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— **SUPERMINI SHOOT-OUT** — GR YARIS **v** i20 N **v** FIESTA ST **Brilliant trio head-to-head** 

# ROAD RAGERS

Porsche's new GT3 battles Nismo & McLaren's fiercest



**PLUS** 

### **PETER STEVENS**

The secrets of modern car design

### **END OF AN ERA**

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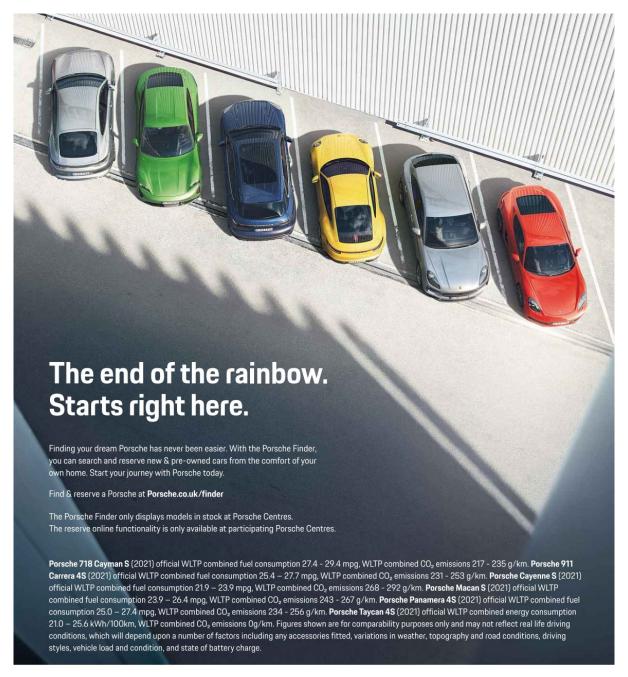
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### **EDITORIAL**

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IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN
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# Ed speak



### IN OUR SEARCH FOR THE HOLY GRAIL OF TODAY'S

new driver's cars are we sometimes too quick to dismiss some because they don't meet every aspect of our exacting criteria? I think we are.

We shouldn't accept lacklustre cars, and we don't, which is why we're struggling to find the appeal of the Mk8 Golf GTI and R models, hot hatches that feel like cars engineered to a delta over the outgoing versions rather than developed to maximise the potential of the new model. It feels as if VW has already closed the file on the Golf GTI and moved on.

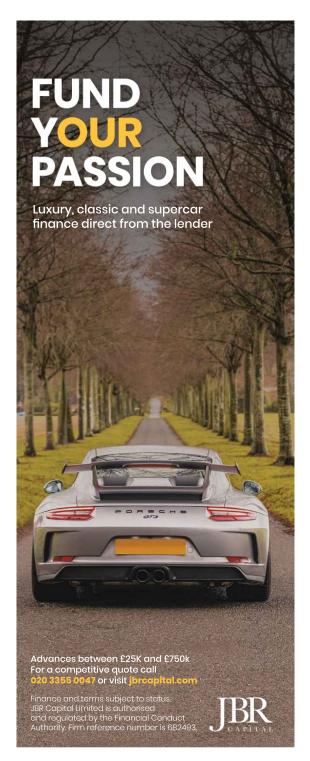
We've also struggled at times with Porsche's 992-generation Carrera. It's lacking that 911 soul we and so many have fallen for over the decades, and in the harsh light of road testing those intrinsic characteristics we celebrate in Porsche's icon are harder to discover. But, there are still more times than not when a 992 delivers something unique, something special that few, if any, other cars can offer. Yes, it's too wide and its engine no longer has that beautifully organic approach to performance only a naturally aspirated flat-six can deliver, yet it still enthrals and entertains. Today's 911 still delivers those special moments, they just take a little longer to come to the boil.

Lotus's new Emira? Many have been in touch to say Lotus has thrown in the towel and sold its soul, because how can a Lotus that weighs 300kg more than an Alpine A110 be considered a Lotus? Well, the small matter of it sitting somewhere between an A110 and a 911 in terms of size has something to do with it, so too it being a car Lotus will be able to sell around the world and all the additional legislative baggage that brings with it. And playing devil's advocate, it's only 44kg heavier than the Evora G7410... Oh, and we've yet to drive it, so let's hold back on judging it for now.

Because judging a car on its technical specification alone is a dangerous path to take. It only provides you with a one-dimensional view on which to form an opinion, and it's often been demonstrated that when the best automotive engineers in the world are involved, the reality of how a car drives can be very different from our original perception.

Stuart Gallagher, Editor @stuartg917

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by HENRY CATCHPOLE

# Morgan Plus Four CX-T

A Morgan for overland adventures: that's how the company describes the extraordinary new Plus Four CX-T. Hold on tight...

AVE I ENTERED A SUBTLY ALTERNATE universe? A sort of steampunk wonderland, perhaps? For starters I'm in Wales and the sun is out, the grass bleached brown. Most unusual. Then there is the vehicle in front of me. Even the most fleeting of glances tells me it's a Morgan: the flowing wings, the round headlights, the bonnet louvres. But this is also like no Morgan I have ever seen before.

From the front, the quartet of spotlights ranked along the top of the windscreen is the first indication that something is out of joint. Then you clock the chunky tyres surrounding modern-looking rims, the raised ride height

and extra cooling capability. But it's at the back where things get really quirky; a T45 cage ensnares the rear half of the car and a bewildering array of paraphernalia is attached to it. Boxes and tools with the best brandnames in the business are packed perfectly and purposefully amongst the scaffolding, while two spare wheels are slung at the very back, suggesting a 9II's weight distribution.

If the apocalypse arrived and all the Land Cruisers and their lik had been taken, then necessity would invent something like this. It could look like Frankenstein's ungainly sibling, but sitting on this rugged hillside it just looks

### **Driven**

brilliant. Ripe for an adventure. Or, with a splash

is largely the same as the Plus Four as well, with a BMW B48 turbocharged four-cylinder engine

a BMW B48 turbocharged four-cylinder engine attached to a six-speed manual gearbox.

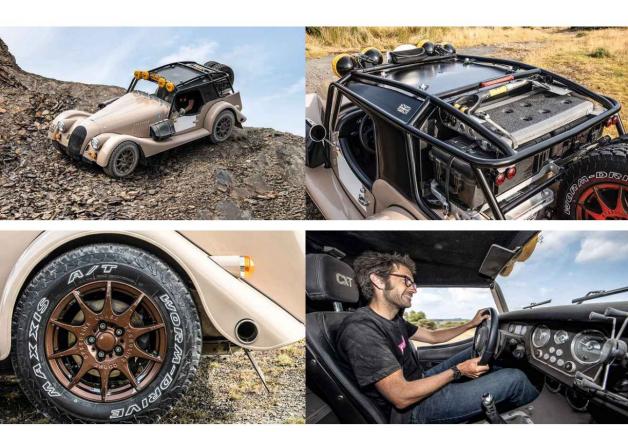
The T part of the name stands for Trial, as in competitive trials, the like of which Morgan has quite a history in. There are plenty of sepia photos of Morgans, both three- and four-wheeled, gamely battling their way through mud, ruts and water, passenger often bouncing on the rear of the car to help eke out some extra traction. A lack of weight and skinny tyres meant that relatively unmodified machines could tackle surprisingly tricky terrain.

The CX-T is not a competition car, but Morgan wanted to doff its (presumably flat) cap to its

### 'Ignore any feelings that a Morgan should be treated delicately...'

simply as BD, and during the day I spent with





with an oval profile to help ground clearance. The tailpipe now exits at the side, through a rear wheelarch as this helps the car's departure angle but more importantly means it won't clog up when you're reversing through goodness knows what, out in the back of beyond.

That the CX-T has been designed to really be used is perhaps even more evident in the storage solutions. For a start, the traditional side-screens can be attached to the roof rather than having to try to squeeze them behind the seats when not in place. Then there are the Peli cases and the Rotopax containers at the back of the car. The leather saddle-bags on either side of the bonnet are only semi-useful as storage because although one has room to hold a bespoke kinetic tow rope, the other is filled with a large air filter to make sure the engine isn't clogged with dust.

Real thought has been given to the interior too, with little cool-bags in front of the seats for feeding on the go, a removable document pack for the co-driver and a neat solution for tidying all the cables. You can tell it has been made by someone who has actually done a lot Clockwise from above: all-terrain tyres and side exit exhaust; Welsh guarry provides a suitably stern test; roll-cage becomes storage system; Henry gathers dust

of overlanding and rallies, rather than someone who just dreamed of doing them. It's as practical as a Morgan is ever likely to be.

Of course some of the owners have already asked for personalisation and so extra mounts for things like bicycles, skis and surfboards can be accommodated. One customer has even asked for attachment points to be added so that the car can be craned onto a vacht. Not something I would have thought of.

It's perhaps also worth pointing out that the cage, while undoubtedly very protective, is not an FIA homologated item. For a start, there are no big side impact bars, which would really obstruct ingress and egress. The cage also has links in it to allow the bespoke composite roof to be removed if owners want the full al fresco experience.

For my day of driving I've got the roof in place but the side-screens off, and within

a very short period of time I appear to have aged about 20 years with the pale dust kicked up from the gravel coating my face and hair. The CX-T is road-legal, but we're sticking to an old quarry and there is a huge amount to explore - everything from gravel roads to fields to rough tracks. But one of the first things I'm encouraged to tackle is a drop off a cliff. Or at least that's what it feels like.

I'd genuinely think twice before tipping over the edge in a Defender, but I'm assured by BD (the Morgan crew look less convinced) that it will be no problem. I pick out a marker for my front left wheel and then, at a little over walking pace, accelerate over the point of no return. Sure enough, the CX-T takes it in its stride, even if my eyes are as wide as the Morgan's headlights. It's not one of those things that seems easy once you've done it, so I'm less than keen on doing it another couple of times for the camera, but it does give me a chance to appreciate how stiff the chassis feels on such a, well, stiff test.

Then it's onto the gravel roads, where I feel more at ease. With 255bhp and 258lb ft of



torque there is more than enough to haul the extra 200kg along at a decent pace and spin up the rear wheels at will. The gearbox feels nicer than I remember and the pedals are well placed for any sort of fancy footwork that you might want to try. The Sport mode is still available and, to be honest, it feels like a good idea to switch it on as soon as you get in the car; greater response, a few pops on the overrun and a generally livelier feel. The other sound you get as you accelerate is a very Darth Vader intake of breath from the saddle bag on the right.

Although there is 230mm of ground clearance, impressive-looking Maxxis Worm-Drive all-terrain tyres and the fancy dampers, this is not a car that cossets. As Jon Wells, Morgan's head of design, said to me, they wanted it to be 'a Morgan, not a monster truck'.

Consequently you have that lovely small footprint but you very much feel the ground that you're covering and you need to read the road, or what's left of it, ahead. It's not a relaxing drive. The CX-T will take a huge amount of abuse though, and the ride actually improves at speed, so the best plan is to ignore any feelings that a Morgan should be treated delicately and just get stuck in.

Do that and there is a delightful incongruity to steering the long louvred bonnet through a corner, feeling the car floating underneath you,



**Above and top:** there's 230mm of ground clearance and extra underbody protection running the length of the car; cockpit looks almost standard by comparison

and enjoying the solid sense of connection with the diffed-up rear axle as you use the throttle to steer and spit gravel. Despite the slightly ungainly appearance with all the kit on the back, it's pretty well balanced, too. You need to be a touch patient with the front end in the tighter corners, but it's remarkably confidence-inspiring given that the standard road car wouldn't be my first choice for on-the-limit predictability.

At one point we reach a fantastic bit of rough gravel track with hairpin after hairpin through trees and then a faster section past rock faces and gorse bushes leading to fields at the very top. Sliding through the hairpins, sitting right over the spinning rear wheels, picking lines past boulders and glancing in the little mirrors to see the dust billowing behind, all while knowing you have enough on board to be self-sufficient for days, is really rather wonderful. So wonderful that I turn around and drive it all again. Three times.

The downside? Each CX-T will cost from £204,000 and Morgan is only going to build seven customer cars... for the moment. Whatever happens, I suspect that some of the learnings from the development of the CX-T may well find their way onto other Morgans in the future, but the car has been designed with type approval in mind, so never say never. And given the success of Ariel's Nomad, there is clearly a market for slightly daft on-road/off-road vehicles, so it really doesn't seem an entirely preposterous notion to put something into full production. Perhaps frame it as Malvern's version of one of those small SUVs that seem so popular?

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbocharged
Power 255bhp @ 5500rpm Torque 258lb ft @ 1000-0500rpm
Weight (dry) 1213kg (214bhp/ton) 0-62mph c6sec (est)
Top speed c140mph (est) Basic price £204,000

Absurd but fun way to outrun the zombies
Expensive

evo rating  $\star\star\star\star\star$ 



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Model shown is a Ford Puma ST 5-Door. 1.5 EcoBoost 200PS (147W) 6 speed manual with optional 19" Magnetite Machined Finish Alloy Wheels and Metallic Paint. Fuel economy mpg (1/100km), (Combined) 41.5 (6.8). CO2 emissions 155g/km.

Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO2 figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted, variations in weather, driving style and vehicle load.

# **Driven**

Hyundai i30 N

Can more power, revised suspension and a DCT option keep the i30 N competitive against its rivals?

OR A FIRST-TIME EFFORT, THE ORIGINAL Hyundai i30 N was a pretty incredible car. It wasn't perfect, though. The ride was a bit too fruity for the worst UK roads in its most aggressive damper modes, the seats could have been more supportive given the amount of grip the car could generate, and the engine, although potent, was never that smooth at the top end and in the mid-range, the flow of torque not quite as rich as it is in other big-hitting hot hatches.

Hyundai's response? A new, subtly improved version of the i30 N boasting a touch more power (5bhp), a bit more torque (10lb ft), revised suspension and the option of a pair of much more supportive lightweight sports seats (saving 2.2kg each). And if for some reason you don't like swapping cogs manually, there's also a new option of an eight-speed dual-clutch gearbox.

It's a combination of upgrades that should, in theory, take the hot i30 even closer to the mighty Type R dynamically. Which is just as well given the price has risen from its former sub-£30k position to £33,745 for the six-speed manual or £35,695 for the DCT we're testing here. That drops it directly

into Civic territory, the Honda starting at £34,415 (or £35,400 for the new wingless Sport Line version – see last month's Driven) and still coming with a fair bit more power and torque: 316bhp and 295lb ft versus 276bhp and 289lb ft for the revised i30 N.

So on the surface, it does seem like the N division may have got a tiny bit carried away with its own success when it comes to the pricing of the revised i30 N. Yet if you dig deeper into the spec and look at what's on offer both above and beneath the skin, the increase is easier to justify.

For starters, the car comes with everything you







good road the latest i30 N feels even sweeter yet even sharper than before, with meaty but precise steering, great body control and eye-watering levels of grip from its N-specific P Zero tyres.

Without question the revised engine feels both smoother and pokier than before, too, providing more zip at the top (where the original could feel a touch rough) and notably more energy in the mid-range. This is confirmed by the 0-62mph time falling from 6.1sec to 5.9sec with the manual, and this drops again to 5.4sec with DCT if you use launch control. The DCT car also gains a function called 'N Grin Shift' (yes, really), which is engaged by the push of a button on the steering wheel and puts the 'box and engine into full-attack mode for 20 seconds, accompanied by a countdown in the instrument cluster.

Of the general drive modes, for road driving you're best off in Sport, or better still having a good play within the Custom set-up menu and trimming all the individual elements to your own personal taste so they become available at the press of a single button, located as before on the bottom right of the steering wheel boss. If you merely

Left: DCT option is new and costs £1950 while trimming 0.5sec from the 0-62mph time. Above: exhaust tailpipes have been enlarged. Right: N Light Seats are a £600 option and bring welcome extra lateral support

select N mode and leave it at that, the damper settings become very stiff indeed - too stiff for most UK roads, even though the level of body control also goes up several notches.

Instead it's best to reserve the full-blown N mode for track work only - or for showing off to you mates with - because in the right scenario it really does work a treat, not just firming up the dampers but also unleashing the naughtiest throttle and exhaust maps and switching the dual-clutch gearbox to its sharpest mode.

Left in auto the DCT works fine, but to realise its full potential you need to select manual and, ideally, at least Sport mode. Or you can go into Custom and set it to shift as fast as possible, which is something it does with some gusto, up or down the ratios, blipping the revs accurately on the way down. And because there are two more forward ratios to go at, the gearing is closer and shorter than in the manual, which again makes the i30 N feel more energetic. I wouldn't say it works just as well as a Porsche PDK (which remains the industry standard among dual clutches), lacking the final eight per cent in shift clarity in full beans mode, but it's at least as good as a Volkswagen Group DSG and a fine effort overall.

Same goes for the car in general, which has gone from being very good indeed in its original form to borderline excellent this time round. Could it have the measure of the Civic Type R? That might still be a bit of a stretch. But it's undoubtedly fitter than





ever for taking on the aforementioned Mégane RS and Golf GTI Clubsport. We'll find out exactly how it stacks up against those two, and more of its rivals, next month,

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbo Power 276bhp @ 6000rpm Torque 289lb ft @ 1950-4600rpm Weight 1455kg (193bhp/ton) 0-62mph 5.4sec Top speed 155mph (limited) Basic price £35,695 A strong hot hatch contender just got stronger And more expensive

evo rating ★★★★

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Fuel economy and CO  $_2$  results for the MG HS. MPG (I/100km) (combined): 36.6 (7.7) to 37.9 (7.4). CO  $_2$  emissions: 168–174 g/km.

Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO, figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fittled (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. "Model shown: MG HS Exclusive with Dynamic Red Paint 224 690 on the road.



### **Driven**

by JORDAN KATSIANIS

# **Volkswagen Arteon R Shooting Brake**

Mating of a 316bhp 4WD powertrain and a handsome estate body makes for an appealing, if not perfect, package

OU COULD BE FORGIVEN FOR BEING A little overwhelmed by the sheer number of new R models being introduced in quick succession by Volkswagen at the moment. After a few years of restraint, keeping the badge exclusive to the Golf, in 2021 VW seems happy to slap its flagship performance letter and Lapiz Blue paint on pretty much anything with a modicum of performance intent. So with the Mk8 Golf R at one end of the spectrum and the disappointing Touareg R plug-in hybrid at the other, where does the Arteon R Shooting Brake fit in?

Being an adoptee of VW's MQB platform, the

Arteon R Shooting Brake essentially hotfoots the Golf R's powertrain into a larger estate body, then adds just enough R-specific design elements to keep it distinctive, but without trying too hard. That said, the visual result is remarkably effective, with fellow road users often craning their necks just to catch a glimpse of its sleek silhouette – and this, remember, is still a VW estate.

On further inspection you can see why it has this effect, as there are few 'normal' cars that look more exotic with such fundamentally mundane proportions. The R is no wider and only 20mm lower than a standard Arteon, but the slinky

windowline and scowling face stand out in the humdrum carscape of 2021. The detailing plays a strong supporting role, too – the frameless glass doesn't just look neat when the doors are open, but also cleans up the side profile (ever wondered why a five-door Mini looks so much worse than a three-door? Look at the door seals), while the clamshell bonnet highlights the precision of the shutlines and the crispness of the surfacing. It's all superbly executed.

This attention to detail doesn't quite translate to the cabin, though, with the Arteon's Passatbased dash remaining largely unchanged save



for some new air vents, fake stitching and woven metal inserts. Yet while it might initially feel a little old-hat in comparison to the newer layouts seen on Golfs, Leons and Octavias launched in the last 12 months, build quality generally feels good, and infuriating haptic steering wheel controls aside, the touchpoints are good too. The digital interfaces aren't exactly brilliant, mind, but they are easier to interact with than the new-generation units wreaking havoc in the Golf 8.

Which is a theme that seems to continue with the Arteon's driving experience. The powertrain is a familiar one: under the bonnet is the same

### 'Its slinky looks stand out in the humdrum carscape of 2021'

transversely mounted 'evo4' EA888 turbocharged 2-litre four-cylinder petrol unit as in the Golf, producing 316bhp from 5350 to 6500rpm and 310lb ft of torque between 2000 and 5350rpm. This is matched to a seven-speed dual-clutch transmission and 4Motion all-wheel drive system, complete with the new torque-vectoring differential on the rear axle. The coil-spring suspension is 20mm lower than on other Shooting Brakes, with excellent multi-stage adaptive dampers standard fit, as is an uprated brake package. Larger, 20-inch alloys that are unique to the R are optional (more familiar 19s are standard), so too an uprated hi-fi, matrix LED lights and the top-level infotainment system.

On the road the Arteon R does a decent job of







being a calm cruiser, albeit with a slightly brittle ride in its default Comfort mode on our test car's 20-inch wheels. The different driver modes have a marked effect, though. Hit the little blue 'R' section of the steering wheel (by accident or otherwise) and this Arteon will instantly tense up, the firmness associated with those 20-inch rims now syncing with the more resolute tightness to the damping. The transmission is also now more willing to give you access to the inherently strong engine, and the gearshifts are faster too, while the steering is more resilient and trustworthy.

It's now that the ingredients start to mesh. The steering doesn't purvey much in the way of feel, but it is accurate, and after some acclimatisation to the variable ratio is a good ally to start exploring the grip available from the front axle. Lean on the front end and you quickly discover it has more bite than a Golf R, something that could be explained by the fitment of Pirelli P Zero rubber rather than the Golf's Goodyear Eagle FIs. Push harder still and the Arteon does a good job of hiding its 1793kg in the corners, although in a straight line the extra 242kg over the Golf has a more noticeable effect.

**Above:** trapezoidal tailpipes help mark out the R at the rear, while a new face (bottom right) features fewer chromel grille strakes for a sportier look. **Left:** interior feels less special, owing plenty to the Passat's cabin

the Arteon lacking a real edge to its acceleration. A 0-62mph time of 4.9sec (0.2sec behind the Golf) sounds impressive in isolation, but the Arteon R never feels more than merely brisk.

With the nose locked into a bend, get on the power early and the rear end will only just about make an impact, but there's never quite the grunt to get it moving around with any real attitude, even despite the promise of the torque-vectoring differential. In less grippy conditions, however, the Arteon can be provoked into being surprisingly tail-happy in a progressive and not at all intimidating way. We're not talking about lock-stop levels of angle, but enough to make it more three-dimensional when circumstances allow. And if the ride is too firm, selecting Individual mode will give you control of the 15-stage adaptive dampers to fine-tune the car's attitude. It's a great feature – if only it wasn't hidden away in a deep-set menu.

But the Arteon's appeal, unlike the Golf R that was such a disappointment in last month's group test, perhaps shouldn't be judged on a basis of no-compromise thrills, as fundamentally this is an estate car with duties beyond those of a hot hatchback. As a performance estate it's a captivating package, but its appeal is pinned more upon its aesthetics than what's underneath the skin. Get cosy with the numbers and you'll also discover that, in basic spec, the Arteon R is actually £185 more expensive than a BMW M340i Touring, a rival compact executive estate that's both more





powerful (by 53bhp) and more engaging to drive, with two extra cylinders, a higher quality cabin and no less space inside. All you'll miss out on is the Shooting Brake's svelte design. 

■

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1984cc, turbo Power 316bhp @ 5350-6500rpm Torque 310lb ft @ 2000-5350rpm Weight 1793kg (179bhp/ton) 0-62mph 4.9sec Top speed 155mph (limited) Basic price £52,585 Sleek looks, spacious interior, decent handling Value equation doesn't add up

evo rating ★★★☆☆



# IGNITION

NEWS, INTERVIEWS, TECH AND EVERY NEW CAR THAT MATTERS

# Valhalla: it's coming

Aston Martin has confirmed the 'son of Valkyrie' for production as a 937bhp hybrid supercar to rival the best from Ferrari and McLaren

by JETHRO BOVINGDON

HIS IS THE NEW ASTON MARTIN VALHALLA. NO LONGER A concept, but a real representation of a car you'll be able to buy in late 2023, with production limited to two years ('24 and '25), fewer than 1000 units, and the sort of headline stats we've come to expect in these crazy times: 937bho hybrid! Six hundred kilograms of downforce at 155mph! Nordschleife target lap time of 6:30! £700.000! Okay, we'll stop now.

Such statements have become an everyday part of the rapidly evolving supercar reality. So how do you cut through the noise? How does Aston Martin convince us that this is more than simply another moon-shot to save the company and emulate the incredible successes enjoyed by Ferrari? The key, it turns out, is to put the numbers and even the stunning looks to one side for a moment, sit down and listen to the new CEO, Tobias Moers. The former AMG man does not mess around.

'Previously there was no engineering philosophy: it was a design company.' Moers says, almost as though it leaves a bitter taste in his mouth, 'The design department would throw something over the fence and engineering would try to make it work. Now there is the chance to challenge each other. To push.' When we put it to him that Aston Martin has always avoided taking on the likes of Porsche, Ferrari or even his old company, AMG, head-on, he agrees. 'Now we must,' he says without blinking. 'We must chase performance. Become a performance brand. Do people understand what Aston Martin is? I'm not so sure. We will show them.'

The Valhalla is a part of that new ambition, along with a 296 GTB-rivalling mid-engined Vanguish that will follow and substantial facelifts for the current range that are said to make real changes in an aesthetic and dynamic sense. Back in Geneva 2019 the Valhalla was pitched as 'Son of Valkyrie' and featured a new bespoke twin-turbocharged V6 hybrid powertrain and a price of well over £1million. The changes to production spec are pragmatic on the one hand – developing a V6 engine would cost a huge amount of money, resource and time and Euro 7 emissions would be tough to meet with a smaller, higher-revving unit – but also extremely exciting. Adopting the 4-litre flat-plane-crank twin-turbocharged V8 engine from the AMG GT Black Series is a very fine back-up plan, for example. Wouldn't you agree?

Now read on for some of the detail beneath the headlines.



### INTERIOR

Aston Martin has yet to show us inside the cockoit of Valhalla but a few key details have emerged. Firstly, the seats are fixed and the car features an adjustable pedal box. Great for keeping weight down, controlling weight distribution and for ingress/segress through the dihedral doors. Second, the footwells are raised for an Fi-inspired driving position with low hip-to-heel – although it won't go as far as the extreme Valkyrie, which literally mimics a single-seater race-car recline. Finally, Aston has revealed that it will introduce a new and unique HMI system with a central touchscreen and all the functionality you would expect, including Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. If you've driven any recent Aston you'll realise this is A Very Good Thing, as its borrowed HMI has always been a generation or two out of date. However, it's also a complex and expensive thing to get right, so something of a gamble. Regardless, if the Valhalla can combine that driving

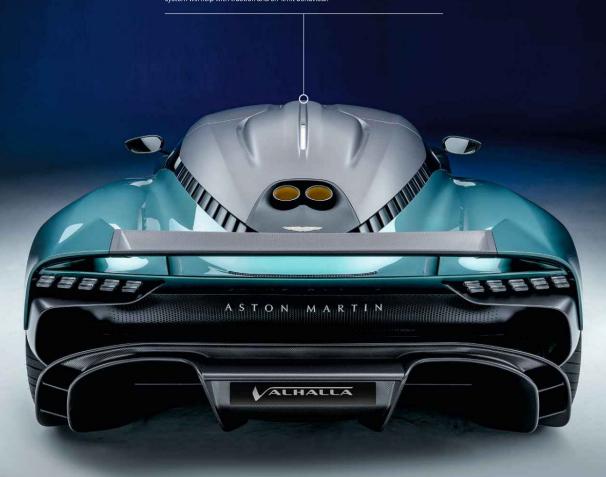
position with the gorgeous racer/bespoke GT cockpit of the recent one-off Victor, it should be a very special place to be.

'THE FOOTWELLS
ARE RAISED FOR
AN F1-INSPIRED
DRIVING POSITION,
THOUGH IT WON'T
GO AS FAR AS
THE VALKYRIE'

### GEARBOX Valhalla will benefit from a new eight-speed DCT gearbox with 'e-reverse' handled by the electric motors and helping to shave weight from the mechanical package. The gearbox **AERODYNAMICS** should be a real step forward for Aston and When Tobias Moers says he wants to turn Aston Martin into a will no doubt make its way into other (frontperformance brand, you sense that the Nürburgring will form a central engined) models, too. With an e-diff and the part of that strategy. The Valhalla, he says, will be capable of lapping capability for the EV system and the ICE to the Ring in under 6 minutes 30 seconds. No question it has the power run in different ratios simultaneously, Aston to do so, but aero will also play an important role. An active front claims superb launch acceleration and a peak splitter and rear spoiler, plus powerful underfloor venturis will combine torque figure of 737lb ft. Valhalla will be able to deliver 600kg of downforce at 150mph. By way of comparison, the to hit 80mph on pure EV power but the range McLaren Senna is said to produce 800kg at 155mph in Race mode, is limited to just 15km or so. The company so although the claim is impressive it's not as other-worldly as those predicts a CO2 rating of sub-200g/km, a top made for the extraordinary Valkyrie. At the recent launch of the car speed of 217mph and 0-62mph in 2.5sec. at Aston's F1 facility it was telling that less time was devoted to the 'beauty' of the car than the performance potential. That said, whilst Aston Martin's design-led philosophy is being challenged, there's no question that from function the design team has really delivered in terms of the aesthetic, too. The roof scoop/intake and top-exit exhausts are just two of the details that mix in a bit of raw aggression and engineering efficiency with typical Aston Martin design flair. STON WILLIAM

### **POWER UNIT**

The ambitious plan for a home-grown twin-turbo V6 engine has been ripped up and Valhalla will once again lean on Aston's technical partnership with Mercedes-AMG. However, rather than just boost up the existing 4-litre twin-turbo V8 from the Vantage, Aston will utilise a 'bespoke' version of the flat-plane-crank unit found in the AMG GT Black Series. It produces 740hpp, revs to 7200rpm and drives the rear wheels only. Moers and the team wouldn't be drawn on the exact changes in specification over the Black Series application, but said it was considerably more than just an ECU tune. The engines will even be built in a new production facility within the Gaydon factory. This mighty V8 will be enhanced by a 150kW/400V battery hybrid system featuring a motor on each axle and capable of delivering up to 201bhp, although the combined peak power of the drivetrain is rated at 937bhp. The pure EV mode will send power only to the front wheels (we're already planning a drag race with a Cygnet) but as you ramp up through the drive modes the rear axle will get an electrical boost, too. Depending on the dynamic situation, up to 100 per cent of the electric boost can go to the rear wheels, but clearly the four-wheel-drive system will help with traction and on-limit behaviour.





### BRAKES/TYRES

The combination of carbon ceramic matrix brakes and Michelin Pilot Sport Cup tyres shouldn't come as a huge shock to anyone. It's become the industry standard and, with Moers background at AMG, it's no surprise that he's brought Michelin in as a supplier. Yet, it is significant. A bespoke compound and construction programme with Michelin is extremely expensive and in the past Aston Martin has simply not had the money or, perhaps more accurately, not been prepared to assign that level of investment to the tyre development. With Valhalla, things are different. The prototype wears 295/30 ZR20 front tyres and 325/30 ZR21 rears and although it's still extremely early in the development phase, the key thing is that Aston Martin has committed to a bespoke tyre programme. It's decisions like these that reinforce the sense that Valhalla and the company as a whole are undergoing a sea change in philosophy. Previously Aston has settled for a solid, competitive option. Now it wants only the best and is chasing marginal gains everywhere.



### CHASSIS

As with the One-77, Vulcan and Valkyrie, Aston has turned to Multimatic to develop a new carbonfibre tub for the Valhalla. Despite the car originally being billed 'Son of Valkyrie' this new structure is unrelated to Adrian Newey's creation. Which isn't to say it's not pretty trick in its own right. At the front it features pushrod-operated suspension with inboard springs and dampers and at the rear there's a multi-link design. It also adopts Multimatic's Variable Spring Rate and Adaptive Spool Valve (ASV) damper units, allowing for a 'dramatically lower' Track mode and a front axle lift system. This sounds much like the system employed by Ford on the GT supercar (with partner Multimatic), whereby in Track mode the coil spring is hydraulically locked-out and only the torsion bar acts as a spring. This enables high-downforce capability without crazy spring rates that would impact other drive modes.

### VERDICT

Aston's mid-engined supercar programme has been an on-off affair since former CEO Andy Palmer triumphantly pulled the wraps off the Valhalla and Vanquish concepts at the Geneva motor show in 2019. But they were little more than concepts, show-stand dressing to tempt investors ahead of the company's doomed IPO.

When Lawrence Stroll gained control and appointed Tobias Moers, the pair immediately put the mid-engined cars on hold until they could work out how, and if, they could bring them to market in a crowded sector fighting for the attention of a relatively small number of customers. Nine months on and Valhalla is their interpretation of Palmer's vision.

The close association with AMG that Moers brings will undoubtedly smooth the process.

but this remains a bold transition into an already well-supported market when - even by the admission of its own CEO - few know what Aston Martin really stands for. SG

### SPECIFICATION

Engine V8, 4-litre, twin-turbo, plus two electric motors Gearbox Eight-speed dual clutch

with e-reverse Power 937bhp (combined) Torque 737lb ft (combined) 0-62mph

2.5sec Top speed 217mph Basic price £696,000

# BMW continues its purple patch

New 2-series marks BMW's return to building a bespoke, two-door coupe-saloon in the spirit of the iconic E30

RE THERE TWO BMWS CURRENTLY operating in this world? There's the one that continues to transition to a manufacturer of electric vehicles via its iNext revolution, which isn't really that revolutionary when you consider the i3 and i8 broke the mould over a decade ago and BMW has been waiting for others to catch up ever since.

Then there is the century-old BMW, the one that gave us the ultimate driving machines, marvellous M-cars and, yes, SUVs. The one that built the traditional BMWs that many of us cut our teeth on when venturing into the world of driver's cars that could also be used for daily chores and company-car duties, cars that for a while it appeared were no longer a priority to the company, there being a suggestion that an apathy had set in, a 'that will do' approach rather than an 'is that good enough?' attitude.

But in recent times there has been something of a renaissance for that latter BMW, and we don't just mean the latest batch of M-cars that have seen the M2 CS claim the 2020 **evo** Car of the Year crown, the M3 and M4 return to stellar form and the M5 CS redefine our opinion of how exciting a full-size supersaloon can be. There are the sub-full-M models too: the M550i and M340/440is that have demonstrated there are some individuals in Munich who care about how an ICE-engined BMW should drive and feel.

These models have steering that's back to being linear and precise, body and ride control that no longer spends its time arguing with the road surface but delivers a level of compliance and cohesion that allows the car to breathe with whatever surface it's on. And there are engines, be they with six or eight cylinders, that are precisely matched to the eight-speed ZF auto





gearboxes they are mated to, and rear-biased xDrive chassis that sparkle with an unexpected degree of enthusiasm and encouragement.

All this brings us neatly on to the latest of that breed, the all-new M240i xDrive. No longer an offshoot of the 1-series line-up, the new 2-series coupe is based on an adapted 3-series CLAR platform, which means rear-drive for the 2-litre petrol and diesel-engined models, and rear-biased four-wheel drive for the six-cylinder M240i. Sitting on top of said platform is an unashamedly three-box design, one that instantly brings to mind the iconic E30, a connection BMW is happy to acknowledge and go along with.

For a 21st-century BMW the exterior design is rather reserved. There's no toothy front grille, but there is a 10-way active air flap incorporated within the modest kidneys, which are flanked either side by LED headlamps inspired by the 2002's. Longer, wider, and lower than the 2-series coupe it replaces, at 1690kg it is also 220kg(!) heavier than the outgoing M240i and 115kg heavier than Audi's new RS3 (see page 38).

In a bid to keep weight down, aluminium is used for that long bonnet and the panels that flank it, as well the front suspension struts, delivering a 9.6kg saving, while new wheel bearings trim away off a further 2.7kg. All new 2-series coupe models are fitted with passive springs and dampers as standard, with BMW Adaptive M suspension available as a cost option on the M240i. M Sport brakes and the M Sport rear differential are standard on the six-cylinder four-wheel-drive model, so too 19-inch alloy wheels.



Top: 19-inch wheels are standard, as are uprated M Sport brakes. Above: interior is suitably driver-orientated, but no manual gearlever or third pedal - the M240i is auto only

All new 2-series also have a wider track than the previous model, with the M240i's wider still, and they all benefit from as-near-as-dammit 50:50 weight distribution, a key target in the model's development process. With 369bhp and 369lb ft to call upon, the M240i has the credentials to become one of those under-the-radar sleeper performance cars (if not specified in Thundernight purple, anyway). Less overt, brash, and in your face than Audi's RS3, this remake of the legendary E30 should prove to be yet another fine, driver-focused BMW to fire the imagination.

That the eight-speed automatic is the only gearbox option is likely to result in much hand-wringing from those craving a manual, but the uncomfortable truth is that we don't buy enough new cars with manual 'boxes for the likes of BMW to invest in the development of one to pass the various emissions tests new cars have to be put through. But worry not, there is a full-bloodied M2 coming, too, and that might still have three pedals and a single driven axle.

### SPECIFICATION

Engine Power Torque Weight Power-to-weight 0-62mph Top speed £48,940

Basic price

In-line 6-cyl, 2998cc, turbo 369bhp @ 5500-6500rpm 369lb ft @ 1900-5000rpm 1690kg

222bhp/ton 4 3sec 155mph (limited)

### **BODY & ROOF**

The recipe is nothing radical over previous McLaren models. The 765LT Spider shares the same basic MonoCage II tub as the coupe, but the coupe's central spine has been removed (improving interior head space) and the Spider is equipped with a new integrated rollover protection system that links to the car's rear subframe. There is also an additional upper structure in the engine bay. The roof panel is made from carbonfibre and the 720S Spider's glass buttresses remain.





# Along came another Spider

While we still wait to drive the Artura, McLaren has revealed the 765LT Spider

HE ARTURA IS COMING, DON'T worry. McLaren hasn't forgotten about the replacement for its Sports Series models. The new V6 hybrid powered car will, we are faithfully told, be available to drive in September, following delays linked to the pandemic that took a bit of a toll on McLaren's finances. This meant some housekeeping was required to get the current account in order

before the Artura could be released to the world.

