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(4.9). WLTP equivalent CO₂ emissions: 145 – 129g/km.

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01

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IF YOU HAD SAID TO ME IN SPRING THAT WE WOULD

have been able to gather 16 new performance cars at Anglesey Circuit for a week, followed by taking our favourite eight to Scotland for a further five days of assessment on some of our favourite roads, it wouldn't have been a Covid test I would have suggested you needed.

But 2020 has been all about the unexpected. Planning for the unknown and reacting to the unpredictable, we've all had to do it in one form or another. So it is with a huge amount of pride for the evo team that this issue we are able to bring you one of our biggest eCoty tests for a number of years.

This year was always going to be a significant one for the performance car. Manufacturer product cycles saw to that with an abundance of new models to select from for the 23rd eCoty. When our 16 lined up on day one at Anglesey it struck me just how diverse our little world is. A Nomad parked alongside an homologation special from Toyota, itself eyeballing the most extreme McLaren Super Series to date, was strangely surreal... for about five minutes.

Then the action started, followed by the first conversations sparking up between (socially distanced) testers, and the thought of a Morgan challenging a Ferrari seemed perfectly normal. Because it is. A Plus Four owner will possibly never consider buying an F8 Tributo, and vice versa, yet both drivers will enjoy the same experiences, sensations and thrills that only a car they enjoy and covet can deliver. So despite the best efforts of 2020, the thrill of driving is still available in a remarkable assortment of shapes and sizes.

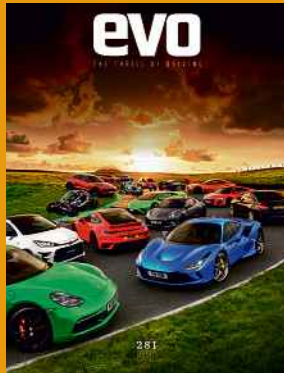
Once you have enjoyed our 75-page eCoty long read, at 8pm on 22 and 23 December on ITV4 you will be able to sit down and watch evo Car of the Year, a two-part documentary that followed us as we tried to look professional doing the best job in the world. (Readers in France, Spain and Turkey will also be able to watch the documentary – keep an eye on evo.co.uk for broadcast details.)

This being the eCoty issue means it is also the last of the year and I'd like to thank you for all your continued support during 2020. It hasn't been easy for anyone and I hope we have been able to deliver a small amount of escapism from world events each month. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Stuart Gallagher, Editor @stuartg917

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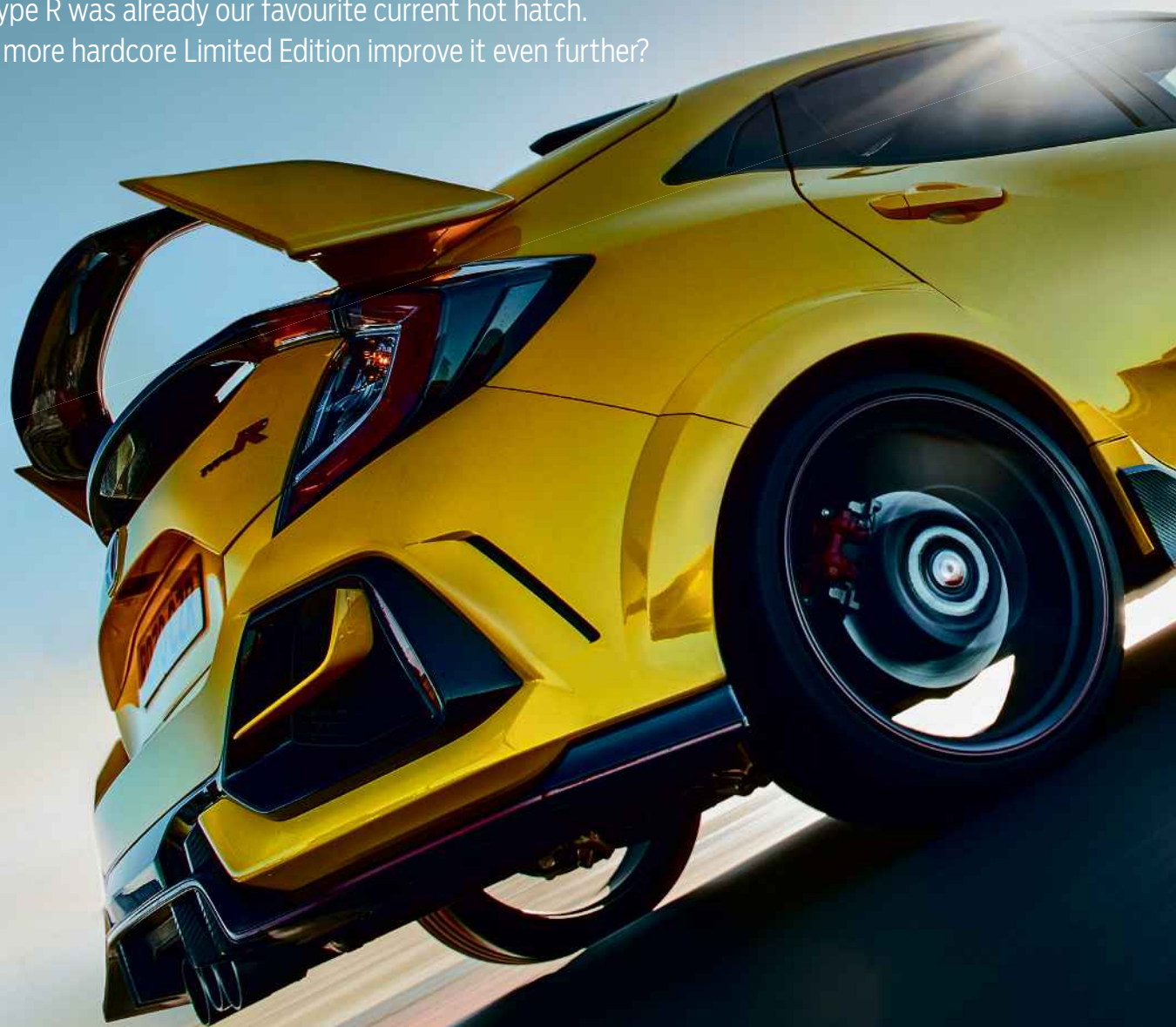
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by ADAM TOWLER PHOTOGRAPHY by MATT HOWELL

Honda Civic Type R Limited Edition

The FK8 Civic Type R was already our favourite current hot hatch.
Can the lighter, more hardcore Limited Edition improve it even further?





IT'S SIMPLY KNOWN AS THE LIMITED Edition. Not the most flamboyant of names for a car with such **evo** credentials, but nothing if not accurate, given this Civic is very limited indeed. Just 20 are available in the UK, and they're already all allocated.

In fact, only 1020 of them are being sold globally (most – 600 – in the US), finally answering a question we've pondered for some time at **evo**: given how potent the standard FK8 Type R already feels, just how mind-bogglingly effective would a sharper, lighter, more tightly focused version be?

It was immediately apparent the FK8 was something special, even back on the international launch in 2017. There we were, flying down the autobahn at nearly 170mph, carving across Germany's minor roads at tremendous speed, revelling in the grip, the balance and the involvement (while trying to not catch a glimpse of the exterior styling in a reflection). Honda made no bones about the fact that this time it had allocated both the budget and the time to really make a world-beater

of a hot hatch. The previous FK2 project had been signed off late in the product cycle, but now there was an independently sprung rear end once more and Honda was going to do the job properly.

The result was sensational, as demonstrated when the Civic proved far too much for the latest Mégane RS, and demolished slightly less focused hot hatches such as the venerable Hyundai i30 N at our 2018 Track Car of the Year (**evo** 254), where it also proved the quickest car on track in wet conditions – even against a 991 GT3 and McLaren 570S Track Pack. Honda recently facelifted the FK8, the result of which we detailed last month and you can also read about in *eCoty* in this issue. I don't think I'll spoil anything when I say it's a very serious contender for outright glory indeed.

The Limited is that more focused version we've often wondered about. It's lighter, yet no more powerful, but then the 316bhp turbocharged four has never, ever, felt like it was short on mojo. Instead, Honda has managed to shave 47kg from the overall weight of the GT model via a thorough



examination of the parts list, yet has kept things reasonably civil by retaining the rear seats. Of that total weight loss, just over 14kg is from removing sound-deadening material from places such as the roof and behind the dashboard, and by ditching various plastic trims such as the spare wheel housing lid. A further 10.4kg is lost through omitting the air conditioning system, and another 5kg from there being no infotainment set-up – including no audio whatsoever. Forged 20-inch BBS wheels are stronger but also 10kg lighter for the set, and are now shod with Michelin's famous Cup 2 tyre instead of the standard and GT models' Continentals.

Tracking down a Limited Edition may be almost impossible, but you'll know when you see one on account of the Sunlight Yellow paint, a nod to Type Rs of the past, with gloss black detailing for the roof, mirrors and engine intake. Sure, in visual terms the Type R can still make your teeth itch unless you're under the age of 15, but just personally speaking, I can't help feeling the remit of this car makes the visual bombardment somehow acceptable. Such a hardcore machine has earned the right to wear its big wing with pride.

It soon becomes obvious that the Limited Edition has every right to look as loony as those old STI GC8 Imprezas. Just as the standard FK8 enthralled in the





‘The best laps feel properly fast, more than enough to sharply focus the mind’

Above: the Limited is blisteringly quick around a track, but will also happily oblige if you want some sideways fun.
Far left: pared back cabin has no air con or infotainment

first few yards, the Limited is that and more. Honda is rather coy on chassis changes, and we could gather no more than the steering is revised and that the electronically controlled dampers ‘adapt’, so whether those differences extend to calibration changes, new geometry settings or EPAS settings we can’t say, frustratingly, but the first thing you notice is that the Limited takes the already stellar steering characteristics of the regular car and adds more weight and feel. It’s actually quite heavy for a modern power-assisted set-up, but not in a clumsy, awkward way. Instead there’s a genuine sense of resistance and connectivity that perfectly matches the sturdy brake pedal feel.

Immediately you sense the Limited piling on speed in a deliciously unburdened way. The weight reduction looks small on paper, but driving GT and Limited back-to-back (as we have done recently) the difference is noticeable. It just piles on speed in one long surge, but unlike most turbocharged engines this one loves to rev right up to the red line, and feels happiest working in the final third of its

rev band, where it fizzes with energy like a vitamin C tablet in water.

There’s a sense that this time of year isn’t the Limited’s favourite season, because however impressive its traction – and it is, very – it will inevitably be a prisoner to the road’s surface with so much power going through only the front wheels. Sure enough, the electronics do a thoroughly decent job, but in low temperatures you need a sensitive right foot if you’re not to feel the power cut and then be reintroduced. But the Limited’s performance envelope is still mighty and, of course, once the car is pulling hard in third gear its traction issues are well behind it.

This really is a devastatingly quick car point-to-point, fusing a powerful and stable braking platform with tremendous lateral grip and amazing agility for what is actually quite a big car. It’s so engaging too, flicking around the gearbox, working the chassis to the point where the rear of the car starts to assist the front. The ride is firm, but no more so than on the GT, and I soon settle on Sport mode for proper driving, with Comfort for urban areas to round the edges off. On the motorway Comfort allows it to roll along with relative ease with none of the head-nodding of a Trophy-R, and bar just a little more

road noise there seems an almost negligible price to pay for the weight loss.

Thankfully, we also have the opportunity to take the Limited to our home track of Bedford Autodrome, even if the temperatures and track surface aren’t ideal for setting lap times. Mercifully though, the sun shines, and by lunchtime most of the damp patches have disappeared, even if the asphalt remains rather cold for Cup 2s. The first two things I do on leaving the pitlane are push the switch on the centre console forwards for ‘+R’ mode and then trigger the two-stage removal of ESP and traction control in its entirety. I’m expecting the next 20 minutes or so to be quite lively...

The Limited is quite a different animal on the track than on the road. With the space and confidence to commit, the subsequent cornering loads make the car much more expressive. A lift of the throttle mid-corner, even on warm Michelins, has the rear stepping out, and if you’ve really provoked it you can take it to wild angles, easily recoverable with steering lock and, of course, throttle. It’s almost as tail happy as the Trophy-R, but the difference is the Civic feels calmer doing it, more controlled, and less likely to do it unless you’ve actually asked it to.

The Limited just shrinks Bedford’s straighter



sections, and loves a feisty direction change, even under full throttle. The brakes are superb, with fabulously reassuring feel in direct contrast to the Trophy-R's optional carbon-ceramics, but no sign of fading even after repeated laps. Post-apex, the Civic's traction is so strong it'll hop on three wheels as it fights the contradicting forces – much like an early '90s Super Tourer – rather than understeer wide.

The best laps feel properly fast – not exactly wild, and not ragged, but the speeds and subsequent commitment required more than enough to sharply focus the mind. Even so, it doesn't prepare me for the plot and time revealed by our VBox data logger: at 1min 23sec dead the Limited smashes the Trophy-R's time of 1:23.6 recorded in warm conditions, which itself bested the Golf GTI Clubsport S's 1:24.1. How has it done it? The graph reveals that whenever the track

turns straight, the Civic simply walks away from the 296bhp Mégane, adding up to 5mph more before braking at the same point if not later, yet shedding the extra speed to match the Renault's corner speeds: testament to the confidence its brakes inspire and the raw energy of its engine. It's the quickest lap time we've yet recorded on the revised West Circuit layout – quicker even than a Porsche 718 Cayman S in dry conditions (1:23.2). That the Civic costs not much more than half the price of the ultimate-spec Mégane, and retains the use of its rear seats, really is game, set and match to Honda.

Is the Limited Edition the greatest hot hatch of all time? At one point driving the car it was a sentiment I attached real credence to, but how do you compare a 205 GTI, a Clio Williams or suchlike, with a car such as this, or a Mégane Trophy-R for that matter?

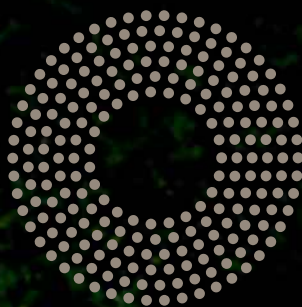
They're so different in so many ways. However, for me it's right up there on the all-time leaderboard, and of all the big number/turbocharged breed it is undoubtedly the ultimate. With Renault Sport withdrawing from that race, it remains to be seen whether VW has anything left in its locker before the noose of emissions tightens unequivocally. For now, if you're one of the 20 with an order confirmed for one of these very yellow, absolutely awesome vehicles, you're very lucky indeed. ✕

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1996cc, turbocharged **Power** 316bhp @ 6500rpm **Torque** 295lb ft @ 2500-4500rpm **Weight** 1333kg (241bhp/ton) **0-62mph** 5.7sec **Top speed** 168mph **Price** £39,995

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by STUART GALLAGHER PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT

Alpina B3 Touring

With a pukka M-power motor and a finely honed Alpina chassis, this new B3 could have you questioning the need for an M3 Touring

YOU WAIT FORTY YEARS FOR ONE BMW M3 Touring to arrive and then two come along at once. OK, not exactly two at the same time and, technically speaking, only one is a bona fide M-car, or rather it will be, once it arrives in 2022, but with Alpina's new B3 Touring touting a genuine M motor (a first for an Alpina), it's cause for celebration.

Alpinas have always had a cult appeal, a car that if you know, you know. And if you don't, you think it's merely a BMW with a bodykit, some wheels that look impossible to clean and a set of coachlines that add a retro touch in today's flame-surfaced world.

This latest G21 3-series-based Alpina Touring is no different (although our press demo is minus the stripes) because beneath

the subtleties of the bodykit lies a package of upgrades that have the tantalising prospect of making it the only car you'll ever need (trademark every motoring journalist, ever). After all, it's based on the M340i xDrive, a model we've recently added to our Fast Fleet (see page 140), where it is already proving to be one of those cars that adds up to more than the sum of its parts. Quick, subtle, engaging enough to interest you, even fun when the opportunity arrives. The B3 is all that but wound up pretty close to 11.

It starts with the engine, which is impossible to ignore. Alpina has always been one to fettle and tune in an old-school way, taking BMW's straight-six and eight-cylinder engines, enhancing them to considerable effect and often installing them in models







‘Wound up to its max the B3 is as quick a point-to-point car as you could ever need’

in which they are unavailable through BMW. Being able to push the Munich motors to performance parameters global manufacturers are held back from doing for all manner of legislative reasons allows bespoke brands such as Alpina to continue the engine designer's original intentions and showcase the performance that these units are truly capable of.

In this instance out goes the M340i's 369bhp B58 3-litre straight-six and in goes the S58 3-litre six that's currently doing time in the X3/4 M and is soon to make an appearance in the new M3/4 family of saloon, coupe and, later, Touring. It's not a straight swap install, however, with Alpina using its own turbos that are smaller and designed for improved low-down responses. Peak power drops to 456bhp as a consequence, down from 503bhp in the UK-bound M3/4 Competition, although the B3's torque is set at 516lb ft, which is 37lb ft more than the M3/4 Competition models will have.

Alpina has also designed and developed its own cooling system for the B3, and we wouldn't be surprised if it's very close to the system BMW M will also be employing.

If you don't have an M340i close to hand when you first drive the B3 you might question Alpina's

claim of having installed an M engine behind the kidney grilles. Roll along and apply nothing more than a gentle tickle to the throttle and the difference between a B3 and an M340i feels negligible. There's more pep at lower engine speeds and more of a bite through the midrange that sees the revs climb quicker, but it's perhaps not the fireworks you were expecting. But today's cars are managed via multiple driver modes and the B3 is no exception. Flick it through to Sport+ and the Alpina's character snaps into focus. Now it's meeting your expectations.

There's a level of responsiveness in the S58 that the B58 motor just can't match, the revs pile on and the blend of torque and power becomes addictive. As the torque shove bleeds away at 4500rpm (having arrived at 2500rpm) the power delivery takes over, with the peak arriving at 5500rpm and hanging around for an additional 1500rpm after that. By now the B3 is flying, covering the ground at such a rate an RS4 would be perspiring to keep the Alpina's chrome exhaust tips in sight, and a C63 would be looking nervously in its mirror.

While the B3 shares the same ratios in its eight-speed ZF auto as the M340i, Alpina has

strengthened the internals where necessary and upped the shift speeds and reaction times between you pulling on the CNC-machined paddle and the gear engaging, each shift now connecting with a heightened level of immediacy. Other changes include upgrades to the limited-slip differential installed in the rear axle and the variable torque split for the xDrive four-wheel-drive system, both having been calibrated to match the increased torque and power and the manner in which they arrive.

On the road the changes made by Alpina result in a far more fluid chassis and more detailed dynamic responses than an M340i. The more alert powertrain means you can play closer to the car's dynamic edge more of the time, the increased precision and delicacy allowing you to push through where an M340i would display slight numbness during the initial turn-in phase. Instead you can lean on the B3's Pirellis (a P Zero specifically developed for Alpina) with more conviction, to the point where the electronics sense they need to start diverting torque to the rear axle, really bringing the Touring alive.

At all times the B3 feels so well within itself, telegraphing back to you the boundary between



grip and slip so you can act accordingly. Having spent several thousand miles behind the wheel of *evo*'s M340i, the B3 quickly highlights the difference between what's possible with a car produced in unlimited numbers and one finessed and tailored to suit a more focused and discerning driver. Wound up to its maximum the B3 is as quick a point-to-point car as you could ever need.

Yet it's not only a performance car for dissecting those roads we turn to when we need to let off steam. New springs and stiffer anti-roll bars that make up the core of Alpina's sports suspension are accompanied by a revised state of tune for the adaptive damper system BMW installs, with a Comfort+ mode that takes the edge off that unavoidable consequence of fitting 19-inch (or optional 20-inch) wheels with such a low-profile tyre. Sport mode is too harsh for any road in the UK, but that's also true of the M340i's setting, and when you aren't chasing the B3's ultimate performance the Comfort damper modes deliver a GT-like quality to the chassis, absorbing the conditions it finds itself in with little to no complaint while still remaining alert.

There are further details that Alpina has fine-tuned, too, such as the variable sports steering

Above: 3-litre twin-turbo S58 M motor is a version of that coming to the new M3/4, here with less power but more torque. **Top right:** test car's hard-to-resist 20-inch 'Classic' forged alloys are a £2080 upgrade over the standard 19-inch 'Dynamic' cast items

system, which has a more organic feel to its weighting when you climb up through the modes and a more linear response that helps deliver more direct feedback as a result. Our demo car also has Alpina's high-performance brake system fitted, which adds £1680 to the cost and includes lightweight 395mm front and 345mm rear drilled discs, with a more aggressive pad also included. The result is stronger, more consistent retardation over BMW's optional M Performance brake set-up. If you plan to use the B3's performance as intended (and why wouldn't you?) it's £1680 well spent in our book.

We'd also want the Alpina Green paint (£1740) and while we'd always steer clear of larger wheel diameters for the sake of it, resisting those 20-inch multi-spoke items would be hard, despite the additional £2080. All in, our test car books at £84,625, up from £67,950 basic, but that former figure also includes a number of BMW

factory options you could happily chip away at. For comparison, an M340i xDrive Touring starts at £50,710, while the M3 Touring will be priced somewhere north of the £74,755 BMW will ask for the Competition saloon.

With the first M3 Touring appearing on the horizon there will be some questioning the B3 Touring's appeal, but that would be to miss the rationale behind such a car. Alpinas are much calmer machines than full-blooded M-cars. They are both smoother on the palette and able to deliver a richer, more concentrated performance because the company's objectives don't need to provide something for all tastes, rather they can focus more on the connoisseur looking for a performance car that's more discerning yet no less rewarding, and the B3 Touring passes this test like few others. **X**

Engine In-line 6-cyl, 2993cc, twin-turbo
Power 456bhp @ 5500-7000rpm **Torque** 516lb ft @ 2500-4500rpm **Weight** 1865kg (248bhp/ton) **0-62mph** 3.9sec
Top speed 186mph **Basic price** £67,950

+ A richer, smoother experience than an M-car can provide
- Little different to an M340i at low speeds

evo rating ★★★★★



Skoda Octavia vRS

The affordable Q-car returns in fourth-generation form, now with Mk8 Golf GTI underpinnings

ARGUMENTS HAVE RAGED FOR generations, and will continue to do so, over which was – and is – the original Q-car. Cars that slip under the radar while making progress. Cars that blend in. Cars that ghost between point A and point B undetected, and are anonymous to all but those with an eye for the subtly swollen wheelarches, an additional exhaust tip and a wheel and tyre package an inch or two larger than you would find on the mainstream model on which they're based.

Our forefathers saw BMW's E34 M5 become peak Q-car, while Mercedes' 500E was the preferred choice for those who wanted something from Stuttgart, via Weissach, rather than being hand-assembled on a line at Garching having started life in Munich. Lancia Thema 8.32? Naturally, anything that shared its roots with a Saab 9000 but gained a Ferrari V8 along the way is a shoo-in for Q status. Jaguar XJR? Has there been a more thuggish brute

in a suit? Even Audi's early S4 and S6 models filled the criteria before they overdosed on the protein shakes and spent too much time looking in the mirror at the gym.

How, then, does the Skoda Octavia vRS earn its stripes to be considered alongside such Q-car royalty? Its appearance in **evo** should come as no surprise – we've been fans of the not-quite hot hatch/fast estate from the Czech Republic since its inception in 2001. By mixing Golf GTI running gear with a longer wheelbase and a dynamic set-up that sits between those of VW's icon and Audi's more heavy-hitting (riding?) S models, the vRS is a performance car sweet spot for those in the know. To others it's just a Skoda, and therefore it wears the perfect Q-car disguise.

This is the fourth-generation Octavia vRS and it doesn't stray far from the path of success that the model has enjoyed these last two decades, so it still doesn't try hard to be one thing at the expense

of another. Instead it retains its unassuming, well-rounded, go-to, do-anything performance car persona for those of us who don't have the luxury or the budget (sometimes both) to enjoy a fleet of driver's cars.

Still based on the underpinnings of the Volkswagen Golf (the Mk8 in this instance), the design of the latest vRS is conservative rather than radical, blending elements from Skoda's two other saloons-not-hatches, the Scala and the Superb, with little fizzes of performance details added here and there. There's black trim where brightwork sits on the standard cars, the obligatory twin exhausts, painted brake calipers and suitably larger wheels and tyres.

You don't need to be a VW aficionado to know that, being Golf-based, the Octavia vRS continues to use the GTI's EA888 2-litre turbocharged engine. Initially the drivetrain choices will be this 242bhp unit with the seven-speed DSG gearbox and front-



wheel drive, or a 197bhp diesel, which can be had with four-wheel drive. There'll also be a 242bhp plug-in hybrid 'iV' model joining the line-up, and a six-speed manual will be available early in 2021, which will get the petrol vRS from 0 to 62mph in 6.8sec, one-tenth slower than this DSG version.

While the EA888 is a dependable engine that covers a huge remit when it comes to standard VW Group states of tune and offers endless possibilities in the aftermarket, it's not what you would call characterful. Reliable, yes, but not an engine you'd get up early in the morning just to listen to. The most noticeable improvement with this evolution of EA888, which we have also noticed in the Golf GTI, is that its torque delivery is far more measured – it peaks over a 2700rpm window – allowing for much smoother progress and a more seamless transition when the power takes over. While the seven-speed DSG 'box isn't a great match for this engine, Skoda has clearly

worked at mapping the shifts to suit the engine's characteristics as best they can.

Dynamic Chassis Control (£995) is fitted to our test car, replacing the standard vRS-specific passive set-up, which we've yet to try. DCC isn't infinitely tuneable here like in the latest Golf GTI, but offers Comfort and Sport settings, with the former a little on the soft side for quicker progress, the latter too hard when you're between interesting sections of road. This means you frequently find yourself using the new 10-inch touchscreen to switch between the two, as the firmer setting delivers enough additional body control to make it worth persevering with.

The new interior features neatly integrated, reassuringly unglitzy carbonfibre trim, with Alcantara breaking up the larger sections of plastic, which remain harder than expected in places. The only real gripe is the seat, which doesn't go low enough and also feels like it's tipping you out.

Above: latest Octavia gets a new cabin, with plenty of Alcantara and carbonfibre in the vRS; driver's seat needs to adjust lower. **Top left:** vRS continues to be available as either a hatchback or, as tested, an estate

Reading all that back makes the Octavia vRS sound a touch uninspiring, but that couldn't be further from the truth, for it remains one of the most affordable ways to own a junior-level Q-car. It's everything you'd expect an Octavia vRS to be, which means it remains a very good thing.

Stuart Gallagher

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1984cc, turbocharged
Power 242bhp @ 5000rpm **Torque** 273lb ft @ 1600-4300rpm
Weight 1445kg (170bhp/ton) **0-62mph** 6.7sec
Top speed 155mph **Basic price** £29,815

🟢 A capable Q-car for the masses
 🇬🇧 VW EA888 engine lacks character, driver sits too high

evo rating ★★★★★

IGNITION

NEWS, INTERVIEWS, TECH AND EVERY NEW CAR THAT MATTERS



Wrap party

Porsche's next 911 GT3 will be officially revealed in February 2021, but we caught up with GT boss Andreas Preuninger during a final development drive to discover what to expect

1 T'S STILL IN GOOD SHAPE,' SAYS Andreas Preuninger, director of Porsche's GT product line, taking a step back like an artist from his easel to consider the car in front of him. The car in question is not actually his work, because Preuninger joined Porsche's fabled GT department after the inaugural GT3, the 996.1, was completed. But this was the first car he used when he started the job. The car that informed his initial thoughts on the GT3 project 20 years ago.

'I drive it from time to time. It's kind of interesting how performance perception changes through the years.' It is somehow very heartening to hear him say this. When Preuninger says that new is better than old, you now know that it's an opinion that comes from a direct comparison and it doesn't

just mean an improvement in bald numbers. Of course, it's not just the original that he has on hand for perspective, because the silver car with the swoopy wing is sitting in a garage with nearly all the subsequent GT cars. It's quite the back catalogue.

In the middle of the garage is the latest member of this dynasty. It's a prototype, with tape masking the badges and additional panels hiding the bodywork details, but the major aerodynamic parts are on show and there's no disguising the aggression in its stance. All prototypes have a scruffy, gnarled sense of purpose – if they had hands they would be calloused and etched with dirt from the hard miles of testing – but even so, this looks like it is going to be the most RS non-RS to date.

As with the final look of the car, Porsche is keen



to keep back some of the mechanical details for the full reveal. However, I suspect Preuninger would tell all if he was allowed. It's like he's found the perfect Christmas present for someone, but is so excited he now wants them to open it before the big day.

So, the 992 GT3; here are the answers to the FAQs. Yes, the engine is still naturally aspirated. Yes, there will be the option of a manual gearbox as well as PDK. No, it doesn't weigh any more than the last one. And yes, it's faster around the Nordschleife – 'devastatingly so' according to Preuninger. Pretty much the best headlines of 2020, I think you'll agree.

Now for something that you might not have been expecting. This is the first ever Porsche 911 with a number plate to have double wishbone front suspension instead of MacPherson struts. The 991 RSR race car, introduced in 2013, made the switch to double wishbones at the front, but this is the first road car to do so. The big advantage is better control of camber – and therefore increased contact between the tyre and road – during cornering. The big disadvantage for a 911 road car is the potential impingement on space, particularly by the upper control arms. However, somehow, the engineers have managed to package it so that the space in the 'frunk' is unaffected compared with a standard 992.

To balance out the added front grip, changes have also been made to the rear suspension. The wheels are also now 21 inches in diameter at the rear (still 20 inches at the front), just like on the previous GT3 RS. And behind those rims are bigger brakes. PCCB will be an option, but the cast irons, as fitted to this car (don't be fooled by the yellow calipers), have grown from 380mm in diameter at the front to 408mm, with only a negligible increase in weight.

The other big change at the front of the car is the lid of the luggage compartment, which is now made from carbonfibre. In fact, this is a happy by-product of the two large vents that you can see in it. Because the 992 has a longer lid compared to the 991 it means that the vents we've seen in the noses of GT3s for many years wouldn't fit in the front bumper, so they had to be moved to the lid. However, manufacturing such shapes in aluminium or steel wasn't practical, so carbon was specified. Obviously this helps to reduce weight, which stands at a smidgen over 1400kg, all in, ready to go, with a full tank of fuel (the last GT3 weighed 1413kg).

At the rear of the car there has been some weight-saving too, with the introduction of lightweight glass for the rear window, just like on the previous RS. However, the most obvious facet of the rear of the new GT3 is its bold wing. There is a larger rear diffuser too, but it's the wing that's the talking point thanks to the swan-neck supports. On the prototype it looks incredibly utilitarian, but Preuninger promises that when the struts are uncovered it looks much more attractive. Of course, it's not there for decoration and the performance gains from having a clean underside or suction side (the side that's really doing the work in other



'IT IS AS COMMUNICATIVE AS A GT3 EVER WAS AND MAYBE EVEN A TAD MORE'

Above: standard brakes have grown in size; carbon-ceramics remain an option. **Right:** front bonnet is now carbonfibre, saving weight. **Above middle:** Preuninger at the wheel; note the large PDK shifter

words) working with the ducktail beneath it are significant. It generates more downforce, but with less angle of attack, so it harms top speed less.

Time to get in – passenger side, for now – and go for a drive. As I open the door, exposing tantalising flashes of the blue paint beneath the black wrap, and drop way down to the bucket seat, the first thing I notice is it's a manual car. It must be because a PDK 992 would have a little toggle switch in place of the gearlever. Except it's not a manual. Preuninger only has two pedals. He explains he likes to have the option to shift with a lever in a PDK and as the 992 GT3 has the





991's old seven-speed PDK they could keep a proper sequential-type shifter. It doesn't look like the old gear selector though, it looks like a H-pattern lever, which is quite cool. And confusing.

The engine it (or the paddles on the wheel) controls is essentially the same 4-litre flat-six as found in the last of the 991 GT cars, the Speedster. Yes, it has gas particulate filters, but from the moment we roll out of Weissach the GT3's glorious, naturally aspirated soundtrack sings clearly and loudly. It is quite an achievement to have retained this engine in the current legislative age.

Aside from the gear selector, there are a few other changes to a normal 992 interior, and the usual Comfort or Clubsport specs will be offered. The instruments, for example, have a new Track Mode, which leaves the extremities of the screens blank so that you focus on the analogue rev counter

with the embedded digital speedo. If you extend the revs round to their upper reaches then yellow lights begin to encircle the rev counter, building until they flash blue to indicate an upshift is required. It's a system that has been designed to be visible (but not distracting) in your peripheral vision.

While passenger rides are obviously no substitute for getting behind the wheel, it is nonetheless easy enough to discern certain things. Sometimes it's actually easier as you don't have to worry about where you're going, and can just concentrate on the various sensations. The suspension, for example, has a noticeable extra level of pliancy to it compared to the previous generation. However, there is also undoubtedly more grip. As Preuninger attacks a long, right-hand corner on what is clearly a well-trodden test route, the amount of lateral G that I experience as my ribs

lean into the seat bolsters is monstrous. I know that a 991 GT3 would not have carried so much speed or done so with quite as much composure.

Of course, speed is not everything and Preuninger is adamant that the steering is not only more direct but retains the tactility that is so crucial to the GT car recipe. In fact he is very clear that the whole car is still full of feel. 'Nobody should be afraid that the car isn't emotional anymore and isn't talking to you anymore,' he says. 'It's as communicative as a GT3 ever was and maybe even a tad more.'

And given that he has all the previous GT3s at his disposal, ready to go whenever he likes, you can be pretty sure that he's in the best position possible to make such a statement. Of course, he clearly also has a vested interest in saying such things, so we still need to get behind the wheel to confirm or deny the assertions. We can't wait. ❌

AERODYNAMICS (REAR)

A modified Super Trofeo rear bumper and new diffuser improve aero efficiency, and the NACA duct incorporated into each rear haunch acts as an engine air intake, reducing static pressure losses by 30 per cent. An air scoop integrated into the top of the new engine cover improves cooling at the rear of the engine bay, with air deflectors in the rear bonnet's frame managing airflow from the snorkel to cool the exhaust. An LMP1-inspired shark fin improves high-speed stability and an adjustable rear wing optimises aero balance without increasing drag.

DRIVING MODES

There's still no Ego mode for the most extreme Huracán, but there are three new driver modes to pick from: STO for road driving, Trofeo for dry track work and Piovra for wet trackdays, and all have increased slip thresholds. Rear-wheel steering, torque vectoring and an updated traction control system are all included, too.



Huracán force

Over a decade in the making, Lamborghini's 911 GT3 RS rival will arrive in 2021

REMBER 2009? OBAMA WAS SWORN in as America's 44th president, British drivers held both the Formula 1 and IndyCar titles (Jenson Button and Dario Franchitti respectively), Séb Loeb won his 1000th WRC title and Peugeot was victorious at Le Mans. Oh, and there was a global swine flu pandemic.

It was also the year Lamborghini launched its Super Trofeo one-make race car and with it aspirations to build a road-going equivalent.

Eleven years later and the £260,000 Huracán Super Trofeo Omologato (STO) is that car.

Combining a rear-wheel-drive chassis with the most potent V10 that Lamborghini offers, the STO takes the very best from both the Super Trofeo and GT3 Evo race cars to create the most extreme road-going version of the company's entry-level model yet.

Aerodynamics are key to the STO's make-up, but while outright speed isn't the goal, driver

involvement is, with a bespoke chassis set-up, driver modes and lightweight components – including a new, front-hinged single-piece clamshell bonnet – all part of the package.

With its performance said to be between that of the Performante and the GT3 Evo, the STO is Lamborghini's first genuine attempt to go splitter to splitter with its distant cousin, Porsche's 911 GT3 RS. It's also a strong welcome-back present for returning CEO Stephan Winkelmann.

FRONT DESIGN & AERO

The 'confango' returns with the STO. Originally introduced on the Miura and last seen on the ultra-rare Sesto Elemento, this front-hinged opening comprises the front bonnet, wings and bumper in a single clamshell design. There's an additional pair of air ducts that increase airflow through the centrally mounted radiator to improve cooling and generate more downforce. A new front splitter channels air under the car along its flat floor. In total, downforce is up 53 per cent, aero efficiency improved by 37 per cent, with 13 per cent of adjustable aero balance available.

ENGINE

The STO may be rear-wheel drive but it has the more powerful 5.2-litre V10 from the four-wheel-drive Huracán Evo models. This equates to 631bhp and 477lb ft of torque but with the race car's throttle maps uploaded to improve responses across the board and sharpen the top end. The same approach has also been taken with the gearshift speeds.

CHASSIS

It comes a fixed steering ratio, wider front and rear tracks (by 10 and 16mm respectively), stiffer suspension bushings and anti-roll bars that have both been designed specifically for the STO, and the MagneRide damping has been recalibrated, too. Lamborghini Dynamic Vehicle Integration (LDVI) has also been adapted to suit the STO's more track-focused characteristics.

WHEELS, TYRES & BRAKES

Lighter magnesium wheels, a new bespoke Bridgestone Potenza road-legal trackday tyre and a new carbon-ceramic brake system have all been developed for the STO. Braking power is up 25 per cent, stopping distances are reduced by seven per cent, there's a higher thermal conductivity by a factor of four and a new brake cooling system has been specifically developed for the STO.

WEIGHT

Seventy five per cent of the STO's body panels are made from carbonfibre, with the rear arches manufactured from titanium. It means the STO weighs 1339kg dry, 43kg lighter than a Performante.



Fuelling the flames

As the UK government brings forward the banning of new petrol and diesel cars to 2030, one concerned group says it needs to look at the bigger environmental picture



IT WON'T HAVE ESCAPED YOUR attention that the UK government has brought forward its intention to ban the sale of solely petrol or diesel-engined cars by a decade, to 2030, in a move that is part of a £12bn investment package for a 'green industrial revolution'.

From this investment £4bn has been earmarked to facilitate the switch from the sale of internal combustion engines to electric ones, with £1.3bn being made available 'to accelerate the roll-out of charge points for electric vehicles in homes, streets and on motorways across England'. An additional £582m will be available as grants for buyers of zero- or ultra-low-emission vehicles, with a further £500m to be spent over the next four years to accelerate the development and mass production of batteries. Which all sounds very good, although it didn't take long for it to be pointed out that the HS2 rail link between London and Manchester is expected to cost £106bn and that's only required to transport people between fixed points and at fixed times on a fixed route, as opposed to asking the nation's millions of motorists to change their motoring habits for a technology that is still in its infancy.

However, a new report backed by manufacturers and suppliers suggests legislation needs to look beyond EVs if governments are to meet their emissions targets.

Titled 'Decarbonising Road Transport: There is no silver bullet', the report was commissioned by Honda, McLaren, Aston Martin and Bosch and has called on policymakers to adopt a range of technology solutions to support a more rapid drive to net zero for the industry.

