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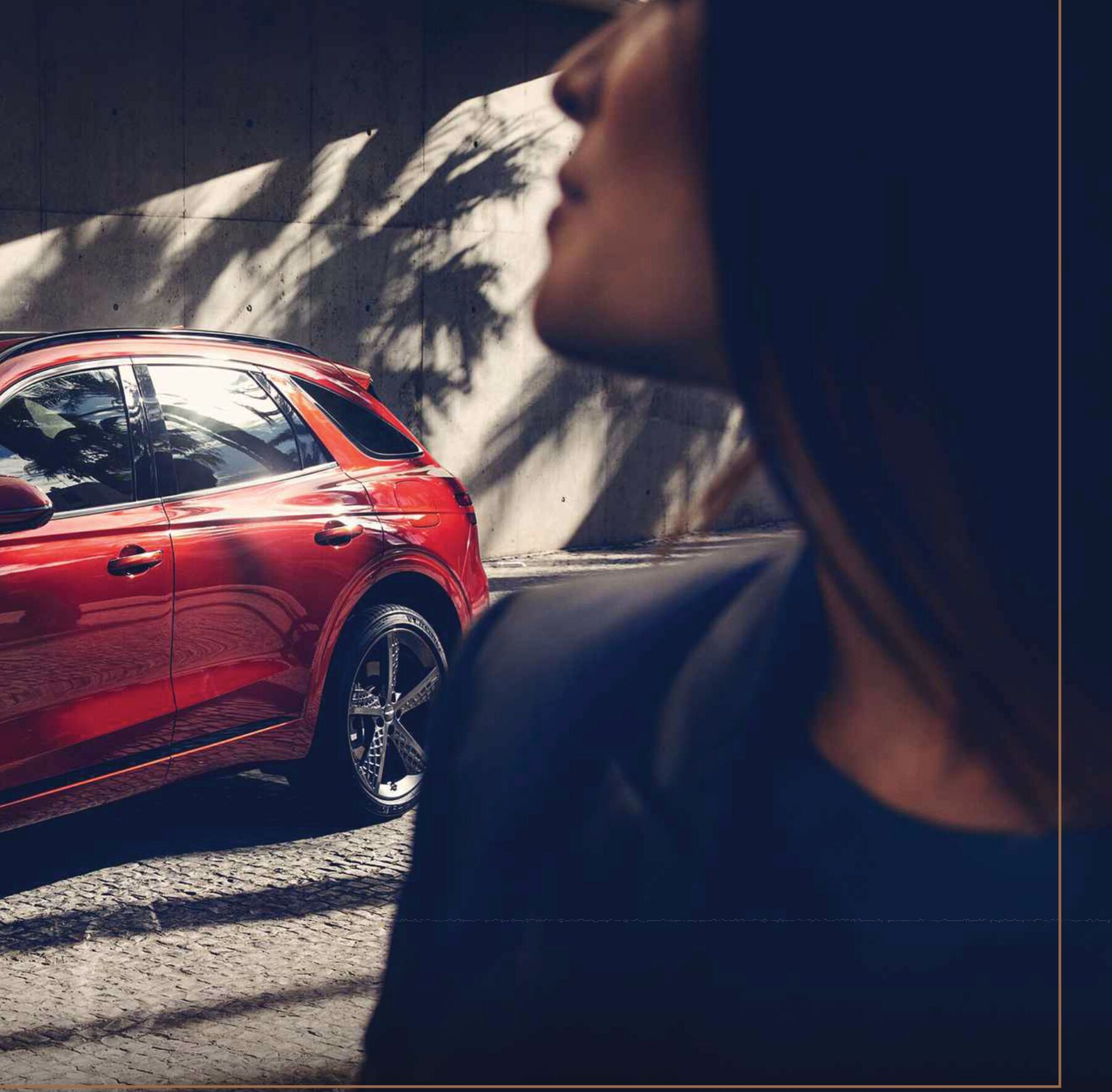
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Ed speak



THE AUTOMOTIVE FUTURE IS PURE ELECTRIC. We know this because a small minority of EV evangelists won't stop telling us, regardless of whether they have been asked for their view or not, and they are joined by a number of CEOs from car and battery manufacturers who have bet their investors' money on the world plugging in.

However, those manufacturers who aren't solely at the mercy of other people paying for their ideas, the OEMs who enjoy the independence afforded to them by still having a proportion of private ownership or a family member still instrumental in the decision making, are less gung-ho when it comes to going all-in on electrifying their future. Toyota is a prime example. A very early adopter of hybrid technology long before other legacy brands took the plunge, during the last quarter of 2021 it revealed a strategy that will include 15 new electric vehicles across its Toyota and Lexus brands (the Japanese giant having been restrained when it has come to fully electric vehicles in the past), including a sports car or two. It also presented its future strategy for hydrogen, which currently includes a GR Yaris powered by the stuff.

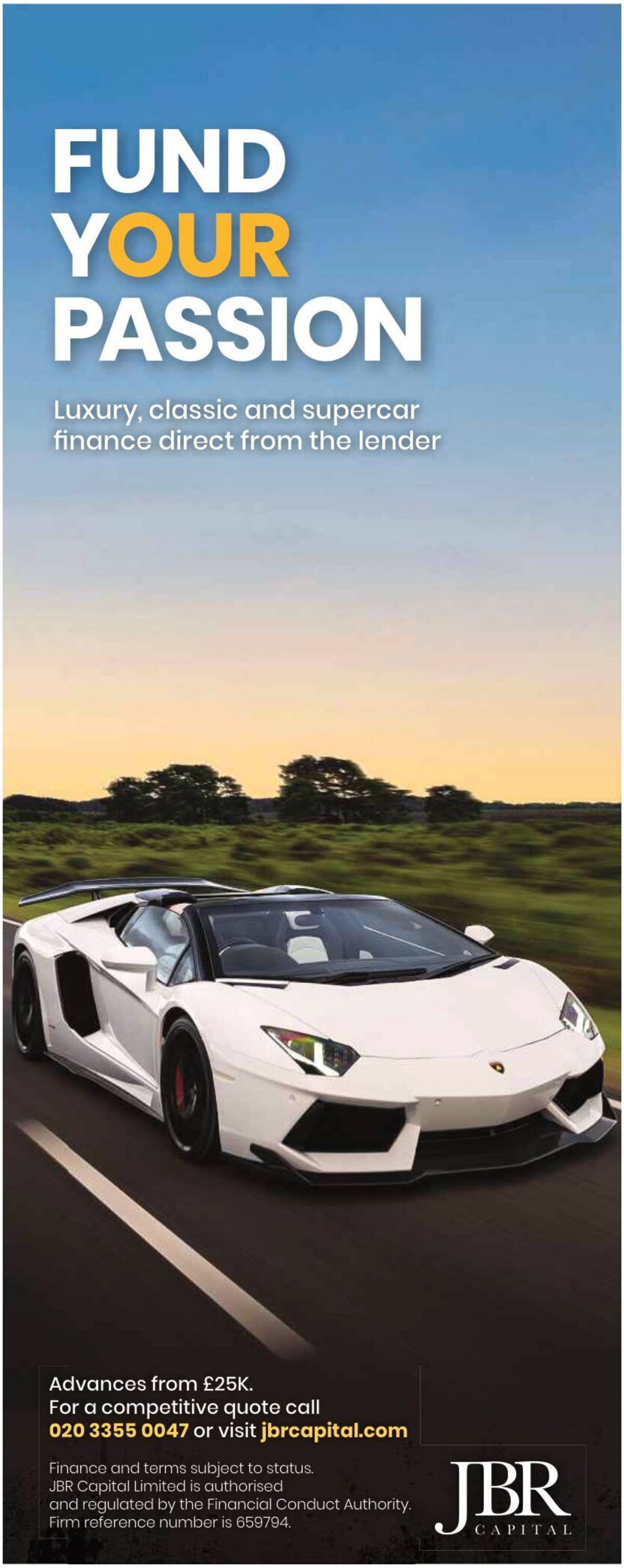
Basically, the conversation is moving, albeit slowly, towards discussing how electric isn't the one-stop fix-all for our carbon-based issues. But while the noise around electrification becomes deafening, there are more measured conversations taking place with regards to what is actually required to address the many challenges we face.

This month we have spoken to two UK-based engineering firms working quietly but tirelessly on solutions that don't simply rely on a battery the size and weight of a small car. Viritech's hydrogen technology may be presented in a headline-grabbing sports car, but its goal isn't to take on the 2000bhp, £2m electric hypercars, rather it's to showcase and prove the concept of a technology that will be a more viable and suitable solution for sectors that will never be able to rely purely on an electric option. And then there's McMurtry, which is approaching the electric vehicle from the opposite end to the established OEMs by focusing on reducing weight in order to be less reliant on bigger and therefore heavier batteries.

How does this impact the cars we live for? Less focus on heavy – and therefore big – cars with four-figure horsepower outputs in favour of smaller, lighter, more efficient, more nimble and potentially more engaging machines has to be a good thing. So, too, the ability to choose what suits our needs best, rather than being told by those no better informed than you or I.

Stuart Gallagher, Editor *@stuartg917*

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Driven

by JETHRO BOVINGDON

McLaren Elva

With a higher power-to-weight ratio than a P1 but no windscreen, is the Elva a true driver's car or just a pricey toy for collectors?

THE ELVA IS ASCENDING INTO A cloudless sky for mile after mile through a never-ending sequence of long, third-gear corners. At times the gradient is steep as a curve opens out and the road climbs rapidly to the next long hairpin. Interspersed are flatter, meandering sections that follow spectacular ridgelines before the tarmac coils back in on itself and the climb resumes. The Elva doesn't notice. Whether its nose is pointing upwards or shovelling low along one of the flat sections, the acceleration is akin to freefall. My stomach is three corners back. Every time I pin the throttle to its stop it's like the moment a rollercoaster hurtles over the big, heart-stopping drop. But there's nothing to catch you at the bottom, so you just keep falling and falling until you run out of road or bravery. The Elva is stupidly, wonderfully, shockingly fast. The sort of fast to which your body can't acclimatise. It never gets old.

The Elva is also, let's face it, a very silly car indeed. Certain things about it are very easy to get on board with. For example, it's McLaren Automotive's lightest ever car, at 1148kg dry or 1269kg with fluids. The familiar 4-litre twin-turbocharged V8 has never been more powerful, either. With 804bhp at 7500rpm and 590lb ft at 5500rpm, the Elva has a power-to-weight ratio of 644bhp per ton, which puts it ahead of the P1,



the Senna and even the F1, the featherweight OG. McLaren claims the Elva can reach 62mph in 2.8 seconds, 124mph in 6.8 seconds and go on to hit a presumably rather breezy 203mph. Good stuff.

The bad stuff? Well, there's no escaping that it's a car that has no windscreen. And not in an Ariel Atom or Caterham sort of way. It's not an intrinsic part of a back-to-basics sports car – the Elva is spun from a platform that has spawned many coupes and spiders – rather it's one of those 'collector' models with no windscreen that are meant to be more visceral and exciting but can't help feeling contrived and a bit naff. The Elva, like Ferrari's Monza SP1 and SP2 and Aston Martin's V12 Speedster, is created for those so rich, so bored and so ludicrously in need of attention that they'll happily put up with being pelted by gravel because, well, they're the lucky ones who can afford it. Just 149 Elvas will be produced at a price starting at £1.4million each.

Perhaps you can tell I'm a little bit cynical about these sorts of cars. Even so, I'll admit that when I started to delve into the story of the Elva it was more interesting from a technical and engineering point of view than I'd imagined. The name is inspired by Bruce McLaren's Group 7 sportscars of the 1960s. Those lightweight, powerful prototypes with Oldsmobile V8 engines were basically forerunners to the Can-Am monsters to come, and production of customer cars was outsourced to Elva Cars of Sussex. Light, open-topped (with tiny aeroscreens) and featuring a massive power-to-weight ratio, the M1A, M1B and M1C were successful and wonderfully fit for purpose.

'It's a freakishly rapid car. The top-end delivery is simply outrageous'

McLaren isn't messing around trying to honour those thunderous yet delicate racers with the Elva. Take the lightweighting, for example. The entire body is made from three main carbonfibre panels. The front clamshell is just 1.2mm thick and the side panels, which sweep all the way back to the active rear spoiler, are over three metres in length. Sintered carbon-ceramic brake discs (as on the Senna) have higher thermal conductivity and hence the physical size can be reduced. Even so they measure 390mm and are gripped by all-new and lighter titanium calipers.

The extra power is liberated mostly by the fitment of a new four-outlet exhaust system shaped from Inconel and titanium and fitted with 3D-printed titanium finishers. It's a real work of art and reduces back pressure, which in combination with improved low-temperature radiator function and hence lower charge-air temperatures sees power jump from the Senna's 789bhp to 804bhp. McLaren has also worked hard on the noise generated and the four-outlet solution was employed to get sufficient bass



from the widely spaced lower exits, whilst the narrow, top-exit pipes create a complex high-rev shriek befitting a car with over 800bhp and capable of 8000rpm.

There's plenty more: shorter and lighter seats so you can stand on the bare carbon floor to jump in and out of the car should you not wish to use the tiny dihedral-opening doors; a simplified dash with the Active Dynamics controllers for Handling and Performance mounted on the sides of the instrument pod; 'Ultra-Lightweight' wheels with Pirelli P Zero Corsas; and, of course, McLaren's Active Air Management System.

The AAMS concept is to create a calm and protective bubble of air around the driver and passenger – a kind of virtual windscreen. McLaren achieves this with a complex system comprising a large inlet above the front splitter, an outlet vent in the front clamshell and a carbon deflector just ahead of the outlet that raises and lowers at different speed ranges.

AAMS is operational between 28mph and 124mph and the Elva is limited to 124mph with the system activated, but it can also be manually turned off. When AAMS is inactive, the front inlet is closed and air is instead diverted to the twin low-temperature radiators mounted ahead of the front wheels. It's for this reason that you can't select Track mode with AAMS active. However, this is no big sacrifice, as even McLaren's engineers admit it's not hugely comfortable to be in the Elva without a helmet at the sort of speeds you can achieve in Track mode.

Incidentally, a special open-face but full-length-visor helmet has been developed with Bell for Elva owners. You get two helmets and two sets of ballistic-grade sunglasses thrown in for free with the car. Generosity is not dead in Woking. You can also opt to have your Elva fitted with a large, swept-back composite structure, carbonfibre-framed and bonded to the chassis, that also protects occupants from the airstream. A windscreen is a no cost option.

Above left: 'splitter fangs' help duct air into the Active Air Management System, which keeps occupants in the screen-less Elva comfortable up to around 70mph

You know what? On a gloriously sunny day in La La Land, the Elva looks stunning. Viewed from the rear three-quarters in particular, it manages to convey a sense of the extreme power lurking within thanks to the open rear end and yet feels lithe and minimalist due to those almost seamless, organic forms. I particularly love the way the 305-section rear tyres are so exposed beyond the deep rear diffuser. Later, when it's hot and well exercised, every detail and shape is diffused through an intense heat haze. Evocative stuff.

First impressions are breezy but positive. The steering is light, clean and full of feel, the ride is deftly controlled even when you select Sport with the rocker switch for Handling mode, and there's no question that the Elva feels lighter and even more alert than a 720S Spider but has none of the harshness that fizzes through the hyper-aggressive Senna. It feels road optimised. Even if it's very obviously not speed-







limit optimised. You don't need to search for the outer reaches of the rev range to understand that this is a freakishly rapid car. It seems to accelerate without inertia and as speeds rise it doesn't tail off. At all. The top-end delivery is simply outrageous.

The only dent to this effortlessness is manifested in the rapidly intensifying bombardment from the elements. The AAMS system works effectively up to around 60 or 70mph and manages to keep things relatively calm, but the Elva's comfortable operating window extends a little beyond 60 or 70mph. In short, wear a helmet unless you're pottering to the shops. Even if you live in a world where it doesn't rain.

Like all McLaren hypercars the Elva features hydraulically linked Proactive Chassis Control dampers with no anti-roll bars, plus an open rear differential utilising Brake Steer to mimic a limited-slip differential without the weight penalty (although the new Artura adopts an e-differential and will surely herald a similar switch for the whole range in future). It also features the superb Variable Drift Control function for the traction control. Although it may seem slightly jarring that a £1.4million special adopts exactly the same technology as a 720S, there's no question that by so doing the Elva benefits from all the refinements and development that these basic ingredients have benefited from over the years. It makes for a beautifully poised experience.

There are few short, sharp corners here so the drift control function, with steps from 1 (mild) to 15 (you work it out – literally), doesn't free you up to slide around at will. However, adjusting it towards its upper end does allow you to feel the Elva's natural balance and the way that crazy firepower can be used to manipulate the balance. It's fantastic to feel the Elva soak up bumps with such control, its chassis feeling every bit as structurally stiff as those of most coupes, then zipping into corners with clarity and ease bubbling through the steering. Without thinking, you load up the rear tyres with torque and the balance quickly settles into a clinical angle of attack, front end nailed on course and the rear ripping into the surface. You can almost picture the outside-rear sidewall peeling away from the rim.

The brakes, too, are superbly effective, and although all McLarens tend to have a slightly longer pedal than, say, a Porsche 911, the action is really well judged for left-foot braking. The pedal spacing and position makes this entirely natural, and with the sintered discs there's just



Above left: fitment of McLaren's 15-stage Variable Drift Control allows the driver to select their desired level of electronic support for moments of oversteer

Driven











a shade more immediacy and a shorter, precisely defined travel. More than once I'm extremely grateful for them simply because the Elva creates speed as if by magic. Or, more accurately, you tend to stay on the throttle a moment or two too long because you want to experience and savour the wild top end even when you know it's time to stop. It's manic and laugh-out-loud funny and requires a lot of discipline to exploit.

So, the Elva is as riotous as 804bhp in little over 1200kg suggests and has a real sense of joy about it. For me it lacks the sharpness and outright control of the 765LT and the intensity of the Senna, but there's genuine appeal in the way it combines the supple poise of a 720S with even greater agility and next-level performance.

Bottom left: sintered carbon-ceramic brake discs and weight-saving titanium calipers are supported by an Airbrake function for the active rear spoiler

Would it be any less thrilling with a windscreen? Or even a roof? I don't think so, but I understand that some people love the fresh-air sensations and the unique look that the Elva offers. I would like to point those people in the direction of a high-powered Ariel Atom but that's probably missing the point.

Even putting all my prejudices about cars like the Elva to one side, there's one feeling that won't quite go away. It concerns the value proposition. Never mind that the Elva is £1.2million more expensive than a 720S Spider. (Think about that for a second.) It's a special car, a collector's item, so it doesn't play to the same rules. But how can it be nearly twice the price of the similarly hyper and exclusive Senna? It just seems unnecessarily cynical and greedy.

Now, I accept I'm not a target customer and that 'value' is a different concept when you're buying the 20th or 30th car for your collection. Equally, I understand that the Ferrari Monza SP1 and SP2 models and Aston Speedster are also priced in the stratosphere. Yet even in this rarefied and often illogical world it seems the market agrees. The initial planned run was for 399 Elvas, but the final number has now been capped at the aforementioned 149. And you can still order one today. Each and every owner will have a great deal of fun in their Elva. It's a fantastically exciting car. Luckily, back in the almost real world, a 765LT coupe or Spider is nearly as fast and even more thrilling.

Engine V8, 3994cc, twin-turbo
Power 804bhp @ 7500rpm **Torque** 590lb ft @ 5500rpm
Weight 1269kg (644bhp/ton) **0-62mph** 2.8sec
Top speed 203mph **Basic price** £1,425,000

+ Stupendous performance; feels light and agile
− Lacks the connection of the 765LT; requires a crash helmet

evo rating ★★★★½

'It's manic and laugh-out-loud funny and requires a lot of discipline to exploit'



by ADAM TOWLER

Porsche Taycan GTS Sport Turismo

At last! An EV that's also a genuinely involving driver's car. So what's the catch?

THERE COMES A POINT WHEN I'M REALLY NOT SURE WHAT to make of the GTS Sport Turismo. About an hour ago I was at the wild and frankly awesome Willow Springs Raceway, about 80 miles north of Los Angeles, driving the four-door version of the GTS. It's a fast, demanding circuit – not exactly the sort of place you'd even think to take a 2.3-ton EV. Then again, maybe that's just me? A dinosaur. One who thinks all sports saloons should be like the BMW E39 M5, or something. Anyway, I kept an open mind. And then that same grey matter was well and truly blown by the GTS's ability to resist understeer in three-figure-speed corners, to turn in crisply, and to even step slightly sideways under full power, while at the same time refraining from cooking its brakes into an expensive pile of smoking carbon-ceramic dust.

Yet if that was impressive, what's happening right now is, for me, even more of a surprise. I'm driving on a deserted two-lane road that cuts through the mountains, the equal of anything you'll find in the Alps, and I'm actually really enjoying it. I don't mean finding it impressive, for that's a given: the Taycan has long since met that particular criteria. What I mean is that I feel involved, entertained and preoccupied by the process, too. What's going on here?

The Sport Turismo part of this car is easy to understand. You've seen the shape before in the form of the Cross Turismo, but now Porsche has ripped off all the vaguely off-road-y bits, lowered the ride height back down to that of the saloon and, in GTS form, applied the Sport Design bodykit and all the usual glossy black details that mark out a Porsche GTS model. In the signature GTS hue of Carmine Red it certainly has presence: a great long, wide, low slab of a shooting brake that turns heads. I like it.

Inside, the typical GTS elements continue, with sports seats as standard and lashings of Porsche's Race-Tex material (Alcantara to you and me) over almost every surface to create a distinctly GT-department vibe. For such a big car it definitely doesn't feel as spacious as you'd expect if you're sitting in the rear, but it's still a practical beast and, as evidenced by the drive to Willow Springs, a consummate long-distance tourer that swallows miles in serene, silent comfort.

Like other GTS models, it's the mix of standard components and low-level traditional fettling that's intriguing, this being an approach that worked spectacularly well with the 997.2 Carrera GTS, for example. The Taycan GTS sits between the 4S and Turbo models in



the range, but is positioned very much as the driver's choice. Indeed, while the Porsche engineers call the Turbo S the power monster for the autobahn, it's the GTS that they're excited by in terms of actually driving. Why? Because this car uses the same rear-axle motor as the Turbo models, but the front-axle motor of the 4S, and it can generate almost all of its required system power from the one at the rear. Or looked at another way, it can be largely rear driven unless otherwise required. Neatly, in power terms the 590bhp GTS sits between the 523bhp 4S and the Turbo and Turbo S with 662bhp and 761bhp respectively (all those figures being when overboost is active, which happens only when Launch Control mode is engaged). The GTS can cover 0-62mph in just 3.7sec, so it should be fast enough.

As for the chassis, the roll bars are about 20 per cent stiffer than those of lesser Taycans, the spring rates have been increased and the three-chamber air suspension has been reconfigured so that all three chambers are used in Normal mode, but Sport and Sport Plus use just one (and a lower ride height) instead of the usual two. The steering is impacted as a result of these changes, and both rear-axle steering and Porsche's PDCC active anti-roll bars are on the options list – and our test cars have every chassis option fitted, along with carbon-ceramic brakes. As standard the GTS uses bigger front discs and calipers, while the rears remain the same as on the 4S. There's also a new 21-inch wheel that saves as a set some 5kg over the existing 'Mission E' design 21s. GTS Taycans come with a 20-inch wheel as standard, but the 21-inch options are fitted with a more performance focused tyre.

The predictable element to the GTS is that it feels hugely rapid. Not so much as the speeds reach silly numbers, but on the road, at the kind of velocities most of us spend the great majority of our driving moving along at, it is more than strong enough in the acceleration department. And of course, as with other high-power EVs, it's the immediacy and enormous torque that defines the delivery.

However, the GTS also features a louder and unique artificial engine noise in the cabin, which can at times sound to my ear a little like a V10 at low revs, with the subtle resonant tones of the old C6-gen Audi S6. It also has a more obvious change in pitch than the usual Taycan noise, which gives the impression of different gears being used. This might read like I'm desperately searching for an element of soul to the GTS, and you might be right,









but it's amazing what a bit more noise can do to the driving experience, even if the effect is wholly subconscious. Somehow, there's more of a connection between man and machine; I feel like I know what the machine is up to at any given time (even though in reality I don't).

Hairpins beckon. Time and again you can dig really deep into the retardance of the carbon-ceramics and they show no sign of losing their edge, of juddering or of a lengthening of the stopping distance. Turn into the corner and the GTS steers better than any Taycan I've driven before – smooth, accurate and natural. I can't feel it, but the rear steer must be at work because the way the car pivots into the corner belies its size and weight, and suddenly it doesn't seem too big for this road at all. What I also haven't got my head around is how much torque is available upon the corner's exit; it energises the rear of the car, assisting in keeping the nose pointing up the road where you want it, but never feels contrived. It's not that violent tug at the wheel you can get with some four-wheel-drive cars, a madcap desire to have the car pointing straight as soon as possible. Instead it just keeps the car fluid and alert. I push harder, expecting the GTS to crack first, to start to understeer or wallow or just generally feel as though it's being made to do something it really would rather not be doing, but at the sort of pace that would keep it on the tail of a hardcore hot hatch it's my own nerve and sensibilities that are beginning to wilt, not the car. It seems to be lapping it up, while I'm starting to flag with the required concentration.

I am enjoying this. Yes, I'd rather be doing it in an E39 M5. I'd rather be doing it in a new M5 too – well, maybe. And yes, the road is extraordinary, and that can easily cloud one's judgement. But I can say with some certainty that it's the first time I've really felt truly engrossed by a drive in an EV; alas, so much so that it's a shock to discover the range figure matches exactly the miles to the charging station Porsche has plumbed into the satnav. Suddenly, the Siberian wind of range anxiety gusts through the car, my foot comes off the throttle faster than you can say 'dead battery' and I spend the rest of the drive cruising with apprehension until arriving with 16 miles to spare.

Yes, there were probably other chargers, visible on an app or something, but all I saw en route were petrol stations, and as we've said many times recently, in parts of the UK, with its primitive charging network (compared to areas of California), that continues to be the biggest drawback to owning a performance EV. That aside, as a car, this Taycan makes a strong case as a fast, practical, long-distance GT.

Motors Two, 380kW total (440kW with Launch Control)
Power 510bhp (590bhp with Launch Control)
Torque n/a (627lb ft with Launch Control)
Weight 2310kg (224bhp/ton) **0-62mph** 3.7sec
Top speed 155mph (limited) **Basic price** £104,990

\+ One of the best performance EVs yet
\- Charge anxiety

evo rating ★★★★½



by STUART GALLAGHER

Ford Focus ST Edition

With its trick chassis upgrades, 'Edition' spec finally elevates the bigger ST from its underdog status

FORD'S FOCUS ST HAS ALWAYS BEEN A bit of a strange one for **evo**. It should be a contender that takes the Golf GTI to task for those who are happy to swap soft-feel plastics and a sophisticated approach for a little more spirit and engagement and traditional front-wheel-drive yobbery. But we've never fallen for the Focus as we have its wee brother, the Fiesta ST.

Where the Fiesta feels alive, its character always bubbling away at the surface with a sense it's been honed by the guys and gals at Ford Performance to be the best it can possibly be, the Focus doesn't. There's a sense it's been pegged back, that it missed out on a layer or two of polish being applied and is therefore not quite as good as it could be. It's still a rewarding steer, but there are niggles that surface frequently and are enough to prevent it being a truly great drive.

Such as? Its front suspension and steering struggle to contain the modest 276bhp output from the 2.3-litre turbocharged motor, the front axle being easily distracted and knocked off line, the front tyres fighting with the torque delivery. Where a Fiesta ST feels cohesive, the Focus can, at times, feel disjointed.

With this new Focus ST Edition, Ford hasn't set out to specifically address these issues – they will more likely than not be dealt with by the introduction of the recently announced facelifted Focus. Rather the Edition is a final hoorah for the current car that taps into much of the finessing that makes the Fiesta such a capable and desirable and class-leading supermini.

So there are changes beneath the Azura Blue paintwork and black roof and spoiler. Big changes, too – as you'd hope for the extra £2500 that the Edition commands – because the adaptive damping hardware and software have both been left on a shelf and replaced by KW Automotive's trick adjustable coilovers and twin-tube dampers. And by adjustable they don't simply mean Comfort and Sport settings, but a full-on 16 levels of rebound and a further 12 for compression. Unfortunately, Ford didn't provide an indication as to the settings our test car arrived on, and the thought of removing the wheels and some of the wheelarch linings to start playing with the adjustments wasn't a positive one: before you could say 'lift-off oversteer' we'd have a chassis set-up to rival an MGF with failed hydragas.

The settings Ford had selected were pretty spot on, though. On the road the Edition is much calmer at the front, the steering less fitful in your hands, the Michelin Pilot Sport 4 S tyres exerting more control over the surface and managing the torque and power delivery with a much higher level of ability. Feed the power in on the exit of a corner that's less than perfectly surfaced and you're no longer fighting the steering wheel like you would a dog when trying to squeeze it into a Christmas









‘It’s a calmer, more precise and more rewarding road car’

jumper. It’s a much calmer, more precise and more rewarding road car as a result. Dynamically a significant step above what’s gone before, it now feels ahead of a Golf GTI and not as far behind Hyundai’s i30 N.

Despite spring rates that are 50 per cent stiffer, the ride isn’t a killer. Yes it’s firm, but not as unremittingly harsh as some rivals. Some of this can be attributed to the fitment of a set of 19-inch flow-formed wheels that reduce unsprung mass by 10 per cent at each corner. The Edition also sits 10mm lower than a regular ST, with a further 20mm of ride height adjustment available if you enjoy getting on your hands and knees. Combined, these changes turn the Focus ST from a hot hatch that required a commitment level often higher than the reward on offer to one that flows with the surface, applying a lighter touch when it can but still able to knuckle down when needed.

We also tried the Edition on track at Thruxton and Bedford Autodrome, and the newfound precision on the road continued to impress beyond the pitlane. Directional changes are consistent and inspire a much higher level of confidence, which encourages more commitment and a few more liberties to be taken as you throw the ST at the apex, the nose holding tight as the rear goes light and glides around the car’s centre point at your discretion. However, this new-found athleticism shines a light on the Focus’s steering, which still lacks the clarity of that of, say, an i30 N or Civic Type R. It can be slow to respond to inputs, and any mid-corner adjustments don’t always deliver the expected result.

Ultimately, the ST Edition is more lively, more engaging and more fun as a result of its more sophisticated chassis hardware, and crucially a far better resolved hot hatch. It’s just a shame that it’s taken a very bespoke and quite expensive solution to get here. ■

Above: Azura Blue paint is mandatory for the Edition, as is the hatchback body and manual gearbox (there’s no estate or auto). **Top left:** Recaros gain blue stitching

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 2261cc, turbocharged
Power 276bhp @ 5500rpm **Torque** 310lb ft @ 3000-4000rpm
Weight 1433kg (196bhp/ton) **0-62mph** 5.7sec
Top speed 155mph **Basic price** £35,785

+ Quality of the chassis beyond question
− Needs an engine and steering to match

evo rating ★★★★½

Driven



by JOHN BARKER PHOTOGRAPHY *by* ASTON PARROTT

Turbo Technics Fiesta ST S285

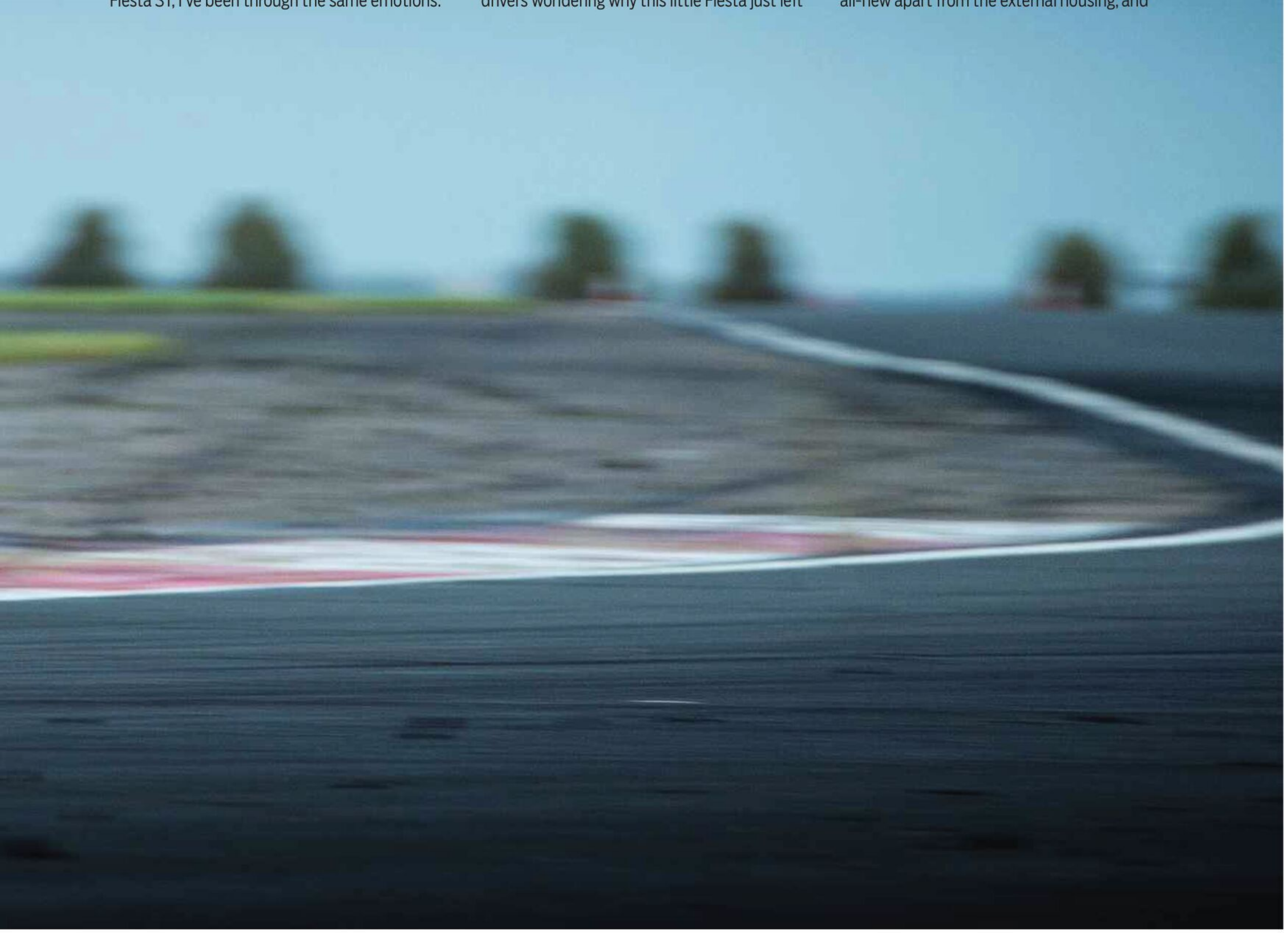
Can the humble three-pot Fiesta ST really be improved by giving it close to 300bhp? Turns out it can

THERE'S A SENSE OF DÉJÀ VU ABOUT this encounter. About 30 years ago I drove a Peugeot 205 GTI 1.9 with a Turbo Technics conversion. In standard, 130bhp form the Peugeot was sensational, so adding 50bhp seemed unnecessary, while introducing a bit of throttle lag and a burst of extra torque to a chassis that at times already seemed maxxed out appeared ill-considered. I was wrong: it was an absolute weapon and I remember it very fondly. Today, just a few miles into driving the Turbo Technics conversion for the three-cylinder, Mk8 Fiesta ST, I've been through the same emotions.

The almost standard look of the Ford belies a similarly huge uplift in performance, the Turbo Technics kit dropping another 80bhp or so on top of the standard 197bhp, hence the S285 badging. In fact, this car is closer to 300bhp thanks to the choice of intercooler and exhaust. That sounds an awful lot for a little Fiesta riding on 17-inch alloys with 205/40 tyres, but history repeats itself: while the extra performance lends a substantial extra weight to the Fiesta's delivery, it doesn't overwhelm the grip and handling.

So there's huge potential to leave other drivers wondering why this little Fiesta just left them for dead. The boot badge is a giveaway but that's optional, and whatever you just gapped probably won't get a look at the front, where you can more easily spot an enormous new aluminium intercooler lurking behind the black grilles.

Pop the bonnet and your gaze is drawn to a new air filter the size of a biscuit barrel and the bright blue Samco hose connecting it to the standard turbo intake elbow. The turbo looks standard too but the 'hybrid' turbocharger that Turbo Technics has designed and developed is all-new apart from the external housing, and



even the inside of that side is CNC machined to accommodate the new, machined-from-billet compressor wheel and high-flow turbine wheel. The shaft and all the bearings are new too. A much larger capacity intercooler and less restrictive, full-length exhaust are also key parts of the package, and the whole lot is brought together by a bespoke 'CP3' remap. CP stands for Collins Performance, the Ford tuning specialist and Turbo Technics' partner on the project.

From a cold start the exhaust sounds a bit lairy, but after a couple of minutes it tones down leaving just a more bass-heavy version of the regular Fiesta ST three-cylinder tailpipe burble. There are distinctly non-standard noises from the front end though, one being the sound of air being sucked in, another the quite nostalgic sound of boost being dumped, something you don't often hear with today's production turbo installations. Squeeze the throttle halfway down, back off just as boost has started to build and you'll hear the classic *ch-ch-ch-choo!* chuckle of boost venting.

A look at the dyno graphs of the S285 versus the standard set-up shows that once over 2000rpm the tuned engine leaves the standard engine for dead. Practically, it's not just that it delivers so much more but that it is impeccably mannered; there's not the slightest hiccup or flat spot, the engine being as tractable as standard whether hauling from idle in top gear with a wide open throttle or responding to a snap, full-throttle demand in third.

'This is a seriously impressive and addictive conversion'

It's such a deliciously massive, torque-rich delivery that it even makes sense of the super-long ratios of the Fiesta's standard six-speed gearbox. In sixth at 60mph, the revs are at just over 2000rpm, on the cusp of boost. Floor it and in no time the Fiesta is hauling hard on full boost and the shove is so solid you expect it to carry on pushing at this rate until it hits the limiter.

The chassis copes, too. What's particularly interesting for me is that this Turbo Technics demo car doesn't have the biggest wheels and tyres offered on the ST. Instead of 18-inch rims with 235/35 tyres it has those aforementioned 17s with skinnier 205/40s. I ran a long-term ST on 18s and found it grabby and a little edgy on lumpy back-roads, characteristics that might become exaggerated with an extra 80lb ft of











torque taking the total to just shy of 300lb ft. This ST on 17s has a more rounded, calmer base character and while you'd expect its narrower tread to struggle to get all the enhanced engine's grunt down, even on the most difficult of surfaces – cold, wet, bumpy B-roads – they do really well, with the standard traction and stability control keeping everything tidy.

The Fiesta doesn't feel uncomfortable with so much extra torque, then. Yes, it'll push a bit wide in corners before being reined in, and if you turn off the electronic aids it'll do it dramatically, but you quickly get comfortable with the level of performance and, importantly, you can get just as much as you want with hardly any lag. It's an entertaining challenge to use as much as you can, serenaded by a relaxed-sounding triple *fwaarp!* from the tailpipes and the hiss and chatter from the front.

Turn everything off and on a cold, wet racetrack you can turn in, back off and have the rear come round to the point where it gets to the apex before the front... and then use the ready torque to drag the car out of the corner and up the straight, everything now pointing in the right direction. Alternatively, on the road you can revel in the more subtle joy of using the ridiculously generous torque to make brilliant progress in high gears, which is curiously relaxing.

Top: air filter upgrade is hard to miss; turbocharger looks standard but has reworked internals. **Above:** on 17-inch rims this near-300bhp Fiesta is a real sleeper. **Left:** substantial new intercooler offers a clue to the observant

The cost of the hybrid turbo (exchanged), intercooler, induction exhaust and remap is £3800 including VAT and fitting. However, Collins Performance recommends upgrading the pistons and conrods too. They haven't yet seen a failure with the installation (Turbo Technics' demonstrator is on standard rods and pistons) but say they have seen failures of this engine running similar horsepower from other tuners and feel the conrods of the Mk8 Fiesta's three-cylinder engine aren't as substantial as those of the Mk7's four-pot unit. Upgrading the conrods and pistons is a job that includes some machining of the engine block and costs £3996.

So, an £8k, bulletproof upgrade. That sounds like a lot, but if you love the sound of a feisty triple and the feel of oodles of torque and power delivered with finesse, this is a seriously impressive and addictive conversion. A standard ST on 17s with such generous performance is an absolute blast, but maybe the dream package is this kit applied to a used Fiesta ST Edition or Performance Edition. That would be a hugely compelling, 300bhp, £30k hot hatch.

Engine In-line 3-cyl, 1497cc, turbo
Power c290bhp @ 5400rpm **Torque** 294lb ft @ 3750rpm
Weight 1187kg (c248bhp/ton) **0-62mph** c5.6sec (est)
Top speed 155mph (limited) **Conversion price** See text

\+ Makes the most of the ST's very capable chassis
\- £8k is a lot to spend on upgrading a supermini

evo rating ★★★★½

IGNITION

NEWS, INTERVIEWS, TECH AND EVERY NEW CAR THAT MATTERS

The road to cell

This is not another heavyweight battery-electric hypercar. Rather it's a showcase for a new hydrogen fuel-cell technology that can deliver 1200bhp in a car that's as light as an Elise. Meet the Viritech Apricale

VIRITECH APRICALE

by ADAM TOWLER

PLEASE, DO NOT TURN THE PAGE BEFORE reading this. I know what you're thinking: another swoopy, extremely high-powered hypercar, costing megabucks, from a brand you've never heard of. And you guessed right, it has indeed got a battery and there isn't a petrol-powered engine in sight. But I promise you that reading on is worthwhile, because what you'll learn about might, just might, be the saviour of the sort of cars that readers of this magazine love.

One of the key people behind it is Matt Faulks, former boss of racing car support and development specialist Tour de Force. I always make a point of answering the phone to Faulks, not least because he once offered me a drive in an F1 car before Saturday morning practice at the 2018 Belgian Grand Prix, and as ludicrous as it still sounds to me, it actually happened (see **evo** 267). So when he said he'd started an entirely new project with a long-standing friend back in the lockdown winter of 2020, and that it was going to produce a car that featured over 1000bhp but, crucially, weighed similar to a Lotus



Elise, and that it might in its own way help save the planet too, it clearly sounded like something **evo** should know more about.

The new company behind the project is called Viritech, and the car is the Apricale. It is powered by a fuel cell that converts hydrogen into electrical energy that then drives electric motors, but the car also features a small, F1-style battery that supplements the fuel cell's efforts as required. Because the car doesn't lug around a huge battery pack its weight is comparable with an ICE sports car's, yet its power output is even greater, while in ten years the technology as a whole is predicted by key industry players to be on a cost parity with ICE, too.

Even Lotus, which claims its Evija battery-electric hypercar is the lightest of its type yet, hasn't been able to claim a kerb weight much below 1700kg, and therein lies the point. Faulks hates heavy sports cars, and heavy racing cars too for that matter, and refuses to see a future made up almost entirely of two-ton, huge-power but arguably soulless hypercars. We at **evo** are definitely on that same page.

But there's the Apricale and then there's the much bigger picture. 'We're not here to set up a sports car brand,' reveals Faulks, Viritech's CTO. Instead there will be just 25 Apricales, and while they will be supported with further developments in the future, the car is effectively a shop window for the technology, because let's face it, attracting headlines is much easier with a hypercar than it is a new truck. And why not a spiritual successor to the Lotus Elise? Because new technology is expensive and economies of scale further down the line will be required before more affordable sporting machinery can realistically be made.

Rather than aspiring to be a car maker, the business is based around two elements. Firstly, to offer a green solution to low-volume, UK-based manufacturers who need a low-emissions powertrain but don't want to be battery powered due to their brand being about light vehicles. And secondly, to license the patented technology to OEMs and Tier 1 suppliers, making it available to all who are willing to pay. Principally, that's the LCV and HGV market, where the restrictions of range and weight (versus payload) are presenting huge problems and, in the case of HGVs, the UK government is setting targets for the rollout of hydrogen by 2030.





Right: Apricale set to produce 1207bhp and act as a showcase for Viritech's tech.
Above and below: Cayman-based test bed combines fuel-cell stack with electric motors



It's not true to say that Faulks hates electric cars. He describes the Nissan Leaf as 'brilliant – but boring' and believes that in the very near future our motoring lives will be dominated by battery EVs for urban and general driving. And that, he says, is fine. But what he doesn't believe is that the BEV is the answer to all our future transportation needs, and increasingly others are coming to the same realisation.

'Myself and [Viritech co-founder] Timothy Lyons go back a long way,' says Faulks. 'We were bored in lockdown and kept talking about what we could do together, and Timothy eventually suggested hydrogen. I replied, "I think we can lightweight that."' Just a week later Viritech was born, and progress since then has been nothing but rapid. An initial round of private equity exceeded their expectations and the firm is now 12 months ahead of its original schedule, with the first mule car built, a headquarters based within the famous MIRA complex near Nuneaton along with access to MIRA owner Horiba's extensive facilities and hundreds of engineers, a rapidly expanding staff, and relationships with most of the required major suppliers. And that's not to mention Faulks' work with governmental departments



and other bodies around the implementation of hydrogen as a viable fuel for the future.

The Viritech powertrain is relatively easy to understand, but hugely complicated in detail. As is the norm with a hydrogen fuel cell system, hydrogen stored in a tank is fed to the cell, creating electrical energy and the only waste product, which is water. However, the Apricale's stack, as it's referred to, is used as a primary power source, not as a range-extender, and morevoer, it's 'turbocharged' in that oxygen is forced in under pressure via twin compressors, raising power to 300kW (402bhp). An interesting by-product of this is that it gives the vehicle it is fitted to its own authentic 'voice', rather than just the whine and artificial noises of pure EVs; it might even chuff and wheeze like a Group A touring car.