Therefore, following a £175m sale and lease back of its Woking HQ, 800 redundancies, a £150m loan from the National Bank of Bahrain, a £275m loan against its collection of old F1 cars and the recent announcement of £550m of fresh investment (existing shareholders providing £150m and new investors £400m), McLaren has dusted itself down and is ready to go again.

Granted, VW probably spent the same on the woeful infotainment system in the new Golf, but for McLaren this new cash means it can focus on making cars again, such as the new 765LT Spider.

It's limited to 765 units, as per the coupe, has its sights set on Ferrari's 812 GTS and will cost £310,500 before any discount, an issue that McLaren still has to work on. Along with reliability, but we're confident both can be resolved.

### INTERIOR

Carbonfibre and Alcantara rule the interior. The former includes carbon-shell race seats that save like, over the 7205 sport seats, and some might recognise them from the PI, where they were first used. The carbon central tunnel is a mere 0.8mm thick, the door pockets are now nets, and by removing the floor carpet McLaren has saved 2.4kg, with an addittonal LSkg saved by ditching the radio and a further 10kg by removing the air-conditioning system. Additional weight saving can be achieved by fitting the seats from the Senna.

### **BRAKES & WHEELS**

There's a new ten-spoke design of 19 (front) and 20 (rear) inch forged alloy wheels, with Pirellip Zero Trofeo R tyres the default fit and the wheels weighing a combined 22kg less than those available for the 720S. Being an LT model means the latest carbon-ceramic discs with the calipers from the Senna are fitted, and for those wanting even greater braking performance the full Senna braking system is available as an option, which includes discs that are 60 per cent stronger and provide four times the thermal efficiency.





### CHASSIS

There's no change to the 765LT Spider's chassis over the coupe's, which means you get McLaren's trademark Proactive Chassis Control suspension system that utilises hydraulically cross-linked dampers to do away with the need for traditional anti-roll bars. LT springs and dampers are also fitted, with the Spider benefiting from the same 5mm ride height drop and 6mm wider track as the coupe. At 1388kg, the Spider is 49kg heavier than the coupe.

### ENGINE

You didn't expect anything radically different for the Spider's engine, did you? It retains the Ricardo-built 4-litre twin-turbocharged V8 that McLaren has used for an eternity, with forged pistons, a three-layer head gasket, carbon-coated valvetrain followers and twin-scroll turbos with electronically controlled wastegates – all as per the coupe. Which means the same 754bhp at 7500rpm and 590lb ft at 5500rpm. The seven-speed double-clutch gearbox is also unchanged. Zero to 62mph takes 2.7sec (a tenth slower); top speed remains 205mph.

### AERODYNAMICS

Visually, and roof aside, the 765LT Spider's carbonfibre body isn't altered from the coupe's. It has the same front spillter and bumper, the lower door blades and side skirts are the same and the rear bumper – and quad exit exhaust tips – are unchanged. And while the active rear wing is the same design, its action has been recalibrated to optimise aero performance with the roof open and closed, resulting in a 25 per cent increase in downforce over a 720S Spider.



# Peugeot enters the LMH fray

9X8 Hybrid4 prepares to take on Toyota and Glickenhaus in Le Mans Hypercars - and all without a wing in sight

HE 2022 RACING CALENDAR IS SET TO be a transformative one, with Formula 1 and the WRC preparing to introduce large-scale rule changes. The World Endurance Championship will continue its metamorphosis too, as the Le Mans Hypercar class enters its second season and Peugeot joins the line-up with its new 9X8 Hybrid4 500kW.

As a quick recap, the Le Mans Hypercar class replaces the old LMP1 category, and offers more flexibility than the LMDh class being phased in from 2023 and in which Audi. Porsche and BMW will compete. Toyota and Scuderia Cameron Glickenhaus are already campaigning LMH machines in 2021, and now Peugeot has decided to capitalise on the Le Mans Hypercar regs with the creation of its own bespoke chassis, powertrain and ambitious new aero package.

The 9X8's main power source is a new 2.6-litre twin-turbo 90-degree V6 petrol engine mounted longitudinally behind the driver in a mid-rear layout. It will produce a maximum of 671bhp and drive the rear wheels via a seven-speed sequential transmission. The decision to develop this new V6 was made due to its ideal compromise between power density, packaging and weight (it tips the scales at 165kg), and the engine has been created purely for motorsport, with there being no plans to make it available in a road-going form.

In addition to the internal combustion engine is a 200kW (268bhp) electric motor mounted on the front axle and driving the front wheels - hence the 'Hybrid4' part of the car's name. When combined, these two propulsion systems could significantly exceed the 671bhp (500kW) power cap dictated by the Hypercar regulations, so Peugeot Sport will avoid this by actively modulating the petrol engine's output depending on the contribution of the electric motor.

According to Hypercar powertrain rules, the front motor is not allowed to function below 75mph, so this is when the petrol engine's full 671bhp will be called upon. The V6's full output can also be used whenever energy from the batteries for the electric motor has been depleted. This complex engine management will be monitored and controlled by the racer's electronic brain, with telemetry being automatically transmitted to race officials to ensure the rules are being adhered to.

The 9X8's brakes are by wire and, as in F1 and LMP1, will utilise both friction and regenerative braking, with regen levels adjustable from the cockpit. The Hypercar regulations also specify a limit for downforce, which Peugeot Sport's racer achieves without the need for a tall, drag-inducing rear wing. Instead, downforce is built on top of the 9X8's body panels, and is then actively balanced with aero devices built into the bodywork itself.







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### **New metal round-up**

New RS3, Macan and Abarth incoming, and a farewell to Divo

FYOU DON'T FANCY BMW'S NEW M240i xDrive (see page 32), have something against Mercedes-AMG's A45 S and yet must have four-wheel drive, Audi has a solution in the form of its new RS3 (1).

Available as a five-door hatch or four-door saloon, it's powered by the latest version of the company's 2.5-litre five-cylinder engine, with peak power sticking at 394bhp but now delivered across a wider rev band (5600-7000rpm), and torque up by 15lb ft to take the maximum to 369lb ft, available between 2250 and 5600rpm. Audi's big news is the fitment of a new torque-vectoring rear diff. Prices start from £50,000.

Of course, you might prefer your four-wheeldrive hyperhatch to ride a little higher off the ground, which is where Porsche's revised Macan (2) comes in before it goes fully electric. Out goes the Turbo model and in comes an upgraded GTS with 434bhp – the same output as the old Turbo. At £64,770 the GTS represents a hefty £7k premium over its predecessor, but you do get air suspension, revised adaptive dampers, new front and rear bumpers and a thoroughly overhauled interior. Porsche's Macan has always been an evo guilty pleasure, and these upgrades only strengthen that appeal.

Did you know Fiat still makes a non-electric 500? Neither did we, but it does and the Abarth F595 (3) celebrates the firm's involvement in Formula 4 (the 595 and an F4 racer share the same 165bhp, 1.4-litre turbocharged four-pot), is painted matt grey and costs £20,305.

And if you were about to send your configuration to Bugatti for your limited-run Divo (4), sorry to be the bearer of bad news but the fortieth and final £4.4million example has been sold and delivered. But don't worry, there are plenty of production slots available for the current crop of 2000bhp, £2million-plus electric hypercars. What's that? You couldn't care less about such a car? Don't worry, by the look of the order books you're not alone.









#### WATCHES



Hatton Racer

#### From £225 hattonwatches.com

New from London-based Hatton Watches is this affordable motorsport-style chronograph. It's available with a choice of four different leather or rubber straps or on a steel bracelet.



#### **MHD Streamliner**

£850 mhdwatches.com
This latest piece from MHD takes its inspiration and name from 'streamliner' vehicles of the 1930s. It's available with a blue/steel or all-black dial, each limited to 200 examples.



Maurice Lacroix Aikon Master Grand Date Only Watch 2021

#### £TBC onlywatch.com

Created in collaboration with Mahindra Racing, this one-off, carbonfibre-cased watch will be auctioned in November to raise funds for research into Duchenne muscular dystrophy.



# Watch-wearers of the world – unite!

When Karl Marx told the world's workers they had nothing to lose but their chains, he could have been talking about the original proletarian mode of transport: the bike. Coincidentally, cycling was the inspiration for the new C63 Sealander Elite chronometer. Not only does the smart pop-out crown stop it digging into your wrist when you're riding, but the super-light titanium case makes it effortless to wear. Though Karl would have surely loved these utilitarian features, we think its sleek design is more 'Wiggins' than 'Marx'.

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## **Richard Tuthill**

Rally driver and Porsche guru

Giving up a career in front-line rallying to run the family business, Richard Tuthill now heads one of the world's leading Porsche specialists

by RICHARD MEADEN
PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT

'VE LIVED HERE ALL MY LIFE, literally a hundred metres from where we're sat. It was pretty much inevitable l'd get involved with the business: 'So says Richard Tuthill, accomplished rally driver, 911 fanatic and the driving force behind the eponymous Tuthill Porsche, the basis of which was founded by his father, Francis, back in 1977.

The highly impressive edifice you see upon arrival at Tuthill's premises might occupy the same location as Tuthill Snr's original rally preparation business (a literal stone's throw from the family home), but today's slick, multi-million-pound operation has grown out of all recognition. Francis remains ever-present, but it is Richard who has propelled the company increasingly into the spotlight, thanks to high-profile projects spanning everything from its acclaimed 'Below Zero' ice driving events and spectacular successes in the historic East African Safari to running a modern GT3 in the WRC and forging increasingly close ties with Singer Vehicle Design.

Both astute and ambitious, Tuthill's energy and focus is a force of nature, but his love of cars and driving (fast!) brings an extra level of authenticity. His is a life very much fuelled by petrol and shaped by his father's impressively liberal attitude towards giving his offspring early access to cars. RT takes up the tale: 'My early memories of family cars is that we had Saabs. Specifically a V4 Estate where you're sitting in the back facing backwards.

We were taught by the old man to drive when sitting on his knees steering before we could reach the pedals. My first car was an old Saab coupe with a column gearshift. My brother and sister and I used to charge around a field next to the house, initially in the Saab, but then that was ioined by a pale blue Beetle. That was the first car I rolled. I suppose I'd have been about eight years old. My sister was sitting next to me, my cousin was in the back, and my brother was stood at the finish line timing me around our makeshift course. Obviously we did a handbrake turn at the end, and of course, after a whole day of handbrake turning in the same spot it had got a bit rutted, so over we went! I think I hid. I was terrified of the old man's reaction. Turned out he was semi-delighted ... '

Perhaps unsurprisingly given his unorthodox pre-teen driving experience, Tuthill took three attempts to pass his driving test. But, being a Tuthill, the ink was barely dry on his licence when he embarked upon his first proper road trip, having been dispatched to Sweden to deliver a 2-litre short-wheelbase 911 for Bjorn Waldegard.

"It was two weeks after passing my test so I'd never been anywhere, yet I jumped in this 911. Back in the day [circa 1991], there were no service vans on historic stuff, so you'd drive the car to the rally. The car had more spares in it than our stores does today. I was literally crapping myself all the way to Sweden. It didn't get better once I got there. No mobile phone, armed with a map







and appalling directions and no idea where I was. Then, on arrival, there's me, 17, green as grass, with a load of Swedes, who as soon as they boarded the boat to Finland started drinking like fish...

While he took to driving like a duck to water, it's safe to say Tuthill was not a natural academic – 'I got kicked out of school after my GCSEs' – and subsequently spent a while doing all kinds of random work, from fabricating agricultural sheds to doing odd jobs at Prodrive. It was an intervention by his brother that steered Tuthill back on-course: 'My brother told me to go to university. I did a term of automotive engineering, but by now I was driving rally cars. The course was massively work-intensive, so I changed from engineering to engineering management and continued with the rallying.'

As is often the case with race and rally drivers, when it comes to competitive exploits Tuthill can chart his four-wheeled life in minute detail, while road cars are viewed as more mundane workhorses. Nevertheless, he retains some fondness for certain road cars. Foremost amongst them is 'Roy', an early 8v Golf GTI.

'I've got really good memories of Roy, so-called because the registration plate ended in R-O-Y.

#### 'THE GTI WAS A GAME-CHANGER IN TERMS OF MY ROAD CAR EXPERIENCE'

The GTI was a bit of a game-changer in terms of my road car experience. It was a cracking thing. In particular I remember trips from here [Wardington, near Banbury) to Aberdovey where we've always gone on holiday in Wales. Back then I basically approached the journey like a full-on three-hour special stage. There's a 90 left, just after Craven Arms, which Roy and I massively overcooked. To this day it still makes me smile when I pass that spot.'

Like his father, Richard possesses exceptional skills as a rally driver. Indeed for a significant period of his life, pretty much from those university days until he took up the reins of the family business. Tuthill was a hot prospect.

'My first rally car was Dad's 1970 VW Beetle. My second was another Beetle, in which I became the youngest driver to enter a WRC event when I did Rally GB. Not to be disparaging about the Beetle, but my first "proper" rally car was a Group A Vauxhall Nova. I won the British Junior Championship in it. Then I drove a Civic Type R for a couple of rallies, but I couldn't get funding. I think I won the first rally and retired on the second, but I'll never forget that VTEC engine.'

Maintaining his connection with Prodrive, Tuthill continued to balance work with rallying, turning his hand to whatever Prodrive wanted him to do, be it working on the build of Group A Legacies to attaching the wheels and decals to all the Series McRae Impreza road cars.

Above and right: main workshop at Tuthill Porsche HQ always has a wild assortment of Porsches, from early 356s through to Singers and 2-litre Cup racers. Pink car (opposite, top left) was built for East African Safari Rally; Tuthill is running no fewer than 17 cars on this year's event. Reception is also crammed with cars: not often you see a restored Porsche tractor alongside a 904 racer. Brumos RSR (right) has remarkable race history, including Daytona and Sebring





A big break came when he persuaded David Richards that he could run one of Prodrive's Group N Imprezas as a trainee engineer. The kicker was he would also be driving said Impreza. A 2nd place finish in Group N on the Rally GB remains Subaru's best Group N result to date. This led to a campaign in the American Rally Championship, driving a derestricted Group N Mitsubishi Evo 6, and then with Hyundai. It was to be the high point of Tuthill's career.

'Most of the US rallies had no pace notes. You had maps. So you're driving unrestricted Group N cars, probably 400 horsepower, blind. I got on really well with that because I'm in my element driving down a blind piece of road. I love the fact that you have to keep the car moving the whole time. I really enjoyed rallying in America, even though I missed out on the factory Hyundai seat to Mark Higgins. It was gutting, but I was young and his CV was mega. Anyway, I could've probably had another go at doing something, but I wanted to do it at the best level possible. because by then (2002) I'd been driving good cars for three years. In the end I said to myself, "Okay, don't hang on to it. Don't hang onto a dream" so I decided to stop and help Dad with the Safari Rally entry for 2003. I came for that one job, and I haven't left ... '

#### 'STICK ME IN A 911 AND I'M PRETTY MUCH IN DRIVING HEAVEN'

Aside from the historic 911 rally cars for which the Tuthill Porsche business has become synonymous, Richard is perhaps best known for his valiant efforts to introduce a Porsche 997 GT3 to the WRC, initially campaigned by him but – most famously – driven by Francois Delacour. It remains one of the great rallying efforts of recent times, even if it ultimately led to something of a cul-de-sac.

'It was an absolute highlight, says Tuthill, but also one of the most awful projects I've been involved with. At least in terms of frustration, which largely stemmed from the FIA. I don't know how much I spent. I never want to know. Too much for sure, but the year with Delacour! What would you pay for that? In that respect it was priceless.'

Since then Tuthill has his head firmly in the

business. The Safari rally and Below Zero activities are pillars of the Tuthill Porsche enterprise, and the relatively recent move to building cars and engines for drivers competing in the 2.0 Cup historic race series has propelled the Tuthill name into the circuit racing fraternity.

And then there's Singer. It's well known that Tuthill and his team handled the build and development of Singer's sensational ACS Dakarstyle commission, but it's less known that he has also been closely involved in the development of the DLS. I know this will sound like a sales pitch, but the DLS is an extraordinary thing. Like one of the all-time best cars I've ever driven.'

What's next for Tuthill? Well, there are a couple of exciting in-house projects - one 993-based and something RT describes as being 'based on an early car, super super super-lightweight with an engine the like of which has never been seen before.' Considering his experience of the DLS this is quite a statement.

As for his love of driving, well, that remains as strong as ever. So long as it's in a Porsche. 'Nowadays I can drive for fun, and I never have more fun than when I'm in an early 911. I'm the first to admit I'm completely typecast. Give me a BMW M3 and I don't really know what to do with it. But stick me in a 911 and I'm pretty much in driving heaven.'

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by RICHARD PORTEI

## **DOA: MERCEDES-BENZ C112**

Despite strong demand, this V12-powered supercar was denied production - but its legacy lives on

HIS WAS ONE OF THOSE OCCASIONAL times when Mercedes-Benz slapped its technology tackle onto the table.

Revealed at the 1991 Frankfurt motor show, the name of the C112 signalled it as spiritual successor to the C111 rotary- and diesel-powered test cars from the 1960s and 70s, but the technology within it reflected a decade of R&D progress since those bright orange record setters were retired.

The C112 had active body control using hydraulic rams on top of the springs to help repel roll, dive and squat. It had rear-wheel steering, grandly labelled a 'cybernetic' system by Mercedes, which turned contra or parallel to the front wheels depending on speed. It had an active air brake which popped up to 45 degrees and, according to Mercedes, reduced the 190-0mph stopping distance by a useful 330 feet. Most remarkably, the C112 had an active aero system that hydraulically deployed a front spoiler and a rear wing and could react in a tenth of a second to increase downforce when the car's multiple G-force sensors detected a loss of grip in a corner. Why it wasn't already providing enough downforce to stop you losing

grip in the first place isn't clear. As well as this centrally controlled suite of active dynamic aids the C112 came with radar cruise control, tyre pressure monitoring and traction control, commonplace features now but 30 years ago more like distant pings from the future.

The whole thing was powered by a 6-litre, 403bhp V12 driving the rear wheels through a six-speed manual gearbox, contained within an aluminium monocoque skinned with ally and Kevlar panels to a design intended to remind people of the Sauber-built Mercedes Group C racers that had taken the World Sportscar Championship titles in 1989 and '90. But where the C11 racer's door flopped forward when open, the C112 had gullwings like an original 300 SL, or indeed the C111.

This was a mind-bogglingly advanced machine for its time but it was blatantly engineered with an eye on the showroom. Its V12, the M120 unit from the 600 SEL launched earlier in 1991, was capable of meeting emissions standards all around the world, and the car was designed to meet global safety standards too, with ABS, airbags, and regular seatbelts neatly integrated into its

electric seats. The show car, beautifully built by Turin-based carrozzeria Coggiola, certainly looked ready for production, to the extent that 700 people contacted Mercedes after its debut and demanded to place an order, despite no mention of a production schedule or price.

It was subsequently reported that Merc management gave serious thought to signing off the C112 for public consumption, maybe even getting their race partners at Sauber to build it, but ultimately realised it was a risk they couldn't take. This was the early '90s and the world was plunging into a recession that would do no favours to highpriced, low-volume supercars, as Jaguar and Bugatti were about to discover. Plus. Merc was already smarting from launching the hefty W140 S-class, which was late, over-budget and suddenly looked horribly out of step with the times. An ostentatious gullwinged flagship was impossible to justify and the C112 remained a one-off that lives to this day in the factory museum. Almost all of its technology has ended up in other Mercedes cars, however, and its V12 eventually became a mid-engined superstar as the motor in the original Pagani Zonda.





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#### Seizing the day

In 2014 my wife and I lived in Horsham, West Sussex. At Easter we made our usual visit to the annual Horsham Piazza Italia supercar gathering. After walking backwards and forwards among the beautiful cars my wife said she liked the Ferrari 360 best.

Another visit to the beer tent later and she said (she said!): 'We could have one of those, couldn't we?'

That was an opportunity not to be missed and so four weeks later we collected a 360 Spider in Grigio Alloy. My wife always says that if she had suggested a new kitchen we'd still be discussing it. So Stuart (Ed Speak, evo 288), keep browsing those classified ads and ignore any kitchen-based discussions. Your wife will thank you in the long term!

And Adam, if you really want to trade 300bhp for a tuneful engine and a manual gearbox (McLaren 720S Spider v 911 Turbo S Cabriolet), I give you the Ferrari 360 Spider. But not mine. I'm not letting it go until I can't get in or out of it any more!

#### Laurie Hockley, Somerset

#### Weight for it

About two years after it was launched, I had the chance to drive an Elise, and by comparison to anything I had driven before it was just wonderful - so agile and light on its feet. When Lotus announced the Final Edition a few months ago, I still saw the car as one of the most beautiful designs on the road.

The Emira, I'm pleased to see. is just as stunning, but is it really a proper Lotus? I can't help but notice from your spec comparison (evo 288) that the four-cylinder Emira is nearly 300kg heavier than the Alpine A110S, 50kg heavier



than a four-cylinder Cayman (hardly a lightweight itself) and the same weight as a six-cylinder 4-litre Cayman.

What happened to Colin Chapman's philosophy of 'engineering in lightness'?

#### James Brock

#### Margin call

With the recent unveiling of the allnew 296 GTB, you've got to wonder if the margins of performance are getting a little tight at somewhere like Ferrari.

The 296 gets you 819bhp for £230k. For an extra £145k you can have the SF90 with a combined output of almost 1000hp. Then at the other end you have the 'entrylevel' Roma with just over 600bhp for £175k. Yet all these cars have something in common, and not just the horse on the front: realistically you can only drive them all as fast as you can a Porsche Cayman GT4.

Alpine's A110 should have been a wake-up call for some other manufacturers to make less expensive, less heavy, more accessible performance cars. The Lotus Emira deserves to be a big success - it will be the last petrolpowered vehicle that can be fully enjoyed no matter what the road you're on.

#### **Brad Johnson**

#### Hate Rs gonna hate

Full disclosure: I have a Mk8 Golf R and it's not my first performance Golf, so I suppose I'm one of 'those' people. I'm pretty accepting of the fact that it's not the hot hatch interpretation of a GT3 like the Civic Type R, nor a proper hot-rod like the AMG A45, but did it deserve such a panning (evo 288)?



#### LETTER OF THE MONTH

#### Follow your dreams

#### I'D LIKE TO COMMENT ON THE BRILLIANT PIECE BY PETER

Tomalin in your 'Living the Dream' article (evo 288). The opening and closing paragraphs really struck a chord with me and even drew a tear.

I'm 54 and I've been thinking about treating myself to the car of my dreams for my 60th too. However, just recently I'd been toying with the idea of 'just' getting a brand new Golf GTI instead. Safe, reliable, practical and saving a huge chunk of money for a rainy day. But not anymore, oh no.

Peter's comment about the Aston putting a 'soppy smile on my face' made me say out loud, 'You are so, so right!' Some cars and dreams are so very special and life is actually quite short.

I first and last wrote to this magazine 15 or so years ago. It will be only a third as long until I next write, this time to tell you of my new car. In 2027 I shall be purchasing an Aston or a 911 - I would be equally proud and dizzy to have either.

Enjoy your Dream Drive, Mr Tomalin. I can honestly imagine how it makes you feel. Thank you for the inspiration to follow my dream too, and to not have regrets like your late father.

#### **Gary Jenson**

#### The Letter of the Month wins a Straton watch

The writer of this month's star letter receives a Straton Daily Driver watch worth £200. This affordable chronograph has a 44mm case and a stainless steel bracelet, is water resistant to 200 metres, and is available in nine different colour schemes.







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## **PINBOX**





I've had mine two months and never switched on the heated steering wheel by mistake, and when I get in, a quick prod of 'R' on the steering wheel and then 'Special' gets you a bit of theatre combined with UK-friendly suspension. Drift mode is one push more, which seems fair enough if you're planning to head around Tesco's car park at forty-five degrees. The heating controls really are rubbish, though, but thankfully the back axle is awesome and the engine thumping. And the home button being a square rather than an outline of a house wasn't a deal breaker for me...

Anyway I wish CTR and A45 drivers and everyone else a summer of deserted back roads and easy-to-navigate infotainment systems.

Robert Bryce, Perth, Scotland

#### Come on, England!

You have to love a big England game, like (as I write) last night's match against Ukraine.

There is an extra intensity and busyness to the hours before the match, with people dashing all over the place to complete their errands before kick-off. And then suddenly you notice it: the hush descending over the country, the silence building, until two minutes to 8pm, when everyone is sitting glued to their televisions, waiting, anticipating...

The moment has arrived. Quick glance out the window: yes, a beautiful, dry summer's evening. Grab the keys to the GT3, enjoy the fact that for once everyone's far too busy to be disturbed by the noisy cold start, and head out onto the roads.

Immediately you're transported back from the standstill congestion of 2021 to the lightly trafficked roads of 1966. (OK, I know that's World Cup not European Cup, but the analogy still works!) Ninety delightful minutes of driving lay ahead with barely another car in sight.

As you pull up back on the driveway later, listening to the pinging of hot metal cooling, you turn on the radio to hear the result. England's through, and an even more gripping match beckons. For now, everyone's happy.

James Stacey

#### Name that tune

Reading Dickie Meaden (column, evo 288) talking about listening to cars and bikes in the distance on summer days reminds me of my childhood, in the back garden of my parents' house on an evening, listening to machines being howled up the nearby Mary Panel straight (so called as apparently Mary Panel herself was hanged there for witchery...).

Today, living with my missus in our quiet village, she finds it odd that I can easily identify what kind of car is being thrashed out of the village and down the following mile straight just by its howl.

God bless the internal combustion engine. Things won't be the same come the year 2040 or so.

Brad Johnson, Doncaster

#### Life in the old ICE yet

JCB has done some amazing work on the hydrogen internal combustion engine, as batteries simply do not perform well enough to be viable in its hard-worked larger machines.

Former **evo** man Harry Metcalfe has made an excellent video with Lord Bamford on the subject, and two key points stood out for me:

The hydrogen ICE avoids the inflationary costs of batteries.

2) The hydrogen ICE sounds more like a petrol engine.





Cheaper, lighter, no charging-time worries; infrastructure and transport very similar to current LPG.

We're saved.

Now Ferrari just needs to make a hydrogen ICE that sounds like a F355.

#### **Richard Carter**

#### Independent thinker

I think Chris Parker (Inbox, evo 288) might have been sitting out in the sun for too long.

As someone who is not in the position to see, much less drive anything like the lunatic Alfa Giuila GTAm either near, on or over its limits of grip, this is precisely why I subscribe to this magazine. I, like many others, live vicariously through the highly considered words and images put together by evo's trustworthy band of utter professionals. The image of tyre smoke liberally exiting the rear wheel housing of that glorious green monster pulls my heart straight into these very pages, putting me in the driver's seat and briefly gifting me the heroic driving skills I will never possess in the real world.

Does it immediately encourage me to go out in my own car and try to replicate such things? Of course not, because I am an adult. An adult who still pays money for a paper magazine to be delivered through his letterbox once a month. This demonstrates I am sensible (old), have independent thought and the cognitive abilities to determine where entertainment ends and cold reality begins. I also posit that testing the limits of any car absolutely counts as constructive consumer advice.

I hope this letter will give you an excuse to reprint that wonderful picture for a third time...

Steve Hedderman, Leighton Ruzzard

#### Each to their own

Peter Jaggs (Letter of the Month, evo 288) may be struggling to see the point of the £140k, 626bhp BMW M5 CS, but I am in love with it.

I currently own an RS6 for my family wagon, a car chosen because the M5 doesn't come in Touring form. I absolutely love the sledgehammer nature of the Audi's performance when I'm the only one in the car, and when it's fully loaded it makes a nice family car, with more than enough overtaking ability.

I also have a little 130i for fun Sunday-morning drives. I used to own an MX-5, like Peter does now, but rear seats make the 130 more useable other days of the week.

Both RS6 and 130i are great cars to drive, just in different ways. Not everyone wants a B-road blast (no, I don't know who these people are, but presumably they exist) for their motoring thrills: some people just want to accelerate fast, or cruise at high speed, or have a piece of metal on their drive that's gorgeous, or rare, or special in some way.

It's all the Thrill Of Driving, and I quite happily enjoy OTT power-toweight or useable power and size as the mood takes me.

It is great that such crazy cars exist, for people like us (or people like us who play football professionally or won the Lotto perhaps), but I agree we definitely do need more at the GR86. MX-5, i20 N end of the spectrum.

#### Dan Rickard, Essex

#### Going for gold

The M5 CS sounds amazing (and a bit of a handful), but what it's really got me thinking is where is the Subaru Impreza WRC fancy dress party and who else was invited?

**Gareth Jones** 





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# RICHARN MFANFN

#### Meaden's looking forward to life in the slow lane with his next purchase

'VE BEEN SURFING THE CLASSIFIEDS AGAIN. 'What's new?!' I hear you cry. And you'd be right. Rare old air-cooled Porsches, barn-find Lamborghinis, a few old Fords. Even some classic British kit from the '50s and '60s. All have come under my watchful gaze. The only difference is that instead of hunting for sports cars I can neither afford nor need, I've been searching for something I actually need and can afford: a tractor.

No, I haven't lost my mind. And no, you won't be seeing Dickie's Farm battling Clarkson's Farm and Harry's Farm on Amazon and YouTube. Watching me tending to a couple of acres of grass paddock is unlikely to be TV gold, although as beer tends to be a component of gardening and property maintenance at Meaden Towers I might be selling the spectacle short.

The reason for the imminent tractor purchase is horsepower of a different kind. Namely Mrs M's two horses, which have dedicated their existence to eating/destroying the aforementioned paddocks, gates, fencing, bordering trees and most of our disposable income. Still, to give the nags their due, horse ownership might be one of life's great ball-aches, but they are providing me with the perfect justification for buying a cool old tractor. A purchase, I might add, that comes with the full and enthusiastic endorsement of Mrs M. I've even caught her watching a livestream from a Cheffins agricultural auction.

For a decidedly un-farmy individual such as myself, the learning curve has been steep. In fact it's been quite a challenge, but I've been amazed to discover that a love of old tractors is a guilty pleasure concealed by lots of car people I thought I knew well. Ask them their view on the Lewis v Max crash and they give a non-committal shrug, but quiz them on grey Fergies and Fordson Dextas and their eyes light up. Clearly farm machinery is the petrolhead's dark web.

This is something of a role reversal for me, as I'm usually the person people come to for answers. Amusingly, just as I try to steer them away from buying something they'll regret, only for them to ignore me and buy that PT Cruiser Convertible they've always wanted, so I listen to tractorists telling me I should buy a boxy 1970s Massey Ferguson 135, or perhaps even a modern Kubota. I humour them, but we both know I'll end up buying a curvy 1960s MF 35X, or maybe a David Brown 770 Selectamatic. Not because they're going to be more reliable or better suited to our needs, but because either could be a character from a Pixar movie and would look cute peeping out of the tractor shed.

I've also come to realise that the classic tractor market is the classic car market in microcosm. Prices are going up rapidly doubtless thanks to saps like me buying the 'wrong' tractors for too much money - and the term 'investment tractor' is commonplace in the pages of my new favourite magazine, Classic Tractor. I might have missed the boat with S1 Elises, but I'll be damned if I'm going to watch old Fergies chug inexorably beyond reach.

The great cliché is the collector's garage packed with priceless air-cooled 911s and £40k-worth of pristine, bright red, late-'50s

> Porsche-Diesel Super tractor, but I'd be lying if I said I didn't like the idea of having one to park next to my 964. It's the same reason I've been toying with the idea of buying a 1959 David Brown because it's the closest I'll ever come to owning a DB4 GT Aston Martin. Much like ManMaths® the dangers of TractorLogic™ are not to be underestimated.

> I'm sure anyone with real agricultural work to do must regard people like me lusting after unsuitable, overpriced tractors I don't even know how to operate with the same bemusement we reserve for the auction bidder who blew £60,000 on a 1985 Escort RS Turbo.

Not that I need any justification for plunging headlong into tractor ownership, but it also occurred to me that an old tractor could in all likelihood become the last bastion of true analogue driving, and perhaps internal combustion too. OK, so you have to make sure your old crate comes with a V5C document that means it's registered for the road, but as a bonus this means it probably carries a cool old reg number just like a period Aston or Jag racer.

With as many as three levers controlling a dozen or so forward gears, these old tractors surely take some skill and mechanical sympathy to master, but given you'll require a favourable gradient and following wind to breach 15mph I'm guessing there's plenty of time to hone your technique.

The faster modern cars become, the more I like the idea of pressing the slo-mo button every once in a while. It might not be your idea of The Thrill of Driving, but putt-putting along a country lane without a care in the world sounds pretty good to me.

'I've discovered that a love of old tractors is a guilty pleasure concealed by lots of car people'







# RICHARD PORTER

#### The revival of the two-spoke steering wheel is welcomed by Porter

'A two-spoker

makes sense in a

sports car: it gives

you more places

to wrap your

fingers'



F ALL THE UNSPOKEN RULES AROUND CARS, one of the simplest concerns the number of spokes on your steering wheel: three means 'sporty', four means 'luxury', five means the head of interior design has been smoking his weed vape round

the back of the studio viewing yard again. A single spoke was largely the preserve of Citroën and came with the challenge of making the wheel strong enough to work, though it was the need to package an airbag and various wheel-mounted controls that eventually killed it off.

Which leaves the two-spoke wheel, traditionally used to suggest ordinariness. Throughout the 1980s and '90s a two-spoke steering wheel in a car was a way of saying you're at the basic end of the

model range, loser. But I've just checked and 2021's cheapest new car, the Dacia Sandero, comes with a 'luxury' four-spoke wheel, while there's a three-spoker in all the tiny and/or tinny stuff like Ups, C1s and i10s. You might assume the two-spoke wheel is as dead as most of the Metros and Novas that had one. But no. The two-spoke wheel is back, baby.

Leading the return was that vanguard of innovation, the Mercedes S-class, which sported a proud double-spoker in its last incarnation. Disappointingly, the new model has retreated to a triple-spoke arrangement, as has the latest Kia Picanto, which previously

had a bravely basic twin-spar arrangement. But such changes of heart don't matter because these cars have set the (twin-spoked) wheels in motion and now loads of other makers are at it. The new Hyundai Ioniq 5 electric car has a two-spoke wheel, as does its Kia EV6 sister. The BMW i3 has been in the double-spoke club since it arrived, and now the Fiat 500e has joined in too, while Audi is making a move towards the dual-spoke action judging by the wheel in its new Grand Sphere concept.

It's not just electric cars, though. The latest models from Hyundai's posh offshoot, Genesis, have a weirdly pillowy dual-spoker, while Skoda put a two-spoke wheel in the latest Octavia and recently dropped the same design into the new Fabia, as well it might when the company says this new wheel alone took three years to develop. Which is an interesting point about steering wheels: they need a lot of time and money to see through to production, what with all the careful consideration

over wheel diameter, rim thickness and where you put all the buttons and switches (unless you're McLaren, in which case the answer is 'somewhere else'). Plus, they've got to meet safety regs and provide an effective home for an airbag. No wonder designs tend to be shared across multiple models and across different generations of the same car. It's dangerously expensive if every six years you're trying to reinvent the wheel.

Why the swelling shift back towards two spokes now? Doubtless there are advances in metallurgy and production techniques that have made it possible to get the strength required from a modern wheel using only two spokes, and this possibility has given interior designers more freedom. But an actual car designer told me there's another possible reason behind the return of the two-spoke wheel:

> for a younger generation now populating car design studios around the world, the two-spoke wheel isn't 'basic', it's 'retro' and therefore interesting. Which might be why it's coming back.

> That's all well and good, you say, but the two-spoke wheel has no place in the kind of cars evo has most interest in. Ahem, I reply, while standing two metres away because no one likes a cougher these days, that's not strictly true. Have you seen the wheel in the Alfa 4C? Or the one in the new mid-engined

Corvette? A pair apiece and not a spoke more. Conditioned as we are to think that three

spokes means sporty, this might seem inauthentic and wrong, but I'm not sure, because the other day I was standing next to a very early DeTomaso Pantera, a winsomely pretty car before it was plastered with the stick-on arches and wings that made it reminiscent of sweaty-jumpsuit-era Elvis, and I discovered that original Panteras have a two-spoke wheel that looks absolutely brilliant. In many ways a two-spoker makes sense in a sports car. It's simple, it's effective and it gives you more places to wrap your fingers. I can see it now: Ferraris with elegant, Momo Mod.02inspired wheels. Porsches paying homage to the near-as-dammit two-spoke wheel its cars had 40 years ago. McLaren taking its clean, minimalist interior aesthetic to new heights with a proud pair of spokes either side of a simple centre boss.

The two-spoke steering wheel is back and I for one welcome its return. Unlike the three-spoke alloy, which must never happen again because it's awful.

@sniffpetrol

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#### Jethro enjoys a trip to supercar central and an audience with Mr Pagani

RECENTLY DONNED A HAZMAT SUIT, STUCK many, many devilishly painful 'swabs' up my nose (pretty sure they're actually tiny obsidian blades) and headed on something called an 'aeroplane' to Italy. It took weeks of scouring rules, many hours of filling out forms and constant scrolling between news channels as rules, quarantine periods and flight availability changed almost hourly. And you know what? It was worth it. Every painful moment. Italy is bloody amazing! Travelling is also bloody amazing.

I was there for the Motor Valley Fest, an annual celebration of engineering, design and manufacturing expertise now in its third year. Think of it as a Goodwood Festival of Speed spread across Modena and the surrounding area: Ferrari F1 cars ripping around

a makeshift circuit at the Novi Sad Park, static displays from manufacturers and suppliers in the simply gorgeous Piazza Grande, and various meet-ups, rallies and trackdays from the dreamy Apennines nearby to Varano and Imola.

Motor Valley Fest doesn't yet have quite the concentrated brilliance of Goodwood but the sprawling, occasionally chaotic approach is uniquely Italian and people came from all over mainland Europe in their Ferraris, Lamborghinis and Maseratis just to be a part of it. I'd happily go again and soak up the sights, sounds and, of course, the amazing food and sheer enthusiasm of the people. Mostly because it's so nice to be in

a region where you don't have to apologise for loving cars.