'We need to do more than just electrify the fleet,' says Andy Eastlake, managing director of the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership. 'We are still selling diesel and petrol cars, the engines of which could play out until 2050, so we have to look at decarbonising fuel.' Which means also looking at alternatives such as synthetic fuels and hydrogen, technologies which the likes of Porsche and Hyundai, amongst others, are already well invested in the research of. There has also been a call to look more closely at the whole-life vehicle emissions of a car, from manufacture, through use, to disposal.

'You can demand zero CO2 from the tailpipe but a lot of CO2 is produced in the manufacturing,' explains former Aston Martin CEO Dr Andy Palmer. 'And while synthetic fuels are not CO2-free at the tailpipe, they can be at production and expulsion.'

Synthetic fuels have been in development and under consideration by manufacturers for a number of years, with Porsche open about its interest in the solution. Termed a 'drop-in fuel',

a synthetic fuel can work with petrol and diesel engines as a direct replacement because its volume and energy density is very similar. They can also utilise the existing refuelling infrastructure and are a far more viable alternative for HGVs than electric or hydrogen.

Even the chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Electric Vehicles, Matt Western MP, says we should not be fooled into thinking that the switch to EVs alone will solve the problem. 'We need to address decarbonisation of both vehicles and fuel to have any real hope of meeting our CO2 reduction ambitions,' he says.

The report went on to explain how making all new vehicles zero emissions at the tailpipe only works if the energy grid is zero emissions, a view supported by many who feel EVs are painted as emissions saints despite consuming more energy in their construction than an ICE car does. And while in 2019 more UK electricity was generated by renewables than fossil fuel, car production is a truly global operation and not every factory is located in areas where green energy is readily available. And that's before you get on to the thorny subject of sourcing the materials required to produce EV batteries.

This is what has led to the call by some for the introduction of Environmental Performance Certificates (EPC), to be displayed on cars at the point of sale and which show their lifetime environmental impact. It comes after Polestar elected to be open about the CO2 generated in the manufacture of one of its cars, revealing that a Polestar 2 is required to travel 78,000km before its carbon footprint is smaller than that of a diesel-engined Volvo XC40 on which it is based.

The government's policy also only addresses those new vehicles sold each year (nearly two million in 2019) and not the circa 40million cars registered in the UK. Surely a more strategic and joined-up plan would be to increase the sale of zero- and low-emission vehicles while at the same time providing a cleaner, carbon-free fuel solution for the remaining ICE vehicles. Without this it makes the government's announcement little more than an attention-grabbing headline. ❌

'IT ONLY WORKS IF THE ENERGY GRID IS ALSO ZERO EMISSIONS'

Incoming



BACK TO BLACK

Planning a trip to the Nürburgring in 2021? You'll need to know that the AMG GT Black Series has broken the lap record with a 6min 43.6sec lap.



ALONG CAME THE SPIDER

Ferrari has revealed its £415,000, 986bhp SF90 Spider, claiming the plug-in hybrid hypercar is the fastest series-production convertible in the world.



THREE-WHEELING TO RETIREMENT

After nearly a decade in production, Morgan will soon call time on its 3 Wheeler, marking the occasion with 33 examples of a P101 special edition.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

McLaren is to break with its tradition of using model numbers for its Sports Series cars by calling 2021's 570S replacement the Artura.



JOIN THE WAITING GAME

This is Subaru's new BRZ coupe. Co-developed with Toyota once again, the Scooby won't be coming to Europe, but we will get Toyota's new GR86 in 2021.



ALL THE CAR YOU NEVER ASKED FOR

Beneath its 'GT3-inspired' looks the The Naran (sic) is a BMW M8-based coupe with a 1048bhp twin-turbo V8 and switchable four-wheel drive.

WATCHES



Q Timex Reissue Digital LCA

£135 timex.co.uk

With digital watches enjoying a resurgence, Timex has resurrected its LCA (Liquid Crystal Analogue) model from 1987, enabling its once cutting-edge analogue-digital hybrid display to be enjoyed all over again.



Omologato Panamericana

£395 omologatowatches.com

Marking the start of a new design chapter for Omologato's watches, this piece is named after the Carrera Panamericana road race that took place along over 2000 miles of the Mexican leg of the Pan-American Highway in the 1950s.



Chopard Mille Miglia Lab One

€128,500 chopard.com

A world away from Chopard's other Mille Miglia models, the Lab One features a complex tourbillon movement for enhanced accuracy, while a titanium case helps keeps weight down. Just 20 will be made.

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Rob Young

Founder, DMS Automotive

His skills in microelectronics enabled Rob Young to establish one of the UK's most successful performance upgrade businesses – and indulge his own passion for cars

by ADAM TOWLER

1 WAS ALWAYS INTO CARS. MY DAD LOVED driving, and we'd go on our holidays to Spain. We had an apartment in Majorca, and Dad used to drive there, so I'd sit in the back and be car spotting. From six years old it was all about the 911 Turbo with the big whale tail [the 930] – that's what I wanted from being about knee-high. Not a Ferrari.

When I was about 14 my dad taught me how to drive, in Spain. My first car was a 957cc Ford Fiesta, with 39bhp. I was sure it had lost some of that power, so I bought a Haynes manual and took the cylinder head off, jet washed it all out, ground the valves back in with paste, and put it all back together in the back garden, hoping I'd get back the power. I was power hungry even then...

Microelectronics is my trade, but I was applying it to some pretty boring stuff after my education. I spent all the money I had on cars. I had a Mk2 Golf GTI 8v, then a 16v, followed by an E30 325i M Sport in 1991, with the big bumpers, then an E36 325i for about a week, and then a 1994 3-litre E36 M3. It was that car I sold in 1997 to start this business.

Before then, working hard was all about 'what else can I buy for my car?' That was how my mind worked. I always wanted to do more with cars, but I had no idea how to run a business with them.

At my previous employer I completed a three-year degree in just two years, and took unpaid leave to do all the coursework. However, after all that work they tried to wriggle out of giving me

the pay rise they'd promised. I was so disillusioned about working in a big corporation that I left with no idea about what I was going to do next. Either I had to find another job or this was my time to start on my own, and I decided on the latter.

Like many, I made lots of mistakes to start with, but eventually you get the hang of it, and one thing I soon realised was that without your customers you have no business, so you have to cater for what they want. And if you're doing something that you're really passionate about then it's a real advantage – and I really love cars!

I went from having my M3 to just a van – most of the time you have to go backwards first to go forwards. After the first two years we then started to grow quickly, and I realised I had to stop worrying about it and just get on with it.

Most of all I like to think of myself as a problem-solver. We have seven staff members currently, including my brother Tony, and two sites with three rolling roads – two at our Southampton HQ, one at our West Midlands branch. I'll do mechanicals if I have to, but my experience is software and the electronics, and understanding the whole problem. If someone is better at a job than me then I'll get them to do it, and that's why I love working with people such as Mariusz, one of our techs, because he understands the mechanical side in a way I don't. For example, we had a Carrera GT here, and there was a bearing that Porsche said you couldn't buy – you need to buy a new gearbox.





'I LOVE STARTING WITH A PROBLEM, AND THEN GETTING TO THE SOLUTION'

So Mariusz got a new sleeve for the bearing made in Poland, and then we stripped it out on the bench – and there's no handbook for that car – and put it all back together. I love starting with a problem, even if it's really stressy, and then getting to the solution.

Back in the era of the Sierra Cosworth when everyone was tuning them, they'd put a stronger spring on the actuator and then alter the fuelling within the ECU. Before that, with set-ups such as Bosch K-Jetronic, air was drawn through a flap with a potentiometer on it and you'd just bend the flap. But the thing that really set us off being particularly busy was around 1998/99 when electronic control systems really began to develop. Something such as a Porsche 993 Carrera had a simple 28-pin chip that you plug in, the kind that was in all sorts of machines and very easy for someone to replace.

However, then they went to EPROMs called PLCCs, which are twin square chips soldered to the board, and 16-bit. The technology was crude, and the software was beyond that of the hardware, so you'd have two chips, high-bit and low-bit. Those were physically hard to work with; forget about the software, which was basic anyway, actually desoldering those chips off the board, making sure you read them correctly, programming new chips

and then resoldering them back on the board without damaging any of the delicate circuit board tracks was really difficult. However, that's my background – that for me is baking bread in a bakery!

So suddenly hardly anybody could tune all these new ECUs, and not only did I have the direct work for customers, I'd have other companies sending me an ECU, I'd do it for them, and they'd even give me the software, and then I'd do the turnaround. I did that for the first year, and then we worked exclusively for us after that. Now there is so much depth to the software, there's so much that you can do with different maps and the technology.

Another big thing for us was when someone rang up one day and said: 'I'm from the Ferrari Club Singapore, can you tune these cars?' Manufacturers were making a separate spec for hotter climates, often with less power, so there was a big grey import scene and those cars were going wrong – they've only got 95 RON to run on over there, so suddenly we were doing Ferrari F355s and 550s, detuning them to run on their fuel. Who in their right mind would take a chance and go out there? But sometimes it's realising that not everything will work out and that if something does go wrong then having the ability to just let go of it and move on. Then we hit the 2008 recession. In August 2008 we had 50 cars a week in here, by October we had just three cars a week. That's when you realise to really appreciate your customers and never take things for granted.

I have cars that are my passion, and then cars that are 'work cars'. For the former, my first Porsche arrived in 2001, a 996 C4 with factory aero kit – Arctic Silver with Metropole leather. I really liked it at the time. And then I got my dream car, the 996 Turbo. That's a car I should never, ever have sold. However, I still have my



997 Turbo – a GT2 RS lookalike with 900bhp – and that is simply my ideal Porsche, plus some others. Amongst those are an SLK55 AMG that my wife still drives, and a Mk3 Golf VR6, the last of the line with no plastic wheelarch trims that we bought in 1997 nearly new – I can't bring myself to sell it. I have a McLaren 650S GT3 car that I race occasionally; I don't do much, but it's just a reward for working hard and I really enjoy it. I haven't gone out and bought a load of cars, I just haven't really sold many...

For work, with something such as the current F90 M5, I knew if I could wait another couple of months I could save twenty grand on buying one, but then I could lose 50 customers, so I had to go and commit. I needed an active cruise control car and one with active steering too, because these days you need to understand how all the electronics are integrated before tuning them, plus I needed a non-OPF [Otto Particle Filter] car.



Left: an F90 BMW M5 is Young's current 'work' car. **Below:** a Mercedes SLK55 AMG has found its way into the Young family garage



The non-OPF car has all the wiring and all the connectors for the OPF, it's just all blanked off, so the hardware is the same, and I can then fully understand how it all works. This is really important now since September 2018 and the emissions regulation changes. There were only two cars in the UK that matched that spec, and I bought one of them – I love it, but when it goes I'll have no sentimentality attached to it. There are so many new cars coming now, I can't buy all of them for work, but I know I can ignore some cars for the moment, until they hit the sweet spot value-wise and then the

demand for tuning will be there.

We do tune some hybrids but the whole EV thing doesn't interest me. I couldn't wake up in the morning and work on EVs, I'd be lying to myself, which is the same reason we don't tune Nissan GT-Rs.

With something such as a Porsche 993 or 996, how can it date? It's like an old Hasselblad, it's still a nice thing to have. An iPhone 5? Who wants that? Electric cars will be disposable, I think, but petrol engines have character and there's enough great cars out there already to keep us busy for the foreseeable future.' ❌

Right: Mk2 Volkswagen Golf GTIs in 8 and 16-valve forms were among Young's earlier car purchases. **Above right:** a succession of BMWs came next, including an E36 M3. **Left:** Young followed up his first Porsche, a 996 Carrera 4, with his dream car, the 996 Turbo



The right tyre all year round

Supreme confidence, whatever the weather

WHEN IT COMES TO PERFORMANCE CARS, or any car for that matter, there's one component that's arguably more important than any other, tyres. It's those small contact patches, where the rubber meets the road, that keep a car heading in the right direction and ensure that the power of hundreds of horses is transferred efficiently to the tarmac.

So important are tyres to the performance car equation, that many manufacturers will work with tyre brands to develop new compounds and tread patterns for a specific model in order to fully optimise the performance and handling. But it's important to remember that tyres have so much more to deal with than just the outputs from the vehicle they're fitted to; they also have to adapt to myriad environmental changes that are as random as, well, the weather.

It's often said that the UK doesn't have seasons, it simply has weather, and anyone who's planned a day trip – or even a track day – in July or August only to endure heavy, cold rain all day knows that all too well. It's this total unpredictability, and the fact that the UK has relatively mild winters, that has made the process of switching between summer and winter tyres very rare for drivers in the UK. In many European countries that do have harsh winters with plenty of snow, switching to winter tyres as the weather starts to turn is a matter of course, and there's infrastructure in place to make that transition simple, with tyre storage readily available. Finding similar services in the UK would be hard, making the notion of tyre switching even less attractive.

The result is that UK drivers tend to run summer tyres all year round, with compounds that aren't designed to operate optimally in cold temperatures. And while much of the UK rarely sees heavy snow, cold and icy conditions will prove to be just as challenging for cars running summer tyres, especially high-performance cars, leaving drivers feeling less confident behind the wheel through the winter months.



A tyre for all seasons

There is an answer to this conundrum, though – all season tyres. An all season tyre is essentially a hybrid that's designed to deliver the highest levels of performance and driver confidence, no matter the weather conditions, temperature, or time of year. With all season tyres drivers can enjoy their cars to their full potential during the dry summer months, safe in the knowledge that when winter sets in, they won't have to worry. And if you're thinking that all season tyres aren't designed with high performance cars in mind, think again.

Vredestein has been manufacturing high-quality tyres for over a century, with a specific focus on all season tyres for 28 years. That level of experience and expertise has won Vredestein countless awards, with its latest range of all season tyres no exception, including the Quatrac Pro, which is the first all season tyre to focus specifically on the ultra high performance (UHP) sector.

Modern performance cars aren't the delicate weekend toys they used to be, they're designed to be used every day and drivers of these sports saloons, hot hatches and performance SUVs need tyres that deliver confidence all year round, whether on a warm summer drive out in the countryside or a cold and icy Monday morning commute in the dead of winter. The Quatrac Pro is designed specifically for that task, allowing daily driver performance cars to be used to their full potential whatever the weather.

Building on nearly 30 years of experience designing and manufacturing all season tyres, the Quatrac Pro delivers the all weather confidence that's synonymous with the Quatrac range, without compromising on the dry handling that performance car drivers demand.

The Quatrac Pro is manufactured using a bespoke compound with high levels of silica and resin to improve traction on wet and even snowy road surfaces. While the custom tread pattern, with its wider longitudinal grooves and diverging grooves at the shoulder, increase water evacuation to ensure the best possible performance, handling and confidence on wet roads, even at high speeds. And that high speed performance is further enhanced by impressively short braking distance, even when driving in wet conditions.

Vredestein has created something truly special with the Quatrac Pro; it's a tyre designed from the ground up with performance cars and their drivers in mind, a tyre not willing to compromise on performance, handling or braking whatever the road conditions, and a tyre that will deliver supreme confidence all year round, whatever the elements may throw at you.

To find out more about the Vredestein Quatrac Pro and why you should be considering all season tyres for your performance car, head to www.vredestein.co.uk or simply scan the QR code with your phone.



'The Quatrac Pro is the first all season tyre to focus specifically on the ultra high performance sector'





THE evo

ENGINEERED A

Our motoring A to Z reaches the end of the road, as Richard Porter dispatches his final batch of automotive definitions

THIS MONTH X-Z

X

Letter used to make car names more exciting, especially in the 1980s, e.g. Ford Escort XR3, Nissan Sunny ZX, Subaru WRX STI.

X engine

Properly bonkers internal combustion configuration in which four banks of cylinders are arranged in an X shape when viewed from the front, with a common crank in the middle. Insanely large and heavy, and hence only ever seen in aircraft and tanks, though it's entirely possible that Ferdinand Piëch at the height of VW engineering hubris tried to make his team come up with one that would fit in a Lupo.

X-spoke

Abbreviated way of describing cross-spoke alloys. X also features in attempts to remove brake dust from such a wheel design, e.g. 'Why can't I get these fxcking wheels clean?'

Xenon

Type of car headlight that works by creating an arc between two contacts within a chamber of xenon gas, the ionisation of which creates the bright blue-white light for which these lights are known. Also known as High Intensity Discharge or 'Argh, is that a police car behind me?' lights.



XJ

Long-running name for Jaguar's large saloon cars, although originally it was an internal code for models under development and stood for 'eXperimental Jaguar'. Hence the original XJ6 was confusingly codenamed the XJ4.

Xylophone

Percussion instrument based around tuned wooden bars which are struck with small, spherically ended mallets. Nothing to do with cars, but all alphabetical guides have to have one in their X section because not much else starts with X. Sorry.

Y-junction

Like a jazzier version of a T-junction. Not to be confused with a 'why junction' such as the inexplicably half-arsed way the M1 connects to the M25.



Top: X-spokes, in this case unusually free of brake dust.
Above: an XJ Jaguar



Clockwise from bottom left: a xenon headlight, a Yank tank, yaw, and... well, we'll leave you to find this entry for yourselves



Yank tank

Old fashioned and somewhat disparaging tag for an American car based around traditional size, weight and indeed handling characteristics of such machines. Might still apply to the Cadillac Escalade or Ford Expedition, though rather harder to pin on, say, the Corvette C8.

Yaw

The rotation of a car away from an imaginary front-to-rear line when viewed from above. Hence electronic 'yaw control' in which a car's stability systems may be used to manipulate the yaw characteristics to improve turn-in. Not to be confused with popular children's cartoon *Paw Patrol*, though you can sing the former to the theme tune of the latter and now you probably are.

Yellow

Primary colour often regarded as resale death on cars, unless they are Lamborghinis or the Fiat Cinquecento Sporting.

Yellow box

Type of marking on some road junctions into which you must not drive unless your exit is clear (or unless you are turning right and waiting for a gap in oncoming traffic). Also known as a 'moron web'.

Yellow flag

Universally understood motorsport signal requiring drivers to slow down because there is a hazard ahead (unless you are Mika Häkkinen, in which case you may give the person waving the flag a cheery wave of acknowledgement thereby giving the impression that you are acting appropriately while not actually lifting off at all).

Yellow lines

Brightly coloured street trimmings, the number of which denotes how bad it would be to park there anyway with your hazards on because you're a lazy berk with a BMW X6 and you want to use the cash machine.

Yield

Weirdly old-fashioned sounding word for 'give way', written on inverted triangle signs in some countries, e.g. the USA, and which sounds amusing if you roar it in the voice of a villain from a campy science fiction movie.



Yikes

What a cartoon character might say upon coming around a corner and seeing the new BMW M4. Once they'd finished vomiting.

Yump

A small jump, e.g. in rallying. Possibly derived from the way drivers from some countries would say 'jump'. Although you never heard them refer to a Harrier Yump Yet.

Z axle

BMW's label for its multi-link rear axle first seen on the Z1 and short for Zentralpunktgeführte Doppelquerlenker or 'central point guided double wishbones'. Obviously.

Z car

Colloquial way of referring to various Nissans,

some more sporty, e.g. 370Z, than others, e.g. 1983 300ZX. Not to be confused with *Z Cars*, the black and white TV series in which police people sat in a windowless Ford Zephyr in front of an unconvincing back projection, and created by the man who later wrote *The Italian Job*.

Zastava

Serbian armaments manufacturer that also started to build vehicles in the 1950s and did so continuously until the war in the Balkans in 1999 when the US Air Force, possibly failing to read up on what was made where, blew up the car factory.

Zebra crossing

Ubiquitous type of pedestrian crossing, so named because it is at risk of getting savaged and eaten by the less commonly seen lion crossing.

Zero emission

Claim sometimes made of electric cars, causing a certain type of bore to start huffing on about power stations.



Above: ZZ Top, on the back cover of their album *Eliminator* with the eponymous hot rod, owned by frontman Billy Gibbons. **Below:** a Nissan Z-car

Zetec

Name used by Ford to unify a whole range of (sometimes unrelated) engines. Originally 'Zeta' but changed after a firm legal cough from Lancia, which owned the Zeta name, to the chagrin of Welsh actor Catherine EcoBoost-Jones.

ZF

German car component firm responsible for myriad parts in numerous cars, most conspicuously that really good eight-speed automatic gearbox that everyone uses. ZF stands for Zahnradfabrik Friedrichshafen ('Gear Factory Friedrichshafen'), although these days they refer to themselves as ZF Friedrichshafen, which technically makes the company 'Zahnradfabrik Friedrichshafen Friedrichshafen'. Tch. Bet they say 'PIN number' as well.

Zinc

Protective coating given to metal parts to prevent them from rusting, hence why cars don't go conspicuously rotten in modern times (apart from the Ford Ka and the W210-shape E-class).

ZZ Top

American beat combo famed for naming an album after a customised 1933 Ford, and for being hirsute to the point of ridiculousness (apart from the drummer, Frank Beard). ❌





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DOA: Rover P6BS/P9

This mid-engined, V8-powered three-seater could have been Rover's first sports car, but a wary rival within the British Leyland empire ensured it would never see the light of day

IN THE POST-WAR YEARS ROVER HAD a reputation for making dependable but starchy cars, like redoubtable maiden aunts made metal. By the 1960s, though, changes were afoot. The Rover-BRM racer burnt the company's trad image in the white heat of its gas turbine engine, especially when it lasted the distance in the experimental class at Le Mans in '63. Two years later the same car ran as an official entry with Graham Hill and Jackie Stewart driving, bagging 10th place. Rover's big news of '65, however, was the acquisition of a lightweight 3.5-litre V8 engine from Buick to put some pep in the step of the stately P5 four-door and bring welcome muscle to the smaller P6 saloon. Suddenly Rover carried a sportiness unthinkable ten years earlier. The only thing it didn't have was an actual sports car.

In 1966 Rover management made a non-committal attempt to address this by asking chief engineer Spen King to draw up a cost-effective design with the new V8 at its core. It was quickly agreed that the car would be mid-engined with an ingenious powertrain arrangement in which the engine sat slightly to one side with the gearbox in parallel, connected by a chain drive. This brilliant piece of packaging liberated enough interior space for a third person to sit behind the front passenger in a car 18 inches shorter than a P6 saloon.

A make-do-and-mend running prototype was



ready to go by 1967, using various borrowed parts including P6 rear suspension and a Vauxhall Viva steering rack, all bolted to a butchered P6 base unit. Since the styling department was busy on other projects, engineer King designed the bodywork himself, a trick he would later repeat with great success for the first Range Rover.

Now codenamed P6BS (because it was P6-based, had a Buick engine, and was a sports car), the lone engineering car started testing at MIRA,

but the project still lacked a firm commitment from management. In fact, the P6BS seemed to be regarded as more of an amusing experiment, something underlined in March 1968 when Rover's masters at Leyland decided to show it off at the New York motor show, labelled as the Leyland Eight GE (Group Experimental). Just before the trip to America it had been lent to *Motor* magazine, which spoke in glowing terms about its abilities. Yet it was referred to throughout as the 'Leyland Rover BS experimental car', cementing the idea that this was little more than a 'what if?' exercise.

In 1969, however, the project gained a fresh lease of life, earning a new codename – P9 – and some proper time in the design studio, during which it became larger and more muscular-looking, though no less appealing. However, just as it seemed the Rover sports car might be getting somewhere, it was enveloped by a murky soup of politics, some of which could be traced to the 1968 merger of Rover's owners with great rivals BMH to form British Leyland. Within the unmanageable mass of companies that resulted was Jaguar, and its founder William Lyons didn't like the idea of an in-house sports car that could outpace an E-type.

Rover was already in development hell with the ultimately doomed P8 saloon. Fighting a rear-guard action to save a sports car it hadn't the resources to complete was a battle too far, and the P9 died around the dawn of the '70s. The sole P6BS prototype survives in the British Motor Museum as a sad reminder of what might have been. ❌



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Out of sight

Massive congratulations to the guys and girls at SSC for claiming the world's fastest production car speed record. Watching the footage of a low-drama 330mph run is something special.

But I'm a bit disappointed with what the production car record has become. Back in the day when the fastest road car was an E-type, I still wouldn't have been able to afford one but at least I might know someone who could. Same with AC Cobras and the like.

It all started getting a bit silly when you had to be invited to buy an F40, but Ferrari built plenty of them and by now we've probably all seen some on the roads or more likely at a car show.

More recently, though, the Bugatti Veyron Super Sport? How many of those did they actually build? Not exactly attainable, even for the very rich. And are they really a production car? Same with the new SSC Tuatara. They may be aiming to build 100, but presumably today there's only one.

Maybe I'm just sad that I'll never own one, drive one or probably even see one in the metal. I'm off to look up the fastest front-wheel-drive Nürburgring records instead.

Paul D Brown

Two days later...

All this recent attention that the SSC Tuatara has got online has got me thinking: I love a bit of cheating.

I love the cheating that has always gone on in Formula 1 and motorsport in general. I like the fact that brilliant engineers can come up with such inventive tricks. Toyota's WRC team is still a particular favourite. I'd still love that Celica.



I'm not suggesting that the SSC team have been cheating, by the way. If they have actually built a 330mph car then that's brilliant. If they have got a bit of an error, or a small margin of tolerance in their GPS, and they've only managed 280 or so, that's still a pretty fantastic achievement.

It reminds me of stories I've heard over the years about how American car companies were substituting full NASCAR motors in their new production cars before the road testers took them to the drag strip, or back when the MG Maestro was faster than a Golf GTI, only for all of the press cars to later blow up as maybe they'd had the wick on their turbos turned up a bit too much. 'Special' tyres, blueprinted engines, E85 or nitromethane in the tank... keep it up.

Hopefully – whatever powers the next generation of fastest production or race cars – we will never stop with the fun and games.

Paul D Brown (again)

More EVs in evo!

Just started reading *evo* 279. It might have taken a time to ship overseas, but a strange absence of anything electric, save for a lone Hyundai Kona advertisement and a half Porsche Taycan in one of the pics, makes the issue feel as if it's from the last decade. Keep the petrol flowing, I salute that, but don't ignore the times we live in. You can do better!

I have sampled the Taycan and can easily say that it is a much better proposition for the target audience than the Panamera or an Audi RS7. None of these cars is particularly suited to track duties, none travels continents on a regular



LETTER OF THE MONTH

Power point

IN ADAM TOWLER'S REVIEW OF THE FERRARI 812 GTS

(*evo* 280) he was incredulous that the 6.5-litre motor could have the same 'feral' top-end rush that a Honda K20 can achieve.

I would have thought the physics are very similar in both remarkable engines. The Honda 2.2-litre H22A1 engine from the early '90s Prelude was redlined at 8600rpm and with a cylinder capacity of 539.25cc is directly comparable with the Ferrari's 541cc. I would consider that the main restrictions on rpm would be reciprocating mass, and with almost 30 years' more development the pistons, conrods and valve gear in the Ferrari should be at least as capable of achieving the same loads as those of the Honda.

Interestingly, it is my understanding that cylinders of around 500cc tend to offer the best brake mean effective pressure and this ensures good potential horsepower, torque and – dare I say it? – economy. This would be born out by the widespread use of 2-litre four-cylinder engines and why everyone from Mercedes to McLaren has a 4-litre V8 in their line-up. It is also, I would imagine, why BMW's modular engine range goes from 1.5-litre three-pots to 3-litre six-cylinder units.

Where this leaves the 3.9-litre V12 for Gordon Murray's T.50 I'm not sure, but as the guys at Cosworth are a damn sight more clever than I am, hopefully it won't be one of those engines that has to be constantly on the boil to be interesting.

Chris Stacey

The Letter of the Month wins a Straton watch

The writer of this month's star letter receives a Straton Classic Driver chronograph worth £225.

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basis, but when in its natural habitat – on the city street, often close to the home base – the Taycan excels. Vibration-free drivetrain, always 100 per cent power available at a firm arch of the right foot, and let's be realistic: for the target audience it is rarely the only car they own and the availability of personal parking with a charger outlet is similarly a non-problem.

I'm not alone in this thinking. Recent Porsche US sales stats show this incredibly well, with Taycan outselling Panamera 2 to 1.

Reinis Cakuls

Under the influence

I must give a hearty 'thank you' to *evo* and Richard Meaden for the piece on 'Shep' (Life Through a Lens, issue 279). David Shepherd is as modest as they come, and it's a great source of family pride to see this recognition of his talents.

In addition to his professional career spanning three decades, David is also my uncle and has been my primary petrolhead influence since the early '90s. Not every child of that era regularly received car posters (a Ferrari F355, J Plato & A Menu in respective yellow Williams-Renault Lagunas), die-cast models, or had a willing adult capable of playing 1-v-1 races on *Colin McRae Rally* on the PlayStation 1.

Nor did they have a steady source of exciting cars to experience: traffic-light getaways in a WRX STI around Clapham pre-Congestion Charge, peeling my eyelids back in a Caterham Seven (normal speeds, just no windscreen), or his Mk2 Focus RS with aftermarket Mountune kit. That last one was responsible for accidentally scaring old ladies around Newbury with the 'spirited' blow-off valve, and was subsequently reviewed in *evo* by Mr Meaden – mainly on three wheels.

Reminiscing aside, all this got me thinking about how both professional car photographers and family members alike can uniquely light the petrolhead flame in young minds, and for that you have our utmost appreciation.

When we're all fed up with screens and socials, it remains special to bury your head in a good car mag and feel like an excited sprog again.

Keep up the stellar work!

Adam Thompson

Manual man

Volkswagen has just lost a customer. I have had a Mk5 Golf GTI, a Mk5 Golf GTI Edition 30 and for the last five years a Golf R. I would have changed the R as I never usually keep a car this long, but there hasn't been anything else I wanted. So I have been waiting for the Mk8 R.

So when I read there will be no manual transmission available it upset me as much as finding out there would be no estate version of the Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio – another car I would have bought if it existed.

VW has been quoted as claiming that there is no interest in a manual transmission among Golf R buyers. Well, they didn't ask me!

Alun Pearson

Wagon's role

I'm writing in response to Stuart Gallagher's question in his RS7 v M8 Fast Fleet report (*evo* 280), namely 'Does anyone actually carry a dog in their RS6?'

I can't afford an RS6 but do have a BMW 335d M Performance Touring and I do carry the dog in the back – or a road bike, snowboards or even body boards for Cornwall.

This is my second estate. After a driving career never having any desire



for one, I got to 40 and suddenly would never have a saloon again. As most (boomers?) seem to agree, estates fit family life so well and also look much better resolved and proportioned when designed carefully.

Not sure the spaniel appreciates the limpet-like grip round the corners, but I guess that's why they put hooks in the boot to hold stuff down...

Elliott Harley

'Exceptional'

I haven't had cause to look in The Knowledge for a while, but my interest was piqued in issue 280 by the warning in Contents.

A quick scan of The Knowledge section showed nearly all the cars listed have four or five stars, with practically nothing scoring below three. And then there she was, standing proud: the Mitsubishi 3000GT with just one star – which finally proves it's an exceptional car!

It's also interesting to note that, after the months of derogatory comments, the lack of an issue reference on the GT's entry suggests **evo** has never even tested the thing!

Alex Chester

PS: 100 per cent agree with Stuart's Ed Speak piece on Lewis Hamilton. It's a shame people prefer to denigrate his incredible achievements rather than appreciate his rare and special talents.

Hooey Lewis

In response to Stuart Gallagher's opinion on Lewis Hamilton being instrumental in helping build a successful F1 team I have to agree – but! He is in no way to be considered a sportsman in the way we regard such legends as Jackie Stewart and Stirling Moss, to name but two.

Hamilton may well be at the top of his game but he must remember

that the game is F1 and not politics, and that the fans are the ones who support him while he so frequently snubs them. He may be successful at winning F1 titles, but the titles of 'gentleman' or 'sportsman' are two he may never earn.

Craig Muir, Kirkwall

Hidden gem

The link between the Mk3 Toyota MR2 and the styling of the GMA T.50 (Inbox, **evo** 279) is intriguing. Even more intriguing is how the relentless pursuit of bhp is pushing previously rated cars to the point of obscurity, smothered by a potent cloud of crackle maps and upshift farts.

The humble Mk3 MR2 is a case in point: midship engine, manual 'box, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip diff, a tight chassis with more to give than what the engine asks of it, no traction or stability aids, and delivered with a sense of purpose not often encountered in mass-produced cars. (Who needs luggage space?) And all of this could now be yours for the price of a fridge.

Some past masters were destined for greatness, such was their contribution to the cause. Yet for every one of these heroes how many more hidden gems will be forever relegated to the vaults?

Andrew Brockett

Prayers answered

Three cylinders, light, (relatively) cheap, manual 'box, grippy tyres and great suspension, you say? All your Christmases have come at once James Bowen (Inbox, **evo** 280). Hello, Toyota GR Yaris! I assume you've put your money where your mouth is already? Enjoy. It's a car the likes of which we probably won't see again.

Neil Latham, Coventry

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RICHARD MEADEN

BEVs may herald the sound of silence, but that brings with it a unique advantage



CONFESSION TIME. I HAVE CHOSEN CARS ON the quality of their hi-fi. Actually that's not quite true. I've never purchased a car on the strength of its sound system, but I have definitely been swayed by the quality of a car's stereo. Especially when it comes to choosing a long-term test car or deciding which group test contender I want to take for the long drive home.

You might expect a horny-handed son of coilovers to always pick bhp over watts-per-channel, and Side Slip Control over subwoofers, but I've always felt that the combination of the right tune through a great in-car hi-fi can elevate any driving experience to something very special indeed.

Sometimes it elevates your speed, too. I recall a moment from my distant youth, when a piercing siren and flashing blue lights added an uncannily rave-like but ultimately unwelcome dimension to my spirited enjoyment of The Prodigy's *Their Law* while travelling at 102mph down the M40 in an E38 740i BMW. On my subsequent appearance in Banbury Magistrates' Court, when asked if I'd like anything to be taken into consideration, I decided against claiming it was Liam Howlett wot made me do it, and instead passed them a begging letter from my editor. I took the six points and drove home to the soothing tones of Radio 3.

Increased listening pleasure is one of the few upsides I can see to the proposed shift to BEVs, as their inherent lack of mechanical noise will focus engineers on ever-better ways of suppressing those unwanted sounds that persist. With little or no wind noise, comprehensively muffled motor whine and – I'm hoping – wheelarch liners that don't sound like you've tipped a bucket of pebbles into a tumble drier when you drive over loose chippings, our cars could be the perfect soundstage in which to enjoy music. Just as there have been huge advances in the definition of our televisions, so there are potentially game-changing technologies being developed for in-car entertainment systems. Not only via speaker technology and sound processors, but also via new recording formats and streaming partnerships that promise truly immersive sound.

If you're old enough to feel a frisson of excitement at the memory of breaking the gold seal on a Maxell XLII 'metal' cassette tape, or still wonder how the hiss-reducing Dolby button worked,

then you'll know massaged sound is nothing new. One radical concept is the speakerless 3D sound system being developed by Sennheiser and Continental. Branded 'Ambeo', the Ac2ated Sound technology vibrates surfaces inside the vehicle to produce sound instead of using conventional speakers. I have some experience of what I like to think inspired this concept. Being married to a former editor of *Max Power* means I've heard systems that not only vibrate the interior of the car they're fitted to, but those of the cars around them, along with your internal organs.

Unlike Mrs Meaden's tricked-out Peugeot 205, which had its brittle plastic trim pummelled by shock waves pulsing from a dustbin-sized subwoofer, Ambeo uses special actuators to excite specific surfaces, such as the A-pillar trim, door panels, roof lining

and rear shelf, so they emit sound at different frequencies. The theory is that because the car's interior effectively is the speaker, you're entirely enveloped in the sound. Another upside is because there aren't any speakers in the traditional sense there's no need for speaker enclosures, so the system is incredibly space-efficient. It's also much lighter. Two important benefits when you consider the struggles engineers face in both packaging and in reducing the mass of inherently heavy BEVs.

Another system of note is Sony's 360 Reality Audio. The Japanese tech giant has been cagey about the details, but it features 33 speakers,

some of which are believed to use a mix of conventional speakers and actuated panel tech not dissimilar to the Ambeo system. It also promises sound engineered in a way that maps the listening environment and positions vocals, individual instruments and even the sound from a live audience anywhere inside a 360-degree spherical space.

A prototype version of the system was incorporated into Sony's impressive Vision-S BEV concept car, shown at 2020's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. This would suggest the revolution is coming to production cars. The question is when.

It's all a far cry from screwing a pair of Goodmans speakers to the parcel shelf or filling your autochanger with half a dozen CDs. I'm more technophobe than technophile, but even I'm excited about just how rich, detailed, immersive and experiential good music will sound in the not-too-distant future. The Thrill of Listening? You heard it here first.

'Increased listening pleasure is one of the few upsides I can see to the proposed shift to BEVs'

@DickieMeaden

Richard is a contributing editor to **evo** and one of the magazine's founding team

TAMING THE BEAST



Introducing EBC Brakes Racing's two-piece fully floating disc conversion for the Lamborghini Gallardo and Audi R8.

KEY FEATURES

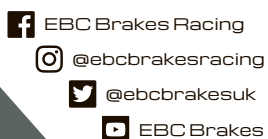
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RICHARD PORTER

Look beyond the obvious and the Land Rover Discovery has an appealing skill set

THE CURRENT LAND ROVER DISCOVERY IS ONE of those cars defined in the popular imagination by one thing: it has a wonky arse. Last summer I told a mate I'd borrowed one for a week away and his first response was, 'Has it still got a wonky arse?' Then, while I had it, I dropped in on another friend who approached it from the front with the words, 'Oh wait, is this the one with the wonky arse?'

It doesn't matter what the Discovery does or achieves in its life, it's like that kid in the year below at school who got famed for soiling himself on a school trip to Alton Towers.

'Did you hear about Paul Liversedge from school? He's become an emeritus professor of oncology at Harvard and just won the Nobel Prize for curing all known cancers.'

'What, the kid who shat himself on a rollercoaster?'

So it is with the current Discovery. Overshadowed by the new Defender and various glamour puss Range Rovers, and forever known as that car with the wonky arse. Which is a shame because after a week away in one I've become very, very fond of it.

There are various reasons to admire this car, especially when viewed through the lens of a family holiday in which the sink we packed still had the rest of the kitchen attached to it. Our kids travel with a surprising number of things for people so small, some of it relating to their ages and some to their desire to take a full dayglo plastic facsimile of a *Time Team* excavation kit to the beach. So we require space. And, because we have a large dog, more space on top of that. The Discovery has it, especially if you're not using the third row of chairs, which retract neatly into the floor.

The other thing I like about this Land Rover is that it's glassy, so the whole inside feels light and spacious, even when 80 per cent of the stuff from our house is now inside it. Oh, and you can drop the air suspension using buttons in the boot, which I'd found inexplicable at first, before I'd tried to get a slobbering mutt with a gammy back leg to leap inside. Now I understand.