In traditional fuel-cell vehicles the hydrogen tank is simply bolted in, at the expense of weight. In the Apricale, the tank is used as a stressed part

'IT MIGHT EVEN CHUFF AND WHEEZE LIKE A GROUP A TOURING CAR'

of the structure (meaning it effectively does two jobs), enabling the rear bulkhead of the carbonfibre monocoque to be much thinner than it would otherwise need to be. Many people still picture the Hindenburg disaster when hydrogen is mentioned, but as Faulks says, storing it in a tank safely was understood by the Victorians and their steam boilers, and Apollo used it on the moon. Every pressure vessel for hydrogen has a failure mode that means it leaks before it could explode, and the SAE has a clearly defined standard for filling tanks, unlike the myriad of chargers that sometimes make accessing the EV charging network befuddling.

So how is the rest of the Apricale's four-figure bhp output produced? 'We look at energy on the vehicle in a similar way to F1,' explains Faulks. 'We have an electrical energy store, in this case a lithium battery with cells similar to an F1 car's ERS set-up, so we have really high charge and discharge rates, and we can deploy up to 600kW [805bhp] when we need it, plus the 200 to 300kW [260-402bhp] from the fuel stack at the same time, so over 1207bhp in total.'

As the Apricale's range is in no way linked to the charge of the battery, the battery itself is small and light at 5.6kWh, and is always run in the zone where it's at its happiest, so it won't age or get damaged, unlike a traditional EV battery that has to put up

with charge levels ranging from 100 to 0 per cent.

The energy management system that runs all this is christened Tri-Volt. It is perhaps the most complex and clever part of all. Essentially there are three operating modes. In urban driving or traffic congestion the Apricale (or a truck) is purely electric, leveraging all the advantages of such propulsion – quiet, high torque, zero emissions. For a truck, running in a connected environment and/or using GPS, the system will ensure the battery is full before reaching the area of slow-moving traffic. Mode two is steady-state running, where the vehicle uses just the fuel stack, thereby negating the need for the large and heavy batteries required by a BEV. And then mode three is where everything works together. In a truck that would be moving away from rest, or dealing with an incline; in the Apricale that will be for maximum acceleration, or running on a track.

Filling the tank with hydrogen takes between six and seven minutes, and there's no plug-in element to the battery set-up, because the battery can harvest energy so effectively. It's the opposite of a current hybrid car, where the dashboard display tells you energy is going back into the battery when braking hard but the range barely seems to move in the positive direction. The expected range of the Apricale is 300 miles in normal driving and around 200 when being worked hard on track.

Viritech's home is a new unit just next to the flyover that spans MIRA's high-speed bowl. Inside there is a dedicated electronics manufacturing department, a simulation room, a breakout area with fake grass and palm trees, and a workshop where currently two cars sit. One of these is the company's first prototype, a 2009 Porsche Cayman with its flat-six removed and a fuel stack and basic tank installation in its place. It's not a prototype for the Apricale as such, merely a test bed for the type of powertrain technology that the Apricale will use. In an amusing nod to the history of the Porsche marque, this stack is simply air cooled – unlike the Apricale with its intercooler and forced induction.



I drive the Cayman briefly, and perhaps the biggest compliment I can pay it is that it's a non-event, almost silent, and smooth, which for a very first proof of concept is admirable. The long gearing (a carryover) means initial acceleration is sluggish, but once it gets going it's swift enough, and you could easily use it to commute to work, or go to the shops. Its ultimate power isn't quite up there with the ICE original, but that doesn't matter (further development would take it there). Ths car's job is to test the theory, and most of all to verify the work Viritech is doing on the simulation software that will enable its super-trick Tri-Volt system to manage the workings of the complex powertrain. The more data verified as accurate, the better and more trusted the simulations can be and the faster the development cycle.

Above: hydrogen tank will become a stressed member in the Apricale. **Below left:** Towler gets behind the wheel of the company's impressive Cayman prototype

The second prototype, based on a Radical that's being stripped in the workshop during our visit, will have a much more representative powertrain inserted amongst its unsuspecting tubes, and looks set to be a rocket. Beyond that, Faulks aims to have the first proper Apricale, the XP1, up and running during 2022, with full production cars from 2023. Major technical partners should be named shortly, with a second round of funding imminent as well.

I'm trying to imagine what 1200bhp in a car that weighs under a ton might feel like. It won't be like a Bugatti Chiron Super Sport or a 2000bhp battery-electric hypercar; it might be a bit like a current F1 car or, as keeps coming to mind, that time when Mark Blundell took pole by over six seconds for the 1990 Le Mans 24 Hours when the wastegates on his Nissan R90C (900kg-ish, briefly 1100bhp-plus) jammed open. It's not just the power-to-weight, it's the relationship between power and weight that's key.

The Apricales will be built to single vehicle type approval, the exact requirements for a hydrogen vehicle being worked out between Viritech and the government at the moment. It won't have airbags or need to be fully crash tested, thus keeping costs realistic for a tiny company, but the monocoque is being built to full FIA LMP crash regs, so it will be exceptionally strong. The glint in Matt's eye when Le Mans is mentioned potentially gives a clue to ambitions on the track.

We'll bring you more of the Viritech story as it develops, but for now, the future of real driver's cars suddenly looks that bit brighter.



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SCD PARTNER

Trustpilot

TVR breaks the silence

Nearly a decade after taking control of TVR and five years since the new Griffith made its debut, Les Edgar and his senior team bring **evo** up to date with the firm's progress



'IF WE HADN'T DONE WHAT WE DID, TAKE a brave step and leapfrog a few stages you would normally go through before you produce a road-going thing that you can drive around a track and take up and down the road; had we not done that, we would be in a lot more of a state in terms of timing.' Les Edgar, chairman of TVR since he took over Britain's beefiest sports car brand in 2013, is in a bullish and open mood when we sit down before the end of 2021 along with CEO Jim Berriman and operations director John Chasey to get up to speed on all things TVR.

That decision to build, at huge expense, a driveable, working prototype new Griffith was not only to prove the concept to themselves but also to customers, investors and other stakeholders behind TVR's rebirth. 'We can jump in it and say: "We'll bring the car to you." You can hear it and see it and feel it and drive it. And I think that's made a huge difference in terms of promoting it,' continues Edgar.

'Especially if you speak to someone not in the industry. You can't show them a mule car,' adds Berriman, who joined Edgar at TVR after a career at Rover Group that saw him bring the Land Rover Freelander and Mk3 Range Rover to production, followed by a stint at Rolls-Royce as part of the team responsible for the Phantom.

For many outside TVR this approach has left the

'LIFE GETS MORE COMPLICATED WHEN ONE OF YOUR BACKERS IS THE WELSH ASSEMBLY'

by STUART GALLAGHER



firm open to questions regarding its viability. After all, it had a finished car built on Gordon Murray's innovative iStream chassis and a crate engine from Ford ready to go. But crucially it had no factory to build it in and no workforce. Above all, how was it all going to be paid for?

'It's rarely a case of "They must be doing brilliantly because they're not saying anything"', says Edgar, who comes across as someone who has fast-tracked the automotive industry course on how to resurrect a car brand. 'The key thing is everything takes longer, from deciding how to do the car with Gordon [Murray] to working with shareholders.'

Life gets more complicated when one of your backers is the Welsh Assembly, which is providing a factory in the Ebbw Vale area of south Wales. All three men express how supportive the Assembly has been, but rules around state aid and funding meant that work on the factory – which started as a refurbishment project but became a full strip-down and rebuild – was delayed, which didn't help Edgar and his team when it came to raising investment.

'We got into a bit of a chicken-and-egg scenario,' he says. 'We explained that our investment case would be more attractive if work was already underway with the factory, and it took more time to get agreement that work could start ahead of our next round of investment and recruiting staff.' Work

Above: 2022 TVR management team. From the left, chief executive officer Jim Berriman, operations director John Chasey and chairman Les Edgar



started on the factory in July 2020 and investor conversations started to head in the right direction. Completion of the factory will see TVR take the keys during quarter one of 2022, which allows for both the installation of the iStream production facility and the first prototypes to be built.

'We're currently finalising how many prototypes we need,' says Berriman. 'We need to drive one into a wall, but we'll also need one for airbag and ABS testing, for example, that will need to be sent to a supplier – most likely Bosch – plus hot and cold weather test cars, powertrain, etc.' Like many smaller firms, they aren't in a position to build a prototype for every area of the Griffith's development, so each test mule will be required to carry out multiple roles. Development work will be undertaken by an as-yet-undisclosed third party.

The tasks that face the team – including operations director Chasey, who like Edgar has a technology background though his predominantly app-based – are not being taken lightly. One of the biggest challenges is to get the build-time for each car down to tens of hours rather than the many hundreds the one-off took – but without compromising quality. 'A car not starting or a door falling off is not acceptable,' says serial TVR owner Edgar. 'This was our starting point. It's why we are using proven components rather than trying to reinvent the wheel by, say, designing and manufacturing our own switchgear. Yes, it will look and feel like a bespoke component, but the switch will be from an OEM supplier, which will have been tested beyond anything we can better.'

This philosophy is also why the new Griffith will initially be powered by a Ford-supplied 5-litre V8; while the Speed Six engine was designed and built under Peter Wheeler's ownership, to replicate it today would be nigh-on impossible and make the project a non-starter from the get-go.

With keys to the factory and investor money in line, Edgar has also forged a partnership with a lithium mining company that will allow TVR to start looking at alternative powertrains in the future. EVs, hydrogen, and hydrogen fuel cell options are all up for discussion – so long as the end result is that the car feels and drives like a TVR, says Edgar. A mid-engined car wouldn't be dismissed either, nor a supercharged Griffith. A core attribute of the iStream model is that



Left and below:
Les Edgar and his senior managers (Jim Berriman, below left, and John Chasey) are confident the pieces are now in place to see the Griffith into production at TVR's Welsh factory

'DELIVERIES ARE FIRMLY SCHEDULED FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 2023'





it allows for (relatively) cost-effective changes to suit the desired powertrain and configuration, allowing for future product planning, which in turn leads to a sustainable future beyond V8s.

Naturally, both Brexit and Covid have had an effect on progress, the former focusing minds on the issues around funding the factory with taxpayers' money. Welsh leaders have also witnessed Ford closing its factory at Bridgend and Ineos deciding it wanted to build its reimagined British icon (the Defender-like Grenadier) in Portugal rather than, er, Britain. Factor-in Honda closing its Swindon factory over the border in England, plus the knock-on effect this had in the supply chain, and the delays, questions and debates over supporting a low-volume British sports car brand become a little easier to understand for those of us on the outside.

Edgar, Berriman and Chasey are determined to make TVR more relevant, both today and for the future. They are acutely aware that working to small series homologation rules means they can produce only 1075 examples of a 'type' – coupes and soft-tops are classed as types, so too an EV – and these volumes alone can only be used as a footing to future success and sustainability. But those numbers are also specific to territories such as the EU, so should they replicate their south Wales production template outside the EU the build numbers start from zero once more. So too the opportunities, say the team – a key factor when you consider that the drive to outlaw the sale of petrol-engined cars is predominantly an EU objective. But they are also better prepared than perhaps they were to face a future that has to include alternative energy sources. 'So long as we can produce a car that looks and drives like a TVR should, we will consider it,' says Edgar.

But this is all for the future – a long way in the future. Before alternative-powered TVRs and overseas production facilities, there's a factory in Wales that requires fitting out (planned to start in February) and staff to be recruited and trained to assemble the cars (set to start in the spring) before production and delivery of the first all-new TVR Griffith for 20 years, firmly scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2023. That will be a decade after Edgar embarked on his dream to reboot TVR, but that dream does at least feel as though it's taken a considerable step towards becoming reality.

Life after Peter

He was the man who transformed TVR from cottage car-maker into one of the world's great sports car marques. We chat to Peter Wheeler's family about his legacy and redeveloping the old factory site

DRIVE UP BRISTOL AVENUE IN BLACKPOOL today and you won't find much left of the place where Peter Wheeler and his team of mostly young, enthusiastic engineers and designers conceived, developed and built cars like the Griffith, Cerbera and Sagaris. Instead you'll find the works being replaced by rows of neat, new industrial units catering for a range of small businesses.

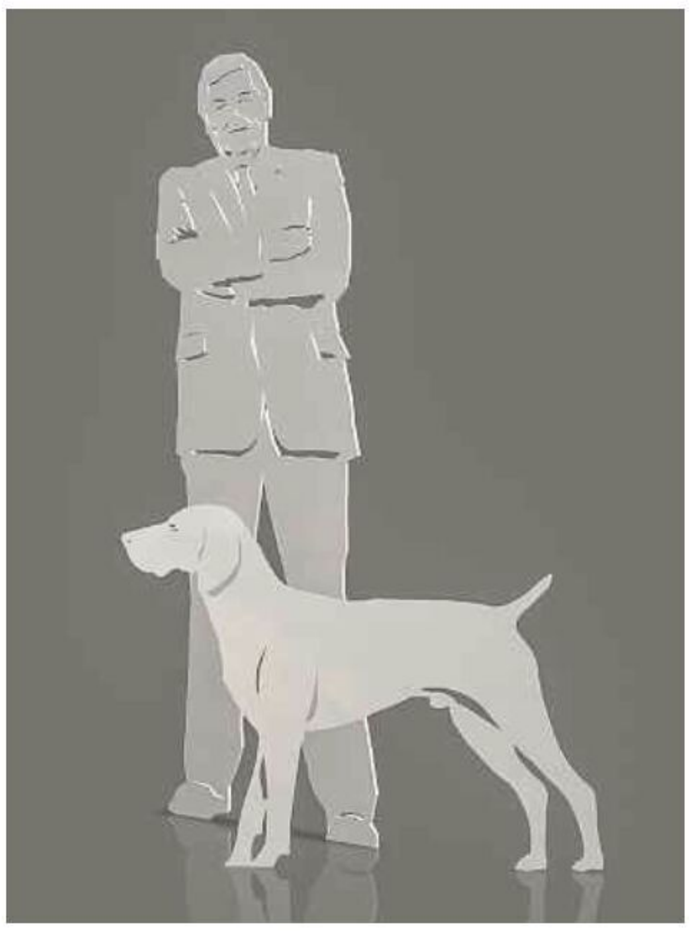
The development is called The Wheeler Hub and in a year or two it could become a destination for TVR and sports car fans generally once more because at its heart will be a life-size statue of 6ft 6in Peter Wheeler and his beloved dog, Ned.

The TVR works in Bristol Avenue was never a particularly handsome place, looking more like a factory making something mundane like kitchen equipment – probably because before it became the home of TVR Engineering in the early '70s that's exactly what it did. It looked vastly more attractive with sports cars crowding the parking spaces out front, particularly during the successful Wheeler era.

When Wheeler sold TVR Engineering to the young Russian Nikolai Smolenski in 2004, the deal didn't include the Bristol Avenue factory; Wheeler leased it to him. After TVR went into receivership in late 2006 the buildings were rented to a variety of businesses.

'A lot of the people that worked at TVR took on units and made their own businesses there,' says Wheeler's widow, Vicky Oyston (née Wheeler). 'Peter's mechanic still has his business there and up until recently there was a company doing chassis frames and bodywork, so TVR has never quite left the place.'

The statue of Peter and Ned, commissioned by Vicky, has been designed by Graham Browne, TVR's chief designer from '98 to 2005, and the drawings are now with Rotherham-based DNA Metalwork. The forms of Peter and Ned will be cut from 10mm thick 'weathering steel' on a state-of-the-art fibre-laser machine, the latest in intricate and clean cutting technology. Over time, exposed to the elements, the steel will gain an orange, oxidised surface finish just like Antony Gormley's massive artwork Angel of the North, which overlooks the A1 at Gateshead.



Above: a rendering for the life-size statue of Wheeler and his pointer, Ned, which will eventually form the centrepiece of the redeveloped TVR factory site

'BRISTOL AVENUE COULD BECOME A DESTINATION FOR TVR FANS ONCE MORE'

'As the statue is going in the middle of the site, it will be a while before we put it in place,' says Vicky. Work has just started on phase two. The roads around will have evocative names, too; there's already a Tuscan Way and other Wheeler-era models will get name-checked in the finished development, which will cover the entirety of the former TVR factory site.

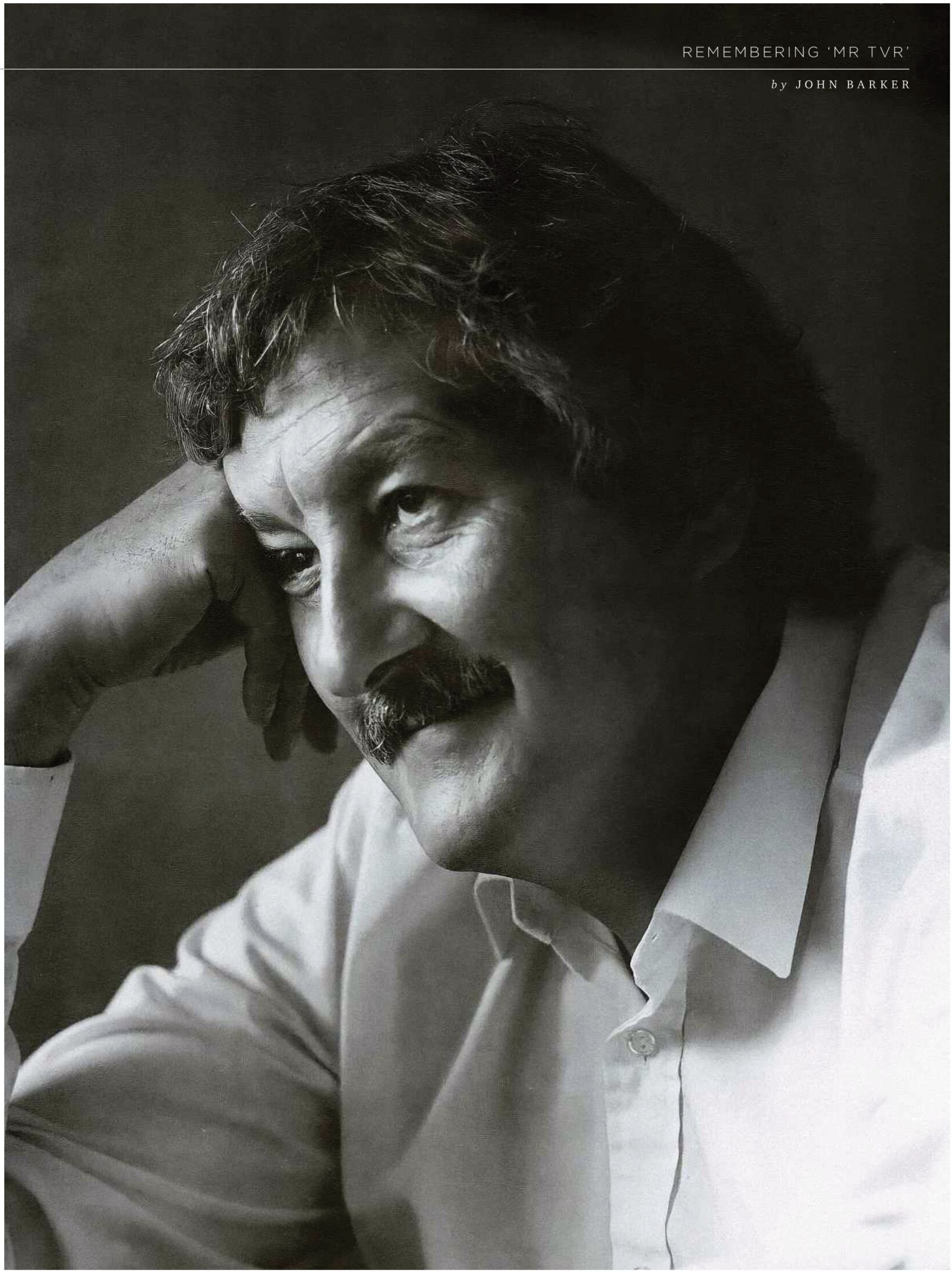
Bristol Avenue is a part of Vicky's heritage, too. She joined TVR in 1994, initially working with Ben Samuelson on the PR side. 'No-one had a job title as such, we filled in wherever needed, so I started looking after the Tuscan race weekends with Ben as well. Then, further along the line, I ended up as Peter's PA.' They later married and had three children together.

After Peter's death in 2009, Vicky ensured his last projects were completed: the amphibious Scamander and the 5000M that had been built for him by ex-TVR employees for historic racing. 'We still have Peter's Tuscan Challenge racer, number eight, and the 5000M,' says Vicky. 'Joe is desperate to get out in that somewhere!'

Joe, 17, is the youngest of the offspring and last year competed in the ultra-competitive Ginetta Juniors race series, finishing in the top ten and earning the accolade of 'top overtaker' having gained an impressive 96 places over the season.

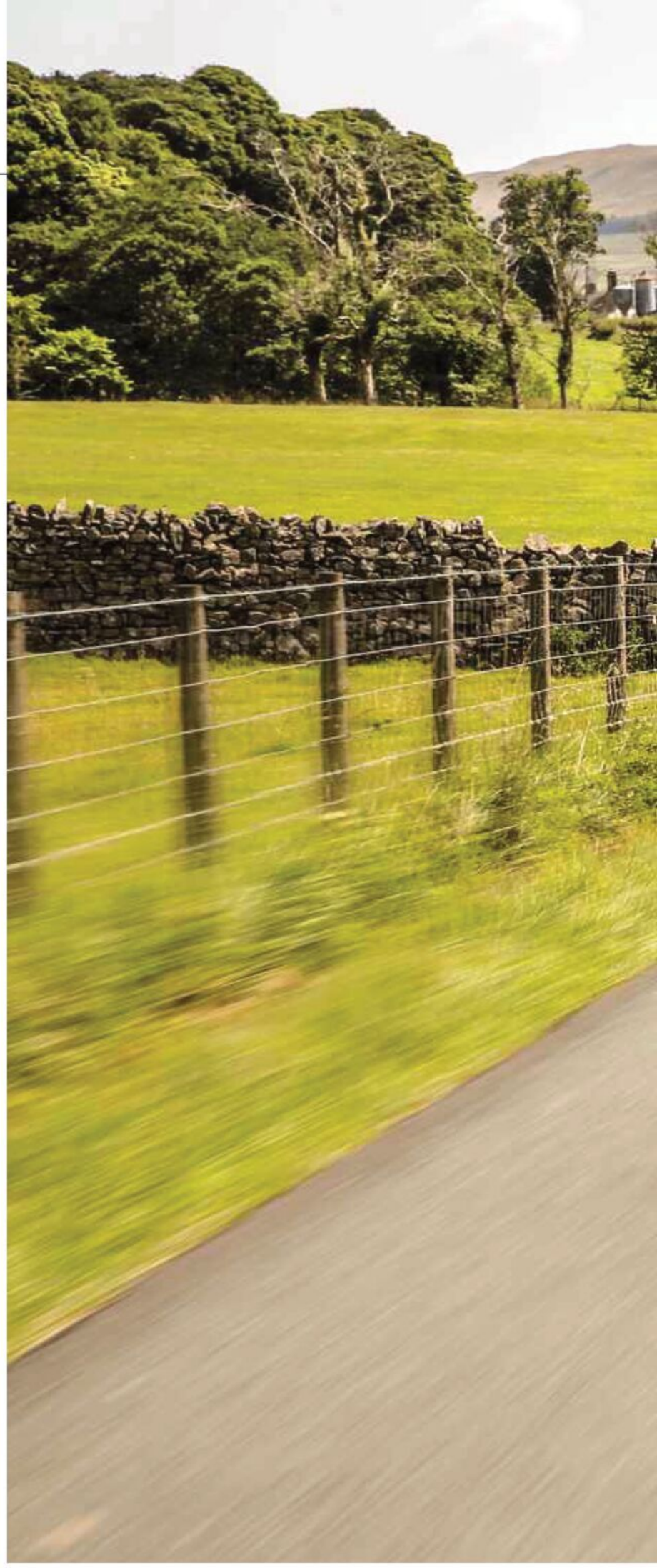
REMEMBERING 'MR TVR'

by JOHN BARKER









Above: part of the new business park, named The Wheeler Hub, being built on the old TVR factory site. **Right:** Peter's widow, Vicky (right), with two of their three children, daughter Anne and son Joe

Next year he's moving up to Ginetta GT4s, running alongside Freddie Tomlinson, son of Ginetta boss Lawrence Tomlinson.

Joe is fully aware of his father's legacy, partly because since the age of five he has owned one of the best cars created by the company: the black Sagaris in the picture on the right. On a summer's day back in 2010 he went with his sisters and mum to a local TVR dealership to choose a car. Flanking Joe's Sagaris are the Tuscan chosen by Elizabeth (24) and the Cerbera chosen by Anne (22).

'It was the year after Peter passed. Obviously, everything had been difficult,' says Vicky, 'but I took them along to Hexham Horseless Carriages and let them choose, so that they'd have something to remember Peter by. And they remember going and they remember choosing the cars.'

'Yeah, I remember,' says Joe. 'Mum wouldn't tell me what we were going to do, so it was a big shock when I got there. I was so young at the time, I had no idea. It was quite a strange experience. I think I chose the Sagaris because, looking at all of them, it's the most crazy, childish one, isn't it? I'm quite happy with my choice!'

Joe's not the only chip off the old block, though, as Vicky explains. 'Elizabeth went into engineering like Peter and is doing a PhD in biomedical engineering at Imperial College London. Annie would like to do some rallying but she's been so busy; she's just finished her degree and is about to start her master's in biomedicine at Manchester Uni, but is still aspiring to rally in the future. She regularly comes to the racing and if she had time in her life, I think she'd start rallying.'

While his sisters are now old enough to be insured to drive their TVRs on the road, so far Joe – who is doing his A-levels alongside his racing – has only been able to drive his Sagaris up and down a few private roads on the family estate. This is despite passing his test first time (after just one lesson, on the day before the test) and now having three seasons of racing behind him. 'He's been driving stuff around the estate since he could walk,' says Vicky.

'It's quite weird,' says Joe, 'I only started talking when I was about five – I think my sisters did the talking for me! – so I was actually driving before I could construct a sentence!' His first season was in a Citroën Saxo in the JSCC – the Junior Saloon Car Championship – when he was 15. But when he moved into Ginetta Juniors he didn't appreciate how competitive it would be.

The series is part of the British Touring Car Championship package and gets live race coverage on ITV4, giving it a serious profile. He discovered that most of his rivals had been karting since they could walk and some had gone as far as learning to drive the Ginetta Junior for up to 18 months before entering their first race.

'The first 20 are usually covered by a second in qualifying,' says Joe. 'Everything you can think of counts. The level that the series is at right now is crazy. The cars are quite hard to drive; speaking to people who've done it and moved into Porsches, they say it's one of the hardest championships.'

'IF JOE HAS HIS WAY, IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE WE SEE THE WHEELER NAME NEXT TO A TVR ON AN ENTRY LIST AGAIN'





The unique 5000M that Joe is keen to exercise can claim to be the last TVR built in the Bristol Avenue works. When the factory was first converted into industrial units, Wheeler trusted three ex-TVR employees with their business there to build the 5000M, his last race car.

With its 400bhp, 4.7-litre Ford V8, it gave Wheeler exactly the sort of car that suited his driving style, which he once described as 'applying copious amounts of power along the straights, braking early, letting everyone catch up and then disappearing again on the next straight'! Quite a contrast with Ginetta Juniors, which are all about slipstreaming and preservation of momentum, but if Joe has his way it won't be long before we see the Wheeler name next to a TVR on an entry list again.

Above: the Tuscan, Sagaris and Cerbera that the three Wheeler children chose to remind them of their father.
Left: son Joe leads the pack in the Ginetta Juniors race series

MY LIFE & CARS

Ian Callum

Designer and car collector

Best-known for his designs for Aston Martin and Jaguar, Ian Callum looks back over a distinguished career and talks about his own eclectic collection of cars

by BRETT FRASER
PORTRAITS *by* ASTON PARROTT

YOU KNOW YOU'RE GOING TO GET ON well with Ian Callum, designer of the Aston Martin DB7, Vanquish and DB9, and for 20 years design boss at Jaguar, when he tells you he once had a Sierra RS Cosworth as a company car while simultaneously owning a Citroën 2CV. 'I loved that Cosworth, oh my goodness,' enthuses Callum.

There was a certain amount of envy from the softly spoken Scot's fellow managers at Ford, he recalls. 'A lot of the guys asked: "How have you got that?" So I said that I'd just filled in some forms and ordered it and they could do the same. They said: "But we can't afford it." I replied: "I can't afford it either!"

'But I was a genuine car guy and I simply had to have that Cosworth. I had it for about a year and a half and went everywhere in it. It was just amazing. You were supposed to return it after six or nine months with no more than 10,000 miles on them. I kept getting letters from the company car guys saying that I had to return it – this went on for ages and I eventually handed it back with 30,000 miles on it, so I got my money's worth.'

Callum's fascination with cars and his passion for drawing them emerged from a very young age, he recounts. 'From the age of about three I would draw stuff around the house – TV sets, radios, mechanical things. Then one day I decided that I loved cars. I think my grandfather may have had something to do with that as he had a keen interest in them and encouraged me. At our house in Dumfries I used to stand at the gate at the bottom of the garden and watch all the cars go by.

'One day I saw a Porsche 356 drive past, a silver one, and I realised it was something remarkable and to my eyes very beautiful. I remember on my first day at primary school telling my teacher that when I grow up I'm going to be a car designer. She looked at me rather condescendingly and sent me back to my desk.'

There would be many setbacks in achieving that goal, but Callum had utter conviction car design was his destiny. 'That certainty turned my younger years into a race – I had to get through all this other stuff so that I could go off and do what I really wanted to do. School was a formality I had to put up with. My school was academically driven so the idea that I wanted to study art instead of French baffled them.

'I told them I wanted to take art and engineering, but for the life of them they couldn't understand the connection. So I used to say to them that perhaps they should go and ask Leonardo da Vinci about it.'

With a degree of prescience, in 1968, aged 14, Callum sent some of his designs to William Heynes, Jaguar's technical director: Heynes' reply confirmed the need for further education in art and engineering. Explaining his interest in Jaguars, Callum says: 'In my youth Jaguars were the most exotic cars that somehow seemed attainable.







And the E-type was the essence of style. It was an inspiration and made me want to create very stylish cars. Later on, that thought was always emotive for me as a Jaguar designer, as I tried to educate people that Jaguar is about style first and foremost.'

Regular school done and dusted, Callum enrolled at the School of Transportation and Design in Coventry, though it would prove a disheartening experience. 'There was a fuel crisis going on and we were discouraged from designing cars,' Callum sighs. 'They wanted us to design other forms of transport, stuff like rollerskates, so I got little car education or car design training. Peter Stevens [car designer and now a good mate of Callum's] came in a couple of times to show us how to draw cars, but against the backdrop of the time, it felt almost politically incorrect.'

A year into 'this disappointing experience' Callum quit and returned to Scotland where he did an art course in Aberdeen and then an industrial design course at the Glasgow School of Art. 'That saved me,' he confesses. 'I spent three fantastic years at Glasgow and got back into my car design. I produced some good projects with thought-provoking ideas behind them.'

With his talent now shining, Callum earned sponsorship from Ford to attend the Royal College of Art's automotive design course in London. But Callum reveals that he'd actually been hoping for a job with Vauxhall. 'In those days Wayne Cherry was running the show at Vauxhall and had done things like the Firenza and the SRV concept car, an incredible piece of design. So I tried getting a job there and was even endorsed by Cherry to go to the Arts Centre California [America's answer to the RCA], but Vauxhall was reluctant to employ me at that time.'

While studying at the RCA, Callum acquired his first car. 'It was a Volvo P544 that I bought from Peter Stevens, who was a lecturer at the RCA. He'd hot-rodded the car and it had proper American mag wheels on it, although it didn't have an engine. I found one and fitted it and thought that funny old Volvo was so cool.

'But it only did 12 to the gallon so I couldn't afford to run it. After that it was a Mini Clubman, 998cc, that I used to drive back to Scotland in. Then I had a Vauxhall Chevette, believe it or not. I'd fallen in love with the Chevette HS2300 – I couldn't afford one of those but thought I could drop a 2.3 lump into a regular Chevette. You know what you're like at that age, full of dreams...

'A Morris Minor pickup with a Sprite engine was next, followed by a Beetle GT which again I bought off Peter Stevens – that was written off when a Mini crashed into it. I bought a Beetle convertible in Holland, did it up and then my wife and I toured Europe in it. Mad! When I joined Ford and tired of the labour that goes into old car ownership I bought a Mk1 XR2, which was a tremendous little car. I traded it in for a Mk2, a car I'd actually done some work on.'

By 1979 Callum was working full-time at Ford in Dunton, which wasn't the dream job he'd envisioned. 'It was a bleak, rainy day in Dunton, I'd just been given a steering wheel to design for the Transit, and I had a moment where I asked myself if this is really what I wanted to be doing. But it was all part of growing up. You go through that phase in your late teens and early 20s where you're fighting with life and you want to make sure you fulfil your dreams properly.'

Those clouds of gloom dispersed when Callum devised a cunning plan. 'I learnt how to make a noise – the squeaky wheel gets the most oil...

Clockwise from above: Callum's reworking of his original Aston Vanquish; his beloved Ford Model B hot-rod, and his parents' Ford Zephyr V4, which was early transport in his student days. Current collection includes RS2000, XJ Coupe, modified 993-gen 911, souped-up Mini, early Vanquish, and uprated TR6, which is the car he says he drives the most




UHK 878E


JPY 404N




EU54 WPE


TJA 643R







I didn't moan so much as make the point that I should be doing exterior design, it's what I need to do. So what they did was ship me around the world: I don't know if that was to give me experience or just to get rid of me.

'I ended up working in Australia, in Japan and in Italy, where I was manager at Ghia. Ford looked after me very well and the experience was invaluable. You learnt how to design things at a cost – style is very important to a company like Ford because the cars sell as much on style as substance. Because the cars are relatively inexpensive you have to maximise the effect of the metal and interior as much as you can for the buck.'

After enjoying the fun and glamour of his life at Ghia in Turin, an eventual return to Dunton and a Mondeo steering wheel design was a deal-breaker for Callum and in 1990 he took a job with Tom Walkinshaw at TWR to establish a design studio. 'Tom was Scottish so we got on really well,' laughs Callum. 'And he was very aesthetically astute so realised that a design studio would be a shop window for the company's engineering talents.

'When ex-colleagues from Ford came to see me in my little TWR industrial unit in Oxford I could see their questioning looks, but I remember saying to them: "Don't judge me on this, judge me by what comes out the other end." And we did some great cars at TWR – the Aston DB7 was the making of me. The Vanquish then cemented my reputation.'

Largely because of the Vanquish, in 1999 Ford's global head of design, J Mays, who was shaking up the Ford group's design pool, poached Callum to be chief designer at Jaguar. 'When I arrived at Jaguar my first work was actually the DB9 [at the time Jaguar and Aston were both Ford-owned], which I was glad to do because a lot of the new Jaguar stuff was already done for the next five years.'

Initially involved with facelifts and derivatives of existing models, by 2006 Callum and his team started to reveal to the world Jaguar's new design language. First out of the traps was the XK, followed at frequent intervals by the XF, all-new XJ, F-type, XE, F-Pace and I-Pace, a prodigious output interwoven with facelifts and show-stopping concept cars. With hindsight we can wonder at the scale of that achievement, but Callum reveals that not all the designs were well-received internally. 'To me the XK was very much part of the traditional Jaguar family, a good follow-up to the XK8, but a couple of the executives did not like that car at all because it had "sharp edges" on it.'

In 2019, after two decades steering the design direction of Jaguar, Callum stepped down from the role. That was also the year he was awarded a CBE 'for services to the British car industry'. Interestingly, in my two lengthy conversations with the Scot, he never once mentions his gong, which may be modesty or could be because he much prefers talking about cars.

'WE DID SOME GREAT CARS AT TWR – THE DB7 WAS THE MAKING OF ME'

He doesn't just talk about them, he owns them. 'I've bought cars I wanted when I was younger but couldn't afford. My XJ Coupe, for example, which is such a beautiful thing. I always hankered after a 911 and the 993 was one of my favourites. It's modified to be more like an RS. And I've got a TR6, uprated, which is the car I drive most.

'I've loved hot-rods since I was a teenager, so have a Ford Model B hot-rod and an old Chevy C10 pickup truck. I've had numerous rubbish Minis but in 1995 I bought a year-old car that I still have. I owned a Mk1 Escort RS2000 for a while, and a genuine Chevette HS2300 too. I've also got an Alfa Giulia coupe, which is being built up with a twin-spark engine. I'm building a 2.2 Porsche 914, too, which is proving to be a pain in the arse.

'I've got a VW T6 van which I've lowered, put big 20in wheels on it. Oh, and I've got a Vanquish as well,' says Callum, suddenly remembering one of his greatest designs. 'My Mk2 Jaguar restomod was a labour of love. It was built by Classic Motor Cars to an extraordinarily high specification. We tried to turn it into a business but it was too expensive. I had to sell my car to recoup development costs – literally hundreds of thousands. Shame, it was a fantastic bit of kit.'

Rather than retire, in 2020 Callum launched a design and engineering consultancy called, appropriately, Callum. One of its first creations is the Vanquish 25, a fresh take on the V12-engined Aston coupe, which has been thoroughly updated visually and mechanically, inside and out. 'When I started Callum I wanted to expand our portfolio beyond just cars, into areas such as furniture, for instance. And we're now working on a fairly eclectic mix of projects such as a lounge chair and others that I can't really talk about.

'But with that goal well under way, I'm relishing doing more car work again, such as the recent Prodrive Hunter T1+ and a few more you will see soon.' His younger self would thoroughly approve.

Above: Callum with his Ford Model B, one of several hot-rods he's owned. Despite reaching retirement age last year, he shows no signs of slowing down – his eponymous design company is involved with everything from cars to furniture

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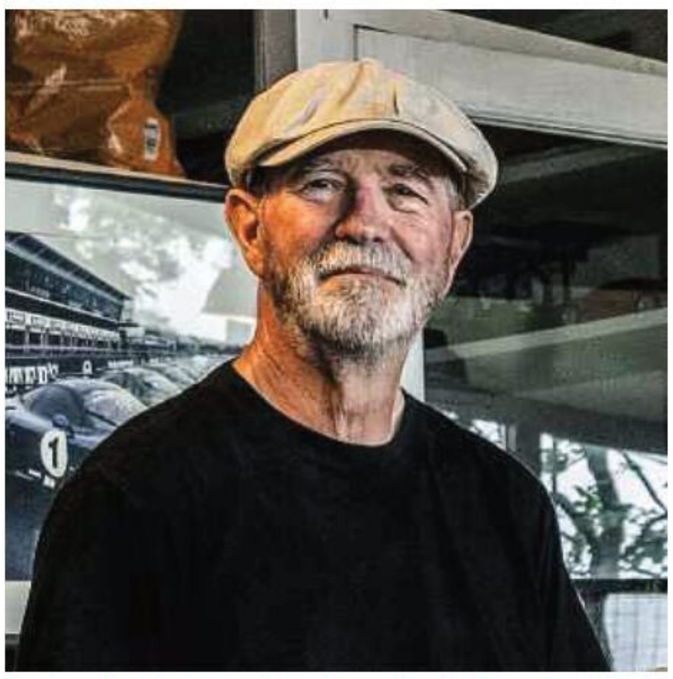
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PETER STEVENS DESIGN BRIEFING

Part 5 The dashboard

Form and function are both critical in the design of a car's dashboard but current trends are putting cost ahead of safety, argues Stevens

BACK IN THE DAYS OF HORSE-DRAWN vehicles, those who sat on the seat at the front of the carriage endured a pretty unpleasant experience in bad weather when the horse threw up water and mud from its hooves. Country people fitted a barrier of either wood, leather or sacking to stop this muck from being 'dashed up'. The first known use of the term dash-board (hyphenated in those days) dates from 1847 and it was carried over when carriages became horseless. One of the earliest automobiles was called the 'Curved Dash' Oldsmobile, a name derived from a small horse-drawn buggy.

This panel in front of the driver and passenger became a sensible place to fit various bits and pieces that the early motor car needed; there were switches, little dash-pots for oiling parts of the engine or chassis and, later, instruments. Since all cars built at the beginning of the past century were fundamentally unreliable the driver was required to keep an eye on temperatures, pressures, oil feeds, levels of liquids, etc, even though there was not much he could do about bad news except stop!

By the 1920s the dashboard was a grand piece of either wood or aluminium and very much the focus of attention. There'd be a huge number of gauges or instruments, a multitude of switches (often unmarked), a maker's plaque and often a Saint Christopher for those who had more faith in an ancient traveller than in the manufacturer. The layout was often chaotic with a wide variety of unmatched instruments, bezels and graphic styles. It was the American cars of the 1940s and 50s that became much more style-conscious, featuring Art Deco layouts with highly creative graphic styles for both letters and numbers.

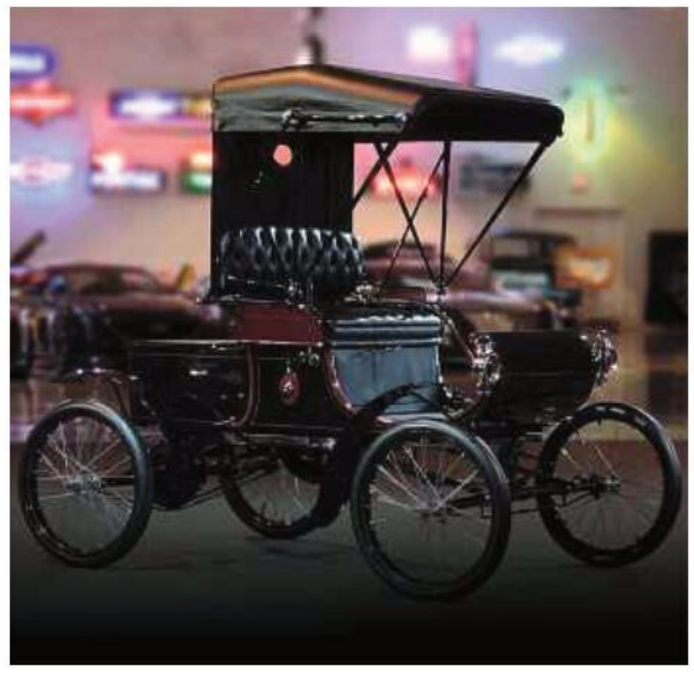
It wasn't until 1959 that there was a move away from classic circular dials for instruments: both De Soto and Buick introduced the 'ribbon style' speedometer where the needle moved horizontally across a narrow strip of numbers; sometimes a rotating drum behind the needle gave the appearance of the background changing from black to red. The 1959 Mercedes 'Fintail' turned the idea through 90 degrees and had a needle that moved vertically upwards as speed increased. Closer to home, in the early 1960s the Austin and Morris 1100 had rather cheap-looking horizontal ribbon speedometers, though they had become something of a dead end by that time.

For a period in the 1980s and '90s, large LCD or Liquid Crystal Displays were used for the digital speedometers of a number of cars. At Lotus, when we discussed instrument displays, there was a common feeling that what the keen driver needed was to be able to quickly see a rate of change of the position of a rotating needle: quicker and safer than staring at changing numbers. In 1983, Vauxhall and Opel's Monza model and a few others presented the rev-counter, or the 'engine revolution speed indicator' as the pedantic liked to say, as a kind of vertical bar graph that looked like a torque curve. There were two objectives here: one was to give the appearance of modernity and the other was to save money because conventional instruments were, and still are, expensive pieces.









In the late 1990s Lexus developed a stunning piece of 'theatre' for its instrument display. When the driver switched on the ignition the display went through a number of separate phases before showing that it was ready for your next command. I always found this production to be quite charming.

Passenger safety requirements such as driver and passenger head impact regulations, which dictate the edge radii and protrusion of any part of the car's interior, have an influence on facia and switchgear design. Flick-up and down switches, push button switches and rotary switches can still be used, though they can tend to look like the controls from an ancient Belling electric cooker. Around the turn of the last century, to get rid of all these switches, BMW thought to captivate buyers with its iDrive system. The driver was expected to look at a central screen whilst rotating and/or pushing a large circular knob, like something off a cheap Korean hi-fi, in order to carry out even simple tasks like turning up the cabin heat. It wasn't particularly well received...

Then came the wretched touchscreen. The idea was comparatively low-cost and came from mobile phone technology. A number of different screen displays can be called up to control most driving functions. Anyone who has tried to text whilst travelling on a British train or rural bus will know how hopeless the results of typing a simple message can be. To be in charge of a two-ton vehicle at speed with one hand, whilst attempting to alter some important control with the other seems to me to be rather stupid.

Clockwise from above right: early motor cars like the Oldsmobile were the first to feature a 'dash-board'; by the 1920s they were a key feature of a car's interior; today's touchscreens aren't Stevens' idea of progress

One of the main problems with the touchscreen is that the user gets no feedback from their action, once again requiring the driver to take his or her eyes off the road. And who doesn't like the feel of a nice switch going 'click' so that you know that you have initiated the desired response!

'WITH A TOUCHSCREEN THE USER GETS NO FEEDBACK FROM THEIR ACTION'

Countering this we have head-up displays, as initially used on fighter jets and Apache helicopters and now quite common in performance cars, that either project an image of the instruments onto the inside of the windscreen or more cleverly project a virtual image some distance ahead of the driver so that their eyes do not have to adjust their focal length whilst alternating from looking way ahead to checking the vehicle's systems.

The question that car companies rarely ask themselves when it comes to interior design is: 'What are we trying to achieve here?' Safety must come first, whether it's informing the driver of speed, outside conditions or an impending mechanical disaster. Second, if the driver is pressing on and knows the characteristics of their car's engine, then a rev-counter is useful. The only other crucial bit of information is: 'Do we have enough stored energy in the car to get us to where we are headed?'

Back when I was working with Subaru on the high-performance versions of the Impreza, we had a discussion about incorporating a turbo boost pressure gauge. With perfect logic the Japanese engineers said: 'Why have a boost gauge when there is nothing the driver can do with that information?' They were absolutely right – simplicity is best.