During these wonderful few days I got to have dinner with Horacio Pagani at his gorgeous house and chat all things Zonda, Huayra and beyond. It was, as you'd expect, a pretty cool way to spend a hot summer's evening and it struck me that an audience with Mr Pagani is my generation's version of an appointment with Enzo Ferrari. I read about these encounters as a kid in various magazines. The waiting. The nerves. The unmoving face behind the dark glasses and the short, philosophical but so often piercingly astute answers. Il Commendatore seemed fascinating but with the power to intimidate of a vengeful pope from generations past.

Horacio is all smiles. Like 'the Old Man', he prefers to speak in Italian and, also like the Old Man, he understands more English than he'd like to pretend! But conversation is easy, Horacio has an affection for older cars that Enzo would never countenance, and he is happy to talk about other sports and supercars he loves. Perhaps

it's because he knows Pagani operates in another universe to 'volume' players like Ferrari, Lamborghini and the like, or perhaps because he's just an ever-curious engineer and car enthusiast.

Like all of us, his mind is occupied by the huge change we're seeing in the way cars are powered. 'The closer relationship between the Motor Valley manufacturers is fantastic,' he says. 'The big topic of discussion is EVs. How can they be truly as exciting and engaging?' If he's expecting a definitive answer on this subject, the silence that follows is deafening. 'Of course, we are working on an EV project,' he continues. 'But not because our customers want it. Quite the opposite. They actively say they don't. From what we see and hear there is no real appetite for EV hypercars.

"The biggest request we get - by a huge margin - is the manual

gearbox, of course,' says Horacio, almost with a shrug of his shoulders. The replacement for the Huayra model line, currently known only as the C10, will feature three pedals and a stick you stir around to play tunes with a V12 engine. Just the way God and Il Commendatore intended.

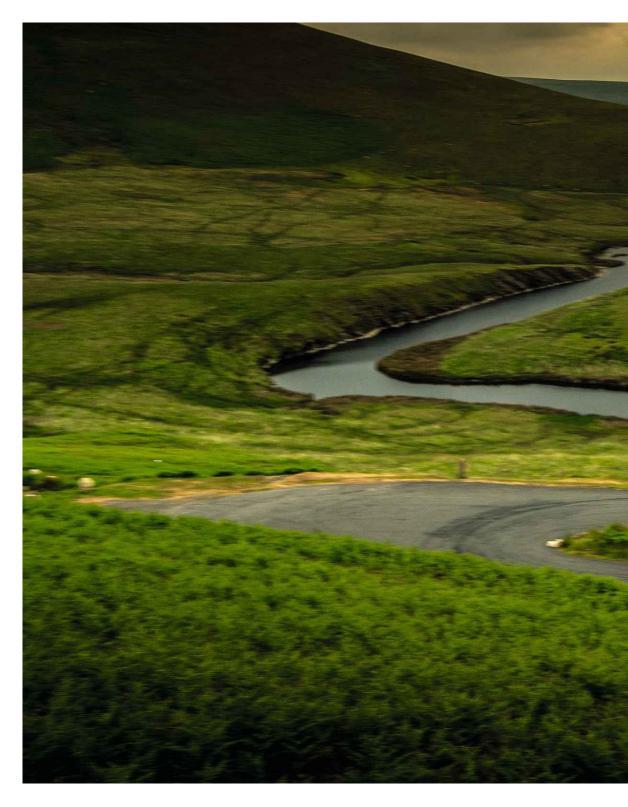
We move on simply because we both feel the EV question is too knotty a problem to solve over a relaxed dinner. By the time the vanilla ice cream laced with balsamic vinegar is spooned into bowls (it's delicious, by the way), conversation has moved to other cars. 'What do you like right now?' he asks. I'd just driven the 992 GT3 so blurted that out almost without

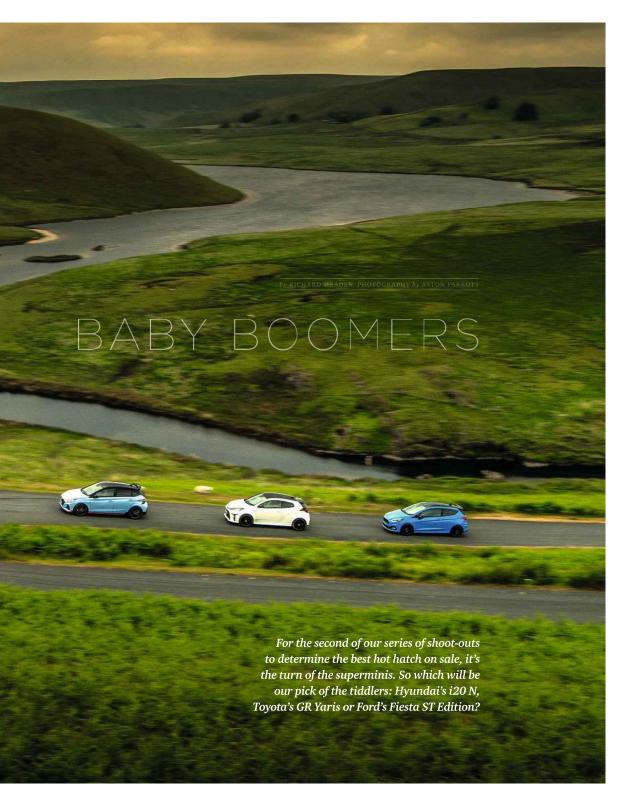
thinking. 'Porsche's GT department really make outstanding cars,' he agrees. 'They are perhaps my favourite.' Although I soon hear how he adores his Ferrari F12tdf and 458 Speciale. 'The engine in the tdf...' he says in awe, before his words trail away. He doesn't need to finish the sentence.

Motor Valley Fest and the closer collaboration it signifies between the likes of Ferrari, Lamborghini, Pagani, Dallara, the local universities and specialists, brings with it mouth-watering possibilities. 'How about approaching Ferrari to use their V12 engine?' I posit. He smiles, then chuckles. 'We are working more closely to protect our industry, to look at future solutions and train the engineers we need. But ultimately we are still... rivals, if you like. Our future remains with Mercedes.' Even so, we both imagine, just for a moment, a 1200kg Pagani with the 819bhp screamer from the 812 Competizione. Enzo wouldn't stand for such an idea, of course. But, behind the glasses, surely his eyes would be smiling.

'It's so nice to be in a region where you don't have to apologise for loving cars'

(a) @JethroBovingdon







#### HEN IT COMES TO HOT HATCHES, SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL.

Well that's my theory, anyway. Golfs, Méganes and Civics have their place, but as the models on which they are based have grown in size and weight, so the nature of their performance has altered. No longer compact bundles of energy, they have taken on a more serious demeanour and left the simple, old-school formula far behind in the process.

If it's proper hot hatch high jinks you're after then the all-new Hyundai i20 N, souped-up Ford Fiesta ST Edition and much-hyped Toyota GR Yaris are the ones for you. In the 197bhp Fiesta we have a direct descendent of a high-achieving bloodline. In the 257bhp Yaris a throwback to the exotic Lancia Integrale. And in the 201bhp i20 N? Well, we have the latest product from Hyundai's impressive N performance division; a model that treads new, pint-sized ground for the Korean giant, but is very much a spiritual successor to some great small hot hatches from the past.

At a shade under £29,000 for the ST Edition and just over £30,000 for this non-Circuit Pack GR Yaris, they represent the toughest of adversaries for the £24,995 i20 N. But if the Hyundai can cut it in this company we'll know it's a cracker. Fellow contributing ed John Barker and myself are certainly looking forward to finding out, in what promises to be a proper dust-up.

Such a talented trio demands the best possible stage, so we converge on the Elan Valley in the heart of Wales, heading for roads that could have been tailor made for hot hatchbacks. Ahead of us, two days of hard driving and detailed back-to-back comparison. The full evo number, in other words.

It's a long journey to get there, but the mix of motorways and sweeping A and B-roads is welcome, as it gives me three solid hours to get acquainted with the i20 N. I've been intrigued by it since Adam Towler first drove it back in issue 285 and am a fan of Hyundai's commitment to hot hatchery. The i30 N - Hyundai's debut N car might be a bit light on outright exuberance but it's big on competency.

By contrast, it appears being relieved from some of that 'eldest child' pressure has allowed the i20 N to be a bit more outgoing in looks and

deeds. Its styling is sharp and distinctive, and yes, a bit overwrought in some areas so it's not to all tastes, but it makes a welcome statement. Likewise the interior is heavily stylised, but it looks and feels good. The flames and plasma graphics that explode across the rev counter when you engage the more aggressive dynamic modes are properly OTT, but it secretly makes you smile. A good start, then.

Something else that brings a smile is the presence of an H-pattern manual transmission and – praise be – an actual handbrake lever. In fact all three of our contenders share the same resolutely analogue approach. Unique in this company is the i20 N's four-cylinder engine, which though some way short of the Yaris in terms of power, has a welcome free-revving nature that will contrast nicely with the gutsy but less fizzy three-pots in the Ford and Toyota.

Both driving position and the seat itself are comfortable, the latter managing to be yielding and supportive. A low scuttle offers great visibility when you peel into corners. Despite its array of buttons the steering wheel is just the right diameter and thickness, and the pedals (three don't forget!) are well placed for heel-and-toe. And if you like the added smoothness and theatre of a blip-shift, but don't have the knack, there's even a rev match function to enjoy. When it comes to nailing the basics, the little Hyundai is golden.

By the time I rendezvous with the boys I'm a big fan and can't wait to see how it compares, though sizing up the opposition suggests it's going to be a real tussle. Both the Fiesta and Yaris are familiar faces and formidable performers. As ever the Toyota is the outlier on account of its rally-bred all-wheel-drive concept. By comparison the Ford is a highly conventional hot hatch, but in 'Edition' spec has bright paint, lighter, flow-formed 18-inch rims, and some lower, stiffer multi-adjustable coilover suspension. It's the real deal.

It makes sense to stick with the Hyundai for my first run along the valley road. Shrink-wrapped to the terrain and packed with twists, turns, wicked crests and punishing compressions, punctuated by fast, open schusses to stretch each car's legs, it's ready to ask a constant stream of difficult questions.

Right from the off the i20 N feels up for it. The engine really wakes



up from 3000rpm, then keeps on delivering all the way through to the better part of 7000rpm. It's hard to read the true aural character of the engine as there's some piped-in noise in the more dynamic settings, but its a smooth, responsive motor that has some real zip.

The gearshift is a highlight. Precise but with a slightly soft edge to the gate, you can freely flip the lever back, forth and across with very little in the way of obstruction, yet it retains a certain mechanical feel. It's switch fast but also offers some tactility and connection. The brake pedal has a satisfying firmness, but also good modulation, the bite progressive and linear so you can be smooth whether brushing or burying the middle pedal. It's a car that has clearly been finessed – proof that those responsible for Hyundai's N models really have a grasp of what's required.

You'd expect the i20 N to be firmly suspended, and it is. Barker accurately describes it as 'a bit thumpy, ride-wise', but there's just enough pliancy for it to remain on the civilised side of stiff. Early encounters with a few yumps and compressions suggest a slight lack of wheel travel, but with more miles it seems the deeper issue is a lack of rebound damping. Without sufficient force pushing the wheels into the road, when the surface falls away beneath the car you can find the wheel still heading downwards when the road comes back up to meet it. String a few of these sharp undulations together and if you're carrying speed (and you will be) it bruises its bump-stops as road and car get slightly out of sync.

It's a gripe rather than deal-breaker, and in truth there's something to be said for a car that requires you to read the road and occasionally temper your speed. What's beyond question is its appetite for corners and direction changes. There's an effective and surprisingly subtleacting limited-slip differential to put the torque into the tarmac, so it really hooks up and shoots out of corners, and all while holding a tight line without tugging the wheel in your hands. Steering feel and weight depends on the selected mode: it's light and free in Normal, but you'd ideally have a bit more steering effort; Sport introduces some welcome weight, but with it comes a slightly stodgy feel - one which increases with speed and is magnified in N mode. To be honest I find it a bit of a fiddle to navigate my way into the full depths of the dynamic settings (you can individually tweak powertrain, steering, suspension and the stability control thresholds), but both Barker and I reckon Sport is the sweet spot, JB saying the steering 'has a brightness and clarity that seems to suit the transparent chassis feel'.

The i20 is also very ready to cock an inside wheel – always a good sign in my book – and has a tremendous sense of being on its nose as you turn in. It's a little bit naughty, egging you on without being overbearing. And when you really do throw it down the road it revels in operating just at the tipping point of instability without actually giving you a scare.

The result is a car that thrives on being asked to do lots at once. You can nail it into a combination of corners, leaning hard on the front end with a rear wheel in the air, then immediately flick it into the next turn, and it's even happy to brake into it if the next corner is tighter than the last. High-speed corners are also fun, that sensation of loading the front and hoisting an inside wheel slightly toned down, but still apparent. I can honestly say I've not enjoyed a new car quite so much as this in years. The Fiesta and Yaris have a fight on their hands.

If the i20 N is very clearly the product of an up-and-coming factory performance brand, the ST Edition has the look and feel of a well executed tuner car. That's not meant as a criticism, but the Ford Performance Blue paint, the choice of wheels and the coilovers visible between their spokes are more aftermarket than OE. The





interior shares the same look and feel, trying hard to exude sportiness, but relying on the same old tropes of embroidered 'ST' logos, Alcantara and slivers of carbonfibre.

The Recaro seat is excellent, as is the driving position. The Fiesta's interior feels bigger than the i20 N's, but once up and running the ST has a tight, compact feel. The engine is immediately impressive, though you do notice an increased inertia compared to the Hyundai. The gruff note is quite endearing, but it lacks nuance and never really sings.

The gearshift is light and springy, with a short stubby lever to slot through the six-speed gate. The brakes have plenty of bite – a little more initial power than the i20 N's, actually – but this response comes with excellent progression, so you don't have to think too hard about measuring your pedal pressure.

What separates the ST Edition is its chassis. Riding 15mm lower at the front and 10mm at the rear, the dampers offer 12-way bump adjustment and a further 16 clicks of rebound. It's a serious set-up, though as with any manually adjustable suspension it is potentially befuddling. I'd wager most owners will settle on a road set-up they like and stick with it.

At low speeds you can hear faint clonks and clicks from the suspension. If you're not used to cars running coilovers this might come as a surprise, but just think of it as the car interlacing its fingers and cracking a few of its knuckles before going on with the job at hand. Barker, who lived with a regular three-pot ST a few years back, is a fan: 'The Fiesta ST has always been all about instant gratification: the beefy steering is very responsive just off centre, the engine picks up quickly and strongly and there's lots of detail to the ride. It feels alive, alert and keen to get stuck in.'

There's no doubting the control this fancy suspension brings. Almost regardless of what comes its way the car feels unfazed, springs and dampers soaking up the punishment without ever being deflecting from your chosen trajectory, even if you hit a mid-corner bump with the front-end fully loaded. There are many moments where you wince but the suspension never bottoms out, and a few where the forces involved work the suspension to the limit of its compression, but even then it never really feels like it's struggling to one.

There's a ton of traction too, the Pilot Sport 4 tyres digging in as through they've got spikes. The limited-slip diff is more aggressive than the Hyundai's, and this does shape the driving experience thanks to a sensitivity to cambers, surface changes and white lines. There's an occasional tug of '90s-spec torque steer, but on the whole you're just aware of the ST being busier and requiring frequent small and instinctive nudges of steering to counter the diff's sniffer-dog tendencies.

Best of all, this poise and purchase doesn't come at the expense of agility and excitement. Like a boxer the ST is always on its toes, stable but ready to move in any direction. In this respect it's like the Hyundai, though the sensations and responsiveness is notched up a few clicks. If steering corrections are needed they're only modest and wholly intuitive, so there's this wonderful sense of just being able to let the car flow along the constant scroll of road between where you are and where you're looking.

Working my way back to our rendezvous point in the neck of the valley is a chance to slow things down and take a moment to consider the scope of performance these cars offer. We often complain about the increasing irrelevance of the power and pace of today's 700bhp supercars, but in truth everything below those exotics has been dragged up with them. It used to be the case that something like an E46 M3 was just about perfect in terms of grip, grunt and speed across the ground, but right now, with a faint glow of perspiration and that brilliant background adrenaline buzz you get after a truly great drive, you'd have a hard job convincing me you need anything more than a 200bhp hot hatch. It's a view with which Barker concurs: 'Back in the late '80s, the Sierra RS Cosworth was a thrill and it also had 200 turbocharged bhp and weighed around 1200kg. The difference is that the power delivery of our modern trio is broad and generous, not the firework-like fizz...bang! of the Cossie. Also, the grip of current tyres is significantly better than the 205/50 R15 Dunlop D40s of the Sierra, so the pace these three can carry is astonishing. I doubt you could go any faster along here in anything else. Or that you'd want to...

Which segues us nicely into the, ahem, gripper and more powerful GR Yaris. Overkill? Perhaps, but the endlessly documented appeal of the Toyota is the fact that it packs so much hardware into such a small











machine. Until now our attentions have focused on the Circuit Packequipped Yaris, but in order to drop its price closer to the Hyundai's, and to see how much of the GR's magic comes from the clever diffs, better tyres and sportier seats, it's the basic version we have here.

Judged on looks alone the Yaris has the measure of the other two. It's boxy and brutal, but the wide track, broad wheelarches and minimal overhangs give it an impressive physique. The interior is more workmanlike, with a seating position that could do with being an inch or two lower. The infotainment screen and rear-view mirror create a letterbox view forwards, which also takes some getting used to. The pedals are widely spaced so heel-and-toe requires a bit more ankle rotation than ideal, but it's still possible.

The engine has some character about it - triples always do - and there's a big swell of torque in the lower mid-range that's impressive, creating an impression of potency that puts it a step above the i20 N and Fiesta. The weight and precision of the gearshift always comes a surprise - you don't expect it from a hatchback - so there's a feel of engineered substance, even if it does mean plotting a more deliberate course through the gate than with the lighter, freer shifts of the i20 N and ST. Likewise, the brake pedal is hard beneath your foot, which lends further emphasis to the GR's seriousness of purpose. It all gels supremely well, so although it feels distinctly different to the Ford or Hyundai, you're quickly piling down the road enjoying the generous torque and praising the controls.

As you'd expect, the balance is very different. Where the i20 N and Fiesta very much feel pinned over their front axles, the Yaris rotates around its centre and works all four corners to punch its way down the road. Where the front-wheel-drive cars dance, the Yaris remains nailed, rewarding you with a delicious sensation of just beginning to squat onto its outside rear wheel when you work it to its limit through a medium or fast corner.

This difference in dynamic character is perfectly expressed in a single moment later in the test. I'm in the Hyundai, ahead of me is digital news editor Jordan Katsianis in the Fiesta, and behind me is Barker in the Yaris. We're chasing into a long, third-gear left-hander complete with smooth Shellgrip surface. As the Fiesta dives into the turn its inside-rear wheel lifts a few inches clear of the road and stays there for the duration of the corner. I can feel the Hyundai is doing the same, while a glance in the mirror reveals the Yaris to be doing its best to lift its inside front wheel. As mental snapshots go, it's an absolute belter.

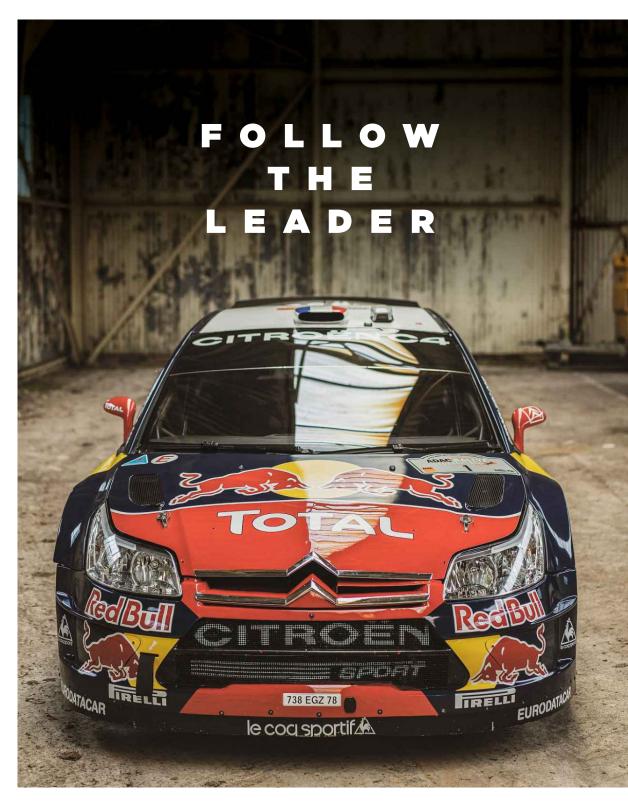
If there's a question mark over this basic GR Yaris it's that the Dunlop SP Sport Maxx tyres don't have the bite and raw grip the Circuit Pack's Michelins deliver. Ordinarily less grip would be a good thing, but the Yaris is a car that revels in extreme roads and has an inherently calm rate of response. If anything it could do with a dartier front-end, even in Circuit Pack spec, so the dull-edged Dunlops don't help its cause.

What the Yaris does better than anything is attack a road that undoes the Hyundai's damping and even leaves the Fiesta mildly flustered. And all the while you've got the deeply impressive coalition of that gutsy engine, rifle-bolt gearshift and bulletproof brakes to make things feel special at any speed.

Top left and left: i20 N delivers exactly the kind of fun you'd hope for from a hot hatch of its size; the Fiesta ST is well established in that game, though, and stronger than ever in its honed 'Edition' form: 4WD Yaris, meanwhile, takes a very different approach, and is tested here in non-Circuit Pack form for the first time









E'RE AIRBORNE. A FAMILIAR WEIGHTLESS serenity has pervaded the cockpit. Earth's surly

bonds have been slipped.

We're still airborne.

In fact we're airborne for so long that I half expect hear the bing bong of a tannoy interrupt the semisilence: 'Welcome to Citroën Airways. Please ensure your seatbelts are fastened as we prepare for landing. Doors to manual and cross check.'

Then ground meets tyres. Springs and spines compress. The cacophony recommences. Left foot hits brake pedal. The car darts into a left-hander, which then tightens into a hairpin. An almost lazy pull on the big handbrake. Calm again for a moment as the car rotates with the rear wheels frozen... then an anti-lag-primed punch of acceleration slams the C4 WRC forward.

That was 13 years ago, in France. I was a passenger in the codriver's seat, watching none other than Sébastien Loeb do his thing. The swift, sure inputs. The astonishing speed carried in corners. The experience of a lifetime.

And now I'm standing at Monet's easel. The paints and brushes are at my disposal...

This particular C4 is from 2008, the year I rode with Loeb, but it's not the same car. That was a test car, whereas this is chassis 14. which won no fewer than four rallies with Loeb and Daniel Elena onboard. The first of those victories was Monte Carlo, the car winning fresh out of the box, wearing a relatively plain red livery. Next up it was the hot gravel of Sardinia, then back onto the sealed surface of Rally Deutschland - the spec that it's in today - before conquering the mud of Wales Rally GB. It even went on to be used by another world champion in 2010; Kimi Räikkönen rolled it down a hill on SS7 of Rally Mexico.

'I'd like to have had it in Monte livery,' says the ever-smiley, eversuave Max Girardo, the car's new owner, 'but the Red Bull livery that came in half way through the 2008 season is just so much cooler. It's the one.'

And despite competing on both gravel and tarmac rallies, the C4 really belongs in hunkered-down, big-wheel, big-brake spec. Citroën developed its rally cars as tarmac cars first and then adapted them to work on gravel and it showed in the results. The car was good on gravel, but in the hands of Loeb it was literally unbeatable on asphalt. Over the C4's four-season lifespan between 2007 and 2010 it won every sealed surface WRC round. Few cars in motorsport have been so dominant.

Today, sheltering from the rain in a barn, it looks better than ever. It's such a neat, clean, aerodynamic shape. Yes there is the big rear wing, but compared with many WRC cars it is remarkably unadorned. Where with the current generation you have to look for the original road car as you would a friend at a fancy dress party, this appears almost showroom spec by comparison. Until you open the door.

Inside, you're presented with a pair of seats set almost comically  $far \, back \, from \, the \, dash, \, right \, in \, the \, middle \, of \, the \, car. \, Slide \, between$ the roll cage and the steering column and your bottom sinks into a very snug Recaro. It's dark inside, a deep sunstrip covering the top half of the windscreen, the mirror-tinted windows dimming out a good proportion of the light from the sides. Ahead of you is a steering wheel, conventionally round in shape but festooned with brightly coloured buttons and switches, like a prototype





for a modern Ferrari road car. Behind it, arcing round from 1 o'clock to 5 o'clock is a single carbon paddle for changing gear. Flick it away with the back of your right hand to change down, tap it towards you to change up. Simple. If you need the handbrake, then it's conveniently placed and easily spotted thanks to fluorescent yellow tape.

The dash is surprisingly empty. There is just one small screen, about the size of a pack of playing cards, capable of displaying the gear you're in, some shift lights and a warning light. The rest of the information appears on a screen down on the transmission tunnel, angled towards the co-driver's seat. There's also a small forest of switches, which take a little longer to decipher than usual as my French is un peu rouillé.

Most of them won't be required today, but to start the car I need to flick the one with the white guard to turn the electrics on and wake up the main screen, which cycles through a Windows home page and a GEMS logo before settling on page one of 15 information layouts. Daniel Elena really was like a high-speed office manager. Only once it's live can I flick the contact switch. Then it's roughly a five-second wait before I can press the small red button to the left to spin the starter motor.

All this flicking and waiting somehow exaggerates not only the anticipatory silence but the way in which the peace and quiet is then shattered violently by the 2-litre four-pot exploding into life. Rouse a road car, say a raucous hot hatch, and you will be aware that there is noise coming from the engine in front and the exhaust behind, but with

Above and right: Catchpole pulls on the harnesses; interior couldn't be further removed from a C4 road car's; disused military facility provides today's 'stage'















relative tranquillity in between. Wake the C4 WRC, however, and the whole car seems to buzz, clatter and growl from bumper to bumper. It feels alive and angry, the revs hunting up and down, searching for some mechanical solace. Bolted solidly to the floor in the Recaro, the vibrations and noise gather you up and envelop you inside this small, localised storm that has broken out. Combined with your own tingling spine and raised heart-rate, it is quite the experience, particularly if you know you are about to try to tame it.

Putting on a helmet damps out some of the noise. Lets you focus. Normally there would be a squeak as the intercom was plugged in and then the reassuring voice of a co-driver to bring some calm, but today it's just me. Max leans in through the driver's door and gives me a beaming smile, telling me just to enjoy it and make good use of both the stage mode (labelled Fresh Air in reference to the anti-lag) and the handbrake.

Dip the small but resistant clutch pedal then press the pimple on the back of the paddle and pull it towards you to select first gear with an audible and palpable clunk. It's stall avoidance time. Experience tells me that any pressure on the throttle will provoke enough noise to make me think I'm buzzing the red line when in fact I'm barely flickering above tickover. So, more throttle and noise than you think, and then try to keep the revs up in the crucial millimetres of travel as the clutch bites. We're off and now the footwork flits to arcade mode as you switch your left foot to the big brake pedal.

Did I mention that it's wet today? The OZs are shod with rallying's equivalent of slicks, and as I plunge beneath the trees for the first time there is trepidation as I turn into the first apex. We're at a private test venue in deepest Wales, using the old access roads of a disused military facility. It is very definitely not a circuit, so there are sodden leaves and changes of surface and kerb stones. Not red-and-white-striped kerbs, but proper, damage-your-wheels-and-possibly-suspension kerb stones. It's doing a good imitation of a rally stage.

Accelerating out of the bottom corner, the combination of 430lb ft of torque and short gearing means the wheels spin up even in a straight line as you keep pulling the gears. The C4 remains surprisingly stable and straight, but you can feel it scrabbling. Things only settle down as you go from fourth to fifth and instigate a noticeably bigger drop in the revs. But then it's back on the brakes, batting away the downshifts and getting everything slowed for the tight double right. You quickly realise that it's a car you need to drive on the torque and therefore attack each corner a gear higher than you might initially think. Just occasionally you're actually a gear higher than you want as the paddle is incredibly light and sensitive, so it's easy to knock it twice unintentionally.

The suspension is firm for a rally car, with remarkably little roll. It is flat and focused, like a touring car converted for the stages. Even in the first few miles, as I'm finding my feet and trying to get some heat into the tyres, the grip that the C4 can generate is astonishing. By the third time of asking I'm already flat in fifth through a fast, blind right-hander over some copper-coloured leaves, the C4 just twitching slightly before the tarmac narrows to barely a car's width, the green blur in the side windows suddenly getting closer.

Above and left: 2-litre four is boosted by single Garrett turbo; makes a raucous 315bhp and drives all four wheels via an active centre diff. Recaros are a snug fit; handbrake barely a finger-stretch from the wheel









Then it's hard on the big brake pedal again, though judging the pressure to exert is tricky in these conditions. It's the same with the lateral grip in the slower corners – the limit seems to arrive abruptly and the steering really doesn't give much feel of how hard the tyres are working. So, partly because it's a Loeb trait and partly because it feels necessary, I give the belts a tightening tug to squeeze me even more securely into the seat, make me an even more integral part of the car. If the steering isn't going to provide huge amounts of feedback then I want to feel hardwired into the C4's slightest shimmy.

The prevailing balance seems to be a touch of understeer at the limit, which is probably the more comforting option at this stage. This was an era when WRC cars could have an active centre diff: the top right manettino-type switch on the steering wheel lets you adjust it a certain amount and after a bit of a play I decide that 4 (out of 5) feels the most natural somehow.

It's a car that you really need to spend time with though. You need to understand the engineering underneath, as that dictates how it wants to be driven. And you need to know its limits almost instinctively rather than feeling for them. After a few miles I begin to experiment with the handbrake and that opens up a whole new world in the tighter bends. It's surprisingly easy to get comfortable with rotating the car on the bar, but far from feeling flamboyant there is instead a satisfying sense of extreme efficiency when you get it right. Just as you would in a front-wheel-drive car, you want to use a bit of momentum and then hang on the handbrake, letting the locked rear wheels do all the rotation early in the bend. You need to get the car turned in this way, because as soon as you release the fly-off and get back on the throttle you'll feel the

four-wheel drive pulling you straight rather than exaggerating the slide, launching you purposefully out of the corner with tremendous traction. If you get it right (which just occasionally I do) there shouldn't be any corrective lock required.

The more I commit to the corners and revel in the speed, the more I realise that in many ways it's a car that embodies the Sébastien Loeb style of driving: straight. It is the most serious, most tied-down and just plain ruthlessly fast rally car I have ever driven. Most have had a slight looseness to them, a bit more travel, a bit more leeway in their handling. The C4 feels laser-guided by comparison.

As luck would have it, I also got to experience it in the dry a few weeks later at the Goodwood Festival of Speed. The handbrake turn at the bottom of the hill went well, the start was a bit below average and then it was almost serene in the way it just devoured the hill. The grip that it generates in the dry is almost otherworldly. I could feel some heat come into the tyres by about halfway up and I'm certain I've never attacked the right-left past the flint wall with so much confidence.

And in the days after that I couldn't help imagining what this immensely impressive car would be like to drive in a real rally. Because of its precision, it's a car you could dissect a stage with. And yet to really drive it on the limit over the Col de Turini, to maximise its aggressive grip through the vineyards of Germany, well, that wouldn't be so easy. Even those two 2008 passenger laps of a test venue seem even more remarkable now I've driven the car. The C4 WRC is absolutely amazing, but what Loeb did with it remains more so.

 $Thanks to {\it Girardo\,\&\,Co.} Find {\it them\,on\,Instagram\,@girardo\,andco}$ 

Below: chassis 14 has been returned to the spec in which it won the 2008 Rally Deutschland, one of four victories that year for this car and the Loeb/ Elena combination

0-62mph n/a Top speed n/a evo rating ★★★★



# HOW CITROËN HIT AN ALL-TIME HIGH WITH THE C4

PHOTOGRAPHY by ALAMY

**CITROËN TOOK ITS TIME WITH THE C4 WRC, BUT IT WAS** worth the wait. The new rules to which the C4 was built were introduced in 2006 but Citroën decided to have a sabbatical from competitive rallying

in 2006 but Citroën decided to have a sabbatical from competitive rallying that year. Clearly it didn't want to rush the C4 WRC's development. Not wishing to miss out on a third straight driver's title, Sébastien Loeb spent 2006 competing with the Belgian Kronos team in a modified Xsara WRC. He duly won the title, despite missing the last four rounds due to a

mountain biking accident.

When the C4 eventually arrived at the first round in Monte Carlo in 2007 it was immediately successful. It won its first stage. In fact it won every stage in the first two days of the rally and Loeb and Dani Sordo were on the top two steps of the podium at the end.

Loeb would go on to win eight out of the 16 rounds that year. In 2008 he won 11 of the 15 rounds, making him the first driver ever to win ten or more rallies in a single season. In 2009 he won seven out of 12. In 2010 he won eight out of 13 rounds and Sébastien Ogier won another two.

To save you doing the mental arithmetic, the C4 WRC won 36 of the 56 rallies that it was entered in during that four-year period before it was replaced by the DS3 WRC in 2011. A 64 per cent win rate. And that goes up to 100 per cent if you look at the 13 sealed surface rallies it competed in. At the likes of Monte, Germany, Ireland and Corsica it was unbeatable.

Records tumbled. Kankkunen and Mäkinen were surpassed in 2008 with Loeb becoming the first to win the driver's championship more than four times. Loeb's victory in Rallye Deutschland in 2010 was the first time anyone had won a rally eight times. In Bulgaria, C4s occupied the top four places – the first time a car had achieved such a feat in 16 years. During that year Loeb and Elena were on the podium at every rally except Japan, where they were fifth.

It could of course be argued that the competition wasn't particularly deep as the C4 was mostly only up against the Ford Focus WRC and the fading force of the Subarus. However, the Focus was certainly a good car and I think that it would be difficult to call world champions Marcus Grönholm and Petter Solberg weak opposition. The problem is that Loeb often made it look too easy. He seemed to drive with such economy and precision, not to mention consistency. Amazingly, he retired from only four rallies in the four years he drove the C4.

Sometimes, however, he did have to really extend himself. His first ever Rally Finland win was in 2008 when he became only the fourth non-Nordic driver to conquer the 1000 Lakes. 'I felt I had to drive above myself on that rally,' he confessed. 'I didn't like that so much.'

The C4 really did seem to be Loeb's car. It was the first one that he helped engineer from scratch, though curiously he has since admitted that he didn't actually like it much when he first tried it because it wasn't as mobile and agile as the Xsara. It had a long wheelbase, however, and that made it very stable, which brought its own benefits.

Loeb certainly seemed to be able to make the C4 work in a way that no one else did. When the Frenchman faltered, the team's number two driver, Dani Sordo, never managed to take a win (something he has done three times since) and the Spaniard never came close to claiming the runner-up spot in the driver's championship behind his team leader. Ogier was more successful in 2010, winning two rallies, and Petter Solberg was third in the championship the same year in a privately entered C4.

The Citroën C4 WRC is, then, inextricably linked with Loeb and Elena. They won more of their nine titles in this car than any other. The most successful car of the most successful pairing. Not a bad parking spot in the history books.







# Peter Stevens explores the importance of good design in the motor industry and the pressures faced by the current generation of car designers PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT

# ESIGN' IS AN OFTEN MISUSED WORD

in the business of developing a consumer product. Everyone wants to be The Designer. A pointless affectation because there are two equally important elements that are crucial to the creation and development of any product: the engineering of the mechanical parts and the visual appearance. The automobile is no different from any other product: it's a highly complex object that is expected to work perfectly and look better than its competitors.

Appearance has always been a major selling point when it comes to cars. In the early days of the automobile industry the more you paid for a car the better it looked.

The very wealthy could have a body constructed to their own design taste from dozens of independent companies. These craft-based makers would clothe whatever chassis the customer decided to buy, and often the body would cost more than the chassis. Coach makers would give their customers a side view drawing of what the body would look like. These were finely detailed pen-and-ink drawings with water colour painted surfaces.

When, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, companies like Budd and Briggs in the United States developed all-steel technologies to replace the slow and costly wooden body frame practice for building car bodies, they revolutionised mass-produced vehicle production. The advances in giant press tools from 120-ton presses in the 1920s to those exerting a pressure of many hundreds of tons by the 1930s meant that panels with much more curvature could be made. This radically changed the forms that designers could propose.

New sketching techniques developed to help visualise the new shapes. Harley Earl, head of General Motors' design division, quickly realised that a more artistic approach to design was needed. The traditional method where engineers designed the bodies was no longer relevant. He was the first to introduce modelling clay as a means of exploring new forms. The executives at General Motors viewed Earl's conceptual ideas as flamboyant and not founded on proper engineering. Earl was often referred to as one of the 'pretty picture boys', and his design studio as being the 'Beauty Parlor', a view that has still not quite disappeared today!

GM chairman Alfred P Sloan, with the encouragement of Earl, introduced 'Dynamic Obsolescence', in fact planned obsolescence, and the 'Annual Model Change', which introduced the concept of a new model for each year. Earl liked the concept, both for the work it brought to his division and that it positioned design as a driver for the company's product success. He also had the sense to realise that continuity of style that suggested evolution rather than revolution was important for not alienating conservative-minded customers.

Earl and Sloan's concept for a style-driven marketing structure at GM was soon followed by every automobile manufacturer. Henry Ford was suspicious of the idea until his son Edsel finally persuaded him to accept the new direction. Now almost all cars are good at what they do, within the limitations of their intended market; price and appearance are what sells – with a fair push from marketing.

**Right:** Stevens at work in his home studio; some of his own designs share wall-space with the machines he loves, classic hot-rods prominent among them





Twenty or thirty years ago the design process that produced a new car from a major manufacturer was standard throughout the industry. The marketing department would follow the market trends of its competitors in terms of price, size, specification and performance; they would buy the competitor cars, strip them down, weigh and estimate the cost of each component. From this fairly rough analysis would come a detailed spec for the new car.