So it's a car that's very fit for purpose, especially if your purpose is a family holiday to a part of East Anglia that is, as turns out, so thick with out-of-towners in Land Rovers that it

looks like a Boden advert. But it's not the room or the ambience or the remote curtsy function that won me over with the Discovery, nor indeed its ability to blend into an environment full of people in quilted jackets loudly shouting, 'I've *told* you Raffy, you can have your millefeuille later...' No, it's what happened on the last night of our holiday.

On the way home we'd stopped to see some friends not far from where we'd been staying, everyone was having a nice time, our kids were playing happily together, we stayed a lot longer than intended. You know the drill. So it was dark by the time we set off. The kids, exhausted but happy, started to doze in the back. My wife was doing likewise in the front passenger seat. The dog curled up on a towel in the boot, her presence signalled

only by an occasional whiff of damp hound since earlier in the evening she'd jumped into a stagnant pond, which seemed to make her the happiest family member of all because she is a dog and also an idiot.

Up front, fuelled by a punchy coffee and a firm desire to get the things I love most back to London in one piece, I wound the Discovery towards the A11. It's not a sports car, but there's enough accuracy in all the controls that you can drive it briskly. More importantly when you've got semi-sleeping humans on board, you can drive it smoothly. With a gentle touch this chunky bus will swoop across the

countryside feeling imperious and purposeful.

As we finally got onto the dual carriageway the rain came, great sheets of it sweeping across the East Anglian flats and spattering off the slick tarmac ahead. The Discovery felt unfazed, trucking onwards, wipers swashing, tyres hissing gently over the wet surface. The interior a cosy bubble, feeling safe and warm against the summer storm outside.

On we went, the car hunkering down squat to the sodden road as we flashed across the landscape, towns and villages and remote farms twinkling in the inky distance until at last the city hove into view and a short while later we turned into our street. The rest of the car woke up and stretched, and I sighed with satisfaction behind the big tiller steering wheel, full of love for the big old Discovery and its stupid, wonky arse.

It's a very good family car, no doubt about that. But sometimes the best car in the world is simply the one that gets you home.

'Driven with a gentle touch this chunky bus will swoop across the countryside feeling imperious'

@sniffpetrol

Richard is an author, broadcaster and award-winning writer of short autobiographies



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JETHRO BOVINGDON

If manufacturers aren't careful we could see the end of the very cars we love

EVO SHOULD ALWAYS BE A CELEBRATION OF the best performance cars past and present. We should interrogate and question, of course, but this magazine is one of the last safe sanctuaries for those of us who love cars. A place to dream and revel in all the magic stuff you can't define by merely writing out a spec. In a world of CCTV surveillance, dash cams, average speed cameras, speed limiters and technology created by car companies with the sole purpose of removing the driver from the equation (which is pretty odd, when you think about it), *evo* is the car park at the Nürburgring. Eclectic, welcoming, buzzing with activity and with a frisson of danger just for good measure.

It's a bubble of which I'm very fond. And so I always hesitate to jump on the 'too fast for the road' bandwagon in this safe haven. That's for other people to debate. Of course, I'm not some sort of flat-earth denier. Cars *are* too fast for the road. Not just supercars or sports cars, supersaloons or hyperhatches. Just generally. Modern tyre tech, stability systems and suspension technology allows even a complete novice to drive very, very quickly should they be of a mind to do so. Even in, say, a mid-level Focus. Up the ante to a Golf R for example, and the momentum involved starts to get scary.

It's hard to pinpoint exactly when cars became too fast, but if I had to 'blame' any single car for the exponential ramp-up in accessible performance it would have to be the Nissan GT-R. I remember vividly the first time I tried Nissan's new monster and the shock at what it could do. The way the digital boost gauge didn't even flicker from its maximum between gearchanges, the speed it could change direction and the outrageous blend of control, balance and grip. It wasn't so much the ultimate potential that was mind-blowing (although it was extraordinary), but the fact that Nissan had found a way to unlock everything it had to give in almost any situation. Not only did it rewrite the rules to the game, it forced everyone to play catch-up. The new normal was beyond what before had been considered other-worldly.

Which is how we find ourselves here. Gazing upon a line-up of road cars that have simply stupendous abilities and – I'm not going to lie – offer extreme excitement. There's an old cliché that driving a slow car fast is more fun than driving a fast car slow.

Which is true. But driving a fast car fast is something else entirely. It's not OK to say it, but... driving these cutting-edge cars as fast as your talent allows is lots and lots and lots of fun. Sustainable? Nope. Responsible? That depends on the circumstances. But I defy anyone given the key to anything from an AMG A45 S to a Ferrari F8 Tributo on a fabulous and empty stretch of road to tell me they'd get a bigger thrill in Car X with 100bhp and remoulds.

So yes, cars are too fast for the road. I suspect that's a forever thing now. What's occupying my mind is whether the latest breed of supercars in particular are simply too fast to responsibly sell to human beings. The issue crystallised during a run to the petrol station on this year's eCoty. Me in a Lamborghini Huracán Evo RWD, followed by Dickie Meaden in the McLaren 765LT. Way

back when (and maybe in another country with less licence-losing potential) this would have been one of *those* drives. The ones you get to the end of and pray to God nobody saw, heard or recorded what had just unfolded. In these cars? Mostly lifting the throttle to avoid breaking the sound barrier, punctuated by a few frenzied corners pushing into their vast reserves of composure. The Lambo was sensational and made me feel heroic, scared and amazed all at the same time. But I doubt I used more than 5500rpm. The LT? It is a whole new level again, so I assume Dickie didn't even bother flicking a paddle himself.

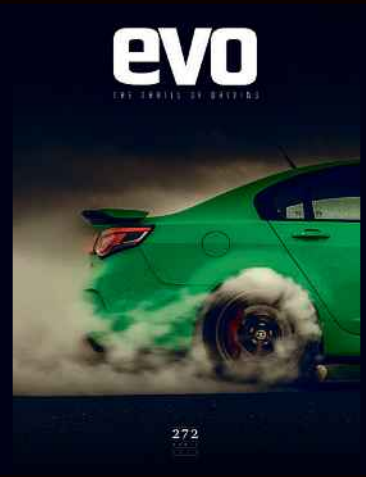
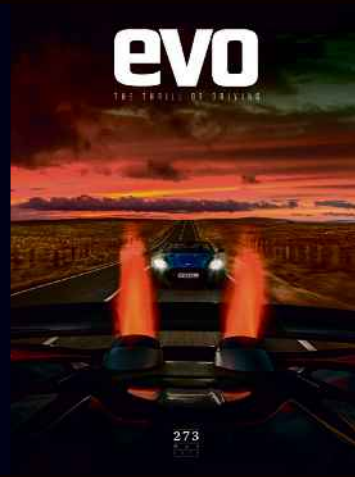
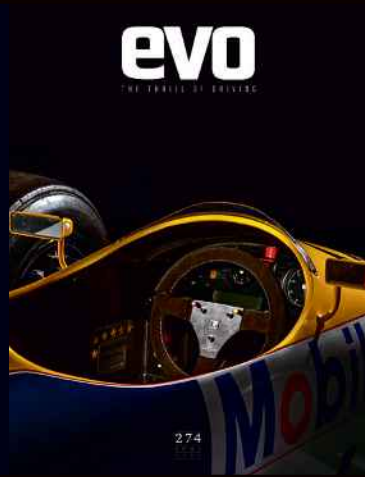
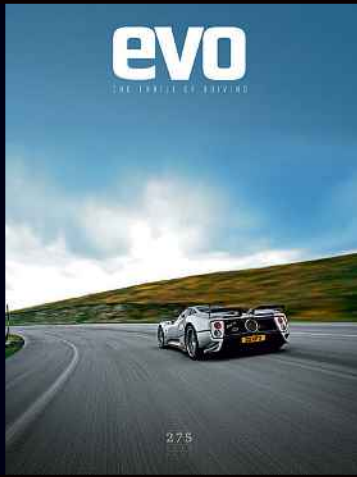
However, I did take a friend of the mag out in the 765LT and for a few seconds let rip on an empty moorland road. The passenger, well versed in these sorts of cars, went very quiet before blurting out, 'Jesus, it makes the Speciale feel like a 2.7-litre Cayman.' Just think about that for a second. The Speciale is a 597bhp track-focused supercar. And he's right. And how do you qualify to own a 765LT? Just be rich. Zero talent required. Zero training.

I'm loathed to suggest more personal freedoms are taken from us as consumers and individuals. I adore the 765LT and other cars like it. But sooner rather than later the manufacturers have to exercise some restraint before somebody steps in and legislates far more drastic measures that could literally end the production of the sorts of cars we celebrate right here. The scary part? Supercars are built in tiny numbers. A blip. With the rapid pace of EV tech and the race to 1000bhp everyday saloons and SUVs, this problem is only going to get bigger, heavier and evermore out of control.

'How do you qualify to own a McLaren 765LT? Just be rich. Zero talent required. Zero training'

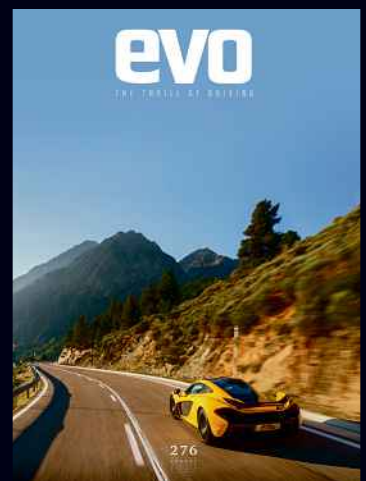
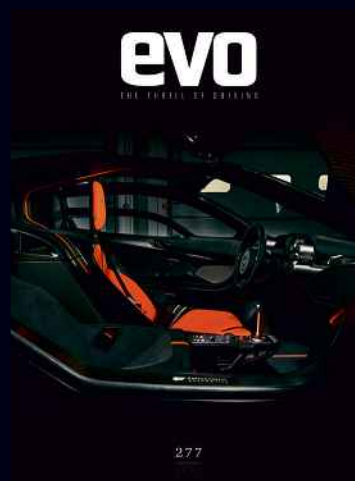
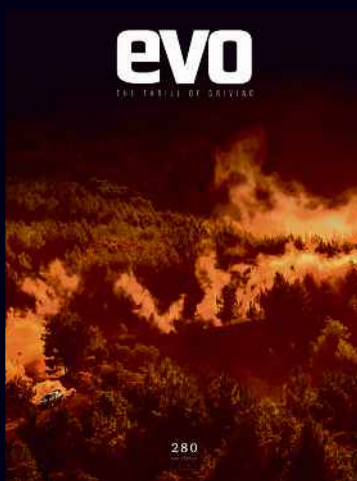
@JethroBovingdon

Jethro has been writing for *evo* for nearly two decades and is a host on *Top Gear America*



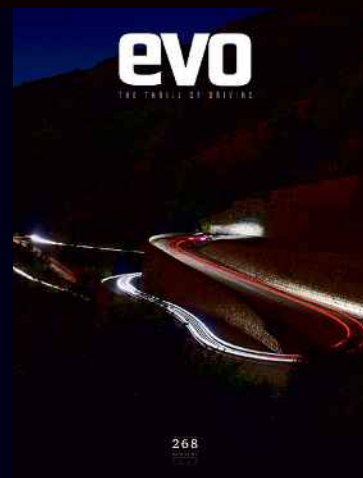
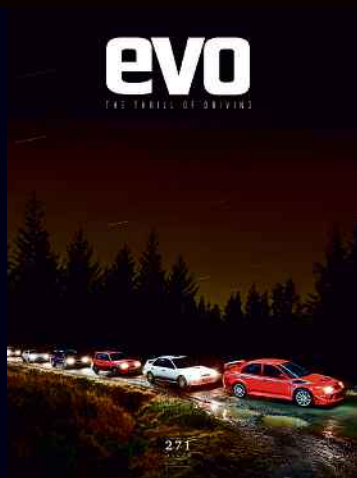
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BYE CAR OF
THE YEAR
2020

CAR OF



THE YEAR

INTRODUCTION BY STUART GALLAGHER PHOTOGRAPHY BY ASTON PARROTT



These are the 16 best new performance cars of the last 12 months, but which is the very best of them all? Over two weeks of rigorous testing on road and track, we'll find out, as we hone in on evo's 2020 Car of the Year

BY CAR OF
THE YEAR
2020





THE ECOTY FORMAT IS A SIMPLE ONE: PULL

together the most exciting, thrilling, engaging, surprising and entertaining performance cars we have driven over the last 12 months and pick a winner.

The eCoty format is a minefield: try to pull together the most exciting, engaging, surprising and entertaining performance cars of the last 12 months and hope they are available when we need them, they turn up and don't break down, and they live up to the hype and promise to warrant their inclusion.

Despite all that 2020 has thrown at us, this year's eCoty format is very much the former. All but one car on our wish list was available (the AMG GT R Black Series couldn't be extracted from Germany in time), our chosen destinations could accommodate us, and the diaries of our judges played ball, too.

From Ariel's Nomad R to Toyota's GR Yaris, the mix is one of the widest we've seen for some time. Sixteen cars from five different countries. Only three have naturally aspirated engines (two of which are identical), six require you to change gear yourself and one has a sequential shift. Nine are rear-wheel drive, a handful have two driven axles. And there's one SUV... Sorry, a what? It's only the second time in eCoty history that an SUV has made it in (the first when Porsche's Cayenne launched), and the DBX is here because Audi's RS supersaloons – the RS7 in this case – need to work for their hero worship.

There are five supercars in the guise of the 911 Turbo, McLaren 765LT, the rear-wheel-drive Lamborghini Huracán Evo and Audi R8, and Ferrari's F8 Tributo. We've three hot hatches (Golf GTI, Civic Type R and the Yaris), a diverse set of sports cars (Morgan Plus Four, Cayman GTS and Alpine A110S) and a saloon-cum-coupe (BMW M2 CS) that sits somewhere in there, too. And then there's a glorious Bentley Continental GT V8, the most opulent way you can enjoy the thrill of driving.

For 2020 we've retained a track element to eCoty, not to find the fastest around Anglesey's magnificent coastal circuit, rather because it's the perfect playground to exploit each car's performance, enabling the judges to form clear conclusions alongside their road driving impressions. We've split this initial week of track work into a number of twin and triple tests, not necessarily to pit rivals against each other in a straight fight, but to allow us to present the full flavour of 2020's performance car tasting menu.

We'll then take the eight best cars from **evo**'s second home in north Wales to its third: the Scottish Borders. The venue for 2018's eCoty and plenty of single and multi-car tests since, the roads that run east to west across Scotland's border with England are some of the toughest you can encounter in Europe, delivering every type of permutation you can wish for.

Those casting the votes are your tried and tested panel of eCoty veterans. **evo** founders Dickie Meaden and John Barker head the roster, with old boys Jethro Bovingdon, Henry Catchpole and yours truly filling in the middle. And, of course, there's **evo**'s deputy editor, Adam Towler, who will take you on the remarkable week-long Scottish journey towards finding our winner.

So pour yourself a large one, make yourself comfortable and enjoy 2020 **evo** Car of the Year.

MORGAN PLUS FOUR

Engine	In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbo
Power	255bhp @ 5500rpm
Torque	258lb ft @ 1000-5000rpm
Weight	1013kg (dry)
Power-to-weight	256bhp/ton (dry)
0-62mph	5.2sec
Top speed	149mph
Basic price	£62,995

**'THE PLUS FOUR
IS A UNIQUE
AND THRILLING
EXPERIENCE'**
— EVO 279



AUDI RS7 SPORTBACK

Engine	V8, 3996cc, twin-turbo
Power	592bhp @ 6000-6250rpm
Torque	590lb ft @ 2050-4500rpm
Weight	2065kg
Power-to-weight	291bhp/ton
0-62mph	3.6sec
Top speed	155mph (limited)
Basic price	£98,590

**'IT ALWAYS SEEMS
TO HAVE ANOTHER
LEVEL YOU CAN
PUSH INTO'**
— EVO 277



THE JUDGES



EDITOR

STUART GALLAGHER

Pulled his index finger out of its socket and forgot his luggage and credit card in week one of eCoty. Week two went better. Third year on the bounce he hasn't delegated the writing of these biogs.



DEPUTY EDITOR

ADAM TOWLER

Failed again in his attempt to get the Gen2 996 Series Porsche 911 Carrera and Peugeot 205 GTI included in eCoty. He has, however, written a brilliant account of the Scottish leg of eCoty 2020.



CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

RICHARD MEADEN

If you own shares in a tyre company you'll love Dickie. If you run a press fleet and have to budget for tyres you'll hate Dickie. We're just fortunate that Dickie allows us to call and request more tyres.

LAMBORGHINI HURACÁN EVO RWD

Engine	V10, 5204cc
Power	602bhp @ 8000rpm
Torque	413lb ft @ 6500rpm
Weight	1389kg (dry)
Power-to-weight	440bhp/ton (dry)
0-62mph	3.3sec
Top speed	202mph
Basic price	£164,400

**'IT'S BRIMMING
WITH CHARACTER,
PERFORMANCE
AND ENGAGEMENT'**
— EVO 276



BMW M2 CS

Engine	In-line 6-cyl, 2979cc, twin-turbo
Power	444bhp @ 6250rpm
Torque	406lb ft @ 2350-5500rpm
Weight	1550kg
Power-to-weight	291bhp/ton
0-62mph	4.2sec
Top speed	174mph (limited)
Basic price	£75,355

**'THE M2 CS IS ONE
OF THOSE CARS
THAT ENRICHES
YOUR SOUL'**
— EVO 277



CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
JOHN BARKER

He's been there and done that and isn't fazed by the latest and supposedly greatest new models until they have proven themselves on road and track. Always knows the fastest route to the hotel.



CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
JETHRO BOVINGDON

Note to subs: We agreed not to mention on-set make-up, trailers, riders and portable toilets in Jethro's profile, so can you write something nice about Top Gear America's third presenter here? Thanks.



CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
HENRY CATCHPOLE

Softly spoken, mild mannered, impeccably polite and a role model to all of us as to how we should behave in public. Unfortunately we're always too busy throwing stones at a rock to notice.

HONDA CIVIC TYPE R

Engine	In-line 4-cyl, 1996cc, turbo
Power	316bhp @ 6500rpm
Torque	295lb ft @ 2500-4500rpm
Weight	1380kg
Power-to-weight	233bhp/ton
0-62mph	5.8sec
Top speed	168mph
Basic price	£32,820

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

— EVO 280



McLAREN 765LT

Engine	V8, 3994cc, twin-turbo
Power	754bhp @ 7500rpm
Torque	590lb ft @ 5500rpm
Weight	1339kg
Power-to-weight	572bhp/ton
0-62mph	2.8sec
Top speed	205mph
Basic price	£280,000

**'McLAREN HAS MADE
A 754BHP MONSTER
FEEL ENTIRELY
CONTROLLABLE'**

— EVO 279



ARIEL NOMAD R

Engine	In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, supercharger
Power	335bhp @ 7600rpm
Torque	243lb ft @ 5550rpm
Weight	6700kg
Power-to-weight	c486bhp/ton
0-60mph	2.9sec
Top speed	134mph
Basic price	£77,400

**'THE NOMAD R
TEARS AROUND
LIKE A SCALED-UP
TAMIYA RC CAR'
— EVO 278**



PORSCHE 911 TURBO S

Engine	Flat-six, 3745cc, twin-turbo
Power	641bhp @ 6750rpm
Torque	590lb ft @ 2500-4000rpm
Weight	1640kg
Power-to-weight	397bhp/ton
0-62mph	2.7sec
Top speed	205mph
Basic price	£155,970

**'IT WILL ATTACK
A SEQUENCE OF
CORNERS WITH MORE
THAN A HINT OF GT2'
— EVO 276**



EVO CAR OF
THE YEAR
2020

ALPINE A110S

Engine	In-line 4-cyl, 1798cc, turbo
Power	288bhp @ 6400rpm
Torque	236lb ft @ 2000-6400rpm
Weight	1114kg
Power-to-weight	263bhp/ton
0-62mph	4.4sec
Top speed	161mph
Basic price	£57,140

**'IT'S EXHILARATING
TO THREAD IT
ALONG, FEELING IT
UP ON ITS TIPTOES'**
— EVO 276



ASTON MARTIN DBX

Engine	V8, 3982cc, twin-turbo
Power	542bhp @ 6500rpm
Torque	516lb ft @ 2200-5000rpm
Weight	2245kg
Power-to-weight	245bhp/ton
0-62mph	4.5sec
Top speed	181mph
Basic price	£161,500

**'THE DBX HAS MORE
CHARACTER AND
PERSONALITY THAN
ANY OF ITS RIVALS'**
— EVO 277





PORSCHE 718 CAYMAN GTS 4.0

Engine	Flat-six, 3995cc
Power	394bhp @ 7000rpm
Torque	310lb ft @ 5000-6500rpm
Weight	1405kg
Power-to-weight	285bhp/ton
0-62mph	4.5sec
Top speed	182mph
Basic price	£64,480

**'THE 4.0 IS A CAR
THAT MAKES US
QUESTION THE
NEED FOR A GT4'**
— EVO 273



FERRARI F8 TRIBUTO

Engine	V8, 3902cc, twin-turbo
Power	710bhp @ 7000rpm
Torque	568lb ft @ 3250rpm
Weight	1435kg
Power-to-weight	503bhp/ton
0-62mph	2.9sec
Top speed	211mph
Basic price	£203,000

**'THE TRIBUTO IS
FERRARI'S BEST
SERIES-PRODUCTION
V8 MODEL EVER'**
— EVO 266

EVO CAR OF
THE YEAR
2020

BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GT V8

Engine	V8, 3993cc, twin-turbo
Power	542bhp @ 6000rpm
Torque	568lb ft @ 2000-4000rpm
Weight	2165kg
Power-to-weight	254bhp/ton
0-62mph	4.0sec
Top speed	198mph
Basic price	£151,800

**'THE CONTI EXCELS
AT PUTTING ITS
FULL FORCE DOWN
INTO THE ROAD'**
— EVO 280



AUDI R8 V10 RWD

Engine	V10, 5204cc
Power	533bhp @ 7900rpm
Torque	398lb ft @ 6400rpm
Weight	1595kg
Power-to-weight	340bhp/ton
0-62mph	3.7sec
Top speed	199mph
Basic price	£117,325

**'IN AN INSTANT
YOU'RE CAUGHT IN
A HURRICANE OF
V10 FURY'**
— EVO 280



TOYOTA GR YARIS

Engine	In-line 3-cyl, 1618cc, turbo
Power	257bhp @ 6500rpm
Torque	265lb ft @ 3000-4600rpm
Weight	1280kg
Power-to-weight	204bhp/ton
0-62mph	5.5sec
Top speed	142mph (limited)
Basic price	£29,995

**'YOU'LL STRUGGLE
NOT TO DRIVE THE
GR YARIS FLAT OUT
EVERYWHERE'**
— EVO.CO.UK



VOLKSWAGEN GOLF GTI

Engine	In-line 4-cyl, 1984cc, turbo
Power	242bhp @ 5000-6500rpm
Torque	273lb ft @ 1600-4300rpm
Weight	1354kg
Power-to-weight	182bhp/ton
0-62mph	6.4sec
Top speed	155mph (limited)
Basic price	£33,460

**'THE GTI DEVOURS
THE TOUGHEST OF
B-ROADS, ITS PACE
FORMIDABLE'**
— EVO 279



BYO CAR OF
THE YEAR
2020

PHOTOGRAPHY *by* ASTON PARROTT & ANDY MORGAN

PART ONE:



ANGLESEY

You've met our 16 contenders, but only half can progress to the final for a shot at the eCoty title. Laps at Anglesey Circuit and miles on the testing Welsh roads nearby will identify those that make the grade



ARIEL NOMAD R & ASTON MARTIN DBX

They're like nothing else at this year's eCoty, so can their unique abilities and appeal see them make their way through to the second round? **Henry Catchpole** finds out





THEIR MANUFACTURERS BOTH BEGIN WITH A.

They both... um... have steering wheels? This is definitely the 'odd couple' category. Ostensibly you could say that they are both capable of going off road, but in R guise the Nomad really isn't designed for those sorts of shenanigans – tarmac is its territory. So, in terms of compare and contrast, with these two it is more the latter.

Let's start by clambering into the Ariel, which is easier said than done. For something that has no doors or windows it provides a curious puzzle for entry and exit strategies. One leg, bottom, other leg? Two legs, then bottom? Head first? Once you've made it into the one-piece plastic seat (good lateral, no lumbar), you're presented with a screen surrounded by a number of dials, buttons and switches and one big paddle. It has the air of a beautifully engineered race car, but would also make quite a good children's activity centre. The one paddle might seem confusing, but actually it couldn't be more simple – push it away with the back of your fingers to go down a gear, pull it towards you to go up a gear. It's the same gear-changing method as that found in WRC cars.

In the Nomad R the paddle controls a pneumatic shifter on a sequential 'box with straight-cut gears that whine like a heavy-duty drill. Add in the familiar banshee shriek from the supercharger and you have a soundtrack that is every bit as intense as the performance. And boy is it intense.

'It's like a kid on tartrazine,' says Barker. 'The thing pings like a pinball.'

A lap of Anglesey goes by in a blur of screaming acceleration, grip, oversteer and some curious lean angles for a track car. In fact the only time you seem to be able to relax is when it runs out of revs in sixth gear at 135mph with about a third of the oxymoronically curving back straight to go. 'A few flat-out laps and you feel like you've fought with a bear,' says Meaden,

inspecting himself for claw marks before continuing. 'It has the robust integrity of a modern race car. Something that you can thrash the bejesus out of, then park it, lie down in a dark room for half an hour, refuel it and repeat.'

You certainly need more than one session on track to get to grips with the Nomad R, and as with all Ariel's cars you need to do a certain amount to manage the unequal weight distribution in the corners. Helping you is the fact that you can simply flat shift and switch your left foot permanently onto brake pedal duties. This means you have a bit more ability to keep the front tyres nicely loaded and turning.

There is a ton of tacky grip from the Yokohamas, so although you know you've got 335bhp and 243lb ft that should and can unhook the rear tyres with relative ease, initially it still seems to take quite a bit of effort to do so, which feels odd. I think some of this comes from the fact that the car seems to sit into its suspension and find more grip just at the point when you think it might begin to slide. When the oversteer comes it actually does so with some progression, but not necessarily precision, so it feels good to have a bit of space to slide. 'Even when it's oversteering there's enough grip to accelerate it forwards strongly,' notes Barker. Adam Towler just looks stunned and then mutters, 'Manic.'

The reason that it's not going through to the final eight is that all the madness doesn't translate terribly well to the road. It's just too much and, contrary to what you might expect from a Nomad, the suspension feels like it needs the smoothness of a track to really work. Real-world imperfections kick back through the steering like a dog being carried towards the vet's, making it even more of a fight, despite the fact you only ever drive it within the limits of its prodigious grip. Of course, you can try to drive it slowly and simply revel in all the sounds and sensations that it bombards you with at even modest



‘THE DBX HAS A
PRECISION AND
POISE THAT
LEAVES YOU
SCRATCHING
YOUR HEAD’



speeds. But, as Barker points out, eventually that becomes ‘like trying to eat a Fruit Pastille without chewing’.

Park up in the shadow of the DBX, scrabble out like a spider climbing up through a plughole, and then relax as you step into the sumptuous surroundings of the Aston. To be honest, a bum-basic Dacia would feel pretty plush after the Ariel, but the DBX really is a fabulous place to be, with its soft leather and the sense of airiness from the panoramic roof. ‘It’s the best interior of any current Aston,’ reckons Meaden. ‘Cleaner and less try-hard, with an improved sense of quality.’

It certainly doesn’t feel like a track car, and sure enough a couple of corners are really all you need to confirm this opinion. ‘After anything else, not just the Ariel, you feel like you’re driving a double-decker,’ says Barker, ‘from the front seat on the top deck...’

Just occasionally I find the DBX will let me have a bit of a slide, but that seems to be a glitch, because most of the time, even with the ESP supposedly off, it won’t let you cut loose. In fact you’re very aware of the electronics trying to keep everything in check on track because you can feel the front brakes nibbling away through most corners as they try to contain things.

So, in this perplexing pairing, one needs the track to shine and the other definitely doesn’t. Head out onto the road in the DBX and all the reasons that it has found favour come flooding back like a nostalgic smell on the breeze. The way it flows down the bumpiest of B-roads, soaking up the lumps with a lush pliancy, is fantastic. Most SUVs seem to want to pummel a road into submission, but the DBX feels relaxed

and quite light while also delivering accuracy. The steering is surprisingly quick at 14.4:1 and the 48V anti-roll system stops all that travel turning into lean, so you can thread this big car through a set of corners holding a lovely neat line.

‘It has a precision and poise that really does leave you scratching your head at how it does it,’ says Dickie, trying to attack his scalp before realising he’s still wearing his Stilo.

Then there is the engine. ‘If we were putting cars through to the last eight solely on the basis of how they sound,’ says Gallagher, ‘then the DBX would be going to Scotland.’

Not everyone is sold, though. ‘A long time ago I loved this sort of thing,’ reminisces Barker, ‘the absurdity and unexpected performance of a standard-looking 1980s Overfinch Range Rover with its 300bhp, 5.7-litre Chevy V8. But what was once rare and confounding has become the norm and I’ve fallen out of love with the hi-po SUV.’

Oddballs then, the Ariel and Aston, but both undoubtedly desirable and deserving of recognition in eCoty, if not places in the final. In fact, if you had to choose a two-car garage from the 16 contenders, I think you could do a lot worse than to pick this pair. The DBX is the Swiss army knife that can tackle whatever life throws at you on a day-to-day basis while also providing entertainment when the opportunity arises. It could even tow a trailer with the Nomad R on it. The Ariel would then provide the thrills. Bigger thrills than anything else here. Such big thrills that you’d probably need to keep some chainsaws and a blindfold in the boot of the DBX just so you could do some juggling to wind down after a Nomad R track session. Definitely **evo** Crazy of the Year.

Above: Aston Martin’s DBX isn’t a natural on track, but scores highly on the road.

Left: Ariel’s Nomad R is a riot, and about as intense as driving gets

BYD CAR OF
THE YEAR
2020





TOYOTA GR YARIS, VW GOLF GTI & HONDA CIVIC TYPE R

A vintage year for hot hatches sees these three very different examples vying for places in the final. **John Barker** reveals which make it through

VW CAR OF
THE YEAR
2020





‘THE CIVIC
HAS A DEPTH
OF CLASS YOU
DON’T NORMALLY
ASSOCIATE WITH
A HOT HATCH’

UNSURPRISINGLY, THE YARIS ATTRACTS THE most attention among the hatchbacks. Yes, that’s the latest FK8 Civic Type R in Racing Blue and a German-registered, all-new Golf GTI, but will you look at this little Toyota?! We’re lucky it’s here at all. Strings have been pulled, and on day two it rolled into the Anglesey pitlane wearing show plates because there hadn’t been time to register it.

Subaru and Mitsubishi seemed to be delivering rally specials every couple of months when *evo* was born 22 years ago, but it’s been years since we’ve seen a car like the GR Yaris. Arguably, this is more special than any Impreza or Evo because there wasn’t a three-door, four-wheel-drive Yaris until Toyota gave Gazoo Racing the go-ahead to make one.

They haven’t held back. Take the engine, on paper a modest-sounding 1.6-litre in-line triple, but it produces 257bhp, 15bhp more than the Golf’s 2-litre four-cylinder. Then there’s four-wheel drive with selectable torque distribution. The default gives 60:40 front-to-rear, but you can have 50:50 and even 30:70. There’s more. The ‘standard’ £29,995 GR Yaris has open diffs across front and rear, but the £33,495 Circuit Pack model we have here comes with Torsen locking diffs on both axles. It also gets a thicker front anti-roll bar and stiffer front springs to sharpen up front-end response, and the final tweak is forged rims shod with dinky Michelin Pilot Sport 4 S tyres.

That’s a lot of kit packed into a teeny car, and it looks crammed with those wide arches, while up front the vast ‘mouth’ makes it look like it’s swallowed a range cooker.

In the C-segment the Civic Type R continues to justify its controversial Touring Car looks with its driving experience, while at the other end of the styling scale is the Golf. It’s neat, reassuringly consistent, an almost classless car that wouldn’t look out of place on the driveway of a posh hotel or in a muddy Sunday football car park. The downside is that not everyone will recognise that it’s all-new. It’s easy to imagine its designers taking the previous model, nudging the lines around here and there and pressing send. And yet, proving what a thankless task updating an icon is, I find myself mildly offended by the biggest changes, namely the central GTI tailgate lettering (a bit needy) and the gaping black intakes at the front (too much plastic).

They are, however, nothing compared with the eighth-generation Golf’s infuriating HMI (human-machine irritation) that makes everything more awkward, more distracting and less intuitive than it should be. Happily, in other respects the cabin of the Golf is a good place to be. There’s a subtle homage to previous generations in the golf ball-like dimpling of the gearknob, as well as a less subtle homage with the plaid cloth for the fine seats.

A play with the damper settings reveals a car with a greater dynamic bandwidth than ever before, able to deliver great comfort on choppy town roads and crisp track handling. Power and torque have gone up modestly – to 242bhp and 273lb ft – but there’s appreciably more punch, more bite. As is often the case, there’s a defining moment, and for the Golf

EV CAR OF
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it's the demanding left-hander at the top of the circuit. It's an awkward turn, an acute left at the top of a gradient, inviting the lightly loaded inside front wheel to scrabble as you hit the apex on the power. But the Golf is totally unfazed, scribing an impressively smooth line from turn-in to apex to the next turn. Elsewhere it's fast and fail-safe.

'The Mk8 is a brilliant Golf GTI, on a par with the Mk5 in terms of nailing the brief,' says Gallagher. 'It's quick, refined, responsive and communicative: everything you want a Golf GTI to be.'

'It's more of the same, isn't it?' says Catchpole. 'Which is a good thing. You instantly feel comfortable hustling it down the road. It feels slightly more responsive, with a marginally increased sense of connection to the front axle. However, it can't match the Civic's level of tactility.'

He's not wrong. The latest, carefully tweaked Type R is even more capable and finely honed, and also has a remarkable dynamic reach, able to deliver everyday comfort with a precision and capability that exceeds that of the Golf... and most other fast hatches.

It helps that the Honda's high-back seats hold you firm, all the better to appreciate and exploit its astonishing grip and accuracy at the limit. There's terrific punch from the engine, a slick, tactile gearshift and superb brakes, and it all feels so carefully, lovingly polished and blended that you wonder how they do it for the money (£32,820). Value for money isn't a big consideration here but it's interesting that the Civic, Golf and Yaris all cost about the same...

I collar Towler as he returns to the pits in the Honda. He's clearly impressed. 'It has a depth of class you don't normally associate with a hot hatch, doesn't it? Every one of its controls is beautifully wrought and it's properly fast too. In many ways it makes a mockery of the two-seat hot hatch nutters because it seems to offer all they do but with the ease of use of a normal hot hatch. If only it looked better...'

The Civic has wowed Catchpole too, and so far he's only trundled to the pub in it. 'All the control weightings are perfect and the poise of the whole car is evident even at three-tenths. It just felt absolutely spot-on. The gearshift alone almost makes it worthy of a pass through to the final eight.' He pauses. 'But I fear its looks would probably put me off buying one.' You'll be wanting the new small-winged, smaller-wheeled Sport Line version then, Henry.

'I quite like the looks, but then again you can take the boy out of Essex...' grins Gallagher. 'There's an almost Ferrari-like character to its turbocharged four in that it doesn't feel turbocharged at all, which makes exploiting its performance so much more fun and manageable.'

'I always have a bit of a mental block with the Civic, largely, I'm ashamed to say, down to its looks,' says Meaden. 'It needs a farrier to clip and file down all the wings and lumpy "styling" addenda. The irony of the homologation-special Yaris being clean and wingless is not lost on me.'

Indeed, and the closer you get to the funky little Yaris, the more impressive it is. The Impreza and Evo homologation specials sold to rally privateers came with thin plastic steering wheels and poverty-spec seats because they'd be immediately binned, but the GR Yaris isn't like that. The sculpted driver's seat fits like it's been personally tailored, the stitched wheel sits nicely in your hands and an exploratory slot of the gearlever reveals a delicious, weighty, oiled precision.



Not everyone enjoys the rumble of a triple but I'm a sucker for it because to my ears they always sound confidently relaxed, a bit like a flat-six. And even before the Yaris reaches the end of the pitlane it feels like it has been crafted for drivers by drivers. It's there in the smooth, weighty steering, that slick, engineered gearshift and the car's demeanour.

What's also quickly apparent is that the little motor has depth and reach, pulling mightily out of the slower turns with every last ounce of urge in harness and then reaching 7000rpm in short order. This may be the Circuit Pack version but it still feels like a rally car at heart, with a soft front-end response and a fair amount of roll that sees the tail drifting, sometimes under power. Exploiting its attitude and traction takes a little learning but the rewards come thick and fast.

'We've been nagging manufacturers to build a car like the Yaris for what feels like decades and now someone has. I never thought it would be Toyota, though,' says Gallagher. 'The way it launches itself from corner to corner is so reminiscent of those old Scoobys. You find yourself diving deeper and deeper into its ability.'

Meaden is grinning like a loon after nailing the cornering shots. On the damp surface into the fastest turn he's left-foot braking to get the Yaris drifting, while I drive photographer Parrott into the space where the Yaris would be on the normal line.

'I've been so looking forward to driving this that I was a bit concerned it couldn't deliver under such a weight of expectation,' says Dickie. 'Much to my relief it not only looks the part but feels the part. The steering is just quick-witted enough without being stupidly jumpy, and has weight

and clarity that help you build a high-definition picture of how much grip there is and how hard you're leaning on it. And you can make it adopt all kinds of silly angles on track with left-foot braking.

'When you're not trying to slide it around it digs deep for grip and traction but still has a sweeter and more natural balance than any Impreza or Evo. Hats off to Toyota for building a car that's as capable and complete as it is cool and curious.'

'I think I was perhaps hoping for a bit more positivity from the front end, a bit more Mitsubishi Evo,' says Henry. 'But then you trail brake a bit more and get more aggressive with the throttle and you find a more pleasing, rear-biased balance on the way through and out of the corners. It certainly feels short of wheelbase, particularly in the way it really quickly shifts its balance rearwards when you get on the throttle. I think it will be more fun on the road, where you don't tend to commit the front end so much in corners.'

I reckon so too. We're all agreed that it's a shoo-in for the final. And the Civic? That's in too. As Dickie says: 'It's an exceptional driver's car. It has so much raw performance and pace, and yet it also manages to feel special at less than warp speeds. It's unquestionably one of the most exciting front-wheel-drive cars money can buy. It makes the top eight with relative ease.'