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by RICHARD PORTER

DOA: VOLKSWAGEN GOLF A59

This 4WD homologation special with 400bhp potential could have rescued the Mk3 Golf's reputation

THE THIRD GENERATION VW GOLF DIDN'T seem set to become a memorable member of the dynasty. It arrived looking portly and drab and, while its forebears felt carved from mountains, the Golf 3 stank of pfennig pinching, a suspicion visibly underlined by a weedy catch on the upper glovebox lid that often caused it to flop open. The sporty models weren't much cop either, the GTI feeling flabby and the VR6 falling far short of its on-paper promise. All told, the third Golf was a disappointing affair, but it could have been so very different.

In early 1992, just a few months after the Golf 3's debut, Volkswagen commissioned a company called SMS – Schmidt Motorsport – to turn it into a rally car. At the time Schmidt was riding high as the outfit behind the factory-backed and all-conquering Audi V8 DTM cars and, though the Golf was far from its first rodeo, it decided to tackle the project by recruiting three of the engineers behind the championship-winning Toyota Celica GT-Four. Tasked with having the car ready for the 1994 WRC season, a small team at SMS got cracking under the unsentimental codename of Auftragsnummer 59 – order number 59 – or A59 for short.

VW's satellite design studio in Düsseldorf took care of the redesigned exterior, which featured swollen arches, a flicked up rear spoiler and new bumpers, all created to meet Group N regs so that customers could take their Golfs rallying in the showroom class, following in the wake of the factory's Group A effort. To keep weight in check, many of the new parts were made from Kevlar.

In VW's mind the mechanical starting point for the A59 was the four-wheel-drive Syncro version of the regular Mark 3, fitted with a 20-valve evolution of the supercharged EA827 four cylinder from the old Golf G60. SMS, however, had different plans. In an ideal world, it would have turned the engine 90 degrees so it sat lengthways, a luxury enjoyed by the rival Escort Cosworth since it was really a Sierra in an Escort-alike wrapper. VW's money people said no to such complete re-engineering but Schmidt went to town where it could, creating a new, state-of-the-art four-wheel-drive system with an electronically controlled centre differential, which in turn demanded a pricey reworking of the Golf Syncro transmission tunnel.

And the big spending didn't end there, because the motorsport experts quickly decided the old EA827 was inadequate for the job, its cylinder walls too thin to take massive boost, and replaced it with a brand-new 2-litre, 16-valve, turbocharged motor delivering 271bhp in road-going trim and targeting over 400bhp in Group A spec.

By April 1993 the all-new engine was ready, but by then times had changed at Volkswagen. In January of that year Ferdinand Piëch had taken charge of loss-making VAG and was on a mission to make savings wherever he could. A multi-million-dollar rallying programme was not what Herr Doktor ordered, nor indeed was a minimum requirement for 2500 road cars, especially once the accountants had looked at the bespoke engineering involved and forecast a showroom price three times that of a contemporary Golf GTI.

Instead, the plug was pulled after just two prototypes had been made, both of which have survived to this day. The first is little more than a show car powered by a Golf GTI engine and is still held by SMS at their HQ near Nuremberg. The second is a complete road-spec A59 cared for by the VW museum, which brought it back to running condition in the early 2010s. Occasionally it's allowed out to remind the world of a time when VW almost made the Mark 3 Golf exciting.



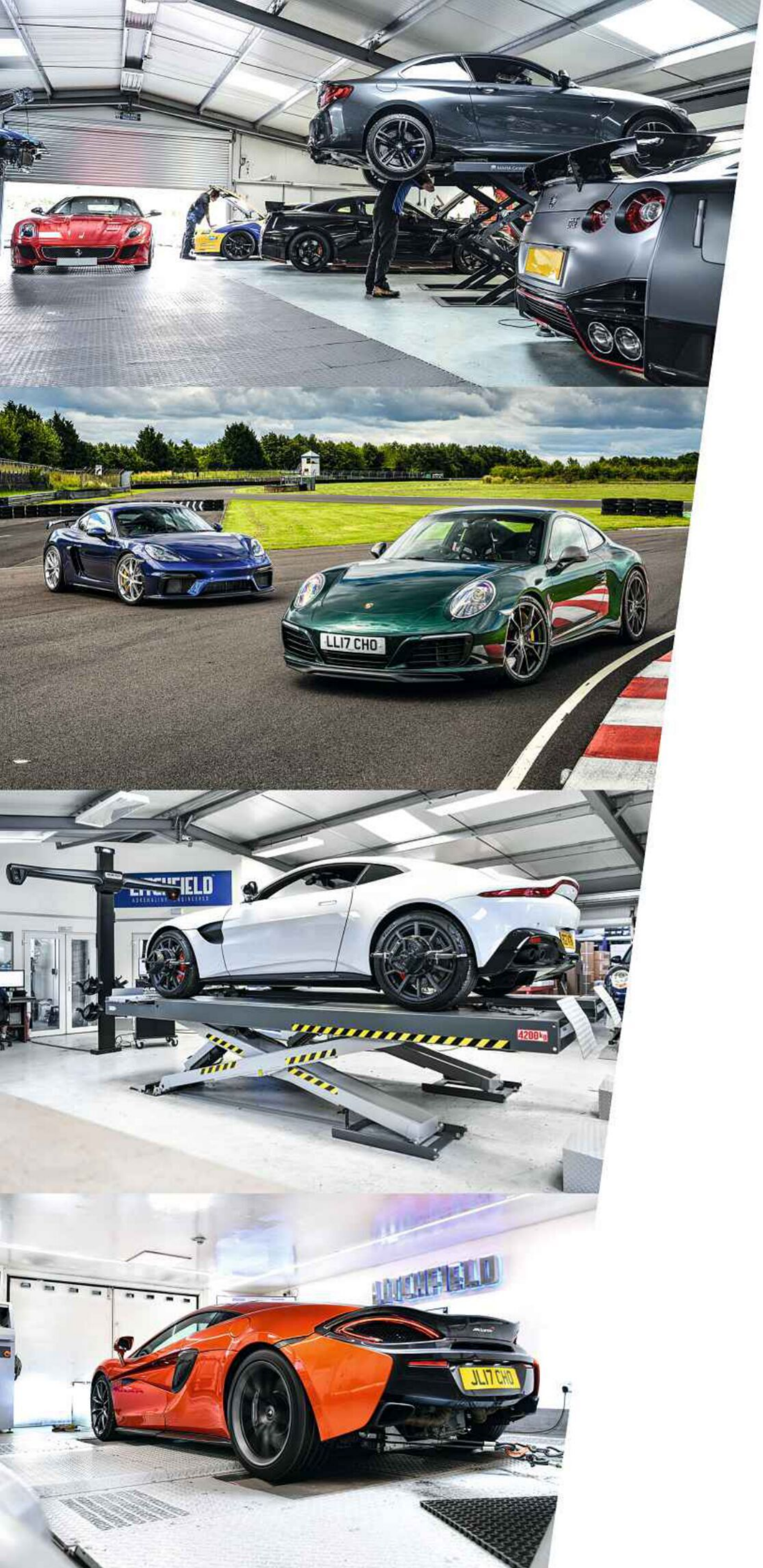
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INBOX





Past the peak

So the latest crop of supercars are too big, too heavy and have way too much horsepower? I've been getting subliminal messages to that effect through the pages of **evo** for some time now, and I couldn't agree more.

Why are manufacturers hell-bent on making even faster cars? I suspect they are not really for passionate enthusiasts like us. I've driven the recent GT3 RS and Aston Martin Vantage etc (not my cars, by the way) but they are an irrelevance because they are way too fast for the road, which makes them so frustrating.

Have we gone past the pinnacle of brilliant driver's cars? Yes, I think we probably have. The absolute delicacy of a 993/996/997 Carrera or GT3 has sadly passed. There are others, of course: F355, 550 Maranello and many more.

I think if you're in your 40s or 50-plus then maybe you feel comfortable with the past and our prime. Me? I love a simple recipe mostly, so what do I drive? A modified 997 C4S, semi-lightweight E-type coupe, a Rolls Shadow for wafting in and – try not to laugh – my latest purchase, a 1936 25/30 Rolls-Royce [pictured above]. They are all polar opposites purposely, but serve up the great thrill of driving.

Richard Skinner

Bubbles and bhp

Just to say thanks for another very enjoyable **evo** Car of the Year.

As of last year, I've made it a tradition to read eCoty cover to cover in the bath. Bubbles and bhp – lovely stuff. Only trouble was, this year's eCoty was so thorough with all its extra bells and whistles that the water was cold long before I was ready to get out. But it made it no less enjoyable – a welcome dose of escapism.

As a Scotsman who regularly takes his BBR 200 MX-5 (Mk3.5) through the Cairngorms in all kinds of weather, the idea of doing the same in your outrageous choice of metal was nothing short of the stuff of dreams. Can I have your job please?

Rory Gammell

Five star

eCoty 2021: fantastic story, wonderful winner. The M5 is such a special thing, going all the way back to the E28, so it's a sheer delight to see one win eCoty at last. It was also a shock that the GT3 didn't win.

Shame about the non-appearance of the Roma and GTAm, though. A shoot-out between those and the M5 CS in the new year perhaps? Please?

Marvellous extra subscriber content too. Thanks for everything.

Martin McMahon,
Kenilworth, Warwickshire

The way we were

I'm currently working from home, so have of course spent much of the day reading old copies of **evo**. Issue 050 from December 2002 has been especially entertaining.

It was no surprise to see things that are now banished to history, such as the introduction of a new TVR (unless I'm eventually proved wrong), a 200mph 'MG' and a double-page advert for cigarettes. Then again, some things never change, as was illustrated by one of your columnists moaning about how powerful road cars had become!

A classifieds page caused some heartache – how about a Lancia



LETTER OF THE MONTH

The next small thing

WELL DONE ON THE BEST ECOTY FOR YEARS (EVO 293).

I was in Scotland in the autumn enjoying the Highlands with a few friends, and our convoys passed near the Kylesku Bridge. You get used to seeing convoys up there – a bunch of Lotuses, Porsches, maybe MGs, and certainly campervans – but yours stood out for being a disparate bunch and also for being all new models. That's very unusual to see.

I completely agree with the sentiments in the eCoty test and especially Richard Meaden's column: new cars have become too big, too heavy, too fast. I took my Porsche Boxster S to Scotland and even it often seemed oversized. One friend left his R8 at home and took his old Vauxhall VX220 – he loved it. Less than a week after returning from our trip I found I had bought myself a Lotus Elise S1.

Perhaps I'll see you up in Scotland again next year. I'll be the one enjoying that little Lotus.

Tim Halket

The Letter of the Month wins a Straton watch

The writer of this month's star letter receives a Straton Daily Driver watch worth £220. 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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INBOX





Integrale Evo 1 for only £10,500? – while Stephen Bayley's contribution to a 'Sexiest Cars' feature was the source of much mirth. His photo was very reminiscent of Alan Partridge, as was the accompanying text, in which he extols the virtues of driving an automatic Citroën 'because you need one hand free for fornication'...

But the highlight of this edition was a quote from issue 009, contained within a '50 **evo** Moments' feature that looked back over the early years of the magazine. One of your contributors, identified only by their initials (an anagram of these being MR), described road testing a 996-generation Porsche 911 GT3 and admitted to having got it up to 145mph on 'a wet minor road' somewhere in Germany.

I'm still trying to decide if this behaviour embodies the true spirit of **evo** or if it was just daft and irresponsible. Maybe back then the two went hand in hand...

Peter Walton

Missing kink

Peter Stevens (Design Briefing, **evo** 292) has highlighted to me, as a long time M3 fan and fortunate owner, why the current M4 doesn't quite look right. No, it's not the grille, it's the missing 'Hofmeister kink' [above]. It's so clear the disappearance of this C-pillar feature is why the latest coupe has lost some of its visual heritage.

David Corkhill

Sign of the times

I read with interest your article on the Talbot Horizon Lotus (DOA, **evo** 291). I live not half a mile from the site of the mentioned Talbot factory in Scotland, and the car-loving residents of Paisley, Linwood and the surrounding area are still proud of this history.

There remains a reminder of this history on the railway bridge that passes by the site of the factory, advertising the 'Talbot Linwood Plant' as the 'Home of the Avenger & Sunbeam' [above]. The wording is very faded these days and there was a campaign a few years ago to have it restored, but unfortunately there was not much wind in the sails. It's a great shame that this automotive landmark could soon be lost for good.

Mark Logan

E-fail

I couldn't help smiling at Scott Holland's sniping at **evo** for supposedly being stuck in the past when it comes to EVs (Inbox, issue 292). As the Letter of the Month in the same issue argued, most of us need cars for the real world.

A motoring correspondent at one of the broadsheets recently decided to test the new Ford Mustang Mach-E by driving from a friend's house in the Lake District to their own home in Devon, 407 miles away. The total journey time was (are you sitting down?) 12 hours, of which six were spent doing the following: hunting for a charging point that wasn't broken or already in use; searching for a charging point that was advertised but didn't actually exist; attempting to download the app required to use a particular company's chargers, only to find the link to the app didn't work; waiting for an occupied charger to become free; and, when the writer was particularly lucky, actually charging the car, on one occasion for nearly 90 minutes.

So, Scott Holland, as I regularly have to drive 200-plus miles each way on business, I won't be embracing your electric future for some while yet.

Phil Thomas

Watches

The latest releases from the world of horology



Corniche Heritage Chronograph Monochrome

$485 cornichewatches.com

New from Swedish brand Corniche is this limited-edition version of its Heritage Chronograph model. It features a three-tone 'panda' dial comprising a brushed steel face, Tantalum grey hands and hour markers and black subdials. Just 200 will be made, each individually numbered on the side of the watch.



Roue CHR

$250 rouewatch.com

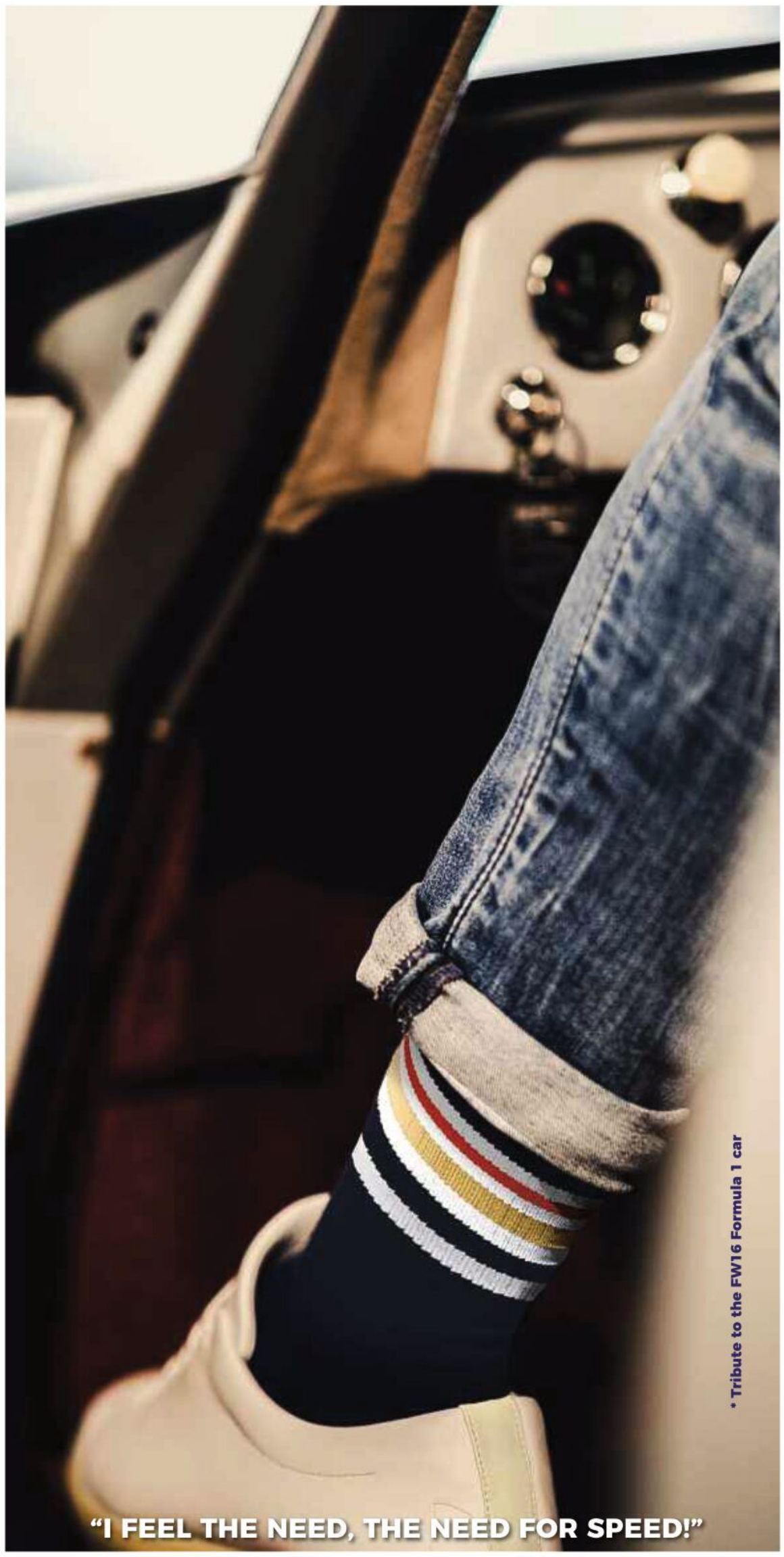
Roue's CHR model has returned with a revised look – the dial now hosts three subdials rather than two – and a trio of new colour schemes. Said to be inspired by original Lamborghini Miura hues, you can choose between orange, yellow and silver, with each limited to just 105 units. All versions come with two straps for the wearer to choose between: one perforated leather, the other silicone.



Raidillon 41-CiC-305

€3950 raidillon-watches.com

Established in 2001, Raidillon takes its name from the fearsome corner at Spa-Francorchamps and offers a range of watches that pair Belgian design with Swiss movements. This newest arrival combines the company's patented curved case design with a more traditional-style white and gold dial. Just 55 examples will be made.



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RICHARD MEADEN

Meaden vows to get more hands-on with cars. What could go wrong?

I'D LIKE TO START 2022 WITH AN APOLOGY. Throughout last year I developed a dreary habit of treating this column as an opportunity to moan. Mostly about how stupidly fast contemporary performance cars have become. Not without justification, I might add, but on the basis that nobody likes a buzzkill, from this day forward I promise to seek out the positives in things four-wheeled.

So what am I going to do about it? The easiest win on my to-do list is to spend less time on social media. Don't get me wrong, there's good stuff and good people on Twitter and Instagram, but I've come to question why I spend so much time scrolling through snapshots and soundbites from other people's lives when I could be investing those empty hours in making my own motoring life more fulfilling.

The rise (and rise) of social media means there's literally endless amounts of car content in which to immerse ourselves, but to be honest I think I'm a bit burned-out by it all. The more I consume, the less nourished I feel. Having given the matter some consideration, I think I need to disconnect from my phone and reconnect with cars in a fresh and stimulating way. Namely by learning how to work on them.

'I need to disconnect from my phone and reconnect with cars in a fresh and stimulating way'

Believe me, this is a wholly unexpected and quite possibly ill-advised development. One I suspect that's largely due to binge-watching car shows like *Fast 'n' Loud* or *Salvage Hunters: Classic Cars*, both of which leave me feeling inspired to get stuck in, even though I'm totally unqualified to do so. It's a slippery slope, but c'mon, how hard can it be?

Past experience of being egged on by seductive TV shows suggests the answer is 'very'. Having spent most of my 30s watching *Grand Designs* and *River Cottage* with the future Mrs Meaden, I spent my early 40s living in a clapped-out caravan and crapping in a Portaloo (affectionately christened the Turdis) while we spent a year and a half rebuilding a tumbledown wreck of a house.

Tempting though it is to attempt a Gas Monkey-style chassis chop and LS swap on Mrs M's Freelander, I'm actually just looking for the opportunity to roll up my sleeves and do some harmless tinkering. At least to begin with. Looking back, it has always bugged me that I've never had the confidence to take one of my own cars apart and trust myself to put it back together, but the stakes always seemed too high.

Once I passed my driving test I needed my car to reliably get me to and from work, so I had the perfect excuse not to meddle with it. When I bought a classic Mini I went a bit mad with tuning parts, but because I'd spent a lot of money I had qualified people do all but the simplest bolt-on jobs. Then once I started working on magazines I was always in brand new press cars.

Ironically, when I was in the position to take the plunge and buy myself a fun car it was a Caterham – the perfect machine to have a crack at building myself! Or so you might imagine. But, me being me, rather than opting for a basic model it was a full-on Fireblade Caterham bristling with all kinds of trick bits. Needless to say, I got a pro to build it.

This time around I don't have any excuses. I even have a couple of good mates who are extremely capable car builders and would be more than happy to show me the ropes. So, with the planets starting to align, my first challenge is to settle on a suitable subject vehicle.

A ratty old E36 or E46 Beemer would be fun, but it feels a bit too predictable. It'd doubtless be rotten as a pear and cost way more to fix than it would ever be worth. Let's swerve that, then. I have to say I keep returning to the idea of something old and simple (much like myself), so a decrepit Series 2A Land Rover might be an option. There are plenty of projects for sale, parts are widely available and aren't prohibitively expensive, and they're simple enough that even I should be able to make some headway with a bit of guidance.

Alternatively, I've always hankered after a classic Fiat 500. Reasonable ones are ten grand or more, but ropey ones are a lot less. It's tiny so won't take up much garage space, and as with an old Landie it shouldn't be hard to find parts. Crucially it shouldn't cost so much money that I'm too scared to risk making a balls-up of something, and it should be worth somewhere near what I spend on it (assuming I ever finish it).

Whether I end up going for a Fiat or the Land Rover, I know I'd love to own either. Most importantly, I'm sure the process of learning new skills would be empowering, and it would be immensely satisfying to drive a car I'd fixed up myself. Maybe 2022 is the year this old dog learned some new tricks.

@DickieMeaden

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

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RICHARD PORTER

Porter finds himself moved (extremely rapidly) by a very British saloon

WHAT'S YOUR IDEA OF MAGNIFICENCE? THE duomo of Florence Cathedral illuminated above the ochre sprawl of the city at dusk? A bull elephant slowly cresting a treeless ridge in the warm evening sun of Tsavo East? You might think of these things as magnificent, but are they as magnificent as the most magnificent thing of all, which is, it turns out, the 2019 Bentley Mulsanne Speed?

The Bentley's magnificence begins with its door handles, which are less a means of entry, more a cool, steely harbinger of what lies ahead. Top spec 7-series and A8s have door handles shared with other, cheaper models. Each door on the new Range Rover features a pop-out handle someone of a certain income might recognise from the Evoque they bought for the nanny. Or the mistress. Either way, it's the same thing. The Mulsanne has no such imperfect bloodline. Its handles, rendered in real metal and carefully textured too, as if finished off by a tiny army of artisan mice in brown store-coats, are bespoke and magnificent. Each handle provides a lovely way to discover the next moment of magnificence, which is the weight and action of the door itself swinging smoothly open as if the hinges are not carefully oiled but soaked daily in a pound of butter.

This stoutness is part of what makes the Mulsanne special and also, though it was conceived under German ownership, what makes it feel British. There's something inherently hefty about this damp island of ours, a weightiness that infests our everyday lives and which you see in everything from Georgian houses to apple crumble and custard. For many of our nearest neighbours, a big breakfast comprises delicate pastries and tiny cups of bitter coffee. Only Britons consider starting the day on the right note with a vast platter of fried meats and eggs, washed down with a cup of tea. From our electrical plugs, beers and rural churches to the very soil on which we stand, constantly moistened by the heavy clouds that linger above our heads, Britain is steeped in the weighty and the dense.

And it's all condensed into the doors of a Mulsanne. This, however, is not the most impressive piece of body engineering on this car. No, the most impressive thing is something you will never see as a Mulsanne whispers past: the braze. To achieve the smooth sweeping line of the Mulsanne's rear end as roof meets rear pillar meets rear wing, there had to be a hidden join somewhere and it's on the softly sculpted D-pillar where the upper and lower panels are slowly and carefully brazed together. And not by robots, oh dear me, no. It's all done by hand.

Years ago I went to the Bentley factory and saw this in action, a bunch of craftspeople working this metallic union in a relentless, fastidious way that must have haunted their dreams. Eat, sleep, braze, repeat. On and on they went, hours of work until the finish was smoothed to perfection, all for something that would be smothered under layers of thick, velvety paint. If you owned a Mulsanne maybe the braze would give you the warm feeling of knowing it was there. Or maybe your warm feeling would come from driving the thing because, by crikey, this leviathan, this glorious land-whale almost 2ft longer than a Range Rover, can strop along in a way that boggles the mind.

'Things of the Mulsanne's size and weight normally have stained glass windows'

Yes, you had to let your driver go after the deal with the Swiss went south, but the Mulsanne makes driving yourself no hardship. You don't expect this Bentley to surge towards distant objects as if you're falling across the landscape, not least because things of this size and weight normally have stained glass windows, but my goodness it can and it does. A road-creasing 811lb ft of torque gives the Mulsanne an absurd ability to arrive at extraordinary speeds without the occupants noticing. You can try to join in by flicking the paddles behind the wheel but you'll instinctively hold too many revs, at which point the V8 becomes a little gravelly, and after a while you'll learn that in most situations changing gears yourself is like checking into an expensive country hotel and annoying the staff by trying to help out. Much better to let the car do the work. Sit back, relax, watch the numbers on the digital speedo not so much rise as swell.

It's that kind of car. It's special, it's unique and it is, sadly, no more. The Mulsanne ceased production without replacement in 2020. The last press car was quietly shuffled onto Bentley's heritage fleet so that it might be borrowed by people like me who'd never driven a Mulsanne before and could belatedly realise that we will never see its kind again. There are other Bentleys, of course. There are other large and delightful saloons. But there are very few cars in this world that could be described as magnificent.

@sniffpetrol

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

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JETHRO BOVINGDON

People like us need a high-profile champion. Happily, Jethro has a plan

WE NEED A HERO. ALL OF US. WE ARE MALIGNED and marginalised. Our passion is under threat and although many of us understand the complexities of loving performance cars in an age of sustainability and social responsibility, we are victims of stereotyping and objects of ridicule. We hide in the shadows, daring only to talk about manual gearboxes and tyre compounds and naturally aspirated engines amongst our closest friends. We need a hero? But who? Just last night it struck me like a giant glitterball to the skull. We need Chris Harris.

I was wiping my eyes at the time. The room had become a little dusty just as Rose Ayling-Ellis performed her Couple's Choice on *Strictly Come Dancing*. The moment the music cut to silence was extraordinary: a window into her life – and that of millions of others – brought into our glitzy Saturday-night entertainment. An emotional sucker punch of stunning power. Rose is an inspiration not only to those in the deaf community but to anyone with a heart and blood pumping through their veins. Deafness, we now realise, doesn't have to be a barrier to happiness or being fully engaged with friends and family. Rose describes being deaf as 'a joy'.

Similarly, the powerful, tender performances of the all-male pairing of John Whaite and Johannes Radebe challenged preconceptions of a traditionally conservative audience and made the *Strictly* final a joyous and fabulously diverse occasion. The pandemic – should it ever end – won't be remembered fondly, but perhaps it has at least made people realise what's really important in life, allowed them to let go of prejudices and recognise that we're all just trying to go about our own lives and be happy. What's so bad about that?

Inspirational, joyous, powerful, tender… Who doesn't think of Chris Harris when they read these words? I can add more. Elegant, statuesque, energetic, a man possessed of a relentlessly sunny disposition and, I don't doubt, natural rhythm. To watch him dance on the pedals of a 911, caress the steering wheel with strong, hirsute forearms… It transcends mere driving. It's a performance. Now imagine that silken coordination with added sequins, a spray tan and, perhaps, some subtle but effective Cuban heels. The campaign for Chris to join *Strictly Come Dancing 2022* starts here. We need a voice. A champion. Somebody who can slip phrases like 'negative camber' and 'slip angle' into prime-time TV.

'The campaign for Chris Harris to join *Strictly Come Dancing* starts here'

You could say it's Chris's duty to join the show. To stand up and be counted. To convey our hopes, fears and dreams to a nation of people who inexplicably don't love cars. To showcase the pain and expense of our passion. The sleepless nights on AutoTrader, eBay and PistonHeads looking at cars we can barely afford and definitely don't need. Even worse, the insatiable need to improve the car you don't need when you finally buy it.

Have your brakes ever exhibited fade on the road? Of course not. But you still bought those heinously expensive Pagid RS pads, didn't you? Trackdays. Love the idea of them but then again do you want to push your pride and joy that hard? Probably not. But a half cage might be a good idea just in case. Unsprung mass! You have too much of it. You know you do. Better buy those forged rims. And titanium bolts. The constant cycle of spending, reaching for something faster and lighter and the inevitable self-loathing that follows. Who else but Chris can shine a light on these issues through the medium of a fleet-footed quickstep or heart-breaking waltz?

Think too of the businesses that would benefit. Trackday organisers, enthusiastic and independent garages with the right kind of stock, manufacturers of high quality components and wonderful cars and even the motoring media, including magazines like this one. Plus, suddenly we wouldn't be the strange people at parties who gather in corners to share links to old rally clips or insanely committed laps of the Nürburgring. Other people might hear the word 'Rubystone' and understand. Chris could lead us out of the shadows and into the light. And I, for one, can't wait to see him holding that Glitterball high – okay not that high – above his glistening head. A hero for our times and our cause.

I contacted Chris to comment on the subject of this column. Unfortunately his response wasn't suitable for publication at this time. However, I think he's wavering and direct messages to him @harrismonkey on Twitter could be effective.

I understand car enthusiasts are not really a repressed group. Nor is this column meant to make light of the incredible work done by Rose Ayling-Ellis or John Whaite in breaking down barriers and fighting for representation. However, I would love to see Chris with an intensely orange spray tan and a comically tight pair of trousers clumping around the dancefloor on Saturday night TV. Plus, the inevitable punch-up between him and the judges would be gold.

@JethroBovingdon

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


HAUS

by RICHARD MEADEN
PHOTOGRAPHY by DEAN SMITH

PARTY

The Glickenhaus SCG 004 is an audacious bid to challenge the supercar establishment. On page 74 we drive the racing version, but first the road car with its 646bhp supercharged V8



JIM GLICKENHAUS'S JOURNEY FROM PROLIFIC CAR COLLECTOR and commissioner of spectacular one-offs to fully fledged supercar maker and race team owner is a Hollywood scriptwriter's dream. Ironic given that it's his success as a movie producer and director that has in part provided the financial means to pursue his four-wheeled dreams.

Though he's been on the car scene for many years, Glickenhaus rose to prominence in 2006 thanks to his spectacular Ferrari Enzo-based, Pininfarina-styled 'P4/5' commission. A bold and beautiful homage to Ferrari's iconic late-60s P3/4 sports racer (an example of which Glickenhaus also has in his enviable collection), the P4/5 was so well received that Ferrari gave the project its blessing, allowing it to be referred to as the Ferrari P4/5.

The love-in between Ferrari and the 71-year-old New Yorker has since soured somewhat, but far from deterring Glickenhaus this only served to spur him into redoubling his efforts and developing supercars from the ground up under his own Scuderia Cameron Glickenhaus (SCG) banner.



Above and right: SCG 004 has all-carbon construction and a central driving position à la McLaren F1; Goodwood circuit was the venue for an early drive in chassis 001, still a work in progress

Like Henry Ford II and Ferruccio Lamborghini before him, Glickenhaus has clearly drawn energy and strength from his conflict with Maranello.

As its name suggests, the SCG 004 is not the first SCG-badged machine, but it is by far the most important, for it's the 004 that – if it proves successful – will cement Glickenhaus as that rarest of automotive marques: the maker of credible, covetable supercars with serious international racing pedigree.

The setting for our first drive of this intriguing supercar is as unlikely as the Glickenhaus story itself: the fruits of a collaboration between US-based SCG and Glickenhaus's long-standing technical partners – Italian firm Podium Advanced Technologies (PAT) – driven for the first time at that most British of race tracks, Goodwood in Sussex.

To be completely honest, much as I adore this ultra-fast and totally unforgiving circuit, it would not be my first choice of venue to test a road-going supercar that's still in a somewhat raw state of dynamic development. By 'raw' I mean a car that's very much a work in progress. Not in terms of basic proof of concept, durability or reliability – these hard miles have already been successfully completed by earlier prototype test cars – but the all-important refinement of engine calibration, braking and damping. This, then, is a brand new supercar in its formative state.

It speaks volumes for what makes SCG – and Jim Glickenhaus – special that in addition to our exclusive drive of the 004S (S for Stradale) we also have the chance to drive the 004C (C for Competizione). Specifically 'Mama', the battle-worn car that has raced to commendable finishes in the 2020 and 2021 editions of the Nürburgring N24. This pair perfectly frame what sets SCG apart from other independent supercar makers, and why we should take Glickenhaus's ambition and achievements to date very seriously indeed.

Sadly the man himself cannot be present at our test, but we have full access to SCG Racing's team principal and PAT's head of automotive engineering, Luca Ciancetti, SCG works racer Richard Westbrook, and the owner of 004S #001, Cici Muldoon. All are on hand to share what it is to build, race and own one of these fascinating supercars.

First the basics. The 004S is a mid-engined supercar built around a bespoke, PAT-designed carbonfibre tub cloaked in carbon bodywork. It is powered by a supercharged 6.2-litre Chevrolet V8, which drives through a six-speed stick-shift transmission. It also features a McLaren F1/Murray T50-inspired central driving position with a passenger positioned either side and slightly aft of the driver. So far, so cool.

Though designed and developed by PAT, SCG will build 004Ss to order at its new production facility in Connecticut. This car (chassis 001 and nicknamed 'Gigi' by Muldoon) is unique in that it is a customer car – the first! – but built by PAT in Italy in order to be completed in time for its dynamic debut at last summer's Goodwood Festival of Speed.

It will also serve as a final development car to refine chassis and engine settings before the specification is set in stone, paving the way for the so-called 'Founder Edition' 004s that will be built in Connecticut for those long-standing deposit-placers who were first to support the project. According to Ciancetti, there is currently capacity to built 50 or so cars per year in the US. More than this and additional tooling will be required. There is no cap on production, the only limit being that which the market sets. Priced at $460,000 in its home market, it is expected to land in the UK for circa £350k.

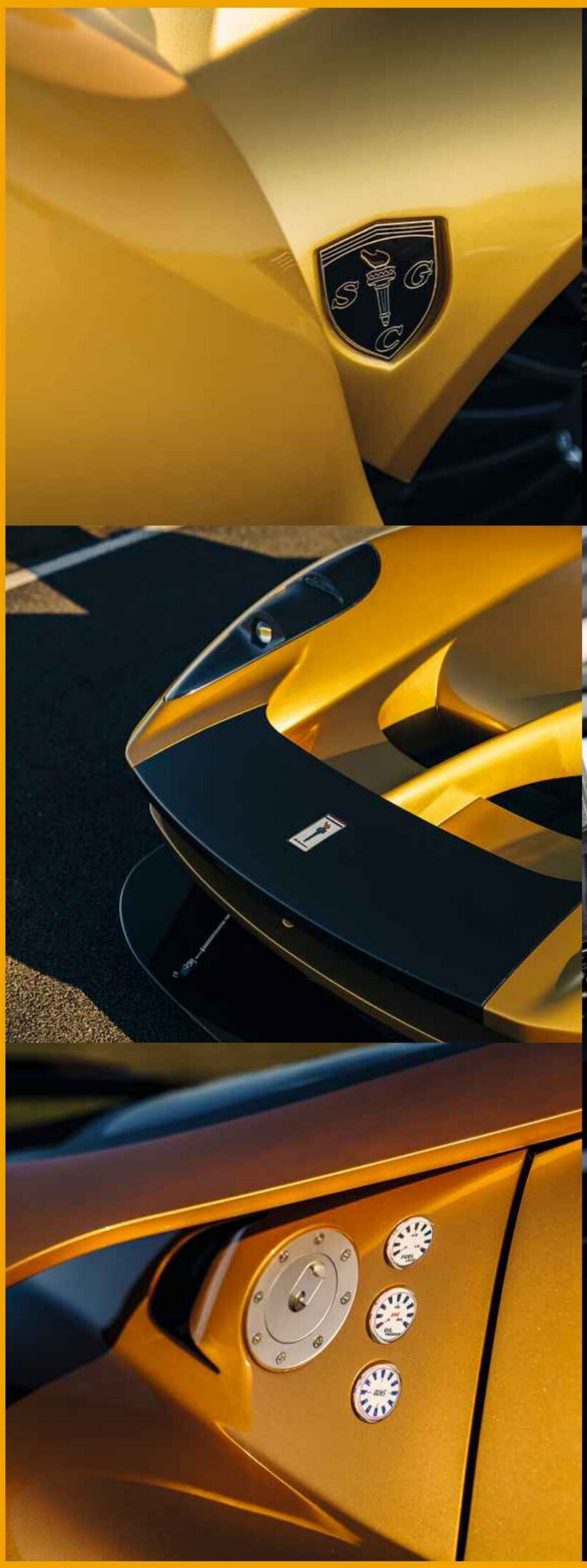
Styled and aerodynamically honed in-house, it's a convincing and compelling design. Muldoon's highly personal colour scheme is divisive, but doesn't distract from a shape that very clearly evolves the Glickenhaus aesthetic. Not unexpectedly there are echoes of the classic Ferrari P3/4, but it fuses contemporary downforce-driven aerodynamics with curvaceous lines to create a car that's contemporary yet redolent of the '60s sports prototypes so beloved of its maker. It's not as handsome as the SCG 003 that preceded it, but it's proud and distinctive.

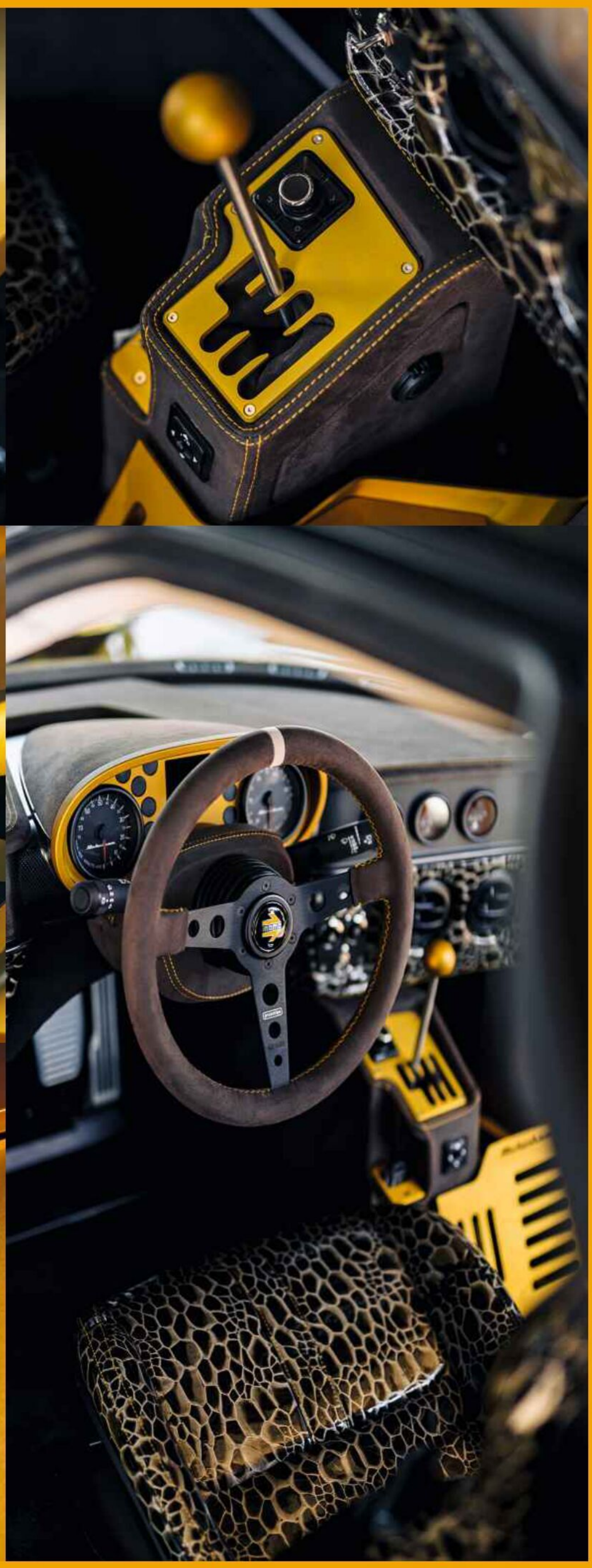
SCG claims a competitive if not class-leading kerb weight of 1480kg. For context, McLaren states 1339kg for its more hardcore 765LT, while Ferrari's complex hybrid SF90 is 1570kg drained of fluids and fitted with lightweight options, but more like 1770kg 'wet' in a spec representative of a customer car. For many the 004's commitment to an analogue driving experience and that central driver's seat are more important than obsessively chasing weight savings. Besides which, any 600+bhp supercar that dips beneath 1500kg is going to be plenty quick enough.

Like all true supercars, the SCG 004 goes the extra mile with its doors, in this case slowly tilting forwards and out on powered rams. The process is a bit slow and cumbersome (PAT is working on a speedier solution), but there's very little to complain about with the arrangement of the three-seater cockpit. Inevitably there's a bit of clambering required to duck inside and work your way to the driver's seat (via the left-hand side to avoid the right-mounted gear lever), but, once in, the view and driving position are terrific.

We've become so used to a pair of pedals in the footwell and a pair of paddles behind the steering wheel that it's


MOTUL
MOTUL
MOTUL





Left: colour scheme and cabin materials were the choice of owner Cici Muldoon; the basics of the driving position and forward visibility are superb; stick-shift typifies SCG's analogue approach

initially a bit unsettling to find three pedals and an H-pattern shift controlled by that right-hand gearstick. Add an array of simple dials across the dashboard and it takes you back at least two decades.

It's made all the more timeless by a Momo Prototipo steering wheel, which is devoid of airbags and feels great in the palms of your hands. If there's a criticism to level it's that the ambience isn't premium enough. The switchgear and instruments are a bit bland, despite wearing bespoke SCG branding, while the fixtures and fittings are rather nondescript and a little too functional.

One thing that feels bang on the money is the 646bhp 6.2-litre supercharged Chevrolet V8. These modern LS motors are hugely potent and pretty much bombproof. They also have a character distinct from the European obsession with twin-turbo V8s. One that's very much in keeping with SCG's proud American roots. It has real presence but also impressive refinement. Where you might expect it to start with a hot rod holler, it gently rumbles into life before settling into a quietly potent idle. Not for SCG a Lamborghini-style shock and awe bombardment, though such a model is in the wider SCG 004 model plan, a little more of which later. For what it's worth the Stradale could be a bit more vocal, but that's easily addressed.

If the honest-to-goodness presence of a non-hybrid internal combustion V8 sitting behind your shoulders gives you a nice warm glow then the exposed gate stick-shift will make your inner purist rejoice. Especially when it's blessed with a lightness and mechanical precision that makes it a joy to use. Supplied by CIMA, the 'box is an established supercar staple and pairs brilliantly with the V8 to make a timeless and unusually engaging powertrain. One that sets the 004 apart from its contemporary rivals.

As I flagged at the start of this story, Goodwood is a fast and unforgiving venue for any car, let alone one with minimal mileage and with plenty of set-up work still to be done. Consequently this is a first drive in the truest sense of the words. Definitive appraisal can wait for a car with a finished set-up, but driven at modest speeds the early signs are hugely encouraging.

There's an immediacy of response that gives the 004S a real sense of agility. A little more steering weight and feel would be welcome, if only to gain confidence through a greater sense of connection. For now it's a bit glassy, but connection and feedback will come.

As it stands, the combination of keen response and a lack of feel means there's an initial sense that in its keenness to head for an apex the nose will rotate more aggressively than the tail can cope with. However, having relaxed into the car, a little familiarity reveals a sweeter balance than the darty turn-in suggests. Once into the corner you can feel the lateral load building through the steering and form a picture of how hard the car is working. The rear end feels stable with well-matched roll front to rear, and though we weren't really committing on corner entry or chasing the throttle on corner exit, the basics are very much present and correct.

As forewarned by Ciancetti, both the brakes and engine require detailed calibration work to finesse their response, the former being over-servoed and the latter having some obvious gaps in the mapping.

What's clear is that even in this, the mildest of the SCG 004 range, the V8 motor delivers vivid acceleration – this tends to be the result of 630lbft from just 3600rpm – thanks to the meaty supercharged delivery that makes these Chevy motors so memorable. Somewhat against the modern obsession with synaptic upshifts, progress in the 004 is made all the more enjoyable by the brief punctuation points that come with each manual gearshift.

Ciancetti is under no illusions that the 004S is about to enter its most important phase, but when the final layers of polish are added (with extensive road mileage back in Italy) the SCG 004 feels poised to fulfil its potential to be a fast, habitable, entertaining and hugely individual supercar.



Glickenhaus SCG 004S

Engine V8, 6162cc, supercharged **Power** 646bhp @ 6400rpm **Torque** 630lb ft @ 3600rpm **Weight** 1480kg
Power-to-weight 443bhp/ton **0-62mph** c3.0sec
Top speed 190mph **Basic price** c£350,000

evo rating ★★★★½

SCG 004 COMPETIZIONE: ONE FOR THE TRACK

FEW THINGS LOOK COOLER OR MORE PURPOSEFUL THAN A battled-scarred slicks-and-wings veteran of back-to-back Nürburgring N24 finishes. Especially when the slightly raggedy racer happens to be 'Mama', Scuderia Cameron Glickenhaus's fabled works 004 Competizione.

Parked alongside SCG's first customer 004S, it represents everything that makes Jim Glickenhaus something of a hero in petrolhead circles. Why? Because where some wealthy, driven individuals 'just' go racing, and others simply build a street car bearing their name, Glickenhaus has chosen to do both in provocative style. It's a path few independent car makers have successfully followed, but the spoils are clear to see. For when road and race cars share so much DNA it invariably adds something to both: road-legal relatability for the race car and race-proven credibility for the road version.

When viewed together, the shared genetics between 004S and C are unmistakable and impressive. According to PAT's Luca Ciancetti, there are many common elements, including the in-house-designed carbon tub and all the major body panels. Both are powered by Chevrolet's fifth-generation 'small-block' engine, though the race car's is naturally aspirated rather than supercharged, with power restricted to a little under 600bhp to comply with racing regulations.