This was often quite restrictive. Marketing would often specify the angle of the windscreen, the diameter of the wheels or even the size of the interior armrests! Design's job was to ignore these restrictions and just sketch what they felt like for senior management design reviews. Usually one or two of the most extreme and exaggerated sketches were chosen for the basis of the full-size clay models and it was at this point that disappointment began to set in because the buck onto which the modelling clay was applied was built to the engineering package. A lot of the drama of the sketches vanished. Design would cheat on ride height, wheel and tyre width and screen rake, and if the vice president of design trumped the other VPs in the company hierarchy, then progress could be made.

A full-size clay model is still the recognised and preferred method of design development among all the best companies. There are some who believe that all the design work can be done on the computer screen – as a designer it is clear to see which those companies are! Lloyd VandenBrink, modelling manager at Ford Truck Studio in Dearborn, Michigan, is a big believer: 'Clay has two characteristics that make it good for use. It's easy to change – you just add it, or take it away. It allows you to be creative and come up with something quickly. Secondly, it's a great collaborative tool. Everyone can get around it, brainstorming three-dimensionally.'

In the last ten years almost all car manufactures have broadened their model line-ups to cover market areas that were previously foreign to them. In the recent past the idea of Aston Martin, Maserati, Bentley, Rolls-Royce, and in particular Porsche building high performance SUVs would have seemed ridiculous. Now it's usually the quickest route to profitability. Current customers seem to find this change of focus perfectly acceptable. Brand image means nothing more than a 'posh' badge on the front and rear; history appears unimportant.

This search for new niche markets has influenced what the industry calls 'time to market'. The period during which variations on the design are evaluated and the design details are carefully and thoughtfully developed becomes a battlefield where design, engineering, tooling, purchasing, sales and marketing do battle with each other and with finance. Design is often the loser in this pushing and shoving for a few fewer weeks on the project Excel spread sheet. Time to market is used by the sales and finance people to demonstrate to those holding up the programme how much their refinement efforts will cost the company in lost sales.

Those at the top who are responsible for signing off new car budgets that are frequently more than one billion pounds, dollars or euros, are naturally conservative and often frozen in the headlights. Hence the similarity of basic design layouts and architecture with only the decorative parts like the front grille, lights and sculpting of the door surfaces differentiating one car from another. Some 30 years ago General Motors coined the phrase 'Down the Road Graphic', DRG, meaning an easily identified frontal appearance; these days that quest for originality results in an ever more extreme corruption of an at one time familiar and well-liked 'face'.

In recent times, computer-aided machining (CAM) has become a common way to create a basic 3D form from data derived from an initial Alias 3D CAD model, often generated by a young designer.

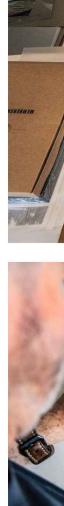




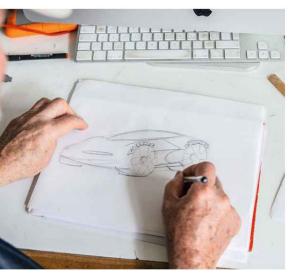
Only after the clay has been roughly machined do the clay sculptors then take over the model development, guided by the designer. The relationship between designer and model maker is a crucial element in producing an outstanding design. The designer has to demonstrate that he knows exactly what he wants the form to be and the clay sculptor needs the skill to interpret that concept into three dimensions. Quite often that successful understanding of the designer's intensions by the sculptor can 'make' a designer. Three-dimensional design using just the computer and a CAD modelling program can easily produce very badly resolved forms and surfaces but a skilled modeller will have the experience to guide the designer and point out surface treatments that cannot be made to 'work' in three dimensions; although I now hear stories of young designers who refuse to make changes to their design.

Since the arrival of CAD, the design process has apparently been speeded up but I don't see any signs that this early concept stage of the development of a new car has become either faster or more efficient. It is important to remember that the computer, whilst being a useful tool, is just a box filled with wires, plastic and sand; there are no ideas inside that enclosure. They are in the designer's head and in the clay sculptor's hands.

**Above and right:** best-known for supercars, Stevens' portfolio also includes affordable transport solutions. Today he works as a consultant and teaches













The introduction of both hybrid and all-electric vehicles has caused many companies to search for a new 'design language' to express the new technology. Styling themes that appear to owe more to air conditioning styling are still very common and are irrelevant to objects that move through the air (whatever happened to aerodynamic efficiency?). Designers were told that the very different layout of the components in the electric car would liberate them from conventional forms, but this is clearly not the case

I remember a conversation some years ago with Patrick Le Quément, past director of design at Renault, when we discussed the possibility that in the future cars would become nothing more than 'white goods'. We were not sure when that would be but both hoped to be out of the car business before it happened. We now feel that there is a strong possibility that this will no longer be in the distant future. The coming of Uber, car rental schemes, car shares and of course the electric car and its de-personalising of the car ownership experience is almost certain to eliminate the pleasure of 'my car' and all that brings in terms of personal freedom.

If you are lucky in your choice of car it can quickly feel like your best mate who will see you through every kind of joy, heartache, drama and discovery. It's your small personal space with your stuff in it; that space can be anarchic, liberating, secret or even a haven of calm. You can pick your nose in the belief that you are invisible, turn the music up really loud or bang the steering wheel in frustration in a space that feels familiar and friendly. I have never heard anyone say that about an electric car or a hire car, and to many people most modern cars are just that, cars bought for a fixed period and then given back to be changed for a newer one. White goods: quickly replaced products that have no soul. Who reads Practical Dishwasher? And in the not too distant future who will rush to read about the latest battery upgrades? Could this be one of the reasons for the recent trend to buy a restomod, an updated, beautifully restored reprise of a classic car, such as a Singer 911 or one of Rod Emory's divine little re-imagined 356 Porsches.

You sometimes hear people saying that they love their smartphone but what they are actually saying is that they love what it does or how it does it. Those painstakingly crafted corner radii are not a must-buy factor, and the name is part of the attraction, not because of what the purchaser thinks of the brand but because of what others will think of the buyer's choice and hence of the buyer. The automobile has always offered the possibility of freedom. It is an empowering product that will take us exactly where we want to go, whether that is to Egypt's Great Sand Sea, the rock cut Treasury at Petra, beyond the Arctic Circle or from Cape Town to Cairo. When we make those trips neither us nor the vehicle will be the same at the end of the journey as we were at the beginning; there is a strange bonding between man and machine that occurs in a quite uninvited way. It is doubtful that an electric vehicle using the present technologies will ever allow such adventures.

I think our fixation with the soulless electric vehicle technology as we now know it will be rather like the brief lifespan of Eight Track car stereo tape machines. Older readers may still remember the central reservations of motorways being littered with discarded strands of pale brown tape spooling out of broken cassettes. At that time, somewhere there must have been a young university student who thought that all we were trying to do was take our favourite music around with us in an easily accessed way. And now it's all on your phone that talks to the car! Perhaps somewhere his grandson is thinking that all we are trying to do is carry a portable source of energy around with us, in a way that doesn't harm the planet but still enriches our lives. Here's hoping.







# OW DO YOU BEAT THE PORSCHE 911 GT3? AS I POINT

the jutting splitter of a McLaren 600LT northwards towards The Borders and the sinewy, weather-ravaged roads that criss-cross between England and Scotland, I sense this is a question not just for the next couple of days, but one that occupies the minds of engineers and test drivers the world over on a constant loop.

As I glide in the svelte McLaren, John Barker is muscling his way to our rendezvous in the Nissan GT-R Nismo. The angular Japanese coupe, built to a different scale and resembling a 1960s brutalist block of flats next to the minimalist LT, is nevertheless similarly preoccupied with striking a blow to Porsche's sublime, track-focused 911. Whether they've achieved their goal remains to be seen, but clearly the teams behind them were unstituting in their pursuit of every performance gain imaginable.

So I'm sitting behind a windscreen that's thinner by 0.5mm than that fitted to the 570S, rolling on ultra-lightweight forged wheels that save a barely believable 17kg and are secured with titanium bolts that cut weight by a further 420 grams. The view out is extraordinarily panoramic in typical (and wonderful) McLaren style, but the plunging A-pillars do obscure the carbonfibre louvres on the front wings. Nice to know they're there, though: reducing wheel well pressure, venting hot gases and saving 1.2kg. There are bigger changes, of course, but these little details show the commitment required to contend in an area of the market pretty much owned by the 911 GT3.

The Nismo is equally devoted, though after so many years in production it's chasing even smaller gains. Forged wheels are lighter by 25 grams apiece. The seats are 20 per cent stiffer and





1.4kg lighter, though compared with the 600LT's one-piece shells lifted from the Senna they're still virtually armchairs. Even so, this ultimate GT-R makes all the right moves. Carbonfibre roof, upgraded aero, new turbochargers for faster response, one groove fewer in the Dunlop tyres for an 11 per cent greater contact patch and, thanks to weight savings afforded primarily by the adoption of carbon-ceramic brakes, switchable Bilstein suspension backed off by 5 per cent in rebound and 20 per cent in compression. Even so, I suspect John is being beaten-up by the A1 as I'm floating over the M6 as our paths prepare to converge.

The 992 GT3 awaits. It will be outgunned. Deliberately so. In truth, we know there's no car talented enough at its £127,820 starting price to really make it sweat. So we simply thought of two very different but deeply wonderful trackfocused cars that might expose any weaknesses in the GT3's dynamic range or holes in its character. That we ended up with the GT-R Nismo at £180,095 and the 600LT Spider, which is no longer in production but was priced at £201,500 when new (McLaren didn't have a coupe and losing the roof costs almost zero in entertainment or composure), speaks volumes for the expectation that weighs on any new GT3. Both produce 592bhp to the Porsche's 503bhp and generate well over 100lb ft more, too. If you want to sprinkle a little more logic into the scenario, consider that a lightly used 600LT is available from around £145,000 and this GT3 is specced to a representative £144,273. No doubt the first 992 GT3s to find their way to market will command a significant premium.

It's little wonder. The Porsche might be two turbochargers and nearly 100bhp down on its rivals, but it looks sensationally purposeful and wickedly assured when it rumbles into our chosen layby, gummy, barely treaded tyres scooping up loose gravel and flinging it into the wheel wells, and the plain white bodywork giving off more than a hint of freshly delivered race car. Rumour has it that the new GT3 has the focus of the previous GT3 RS. Right here and now I'd believe it. But digital news editor Jordan Katsianis jumps out looking fresh as a daisy after a six-hour drive from London. Well, as fresh as any digital news editor ever could. 'I didn't find it harsh at all,' he says. 'It's fantastic on a long journey.' Oh god. The chink in the armour I'd read about and expected closes up in an instant. The GT3 wins. Let's all go home.

A fraction of a second later, John hops out of the GT-R with the look of a very happy man. Maybe we should stay. We've battled through driving rain in England to find sunshine and warmth in Scotland, which might be something to do with it, but I can sense there's more to it. 'What a fabulous thing,' he begins. 'And I discovered it almost by accident. I'd been selecting Comfort for the dampers but there's just too much vertical movement. It never settles. In desperation, I decided to try R mode... and suddenly it all made sense. More control, settled ride and giant performance and grip. It's astonishing.' The most intriguing thing for me is how surprised Barker is by the GT-R, a car we've become so familiar with. 'This one's different,' he says, 'it just took me a while to get on top of it.'

I'm pretty pumped, too. The McLaren really is a fabulously

exciting car to be in. Even on a long motorway schlep and when cursed with those fabulous looking seats from the Senna. I've tried these several times before and, honestly, they're just a bit rubbish. Rattling around the larger size versions (as

Right: ultra-lightweight alloys, carbonfibre wington louvres and carbonshelled seats from the Senna: three examples of 600LT's fastidious weight loss programme







# 'DAYS LIKE THESE DON'T COME AROUND OFTEN, EVEN IN OUR JOB'

fitted to many of the US press cars I've driven) is a bruising experience and these more svelte versions remain loose across the shoulders but painfully tight in, er, other areas. Let's just say it's a good job I have plenty of kids already.

Even so, the LT is a fantastic, fluid and light-footed experience. The view ahead, the gorgeously feelsome steering and suspension that seems to connect you so completely to the surface but filter out all of the 'noise' combine to simply mesmerising effect. If it had 400bhp the LT would be an unforgettable experience. But it has rather more than that. When the turbos come in and you have the visibility to let it rev out, the high-quality dynamics get an injection of pure adrenaline. What a thing. My only concern is that McLaren has adopted a very conservative tyre strategy for this loan. The 600LT should come with Trofeo Rs but this one steps down not one level (to Corsas) but two. Standard. P Zeros might yet ramp up the playfulness but I'm concerned they'll cede precision to the opposition. You don't want to do that with a 992 GT3 and GT-R Nismo hanging around.

Okay, it's time: the GT3 awaits. You know the drill. Fourlitre flat-six that revs to 9000rpm and produces 503bhp along the way; seven-speed PDK gearbox; this car is fitted with the Clubsport package so has a half-cage to up the visual intensity, and the GT department has, of course, upped the dynamic intensity in every conceivable way. Carbonfibre for the bonnet and rear wing plus thinner glass help keep the weight almost stable at 1435kg (1418kg for the manual); downforce is increased by 50 per cent over the old model, rising to 150 per cent if you manually adjust the front splitter and rear wing to track settings; the new GT3 wears huge 255/35 ZR20 Cup 2 tyres at the front and 315/30 ZR21s at the rear, and balljoints are used extensively in the suspension at both ends. Then of course there's the GT3's much-lauded party piece: double wishbone front suspension, RSR-style. The GT3 shares no suspension components with the 911 Carrera or Carrera S. Not one.

Drop down – way down – into the seat and everything feels just so. The optional carbonfibre seats (£3788) fit like a glove, the steering wheel is tiny and the perfect thickness, and while the widescreen central display is a little incongruous there's a simplicity and elegance to the GT3 that isn't present in the blocky, dated GT-R and the slightly overwrought 600LT. The usual Zippo-lighter-shaped 992 gear selector is gone and in its place a much more satisfying lever that could easily pass for a manual. Everything oozes understated quality in a way that the regular 992 Carrera can't quite manage. It's as though all the peripheral luxury-car stuff has been burned away in the intense heat of the GT department's development. Then you start the engine.

It's difficult to convey just how instantly you connect with the GT3. Within seconds – maybe less – it's like it was made







just for you. Confidence doesn't so much 'build' as simply materialise. The GT3 is unbelievably stable and rides so flat that it seems 20ft wide. Roll resistance is quite exceptional. Yet at the same time it exhibits an agility that shrinks the wide hips of the 992 so that soon you don't even think about the physical size of the car. In fact, you barely think at all. Everything is intuitive. Perhaps the sheer rate of response of the front-end, no doubt abetted by the double-wishbone configuration, is initially unnerving, but as soon as you slow your hands down just a shade, everything clicks.

It's the economy of movement that's most striking. The GT3 in full flight generates stunning forces, the engine is so rev-hungry, your right foot seems to be linked directly to the rear wheels, and grip and traction are almost unshakeable. To witness it howling towards you, snapping into corners with the pent-up energy of a Le Mans prototype and with the flat-six shredding the air and the serrated fragments swirling between the hills, you'd expect the driving experience to be just as furious. It isn't. It's eerily calm. The GT3 requires fingertip effort and a clear mind to deliver at its absolute best.

After a 20-minute blast in the GT3, you can't help wondering if we should have looked even further beyond obvious rivals to really interrogate Porsche's latest creation. Maybe an SF90 would deal it a hammer blow? Or a 765LT? Yet, remarkably, the 600LT and Nismo aren't just hanging on to the GT3's swan-neck rear wing with the very tips of their fingers. They're right there, boost gauges pinned to max and in the DRS zone, so to speak.

'The Nismo feels made for these Borders roads and perfect weather conditions,' says John. 'Yes, the weight is still there but it doesn't seem to limit the extraordinary performance and balance. Get on the power early and at the very end of a long corner the rear axle is just starting to struggle to contain the power, slurring fractionally wide. And that's great!'

It really is fun to hear Barker so enthused. Days like these don't come around often, even in our job. 'The Nissan's V6 doesn't have the top end of the McLaren's V8,' he continues, 'but I found myself enjoying the explosive mid-range and taking it all the way to the red line more often. It's phenomenally punchy on full throttle, but there's never any feeling that any of it is going to escape the drivetrain if you're pointing straight. Maybe that's why the chassis never has to get involved redistributing torque and feeling like it's secondguessing the driver... I love this car.'

Despite very different layouts, drivetrains and philosophies the GT-R and GT3 are kindred spirits. They prioritise immediacy of response, grip and control, and although they're both predictable at the limit, the sheer forces at work mean that the edges are defined and sharp when they do arrive. Slip angles are shallow, corrections minute and a big panicked input of opposite lock or a wavering commitment to the throttle will result in a nasty and extremely quick snap the other way. Both really require those slow hands I talked about earlier. At least on the road. In truth, you simply never run out of grip at sane (or even mildly insane) road speeds and both will take turn-in speeds you just wouldn't believe. And what's also remarkable is that despite not having to cajole or manipulate these cars to get them through a corner

Right, from the top: latest version of GT-R's 3.8-litre biturbo V6 features faster-responding turbos and produces a McLaren-matching 592bhp. Elsewhere there's revised aero, extra carbon and weight reductions







there's nothing boring about the experience. Thank the precision and feedback, and the way both resist understeer and feel like the throttle is steering the car as effectively as your hands.

The McLaren is different. For a start it's so explosively powerful that you have to think about traction – not a consideration in the other two – and also there's a softness you have to push through. The front end, even in the stiffest Track chassis mode, just doesn't have the bite of the Porsche or Nissan, and the twin-turbocharged V8 is a feral monster of a thing at high revs but exhibits lag that the Nismo has all but eradicated. It's a strange thing to say of a lightweight, carbonfibre mid-engined supercar in the company, particularly, of a 13-year-old Nissan, but it initially feels a little old-fashioned. The performance is there but it's a tantalising beat or two behind when you want it.

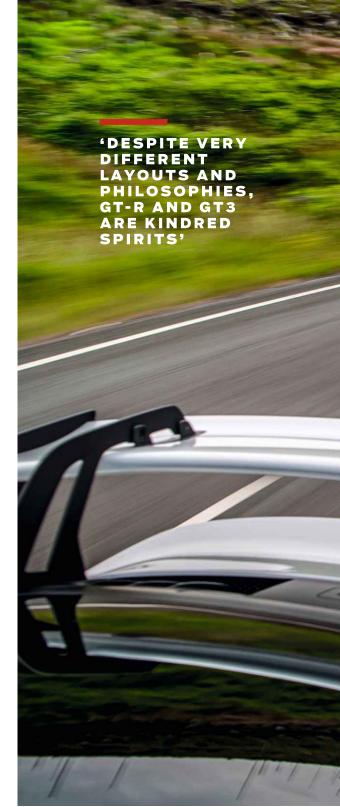
So you need some patience to bond with the McLaren and to tune into its way of doing things. It's worth the effort, because whilst the 600LT never gets to a place where it possesses the sheer, outrageous grip and response of the GT3 and Nismo, it does entertain in other ways. Firstly, it feels so wonderfully light and fluid and, once up to speed in medium- and high-speed corners, the LT has such a magical ability to work all four corners equally. It feels the way a historic race car looks when driven beautifully in a four-wheel drift, only you're going much faster and the tyres are floating on the edge of grip rather than slipping beyond it.

Then there's the gorgeously textured steering feel and the challenge of making the straight-line advantage count. Feeling the engine take hold of the rear tyres and spin them up over the slightest of crests or overspeed on the way out of a corner to the point that a thin wisp of tyre smoke is hanging in the air is fantastically exciting.

Barker feels the same way, warming to the LT as the miles accrue. 'It's the Alpine A110 of this group, isn't it?' he notes. 'The nose doesn't key in like the others but there's a truly wonderful lightness to it that fosters a lithe, effective and very satisfying flow. What it loses on entry it makes up on exit, sling-shotting out of corners.' The A110 comparison is apt, getting to the heart of the McLaren's fabulous delicacy and the involvement of extracting everything it has to offer. 'Its balance is certainly more malleable,' John continues. 'Its ultimate speed is more dependent on you working around the front end – if you're so inclined – to get the rear in play.'

The Borders roads, so often fractured by frosts and broken up by logging trucks, indulge the supremely supple 600LT but, somehow, suit the GT3 and Nismo even more. So much so that I find myself driving both in their most aggressive damper settings, taking a little extra jostle in return for a heap more control. The Porsche, which has been criticised for feeling too RS-like and less everyday-useable, is shrugging off such concerns.

It's a really fascinating chassis, this. No question, it turns in with more precision than ever before and requires almost Ferrari-minimalist inputs. Meanwhile,







the way the engine revs rapidly flare as the road bucks and rolls with the scenery reveals limited wheel travel. Yet the short stroke of each damper works so effectively and the landings are so controlled that the GT3 calls to mind a WRC car running on tarmac. It flies across the ground and even when it's literally flying it breeds endless confidence. The GT3 feels unflappable, unstoppable.

The final photocall of the day sees me in the GT-R chasing John in the GT3 through a left-hander that drops sharply away on entry but then catches the car as it rapidly flicks back uphill. I'm perched high in the GT-R, dampers to R, stability control disengaged so I can feel the chassis working unencumbered. I love the baleful noise of the 3.8-litre twin-turbocharged V6 flowing through a titanium exhaust system and the extremely light, lucid steering. Throttle response is transformed from early GT-Rs and even the latest non-Nismo cars, and the sixspeed 'box seems more immediate than ever. There's no slack anywhere. It hits hard, too, and bites great chunks out of the GT3 whenever the road looks straight. That's no mean feat, as the Porsche is savagely quick, surprisingly so, and is always in the sweet spot thanks to PDK.

We run through the turn several times. The Porsche looks wonderfully composed, jinking left flat and hard, and I can hear how confident John feels as he gets on the throttle earlier and earlier. The GT-R matches the Porsche move for move. It's an incredible feeling just flinging the huge Nissan at the corner in the wheel-tracks of the GT3. As the pace quickens, the Porsche starts to scribe fat black shadows through the entirety of the corner, giving me an even better visual marker. Both cars are so hooked-up, taking the corner a gear higher than you'd think, barely asking for a lift on turn-in and taking the full force of their respective six-cylinder engines a blink later. Neither exhibits any understeer and, as the camber changes and the road flattens out, they ever-so-gently smear into oversteer.

I'm sweating not from the exertion but the excitement. John is parked ahead of me and looks as nonchalant as can be. So I grab the radio and say 'Bloody hell, it's obscene,' hoping for a reaction. Barker cracks a huge smile and puts his face in his hands, shaking his head and breaking into laughter. 'It's like we're on qualifying tyres,' he says. We both ponder whether, given enough time, we could go fast enough to break the earth's crust and bury the cars in the magma below. Grip, precision and superhero composure are the drug of choice today and the GT3 and Nismo keep on delivering. The Porsche's display reveals a sustained lateral 1.55G through our photography loop in either direction.

How do you beat the 911 GT3? Not with the 600LT. It is a fabulous car and there are times where its wonderful ability to flow in perfect harmony with the road whilst fighting a furious battle with the dizzying top-end power seems unbelievably exciting. Its highest heights are right up there with the Porsche's. However, the softer engine response at low and medium revs and the less reliable turn-in and traction just eat away at confidence and can make the LT feel a little scrappy at the outer edges of its abilities. John nails the problem in this

company. 'For once, the McLaren isn't the most ballistic car in this group test,' he says, 'mostly because it feels like it selected wets while the others gambled on dry weather and went for slicks,' A set of Trofeo Rs or Corsas would have closed the

Right, from the top: all three have composite discs as standard: Pilot Sport Cup 2s suit the GT3 down to the ground; rear wing can be adjusted to increase downforce









gap but would not, we suspect, have changed the final order.

The mighty Nissan GT-R Nismo is a tougher challenge for the rippling new GT3 and has been something of a shock. I'm a huge GT-R fan but not blind to its faults and expected it to feel heavy and a little clumsy out here. Not a bit of it. Yes, you still sense the weight being carried and the elevated driving position is a constant reminder of the scale of Nissan's evergreen monster, but it exhibits a locked-down cohesiveness that's extraordinary and awe-inspiring. It really can shadow the GT3's every move. As John later says, 'I think you'd probably have an equally good time in either on these roads. And you'd never believe another car could go faster if you drove them in isolation.'

However, the inevitable conclusion is that the engineers of Woking and Yokohama (and dozens of other locations not represented here) haven't cracked the toughest question in

all of motoring just yet. How do you beat the 911 GT3? The answer is simple: build a better GT3. Undoubtedly, the good people of Weissach have risen to that particular challenge once again. Not only does the latest iteration unearth the sports car lurking within the 992, it polishes the GT3 formula so brightly that the car positively sparkles with precision.

This is a harder and sharper GT3 but it retains the breadth of ability to work on almost any surface, while the engine is nothing short of life-affirming. Howling along these roads that so often resemble the roiling frenzy of whitewater rapids, flat-six homing in on 9000rpm and tyres cutting deep into the surface, momentarily catching air and spiking heart rate and revs before landing and instantly reestablishing an uncanny poise, is simply an unforgettable experience. Driven at half the pace the quality still shines through. The legacy continues.





# TOURING PARTY

The GT3 Touring aims to deliver GT3 thrills in a more subtle package

FOR SOME, THE FACT THAT THE GT3 AND GT3 Touring are mechanically identical has come as a disappointment. The previous 991.2-gen GT3

as a disappointment. The previous 991.2-gen GT3 Touring blended the performance of the track-derived thoroughbred with the calmer, more compliant chassis of a car that wasn't required to rule every apex. Yet it was more, way more, than a Carrera S with a hot engine. It felt every bit as bespoke, considered and meticulously engineered as any other car developed by the GT department – because it was. As a road car first and foremost, it operated within a sweet spot few others achieve, adding useability without removing an ounce of capability.

The new GT3 Touring is, the argument goes, just a regular GT3 with the fixed rear wing replaced by the Carrera's adaptive spoiler, a painted front bumper and some chrome window trim. But this is Porsche's motorsport department, and focusing on trim level isn't really its thing.



a Carrera, but the operating window in terms of height and the angles it reaches is bespoke to the Touring to make sure it develops the same level of stability as the GT3's distinctive swan-neck item. With modifications to the front splitter, underfloor aero and the rear diffuser, Porsche's claim is that stability and aero performance is as near as dammit identical whether you go for a wing or a spoiler.

In reality, the comparison isn't about judging the minutiae of the handling balance; it's more about how you feel and if you're an introvert or extrovert type of person. For many, the GT3 in its full battledress is irresistible; parked alongside a Touring, its more functional-looking unpainted front bumper, optional half cage and that wing present a magnetic pull that's impossible to fight. Every drive will be an imaginary lap of Spa or the Nordschleife.

But the Touring plays the long game. It's willing to wait for your attention, let you spot its calmer, cleaner, fully painted front end (it retains the carbon front bonnet and air intakes), its more crafted rear and the subtlety this all brings. Thankfully the brightwork With leather replacing Porsche's Race-Tex material, it's marginally plusher, but it's unmistakably a GT3 from the second the gruff,

harsher and less forgiving can be put to bed. The car that arrived in the UK for early drives was a pre-prod and our early doubts can be set aside after sampling both this Touring and the GT3 on the preceding pages. Yes, the front end is sharper and quicker to react, and where previous GT3s responded well to being bullied into and through corners, the new model responds more faithfully if you're calmer and more linear with your inputs. But both GT3 and Touring remain the benchmark when it comes to mixing body control with damping fluidity and steering precision.

So what's it to be? Wing or spoiler? For the full GT3 effect, a winged, PDK-equipped car is for you, especially so if trackdays are a priority. If a more subtle, involving, road-biased experience is your thing, a manual Touring is pretty much irresistible. ×







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# LIFE THR GUGH A LENS MALCOLM GRIFFITHS From motorsport to road cars to portraiture, Malcolm Griffiths is a master of all branches of automotive-themed photography. Here he explains how he got there and chooses some of his favourite shots by BRETT FRASER





TAR WARS ISN'T YOUR regular stepping stone for a career in car photography. And yet for Malcolm Griffiths - universally known as Malcy - George Lucas's sci-fi blockbuster was the inadvertent catalyst for spending more than three decades (and counting) behind the lens.

'I was part of the Star Wars generation,' explains Malcy, 'and was so interested in the movie that I bought a book about it. In one of the behind-the-scenes shots there was a guy on the back of a crane with a big Panavision lens and those large film reels, and I thought, "That looks cool, working on a film set." I set my heart on being a cameraman. So I managed to find an assisting job working for a cameraman on a Channel 4 show. I did that for about three months before coming to the realisation that I didn't want to be him after all - although he was very good at what he did, there were about 20 people telling him how to do it. I didn't think I could cope with all those people poking at me, telling me what to do. I wanted a job where I could be freer than that.'

Not that Malcy turned immediately to stills photography. 'Back then I wasn't really convinced anyone actually made money out of photography. I thought it was more of a hobby,' he confesses. Furthermore, photography wasn't a burning passion for young master Griffiths growing up certainly not as a career choice - although he was always surrounded by cameras. 'My dad had an old Agfa or something, but he wasn't a photographer. I was fascinated by it as a gadget - the buttons, the dials, the twiddly bits... What did they all do? From then on a camera, generally an Instamatic or similar, was on my birthday list and I always had one in my hand.'

The car element of the equation didn't come



'My Formula 1 days were the Hill/Schumacher era in '95-'96, so this was a spooky event. It was shot was in 2006 and Williams kitted the garage out in period panels and wore period team kit. I walked in and what hair I still have stood on end. Damon is still, as then, a gentleman and worthy champ.'

'I always make time in a race weekend to shoot something for myself. In 1996 at the

Norisring in Germany, for the International Touring Cars, I thought I'd shoot a slow pan through the teams' pit wall perches just as Jason Watt aquaplaned past, gently glancing off the pit wall. I don't think I have bettered this pic."

'I enjoyed having this great opportunity to shoot the cover for issue 239 of evo: Bedford Autodrome, a Ferrari, a Caterham and a handful of tracking laps in the rain, et

voila! I have to confess I'd take the Caterham every time. Or maybe the Ferrari, then sell it to buy lots of Caterhams."

'Always trust your journo! This was a quick trip to Betws-y-Coed to shoot the glorious Ferrari 812 Superfast, We started the journey in pissing rain and I had no confidence it would clear. John Barker knew! The sun popped out for the last hour of the day creating gorgeous low light, water spray and a rainbow.'















This was a great gig, as one of the official photographers on the 720S Spider launch in Arizona. I was shooting alongside Chris Brown and he'd been moved on to do another shot so I inherited this amazing angle. Thanks, Chris – you get 50 per cent credit for this shot.

'This was a filming day to promote the first Rome

E-Prix, which was held in 2018. I was there to shoot over the shoulders of the TV crew and noticed an unused lane in the middle of the street devoid of cars and visual clutter, giving a clear view of the Colosseum. It's one of my favourite shots to this day."

'I've always taken pictures of my own cars. This is my latest, an MX-5 Mk1 that I bought as a track mule and have since restored

and uprated. On a road trip to Scotland I got this shot lined up then was blessed by a rainbow.

'From Formula Ford to Formula 1, the winner will always wave to the crowd and marshals, so it's one of those banker shots you expect to get. Even so. capturing Lewis Hamilton winning his home Grand Prix is always special.'

from Malcy's parents, who had no interest in them beyond convenient transportation. 'I did once watch a Grand Prix with Dad when I was about seven or eight, but he fell asleep in his chair... But as soon as I got my licence I was into Mk1 Escorts, getting my hands dirty, changing engines, putting bigger wheels on, lowering them, all that sort of stuff. My love of cars comes from the humble Escort. And as I lived just down the road from Brands Hatch, me and my mates used to nip up there to watch the fast Fords whipping around the track.'

For his own gratification Malcy used to take a few pictures with his Olympus OM10 camera whilst at Brands, and they were to hold him in good stead when he rang weekly motorsport publication Motoring News to enquire if there were any vacancies in the darkroom - this was 1990, in The Days Before Digital. It turned out there was a spot, and once the boss had checked out Malcy's Brands pictures he got the job.

'I did about seven years there, working my way up, shooting all types of motorsport and eventually Formula 1 for a couple of years. During my first season in F1 I got to go to Melbourne, Argentina and Brazil, and I relished the travel - Argentina was my favourite track, especially as during my first visit Martin Brundle took all the UK snappers out for a fabulous dinner at an amazing steak restaurant. Particularly at that race, but at most other F1 venues too, I really enjoyed the sense of camaraderie between photographers, the banter.

'But it was hard work, too. We shot film, and the negatives had to be processed on-site, sometimes in the public toilets, after which they had to be scanned and sent back to the agency; the transparencies we took home with us. It's different now, of course, when with digital you can send pics back to base directly from the camera, and a digi-tech person in the office will make all the adjustments to the image and send it on to clients.'

As glamorous as it might sound to travel the world at someone else's expense and mix close-quarters with motorsport's elite, the lack of a social life and working most weekends took its toll on Malcy - 'I simply couldn't get on another plane and live out of a suitcase' - so after two and a bit seasons of F1, in 1997 he decided to go freelance. Still mainly shooting motorsport, but in the UK and Europe, and with a far less hectic schedule.

A chance meeting with Stuart Gallagher, now evo's editor but back then working for Performance Ford, enabled Malcy to break free of the track and start shooting road cars: 'Stu was integral to my first paid freelance nonmotorsport gig.' Although still contracted to photograph Touring Cars, Malcy now added various one-make magazines to his portfolio, as well as a classic cars title. The latter kept him very busy, but after four years of shooting old cars, he craved more variety and returned to the world of motorsport magazines, this time specialising in portraiture, a discipline he admits to enjoying more than photographing race cars.

Meanwhile, Malcy was finding favour with evo, which he believes is the perfect showcase for his talents – when he sings the mag's praises, it's without the slightest hint of sycophancy. I admire the fact that evo survives by keeping faith with old-school editorial. From a photographer's perspective you can go off and do a shoot and get a front cover and ten pages inside, the pictures used lavishly. It's a really great platform and it's wonderful to be involved with something like that.

'The reward you get from seeing your pictures displayed this way is immense. I remember once at Heathrow airport watching a bloke pick up a copy of **evo** with my shot on the cover – it was so gratifying to think that in some small way I'd been instrumental in his purchasing decision.'

With the market for car photographers now flooded across all genres of motoring, and with some newcomers prepared to work for nothing and making life difficult for those trying to earn a living, Malcy has diversified, employing his portraiture skills to shoot sportsfolk for corporate clients, and sporting products, too. But he's looking forward to a post-Covid world where there are car shoots and launches galore and he has the chance to fully exercise all facets of his craft.

And he does regard it as a craft. Even in the days of digital. 'All the polishing is done post-production now,' says Malcy, 'but the same basic rules apply that have always applied when you're actually shooting – some photographers still don't get that, they think you can just blast away randomly and fix everything with a computer later on.

'But those of us who started our careers with film had to learn how to create images inside the camera, compose them properly, that's the art of it. So we still do that with digital, then simply tweak the pictures in post-production because we've thought about what we're doing before pressing the shutter. I'm beginning to wonder if we're the last generation of guys who consider photography to be a craft. Is that too snobby a word? I don't know...'





#### Ken Block Ford Fiesta ST (top)

'Shooting the legendary Ken Block is effortless: his Gymkhana shows – this one was in Madrid in 2013 – are always big on spectacle, so a dramatic shot is guaranteed. Having drivers able to throw cars around by the scruff of the neck makes any snapper's job easy!'

Rome E-Prix, 2019 (above)
'I find start shots nerve-racking: you have to time when you get to the first corner to be in front of a load of other

idiots with cameras to get a clean shot. This particular Formula E race was funny as two local photographers were nattering away and failed to notice the start!

#### Porsche 911 3.0 RSR IROC (top right)

As photographic locations go, the North York Moors have plenty to offer in terms of eye-catching landscape. For this shot, however, it was the clouds that caught my eye. As dramatic as they are, though, it's that lime green Porsche

911 IROC – one of only 15 made for the International Race of Champions, and the only one outside of America – that fully commands your attention.'

#### Lancia D24 (right

Although not original, this wonderful reconstruction of the Lancia D24 road racer from the early 1950s was marvellous – the weather for the shoot, not so much. To overcome the grey dullness of the day attached the camera to the car with a rig to help create some whizzy drama to bring it to life."











#### HE MAN FROM CLASSIC WORKS AND I PAUSE

next to a Signal Red pre-HE XJ-S V12 and stare. We're both smiling for reasons that quickly become clear, as we regale each other with tales of childhood journeys squashed into the back seats of Jaguar's controversial coupe. In my case, a friend of my father's had the TWR V12 version. That was cool: Alexander O'Neal on the tape deck, big gold watch; it was the '80s to the maximum, and I was in awe.

That's usually the way with cars, isn't it? The friend's dad who had one, or the neighbour; memories burnt into our brains at a formative age of seemingly unattainable cars, then reignited in later life by that powerful narcotic called nostalgia. I haven't got a bright red XJ-S near the top of my own classic car wish list, but I can't help but be drawn towards this example.

The same drug is at work as I look down the row upon row of Jaguar and Land Rover classics, double-stacked in long lines. It reminds me of the brightly coloured wooden garage I had as a kid, where Matchbox cars could be parked in the multi-storey and you drove into the lift to reach different floors. Except, of course, these cars are real without wheels pointing in four different directions, aren't clogged with garden mud, and don't have brutal damage inflicted by skirting boards at each corner. These are some of JLR's very own crown jewels.

Next door in this 14,000m2 facility at Ryton-on-Dunsmore is possibly the most expensive-looking workshop I've ever seen. It is simply vast. As many as 54 ramps are arranged in expansive work areas; surgically clean, light and airy. This is what happens when a major automotive brand gets serious about its heritage - and understands that there's good profit to be made there, too.