What of the Golf, the consummate all-rounder? It doesn't make the cut. 'If this were another magazine's Car of the Year test,' says Henry, 'then I think it would have to be in with a shout at the title because it remains the "safe bet" that manages not to be in any way boring. But here it doesn't quite hit the heights of the others.'

Far left, from top: latest Golf GTI is super-composed, as you'd expect; 4WD GR Yaris is brilliantly playful; updated Civic Type R remains at the top of its game

**'IT'S QUICK,
REFINED,
RESPONSIVE –
EVERYTHING YOU
WANT A GOLF GTI
TO BE'**



AUDI R8 V10 RWD & AUDI RS7 SPORTBACK

Both of these newcomers from Ingolstadt have grabbed our attention during 2020. **John Barker** discovers if they've got enough talent to make the eCoty top-eight cut





5 CAR OF
THE YEAR
2020



‘THE WAY THE
RS7 TURNS IN
IS SURPRISING
FOR A BIG
AUDI’

AUDI IS FIELDING TWO CONTENDERS THIS YEAR, and although they're not far apart in performance, they could hardly be more different. One is a minimalist version of its mid-engined supercar while the other is a five-door 'coupe' incorporating the full contents of Audi's technology toy box.

The R8 V10 RWD uses the tamest version of the venerable 5.2-litre, naturally aspirated V10, delivering 'just' 533bhp to the rear wheels, as its name suggests. Those wheels are 19-inch items and no factory upsizing is offered. You can't add adaptive dampers either, making this the simplest and least expensive but potentially most rewarding R8 in the range.

Meanwhile, the RS7 is on 22-inch wheels (21s are standard) and has four-wheel drive, four-wheel steering, adaptive damping and a turbocharged V8 that pumps out a monster 592bhp and 590lb ft of torque. And that's why despite weighing over two tons, the RS7 hits 62mph from a standstill in just 3.6sec, a tenth faster than the 470kg-lighter R8.

It's not about the numbers, though. Well, apart from the weight, obviously. Yet even that is less of an issue for the RS7 than you'd expect thanks to its rear-steer system, which is much revised versus the previous iteration, now being mapped to respond to developing circumstances.

The RS7 is more impressive than expected, says Henry: 'It's obviously heavy, and that's never a particularly nice feeling on track, but the way it turns in is surprising for a big Audi and there is a genuine adjustability. Drive it with a healthy regard for its limits, particularly on the way into corners, and it can feel quite light on its feet. You can balance it on the throttle really quite subtly at times.'

He's right; the RS7 can be surreally agile. Its eagerness to turn in is uncanny. The front doesn't get overloaded as you might expect with that 4-litre V8 hanging out beyond the front axle and there's even a bit of power oversteer at times. But despite this, the nagging thought is that it's rather like an elephant riding a bicycle: remarkable but pointless.

Dickie isn't won over: 'The agility or lightness of touch seems the result of control weights and rate of response. It's a veneer that's easy to scratch through if you're looking for more depth. It feels like a car that's been pushed beyond its sweet spot by a forfeit of performance. It's bulky. Torque is the dominant force. It makes for impressive acceleration but the powertrain lacks much in the way of nuance or personality.'

Oddly, its engine seems to have a bigger personality on the road, the V8 hauling the RS7 along with a rounded, thunderous rumble. It's very refined too, but there's nothing much coming back through the steering to work with and although the agility is still there, the mass and the sheer scale of the RS7 are inescapable and a bar to exploiting it.

'Like an RS6 on air, this air-sprung RS7 just feels stodgy to me,' says Towler. 'It seems to lean hard on its outer front wheel with a rubbery feeling through the steering. The weight of it soon tells on track too; it couldn't keep the Yaris in sight...'

The dissenting voice is Gallagher's. He reckons that, like the RS6, the RS7 is one of the best all-round supersaloons on the market: 'Others are more powerful, sharper and agile, but the RS7 ticks more boxes and covers more of the required bases when it comes to a do-it-all daily.'

Above left: latest R8 derivative is lighter and rear-drive only – what's not to like?

Left: big and heavy RS7 has defied many an expectation

But it's not enough to save it and it doesn't make the cut. Will the R8

RWD have what it takes? The stripping out of drive to the front has cut weight, and the benefit of this simpler drivetrain is more apparent on track than on road. This R8 drives like it looks, with not much on the front end. Stability control off, on the road you have to work around soft front-end response and then stronger rear grip to get the tail to steer the car. You can get there, but it takes some commitment.

With more room and time, the R8 is much more playful, easily the most approachable of the mid-engined supercars here. It slips into oversteer in a gradual, progressive way, grip at the rear bleeding away gently and slowly so that you have time to wind on the exact amount of opposite lock. It helps that the naturally aspirated V10 delivers exactly what you ask for, allowing you some scope to play the rear angle. Its relatively modest 533bhp is insufficient to smoke the rear Pirellis for the length of the gear through the big right-hander, but if you want to have fun and learn about mid-engined supercar dynamics on track, the R8 RWD will indulge you better than almost anything else I can think of. Trouble is, it's not terribly exciting to look at or be in, especially in this company.

'It's so low key it's almost apologetic by supercar standards,' says Towler. 'Standing next to it, for a moment I was reminded of a slightly bigger Toyota MR2, and then I realised that's absurd seeing as it has exactly the same V10 as the Huracán! But it's so straight-laced. All the joy of a supercar seems to have been forcibly extracted. The interior is a sea of medium grey, like a 15-year old A3, and the gearshift paddles are tiny.'

Meaden concurs: 'The gearshift is a complete non-event, the paddles feeling more like buttons than any meaningful connection to the machine. The steering is a bit dead too, and the engine effective but strangely subdued. Most unexpectedly I didn't think the switch to rear-wheel drive added much in the way of excitement or purity.'

Gallagher agrees: 'The R8 feels inert and flat where the rear-drive Huracán comes alive in your hands, dancing on its Pirellis.'

'Dynamically, where the Lamborghini seems to gain by the removal of the front driveshafts, I think the Audi has suffered,' says Catchpole. 'I drove to Anglesey in the R8 and it was a lovely long-distance companion, but in the same way that the Golf doesn't quite sparkle like the Civic, the Audi lacks the excitement of the Lamborghini. You can't help but feel like you're missing out a bit, particularly given that the Lamborghini in Strada mode is actually capable of playing the subdued supercar rather well.'

'There's a considerable net of understeer that's been dialled in,' says Towler. 'It's as if they've bottled it when they realised it might become a more dynamic driver's car.'

'R8s have never really felt four-wheel drive when you really provoke them,' says Meaden, 'but I expected evidence of a car that had been retuned dynamically. In truth it feels like an R8 that has been compromised rather than enhanced. It's a gauge of this year's group that the R8 feels a bit half-hearted. Not because I want it to be a headbanger, I hasten to add. It just has a bit of a lazy feel.'

'Where's the thrill and involvement? What's the point of a supercar if it doesn't have that?' concludes Towler, while Catchpole says he loves R8s but that this one lacks the memorable magic of the best.

'In the Audi's case, less is sadly less,' says Gallagher. The R8 also misses the cut.

ALPINE A110S & PORSCHE 718 CAYMAN GTS 4.0

Think this pair are both safe bets for passes to the final round?
Henry Catchpole explains why it's not quite that straightforward...





Below: A110S builds upon the already successful A110 recipe, but is its firmer, grippier chassis a benefit or a detriment?

SURELY THE OVERALL WINNER MIGHT COME from this pairing: a car that is billed as an improvement on the 2018 runner-up and a car that is a more affordable version of the 2019 victor. This could be the top two, right here. The Prost v Senna battle at the head of the field.

Certainly the initial impressions are fabulous. The first mile or so in the lightweight Alpine is like an exploratory swish with a modern tennis racquet after playing with a heavy, old wooden one. It reacts with such easy immediacy. Whether it's shedding speed, darting into a corner or responding to the throttle, it does so with an effortlessness that is like breathing through a menthol-cleared nose.

By contrast, the Porsche makes an instant impact with its engine. Putting out 394bhp, its 4-litre flat-six is just 20bhp down on the 718 Cayman GT4's, while torque is an identical 310lb ft. But more importantly, it sounds every bit as rich and mellifluous as its more expensive sibling. Every time you crack the throttle open it has a fantastic baritone bark that leaves you in no doubt why natural aspiration is still something to be treasured.

But of course, eCoty judges don't buy sports equipment based on a quick swish in a shop and they don't go to the cinema purely for the scores. Oh no. And further acquaintance with these two cars is rather revealing.

The A110S differs from the standard version by taking maximum power up by 39bhp to 288bhp, but like the Cayman, torque remains the same as its sibling – 236lb ft in this case. The turbocharged four-cylinder is certainly keen and the twin-clutch gearbox that it's mated to is remarkably snappy yet smooth. And while an extra 39bhp might not sound like much (and the measly 0.1sec reduction in the 0-62mph time

would suggest it isn't), it is certainly enough to be felt in a car that weighs just 1114kg.

However, it's not just the engine that has been tweaked in the S; there is also a Sport chassis. This brings springs that are 50 per cent stiffer and anti-roll bars that are 100 per cent firmer. The tyres are also 10mm wider, both front and rear. On track this translates well. 'It's joyously light in the tight stuff and down through the corkscrew, then it's neat and stable in the fast stuff,' comments Barker.

There is definitely a greater sense of precision with the S, but this more tied-down A110 is also a little more prescriptive in its handling on the limit. If you go looking for them then slides tend to come through heavy trail braking, so that you are sliding into and through corners, like you might in a front-wheel-drive hot hatch.

Not that a circuit has ever been the habitat that has really endeared people to the modern A110. What is so beguiling about the Alpine is how its light weight and long wishbones combine to let it float down roads. Particularly bumpy ones. But as soon as you encounter the first lumpy section of Welsh tarmac in the S it's clear that the recipe is not the same. It's not even like comparing Coke and Pepsi.

'It thumps and crashes where its less powerful sibling flows across the surfaces, absorbing the rough and delivering the smooth,' suggests a disappointed Gallagher.

'It's so busy at 30mph that it feels like a different car,' says Barker, 'and that's not what I expected or wanted.'

The ride does seem to get into its stride with more speed and loading, but like how we sometimes bemoan the performance of supercars for being unusable on the road, so the suspension of the S feels like it has been set up for equally unattainable





speeds. It still threads neatly down a clear stretch and that wonderful lack of inertia remains, but overall it feels like a bit of a retrograde step compared to the brilliance of the cheaper standard car. That's why, in something of a shock, it just misses out on securing a spot in the final eight.

Lightning won't strike twice in this pairing, though. Will it? We'll come back to the Cayman's gearing in a bit...

The big question when you approach the GTS 4.0 is 'just how much of the brilliant GT4 has been sacrificed to reduce the price?' And initially the answer seems to be 'not very much'. Even just pottering down the pitlane for the first time Barker was impressed. 'It exudes a solid, planted confidence in the way it rolls, in the feel and response of its controls, in its ride and in the loping, heavy sound of its flat-six,' he notes, before adding: 'It all suggests that it's going to be capable and satisfying... so it's absolutely no surprise when it is.'

Unlike some of the cars here, the GTS doesn't seem to need a particular environment to shine dynamically. Whether on track or road it exhibits the same sublime sense of control and calm in the way it drives. It constantly projects the soothing reassurance of a British Airways pilot's welcome. Towler clearly feels at ease in it, saying, 'The GTS is a car that I feel you could really learn a circuit in, building up your pace. It would always look after you, as well and its tyres and brakes.' Gallagher echoes this sentiment: 'The chassis feels so within itself you wonder what you'd have to do to catch it out.'

When you do breach the limits of grip, you generally find it's initially through momentum, with the slide then being sustained with fairly aggressive application of power. It can feel almost languid in the way the tail swings round, and

although there's not the precision you might expect in the way you adjust the grip, it is nonetheless so relaxed that you always feel like time is on your side.

Out on the road the ride is so composed that it feels almost essential to have the PASM adaptive dampers on their firmer setting, otherwise it can all be a bit too smooth sometimes. The GT4 felt like this too and the GTS has even less of an edge to it. It feels the right size as you dash between the hedges, though. Not quite as threadable as the Alpine, which really is teeny tiny (and has the lack of boot space to show for it), but a nice, normal size compared to a supercar that can elicit the occasional sharp intake of breath down a B-road.

All-in-all, it is almost the perfect package. Almost.

'Anglesey just doesn't feel big enough for the Cayman's tall gear ratios,' bemoans Towler. Barker quickly seconds that opinion. I find the gearing is more of a problem on track than it is on the road and Meaden notes that 'the 4.0's extra torque over lower-level 718s bridges the yawning first, second and third ratios better. Certainly enough to offer a meaningful taste of fourth gear's mid-range from time to time.' I think the fact the engine creates such a lovely noise the moment you're on the throttle also helps disguise the problem, because it means you're not continually searching for the upper reaches of the revs for your aural entertainment.

But it is a flaw. 'Maybe its only flaw, full stop,' suggests Barker. And unlike the Alpine's ride, definitely not enough of a flaw to stop it from going to Scotland. And once it's up amongst the heather and the lochs, with that glorious engine note echoing off the hillsides, who's to say it won't emulate last year's Cayman...

Above: the 718 Cayman GTS 4.0 has been called a cut-price Cayman GT4, but does it have enough of its bigger brother's magic to be successful here?

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FERRARI F8 TRIBUTO, LAMBORGHINI HURACÁN EVO RWD & McLAREN 765LT

Three spectacular supercars, but they can't all go through, can they?
Richard Meaden attempts to identify the weaker players

WHILE THE SPECTACLE OF ECOTY COMES FROM the wild disparity between a broad list of contenders, it is at its most intense when very similar cars fight tooth and nail for their place in the final. This year the most conspicuous internecine battle is undoubtedly the one between the Ferrari F8 Tributo, Lamborghini Huracán Evo RWD and McLaren 765LT.

To have three such potent mid-engined supercars in the same year is pretty remarkable, but to have three such different mid-engined supercars is truly exciting. Cars of this calibre always add to the show, of course, but when they're thrown in with such a special group of contenders, their participation also offers the possibility of some delicious David and Goliath battles further down the line.

All in good time. Right now we need to get beneath the skin of each of these incredible supercars and decide which deserve to make it through to part two.

One thing worth having at the forefront of your mind is the potency these cars possess and the level at which they perform. It's not often a Lamborghini is the junior of the group, but with 602bhp and 413lb ft of torque it is at a significant disadvantage to the F8's 710bhp and 568lb ft and the 765LT's colossal 754bhp and 590lb ft. I'm not going to list the performance figures for each, but I'll just leave this here: the McLaren will hit 124mph from a standstill in 7.0sec and lap pretty much any given circuit at McLaren Senna-like pace. I'm not sure eCoty has ever seen the like.

If deciding which to jump into and drive first is indicative of how hard these cars are to separate, we're in for quite a challenge. After a momentary pause I step towards the F8.

A cynic might dismiss the Tributo as a run-out facelift that breaks no new ground, but the reality is that, to all intents and purposes, it's a more comfortable, prettier, cheaper 488 Pista, with Ferrari's latest-gen electronics to make it even more exploitable.

Push the starter button and the 3.9-litre twin-turbo V8 starts with a snarl, but quickly settles into a subdued and rather nondescript idle. As we discover out on track it has a certain something when wrung out, but much as I hate to hark back to 'the good old days', it's a shame that a rampant 700-plus horsepower Ferrari should have a less than operatic voice.

It's quick, though. Super-quick, in fact. And as agile as a gymnast. With less weight and more grunt than the 488 it is blessed with terrific athleticism. You need relaxed arms and

calm(ish) hands to find its flow, as stiff, abrupt inputs will simply make it feel jumpy, but once you understand its liking for an economy of input the whole thing gels.

The real genius is controlled by the little manettino, which ramps up the aggression and immediacy or dials it back, all with uncanny precision. There's a mode to suit every mood or moment, from cold, wet, dicey country roads to warm, smooth racetrack tarmac. It's a quality piece, and a supercar that encourages you to peel back the layers.

If there's a minor criticism beyond the soundtrack it's centred on brakes that are a bit too responsive at the very top of the pedal's travel. Even the lightest pressure results in a slightly grabby reaction that's at odds with the finesse with which the rest of the car has been executed.

Barker sums it up with an enviable economy of verbiage that belies his trade as a paid-by-the-word freelance: 'It's the scope of its abilities that astonishes, from supple, easy-going loafer to all-out leery racer and everything in-between, all the time with an impressive quality and polish and feedback.' The F8 will be joining us in Scotland.

Given the life-long rivalry between Maranello and Sant'Agata it makes sense to switch to the Huracán next. I don't know what it is about Lamborghinis that leave me feeling so conflicted. Part of me loves them for their ability to make me feel like a starry-eyed kid seeing a supercar for the first time, but the rest of me cringes at how they have been hijacked by the Rich Kids of Instagram.

Park all that and the Huracán is a bad-to-the-bone Lambo in the finest tradition. As a piece of design it stops you dead in your tracks. The interior is very full-on, but I rather like the toggle switches and carbon, though others think it's a bit much. Mercifully the seats are no longer instruments of torture, so you don't get a sciatic nerve block within 15 minutes.

The Huracán wears its heart on its sleeve, booming and hollering from the moment its V10 fires. This sets the tone for a boisterous driving experience, one that lacks the nuance of the Ferrari, but feels enormously exciting right from the off.

The engine is spectacular. If you place throttle response above an abundance of low and mid-range torque, and enjoy working an engine through its rev range, then the Lamborghini V10 is your kind of motor.

The gearbox is a pleasure to use, too, largely because Lamborghini no longer insists on overly aggressive upshifts

Below: Huracán Evo RWD, 765LT and F8 Tributo – rare is the year when you get a trio of new supercars that are as engaging as this bunch





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in Corsa mode. Always smooth, but with just enough punch to feel each upshift deliver a split-second punctuation in progress, it's organic enough to feel engaging even though you're only flipping the paddles.

The biggest surprise is the chassis. The steering is calmer and actually a little dead feeling compared to the Ferrari's and especially the McLaren's, but the Huracán works so well in rear-wheel-drive configuration that it feels as though it was born this way. The fixed range of dynamic modes mean there's no scope for mix-n-match chassis and powertrain settings, which is a shame. Still, not only can you trust the stability control implicitly, but the Evo RWD has such innate balance and progressive handling traits that you can drive the wheels off it.

In many ways it's a more old-school experience. One that's less reliant on its stability control and ultra-clever differentials to create and manage a degree of dynamic instability. It can't match the Ferrari or the McLaren for front-end bite, nor does it have their wild, boost-fed torque to fire you out of corners, but it wants for nothing in terms of excitement and enjoyment.

Gallagher channels what we're all thinking when he proclaims it to be 'the best road car Lamborghini has made for a long time'. It too will be heading to Scotland.

And so to the 765LT. We've got used to all McLarens possessing a genuinely incredible turn of speed, but the 765 is insanely rapid. It comes at a price, for this car has a gritty, no-nonsense way of doing things that's not quite an assault on the senses (at least not until you dig deeper into the throttle travel or lean harder on the chassis) but is still pretty raw.

On track we all found ourselves truly tested by its performance. You have to let the tyres (McLaren supplied Trofeo Rs and Corsas with the car) get some heat into them before you can even think about letting out the cork, but that's just as well, because your brain and reactions need every second of that time to adjust.

Barker is honest enough to say it's a bit too much: 'The needle swung a little too far in the direction of a racer.' Catchpole also feels the shock and awe. 'There's something about the 765 that seems a slightly unsettling step above the other supercars,' he says. And he's absolutely right. Gallagher describes it as 'afterburner performance', which, given the fighter-jet looks and orange-blue flames it emits when fully lit, is rather apt.

I'm just as boggled by the 765LT's performance as everyone else, but what I find most praiseworthy is the precision, feel and rate of response engineered into the steering. It is by some margin my favourite chassis of the three. You need your wits about you in tricky conditions, especially if you're truly pushing for pace rather than pleasure. But you shouldn't use a sharp knife and then cry about it when you cut yourself; the 765LT rewards skill, requires respect and has the capacity to punish those who don't possess enough of the former or lack the sense to show it the latter.

Select the most appropriate dynamic mode and it is fun, fast and trustworthy – a great combination on the road. And, because it feels so right – from the driving position and the weight and clarity of the steering, to the breathtaking energy with which it will hunt an apex and then fire to the exit – you feel like you're in something truly exceptional at all times and whatever the speed at which you're driving. Yes, you guessed it: the 765LT will also be heading to Scotland.

To be continued...

‘THE EVO RWD
HAS SUCH
INNATE BALANCE
THAT YOU CAN
DRIVE THE
WHEELS OFF IT’

BMW M2 CS & MORGAN PLUS FOUR

They're 2020's best new front-engined, rear-drive performance cars, so fun should be their forte. **Richard Meaden** uncovers if they offer it in sufficient quantities



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BEYOND A FEW UNLIKELY STRANDS OF SHARED

Bavarian DNA, you'd struggle to find two more divergent takes on the front-engined, rear-wheel-drive formula than BMW's M2 CS and Morgan's Plus Four. And yet both possess an uncanny ability to make you want them.

If you read last year's eCoty you'll know we fell for the Plus Four's big brother, the Plus Six, in an unexpectedly large way. Yes it had some fairly major flaws, but it made us smile and it made us rethink what it is that constitutes driving enjoyment. When so much effort and focus is placed on simply going faster, this will always be refreshing. Unsurprisingly, the Plus Four taps into the same emotions and prompts the same questions. In fact thanks to its more modest 2-litre turbocharged four-cylinder engine and manual transmission, it promises to go a step further in the less-is-more equation.

There's a period of readjustment when you get behind the wheel. For starters you sit a *looong* way back, almost on top of the rear axle, in fact, so it takes a little while to zero in your hand-eye co-ordination to match the slightly delayed sensation of sitting behind the moment of inertia. In this respect it's not so different from driving a Caterham for the first time. If only the Morgan was as intuitive to master...

What you quickly learn is that the Plus Four is very much Jekyll and Hyde. Mop along a nice country road at a pace that's well within yourself and the car and you're in the sweet spot, snicking up and down the gearbox and enjoying the generous, torquey shove that comes from propelling a 1000kg car with 255bhp and 258lb ft of torque. However, dig deeper into those reserves of performance and lean on the chassis in a meaningful way and you find it rather less blissful.

It comes down to a lack of front-end feel and a tricky disconnect between front and rear response that makes it edgy at the point traction is lost. Where most front-engined, rear-drive cars will readily settle into a point of balance between throttle opening and opposite lock, the Plus Four's lack of progression and feel makes it hard to apply just the right amount of throttle to initiate a measured rate of breakaway. There's no limited-slip diff, which doesn't help, but applying the right degree of steering lock to catch, but not quench, the oversteer is equally tricky.

I know, this probably all sounds a bit trackday jock for your liking. And you'd be right. Except I'm not talking about gratuitous, smoky powerslides for the cameras. The Morgan should be the kind of car you can playfully nudge into a small, satisfying slide around your favourite roundabout or corner, then bring neatly and smoothly back into line. The sort of thing that makes you smile but doesn't scare anyone.

Where the Morgan falls down, as Barker eruditely puts it, is because 'winding on the opposite lock quickly enough and by the right amount is largely down to guesswork, and therefore much harder than it ought to be'. His findings are backed up by Catchpole – who won't mind me saying is a man more disposed to loving the Plus Four than most – who adds, 'I don't

Far left: Plus Four is a tricky customer at its cornering limits.

Left: M2 CS is much easier to read and exploit in the same circumstances

think there's anyone who isn't glad the Morgan exists, but judged purely as a driving machine, it isn't good enough for a place in the final eight.'

The M2 CS enters the fray at a point in time when BMW and its M-cars in particular are copping

considerable flak. We've all winced at the all-new M3 and M4, forgotten the M5 exists and wished the four-thirds scale M8 didn't. It's a sad state of affairs. And then they produce something like the M2 CS – an M-car that embodies all the qualities for which the M division was rightly celebrated.

Some of you might struggle with the £75k price tag. It's certainly a chunk of change for the baby of the range. Perhaps it's better to regard the CS as by far the best M-car in the range, and one of the best in recent memory. Why is it? Because like all the best driver's cars, it feels at ease with itself and delivers a powerful and consistently brilliant driving experience.

It pretty much drives how it looks, the wide-track, short-wheelbase chassis giving it a stocky, four-square stance that translates into a car that's bold, muscular and boisterous, but also one that communicates clearly and gives you plenty of confidence.

The 444bhp motor is one of the stars of the show. Boosty and big hearted, it gives generously from middling revs then continues to build to a proper crescendo at the red line. It sounds proper, too, Barker describing it as 'a great-sounding engine with much more detail and interest than many turbocharged engines'. It certainly provides all the performance you could want and, rather pleasingly, more than the rear Michelins can handle if you give it the beans.

This test car has optional carbon-ceramic brakes, which are a costly but worthwhile addition, as they have great feel, tons of stamina and further reduce unsprung weight. Together with those lovely looking lightweight wheels they contribute to the CS's sense of vertical wheel and body control. It's a firm car, but you can dial the damping up and down via the dynamic modes, which offer enough pliancy to mitigate all but the lumpiest tarmac, and also shine on smooth circuit-grade asphalt.

It goes without saying that if you disable the stability control you need to treat the CS with a deal of respect. Wet or dry conditions the rules are the same, the generous shove of low-down torque meaning you need to be ready to catch the tail. It's easier in the wet because the breakaway happens at lower speeds and lesser throttle openings. Ultimately, so long as you're measured with the throttle and quick and decisive with your initial steering inputs there's huge fun to be had come rain or shine, with the CS happily settling into perfectly balanced slides or working impressively well within the thresholds of its electronic driver aids.

Special mention, too, for the manual transmission. For those of us old enough to remember the E36 and E46 M3s, the way the M2 CS's lever slips through the H-pattern gate is an uncanny echo from the past. It really is a precise and delicate shift. Perhaps a little longer of throw than you might expect, but with a light yet satisfyingly knuckly quality that reminds you just how good the best stick shifts can be.

Demerits? Well, we're all agreed the steering wheel rim is stupidly fat, but Catchpole is correct to point out it's not a bother once you're focused on driving. He also laments the fact that BMW didn't go the full CSL in order to further differentiate this model from the already excellent M2 Competition. It's a valid point, but perhaps this would have been a step too far for the already embattled and clearly distracted M division team. Otherwise Henry's as smitten as the rest of us. What a cracking car. It goes through.

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BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GT V8 & PORSCHE 911 TURBO S

These four-wheel-drive GTs have both upped their driver appeal in their latest forms. **Stuart Gallagher** finds out which becomes our eighth finalist



Above: latest 911 Turbo S is, perhaps unexpectedly, a real hit on track; it's its on-road performance that has a question mark over it

TWO TECHNICALLY SIMILAR BUT OH SO different brothers from a different mother you couldn't expect to meet when it comes to Porsche's 911 Turbo S and Bentley's Continental GT V8. Both may owe their existence to the VW mothership, have four-wheel drive, eight-speed gearboxes and turbocharged engines, but really that's where the faintest of family resemblances begins and ends. Which is why the decision on which of these two, if either, makes it through to Scotland won't be determined by how they thunder around Anglesey for three days. Loudly in the case of the Bentley; blink and you'll miss it when it comes to the 911.

Bentley's new Continental GT V8 is at eCoty purely on its own merit. With a W12 behind its mesh grille the latest GT is such a leap on from its predecessor it wouldn't be a surprise if Bentley had considered a name change. Now with the VW Group's ubiquitous twin-turbocharged 4-litre V8 up front it has become arguably the best driver's car Bentley has built.

It surprises you how adaptable it is to the situations it finds itself in, absorbing mile after mile of tedious journeys with its long-legged stride, soaking up the surface, isolating you from the white noise of society like few others. That it no longer falls over itself the moment the scenery turns interesting is where the GT V8 grabs you by the lapels and makes you take notice. Previously where you would resign yourself to wafting along with the occasional blast down a long, clear straight, you now plug yourself in and prepare to get involved.

The GT takes hold of any slack, tightens its resolve and indulges you in the action beneath its deep-pile carpets. It doesn't all of a sudden become a Cayman GTS, but it enjoys being driven hard and yet at no time does this come at the cost of its luxury grand touring brief.

On track it's a slightly different story, although not one where the Bentley understeers off the edge of the circuit into the Irish Sea. Its dynamics lose their focus and become a little one dimensional, and a driving style not far off that needed for a hot hatch is required to get the most from it. 'Lift off on turn-in to unload the rear and encourage it to swing and help turn the car into the apex,' was John Barker's method.

Ultimately the mass that allows it to glide across the road struggles to be discreet on track. 'That's not to say there isn't balance and some poise in there, far from it,' explains Henry. 'It's just that such huge mass inevitably pummels the tread blocks and strains the sidewalls all too easily, which is not a very nice feeling.' Adam is taken with how it isn't shy to loosen its tie and roll up its sleeves: 'It's a right giggle how you can fling it around Anglesey, smoking the rear tyres if you provoke it and get on the power really early. Yes, it's all a bit silly, and not what you'd buy one for, but this is a car with a spirit just beneath the surface.' Quite.

It's the Bentley's spirit that got it this far and won it many admirers, bar John, who concludes: 'It's undoubtedly a better road car than track car but the Bentley leaves little impression on me.' And while there were a few eyeing it up for the run to Scotland, hand on heart we are unanimous that it wouldn't be in with a shot at the podium. However, like the DBX, it's one of 2020's surprises and one we'd secretly like to have ready access to more often than not.

Which leads us to the 911 Turbo S, which very nearly doesn't make it to Scotland. Not sure if Porsche would expect us to return the brown envelope if it didn't... Anyway, this is a 911 Turbo that impresses on every drive, regardless of the circumstances, as Dickie explains between mouthfuls

of his kale and quinoa breakfast (or double egg and bacon bap as they call it at Anglesey): 'The combination of genuine everyday comfort and refinement with the ability to up its game to GT3 RS pace – and possibly more – on track sets it apart. I think it's the most convincing take on the 992 yet, and an otherworldly spaceship in the oldest Turbo tradition.'

Its blend of on-road usability and on-track adjustability and hooliganism makes for a compelling driver's car, and an addictive one, too. You savour every rush of acceleration, the razor-sharp turn-in and that four-square, pawing-at-the-surface stance that 911 Turbos take up when you point them at the apex and let them loose. As with our three other supercars here, it is, of course, far faster than we all need for the road. But you could argue that all Turbos have been. That the 992 feels as much a track car as a GT3 is the more remarkable story. But also one that starts to cast a doubt.

'The Turbo leaves me feeling a little underwhelmed on the road. On the track I think it's fantastic... for what's quite a heavy car now. It just shrugs off track work like it was born to do it,' is Adam's take. John's? He's equally floored by the Turbo S's on-track ability and agility: 'It's astonishing. I was out in the worst possible conditions, when it was damp, and the mechanical grip it found was jaw-dropping.' But after another drive on the road he returns with questions over the firm ride and wishing it was a little more easy going when you weren't crashing into the horizon.

Was this really going to be the second year on the bounce that a 911 wouldn't make it to the final of eCoty? It was a close call. So close in fact that Henry and I can't call it and are sent out to make our minds up and told not to return until we're ready to cast the deciding votes.

Both of us think it is outstanding on track. A more impressive track car than it is a road car in fact, helped undoubtedly because a circuit allows you to fall into the Turbo S's performance and experience its full force without fear. And, also, experience a level of precision and agility that is totally unexpected. 'I remember feeling the rear break loose in the most fabulously progressive yet still 911-ish way,' explains Henry as we debate the Turbo's merits in the car park of a garden centre (the glamour is never far away on eCoty). 'It was so well telegraphed that you had plenty of time to have a ponder and decide whether you wanted to gather things up or perhaps see if you could keep the slide going.'

Both of us struggle to champion it on the road, though. I still think it's the best 911 Turbo for a long time, one that finally feels like it has a purpose to its existence. Henry's take is that 'on the road there is so much grip that you can only marvel at its crushing capability rather than feel part of a really engaging experience'. It remains a brilliant all-rounder, yet despite getting a ticket to the final there is a sense that, of our eight finalists, the 911 Turbo S will have the toughest job of all to challenge for the podium.

Below: new Conti GT is far removed from what went before, and all in a good way; V8 (rather than W12) engine further adds to its appeal



‘WITH THE LATEST
CONTI YOU PLUG
YOURSELF IN AND
PREPARE TO GET
INVOLVED’

THE BORDER THAT SEPARATES ENGLAND FROM Scotland on the A68 is a wild and windswept place. Perched upon high, with the burn-strewn mountains in front, behind lie the tall, dense forests of Northumbria, a claustrophobic mass creeping up in the rear-view mirror, ready to suck you back into their endless, intimidating depths. There's an invisible cloak of loneliness in the air tonight. It's mercifully dry, but with no sign of the stars that can dazzle in this part of the world when cloud cover is absent, as the nearby observatory attests.

The little green Porsche's wheels gently rotate to a stop, and car and I pause. I just need a momentary breather. There are some alarmingly tumultuous sections of road nearby and I wonder, with more than a tinge of guilt, if my low-

lying antics registered on any radars, military or otherwise. We're in a land – like the world – ravaged by the effects of coronavirus, in financial, health and social terms, which makes the eerie silence of this great expanse all the more unsettling, the sound of the wind interrupted only by the heavily restricted gurgling of the 4-litre flat-six ticking over.

No one thought Porsche would put into production an entirely new, naturally aspirated engine for its mainstream sports cars, but then no one could have foreseen the seismic shift the world has undergone in 2020 due to Covid-19. Yet despite the best efforts of outside influences, if last week at Anglesey has proved anything, it's that if nothing else 2020 is a corker for new driver's cars.

There'll be plenty of time to evaluate the Cayman

PART TWO:



GTS over the coming week. Your six judges – Gallagher, Meaden, Barker, Bovington, Catchpole and myself – have eight finalists to drive, ponder over, argue about and make excuses for. In the end selecting those final eight wasn't too difficult. Most were dead certs: the viciously exciting McLaren 765LT, the polished-to-perfection Civic Type R, the 'GT4 Lite' Cayman GTS 4.0, and the loveable BMW M2 CS. It was also obvious, instantly, that the GR Yaris was something special, so that was always going through as well. The F8 Tributo had little trouble earning its place either, although the 911 Turbo S had to work a little harder for its pass. The nearly cars were the A110S and the Golf GTI, neither quite enthralling enough to make the final cut, but for very different reasons. Instead comes the undoubted

surprise of week one, the rumbustious, tyre-shredding Italian playboy that is the Lamborghini Huracán Evo RWD. For the first time in years I and every one of the judges genuinely can't call it. Which for all of us, and hopefully you too, is very exciting indeed.

TUESDAY DAWNS CLEAR AND REASONABLY MILD. Any additional minutes of precious slumber afforded by the Cayman's rapid progress across the hills to Hawick town centre last night were wiped out by the arrival after midnight of Gallagher in the 765LT, the shuddering boom of the gravelly Ricardo-bred V8 reluctantly reversing into its parking space enough to set the floorboards trembling and the sash windows vibrating. That's the Longtail to a T: it's

SCOTTLAND

by ADAM TOWLER PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT & ANDY MORGAN



a complete beast of a machine and unambiguous about it. I think I like it a great deal.

Right now we all just need superunleaded, so I'm sticking with the Cayman for the short run to the luckiest petrol station in southern Scotland. Fuelled up, we continue en masse to the first location, which will be our base for the first couple of days. I lead, the Civic tucked menacingly in behind, Jethro in the M2 CS after that, then John in the Lambo and Dickie Meaden in the Ferrari. It's quite a pack, a snarling congregation of xenon and LED eyes, jostling for position, the weight of responsibility lying with the Cayman and me up front to set the pace and spot the hazards. The sun is shining but they're pale, watery rays, and the road is cold and slick with a layer of overnight chilled moisture.

It's a slippery surface that isn't playing into the hands of the M2: I can see Jethro is struggling, the gap between the Civic and the BMW lengthening and the Lambo and Ferrari all over the back of the little black muscle car. When we reach the parking area, with the photographers already there, kicking around, cameras under their arms and wearing that facial expression that says 'I've been here for hours...', the impressions flow forth. Jethro confirms the CS's Michelin Cup 2s were not at their operating temperature and the BMW felt very nervous as a result. Dickie, meanwhile, looks remarkably chilled getting out of the Ferrari. 'I don't think I used any more than 3500rpm all the way here,' he says, not meaning to sound smug but simply parlaying how immediate and effortless the F8's torque delivery is, and how high the F8's limits are.

As for me, I'm actually rather glad to hand the key to the

Cayman GTS to someone else. We've done a lot of miles together, and as much as I love it, I have started to find myself wanting more. More of what is hard to say. Will anyone else feel the same, though? Can a Porsche – and potentially another 4-litre-engined Cayman at that – take the eCoty crown again? The 'evo's biased to Porsche' lobby group will be in uproar, but it's entirely possible it will.

Pretty soon the hillside is buzzing with activity. We've a camera crew present, filming for a two-part eCoty documentary you'll be able to watch on ITV4 before Christmas, plus our elite snappers Aston Parrott and Andy Morgan, and a couple of additional drivers in support. Sadly no catering truck though, which no one wastes any time in reminding 'TV's' Jethro Bovingdon of. Having recently flown in from LA, a period of quarantine meant he couldn't join us until part two and had to miss out on the first week of skidding around on track, which he hates anyway. Cars come and go, taken off individually or in pairs, following a photographic masterplan that so far is as well oiled as the contents of our supercars' sumps.

Talking of Jethro, he's about to arrive in the Lambo and I want to grab his thoughts. I say 'about to arrive', but what I really mean is he's probably two miles away, yet the bark of the V10 is filling the valley, reverberating off the wooded hillside on the far side in a way that confuses the ear and suggests he's somehow found a new road in the opposite direction. *WHAAR, WHARP!* Still no sign of the car. *WHAAAAAARP!*

Suddenly, a luridly green dart is just visible on the horizon, snaking left and right, following the contour of the

Below: M2 CS earns praise for its authentic-sounding engine and its manual gearbox, not to mention its chassis.