Ciancetti confirms there are plans for a 004CS (Club Sport), which will run an 850bhp version of the road car's supercharged motor. This will be mated to a seven-speed paddleshift version of the CIMA gearbox, plus air jacks and other race-proven hardware for a pared-back McLaren Senna approach to deliver maximised track capability performance in a road-legal car.

Such is the speed and scope of Glickenhaus's ambition, PAT was also engaged to complete the design, build and running of the SCG 007 – Glickenhaus's Le Mans hypercar, which debuted last year and yielded 4th and 5th place finishes overall in 2021's 24 Hour race, the first to finish after the mighty Toyota effort. One of the team drivers is British racer Richard Westbrook, who's at Goodwood to shake down the 004S and to show me around the 004C.

Though they share the central driving position, similarities between the 004S and 004C end once you're strapped in. As you'd expect, the race car is pure function, with a large rectangular LCD display just ahead of the yoke-shaped steering 'wheel'. It's initially a bit overwhelming, but for the purposes of our test I can ignore the vast majority of the switches and just enjoy the view.

In place of the road car's H-pattern gearbox there's a sequential six-speed racing transmission controlled by paddleshifters. The only time you use the clutch is when pulling away. There's switchable ABS and traction control (both of which Westbrook has set prior to me climbing in), so all that remains is to manage the pleasingly civilised clutch and drive out onto the circuit.

Unlike the road car, 'Mama' has had countless hours of development, not to mention the rigours of two gruelling N24s. As such it's a joy to drive, every response beautifully measured and blisteringly, effortlessly quick on a lap. As is the modern way, this pace is more due to its braking and cornering capabilities than raw straight-line power, though of course these things are relative. Of other GT3-style cars I've driven, it's most akin to Audi's first-generation R8 LMS, with a compliance and approachability that hints at its Nürburgring pedigree. Few competition cars bring you up to speed better or provide such feelsome reference points. It's a fabulous thing to drive.

Despite Nürburgring and Le Mans race programmes, an epic 'Baja Boot' off-road racer (look it up, it's sensational!) and the ongoing development of the 004S, Jim Glickenhaus is not one to take his foot off the gas. SCG is currently putting the 004S through strict US crash tests while working to achieve GT3 homologation for the 004C. Though small beer compared to the 007 Le Mans hypercar effort, which will soon see SCG competing against the grandee endurance racing marques including Ferrari and Porsche, an eligible GT3 car will open the door to top level national and international championships such as the British GT and Blancpain series. Watch this space.



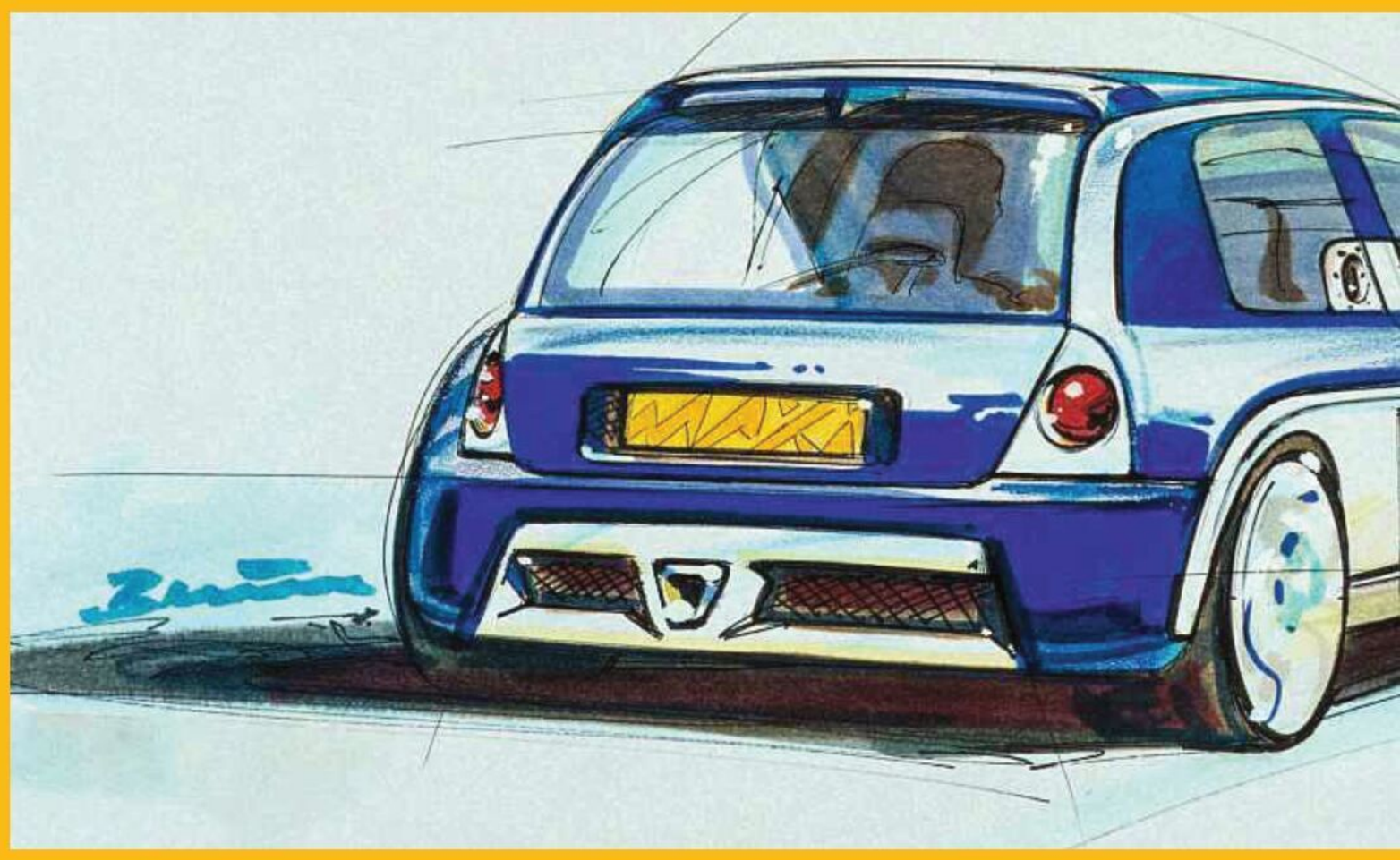
Glickenhaus SCG 004C

Engine V8, 6162cc **Power** 592bhp @ 6400rpm
Torque 480lb ft @ 5000rpm **Weight** 1270kg
Power-to-weight 474bhp/ton **0-62mph** c3.0sec
Top speed 177mph **Basic price** n/a

evo rating ★★★★★

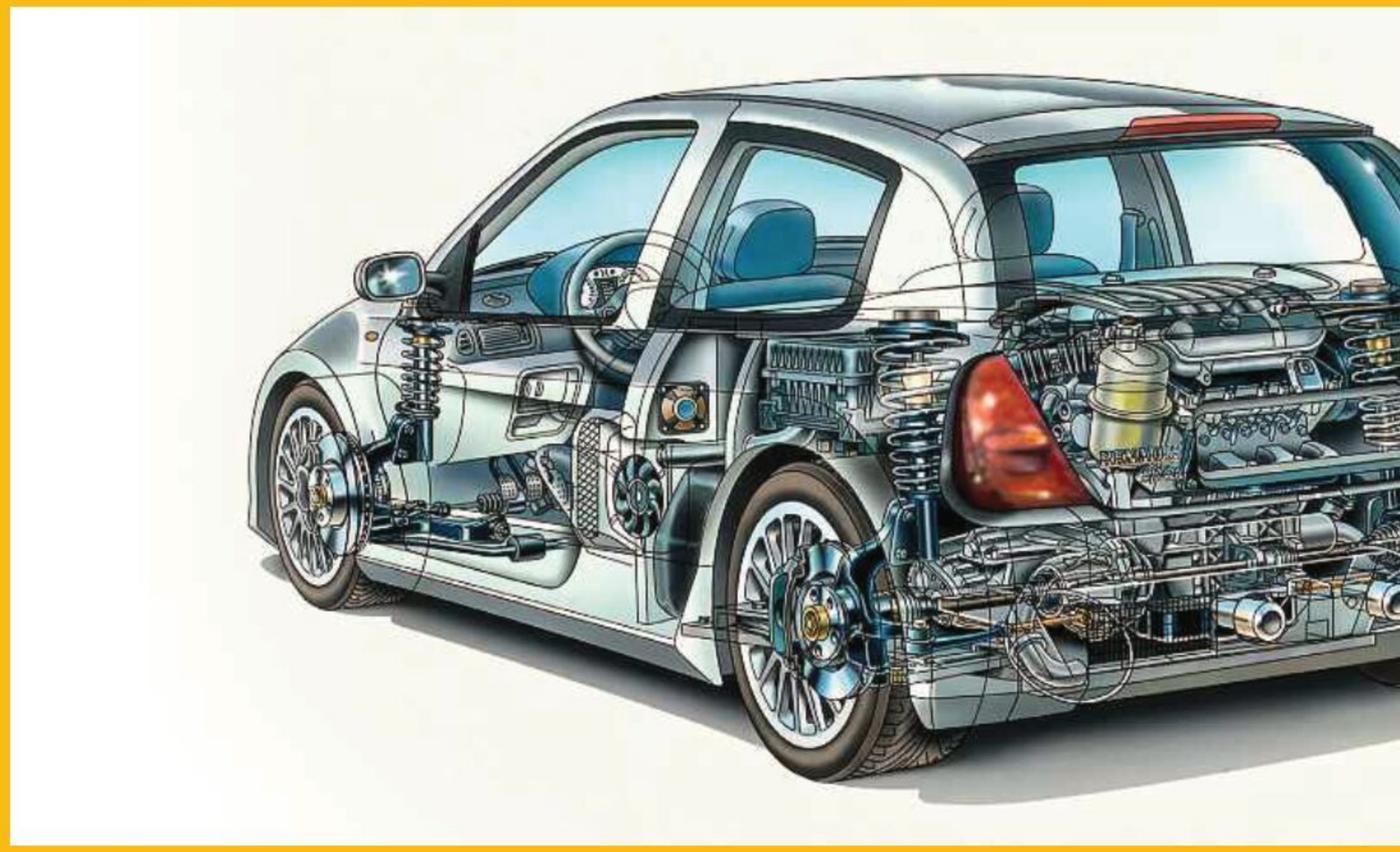

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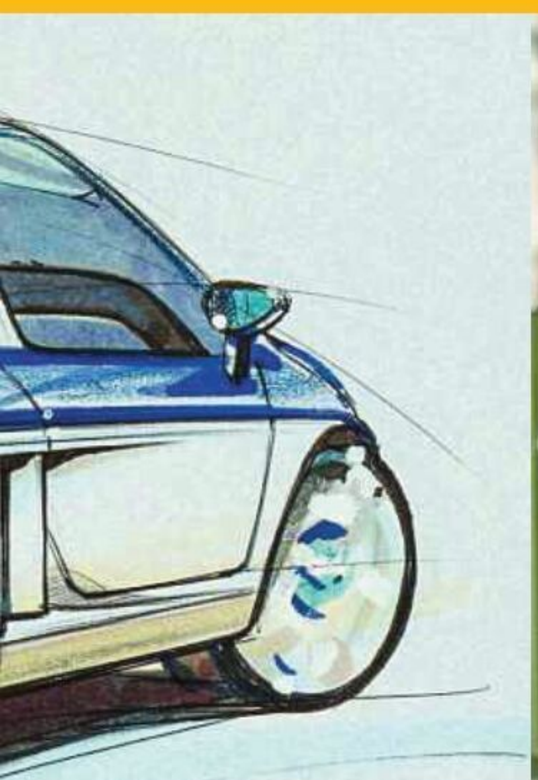
BORN TO BE WILD



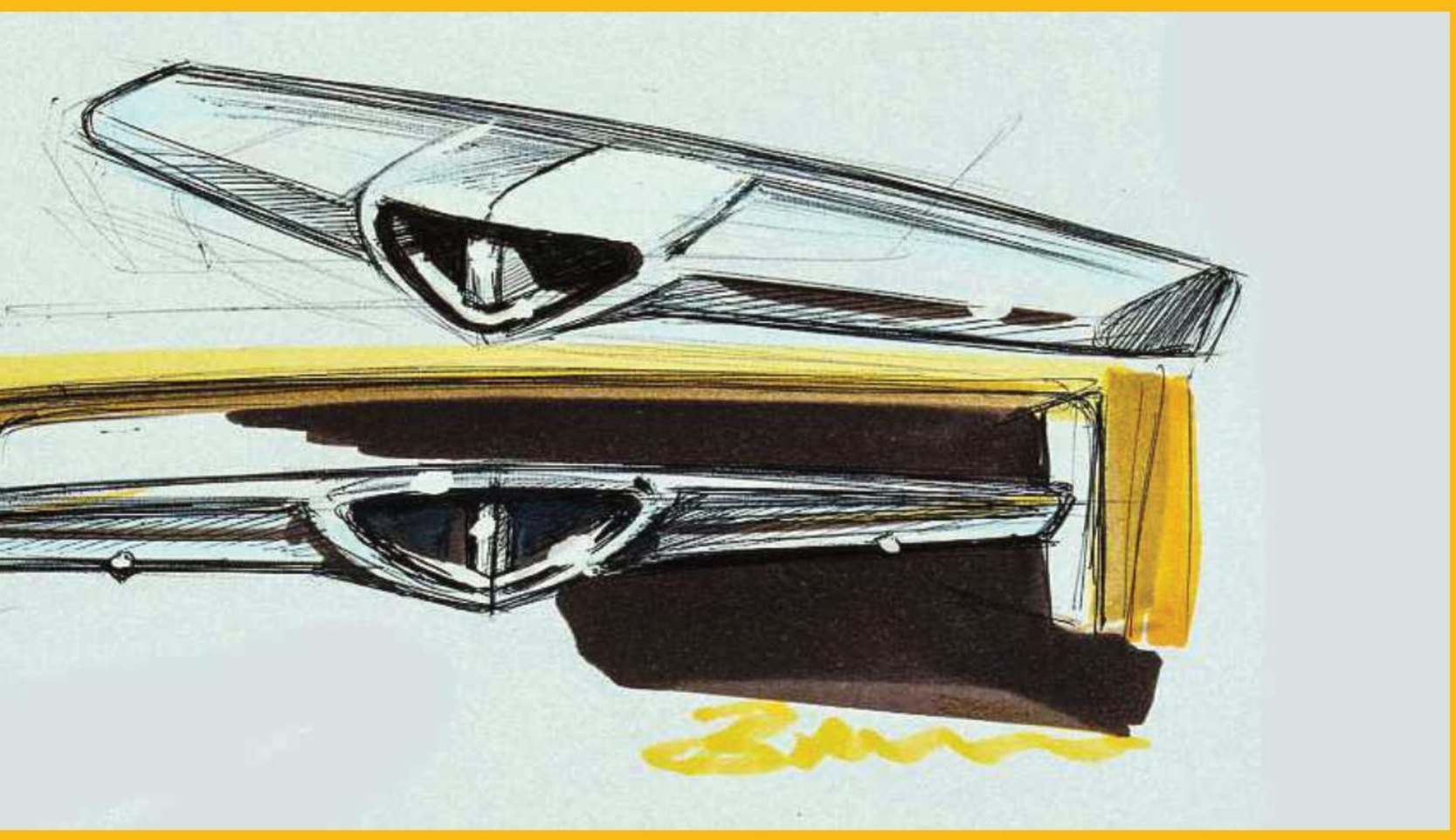












Two decades on, the Clio V6 still seems gloriously bonkers. We discover the truth about its troubled birth – and remind ourselves what it was like to drive

by RICHARD MEADEN

PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT





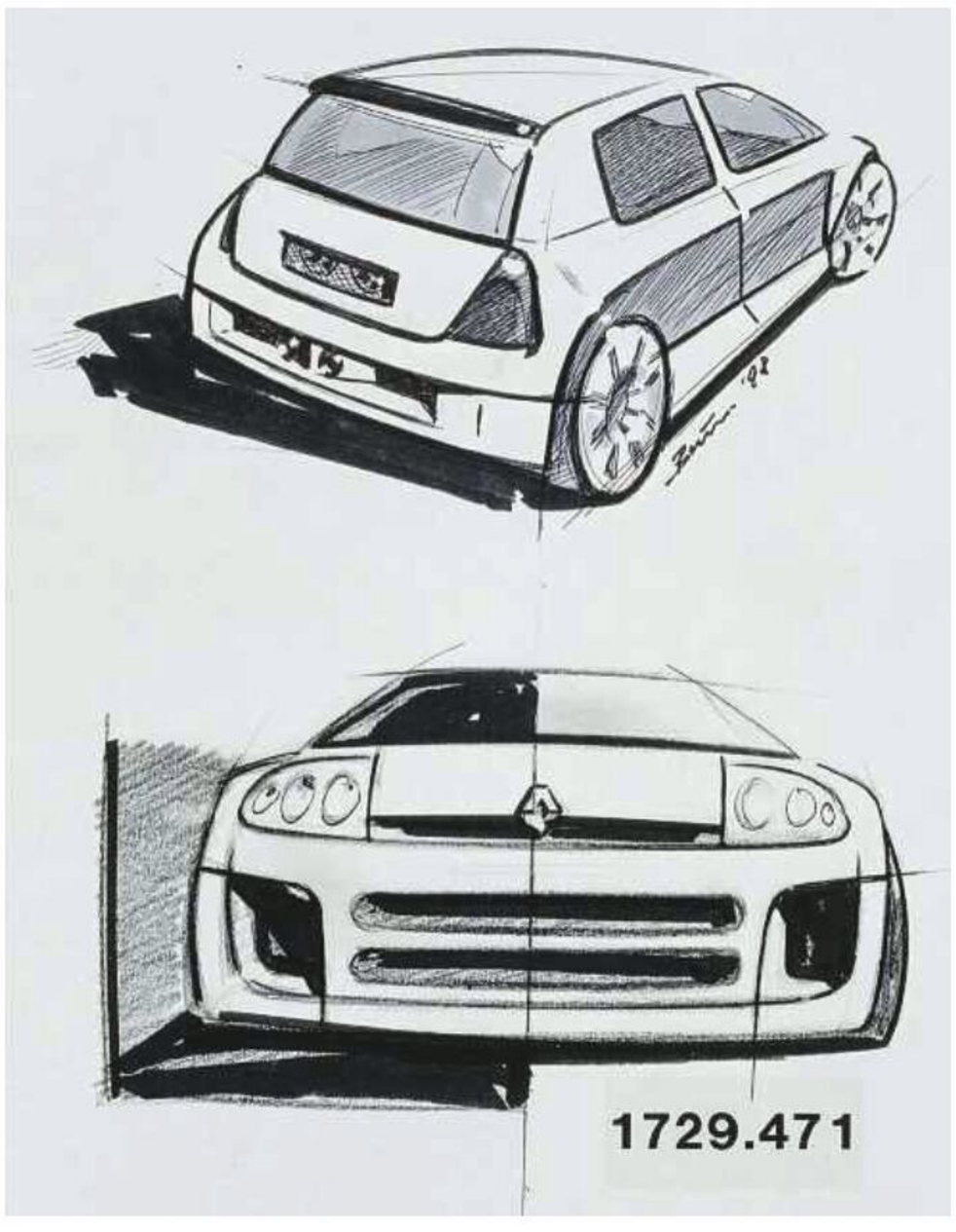
IT'S NOW 22 YEARS SINCE THE RENAULT Sport Clio V6 street car entered production. Two decades in which nothing has come close to matching its audacity. Created in the spirit of its illustrious rallying ancestor the Renault 5 Turbo, the Clio was created not for the purebred purpose of competition, but as a halo project to draw attention to the then all-new Clio range.

A lesser effort would have been dismissed as a cynical marketing exercise, but the exuberance and style of Renault Sport's execution ensured we were hooked from the moment it was announced. Ever the outlier, Renault's bonsai supercar remains a source of joy and fascination, its notoriety made spicier by a reputation for rather dicey handling. Few cars carry such a cloak of myths and legends.

One man who knows the inside story is Steve Marvin. Currently R&D director for French auto industry body PFA, Marvin is a former director of Renault Sport. He was also pivotal in the development of both the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Clio V6 while working at British engineering firm TWR, to whom Renault entrusted the project.

Chatting via Zoom from his home in France, it's clear that his enthusiasm for the Clio V6 remains undimmed. The glint in his eye is emblematic of a project that typified Renault's maverick attitude towards making fast, fun cars. For Marvin it assumed greater significance, for the V6 would play a pivotal part in his future career. As to how it came about, well, it was far from conventional.

In the mid-late 1990s, Renault Sport was all about one-marque racing, at that time with the Renault Sport Spider Trophy. For its replacement a number of ideas were mooted. Meanwhile a member of the Renault design team by the name of Axel Breun had been exploring a radical project purely for his own amusement.



Clockwise from right: Trophy race car cutaway; assembly in Sweden; early interior concept; clay for Clio Maxi; Phase 1 production; **evo**'s first drive; installing the V6; bodyshell awaits paint

The specifics of Breun's idea make the Clio V6 seem tame. Realising that Renault's Twingo and Ferrari's 308/328 shared the same wheelbase, his idea was to buy a damaged Ferrari as the basis for a one-off mid-engined Twingo. While Breun's passion project never came to pass, by '95 the idea had evolved into an official project, with the notion of using the then-new Spider Trophy chassis to underpin a wild Twingo powered by a V10 F1 engine, creating a smaller sibling for the mind-blowing one-off Espace F1 that had been demonstrated the previous year.

Sadly the Twingo never got the green light, but by late '97 Renault was poised to unveil the second-generation Clio, at which point Breun's idea took another turn, this time with a car that took direct inspiration from the R5 Turbo. Originally referred to internally as the Clio Maxi, it would once again feature the Spider chassis, this time fitted with a 3-litre V6 and dressed with wild composite Clio II bodywork incorporating butterfly doors. This project was also shelved, though not before a full-scale clay was made.

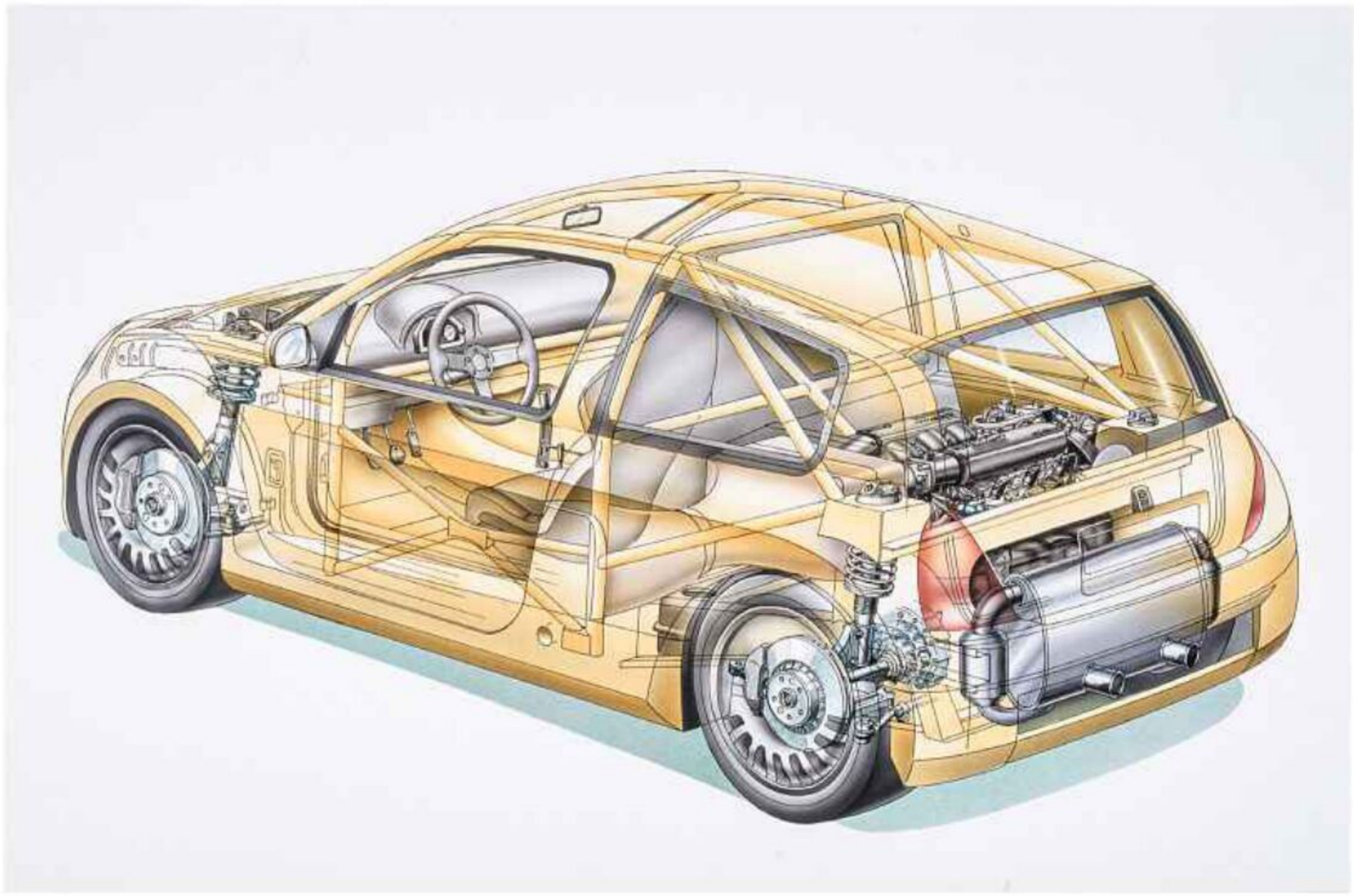
Thankfully the seed of this design would soon bear fruit in the slightly toned-down shape of the Clio V6 Concept and the Trophy one-make race car, both of which were based on a heavily reworked Clio II bodyshell and broke cover in 1998. The project was overseen by Jean Coquery, who was in charge of engineering at Renault Sport, which was a tiny operation at that time.

'The V6 was first revealed at the Paris motor show in October '98,' explains Marvin. 'There was a big reaction. Everyone went crazy and said Renault had to do it. Amazingly, before the year was out Renault had contacted Tom Walkinshaw Racing through a past connection between Tom and Christian Contzen, who was the boss of Renault Sport. This led to TWR being awarded a three-month pre-study phase to build some demonstrators and prove we could have a road car that was convincing enough to get the project decided.'

Three months to take an idea to a working demonstrator is no time at all, as Marvin confirms: 'The project went unbelievably quickly. We were working all hours seven days a week to get two demonstrators built. They were based on the Trophy bodyshell and panels [which had been handled by MOC, a French engineering and composites company], but initially just using the standard soft-tune 190bhp V6. It was a difficult car to benchmark for obvious reasons, but by the end of March we had two development cars ready for Renault VIPs to try back-to-back against a Boxster, Z3 M Coupé and, believe it or not, a Honda Accord Type R.'

Though rudimentary, these two mule cars got the nod from Renault Sport, and TWR was tasked with delivering the entire Phase 1 project. It was an enormous challenge and, by all accounts, a logistical nightmare.

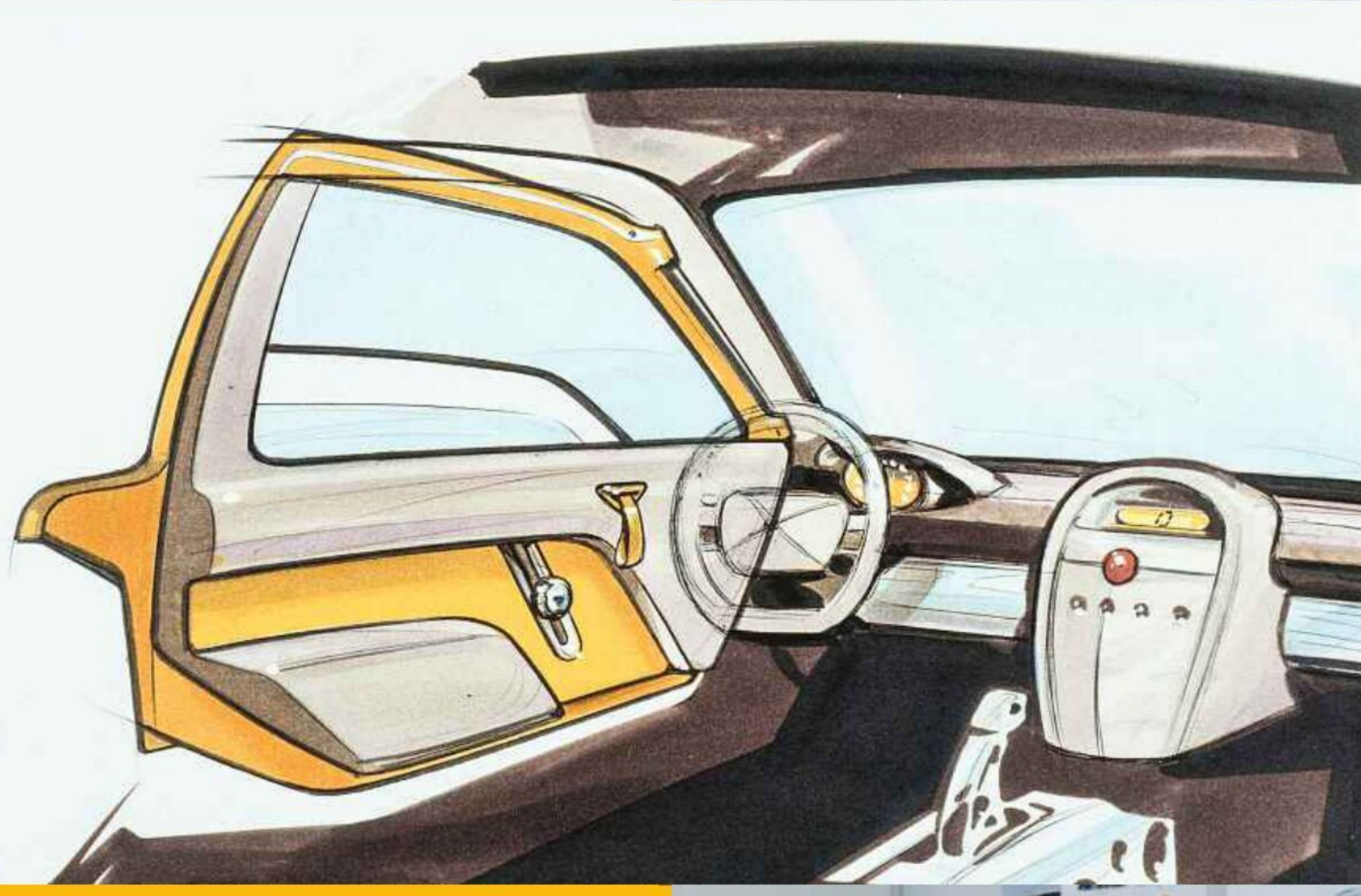
'The project was a complete handover to TWR,' says Marvin, who was working for the British concern at that time. 'Development, supplier selection, cost management… everything. We then sold the car at a fixed price to Renault. The operational challenges were huge. For example, Renault didn't have production capacity for it anywhere, so the decision was made to built the car at a plant that was jointly owned by TWR and Volvo in Uddevalla, Sweden. The Clio monocoque would be delivered unpainted from France,







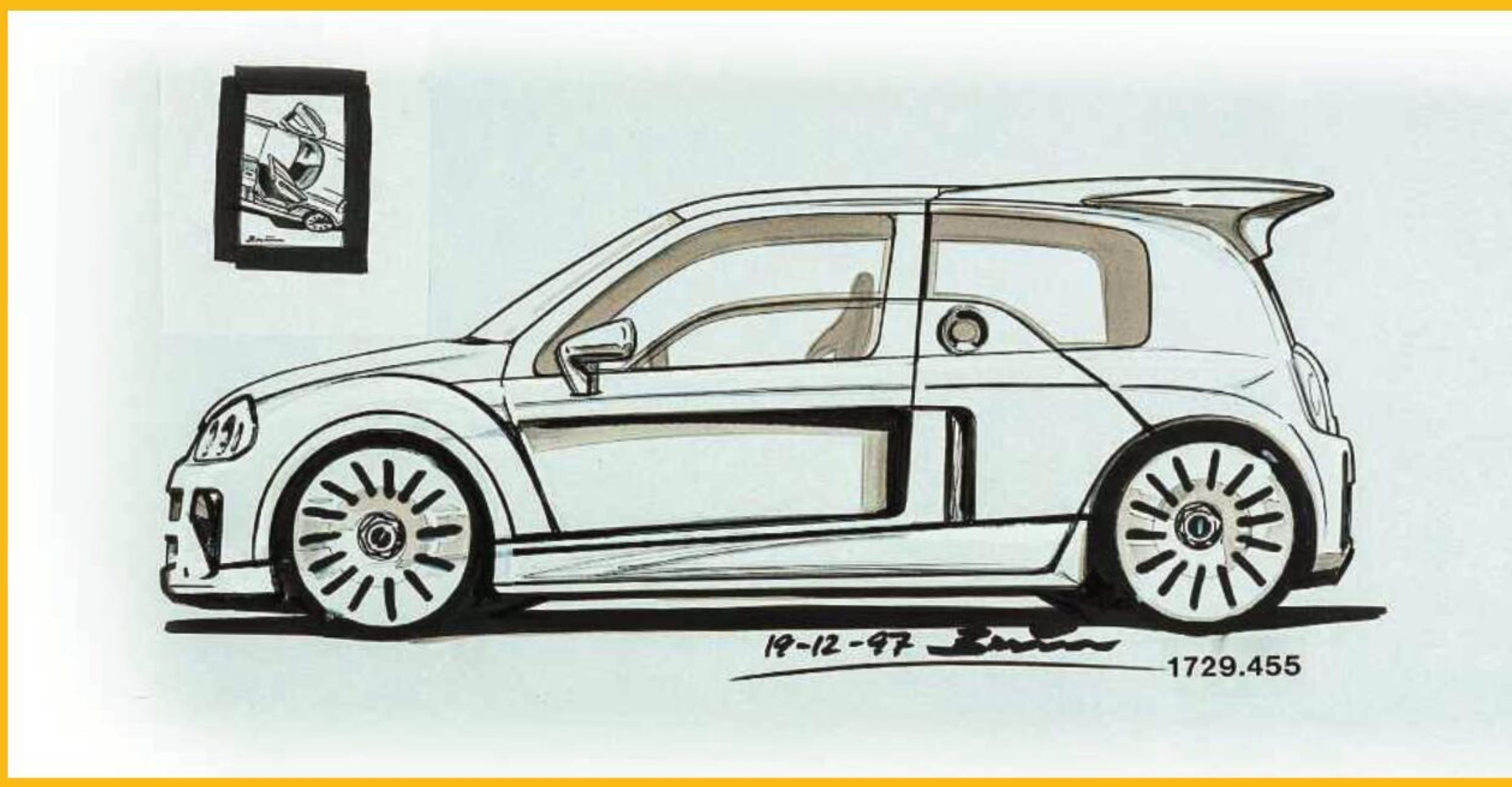





[Renault Sport Clio V6]
The outrageous Clio V6 rekindles the spirit of the Monte Carlo Rally-winning Renault 5 Turbo. We take it to the scene of its forebear's finest hour, the mighty Col de Turini. For the super-Clio, this is the moment of truth
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‘THERE WASN’T MUCH MORE THAN 18 MONTHS BETWEEN CONCEPT AND PRESS LAUNCH’



Top: Clio Maxi sketch proposed butterfly doors (inset). **Above:** Steve Marvin was engineering project manager at TWR when it developed the Clio V6. **Top right:** the team that built the cars at the Uddevalla plant

then cut apart to have the spaceframe welded in. Then it would be e-coated at a Volvo facility in Gothenburg before being painted back at Uddevalla. Just to make things more complicated, Uddevalla's paint ovens were too hot to bake composite parts, so the Clio V6 body panels had to be sent already painted from the supplier, who was located in the middle of France. It was crazy.'

With TWR keen to get the car into production as quickly as possible, and Renault under pressure to follow up the Trophy race car with a road car, time was at a premium. So it was perhaps little wonder the Phase 1 car was still in a somewhat raw state when it went into production. 'The timeframe was not much more than 18 months between proof of concept and the press launch,' says Marvin. 'I think we paid for this because at the same time we were doing the press drives we were getting results from the durability tests.'

The dynamic development was similarly truncated. 'The very first car suffered from some fairly dreadful roll oversteer,' admits Marvin. 'We quickly corrected this with a modified subframe, but it still suffered from a lot of lateral force-induced toe change at the rear. Basically as you went around a bend the rear suspension bushes loaded up and the outer wheel would start to toe-out. That's why the Phase 1 was a little bit, er, "non-linear", shall we say…'

I can distinctly remember attending the international press launch. It was a slick affair held in Cap Ferrat, just along the Côte D'Azur from Monte Carlo. We (that's to say **evo**) had negotiated a spot on the weekend rotation, so we had an extra day with the car, which we spent charging through the Alps Maritime. It was a bit of a handful through faster corners, but safe enough through tighter hairpins (largely due to a lack of poke). It clearly had the potential to be spiteful but was still far friendlier than the wayward Trophy race car, which span like Looney Tunes' Tasmanian Devil.

The extra 375kg the V6 weighed over the Renault Sport Clio 172, not to mention the lazy 227bhp state of tune, meant it didn't have the straight-line punch or appetite for revs I'd expected, but we had a lot of fun and – despite best efforts – brought it back in one piece. Which is more than can be said for some other members of the media, as Marvin luridly recalls…

'The press launch was unbelievable. We got it done with really, really early pre-series cars, so not true production versions. We didn't have a workshop so we had to use a local dealership after hours. We had gearboxes breaking, and we had accidents almost every day. We'd be taking engines out and fixing cars overnight just to make sure we had enough cars for the next day.'

It was at this press launch for the Phase 1 that discussions began for the Phase 2. Steve Marvin's experience on the early cars meant he knew exactly what was required for the Phase 2, so although TWR's financial collapse and ultimate demise in 2002 meant strained relations between Renault and TWR as the Phase 2 project neared completion, the success of the rework meant he was perfectly placed to assume a new role at Renault Sport in 2003.

It's fair to say that if you don't smile when you see a Liquid Yellow Phase 2 Clio V6 then there's probably something wrong with you. No, 251bhp isn't all that in the context of hatchbacks like the 400bhp AMG A45 S, but nothing holds a candle to the Clio for visual drama and gleeful excess. If anything, the shape has got better with age. Bold and uncorrupted, it has the same impact the concept car did back in 1998, with a sharpness and purity that's testament to Renault's design team, then led by the legendary Patrick Le Quément.

It still comes as quite a shock when you open the door (via the handle hidden deep in the recess) and see the almost bog-standard Clio interior. It's comfortable enough – better with the seat lowering kit fitted to this example – but it always seemed a shame that the V6 didn't feature a wild interior like that of the R5 Turbo 1.

The Phase 2 driving experience was much improved. It's a tamer and more predictable machine, with plenty of grip to lean on, a more responsive engine to work with and a far better sense of connection. The harmonious rate of response front-to-rear means you really can commit it to corners without fear of anything untoward.

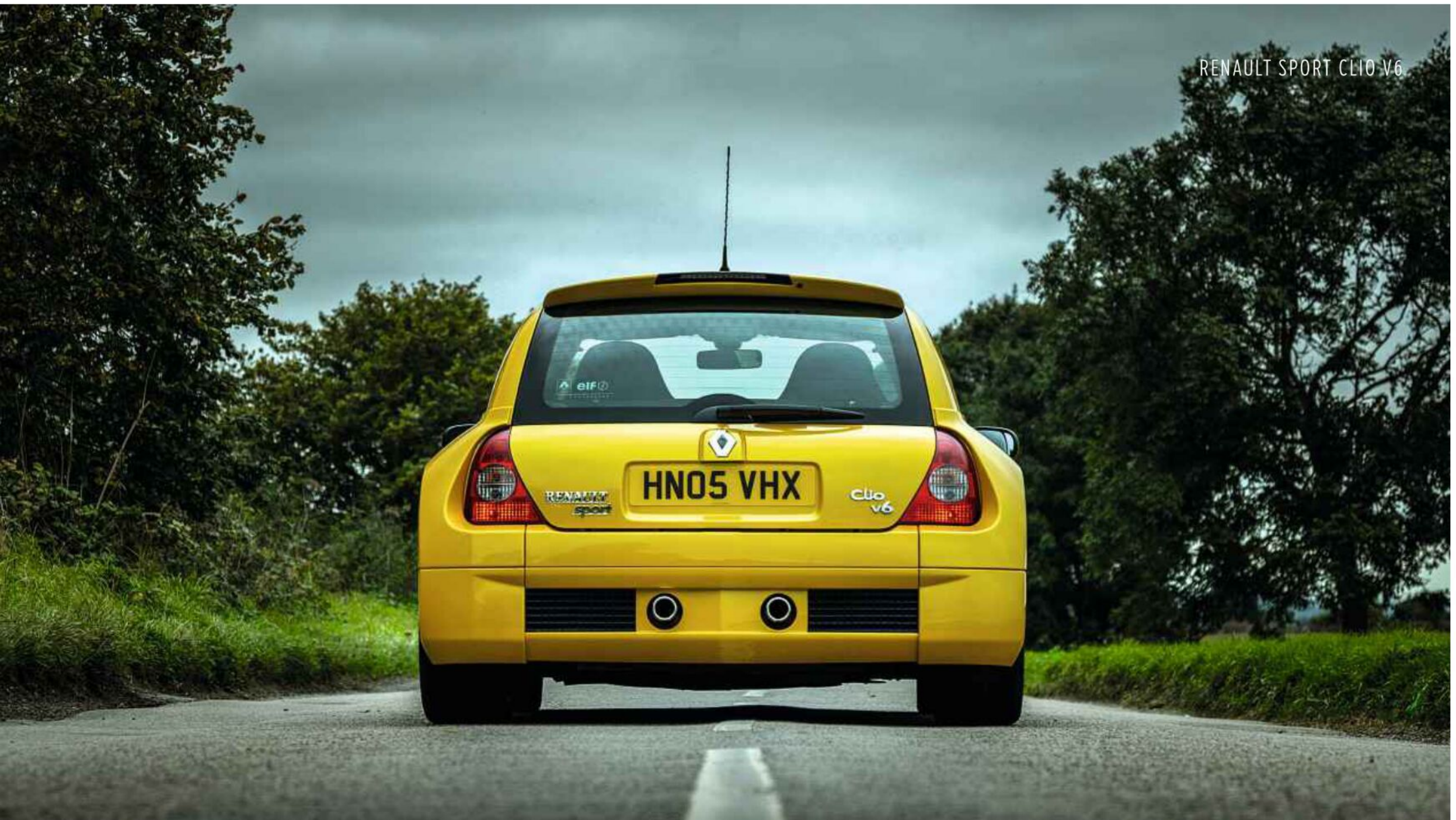
It sits well on the road, the sense of stability mirroring its squat, four-square stance. The steering has reasonable feel but is somewhat slow-witted, so you do have to make more steering input for any given direction change than in, say, the front-wheel-drive 172 or 182 Clios, which were sharper and more aggressive in the way they turned in. And while there's much to admire in how the Phase 2's handing was tamed, it's so benign you sometimes wish it were a bit more agile. As it is, the front end pushes wide first, though playing with the balance on corner entry does bring it to life with very little sense of jeopardy.

The Phase 2 transformation effectively took the Clio V6 from productionised development prototype to finished article. For Marvin it went a long way to righting the wrongs of the original time-compromised project: 'Where the Phase 1 was basically a copy of the Trophy car, faults and all, the Phase 2 chassis was completely reworked. We did a lot of calculation using Adams [chassis kinematics modelling software]. We decided to change the set-up philosophy, so where the Phase 1 ran fairly soft springs with intrusive bump-stops, we supported the Phase 2 more on its springs, allowed the dampers to control the movement more freely and brought bump-stops into play right at the end of the travel.






HN05 VHX
R 1 3 5
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RECARO



Above and opposite: Phase 2 version was ready in spring 2003 with a raft of chassis changes and an extra shot of power, taking the total up to 251bhp; gear ratios were now a bespoke set

'The rear suspension geometry was completely reworked to remove all of the nasty effects. The subframe was completely different, angles of the trailing arms and position of the tie-rods completely changed. One thing we would have liked to change was the steering ratio, but we'd had to cobble together a Clio rack and Laguna hubs, so the ratio was something like 20 or 21:1. We were also limited on lock by space in the wheelhouses. The turning circle was ridiculous!'

It might be modestly powerful by today's standards, but the 251bhp engine has lusty oomph and a seductive soundtrack lost to the ravages of downsizing. It flows really nicely on challenging roads, its muscular performance freely given and readily exploited. According to Marvin, there was talk of replacing the Phase 1's warmed-over Avantime motor with a Lotus-developed version of the V6 destined for the stillborn M250, but when that project came to nothing TWR proposed its own rework with new heads, pistons, injectors and intake. Even Porsche was involved, but only in the calibration of the Bosch ECU.

'TWR wasn't deigned worthy to have access to the Bosch tools, so we went to Porsche. They had no other involvement,' explains Marvin. 'We also changed the gear ratios. For Phase 1 the gearbox was from the Avantime, but for Phase 2 one of our guys chose bespoke ratios by analysing the relationship between ratios in the Peugeot 306 GTi 6 gearbox and transposing them onto the Clio V6 'box. We also shortened the shift a little and lowered the final drive.'

One thing that couldn't be changed was the additional weight that came with the V6 package and structural changes, and despite the extra poke this extra mass is still felt when hauling through the gears. Crack open the throttle and the Phase 2 builds speed rather than punches forward with urgency, but thanks to the much-improved chassis you can carry far more of that speed. For some the lack of fireworks means the V6 falls short, but if you like a slightly more cerebral steer it's richly immersive and truly memorable.

How does history judge the Clio V6? As a fantastical, characterful and increasingly collectible freak. One that was flawed, at least in its Phase 1 iteration, but equal parts fabulous and frivolous. Those wild looks wrote a cheque even a 3-litre V6 stuffed behind the seats struggled to cash, but in truth it mattered little then and it matters less now, that passage of time making us more appreciative of the magical, maverick philosophy and seductive driving experience that springs from this enduring and uniquely unhinged hatchback.