On the day of our visit, the 25 'Works Trophy' Land Rover Defenders are in various states of build (calm down, Richard Porter), but there are also D-type continuations, XJ220s, XJ-Ss and old Range Rovers, some looking distinctly better than new. And lots and lots of old Land Rovers, which I must admit I'm quite partial to, even though prices have gone ballistic, which is annoying if you haven't bought one already. But I'm not here to see those today, and without direct permission Aston can't photograph the owners' cars sitting in various states of mechanical undress. Today is about the collection of 300 cars in the hall alongside.

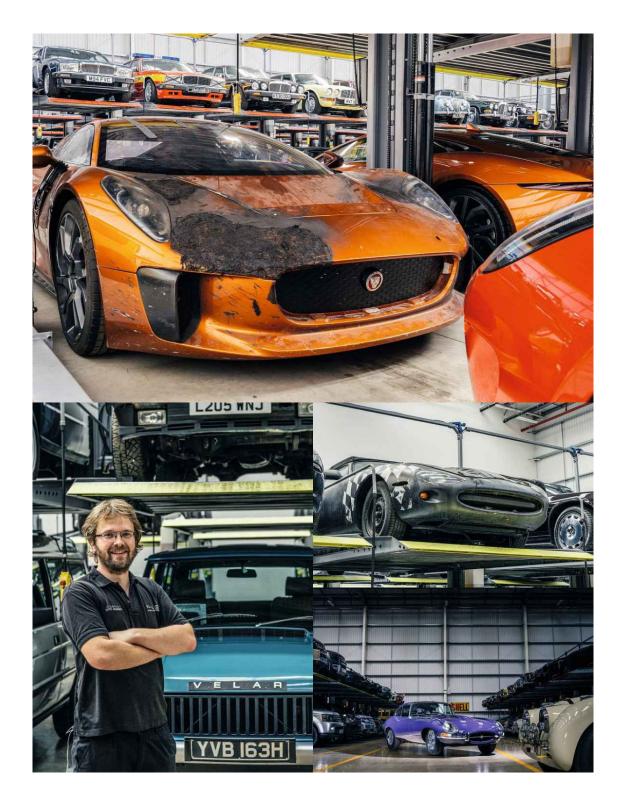
We're mostly here for the Jags, it's true. As the brand slowly starts to leave its troublesome mass-market strategy behind for an all-EV luxury future in a few years' time, it's especially poignant to stroll past silent rows of the cars that make it a sleeping giant, in emotive terms if not by profit and volume. There are cars here that were once relatively common and now aren't. Cars that were once desirable, then weren't, and now increasingly are again. And cars that all but the marque's die-hard fans will have forgotten: XJ40s, 420Gs, MkVs and so on. There are famous JLR cars from films, too, such as the fire-damaged C-X75 from the James Bond movie Spectre.

My guide is Matt Bailey, business development manager at Classic Works. It's a small team for a large number of cars, with Matt, a supervisor, a curator and one dedicated technician, and there's a lot of work to be done. That's because this is far from being a museum: there's the Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust for that, custodian of such globally significant treasures as NUB 120, the Coupe des Alpes-winning XK120 of 1950/51 (although sister car

#### Above and right:

1950s saloons are one small part of the collection, Classic Works is also home to production of continuation cars like the D-type, along with a full sales and servicing operation (the XJ220 being a customer car)









#### **'THEY'VE SOLD** SOME JAGUARS - THEY HAD FIFTEEN XJ-Ss FOR EXAMPLE'

RUB 120 is here), and TWR XJR-9 chassis 488, the 1988 Le Mans 24-hour winning Group C car. Some of the Trust's cars can be seen here today on loan, and the two entities have established a working relationship together for the common cause. But the collection at Classic Works is different - it needs to work for its supper.

It began with Jaguar buying the 543-strong James Hull collection back in 2014. 'The cars here are from that original purchase, along with our own cars that we've added,' says Matt. 'We've sold off most of the other margues [a few 1950s and '60s Bentleys can just be made out several rows back, their dinner-plate-sized headlamps peering suavely out of the darkness, and I spot a lovely Mk3 Mini-Cooper], and we now have currently around 300 cars here.

'Some of the cars we've sold were Jaguars; we had 15 XJ-Ss for example, and that's not for us - that's the role of the JDHT.' Indeed, Bailey is not afraid to sell anything if it doesn't meet the purposes of Classic Works. As we arrived, I'd noticed two X150 XKs in the expansive entrance lobby/ showroom - a late 5-litre XKR and a lovely 4.2 XKR-S each showing just delivery mileage. Both will be sold to collectors to raise funds because their mileages are so low they couldn't realistically be driven. So the collection will replace them with excellent but useable examples that can be 'on the button', ready to go when required.

So what exactly is the point of all this then? Classic Works is all about strengthening the Jaguar brand and embraces a whole range of activities: the continuation cars, brand experiences and Classic Racing, plus servicing and restoration. In fact, there's almost no limit other than a customer's imagination to what the department can do, from a modernised Series 1 E-type to what looks like an early L322 Rangie in for a service next door.

Take, for example, the beautifully restored XK120 that sits quietly in the row of cars, its badges and detailing revealing that it was prepared for the Mille Miglia last year, an event that Jaguar didn't ultimately attend for obvious reasons. Drawn from Works' collection of early XKs (which is extensive), it was competition-prepared with the idea that a customer would enter the event as a Jaguar 'Works driver', their name entered into the firm's records alongside those of Mike Hawthorn, Stirling Moss, Martin Brundle and Andy Wallace. Race suit, full support crew, spares, you name it was to be included, with the cherry on the top being that they'd own the car at the end of it. I don't dare to ask what all that might cost, but if you've got the means it does sound like a fun way to spend a lot of money... Classic Works doesn't intend to sell off all its cars like this, one by one, but if you owned an XK120 and fancied the same experience there's nothing to stop you from asking for the same treatment.

#### Opposite page: Scott Barber is the man charged with getting

the whole collection in running order so that any of the cars can be pressed into service when required. Curios include Spectre CX-75 and various prototypes; presence of Series 1 E-type is a given



Then there's the golden-orangey-hued Project 8, a preproduction example that was destined for the crusher until Classic Works saved it. Now it's available for those who may want to experience Jaguar's unlikely supersaloon hero, perhaps at the local Fen End track that JLR owns, or if the parent company needs an example for display. It's a policy that Matt is pursuing further, developing relationships across JLR's vast engineering teams so that when a project comes to a close something useful to the collection, such as this P8, can be saved for a new life. The same is true for the continuation cars because 'car zero' of any tiny production run henceforth comes automatically to the collection.

My eye is also drawn to other gems, such as a pair of XKR-S GTs, one with just delivery mileage, and a beautiful early E-type with what turns out to be period Coombs mods. A bright red XJ40 is instantly recognisable, too: this was the fire tender safety car at Silverstone for many years - races I attended as a youngster, where I'd watch it tail the field around on the first lap following the start of the race. And I must admit to having a thing for the Lynx Eventer an XJ-S V12 'estate' - the example here believed to be the only one to have a manual gearbox.

The man with almost sole responsibility for tending to the mechanical needs of this huge collection is Scott Barber. He started his career as an apprentice at a large Jaguar main dealer in 2006, then worked there as a technician before answering an advertisement he saw at the Essen classic car show for this role. That was four years ago, but it's refreshing that his enthusiasm seems undimmed, particularly given the mammoth task in front of him - that of maintaining and eventually getting all the cars you see here running again. Given the breadth in age and technology of the collection it requires a really broad knowledge base, but then Scott was working on diesel locomotives as a toddler during a youth spent around engines. He's owned many classic cars himself, but these days is into British army lorries of the 1940s and '50s. His favourite car in the collection is an E-type (a Series 2 with many early Series 3 development parts) once owned by Lofty England, the former Jaguar engineer and later chairman and CEO, although he's hoping an XJ220 and XJR-15 will join in the future.

What's not currently in the collection is almost as interesting as what is. Absentees include the two aforementioned early '90s supercars (the XJ220s we see are customer cars), but the biggest holes are far more prosaic. There's no X-type, for example, or S-type, and only one X100 XK model. These are cars the collection will need to acquire if it's to cover all bases, even if in some cases they're a less romantic page in the firm's history. Similarly, while it has some truly special E-types (two early 'flat floor' cars, the only known Roman Purple S1, plus three of the commemorative Series 3 V12s that saw out the type's production), what it could really do with is some decent but non-historic E-types for all sorts of press and customer duties, because funnily enough it's the E-type that gets the most requests and you don't always want to be loaning the really special stuff out for the sometimes rough-andtumble life of a 'press car'.

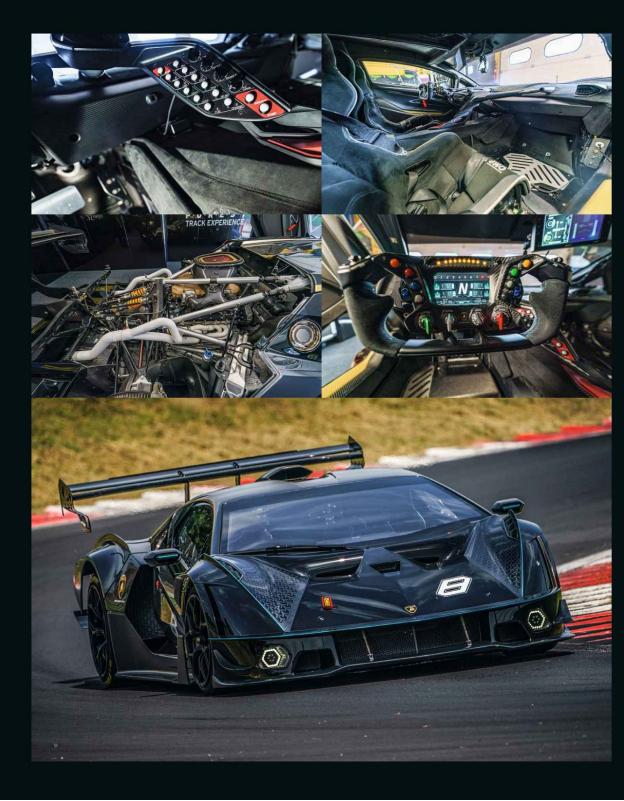
Naturally, your correspondent has his eyes open as we browse around, identifying a few choice examples that may well appear as 'Icons' in these very pages. Funnily enough one might wear a body kit by a certain Tom Walkinshaw Racing. Could be time to dig out those old cassettes...

Opposite: business development manager Matt Bailey has to ensure the cars and the extensive facilities earn their keep. The XK120 was prepped for last year's Mille Miglia; rare Lynx Eventer estate (top right) is believed the only manual example









#### IT'S A TRACK-ONLY CAR THAT'S BASED LOOSELY

on the Aventador and there will only ever be 40 made, each costing 2.2million euros before local taxes. So it's a serious toy for the seriously rich, although, says Lamborghini, it will never compete, despite having been granted full FIA approval to do just that.

Think of it instead as Sant'Agata's answer to Ferrari's XX programme, whereby the factory designs and develops the craziest, most expensive hypercars imaginable then sells them to their wealthiest customers, the ones who crave the ultimate exclusive experience on four wheels but don't necessarily want to go racing to achieve it. And while Ferrari may have pioneered this concept some 16 years ago with the Enzo-based FXX, Lamborghini is now unashamedly replicating the idea, enlisting the services of one Emanuele Pirro - five times Le Mans winner with Audi Sport and all-round racing car legend - to help them do it.

Pirro is effectively the boss of the Essenza program, with the 819bhp SCV12 being the first example of an entirely new line in ultra-fast versions of already brisk hypercars that will be limited in numbers and which will be run by the factory, also just like the Ferrari XX cars. To help him build it, he assembled a team of core people from within Lamborghini's Squadra Corse racing department hence the SC in the name - and three years and one global pandemic later, the SCV12 is what they came up with. Quite some piece of work it is, too.

At its core sits an Aventador's carbonfibre tub, but extensively modified to accommodate a 6.5-litre V12 that's been rotated through 180 degrees so that the new six-speed X-Trac sequential gearbox sits behind it, rather than in front as per the road car, becoming a fully stressed member in the process. The engine itself is similar to the SVJ's motor internally but produces 819bhp at 8500rpm and 560lb ft at 7000rpm - increases of 60bhp and 29lb ft - thanks to a ram-air system that channels air from a big scoop on the roof, along the car's spine and straight into the intake system.

The SCV12 is longer than an Aventador. The wheelbase alone is 205mm longer, while the bodywork before and aft of this is extended in both directions. Its designers at Centro Stile say they always wanted to create a car with a longer tail that was more dramatic in profile (they succeeded), and, in turn, this helped the aero engineers create a more effective car too. The result is a claimed 1200kg of downforce at 150mph, although Pirro says that this ultimate number isn't really the key one. The fact that the car develops 'lots of useable downforce, rather than one high peak of it' is, he says, far more important.

Lamborghini wasn't too fussed about making a car with the best 0-62mph time or the highest top speed, the aim instead being to create a very fast track car that is as enjoyable - and as relatively easy - as possible to drive. Even so, the rear-wheel-drive SCV12 will still hit 62mph in well under 3 seconds - although Lamborghini doesn't say by how much - while its top speed is well beyond 210mph, despite the huge rear wing.

Another element that Pirro is clearly rather chuffed with is the SCV12's differential, which is mechanical, but electronically operated in that you can alter the preload settings via a rotational button on the top left of the steering yoke (you can't call it a wheel because what



you steer with is categorically not a wheel). Effectively this allows you to open or close the diff to dial in or dial out understeer/oversteer to suit the kind of track you're at - or even which specific corner you're attacking on that track.

There are five different engine modes to choose from via a rotational switch on the yoke, each delivering five per cent more power. Only in mode 5 does it give you the full beans. There's also 12-stage traction control and 12-stage ABS, the first six stages in both cases being essentially wet settings, which means you still get six to play with in the dry depending on how tasty you think you are. The controls for these and other functions are all sprinkled close to hand around a fully digitised Motec instrument display that sits in the centre of the voke.

Interestingly, the brakes on the car we're driving are steel, although carbon-ceramics are also available. Pirro says he quite likes the steel rotors because they have a wider operating temperature and wear 'quite well'. They also don't offer any less outright braking performance than the carbon discs but cost an awful lot less to replace. The only downside is that they weigh a bit more, but even with steel brakes the overall kerb weight of the SCV12 is well under 1500kg. 'Which is too much for a pure racing car,' admits Pirro, 'but not too bad considering how many electronic systems there are in the car and what our original intentions with it were.'

If you've ever driven an Aventador or even a Murciélago before, you will have at least an inkling of what the SCV12 is like to drive. Sort of. You can feel that same DNA in the way it responds to your inputs and feels very obviously midengined in its fundamental behaviour. You still feel like you are sitting at the pointy end of a V-shaped missile in which most of the natural inertia sits behind you - and wants to overtake you if you get it wrong.

But in reality nothing can prepare you for the way the SCV12 dismantles the ground that passes beneath its massive slick Pirelli tyres. Despite a fairly immense initial intimidation factor - the V12 is entirely unsilenced, the steering seems curiously aloof to begin with, as does the ride, while the cabin feels quite a lot like an impossibly small, one-man sauna out of which you can't really see too

Opposite: cabin has two seats but is otherwise a minimalist affair; steering yoke is home to 16 controls covering everything from differential adjustment to a pit limiter; remaining buttons are clustered on a race-style panel on the centre console Above: huge wing contributes to significant downforce

much – the SCV12 actually turns out to be far better balanced and much, much quicker than even the very fastest road-going Aventadors. In fact, it feels nothing like an Aventador once you get comfortable with what it can do.

Around Italy's Vallelunga circuit, where we're getting our taste of the SCV12, an Aventador SVJ wouldn't get within 15 seconds a lap, while even a GT3 Huracán would be trailing by 3 seconds. The sheer acceleration the SCV12 is capable of generating is quite shocking to begin with, it's that savage, that intense, and the way the X-Trac gearbox slices so cleanly up and down its ratios only amplifies the effect. Yet it's the brakes and the aerodynamic grip this car produces that leave you gasping hardest in disbelief, and make it feel most like a full-blown racing car.

The brakes are heroic in the way you can stop in such a terrifyingly short distance from such enormous speeds, lap after lap, knowing that it is only *your* limits, not those of the car, that are preventing you from going faster still.

Getting used to the aerodynamics to a point where you can trust them is largely a matter of time, but you need a certain degree of confidence in your own imagination as well, otherwise you'll never go fast enough to get the air to work in your favour. But if and when you do bring yourself to commit to a high-speed corner and hold on to your insides, the rewards are rich, and the results are fairly surreal.

Even in third-gear corners the SCV12 just sticks when you think surely it's about to slide. And in fourth- and fifth-gear sweepers at 120-140mph, it feels spookily keyed into the tarmac – you can actually sense the downward forces increasing via the steering weight and through the seat as the aerodynamic loads go up.

The steering is hyper-accurate but not exactly bubbling with feel. Instead it provides an effective way of guiding the nose of the SCV12 through corners, even if it's not a source of any great subjective ecstasy. Unlike the engine and gearbox, which seem oddly conventional compared with the aero and brakes, but still manage to form the heart of the car's personality on the move.

The gearbox is fantastic, swapping ratios as quickly as you could wish for, although you do need to be positive with your inputs otherwise it'll spit a half-hearted shift right back at you. As for the V12 engine, it is more magnificent here than it has been in any other Lamborghini we've driven. Ever. It is truly a beautiful thing to use, or even just to listen to, with no form of silencing whatsoever for its exhaust and a heart-stopping sense of crescendo to its delivery. There really is nothing else quite like it on this earth right now, and when, finally, this engine goes to another place, a big piece of Lamborghini will go with it.

For this reason alone, the Essenza SCV12 deserves its place alongside the other true greats from Sant'Agata, even if it is just an extravagance for the mega-rich.  $\boxtimes$ 



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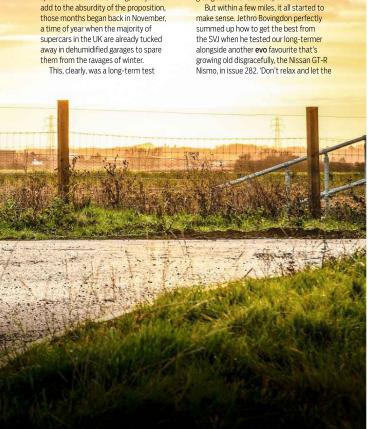
# Lamborghini Aventador SVJ

The new SCV12 may have it licked for ultimate on-track performance, but the 759bhp SVJ is a hardcore Lambo you can enjoy every single day - as we've spent the last few months proving



spent several months doing, and just to

giving cause for circumspection.





p133 Alfa Giulia Quadrifoglio



p134 Aston Martin V8 Vantage



p136 Volkswagen T-Roc R



p138 Audi RS e-tron GT



car chart its course,' he wrote. 'Grab hold and bully it. Then it doesn't take long for the cold handshake of the SVJ to turn into a big bear hug. It's on your side. You just have to talk its language.' And it's true: show the SVJ a firm hand and you begin to make flowing progress, which in turn means you feel more at ease behind its wheel, which then means you can really start to enjoy what this extraordinary machine has to offer.

Those Corsa tyres proved themselves to not be the handicap you might expect, too. OK, so even with the help of the Aventador's four-wheel drive system a run to the 8500rpm power peak could remain frustratingly out of reach for days upon end when the roads refused to dry out, but there was always clear information feeding back about how far you could work those Pirellis, and you could very often work them much harder than you might expect. John Barker described their grip in such conditions as staggering, while Richard

#### 'We'll always remember how every single journey in the SVJ felt like an event

Meaden went one further and drove our SVJ to the supermarket in the snow...

And such humdrum tasks can be tackled in an SVJ. The front axle lift enables it to clear speed cushions that even our Focus ST long-termer has scuffed, the four-wheel steering ensures it has a respectable turning circle, and the front luggage compartment is larger than a 911's. Certainly there was always more effort required than if you were in something more 'normal', because in a 'normal' car you don't have severely restricted rearward

visibility, slightly abrupt engaging/disengaging of an automated single-clutch transmission during slowspeed manoeuvres, or a rapidly growing audience observing your every move. But working with all of this always made you feel like you were fully invested in the task of driving, regardless of the speed. And, as Barker observed, with power steering, an automated gearbox and stability control, an Aventador is considerably more accessible and exploitable than, sav, a '90s Diablo.

Our time with the SVJ wasn't entirely plain sailing, though. Early in our tenure, during a long, steady 70-ish mph cruise. I experienced some intermittent power reductions accompanied by a series of warning messages: 'Catalyst overtemperature', 'ESC fault', 'Parking brake failure'. Rather than trying to limp the final 40 miles home, I decided to stop somewhere safe and call Lamborghini Assistance, which sent a recovery truck to relay the car to a dealer. A faulty exhaust gas sensor was diagnosed





as the cause of the problems and the car was soon back in action... only for it to stumble again a couple of weeks later, this time with JB at the wheel, the car dropping out of gear and announcing a 'Gearbox malfunction'. The cause this time? A blown fuse.

Perhaps the SVJ was complaining about being driven in all conditions, living outside 24/7, and not enjoying the typical pampered life of a supercar. Or perhaps its 10,000, often hard-driven miles as a press car – including setting the production car lap record at Hockenheim back in 2019 – were beginning to tell. Perhaps we were just unlucky. But thereafter FR624ZF ran faultlessly.

And I don't think those blips will be the moments we will remember from our time with the SVI, anyway. We'll remember how every single journey in it felt like an event. How its ferocious naturally aspirated VI2 set our spines a-tingle

every time it worked through the upper reaches of a gear. How its unleashed performance never seemed anything less than utterly sensational. How it looked simply outrageous wherever it was parked and unspeakably cool when covered in a layer of wintry grime. How it brought joy to so many people, young and old, who got to experience such a rarity up close. Ultimately, how it felt like a true, pure, bona fide supercar in every possible way.

It is ridiculous to run an SVJ as a daily, but perhaps that's missing the point, because if you do, it'll be an experience you'll never, ever forget. Ian Eveleigh

Date acquired November 2020 Duration of test 5 months Total test mileage 4011 Overall mpg 12.3 Costs £0 Price when new £443.054 (2019) Value today £325,000



### Alfa Giulia Quadrifoglio

A closer look at tyres and trim

IME IS RUNNING OUT FOR OUR TENURE of the Giulia, and it looks as though we're going to miss the opportunity to try some alternative rubber on it before it disappears back to Alfa. However, a reader got in touch to say he'd tried Michelin's Pilot Sport 4 S on his Quadrifoglio and, in his opinion, the wear rates and wet weather grip levels were vastly better than the Pirelli's and the dry grip comparable. Given his car is also running 600hp and 580lb ft of torque, such a transformation must have been particularly welcome. It was the difference between 'wheelspin in fourth gear and wheelspin only in second gear' apparently.

Meanwhile, as we close in on 6000 miles, let's talk about the tricky subject of build quality. The surround for the cruise control switch has recently come adrift, as have little fillets of silver plastic trim from two of the driver's door window switches; the driver's Sparco bucket now creaks constantly to the point where my brain has installed its own noise-cancelling software, and there are, it must be said, occasionally a few squeaks and rattles in the cabin. I know I could superglue the trim bits back on, and every time I walk past my socket set I remember I need to try to sort out the seat – and then promptly forget to do so.

My faith in the integrity of the Alfa's mechanicals is unshakable, though, and I'm the sort of person who places interior plastic quality, and the science of glueing and screwing bits of trim together to give an impression that the whole car is a quality item, a long way down my priority list. It's a specialised skill the German brands have become very good at, but it's not necessarily connected to whether your engine is going to blow up, or your gearbox will poop itself.

Nevertheless, the new G80 BMW M3 certainly makes you feel like it's made with a few more euros set aside for the interior.

Adam Towler (@AdamTowler)

Date acquired January 2021 Total mileage 5901 Mileage this month 501 Cost this month £0 mpg this month 21.1



ARELY A MONTH INTO ASTON ownership and the first major expense hit: a not inconsiderable four grand.

Ooof. Didn't see that coming.

Not really the Aston's fault, to be fair. Thing is, Mrs T had long been hankering after a Fiat 500 Convertible, and after she'd agreed to me getting my own actual Aston Martin there was really no way I could refuse her a Fiat. So we now have the two most impractical cars in the road. The dog isn't impressed, I can tell you.

The Aston itself hasn't cost a penny so far – beyond the purchase price, road tax, insurance and fuel. So, how much do these things cost for an early Gaydon-era V8 Vantage?

If you saw last month's cover story, you'll know that I bought the Aston back in March in one of those It's Now or Never moments. In short, I was about to hit the big 6-0 and needed cheering up, and as I'd recently inherited a bit of money, I decided an Aston was the answer.

At the time you could find very presentable V8

Vantages for between £25k and £30k (they've moved up a bit since then) but these were usually private sales and I wanted the reassurance of buying from a specialist. Which led me to McGurk Performance Cars in Warwickshire and this January 2006 Vantage in Toro red, which I picked up for £32.500.

One bonus with a really early Vantage is that the road tax is £340 a year (had it been registered after 23 March 2006 it would have been £600). Another pleasant surprise was that insurance was just £236 a year for myself and Mrs T on an Admiral multi-car policy, though the excess is a fairly chunky £600 and do keep in mind that we're both damn near pensionable.

You don't buy a Vantage for its fuel economy. Most owners reckon on getting anything between mid-teens when they're enjoying themselves and early 20s sitting on the motorway, so the average of 19.5mpg over the first 1000 miles or so feels about right. Were you to cover 3000 miles a year (which isn't untypical) that would work out at

around £1000 a year for fuel. Most specialists suggest budgeting the same again for routine servicing and the usual expendables.

Speaking of which, the tyres could really do with replacing. They're original-equipment (OE) Bridgestone Potenzas, which don't have the best reputation for ride or handling, and though there's a decent amount of tread left, a check of the manufacturing date on the sidewalls reveals that the fronts are five years old and the rears a positively geriatric eight years old. Though there's no sign of perishing, that's really pushing the upper limit of healthy tyre life and may well be contributing to a rather brittle secondary ride. The favourite replacement among other owners seems to be Michelin's Pilot Sport 4 S, but Bridgestone's recently launched Potenza Sport has been getting some good notices. I'm hoping evo's tyre test later in the year will help me decide which way to go.

Also on the to-do list is to investigate an upgrade for the infamously woeful factory-fit satnav. It was some way off the pace when the car was new, so 15 years later the pop-up screen remains firmly stowed



and the iPhone does nav duties instead. I've heard good things about a company called Aston Installations, who cleverly adapt the electrics so that you can run Apple CarPlay via the existing screen, so that's one avenue to explore.

In the meantime I'm thoroughly enjoying the early months of Aston ownership. The V8V is spared daily duties. I've no doubt it would take them in its stride, but I'm still at the point where I'm nervous of leaving it anywhere it might possibly pick up dings in those exposed flanks. So it's special days out, including joining around 700 other Astons at the AM Heritage Festival in June, visits to family and friends, and the occasional early-morning or late-evening blat around the local lanes. They've never sounded better.

Peter Tomalin

Date acquired March 2021 Total mileage 41,881 Mileage this month 450 Cost this month £0 mpg this month 19.5



#### BMW M550i xDrive

Discovering new challenges in the unlikeliest of driver modes

OT A HUGE HAUL OF MILES THIS MONTH as I've been in and out of various other test cars, but I have discovered another facet of the 550I, and an unexpectedly compelling one, too. It's an eco mode, which sounds a bit contradictory in a 530bhp, two-ton performance saloon, but it's a fascinating challenge because it rates your driving and also offers driving tips.

Select Eco Pro and the instruments adopt a light blue theme and the right-hand dial switches from being the tacho to an mpg meter, showing real-time and average mpg and also when you're charging the mild hybrid battery. You can set up preferences for this mode as you can for others, setting the suspension (Sport for me) and also nominating a maximum speed (63mph).

Right away you notice that the throttle is much softer, encouraging a relaxed, more considered approach to acceleration. And so begins an education in driving frugally and realising the impressive economy potential of the 550i. The car rates two elements of your driving – anticipation and acceleration – and scores you out of five. It knows where you are via the satnav and often prompts you to think about letting off the throttle waaaay before a roundabout, partly because in Eco Pro there's a freewheel or 'sail' function rather than engine braking. If you ignore it and brake late, your anticipation rating will never get very high.

Admittedly, it's not as much fun as trying to get a five-star rating from the Drift Analyser feature in the new M4 (see evo 284), but it's quite absorbing nonetheless and a great way of making mundane journeys a test of skill. The numbers the 550i can return are impressive, too - I've seen over 33mpg - and the way it sharpens your anticipation and promotes a light-footed approach to keeping pace with traffic is satisfying. Avoiding sudden braking and acceleration, keeping a smooth, steady flow, feels like chauffeur driving - trying to make the drive as comfortable as possible for passengers. This seems entirely appropriate when you get out and look back. The 550i is long, low and black, and if it was debadged very few people would guess it was so close to being an M5.

There's only so long you can abstain from a proper squeeze of the throttle, though. I never tire of the feeling of that twin-turbo V8 filling its lungs, shrugging off the mass and firing me up the road, and the relentlessness of the shove as it eats up the gears. And when it's devoured an interesting bit of road you can pop it back into Eco Pro and try to massage the mpg figure back up to the 30s. **John Barker** (@evoJB)

Date acquired January 2021 Total mileage 7730 Mileage this month 574 Costs this month £0 mpg this month 29.1

#### **END OF TERM**

## Volkswagen T-Roc R

The T-Roc's time on the Fleet is up. Did it turn us into crossover fans?

ET'S IMAGINE OURSELVES IN JOST Capito's garage. I'm not talking about the Williams' pit garage at a Grand Prix, George Russell plotting his way to another Q3 in a the FW43B. No, I'm talking about Capito's personal garage, at home, away from his current job as the team principal at Williams Racing.

I should point out that I've never been to his garage, nor do I know if it exists. For all I know, Capito may live in a one-up-one-down with limited street parking. But let's assume he has a nice big house and has kept an example of each of the most significant cars he has been involved with in his career. As we walk through the door and flick the lights on, we see them lined up in chronological order, starting with a BMW E30 M3, because he worked on that car's engine. Then there is a Paris-Dakar Unimog alongside a Porsche 964 RS. On the shelf behind is one of Kimi Räikkönen's helmets, as it was Capito who brought

him into the Sauber FI team. Next up are trio of Fords: MkI and MkZ Focus RSs and an FI50 Raptor. Then, hiding behind the pickup, there's another hot hatchone of the all-conquering Volkswagen Polo WRC cars. And at the end there is a space... for a T-Roc R?

You see, before Capito left for his current role back in the FI pitlane, he was in charge of Volkswagen's R performance division from 2017 to 2020. The T-Roc R is his baby. It was one of the reasons that I was intrigued to run KY20 BYN on the Fast Fleet. Could Capito create a captivating crossover?

But before we get to the dynamic stuff, let's deal with the rest of the car that has kept me company for the last six months. For a start, it felt like a good size. No bigger than a Golf and therefore a doddle to slot down country lanes and to park in town. Yet, despite being neatly dimensioned, it still felt reasonably practical. Again, hatchback sized, which meant it was ample when it was just me, but capable

of fitting a family of four as long as the packing stopped a little way short of the kitchen sink. Huge door bins too. And a secret drawer under the driver's seat that I only discovered with about a week to go.

The interior certainly stood up well to having everything from car seats to mountain bikes to camera equipment bunged into it. There are a few more hard plastic surfaces than you might expect at the price point (£41,590 before options), so it never felt quite as cosy as the two GTIs I've run in the past, but the seats were good on a long journey. An inability to stay in hotels for work meant some pretty lengthy days driving around the country and the T-Roc R was a decent motorway mile-muncher. The mpg would sit in the mid-30s and although I'm not much of a fan of radar cruise control, when the situation was right the T-Roc's worked well. Having physical buttons on the steering wheel to control it was nice, too.

Just occasionally I was also pleased to be in something with a little more ride height – specifically during the floods that afflicted the countryside round my way during the winter. One night in particular, the T-Roc got me home through two separate stretches of water that I certainly wouldn't have attempted in a hot hatch.









But did it merit the R badge? Well, it was certainly quick. The claimed sub-5sec 0-62mph time felt entirely believable and the way it ripped through its gears under full acceleration was always impressive and slightly surprising. However, it did feel like it needed to be provoked, because if left in D it would feel pretty lethargic. If you hadn't pre-empted the need for a swift exit from a roundabout with a few taps on the left-hand paddle then there really wasn't much enthusiasm to change down on its own.

The turbocharged EA888 could also feel a little gruff and unrefined at higher revs, so it never felt effortless when you began exercising the engine. The



extremely expensive optional titanium Akrapovic exhaust did make for entertaining company on a trailing throttle though.

In terms of its handling, the R felt impressively tied down. Despite its flood-fording ride height, roll was kept to an absolute minimum. And yet with the optional adaptive DCC dampers, the daily ride comfort was perfectly acceptable too. It always felt secure and there was no doubting the pace it could carry on a good B-road, but the downside was that it never felt particularly adjustable. You could trim lines a little and make it flow nicely through a set of bends, but it wasn't an expressive car. Running the dampers in their Normal or even Comfort setting added a little more in the way of interaction with the way the weight shifted, but the essential character remained.

It was, perhaps predictably, but also impressively,

very like a Mk7.5 Golf R, but in crossover form. I didn't love it like I did the GTIs, but I did respect that there was some proper engineering underpinning it rather than just badge-engineering on the grille. You could feel the work that had gone into it. And in one respect it was even better than the Golf R – it was almost invisible as a performance car. The Golf R is hardly attention-grabbing, but a T-Roc R is a veritable Q-car. To that extent, I'm not sure people would notice even if Jost Capito did park one in his garage.

Henry Catchpole (@HenryCatchpole)

Date acquired December 2020 Duration of test 6 months Total test mileage 6073 Overall mpg 30.5 Costs 60 Purchase price £45,970 Value today £36,000

#### **Audi RS e-tron GT**

It's got a strong GT game, but is the range-topping e-tron 'RS' enough?

M

ONTH TWO WITH OUR FIRST ELECTRIC Fast Fleeter has seen it frequently traverse the crowded and roadwork-littered

Putney High Street, transporting me back and forth between home and Goodwood for this summer's **evo** trackdays and a little car show you might have heard of called the Festival of Speed.

Negotiating busy urban streets is, unfortunately, the reality many of us are dealt when it comes to daily driving, but it's a task our RS e-tron GT handles rather well. It's quite a wide car but, in London, so long as you're not wider than a Routemaster, you're fine. Interior space in the back of the e-tron is somewhat lacking, but I'm generally a party of one so it's only the occasional friend who will cry for mercy in the small leather and Alcantara jail cell back there. More important to me is that our electric Audi is superbly refined and perfectly adept at crawling along with an average speed in decimal points rather than double figures.

Once free of the buses, mopeds and, well, more buses, the trip to Sussex is largely smooth sailing

along flowing A-roads and motorways, on which the e-tron GT shines with its supple ride and double glazing. The Bang & Olufsen stereo is also very good (except at certain frequencies, which seem to rattle both offside tweeters) and after a few tunes we jump off the A3 and onto some tighter, bumpier roads – which is where all hell breaks loose.

By this I don't mean that there's a huge shift to the e-tron's chassis whereby it suddenly displays superb balance and dynamic capability, but rather that this is the point where the chassis starts to wilt under the heat of more complex roads. The three-chamber air suspension feels very soft, and even with adaptive dampers set at their firmest it just can't handle the pressure, literally. Small bumps don't trouble the car too much, but larger undulations can set its 2347kg bulk moving vertically in an uncomfortable manner. Once momentum has taken over, you sometimes feel there's a risk of a very large, very expensive impact with the tarmac. Indeed, on one occasion the e-tron has proved that it will bottom out rather than hit bump stops.

The steering precision that Porsche engineered into its largely similar Taycan is dialled back in the Audi, which makes the lack of feel that's common to both cars more acute here. Hit the brakes and you realise that they can't take the heat either – the pedal is soft, the calibration between regenerative and friction braking inconsistent and vague, but worst of all is when you really need to call on them to bring speed down with urgency. The standard six-piston calipers and siliconecarbide discs (another nod to the RS's Porsche sibling) simply aren't powerful enough for a 637bhp car carrying close to two-and-a-half tons. And forget about resilience, because it takes all of one heavy braking input for the stopping ability to be compromised even further.

So the 'RS' bit of this e-tron GT is so far proving about as appropriate as the stickers(!) used to add those two letters to the seats (see picture on page 131), but it does at least have the 'GT' bit largely sorted.

Jordan Katsianis (@JordanKatsianis)

Date acquired June 2021 Total mileage 4942 Mileage this month 1582 Costs this month £0 mi/kWh this month 2.8





#### **Aston Martin DBX**

A switch to lighter wheels has improved our Aston SUV's ride quality

HEN DID WHEELS GET SO BIG? THOSE of us of a certain age will remember when 15-inch alloys were considered large, and if you had 16s you were talking about a serious diameter-to-width ratio, with a low-profile tyre thrown in for good measure. If you can call a 50 profile 'low', that is. But then 18s quickly became standard fare, 19s optional (the BMW E46 on its optional larger wheels was full Speed Freaks in overproportion for me), and then we blinked and the 20s arrived, with the world going big-rim, lowprofile-rubber mad. But why?

Well, cars are getting bigger so that they can pass ever-more-stringent crash tests, while the technology being squeezed into each new model requires more room, too. The inevitable result is bigger cars and, in turn, suitably sized wheels to make them work visually.

All of this means there are thousands of chassis engineers crying themselves to sleep at night as they try to fathom out how they can control all that unsprung weight hanging from each corner of their new car. The average weight of a 20-inch tyre is up to 15kg depending on the load rating. For a cast wheel you can add at least another 10kg depending

on its design and how strong it needs to be for the role of the car it's been designed to fit. For the DBX's 22-inch Ribbon design wheels don't expect much change from 35-38kg per corner.

In selecting the Ribbon wheels for JYD not only did I incur the wrath of evo's car design critics but I had inadvertently handicapped the DBX's GT-like ride quality, a standout feature when I drove the model at its launch. A ruffle had appeared in the smoothness of the ride compared with those launch cars, with poor surfaces making themselves known in the cabin more frequently than expected.