Top right: 765LT is simply ballistic, but that's not where its talents begin and end







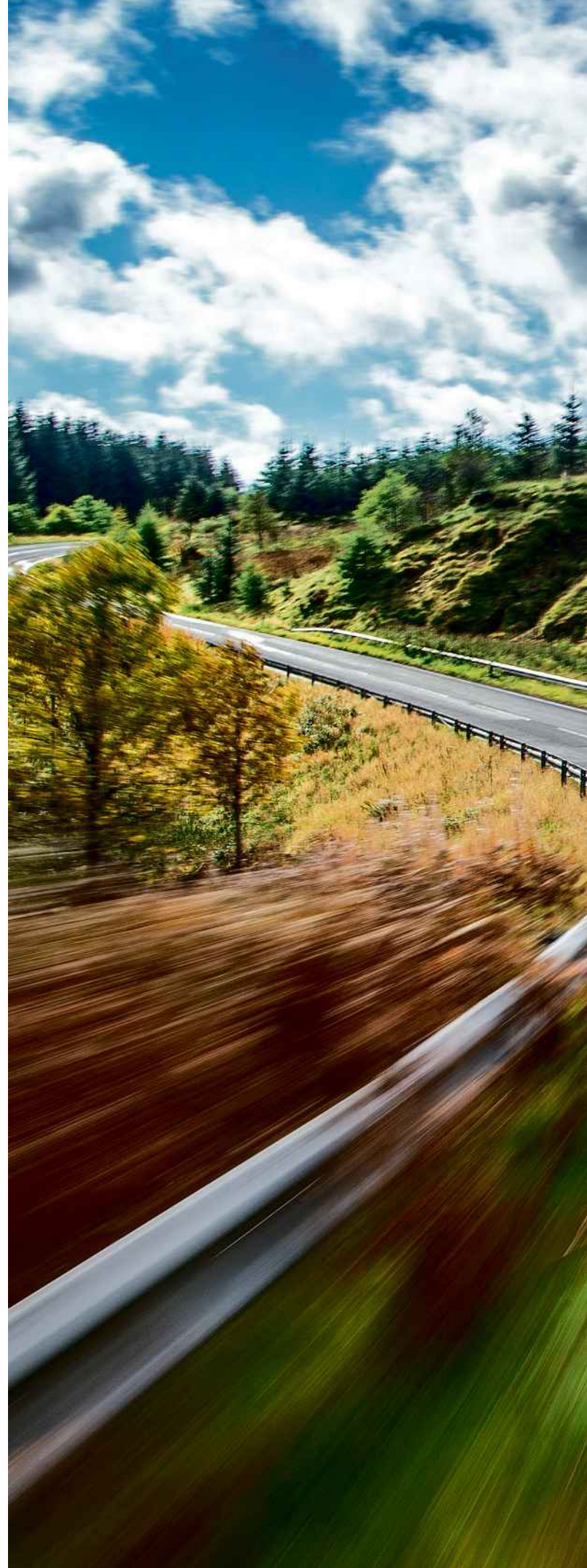
'IT'S SHOCKING HOW EAGER THE 911 IS TO TURN IN'

landscape, tracking the road like a missile homing inevitably in on its target. Everyone stops what they are doing and stares into the middle distance like rabbits eyeballing a predator. The Huracán is close now, its form finally visible to all, and with a final *Woop, Woop, Woop* down the 'box it pulls into the parking area and the noise ceases instantly.

'It's hard to enjoy it without worrying that you're going to get arrested, it's so loud,' is Jethro's opening gambit through a grin that would outshine even the flashbulb of a Hollywood paparazzo. 'And I wasn't even flat out; I couldn't hit the limiter. I don't think I even went over 6500rpm. I cannot believe this is the slowest car they make, it's so strong. Yes, the steering is a bit slow, but I'd rather than than the horrible active steering as you can really lean on it. Given you can't wring these things out on the public road it's the theatre that becomes ever more important – the engine and 'box are the best on sale.' Praise indeed.

I grab the key to the M2 and shut the door on the outside world. It feels snug but comfortable; familiar, conventional and somehow strangely reassuring because of it. I know the CS well enough to know that it will be a real force to be reckoned with as the week progresses, just as it was at Anglesey. The S55 engine fires up with real presence: thick, almost treacly notes – the voltage warmth of an analogue synthesiser after the crisp but arguably clinical digital-sample playback of some other cars here. The manual shift feels like those of BMWs in the 1980s – heaven knows how they manage to engineer that in, but they have. As John said earlier: 'It's hard to describe how much more colour and flexibility having a manual 'box brings to the drive. You work the engine differently and the pace and tone of the drive are more your choosing. Yes, if you're on a track or flinging it down some tricky bit of road, the ease of an auto or paddleshift is welcome, but that's such a small part of life with a driver's car.' I agree wholeheartedly: I couldn't imagine ordering an M2 CS and not ticking the box for three pedals and a stick.

Until there's some heat in the Michelins it doesn't feel that much more connected than an M2 Competition, but once you're in the groove with it the whole car comes alive, and soon enough it's more about what happens at the rear axle than the front that's dominating your thoughts. The CS provides a delicious sensation of sitting on its rear haunches and powering through a corner, almost like slalom skiing through a sequence of switchback bends. And because the engine is so responsive, and so broad in terms of a rev band, whether you want to keep it neat and tidy or push the rear





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out further is directly influenced by your right foot. That engine, too: sometimes I just let the revs soar even on a light throttle, just because I can, just to sense the pedigree in the smoothness of a straight-six; another time I only use even gears and feel it pull heartily from barely 2000rpm. And then I park up, buzzing, climb out and look back at it, and fall in love all over again with its JPS-esque gorgeousness, its buxom beauty that implores you to keep staring. Wherever we go on this eCoty, people admire the CS, even with a luridly green Lamborghini alongside.

Jethro seems to agree: 'First impressions didn't help. The steering wheel is so fat! Why? And on cold tyres the CS feels like it might be too extreme for its own good. It hunts around like an old CSL on those deadly first-gen Cup tyres, shudders and shimmies when you ask too much of the front tyres, and the traction control is working overtime on part throttle. But... that awkward phase, even in cold conditions, lasts for barely two minutes. There's something really cool about feeling it all come up to temperature in such a concentrated timeframe, too. It makes you feel a little bit heroic and sets the car's agenda in no uncertain terms.'

Meanwhile John has been getting some seat time in the Ferrari: 'You have to relax with it – even more so than on the track. Bumpy Road mode really works, though. Everything really works.' He and I are notable fans of the F8, but I worry that it will be overshadowed slightly in this company, and that its Cup 2s may not have played to its strengths for the road element. 'The decision to go with the Michelin Cup 2 rather than stick with the regular P Zero was, I think, a mistake,' says John. 'The sharper, grippier tyre makes the F8 feel a bit too bright, steering wise, and also makes the ride a little harsh.'

And then there's its bitter rival, the Lambo, which continues its forceful charm offensive in the hands of Stuart Gallagher, who's taken it for a refuel in Hawick and kindly sorted an enormous bag of sandwiches at the same time. 'It's almost McLaren-esque in its front end,' opines Stu, which I think we can take as a compliment. 'It really flows. I enjoyed that.' Presumably he means the drive there and back and not melting his credit card on sandwiches, crisps and fizzy pop. 'I wish you could switch the exhaust off, though,' he adds.

I am pondering the Yaris from across the car park. It's so small (a good thing), so wide (relative to its overall size), so... functional, in a quite brilliant way. There's no frippery with it, no silly aero devices or naffness. And I think that's actually a fine metaphor for the car and homologation specials in general: there's an authenticity to them that we've been missing in the performance road car market since their tragic demise. No sooner have the little car's wheels stopped rotating than it's off again, its fruity exhaust parp echoing off the rocky hillsides as the next judge indulges his curiosity.



'THE YARIS GOADS YOU INTO THRASHING IT EVERYWHERE'



Come night-time, it's not quite the usual lively group discussion thanks to the measures in place against coronavirus, but collectively I think I can detect a pattern forming. Purely from measuring the amount of chatter on the wires, the Porsches seem to be struggling.

'The induction sound of that flat-six is probably the sweetest in the entire test,' reckons Henry when I press the assembled group for more insight. 'And what a bargain! The quality of this GTS is staggering and...' It's not a 'but', but it might as well be. Why the GTS isn't stealing people's hearts and minds is actually quite difficult to pinpoint.

Henry eventually continues: 'It's so capable and so polished that it can feel a little uninviting in the chassis department.' Dickie is also patently in a conundrum: 'There's so much that's wonderful about this car. It has a fabulous flow that's effortless and yet super-satisfying. The engine is wonderful – smooth and soulful with a muscular mid-range and sharp top end – and the damping has a masterful capacity to shine on smooth roads yet cope with craggy sections.' Crikey. Sounds like it should be winning. But even Mr Meaden acknowledges that all is somehow not right in the world of Weissach: 'It's such a shame that the gearing is so mismatched, because it denies you the pleasure of working up and down the excellent manual gearbox and hearing the ebb and flow of that lovely 4.0 motor. In any other year I think the GTS would be flying, but its mild manners and subtle brilliance are being overshadowed here by the bigger characters and more focused or more intense performers.'

I OPEN THE SHUTTERS ONTO HAWICK HIGH STREET the next morning and instead of a gloomy downpour there is... almost sunshine. Well, clearly *evo's* weather guardian is on top form again, and after another fried breakfast (these will gradually be reduced to toast as the week wears on and we listen to our struggling constitutions) it's time to head back to the hills near the border to mop up the last of the photographic and filming requirements in that area, gathering cheeky drives in the cars in the process. We'll head westwards after lunch for new roads and vistas.

There can be no more potent a pick-me-up than strapping yourself into a mid-engined Ferrari and within 15 minutes having a handful of opposite lock over a crested corner. It's a bizarre 'new normal' in a 710bhp mid-engined Ferrari, but

Left, middle: GR Yaris is the most affordable car at this year's eCoty, coming in at under £30k in basic spec, but it's capable of punching well above its price tag

the F8 makes it possible because it simply has a stunning precision to everything it does. I get what some are saying about its almost hyperactive responses, but I do think once you're fluent in the Tributo's dialect it is astonishingly manipulatable, albeit not an easy car to truly read.

The engine's throttle response is the absolute cutting edge of turbocharged engines, way in advance of the McLaren's similarly configured V8, for example. But in this latest guise the V8 feels emasculated from a personality perspective: there's no roar, no tune, no character. There is simply drone and hiss, and from the outside it is really very flat indeed – it could be a turbo'd four. The Ferrari is also – understandably given its roots in the 458 – beginning to show its age, from the occasional sense that its rigidity isn't what it might be, to the driving position, which sits you high and upright, curiously on top of the action. That it could be used as a 'daily' is something to admire, but at the same time it also somehow normalises what should be an exceptional experience. We're also all becoming united on the way its brakes are disappointingly oversensitive.

We're heading for Kielder Forest after a car swap and I've purposefully claimed the McLaren. So far it has eluded me in Scotland, and the longer it has, the more the intimidation factor has started to niggle away in the back of my mind. That's rare for a modern car, with all their electronic safety systems, but even though it has a considerable suite of such things itself, the 765LT still exudes menace from every gaping cooling slat, tempting you to switch said systems off if you really dare, like Beelzebub has infiltrated the wiring loom.

Just as there's a sense of inevitability about the BMW's podgy steering wheel, so we've almost come to take for granted the McLaren's superior grasp of driving ergonomics. No other car here can come close to matching the relationship of wheel, paddles and pedals, or for seat support and visibility out. It's not just the scope of that vision, but also the aesthetics of the view afforded to the driver: it really does feel like you're in a top-flight sports prototype racer. The 765 plays along: the trick, optional 'Senna' carbon brakes squeal like the proverbial son out of wedlock at every opportunity, the exhaust spits and bangs on shifts with minimum King's Road theatre but maximum artillery purposefulness, and braking hard for the first real corner – a tricky downhill left that narrows and snakes into a sequence of left and rights – my view in the internal mirror is obscured by the sudden presence of the LT's massive air brake. Oh man, this is intense already, my fingers are sweating and my heart is racing away – and I haven't even gone over 3000rpm yet.

It's soon obvious that while there is some lag in the McLaren, you can use no more than 5000rpm and make the most indecent progress. There is simply so much torque available that the road appears to be sucked under the car and out through the diffuser before the eyes can even focus on its detail, but the LT's ace card, amazingly, is its chassis. Dickie's words on the McLaren, as I gracelessly clambered into its uncompromising bucket seat, are still ringing in my





F8 TRB

V10
ORDINE DI ACCENSIONE
1 5 8 10 2 7 9 3 4 6

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ears. 'Every time I drive the 765 it makes my head spin,' said *evo*'s master of the wheel and ace flouter of deadlines. 'The performance it possesses is completely mind-blowing, even on roads where you'd expect it to be too low and too stiff. It had received some mixed press immediately prior to eCoty, but I just don't get the criticism. Not in a fast road context. The stability system is brilliantly effective and tremendously flattering. There's no need to turn it off in a road scenario. Experience made me tense and tentative on cold, damp roads, but you really can trust it implicitly. That's bonkers when you consider what you're unleashing through the rear wheels of a light, mid-engined car.'

Right now I'm discovering all of that and more. I adored it when I first drove it at Silverstone (*evo* 279), and loved it at Anglesey, too, but of course, you have to question how such a formidable track car will fare on a road much more suited in theory to a GR Yaris. The answer, as Dickie says, is mind blowing: not just its pace, but the sheer quality of its steering, which is easily the best here and may be one of the finest implements to altering the trajectory of a vehicle yet devised by man. The Super Series chassis with its interconnected roll bars has the ability to slam over a kerb onto the Hangar Straight at ludicrous speed, but also to dismiss with aplomb the ruts on the inside of the corner I've just scythed through, or the awkward, off-camber section as I enter the valley floor. The sheer speed of the car can be mesmerising to the point of insanity, but crucially – and this really is the overriding thing to remember about the LT – it is rewarding at three-tenths pace, not just flat out.

And then, ladies and gentlemen, you pull the pin on the V8, and it's absolute mayhem. 'F***ing mental. It is f***ing mental. Truly, madly, deeply, f***ing mental,' is Jethro's succinct Anglo-Saxon summary. No, you can't use that kind of firepower on the road, and this is something that I think for some judges may be a demerit for the LT, but knowing it's there gives me a kick like little else.

When I reach Kielder I feel like I'm jumping out from a stint at Le Mans, as though I should remove my seat insert

in preparation for the next hired hand. Both John and Henry will have similar drives during the week, often denied the chance to push anywhere near the McLaren's limits, but revelling in its feedback, capability and ability to evoke vivid dreams of leading the world's greatest endurance races.

IT'S BEEN A REVEALING AND HUGELY ENJOYABLE drive over to Kielder, but it's soon time to leave this part of the country altogether. The Civic is calling my name. With so many glamorous, powerful cars in eCoty this year, it's potentially difficult for a Honda hot hatch to be heard amongst the noise, particularly when it looks virtually identical to the model that's been on sale since 2017. And yet it has broken through, emphatically, consistently leaving those who have climbed from its no-nonsense bucket seat almost speechless at the extent of its raw ability. And the revealing thing about the Type R is that it takes no more than about 15 yards to understand why that is so.

First, forget everything you feel about the way it looks. Honestly. Just dump it in the bin for now. Instead, tune into what the car is doing. The response and oily precision of the steering, like aero-grade metal components perfectly meshed. The weighting and connection of the gearlever, an engineering feat that seems to have been overlooked by all but a few car makers, but which ensures every single gearchange provides a tiny spike of reward. The ride quality, even in the middle-of-the-road Sport setting that's unapologetically firm yet also taut and controlled and ready for business. The brake pedal feel – felt at the first junction leaving the car park – that genuinely transfers the sensations of pads pressing against those new two-piece front discs. If you understand these subtleties – and as a reader of this magazine there's a very good chance you do – it's what makes the Civic ten, maybe twenty times the hot hatch compared with, say, an Audi RS3, and legitimately allows it to stand direct comparison with a Porsche 911 Turbo S.

The Type R has the ability to turn any road into a tarmac rally stage, to the point where you swear you can hear

Left, middle: Porsche's 911 Turbo S only made it through to the second round by the skin of its teeth; can it strengthen its case with our judges after more road miles?

pace notes in your left ear. The engine constantly wants to headbutt the limiter, there simply isn't a combination of surface, camber or compression that can faze the chassis, and the brakes for a hatchback are mind blowing. Let me be abundantly clear: there is nothing here that can escape the clutches of a well-driven Type R.

It's now Wednesday lunchtime and the pressure is beginning to show. Henry is exuding a quiet – but nonetheless slightly irritating – inner confidence from having his order 'largely settled', while Dickie looks a lot less chipper and admits to being 'befuddled'. A hyper Jethro, jumping from one car to the next, is proclaiming everything to be 'amazing', so I've given up noting down his thoughts for now. Meanwhile, John and I are drawing up plans to rebody a Civic Type R, in the style of the Lancia Hyena by Zagato, which – somewhat unthinkably, now – rebodied the Integrale Evo. JB is effusive in his praise for how the Honda drives, though: 'It will absolutely leave any other fast hatch in its wake, on road or track, with sensational, totally transparent and accessible grip and handling. But the feedback and precision and satisfaction are there when you're ambling too.'

Jethro has had 'one of those drives' in it where he 'wouldn't have swapped it for any other car here'. Henry is similarly bowled over by it, but is also fighting an internal conflict

with the styling, whereas Dickie is much more entrenched and simply cannot get past the way it looks. Even bestowed with such, er, challenging visuals, I wonder if the hot Honda might have enough to grab the crown...

Stu is clearly in love with the Yaris, and it's this car that I need to somehow worm my way into. I followed it back to our start point just now in the Civic, and for all the Type R's manic pace I couldn't close in on the little Toyota, instead enjoying a front-row view of how it dissects a road, subtly rotating into corners and powering through with blisteringly effective neutrality, smoothing away the worst of the undulations with nonchalance. I'm too slow to its aluminium door skin though, and end up in the M2 instead. Oh well...

By the time we reach our next destination most of the other cars and support vehicles are there, and it's like a circus has pitched up in the middle of nowhere. The M2 CS ticks and pings as it cools and I fail completely to suppress a Joker-like grin about the preceding hour-and-a-bit's driving. I've finally lined up the Yaris, but there's a brief wait until the cameras have been pulled off it like sea urchins from the hull of an old trawler. Still, a Guards Red 911 Turbo S is just sitting there with the key in it and nowhere to go... Well, what would you do?

Amongst eight excellent cars the Turbo S is my least

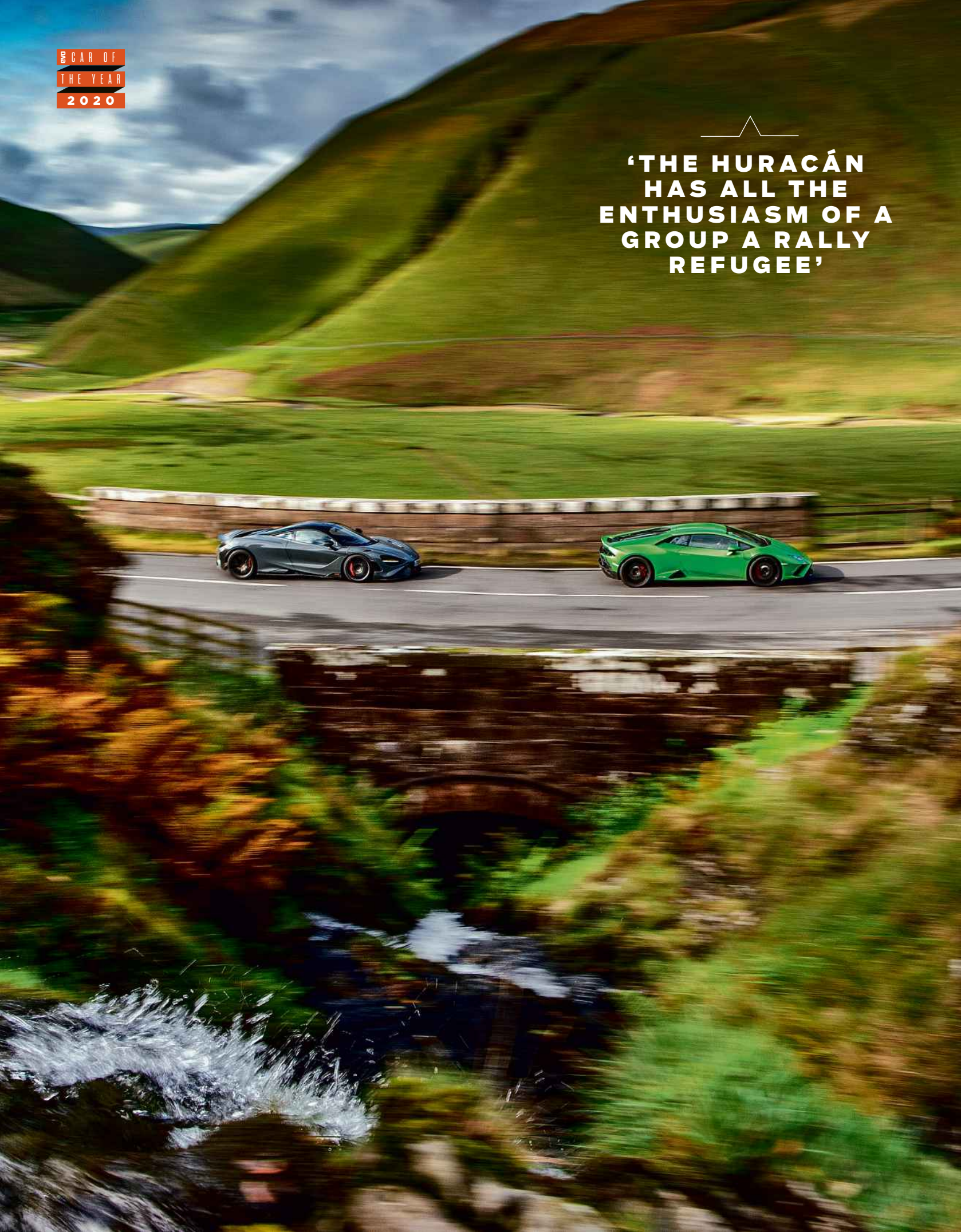


‘THE F8 HAS A
SIMPLY STUNNING
PRECISION TO
EVERYTHING IT DOES’



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2020

—△—
**‘THE HURACÁN
HAS ALL THE
ENTHUSIASM OF A
GROUP A RALLY
REFUGEE’**



favourite. I respect it, and it really wowed me on track at Anglesey, but basing eCoty on that performance alone would be to sell the overall accolade so very short. When the Turbo works, it is brilliant, but too often it feels stuck between two skill sets, failing to truly master either. I remain unconvinced of the Sports Suspension option, for it seems to me that while it makes for a great track car, who really wants a 1640kg, four-wheel-drive 911 as a track car in the first place? And on the road, the compromise in ride quality and general NVH makes the car nothing like as good a high-speed express – a 911 Turbo's key remit. It's also the one car here that suffers from that modern predicament of only being really enjoyable when you're driving as though your trousers have unexpectedly combusted. At lower effort, say six-tenths, it's bizarrely quite boring: the gearchange paddles are small and slightly awkward to use, almost as though Porsche doesn't really want you to change gear yourself, and the engine lacks character, its voice one-dimensional. Once you've become desensitised to that almighty turbocharged kick from behind – which inevitably, eventually, you will do – then feelings for the Turbo S rarely go beyond respect, and don't reach genuine affection. It's why so often during this test the Turbo is left as the last in the car park. This drive is no different, and my overriding sensation is a mixture of guilt and relief, having traversed the road more quickly than part of me would really have liked.

The Yaris couldn't be any more different, and what a jetstream of fresh air in the face it really is. Even just blasting up and down past a loch for the camera its eagerness is obvious, from the zesty triple to the way it deploys every last horsepower it can muster. It feels tiny, immensely chuckable, yet teeters expertly on a fine line between purposefulness and loutish fun. 'Nobody will buy one of these by accident,' says Dickie later. 'It's a geeky kind of car. I just know that when I see one, the driver is going to be one of us.'

Often, the most memorable moments in eCoty happen when you least expect it. Having assembled all the cars by a remote reservoir, and sheltered behind the open tailgates of the snappers' barges to escape a ferociously biting wind, when the signal is given that the shot is in the bag everyone runs for cars more out of desperation to warm up than anything else. It's been a long, informative and rewarding day, but a beer by an open fire seems outrageously appealing and no one is going to be sparing the horses to get there. I collapse into the Huracán, flick the 'safety' catch upwards and press down hard on the starter button. With a rapid churn the V10 awakes and I get comfy – it's a decent-length drive to our inn and on a road that's a formidable challenge in daylight, let alone at night.

There's a traffic jam leaving the location, but by the time others have followed the single-track lane to the main road a sizeable group has forged ahead out of sight. I ease out onto our beloved road, and glance in the rear-view mirror to see the F8's lights flicker as it blasts out of the junction behind me, scrabbling for grip – it's not much of a deduction to assume Jethro's in the mood, and it would, undoubtedly, be

Left: Evo RWD sees the Huracán on top form – fit for taking on the other supercar contenders and set to deliver Lamborghini's highest eCoty finish in years



interesting to see how the two Italian supercars compare on the same stretch of road. Come on, Towler, get a bloody move on! I flick the Huracán out of Strada mode halfway up the rev band and instantly the rich, full-blooded engine sound floods the cabin, all off-beat, sonorous and chewy. My right foot remains flat and the noise continues to build until my head feels like it's going to explode and the acceleration feels completely feral.

It's a very dark night. This first section is all third and fourth-gear sweepers, straights that never feel quite as long as you remember and crests that leave the driver of a low-slung supercar continually guessing as to the road's direction beyond. The issue is that the Lambo's main beam is maddeningly feeble: I know the road well enough to be sure if it's left or right, fast or slow, nine times out of ten, but still my pupils are straining into the outer recesses of the beams' limited reach, desperately trying to pick out clues to confirm exactly where the road is going next. Mama mia! I shuffle uneasily in the Lambo's Sport seat and feel the clamminess of stress on my neck, while the insistent beams of Jethro's P8 not only dazzle in the mirrors but illuminate past and ahead of the Lambo on either side.

Suddenly the road becomes narrow and a section best described as 'the rollercoaster' begins, a sequence

fortunately I have memorised completely. It's slower, if more technical, and at last I have the visibility range I need to feel comfortable. The V10 yelps down a gear, then another, and subconsciously I rejoice inside that at last this is a Lamborghini with steering that feels instinctive, incisive. There's something about its calm, effortless delicacy that combines so well with a chassis that has just enough give to key into the road's surface without ever feeling woolly. Yes, you're always aware of the V10's mass over your shoulder, unlike the McLaren and Ferrari's V8s, but the trade-off is that wide-band throttle control: summon an individual Bolognese stallion and it tosses its mane and gallops over, right on cue.

We're threading through high dry-stone walls now like an Olympic toboggan run, the amplitude of the road's surface so dramatic that the suspension is on full droop one moment, maximum compression the next. Our ultimate speed isn't that high, but the Lambo leaves the ground probably ten times in the next few minutes, sometimes repeatedly, its front wheels pawing the air like Lightning McQueen in *Cars* jumping over the speedway pile-up. And yet it hangs in there and takes it with all the enthusiasm of a Group A rally refugee, a slight kiss from the front undertray all that betrays just how hard car and driver are working.

Finally, there's the twinkle of tail lights on the horizon,

Below: Civic Type R has gone from strength to strength in its updated form. **Right:** deputy ed Towler grabs another drive in the McLaren as he attempts to nail down his own finishing order





then two pairs, then the flicker of headlamp beams against the blackness, and sure enough, soon we've latched on to the back of the pack. As we trundle down the M74 I decide the only car anyone ever needs is a Huracán Evo RWD. Dazzling supercar one moment, the next it'll roll up the sleeves on its Armani suit and get down and dirty with the best of them here without hesitation – it's a sensational car.

THERE'S A DIFFERENT ATMOSPHERE TO ECOTY ON Thursday morning. Stuart is already brandishing his results Excel spreadsheet like the Grim Reaper's scythe, casting fear into the panic-strewn judges as we all grapple with the simple, disarming fact that this is an eCoty final line-up like no other. Eight cars, and all of them really outstanding; cars you'd want to see in your own garage when you raised the door in that treasured moment. No duds. No lemons.

For me, and I suspect almost all of our judges, it's not too difficult to split the order into two halves. The bottom two pretty much writes itself, but the top six, and in particular the top half... it's far too close to call. I've changed my mind five times this morning already – three before breakfast – and Jethro is on the verge of a panic attack flitting between cars, worrying he hasn't gained enough miles in one, then pushing it up the order as he gets out



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**'THERE IS
NOTHING HERE
THAT CAN ESCAPE
THE CLUTCHES OF
THE TYPE R'**

ready to try another. Dickie hops from toe to toe like he needs to empty his bladder, while Stu is icy cool and Henry looks settled, chatting Turbo S with John.

'I'm still shocked at just how eager it is to turn in,' says Henry. '911s – certainly not the non-GT ones – don't have front ends like that, do they? Then, once you've got over the way it darts into a corner, it's a fun game seeing just how early in a bend you can get back on the throttle. It's generally always sooner than you thought.'

But even Henry – and Stu, who remains possibly the Turbo's biggest fan – concedes that in this company it is proving to be the car that sits around while the others get driven. John chimes in on the same theme: 'I had a fabulous drive in the Turbo S on the glistening, wet asphalt of the smooth, fast, meandering road to the services. The car felt as one with the road, tacking between apexes with poise and precision, well within itself but travelling very briskly, the engine growling encouragingly. In those moments when the car flows and you feel absolutely in control and smooth and relaxed you can forgive a car a lot. But I've driven too many miles in this car to know how ordinary it can feel too. To wit: the evening before, I drove the Turbo S

on the alternative route back from the fuel station, the much lumpier and more challenging B-road, and it was dreadful, unsettled and nervy in any damper mode.'

Personally, I think my mind is nearly made up, but I just need one more drive in the Yaris. I need to feel that special something... the magic, whatever that may be. Yesterday it was good. No – it was great. But whether through hype, or simply our own sky-high expectations and will for a new 'people's champion', I want it to leave me so smitten that I'm writing the eBay advert for my own cars before I've even made it home tomorrow night. As Henry muttered as I walked towards it just now: 'A really fun little car, but I feel like I'm always waiting for that one drive where it will all really click.' Hmm...

I grab the Yaris by the scruff because that's what you do. It's one of those cars where you quickly resort to going everywhere at supersonic pace just because it somehow constantly goads you into thrashing it, like all the very best hot hatches always have. Funnily enough, to get the best from the Yaris you actually *have* to drive it like that, for it's a car that needs loads placed through its chassis for it to really come alive. Don't mistake 'coming alive' for



**'I THINK MY MIND IS
NEARLY MADE UP,
BUT I JUST NEED ONE
MORE DRIVE...'**

pace or ability, because it has those in vast quantities from the off, but it's just that it can feel a little sensible, almost slightly inert unless there's enough lateral, longitudinal and yaw forces to unsettle it. Its character is more towards early Impreza rather than classic Lancer Evo, in that it lacks the Mitsubishi's high-definition front end, and hyper-agility for that matter, trading a degree of those qualities for incredible traction, reassurance and outright pace. Once you're turned in and on the power it's baffling just how much speed you can carry through a corner, how early you can tap into the abundant torque of the ever-enthusiastic triple.

You sit too high, almost hanging on sometimes. It's a shame. The gearshift is really good, as are all the control weights, and the seats. Given how brilliant the car is as an overall package – what an absolute triumph that someone has made it in the first place – it feels almost churlish to be making such tiny criticisms, but that's our job, and also a reflection of how many good cars are here.

Up and down a particularly challenging stretch of road I go, travelling quicker and quicker, the liberties taken greater. With confidence I'm overriding the front end's lack of ultimate precision by pitching the car in early and working

it all out as we close on the apex. Yep, it's in my top four, but is it quite good enough to clinch the overall win? Feeling a bit desperate, I go in search of fellow judges for their view. Barker describes the steering as 'soft' but clearly still loves the Toyota overall. Bovingdon says: 'It comes down to the fact it has so much cool tech and hardware and yet the driving experience feels a bit too "safe" or conservative. I want it to be pointier, to have some of that hyper-alertness of the old Mitsubishi Evos and then use its four-wheel-drive system to control that flightiness. The only people willing to spend this much on a Yaris will be hardcore enthusiasts, so why not make them a car that feels as extreme as the spec suggests?' Dickie, though, is a massive fan, loving the way it melds the best of both Imprezas and Evos of old. He's practically signing the finance agreement as we speak.

We won't be leaving this wonderful part of Scotland until Friday lunchtime, but there's no avoiding the steely glare of editor Gallagher and his persistent request for scores. Soon the die is cast, the results are made official, and nothing is going to change them (bar the unlikely revelation that Gallagher is unable to work a spreadsheet). Read on to begin the toughest countdown we've ever had to make.





8th PORSCHE 911 TURBO S

No, your eyes are not deceiving you: a 911 hasn't won eCoty. That should give the conspiracy theorists something to think about.

Astonishing on track, the 992 Turbo S is one of the most accomplished of its kind for a very long time. It has, as expected, performance in abundance, more than you can ever need on the road (as have so many of our finalists if we're being frank), and how it uses its muscle is no less superlative inducing than any of the other supercars that arrived in Scotland.

Across any road in any conditions it has the ability to leave you short of breath and nodding approvingly at how it has processed the terrain and delivered you to your destination. And yet... this year, in this company, it couldn't get out of the shadows of the others. Dickie, an advocate of the Turbo S, nailed it when he said: 'There's enough sense of occasion to feel like you're in something out of the ordinary. That said, it can be a bit clinical and matter-of-fact about the way it throws you at the horizon.'

Others felt it only came alive when caution was thrown to the wind (hence its strong showing on track) but felt ordinary on the road and was undone by its hard-nosed approach to everything it does. Four judges placed it last, 2020's other finalists proving too strong for this 911.

7th PORSCHE 718 CAYMAN GTS 4.0

Two Porsches made it to the final, and both are propping up the results table. Magnificent engine, superb damping, beautiful chassis, precise steering, slick gearshift, so where did it all go wrong for the Cayman? It's hard to say. Without fail no matter who stepped from its cockpit did so with

a grin and a huge amount of respect and admiration for the GTS. It is, after all, so closely linked to last year's champion it's hard not to be impressed by everything it delivers.

Overly long gearing certainly didn't help its cause and in this company the spotlight shone brighter than ever on this technical flaw. To the point where some in the ranks mumbled about wishing it was a PDK...

Like the Turbo S, the Cayman GTS proved to be more clinical in its approach than characterful, being hard to fault but harder to love as a result. As a car that was hotly tipped to be a shoo-in for the podium and a favourite for the top step, its performance here came as more of a shock than that of the Turbo S. It placed no higher than sixth on any judge's score sheet and was best summarised by Henry, who said: 'I think it suffers slightly in the same way as the Turbo S, because it's so capable and so polished that it can feel a little uninvolved in the chassis department.'

The GTS remains a superb driver's car, our favourite of its kind, but its lack of sparkle was its undoing here.

6th HONDA CIVIC TYPE R

Zero point three, that's how close Honda's facelifted Civic Type R came to finishing ahead of the Ferrari. The Type R's performance at eCoty came as no surprise, for since its inception in 2017 few of its kind have come close to matching its ability. Every mechanical action oozes quality and precision, with a deep sense that the accountants weren't allowed anywhere near the engineering department during its development.

On track it's unflappable, yet it's on the road where it delivers a series

by STUART GALLAGHER PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT & ANDY MORGAN

THE RECKONING

The scores are (finally) in. Let the countdown to the 2020 winner commence!



of body blows that leave you breathless. It matches the fluidity of a Golf GTI when you want to knock the pace back and the feral enthusiasm of the Yaris when you grab it by the scruff and fling it down the road. And at all times you're revelling in that sublime gearshift, the mechanical precision of the throttle and the linear responses of the steering. We all agreed that as front-drive hot hatches go, no one does it better.

Jethro was a big fan: 'The dazzling agility and control of the Type R really highlighted why the Yaris doesn't quite work for me.' So too Henry, who added: 'The little tweaks over the pre-facelift model seem to have elevated it to a sweet spot that now makes it hard to fault.' Henry and Jethro both scored it higher than the Yaris, John had it on a par with the F8 and 765LT.

5th FERRARI F8 TRIBUTO

'There are moments of magic in the Ferrari... The way it lets you drive it down a road that means you get out thinking it is the best car in this test.' Henry's sentiment could have been applied to any of our eight finalists, but it feels a fitting remark for the wonderful F8. And it is wonderful.

It bristles with the character that is lacking in the 488 Pista and has the performance to match the McLaren, albeit delivered in a more cultured way. The edginess of its optional Michelin Cup 2 tyres lost it a point or two from all the judges and the carbon-ceramic brakes proved hard to modulate, and while it matches the 765LT for punch, its V8 lacks a voice.

As Jethro pointed out: 'On the right road and in the right conditions, the F8 is genuinely brilliant. However, the instant steering response, abundance of torque and the rather sharp edges of the Cup 2 tyres don't

quite deliver in Scotland.' From Dickie there was admiration for Ferrari's approach to modern supercars: 'They understand how to build a state-of-the-art mid-engined supercar like Rolex understands watchmaking.'

4th TOYOTA GR YARIS

A Toyota in eCoty is a rare occurrence. The GR Yaris is only the third time the world's biggest car manufacturer has been represented. And what a way to mark your return.

The pressure was on for the Yaris. It was built to a homologation brief and has a specification that is hard to fault, and as John pointed out: 'This is exactly the sort of car we were advocating in our evo Blueprint [issue 270], and it really does deliver.' It certainly did.

Dickie was desperate for it to be a cracker and wasn't disappointed: 'I honestly didn't expect it to be so complete or so much fun.' While Adam was equally impressed as early as his first drive at Anglesey: 'In the Yaris it's not just about getting the turn in, it's what happens through the corner and on the exit. The traction is awesome. It's a really appealing little car.'

Henry and Jethro had more measured views, both looking for Mitsubishi Evo character rather than the Subaru Impreza DNA many of us felt the Yaris had. 'Why haven't I fallen so completely for it as some others?' asked Jethro. 'I love the size, the toughness, the manual gearbox and the feistiness. I just want to dial up the craziness a little bit.'

Jethro scored it equal last with the Cayman GTS, Henry and John scored it mid-table, while Adam and Dickie placed it in their top three. Me? It was my car of the year, a simply brilliant driver's car.

3rd LAMBORGHINI HURACÁN EVO RWD

If the GTS was an expected pre-event podium finisher, the rear-drive Huracán wasn't expected to go beyond Anglesey. But eCoty delivers the unexpected, and the Lambo's performance was certainly that – and a great big slice of excitement no matter what the drive you had in it.

After the disappointment of the Audi R8 RWD, the Huracán was a breath of fresh air. 'I couldn't believe how much more convincing the Huracán was. Sharper, more direct, more intense and more immediate, it's just as you'd hope it would be. The engine is spectacular – like it's powered by nitroglycerin, not gasoline,' was Dickie's summary.

Henry was impressed with the fluidity of its suspension and how it addresses the issues of previously potentially great Lamborghinis in terms of brakes, turn-in and gearbox.

So intoxicating was the Huracán that John placed it top in his scores (alongside the M2), saying: 'It's far from flawless but I can forgive it, because there's such a richness to the experience.' I thought it drove like it looked: nose down sniffing out the grip, tail a little raised to provide mobility when required, a genuine street fighter you want on your side.