As a totem for what a volume manufacturer can do when it sets its heart and mind on something, the Clio V6 stands alone. Its appeal will always remain rooted in its unlikeliness, but its wider legacy can be found in the string of exceptional Renault Sport hatchbacks that followed in its wake as the in-house department blossomed under Marvin's control. That many of those talented individuals who worked on the V6 subsequently had a hand in the sublime Alpine A110 brings satisfying symmetry to Renault's mid-engined adventure.

Renault Sport Clio V6 255

Engine V6, 2946cc **Power** 251bhp @ 7150rpm **Torque** 221lb ft @ 4650rpm
Weight 1400kg **Power-to-weight** 182bhp/ton **0-62mph** 5.8sec
Top speed 153mph **Launch price** £27,000 (£45,000 in today's money)
evo rating ★★★★½

WILD BOYS

Ariel's wild Nomad and Morgan's equally mad CX-T were designed with off-road adventures in mind. So how do they feel on the smooth asphalt of the Bedford Autodrome? Here's where we find out

by ADAM TOWLER PHOTOGRAPHY *by* ASTON PARROTT

IF A MORE UNLIKELY DUO HAS EVER HIT THE track at Bedford Autodrome, I haven't seen it. Rather like those mutant toys that crawl from the recesses of the bad boy's bedroom in the original *Toy Story* movie, the Ariel Nomad and Morgan CX-T make a curious sight as they wait tentatively in the pitlane, all gangling long-travel suspension and inappropriate tyres, spot lamps shining widely like concerned eyes, metal tubing like protective arms held aloft. If cars could talk, there would be nervous, jittery voices echoing off the pitlane garage doors.

You couldn't blame the poor things for being a bit uncomfortable. After all, they're as far from their comfort zone as it's possible to be. The smooth, carefully manicured asphalt of a racing circuit is alien territory to both cars; they prefer it muddy, dusty, wet and mucky. If nothing else, it'll be fun to see how they adapt.

Not only are they at odds with their surroundings, but they're pretty much at odds with each other, save for the fitment of roll-over scaffolding and chunky tyres best-suited to taking lumps out of an earthy incline. The Nomad remains the Ariel Atom derivative you're not quite sure what you'd do with if you bought one, but at the same time seems to possess an unquantifiable want-one factor that makes the thought of buying one irresistible. I'm not sure what I'd do with a Nomad, or where I'd drive it (not an issue if you happen to own miles of private estate, I suppose), but ever since it first appeared I've just always felt a desire to put one in the garage.

Also emanating from the west of England, but a little way further north in Malvern Link, the CX-T is yet another example of Morgan reinventing itself in the 21st century with a willingness to put daring new concepts into small-scale production and to capitalise on the uniqueness that the brand has in abundance. Whether three wheels or off-road wheels, that playful, eccentric, not-too-serious vibe that Morgan seems so able to conjure is nothing if not infectious.

The question is, are they only good off the metalled road, or will a session on the Autodrome prove that they're cars that give plenty back in all sorts of environments? As they say, there's only one way to find out.

I head towards the Nomad first. The last time I drove one it was the 335bhp, supercharged Nomad R, running on some aggressive semi-slicks at Anglesey Circuit in the wet. It sounded like an out-of-control chainsaw, had a brutal sequential gearshift that was brilliant but took a little getting used to in the first instance, and was snappy as hell on a slick track with occasional deep puddles of standing water. It was incredibly short in gearing, accelerated like crazy, and I needed a quiet moment in the back of a dimly lit pit garage afterwards just to compose myself.

While there, I wondered what the point was of an Atom derivative that had been specifically and fundamentally redesigned to go off-road but then subsequently developed specifically to go on track. I was glad to have tried it, but perhaps once would be enough for the foreseeable, thank you very much.

This Nomad might be different though. This is the Nomad as its creators originally intended, with a four-cylinder naturally aspirated engine (oh the novelty these days!), soft, long-travel suspension and chunky tyres (Yokohama Geolandars). The motor is the familiar Honda VTEC unit, but here at 2.4 litres for more low-down torque compared to the usual 2-litre. Well, relatively speaking. Then again, with 235bhp punting along just 670kg, it's hardly going to be lacking in straight-line performance, as a 0-62mph time of 3.5sec attests.

Once fired, the Honda idles with all the tingle and resonance you'd expect from a highly tuned four-cylinder engine bolted into a tubular chassis. The thickness of those bars breeds some confidence, although clambering between them to gain entry to the seat is not the easiest or most graceful of tasks, and getting out requires each twist of limb to be done in the correct order if you're to avoid an embarrassing moment of realisation that you might be stuck. Once in, you can't help feeling



Right: Ariel leads Morgan around Bedford's West Circuit, its far lower kerb weight giving it the edge in performance terms, though both are an absolute hoot on track

‘THEY’RE AS FAR FROM THEIR COMFORT ZONE AS IS POSSIBLE’

a little exposed, as though you're sitting in a rollercoaster, waiting for it to start – and knowing that it ends with a giant water splash. In spite of its screen, the Nomad driver is always going to feel at one with the elements – and is more than likely to wear them, too.

Right from the moment the wheels turn, the Nomad feels alive and up for a good time. You can flick the gearlever around the gate with ease and immediately sense how every little input you make has a very large effect on the car. The 2.4 doesn't have quite the high-rev urge that usually characterises a classic Honda VTEC, trading top-end numbers and energy for a more linear shove over a wider band that suits this car's remit, but it's more than enough to give it serious pace around the lap, and it's a real joy to be able to cane a revvy, non-turbo engine once again.

Although it's a light car, its controls are all unassisted and, while it's responsive, it does demand that you're on top of it, letting it know exactly what you want it to do. A sloppy, inaccurate approach will yield poor results; when it does slide, you need to work the wheel, not rely on any castor in the suspension to have it spinning easily back to dead-centre in your palms, because it simply won't.

'FROM THE MOMENT THE WHEELS TURN, THE NOMAD FEELS ALIVE AND UP FOR A GOOD TIME'

Understand this and the Nomad is much more fun on a circuit than it has any right to be. Its limits are far lower than those of an Atom, but perhaps because of that it's easier to approach them, and within a few laps I'm seeing if I can get it to slide on just about every corner. There's still real speed to the way it adopts an angle, the weight distribution still some way rearwards, so when it does go you need to be quick to catch it, but then the wonderful throttle response of the engine allows you to keep the slide going with repeated, quick-fire stabs of revs: tricky to balance at first but, once it clicks, almost effortless.

From trackside, the Nomad appears to have a drastic case of stagger, like an old IndyCar, its wheels practically leaning into the corner like those of a cartoon vehicle, and the pitch and roll from the driver's seat feels like a rodeo ride at times, particularly when changing direction repeatedly. But it's still a blast, and to be honest I could lap for as long as there was fuel in the tank if it wasn't for another two-seat British sports car demanding my attention. To think you can do all of this and then blast along off-road tracks in the same vehicle makes the case for a Nomad all the stronger.

Meanwhile, at the other end of the pitlane, there's a CX-T












NOMAD

to contend with, and to be honest I'm not expecting great things. It's not as though a regular Morgan Plus Four would be my choice for a circuit car in the first place: we had one at the track part of eCoty 2020 at Anglesey (along with the Nomad R mentioned above), and while I wanted to love this new-age British roadster, the reality was rather challenging.

Morgan has made huge strides in modernising its cars over recent years while at the same time retaining the olde worlde charm of before, but we found there was rather too much olde worlde about the Plus Four's dynamics, too. Even in the presence of extreme machines such as the McLaren 765LT, the Plus Four was one of the trickiest cars to drive on the limit, a mismatch of odd steering, limited grip and snatchy handling that made it neither friendly nor rewarding to drive quickly, urged on by the gruff and humourless BMW B48 engine that certainly doesn't lack torque in a car of this weight.

Don't get me wrong: for pottering around the lanes and a trip to the country pub the Plus Four fulfils its brief more than adequately; it's just a shame it doesn't offer much more than that when pushed, especially given the modernity of the ingredients under the skin. The omens for a version that's been designed to tramp over deserts and the like don't bode well here.

The CX-T was hatched in the Morgan design studio; when the bosses spotted the concept sketches, they felt it simply had to be made and commissioned a run of just eight. Built in conjunction with Dakar specialists Rally Raid, it takes the idea of a Plus Four and then morphs it through a vaguely steam punk filter into a vehicle that, if not quite fit for serious off-road competition, should be more than appropriate for long, happy days travelling off the beaten track. Think of it as more lifestyle choice than competitive vehicle, a sort of Instagram-friendly whimsy… at a little over £200,000.

As Henry Catchpole found when he drove the car in **evo** 289, wonderful details abound, from the heavy-duty air filter hidden within a bonnet-mounted saddle-bag, to the exhaust pipe that exits sideways to prevent it becoming clogged up if you reverse into a bank. Most of all, there's lots and lots of suspension travel and an enormous amount of protective undershielding, the combination of which offers at the very least an almost impervious attitude to speed bumps. At a glance, the CX-T appears to be almost all protective roll-over frame, but the exoskeleton that you can see is mainly for show and to provide locating points for the extra survival kit the CX-T offers; the real roll-cage is hidden underneath the hard-top roof.

'THE MORGAN IS HILARIOUSLY GOOD FUN, EVEN IF IT'S MILES FROM WHERE IT'D RATHER BE'





Opposite page: this is the Nomad in its pure, original form, with a naturally aspirated Honda engine of modest power and torque – but enough to sustain a tail-out attitude through most of Bedford's turns

What will the CX-T and its Dunlop Maxis off-road tyres make of the Autodrome? Despite lacking the extra bracing bars of the Nomad, it's still a bit of a challenge to thread down through the narrow gap between sill and roof. Once inside, if you're over 6ft you may well find it feels one size too small, with the wheel down in your lap and the letterbox screen requiring a bit of a slouch to see through properly. The turbocharged BMW 2-litre four cranks into life with neither a blip nor a rasp and the gearshift is unremarkable after the brilliant Honda shift in the Nomad. Despite the different tyres and expensive Exe-TC dampers, as we pull away it's the usual Morgan steering traits that are initially to the fore: that rapid sensation of falling onto lock away from a plateau around the straight-ahead. I wonder if this is going to be a real handful…

First corner: the hairpin. Turn in and… whoa… the CX-T rolls in a way I haven't experienced since driving basic little French hatchbacks in the 1990s. I'm worried we might actually capsize. But then on the way out I give it a bootful of throttle, and with the electronic rear diff in its locked setting the rear of the car steps out under power in a predictable fashion. Already I'm giggling like a fool.

That laughter is soon ringing around the entire track, because the CX-T is hilariously good fun even though it's obvious it's miles from where it would really rather be. It gamely clings onto the tarmac while displaying what feels like the most comedic levels of body roll, and it doesn't just collapse into armfuls of understeer as you might expect,

Below: all-terrain tyres find a surprising amount of grip, even when the Morgan's body-roll reaches comedic levels in the tighter turns; BMW turbo four lacks a little character but it's big on torque











instead resolutely staying on its line as the tyres howl in protest and sometimes allowing for oversteer if you really provoke it. It's like a mild-mannered old Labrador after the frantic, collie-like Nomad, but in its own way equally impressive at not falling to pieces, while what the BMW engine lacks in character and response it makes up for in a readily accessible band of torque that fires the CX-T out of tighter corners with real gusto.

The temptation is simply to straight-line some of those corners, to go sailing straight over the red-and-white sausage kerbs and miss out entire sections of the track. Do so and the CX-T might turn out to be the quickest car we've ever tested at Bedford, even if it would be blatant cheating, such is the unstoppable feeling you get hunched behind the wheel of this little car that anything is possible. It would certainly be fun, although Dr Jonathan might not approve…

Nevertheless, it's that f-word that's the key here, isn't it. Fun. Rarely can we have brought together two cars that seem so frivolous but at the same time are so enjoyable. It's hard to explain their appeal to someone who doesn't 'get it', just as it would be difficult to look past some amazing **evo** favourites if it were my own money that I was spending. But I can also see that if you've already satiated those desires then having something slightly crazy like this – just because you can and it makes you smile – would be hard to resist.

Spending time in their company is a reminder, as if it were needed, that enjoying yourself behind the wheel isn't about lap times, downforce or the 0-62mph sprint; it's about the size of the grin that gets plastered all over your face. And, it has to be said, while these two go about that objective in very different ways, they're both highly successful at achieving their goal. ☒

'THEY'RE A REMINDER THAT ENJOYING YOURSELF ISN'T ABOUT LAP TIMES'

Morgan Plus Four CX-T

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbocharged **Power** 255bhp @ 5500rpm
Torque 258lb ft @ 1000-5000rpm **Weight** 1213kg (dry) **Power-to-weight** 214bhp/ton
0-62mph c6.0sec (est) **Top speed** c140mph (est) **Basic price** £204,000

evo rating ★★★★½

Ariel Nomad

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 2354cc **Power** 235bhp @ 7200rpm
Torque 221lb ft @ 4300rpm **Weight** 670kg (dry) **Power-to-weight** 356bhp/ton
0-62mph 3.5sec **Top speed** 125mph **Basic price** £33,000

evo rating ★★★★★



LIFE THROUGH A LENS

DAVE SMITH

When it comes to capturing a four-wheeled adventure, Dave Smith is the photographer that many have at the top of their list. Here he tells the story of his career so far and talks about some of his favourite images

by BRETT FRASER



WERE IT NOT FOR THE UNWANTED amorous attentions of Franco Zeffirelli, the noted Italian film and theatre director, Dave Smith might have specialised in portraiture rather than photographing cars.

'I was about 25 at the time and working as an assistant to a well-known portrait photographer called David Gamble,' explains Smith. 'We were doing a shoot for the *Independent on Sunday* and were expecting half an hour with Franco at his house in Chelsea. We were going to photograph him in his kitchen as he cooked a meal for his friends and biographer. Anyway, Franco took a massive shine to me and insisted we stay for dinner. Gamble, of course, was happy because it gave him more time for pictures.

'But Franco was basically sexually harassing me and I was getting pretty pissed off with it – but what could I do in that situation? I kind of laughed it off, but after four hours I had to get out of there. Franco completely overreacted to that and said that if I left, everyone else also had to. And he made everyone leave.'

The incident left Smith questioning his desire to pursue a career as a portrait photographer, and another celebrity tantrum convinced him to point his lenses in a different direction. 'I was assisting another portrait photographer, Sue Adler,' continues Smith. 'We had to photograph Mike Leigh, the English director, at a theatre in London. We found a room, set up the lights, took a few Polaroids and waited for him to arrive.

'He eventually showed up and had a hissy-fit about us setting up in this room we weren't supposed to be in. He shouted at us, was extremely rude, and in the end we had only five minutes with him, minus our lights. It was a truly horrible, stressful situation. Both Adler and Gamble were thick-skinned



Mazda MX-5 in Iceland (previous pages)
'I've been very lucky to work with Mazda on its Epic Drives campaigns – this one was for the MX-5 in Iceland. I love the bleak emptiness of Iceland and this undulating dirt road shows it so well. The whole country is heaving with great locations and I'd happily go there again.'

BMW 320d M Sport (above)
'This was shot in the "Graffiti Tunnel" in Waterloo, London, for *BMW Car* magazine in 2013. It wasn't a particularly safe place to hang out, and was often used as a toilet, so you had to watch where you stood! It was worth the effort, though. Unfortunately shooting in cities is becoming harder and harder because of excessive red tape.'

Renault Mégane RS (right)
'I often think that car photography is landscape photography with a car in it, even for action stuff. This Mégane RS was shot for **evo** on its launch in Spain. We headed for the mountain roads near Ubrique and chose this corner because I was drawn to the shape of the mountains behind.'

Nissan GT-R at Spa (far right)
'Andy Morgan and I were at Spa in June 2016 shooting a GT-R event for Nissan. We were hiding from the torrential rain showers in the marshal's box at Raidillon, capturing journalists driving past, and having a competition to see who could get the car sharp at the slowest shutter speed.'

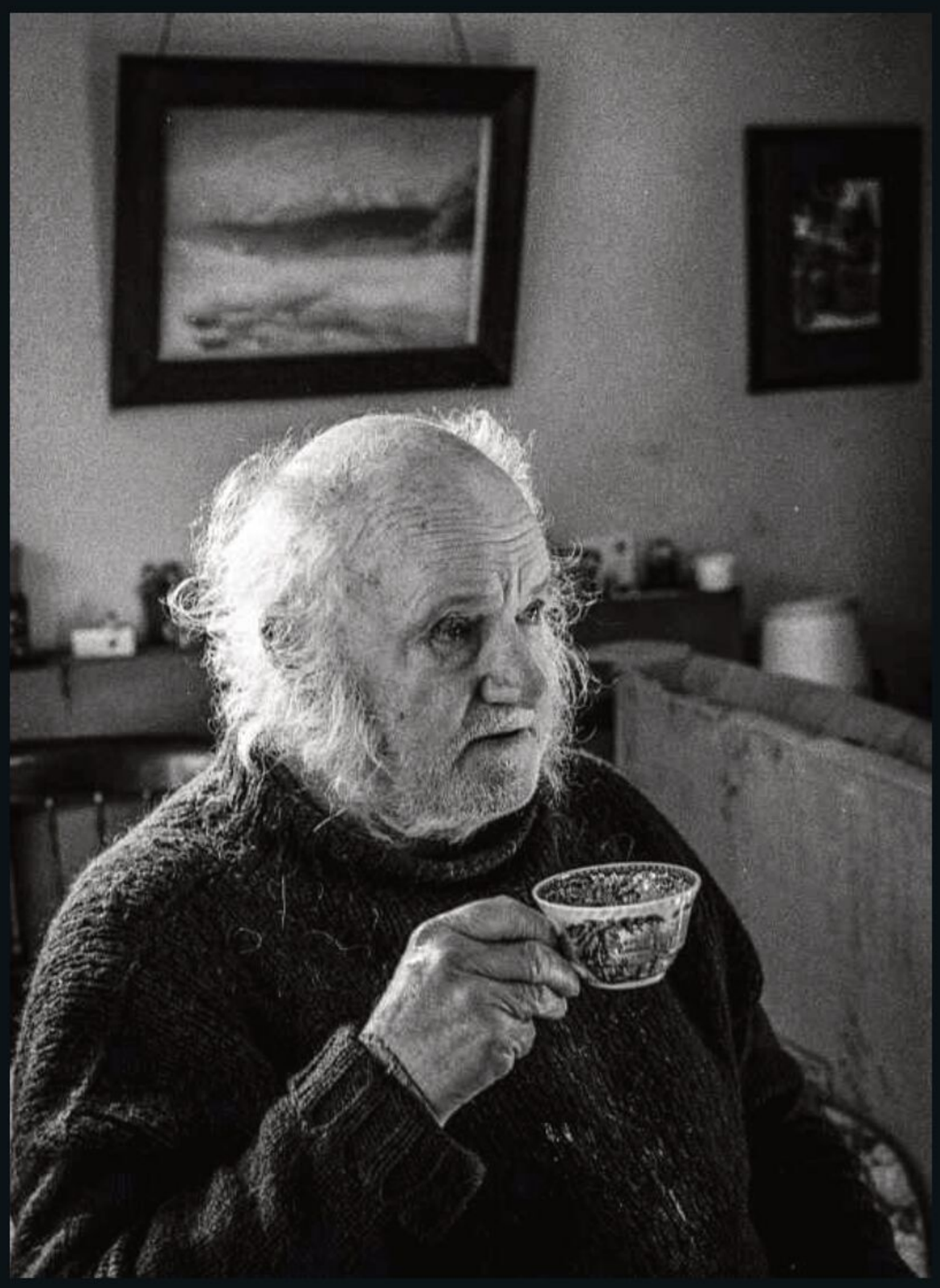

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AC I 8001





AC Schnitzer i8 (left)
'Someone once joked that the initials LF in the middle of my name stand for "loves flash". For this AC Schnitzer shoot in Germany it was certainly true – I used multiple flashes to light the car so that I could darken off the exposure of the sky and make the most of the cloud formation.'

911 Carrera RS 3.0 (top)
'Sometimes when you're pushed for time and the location offers limited possibilities, you have to make do with what's in front of you. Here the concrete pipes formed some interesting concentric shapes to frame the 911, which I lit to give it some oomph on a fairly dreary day.'

George Davis (above)
'My dear friend George, who helped me start out in photography with the loan of his cameras and darkroom. His house was like a time machine, little changed since Victorian times. He was an engineer and designed high-speed cameras in WW2 for recording machine-gun fire from Spitfires.'

and didn't care, but I wasn't, I was way too sensitive. I made up my mind that I didn't want all that.'

Smith's first automotive shoot came out of the blue. 'A mate of mine was trying to break into video in about 1995 and had been commissioned by Marcos to shoot some promo footage in Wiltshire. Marcos also wanted stills, so he suggested I take them. Considering I'd never shot a car before, let alone any action, it turned out reasonably well.

'And then a job at *What Car?* turned up – my mum actually saw it advertised in the *Guardian*. I wouldn't have thought of going for a job like that, but on the strength of that Marcos shoot I got the position of junior photographer on the magazine. I was dropped in at the deep end and initially it was a bit of a struggle, but then things clicked into place and I had a great time with a good bunch of people. I stayed for four years and only left to join *Auto Express* because there was no opportunity to become a senior photographer.'

Although his engineer father was a keen amateur photographer, Smith's inspiration to pick up a camera came from a different source. 'When I was about 15 I was a bit of a delinquent,' he confesses. 'Around the corner from where I lived in Leicester were a couple of derelict Victorian houses that looked abandoned, and me and my mate snuck in through an open window to have a peek inside. But then this old dude suddenly appeared and threatened to call the police.

'But once I'd explained we hadn't realised anyone lived there he became very friendly and said we could come back any time. And I did because he had a stack of old cameras and a darkroom, and that was what sparked my interest in photography. A couple of years later I did a City & Guilds course in photography and eventually went to London to work as an assistant to those portrait photographers.'

Smith's move from *What Car?* to *Auto Express* proved professionally unrewarding. 'I near doubled my salary and had the prestige of being the only staff photographer, but *Auto Express* stifled my creativity. Being weekly and with so many group tests to shoot, it became a treadmill and was very boring. After the first year I wondered if I might have been better off going freelance when I left *What Car?*; at the end of the second, that's exactly what I did.

'Going freelance was when car photography opened up creatively for me. Working for the likes of **evo** was so nice because you didn't have to have the car filling the frame and you could experiment more. And I started to learn so much from working with other

photographers – [former **evo** staffer] Andy Morgan encouraged me to look at things from a different perspective and not be afraid to take a few risks, while David Shepherd, who I still work with, taught me heaps about the technical side of things. I'm still learning from other snappers and in turn they're learning from me – that way we all develop.'

Smith frequently keeps the car small in the frame so that we can revel in the landscape. 'Car photography is often landscape photography with a car in it. You have to ask yourself, if I took the car out of the shot, would it still be a nice picture? I'm also obsessed with skies; I'm a cloud man. In the days of film I'd use graduated filters to darken the sky and flash to bring up the light on the car. It's a bit different when you're shooting action, but these days if you take care to maintain the integrity of the highlights, you can manage it all in Photoshop.'

Talking of Photoshop, Smith was an early adopter of digital imagery and has made sure to keep up to date with technological advances. 'You've got to go with the latest kit,' he insists, 'or you'll simply get left behind.' He also believes that there's currently a shift away from stills photography and towards video to cater for digital media.

'When the Sony a1 came along I was straight on the list, more for its video capabilities than its stills. My clients increasingly want moving images so I've fully embraced the video side of things. I enjoy shooting video – after shooting stills for 25 years it's refreshingly different. And we car photographers have the advantage of already knowing how to make a car look good, so it's just a case of applying that knowledge to a moving image.'

Smith predominately shoots for corporate clients these days. 'Editorial opportunities are fewer, budgets have shrunk, and there's an expectation that you won't mind driving from London to Scotland and back in a day for a shoot. On a car manufacturer's launch I can enjoy being in one beautiful location for three or four weeks, generally somewhere warm, and get paid for every day.

'Another huge plus is that I get to travel. I'm lucky to have been to Iceland – that place is dreamland for shooting cars as far as I'm concerned – Kazakhstan, Russia, the Arctic Circle, the Azores and Morocco in relatively recent times. All beautiful places, which certainly helps in the creation of stunning images.

'I really love the travelling and have missed it during Covid – there are so many more places I would like to go. If I weren't a car photographer then I'd have to be a travel photographer. I've had some fantastic adventures to date and I hope it continues.'





Nissan Navara, Morocco (top)
'For the last two years Covid has curtailed my ability to travel for work, and this image shows why I miss it so much. This shot from 2016 is of a Nissan Navara in the sand dunes of Morocco, with Henry Catchpole at the wheel, for a story about the old Paris-Dakar route.'

Morgan Aero 8 (above)
'I shot this Morgan Aero 8 for **evo** in a car park in the Elan Valley after some serious rain. I used the puddle reflection opportunity and added some flash on the tree to the left for a bit of colour, and some more flash to add a bit of drama on a gloomy day.'

Navara and Milky Way (top right)
'When you're doing a travel story then atmosphere is just as important as the car itself. This is another image from the Paris-Dakar route photoshoot with Henry Catchpole, so we were out in the Moroccan desert. It was super clear and we got lucky with where the Milky Way was that night.'

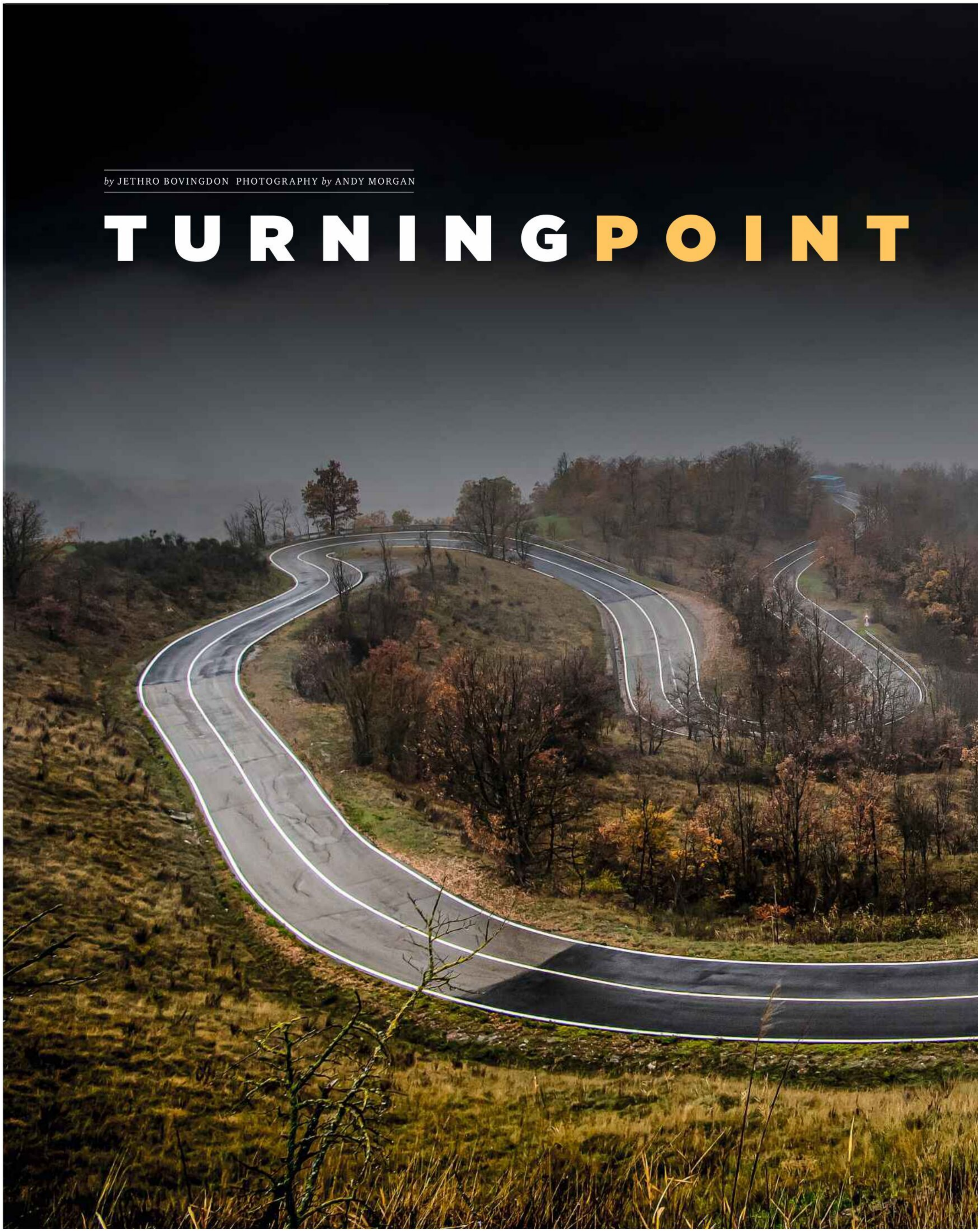
Mazda CX-30 in Kazakhstan (right)
'Shot for Mazda on the road to the Singing Dune of Altyn Emel in Kazakhstan. The dune itself – which emits a chorus-like sound as the wind moves the sand – wasn't that interesting to look at, but the dirt road and dust trail in low light offered a great drone shot opportunity.'



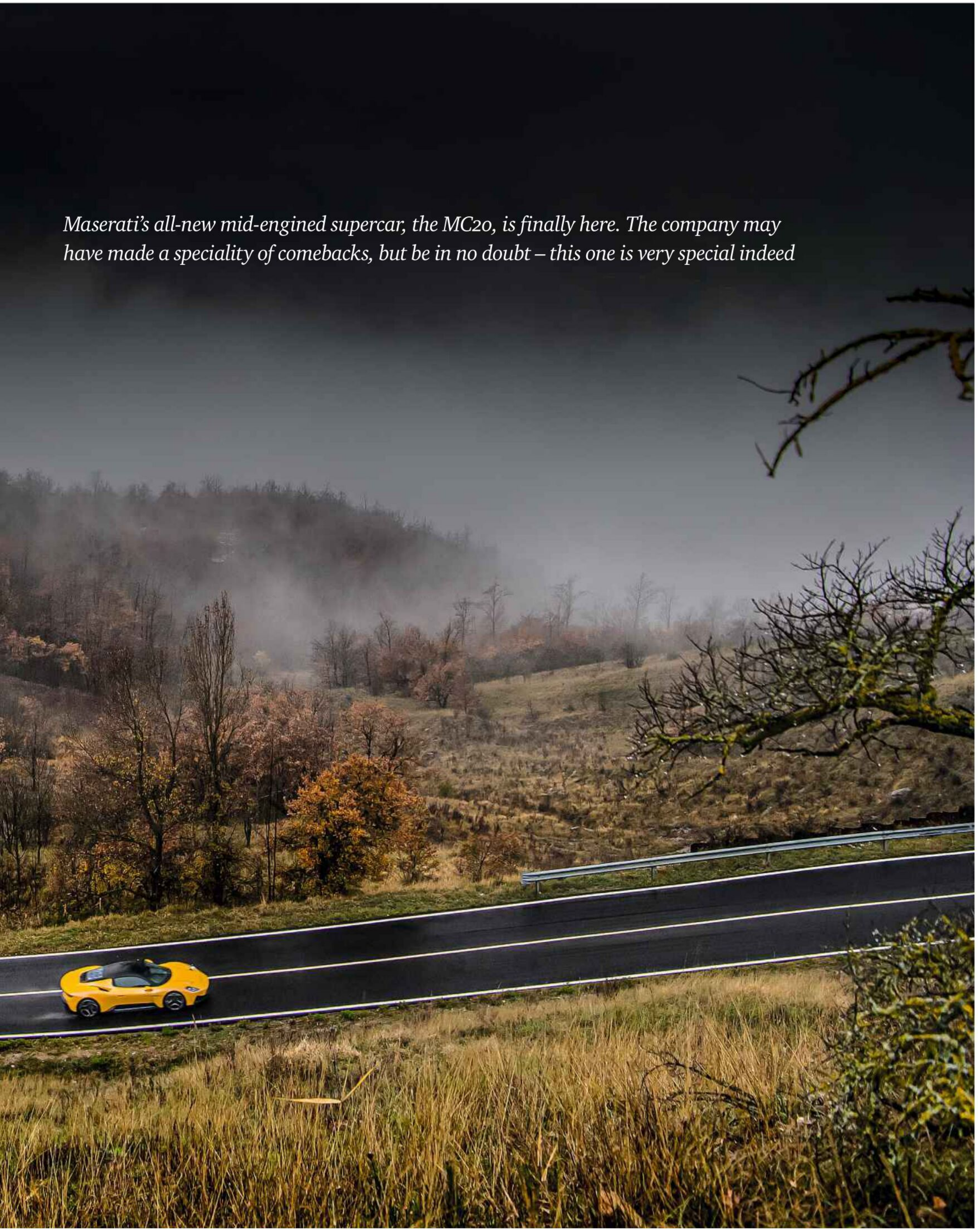


by JETHRO BOVINGDON PHOTOGRAPHY *by* ANDY MORGAN

TURNINGPOINT



Maserati's all-new mid-engined supercar, the MC20, is finally here. The company may have made a speciality of comebacks, but be in no doubt – this one is very special indeed



IT PAYS TO SUSPEND DISBELIEF AND SWALLOW the questions swirling through your mind when presented with the Maserati MC20. There are, of course, so many questions. This is Maserati. Nothing is predictable; logic is an alien concept.

Does anyone really know what Maserati is at its very core? Formula 1 constructor back in the days of Fangio; producer of impossibly glamorous and esoteric coupes and saloons in the '60s and '70s; perennially on the edge of financial oblivion; relaunched, revamped and reinvented every few years but never quite achieving its goals and, in its latest guise, a company soon to have a range spanning from a Porsche Macan competitor to this new, McLaren Artura-rivalling supercar. What is Maserati? It's a question too big to answer here and now. So, instead, let's focus on a simpler question: what is the MC20? I genuinely can't wait to find out.

We arrive at Maserati in the heart of Modena to find the area shrouded by the sort of fog and drizzle that the North York Moors would be proud to serve up, with knowledge gleaned from press releases and little more. It's an intriguing car. Mysterious even, lost as it's become in the mists of the pandemic. Throw in the trademark chaos of Maserati and the fact that Ferrari no longer has the heel of its boot on its neighbour's throat and the MC20 is nothing short of fascinating.

Today is my favourite sort of day. Not a glossy launch with leather samples and bizarre lifestyle messages thrown at us in a high-end hotel, but a simple arrive and drive. Pick up the MC20 at 8am, drop it back after dark and do whatever you want in the meantime. An old-school approach that warms my soul and suggests there's real confidence with the MC20. And excitement. Maserati knows how crucial the success of the Levante and Grecale SUVs are to the company, but it's the MC20 that makes the engineers' eyes bright.

Before we disappear into the gloom and then drive up and (hopefully) into some clear air, here's a precis of those press materials: the MC20 was developed in just 24 months thanks to an intense focus on predictive tools, simulation and modelling at the Maserati Innovation Lab. It's produced at the Viale Cero Menotti plant, which has been home to Maserati for over 80 years. This mix of innovation and classicism is apt, because the MC20 is the archetypal Italian mid-engined supercar executed with modern materials and thinking. It features a carbonfibre tub and aerodynamics developed in partnership with Dallara, double wishbones at each corner with Bilstein adaptive dampers, and a brand new 3-litre twin-turbocharged 90-degree V6 engine called the Nettuno (Neptune) and featuring F1-style pre-chamber ignition.

The dry-sumped Nettuno produces 621bhp at 7500rpm and 538lb ft from 3000 to 5500rpm and Maserati claims 0-62mph in 2.9sec on standard road tyres and a top speed of 203mph. The MC20 weighs 1475kg (with fluids) and costs from £190,275. That puts it pretty much level with the more



powerful and hybrid McLaren Artura and within touching distance of the Lamborghini Huracán Evo, McLaren 720S and Ferrari F8 Tributo. In other words, Maserati is walking directly into the lions' den like it's never been away. Even though, on paper at least, its contender looks a shade undercooked in terms of power and hybrid technology. Maserati's people don't flinch at the suggestion. The pure EV 'Folgore' (Lightning) is coming. This is just the beginning. Another one.

Scepticism is powerless in the face of a triple-layer Giallo Genio MC20. Maserati's new supercar looks compact, simple, understated and has an innate sense of elegance. Perhaps the new Artura is even more svelte and delicately sculpted, but the MC20 possesses a freshness that the familiar McLaren design language can't hope to achieve. It feels genuinely new, which is a rare thing in this world of frequent derivatives, even if the MC20 deliberately references the outrageous Ferrari Enzo-based MC12 supercar and endurance racer. The all-pervading haze of rain just makes it glisten all the more and I think my mouth may actually be watering.

The handover is mercifully short, mostly running through the five different drive modes selected via a Ferrari-style manettino. It's not a direct rip-off, with Maserati using a large chronograph-inspired dial rather than a small switch and mounting it on the glossy carbon centre console just ahead of buttons marked D/M and R for the gearbox. As you might expect, the MC20's suspension, powertrain, optional e-differential, throttle response, traction control and exhaust are all ramped-up in concert through Wet, GT, Sport, Corsa and ESC Off modes. In the centre of the manettino is a push button to provide additional options for the dampers. Depressing it in Corsa mode, for example, reverts the damping to the Mid setting. In Sport it selects Soft and in GT it goes the opposite way and stiffens the MC20 to the Mid setting. Ferrari may no longer be a sister brand but lessons learnt from the relationship are clearly not lost. This decoupling of the suspension from the aggressiveness of the rest of the package is a classy detail that is still – astoundingly – lacking in a Lamborghini Huracán, for example.

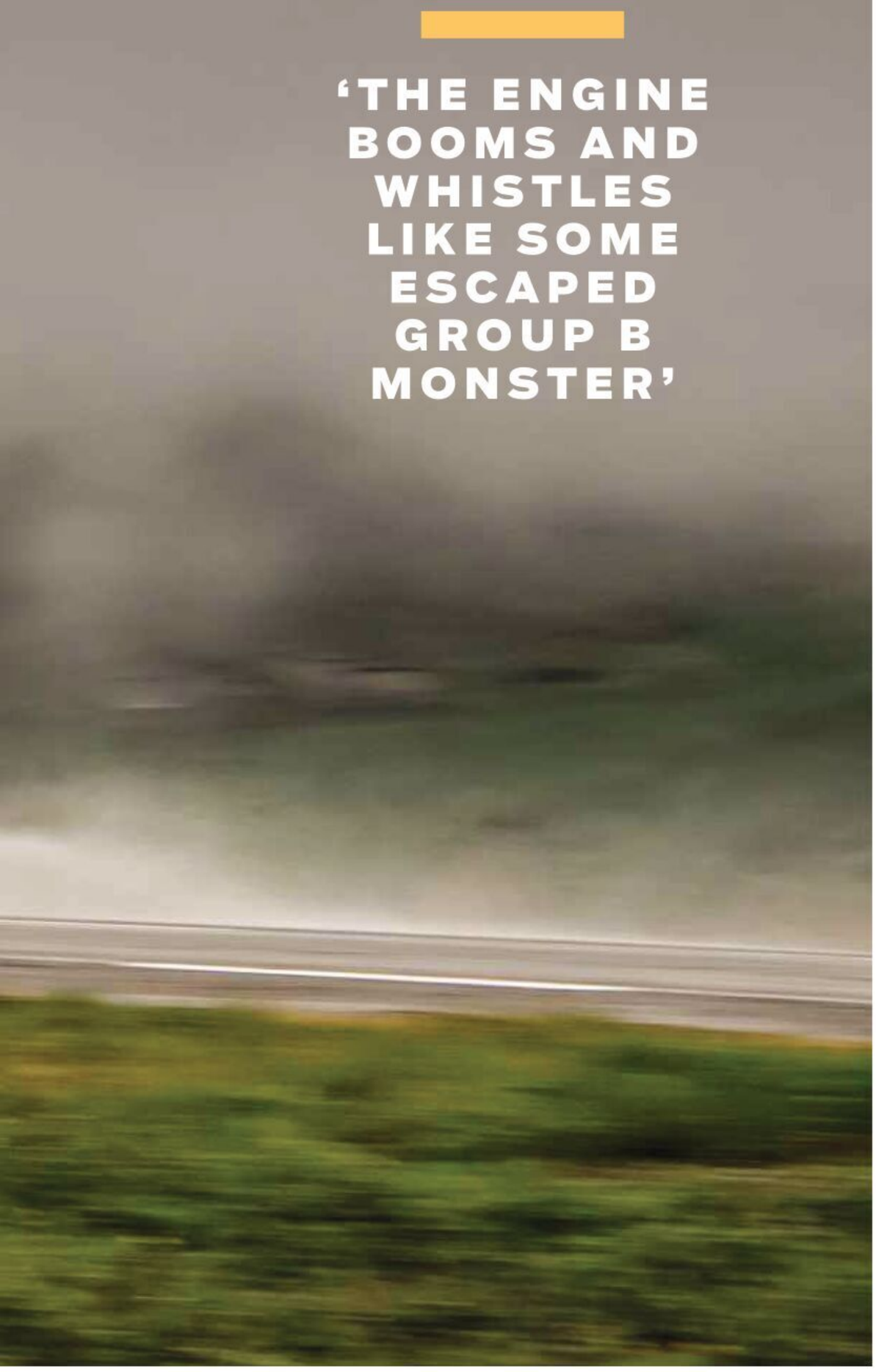
Above: the 3-litre twin-turbo V6 that nestles in the MC20's carbonfibre tub is unique to Maserati and produces a fiery 621bhp at 7500rpm

Later I'll notice the way the 'butterfly' door arcs forwards to reveal a gorgeous carbonfibre tub. It sweeps dramatically inwards past the footwell to help serve the aerodynamics, but the slim form also creates a sense of lightness and purpose. As an added bonus it reminds me of the LaFerrari. Not a bad evocation. For now, though, I just want to get going and the finer details don't quite seep in. Even so, it's impossible not to appreciate that the restraint of the exterior is carried over to a simple and quite conventional cabin. There's none of the fighter-jet drama of a Lamborghini, nor the busy and tech-heavy feel of









a new Ferrari. There’s just a bigger than anticipated steering wheel, a rectangular screen for the instruments and a large touchscreen for all the infotainment and heating controls. Flashes of blue trim for the Sabelt seats is about as wacky as it gets.

For some it might seem a little underwhelming, but for me the lack of extravagant decoration creates its own identity. Perhaps it’s preparing me for a cooler, calmer driving experience? Depressing the starter button mounted below the left spar of the steering wheel shatters that notion immediately. The Nettuno engine booms into life and the flat, harsh, monotone cold-start suddenly creates an edge of aggression. The MC20 might default into GT mode but the engine doesn’t seem to recognise what those letters usually signify. It’s an angry and – on first acquaintance at least – uncultured engine.

The sense of disconnect between the aesthetic, the raucous engine and, it soon becomes apparent, the highly evolved chassis continues in the heavy morning traffic of Modena. The MC20 rides beautifully, with the sweet control of a McLaren but greater quietness. There’s no float or overt ‘softness’, just plush damping that manages to make the MC20 feel light and extremely fleet of foot. The steering doesn’t have the amazing alertness of a Ferrari’s nor the texture of that of, say, a 720S, but it mirrors the polish so evident in the body control. It’s light, fluid and consistent and works in harmony with the car’s natural responses. Maserati’s engineers chose not to give the option to manipulate the steering weight through the manettino settings, having painstakingly found the level of feel and response they wanted. Another sign that they get it.

Yet whilst the MC20’s inherent poise serenades, that engine booms and gargles and whistles like some sort of escaped Group B monster. It settles down at constant revs through Modena and as we start to emerge onto wider, faster roads, but there’s always some spit in its eye and a deep, bassy resonance to its exhaust. The Nettuno isn’t uncouth but it’s certainly unapologetic about the lengths travelled to wring 207bhp from every litre of capacity.

No complaints about the Tremac eight-speed dual-clutch transaxle gearbox shared with the Corvette C8. It’s smooth and refined where required but much sharper at high revs than in the Chevy. The extended carbonfibre paddles (part of the £6450 interior carbon package) also have a lovely, lengthy action that’s similar to those of – guess what? – various recent Ferraris and convey a mechanical connection between your fingers and the gearbox. An illusion, of course, but a good one.

Now, I need to address one major caveat before continuing. The weather is filthy and our MC20 is fitted with Michelin Pilot Alpin winter tyres instead of the usual bespoke Bridgestone Potenza Sport. They may contribute to the excellent ride quality but you would also expect them to erode response and the sense of connection. So, as the roads start to climb and bunch-up, I’m expecting a taster of the MC20’s absolute abilities rather than the full experience. Yet corner by corner those worries dissolve and the MC20 starts to flex its considerable abilities. Very quickly I realise I don’t care if it’s 50bhp down on an Artura or lacking the knock-out sonic punch of a Lamborghini Huracán… because instead I’ve got a chassis so approachable, indulgent and predictable, supported by incredibly intuitive electronic assistance, that all I can think about is the next braking zone, the next apex, the next time I get to feel that e-diff locking up. It’s captivating.

There are real, tangible steps between GT, Sport and Corsa modes, and on narrow roads with rippled, pock-marked and occasionally subsiding tarmac the ideal is Corsa but with the dampers dialled back to Mid. Not only does this provide superb throttle response, it also seems to turn the coarseness of the engine from distraction into baying, multi-layered and savage accompaniment. It’s still at odds with



Left: MC20 name harks back to the Enzo-derived MC12; MC stands for Maserati Corse, and where ‘12’ denoted 12 cylinders, ‘20’ is for 2020


Maserati
A6 32888



the MC20’s wonderful manners and effortless precision, but somehow the shrieking whistle and rib-jangling bass add excitement if you just embrace Nettuno’s ugliness. The F40’s heavily boosted V8 soundtrack wasn’t a symphony, remember.