Thankfully Aston Martin's head of engineering, Matt Becker, knows more about these things than I do and suggested we tried the lighter - by around 3kg per wheel - Sport design wheel and drop the tyre pressures by 0.2bar. That second bit of advice is because the Pirelli P Zero only has one recommended pressure on the DBX that covers both high-speed and full-load running, yet the former is not something I'm going to achieve on the M11 between Cambridge and London, and even my family's inability to pack lightly won't trouble the DBX's maximum load weight.

Anyway, the result is that the evo DBX has



taken on the full gangsta look with its set of matt black Sport wheels, but they, and the small drop in pressures, have also brought a marked improvement in ride quality. There's now more consistency on poor surfaces and less lowspeed shuddering - on the heavier wheels it could occasionally feel like you were driving over Belgian pavé – while high-speed ride, stability, grip and precision aren't impacted one bit, so it's a job well done all round.

Stuart Gallagher (@stuartg917)

Date acquired April 2021 Total mileage 6347 Mileage this month 2430 Costs this month £0 mpg this month 19.9

# **ESSENTIALS**

Must-haves for the **evo** reader and their car

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After a few years with the shutters down evo are pleased to announce that the evo shop is **now open**. We'll be offering a range of branded merchandise including t-shirts, hoodies, caps and evo art prints, as well as single and back issues of the magazine.

As well as branded merchandise we will also be bringing you exclusive collaborations with evo partners.

# The Knowledge

## RATINGS

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

enew 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 shows details of the car's combustion engine, or for BEVs the total output in kW of the car's electric motors. 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 (tested) 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 **Toyota GR Yaris** (left) is just the kind of performance car we've been praying would get made, while the **Hyundai 120 N** and **Ford Flesta ST** offer more affordable supermini fun. **The Renault Mégane RS** has a strong B-road game, especially with the non-Cup chassis, and the **Hyundai 30 N** is an infriguing and impressive alternative to the usual suspects.

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR YEARS ON SALE)	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH	0-60MPH	0-100MPH (TESTER)	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 Al 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	246F	74-78	4/1984	228/6000	273/1600	1315kg	176	5.8	4	-	155	+ Compliant and engaging chassis; quick, too - Looks dull without options	****
Audi Al quattro	264 F	73	4/1984	253/6000	258/2500	1420kg	181	5.7	-	-	152	+ Polished 253bhp all-wheel-drive A1 - Just 19 came to the UK, with a Porsche Cayman price	****
Audi S3 Sportback	279 D	£38,475	4/1984	306/5450	295/2000	1500kg	207	4.8	-	-	155	+ Less one-dimensional than its predecessor - Breaks little new ground	****
Audi RS3 Sportback	256 F	£46,285	5/2480	394/5850	354/1700	1510kg	265	4.1	-	-	155	+ Hugely quick point-to-point - Sometimes speed isn't the be-all and end-all	***
Audi S3	188 F	73-'20	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1395kg	216	5.2	5.4	12.5	155	+ Lots of grip and one of the best-sounding four-pot turbos - Still a little too clinical	****
Audi RS3 Sportback	221 F	75-76	5/2480	362/5500	343/1625	1520kg	242	4.3	3.6	-	155	+ Addictive five-cylinder noise; monster pace - Chassis not exactly playful	****
BMW 128ti	283 F	£31,875	4/1998	261/4750	295/1750	1445kg	184	6.1	-	-	155	+ More exciting and rewarding than a Mk8 Golf GTI - A manual gearbox would be welcome	****
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 Coupě	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 M135i	212 F	72-75	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	70-75	4/1598	154/6000	177/1400	1240kg	126	7.3	-	-	133	+ A proper French hot hatch - Petrolheads might find it too 'designed'	****
Citroën DS3 Racing	153 D	71-72	4/1598	204/6000	203/2000	1240kg	167	6.5	-	-	146	+ A faster, feistier DS3 - Not as hardcore as its 'Racing' tag suggests	****
Citroën 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	£34,495	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	****
Cupra Leon 300	287 F	£35,030	4/1984	296/5300	295/2000	1415kg	213	5.7	-	-	155	+ Great chassis, crisp steering, strong performance - Struggles in the wet; no manual option	****
DS3Performance	222 D	76-78	4/1598	205/6000	221/3000	1175kg	177	6.5			143	+ All the right ingredients - Undercooked	****
Flat Panda 100HP	273 F	'06-'11	4/1368	99/6000	97/4250	975kg	103	9.5	-	-	115	+ About as fun as small cars get - Optional ESP can't be turned off	****
Ford Fiesta ST-Line 140	251 F	£18,440	3/998	138/6000	133/1500	1144kg	123	9.0	9.2	26.4	125	+ Quality chassis makes for a born entertainer - Tall gearing and dull engine can spoil the fun	****
Ford Fiesta ST	259 F	£20,700	3/1497	197/6000	214/1600	1187kg	169	6.5	2	-	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	207F	73-77	4/1596	197/5700	214/2500	1088kg	184	6.9	7.4	18.4	137	+ Chassis, price, punchy performance - Have you heard of Mountune?	****
Ford Fiesta ST200	253 F	76	4/1596	212/6000	236/2500	1088kg	198	6.7	-	-	143	+ Massive fun - They only made 400	****
Ford Flesta 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 Flesta 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)	207F	75-78	4/1999	247/5500	265/2000	1362kg	184	6.5	-	-	154	+ Excellent engine - Scrappy when pushed	****
Ford Focus ST (Mk2)	119 F	'05-'10	5/2522	222/6000	236/1600	1392kg	162	6.8	6.7	16.8	150	+ Value, performance, integrity - Big engine compromises handling	****
Ford Focus RS (Mk3)	246F	75-78	4/2261	345/6000	347/2000	1547kg	227	4.7	4.9	12.6	166	+ Torque-vectoring 4WD brings new sensations to hot hatch sector - Needs to be driven hard	****
Ford Focus RS Edition (Mk3)	246 D	78	4/2261	345/6000	347/2000	1547kg	227	4.7	-	-	166	+ Front limited-slip differential brings more precise handling - Pricey and still heavy	****
Ford Focus RS (Mk2)	195 F	'09-'11	5/2522	300/6500	324/2300	1467kg	208	5.9	5.9	14.2	163	+ Huge performance, highly capable FWD chassis - Body control is occasionally clumsy	****
Ford Focus RS500 (Mk2)	256 F	70-77	5/2522	345/6000	339/2500	1467kg	239	5.6	5.6	12.7	165	+ More power and presence than regular Mk2 RS - Pricey	****
Ford Focus RS (MkI)	207F	'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	271F	'92-'96	4/1993	224/6250	224/3500	1275ke	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)	288 F	£34,415	4/1996	316/6500	295/2500	1380kg	233	5.8	5.9	12.6	168	+ Wildly exciting, with improved refinement - Looks remain challenging for some	****
Honda Civic Type R Limited Edition (FK8)	281 D	£39,995	4/1996	316/6500	295/2500	1333kg	241	5.8	-	-	168	+ Terrifically capable, blisteringly quick, still practical - Only 20 are coming to the UK	****
Honda Civic Type R (FK2)	227 F	75-77	4/1996	306/6500	295/2500	1378kg	226	5.7	5.4	12.4	167	+ Great on smooth roads - Can be punishing on less-than-smooth roads	****
Honda Civic Type R (FN2)	102 F	'07-71	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)	287 F	'01-'05	4/1998	197/7400	145/5900	1204kg	166	6.8	6.8	16.9	146	+ Potent and great value - Duff steering	****
Honda Civic Type R (EK9)	210 F	'97-'00	4/1595	182/8200	118/7500	1040kg	178	6.8	-	-	135	+ Sublime early incarnation of the Type R recipe - Good ones are thin on the ground	****
Hyundai i20 N	285 F	£24,995	4/1591	201/5500	203/1750	1190kg	172	6.7	-	-	143	+ A serious threat to the Fiesta ST - We'd like the option of a stripped-back version	****
Hyundai i30 N	79-20	£25,995	4/1998	247/6000	279/1750	1400kg	179	6.4	-	-	155	+ Very close to the Performance version on abilitybut not that far away on price	****
Hyundai i30 N Performance	267 F	£29,495	4/1998	271/6000	279/1750	1429kg	193	6.1	6.6	14.9	155	+ A brilliant, thoroughly developed hot hatch - Imagine if it was lighter too	****
Hyundai i30 Fastback N Performance	269 F	£29,995	4/1998	271/6000	279/1750	1441kg	191	6.1	-	14.7	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	239 D	73-78	4/1591	201/6000	195/1500	1359kg	143	7.3	i		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		-	-	137	+ One of the finest cars ever built - Demands love, LHD only	****
Europe Denta / II Transplate E VOIGE (OTE II	4/11	20.24	47 1993	212/3/30	20272500	104016	101	5.1			131	· One of the linest curse real burnanes love, ETD ONLY	~~~~

AKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE OR YEARS ON SALE)	CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLUVE)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTEO)	MAX MPH	EVO RATING	
ercedes-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	***
lercedes-AMG A45 S	288 F	£51,235	4/1991	415/6750	369/5000	1550kg	272	3.9	-	-	167	+ A 21st-century reincarnation of late-'90s imprezas and Evos - It costs £50k	***
lercedes-AMG A45	221 F	75-78	4/1991	376/6000	350/2250	1480kg	258	4.2	3.9	-	155	+ Tremendously fast - But not a true great	***
lercedes-Benz A45 AMG	194 F	72-75	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	***
lini Cooper (F56)	254 T	£17,635	3/1499	134/4500	162/1250	1085kg	125	7.9	-		130	+ Driving a slow car fast - Driving a car with Union Jack tail lights	***
lini Cooper S (F56)	268 F	£20,925	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	***
lini John Cooper Works (F56)	211 F	£25,950	4/1998	228/5200 302/1750	236/1250	1200kg	193	6.3	-	····	153	+ Fast, agile, nimble - Chassis lacks sparkle found in previous JCWs	***
lini John Cooper Works GP (F56)	280 F	£33,895 '16-'17	4/1998 4/1998	228/5200	332/1750 236/1250	1255kg	244 191	5.2	-		164 152	+ Street-fighter looks, illustrious predecessors - Better at style than it is substance	***
fini John Cooper Works Challenge (F56) fini Cooper (R56)	237 F 185 F	10-17	4/1598	120/6000	118/4250	1215kg 1075kg	113	6.3 9.1		-	126	+ A more hardcore JCW - The ride could be considered a little too hardcore + Brilliant ride and composure; could be all the Mini you need - You'll still buy the 'S'	***
lini Cooper (R56)	149 F	06-74	4/1598	181/5500	177/1600	1140kg	161	7.0	7.0		142	+ Like the Cooper, but with added shove - Google 'Mini death rattle'	***
fini 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	***
lini John Cooper Works GP (R56)	231F	73-74	4/1598	215/6000	206/2000	1160kg	188	6.3		-	150	+ Brazenly hyperactive - Too much for some roads and some tastes	***
ini John Cooper Works Coupé (R58)	164 F	71-75	4/1598	208/6000	206/2000	1175kg	180	6.3	-	-	149	+ The usual raucous Mini JCW experience - But wearing a backwards baseball cap	***
lini Cooper S (R53)	077F	'02-'06	4/1598	168/6000	155/4000	1140kg	143	7.2	7.8	19.9	135	+ Strong performance, quality feel - Over-long gearing	***
lini 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	***
ssan Juke Nismo RS	208 D	75-77	4/1618	215/6000	206/3600	1315kg	166	7.0	-	-	137	+ Quirky character and bold styling - Not a match for a pukka hot hatch	***
eugeot 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	***
rugeot 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	***
eugeot 106 GTi 16v	034 F	'97-'04	4/1587	120/6600	107/5200	950kg	128	7.4	-	-	127	+ Fine handling supermini - Looks its age	***
eugeot 208 GTI by Peugeot Sport	254 F	75-78	4/1598	205/6000	221/3000	1160kg	180	6.5	-	-	143	+ A brilliantly focused small hatch - Obscured dials	***
ougeot 208 GTI	184 F	72-76	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	***
eugeot 205 GTI 1.9	195 F	'88-'91	4/1905	130/6000	119/4750	910kg	145	7.6		-	124	+ Still scintillating after all these years - Brittle build quality	***
eugeot 308 GTi by Peugeot Sport	245 F	£30,745	4/1598	256/6000	251/2100	1205kg	224	6.0	6.0	13.8	155	+ A great entertainer with a cracker of an engine - Tiny steering wheel obsures the dials	***
ugeot 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	***
ugeot 306 Rallye	095F	'98-'99	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1163kg	146	7.8	6.9	19.2	137	+ Essentially a GTI 6 for less dosh - Limited choice of colours	***
nault Sport Twingo 133	175 F	'08-73	4/1598	131/6750	118/4400	1050kg	127	8.7	- 60	170	125	+ Renault Sport experience for pocket money - Optional Cup chassis gives bouncy ride	**
nault 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 revvy NA engine and manual 'box	**
nault Sport Clio 220 Trophy	229 D	76-78	4/1618	217/6050	206/2000	1204kg	183	6.6	-	16.7	146	+ Willing chassis - Awful paddleshift gearbox	***
nault Sport Clio 200 Cup	247 F 115 F	'09-'13 '07-'09	4/1998	197/7100 194/7250	159/5400 158/5550	1204kg	166 161	6.9	6.6	16.7	141	+ The hot Clio at its best - They don't make 'em like this anymore + Quick, polished and capable - Not as much sheer fun as 182 Cup	**
nault Sport Clio 197 Cup nault Sport Clio 182		'07-'09		194/7250		1240kg		6.9 7.1	66	17.5	134	+ Quick, polished and capable - Not as much sheer fun as 182 Cup + Took hot hatches to a new level - Flawed driving position	**
nault Sport Clio 182 nault Sport Clio 182 Cup	066 F 187 F	04-05	4/1998 4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1110kg	165		6.6	17.5	139		**
nault Sport Clio Trophy	262 F	05-06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250 148/5250	1090kg 1090kg	168 168	6.9	6.6	17.3	140	+ Full of beans, fantastic value - Sunday-market upholstery + The most fun you can have on three (sometimes two) wheels - Only 500 were built	**
nault Sport Clio 172 (Phase 2)	034 F	'01-'03	4/1998	170/6250	147/5400	1110kg	156	7.2	7.1	20.0	138	+ Poised, predictable, fast - Lacks aggressive edge	**
nault Sport Clio 172 (rriase 2)	048F	'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	**
nault Sport Clio 172 Ctip nault Sport Clio 172 (Phase I)	146 F	'00-'01	4/1998	170/6250	147/5400	1035kg	167	7.2	6.6	18.2	138	+ Brilliantly accomplished - Imperfect driving position	**
nault 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	**
nault 5 GT Turbo	255 F	'87-'91	4/1397	118/5750	122/3000	855kg	140	7.3	7.0	20.0	120	+ Clio Williams' grand-daddy - Few unmodified ones left	**
nault Sport Clio V6 255	277 F	07-97	6/2946	251/7150	221/4650	1400kg	182	5.8			153	+ Supercar drama without the original's edgy handling - Uninspired interior	**
nault 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	**
nault Mégane RS (280)	267F	78-20	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	44
nault Mégane RS 300	283 F	£33.560	4/1798	296/6000	295/2400	1443kg	209	5.7	-	-	158	+ Combines the more potent engine with the softer chassis at last - But now it's auto only	
nault Mégane RS Trophy	267 F	£37,995	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	**
nault Mégane RS Trophy-R	280 F	£51,455	4/1798	296/6000	295/2400	1306kg	230	5.4	-	-	163	+ An absolute beast on track - Too much of a beast on the road	**
nault Sport Mégane 275 Cup-S/Nav 275	223 D	76	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1394kg	198	5.8	-		158	+ The same engine as the Trophy-R - They don't make it anymore	**
nault Sport Mégane 265 Cup	195 F	72-75	4/1998	261/5500	265/3000	1387kg	191	6.0	6.4	14.8	158	+ A hot hatch benchmark - Cupholder could be better positioned	**
nault Sport Mégane 275 Trophy	212 F	74-75	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1376kg	200	5.8	-	-	159	+ Another cracking Trophy model - Stripped-out Trophy-R is even more thrilling	**
nault Sport Mégane 275 Trophy-R	231 F	14-75	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	**
nault Sport Mégane 250 Cup	139 F	'09-'12	4/1998	247/5500	251/3000	1387kg	181	6.1	6.1	14.6	156	+ Fantastic chassispartially obscured by new-found maturity	**
nault Sport Mégane dCi 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	**
nault Sport Mégane 230 F1 Team R26	195 F	'07-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1345kg	171	6.5	6.2	16.0	147	+ The car the R26.R is based on - F1 Team stickers in dubious taste	**
nault Sport Mégane R26.R	276 F	'08-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1220kg	189	6.0	5.8	15.1	147	+ A true hot hatch great - Two seats, plastic rear windows	**
NT 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	**
NT 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	**
NT Leon Cupra 290	267 F	'16-'20	4/1984	286/5400	280/1950	1356kg	214	6.0	-	-	155	+ Agile, transparent and easily exploited - Can feel rather plain	**
NT Leon Cupra R	244 D	78	4/1984	306/5800	280/1800	1378kg	226	5.8	-	-	155	+ Sharper handling and better body control - High price and limited availability	**
AT 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	**
ida Fabla vRS (Mk2)	146 D	70-74	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1218kg	148	7.3	-	-	139	+ Clever twincharged engine and DSG 'box - Do you homework on the reliability of the engine	**
ida Fabia vRS (Mk1)	077F	'03-'07	4/1896	130/4000	229/1900	1315kg	100	9.6	-	-	127	+ Fun and frugal hot hatch - A little short on steering feel	**
da Octavia vRS (Mk4)	281 D	£29,815	4/1984	242/5000	273/1600	1445kg	170	6.7	-	-	155	+ A capable Q-car for the masses - Engine lacks character	**
ida Octavia vRS (Mk3)	187D	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	**
da Octavia vRS 245 (Mk3)	250 F	17-'20	4/1984	242/5000	258/1600	1370kg	179	6.6	7/	201	155	+ A credible, entertaining performer - You won't get out of bed at 4am to drive it	**
uki Swift Sport (Mk3)	267 F	£17,249 72-77	4/1373	138/5500	170/2500	975kg	144	8.1	7.6	20.1	130	+ Composed and brisk - Adjustability and character have been diluted	**
uki Swift Sport (Mk2)	175 F	12-17	4/1586	134/6900	118/4400	1045kg	130	8.7	-	-		+ Still a great pocket rocket - Not quite as adjustable as the original	**
uki Swift Sport (Mk1) ota GR Yaris	132 F 282 F	£29,995	4/1586 3/1618	123/6800 257/6500	109/4800 265/3000	1030kg 1280kg	121 204	8.9 5.5	-	-	124 142	+ Entertaining handling, well built - Lacking in steering feedback  + A proper homologation special - More Subaru Impreza than Mitsubishi Evo	**
ota GR Yaris ota Yaris GRMN		129,995	3/1618 4/1798		265/3000 184/5000		187						
ota varis GRIVIN IXINAII Corsa VXR	254 F 211 F	74-78	4/1/98	209/6800	206/1900	1135kg 1278kg	161	6.3			143 143	+ Appealingly feisty supercharged supermini - Artificial steering; they only made 400 + Begs to be wrung out - You'll need the £2400 Performance Pack	**
ixriaii Corsa VXR ixhall Corsa VXR	154 F	'07-'14	4/1598	189/5850	192/1980	1276kg	165	7.2			140	+ begs to be wrong out - rounneed the £2400 Performance Pack + Looks snazzy, punchy engine - Lacks feel, uncouth compared with rivals	**
ixhall Corsa VXR Nürburgring/Clubsport	154 F	11-13/14	4/1598	202/5750	206/2250	1166kg	176	6.8		-	143	+ Looks snazzy, punchy engine - Lacks reel, uncount compared with rivals + VXR gets more power and a limited-slip diff - But they come at a price	**
ixhall Astra/GTC VXR (Mk2)	207F	12-18	4/1998	276/5500	295/2500	1475kg	190	6.0	-	-	155	+ Loony turbo pace - Lacks the Renault Sport Mégane's precision	**
xhall 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	**
swagen Up GTI	273 F	£16.320	3/999	113/5000	147/2000	995kg	115	8.8	-	-	122	+ Infectious appetite for fun - City car roots are still there	**
swagen Lupo GTI	034F	'01-'04	4/1598	123/6500	112/3000	1038kg	120	8.2	8.9	30.1	127	+ Looks, performance, chassis - Lacks the fizz of the 106 GTI	**
swagen Polo GTI	244 D	£22,005	4/1984	197/4400	236/1500	1272kg	157	6.7			147	+ Decent performance; mature ride and handling - Lacks driver involvement	**
swagen Polo GTI	211 F	75-77	4/1798	189/4200	236/1450	1197kg	160	6.7	-	-	146	+ Smooth and brawny - Fiesta ST is more engaging	**
swagen Polo GTI	154 F	10-14	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1184kg	153	7.4	-	-	142	+ Modern-day Mk1 Golf GTI gets twin-clutch DSG - It's a little bit bland	**
swagen Golf GTI (Mk8)	279 D	£33,525	4/1984	242/5000	273/1600	1429kg	172	6.4	-	-	155	+ An alluring blend of the best GTI ingredients - The competition is stiffer than ever	**
swagen Golf GTI Clubsport (Mk8)	283 F	£37,230	4/1984	296/5000	295/2000	1461kg	206	5.6	-	-	155	+ Super-effective - But not as exciting as you might hope	**
(swagen Golf R (Mk8)	288 F	£39,295	4/1984	316/5200	310/2100	1551kg	207	4.7	-		155	+ 316bhp, four-wheel drive, understated flair - Chassis lacks the control you'd expect	**
kswagen Golf GTI (Mk7.5)	233 D	17-'20	4/1984	227/4700	258/1500	1289kg	179	6.4			155	+ A highly capable all-round hot hatch - Could be more thrilling	**
kswagen Golf GTI TCR (Mk7.5)	267 F	17-20	4/1984	286/5400	280/1950	1410kg	206	5.6	-	-	155	+ Quicker than a regular GTI - It's no Clubsport S	**
kswagen Golf R (Mk7.5)	267F	17-20	4/1984	296/5500	295/2000	1450kg	207	4.7	4.5	11.6	155	+ Outrageous yet accessible performance - Proper excitement is sometimes elusive	**
kswagen Golf GTE (Mk7)	236 F	75-77	4/1395	201	258	1524kg	134	7.6	-	-	138	+ The most enjoyable plug-in hybrid in its price range - Golf GTI still quicker and more fun	**
kswagen Golf GTI (Mk7)	236 F	13-17	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1276kg	173	6.5			153	+ Brilliantly resolved - Lacks the punch of newer rivals	**
kswagen Golf GTI Clubsport Edition 40 (Mk7)	230 D	16-17	4/1984	286/5350	280/1700	1300kg	224	6.3	-	-	155	+ A faster, sharper, more entertaning GTI - Some rivals are more exciting on track	**
kswagen Golf GTI Clubsport S (Mk7)	280 F	16-17	4/1984	306/5800	280/1100	1285kg	242	5.8	5.8	12.8	165	+ Runner-up at evo Car of the Year 2016 - Only 400 were built	**
kswagen Golf R (Mk7)	220 F	74-77	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1401kg	215	5.1	5.2	12.4	155	+ A VW 'R' model you can take seriously - Mêgane 275 just edges it as a pure driver's car	**
kswagen Golf GTI (Mk6)	172 F	'09-73	4/1984	207/5300	207/1700	1318kg	160	6.9	6.4	16.5	148	+ Still a very accomplished hot hatch - 207bhp isn't a lot any more	**

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR YEARS ON SALE)	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (DLAMED)	0-60MPH (TESTEO)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	EAO BATING	
Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk5)	259 F	'04-'09	4/1984	197/5100	207/1800	1336kg	150	7.3	6.7	17.9	146	+ Character and ability; the GTI's return to form - Lacking firepower?	****
Volkswagen Golf R32 (Mk5)	087F	'06-'09	6/3189	246/6300	236/2500	1466kg	170	6.5	5.8	15.2	155	+ The traction's great and you'll love the soundtrack - We'd still have a GTI	****
Volkswagen Golf R32 (Mk4)	053F	'02-'04	6/3189	237/6250	236/2800	1477kg	163	6.6	6.4	16.3	154	+ Charismatic - Boomy engine can be tiresome	****
Volkswagen Golf GTI 16v (Mk2)	195 F	'88-'92	4/1781	139/6100	123/4600	960kg	147	7.9	-	-	129	+ Still feels everyday useable - Too many have been modified	****
Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk1, 1.8)	224 F	'82-'84	4/1781	112/5800	109/3500	860kg	132	8.2	-	-	114	+ The car that started it all - Tricky to find an unmolested one	****

## **SALOONS / ESTATES / SUVs**



## **OUR CHOICE**

Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio. At last, an Alfa Romeo we can love not just for its badge, for the noise it makes and for being Italian, but because it's a great car. In fact, the Giulia Quadrifoglio is a saloon car that feels like a sports car – and thankfully that sports car isn't a 4C.



## BEST OF THE REST

The new BMW M3 Competition (left) drives like a larger M2 Competition, the current Mercedes-AMC CG3 S will be your last chance to get one with a V8, or if it's something a size larger you're looking for, the Audi RSG Avant, BMW M5 Competition and Mercedes-AMC EG3 S (saloon or estate) provide a trio of strong options.

Alfa Romeo Giulia 2.0 Turbo Super	234 D	£33,595	4/1995	197/5000	243/1750	1429kg	140	6.6		-	146	+ Keen engine, enjoyable handling - Firm low-speed ride	****
Alfa Romeo Giulia Veloce	244 F	£39,875	4/1995	276/5250	295/2250	1429kg	196	5.7	-	-	149	+ Supple and satisfying - Engine reluctant to rev	****
Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio	287 F	£68,995	6/2891	503/6500	442/2500	1620kg	315	3.9	-	-	191	+ If Ferrari built a saloon (really) - Lacks the final polish of German rivals	****
Alfa Romeo Giulia GTAm	286 F	£157,700	6/2891	533/6500	442/2500	1580kg	343	3.6	-	-	186	+ An utterly fabulous saloon car with a truly infectious character - It's a bit pricey	****
Alfa Romeo Stelvio Speciale AWD	234 D	£43,705	4/1995	276/5250	295/1750	1660kg	169	5.7	- 1	-	143	+ Agile feel, quick steering, attractive cabin - Engine not truly inspiring	****
Alfa Romeo Stelvio Quadrifoglio	244 D	£71,880	6/2891	503/6500	442/2500	1830kg	279	3.8	-	-	176	+ Rivals the Macan GTS - Needs optional P Zero Corsa tyres to give its very best	****
Alpina D3 S Touring	286 D	£55,950	6/2993	350/5500	538/2500	1935kg	184	4.8	-	-	167	+ The best fast diesel you can buy - The B3	****
Alpina B3 Touring	281 D	£67,950	6/2993	456/5500	516/2500	1865kg	248	3.9	-	-	186	+ A richer, smoother drive than an M-car - Little different to an M340i at low speeds	****
Aston Martin Rapide	141 F	70-73	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1990kg	240	5.3	-	-	188	+ Better than its DB9 sibling - More of a 2+2 than a proper four-seater	****
Aston Martin Rapide S	201 D	73-79	12/5935	552/6650	465/5500	1990kg	282	4.4	-	-	203	+ Oozes star quality; gearbox on 2015MY cars a big improvement - It's cosy in the back	****
Aston Martin Rapide AMR	261 D	£194,950	12/5935	595/6650	465/5500	1990kg	304	4.4	-	-	205	+ Powertrain, performance, personality - When it goes off sale, so does Aston's 5.9 V12	****
Aston Martin DBX	277 D	£161,500	8/3982	542/6500	516/2200	2245kg	245	4.5		-	181	+ Drives nothing like an SUV - Still heavy and thirsty like an SUV	****
Audi S3 Saloon	192 D	73-'20	4/1984	306/5500	280/1800	1430kg	210	5.3		-	155	+ On paper a match for the original S4 - In reality much less interesting	****
Audi RS3 Saloon	243 F	£47,310	5/2480	394/5850	354/1700	1515kg	264	4.1	3.6	8.8	155	+ Mini RS4 looks; stonking pace - Not the most involving driving experience	****
Audi S4 Avant (B9, diesel)	266 D	£49,425	6/2967	342/3850	516/2500	1825kg	190	4.9	1000	-	155	+ Effortless performance, well-judged chassis - Diesel power won't be to everyone's taste	
Audi S4 (B9, petrol)	225 D	77-79	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1630kg	218	4.7	-		155	+ Strong response and delivery - Chassis feels softer than before	****
Audi RS4 Avant (B9)	282 F	£65,700	6/2894	444/5700	442/1900	1745kg	259	4.1	-	-	155	+ Very 'real world' fast - Some may feel it lacks character and drama	****
Audi RS4 Avant (B8)	216 F	72-75	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1795kg	251	4.7	4.5	10.5	174	+ Looks and sounds the part, thunderously fast - Unnatural steering, dull dynamics	****
Audi RS4 (B7)	250 F	'05-'08	8/4163	414/7800	317/5500	1650kg	255		4.5	10.5	155	+ 414bhp at 7800rpm! And there's an estate version too - Busy under braking	****
Audi RS4 (B5)	192 F	'00-'02	6/2671	375/6100	325/2500	1620kg	236		4.8	12.1	170	+ Effortless pace - Not the last word in agility; bends wheel rims	****
Audi RS2	214 F	'94-'95	5/2226	315/6500	302/3000	1595kg	201	4.8	4.8	13.1	162	+ Storming performance (thanks to Porsche) - Try finding one	****
Audi S5 Sportback	233 D	17-19	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1660kg	214	4.7		-	155	+ More capable than you think; strong V6 engine - Gearbox frustrating in auto mode	****
Audi RS5 Sportback	264 D	£69,525	6/2894	444/5700	442/1900	1720kg	262	3.9	12.00	-	155		****
Audi S6 Avant (C8)	263 D	£63,315	6/2967	344/3850	516/2500	2020kg	173	5.1	-	_	155	+ Diesel suits the S6 ethos - Poor low-end engine response	****
Audi RS6 Avant (C8)	272 F	£92,790	8/3996	592/6000	590/2050	2075kg	290	3.6	-		155	+ Power, poise, build - Needs Dynamic Ride Control suspension to be at its best	****
Audi RS6 Avant (C7)	203 F	73-78	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1935kg	290		3.6	8.2	155	+ Performance, foolproof powertrain, beefy looks - Feels a bit one-dimensional	****
Audi RS6 Avant Performance (C7)	224 D	75-79	8/3993	597/6100	553/2500	1950kg	311	3.7	5.0	0.2	155		
	116 F	'08-70	10/4991	572/6250	479/1500		293	4.5	4.3	9.7	155	+ Was the world's most powerful estate - Power isn't everything	****
Audi RS6 Avant (C6)						1985kg	293			11.6			****
Audi RS6 Avant (C5)	258 F	'02-'04	8/4172	444/5700	413/1950	1865kg		4.6	4.8	11.0	155	+ The ultimate estate car? - Numb steering	****
Audi RS7 Sportback	268 D	£98,590	8/3996	592/6000	590/2050	2065kg	291	3.6	-	-	155	+ Surprisingly agile and involving - Sometimes feels its weight	****
Audi RS e-tron GT	284 D	£110,950	495kW	637	612	2347kg	276	3.3	-	-	155	+ A fine GT - Range not up to touring	****
Audi SQ2	261 D	£37,395	4/1984	296/5300	295/2000	1510kg	199	4.7	-	-	155		****
Bentley Flying Spur V8	283 D	£153,900	8/3996	542/6000	568/2000	2330kg	236	4.1	-	-	198	+ The best limo for those who enjoy driving - 2330kg and 5.3 metres	****
Bentley Flying Spur	272 D	£168,300	12/5950	626/6000	664/1350	2437kg	261	3.8	-	-	207		****
Bentley Flying Spur V8 S	230 D	76-79	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2417kg	219	4.9			190	+ Old-school approach to comfort and luxury - Old-school tech	****
Bentley Flying Spur	185 D	73-78	12/5998	616/6000	590/1600	2475kg	253	4.6		-	199	+ For those who still want their Flying Spur with a W12 - Car feels its weight; engine sounds dull	
Bentley Bentayga V8	247 D	£136,900	8/3996	542/6000	568/1960	2388kg	231	4.5	-	-	180		****
Bentley Bentayga	217 D	£162,700	12/5950	600/5000	664/1350	2440kg	250	4.1	-	-	187	+ Sublime quality, ridiculous pace - Inert driving experience, SUV stigma	****
Bentley Mulsanne Speed	279 F	74-'20	8/6752	530/4000	811/1750	2685kg	201	4.9	-	-	190		****
BMW 320d xDrive M Sport (G20)	262 D	£40,585	4/1995	187/4000	295/1750	1540kg	123	6.9	-	-	145	+ Brilliant mix of performance and economy - Lacks a degree of dynamic finesse	****
BMW 330i M Sport (G20)	257 D	£40,385	4/1998	254/5000	295/1550	1470kg	176	5.8	-	-	155	+ Feels like a 3-series once more - Harsh and unsettled ride	****
BMW M340i xDrive	270 D	£49,845	6/2998	369/5500	369/1850	1670kg	225	4.4	-	-	155	+ Very fast and refined - Limited driver appeal	****
BMW M3 Competition (G80)	287 F	£74,815	6/2979	503/6250	479/2750	1730kg	295	3.9	-	-	155	+ As quick and capable as you'd want - Bigger and heavier than you'd like	****
BMW M3 (F80)	266 F	74-'20	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1560kg	277	4.3	4.1	8.6	155	+ Looks, performance, practicality - Body control on rough roads; engine lacks character	****
BMW M3 Competition Package (F80)	237F	76-19	6/2979	444/7000	406/1850	1560kg	289	4.2	-	-	155	+ The car the F80 M3 should have been from the start - Less refined at low speeds	****
BMW M3 CS (F80)	250 D	78-79	6/2979	454/6250	442/4000	1585kg	291	3.9	-	-	174	+ Improved chassis and mid-range urge - Cost over £20k more than an M3 Comp Pack	****
BMW M3 (E90)	123 F	'08-77	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1605kg	262	4.9	4.9	10.7	165	+ Every bit as good as the E92 M3 coupe - No carbon roof	****
BMW M3 CRT (E90)	179 F	71-72	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1580kg	285	4.4	7	-	180	+ Saloon chassis + weight savings + GTS engine = best E90 M3 - Just 67 were made	****
BMW M5 (F90)	244F	77-'20	8/4395	592/5600	553/1800	1855kg	324	3.4	-		155		****
BMW M5 Competition (F90)	282 F	£102,325	8/4395	616/6000	553/1800	1895kg	330	3.3	-	-	155	+ Incredible performance, sharper handling - It's still a big old bus	****
BMW M5 CS (F90)	287 D	£140.780	8/4395	626/6000	553/1800	1825kg	349	3.0	-	-	189		****
BMW M5 (F10)	208 F	71-76	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1870kg	300			-	155	+ Twin-turbocharging suits M5 well - Can feel heavy at times	****
BMW M5 (E60)	129 F	'04-70	10/4999		384/6100	1755kg	289		-	-	155	+ Close to being the ultimate supersaloon - SMG gearbox feels old-tech	****
BMW M5 (E39)	268 F	'98-'03	8/4941	394/6600	369/3800	1795kg	223	5.3	4.9	11.5	155	+ Magnificent V8-engined supersaloon - We'd be nitpicking	****
BMW M5 (E34)	110 F	'88-'95	6/3795	335/6900	295/4750	1725kg	197	5.8	4.9	13.6	155	+ The Godfather of supersaloons - The family can come too	****
BMW M5 (E28)	258 F	'84-'88	6/3453	282/6500	251/4500	1431kg	200		7.7	-	156	+ The original storming saloon - Understated looks	****
BMW M6 Gran Coupě	190 D	73-78	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1875kg	299				155	+ Enormous performance, stylish looks - Looks overpriced next to rivals, M5 included	****
BMW M760Li xDrive	233 D	£141.750	12/6592	602/5500	590/1550	2180kg	281	3.7	-		155		****
BMW X5 M50d	191 D	£74,395	6/2993	376/4000	546/2000	2190kg	174	5.3			155		****
BMW X7xDrive30d M Sport	262 D	£76.765	6/2993	261/4000	457/2000	2370kg	112	7.0	-		141	+ Spacious; quick enough - Its 'face' will make your kids cry	****
	012 F	198-103	4/2157	209/7200	158/6700		163	7.2		17.4	142		
Honda Accord Type R	227 D	£36,755	4/2/5/	178/4000	317/1750	1306kg	107	8.4	6.1	- 17.4	132	+ One of the finest front-drivers of all time - Convincing your friends of that	****
Jaguar XE D180 AWD						1685kg						+ Talented chassis gets more traction - Shame the engine isn't as polished	****
Jaguar XE P300 AWD	262 D	£41,005	4/1997	296/5500	295/1500	1690kg	178	5.7	- 25	70	155	+ Fluent handling; 4WD grip and security - Auto 'box saps sportiness	****
Jaguar XE SV Project 8	269 F	78-'20	8/5000	592/6500	516/3500	1745kg	345		3.5	7.8	200	+ Beautifully controlled and amazingly agile - They only made 15 in Touring spec	****
Jaguar XF Sportbrake R-Sport 300PS AWD	260 D	£49,090	4/1997	296/5500	295/1500	1763kg	171	6.0	-	-	155	+ Precise, involving dynamics, unexpected performance - It's only got four cylinders	****
Jaguar XF S Diesel 300PS RWD	219 D	£53,485	6/2993	296/4000	516/2000	1796kg	167	6.4	-	-	155	+ Great chassis, good looks, and it's got six cylinders - It's a diesel	****
Jaguar XFR	181 D	'09-75	8/5000		461/2500	1800kg	284		4.8	10.2	155	+ Brilliant blend of pace and refinement - Doesn't sound as special as it is	****
Jaguar XFR-S	208 F	73-75	8/5000		501/2500	1800kg	306		-	-	186	+ XF turned up to 12 - Tyres aren't cheap	****
Jaguar XJR	191 D	74-77	8/5000		502/2500	1875kg	294		-	-	174	+ Hot-rod vibe, fine cabin - Opinion-dividing looks	****
Jaguar XJR575	251 T	77-78	8/5000	567/6250	516/3500	1875kg	307	4.4	-	-	186	+ Big performance, genuine sporting spirit - Unfashionable package; depreciation	****
Jaguar E-Pace P300	243 D	£45,575	4/1998	296/5500	295/1200	1894kg	159	6.4	V-	-	155	+ Decent grip and balance - Dreary engine; heavier than a V6 F-Pace	****