But it was Jethro who was transfixed by the Evo: 'It's not an exaggeration to say that paying £164,000 for this engine and 'box would be a wholly reasonable thing to do. But – and it's a big, almost unprecedented but – the rest of the package is properly, no-excuses-required brilliant, too. Finally! This thing is absolutely joyous.'

2nd McLAREN 765LT

It wasn't its looks, or its twin-turbocharged V8's ability to bend time and spit flames. Nor was it a chassis that's on top of its game on track and equally at home on the road. No, the talking point for everyone the moment they extricated themselves from the 765LT was its steering. And once its tactility, perfect weighting regardless of speed and how the calm feedback wasn't impacted by pace had been discussed, only then did the conversation move on to the 765LT's ability to leave a group of wordsmiths lost for words. Well, words that we can publish in a family magazine.

Jethro tried: 'Intense, extreme, insane, immoral, unforgettable, absurd... It's pretty hard to describe it without returning to f***ing mental.'

Yet while it's far too fast for the road, all agreed that before you even get in it it's more exciting than anything else here to look at. And then there are the perfect ergonomics, likened to those of a Le Mans racer by John when he found himself travelling back to the hotel at night, caught in the moment of enjoying a great car on an even greater road.

'I remember literally taking a deep breath before changing down and squeezing the throttle all the way,' explained a wide-eyed Henry after a drive that nearly saw him place it top of his Christmas list. While Dickie's head was left in a spin after every drive and confused by some of the mixed reactions the McLaren had received prior to eCoty. Without a doubt, as modern supercars go, the 765LT reigns supreme.



'THE CS TAKES THE
COMPETITION RECIPE
AND THROWS IN
THE CHILLIES'

EVO CAR OF THE YEAR 2020

BMW M2 CS

A mere two-tenths of a point separated the McLaren in second and the BMW M2 CS. That shows just how close eCoty 2020 was and how far the M2 has come. In 2016 it barely registered a positive vote. Two years later the Competition version showed that BMW M did still know how to produce a cracking performance car. But the CS takes that Competition recipe and throws in the chillies.

‘Sometimes the simplest recipes, done well, with quality ingredients, are the tastiest,’ said Henry, who placed the CS first on his list. ‘The biggest difference over the M2 in 2016 is the suspension and the way it can cope with bumps. Its compliance and control means you can get into a flow down a road, the car remaining composed enough to deal with whatever you chuck it at and therefore let you enjoy its innate adjustability.’

‘This is a driver’s car – and specifically an M-car – as they used to be,’ explained Dickie. ‘Small, punchy, potent and reliant on skill and effort to get the best from it. The CS has an aura of something extra special.’

BMW’s M2 CS follows a simple formula that many great driver’s cars have done in the past, and just like the greats it gets the core constituent parts absolutely bang on. It starts with the powertrain: ‘Brimming with torque and character

– such vibrant character for a turbo engine,’ said John. And it’s hooked up to a gearbox that is an uncanny throwback to those of the E36 and E46 M3s, explained Dickie: ‘Delicate and short of throw with a unique knuckly sensation when you slot the lever beyond the neutral plane and into a gear.’

Like the Yaris, there was a great deal of expectation on the M2 CS’s broad haunches, but from the moment it rolled into the pitlane at Anglesey it didn’t put a Cup 2 out of line (unless provoked, which it often was). After every run in a supercar it provided a level of calmness yet was no less exciting. Step from the two exceptional hot hatches and it applied the layer of polish they often left you looking for.

The last word goes to Jethro: ‘It’s the essence of a driver’s car and the foundation of everything we celebrate at **evo**. The M2 CS looks hard as nails, goes like hell and entertains with every revolution of its wheels. Sometimes eCoty can feel complicated when you sit down to score the cars, but the M2 CS makes it easy. It delivers on every drive and makes you daydream about when you might get another go. It feels special despite being conventional and familiar. Pricey? Yep. But worth every penny.’ As all champions are.

And it’s quite a way for BMW to crown its first eCoty victory. Congratulations, M.



	SG	AT	RM	JBar	JBov	HC	Average
BMW M2 CS	96	97	97	95	95	94	95.7
McLaren 765LT	95	98	98	93	96	93	95.5
Lamborghini Huracán Evo RWD	94	95	95	95	95	92	94.3
Toyota GR Yaris	98	96	97	92	87	90	93.3
Ferrari F8 Tributo	94	93	95	93	89	90	92.3
Honda Civic Type R	93	94	91	93	90	91	92.0
Porsche 718 Cayman GTS 4.0	92	92	92	92	87	89	90.7
Porsche 911 Turbo S	90	90	93	89	89	87	89.7



JUDGE'S NOTES: RICHARD MEADEN

The camaraderie and the all-round corking contenders made this a memorable year for Dickie

THERE WAS SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL about this year's eCoty. Not least the final group of cars. Every one of them was exceptional. Rare is the year that boasts such quality or diversity of character.

If 2019's test felt like slim pickings, 2020 has been an embarrassment of riches. Ironic given the crap for which this godforsaken year will otherwise be remembered.

Perhaps because we've not been able to enjoy ourselves as we would otherwise do, eCoty 2020 was special for reasons that extended well beyond four wheels, fine roads and a few pints of free beer. I've worked with Barker, Gallagher and Morgan for half my life, and watched Bovingdon, Catchpole and Parrott arrive at *evo* as enthusiastic pups and rise to the top of their professions. Without wishing to get too sentimental, spending a couple of weeks with them and the rest of the gang was an absolute pleasure. I hope at least some of the fun we had comes across in the feature. This said, Stu, I will still be sending an invoice...

Highlights? Driving the Huracán around

Anglesey until its tyres literally popped. Being egged into a mighty spin by Aston P when taking him for a few fast laps in the Nomad R. Finding a decent pub that was open on our final night on the island. Having my arse handed to me by a van driver while heading up to Hawick in the F8 for week two. Chasing a snake of supercars on cold, damp roads to our meeting point on the first morning of week two. Falling in love with the Yaris. Hearing Jethro say 'I just need one more go in the Huracán' for the hundredth time.

Surprises? Some of you will be shocked by two such apparently brilliant Porsches placing so low in the final order. It might look like a knee-jerk reaction to years of having Porsches win eCoty, but it really isn't. I had drives in both Cayman and Turbo S that left me convinced they would rank highly. But, as each day passed I made a deeper and more lasting connection with some of the other cars. Where the 718 and 911 finished is more a reflection of just how good this year's group was than any evidence of Porsche losing its touch.

Voting proved incredibly difficult. In the end

I simply had to stop driving because it felt like every car was one great drive away from being within touching distance of the top three. In the end I had the 765LT first, with the M2 CS and GR Yaris just one point behind it in joint second. Part of me wishes I'd placed the BMW and Toyota joint first and the McLaren third, but in the end I couldn't deny the dizzying, dazzling brilliance of the 765. I tend to rail against the big-ticket supercars, but the McLaren really was like a drug. Each of us would head off to score some adrenaline, then return uttering a mix of superlatives and profanities. It's on another level for feel and ferocity.

Am I sore that the McLaren missed the top spot? Not at all. To be honest I was more disappointed that the Yaris didn't place third. It's not as flashy or rabidly quick as the Lambo that pipped it, but it succeeds by moving the hatchback game on where the RWD Huracán won hearts by harking back. As for the M2 CS? BMW's first eCoty winner is just about everything I could ever want or need.

2020. Shitty year, stunning cars.

JUDGE'S NOTES: JOHN BARKER

The engrossing character of the Huracán and the stupendous steering of the 765LT were standouts for JB

OH, WOW. TIME AND AGAIN I FOUND myself saying those words. This was the finest of Car of the Year contests, for the cars, for the locations and the team. Covid-19 may have scuppered our plans for a foreign-based contest, but the UK was at its most attractive and gave us two weeks of mostly fantastic weather, all the better to admire its fabulous scenery.

My most memorable drive wasn't on the test itself but the run home from Anglesey at the end of week one. I could have taken the quick route – A55, M6 – but it was early afternoon, the sun was in a cloudless sky and I was in the Huracán. So I took the interesting route: the A5 to Betws-y-Coed and then Bala, and from there the B4391 to Welshpool, rejoining the A5 near Shrewsbury. From the circuit gate that's about 100 miles of engaging, challenging asphalt.

Although the A5 into Snowdonia was slow, I was in no hurry, because it looked as handsome as I've ever seen it: vibrant greens and oranges on the slopes, the contrast in its crags like a Tim Layzell canvas. I refuelled in Betws-y-Coed and the pace gradually picked up, hitting

a comfortable and thoroughly engaging lope when we peeled off the A5 for Bala. I doubt I used half the Huracán's potential, grunt or grip, because the hedgerows are high and it's more about precision, but it was so satisfying, picking lines, letting the power of the V10 flow, making calm but brisk progress.

After Bala, it got even better. The road is just as demanding but has a few long, clear-sighted sections too, where you can really open the taps. After happily stroking the Huracán along on its torque, the sound and fury of the V10 yowling at 7000rpm and beyond shocked me. It was thrilling, but I didn't need to find the red line to be thoroughly entertained.

The McLaren and Ferrari with their lighter, smaller V8 engines have less dynamic inertia and so would be more agile on these roads, but their flat-plane V8s lack charisma. The Huracán is old school, a supercar built around a super engine, and you can't fail to be entertained when that engine is big-lunged, instantly responsive and has layers of character. I was happy managing the masses and performance of the Lamborghini, absorbed and enthralled.

The McLaren has the best steering, though. Not just versus the Lamborghini and Ferrari, not just in this test: I think it's the best power-assisted steering I've ever tried. It had perfect weight, superb feedback and was instantly responsive and fast-gearred yet somehow calm. It gave an exceptional sense of connection with the 765LT, a car that could feel terrifyingly potent. I won't forget the drive back to the hotel in the dark on sweeping, flat, deserted roads, slung low, the centre line of the road picked out in the lights sweeping left and right beneath the car as I straight-lined the corners, like a scene from the film *Le Mans*. Again, though, I was using only a fraction of its performance.

Another car that, like the Huracán, only grew in my estimation was the M2 CS. It too rose to every challenge, on road, on track, in the wet and in the company of some outstanding cars. It also has a character-rich straight-six, ensuring that it is endlessly entertaining. In fact, if this year's contest needed a strapline, I'd suggest 'Coty 2020 – Never a dull moment' because all things considered, it has been quite a year.





JUDGE'S NOTES: HENRY CATCHPOLE

The thrill of the chase and the contrasting solo drives left lasting impressions aplenty on Catchpole

DOWN ONE, TWO, THREE GEARS. ONE, two, three yelps, each higher than the last. There's no disguising what you're about to do in the Huracán. In front of me its two huge tailpipes squat with the rest of the car and the sound of the V10 rips the Scottish air asunder. Barker is keen for dinner.

Thankfully I'd been expecting it, so the M2 is primed and amazingly the gap doesn't grow anything like as much as you might think as the little BMW sets off in pursuit, that creamy straight-six winding all the way round to its red line. For the next half an hour I chase the Lambo. Firstly across open moorland, dipping the clutch and moving my left hand as fast as I can. Then harrying the green wedge along a tight valley, chucking the CS about with complete confidence in its balance. Finally ducking and diving to keep the Italian plates in sight through some woodland. At times I'm close enough to see straight down those pipes to glowing hot innards, and all the while my mirrors are filled with the hungry-looking headlights of the F8.

The next day, as darkness falls over the loch,

eight balls of light head off towards the hotel via various routes. I'm in the Cayman and behind me is Dickie in the Yaris. The Porsche is the perfect partner. Balanced in its handling and reassuring in its damping, letting you pick a line precisely but also trim it at the last minute. The controls all feel natural in their responses, well-weighted and slick so you can maintain a flow. No harsh inputs. And all the while the induction note of the flat-six wraps you in the most wonderful blanket of naturally aspirated noise.

The invisible elastic is constantly busy. Some sections I can let the car run, perhaps get on the power earlier than Dickie might have been expecting and pull a small gap. Other times the little Yaris's LEDs are illuminating the Cayman's cabin like it's daytime. It is so much fun.

In these drives I love the fact that I know the personalities of the drivers in the cars around me. People I'm lucky enough to call friends. Sensing their thoughts as they tackle a road, watching the attitude of a car and guessing their attitude inside.

Sometimes, of course, you find yourself

on your own. Early morning in the McLaren. Pottering through quiet streets, letting warmth seep through the car. Stripped of any speed, but still enjoying the character of the machine. The nuanced noises and associated vibrations. The forward-slung driving position. The steering that is amongst the best I've ever felt.

Then there's the drive after all the scoring has been done. Nothing more than heading to fill the F8 with fuel, Barker behind in the Turbo S. The road, another rollercoaster, is damp and I'm loving the feeling of the Ferrari teetering on a knife-edge. Committing to a cresting left you feel utterly integral as the rear starts to slide purely through momentum when the car goes light and the weight of the V8 leans on and then overwhelms the Cup 2s. The steering is so quick that it's easy to balance. A flick of the wrists, where others would require an armful.

And yet again in this most brilliant of eCoty years, I get to the end of the drive, sit for a minute, and wonder how something so intoxicating can't be the best car of the year. But there can only be one. I'm glad it's the BMW.

JUDGE'S NOTES: STUART GALLAGHER

Porsche has never had it so tough, says Gallagher, and nor have the judges when it came to scoring the cars

AS IS THE CASE EVERY YEAR, YOUR eCoty judges react with a look of horror, surprise and amazement that, after two weeks of driving the best of the very best, they are expected to produce a finishing order. Every year we have the same dance. Some stall for time. Others pick up a microfibre to clean a stubborn piece of the dirt from the underside of a diffuser. A few even offer to go and refuel a car. Hell, they'll even do the sandwich run. What they won't do is commit to a finishing order.

There's always one who breaks first (usually me, because the look from the photographers waiting to plan podium images strikes the fear of god into me) and then a dribble of score sheets start to appear. Then Jethro goes for 'one last drive' in the Huracán.

This year I felt every tortured piece of decision making of my fellow judges. Every score resulted in a crisis of confidence that I'd been unduly harsh or too lenient; each of the eight finalists was in with a shout of finishing on my personal podium. Even the 911 Turbo, which after leg one was a car I would have been quite happy to leave behind. I'm glad we didn't, because there were times in Scotland when

it was immense, its only problem being the seven other cars it was fighting with were more than equal to it. I can't remember a year when Porsche has had it this tough.

Anglesey proved to be a great leveller. It unpicked the great work the Golf GTI had carried out on the road and dismissed the A110S for bringing less to the party than it claimed it would. And where the rear-drive R8 should have shone it couldn't get out of the shadow of its more entertaining Italian cousin.

Anglesey nearly made Henry argue the case for taking the Nomad to Scotland, too, but then he remembered he'd have to drive it there and back. Although it deserves its moment north of the border, this wasn't the time; one for the spring.

As many of my colleagues have already touched on, every one of the last eight left a deep imprint on you after every drive. The Ferrari's confidence in shrugging off all you could throw at it, the Huracán's flamboyance and the 765LT's ballistic speed gave us three very different supercars that in any other year could waltz away with a podium spot – rather than scrapping for one – if not an outright victory.

Naturally the two Porsches didn't fail to

enlighten and impress, but in this company they didn't entertain or engage enough. In isolation two better driver's cars you couldn't hope to spend time in, but in this company? Even the best 911 Turbo for a generation and a sublime, mid-engined sports car that shares so much with the incumbent eCoty champ didn't make the grade.

How Honda keeps improving the Civic Type R remains a mystery. Its quality and depth of engineering is on a par with anything that comes out of Weissach, it's that good. How BMW took the M2 Competition and improved it across the board to deliver a brilliant 2020 eCoty champ is pretty gobsmacking too.

For me, though, one car stood out. It's the performance car we have been pleading for manufacturers to make for years, only to be rebuffed to say it's not possible. In the GR Yaris, Toyota has proved it is. And then some. On every eCoty there is a single drive that sticks in every judge's mind. It might not necessarily be behind the wheel of the winner, but it's a drive that signals eCoty is well and truly underway. I didn't experience this in the Toyota once, only because *every single journey* in the four-square Yaris was the epitome of the thrill of driving.





JUDGE'S NOTES: JETHRO BOVINGDON

The sideways shot isn't just for show, claims Bovingdon, it also provides an intense insight into a car

HOW WAS ANGLESEY?' I ASKED EDITOR Gallagher on the eve of McCoty. I was hoping the answer might be 'wet and miserable', having missed all the track action due to self-isolation. It wasn't. 'Absolutely mega,' he replied with a genuine look of glee. 'And the beauty is,' he continued, 'we got all that crazy action on the track so don't need to worry too much about handling shots this week.' We both nodded, sagely.

'Can you do me a sideways shot in the Lambo, mate?' It's 9.01am on the first morning of our little Scottish adventure and Aston Parrott, as usual, hasn't quite read the script. I haven't so much as sat in the RWD and, honestly, feel a little ring rusty to be pitching it sideways into a turn. But... with all the abuse I'm already getting about make-up artists and trailers and fluffers (most of which is highly inaccurate. Okay, some of which) I have to at least show willing.

Joking aside, I'm happy to help. The classic 'handling' shot is anathema to some people these days. A cliché, an exercise in trivialising the subtle and dazzling dynamics of a well

set-up car and, well, just a bit stupid. I'm of a different opinion. Firstly, they're done with lookouts and radios and mostly at low speed. Secondly, they look cool. But most of all, as the bloke trying to get the car to look dramatic and exciting, they offer a vivid snapshot of the car's ability to convey confidence. Accrued knowledge from many years of doing this stuff suggests the idea of warming-up in a rear-drive Huracán with nervous steering, binary throttle response and sharp edges is A Very Bad Idea.

It isn't. Even on the way to 'the corner' this Huracán feels different. The steering is a shade slow and light but it feels consistent and is well matched to the way the car flows over the ground. The RWD possesses a wicked combination of iron control and finessed damping yet still with a sense of short-travel aggression as it occasionally picks up a rear wheel over jagged surfaces. The balance of fluidity and sharpness in the chassis overlaid by manic aggression from the V10 and a sublime gearbox has me pretty much drooling from the off.

Ten minutes later we're done and the Lambo

is firmly entrenched in my affections. What a thing! I'm not sure I've ever driven an 'entry level' supercar that feels so wild and focused. Is it easy to slide? Not especially on the road, but the way the forces build, the spike of oversteer and the speed and smoothness you need to exercise to keep everything calm reminds me of driving a 997 GT2 RS. Scary, but in all the right ways.

Aston, and Andy too, continue to ignore Stu's impeccable logic and ask for more sideways shots, so I go along for the ride. The Yaris is small, light and I love the relentless energy it has for howling along any road. It's hard not to hark back to homologation cars of old when you experience it. The only disappointment is that it's more Integrale or Impreza than Evo. I love its ability but hoped for more of the Mitsubishi's extreme, edgy character. Or a Spec C for that matter. The Cayman feels lighter still and wonderfully accurate and the 992 Turbo is like every 911 at the limit only with the world on fast-forward. Completely unhinged. The 765LT? Henry volunteered for that one. Good lad. **x**

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just a small selection of the 60,000 deals available on the website too, so if your tastes are more Type R and E63 than i30 N and M5, you'll almost certainly find an evo-worthy car to suit.

Hyundai i30 N Performance

There are faster hot hatchbacks and ones wearing more prestigious badges, but you'll struggle to find one that delivers more satisfying on-road thrills than Hyundai's i30 N Performance.

It's been an evo favourite since launch, with a punchy 2-litre engine, fantastic levels of control and composure and a look that hits all the right notes. Perhaps the greatest compliment we can give it is that if you're in the market for a Golf GTI,

then you really should give the i30 N a try too.

One area the i30 N comfortably has the edge is price. Brand new it's already something of a bargain, but nearly-new models on Buyacar are even more cost-effective. How does a two-year-old N Performance for £21,195 sound? That's supermini money for a car that can mix it with Golf GTIs and Mégane RSs, and at £340 a month it shouldn't put too great a dent in your finances either.

Toyota GR Supra Pro

Toyota's Supra is a legendary name among enthusiasts, particularly with younger generations brought up on movie and video game appearances. The latest model shares its underpinnings and



335bhp straight-six with the BMW Z4, but Toyota went its own way with the styling and chassis tuning, and the result is a bold and brawny grand tourer. Thankfully the Supra isn't an exotic machine in terms of running costs, capable of 34.4mpg combined if you're going easy. Nor does it need to feel like an exotic toy to buy. While a new Supra Pro with its head-up display and 12-speaker JBL audio will cost you £54,340, you can save over £7000 on a 1364-mile example on Buyacar, paying £658 a month with a £300 contribution and APR from 7.9 per cent. Maybe you could spend what you save turning the car into something truly worthy of the Midnight Club...

Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio

Too often in the past would Alfa Romeo reviews have to carry some kind of caveat over their useability or driving characteristics, but the Alfa Romeo Giulia, and the monstrously fast Quadrifoglio in particular, needs no such subtext. It's the complete package: great to look at, a pleasure to operate thanks to fantastic seats and tactile gearshift paddles, agile and engaging to drive, and surprisingly approachable despite its 503bhp output.

The Quadrifoglio is eminently useable, too. On a cruise the twin-turbocharged V6 settles down to a background murmur and really isn't too thirsty, and whether on motorway, A-road or broken British back road, its supple chassis floats over the surface in a way few rivals can emulate. At £62,295 or £960 per month from Buyacar it won't run roughshod over your wallet either – that sticker price is a useful saving of almost five grand next to a brand new model.

BMW M5 Competition

Now things are getting really serious. BMW's M5 is a true performance icon, from the first M5 of 1984 that packed the M1 supercar's straight-six, through the glorious naturally aspirated V8 of the E39 generation, to the latest F90, whose 4.4-litre twin-turbo V8 makes 616bhp and 553lb ft of torque. It's a devastatingly effective combination, both in terms of sheer speed (the M Driver's pack lifts top speed to 190mph) and also typical 5-series comfort.

You'll pay six figures for a car fresh from the factory these days, but there is another way. With just a few hundred miles on the clock you can save more than £10,000 with examples on Buyacar, with a cash price of £90,280, or £1306 per month with a £300 Buyacar contribution and 7.9 per cent APR. Nobody will be any the wiser at the saving but you'll still get to enjoy those timeless M5 qualities.

Ferrari 812 Superfast

As we race towards an electric future cars such as the Ferrari 812 Superfast surely won't be long for this world. That Ferrari still makes cars such as this today is something to celebrate, and while there



have been a few automotive misnomers in the past, 'Superfast' is categorically not among them. Experiencing 789bhp from a naturally aspirated, 9000rpm-limited 6.5-litre V12 is as life-affirming as you'd infer from the numbers, and the soundtrack and agility are out of this world.

The price though doesn't have to be. Let's not pretend that a nearly new Ferrari is inexpensive, but a cash price of £229,395 is still a £30,000 saving, with under 3000 miles on the 812's digital odometer. There are more threes in the monthly price too: a £300 contribution from Buyacar, and a figure of £3330 per month. Given the car's well inside Ferrari's four-year unlimited mileage warranty, it's about as painless as buying a supercar can get.

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FAST FLEET



NEW ARRIVAL

BMW M340i xDrive Touring

It's not a full-blooded M3 estate, but is this top-of-the-range M Performance version still worthy of your consideration? Over the next six months, we're going to find out



NINE MONTHS RUNNING AN Aston Martin Vantage have come to an end (see page 144) and whatever replaced it was always going to be a bit of a contrast. And contrasts to two-seater sports cars don't come much greater than a grey estate car parked in the Vantage's space.

evo's Dravit Grey estate car is more than just a 3-series Touring, however, for ahead

of the arrival of the first official M3 Touring in 2022, a G21 M340i xDrive is the fastest and most powerful 3-series wagon you can buy, thanks to its 369bhp B58 3-litre turbocharged straight-six.

As the xDrive nomenclature indicates, it's four-wheel drive – the only drive option available with this engine, which also means BMW's eight-speed automatic is the sole transmission. Previous exposure to



p143 Porsche 911 Carrera (996)



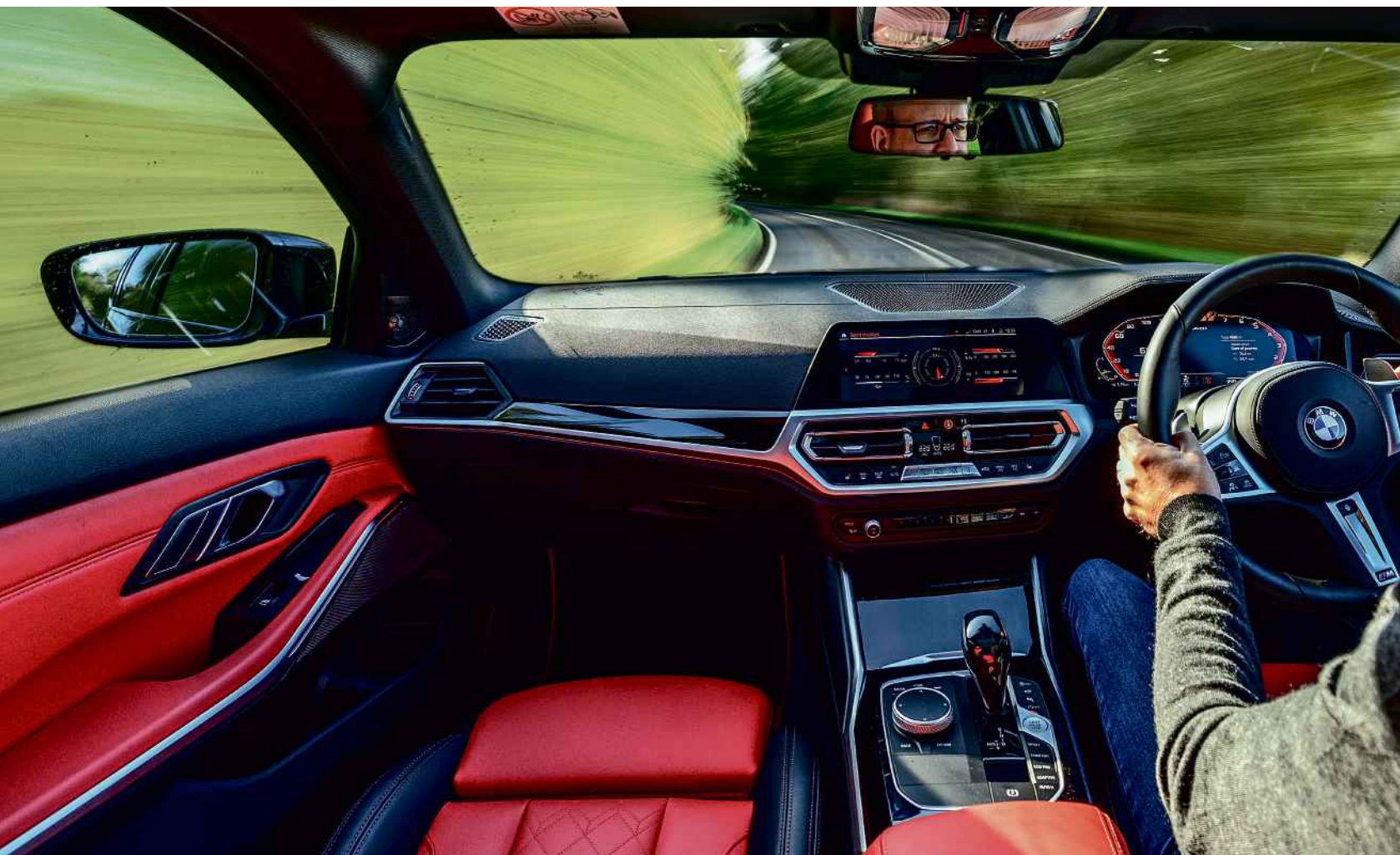
p144 Aston Martin Vantage



p148 VW Passat R-Line Edition



p148 Dacia Duster



this drivetrain suggests there's more adjustability than the specification might lead you to believe, and since YB69 FYG joined **evo** at the beginning of autumn each drive has also indicated a more traditional BMW rear-drive dynamic than you might expect, too.

Deciding on the spec of FYG was left to BMW, but there's very little I'd change. **evo**'s design team let out a collective groan at the colour of the paintwork, but after spending 8000 miles in an Aston, I'm looking forward to travelling discreetly and blending in on the M11. Thankfully the Fiona Red and black Merino leather interior lifts the mood when you open the door.

In a WLTP world the new car ordering process is now one of selecting option packs rather than individual trinkets, and there's one that was ticked for our car that I would have spent a great deal of time hovering over, unable to decide if it would be £750 well spent or not. For this sum you can have the Shadow Line Plus option, which provides black mirror caps and a black front grille, rear privacy glass (hmm, would prefer clear glass but a not a deal-breaker), BMW's Individual high-gloss

Shadow Line trim with 'extended contents' (any bits of trim that had a chrome or silver finish are turned black – a must-have), and a set of Jet Black 19-inch M double-spoke light alloy wheels. It's the wheels that would have kept me hovering over the button. Black wheels should only ever be seen on a Mk3 Vauxhall Astra in an episode of *The Bill* or be of the steel variety and fitted with a set of winter tyres. On a G21 they make it look under-wheeled and the body look a little droopy.

Other options fitted to bump up the £50,710 RRP include the £1500 Visibility Pack (high-beam assist and laser headlights) and the £1900 Technology Pack (head-up display, Harman Kardon surround sound, enhanced Bluetooth and wireless charging, gesture control, and prep for a Wi-Fi hot spot). The Comfort Pack (steering wheel heating, comfort access, luggage compartment package and extended storage) is a further £890. Add in the £300 charged for the piano black trim, £1100 for the grey paint, 'Driving Assistant Professional' at £1250 and £650 for Parking Assist Plus and the total price ends up at £58,735. That's an awful lot of money if you were to write a cheque

for it in one hit, but chances are you'll put a four or possibly small five-figure sum down and pay a three-figure monthly payment for a couple of years.

Would it be worth it regardless of how you paid and how big a discount you negotiated? After the first couple of thousand miles I'm already preparing myself for the feeling of loss that will come with life post six-cylinder 3-series Touring ownership.

For a family of three (or four if you count the puppy, which apparently I should) it's all the car you could ever need in terms of space and practical things, but it's how it drives and settles into the duties of getting you to where you want to be in a way that isn't instantly unforgettable that has impressed in these early weeks.

Its dimensions, while not E46 compact, mean you're not thumping over the catseyes to avoid the nearside hedge and you can make progress without crossing the white line and therefore without drawing attention to yourself. And it's pleasing to report that a BMW straight-six, even one that's turbocharged, remains one of the industry's endearing motors. There's a charm to it that makes even the most mundane journey feel special. It also delivers a



Porsche 911 Carrera (996.2)

A new exhaust has changed the Carrera's character

level of performance that, while unlikely to set a blistering time on Bedford Autodrome's West Circuit, does result in a satisfying feeling at the end of a journey. Like you've actually driven a car rather than been driven in it. This is a mainstream car that doesn't forget to ask the fleshy bit behind the wheel to get involved, basically.

Naturally there are driver modes aplenty, stability systems that require slackening off from time to time and safety systems that irritate but thankfully remain silent for evermore once you've told them to.

A compact, six-cylinder BMW estate car has always had a desirability about it that no rival has managed to better without turning in a full-blown RS or AMG derivative, and I'm going to enjoy the next six months discovering if this remains the case. Which I already suspect it will.

Stuart Gallagher (@stuartg917)

Date acquired October 2020 **Total mileage** 5104 **Mileage this month** 2376 **Cost this month** £0 **mpg this month** 27.4

MY LAST REPORT (evo 279) WAS A DIZZY recollection of big servicing expenditure and new parts for the 996, but now I've calmed down a bit I thought I'd go into more detail about the new Kline Innovation exhaust system. I've retained the factory manifolds – for now – but everything aft of them is new, including consumables such as the lambda sensors.

Junking the standard 600-cell cats for free-flowing 200-cell items in theory releases a bit more power and torque, and then there's the X-pipe design with the gas paths merged in the middle of the car at the rear and then directed to the silencers in the corners, which are now single-chamber items. The pipe diameter is 57mm before the cats and into the tailpipe trims, and 63mm elsewhere. Kline offers its systems in Inconel 625, but that's a bit drastic for a humble 996 Carrera, so mine is in 304 stainless steel. Kline claims the Inconel version weighs just 14.9kg and the steel version 18.1kg, although when Auto Umbau (who fitted the exhaust while carrying out the servicing) put my Kline set-up on the scales it actually came in underweight at 17.6kg, while the factory exhaust system that came off the car weighed 29.4kg. So in other words, a very worthwhile saving.

When the engine cranks now there's a real *wumph!* as it catches, and a really deep, menacing idle. It sounds very Mezger-like now, the noise of a GT3, and not at all like the traditional M96 engine noise. At least, that is, at low revs. But hey, it's not a GT3, right? It's still a bit one-dimensional higher

'It sounds very Mezger-like now, the noise of a GT3'

up the rev range. Most of the time the extra noise is very welcome, although there is quite a lot of bassy resonance at – typically – motorway speeds. Still, I did say I wanted it to be more aggressive in character.

It's also altered the character of the car on the road. It's actually lost a little torque and throttle response below 4000rpm, where it no longer pulls with the ease it once did. But the trade-off is real enthusiasm to the delivery above that rpm figure now, which makes you want to drive it harder.

Apart from the influence of effectively shortening the gas path, it seems the torque loss may be due to the engine running richer. I've noticed a substantial drop in mpg, too, which backs this theory up. What it needs is a good old tune up, something that Rob Young and his laptop at DMS Automotive are about to sort out. I'm told to expect the realisation of all that potential, and I can't wait to experience what that might be like...

Adam Towler (@AdamTowler)

Date acquired May 2016 **Total mileage** 85,196 **Mileage this month** 251 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 20.1



END OF TERM

Aston Martin Vantage

Aston finally sorted its Vantage, and we reaped the benefits

IT'S ALL OVER, THEN. THE ASTON MARTIN Vantage has left the **evo** car park for the last time and with it has left a rather fast hole in our fleet. For all the troubles inside the factory and in the boardroom, Aston Martin continues to turn out a suite of models that offer a collection of character traits we admire greatly in a driver's car but are finding increasingly hard to track down, regardless of the manufacturer. And the Vantage's character was a standout part of its appeal during its nine months and 8000 miles with us.

I was given the arduous task of collecting KR69 HTE from Aston Martin's Gaydon HQ, which was a rather surreal yet exciting glimpse into the world of someone fortunate enough to order their own Vantage, or any Aston for that matter. I hadn't specced **evo**'s Vantage, so while I'd spent hours on the configurator, the moment the spec arrived in my inbox I still wasn't sure what to expect of White Stone paint with red highlights. With a couple of

car design graduates on **evo**'s team in the form of dep ed Adam Towler and digital news editor Jordan Katsianis constantly banging on about shoulder lines and highlights, I sent them the spec in anticipation of some insight. 'It's white with red bits,' was the reply. 'Not sure how that's going to work.' Good to see that education didn't go to waste, boys.

When the silk cover gracefully fell to the floor, this cynic went a little weak-kneed. HTE looked remarkable. The pearlescence in the white paint pinged in sunlight like a jewel, the red diffuser, side mirrors and front grille inserts – all part of the full graphics pack – a perfect accompaniment of colour without grabbing you by the scruff and blinding you. It looked bloody cool, as an Aston should.

With every day, week and month that passed, the Vantage drew smiles from me (a miracle in itself) and turned heads, posed for cameraphones and sparked conversation from all who walked by. It was a genuine attention-grabber, but in all the right ways.

It did an equally strong job of grabbing your attention when driving it, too, which was a huge relief. **evo** and the Vantage haven't always had the strongest of bonds, with us feeling the early cars were somewhat undercooked and had been produced to satisfy the company's IPO rather than to be competitive against rivals. And once Aston Martin's former CEO let us drive 'his' cars again it was clear the engineering team had been burning the midnight oil to bring the Vantage up to scratch. Since mid-summer 2019 every entry-level Aston has continued to shine and HTE was no different.

So what if its 4-litre V8 is an AMG unit? It suits the nature of the car so well. There was always an angry punch of power waiting as the revs approached their peak, following the torque shove that was always building to a higher level to provide multiple layers of performance to suit the situation you found yourself in. If you wanted it to be, the Vantage was an easy car in which to cover large distances in a short space of time, and an immersive and intoxicating one when you chose to dive off the beaten track.

Pre-lockdown, HTE carried out a handful of airport runs, and these coincided with the only time I left the auto 'box in Drive: for every other occasion the



'Hooked up and in the zone the Vantage felt unbeatable. And the harder you drove it, the more thrilling it was'

paddles (great size, nicely finished) were used, the 'box reacting far quicker to them than when left to its own algorithm. Sport+ became my default driving mode, too, adding some pep to the throttle response and shift speeds and feeling like it was the default setting envisaged before WLTP stepped in.

Hooked up and in the zone the Vantage felt unbeatable, its blend of performance and poise allowing you to immerse yourself in its ability to pull apart a road with an unexpected level of clarity. And the harder you drove it, the more visceral and thrilling that experience was. If the surface was far from dry you still needed your wits about you, because it wasn't a miracle worker when it came to generating traction where there was none to be had. Measured

inputs and a sensitive approach to throttle and steering angles made for the best results. Although, if you found yourself with the space to explore the chassis a little more, the e-diff (the first of its kind fitted to an Aston) hooked up quickly and was consistent in how it managed torque and power. It was a spiky transition from grip to slip, but once you were sliding it became manageable and calm. Ish.

Spend this much time with a car that wears a £165,735 price tag (with options) and you're going to find fault somewhere, no matter how broad the grin it can induce. Most of this was aimed at the interior. It's not up to scratch in terms of materials used or its aesthetic and requires a rethink.

A faulty coil pack and a fuel flap that failed to

open one day (neither stopped HTE in its tracks) were the only gremlins to be inflicted on us.

If I had the funds, would I buy one? Yes. The Vantage is a super sports car brimming with character and personality that focuses on thrilling you with every drive. As with all modern cars of its ilk, its list price is hard to justify, but the driving experience remains one to savour.

Stuart Gallagher (@stuartg917)

Date acquired January 2020 **Duration of test** 9 months **Total test mileage** 8457 **Overall mpg** 24.6 **Costs** £0 **Purchase price** £165,735 **Value today** £99,000



Lamborghini Murciélago

SG54 has been racking up more miles... and losing them at the same time

IT'S BEEN A WHILE, I HEAR YOU SAY. AND you'd be right. SG54 is still alive and kicking though, I'm pleased to report, albeit spending more time staring at the inside of its barn than it has in the last 15 years put together. That said, it's never been a garage queen, as regular *evo* readers will know, and it's rather late in the day to start now. So what's new?