Corsa mode also reveals the true genius of the stability and traction control systems. In this most lenient setting you have reassurance but not paranoid intervention and the smooth yet decisive way the MC20’s brain can catch, hold and then rein-in a slide is something else. These sorts of systems have been getting better and better for many years but it feels like we’re at a watershed moment with the new BMW M3 and now this MC20. On the road, at least, I can’t imagine why you’d ever turn the manettino right and hold it there to activate ESC Off mode. In slow or fast corners the MC20’s electronics are enablers and grant access to places you might not otherwise go.

Having said that, electronics can only cover for poor balance or tricky on-limit behaviour by coming to the rescue early and with force. The fact that the MC20’s can caress the trajectory with such a light touch speaks volumes about its innate calmness as things start to get critical. In short, the MC20 breeds huge confidence and then justifies your faith with a playful balance that’s almost unnervingly good. I found myself wondering aloud ‘Can it really be this easy?’ over and over again. Then I remembered the winter tyres. Maybe it’s just because the limits are lower and the deeply treaded rubber more progressive? Perhaps, but there’s still precision and lots of mechanical grip. The MC20 simply flies in these conditions and I think all the strengths will only multiply on warm, dry roads and with the fitment of stickier tyres.

Pretty soon I stop the naval-gazing and the talking to myself and just enjoy the wild, savage soundtrack, the punch of the gearbox and the serene way the MC20 cuts through turns with no understeer and the option of exquisitely executed and neat oversteer whenever you fancy. There isn’t quite the raw feedback and agility of a 720S nor the face-flattening torque of a Ferrari F8 Tributo, but the Maserati’s unique ability to blend acrobatic poise with that venomous engine is a fascinating experience in its own right. And fun. Incredible, unexpected and extremely addictive fun. The MC20 is pretty fantastic.

As the miles accrue and the corners keep coming, Maserati’s new supercar has me hooked and keeps revealing more and more of its character. Some things you might expect, like the tangible rigidity of the carbonfibre chassis; others seem so surprising. The almost unassisted feel of the carbon-ceramic brakes, for example. Then there are cool little features like the digital rear-view mirror and the Android-powered touchscreen that’s easy to use and appears to work. How can Maserati get this right and the might of VW get it so wrong? And every time I hit full throttle and the Nettuno roars and whistles and goes all Delta S4, I can’t help but smile. It rips through the revs, too.

Perhaps my favourite thing about the MC20 is that it feels unique. Of course, I can’t help but reference rival cars and try to recognise elements of Ferrari here, Lamborghini there or McLaren in some detail or another. The engineers and test drivers investigated these cars, too. They loved the engineering purity of McLaren, the sophistication of Ferrari’s control systems and suspension and the sheer excitement of Lamborghini, but they always had their own clear ‘Maserati’ vision for the MC20. A supercar with GT useability, a car that can be driven on the racetrack but is really at home on the road. Long, fast, straight ones for ten or twelve hours at a time or narrow, bumpy, ragged ones that haphazardly traverse mountains and tumble into valleys.

Sounds a broad-reaching brief and I’ll admit I was worried a supercar with GT ambitions would simply feel too compromised and too contrived, that the perception of Maserati from within the company itself would somehow prove an anchor to its progress. But why get hung up on




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MID
Attivazione
sospensioni
MID
RSA
ESC
OFF
30 km




SPORT
CORSA
GT
WET
ESC-OFF
M

Left: cockpit isn't as showy as some; provides GT comfort. **Below left:** carbon-ceramic brakes feel almost unassisted

the past when that past is so infuriatingly inconsistent? Just build the best car possible. Fortunately, the gods of Maserati didn't allow for a supercar with soft edges. The vision came to life as so much more than a cool-looking supercar with a supple ride and comfortable seats. Instead the MC20 is agile, malleable, adjustable and, yes, has a level of comfort that is beyond that of perhaps all the big players. But it's also got a wild alter ego that at first seems incompatible with the restrained aesthetic and everyday comfort yet eventually becomes the very core of its appeal.

So the sense of freshness is real. The MC20 is a new flavour and it'll be fascinating to see future derivatives – Spyder, Folgore and, I can only imagine, a hardcore Trofeo version – but all the time I drive it there is a small nagging feeling of familiarity. Only later can I put my finger on it. The MC20 reminds me of the Alpine A110. A kind of super-evolved, occasionally deranged A110, admittedly. However, the core fluidity of the dynamics, the focus on fun and exploitability at road speeds and the brilliance of execution in every detail is shared with the heroic little French sports car. I hope Maserati's engineers take that as it's intended. I can't think of much higher praise. What is the Maserati MC20? I would like to say it's the blueprint for Maserati's future success, but that's just tempting fate. Let's just say it's a triumph and be happy. Maserati is back. Again.

PRE-CHAMBER IGNITION: F1 TO THE ROAD

Maserati's new 3-litre V6 engine is packed with technology and debuts pre-chamber ignition in combination with twin turbos and direct and port injection. The system, as seen in F1 and LMP1, promotes a much faster burn in the main cylinder and hence allows high boost pressure without risk of detonation.

In simple terms, a small chamber with its own spark plug at the top of the cylinder ignites a tiny amount of air and fuel, which is then forced through multiple jets into the main combustion chamber and makes for a rapid and highly efficient burn. In F1 or LMP1 this is used to mitigate the fuel flow restrictions as it allows for stable combustion even with an extremely lean mixture. Maserati hasn't gone down this lean-burn route (mostly because it produces high levels of NOx) and instead uses the benefits of pre-chamber ignition for knock resistance at high boost pressure.

The set-up does have inherent NVH issues, but Maserati claims to have overcome them by employing port injection and standard combustion at lower revs and only utilising the direct injection and pre-chamber system in high-boost situations.

Maserati MC20

Engine V6, 2992cc, twin-turbo **Power** 621bhp @ 7500rpm **Torque** 538lb ft @ 3000-5500rpm **Weight** 1475kg **Power-to-weight** 428bhp/ton **0-62mph** 2.9sec **Top speed** 203mph **Basic price** £190,275

evo rating ★★★★½

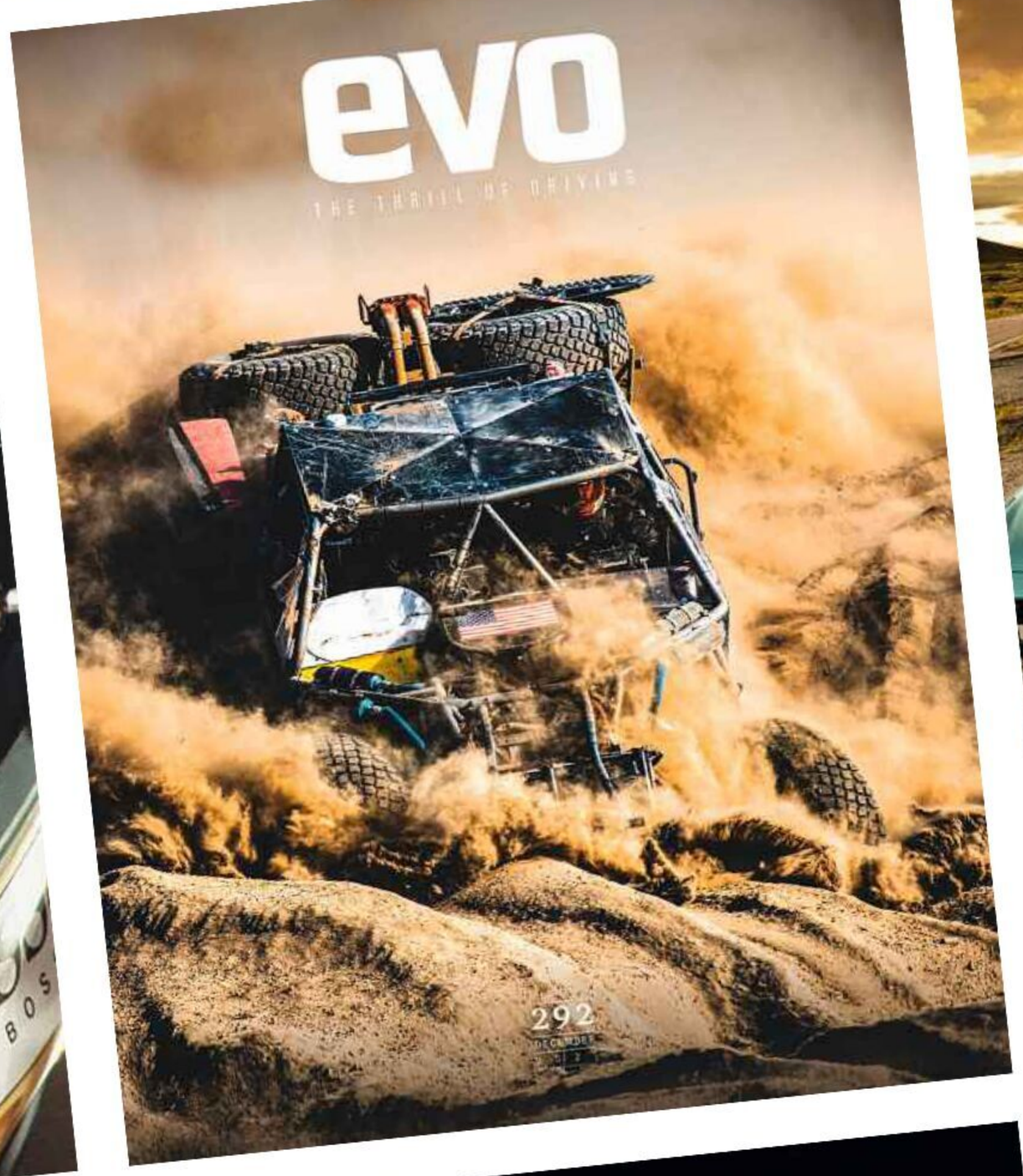
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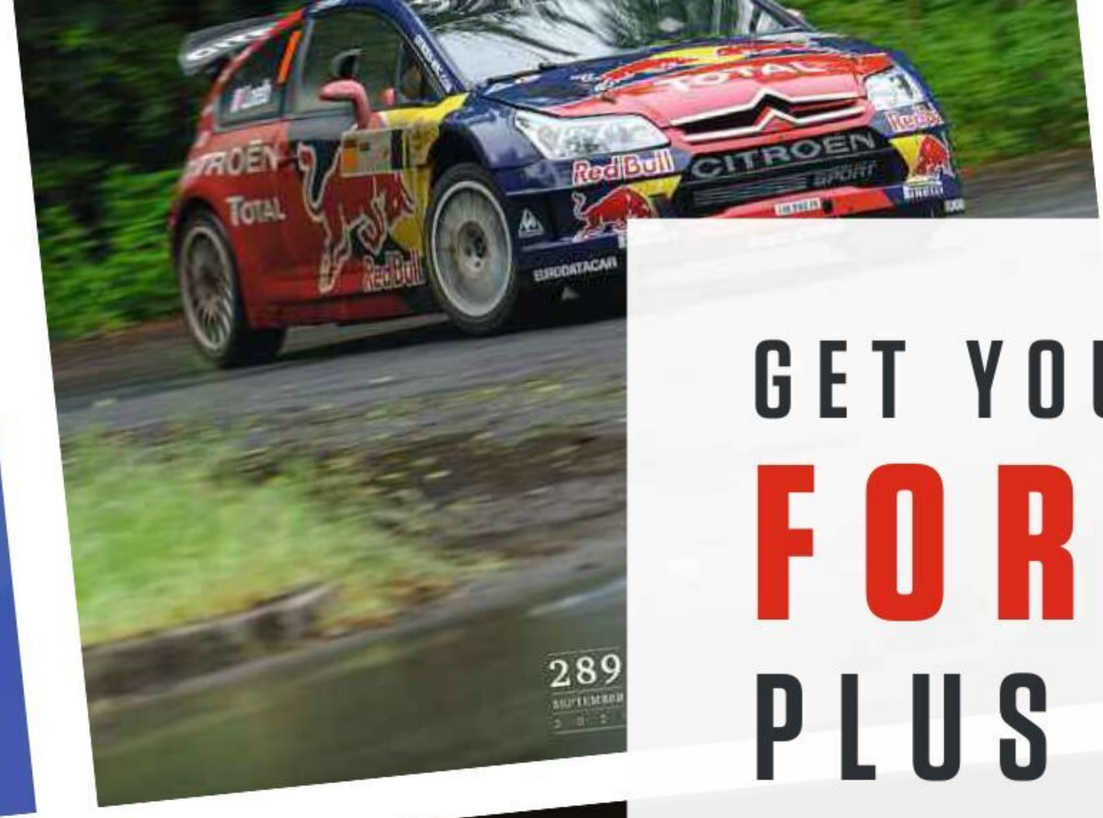














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by JOHN BARKER. PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT

SMALL WONDER

With its pocket-sized proportions, drastically reduced kerb weight and innovative aero, the McMurtry Spéirling takes a refreshingly different approach to electric performance


Spirling
TOW
McMURTRY
AUTOMOTIVE
McMURTRY
AVON



WHEN IT FINALLY POPS OVER AVON RISE AND TUCKS into Quarry Bend, it's not what I was expecting. But I was expecting that. I've raced here at Castle Combe circuit, Wiltshire, in snorty stuff like Caterhams and TVRs and I knew the all-electric McMurtry Spéirling wasn't going to sound anything like them, but when it appears it doesn't sound much like any electric racer I've heard before either.

Its approach was heralded by a constant hum and it was that constancy that was the first discombobulating detail. I thought it was the electric motor and expected its pitch to drop as the little black car slowed and dived for the apex, but it didn't. The reason it didn't is because it was the sound of the suction fan of the Spéirling's active downforce system.

The system also explains the second confusing aspect of the pass, which is what appears to be steam coming from the rear of the car as it corners and then accelerates away. It isn't steam, it's dust – and a surprising amount of it – being sucked from the surface of what looks like a clean race circuit.

These are the oddest details of a car that is itself unlike anything else I have ever seen. Of tiny dimensions (it casts a shadow smaller than a Volkswagen Up), with a central, single-seat cockpit trailing a fin, and riding on huge wheels whose carbon covers in motion give the appearance of balloon tyres, the McMurtry looks like… what? A fun-size Batmobile built to kei-car regulations? The diminutive, evil adversary in a new Pixar *Cars* movie? Or, as McMurtry would have it, the lightweight, fully electric track car that nobody else has had either the vision or the bravery to make.

EVs like the Tesla Model S and Porsche Taycan have immense standing-start acceleration, but almost as a by-product. They have lots of battery power to give them the desired range, and the nature of electric motors is that they produce maximum torque at zero revs, and that combination delivers stunning off-the-line performance despite a huge kerb weight.

Draw up a list of attributes of a driver's car, however, and standing-start acceleration will be ranked a long way down, along with maximum speed, because it's not as relevant to the thrill of driving as response, dynamic agility and feel and feedback. This is the stuff that really matters, most of the time. Yet it seems like every new electric supercar that's announced is built on the established EV model and promises 2000bhp and 0-60mph in two seconds but weighs getting on for 2000kg.

McMurtry gets it; it is creating an electric car with the same power-to-weight ratio of 1bhp per kg, but the numbers that take it there are halved: close to 1000bhp and a weight of less than 1000kg. Imagine how much more biddable and engaging and dynamic that would be. Make it very compact and imagine how much more exploitable it would be too. That's the McMurtry Spéirling. 'Spéirling' is Irish and means thunderstorm, but who or what is McMurtry?

'Sir David McMurtry is an amazing chap,' says Thomas Yates, the young MD chosen by McMurtry to head up this new British company, based half an hour from Castle Combe in modest premises in Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire. 'Sir David is now in his 80s but he's one of the most prolific inventors in the UK. He was originally at Rolls-Royce, worked on Concorde's engines, then left to set up a company called Renishaw and invented a device called the touch trigger probe for analysing manufactured components to micron accuracy.'

Today, Renishaw is a multi-billion-pound company, and six years ago McMurtry approached Yates, now 33, to head up


McMURTRY



a team to develop his concept for a new high-performance EV. At the time Yates was working on hybrid powertrains for Mercedes-AMG at its Brixworth F1 site, but he’d also worked on project management at AMG in Affalterbach in Germany. This is his first full EV.

‘It felt like the perfect opportunity to assemble the Dream Team, people I’d admired but not had a chance to work with. The first day we opened the doors in 2016 there were just five of us, six if you include Sir David. The core concepts were very much his vision and throughout the process he has been regularly involved. And the thing that we find amazing is his ability to pull us up on design decisions that we’ve made. He’s a phenomenally sharp engineer.’

The ultimate aim is to make a road car with track capability. ‘That’s the only sound justification for putting strong performance in a road car,’ says Yates. ‘And it’s actually very difficult at the moment to create an electric road car that is genuinely track capable.’ That’s a function of having a heavy car with a battery pack and powertrain designed primarily for range. Cells optimised for a slow, steady draw of power for mostly cruising mileage aren’t able to cope with sustained high demand. They overheat and de-rate. The Spéirling tackles these issues.

‘What we’ve done is design a vehicle from first principles,’ says Yates. ‘As a company we are incredibly vertically integrated. There’s not a great deal on the car that we haven’t had a hand in developing and designing. We very strongly believe that to make a car enjoyable to drive the key attributes are, firstly, it’s got to be small, and secondly, it’s got to be light.

‘The thing that is relatively profound, I think, is that with the EV age the penalty that you pay for redundant space and redundant seats has gone up vastly. It used to be that carrying around lots of extra energy was relatively easy because you’d just have a slightly bigger fuel tank and not really notice. With electrification, the weight difference between a car that’s driver focused and a car that’s carrying redundant space is going to grow drastically. In a lot of ways the move to electrification might be the eureka moment for people like us who care about driver’s cars if it encourages manufacturers to make more focused vehicles.’

So the Spéirling is only as big as it needs to be, has motors on just the rear axle and the battery pack is U-shaped and runs forward, surrounding the cockpit. It’s built around a carbonfibre, single-seat monocoque that can accommodate drivers of up to 6ft 7in, the bodywork is also carbonfibre and the suspension is multilink with active ride height control. For such a small car it has massive wheels and tyres: 9.5 x 19in at the front and 10.5 x 19in at the rear, shod with Avon slicks.

It weighs ‘well under 1000kg’ and predicted performance is 0-186mph in 9.0sec and over 200mph all out. Of more interest, the 800V-plus, 60kWh battery pack will give 30-60 minutes of track time and can be charged up again very quickly. ‘With the right grid infrastructure we can comfortably do a majority charge, say 75 per cent plus, in 15 minutes, and that’s being a bit conservative. In part that’s possible because we have a power-focused powertrain and cells; absolutely everything is designed to give out and take in charge at a high rate.’

The McMurtry Automotive team now numbers around 30. The car here is the second running prototype, an evolution of the first, and was completed just a couple of days before it made its public debut at 2021’s Goodwood Festival of Speed.


McMURTRY




Spéirling





'It's testament to the capability of the team that we genuinely put the wheels on, went straight to Llandow Circuit in south Wales and spent a bit of time with Alex Summers [2015 British Hill Climb Champion] and Derek Bell [the legendary sportscar racer]. We managed two days of running and then went to Goodwood and went up the hill in front of hundreds of thousands of people. We were absolutely thrilled that it went well.'

Nobody gets out of the car unmoved by driving it, says Yates with a big smile, adding that with straight-cut gears it's a more engaging and thrilling experience than you might expect from hearing it pass. When the Spéirling is really going for it, its acceleration is surreal and the noise is like the high-pitched sound of a commercial jet's engines modulating on the final approach.

The Spéirling's fan-powered downforce is an interesting consequence of it being such a small car. It's harder to have a shape or add spoilers large enough to generate the aerodynamic downforce appropriate to its performance, says Yates. 'If you wanted just a few kilograms of downforce then you could do that with a lip or a wing, but our downforce targets are aggressive. To deliver the level we want and keep the car in this compact form, a fan system is not just the most efficient way, it's probably the only way. We have a DRS function for the straights so we can drop the power consumption massively when we don't need the downforce.'

What the team started with three years ago was something akin to 1970s fan cars like the Brabham BT46 and Chaparral J2, but what they have now is something quite different. Instead of trying to create a skirted area from sill to sill the Spéirling has a skirted area about the size of a bodyboard beneath the driver.

'If you can do a sealed system that's a relatively small area and pull a reasonable pressure delta over it, you can deliver downforce for relatively low power useage,' says Yates. 'It's an efficient way of doing things. It's based on a centrifugal fan rather than an axial fan and that gives us a nice large pressure delta and it's properly compact because we're not actually shifting a huge amount of air.'

The system has two fans mounted beneath the sloping pod behind the driver's head, and one or both can be running dependent on the amount of downforce required. Another advantage of having a small skirted area in the middle of the car is that the tyres can ride even serrated kerbs without breaking the seal and losing downforce.

Initially, McMurtry used prototype systems mounted in trailers to help development, but a lot of the proof-of-concept work was carried out using an old ambulance converted to electric. Yep, an old ambulance, lapping another local circuit, Thruxton, the country's fastest racetrack.

'It gave the right loads, there was plenty of space to work and it provided valuable insights,' explains Yates. 'You can switch on the downforce and experience how it works, how it responds to a moving surface and when the suspension is moving around, when you're cornering. It's still undoubtedly the ambulance with the most downforce in the world…'

Other challenges of the system still to be resolved include creating an effective filter system so that following cars aren't peppered with debris that's sucked up and ejected, but there's then the issue of what to do with debris that is filtered out. You don't want to be carrying it around and emptying bags when you pop the car on charge like it's an expensive vacuum cleaner. There's also the effect of this (variable) internal airflow system on the car's overall aerodynamics to be taken into account.

'Today you'll hear a flat fan speed because we're just trying to measure things and reduce the number of variables. It's relatively easy for us to map it to increase downforce with car speed. We're exploring whether we can make it work well at all speeds.

Yates describes where they are, six years in, as the proof-of-concept stage. The current plan is to make a small number of track cars and then look at a road version. The Spéirling already complies with many competition car safety regulations, which is why it's allowed to run at MSV tracks in general testing. A road car is much harder because of all the legislation involved and the addition of lights and other essentials. And a road car – surely – has to be a two-seater, and that means redrawing all the hard-won compromises. Fan-assisted downforce might not be appropriate, desirable or even necessary for the road car, either.

But even without it there's a strong, appealing sense of innovation and obsessive attention to size and weight about the McMurtry project that brings to mind people like Gordon Murray and Colin Chapman. 'Murray and Chapman are absolutely legendary in the history of engineering,' says Yates, adding that the Spéirling is 'similar to Murray's Rocket in certain regards: smaller is better, super lightweight. And we clearly had a similar thought process at some point that it might be time for the return of fans.'

We may not have driven the Spéirling yet, but seeing the prototype in action, and discovering what drives the team behind it, you quickly get a warmer feeling about an entirely EV future.





ICON

PORSCHE BOXSTER

It was the car that saved Porsche and the original Boxster remains as sweet, sorted and satisfying today as it was 25 years ago



by JOHN BARKER
PHOTOGRAPHY *by* GUS GREGORY



‘PORSCHE HAD HOPED TO FIT A FOUR-CYLINDER ENGINE’



TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO I WAS somewhere in Germany to drive two of the hottest cars on the planet, the new 'baby' sports cars from Porsche and Mercedes. Sunlight glinted off the glossy silver Mercedes SLK and it outshone the Boxster in more than just colour; it was cute and neat and, despite being more compact, had a Transformers-style talent, being able to dramatically fold and stow its expensive-looking hardtop beneath a double-hinged bootlid. It drew an admiring crowd wherever it went.

Three years earlier at the Detroit show, Porsche's concept for an affordable, mid-engined sports car had wowed the crowds. It was pert and curvaceous and glittered with fabulous details, including air vents with individual, miniature wind tunnel turbines. It was a mouth-watering prospect. The production version in front of me was somewhat less fabulous, even though it was the work of the same designer, Grant Larson. In some respects, his hands were tied.

'Promise less, deliver more,' might be sound advice from *Great British Bake Off* judge Paul Hollywood, but that's not how concept cars work. If Larson's show car hadn't been such a hit, if people hadn't beaten a path to the corner of the Detroit show where Porsche had been relegated and left blank cheques, the company's bosses might well have chosen a different path in search of commercial salvation.

Porsche's finances were in a desperate state. There wasn't the money to convert the concept more faithfully into production because the firm was also committed to replacing the 911. To get both the Boxster (986) and the all-new 911 (996) over the line required a sharing of significant parts such as the facia and interior, much of the structure forward of the screen, including the bonnet and distinctive 'fried egg' headlamps, and the doors.

Happily, the restricted budget also brought one very beneficial, possibly crucial consequence for the specification of the Boxster. Porsche had hoped to fit a four-cylinder engine but in the end it was less expensive to fit a downsized version of the all-new, 3.4-litre, water-cooled flat-six destined for the 996, installed about-face with the gearbox poking out to the rear.

In Germany all those years ago, as soon as the Boxster fired up, the balance of the twin test began to shift in its favour. The flat-six's seductive drawl was like Marlene Dietrich to the SLK's four-cylinder Jeanette Krankie. For all of its visual sparkle, the SLK's supercharged (K for Kompressor) engine adhered to the Mercedes philosophy of the period, being admirably effective but quite charmless. The SLK's dynamics could be described in similar terms, so soon the momentum was firmly with the Porsche.

All these years later, I've been through the same range of emotions. I'm still no fan of the Boxster in profile but as soon as its 2.5-litre flat-six is started – smooth, confident and oozing character – aesthetic shortcomings evaporate like steam from its central single tailpipe. This tidy example, owned by photographer Dan Bathie, already had the lowered springs when he bought it, and I don't think they help its look, but the less restrictive exhaust usefully enhances the engine's character.

I'm not sure we'd be celebrating the 986 Boxster if it were powered by the Audi 1.8T four-pot, an engine so anodyne it sucks the joy out of anything within a three-metre radius. On the other hand, the little flat-six has a richness and allure that has you smiling in anticipation, even though you know it has a mere 201bhp (and even less torque) and that it will probably feel even less gutsy than it did 25 years ago.

The modest output was evidence of Porsche's desire to put distance between the Boxster and the 911, staple of the company for so many years. Launched the year after the Boxster, the 996 cost almost twice as much, had 300bhp and was unquestionably the more thrilling driver's car. The evolution of the Boxster was soon underway though, with power increasing to make it more

Right and opposite: parts sharing with the 996-gen 911 included the interior and the front section of the body but also, crucially, the flat-six engine that gave the original Boxster so much of its appeal



‘TO MAKE DECENT PROGRESS, KEEP IT NAILED ALL THE WAY TO THE RED LINE’









of a match for the ability of the chassis. Engines quickly grew to 2.7 litres and then 3.2 litres in the Boxster S, and in 2005 the Cayman joined the second-generation Boxster. However, there remained an almost deferential gap between the mid-engined and rear-engined models, a gap that was only closed with the very recent launch of the GT3-engined Cayman GT4 RS. Meanwhile, the 911 RSR, Porsche's GT racer, went mid-engined in 2017…

For a 25-year-old, this Boxster is pleasingly tight and rattle-free and instantly feels like a good place to be. That shared dashboard is not a great piece of design and, although trimmed in the same terracotta leather, the interior isn't nearly as funky as the Detroit concept's. There are some neat touches, though. I love how the rear-view mirror is shaped to match the gap you can see between the headrests cum roll-over bars. I also love the air gap between the instruments and the binnacle, and the dials with their lovely markings that hint at the modesty of this Boxster's performance, the speedo having a high score of 150mph and the rev-counter only going to 7.

The gearshift is a bit looser and its throw longer than I recall but it's a pleasure to stroke the car along, lazily changing gear with a wristy action, the pedals perfectly spaced for heel and toe. And it's such a sweet engine, quiet on a light throttle and loaded with character when you open the taps, when the low, loping bass gets overlaid with whirring top notes.

A modest kerb weight of just 1250kg helps make the most of the available power (the official figures were 0-60mph in 6.7sec and 149mph flat-out), but the first time you pin the throttle with the tacho needle at around 3000rpm, there's a surprising lack of go. If you want to make decent progress, you need to rev the little flat-six beyond 4000rpm and keep it nailed all the way to the 6500rpm red line. It's up for it, sounding crisp and feeling smooth and willing as it approaches the red zone, and it's a challenge to relish to keep the momentum and revs up for a sustained cross-country dash.

In typical Porsche fashion, at first the Boxster doesn't feel dynamically sharp. The wheel is just the right size and has just the right diameter rim, but initially the steering feels a bit slow and a little heavy, so the car feels heavy too. However, after an hour you've forgotten this because you've discovered that when you want and need the steering to be crisp, direct and feelsome – in the corners – it is.

Despite this car's shorter and perhaps slightly stiffer springs, the ride is still pretty supple. Add in a great driving position and decent seats and refinement and this feels like a car you could cover big miles in. It's practical too, of course. That SLK test was the first, but over the years I've been on lots of Boxster twin tests and group tests where the Porsche ends up carrying all the photographer's gear because it's the only one with enough luggage space. There's a deep boot at the front and a smaller but still useful one at the rear, leaving you to puzzle how they fit in a flat-six engine and five-speed gearbox… and then still have the room to fold an electrically powered roof on top, creating a smooth line from stem to stern. It's a sort of packaging alchemy, though if you've seen a cutaway of the rear quarters of a 911 Turbo you'll appreciate that Porsche is rather good at this sort of thing.

So good that you can almost forgive the Boxster its slabby

Opposite: Boxster was an object lesson in packaging, featuring a roomy, comfortable cabin, two very useful luggage boots, and an electrically powered soft-top that folded down flush with the smooth rear deck

profile. The Boxster concept wasn't unimprovable, though. The production version looks better from the rear three-quarters because the rear panel doesn't extend all the way up to the backs of the seats. The 'speedster' look was great for the show but the production car needed a roof, of course, and while the SLK restarted the trend for folding hardtops (few of which were integrated quite as well as the Mercedes'), the execution of the Boxster's fabric roof made a mockery of that fad.

Sure, it wouldn't stop a knife vandal, didn't come with a heated rear screen (initially) and wasn't quite as refined at elevated autobahn speeds, but it performed impressively for a fabric roof because it was so small and taut. And in many other respects it was much better. It weighed massively less and the Boxster's weight distribution was barely altered with it up or down. Not something you could say for the SLK and its ilk, with their boots full of glass and metal.

In theory, the Boxster's superior mid-engined layout should have hastened the 911's demise, or at least impacted its status, but while the Boxster proved capable and polished, dynamically the 911 was still the daddy. The 996 was the latest big step in 35 years of evolution that had fashioned a car that seemed to defy physics, harnessing all the benefits of an overhanging rear engine with few of the vices, and challenging and rewarding the driver in equal measure.

With just 201bhp and 181lb ft of torque, the Boxster didn't have the performance to fully exploit its chassis, but the upside is that you can use every last atom of energy the flat-six can give. It's great to see that this Boxster is on a set of premium tyres – Michelin Pilot Sports – which probably offer an improvement in grip, response, comfort, noise… *everything* over the original equipment fitment from a quarter of a century ago (the Michelin Pilot SX was an OE fit).

That does mean that despite predating electronic traction and stability control, this Boxster is very hard to unstick, but power oversteer was never a big part of the model's dynamic repertoire. You still enjoy its eagerness to change direction at low speed and the feeling that all the mass is low-slung and that everything that's happening is well telegraphed. It's equally engaging at speed, thanks to its calm balance and precision, so however you're driving you fall into an easy rhythm with the Boxster. Impressively, the modestly dimensioned brakes deliver fine top-of-the-pedal response, too.

More powerful and more dynamic Boxsters followed, but a day spent with the first on a great mix of roads shows that Porsche nailed the original brief. It may not have dramatic performance but it still has great reach. Mooching around town, it rides well and feels and sounds sophisticated and characterful, yet if you work the flat-six hard, it will cover ground impressively, the chassis composed and responsive. Like all Porsches, the Boxster feels built for it. Add remarkable practicality and it's a winning formula.

An essential element of the Boxster and Cayman's success is the flat-six, though. I don't think it would have been such a big hit with a four-cylinder engine. The recent 718 with the flat-four has plenty of performance and is dynamically superb but it's not good to listen to and lacks sophistication. As with the original SLK, there's no joy in just travelling.

I'd go as far as to say that the flat-six is a major part of why the Boxster and Cayman have managed to do what no other sporting Porsche has done. Until the Boxster came along, the 911 had outlived every other model – 914, 928, 924, 944 and 968. Twenty-five years on, the Boxster and Cayman show no signs of fading away. Indeed, as the GT4 RS shows, the best may yet be to come.

Porsche Boxster (986)

Engine Flat-six, 2480cc **Power** 201bhp @ 6000rpm
Torque 181lb ft @ 4500rpm **Weight** 1250kg **Power-to-weight** 163bhp/ton
0-62mph 6.7sec **Top speed** 149mph **Price when new** £33,950
(£67,000 in today's money) **Value today** £5000-£10,000

evo rating ★★★★½



Birds

"M2 performance with newfound precision and control."
- EVO Magazine ★★★★½

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

"The result is a car damn near as quick and exciting as the M2 Competition and, whisper it, more balletic on the road."
- Autocar ★★★★½



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FAST FLEET

NEW ARRIVAL

Mercedes-AMG E63 S

Following in the tyre tracks of its rivals, AMG's 604bhp twin-turbo V8 supersaloon joins the **evo** fleet. Will it be more compelling than the opposition as a long-term proposition? This is where we find out

AUDI'S RS6 AND 7 AND BMW'S M5 and 6 have all spent time in **evo**'s Fast Fleet car park over the last decade or more, but to date Mercedes-AMG's E-class equivalent has only crunched the gravel for fleeting visits, invariably to be put up against one of the aforementioned long-term residents. But now an E63 S has come to stay for six months.

There are two things that many of you will spot. The first is that this is the same car we put against BMW's M5 Competition in issue 286, where it put its grip and grunt to good use to keep the more detailed and sharper BMW honest. But the cut and thrust world of a twin-test is very different to living with a car day in, day out. The latter is where you discover if it's a car you always want to point in the direction of a favoured test route or one you'd rather head directly to your destination in and skip the fun stuff.

And the other thing you may have noticed? It's not an estate, or 'wagon', the fashionable choice so I'm told by those who follow such things. But those who have met me will know that fashion and I had a falling out a long time ago and I lost. Yet here's the thing, so ubiquitous is the super-wagon that the saloon is the rarer car. And, dare I say it, it's also the cooler option, being more



p133 BMW M3 Competition



p135 Chevrolet Corvette



p136 Audi RS e-tron GT



p139 Renault Mégane RS 300







in keeping with the original supersaloon DNA set out nearly 40 years ago by BMW.

Talking of DNA, the latest E63 S is undiluted Affalterbach. Facelifted at the end of 2020, it gained a Panamericana front grille, 22mm wider front arches to accommodate a wider front track, and aero changes beneath the body. The dampers, air springs and engine mounts were retuned to improve reaction speeds, and the driver modes were recalibrated to enhance their characteristics, including the S models being equipped with AMG Dynamics Plus, which includes a Race mode.

The E63 S comes as what the trade would describe as 'fully loaded'. In the UK it's avaliable only as the £99,565 4Matic+ Night Edition, and the only additional spending opportunity is with the colour, with Designo metallic paints costing from £895 or regular metallics, such as the Selenite Grey of our car, costing £695. Even the three colour options for the interior are cost-free, while the previously optional 80-litre fuel tank upgrade is also now standard and will no doubt be handy, what with the small matter of a 604bhp twin-turbocharged V8 that generates 627lb ft from as low as 2500rpm.

While the E63 S may be new to the **evo** fleet, its engine certainly isn't, being the same M177 hot-vee 4-litre V8 that powered our Aston Martin Vantage and DBX. However, being installed in an AMG means that this is the latest variant with the most up-to-date software. It also means it has a gas particulate filter installed in its exhaust, silencing the pops, bangs and general raucousness expected of AMGs. Still, the neighbours will be happy.

Coming directly from Mercedes' fleet, KT70 AWG arrived with a healthy number of miles under its 20-inch Michelin Pilot Sport 4 S tyres – just over 6000, negating any running-in shenanigans. Although as with seemingly every car on sale today, a setting-up process that goes beyond finding the right driving position is still required. The instrument display was first, with the yellow 'Sport' view settled upon as it's the nearest to a regular layout and happens to also have a hint of Delta Integrale dial pack about it.

When it comes to driving modes there's a train of thought that you leave everything in Comfort until the road gets interesting then twist the steering wheel mounted control to 'I*' for Individual mode, where you have preselected your preferred settings – sharper engine and gearbox map, soft chassis and the fruity exhaust. But since the E63 went four-wheel drive the process is no longer quite so straightforward. For one, the Sport and even Race modes feel more suitable for the road than the preloaded modes in previous generations ever did, then with some more detailed button prodding you can turn the E63 S into a 600bhp, rear-wheel-drive supersaloon. Which isn't something you do on a whim during a British winter.

Stuart Gallagher *(@stuartg917)*

Date acquired November 2021 **Total mileage** 7555 **Mileage this month** 1265
Costs this month £0 **mpg this month** 18.3



BMW M3 Competition

Our M3 returns from eCoty with its head held high – and high hopes for the upcoming M4 CS

BY NOW YOU'LL PROBABLY BE AWARE that YA71 TWV finished joint 4th in 2021's eCoty. I feel a certain amount of pride that it ended up being so well received by my fellow judges, although that seems a peculiar phenomenon. I suppose that's the inevitable bond that forms when you live with a piece of machinery for a considerable length of time.

I also felt a certain amount of envy as the M5 CS powered its way to the top of the leaderboard, but I had to concede where the M3's big brother roundly had my car beaten. Yet it's not hard to imagine how a similar, almost money-no-object approach applied to an M3's dynamic components could have an equally favourable outcome. The forthcoming M4 CS or CSL (whichever it gets called) could be a very special bit of kit indeed, even if I'd prefer to see the treatment applied to the saloon body.

Maybe in time it will be, a bit like the old E90 M3 CRT that never came to the UK, officially. I drove one of those once; it was quite a car. It was reasonably light, too, at 1580kg, and that's an area where clearly the G80 is a disappointment: the latest M4 Competition Convertible (with xDrive) weighs over 1900kg! At this rate we'll soon have mid-sized M-cars that tip the scales at over two tons, and however good the technology within them to disguise their mass, in the end there's no getting away from the fact that carrying around those extra kilos not only hurts ultimate performance but also tends to make the car a lot less enjoyable on the roads at saner speeds. A number of judges already applied that criticism to the M3 on this year's eCoty.

Anyway, as the winter well and truly sets in, a trip to Munich that I had planned for our car looks set to be a further Covid casualty, but we'll have another crack at it while the M3 is still with us. In the meantime, I might see if I can get the set of winter tyres that were ordered for the trip fitted to the car in any case, because as versatile as the Michelin 4 S tyres are, experience with our old Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio on winters last year proved just how effective having the right tyre for the season actually is. Funny... Who knew, eh?

Other than that it's business as usual for the M3 Competition, which continues to flout my initial scepticism by being a superb all-rounder and a wonderful car to live with.

Adam Towler *(@Adam Towler)*

Date acquired April 2021 **Total mileage** 10,565 **Mileage this month** 1311 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 26.9

Cupra Leon 300

Don't be deceived by the looks – the Cupra's performance can surprise

THE FIRST THREE FAST FLEET CARS THAT I ever ran at **evo** were all white. A Mini Cooper S, a Caterham R300 and a Mk5 Golf GTI. All looked rather distinctive; a certain nostalgia around the Mini, a definite motorsport vibe to the Caterham. But it was the Volkswagen in particular that caused comment because it seemed like a bold choice at the time. It stood out.

Fast forward a decade and a half to the white Cupra Leon and it would only stand out less if it was snowing. It's not a bad looking car, but it just looks like a humdrum hatchback rather than a hot one.

'It's easy to get a bit blasé about the performance of front-drive hot hatches'

I'm not sure how much of it is down to the hue, but I don't think it helps. I praised the VW T-Roc R for being a bit of a Q-car and you could certainly take the same stance with the Cupra, except I'm not sure that 'understated' is the look the Spanish brand is supposed to be channelling.

But a bit like Geoffrey from accounts who confounds everyone when he lets loose with an incredible Freddie Mercury impersonation at the Crimbo Karaoke, so the apparently subdued Leon has the ability to surprise. For a start, it's quite the peacock at night. The huge, bright white Cupra logos that project onto the tarmac from under the mirrors are just the beginning. Inside, the interior can be lit up with colours of your choosing, split between the single thin strip that runs round the top of the dash and the softer glow in the door cards. It's cool. It's fun. It's much more what you might expect.

Then there is the surprising speed with which it can cover ground. Not long after I took over custodianship of the Cupra from managing editor Ian Eveleigh, I had to get to the station in a bit of a hurry. Up until this point I hadn't really had cause to stretch the Leon's legs, but heading over the hills it was frankly astonishing the pace it possessed. It's easy to get a bit blasé about the performance of front-wheel-drive hot hatches because they seem to have been static at around 300bhp with 0-60mph times of just under six seconds for quite a while now. And of course they do the day-to-day with such a disarmingly demur demeanour, double-clutch deftly dispatching the drearier journeys, that it's easy to forget what they're capable of.

But let off the leash through the well-sighted corners and along the straights, the Leon 300 was genuinely thrillingly rapid. It likes a trailing brake into a bend, the rear happy to swing round neatly. The EA888 engine also feels noticeably stronger now with a few more miles on it since I last drove this car for the group test back in issue 290. I can't say I looked back longingly at the latest white car on the Fast Fleet as I ran for the platforms, but I did think about that drive as I sat on the train.

Henry Catchpole *(@HenryCatchpole)*

Date acquired July 2021 **Total mileage** 8508 **Mileage this month** 1870 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 28.6



Chevrolet Corvette Stingray

It's got a magic mirror and a special talent for getting itself noticed

DRIVING BOTH BACK-TO-BACK AGAIN, I realised that Chevrolet has a solution for the GR Yaris's mirror problem. Strange but true. When the roof is up, the C8 Convertible's rear-view mirror cleverly becomes a video screen for the rear-mounted camera, and voila, you have perfect rear visibility – exactly what you don't get in the Yaris with its small, wiperless back window.

The only slight niggle is ophthalmological. When you glance at the hybrid mirror/screen your brain expects to be doing some long-distance focusing, yet the focus point when the screen is active is close to your eyes. Having to switch focus can feel counterintuitive, but maybe I'll get used to it. I hope so, because it's a brilliant idea and works flawlessly if you can shift your focus quickly enough.

Further proof that it does a convincing job came from my daughter Sabine, who has been a passenger in the car several times (yes, including for the school run!) and yet only recently spotted there was a difference when the roof is up. The image is very clear, so it wasn't that she noticed any graininess or blur. Instead the giveaway was that she could see the car behind in the mirror, rather than the view out of the driver's side window that you'd normally get from a passenger's POV.

A more amusing quirk is if you try to look in the mirror to see if you've got something on your face or to check your glasses or something, and you see nothing but the road behind. It's like you're suddenly invisible. I suppose that's what it must feel like to be Harry Potter when he puts his cloak on.

Another unusual feature of the C8's interior is the squared-off steering wheel. I didn't think I'd like it but I've discovered I really do; it's fantastic mid-bend, where it reminds me of the bank position indicator on the dash when I was learning to fly.

Staying on terra firma, lately I've driven a few wet mountain roads in the C8 – a rear-wheel-drive mid-engined supercar where normally I would be in my Yaris or Clio Trophy. You know that expression about a car shrinking around you? In the Corvette it feels more like the road shrinks around the car! It would be great on a large, flowing mountain road like the Furka, but not on anything like the Splügen, where it would feel like threading a needle with a shoelace.

Wherever it goes, the Corvette is attracting lots of attention. Accelerating away from the toll booth on the autoroute between Chamonix and Geneva recently, I noticed an orange GT3 RS leaving just a moment before me, and seemingly trying to stay ahead. It didn't, and its driver then followed me off the motorway and along some back-roads that I'm sure he wasn't originally intending to drive on, presumably so he could get a better look at what the hell had just overtaken him. After some exaggerated revving from the Porsche – a sign of slight insecurity perhaps? – we went our separate ways, the 911's Kuwaiti plates glinting off into the distance.

Then a few days later I had a considerably less



pleasant encounter when a Mercedes SUV aggressively tailgated the Vette as I completed on overtake on the autoroute at a speed that I'm sure couldn't have been causing its driver significant delay. It then dangerously skimmed by at close range as I pulled back into the right-hand lane. Perhaps it was just bad luck, but I don't feel like I experience such antagonism when I'm driving my Yaris or other less conspicuous cars. It's like someone trying to pick a fight with you when you're just quietly drinking your pint.

And speaking of drink, it's best not to carry any cold ones in the C8's rear boot, which is just above the exhaust and behind the engine. It keeps croissants and baguettes nicely warm on the way home from the boulangerie, though...

David Price

Date acquired September 2021 **Total mileage** 1837 **Mileage this month** 701
Costs this month £0 **mpg this month** 18.1

Audi RS e-tron GT

Why charging away from home takes the shine off EV ownership

IS IT LEGAL TO DISCUSS ELECTRIC CARS without talk turning to charging? Possibly not. It's the easy stick to beat EVs with as range anxiety fades away. However, as sales of electric cars increase, so too does the demand on the charging infrastructure, which, despite the noise from those EV evangelists who are deaf to criticism, is not only unfit for purpose in terms of meeting that demand but is also potentially dangerous.

If you've shelled out six figures for your electrified Audi RS the chances are you have also purchased a home charger. But it's when you're out on the road, enjoying the calmness and serenity of the GT's, er, GT-like credentials and the battery requires a top-up that the electric dream takes a turn for the worse.

Innovations such as Zap-Map take much of the stress away from locating a suitable charger, advising you what type and how many are available and working at any given location, and their potential kWh output. I used Zap-Map when returning home from Gaydon recently, as I needed to top up the GT to get me home and leave me with enough range should I need to head out again before I had plugged in to my own Pod Point. The M40's Beaconsfield services looked the best solution: a modern motorway service station with a bank of Ionity chargers funded by the majority of the OEMs pouring billions into the roll-out of EVs. So I arrived, with around 70 miles of range remaining and looking to add around the same again.