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR YEARS ON SALE)	CYL/GC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAINED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	<b>EVO</b> RATING	
Jaguar F-Pace S	222 D	76-78	6/2995	375/6500	332/4500	1884kg	202	5.5	-	-	155	+ A match for Porsche's SUVs - Supercharged V6 needs to be worked hard	****
Jaguar F-Pace SVR	262 D	£75,375	8/5000	542/6000	501/2500	1995kg	276	4.3	-	-	176	+ A great candidate for SVO's attentions - It's still an SUV	****
Jaguar I-Pace HSE	251 D	£74,395	294kW	394	513	2208kg	181	4.8	-	-	124	+ Impressive chassis and point-to-point pace - Range anxiety and hefty kerb weight	****
Kia Stinger GT-Line 2.0	247D	18-'20	4/1998	244/6200	260/1400	1642kg	151	5.8	-	-	149	+ Out-Jaguars Jaguar's XE and XF - Except in the looks department	****
Kia Stinger GT S Land Rover Defender 110 (P400)	242 D 273 F	£40,495 £79,655	6/3342 6/2996	365/6000 394/5500	376/1300 406/2000	1780kg 2388kg	168 168	4.7 6.4	-	-	168 129	Playful handling, deep-chested performance - Engine lacks soul, steering lacks feel     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	200	-	190	+ A freakish manipulator of physics - But also rather one-dimensional	****
Lexus IS F	151 F	107-72	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 Cariton	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 Maserati Quattroporte Trofeo	226 D 287 D	76-78 £127.310	8/3798 8/3799	523/6800 572/6750	479/2250 538/2250	1900kg 2000kg	280 291	4.7	-	-	193 203	+ Still pretty - Off the pace dynamically + An alluring alternative to the German defaults - How much?!	****
Maserati Quattroporte Holeo Maserati Ouattroporte S	137 F	108-12	8/4691	425/7000	361/4750	1990kg	216	5.4	5.1	12.1	174	+ A CP with the bho it deserves - Grille is a bit Hannibal Lecter	****
Maserati Quattroporte S Maserati Quattroporte Sport GTS	141 F	108-12	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 CLA45 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	-	-	155 155	+ Incredibly fast and composed - Difficult to engage with	***
Mercedes-AMG C63 Saloon (W205) Mercedes-AMG C63 Estate (S205)	209 D 216 F	'15-'20 '15-20	8/3982 8/3982	469/5500 469/5500	479/1750 479/1750	1640kg 1710kg	291 279	4.1	-	-	155	+ Fast and feelsome - Lacks the ultimate finesse and response of the C63 S + 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)	282 F	£75,458	8/3982	503/5500	516/2000	1670kg	306	4.1	_	-	180		****
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG (W204)	288 F	'08-'14	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 C55 AMG (W203)	088 F	'04-'08	8/5439	367/5250	376/4000	1635kg	228	5.2	-	-	155	+ Furiously fast, commendably discreet - Overshadowed by M3 and RS4	****
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-AMG E63 (W213)	242 D	78-'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)	286 F	£96,565	8/3982	604/5750	627/2500	1935kg	317	3.4	3.4	7.4	186	+ Fast, refined, effective and fun - At nearly two tons, it's not 911 nimble	****
Mercedes-AMG E63 S Estate (S213) Mercedes-AMG GT63 4-Door Coupé	272 F	£101,565	8/3982 8/3982	604/5750 577/5500	627/2500	1995kg	308	3.5	-	-	180	+ As above - It's even heavier than the saloon, and five metres long	****
Mercedes-AMG GT63 S 4-Door Coupe Mercedes-AMG GT63 S 4-Door Coupe	274 F 269 F	79-'20 £141.855	8/3982	630/5500	590/2500 664/2500	2025kg 2045kg	290 313	3.4	-	-	193 196	+ Does the same as the S for less - Takes up plenty of road + Agile and immensely quick - Lacks the coupe GT's drama	****
Mercedes-Ama a 103 3 4-Data Caupe  Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212)	187 D	73-76	8/5461	549/5500	531/1750	1770kg	315	4.2			155	+ Agrie and immerisely quick - Edoks the coupe of 5 or ama + Power, response and accuracy in spades - A little lacking in originality	***
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG S (W212)	208 F	73-76	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	71-73	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	465/5200	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	052F	'03-'06	8/5439	469/6100	516/2650	1760kg	271	4.7	4.8	10.2	155	+ M5-humbling grunt, cosseting 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 Mercedes-AMG GLC63 S Coupé	199 D 253 D	74-77 £85.495	8/5461 8/3982	577/5500 503/5500	590/1750 516/1750	1795kg 1945kg	327 263	4.1 3.8	-	-	155 174	+ Quick and characterful - Dated gearbox, no four-wheel-drive option in the UK + Unquestionable performance - Lacks adjustability and engagement	****
Mercedes-AMG GLE63 S 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 Coupě	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	72-78	8/5461	537/5500	560/2000	2475kg	220	5.4	-	-	130	+ Epic soundtrack - Ancient chassis	***
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-300 SST	118 F	'08-'14	4/1998	290/6500	300/3500	1590kg	185	4.5	5.2	13.9	155	+ First Evo with a twin-clutch transmission - Not as exciting as its predecessors	***
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 '09-'10	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 088 F	105-108	4/1998 4/1997	403/6500 345/6800	387/3500 321/4600	1560kg	262 250	3.8 4.2	- / 2	10.0	155 157	+ Most powerful factory Evo everabout X grand too much when new	****
Mitsubishi Evo IX FQ-340 Mitsubishi Evo IX MR FQ-360	181 F	05-08	4/1997	366/6887	363/3200	1400kg 1400kg	266	4.0	4.3	10.9	157	+ Gives Porsche drivers nightmares - Points. Lots of + 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	057F	'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 Mākinen Edition	271F	'00-'01	4/1997	276/6500	275/2750	1365kg	205	4.6	-	-	150	+ Our favourite Evo - Subtle it is not	****
Peugeot 508 SW PSE	286 D	£55,025	4/1598	355	383	1875kg	192	5.2	-	-	155	+ A hybrid worth considering - But only if someone else is paying	****
Polestar 2	280 D	£46,900	300kW	402	487	2048kg	199	4.7	-	-	127	+ A credible Tesla alternative - Avoid the super-hard-riding Performance upgrade	****
Porsche Panamera GTS	279 D	£107,880	8/3996 8/3996	473/6500 542/5750	457/1800 568/1960	2040kg	236 276	3.9	3.4	8.3	181 190	+ The most engaging Panamera - Still a heavy old thing + Searing pace, with body control that's a real step up - Still very heavy	****
Porsche Panamera Turbo Porsche Panamera Turbo Sport Turismo	237 F 239 D	£115,100 £118.828	8/3996	542/5/50	568/1960	1995kg 2035kg	270	3.6 3.8	5.4	8.3	188	+ Searing pace, with body control that's a real step up - Still very heavy + Looks great; drives better than its weight would suggest - Not exactly a load-lugger	****
Porsche Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid Sport T.	272 D	£144 930	8/3996	671	627	2325kg	293	3.4			192	+ Shows some Stuttgart magic in the corners - It weighs 2.3 tons!	****
Porsche Panamera GTS	208 F	71-76	8/4806	434/6700	383/3500	1925kg	229	4.4	-	-	178	+ Vivacious V8, entertaining balance - Can feel 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	71-73	8/4806	542/6000	590/2250	1995kg	276	3.8	-	-	190	+ Pace, excellent ergonomics - Steering feel, ride	***
Porsche Taycan (Performance Battery Plus)	283 D	£74,739	350kW	375		2130kg	179	5.4	-	-	143	+ Half the price of a Taycan Turbo S - Less is less	***
Porsche Taycan Turbo Cross Turismo	287 D	£116,950	460kW	616	-	2320kg	270	3.3	-	-	155	+ A convincing and crushingly capable crossover - Needs big roads	****
Porsche Taycan Turbo S	267 D	£138,830	460kW	616	- 070 0400	2295kg	273 137	2.8	-	-	161	+ Straight-line oomph will leave you in awe - Inadequate EV infrastructure	****
Porsche Macan Porsche Macan S	259 D 257 T	£47,060 £49,420	4/1984 6/2997	242/5000 349/5400	273/1600 354/1360	1795kg 1865kg	190	6.7 5.3	-		139 157	+ Lighter engine makes for sharper handling - The Golf R Estate + Great for an SUV - Every positive still needs to be suffixed with 'for an SUV'	****
Porsche Macan S Porsche Macan GTS	231 T	76-78	6/2997	355/6000	369/1650	1895kg	190	5.2	-		159	+ Great for an SUV - Every positive still needs to be surfixed with for an SUV + 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	72-75	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	70-77	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	70-77	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 Sport SVR	260 D 250 T	£101,850	8/5000	567/6000 557/5000	516/3500 516/3500	2302kg	250 227	4.5 5.4		-	176 155	+ Loud and proud - More blunderbuss than Exocet	****
Range Rover SVAutobiography Dynamic Rolls-Rovce Ghost	250 T	£144,265 £249,600	12/6749	563/5000	627/1600	2497kg 2490kg	227	4.8	-		155	+ Monsters big journeys - Is a monster on the weighing scales     + Unrivalled luxury and refinement - Still better to be driven in than to drive	****
Rolls-Royce Phantom	054 F	103-77	12/6749	453/5350	531/3500	2560kg	180	5.7			149	+ Rolls reinvented for the 21st century - The roads are barely big enough	****
SEAT Leon Cupra R ST Abt	271F	19-20	4/1984	345/5300	324/2000	c1482kg	c237		-	-	163	+ Raw nature and rocketship pace - Not at the cutting edge of its class	****
Skoda Kodiag vRS	258 T	£45,740	4/1968	236/4000	369/1750	1838kg	130	7.0	-	-	137	+ Looks good, performs well, practical - Doesn't quite justify the vRS badge	****
Subaru WRX STI S209	272 F	'20	4/2457	341/6400	330/3600	1580kg	219	4.9	-	-	162	+ That old Impreza magic is alive and well - Only 209 were built, and only for America	****
Subaru WRX STI	253 F	14-18	4/2457	296/6000	300/4000	1534kg	196	5.2	-	-	158	+ Still has its moments - Something of an anachronism	****
Subaru Impreza STI ('Hawkeye')	090 F	'05-'07	4/2457	276/6000	289/4000	1495kg	188	5.3	-	-	158	+ Stunning to drive - Not so stunning to look at	****
Subaru Impreza WRX STI PPP ('Blobeye')	073 F	'03-'05 '93-'00	4/1994	300/6000	299/4000	1470kg	207	5.4	5.2	12.9	148	+ A Subaru with real edge - Bit too edgy in the wet	****
Subaru Impreza Turbo ('Classic')	011 F	'93-'00 '99	4/1994 4/1994	215/5600 237/6000	214/4000 258/3500	1235kg 1235kg	177 195	5.8 6.1	5.4	14.6	144	+ Destined for classic status - Thirsty + Perfect blend of poise and power - Limited numbers	****
Subaru Impreza RB5	187 F												

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (DR YEARS ON SALE)	ENGINE CYL/GG	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (taives)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	<b>EVO</b> RATING	
Subaru Impreza P1	259 F	'00-'01	4/1994	276/6500	260/4000	1283kg	219	4.7	4.9	13.3	150	+ One of our favourite Imprezas - Doesn't come cheap	****
Subaru Impreza 22B STI	282 F	'98-'99	4/2212	276/6000	268/3200	1270kg	220	5.3	5.0	13.1	150	+ The ultimate Impreza - Prices reflect this	****
Tesla Model 3 Performance	263 F	£56,490	330kW	444	471	1847kg	244	3.5	-	-	145	+ Quicker round a track than an M3 - Lap times aren't everything	****
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	75-77	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	****

## **ROADSTERS / CONVERTIBLES**



### OUR CHOICE

Lotus Elise Sport 240 Final Edition. As the game-changing entry-level Lotus prepares to bow out after a quarter of a century, this special edition combines 237bhp with the usual low kerb weight and sublime handling to create yet another brilliantly accurate and enthusiastic Elise. We'll miss them.



### **BEST OF THE REST**

The Porsche 718 Spyder (left) is essentially a drop-top Cayman GT4, while the 718 Boxster GT5 4.0 is essentially a cut-price 718 Spyder. The Aston Martin Vantage Roadster bests the 911 Cabriolet for character, while the Caterham Seven remains an exemplar of sports car purity whatever the model.

Abarth 124 Spider	256 F	76-79	4/1368	168/5500	184/2500	1060kg	161	6.8	-	-	143	+ A little car with a big soul - Vague and lifeless front end	****
Alfa Romeo 4C Spider	223 F	15-19	4/1742	237/6000	258/2200	940kg*	256	4.5	-	-	160	+ Stunningly beautiful; better steering than coupe version - Still has the coupe's other foibles	***
Alfa Romeo 8C Spider	161 F	'09-'11	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1675kg	273	4.4	1	-	181	+ Beauty meets beast. They hit it off - Boot is useless for touring	***
Ariel Atom 4	273 F	£39,975	4/1996	320/6500	310/3000	595kg	546	2.8	-	-	162	+ Sensory overload - Turbo engine lacks the old supercharged unit's frantic soundtrack	***
Ariel Atom 3 245	248 F	78-72	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	73-78	4/1998	310/8400	169/7200	550kg	573	2.7	7	-	155	+ As mad as ever - Rain	****
Ariel Atom 3.5R	255 F	74-78	4/1998	350/8400	243/6100	550kg	647	2.6	-	-	155	+ Remarkable balance, poise and pace - Pricey	***
Ariel Nomad	248 F	£33,000	4/2354	235/7200	221/4300	670kg*	365	3.4	-	-	134	+ Off-road capabilities make for a super plaything - No Bluetooth	****
Ariel Nomad R	278 F	£77,400	4/1998	335/7200	243/4300	c700kg	c486		-	-	134	+ Intriguing and effective mash-up of track car and off-roader - They're only making five	****
Aston Martin Vantage Roadster	279 D	£126,950	8/3982	503/6000	505/2000	1628kg*	314	3.8	=	-	190	+ Builds on the already excellent coupe's attributes - Interior design lags behind exterior	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage Roadster (4.7)	130 F	'09-'16	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1710kg	250	4.8	-	-	180	+ Sportiest, coolest drop-top Aston in years - Feels dated compared to contemporaries	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage S Roadster	161 F	71-77	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	72-74	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1760kg	294	4.5	-	-	190	+ As good as the coupe, with amplified V12 rumble - Just a smidgen shakier	****
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S Roadster	212 F	74-77	12/5935	565/6750	457/5750	1745kg	329	4.1	-	-	201	+ A brilliant two-seat roadsterlet down by a frustrating automated manual gearbox	
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 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	***
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	***
Bentley Mulliner Bacalar	286 F	£1.5m	12/5950	650/5000	664/1500	2384kg	277	<3.8	-	-	200+	+ A luxury cruiser that's a bit of a rebel roadster - They're only making 12, at £1.5m each	****
BMW Z4 sDrive20i	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 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	002F	'98-'02	6/3246	325/7400	258/4900	1375kg	240	5.1	-	-	155	+ M3 motor; hunky looks - M Coupé drives better	****
BMW i8 Roadster	258 F	£124,735	3/1499	369/5800	420/3700	1595kg	235	4.6	-	-	155	+ Unique and engaging - Still more GT than sports car	****
BMW Z8	026 F	'00-'03	8/4941	400/6600	369/3800	1585kg	256	4.7	4.8	11.1	155	+ M5-powered super-sportster - M5's more fun to drive	****
Caterham Seven 270	219 F	£29,885	4/1596	135/6800	122/4100	540kg*	254	5.0	-	-	122	+ Feisty engine, sweetly balanced, manic and exciting - The temptation of more power	****
Caterham Super Seven 1600	273 D	£33,495	4/1596	135/6800	122/4100	565kg*	243	5.0	-	-	122	+ As enjoyable as other Sevens, but more accessible - Vintage looks come at a price	****
Caterham Seven 310	273 F	£31,385	4/1596	152/7000	124/5600	540kg*	286	4.8	-	-	127	+ Intense and exciting - Sticky tyres limit the amount of throttle adjustability	****
Caterham Seven 360	209 F	£33,385	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	560kg*	327	4.8	-	-	130	+ Extra power is welcome - You'll need the six-speed gearbox to make the most of it	****
Caterham Seven 420	223 F	£36,385	4/1999	210/7600	150/6300	560kg*	381	3.8	4.0	10.3	136	+ It's the one we built for ourselves - Trickier on the limit than lesser-powered Sevens	****
Caterham Seven 620S	220 D	£48,890	4/1999	310/7700	219/7350	610kg*	516	3.4	-	-	155	+ Ludicrous, near-620R pace, with added habitability - Well, 'habitable' for a Seven	****
Caterham Seven 620R	255 F	£53,885	4/1999	310/7700	219/7350	572kg*	551	2.8	-	-	155	+ Banzai on track, yet still relevant on the road - £50k for a Seven?	****
Caterham Seven 160	239 F	73-77	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	77-78	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	107-114	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	71-74	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	73-74	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	535kg*	342	4.8	1000	-	130	+ One of the best road-and-track Sevens - Impractical, noisy, uncomfortable	****
Caterham Seven Superlight R300	150 F	'09-'12	4/1999	175/7000	139/6000	515kg*	345	4.5			140	+ Possibly all the Caterham you need - They're not cheap	****
Caterham Seven CSR 260	094 F	'06-'17	4/2261	256/7500	200/6200	565kg*	460	3.1	3.8	-	155	+ Brilliant for high days, holidays and trackdays - Wet Wednesdays	****
Caterham Seven Superlight R500	123 F	'08-'14	4/1999	263/8500	177/7200	506kg*	528	2.9	5.0		150	+ Better power-to-weight ratio than a Veyron - Until you add the driver	****
Caterham Seven R500	200 F	'99-'06	4/1796	230/8600	155/7200	460kg*	510	3.4	3.6	8.8	146	+ The K-series Seven at its very best - No cup holders	****
Dallara Stradale	267 F	c£162.000		394/6200	369/3000	855kg*	468	3.3	5.0	-	174	+ Startling on-road performance - Can leave you feeling detached on track	****
Elemental Ro1 (2.3)	255 F	£139,800	4/2360	320	354	620kg*	557	2.6	TALL		165	+ Sensational, explosive, captivating, exploitable - Price will test your level of commitmen	
Honda S2000	243F	99-709	4/1997	237/8300	153/7500	1260kg	191	6.2	THOS:		150	+ An alternative and rev-happy roadster - A Boxster's better	****
Jaguar F-type Convertible P450	271D	£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 Convertible P450 Jaguar F-type Project 7	211 D	15	8/5000	567/6500	501/2500	1585kg	363	3.9	-	-	186	+ Strong and nexible supercharged v8 - Steering and chassis ree mismatched + Noise, performance, adjustability - Expensive, and not the GT3 rival we would have liked	
									in				
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	771-715	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	852kg	160	6.5	-	-	127	+ Even lighter, even more focused than a standard 1.6 Elise - Are you prepared to go this basic?	
Lotus Elise Sport 220 (S3)	244 F	'17-'20	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	904kg	244	4.6	- Torre	-	145	+ Perfect power-to-weight ratio - A bit short on creature comforts	****
Lotus Elise Sprint 220 (S3)	254 F	78-79	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	878kg	251	4.5	-		145	+ Makes the most of its lightness - Heavyweight price	****
Lotus Elise Sport 240 Final Edition (S3)	285 F	£45,500	4/1798	237/7200	181/3000	922kg	261	4.1	-	-	147	+ The Elise's swansong - There will never be another Lotus like it	****
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 135 (S2)	040 D	'03	4/1796	135/6200	129/4850	726kg	189	5.4	-	-	129	+ One of our fave S2 Elises - Brakes need more bite and pedal feel	****
Lotus Elise S (S2)	104 F	'06-'10	4/1794	134/6200	127/4200	860kg	158	6.1	6.3	18.7	127	+ Brilliant entry-level Elise - Precious little	****
Lotus Elise 111S (S2)	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	76-77	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	77-79	6/3456	430/7000	325/4500	920kg*	475	3.2	-	-	180	+ A fitting send-off for a brilliant Lotus - Just 20 were made	****
Lotus 2-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	U.S.	-	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 GranCabrio yet - The GranCabrio is starting to show its age	***
Mazda MX-51.5 (Mk4)	230 F	£23,795	4/1496	129/7000	111/4800	975kg	134	8.3			127	+ Lightest MX-5 since the Mk1 - Lacks intensity	***
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	***
	212 F	109-15	4/1999	158/7000	139/5000	1098kg	146	7.6			138	+ Handles brilliantly again; folding hard-top also available - Less-than-macho image	****

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE ION YEARS ON SALE)	ENGINE CYL/CC	внр/врм	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/T0N	0-62MPH	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0.100MPH (TESTE)	MAX MPH	<b>EVO</b> RATING	
Mazda MX-51.8i (Mk3)	091F	'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	971kg	120	8.8	-		114	+ The original and still (pretty much) the best - Less than rigid	****
Mercedes-AMG SLC43	222 D	£47,600	6/2996	362/5500	383/2000	1520kg	242	4.7	-	-	155	+ Twin-turbo V6 well-suited to baby roadster - But also highlights the chassis' age	****
Mercedes-AMG SL63	228 D	£116,430	8/5461	577/5500	664/2250	1770kg	331	4.1	-	-	155	+ Effortless performance - Needs more involvement to go with the pace	****
Mercedes-AMG GT Roadster	239 F	77-79	8/3982	469/6000	465/1700	1595kg	299	4.0	-	-	188	+ An AMG GT with added fresh air - Ride and handling go slightly to pieces on UK roads	****
Mercedes-AMG GT C Roadster	235 D	'17-'19	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	'20	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	78-79	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	286 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 gearing	****
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 GTS (981)	203 D	14-76	6/3436	325/6700	273/4500	1345kg	246	5.0	-	-	174	+ Superb dynamics, fantastic engine, great looks - Sport suspension is very firm	****
Porsche Boxster Spyder (981)	223 F	75-76	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)	277F	10-12	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1275kg	252	4.9	-	-	166	+ Lighter, more driver-centric Boxster - Collapsed-brolly roof not the most practical	****
Porsche Boxster S (986)	070 F	'99-'04	6/3179	256/6200	229/4600	1320kg	200	5.7	-		164	+ Added power over the non-S Boxster is seductive - Very little	****
Porsche 911 Carrera 4S Cabriolet (992)	262 D	£109,725	6/2981	444/6500	391/2300	1600kg	282	4.4	-	-	188	+ Performance, handling, useability - It's no lightweight; body not as stiff as the coupe's	****
Porsche 911 Targa 4S (992)	277 D	£109,725	6/2981	444/6500	391/2300	1640kg	275	4.4	-	-	189	+ Distinctive; driving experience is barely touched - You can't get a rear-drive Targa	****
Radical Rapture	274 F	£108,000	4/2261	360/6000	360/3500	765kg*	478	3.0	-	-	165	+ Unfiltered and utterly addictive - It's more at home on the track than the road	****
Renault Sport Spider	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	****
Tovota MR2 (Mk3)	258 F	'00-'06	4/1794	138/6400	125/4400	975kg	141	8.0	7.2	21.2	131	+ Tight lines, taut dynamics - Minimal luggage space	****
TVR Tamora	070 F	'01-'07	6/3605	350/7200	290/5500	1060kg	335	4.2	-	-	175	+ Well-sorted soft-top TVR - Awkward styling	****
TVR Chimaera 5.0	258 F	'93-'03	8/4997	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.4	-	-	167	+ Gorgeous noise, tarmac-rippling grunt - Details	****
TVR Griffith 4.3	068 F	'92-'93	8/4280	280/5500	305/4000	1040kg	274	4.4	4.8	11.2	155	+ The car that made TVR. Cult status - Mere details	****
TVR Griffith 500	009F	'93-'01	8/4997	320/5500	320/4000	1060kg	307	4.1	-	-	167	+ Gruff diamond - A few rough edges	****
Vauxhall VX220	023 F	'00-'04	4/2198	145/5800	150/4000	875kg	168	5.9	-	-	136	+ Absurdly good Vauxhall - The badge?	****
Vauxhall VX220 Turbo	066 F	'03-'05	4/1998	197/5500	184/1950	930kg	215	4.9	-	-	151	+ Nothing comes close for the money - Marginal everyday usability	****
Vuhl 05	220 F	£59,995	4/2000	285/5600	310/3000	725kg	405	3.7	1.		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 naturally aspirated flat-six, a manual gearbox, extraordinary damping and fulsome 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) was our 2020 Car of the Year winner and runs the 2019 champ – the Cayman GT4 – incredibly dose. The Alpine Al10 gives the regular Porsche 718 Cayman at rue rival to worry about, the Aston Martin Vantage is a genuine 911 beater, and the Lotus Exige continues to go from strength to strength in every form.

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	285 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	+ Firmer and faster - But not necessarily better	****
Alpine A610 Turbo	273 F	'91-'95	6/2975	247/5750	258/2900	1420kg	177	5.7	-	-	166	+ Better than the comtemporary 911 Carrera - Rare then, rarer now	****
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 F1 Edition	288 D	£142,000	8/3982	527/6000	505/2000	1530kg*	350	3.6	-	-	195	+ Brilliantly hones the Vantage recipe - Looks won't be for everyone	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage (4.3)	288 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	71-77	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-'73	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	285 F	73-77	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	75-76	12/5935	592/7000	461/5500	1565kg	384	3.5	-	-	185	+ The GT3-style Vantage we waited so long for - Only 100 made	****
Aston Martin DB11 V8	253 T	£144,900	8/3982	503/6000	498/2000	1685kg	303	4.0	-	-	187	+ Potent and characterful engine; sharper chassis than V12 - Do we still need the V12?	****
Aston Martin DB11	235 F	17-18	12/5204	600/6500	516/1500	1800kg	339	3.9	4.0	8.1	200	+ A great GT - Suffers in outright handling terms as a result	****
Aston Martin DB11 AMR	269 F	£174,995	12/5204	630/6500	516/1500	1795kg	357	3.7	-	-	208	+ A more potent, better controlled V12 DB11 - Still at its best when it isn't trying too hard	****
Aston Martin DB9 GT	214 D	75-77	12/5935	540/6750	457/5500	1785kg	307	4.5	-	-	183	+ More power; still has bags of character - Needs an eight-speed auto 'box	****
Aston Martin DB9	178 F	'04-'16	12/5935	510/6500	457/5500	1785kg	290	4.6	-	-	183	+ A great start to Gaydon-era Astons - Automatic gearbox could be quicker	****
Aston Martin DBS	142 F	'07-'12	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1695kg	306	4.3	-	-	191	+ Stupendous engine, gearbox, brakes - Pricey; can bite the unwary	****
Audi TTS (Mk3)	261 D	£44,610	4/1984	302/5400	295/2000	1405kg	218	4.5	-	-	155	+ Exceptional grip and traction - Excitement fades after the first few corners	****
Audi TT RS (Mk3)	249 F	£53,905	5/2480	394/5850	354/1700	1450kg	276	3.7	3.5	8.7	155	+ Soundtrack; tremendous point-to-point pace - A bit one-dimensional in the long run	****
Audi TTS (Mk2)	193 F	'08-74	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	'09-74	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	10-16	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1715kg	263	4.5	4.3	-	155	+ Brilliant engine and improved chassis - Lack of suspension travel; inconsistent steering	****
Audi R8 V8	284 F	'07-'15	8/4163	424/7900	317/4500	1560kg	276	4.6	4.1	9.9	188	+ A true 911 alternative - The V8 engine got dropped too soon	****
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	****
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 Speed	286 F	c£180,000		650/5000	664/1500	2273kg	290	3.6	-	-	208	+ Shows unexpected finesse for a such a big 'un - We need to try it on the road	****
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	73-77	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	'77	12/5998	700/6000	750/2050	2205kg	323	3.5	-	-	209	+ Massive performance, surprisingly agile - Styling and soundtrack far from descreet	****





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MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (08 YEARS ON SALE)	ENGINE CYL/CC	ВИР/ВРМ	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAINED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	<b>EVO</b> RATING	
Bentley Continental GT3-R	203 D	74-77	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 Coupě	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 BMW M2	225 F 243 F	74-76 76-78	6/2979 6/2979	321/5800 365/6500	332/1300 369/1450	1455kg 1495kg	224 248	5.0 4.5	5.2 4.9	12.7 10.8	155 155	+ Powertrain, chassis, looks, size - Limited-slip diff is an option, not standard + 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	4.9	10.0	155	+ More progressive chassis balance than the W4 - Peels unsettled on rough tarmac + A more capable and involving M2 - More expensive and heavier, too	****
BMW M2 CS	285 F	£75,355	6/2979	444/6250	406/2350	1550kg	291	4.2		-	155	+ evo Car of the Year 2020 - Such quality comes at a price	****
BMW M440i xDrive	282 D	£54,645	6/2998	369/5500	369/1900	1740kg	215	4.5	-	-	155	+ Punchy drivetrain with a chassis to match - That grille	****
BMW M4 Competition (G82)	284 F	£76,055	6/2979	503/6250	479/2750	1725kg	296	3.9	-	-	155	+ Accomplished and fun - Weight gain and auto gearbox look questionable	****
BMW M4 (F82)	218 F	74-79	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	76-'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	77-79	6/2979	454/6250	442/4000	1580kg	292	3.9	-	-	174	+ A further-honed M4 - It ain't cheap	****
BMW M4 GTS (F82)	237F	'16	6/2979	493/6250	442/4000	1510kg	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	+ Fends off all of its rivalsexcept the cheaper 1-series M Coupě	***
BMW M3 GTS (E92)	262 F	'10-'11 '00-'07	8/4361	444/8300 338/7900	324/3750	1530kg	295	4.4		12.3	190 155	+ One of the most focused M-cars ever - Good luck trying to find one	****
BMW M3 (E46) BMW M3 CS (E46)	266 F 219 F	'05-'07	6/3246 6/3246	338/7900	269/5000 269/5000	1495kg 1495kg	230 230	5.2 5.2	5.1	12.3	155	+ One of the best BMWs ever. Runner-up in eCoty 2001 - Slightly artificial steering feel + 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	1515kg	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	1165kg	185	6.7	6.7	17.8	147	+ The best M-car ever - Prices have got out of hand	***
BMW Z4 M Coupé	097F	'06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1420kg	242	5.0	-	-	155	+ 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	£76,270	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	553/1800	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	'05-'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	****
BMW18	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) Chevrolet Corvette Z06 (C7)	197 F 227 F	'13-'19 '15-'19	8/6162 8/6162	460/6000 650/6000	465/4600 650/3600	1496kg 1598kg	312 413	4.2 3.7	4.4	9.4	180 196	+ Performance, chassis balance, supple ride - Body control could be better + 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	16-21	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	£41,430	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	£46,830	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	271D	\$72,900	8/5163	760/7300	625/5000	c1916kg	c403	3.3	12000	-	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	74-77	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1650kg	334	4.2	-	-	186	+ eCoty runner-up in 2014 - Bumpy and boistrous	****
Jaguar F-type R (P575 AWD)	271D	£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	76-79	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	71-74	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 £76,595	8/4969 6/3456	470/6400 354	391/4800	1765kg	271 181	4.3 5.0	-	-	168 168	+ Great looks, noise, sense of occasion - Too heavy to be truly exciting	****
Lexus LC 500h Lexus LC 500	241 D 231 D	£76,595	8/4969	334 470/7100	398/4800	1985kg 1935kg	247	4.7			168	<ul> <li>Excellent comfort and refinement; fine chassis - Hybrid system hurts the fun factor</li> <li>Glorious engine, rewarding chassis for a GT car - Numb steering, messy ergonomics</li> </ul>	****
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)	209F	72-75	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	76-78	6/3456	375/6700	302/5000	1110kg	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	1105kg	345	3.6	-	-	175	+ An absolute riot; feels worth the £83k (new) price tag - Limited build numbers	****
Lotus Exige Sport 410	283 F	£79,900	6/3456	410/7000	310/3500	1110kg	375	3.4	-	-	180	+ A first-rate swansong for the V6 Exige - Some may baulk 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	257F	'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 Lotus Evora GT410	230 F 278 F	17 £85 675	6/3456	410/7000 410/7000	310/3500 295/3500	1325kg	314 306	4.2		-	190	+ Even lighter and sharper Evora - Engine and gearbox behind the best at this price + Fully immersive driving experience - V6 has its limitations	****
Lotus Evora GT410 Lotus Evora GT410 Sport	261 F	£88,675	6/3456	410/7000	295/3500	1361kg 1361kg	306	4.2	-	-	186	+ Fully infirmersive driving experience - volitas its limitations  + 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	1200		187	+ As above but with knobs on - Those knobs don't make it feel any younger	****
Maserati GranTurismo	114 F	107-77	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	711-177	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 quirkiness, it's a great drive - Wafer-thin torque output; thirsty	****
Mercedes-AMG C43 Coupě	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	71-74	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	72-73	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	277F	'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	1990kg	308	4.2	Total	-	155	+ Near-silent progress meets full-blown riot - Don't go thinking it's a GT R	****
Mercedes-AMG S65 Coupě	209 D	£188,550	12/5980	621/4800	737/2300	2110kg	299	4.1	-	-	186	+ Almighty power, fabulous luxury - Nearly £60k more than the S63!	****
Mercedes-AMG GT	227 D	76-79	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	'15-'19 '17-'19	8/3982	515/6250 549/5750	494/1800	1570kg	333	3.8	-	-	193 196	+ Fantastic chassis, huge grip - Artificial steering feel; downshifts could be quicker	****
Mercedes-AMG GT C Mitsubishi 3000GT	241 D	17-19 '90-'99	8/3982 6/2972		501/1900	1625kg	343 167	5.8		-	196	+ As good at being a GT as it is a sports coupe - Difficult to drive fast and smoothly	****
Mitsubishi 3000GT Nissan 370Z	- 204 F	'90-'99	6/2972	282/6000 323/7000	300/3000 268/5200	1719kg 1496kg	167 219	5.8	-	-	159	+ Looks the business, loaded with gizmos - Doesn't do the business + Quicker, leaner, keener than 350Z - Not quite a Cayman-killer	****
Nissan 3702 Nissan 3702 Nismo	204 F 209 F	14-'20	6/3696	323/7000	268/5200	1496kg 1496kg	219	5.3			155	+ Quicker, leaner, keener than 3502 - Not quite a Cayman-killer + Sharper looks, improved ride, extra thrills - Engine lacks sparkle	****
Nissan 370Z Nismo Nissan 350Z	209 F 107 F	103-109	6/3498	309/6800	264/4800	1496kg 1532kg	205	5.6	5.5	13.0	155	+ Snarper looks, improved ride, extra tririis - Engine lacks sparkie + Huge fun, and great value too - Muscle-car vibe not for everyone	****
Nissan GT-R (2017MY)	242 F	£82.525	6/3799	562/6800	470/3600	1752kg	326	2.7	J.J	13.0	196	+ rioge for, and great value too - Musche-car viole not for everyone + More refinement, much improved interior, still fast - Feels a touch less alert	****
Nissan GT-R Track Edition (2017MY)	242 F	£94,525	6/3799	562/6800	470/3600	1745kg	327	2.7			196	+ GT-R regains its sharpness - Getting pricey these days	****
Nissan GT-R Nismo (2020MY)	282 F	£180,095	6/3799	592/6800	481/3600	1703kg	353	2.8	-	-	196	+ Addictive performance - Track Edition gets 90 per cent there for £80k less	****
Nissan GT-R (2012MY-2016MY)	238 F	72-76	6/3799	542/6400	466/3200	1740kg	316	2.7	3.2	7.5	196	Ouicker and better than before – Stopping your Porsche-owning friends calling it a Datsun	****
Nissan GT-R (2012MY-2010MY)	252 F	70-72	6/3799	523/6400	451/3200	1740kg	305	3.0	-		194	+ More powerful version of the original - But they're not worlds apart to drive	****
Nissan GT-R (2008MY)	257F	'08-'10	6/3799	473/6400	434/3200	1740kg	276	3.8	-	-	193	+ evo Car of the Year 2008 - You won't see 20mpg often	****
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R34)	265 F	'99-'02	6/2568	276/7000	289/4400	1560kg	180	4.8	4.7	12.5	165	+ Big, brutal, and great fun - Needs more than the standard 276bhp	***
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R33)	196 F	'97-'99	6/2568	276/6800	271/4400	1540kg	182	4.9	5.4	14.3	155	+ Early proof that Japanese high-tech could work (superbly) - Limited supply	****
Peugeot RCZ R	209 F	74-75	4/1598	266/6000	243/1900	1280kg	211	5.9			155	+ Rewarding and highly effective when fully lit - Dated cabin, steering lacks feel	****







MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR YEARS ON SALE)	ENGINE CYL/CC	внр/ярм	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTER)	MAX MPH	EVO RATING	
Polestar 1	269 D	£139,000	4/1969	592/6000	737	2350kg	256	4.2	-	-	155	+ One of the most appealing hybrids yet - It's left-hand-drive only, and jolly expensive	****
Porsche 718 Cayman	287 F	£47,230	4/1988	296/6500	280/2150	1335kg	225	5.1	-	-	170	+ Chassis remains a dream - Sounds like a Toyota GT86	****
Porsche 718 Cayman T	270 F	£51,145	4/1988	296/6500	280/2150	1350kg	223	5.1	-	-	170	+ A further-honed 2-litre Cayman - Flat-four soundtrack still disappoints	****
Porsche 718 Cayman S	249 F	£53,030	4/2497	345/6500	310/2100	1355kg	259	4.6	3.9	9.3	177	+ Faster and better to drive than ever - Bring earplugs	****
Porsche 718 Cayman GTS	260 F	77-79	4/2497	360/6500	310/2100	1375kg	266	4.6	-	-	180	+ Cracking package of upgrades - Have we mentioned the engine?	****
Porsche 718 Cayman GTS 4.0	283 F	£64,480	6/3995	394/7000	310/5000	1405kg	285	4.5	-	-	182	+ Ninety per cent of the GT4's magic - Can feel a little too capable and polished at times	****
Porsche 718 Cayman GT4	277 F	£75,780	6/3995	414/7600	310/5000	1420kg	296	4.4	-	-	188	+ evo Car of the Year 2019 - Long gearing isn't ideal for road driving	****
Porsche Cayman S (981)	202 F	73-76	6/3436	321/7400	273/4500	1320kg	247	5.0	4.5	10.5	175	+ The Cayman comes of age - Erm	****
Porsche Cayman GTS (981)	219 F	74-76	6/3436	335/7400	280/4750	1345kg	253	4.9	-	-	177	+ Tweaks improve an already sublime package - Slightly 'aftermarket' looks	****
Porsche Cayman GT4 (981)	265 F	75-76	6/3800	380/7400	310/4750	1340kg	288	4.4	-	-	183	+ evo Car of the Year 2015 (even though the 991 GT3 RS was there!) - Second-hand prices	****
Porsche Cayman S (987)	231 F	'06-'13	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1350kg	237	5.2	-	-	172	+ Still want that 911? - Yeah, us too	****
Porsche Cayman R (987)	158 F	71-73	6/3436	325/7400	273/4750	1295kg	255	5.0	-	-	175	+ Total handling excellence - Styling additions not to all tastes	****
Porsche 911 Carrera (992)	287 F	£84,870	6/2981	380/6500	332/1950	1505kg	257	4.2	-	-	182	+ Fast, composed and comfortable - Misses the power and tech of more expensive 911s	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S (992)	285 F	£94,350	6/2981	444/6500	391/1700	1480kg	305	4.2	-	-	191	+ An immaculately polished machine - Lacks character unless wrung out	****
Porsche 911 Carrera 4S (992)	285 F	£99,925	6/2981	444/6500	391/1700	1530kg	295	4.2	-	-	190	+ Terrifically exciting when driven hard - You'll reach some big numbers when doing so	****
Porsche 911 Carrera (991.2)	218 F	76-78	6/2981	365/6500	332/1700	1430kg	259	4.6	-	-	183	+ Forced induction didn't ruin the Carrera - Purists won't be happy	****
Porsche 911 Carrera T (991.2)	264 F	77-78	6/2981	365/6500	332/1700	1425kg	260	4.5	-	-	182	+ Lightweight windows, no rear seats, an LSD Only 5kg lighter than a basic Carrera	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S (991.2)	217 F	76-78	6/2981	414/6500	369/1700	1440kg	292	4.3	-	-	191	+ Blindingly fast - You'll want the sports exhaust	****
Porsche 911 Carrera GTS (991.2)	238 F	77-79	6/2981	444/6500	406/2150	1450kg	311	4.1	-	-	193	+ Everything a 911 Carrera should be - Costs nearly £20k more than a basic Carrera	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S (991.1)	201 F	72-75	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1415kg	283	4.5	4.3	9.5	188	+ A Carrera with supercar pace - Electric steering robs it of some tactility	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.2)	121 F	'08-'11	6/3800	380/6500	310/4400	1425kg	271	4.7	-	-	188	+ Poise, precision, blinding pace - Feels a bit clinical	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.1)	249 F	'04-'08	6/3824	350/6600	295/4600	1420kg	246	4.6	-	-	182	+ evo Car of the Year 2004 - Do your homework on potential engine issues	****
Porsche 911 Carrera (996, 3.4)	249 F	'98-'01	6/3387	300/6800	258/4600	1320kg	231	5.2	-	-	174	+ The first evo Car of the Year, and it still stacks up today - Might feel a smidge dated	****
Rolls-Royce Wraith	205 D	£240,768	12/6592	624/5600	590/1500	2360kg	260	4.6	-	-	155	+ Refinement, chassis, drivetrain - Shared componentry lets cabin down	****
Subaru BRZ	248 F	72-'20	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1230kg	163	7.6		-	140	+ Fine chassis, great steering - Weak engine, not the slide-happy car they promised	****
Toyota GT86	286 F	72-'20	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1240kg	161	7.6	6.9	16.5	140	+ Boldly put playfulness ahead of outright performance - See above	****
Toyota GR Supra 2.0	287 F	£45,995	4/1998	254/5000	295/1550	1395kg	185	5.2	-	-	155	+ Avoids the edginess of the 3-litre Supra - Lacks feel, feedback and bite	****
Toyota GR Supra	269 F	£54,340	6/2998	335/5000	369/1600	1495kg	228	4.3	-	-	155	+ Better than its BMW Z4 cousin - Not better than an M2 Competition	****
Toyota MR2 (Mk1)	237F	'84-'89	4/1587	122/6600	105/5000	977kg	127	8.2	-	-	124	+ Mid-engined fun comes no more affordable - Finding a good one will take time	****
TVR Sagaris	265 F	'05-'07	6/3996	406/7000	349/5000	1078kg	383	3.7	-	-	185	+ Looks outrageous - 406bhp feels a touch optimistic	****
TVR Tuscan S (Mk2)	076 F	'05-'07	6/3996	400/7000	315/5250	1100kg	369	4.0	-	-	185	+ Possibly TVR's best ever car - Aerodynamic 'enhancements'	****
TVR Cerbera Speed Six	004 F	'98-'04	6/3996	350/6800	330/5000	1130kg	315	4.4	5.0	11.4	160+	+Accomplished and desirable - When it's running	****

## **SUPERCARS / HYPERCARS**



## **OUR CHOICE**

McLaren 765LT. Runner-up at evo Car of the Year 2020, where it finished ahead of the Lamborghini Huracân Evo RWD and Ferrari FB Tributo, the 765 melds mind-boggling pace with a remarkably talented chassis and sublime steering to deliver another unforgettable Longtail experience.



## **BEST OF THE REST**

The **Lamborghini Huracân Evo RWD** (left) is Sant'Agata's V10 model at its most desirable, while the **Ferrari F8 Tributo** takes Maranello's mid-engined V8 line to a new state of the art. The **Audi R8 V10** remains a corking entry-level supercar, and the latest **Porsche 911 Turbo S** is the most accomplished of its kind for a very long time.

Aston Martin DBS Superleggera	264 F	£225,000	12/5204	715/6500	664/1800	1770kg	410	3.4		_	211	+ Broad spread of talents - It's not really 'Superlight'	****
Aston Martin DBS Superleggera Volante	273 F	£247,500	12/5204	715/6500	664/1800	1863kg*	390	3.6	-		211	+ Dazzling looks, immense performance - Width and weight bring compromises	****
Aston Martin Vanquish S (Mk2)	260 F	77-18	12/5935	595/7000	465/5500	1739kg	348	3.5	3.9	8.3	201	+ Noise, poise, drama and charm - Not as rounded as the DB11	****
Aston Martin Vanquish S (MkI)	110 F	'05-'07	12/5935	520/7000	425/5800	1875kg	282	4.8	4.9	10.1	200	+ Vanguish joins the supercar greats - A tad intimidating at the limit	****
Aston Martin VI2 Speedster	287 F	£765.000	12/5204	690/6500	555/5000	c1700kg	c410		4.5	-	298	+ Amusing to drive; genuine depth to its development - It's not the last word in anything	
Aston Martin One-77	179 F	70-72	12/7312	750/6000	553/7600	1740kg	438	3.7	-		220+	+ The engine, the looks, the drama - Gearbox hates manoeuvring; only 77 were made	****
Audi R8 V10 RWD	273 F	£117.325	10/5204	533/7900	398/6400	1595kg	340	3.7	_		199	+ More affordable than a 4WD R8 - But not more entertaining	****
Audi R8 V10	261 F	£131.130	10/5204	562/8100	413/6300	1660kg	344	3.4	-		201	+ Beats the 992 Carrera - Could be the last of its kind	****
Audi R8 VIO Performance	256 D	£144.130	10/5204	611/8250	428/6500	1595kg	389	3.1	-		205	+ Stunning V10: approachable performance - Optional Dynamic steering feels unnatural	
Audi R8 VIO RWS(Mk2)	254 F	17-19	10/5204	533/7800	398/6500	1590kg	341	3.7		-	199	+ The first rear-wheel-drive Audi for 40 years - Drives largely like its 4WD counterpart	****
Audi R8 V10 (Mk2)	234 F	75-79	10/5204	533/7800	398/6500	1640kg	330	3.5	-		198	+ All the R8 you really need - You can't get a manual gearbox	****
Audi R8 V10 (Mk2)	250 F	75-79	10/5204	602/8250	413/6500	1580kg	387	3.2	2.9	6.3	205	+ Timeless drivetrain, huge performance - Sometimes seems ordinary at steady speeds	
Audi R8 V10 (Mk1)	254 F	09-75	10/5204	518/8000	391/6500	1620kg	325	4.1	3.9	8.4	194	+ Real supercar feel - The V8 is cheaper, and still superb	****
Audi R8 V10 (Mk1)	190 F	73-75	10/5204	542/8000	398/6500	1570kg	351	3.8	-	0.4	198	+ An R8 fit to take on the 458 and 12C - Firm ride may be too much for some	****
Bugatti Chiron	244 F	c£2.5m	16/7993	1479/6700	1180/2000	1995kg	753	2.5			261	+ Backs up the numbers with feel and emotion - Limited top speed(!)	*****
Bugatti Vevron 16.4	134 F	05-71	16/7993	987/6000	922/2200	1888kg	531	2.5	2.8	5.8	253	+ Superbly engineered four-wheel-drive quad-turbo rocket - Er, lacks luggage space?	****
Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Super Sport	154 F	70-71	16/7993	1183/6400		1838kg	654	2.5	2.8	3.8	258	+ Superbly engineered rour-wheel-drive quad-turbo rocket - Er, lacks luggage space? + Was once the world's fastest supercar - Limited to 258mph for us mere mortals	*****
					1106/3000								
Bugatti EB110	078 F	'91-'95	12/3500	552/8000	451/3750	1618kg	347	3.6	-	-	213	+ Superbly engineered four-wheel-drive quad-turbo rocket - It just fizzled out	****
Ferrari Roma	278 D	£170,984	8/3855	611/5750	560/3000	1570kg	395 373	3.4	-	-	199+	+ Not far off being a front-engined F8 - Choosing between a Roma and an F8	****
Ferrari Portofino M	288 D	£175,345	8/3855	611/5750	560/3000	1664kg		3.5	-	-	199	+ Matches useability to supercar performance - Lacks the passion of the best Ferraris	****
Ferrari F8 Tributo	281 F	£203,476	8/3902	710/8000	568/3250	1435kg	503	2.9	-	-	211	+ Ferrari's best series-production V8 ever - The next one could be a hybrid	****
Ferrari F8 Spider	276 D	£225,897	8/3902	710/8000	568/3250	1400kg*	515	2.9	-	-	211	+ As above, with a folding hard-top - Some may prefer McLaren's 720S Spider	****
Ferrari 488 GTB	228 F	75-79	8/3902	661/6500	561/3000	1475kg	455	3.0	-	-	205+	+ Staggeringly capable - Lacks a little of the 458's heart and excitement	****
Ferrari 488 Pista	262 F	'18-'20	8/3902	710/8000	568/3000	1385kg	521	2.9	-	-	211+	+ Searingly fast and effortlessly capable - Takes a while to fully appreciate it	****
Ferrari 458 Italia	288 F	'09-75	8/4497	562/9000	398/6000	1485kg	384	3.4	3.2	6.8	202+	+ An astounding achievement - Paddleshift only	****
Ferrari 458 Speciale	274 F	73-75	8/4497	597/9000	398/6000	1395kg	435	3.0	-	-	202+	+ evo Car of the Year 2014 - If you don't own a regular 458, nothing	****
Ferrari F430	254 F	'04-'10	8/4308	483/8500	343/5250	1449kg	339	4.0	-	-	196+	+ Just brilliant - Didn't you read the plus point?	****
Ferrari 430 Scuderia	274 F	'07-'10	8/4308	503/8500	347/5250	1350kg	378	3.6	3.5	7.7	198	+ Successful F1 technology transplant - Likes to shout about it	****
Ferrari 360 Modena	163 F	'99-'04	8/3586	394/8500	275/4750	1390kg	288	4.5	-	-	183+	+ Worthy successor to 355 - Not quite as involving as it should be	****
Ferrari 360 Challenge Stradale	274 F	'03-'04	8/3586	420/8500	275/4750	1280kg	333	4.1	-	-	186	+ Totally exhilarating road-racer - Automated single-clutch 'box dates it	****
Ferrari F355 Berlinetta	231 F	'94-'99	8/3496	374/8250	268/6000	1350kg*	281	4.7	-	-	183	+ Looks terrific, sounds even better - Are you kidding?	****
Ferrari 348 GT Competizione	274 F	'93	8/3404	316/7200	239/5000	1180kg*	276	5.0	-	-	175	+ Utterly absorbing, with exceptional dynamics - Steering a little woolly	****
Ferrari 812 Superfast	275 F	£262,963	12/6496	789/8500	529/7000	1630kg	492	2.9	3.1	6.2	211	+ Incredible engine - Finding opportunities to exploit it	****
Ferrari 812 GTS	280 F	£293,150	12/6496	789/8500	529/7000	1645kg*	487	3.0	-	-	211+	+ A brilliant return for the front-engined V12 Ferrari Spider - There won't be many more	****
Ferrari F12 Berlinetta	275 F	72-77	12/6262	730/8250	509/6000	1630kg	455	3.1	-	-	211+	+ 730bhp isn't too much power for the road - Super-quick steering is an acquired taste	****
Ferrari F12tdf	230 F	77	12/6262	769/8500	520/6250	1520kg	514	2.9	-	-	211+	+ Alarmingly fast - Doesn't flow like a 458 Speciale	****
Ferrari 599 GTB Fiorano	275 F	'06-'12	12/5999	611/7600	448/5600	1690kg	368	3.7	3.5	7.4	205	+ evo Car of the Year 2006 - Banks are getting harder to rob	****
Ferrari 599 GTO	161 F	71-72	12/5999	661/8250	457/6500	1605kg	418	3.4	-	-	208+	+ One of the truly great Ferraris - Erm, the air con isn't very good	****
Ferrari 575M Fiorano Handling Pack	200 F	'02-'06	12/5748	508/7250	434/5250	1688kg	298	3.7	4.2	9.6	205+	+ Fiorano pack makes 575 truly great - It should have been standard	****
Ferrari 550 Maranello	275 F	'96-'02	12/5474	478/7000	420/5000	1690kg	287	4.4	-	-	199	+ Everything - Nothing	****
Ferrari GTC4 Lusso T	246 D	'77-'20	8/3855	602/7500	560/3000	1865kg	328	3.5	- "	-	199	+ Effortless, comfortable GT - Misses the richer soundtrack of the V12	****
Ferrari GTC4 Lusso	264 F	76-'20	12/6262	680/8000	514/5750	1920kg	360	3.4	-	-	208	+ Rear-wheel steering increases agility - Not as engaging as other Ferraris	****
Ferrari FF	194 F	71-75	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	'04-71	12/5748	533/7250	434/5250	1875kg	289	4.0	4.3	9.8	199	+ Awesomely capable grand tourer - See above	****



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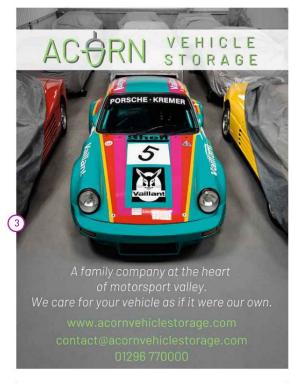
MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (IR YEASS ON SALE)	CYL/CC	внр/врм	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAINED)	0-60MPH (TESTES)	0-100MPH (TESTER)	мах мрн	EVO RATING	
Ferrari SF90 Stradale	277 F	£376,048	8/3990	986/7500		1570kg*	638	2.5	-		211	+ Hugely impressive series-production hypercar - Hybrid turbo V8 no match for a V12	****
Ferrari LaFerrari	203 F	13-15	12/6262	950/9000	664/6750	1574kg	613	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+		****
Ferrari F50	275 F	'95-'97	12/4699	513/8500	347/6500	1230kg*	424	3.9	-	-	202		****
Ferrari F40	275 F	'87-'92	8/2936	471/7000	426/4000	1100kg*	437	4.1	-	-	201		****
Ford GT	253 F	\$450,000	6/3497	647/6250	550/5900	1385kg*	475	2.8	-	-	216		****
Ford GT	200 F	'04-'06	8/5409	550/6500	500/3750	1583kg	353	3.9	-	-	205		****
Honda NSX	270 F	£144,765	6/3493	573	476/2000	1776kg	328	2.9	3.0	6.9	191		****
Honda NSX (NA2)	188 F	'97-'05	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1410kg	196	5.7	-	-	168		****
Honda NSX-R (NA2)	100 F 157 F	'02-'03 '92-'94	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1270kg	221 375	4.4 3.7	-		168 213		****
Jaguar XJ220	202 F	14-75	8/5065	542/7200 1341/7500	475/4500 1011/6000	1470kg 1360kg	1002	2.9	-		273		****
Koenigsegg One:1 Koenigsegg Agera R	180 F	11-14	8/5032	1124/7100	885/2700	1300kg 1435kg	796	2.9	-		273		****
Koenigsegg CCXR Edition	118 F	108-70	8/4800	1004/7000	796/5600	1280kg*	797	2.0			250+		****
Lamborghini Huracân Evo RWD	281 F	£164,400	10/5204	602/8000	413/6500	1389kg*	440	3.3			202	+ The most complete Huracán yet - Prescriptive driver modes still frustrate	****
Lamborghini Huracán Evo	264 F	£198,307	10/5204	631/8000	442/6500	1422kg*	451	2.9	-		202+		****
Lamborghini Huracán Evo Spyder	269 F	£218.137	10/5204	631/8000	442/6500	1542kg*	416	3.1			202		****
Lamborghini Huracán RWD	229 F	76-79	10/5204	572/8000	397/6500	1389kg*	385	3.4	-	-	199		****
Lamborghini Huracán	209 D	74-79	10/5204	602/8250	413/6500	1422kg*	430	3.2		-	201+		****
Lamborghini Huracán Performante	242 F	77-79	10/5204	631/8000	442/6500	1382kg*	464	2.9	-	-	201+	+ The realisation of the Huracan's ever elusive potential - Kitchen-worktop carbonfibre	****
Lamborghini Huracán Performante Spyder	253 D	78-79	10/5204	631/8000	442/6500	1507kg*	425	3.1	-	-	201+		****
Lamborghini Gallardo LP550-2 Balboni	138 F	'09-'10	10/5204	542/8000	398/6500	1380kg*	399	3.9	-	-	199		****
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		****
Lamborghini Gallardo	094 F	'03-'08	10/4961	513/8000	376/4250	1430kg*	364	4.0	4.3	9.4	196		****
Lamborghini Aventador	194 F	71-77	12/6498	690/8250	509/5500	1575kg*	445	2.9	-	-	217		****
Lamborghini Aventador S	246 F	£271,146	12/6498	730/8400	509/5500	1575kg*	471	2.9	-	-	217		****
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	282 F	£360,000	12/6498	759/8500	531/6750	1525kg*	506	2.8	-	-	218		****
Lamborghini Aventador SVJ Roadster	268 D	£387,987	12/6498	759/8500	531/6750	1575kg*	490	2.9	-	-	217+		****
Lamborghini Sián FKP 37	284 F	£312,000	12/6498	808/8500	531/6750	1600kg*	513	<2.8	-	-	217+	+ Our kind of hybrid - Feriociously expensive	****
Lamborghini Murciélago LP640	275 F	'06-'11	12/6496	631/8000	487/6000	1665kg*	385	3.8	-	-	211		****
Lamborghini Murciélago LP670-4 SV	200 F	'09-'11	12/6496	661/8000	487/6500	1565kg*	429	3.3	3.2	7.3	212		****
Lamborghini Murciélago	089 D	'01-'06	12/6192	572/7500	479/5400	1650kg*	351	4.0	-	-	206		****
Lamborghini Diablo VT 6.0	275 F	'00-'02	12/5992	543/7100	457/5500	1625kg*	343	3.9	-	-	208		****
Lexus LFA/LFA Nürburgring	200 F	10-12	10/4805	552/8700	354/6800	1480kg	379	3.7	-	-	202		****
Lotus Esprit Sport 350	171 F	'99-'01	8/3506	349/6500	295/4250	1299kg	274	4.3	-	-	175		****
McLaren 570S	229 F	15-19	8/3799	562/7500	443/5000	1452kg	393	3.2	-	-	204		****
McLaren 570GT	261 F	16-18	8/3799	562/7500	443/5000	1498kg	381	3.4	-	-	204		****
McLaren 600LT	257F	'18-'21	8/3799	592/7500	457/5500	1356kg	444	2.9	-	-	204	+ evo Car of the Year 2018 - There's no glovebox	****
McLaren 620R	268 F	'20-'21	8/3799	611/7500	457/5500	1386kg	448	2.9	-	-	200		****
McLaren GT	271 F	£163,000	8/3994	612/7500	465/5500	1530kg	406	3.2	-	-	203		****
McLaren 720S	262 F	£208,600	8/3994	710/7250	568/5500	1419kg	508	2.9	2.9	5.6	212		****
McLaren 720S Spider	288 F	£242,000	8/3994	710/7250 754/7500	568/5500 590/5500	1468kg 1339kg	491 572	2.9	-		212		****
McLaren 765LT McLaren 650S	281 F 196 F	£280,000	8/3994	641/7250	500/6000	1428kg	456	3.0	-		205	+ Intense, extreme, insane - How much do you value your driving licence?  + Better brakes, balance and looks than 12C; more power too - Which all comes at a price	****
McLaren 675LT	248 F	75-77	8/3700	666/7100	516/5500	1328kg	510	2.0			207		****
McLaren 12C	264 F	71-74	8/3799	616/7500	442/3000	1434kg	435	3.3	-		203		****
McLaren Senna	252 F	£750.000	8/3999	789/7250	590/5500	1198kg*	669	2.8			211		****
McLaren P1	276 F	13-15	8/3799	903/7500	664/4000	1490kg	616	2.8			217		****
McLaren F1	228 F	'94-'98	12/6064	627/7500	479/4000	1138kg	560	3.2		_	240		****
Mercedes-AMG GT R	2611	£158.285	8/3982	577/6250	516/2100	1575kg	372	3.6	3.3	7.1	198		****
Mercedes-AMG GT R Pro	269 F	79-'20	8/3982	577/6250	516/2100	1561kg	376	3.6	-	-	198		****
Mercedes-AMG GT Black Series	283 F	£335.000	8/3982	720/6700	590/2000	1520kg	480	3.2	-	-	202		****
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG	264 F	10-15	8/6208	563/6800	479/4750	1620kg	335	3.9	4.1	8.4	197		****
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Black Series	204 F	13-15	8/6208	622/7400	468/5500	1550kg	408	3.6	-		196		****
Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren	228 F	'03-'07	8/5439	617/6500	575/3250	1693kg	370	3.8	-	-	208	+ Zonda-pace, 575-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		****
Pagani Huayra	185 F	c£lm	12/5980	720/5800	737/2250	1350kg*	542	3.3	-	-	224		****
Pagani Zonda S 7.3	096 F	'02-'05	12/7291	555/5900	553/4050	1280kg*	441	3.7	-	-	220	+ 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 (992)	286 D	£127,820	6/3996	503/8400	347/6100	1418kg	360	3.9	-	-	199		****
Porsche 911 GT3 (991.2)	256 F	77-79	6/3996	493/8250	339/6000	1413kg	355	3.9	-	-	198	+ Almost impossible to criticise - Wasn't the easiest car to place an order for	****
Porsche 911 Speedster (991.2)	263 F	79	6/3996	503/8400	347/6250	1465kg	349	4.0	-	-	192		****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991.2)	278 F	18-'20	6/3996	513/8250	347/6000	1430kg	364	3.2	-	-	193	+ Even better than the 991.1 RS - Demand exceeded supply	****
Porsche 911 GT2 RS (991.2)	257F	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		****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991.1)	223 F	15-16	6/3996	493/8250	339/6250	1420kg	353	3.3	3.0	7.1	193	+ Sensationally good to drive - The Cayman GT4 is even better	****
Porsche 911 R (991.1)	229 F	76	6/3996	493/8250	339/6250	1370kg	366	3.8	-	-	200		****
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	1370kg	329	4.0	-	-	193	+ We named it our favourite car from the first 200 issues of evo - For people like us, nothing	****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS 4.0 (997.2)	274 F	71-72	6/3996	493/8250	339/5750	1360kg	368	3.8	-	-	193	+ evo Car of the Year 2011 - Unforgiving on-road ride; crazy used prices	****
Porsche 911 GT2 RS (997.2)	204 F	'10-'13	6/3600	611/6500	516/2250	1370kg	453	3.5	-	-	205	+ More powerful than a Carrera GT. Handles, too - Erm	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.1)	182 F	'07-'09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1395kg	298	4.3	4.3	9.4	192	+ Runner-up at evo Car of the Year 2006 - Ferrari 599 GTBs	****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (997.1)	112 F	'07-'09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1375kg	302	4.2	-	-	193	+ evo Car of the Year 2007 - A chunk more money than the already brilliant GT3	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.2)	221F	'03-'05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1380kg	272	4.5	4.3	9.2	190		****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (996.2)	068 F	'04-'05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1360kg	280	4.4	-	-	190	+ An even more focused version of the superb GT3 - Limited supply	****
Porsche 911 GT2 (996.2)	072 F	'04-'06	6/3600	475/5700	472/3500	1420kg	338	4.0	-	-	198	+ Revisions made it even more of a star than the 456bhp 996.1 GT2 - Care still required	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.1)	266 F	'99-'01	6/3600	360/7200	273/5000	1350kg	271	4.8	4.5	10.3	187		****
Porsche 911 Turbo S (992)	284 F	£155,970	6/3745	641/6750	590/2500	1640kg	397	2.7	-	-	205	+ More three-dimensional than recent Turbos - Requires self-restraint on the road	****
Porsche 911 Turbo S Cabriolet (992)	288 F	£170,410	6/3745	641/6750	590/2500	1710kg	381	2.8	-	-	205	+ A highly appealing indulgence - There are better driver's 911	****
Porsche 911 Turbo (991.2)	234 F	16-19	6/3800	533/6400	524/1950	1595kg	340	3.0	-	-	198	+ Makes the Turbo S seem unnecessary - But you still would	****
Porsche 911 Turbo S (991.2)	223 F	16-19	6/3800	572/6750	553/2250	1600kg	363	2.9	2.6	6.0	205		****
Porsche 911 Turbo S (991.1)	217 F	'13-'15	6/3800	552/6500	553/2200	1605kg	349	3.1	-	-	197		****
Porsche 911 Turbo (997.2)	218 F	'09-'13	6/3800	493/6000	479/1950	1570kg	319	3.7	3.2	7.3	194		****
	094 F	'06-'09	6/3600	472/6000	457/1950	1585kg	303	3.7	4.0	8.7	193	+ Monster cornering ability - A bit woolly on its standard settings	****
Porsche 911 Turbo (997.1)					413/2700	1540kg	273	4.2	4.1	10.0	190	+ evo Car of the year 2000; the 911 for all seasons - We can't find any reasons	****
Porsche 911 Turbo (996)	249 F	'00-'06	6/3600	414/6000					7.7				
Porsche 911 Turbo (996) Porsche 911 Turbo (993)	066 F	'95-'98	6/3600	402/5750	398/4500	1500kg	272	4.3	-	-	180	+ Stupendous all-weather supercar - It doesn't rain enough	****
Porsche 911 Turbo (996)									-	-	180 211 205	+ Stupendous all-weather supercar - It doesn't rain enough + Blistering performance; cohesive hybrid tech - Added weight and complexity	





















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## **BuyaCar Buying Guide: Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio**

Our pick of the current supersaloon pack is more desirable than ever with BuyaCar

OR A LONG TIME THERE WAS REALLY only one answer to the question of which compact, high-performance saloon you should buy: the BMW M3. Others have come and gone, and there's often been an AMG-badged Mercedes or an S or RS-monikered Audi rumbling around in the background, but if you wanted something that wasn't German, you were generally out of luck.

Until the Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio came along, that is. Launched in 2016 it wasn't just a shake-up for Alfa Romeo – whose cars had until that point been pretty to look at and occasionally entertaining, but rarely class-leading – but for the entire class. With a 2.9-litre twin-turbocharged V6, 503bhp to the rear wheels, and levels of agility to make its German rivals feel lead-footed, it was an instant favourite.

That it felt (and still feels) in many ways like a four-door Ferrari was perhaps no surprise, given more than a few former Maranello employees could be found within its development team. Being an Alfa, it was also considerably more affordable than a Ferrari too, and after a few years on the market to cool off, it's even more attainable today.

Take the 2017 example we found on BuyaCar, offered for a cash price of £43,559 – around £25,000 less than brand new – or, more temptingly, for £775 per month, including a £300 BuyaCar contribution and 6.9 per cent APR. With just over 9000 miles on the clock you'll be able to use its performance from the get-go, rather than waiting an excruciating thousand miles or so to fully open the taps. You still get peace of mind too, thanks to BuyaCar sourcing every vehicle through its trusted dealer network and

carrying out a full HPI check to verify its mileage, history and any outstanding finance. The car will also have at least six months' MOT and service, and you get to choose when it's delivered, with delivery costs to anywhere in England and Wales covered in the monthly payments. And the whole lot's backed up by a 14-day money-back guarantee.

The Giulia should be a delight to own too. It's a step on for Alfa in terms of quality, and while we've prodded better infotainment screens than those on the pre-facelift cars, the actual experience of living with a Quadrifoglio is a real pleasure, from the click of its tactile gearchange paddles to its genuinely comfortable gait even on crumbling B-roads.

Visit buyacar.co.uk to find the latest offers on the Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio.







## **Carwashgate**

## How the drop-tops Grand Challenge got some of the evo team in a lather

OVER THE YEARS I DON'T REMEMBER many arguments aboard the good ship **evo**, but I do recall some stormy skies over Land's End back in the spring of 2009.

It was the final round of the second evo Grand Challenge (issue 130), which had seen four teams each buy a car for £1000 or less, then subject them to various challenges. The rules on this occasion had stipulated that a convertible needed to be purchased and this led us to an MX-5 (predictable by Tomalin and Green), a Saab Turbo (left-field from Barker and Metcalfe), a BMW 325i (which sadly suffered an embrace from some Armoo mid-competition) and the stand-out choice, an MGF, which was the steed of Ian Eveleigh and yours truly. Registration R509 CUM.

Unfortunately the cards were stacked against the British Racing Green beauty in the first couple of rounds. Things like road worthiness and straight-line performance weren't the mid-engined roadster's forte. The track might have played to its strengths but snow scuppered our chances against the great white, front-wheel-drive Saab, otherwise known as Moby Dick.

All of which saw us heading into the final round trailing our rivals. The position looked hopeless. But then I inspected the rules, which had been written by Peter Tomalin (one of our competitors, let's not forget...). They read as follows:

Round 6: Road Drive.

Route: Wollaston to Land's End.

Scoring: Arrive by 5pm to score 50 points. One penalty point for every minute late. One extra point for every mile above 300. Ten bonus points for every seaside town. Extra 20 bonus points for going through a car wash.

You've no doubt immediately seen the wiggle room, the loophole, the area ripe for interpretation. It's almost as though it was left there like a little Easter egg, waiting for someone to crack it. The others turned left out of the office car park, heading straight for the West Country. Ev and I, pipes clamped resolutely between our teeth, swung right and made a beeline for the nearest car wash. And then another. And another. Eleven in total.

Given the parlous state of the MGF's rear window (which had cracked when the seller was demonstrating it to us) it was a plan fraught with peril. However, the rough shag remained dry and, with seconds to spare, we rolled to a stop at Land's End just before 5pm.

It's silly, because it was hardly the British Grand Prix and we hadn't done anything that would make Tom Walkinshaw lose any sleep, but I remember being quite nervous when I laid our claim to a final-round score of 400 points. Our team, Demon Tweed, had racked up 138 more than Need for Swede (Saab) and 145 more than Ginger Tom Racing (MX-5). This left the provisional final standings reading MGF 800, Saab 719 and MX-5 672. You don't need me to do the maths.

Peter Tomalin is one of the nicest, most mild-mannered men you could ever wish to meet, but there was a moment when he looked like I'd kicked his dog and keyed his car. Harry Metcalfe was so livid that I thought he might actually fire me at one point.

Thankfully evo's placid photographercum-chimney, Chris Rutter, had been appointed adjudicator and he deemed that there was indeed enough ambiguity in the rules to award us the win. Beers were drunk, tempers tempered and we were all friends again by the end of the evening. Although I'm pretty sure everyone hoped that the head gasket on our MGF would fail on the way home.

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### BMW

F90 M5 / M8 » 770+BHP (+DELIMIT)
X3M / X4M » 630+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
M850 » 700+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
M2 COMPETITION » 530BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
M2 COMPETITION » 530BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
M3 / M4 » 435BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
M5 F10/M6 » 730+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
M5 F10/M6 » 730+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
X5M:X6M F85 » 730+BHP
X1301 / 3301 » 320+BHP
X1401 » 370+BHP

### MERCEDES-BENZ

A4SS AMG » 480+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
A35 AMG » 350+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
A35 AMG » 350+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
A4S / CLA45 AMG » 430+BHP
AMG GT/GT5 » 624+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
AMG GTGT5 » 624+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
AMG GTGT5 » 624+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
AMG GTS » 650+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
C43 / 633 (405 + 600+BHP + 600+B

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#### PORSCHE

992 TURBO S » IN DEVELOPMENT
992 CARRERA / S » 570+ BHP
9912 GTZ RS » 780+BHP
9911 TURBO / S (ALL MODELS) » 750+BHP
991 GT3 RS \* 10 \* 525/540 BHP
997 CARRERA GTS » 435 BHP
997 CARRERA GTS » 435 BHP
997 L2 CARRERA GTS » 435 BHP
991.2 CARRERA GTS » 40+BHP
991.2 CARRERA GTS » 40+BHP
997 TURBO 3.6 » 625+ BHP
997 GTZ RS » 670+ BHP
997 TURBO / S 3.8 INC PDK » 611 BHP
997 TURBO / S 3.8 INC PDK » 611 BHP
997 TURBO / S 3.8 INC PDK » 611 BHP
995 TURBO / S 3.8 INC PDK » 611 BHP
90X STER / CAYMAN 718 » 380+BHP
BOXSTER / CAYMAN 718 » 380+BHP
BOXSTER / CAYMAN 91 GTS » 375+BHP
CAYENNE TURBO 4.8 CALL MODELS) » 650+ BHP
CAYENNE TURBO 4.8 CALL MODELS) » 650+ BHP
CAYENNE \* MACAN 3.0 DIESEL » 320+ BHP
MACAN 3.0 T S » 445+BHP
MACAN 3.0 T S » 445+BHP
MACAN 3.0 T S » 445+BHP
MACAN 791 4.0 T SE HYBRID » 800+ BHP
PANAMERA 971 4.0 T SE HYBRID » 800+ BHP
PANAMERA 971 4.0 T SE HYBRID » 800+ BHP
PANAMERA 971 4.0 T SE HYBRID » 800+ BHP
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PANAMERA 971 4.0 T SE HYBRID » 800+ BHP
PANAMERA 971 4.0 T SE HYBRID » 800+ BHP

### EXOTIC / MISC

WRAITH / DAWN » 720+BHP
FERRARI 488 PISTA » 780+BHP
FERRARI 488 PISTA » 780+BHP
FERRARI 888 » 750+BHP
FERRARI PORTO/INO » 680+BHP
FERRARI PORTO/INO » 680+BHP
FERRARI ENSO T » 710+BHP
FERRARI ENSO T » 710+BHP
FERRARI F12 » 780+BHP
FERRARI F12 » 780+BHP
MCLAREN 4505 » 720 BHP
MCLAREN MP4 /6505 » 720 BHP
MCLAREN 570/S » 680+BHP
MCLAREN 570/S » 680+BHP
MCLAREN 500LT » 680-BHP
MCLAREN 500LT » 680-BHP
MCLAREN SENNA » 875+BHP
AVENTADOR » 750+BHP
HURACAN LP610 » 650BHP
BENTLEY GT W12 » 700+BHP
MASERATI 3.0 DIESEL » 470 BHP
MASERATI 3.0 DIESEL » 470 BHP
MASERATI 3.0 DIESEL » 470 BHP

### **FURTHER OPTIONS**

As well as installing the above engine tunes, we are able to further individualise your car with additional features. Some of which are shown here. Contact us for further details.



Exhaust tuning (Cracks & pops) Customized driving modes

Gearbox



Sport dials













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## NEW CUPRA FORMENTOR.

## LET YOUR HEART CHOOSE FOR ONCE.

YOU CAN CHOOSE THE STRAIGHT PATH, LIKE ALWAYS. IT'S EASIER, LESS TROUBLE. OR YOU CAN CHANGE COURSE AND CHOOSE ANOTHER WAY, ONE THAT YOU'D NEVER HAVE THOUGHT TO TAKE. AND IF THAT FEELS RIGHT, THE NEW CUPRA FORMENTOR IS FOR YOU.

DRIVE ANOTHER WAY.

Official fuel consumption for the CUPRA Formentor range mpg (litres/100km): 31.4 [9.0] - 235.4 [1.2].  $CO_2$  emissions 33-203 [g/km].

\*Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures with other vehicles tested to the same technical procedures. Figures may not reflect real life driving results. Data correct at May 2021.