Well, since my last report about a year ago (*evo* 268), when the big Lambo returned from an epic 4000-mile Scandinavian trip, for obvious reasons this year's driving trips have been written off. So sadly not much has been added to the odo. And talking of mileage, if you've looked at the figures at the end of this report you may be wondering how instead of adding to the last reported 274,668-mile total it appears to have lost 90 per cent of it.

Nope, it's not been jacked up and run backwards for weeks (à la Ferrari 250GT California Spyder in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*), nor has it had a visit from the 'mileage correction' fraternity. In fact I didn't even notice its far more agreeable clicks until I checked

the Murciélago's MOT certificate in June, a full six months after it had passed said test. I nearly spat out my tea when I saw the mileage had been recorded as 27,750 instead of 277,500.

On phoning the Midlands-based service centre (which I should say I'd not used before, my usual one having closed), the MOT inspector remembered SG54 immediately. 'Oh, yes,' he explained. 'We had a debate about the mileage at the time and decided no Lambo on earth could have covered 277,000 miles, so concluded it must actually be 27,750.' Fantastic. Would a phone call have been too much?

So now I have a Lamborghini that's had over 8000 supercar experience drivers behind its wheel, been in a smash that cost nigh-on six figures and took three years to come back from, has had more new parts fitted than Trigger's broom, and now, to top it all, has a dodgy mileage history too! Part exchange, anyone?

On the bright side, the Murciélago and I have had some great trips here in Blighty recently.



Thanks to a nearby resurfaced road we can now take regular trips together up to my Cumbrian hideaway located around 1800ft up a small mountain. To access this desolate roof-of-England spot the Murciélago still has to be reversed about 250 yards down a dirt track to avoid leaving bits of itself on the ground (the original front lifting system was not replaced after the 2012 calamity). In fact, repairing and repainting the many battle scars the Lambo has picked up in recent times has long become tedious, but I suppose it's too much to hope they might



Mazda 3 Skyactiv-X AWD

It may be frugal, but the 3 is proving devoid of driving thrills

ON THE UPSIDE, THE ECONOMY OF the Mazda 3 continues to impress. It's rarely below 40mpg for a tankful, which means I typically get 400 miles between fill-ups. On the downside, despite having clocked up over 5000 miles, the innovative 1.8-litre engine hasn't become freer and more willing. It still feels like it's lacking torque, despite having a small supercharger and a mild-hybrid system to help out, so apart from fill-ups, it's a disappointment. Mind, I think that if I was driving a car with 150bhp, which is what the 178bhp Mazda feels like it has, I could get 40mpg or better.

There is performance at the top end, but with such long gearing there's rarely the opportunity to go there, and even if you do and wring it out for a few miles on a decent road, the sound and refinement don't reward you. Nor does the performance, to be honest. So the saving grace has to be the chassis.

Oh dear. This top-of-the-range model comes with all-wheel drive, which means changing the torsion-beam rear axle for an independent set-up, which ought to give more tuning possibilities. They appear not to have been exploited.

Indeed, the basics of chassis tuning seem not to have been of much concern. The ride is poor: the car is agitated on bumpy roads and there's no pay-off at speed because the Mazda lurches over big bumps, its suspension reaching full droop with a thump surprisingly quickly, suggesting limited travel. It's not a relaxing car to be in.

'The dynamic balance is, well, not very dynamic. It's not exploiting the potential of its 4WD'

The handling isn't up to much either. Grip is modest, which is fine, but there's not much feel through the steering, and the dynamic balance is, well, not very dynamic. So it's not exploiting the potential of its four-wheel drive, and with so little torque to trouble traction, there seems little reason to have a diff and driveshafts at the rear. If it's there as an outlet for whatever the hybrid system supplies, that urge could be sent through the front wheels where there is plenty of capacity.

So, apart from being frugal, what else is there? Well, I still love the two-tone interior, admire the HMI and enjoy the clarity of the instruments. The quality of the Bose hi-fi is fabulous, too, and it's a good-looking car. But there's no getting away from the fact that it's gutless and utterly uninspiring to drive and a small piece of me dies every time I have to drive it.

John Barker (@evoJB)

Date acquired March 2020 **Total mileage** 5220 **Mileage this month** 1088 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 41.2

actually add to the car's 'provenance'. Fat chance...

Mechanically, since it gobbled the best part of £10k last year (replacement fuel hoses, valve timing, major service and new rubber), SG54 has behaved impeccably, although like my girlfriend it still dislikes early starts immensely. In fact, it makes me snigger when I ponder how a supercar costing the best part of £200,000 in 2004 obstinately refuses to select second when cold. But hey, it certainly adds to its character.

Let's hope that by the next update I can regale you with more tales of the Murciélago's Scandinavian adventures, including another meet with its Danish twin brother from Copenhagen.

In the meantime, stay safe.

Simon George

Date acquired September 2004 **Total mileage** 28,772 (see text) **Mileage this month** 449 **Costs since last update** c£10,000 **mpg this month** 10.0



Dacia Duster

The Dacia's looney tune is proving to be a real pain

FOR AS LONG AS I'VE BEEN LIVING with the Duster one thing has consistently annoyed the hell out of me: the horn beep function when the car locks automatically. It starts as a minor niggle, until you find yourself walking in and out of your house with the key card in your pocket. Or if you get home in the dead of night. Or you're on a petrol station forecourt.

What I initially regarded as a friendly *beep, beep* at journey's end has now become something of a trigger for all kinds of profanity. I've consulted the owner's manual, and all-knowing Siri, but to no avail. If anyone knows how to silence the Duster's forlorn Road Runner-style mewling without resorting to explosives or a chainsaw, please get in touch.

Thankfully in every other respect the Duster is still proving spot-on. Recent wet roads have highlighted a lack of grip through higher-speed corners, but this just means you have to concentrate a bit more and drive according to the conditions. It's an old-fashioned concept, but one that's surprisingly good to be reacquainted with.

'The novelty of trading a hardcore Fast Fleeter for the Dacia is yet to wane'

With more than 5000 miles covered as I write, I'm pleased to say that the novelty of trading the usual hardcore *evo* Fast Fleeter for the unashamedly normcore Dacia is yet to wane. Moreover, now that we're well into autumn I'm finding myself hoping for some proper snowfall over winter, as I reckon a Duster on some quality winter tyres could be quite the weapon.

Mother Nature, do your worst!

Richard Meaden (@DickieMeaden)

Date acquired January 2020 **Total mileage** 5310 **Mileage this month** 1110 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 41.2

VW Passat R-Line Edition

A stand-in diesel Passat spars with one of Ferrari's finest

AS MENTIONED LAST MONTH, OUR Passat was sent back to VW UK's press garage for repair after the tailgate got damaged during our eCoty shoot at Anglesey. Thankfully a replacement car was available, so I found myself driving up to Scotland for the second part of eCoty in another Passat, this one a 148bhp 2-litre diesel version. The spec was pure granddad, with a dark blue exterior and a full cream interior.

The drive north was as you would expect – very comfortable, but not hugely exciting. The surprise came when I finally got off the motorway and onto some proper driving roads. I decided to see what the car had to offer and started to push on, and despite the weather not being great, the Passat felt very predictable. Grip levels were fine at the front end but the rear would slip out slightly, and when you combined this with the lean of the car it actually made for quite an enjoyable experience.

With 30 minutes to go until I reached our hotel, I noticed a vehicle making good progress in my mirrors. Assuming it to be one of the *evo* crew I thought it would only be right if I didn't slow them down. As the gap closed, I could see it was the F8 Tributo, which then followed me for several miles until we both pulled into a petrol station. As Dickie Meaden emerged from the Ferrari he could barely contain his amusement at what he'd just seen, and admitted he thought it must have been one of the team, even though he didn't recognise car.

The Passat went on to fulfil its camera-car duties brilliantly that week, but it also proved that you don't need to have 700bhp to have fun behind the wheel – even on eCoty.

Aston Parrott (@AstonParrott)

Date acquired January 2020 **Total mileage** 7720 **Mileage this month** 661 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 28.1



"M2 performance with newfound precision and control."

- EVO Magazine ★★★★★

"It's so much more composed with the springs and dampers combining beautifully to deal with everything that's thrown at them."

- BMWCar Magazine ★★★★★

"The result is a car damn near as quick and exciting as the M2 Competition and, whisper it, more balletic on the road."

- Autocar ★★★★★



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Heel Tread socks

Heel Tread is celebrating the Hollywood film *Le Mans '66* with a limited edition four-pack inspired by the liveries of the Ford GT40s that changed racing forever. Heel Tread's collection features quintessential automotive icons, ideal for true petrol heads. Made in Portugal, Heel Tread uses seamless knitting techniques to create high-quality cotton products.

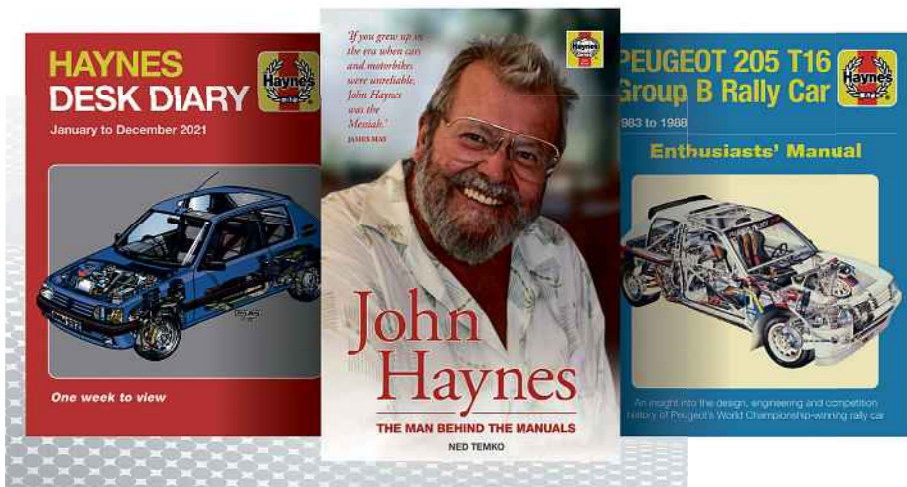
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New books from Haynes

The inspiring biography of John H Haynes – the man behind Haynes Manuals – looks 'under the bonnet' at his extraordinary life and motoring legacy. The 2021 editions of Haynes' best-selling diaries are available in two sizes, and include classic cutaway diagrams from the company archives. The Peugeot 205 T16 Enthusiasts' Manual, meanwhile, takes a detailed look at the Group B icon from the original 1984 car to the 550bhp monsters of 1986.

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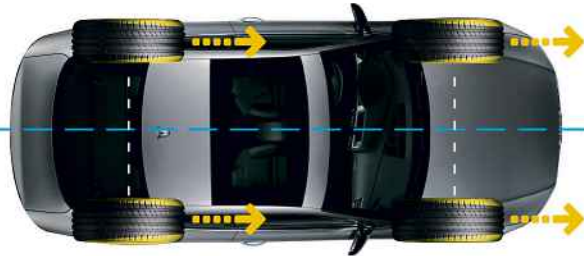
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The Knowledge

RATINGS

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

⊕ = 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.

SUPERMINIS / HOT HATCHES



OUR CHOICE

Honda Civic Type R. Building on the promise shown by the short-lived FK2 version, the FK8 Type R is a more rounded proposition – and is all the better for it. It's outrageously fast on every kind of road, edges ahead of its rivals on track, offers oodles of interaction and is practical to boot.



BEST OF THE REST

The **Renault Megané 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 (ON ROAD OR ASK)	ENGINE CYL / CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	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	187 F	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	14-18	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	13	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	15-16	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	12-18	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	11-12	4/1598	204/6000	203/2000	1240kg	167 6.5	-	-	-	146	+ A faster, feistier DS3 - Not as hardcore as its 'Racing' tag suggests
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
⊕ Cupra Leon e-Hybrid	280 D	£32,000	4/1395	242	295	1596kg	154 6.7	-	-	-	140	+ Steers and handles neatly; tax-friendly - Can't decide if it's a hot hatch or a Prius rival
DS 3 Performance	222 D	16-18	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	91/4250	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	3/1998	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	3/1998	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	13-17	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	16	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	15-18	4/1999	247/5500	265/2000	1362kg	184 6.5	-	-	-	154	+ Excellent engine - Scrapy 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	15-18	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	18	4/2261	345/6000	347/2000	1547kg	227 4.7	-	-	-	166	+ Front limited-slip differential brings more precise handling - Pricy 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	345/6500	339/2500	1467kg	239 5.6	5.6	12.7	165	+ More power and presence than regular Mk2 RS - Pricy	
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)	280 F	£32,820	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)	227 F	15-17	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	4/1995	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	19-20	£25,995	4/1998	247/6000	279/1750	1400kg	179 6.4	-	-	-	155	+ Very close to the Performance version on ability... - ...but 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	13-18	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	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	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	15-18	4/1991	376/6000	350/2250	1480kg	258 4.2	3.9	-	-	155	+ Tremendously fast - But not a true great

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (on road incl VAT)	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/PS	LB FT/PS	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLIMB)	0-60MPH (0-100)	0-100MPH (0-100)	MAX MPH	EVO RATING
Mercedes-Benz A45 AMG	194 F	12-'15	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1480kg	244	4.6	4.3	10.6	155	★★★★☆ + Blisteringly quick everywhere - Not as rewarding as some slower rivals
Mini Cooper (F56)	254 T	E17,635	3/1499	134/4500	162/1250	1085kg	125	7.9	-	-	130	★★★★☆ + Driving a slow car fast - Driving a car with Union Jack tail lights
Mini Cooper S (F56)	268 F	E20,925	4/1998	189/4700	221/1250	1195kg	161	6.8	-	-	146	★★★★☆ + Feels darty and alive at moderate speeds - Loses its composure when you push harder
Mini John Cooper Works (F56)	211 F	E25,950	4/1998	228/5200	236/1250	1200kg	193	6.3	-	-	153	★★★★☆ + Fast, agile, nimble - Chassis lacks sparkle found in previous JCWs
Mini John Cooper Works GP (F56)	280 F	E33,895	4/1998	302/1750	332/1750	1255kg	244	5.2	-	-	164	★★★★☆ + Street-fighter looks, illustrious predecessors - Better at style than it is substance
Mini John Cooper Works Challenge (F56)	237 F	16-'17	4/1998	228/5200	236/1250	1215kg	191	6.3	-	-	152	★★★★☆ + A more hardcore JCW - The ride could be considered a little too hardcore
Mini Cooper (R56)	185 F	09-'14	4/1598	120/6000	118/4250	1075kg	113	9.1	-	-	126	★★★★☆ + Brilliant ride and composure; could be all the Mini you need - You'll still buy the 'S'
Mini Cooper S (R56)	149 F	06-'14	4/1598	181/5500	177/1600	1140kg	161	7.0	7.0	-	142	★★★★☆ + Like the Cooper, but with added shove - Google 'Mini death rattle'
Mini John Cooper Works (R56)	184 F	08-'14	4/1598	208/6000	206/2000	1160kg	182	6.9	7.2	16.7	148	★★★★☆ + A seriously rapid Mini - Occasionally just a little unruly
Mini John Cooper Works GP (R56)	231 F	13-'14	4/1598	215/6000	206/2000	1160kg	188	6.3	-	-	150	★★★★☆ + Brazenly hyperactive - Too much for some roads and some tastes
Mini John Cooper Works Coupé (R58)	164 F	11-'15	4/1598	208/6000	206/2000	1175kg	180	6.3	-	-	149	★★★★☆ + The usual raucous Mini JCW experience - But wearing a backwards baseball cap
Mini Cooper S (R53)	077 F	02-'06	4/1598	168/6000	155/4000	1140kg	143	7.2	7.8	19.9	135	★★★★☆ + Strong performance, quality feel - Over-long gearing
Mini Cooper S Works GP (R53)	262 F	06	4/1598	215/7100	184/4600	1090kg	200	6.5	-	-	149	★★★★☆ + Storming engine, agility - Almost too mannered for a road racer
Nissan Juke Nismo RS	208 D	15-'17	4/1618	215/6000	206/3600	1315kg	166	7.0	-	-	137	★★★★☆ + Quirky character and bold styling - Not a match for a pukka hot hatch
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 2)	273 F	97-'98	4/1587	103/6200	97/3500	865kg	121	8.8	-	-	121	★★★★☆ + Bargain no-frills thrills - Not as much fizz as original 1.3
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 1)	095 F	94-'96	4/1294	100/7200	80/5400	826kg	123	10.6	-	-	118	★★★★☆ + Frantic, thrashy fun - Needs caning to extract full potential
Peugeot 106 GTI 16v	034 F	97-'04	4/1587	120/6600	107/5200	950kg	128	7.4	-	-	127	★★★★☆ + Fine handling supermini - Looks its age
Peugeot 208 GTI by Peugeot Sport	254 F	15-'18	4/1598	205/6000	221/3000	1160kg	180	6.5	-	-	143	★★★★☆ + A brilliantly focused small hatch - Obscured dials
Peugeot 208 GTI	184 F	12-'16	4/1598	197/5800	203/1700	1160kg	173	6.8	6.8	17.9	143	★★★★☆ + Agile chassis works well on tough roads - Could be more involving
Peugeot 205 GTI 19	195 F	88-'91	4/1905	130/6000	119/4750	910kg	145	7.6	-	-	124	★★★★☆ + Still scintillating after all these years - Brittle build quality
Peugeot 308 GTI by Peugeot Sport	245 F	E30,745	4/1598	256/6000	251/2100	1205kg	224	6.0	6.0	13.8	155	★★★★☆ + A great entertainer with a crackler of an engine - Tiny steering wheel obscures the dials
Peugeot 306 GTI 6	020 F	93-'01	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1214kg	140	7.9	7.2	20.1	140	★★★★☆ + One of the great GTIs - They don't make them like this any more
Peugeot 306 Rallye	095 F	98-'99	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1163kg	146	7.8	6.9	19.2	137	★★★★☆ + Essentially a GTi 6 for less dash - Limited choice of colours
Renault Twingo GT	248 F	16-'19	3/898	109/5750	125/2000	1001kg	111	9.6	-	-	113	★★★★☆ + Nippy performance - Less fun than a rear-engined Renault Sport-fettled car should be
Renault Sport Twingo 133	175 F	08-'13	4/1598	131/6750	118/4400	1050kg	127	8.7	-	-	125	★★★★☆ + Renault Sport experience for pocket money - Optional Cup chassis gives bouncy ride
Renault Sport Clio 200 Auto	184 F	13-'18	4/1618	197/6000	177/1750	1204kg	166	6.7	6.9	17.9	143	★★★★☆ + Faster, more refined, easier to drive - We miss the revived NVA engine and manual 'box
Renault Sport Clio 220 Trophy	229 D	16-'18	4/1618	217/6050	206/2000	1204kg	183	6.6	-	-	146	★★★★☆ + Willing chassis - Awful paddleshift gearbox
Renault Sport Clio 200 Cup	247 F	09-'13	4/1998	197/7100	159/5400	1204kg	166	6.9	6.6	16.7	141	★★★★☆ + The hot Clio at its best - They don't make 'em like this any more
Renault Sport Clio 197 Cup	115 F	07-'09	4/1998	194/7250	158/5550	1240kg	161	6.9	-	-	134	★★★★☆ + Quick, polished and capable - Not as much sheer fun as 182 Cup
Renault Sport Clio 182	066 F	04-'05	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1110kg	165	7.1	6.6	17.5	139	★★★★☆ + Took hot hatches to a new level - Flawed driving position
Renault Sport Clio 182 Cup	187 F	04-'05	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	168	6.9	-	-	139	★★★★☆ + Full of beans, fantastic value - Sunday-market upholstery
Renault Sport Clio Trophy	262 F	05-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	168	6.9	6.6	17.3	140	★★★★☆ + The most fun you can have on three (sometimes two) wheels - Only 500 were built
Renault Sport Clio 172 (Phase 2)	034 F	01-'03	4/1998	170/6250	147/5400	110kg	156	7.2	7.1	20.0	138	★★★★☆ + Poised, predictable, fast - Lacks aggressive edge
Renault Sport Clio 172 Cup	048 F	02-'03	4/1998	170/6250	147/5400	1011kg	171	6.9	6.5	17.7	138	★★★★☆ + Bargain old-school hot hatch - Nervous in the wet, no ABS
Renault Sport Clio 172 (Phase 1)	146 F	00-'01	4/1998	170/6250	147/5400	1035kg	167	7.2	6.6	18.2	138	★★★★☆ + Brilliantly accomplished - Imperfect driving position
Renault Clio Williams	233 F	93-'96	4/1988	148/6100	126/4500	981kg	153	7.8	7.6	20.8	134	★★★★☆ + One of the best hot hatches ever - Can be fragile
Renault 5 GT Turbo	255 F	87-'91	4/1397	118/5750	122/3000	855kg	140	7.3	-	-	120	★★★★☆ + Clio Williams' grand-daddy - Few unmodified ones left
Renault Sport Clio V6 255	277 F	03-'05	6/2946	251/7150	221/4650	1400kg	182	5.8	-	-	153	★★★★☆ + Super car drama without the original's edgy handling - Uninspired interior
Renault Sport Clio V6	029 F	99-'02	6/2946	227/6000	221/3750	1410kg	164	6.6	5.8	17.0	145	★★★★☆ + Pocket supercar - Mid-engined handling can be tricky
Renault Mégane RS (280)	267 F	E28,695	4/1798	276/6000	288/2400	1407kg	199	5.8	6.3	14.6	158	★★★★☆ + Outrageous grip and agility - Cup chassis option doesn't do its composure any favours
Renault Mégane RS Trophy	267 F	E32,695	4/1798	296/6000	295/2400	1419kg	212	5.7	-	-	162	★★★★☆ + An RS with knobs on - Unforgiving ride can make it feel ill at ease on trickier roads
Renault Mégane RS Trophy-R	280 F	E51,455	4/1798	296/6000	295/2400	1306kg	230	5.4	-	-	163	★★★★☆ + An absolute beast on track - Too much of a beast on the road
Renault Sport Mégane 275 Cup-S/Nav 275	223 D	16	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1394kg	198	5.8	-	-	158	★★★★☆ + The same engine as the Trophy-R - They don't make it anymore
Renault Sport Mégane 265 Cup	195 F	12-'15	4/1998	261/5500	265/3000	1387kg	191	6.0	6.4	14.8	158	★★★★☆ + A hot hatch benchmark - Cupholder could be better positioned
Renault Sport Mégane 275 Trophy	212 F	14-'15	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1376kg	200	5.8	-	-	159	★★★★☆ + Another cracking Trophy model - Stripped-out Trophy-R is even more thrilling
Renault Sport Mégane 275 Trophy-R	231 F	14-'15	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1297kg	212	5.8	-	-	158	★★★★☆ + As absorbing as a 911 GT3 RS on the right road - Too uncompromising for some; pricey
Renault Sport Mégane 250 Cup	139 F	09-'12	4/1998	247/5500	251/3000	1387kg	181	6.1	6.1	14.6	156	★★★★☆ + Fantastic chassis - ...partially obscured by new-found maturity
Renault Sport Mégane 20i 175 Cup	119 F	07-'09	4/1995	173/3750	265/2000	1470kg	119	8.3	8.3	23.5	137	★★★★☆ + A diesel with a genuinely sporty chassis - Could take more power
Renault Sport Mégane 230 FI Team R26	195 F	07-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1245kg	171	6.5	6.2	16.0	147	★★★★☆ + The car the R26.R is based on - FI Team stickers in dubious taste
Renault Sport Mégane R26.R	276 F	08-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1250kg	189	6.0	5.8	15.1	147	★★★★☆ + A true hot hatch great - Two seats, plastic rear windows
SEAT Ibiza Cupra	225 F	16-'18	4/1798	189/4300	236/1450	1185kg	162	6.7	-	-	146	★★★★☆ + Quick, competent, refined, and manual only - Not exciting enough
SEAT Ibiza Cupra	183 D	10-'15	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1259kg	144	6.9	-	-	142	★★★★☆ + Punchy engine, unflappable DSG - Lacks engagement, DSG only
SEAT Leon Cupra 290	267 F	E31,150	4/1984	286/5400	280/1950	1356kg	214	6.0	-	-	155	★★★★☆ + Agile, transparent and easily exploited - Can feel rather plain
SEAT Leon Cupra R	244 D	18	4/1984	306/5800	280/1800	1378kg	226	5.8	-	-	155	★★★★☆ + Sharper handling and better body control - High price and limited availability
SEAT Leon Cupra	105 F	07-'11	4/1984	237/5700	221/2200	1375kg	175	6.4	-	-	153	★★★★☆ + Great engine, composure - Doesn't have the adjustability of the old Cupra R
SEAT Leon Cupra R	139 F	10-'12	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1375kg	193	6.2	6.1	14.0	155	★★★★☆ + Bold car, blinding engine - Lacks the character of its rivals; only 24 came to the UK
Skoda Fabia vRS (Mk2)	146 D	10-'14	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1218kg	148	7.3	-	-	139	★★★★☆ + Clever twincharged engine and DSG 'box - Do your homework on the reliability of the engine
Skoda Fabia vRS (Mk1)	077 F	03-'07	4/1896	130/4000	229/1900	1315kg	100	9.6	-	-	127	★★★★☆ + Fun and frugal hot hatch - A little short on steering feel
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk3)	187 D	13-'17	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1345kg	164	6.8	-	-	154	★★★★☆ + Quick, agile, roomier than a Golf - Ride is harsh for what could be a family car
Skoda Octavia vRS 245 (Mk3)	250 F	E28,765	4/1984	242/5000	258/1600	1370kg	179	6.6	-	-	155	★★★★☆ + A credible, entertaining performer - You won't get out of bed at 4am to drive it
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk2)	163 F	05-'13	4/1998	197/5100	206/1700	1395kg	143	7.3	-	-	149	★★★★☆ + Drives like a GTi but costs much less - Green brake calipers?
Subaru Impreza WRX	125 D	08-'10	4/2457	251/5400	288/3000	1395kg	180	5.5	-	-	130	★★★★☆ + An improvement over the basic WRX - Still not the WRX we wanted
Subaru Impreza STI 330S	124 F	08-'10	4/2457	325/5400	347/3400	1505kg	219	4.4	-	-	155	★★★★☆ + A bit quicker than the regular STI... - ...but not better
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk2)	267 F	E17,249	4/1373	138/5500	170/2500	975kg	144	8.1	7.6	20.1	130	★★★★☆ + Composed and brisk - Adjustability and character have been diluted
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk3)	175 F	12-'17	4/1586	134/6900	118/4400	1045kg	130	8.7	-	-	121	★★★★☆ + Still a great pocket rocket - Not quite as adjustable as the original
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk1)	132 F	05-'11	4/1586	123/6800	109/4800	1030kg	121	8.9	-	-	124	★★★★☆ + Entertaining handling, well built - Lacking in steering feedback
Toyota Yaris GRMN	254 F	18	4/1798	209/6800	184/5000	1350kg	187	6.3	-	-	143	★★★★☆ + Appealingly feisty supercharged supermini - Artificial steering; they only made 400
Vauxhall Corsa GSi	254 D	18-'19	4/1364	148/5000	162/2750	1278kg	129	8.9	-	-	129	★★★★☆ + Grippy and eager - Older than time itself, and feels it
Vauxhall Corsa VXR	211 F	14-'18	4/1598	202/5800	206/1900	1278kg	161	6.8	-	-	143	★★★★☆ + Begg to be wrung out - You'll need the £2400 Performance Pack
Vauxhall Corsa VXR	154 F	07-'14	4/1598	189/5850	192/1980	1166kg	165	7.2	-	-	140	★★★★☆ + Looks snazzy, punchy engine - Lacks feel, uncouth compared with rivals
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/GTC VXR (Mk2)	207 F	12-'18	4/1998	276/5500	295/2500	1475kg	190	6.0	-	-	153	★★★★☆ + Loony turbo pace - Lacks the Renault Sport Mégane's precision
Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk1)	102 F	05-'11	4/1998	237/5600	236/2400	1393kg	173	6.4	6.7	16.7	152	★★★★☆ + Fast and furious - Lacks a little composure and precision
Volkswagen Up GTI	273 F	E16,320	3/999	113/5000	147/2000	995kg	115	8.8	-	-	122	★★★★☆ + Infectious appetite for fun - City car roots are still there
Volkswagen Lupo GTI	034 F	01-'04	4/1598	123/6500	112/3000	1038kg	120	8.2	8.9	30.1	127	★★★★☆ + Looks, performance,

MAKE & MODEL

Table with columns: MAKE & MODEL, ISSUE NO., PRICE (EX TAX & DEL), ENGINE (CYL/CC), BHP/RPM, LB FT/RPM, WEIGHT, BHP/TON, 0-62MPH (CLAM), 0-60MPH (0-60), 0-100MPH (0-100), MAX MPH, and EVO RATING. Rows include Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk5), Alfa Romeo Giulia, etc.

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 XE SV 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 Mercedes-AMG C63 S.



Main table listing car models, specifications (Issue No, Price, Engine, BHP/RPM, Weight, etc.), and EVO RATING. Includes models like Alfa Romeo, Audi, BMW, Mercedes-AMG, etc.

MAKE & MODEL

ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR TRADE-IN VALUE)	ENGINE (CYL/CC)	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (S/100)	0-100MPH (S/100)	MAX MPH	EVO RATING			
Kia Stinger GT-Line 2.2 CRDi	251 T	'18-'20	4/1999	197/3800	324/1750	1735kg	115	7.3	-	143	+ Smooth daily driver with a decent interior - Frustrating auto 'box, heavy kerb weight	★★★★☆	
Kia 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	★★★★☆	
Land Rover Defender 110 (P400)	273 F	£79,655	6/2996	394/5500	406/2000	2388kg	168	6.4	-	129	+ A great off-roader - If off-roading is your thing	★★★★☆	
Lamborghini Urus	249 F	£159,925	8/3996	641/6000	627/2250	2200kg	296	3.6	-	190	+ A freakish manipulator of physics - But also rather one-dimensional	★★★★☆	
Lexus IS F	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	★★★★☆
Lotus 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	★★★★☆
Maserati 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	★★★★☆	
Maserati Quattroporte S	184 D	'13-'18	6/2979	404/5500	406/1750	1860kg	221	5.1	-	177	+ Tempting alternative to V8 - Feel-free steering, ride lacks decorum	★★★★☆	
Maserati Quattroporte GTS	226 D	'16-'18	8/3798	523/6800	479/2250	1900kg	280	4.7	-	193	+ Still pretty - Off the pace dynamically	★★★★☆	
Maserati Quattroporte S	137 F	'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	★★★★☆
Maserati 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	★★★★☆	
Maserati Levante Diesel	221 D	'16-'20	6/2897	271/4000	442/2000	2205kg	125	6.9	-	143	+ Impressive blend of ride and handling - Performance is mild for a Maserati	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-AMG A35 Saloon	271 F	£37,755	4/1991	302/5800	295/3000	1495kg	205	4.8	-	155	+ Fun when you want it to be, secure when the heavens open - Others are even more fun	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-AMG CLA45 S Coupé	273 D	£51,010	4/1991	415/6750	369/5000	1600kg	264	4.0	-	167	+ Speed, ability and involvement - CLA35 offers a similar experience for less outlay	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Shooting Brake	278 D	£52,010	4/1991	415/6750	369/5000	1630kg	259	4.0	-	155	+ Same stellar performance and involvement as the A45 - See above	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-AMG C43 Estate	228 D	£49,995	6/2996	362/5500	383/2000	1660kg	222	4.7	-	155	+ Incredibly fast and composed - Difficult to engage with	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-AMG C63 Saloon (W205)	209 D	'15-'20	8/3982	469/5500	479/1750	1640kg	291	4.1	-	155	+ Fast and feelsome - Lacks the ultimate finesse and response of the C63 S	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-AMG C63 Estate (S205)	216 F	'15-'20	8/3982	469/5500	479/1750	1710kg	279	4.2	-	155	+ Much more fun than it looks - Gearbox dim-witted at low speeds	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Saloon (W205)	258 T	£74,258	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1655kg	309	4.0	-	155	+ Tremendous twin-turbo V8 power - Not quite as focused as an M division car	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Estate (S205)	252 D	£75,458	8/3982	503/5500	516/2000	1700kg	292	4.1	-	174	+ One of the finest all-round compact performance cars - Baffling array of driver settings	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG (W204)	151 F	'04-'08	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	277	4.5	4.4	9.7	155	+ Monstrous pace and extremely engaging - Same-era M3 is just a little better...	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz C63 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	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-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	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-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	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-AMG E63 AMG (W212)	242 D	'18-'20	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	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-AMG E63 S (W213)	258 F	£96,525	8/3982	604/5750	627/2500	1880kg	326	3.4	3.4	7.4	155	+ Fast, refined, effective and fun - At nearly two tons, it's not 911 nimble	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG E63 S Estate (S213)	278 F	£98,525	8/3982	604/5750	627/2500	1995kg	308	3.5	-	155	+ As above - It's even heavier than the saloon, and its metres long	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-AMG GT63 4-Door Coupé	274 F	'19-'20	8/3982	577/5500	590/2500	2025kg	290	3.4	-	193	+ Does the same as the S for less - Takes up plenty of road	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-AMG GT63 4-Door Coupé	269 F	£138,815	8/3982	630/5500	664/2500	2045kg	313	3.2	-	196	+ Agile and immensely quick - Lacks the coupe GT S's drama	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212)	187 D	'13-'16	8/5461	549/5500	513/1750	1770kg	315	4.2	-	155	+ Power, response and accuracy in spades - A little lacking in originality	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-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	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212)	165 F	'11-'13	8/5461	518/5250	516/1750	1765kg	298	4.4	-	155	+ Turbo engine didn't dilute the E63 experience - Sometimes struggles for traction...	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212)	134 D	'09-'11	8/6208	518/6800	465/3200	1765kg	298	4.5	-	155	+ Indulgent chassis, brilliant engine - Steering still vague	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W211)	096 D	'06-'09	8/6208	507/6800	465/5200	1765kg	292	4.5	-	155	+ Brilliant engine, indulgent chassis - Vague steering, speed limits	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-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, cossetting ride - Speed limits	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG S63 L	246 D	£129,495	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	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-AMG CLS53	247 D	£76,600	6/2999	451/6100	567/1800	1905kg	302	4.5	-	155	+ Impressive chassis and hybrid powertrain - Four-wheel drive only, and heavy, too	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-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	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-AMG GLC63 S Coupé	253 D	£85,495	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1945kg	263	3.8	-	174	+ Unquestionable performance - Lacks adjustability and engagement	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-AMG GLE63 S	218 D	£108,638	8/5461	577/5500	560/1750	2270kg	258	4.2	-	155	+ Stonking pace, extreme refinement - Feels remote	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-AMG GLE63 S Coupé	213 D	£118,105	8/5461	577/5500	560/1750	2275kg	258	4.2	-	155	+ Subtler than an X6 M - More force than finesse	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-AMG G63	250 D	£146,490	8/3982	577/6000	627/2500	2485kg	236	4.5	-	137	+ Vastly improved chassis, fabulous engine - Dynamic ability still limited	★★★★☆	
Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG	172 D	'12-'18	8/5461	537/5500	560/2000	2475kg	220	5.4	-	130	+ Epic soundtrack - Ancient chassis	★★★★☆	
Mitsubishi Evo IX 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	★★★★☆
Mitsubishi 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	★★★★☆	
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-360	122 D	'08-'14	4/1998	354/6500	363/3500	1560kg	231	4.0	-	155	+ Ridiculously rapid Evo - A five-speed gearbox?	★★★★☆	
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-400	181 F	'09-'10	4/1998	403/6500	387/3500	1560kg	262	3.8	-	155	+ Most powerful factory Evo ever... about X grand too much when new	★★★★☆	
Mitsubishi 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	★★★★☆
Mitsubishi 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	★★★★☆	
Mitsubishi 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	★★★★☆	
Mitsubishi Evo VIII MR FQ-300	057 F	'03-'05	4/1997	305/6800	289/3500	1400kg	221	4.9	-	157	+ Extra pace, extra attitude - Extra money	★★★★☆	
Mitsubishi Evo VII	031 F	'02-'03	4/1997	276/6500	282/3500	1360kg	206	5.1	5.0	13.0	140	+ Terrific all-rounder - You tell us	★★★★☆
Mitsubishi Evo VI Tommi Mäkinen Edition	271 F	'00-'01	4/1997	276/6500	275/2750	1365kg	205	4.6	-	150	+ Our favourite Evo - Subtle it is not	★★★★☆	
Polestar 2	280 D	£46,900	-	402	487	2048kg	199	4.7	-	127	+ A credible Tesla alternative - Avoid the super-hard-riding Performance upgrade	★★★★☆	
Porsche Taycan Turbo S	267 D	£138,830	-	750	774	2295kg	332	2.8	-	161	+ Straight-line oomph will leave you in awe - Inadequate EV infrastructure	★★★★☆	
Porsche Panamera 4S Diesel	232 D	'17-'20	8/3956	416/3500	627/1000	2050kg	206	4.3	-	177	+ Sharp chassis, impressive tech - Performance doesn't meet expectations	★★★★☆	
Porsche 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	★★★★☆	
Porsche Panamera Turbo	237 F	£115,100	8/3996	542/5750	568/1960	1995kg	276	3.6	3.4	8.3	190	+ Searing pace, with body control that's a real step up - Still very heavy	★★★★☆
Porsche Panamera Turbo Sport Turismo	239 D	£118,828	8/3996	542/5750	568/1960	1995kg	271	3.8	-	188	+ Looks great; drives better than its weight would suggest - Not exactly a load-lugger	★★★★☆	
Porsche Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid Sport T.	272 D	£142,280	8/3996	671	627	2325kg	293	3.4	-	192	+ Shows some Stuttgart magic in the corners - It weighs 3.2 tons!	★★★★☆	
Porsche Panamera GTS	208 F	'11-'16	8/4806	434/6700	383/3500	1925kg	229	4.4	-	178	+ Vivacious V8, entertaining balance - Can't light on performance next to turbocharged rivals	★★★★☆	
Porsche Panamera Turbo	137 F	'10-'16	8/4806	493/6000	516/2250	1970kg	254	4.2	3.6	8.9	188	+ Fast, refined and dynamically sound - It still leaves us cold	★★★★☆
Porsche Panamera Turbo S	159 D	'11-'13	8/4806	542/6000	590/2250	1995kg	276	3.8	-	190	+ Pace, excellent ergonomics - Steering feel, ride	★★★★☆	
Porsche Macan	259 D	£47,060	4/1984	242/5000	273/1600	1795kg	137	6.7	-	139	+ Lighter engine makes for sharper handling - The Golf R estate	★★★★☆	
Porsche Macan S	257 T	£49,420	6/2997	349/5400	354/1360	1865kg	190	5.3	-	157	+ Great for an SUV - Every positive still needs to be suffixed with 'for an SUV'	★★★★☆	
Porsche Macan GTS	244 F	'16-'18	6/2997	355/6000	369/1650	1895kg	190	5.2	-	159	+ Handles like an SUV shouldn't - Still looks like an SUV	★★★★☆	
Porsche Cayenne S (Mk3)	253 T	£72,080	6/2894	434/5700	406/1800	2020kg	218	5.2	-	164	+ Impressive surface-coated brake tech - We'd rather have it on a sports car	★★★★☆	
Porsche Cayenne Turbo (Mk3)	243 D	£104,490	8/3996	542/5750	568/1960	2175kg	254	4.1	-	177	+ Huge performance, surprising agility - It's still a two-ton-plus SUV	★★★★☆	
Porsche Cayenne Turbo Coupé	263 D	£108,070	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	★★★★☆	
Porsche Cayenne GTS (Mk2, V6)	211 D	'15-'17	6/3604	434/6000	442/1600	2110kg	209	5.2	-	163	+ The driver's Cayenne... but why would a driver want an SUV?	★★★★☆	
Porsche Cayenne GTS (Mk2, V8)	173 D	'12-'15	8/4806	414/6500	380/3500	2085kg	202	5.7	-	162	+ Dynamically the best SUV of its era - At two tons, it's still no sports car	★★★★☆	
Porsche Cayenne Turbo (Mk2)	212 D	'10-'17	8/4806	513/6000	533/2250	2185kg	239	4.5	-	173	+ Remarkable performance, handling, completeness - Vague steering, dated engine	★★★★☆	
Porsche Cayenne Turbo S (Mk2)	184 D	'10-'17	8/4806	562/6000	590/2500	2235kg	255	4.1	-	176	+ More power and torque than a Zonda S 7.3 - In an SUV	★★★★☆	
Range Rover Evoque P250	261 D	£38,050	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	★★★★☆	
Range Rover Velar P380	239 D	'17-'20	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	★★★★☆	
Range Rover Velar SV Autobiography Dynamic	264 D	'19-'20	8/4999	542/6000	501/2500	2085kg	264	4.5	-	170	+ Quick, luxurious - An F-Pace SVR is cheaper	★★★★☆	
Range Rover Sport V8 Supercharged	186 D	'13-'19	8/5000	503/6000	460/2500	2335kg	219	5.0	-	175			