Finding the petrol station at a motorway services is easy, chargers less so. Halfway round my second lap of Beaconsfield I spotted them from afar, over by the bins and in front of the HGV parking area: five chargers, one covered and out of action, two occupied, and the remaining pair unresponsive and requiring a reboot. But EV owners are a friendly bunch, well some are, and as myself and the driver of a Mini E were waiting, the two cars charging left early as they had enough energy to get where they needed to be.

It wasn't the 15 minutes of faffing to get the charger to talk to the car that then irked, or that it took three attempts for the app to register payment because the contactless part of the charger wasn't working, it was that all of this was done in shadowy light, with no canopy for shelter, no CCTV, and no staff on hand to get newbies up and running. It was no better the following day at Donington Park services – chargers positioned in a corner of the car park, with your only options once plugged in being to either sit in your car and be glared at by those waiting to charge, or wait in the main service area.

Has no one at the charging companies looked to see how the refuelling process has evolved? The level of security, service and convenience expected by consumers? I wouldn't want my wife or daughter to have to use some of the motorway service station charging facilities I've used at night; they simply don't feel safe.

The roll-out of state-of-the-art EV-only charging stations, such as those by Gridserve and Shell, is happening, but it's at a glacial rate, and some charging areas are better thought out and in more comforting areas of the services. But if the switch to EVs continues at the current pace, how long will it be before the unthinkable happens to a motorist who finds themself alone, at night, trying to get a charger to work, with only what's lurking in the shadows for company?

Stuart Gallagher *(@stuartg917)*

Date acquired June 2021 **Total mileage** 9186 **Mileage this month** 701 **Costs this month** £0 **mi/kWh this month** 2.8





Aston Martin V8 Vantage

The Aston is tucked away for the winter, while plans are made for 2022

A MONTH AGO I REPORTED THAT I WAS torn between keeping the Aston on the road through the winter and tucking it away somewhere dry and secure until the end of February. A glance at the pics will tell you which way I eventually jumped.

It wasn't an easy decision. We all know that cars benefit from regular use – but as November wore on and the days got danker and darker, I was less and less inclined to use the Aston. With no garage at home, I decided the only thing worse than not using a car was not using a car and leaving it standing out in all weathers.

So I found a local storage facility that was convenient, dry and secure, and mid-November in it went: £85 a month, and the first month covered by the refund for three months' unused road tax.

So, how do you prepare a car for winter storage? In the Aston's case I would need a trickle-charger for the battery, since various systems slowly drain the cells and a flat battery opens the door to all manner of electrical gremlins. CTEK chargers are highly rated, so I went for the mid-range MXS 7.0 (£99.99), and since the Vantage's battery is buried behind the seats I'd need an adaptor (£7.99) so that I could charge it via the 12V socket in the boot. The MXS 7.0 has a range of modes, from reconditioning a spent battery to supplying a gentle pulse to keep a healthy one topped up – which is what I'm hoping will be the case here.

Next on the shopping list was a cover to protect the paintwork. I went for an indoor cover from Concours Auto Products that had been highly rated by our colleagues at *Auto Express*. The 'Luxor' is semi-tailored with a slight stretch so it fits snugly, breathable so it shouldn't trap any moisture, and with a soft fleece lining. In V8V size it cost £129.95.



The final outlay was to brim the fuel tank with E5 superunleaded. The Aston runs perfectly well on E10, but if left standing the consensus is that E10's higher ethanol content makes it more prone to absorb water from any air in the tank. Hence E5 and filling it to the brim.

I waited for a fine, dry day for the final prep – a thorough wash and dry, followed by a brisk run to chase out any remaining drops of water, then off to the petrol station to brim the tank and pump up the tyres. To avoid flat-spots, the advice is to inflate them to between 50 and 60psi. Which does seem a lot. I chickened out at 50.

Then it was into the unit while the car was warm and dry; handbrake off to avoid it seizing on; doors and windows tightly shut to keep out any rodents, charger on, cover on, then home to reclaim the tax and notify the insurers. I know I'm going to miss it like hell, but the anticipation of bringing it out of hibernation is already delicious. And I've a couple of months to plan some road trips for 2022. In the meantime you might want to skip the next couple of reports...

Peter Tomalin

Date acquired March 2021 **Total mileage** 43,388 **Mileage this month** 0 **Cost this month** £237.93 **mpg this month** n/a

Jaguar F-type P450 RWD

The F is vying for a spot among the best Jaguars Meaden's driven

NO POINT BEING COY. I ABSOLUTELY LOVE the F-type. The new-car buzz hasn't faded. The feeling of specialness as I step towards it remains strong, while the smooth, muscular performance and terrific interior makes every journey a pleasure. The regular £100 fill-ups aren't so much fun (I've yet to breach 24mpg), but are still preferable to eating myself to death at Starbucks while waiting an hour for an EV to charge. Yes, this 5-litre supercharged V8 dinosaur really is everything I hoped it would be and more.

Pleasingly it seems to elicit the same response from friends and acquaintances who spend any time with it. There's a lot of love out there for the Jag, which is good to know, even if it also somewhat frustratingly suggests there's always been a bigger market for the F-type than it has managed to find.

Perhaps the pure two-seater configuration is a limiting factor. Personally I don't find the lack of a rear bench too problematic. It's only an issue when you're two-up and need somewhere to stash your coat and/or laptop bag, but you soon learn to put flotsam and jetsam in the boot, which is a useful 500 litres, unlike the Convertible's comical letterbox-sized load area.

One pleasant surprise has been the P450's poise on cold, wet roads. I ran an XKR-R back in 2012/13 and it was a right old handful, but the RWD F finds much more traction than its forebear. Not only is the stability control system quicker witted and more measured in its interventions, but if you do decide to go bareback and switch off the electronics, this F-type has far more benign breakaway characteristics (thanks in part to the limited-slip differential) and is readily balanced on the throttle.

The upshot is that where hustling the XKR was a bit like catching a wet bar of soap, the F feels far more polished and gives you much more confidence as a result. Factor in continuous detail development that has seen this late-model car mature into less of a hooligan than the early V8 F-types and you can now enjoy the fact it's rear-wheel drive rather than feel wary of it. Fun without the fear, if you like.

As you'd expect there's a degree of configurability to the powertrain and chassis, but the settings are somewhat binary and buried a layer into the HMI. Toggling between Normal and Dynamic using the switch on the transmission tunnel then gives you whatever combinations you've preset in the submenus. On those rare occasions when I find fresh tarmac the F really does feel fab with the suspension set to Dynamic, but a Ferrari-style 'bumpy road' button would let me toggle between optimum chassis settings independently from my other Dynamic mode selections. Truth be told, there's room to go a little softer for a truly plush ride, adding a Comfort damper mode below the current Normal. Nevertheless, the P450 still achieves a satisfying compromise that suits its character well.

It's long been a standing joke that however hard Jaguar tries to reinvent itself as a brand, its demographic remains firmly rooted in the, er, 'more mature' age range. Well, I suppose the joke's on me now that I'm 50. While this alone could explain why I'm loving life with the F-type, the fact that the P450 RWD is fast proving itself to be the most capable and satisfying series production Jag I've ever driven is the more palatable and, hopefully, plausible reason.

Richard Meaden

Date acquired October 2021 **Total mileage** 2378 **Mileage this month** 1198 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 23.7



Renault Mégane RS 300

Trophy or not Trophy? It all depends on your journeys

OUR MÉGANE HAS GONE OFF FOR ITS first service, with a note to look at the alarm, which has become even more keen to set itself off within a minute of the car being parked, and also to see if there is a fault with the HMI. You can set mood colours for the ambient lighting and instruments for each drive mode, which I had, but twice now they have defaulted back to one colour. Also, the whole centre screen went blank once while I was driving and then rebooted itself.

In our car's place has come another Mégane RS 300, but this one is a Trophy version, which means it has the Cup chassis, a limited-slip differential, uprated brakes and a few styling and interior upgrades.

I was particularly intrigued to try the Cup chassis, as I find the ride of our Sport-chassis car frustrating at times, rather fidgety and unsettled on a busily surfaced back-road. Well, there's a lot more detail to the feedback in the Trophy, even on roads I know to be smooth; it's like the tyres are pumped up to 90 psi. There's plenty of agitation on back-roads too, but with the firmness comes more control, so there's an honesty about it. There's also not much point steering round the roughest bits of road as I normally would because they don't stand out.

Another obvious difference is the level of rear-steer, which is much greater when you switch to Sport mode. A reason it can be stronger is because there's less roll with the Cup chassis. This improves the steering response and precision generally and is part of the overall greater tautness that characterises the Trophy.

Would I swap our regular Mégane RS for the £5000 more expensive Trophy? I already felt that our car was a bit unresolved and the Cup chassis reinforces that. The Trophy's more positive steering and dynamic character are appealing, but the price is constant road feedback and extra road noise. If I was doing more hacking across country I'd be tempted, but with my more general mix of bimbling and school runs and the occasional long journey, the non-Cup chassis is the better choice for me.

John Barker *(@evoJB)*

Date acquired July 2021 **Total mileage** 6523 **Mileage this month** 1447 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 30.1

Mercedes C63 AMG Estate

An undesirable engine noise has been banished

IT PROBABLY SHOULDN'T COME AS much of a surprise, but a 6.2-litre V8, a measly 66-litre fuel tank and last year's fuel supply crisis didn't go together well. The possibility of a hike in petrol prices had always been in the back of my mind since I bought the C63, but I'd never imagined an outright lack of supply.

Thankfully, I'm rarely forced to use R55 AWP out of necessity, so during the shortage I didn't have to regularly join the endless queues for fuel. Of course, now my fears about rising petrol prices have come true, but at least whatever I put in the tank I mostly get to enjoy during B-road blasts, and even when I do need to make a more humdrum journey, at least I've still got the glorious sounds of that V8 for company.

For a while a minor case of the infamous M156 camshaft adjuster tick had occasionally made itself known, but last month's major service, and specifically the oil change, has silenced all abnormal noises from the engine bay. And on the subject of oil, a small but ominous slick made a reappearance following a recent wash, acting as a gentle reminder that I should probably get those oil cooler seals seen to...

Although I don't intend to cover many miles in the C63 during the winter months, I'm still planning to swap the not-so-fresh Goodyear Eagle F1s for a new set of Michelin's Pilot Sport 4 Ss soon, ensuring I have just a little more traction for when conditions worsen. I'll keep you posted about how that works out.

Sam Jenkins *(@evosamj)*

Date acquired May 2021 **Total mileage** 48,466 **Mileage this month** 81 **Cost this month** £0 **mpg this month** 14.0



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The Knowledge

RATINGS

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

⊕ = new entry this month. Cars in italics are no longer on sale. **Issue no.** is for our most recent major test of the car (D = Driven, T = Driven Too, I = Ignition, F = feature). Call 0330 333 9491 for back issues. **Engine** shows details of the car's combustion engine, or for BEVs the total output in kW of the car's elecric 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

Hyundai i30 N. Clearly developed by a team that knows what makes a great driver's car, the i30 N has edged ahead of the traditional middleweight hot hatch favourites thanks to a refreshing honesty and simplicity that makes it more engaging than the competition at any speed.



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 i20 N** and **Ford Fiesta ST** offer more affordable supermini fun. The **Renault Mégane RS** has a strong B-road game, especially with the non-Cup chassis, and the latest **Audi RS3 Sportback** finally offers more than just impressive stats.

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR YEARS ON SALE)	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	evo RATING	
Abarth 595 Competizione	256 T	£21,985	4/1368	178/5500	184/3000	1035kg	175	6.7	-	-	140	+ Spirited engine; still looks great - Favours fun over finesse	★★★☆☆
Abarth 595 Esseesse	264 D	£25,295	4/1368	178/5500	184/3000	1044kg	173	6.7	-	-	140	+ A bundle of fun if you're in the mood for it - Dynamically dated; expensive	★★★½☆
Abarth 695 Biposto	*205 F*	*'14-'18*	*4/1369*	*187/5500*	*184/3000*	*997kg**	*191*	*5.9*	-	-	*143*	+ *Engineered like a true Abarth product - Expensive for a city car*	★★★★☆
Alfa Romeo 147 GTA	*187 F*	*'03-'06*	*6/3179*	*247/6200*	*221/4800*	*1360kg*	*185*	*6.3*	*6.0*	*15.5*	*153*	+ *Mk1 Focus RS pace without the histrionics - Slightly nose-heavy*	★★★★☆
Audi A1 40 TFSI	256 D	£24,470	4/1984	197/6000	236/1500	1260kg	159	6.5	-	-	155	+ Capable - It's no S1 replacement	★★★☆☆
Audi S1	*246 F*	*'14-'18*	*4/1984*	*228/6000*	*273/1600*	*1315kg*	*176*	*5.8*	-	-	*155*	+ *Compliant and engaging chassis; quick, too - Looks dull without options*	★★★★½
Audi A1 quattro	*264 F*	*'13*	*4/1984*	*253/6000*	*258/2500*	*1420kg*	*181*	*5.7*	-	-	*152*	+ *Polished 253bhp all-wheel-drive A1 - Just 19 came to the UK, with a Porsche Cayman price*	★★★★½
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 S3	*188 F*	*'13-'20*	*4/1984*	*296/5500*	*280/1800*	*1395kg*	*216*	*5.2*	*5.4*	*12.5*	*155*	+ *Lots of grip and one of the best-sounding four-pot turbos - Still a little too clinical*	★★★☆☆
Audi RS3 Sportback	292 D	£50,900	5/2480	394/5600	369/2250	1570kg	255	3.8	-	-	155	+ Improved chassis makes the RS3 a contender at last - Engine and gearbox hold it back	★★★★☆
Audi RS3 Sportback	*256 F*	*'17-21*	*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*	★★★½☆
Audi RS3 Sportback	*221 F*	*'15-'16*	*5/2480*	*362/5500*	*343/1625*	*1520kg*	*242*	*4.3*	*3.6*	-	*155*	+ *Addictive five-cylinder noise; monster pace - Chassis not exactly playful*	★★★☆☆
BMW 128ti	290 F	£33,885	4/1998	261/4750	295/1750	1445kg	184	6.1	-	-	155	+ Strong showroom appeal - Lacks precision	★★★½☆
BMW M135i xDrive	271 F	£36,430	4/1998	302/5000	332/1750	1525kg	201	4.8	-	-	155	+ Strong performance, monster 4WD traction - Engine lacks character	★★★☆☆
BMW M235i xDrive Gran Coupé	274 D	£37,595	4/1998	302/5000	332/1750	1570kg	195	4.8	-	-	155	+ Quick, with an able chassis and quality cabin - Just not that exciting	★★★☆☆
BMW M135i	*212 F*	*'12-'15*	*6/2979*	*321/5800*	*332/1300*	*1430kg*	*228*	*5.1*	*5.2*	-	*155*	+ *Powertrain, noise, chassis - M235i looks nicer, and has an LSD option*	★★★★½
Citroën DS3 1.6 THP	*142 F*	*'10-'15*	*4/1598*	*154/6000*	*177/1400*	*1240kg*	*126*	*7.3*	-	-	*133*	+ *A proper French hot hatch - Petrolheads might find it too 'designed'*	★★★½☆
Citroën DS3 Racing	*153 D*	*'11-'12*	*4/1598*	*204/6000*	*203/2000*	*1240kg*	*167*	*6.5*	-	-	*146*	+ *A faster, feistier DS3 - Not as hardcore as its 'Racing' tag suggests*	★★★½☆
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*	★★★★½
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	290 F	£35,575	4/1984	296/5300	295/2000	1415kg	213	5.7	-	-	155	+ More agile than a Mk8 Golf Clubsport - Not as confidence-inspiring; forgettable looks, too	★★★★☆
DS 3 Performance	*222 D*	*'16-'18*	*4/1598*	*205/6000*	*221/3000*	*1175kg*	*177*	*6.5*	-	-	*143*	+ *All the right ingredients - Undercooked*	★★★½☆
Fiat Panda 100HP	*273 F*	*'06-'11*	*4/1368*	*99/6000*	*97/4250*	*975kg*	*103*	*9.5*	-	-	*115*	+ *About as fun as small cars get - Optional ESP can't be turned off*	★★★★½
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	£21,655	3/1497	197/6000	214/1600	1187kg	169	6.5	-	-	144	+ Highly talented, with real depth to its character - Can get wrong-footed on bad tarmac	★★★★½
Ford Fiesta ST Edition / Performance Edition	292 F	£28,770	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?!	★★★★½
Ford Fiesta ST	*207 F*	*'13-'17*	*4/1596*	*197/5700*	*214/2500*	*1088kg*	*184*	*6.9*	*7.4*	*18.4*	*137*	+ *Chassis, price, punchy performance - Have you heard of Mountune?*	★★★★½
Ford Fiesta ST200	*253 F*	*'16*	*4/1596*	*212/6000*	*236/2500*	*1088kg*	*198*	*6.7*	-	-	*143*	+ *Massive fun - They only made 400*	★★★★½
Ford Fiesta Zetec S	*123 D*	*'08-'13*	*4/1596*	*118/6000*	*112/4050*	*1045kg*	*115*	*9.9*	-	-	*120*	+ *Genuinely entertaining supermini - Renault Sport Twingo and Suzuki Swift are even more fun*	★★★★☆
Ford Fiesta ST	*075 D*	*'05-'08*	*4/1999*	*148/6000*	*140/4500*	*1137kg*	*132*	*7.9*	-	-	*129*	+ *Great looks, decent brakes - Disappointing chassis, gutless engine*	★★★☆☆
Ford Focus ST (Mk4)	267 F	£31,995	4/2261	276/5500	310/3000	1433kg	196	5.7	-	-	155	+ A return to form - Lacks the poise and precision of the very best	★★★★☆
Ford Focus ST (Mk3)	*207 F*	*'15-'18*	*4/1999*	*247/5500*	*265/2000*	*1362kg*	*184*	*6.5*	-	-	*154*	+ *Excellent engine - Scrappy when pushed*	★★★☆☆
Ford Focus ST (Mk2)	*119 F*	*'05-'10*	*5/2522*	*222/6000*	*236/1600*	*1392kg*	*162*	*6.8*	*6.7*	*16.8*	*150*	+ *Value, performance, integrity - Big engine compromises handling*	★★★★☆
Ford Focus RS (Mk3)	*246 F*	*'15-'18*	*4/2261*	*345/6000*	*347/2000*	*1547kg*	*227*	*4.7*	*4.9*	*12.6*	*166*	+ *Torque-vectoring 4WD brings new sensations to hot hatch sector - Needs to be driven hard*	★★★★☆
Ford Focus RS Edition (Mk3)	*246 D*	*'18*	*4/2261*	*345/6000*	*347/2000*	*1547kg*	*227*	*4.7*	-	-	*166*	+ *Front limited-slip differential brings more precise handling - Pricey and still heavy*	★★★★½
Ford Focus RS (Mk2)	*195 F*	*'09-'11*	*5/2522*	*300/6500*	*324/2300*	*1467kg*	*208*	*5.9*	*5.9*	*14.2*	*163*	+ *Huge performance, highly capable FWD chassis - Body control is occasionally clumsy*	★★★★★
Ford Focus RS500 (Mk2)	*256 F*	*'10-'11*	*5/2522*	*345/6000*	*339/2500*	*1467kg*	*239*	*5.6*	*5.6*	*12.7*	*165*	+ *More power and presence than regular Mk2 RS - Pricey*	★★★★★
Ford Focus RS (Mk1)	*207 F*	*'02-'03*	*4/1998*	*212/5500*	*229/3500*	*1278kg*	*169*	*6.7*	*5.9*	*14.9*	*143*	+ *Some are great - Some are awful (so make sure you drive plenty)*	★★★★☆
Ford Escort RS Cosworth	*271 F*	*'92-'96*	*4/1993*	*224/6250*	*224/3500*	*1275kg*	*179*	*6.2*	-	-	*137*	+ *The ultimate Essex hot hatch - Unmodified ones are rare , and pricey*	★★★★☆
Ford Puma 1.7	*095 F*	*'97-'02*	*4/1679*	*123/6300*	*116/4500*	*1041kg*	*120*	*9.2*	*8.6*	*27.6*	*122*	+ *Revvy engine, sparkling chassis, bargain used prices - Rusty rear arches*	★★★★☆
Ford Racing Puma	*262 F*	*'00-'01*	*4/1679*	*153/7000*	*119/4500*	*1174kg*	*132*	*7.9*	*7.8*	*23.2*	*137*	+ *An affordable exotic - Corroding rear arches*	★★★★☆
Honda Civic Type R (FK8)	*288 F*	*'17-'21*	*4/1996*	*316/6500*	*295/2500*	*1380kg*	*233*	*5.8*	*5.9*	*12.6*	*168*	+ *One of the greatest hot hatches ever - Its looks are challenging for some*	★★★★★
Honda Civic Type R Limited Edition (FK8)	*293 F*	*'21*	*4/1996*	*316/6500*	*295/2500*	*1333kg*	*241*	*5.8*	-	-	*168*	+ *Terrifically capable, blisteringly quick, still practical - Standard FK8 is a better road car*	★★★★★
Honda Civic Type R (FK2)	*227 F*	*'15-'17*	*4/1996*	*306/6500*	*295/2500*	*1378kg*	*226*	*5.7*	*5.4*	*12.4*	*167*	+ *Great on smooth roads - Can be punishing on less-than-smooth roads*	★★★★½
Honda Civic Type R (FN2)	*102 F*	*'07-'11*	*4/1998*	*198/7800*	*142/5600*	*1267kg*	*158*	*6.6*	*6.8*	*17.5*	*146*	+ *Looks great, VTEC more accessible - Steering lacks feel, inert balance*	★★★½☆
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	293 F	£24,995	4/1591	201/5500	203/1750	1190kg	172	6.7	-	-	143	+ A serious threat to the Fiesta ST - Ride can be a bit thumpy	★★★★★
Hyundai i30 N	*255 D*	*'19-'20*	*4/1998*	*247/6000*	*279/1750*	*1400kg*	*179*	*6.4*	-	-	*155*	+ *Very close to the Performance version on ability... - ...but not that far away on price*	★★★★½
Hyundai i30 N	292 F	£33,745	4/1998	276/6000	289/1950	1419kg	198	5.9	-	-	155	+ A brilliant, thoroughly developed hot hatch - Its engine isn't the most charasmatic	★★★★★
Hyundai i30 Fastback N Performance	269 F	£29,995	4/1998	271/6000	279/1750	1441kg	191	6.1	-	-	155	+ As above, but with a fractionally more mature ride and soundtrack - As above	★★★★½
Hyundai Kona N	291 D	£35,395	4/1998	276/5500	289/2100	1510kg	186	5.5	-	-	149	+ Unexpectedly tight chassis - Worthy of a better engine	★★★★☆
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	★★★½☆
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	★★★½☆

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR YEARS ON SALE)	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	evo RATING	
Lancia Delta HF Integrale Evoluzione II	*271 F*	*'93-'94*	*4/1995*	*212/5750*	*232/2500*	*1340kg*	*161*	*5.7*	-	-	*137*	*+ One of the finest cars ever built - Demands love, LHD only*	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG A35	267 F	£35,970	4/1991	302/5800	295/3000	1480kg	207	4.7	-	-	155	+ A formidable A-to-B device - Some front-drive rivals are more fun	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG A45 S	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	★★★★½
Mercedes-AMG A45	*221 F*	*'15-'18*	*4/1991*	*376/6000*	*350/2250*	*1480kg*	*258*	*4.2*	*3.9*	-	*155*	*+ Tremendously fast - But not a true great*	★★★☆☆
Mercedes-Benz A45 AMG	*194 F*	*'12-'15*	*4/1991*	*355/6000*	*332/2250*	*1480kg*	*244*	*4.6*	*4.3*	*10.6*	*155*	*+ Blisteringly quick everywhere - Not as rewarding as some slower rivals*	★★★☆☆
Mini Cooper (F56)	254 T	£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	★★★½☆
Mini 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	★★★½☆
Mini John Cooper Works (F56)	211 F	£25,950	4/1998	228/5200	236/1250	1200kg	193	6.3	-	-	153	+ Fast, agile, nimble - Chassis lacks sparkle found in previous JCWs	★★★★☆
Mini John Cooper Works GP (F56)	280 F	£33,895	4/1998	302/1750	332/1750	1255kg	244	5.2	-	-	164	+ Street-fighter looks, illustrious predecessors - Better at style than it is substance	★★★☆☆
Mini John Cooper Works Challenge (F56)	*237 F*	*'16-'17*	*4/1998*	*228/5200*	*236/1250*	*1215kg*	*191*	*6.3*	-	-	*152*	*+ A more hardcore JCW - The ride could be considered a little too hardcore*	★★★★★
Mini Cooper (R56)	*185 F*	*'09-'14*	*4/1598*	*120/6000*	*118/4250*	*1075kg*	*113*	*9.1*	-	-	*126*	*+ Brilliant ride and composure; could be all the Mini you need - You'll still buy the 'S'*	★★★★½
Mini Cooper S (R56)	*149 F*	*'06-'14*	*4/1598*	*181/5500*	*177/1600*	*1140kg*	*161*	*7.0*	*7.0*	-	*142*	*+ Like the Cooper, but with added shove - Google 'Mini death rattle'*	★★★★½
Mini John Cooper Works (R56)	*184 F*	*'08-'14*	*4/1598*	*208/6000*	*206/2000*	*1160kg*	*182*	*6.9*	*7.2*	*16.7*	*148*	*+ A seriously rapid Mini - Occasionally just a little unruly*	★★★★½
Mini John Cooper Works GP (R56)	*231 F*	*'13-'14*	*4/1598*	*215/6000*	*206/2000*	*1160kg*	*188*	*6.3*	-	-	*150*	*+ Brazenly hyperactive - Too much for some roads and some tastes*	★★★★★
Mini John Cooper Works Coupé (R58)	*164 F*	*'11-'15*	*4/1598*	*208/6000*	*206/2000*	*1175kg*	*180*	*6.3*	-	-	*149*	*+ The usual raucous Mini JCW experience - But wearing a backwards baseball cap*	★★★★☆
Mini Cooper S (R53)	*077 F*	*'02-'06*	*4/1598*	*168/6000*	*155/4000*	*1140kg*	*143*	*7.2*	*7.8*	*19.9*	*135*	*+ Strong performance, quality feel - Over-long gearing*	★★★★½
Mini Cooper S Works GP (R53)	*262 F*	*'06*	*4/1598*	*215/7100*	*184/4600*	*1090kg*	*200*	*6.5*	-	-	*149*	*+ Storming engine, agility - Almost too mannered for a road racer*	★★★★★
Nissan Juke Nismo RS	*208 D*	*'15-'17*	*4/1618*	*215/6000*	*206/3600*	*1315kg*	*166*	*7.0*	-	-	*137*	*+ Quirky character and bold styling - Not a match for a pukka hot hatch*	★★★½☆
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 2)	*273 F*	*'97-'98*	*4/1587*	*103/6200*	*97/3500*	*865kg*	*121*	*8.8*	-	-	*121*	*+ Bargain no-frills thrills - Not as much fizz as original 1.3*	★★★★½
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 1)	*095 F*	*'94-'96*	*4/1294*	*100/7200*	*80/5400*	*826kg*	*123*	*10.6*	-	-	*118*	*+ Frantic, thrashy fun - Needs caning to extract full potential*	★★★★★
Peugeot 106 GTi 16v	*034 F*	*'97-'04*	*4/1587*	*120/6600*	*107/5200*	*950kg*	*128*	*7.4*	-	-	*127*	*+ Fine handling supermini - Looks its age*	★★★★½
Peugeot 208 GTi by Peugeot Sport	*254 F*	*'15-'18*	*4/1598*	*205/6000*	*221/3000*	*1160kg*	*180*	*6.5*	-	-	*143*	*+ A brilliantly focused small hatch - Obscured dials*	★★★★½
Peugeot 208 GTi	*184 F*	*'12-'16*	*4/1598*	*197/5800*	*203/1700*	*1160kg*	*173*	*6.8*	*6.8*	*17.9*	*143*	*+ Agile chassis works well on tough roads - Could be more involving*	★★★★☆
Peugeot 205 GTI 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*	★★★★★
Peugeot 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	★★★★½
Peugeot 306 GTi 6	*020 F*	*'93-'01*	*4/1998*	*167/6500*	*142/5500*	*1214kg*	*140*	*7.9*	*7.2*	*20.1*	*140*	*+ One of the great GTIs - They don't make them like this any more*	★★★★★
Peugeot 306 Rallye	*095 F*	*'98-'99*	*4/1998*	*167/6500*	*142/5500*	*1163kg*	*146*	*7.8*	*6.9*	*19.2*	*137*	*+ Essentially a GTi 6 for less dosh - Limited choice of colours*	★★★★★
Renault Sport Twingo 133	*175 F*	*'08-'13*	*4/1598*	*131/6750*	*118/4400*	*1050kg*	*127*	*8.7*	-	-	*125*	*+ Renault Sport experience for pocket money - Optional Cup chassis gives bouncy ride*	★★★★½
Renault Sport Clio 200 Auto	*184 F*	*'13-'18*	*4/1618*	*197/6000*	*177/1750*	*1204kg*	*166*	*6.7*	*6.9*	*17.9*	*143*	*+ Faster, more refined, easier to drive - We miss the revvy NA engine and manual 'box*	★★★½☆
Renault Sport Clio 220 Trophy	*229 D*	*'16-'18*	*4/1618*	*217/6050*	*206/2000*	*1204kg*	*183*	*6.6*	-	-	*146*	*+ Willing chassis - Awful paddleshift gearbox*	★★★½☆
Renault Sport Clio 200 Cup	*247 F*	*'09-'13*	*4/1998*	*197/7100*	*159/5400*	*1204kg*	*166*	*6.9*	*6.6*	*16.7*	*141*	*+ The hot Clio at its best - They don't make 'em like this anymore*	★★★★★
Renault Sport Clio 197 Cup	*115 F*	*'07-'09*	*4/1998*	*194/7250*	*158/5550*	*1240kg*	*161*	*6.9*	-	-	*134*	*+ Quick, polished and capable - Not as much sheer fun as 182 Cup*	★★★★☆
Renault Sport Clio 182	*066 F*	*'04-'05*	*4/1998*	*180/6500*	*148/5250*	*1110kg*	*165*	*7.1*	*6.6*	*17.5*	*139*	*+ Took hot hatches to a new level - Flawed driving position*	★★★★★
Renault Sport Clio 182 Cup	*187 F*	*'04-'05*	*4/1998*	*180/6500*	*148/5250*	*1090kg*	*168*	*6.9*	-	-	*139*	*+ Full of beans, fantastic value - Sunday-market upholstery*	★★★★★
Renault Sport Clio Trophy	*262 F*	*'05-'06*	*4/1998*	*180/6500*	*148/5250*	*1090kg*	*168*	*6.9*	*6.6*	*17.3*	*140*	*+ The most fun you can have on three (sometimes two) wheels - Only 500 were built*	★★★★★
Renault Sport Clio 172 (Phase 2)	*034 F*	*'01-'03*	*4/1998*	*170/6250*	*147/5400*	*1110kg*	*156*	*7.2*	*7.1*	*20.0*	*138*	*+ Poised, predictable, fast - Lacks aggressive edge*	★★★★½
Renault Sport Clio 172 Cup	*048 F*	*'02-'03*	*4/1998*	*170/6250*	*147/5400*	*1011kg*	*171*	*6.9*	*6.5*	*17.7*	*138*	*+ Bargain old-school hot hatch - Nervous in the wet, no ABS*	★★★★☆
Renault Sport Clio 172 (Phase 1)	*146 F*	*'00-'01*	*4/1998*	*170/6250*	*147/5400*	*1035kg*	*167*	*7.2*	*6.6*	*18.2*	*138*	*+ Brilliantly accomplished - Imperfect driving position*	★★★★½
Renault Clio Williams	*233 F*	*'93-'96*	*4/1988*	*148/6100*	*126/4500*	*981kg*	*153*	*7.8*	*7.6*	*20.8*	*134*	*+ One of the best hot hatches ever - Can be fragile*	★★★★★
Renault 5 GT Turbo	*255 F*	*'87-'91*	*4/1397*	*118/5750*	*122/3000*	*855kg*	*140*	*7.3*	-	-	*120*	*+ Clio Williams' grand-daddy - Few unmodified ones left*	★★★★★
Renault Sport Clio V6 255	*277 F*	*'03-'05*	*6/2946*	*251/7150*	*221/4650*	*1400kg*	*182*	*5.8*	-	-	*153*	*+ Supercar drama without the original's edgy handling - Uninspired interior*	★★★★★
Renault Sport Clio V6	*029 F*	*'99-'02*	*6/2946*	*227/6000*	*221/3750*	*1410kg*	*164*	*6.6*	*5.8*	*17.0*	*145*	*+ Pocket supercar - Mid-engined handling can be tricky*	★★★★☆
Renault Mégane RS (280)	*267 F*	*'18-'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*	★★★★½
Renault Mégane RS 300	290 F	£33,585	4/1798	296/6000	310/4000	1443kg	209	5.7	-	-	158	+ Combines the more potent engine with the softer chassis at last - But now it's auto only	★★★★½
Renault Mégane RS Trophy	267 F	£38,035	4/1798	296/6000	310/4000	1443kg	209	5.7	-	-	158	+ An RS with knobs on - Unforgiving ride can make it feel ill at ease on trickier roads	★★★★½
Renault 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	★★★★☆
Renault Sport Mégane 275 Cup-S/Nav 275	*223 D*	*'16*	*4/1998*	*271/5500*	*265/3000*	*1394kg*	*198*	*5.8*	-	-	*158*	*+ The same engine as the Trophy-R - They don't make it anymore*	★★★★★
Renault Sport Mégane 265 Cup	*195 F*	*'12-'15*	*4/1998*	*261/5500*	*265/3000*	*1387kg*	*191*	*6.0*	*6.4*	*14.8*	*158*	*+ A hot hatch benchmark - Cupholder could be better positioned*	★★★★★
Renault Sport Mégane 275 Trophy	*212 F*	*'14-'15*	*4/1998*	*271/5500*	*265/3000*	*1376kg*	*200*	*5.8*	-	-	*159*	*+ Another cracking Trophy model - Stripped-out Trophy-R is even more thrilling*	★★★★★
Renault Sport Mégane 275 Trophy-R	*231 F*	*'14-'15*	*4/1998*	*271/5500*	*265/3000*	*1297kg*	*212*	*5.8*	-	-	*158*	*+ As absorbing as a 911 GT3 RS on the right road - Too uncompromising for some; pricey*	★★★★★
Renault Sport Mégane 250 Cup	*139 F*	*'09-'12*	*4/1998*	*247/5500*	*251/3000*	*1387kg*	*181*	*6.1*	*6.1*	*14.6*	*156*	*+ Fantastic chassis... - ...partially obscured by new-found maturity*	★★★★½
Renault 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*	★★★★☆
Renault 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*	★★★★★
Renault 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*	★★★★★
SEAT Ibiza Cupra	*225 F*	*'16-'18*	*4/1798*	*189/4300*	*236/1450*	*1185kg*	*162*	*6.7*	-	-	*146*	*+ Quick, competent, refined, and manual only - Not exciting enough*	★★★½☆
SEAT Ibiza Cupra	*183 D*	*'10-'15*	*4/1390*	*178/6200*	*184/2000*	*1259kg*	*144*	*6.9*	-	-	*142*	*+ Punchy engine, unflappable DSG - Lacks engagement, DSG only*	★★★☆☆
SEAT Leon Cupra 290	*267 F*	*'16-'20*	*4/1984*	*286/5400*	*280/1950*	*1356kg*	*214*	*6.0*	-	-	*155*	*+ Agile, transparent and easily exploited - Can feel rather plain*	★★★★☆
SEAT Leon Cupra R	*244 D*	*'18*	*4/1984*	*306/5800*	*280/1800*	*1378kg*	*226*	*5.8*	-	-	*155*	*+ Sharper handling and better body control - High price and limited availability*	★★★★☆
SEAT Leon Cupra	*105 F*	*'07-'11*	*4/1984*	*237/5700*	*221/2200*	*1375kg*	*175*	*6.4*	-	-	*153*	*+ Great engine, composure - Doesn't have the adjustability of the old Cupra R*	★★★★☆
Skoda Fabia vRS (Mk2)	*146 D*	*'10-'14*	*4/1390*	*178/6200*	*184/2000*	*1218kg*	*148*	*7.3*	-	-	*139*	*+ Clever twincharged engine and DSG 'box - Do you homework on the reliability of the engine*	★★★½☆
Skoda Fabia vRS (Mk1)	*077 F*	*'03-'07*	*4/1896*	*130/4000*	*229/1900*	*1315kg*	*100*	*9.6*	-	-	*127*	*+ Fun and frugal hot hatch - A little short on steering feel*	★★★½☆
Skoda 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	★★★★☆
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk3)	*187 D*	*'13-'17*	*4/1984*	*217/4500*	*258/1500*	*1345kg*	*164*	*6.8*	-	-	*154*	*+ Quick, agile, roomier than a Golf - Ride is harsh for what could be a family car*	★★★★☆
Skoda Octavia vRS 245 (Mk3)	*250 F*	*'17-'20*	*4/1984*	*242/5000*	*258/1600*	*1370kg*	*179*	*6.6*	-	-	*155*	*+ A credible, entertaining performer - You won't get out of bed at 4am to drive it*	★★★★☆
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk3)	267 F	£17,249	4/1373	138/5500	170/2500	975kg	144	8.1	7.6	20.1	130	+ Composed and brisk - Adjustability and character have been diluted	★★★½☆
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk2)	*175 F*	*'12-'17*	*4/1586*	*134/6900*	*118/4400*	*1045kg*	*130*	*8.7*	-	-	*121*	*+ Still a great pocket rocket - Not quite as adjustabie as the original*	★★★★½
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk1)	*132 F*	*'05-'11*	*4/1586*	*123/6800*	*109/4800*	*1030kg*	*121*	*8.9*	-	-	*124*	*+ Entertaining handling, well built - Lacking in steering feedback*	★★★★½
Toyota GR Yaris	292 F	£30,020	3/1618	257/6500	265/3000	1280kg	204	5.5	-	-	142	+ A proper homologation special - More Subaru Impreza than Mitsubishi Evo	★★★★★
Toyota Yaris GRMN	*254 F*	*'18*	*4/1798*	*209/6800*	*184/5000*	*1135kg*	*187*	*6.3*	-	-	*143*	*+ Appealingly feisty supercharged supermini - Artificial steering; they only made 400*	★★★★☆
Vauxhall Corsa VXR	*211 F*	*'14-'18*	*4/1598*	*202/5800*	*206/1900*	*1278kg*	*161*	*6.8*	-	-	*143*	*+ Begs to be wrung out - You'll need the £2400 Performance Pack*	★★★★☆
Vauxhall Corsa VXR	*154 F*	*'07-'14*	*4/1598*	*189/5850*	*192/1980*	*1166kg*	*165*	*7.2*	-	-	*140*	*+ Looks snazzy, punchy engine - Lacks feel, uncouth compared with rivals*	★★★½☆
Vauxhall Corsa VXR Nürburgring/Clubsport	*164 F*	*'11-'13/'14*	*4/1598*	*202/5750*	*206/2250*	*1166kg*	*176*	*6.8*	-	-	*143*	*+ VXR gets more power and a limited-slip diff - But they come at a price*	★★★★☆
Vauxhall Astra/GTC VXR (Mk2)	*207 F*	*'12-'18*	*4/1998*	*276/5500*	*295/2500*	*1475kg*	*190*	*6.0*	-	-	*155*	*+ Loony turbo pace - Lacks the Renault Sport Mégane's precision*	★★★★☆
Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk1)	*102 F*	*'05-'11*	*4/1998*	*237/5600*	*236/2400*	*1393kg*	*173*	*6.4*	*6.7*	*16.7*	*152*	*+ Fast and furious - Lacks a little composure and precision*	★★★★☆
Volkswagen Up GTI	273 F	£16,320	3/999	113/5000	147/2000	995kg	115	8.8	-	-	122	+ Infectious appetite for fun - City car roots are still there	★★★★☆
Volkswagen Lupo GTI	*034 F*	*'01-'04*	*4/1598*	*123/6500*	*112/3000*	*1038kg*	*120*	*8.2*	*8.9*	*30.1*	*127*	*+ Looks, performance, chassis - Lacks the fizz of the 106 GTI*	★★★★☆
Volkswagen 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	★★★½☆
Volkswagen Polo GTI	*211 F*	*'15-'17*	*4/1798*	*189/4200*	*236/1450*	*1197kg*	*160*	*6.7*	-	-	*146*	*+ Smooth and brawny - Fiesta ST is more engaging*	★★★½☆
Volkswagen 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*	★★★½☆
Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk8)	279 D	£34,175	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	★★★½☆
Volkswagen Golf GTI Clubsport (Mk8)	290 F	£37,925	4/1984	296/5000	295/2000	1461kg	206	5.6	-	-	155	+ Super-effective - But not as exciting as you might hope	★★★★☆
Volkswagen Golf R (Mk8)	288 F	£40,025	4/1984	316/5200	310/2100	1551kg	207	4.7	-	-	155	+ 316bhp, four-wheel drive, understated flair - Chassis lacks the control you'd expect	★★★☆☆
Volkswagen 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*	★★★★½
Volkswagen 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*	★★★★½
Volkswagen Golf R (Mk7.5)	*267 F*	*'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*	★★★★☆
Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk7)	*236 F*	*'13-'17*	*4/1984*	*217/4500*	*258/1500*	*1276kg*	*173*	*6.5*	-	-	*153*	*+ Brilliantly resolved - Lacks the punch of newer rivals*	★★★★½
Volkswagen Golf GTI Clubsport Edition 40 (Mk7)	*230 D*	*'16-'17*	*4/1984*	*286/5350*	*280/1700*	*1300kg*	*224*	*6.3*	-	-	*155*	*+ A faster, sharper, more entertaning GTI - Some rivals are more exciting on track*	★★★★½
Volkswagen Golf GTI Clubsport S (Mk7)	*280 F*	*'16*	*4/1984*	*306/5800*	*280/1850*	*1285kg*	*242*	*5.8*	*5.8*	*12.8*	*165*	*+ Runner-up at evo Car of the Year 2016 - Only 400 were built*	★★★★★
Volkswagen Golf R (Mk7)	*220 F*	*'14-'17*	*4/1984*	*296/5500*	*280/1800*	*1401kg*	*215*	*5.1*	*5.2*	*12.4*	*155*	*+ A VW 'R' model you can take seriously - Mégane 275 just edges it as a pure driver's car*	★★★★★
Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk6)	*172 F*	*'09-'13*	*4/1984*	*207/5300*	*207/1700*	*1318kg*	*160*	*6.9*	*6.4*	*16.5*	*148*	*+ Still a very accomplished hot hatch - 207bhp isn't a lot any more*	★★★★☆
Volkswagen Golf R (Mk6)	*140 D*	*'10-'13*	*4/1984*	*266/6000*	*258/2500*	*1446kg*	*187*	*5.7*	-	-	*155*	*+ Great engine, tremendous pace and poise - High price, adaptive dampers optional*	★★★★½

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

SALOONS / ESTATES / SUVs



OUR CHOICE

BMW M5 CS. The M5 may seem like an unlikely candidate for the CS treatment, but its chassis changes result in a precise, immediate and supremely composed machine that shrinks on the road. Our 2021 Car of the Year and quite possibly the greatest supersaloon ever.