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MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (EST. VALUE OR SALE)	ENGINE (CYL / CC)	BHP/RPM	LG FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLIMATE)	0-60MPH (EST)	0-100MPH (EST)	MAX MPH	EVO RATING
Tesla Model 3 Performance	263 F	£56,490	-	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	'17-'19	-	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	'18-'20	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	'16-'19	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	'16-'19	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	'09-'15	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	'14-'18	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	670kg*	486	2.9	-	-	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	'14-'17	12/5935	565/6750	457/5750	1745kg	329	4.1	-	-	201	+ A brilliant two-seat roadster... - let down by a frustrating automated manual gearbox
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
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
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 engine... - is 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 Drive20i	261 D	£36,990	4/1988	194/4500	236/1450	1405kg	140	6.6	-	-	149	+ Keen engine, communicative chassis - Could handle more power
BMW Z4 M40i	256 D	£49,050	6/2998	335/5000	369/1600	1535kg	222	4.6	-	-	155	+ 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	+ Looks, hard-top versatility, drivetrain - Clumsy chassis is upset by ragged surfaces
BMW Z4 M Roadster	091 F	'06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1410kg	244	5.0	-	-	155	+ 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 - Tricker 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, 'habitabile' for a Seven...
Caterham Seven 620R	255 F	£53,885	4/1999	310/7700	219/7350	572kg*	551	2.8	-	-	155	+ Banzi 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 Roadsport 125	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 Supersport	165 F	'11-'14	4/1596	140/6900	120/5790	520kg*	273	4.9	-	-	120	+ One of the best Caterhams is also one of the cheapest of its era - It's quite minimalist
Caterham Seven Supersport R	180 D	'13-'14	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	535kg*	342	4.8	-	-	130	+ One of the best road-and-track Sevens - Impractical, noisy, uncomfortable
Caterham Seven Supersprint 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 Supersprint 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	£162,000	4/2300	394/6200	369/3000	855kg*	468	3.3	-	-	174	+ Starting on-road performance - Can leave you feeling detached on track
Elemental Rpl (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 commitment
Ferrari 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
Jaguar 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
Jaguar 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
KTM 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
KTM 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	'11-'15	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?
Lotus Elise Sport 220 (S3)	244 F	£41,695	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	904kg	244	4.6	-	-	145	+ Perfect power-to-weight ratio - A bit short on creature comforts
Lotus 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
Lotus 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
Lotus 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
Lotus 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
Lotus Elise Sport 125 (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
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 IIS (S2)	049 F	'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
Lotus 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	'17-'19	6/3456	430/7000	325/4500	920kg*	475	3.2	-	-	180	+ A fitting send-off for a brilliant Lotus - Just 20 were made
Lotus 3-Eleven	126 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?
Lotus 2-Eleven Supercharged	123 F	'07-'11	4/1796	252/8000	179/7000	745kg	344	4.0	-	-	150	+ Impressive on road and track - Not hardcore enough for some
Lotus 340R	126 F	'00	4/1796	190/7800	146/5000	701kg	275	4.5	4.5	12.5	126	+ Hardcore road-racer... - that 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 GranCabriolet yet - The GranCabriolet is starting to show its age
Mazda 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

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MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (ON 1 YEAR OR 3 YEAR)	ENGINE CYL. / CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (SEC)	0-60MPH (0-100)	0-100MPH (0-100)	MAX. MPH	EVO RATING	
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)	017 F	'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	977kg	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	238 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	'01-'10	8/4799	362/6300	361/3400	1180kg*	312	4.5	-	-	170	+ Glorious sound, view over bonnet, dynamics - Awkward-looking rear	★★★★☆
Morgan Aero GT	255 F	'18	8/4799	367/6300	370/3400	1180kg*	316	4.5	-	-	170	+ The ultimate Aero - The last with the naturally aspirated BMW V8	★★★★☆
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	£66,340	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 gear	★★★★☆
Porsche Boxster (981)	238 F	'12-'16	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	'12-'16	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 S (981)	203 D	'14-'16	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-broly 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 coupes	★★★★☆
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	231 F	'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 Tamara	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	009 F	'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	★★★★☆

COUPES / GTs



OUR CHOICE

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 **BMW M2 CS** (left) runs the Cayman GT4 close and is the M division at the top of its game. The **Alpine A110** 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), 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	£48,140	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	£57,140	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 contemporary 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	280 F	£124,400	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	'14-'16	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	+ A great start to Gaydon-era Astons - Automatic gearbox could be quicker	★★★★☆
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	447/5500	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 TT S (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 TT S (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 commitment... - But 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	'07-'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	'10-'15	8/4163	422/7900	317/4500	1560kg	276	4.6	4.1	9.9	188	+ A true 911 alternative - Exclusivity comes at a price	★★★★☆
Bentley Continental GT V8	280 F	£151,800	8/3993	542/6000	568/2000	2165kg	254	4.0	-	-	198	+ Pace, quality, polish - Some rivals offer greater outright dynamic prowess	★★★★☆



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MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (excl. on road)	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/0-100	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (SEC)	0-60MPH (0-100)	0-100MPH (0-100)	MAX MPH	EVO RATING
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	+ A proper driver's Bentley with decent economy - Makes the W12 seem pointless ★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT V8 S	204 F	13-17	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2220kg	238 4.5	-	-	-	192	+ An even better driver's Bentley - Vast weight makes its presence felt in harder driving ★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT	152 D	03-17	12/5998	567/6000	516/1700	2245kg	257 4.5	-	-	-	198	+ Near 200mph in utter comfort - Weight; W12's thirst ★★★★★
Bentley Continental Supersports	234 D	17	12/5998	700/6000	750/2050	2205kg	323 3.5	-	-	-	209	+ Massive performance, surprisingly agile - Styling and soundtrack far from discreet ★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT3-R	203 D	14-17	8/3993	572/6000	518/1700	2120kg	274 3.8	-	-	-	170	+ The best-handling Continental of its generation - Expensive; it still weighs 2120kg ★★★★★
BMW 1-series M Coupé	277 F	11-12	6/2979	335/5900	369/1500	1495kg	228 4.9	-	-	-	155	+ Character, turbo pace and great looks - Came and went too quick ★★★★★
BMW M240i Coupé	229 D	£35,865	6/2998	335/6800	369/1520	1470kg	232 4.8	-	-	-	155	+ Adjustable and plenty of fun - Lacks finesse and precision ★★★★★
BMW M235i Coupé	225 F	14-16	6/2979	321/5800	332/1300	1455kg	224 5.0	5.2	12.7	155	+ Powertrain, chassis, looks, size - Limited-slip diff is an option, not standard ★★★★★	
BMW M2	243 F	16-18	6/2979	365/6500	369/1450	1495kg	248 4.5	4.9	10.8	155	+ A more progressive chassis balance than the M4 - Feels unsettled on rough tarmac ★★★★★	
BMW M2 Competition	265 F	£49,805	6/2979	404/5250	406/2350	1550kg	265 4.4	-	-	155	+ More capable and involving M2 - More expensive and heavier, too ★★★★★	
BMW M2 CS	279 F	£75,355	6/2979	444/6250	406/2350	1550kg	291 4.2	-	-	155	+ Further refines the M2 recipe - For a significant premium, and without any weight loss ★★★★★	
BMW M4 (F82)	218 F	14-19	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1570kg	275 4.3	-	-	155	+ Ferociously fast - A handful on less-than-perfect or less-than-bone-dry roads ★★★★★	
BMW M4 Competition (F82)	262 F	16-20	6/2979	444/7000	406/1850	1570kg	287 4.3	4.4	9.2	155	+ The car the M4 always should have been - Shame everyone specs DCT ★★★★★	
BMW M4 CS (F82)	254 F	17-19	6/2979	454/6250	442/4000	1580kg	292 3.9	-	-	174	+ A further-honed M4 - It ain't cheap ★★★★★	
BMW M4 GTS (F82)	237 F	16	6/2979	493/6250	442/4000	1570kg	332 3.8	3.7	8.0	190	+ Vast improvement on lesser M4s - So it should be, given its price ★★★★★	
BMW M3 (E92)	266 F	07-13	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1580kg	266 4.8	4.3	10.3	155	+ Ends off all of its rivals... - except the cheaper 1-series M Coupé ★★★★★	
BMW M3 GTS (E92)	262 F	10-11	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1530kg	295 4.4	-	-	190	+ One of the most focused M-cars ever - Good luck trying to find one ★★★★★	
BMW M3 (E46)	266 F	00-07	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230 5.2	5.1	12.3	155	+ One of the best BMWs ever. Runner-up in eCoty 2001 - Slightly artificial steering feel ★★★★★	
BMW M3 CS (E46)	219 F	05-07	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230 5.2	-	-	155	+ CSL dynamics without CSL price - Looks like the standard car ★★★★★	
BMW M3 CSL (E46)	279 F	03-04	6/3246	355/7900	273/4900	1385kg	260 4.9	5.3	12.0	155	+ Still superb - Changes from the automated single-clutch 'box are... a bit... sluggish ★★★★★	
BMW M3 Evolution (E36)	148 F	96-98	6/3201	317/7400	258/3250	1155kg	215 5.5	5.4	12.8	158	+ Performance, image - Never quite as good as the E30 ★★★★★	
BMW M3 (E30)	279 F	89-90	4/2302	212/6750	170/4600	165kg	185 6.7	6.7	17.8	147	+ The best M-car ever - Prices have got out of hand ★★★★★	
BMW Z4 M Coupé	097 F	06-09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1420kg	242 5.0	-	-	155	+ A real driver's car - You've got to be prepared to get stuck in ★★★★★	
BMW M Coupé	263 F	98-03	6/3246	321/7400	261/4900	1375kg	237 5.3	-	-	155	+ Quick and characterful - Lacks finesse ★★★★★	
BMW M840d xDrive	260 D	£16,270	6/2993	316/4400	501/1750	1830kg	175 4.9	-	-	155	+ Refinement, old-school GT credentials - Too big to enjoy its performance often ★★★★★	
BMW M850i xDrive	256 F	£99,525	8/4395	523/5500	553/1500	1890kg	281 3.7	-	-	155	+ An impressive multi-role GT - But not a great entertainer ★★★★★	
BMW M8 Competition	272 D	£123,435	8/4395	616/6000	1885kg	332 3.2	-	-	-	155	+ A fast and fine grand tourer - Lacks that true M-car fizz ★★★★★	
BMW M6 (F13)	218 F	12-18	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1850kg	303 4.2	-	-	155	+ Mighty ability, pace, technology - You'll want the Competition Package upgrade, too ★★★★★	
BMW M6 (E63)	106 F	95-10	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1635kg	311 4.2	4.8	10.0	155	+ Awesome GT, awesome sports car - SMG gearbox now off the pace ★★★★★	
BMW i8	210 F	£112,735	3/1499	369/5800	420/3700	1535kg	244 4.4	-	-	155	+ Brilliantly executed concept; sci-fi looks - Safe dynamic set-up ★★★★★	
Chevrolet Camaro Z/28	220 F	14-16	8/7008	505/6100	481/4800	1732kg	296 4.2	-	-	175	+ Scalpel-sharp engine, great chassis (really) - Feels very stiff on UK roads ★★★★★	
Chevrolet Corvette Stingray (C7)	197 F	13-19	8/6162	460/6000	465/4600	1496kg	312 4.2	4.4	9.4	180	+ Performance, chassis balance, supple ride - Body control could be better ★★★★★	
Chevrolet Corvette Z06 (C7)	227 F	15-19	8/6162	650/6000	650/3600	1598kg	413 3.7	-	-	196	+ Mind-boggling raw speed; surprisingly sophisticated - Edgy when really pushed ★★★★★	
Chevrolet Corvette Stingray Z51 (C8)	270 F	£64,995	8/6162	495/6450	470/5150	1530kg*	329 3.2	-	-	194	+ Stunning achievement for the first mid-engined Vette - There's untapped potential ★★★★★	
Ford Mustang 2.3 EcoBoost	222 D	£33,645	4/2261	287/5600	332/3000	1655kg	176 6.4	-	-	145	+ Ninety per cent as good as the V8 - Missing ten per cent is what makes the Mustang ★★★★★	
Ford Mustang 5.0 V8 GT	266 F	£42,810	8/4951	444/7000	393/4600	1743kg	259 4.9	-	-	155	+ 2018MY version gets improved dynamics - Still some way off Europe's finest ★★★★★	
Ford Mustang Bullitt	255 D	£47,545	8/5038	453/7000	390/4600	1776kg	259 4.9	-	-	163	+ Proper V8 sound and performance - Still feels big and heavy near the limit ★★★★★	
Ford Mustang Shelby GT500	271 D	£72,900	8/5163	760/7300	625/5000	1916kg	340 3.3	-	-	180	+ 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	+ Arguably the greatest front-drive car ever - Too raw for some ★★★★★	
Jaguar F-type P300	271 D	£54,060	4/1997	296/5500	295/1500	1520kg	198 5.7	-	-	155	+ Genuinely exploitable performance - Turbocharged four-cylinder lacks top-end verve ★★★★★	
Jaguar F-type P450	-	£69,990	8/5000	444/6000	428/2500	1660kg	272 4.6	-	-	177	+ Strong and flexible supercharged V8 - Steering and chassis feel mismatched ★★★★★	
Jaguar F-type R (RWD)	218 F	14-17	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1650kg	334 4.2	-	-	186	+ eCoty runner-up in 2014 - Bumpy and boisterous ★★★★★	
Jaguar F-type R (P575 AWD)	271 D	£97,280	8/5000	567/6500	516/3500	1743kg	331 3.5	-	-	186	+ More composed than before; now with SVR power - Eye-watering price ★★★★★	
Jaguar F-type SVR	224 D	16-19	8/5000	567/6500	516/3500	1705kg	338 3.7	-	-	200	+ A marginally better drive than the AWD R - Not by enough to justify the extra outlay ★★★★★	
Jaguar XKR-S	168 F	11-14	8/5000	542/6000	502/2500	1753kg	314 4.4	-	-	186	+ Faster and wilder than regular XKR - The F-type R ★★★★★	
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	+ Great looks, noise, sense of occasion - Too heavy to be truly exciting ★★★★★	
Lexus LC 500h	241 D	£76,595	6/3456	354	-	1985kg	181 5.0	-	-	168	+ Excellent comfort and refinement; fine chassis - Hybrid system hurts the fun factor ★★★★★	
Lexus LC 500	231 D	£76,595	8/4969	470/7100	398/4800	1935kg	247 4.7	-	-	168	+ Glorious engine, rewarding chassis for a GT car - Numb steering, messy ergonomics ★★★★★	
Lister Thunder	247 D	£139,950	8/5000	666/6000	720/5940	1650kg	410 3.2	-	-	208	+ Deceptively fast reworked F-type - Never feels as ferocious as the figures suggest ★★★★★	
Lotus Exige S (V6)	209 F	12-15	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1176kg	298 3.8	-	-	170	+ Breathtaking road-racer; our joint Evo Car of the Year 2012 - Gearshift not the sweetest ★★★★★	
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	16-18	6/3456	375/6700	302/5000	1101kg	343 3.7	-	-	178	+ Intense, absorbing and brilliantly capable - Perhaps not an everyday car ★★★★★	
Lotus Exige Cup 380	240 D	17	6/3456	375/6700	302/5000	1055kg	345 3.6	-	-	175	+ An absolute riot; feels worth the £83k (new) price tag - Limited build numbers ★★★★★	
Lotus Exige Sport 410	252 F	£82,675	6/3456	410/7000	310/3500	1108kg	376 3.4	-	-	180	+ A first-rate swansong for this generation of Exige - Some may balk at the price ★★★★★	
Lotus Exige Cup 430	253 F	£103,375	6/3456	430/7000	325/2600	1093kg	400 3.3	-	-	180	+ The ultimate Exige - Isn't cheap ★★★★★	
Lotus Exige S (S2)	253 F	06-11	4/1796	218/7800	158/5500	930kg	238 4.3	-	-	148	+ 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	+ Looks and goes like an Elise racer - A tad lacking in refinement ★★★★★	
Lotus Evora	257 F	09-15	6/3456	276/6400	258/4700	1382kg	203 5.1	5.6	13.6	162	+ Sublime ride and handling, Evo Car of the Year 2009 - The Evora S ★★★★★	
Lotus Evora S	168 F	10-15	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1430kg	245 4.8	-	-	172	+ A faster and better Evora - But one which spars with the Porsche 911 ★★★★★	
Lotus Evora 400	216 F	15-18	6/3456	400/7000	302/3500	1395kg	291 4.2	-	-	186	+ Evora excitement levels take a leap - Gearbox still not perfect ★★★★★	
Lotus Evora Sport 410	230 F	17	6/3456	410/7000	310/3500	1325kg	314 4.2	-	-	190	+ Even lighter and sharper Evora - Engine and gearbox behind the best at this price ★★★★★	
Lotus Evora GT410	278 F	£85,675	6/3456	410/7000	295/3500	1361kg	306 4.2	-	-	186	+ Fully immersive driving experience - V6 has its limitations ★★★★★	
Lotus Evora GT410 Sport	261 F	£88,675	6/3456	410/7000	295/3500	1361kg	306 4.2	-	-	186	+ As above, without the creature comforts - Too pared back for most tastes ★★★★★	
Lotus Evora GT430	246 F	18	6/3456	430/7000	325/4500	1299kg	336 3.8	-	-	190	+ Genuine race-car feel on the road - It wasn't cheap, and just 60 were made ★★★★★	
Maserati GranTurismo Sport	188 F	£93,145	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1880kg	245 4.8	-	-	186	+ A real sense of occasion to drive; wonderful engine - Rather long in the tooth ★★★★★	
Maserati GranTurismo MC	239 D	£109,740	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1873kg	246 4.7	-	-	187	+ As above but with knobs on - Those knobs don't make it feel any younger ★★★★★	
Maserati GranTurismo	114 F	07-17	8/4244	399/7100	339/4750	1880kg	216 5.2	5.5	12.7	177	+ Striking, accomplished GT - Doesn't spike the pulse like an Aston or 911 ★★★★★	
Maserati GranTurismo MC Stradale	193 F	11-17	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1800kg	256 4.5	-	-	188	+ Brilliant blend of road racer and GT - Gearbox takes a little getting used to ★★★★★	
Mazda RX-8	122 F	03-11	2R/1308	228/8200	156/5500	1429kg	162 6.4	6.5	16.4	146	+ Never mind the quirks, it's a great drive - Water-thin torque output; thirsty ★★★★★	
Mercedes-AMG C43 Coupé	251 T	£50,010	6/2996	385/6100	383/2500	1675kg	234 4.7	-	-	155	+ Fast and instilled with a real sense of quality - Not enough emphasis on fun ★★★★★	
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Coupé (W205)	262 F	£78,078	8/3982	503/5500	516/2000	1745kg	293 3.9	-	-	180	+ Mouth-watering mechanical package - Light steering; hefty kerb weight ★★★★★	
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Coupé (W204)	162 F	11-14	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	277 4.5	4.4	10.3	155	+ A proper two-door M3 rival - C63 saloon looks better to most ★★★★★	
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Black Series (W204)	171 F	12-13	8/6208	510/6800	457/5200	1635kg	317 4.2	-	-	186	+ The C63 turned up to 11 - Too heavy; not as fiery as Black Series cars of old ★★★★★	
Mercedes-Benz CLK63 AMG Black Series	277 F	07-09	8/6208	500/6800	464/5250	1760kg	289 4.2	-	-	186	+ AMG goes Porsche-hunting - Dull-witted gearshift spoils the party ★★★★★	
Mercedes-AMG S63 Coupé	251 D	£127,555	8/3982	604/5500	664/2750	1900kg	308 4.2	-	-	155	+ Near-silent progress meets full-blown riot - Don't go thinking it's a GTR ★★★★★	
Mercedes-AMG S65 Coupé	209 D	£188,550	12/5980	621/4800	731/2300	2101kg	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	+ A true sports coupe that also does luxury - Takes time to reveal its talents ★★★★★	
Mercedes-AMG GT S	216 F	£113,260	8/3982	51								

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Table with columns: MAKE & MODEL, ISSUE NO., PRICE (excludes tax and dealer), ENGINE Cyl./Cv, BHP/RPM, LB FT/RPM, WEIGHT, BHP/TON, 0-60MPH (claimed), 0-60MPH (0-100 TUD), 0-100MPH (0-100 TUD), MAX MPH, EVO RATING. Lists various cars like Nissan GT-R, Porsche Cayman, and TVR Cerbera.

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 just about 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, but the Audi R8 V10 remains a corking entry-level supercar, and the Porsche 911 GT3 RS is simply a superb road and track machine.

Table listing supercars and hypercars with columns: MAKE & MODEL, ISSUE NO., PRICE, ENGINE Cyl./Cv, BHP/RPM, LB FT/RPM, WEIGHT, BHP/TON, 0-60MPH, 0-100MPH, MAX MPH, EVO RATING. Includes models like Aston Martin DBS, Audi R8, Bugatti Veyron, Ferrari F8 Tributo, and McLaren 720S.

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BICESTER HERITAGE

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR YEARS ON ROAD)	ENGINE Cyl/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (secs)	0-60MPH (FEET)	0-100MPH (secs)	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	+ Awesomely capable grand tourer - See above	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ferrari SF90 Stradale	271 F	'21 F	'13-'15	12/6262	950/9000	664/6750	1574kg	638	2.5	-	211	+ Hugely impressive series-production hypercar - Hybrid turbo V8 no match for a V12	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ferrari LaFerrari	203 F	'13-'15	12/6262	950/9000	664/6750	1574kg	638	3.0	-	217+	+ Perhaps the greatest Ferrari ever - Brakes lack a touch of precision on track	★ ★ ★ ★ ★	
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	+ Brutally fast - It's in the dictionary under 'turbo lag'	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ford GT	253 F	\$450,000	6/3497	647/6250	550/5900	1385kg*	475	2.8	-	-	216	+ Everything it does on track - Too many of the things it does on the road	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ford GT	200 F	'04-'06	8/5409	550/6500	500/3750	1583kg	353	3.9	-	-	205	+ evo Car of the Year 2005 - Don't scalp yourself getting in	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Honda NSX	270 F	£144,765	6/3493	573	476/2000	1776kg	328	2.9	3.0	6.9	191	+ Blisteringly quick and brilliantly engineered - Limited range on a full tank	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Honda NSX (NA2)	188 F	'97-'05	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1410kg	196	5.7	-	-	168	+ The original useable supercar - 276bhp sounds a bit weedy today	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Honda NSX-R (NA2)	100 F	'02-'03	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1270kg	221	4.4	-	-	168	+ evo Car of the Year 2002 - Hard to find in the UK	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Jaguar XJ220	157 F	'92-'94	6/3498	542/7200	475/4500	1470kg	375	3.7	-	-	213	+ Britain's greatest supercar... - ...until McLaren built the F1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Koenigsegg One:1	202 F	c£2.0m	8/5065	1341/7500	1011/6000	1360kg	1002	2.9	-	-	273	+ One of the most powerful cars we've tested - It's sold out. We couldn't afford one anyway	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Koenigsegg Agera R	180 F	'11-'14	8/5032	1224/7700	885/2700	1435kg	796	2.8	-	-	273	+ As fast and exciting as your body can handle - It's Veyron money	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Koenigsegg CCRX Edition	118 F	'08-'10	8/4800	1004/7000	796/5600	1280kg*	797	2.9	-	-	250+	+ evo Car of the world's fastest cars - Spiky power delivery	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Huracán Evo RWD	276 D	£164,400	10/5204	631/8000	442/6500	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+	+ Performante engine, trick chassis - Badly needs an 'Ego' mode for road driving	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Huracán Evo Spyder	269 F	£218,137	10/5204	631/8000	442/6500	1542kg*	416	3.1	-	-	202	+ Drop-top driving enhances that epic V10 - Being mistaken for a King's Road poser	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Huracán Performante	242 F	£215,000	10/5204	631/8000	442/6500	1382kg*	464	2.9	-	-	201+	+ The realisation of the Huracán's ever elusive potential - Kitchen-worktop carbonfibre	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Huracán Performante Spyder	253 D	£238,000	10/5204	631/8000	442/6500	1507kg*	425	3.1	-	-	201+	+ As above, but even louder for the driver - Not for the shy and retiring	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Huracán RWD	229 F	'16-'19	10/5204	572/8000	397/6500	1389kg*	385	3.4	-	-	199	+ More seductive than the 4WD Huracán - Feels like there's more to come	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Huracán	209 D	'14-'19	10/5204	602/8250	413/6500	1422kg*	430	3.2	-	-	201+	+ Defies the numbers; incredible point-to-point pace - Takes work to find its sweet-spot	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Gallardo LP550-2 Balboni	138 F	'09-'10	10/5204	542/8000	398/6500	1380kg*	399	3.9	-	-	199	+ Mad, rear-wheel-drive Lambo - Limited numbers	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4	180 D	'08-'13	10/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1410kg*	398	3.7	-	-	202	+ Still a missile from A to B - Feels a little dated next to some rivals	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Gallardo LP570-4 Superleggera	152 F	'10-'13	10/5204	562/8000	398/6500	1340kg*	426	3.4	3.5	-	202	+ Less weight and more power than original Superleggera - LP560-4 runs it very close	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Gallardo	094 F	'03-'08	10/4961	513/8000	376/4250	1430kg*	364	4.0	4.3	9.4	196	+ On a full-bore start it spins all four wheels. Cool - Slightly clunky e-gear	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Aventador	194 F	'11-'17	12/6498	690/8250	509/5500	1575kg*	445	2.9	-	-	217	+ Most important new Lambo since the Countach - Can feel a little clumsy	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
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+	+ More exciting than the standard Aventador - ISR gearbox inconsistent	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Aventador SVJ	262 F	£360,000	12/6498	759/8500	531/6750	1525kg*	506	2.8	-	-	218	+ A significant step on from the SV - Have we mentioned the gearbox?	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Aventador SVJ Roadster	268 D	£387,987	12/6498	759/8500	531/6750	1575kg*	490	2.9	-	-	218	+ Increased exposure to that V12 - Next time it'll have electric assistance	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Murciélago LP640	275 F	'06-'11	12/6496	631/8000	487/6500	1665kg*	385	3.8	-	-	211	+ Compelling old-school supercar - You'd better be on your toes	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Murciélago LP670-4 SV	200 F	'09-'11	12/6496	661/8000	487/6500	1565kg*	429	3.3	7.3	2.12	212	+ A supercar in its truest, wildest sense - Be prepared for stares	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Murciélago	089 D	'01-'06	12/6192	572/7500	479/5400	1650kg*	351	4.0	-	-	206	+ Gorgeous, capable and incredibly friendly - V12 feels stressed	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lamborghini Diablo VT 6.0	275 F	'00-'02	12/5992	543/7700	457/5500	1625kg*	343	3.9	-	-	208	+ Best-built, best-looking Diablo of all - People's perceptions	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lexus LFA/Nürburgring	200 F	'10-'12	10/4805	552/8700	354/6800	1480kg	379	3.7	-	-	202	+ Absurd and compelling supercar - Badge and price don't quite match	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lotus Esprit Sport 350	171 F	'99-'01	8/3506	349/6500	295/4250	1299kg	274	4.3	-	-	175	+ Lotus's pukka V8-powered supercar - Weight of that V8 makes it more intimidating	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
McLaren 540C	250 F	£127,890	8/3799	533/7500	398/3500	1311kg*	413	3.5	3.2	6.4	199	+ An excellent junior supercar - The 570S is still better to drive	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
McLaren 570S	229 F	£149,000	8/3799	562/7500	443/5000	1440kg	397	3.2	-	-	204	+ A truly fun and engaging sports car - McLaren doesn't call it a supercar!	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
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	£185,500	8/3799	592/7500	457/5500	1356kg	444	2.9	-	-	204	+ evo Car of the Year 2018 - There's no glovebox	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
McLaren 600LT Spider	273 F	£201,500	8/3799	592/7500	457/5500	1404kg	428	2.9	-	-	201	+ All the brilliance of the coupe - And all the acoustic sophistication	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
McLaren 620R	268 F	£250,000	8/3799	611/7500	457/5500	1386kg	448	2.9	-	-	200	+ A true 911 GT3 RS rival - The GT3 RS has a more scintillating engine	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
McLaren GT	271 F	£163,000	8/3994	612/7500	465/5500	1530kg	406	3.2	-	-	203	+ Fiery performance; refinement - Don't expect a 720S to emerge on a great road	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
McLaren 720S	262 F	£208,600	8/3994	710/7250	568/5500	1419kg	508	2.9	2.9	5.6	212	+ evo Car of the Year 2017 - Favours precision over emotion	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
McLaren 720S Spider	261 F	£237,000	8/3994	710/7250	568/5500	1468kg	491	2.9	-	-	212	+ Every bit as ballistic as the coupe - But a fraction less precise	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
McLaren 765LT	279 F	£280,000	8/3994	754/7500	590/5500	1339kg	572	2.8	-	-	205	+ Formidable on track - We need to try it on the road	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
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	666/7700	516/5500	1328kg	510	2.9	-	-	205	+ Runner-up at eCoty 2015; asks questions of the P1 - Aventador price tag	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
McLaren 12C	264 F	'11-'14	8/3799	616/7500	442/3000	1434kg	435	3.3	-	-	207	+ Staggering performance, refinement - Engine noise can be grating	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
McLaren Senna	252 F	£750,000	8/3999	789/7250	590/5500	1198kg*	669	2.8	-	-	211	+ Astounding performance, stellar presence - Only 500 being made	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
McLaren P1	276 F	'13-'15	8/3799	903/7500	664/4000	1490kg	616	2.8	-	-	217	+ Freakish breadth of ability - At its mind-bending best on track	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
McLaren FI	228 F	'94-'98	12/6064	627/7500	479/4000	1138kg	560	3.2	-	-	240	+ Still the most single-minded supercar ever - The air con was a bit weak	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Mercedes-AMG GT R	2611	£148,595	8/3982	577/6250	516/2100	1575kg	372	3.6	3.3	7.1	198	+ Fun and blisteringly fast; a true rival for the 911 GT3 - A touch showy, perhaps	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Mercedes-AMG GT R Pro	269 F	£188,345	8/3982	577/6250	516/2100	1561kg	376	3.6	-	-	198	+ A GT R fine-tuned for the track - A 911 GT3 RS has the edge	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG	264 F	'10-'15	8/6208	563/6800	479/4750	1620kg	335	3.9	4.1	8.4	197	+ Great engine and chassis (gulling doors too!) - Slightly tardy gearbox	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Black Series	204 F	'13-'15	8/6208	622/7400	468/5500	1550kg	408	3.6	-	-	196	+ Stunning engine, superb body control - Be careful on less-than-smooth roads...	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren	228 F	'03-'07	8/5439	617/6500	575/3250	1693kg	370	3.8	-	-	208	+ Zonda-pace, S75-style drivability - Dreadful brake feel	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Noble M600	186 F	c£200,000	8/4439	650/6800	604/3800	1198kg*	551	3.5	3.8	7.7	225	+ Spiritual successor to the Ferrari F40 - It's a bit pricey	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Pagani Huayra	185 F	c£1m	12/5980	720/5800	731/2250	1350kg*	542	3.3	-	-	224	+ Joint evo Car of the Year 2012 - Engine isn't as nape-pricking as the Zonda's	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Pagani Zonda S 7.3	096 F	'02-'05	12/7291	555/5900	553/4050	1280kg*	441	3.7	-	-	220	+ evo Car of the Year 2001 (in earlier 7.0 form) - Values have gone up a fair bit since then	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Pagani Zonda F	186 F	'05-'06	12/7291	602/6150	575/4000	1230kg*	497	3.6	-	-	214+	+ Everything an Italian supercar ought to be - Looks a bit blingy next to a Carrera GT	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 GT3 (991.2)	256 F	'17-'19	6/3996	493/8250	339/6600	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	+ Essentially a topless GT3 - Only 1948 were made	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991.2)	278 F	'18-'20	6/3996	513/8250	347/6000	1430kg	364	3.2	-	-	193	+ Even better than the 991.1 RS - Demand exceeded supply	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 GT2 RS (991.2)	257 F	'18-'19	6/3800	690/7000	553/2500	1470kg	477	2.8	-	-	211	+ A proper, angry turbocharged Porsche - 'Limited availability'	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 GT3 (991.1)	206 F	'13-'16	6/3799	468/8250	324/6250	1430kg	333	3.5	-	-	196	+ evo Car of the Year 2013 - PDK only	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991.1)	223 F	'15-'16	6/3996	493/8250	339/6250	1420kg	355	3.3	3.0	7.1	193	+ Sensationally good to drive - The Cayman GT4 is even better	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 R (991.1)	229 F	'16	6/3996	493/8250	339/6250	1370kg	366	3.8	-	-	200	+ evo Car of the Year 2016 - Limited availability	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.2)	182 F	'09-'11	6/3797	429/7600	317/6250	1395kg	312	4.1	4.2	9.2	194	+ Even better than the car it replaced - Give us a minute...	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (3.8, 997.2)	248 F	'10-'11	6/3797	444/7900	317/6750	1370							



California dreamin'

Why the lavish launch of the 2006 Shelby GT500 left a lasting impression

I THINK I BECAME A MOTORING JOURNALIST too late to experience most of the really extravagant launches. Or perhaps it was just that those invitations never made it further than Harry Metcalfe's desk. But there is one launch that I will always remember as much for the event as the car itself: the first drive of the modern-era Ford Shelby Mustang GT500.

It was 2006, I was 24 years old and I'd been with *evo* for about a year. It was my first trip across the Atlantic, which was an adventure in itself, and I flew to Detroit, but not to go to Dearborn. I simply stayed in an airport hotel overnight before getting on Ford's private Boeing 737, bound for California, the following morning. I remember sitting in an enormous brown armchair and glancing out of the window to see the Grand Canyon below.

We landed at Ontario International Airport and were then driven to the nearby California Speedway. We didn't mix it with the NASCARs rumbling round the oval, but instead had a bit of a play in the GT500 on the Mickey Mouse infield circuit. Much more memorable, though, was being handed a business card that I still

have today – that of Carroll Shelby. It was just me and him standing on some sort of viewing platform overlooking the circuit, no other journalists or PR people. He was 86 years old by that point, but still an impressively imposing man, especially dressed head-to-toe in black, in spite of the roasting heat. I talked to him (rather nervously) for a while about the car – they had a prototype running around with independent rear suspension, apparently – and also the Goodwood Revival, where I'd once seen him from a distance. I asked if he would be going back to the Sussex circuit that year, but he said no: 'too dangerous'.

Then it was back on the private jet that afternoon to fly north to Oakland, on the other side of the bay from San Francisco. The next morning I drove a 1960s GT500 KR around the block, before heading out for a long road test in the new GT500. That evening it was into a dinner jacket (or tux) and down to the nearby Pixar Studios for a charity gala dinner.

After dinner, the eight or so guests of Ford were ushered away from everyone else into a small cinema, complete with an editing desk in the middle of the seats. John Lasseter then

popped in to introduce us to a character called Lightning McQueen and a new animation, *Cars*. He explained how the vehicles were anthropomorphised and the automotive details they'd put in the beautiful landscapes. This was to be the world-first showing of the film, weeks before the premiere. I'm ashamed to say (particularly in front of my three-year-old son) that jet lag got the better of me and I had a nap halfway through.

The flight home was the next day and nothing was scheduled other than some more food. However, I'd been talking to photographer Barry Hayden who was there for another magazine. His journalist had already headed home but he really needed to go over to San Francisco to get some more Bullitt-type shots with the Mustang. I offered to help. So, very early in the morning, we went over the Golden Gate Bridge, took some photos with Alcatraz in the background and, of course, I drove up and down the famously steep streets, pretending to be Steve McQueen.

None of this, you will be pleased to hear, influenced my four-and-a-half star rating of the car in issue 093.



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2017 R8 V10 » 650BHP (DE-LIMIT)
RS3 / TT RS (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

BMW

F90 M5 / M8 » 770+BHP (+DELIMIT)
X3M / X4M » 630+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
M850i » 700+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
M2 COMPETITION » 530BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
M2 » 435BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
M3 / M4 » 540+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
M5 F10/M6 » 730+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
X5M/X6M F85 » 730+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
X5M50D » 480+BHP
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)
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
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
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350 CDI (ALL MODELS) » 315BHP

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2.0 TD4 / SD4 (ALL MODELS) » 225 / 265BHP
VELAR 30Si6 » 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 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 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 GTS » 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 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
MCLAREN MP4 /650S » 720 BHP
MCLAREN 675LT » 750BHP
MCLAREN 570/S » 680+BHP
MCLAREN 600LT » 680+BHP
MCLAREN 720S » 840+BHP
MCLAREN SENNA » 875+BHP
AVENTADOR » 750+BHP
HURACAN LP610 » 650BHP
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

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