BEST OF THE REST

The **Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio** (left) is the sports saloon your heart would choose, while your head may prefer the new **BMW M3 Competition**. If it's something a size larger you're looking for, the **Audi RS6 Avant**, **BMW M5 Competition** and **Mercedes-AMG E63 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	★★★★½
Alfa Romeo Giulia Veloce	244 F	£40,595	4/1995	276/5250	295/2250	1429kg	196	5.7	-	-	149	+ Supple and satisfying - Engine reluctant to rev	★★★★½
Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio	287 F	£67,030	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	-	-	143	+ Agile feel, quick steering, attractive cabin - Engine not truly inspiring	★★★★☆
Alfa Romeo Stelvio Quadrifoglio	244 D	£74,949	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	★★★★½
Aston Martin Rapide	*141 F*	*'10-'13*	*12/5935*	*470/6000*	*443/5000*	*1990kg*	*240*	*5.3*	*-*	*-*	*188*	*+ Better than its DB9 sibling - More of a 2+2 than a proper four-seater*	★★★★☆
Aston Martin Rapide S	*201 D*	*'13-'19*	*12/5935*	*552/6650*	*465/5500*	*1990kg*	*282*	*4.4*	*-*	*-*	*203*	*+ Oozes star quality; gearbox on 2015MY cars a big improvement - It's cosy in the back*	★★★★☆
Aston Martin Rapide AMR	*261 D*	*'19-'20*	*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*	★★★★½
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	★★★★½
Audi RS3 Saloon	292 D	£51,900	5/2480	394/5600	369/2250	1575kg	254	3.8	-	-	155	+ Improved chassis makes the RS3 a contender at last - Engine and gearbox hold it back	★★★★☆
Audi RS3 Saloon	*243 F*	*'17-'21*	*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*	★★★½☆
Audi S4 Avant (B9, diesel)	266 D	£50,910	6/2967	342/3850	516/2500	1825kg	190	4.9	-	-	155	+ Effortless performance, well-judged chassis - Diesel power won't be to everyone's taste	★★★★☆
Audi S4 (B9, petrol)	*225 D*	*'17-'19*	*6/2995*	*349/5400*	*369/1370*	*1630kg*	*218*	*4.7*	*-*	*-*	*155*	*+ Strong response and delivery - Chassis feels softer than before*	★★★★☆
Audi RS4 Avant (B9)	282 F	£66,945	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*	*'12-'15*	*8/4163*	*444/8250*	*317/4000*	*1795kg*	*251*	*4.7*	*4.5*	*10.5*	*174*	*+ Looks and sounds the part, thunderously fast - Unnatural steering, dull dynamics*	★★★½☆
Audi RS4 (B7)	*250 F*	*'05-'08*	*8/4163*	*414/7800*	*317/5500*	*1650kg*	*255*	*4.7*	*4.5*	*10.5*	*155*	*+ 414bhp at 7800rpm! And there's an estate version too - Busy under braking*	★★★★★
Audi RS4 (B5)	*192 F*	*'00-'02*	*6/2671*	*375/6100*	*325/2500*	*1620kg*	*236*	*4.9*	*4.8*	*12.1*	*170*	*+ Effortless pace - Not the last word in agility; bends wheel rims*	★★★★☆
Audi RS2	*214 F*	*'94-'95*	*5/2226*	*315/6500*	*302/3000*	*1595kg*	*201*	*4.8*	*4.8*	*13.1*	*162*	*+ Storming performance (thanks to Porsche) - Try finding one*	★★★★☆
Audi S5 Sportback	*233 D*	*'17-'19*	*6/2995*	*349/5400*	*369/1370*	*1660kg*	*214*	*4.7*	*-*	*-*	*155*	*+ More capable than you think; strong V6 engine - Gearbox frustrating in auto mode*	★★★½☆
Audi RS5 Sportback	264 D	£72,095	6/2894	444/5700	442/1900	1720kg	262	3.9	-	-	155	+ High-speed composure - Flat-footed on more technical roads	★★★★☆
Audi S6 Avant (C8)	263 D	£65,250	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	£98,280	8/3996	592/6000	590/2050	2075kg	290	3.6	-	-	155	+ Power, poise, build - Needs Dynamic Ride Control suspension to be at its best	★★★★½
Audi RS6 Avant (C7)	*203 F*	*'13-'18*	*8/3993*	*552/5700*	*516/1750*	*1935kg*	*290*	*3.9*	*3.6*	*8.2*	*155*	*+ Performance, foolproof powertrain, beefy looks - Feels a bit one-dimensional*	★★★★☆
Audi RS6 Avant Performance (C7)	*224 D*	*'15-'19*	*8/3993*	*597/6100*	*553/2500*	*1950kg*	*311*	*3.7*	*-*	*-*	*155*	*+ The extra power is no hassle for the chassis - But it is a stern test of your self-control*	★★★★☆
Audi RS6 Avant (C6)	*116 F*	*'08-'10*	*10/4991*	*572/6250*	*479/1500*	*1985kg*	*293*	*4.5*	*4.3*	*9.7*	*155*	*+ Was the world's most powerful estate - Power isn't everything*	★★★★☆
Audi RS6 Avant (C5)	*258 F*	*'02-'04*	*8/4172*	*444/5700*	*413/1950*	*1865kg*	*242*	*4.6*	*4.8*	*11.6*	*155*	*+ The ultimate estate car? - Numb steering*	★★★★☆
Audi RS7 Sportback	268 D	£100,055	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	£113,915	495kW	637	612	2347kg	276	3.3	-	-	155	+ A fine GT - Range not up to touring	★★★★☆
Audi SQ2	261 D	£40,450	4/1984	296/5300	295/2000	1510kg	199	4.7	-	-	155	+ Nothing - Everything	★★☆☆☆
Bentley Flying Spur V8	283 D	£160,200	8/3996	542/6000	568/2000	2330kg	236	4.1	-	-	198	+ The best limo for those who enjoy driving - 2330kg and 5.3 metres	★★★★½
Bentley Flying Spur	272 D	£177,800	12/5950	626/6000	664/1350	2437kg	261	3.8	-	-	207	+ A limo for those who enjoy driving - Needs to lose a few hundred kilos	★★★★☆
Bentley Flying Spur V8 S	*230 D*	*'16-'19*	*8/3993*	*521/6000*	*502/1700*	*2417kg*	*219*	*4.9*	*-*		*190*	*+ Old-school approach to comfort and luxury - Old-school tech*	★★★½☆
Bentley Flying Spur	*185 D*	*'13-'18*	*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*	★★★½☆
Bentley Bentayga V8	247 D	£179,600	8/3996	542/6000	568/1960	2388kg	231	4.5	-	-	180	+ The pick of the Bentayga range - A top-end Range Rover is still more polished	★★★½☆
Bentley Bentayga	*217 D*	*'15-'18*	*12/5950*	*600/5000*	*664/1350*	*2440kg*	*250*	*4.1*	*-*	*-*	*187*	*+ Sublime quality, ridiculous pace - Inert driving experience, SUV stigma*	★★★½☆
Bentley Mulsanne Speed	*279 F*	*'14-'20*	*8/6752*	*530/4000*	*811/1750*	*2685kg*	*201*	*4.9*	*-*	*-*	*190*	*+ The last Bentley with the 'six-and-three-quarter' - We won't see its kind again*	★★★½☆
BMW 320d xDrive M Sport (G20)	262 D	£41,255	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	£40,645	4/1998	254/5000	295/1550	1470kg	176	5.8	-	-	155	+ Feels like a 3-series once more - Harsh and unsettled ride	★★★½☆
BMW M340i xDrive	270 D	£40,900	6/2998	369/5500	369/1850	1670kg	225	4.4	-	-	155	+ Very fast and refined - Limited driver appeal	★★★★☆
BMW M3 Competition (G80)	293 F	£76,115	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	★★★★½
BMW M3 Competition xDrive (G80)	292 D	£78,425	6/2979	503/6250	479/2750	1780kg	287	3.5	-	-	155	+ Four-wheel drive doesn't spoil the fun - There's a slight weight penalty	★★★★½
BMW M3 (F80)	*266 F*	*'14-'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*	★★★★½
BMW M3 Competition Package (F80)	*237 F*	*'16-'19*	*6/2979*	*444/7000*	*406/1850*	*1560kg*	*289*	*4.2*	*-*	*-*	*155*	*+ The car the F80 M3 should have been from the start - Less refined at low speeds*	★★★★½
BMW M3 CS (F80)	*250 D*	*'18-'19*	*6/2979*	*454/6250*	*442/4000*	*1585kg*	*291*	*3.9*	*-*	*-*	*174*	*+ Improved chassis and mid-range urge - Cost over £20k more than an M3 Comp Pack*	★★★★½
BMW M3 (E90)	*123 F*	*'08-'11*	*8/3999*	*414/8300*	*295/3900*	*1605kg*	*262*	*4.9*	*4.9*	*10.7*	*165*	*+ Every bit as good as the E92 M3 coupe - No carbon roof*	★★★★★
BMW M3 CRT (E90)	*179 F*	*'11-'12*	*8/4361*	*444/8300*	*324/3750*	*1580kg*	*285*	*4.4*	*-*	*-*	*180*	*+ Saloon chassis + weight savings + GTS engine = best E90 M3 - Just 67 were made*	★★★★★
BMW M5 (F90)	*244 F*	*'17-'20*	*8/4395*	*592/5600*	*553/1800*	*1855kg*	*324*	*3.4*	*-*	*-*	*155*	*+ Fun in two- or four-wheel drive - Insufficient steering connection and engine character*	★★★★½
BMW M5 Competition (F90)	282 F	£102,385	8/4395	616/6000	553/1800	1895kg	330	3.3	-	-	155	+ Incredible performance, sharper handling - It's still a big old bus	★★★★½
BMW M5 CS (F90)	293 F	£140,780	8/4395	626/6000	553/1800	1825kg	349	3.0	-	-	189	+ evo Car of the Year 2021 - Erm, there's only two rear seats?	★★★★★
BMW M5 (F10)	*208 F*	*'11-'16*	*8/4395*	*552/6000*	*501/1500*	*1870kg*	*300*	*4.4*	*-*	*-*	*155*	*+ Twin-turbocharging suits M5 well - Can feel heavy at times*	★★★★★
BMW M5 (E60)	*129 F*	*'04-'10*	*10/4999*	*500/7750*	*384/6100*	*1755kg*	*289*	*4.7*	*-*	*-*	*155*	*+ Close to being the ultimate supersaloon - SMG gearbox feels old-tech*	★★★★½
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*	*6.1*	*-*	*-*	*156*	*+ The original storming saloon - Understated looks*	★★★★★
BMW M6 Gran Coupé	*190 D*	*'13-'18*	*8/4395*	*552/6000*	*501/1500*	*1875kg*	*299*	*4.2*	*-*	*-*	*155*	*+ Enormous performance, stylish looks - Looks overpriced next to rivals, M5 included*	★★★★☆
BMW M760Li xDrive	*233 D*	*'17-'20*	*12/6592*	*602/5500*	*590/1550*	*2180kg*	*281*	*3.7*	*-*	*-*	*155*	*+ More capable than you'd think; strong engine - Too much of a limo to be genuinely exciting*	★★★☆☆
BMW X5 M50d	*191 D*	*'14-'21*	*6/2993*	*376/4000*	*546/2000*	*2190kg*	*174*	*5.3*	*-*	*-*	*155*	*+ Straight-line pace - Driving experience identical to standard X5, despite the M badge*	★★½☆☆
BMW X7 xDrive30d M Sport	*262 D*	*'19-'20*	*6/2993*	*261/4000*	*457/2000*	*2370kg*	*112*	*7.0*	*-*	*-*	*141*	*+ Spacious; quick enough - Its 'face' will make your kids cry*	★★★☆☆
Honda Accord Type R	*012 F*	*'98-'03*	*4/2157*	*209/7200*	*158/6700*	*1306kg*	*163*	*7.2*	*6.1*	*17.4*	*142*	*+ One of the finest front-drivers of all time - Convincing your friends of that*	★★★★½
Jaguar XE P300 AWD	262 D	£40,180	4/1997	296/5500	295/1500	1690kg	178	5.7	-	-	155	+ Fluent handling; 4WD grip and security - Auto 'box saps sportiness	★★★★☆
Jaguar XE SV Project 8	*269 F*	*'18-'20*	*8/5000*	*592/6500*	*516/3500*	*1745kg*	*345*	*3.7*	*3.5*	*7.8*	*200*	*+ Beautifully controlled and amazingly agile - They only made 15 in Touring spec*	★★★★½
Jaguar XF Sportbrake P300 AWD	260 D	£46,650	4/1997	296/5500	295/1500	1763kg	171	6.0	-	-	155	+ Precise, involving dynamics, unexpected performance - It's only got four cylinders	★★★★☆
Jaguar XFR	*181 D*	*'09-'15*	*8/5000*	*503/6000*	*461/2500*	*1800kg*	*284*	*4.7*	*4.8*	*10.2*	*155*	*+ Brilliant blend of pace and refinement - Doesn't sound as special as it is*	★★★★☆
Jaguar XFR-S	*208 F*	*'13-'15*	*8/5000*	*542/6500*	*501/2500*	*1800kg*	*306*	*4.6*	*-*	*-*	*186*	*+ XF turned up to 12 - Tyres aren't cheap*	★★★★☆
Jaguar XJR	*191 D*	*'14-'17*	*8/5000*	*542/6500*	*502/2500*	*1875kg*	*294*	*4.6*	*-*	*-*	*174*	*+ Hot-rod vibe, fine cabin - Opinion-dividing looks*	★★★★☆
Jaguar F-Pace S	*222 D*	*'16-'18*	*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	£78,165	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	★★★★½



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MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR YEARS ON SALE)	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	evo RATING	
Kia Stinger GT-Line 2.0	*247 D*	*'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	242 D	£42,995	6/3342	365/6000	376/1300	1780kg	168	4.7	-	-	168	+ Playful handling, deep-chested performance - Engine lacks soul, steering lacks feel	★★★½☆
Land Rover Defender 110 (P400)	273 F	£79,655	6/2996	394/5500	406/2000	2388kg	168	6.4	-	-	129	+ A great off-roader - If off-roading is your thing	★★★★☆
Lamborghini Urus	249 F	£159,925	8/3996	641/6000	627/2250	2200kg	296	3.6	-	-	190	+ A freakish manipulator of physics - But also rather one-dimensional	★★★★☆
Lexus IS F	*151 F*	*'07-'12*	*8/4969*	*417/6600*	*372/5200*	*1714kg*	*247*	*5.2*	*4.7*	*10.9*	*173*	*+ Shockingly good Lexus - The M3's available as a four-door too*	★★★★½
Lotus Carlton	*292 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	£71,320	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 Ghibli Trofeo	290 D	£104,960	8/3799	572/6750	538/2250	1969kg	295	4.3	-	-	202	+ Subtle performance elegantly delivered - It's quite expensive	★★★★☆
Maserati Quattroporte S	*184 D*	*'13-'18*	*6/2979*	*404/5500*	*406/1750*	*1860kg*	*221*	*5.1*	-	-	*177*	*+ Tempting alternative to V8 - Feel-free steering, ride lacks decorum*	★★★★☆
Maserati Quattroporte GTS	*226 D*	*'16-'18*	*8/3798*	*523/6800*	*479/2250*	*1900kg*	*280*	*4.7*	-	-	*193*	*+ Still pretty - Off the pace dynamically*	★★★½☆
Maserati Quattroporte Trofeo	287 D	£127,310	8/3799	572/6750	538/2250	2000kg	291	4.5	-	-	203	+ An alluring alternative to the German defaults - How much?!	★★★★☆
Maserati Quattroporte S	*137 F*	*'08-'12*	*8/4691*	*425/7000*	*361/4750*	*1990kg*	*216*	*5.4*	*5.1*	*12.1*	*174*	*+ A QP with the bhp it deserves - Grille is a bit Hannibal Lecter*	★★★★½
Maserati Quattroporte Sport GTS	*141 F*	*'08-'12*	*8/4691*	*433/7000*	*361/4750*	*1990kg*	*221*	*5.1*	-	-	*177*	*+ The most stylish of supersaloons - Slightly wooden brakes, unforgiving ride*	★★★★☆
Maserati Levante Diesel	*221 D*	*'16-'20*	*6/2897*	*271/4000*	*442/2000*	*2205kg*	*125*	*6.9*	-	-	*143*	*+ Impressive blend of ride and handling - Performance is mild for a Maserati*	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG A35 Saloon	271 F	£37,755	4/1991	302/5800	295/3000	1495kg	205	4.8	-	-	155	+ Fun when you want it to be, secure when the heavens open - Others are even more fun	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG CLA45 S Coupé	273 D	£51,010	4/1991	415/6750	369/5000	1600kg	264	4.0	-	-	167	+ Speed, ability and involvement - CLA35 offers a similar experience for less outlay	★★★★½
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	★★★★½
Mercedes-AMG C43 Estate	228 D	£49,995	6/2996	362/5500	383/2000	1660kg	222	4.7	-	-	155	+ Incredibly fast and composed - Difficult to engage with	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG C63 Saloon (W205)	*209 D*	*'15-'20*	*8/3982*	*469/5500*	*479/1750*	*1640kg*	*291*	*4.1*	-	-	*155*	*+ Fast and feelsome - Lacks the ultimate finesse and response of the C63 S*	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG C63 Estate (S205)	*216 F*	*'15-20*	*8/3982*	*469/5500*	*479/1750*	*1710kg*	*279*	*4.2*	-	-	*155*	*+ Much more fun than it looks - Gearbox dim-witted at low speeds*	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Saloon (W205)	258 T	£74,258	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1655kg	309	4.0	-	-	155	+ Tremendous twin-turbo V8 power - Not quite as focused as an M division car	★★★★½
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Estate (S205)	282 F	£75,458	8/3982	503/5500	516/2000	1670kg	306	4.1	-	-	180	+ One of the finest all-round compact performance cars - Baffling array of driver settings	★★★★½
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...*	★★★★½
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*	*'18-'20*	*8/3982*	*563/5750*	*553/2250*	*1875kg*	*305*	*3.5*	-	-	*155*	*+ More rounded than the E63 S - Could be a little too discreet for some tastes*	★★★★½
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	★★★★½
Mercedes-AMG E63 S Estate (S213)	272 F	£101,565	8/3982	604/5750	627/2500	1995kg	308	3.5	-	-	180	+ As above - It's even heavier than the saloon, and five metres long	★★★★½
Mercedes-AMG GT63 4-Door Coupé	*274 F*	*'19-'20*	*8/3982*	*577/5500*	*590/2500*	*2025kg*	*290*	*3.4*	-	-	*193*	*+ Does the same as the S for less - Takes up plenty of road*	★★★★½
Mercedes-AMG GT63 S 4-Door Coupé	269 F	£141,855	8/3982	630/5500	664/2500	2045kg	313	3.2	-	-	196	+ Agile and immensely quick - Lacks the coupe GT's drama	★★★★½
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212)	*187 D*	*'13-'16*	*8/5461*	*549/5500*	*531/1750*	*1770kg*	*315*	*4.2*	-	-	*155*	*+ Power, response and accuracy in spades - A little lacking in originality*	★★★★½
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG S (W212)	*208 F*	*'13-'16*	*8/5461*	*577/5500*	*590/1750*	*1795kg*	*327*	*4.1*	-	-	*155*	*+ Effortless power; intuitive and approachable - Sluggish auto 'box*	★★★★½
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212)	*165 F*	*'11-'13*	*8/5461*	*518/5250*	*516/1750*	*1765kg*	*298*	*4.4*	-	-	*155*	*+ Turbo engine didn't dilute the E63 experience - Sometimes struggles for traction...*	★★★★½
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	*052 F*	*'03-'06*	*8/5439*	*469/6100*	*516/2650*	*1760kg*	*271*	*4.7*	*4.8*	*10.2*	*155*	*+ M5-humbling grunt, cosseting ride - Speed limits*	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG S63 L	246 D	£129,495	8/3982	604/5500	664/2750	1940kg	316	4.3	-	-	155	+ Performance doesn't come at the expense of luxury - But pure driving thrills do	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG CLS53	247 D	£76,600	6/2999	451/6100	567/1800	1905kg	302	4.5	-	-	155	+ Impressive chassis and hybrid powertrain - Four-wheel drive only, and heavy, too	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG S	*199 D*	*'14-'17*	*8/5461*	*577/5500*	*590/1750*	*1795kg*	*327*	*4.1*	-	-	*155*	*+ Quick and characterful - Dated gearbox, no four-wheel-drive option in the UK*	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG GLC63 S Coupé	253 D	£85,495	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1945kg	263	3.8	-	-	174	+ Unquestionable performance - Lacks adjustability and engagement	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG GLE63 S	218 D	£108,638	8/5461	577/5500	560/1750	2270kg	258	4.2	-	-	155	+ Stonking pace, extreme refinement - Feels remote	★★★½☆
Mercedes-AMG GLE63 S Coupé	213 D	£118,105	8/5461	577/5500	560/1750	2275kg	258	4.2	-	-	155	+ Subtler than an X6 M - More force than finesse	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG G63	250 D	£146,490	8/3982	577/6000	627/2500	2485kg	236	4.5	-	-	137	+ Vastly improved chassis, fabulous engine - Dynamic ability still limited	★★★½☆
Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG	*172 D*	*'12-'18*	*8/5461*	*537/5500*	*560/2000*	*2475kg*	*220*	*5.4*	-	-	*130*	*+ Epic soundtrack - Ancient chassis*	★★★☆☆
Mitsubishi Evo 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*	★★★½☆
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-330 SST	*134 F*	*'08-'14*	*4/1998*	*324/6500*	*322/3500*	*1590kg*	*207*	*4.4*	-	-	*155*	*+ Great engine and gearbox combo - It still lives in the shadow of the Evo IX*	★★★★☆
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-360	*122 D*	*'08-'14*	*4/1998*	*354/6500*	*363/3500*	*1560kg*	*231*	*4.0*	-	-	*155*	*+ Ridiculously rapid Evo - A five-speed gearbox?!*	★★★★☆
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-400	*181 F*	*'09-'10*	*4/1998*	*403/6500*	*387/3500*	*1560kg*	*262*	*3.8*	-	-	*155*	*+ Most powerful factory Evo ever... - ...about X grand too much when new*	★★★½☆
Mitsubishi Evo IX FQ-340	*088 F*	*'05-'08*	*4/1997*	*345/6800*	*321/4600*	*1400kg*	*250*	*4.2*	*4.3*	*10.9*	*157*	*+ Gives Porsche drivers nightmares - Points. Lots of*	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo IX MR FQ-360	*181 F*	*'05-'08*	*4/1997*	*366/6887*	*363/3200*	*1400kg*	*266*	*4.0*	-	-	*157*	*+ Well-executed engine upgrades - Prison food*	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo VIII	*055 F*	*'03-'05*	*4/1997*	*276/6500*	*289/3500*	*1410kg*	*199*	*5.1*	-	-	*157*	*+ The Evo grows up - Brakes need beefing up*	★★★★½
Mitsubishi Evo VIII MR FQ-300	*057 F*	*'03-'05*	*4/1997*	*305/6800*	*289/3500*	*1400kg*	*221*	*4.9*	-	-	*157*	*+ Extra pace, extra attitude - Extra money*	★★★★½
Mitsubishi Evo VII	*031 F*	*'02-'03*	*4/1997*	*276/6500*	*282/3500*	*1360kg*	*206*	*5.1*	*5.0*	*13.0*	*140*	*+ Terrific all-rounder - You tell us*	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo VI Tommi Mäkinen Edition	*271 F*	*'00-'01*	*4/1997*	*276/6500*	*275/2750*	*1365kg*	*205*	*4.6*	-	-	*150*	*+ Our favourite Evo - Subtle it is not*	★★★★★
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	473/6500	457/1800	2040kg	236	3.9	-	-	181	+ The most engaging Panamera - Still a heavy old thing	★★★★☆
Porsche Panamera Turbo	237 F	£115,100	8/3996	542/5750	568/1960	1995kg	276	3.6	3.4	8.3	190	+ Searing pace, with body control that's a real step up - Still very heavy	★★★★☆
Porsche Panamera Turbo 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*	*'11-'16*	*8/4806*	*434/6700*	*383/3500*	*1925kg*	*229*	*4.4*	-	-	*178*	*+ Vivacious V8, entertaining balance - Can feel light on performance next to turbocharged rivals*	★★★★½
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*	★★★½☆
Porsche Panamera Turbo S	*159 D*	*'11-'13*	*8/4806*	*542/6000*	*590/2250*	*1995kg*	*276*	*3.8*	-	-	*190*	*+ Pace, excellent ergonomics - Steering feel, ride*	★★★½☆
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	★★★½☆
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	-	2295kg	273	2.8	-	-	161	+ Straight-line oomph will leave you in awe - Inadequate EV infrastructure	★★★★☆
Porsche Macan	259 D	£47,060	4/1984	242/5000	273/1600	1795kg	137	6.7	-	-	139	+ Lighter engine makes for sharper handling - The Golf R Estate	★★★★☆
Porsche Macan S	257 T	£49,420	6/2997	349/5400	354/1360	1865kg	190	5.3	-	-	157	+ Great for an SUV - Every positive still needs to be suffixed with 'for an SUV'	★★★★☆
Porsche Macan GTS	*244 F*	*'16-'18*	*6/2997*	*355/6000*	*369/1650*	*1895kg*	*190*	*5.2*	-	-	*159*	*+ Handles like an SUV shouldn't - Still looks like an SUV*	★★★★½
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	★★★½☆
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 Turbo GT	290 D	£143,910	8/3996	631/6000	627/2300	2220kg	289	3.3	-	-	186	+ A car this big and heavy shouldn't drive this well - It's still big and heavy	★★★★½
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?*	★★★★½
Porsche Cayenne GTS (Mk2, V8)	*173 D*	*'12-'15*	*8/4806*	*414/6500*	*380/3500*	*2085kg*	*202*	*5.7*	-	-	*162*	*+ Dynamically the best SUV of its era - At two tons, it's still no sports car*	★★★★½
Porsche Cayenne Turbo (Mk2)	*212 D*	*'10-'17*	*8/4806*	*513/6000*	*533/2250*	*2185kg*	*239*	*4.5*	-	-	*173*	*+ Remarkable performance, handling, completeness - Vague steering, dated engine*	★★★★☆
Porsche Cayenne Turbo S (Mk2)	*184 D*	*'10-'17*	*8/4806*	*562/6000*	*590/2500*	*2235kg*	*255*	*4.1*	-	-	*176*	*+ More power and torque than a Zonda S 7.3 - In an SUV*	★★★★☆
Range Rover Evoque P250	261 D	£38,050	6/2995	246/5500	269/1300	1818kg	137	7.0	-	-	143	+ As good on road as it is off - Engines still a long way short of being competitive	★★★★☆
Range Rover Sport SVR	260 D	£101,850	8/5000	567/6000	516/3500	2302kg	250	4.5	-	-	176	+ Loud and proud - More blunderbuss than Exocet	★★★½☆
Range Rover SVAutobiography Dynamic	250 T	£144,265	8/4367	557/5000	516/3500	2497kg	227	5.4	-	-	155	+ Monsters big journeys - Is a monster on the weighing scales	★★★★☆
Rolls-Royce Ghost	280 D	£249,600	12/6749	563/5000	627/1600	2490kg	230	4.8	-	-	155	+ Unrivalled luxury and refinement - Still better to be driven in than to drive	★★★★☆
Rolls-Royce Phantom	*054 F*	*'03-'17*	*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	*271 F*	*'19-'20*	*4/1984*	*345/5300*	*324/2000*	*c1482kg*	*c237*	*4.7*	-	-	*163*	*+ Raw nature and rocketship pace - Not at the cutting edge of its class*	★★★★☆
Skoda Kodiaq 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*	★★★★½
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*	*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*	★★★★½
Subaru Impreza Turbo ('Classic')	*011 F*	*'93-'00*	*4/1994*	*215/5600*	*214/4000*	*1235kg*	*177*	*5.8*	*5.4*	*14.6*	*144*	*+ Destined for classic status - Thirsty*	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza RB5	*187 F*	*'99*	*4/1994*	*237/6000*	*258/3500*	*1235kg*	*195*	*6.1*	*5.0*	*14.1*	*144*	*+ Perfect blend of poise and power - Limited numbers*	★★★★★
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*	★★★★★

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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*	★★★½☆
Vauxhall VXR8 GTS	*215 D*	*'15-'17*	*8/6162*	*576/6150*	*546/3850*	*1834kg*	*319*	*4.2*	-	-	*155*	+ *Monster engine; engaging driving experience - Woeful interior*	★★★★☆
Vauxhall VXR8 GTS-R	*272 F*	*'17*	*8/6162*	*587/6150*	*546/3850*	*1880kg*	*317*	*4.2*	-	-	*155*	+ *Blistering performance; bursting with character - The end of an era*	★★★★☆
Volkswagen Arteon R Shooting Brake	289 D	£52,585	4/1984	316/5350	310/2000	1793kg	179	4.9	-	-	155	+ Sleek looks, spacious interior, decent handling - The BMW M340i Touring	★★★½☆

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 GTS 4.0** is essentially a cut-price 718 Spyder. The **Aston Martin Vantage Roadster** bests the 911 Cabriolet for character, while the **Caterham Seven** remains an exemplar of sports car purity whatever the model.

Abarth 124 Spider	*256 F*	*'16-'19*	*4/1368*	*168/5500*	*184/2500*	*1060kg*	*161*	*6.8*	-	-	*143*	+ *A little car with a big soul - Vague and lifeless front end*	★★★★☆
Alfa Romeo 4C Spider	*223 F*	*'15-'19*	*4/1742*	*237/6000*	*258/2200*	*940kg**	*256*	*4.5*	-	-	*160*	+ *Stunningly beautiful; better steering than coupe version - Still has the coupe's other foibles*	★★★½☆
Alfa Romeo 8C Spider	*161 F*	*'09-'11*	*8/4691*	*450/7000*	*354/4750*	*1675kg*	*273*	*4.4*	-	-	*181*	+ *Beauty meets beast. They hit it off - Boot is useless for touring*	★★★★½
Ariel Atom 4	273 F	£39,975	4/1996	320/6500	310/3000	595kg	546	2.8	-	-	162	+ Sensory overload - Turbo engine lacks the old supercharged unit's frantic soundtrack	★★★★★
Ariel Atom 3 245	*248 F*	*'18-'12*	*4/1998*	*245/8600*	*177/7200*	*520kg*	*479*	*3.1*	-	-	*145*	+ *Even better than its predecessors - Can still be a bit draughty*	★★★★½
Ariel Atom 3.5 Supercharged	*180 D*	*'13-'18*	*4/1998*	*310/8400*	*169/7200*	*550kg*	*573*	*2.7*	-	-	*155*	+ *As mad as ever - Rain*	★★★★★
Ariel Atom 3.5R	*255 F*	*'14-'18*	*4/1998*	*350/8400*	*243/6100*	*550kg*	*647*	*2.6*	-	-	*155*	+ *Remarkable balance, poise and pace - Pricey*	★★★★★
Ariel Nomad	248 F	£33,000	4/2354	235/7200	221/4300	670kg*	365	3.4	-	-	134	+ Off-road capabilities make for a super plaything - No Bluetooth	★★★★★
Ariel Nomad R	*278 F*	*£77,400*	*4/1998*	*335/7200*	*243/4300*	*c700kg*	*c486*	*2.9*	-	-	*134*	+ *Intriguing and effective mash-up of track car and off-roader - They're only making five*	★★★★★
Aston Martin Vantage Roadster	279 D	£126,950	8/3982	503/6000	505/2000	1628kg*	314	3.8	-	-	190	+ Builds on the already excellent coupe's attributes - Interior design lags behind exterior	★★★★½
Aston Martin V8 Vantage Roadster (4.7)	*130 F*	*'09-'16*	*8/4735*	*420/7000*	*346/5750*	*1710kg*	*250*	*4.8*	-	-	*180*	+ *Sportiest, coolest drop-top Aston in years - Feels dated compared to contemporaries*	★★★★☆
Aston Martin V8 Vantage S Roadster	*161 F*	*'11-'17*	*8/4735*	*430/7300*	*361/5000*	*1690kg*	*258*	*4.8*	-	-	*189*	+ *Sounds amazing, looks even better - Still not the best drop-top in its class*	★★★★½
Aston Martin V12 Vantage Roadster	*175 F*	*'12-'14*	*12/5935*	*510/6500*	*420/5750*	*1760kg*	*294*	*4.5*	-	-	*190*	+ *As good as the coupe, with amplified V12 rumble - Just a smidgen shakier*	★★★★½
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S Roadster	*212 F*	*'14-'17*	*12/5935*	*565/6750*	*457/5750*	*1745kg*	*329*	*4.1*	-	-	*201*	+ *A brilliant two-seat roadster... - ...let down by a frustrating automated manual gearbox*	★★★★½
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'	★★★½☆
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	★★★½☆
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...	★★★★½
Bentley Continental GT Speed Convertible	291 D	£230,900	12/5950	650/5000	664/1500	2436kg	271	3.7	-	-	208	+ Very nearly as calm and controlled as the coupe - Heavy W12 impossible to disguise	★★★★½
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	★★★★½
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	★★★½☆
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*	★★★★½
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	★★★★½
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 170R	291 F	£26,385	3/660	84/6500	86/4000	440kg*	194	6.9	-	-	105	+ The lightest production Caterham yet - Could do with another 10bhp	★★★★☆
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 Seven 360	209 F	£33,385	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	560kg*	327	4.8	-	-	130	+ Extra power is welcome - You'll need the six-speed gearbox to make the most of it	★★★★★
Caterham Seven 420	223 F	£36,385	4/1999	210/7600	150/6300	560kg*	381	3.8	4.0	10.3	136	+ It's the one we built for ourselves - Trickier on the limit than lesser-powered Sevens	★★★★★
Caterham Seven 620S	220 D	£48,890	4/1999	310/7700	219/7350	610kg*	516	3.4	-	-	155	+ Ludicrous, near-620R pace, with added habitability - Well, 'habitable' for a Seven...	★★★★★
Caterham Seven 620R	255 F	£53,885	4/1999	310/7700	219/7350	572kg*	551	2.8	-	-	155	+ Banzai on track, yet still relevant on the road - £50k for a Seven?	★★★★★
Caterham Seven 160	*239 F*	*'13-'17*	*3/660*	*80/7000*	*79/3400*	*490kg**	*166*	*6.9*	-	-	*100*	+ *The fabulous Seven formula at its most basic - Gets pricey with options*	★★★★½
Caterham Seven Roadsport 125	*105 F*	*'07-'14*	*4/1596*	*125/6100*	*120/5350*	*539kg**	*235*	*5.9*	-	-	*112*	+ *Great debut for Ford-engined model - Bigger drivers need SV model*	★★★★½
Caterham Seven Supersport	*165 F*	*'11-'14*	*4/1596*	*140/6900*	*120/5790*	*520kg**	*273*	*4.9*	-	-	*120*	+ *One of the best Caterhams is also one of the cheapest of its era - It's quite minimalist*	★★★★★
Caterham Seven Supersport R	*180 D*	*'13-'14*	*4/1999*	*180/7300*	*143/6100*	*535kg**	*342*	*4.8*	-	-	*130*	+ *One of the best road-and-track Sevens - Impractical, noisy, uncomfortable*	★★★★½
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*	★★★★½
Caterham Seven Superlight R500	*123 F*	*'08-'14*	*4/1999*	*263/8500*	*177/7200*	*506kg**	*528*	*2.9*	-	-	*150*	+ *Better power-to-weight ratio than a Veyron - Until you add the driver*	★★★★★
Caterham Seven R500	*200 F*	*'99-'06*	*4/1796*	*230/8600*	*155/7200*	*460kg**	*510*	*3.4*	*3.6*	*8.8*	*146*	+ *The K-series Seven at its very best - No cup holders*	★★★★★
Chevrolet Corvette Stingray Convertible (C8)	292 D	£82,200	8/6162	475/6450	452/4500	1692kg	285	3.5	-	-	184	+ Strong V8 engine, fine value - Not as quick as we were hoping	★★★★½
Dallara Stradale	267 F	c£162,000	4/2300	394/6200	369/3000	855kg*	468	3.3	-	-	174	+ Startling on-road performance - Can leave you feeling detached on track	★★★★½
Elemental Rp1 (2.3)	255 F	£139,800	4/2261	320	354	620kg*	557	2.6	-	-	165	+ Sensational, explosive, captivating, exploitable - Price will test your level of commitment	★★★★½
Honda S2000	*243 F*	*'99-'09*	*4/1997*	*237/8300*	*153/7500*	*1260kg*	*191*	*6.2*	-	-	*150*	+ *An alternative and rev-happy roadster - A Boxster's better*	★★★★☆
Jaguar F-type Convertible P450	271 D	£75,470	8/5000	444/6000	428/2500	1660kg	272	4.6	-	-	177	+ Strong and flexible supercharged V8 - Steering and chassis feel mismatched	★★★½☆
Jaguar F-type Project 7	*212 F*	*'15*	*8/5000*	*567/6500*	*501/2500*	*1585kg*	*363*	*3.9*	-	-	*186*	+ *Noise, performance, adjustability - Expensive, and not the GT3 rival we would have liked*	★★★★½
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	★★★★½
KTM X-Bow R	165 F	£87,480	4/1984	296/6300	295/3300	816kg	369	3.9	-	-	144	+ Sharper handling, more power - Pity it's not even lighter, and cheaper	★★★★☆
Lotus Elise Club Racer (S3)	*183 F*	*'11-'15*	*4/1598*	*134/6800*	*118/4400*	*852kg*	*160*	*6.5*	-	-	*127*	+ *Even lighter, even more focused than a standard 1.6 Elise - Are you prepared to go this basic?*	★★★★★
Lotus Elise Sport 220 (S3)	*244 F*	*'17-'20*	*4/1798*	*217/6800*	*184/4600*	*904kg*	*244*	*4.6*	-	-	*145*	+ *Perfect power-to-weight ratio - A bit short on creature comforts*	★★★★★
Lotus Elise Sprint 220 (S3)	*254 F*	*'18-'19*	*4/1798*	*217/6800*	*184/4600*	*878kg*	*251*	*4.5*	-	-	*145*	+ *Makes the most of its lightness - Heavyweight price*	★★★★★
Lotus Elise 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*	★★★★½
Lotus Elise (S1)	*235 F*	*'96-'01*	*4/1796*	*118/5500*	*122/3000*	*731kg*	*164*	*5.9*	*6.1*	*18.5*	*126*	+ *A modern classic - A tad impractical?*	★★★★★
Lotus 3-Eleven	*220 F*	*'16-'17*	*6/3456*	*410/7000*	*302/3000*	*925kg**	*450*	*3.4*	-	-	*174*	+ *A fantastically exciting Lotus - If not exactly a groundbreaking one*	★★★★★
Lotus 3-Eleven 430	*248 F*	*'17-'19*	*6/3456*	*430/7000*	*325/4500*	*920kg**	*475*	*3.2*	-	-	*180*	+ *A fitting send-off for a brilliant Lotus - Just 20 were made*	★★★★★
Lotus 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?*	★★★★½
Lotus 2-Eleven Supercharged	*123 F*	*'07-'11*	*4/1796*	*252/8000*	*179/7000*	*745kg*	*344*	*4.0*	-	-	*150*	+ *Impressive on road and track - Not hardcore enough for some*	★★★★★
Lotus 340R	*126 F*	*'00*	*4/1796*	*190/7800*	*146/5000*	*701kg*	*275*	*4.5*	*4.5*	*12.5*	*126*	+ *Hardcore road-racer... - ...that looks like a dune buggy from Mars*	★★★★★
Maserati GranCabrio MC	185 D	£112,400	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1973kg	234	4.9	-	-	179	+ Most powerful GranCabrio yet - The GranCabrio is starting to show its age	★★★½☆
Mazda MX-5 1.5 (Mk4)	230 F	£23,795	4/1496	129/7000	111/4800	975kg	134	8.3	-	-	127	+ Lightest MX-5 since the Mk1 - Lacks intensity	★★★½☆
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*	★★★½☆
Mazda MX-5 2.0i Sport Tech (Mk3.5)	*212 F*	*'09-'15*	*4/1999*	*158/7000*	*139/5000*	*1098kg*	*146*	*7.6*	-	-	*138*	+ *Handles brilliantly again; folding hard-top also available - Less-than-macho image*	★★★★½
Mazda MX-5 1.8i (Mk3)	*091 F*	*'05-'09*	*4/1798*	*124/6500*	*123/4500*	*1080kg*	*108*	*9.3*	-	-	*122*	+ *Gearchange, interior - Lost some of the charm of old MX-5s; dubious handling*	★★★½☆
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*	★★★★★

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MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR YEARS ON SALE)	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	evo RATING	
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*	*'17-'19*	*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*	★★★½☆
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*	★★★½☆
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*	★★★★½
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 Four CX-T	289 D	£204,000	4/1998	255/5500	258/1000	1213kg*	214	c6.0	-	-	c140	+ Absurd but fun way to outrun the zombies - Expensive	★★★★½
Morgan Plus Six	269 F	£77,995	6/2998	335/6500	369	1075kg*	317	4.2	-	-	166	+ Rapid, exciting, and a bit of a hooligan - Interior could feel more special	★★★★☆
Morgan Plus 8 50th Anniversary Edition	*253 D*	*'18-'19*	*8/4799*	*367/6300*	*370/3600*	*1100kg**	*339*	*4.5*	-	-	*155*	*+ V8 performance and sound, driver involvement - Getting flies in your teeth*	★★★★☆
Morgan Aero 8	*105 F*	*'01-'10*	*8/4799*	*362/6300*	*361/3400*	*1180kg**	*312*	*4.5*	-	-	*170*	*+ Glorious sound, view over bonnet, dynamics - Awkward-looking rear*	★★★★☆
Morgan Aero GT	*255 F*	*'18*	*8/4799*	*367/6300*	*370/3400*	*1180kg**	*316*	*4.5*	-	-	*170*	*+ The ultimate Aero - The last with the naturally aspirated BMW V8*	★★★★☆
Porsche 718 Boxster	224 D	£45,935	4/1988	296/6500	280/1950	1335kg	225	5.1	-	-	170	+ Chassis as good as ever - Four-cylinder's tuneless din would be hard to live with	★★★½☆
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	★★★★½
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*	★★★★½
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-'16*	*6/3436*	*325/6700*	*273/4500*	*1345kg*	*246*	*5.0*	-	-	*174*	*+ Superb dynamics, fantastic engine, great looks - Sport suspension is very firm*	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster Spyder (981)	*223 F*	*'15-'16*	*6/3800*	*370/6700*	*310/4750*	*1315kg*	*286*	*4.5*	-	-	*180*	*+ An even faster, even more rewarding Boxster - Feedback trails the Cayman GT4's*	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster S (987)	*161 F*	*'05-'12*	*6/3436*	*306/6400*	*266/5500*	*1355kg*	*229*	*5.3*	-	-	*170*	*+ Second-gen Boxster's as brilliant as ever - It's a typically Porsche redesign*	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster Spyder (987)	*277 F*	*'10-'12*	*6/3436*	*316/7200*	*273/4750*	*1275kg*	*252*	*4.9*	-	-	*166*	*+ Lighter, more driver-centric Boxster - Collapsed-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	★★★★½
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	★★★★½
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	★★★★½
Toyota MR2 (Mk3)	*258 F*	*'00-'06*	*4/1794*	*138/6400*	*125/4400*	*975kg*	*141*	*8.0*	*7.2*	*21.2*	*131*	*+ Tight lines, taut dynamics - Minimal luggage space*	★★★★½
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*	★★★★½
TVR Griffith 500	*009 F*	*'93-'01*	*8/4997*	*320/5500*	*320/4000*	*1060kg*	*307*	*4.1*	-	-	*167*	*+ Gruff diamond - A few rough edges*	★★★★½
Vauxhall VX220	*023 F*	*'00-'04*	*4/2198*	*145/5800*	*150/4000*	*875kg*	*168*	*5.9*	-	-	*136*	*+ Absurdly good Vauxhall - The badge?*	★★★★½
Vauxhall VX220 Turbo	*066 F*	*'03-'05*	*4/1998*	*197/5500*	*184/1950*	*930kg*	*215*	*4.9*	-	-	*151*	*+ Nothing comes close for the money - Marginal everyday usability*	★★★★★
Vuhl 05	220 F	£59,995	4/2000	285/5600	310/3000	725kg	405	3.7	-	-	152	+ Impressive pace and quality - You can get a more thrills from a Caterham at half the price	★★★★☆

COUPES / GTs



OUR CHOICE

Porsche 718 Cayman GT4. With a 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 close. The **Alpine A110** gives the regular **Porsche 718 Cayman** a true 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*	★★★½☆
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*	★★★★½
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	★★★★½
Alpine A110S	268 D	£57,140	4/1798	288/6400	236/2000	1114kg	263	4.4	-	-	161	+ Firmer and faster - But not necessarily better	★★★★½
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*	★★★★½
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	★★★★½
Aston Martin Vantage F1 Edition	293 F	£142,000	8/3982	527/6000	505/2000	1530kg*	350	3.6	-	-	195	+ Hones the Vantage recipe - Not the trackday refugee the stickers and spoilers suggest	★★★★½
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*	*'11-'17*	*8/4735*	*430/7300*	*361/5000*	*1610kg*	*271*	*4.8*	-	-	*190*	*+ Keener engine, V12 Vantage looks - Slightly sluggish auto only*	★★★★½
Aston Martin V8 Vantage N430	*218 F*	*'14-'16*	*8/4735*	*430/7300*	*361/5000*	*1610kg*	*271*	*4.8*	-	-	*189*	*+ Malleable, involving - Never feels rampantly quick*	★★★★★
Aston Martin Vantage GT8	*274 F*	*'16-'17*	*8/4735*	*440/7300*	*361/5000*	*1530kg*	*292*	*4.4*	-	-	*190*	*+ Enough drama to fill a Netflix mini-series - Just 150 made*	★★★★★
Aston Martin V12 Vantage	*264 F*	*'09-'13*	*12/5935*	*510/6500*	*420/5750*	*1680kg*	*308*	*4.2*	*4.4*	*9.7*	*190*	*+ The car we hoped the V8 Vantage would be - Erm, a tad thirsty?*	★★★★★
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S	*285 F*	*'13-'17*	*12/5935*	*563/6650*	*457/5500*	*1665kg*	*344*	*3.9*	-	-	*205*	*+ Amongst the best Astons ever made - Old-school automated 'box (so get the manual)*	★★★★★
Aston Martin Vantage GT12	*214 F*	*'15-'16*	*12/5935*	*592/7000*	*461/5500*	*1565kg*	*384*	*3.5*	-	-	*185*	*+ The GT3-style Vantage we waited so long for - Only 100 made*	★★★★★
Aston Martin DB11 V8	253 T	£144,900	8/3982	503/6000	498/2000	1685kg	303	4.0	-	-	187	+ Potent and characterful engine; sharper chassis than V12 - Do we still need the V12?	★★★★☆
Aston Martin DB11	*235 F*	*'17-'18*	*12/5204*	*600/6500*	*516/1500*	*1800kg*	*339*	*3.9*	*4.0*	*8.1*	*200*	*+ A great GT - Suffers in outright handling terms as a result*	★★★½☆
Aston Martin DB11 AMR	290 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	★★★★½
Aston Martin DB9 GT	*214 D*	*'15-'17*	*12/5935*	*540/6750*	*457/5500*	*1785kg*	*307*	*4.5*	-	-	*183*	*+ More power; still has bags of character - Needs an eight-speed auto 'box*	★★★★½
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*	★★★★½
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*	★★★★½
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	★★★½☆
Audi TT RS (Mk3)	249 F	£53,905	5/2480	394/5850	354/1700	1450kg	276	3.7	3.5	8.7	155	+ Soundtrack; tremendous point-to-point pace - A bit one-dimensional in the long run	★★★★☆
Audi TTS (Mk2)	*193 F*	*'08-'14*	*4/1984*	*268/6000*	*258/2500*	*1395kg*	*195*	*5.4*	-	-	*155*	*+ A usefully quicker TT, with a great drivetrain - Still steers like a computer game*	★★★★☆
Audi TT RS (Mk2)	*158 F*	*'09-'14*	*5/2480*	*335/5400*	*332/1600*	*1450kg*	*235*	*4.7*	*4.4*	*11.1*	*155*	*+ Sublime five-cylinder turbo engine - Rest of package can't quite match it*	★★★★☆
Audi TT RS Plus (Mk2)	*185 D*	*'12-'14*	*5/2480*	*355/5500*	*343/1650*	*1450kg*	*249*	*4.3*	-	-	*174*	*+ Stonkingly fast cross-country - Shockingly expensive for a TT*	★★★★☆
Audi S5	*252 F*	*'17-'19*	*6/2995*	*349/5400*	*369/1370*	*1615kg*	*220*	*4.7*	-	-	*155*	*+ Chassis rewards commitment... - ...but doesn't offer a challenge. Plain engine, too*	★★★½☆
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	290 F	£166,200	8/3993	542/6000	568/2000	2165kg	254	4.0	-	-	198	+ Pace, quality, polish - A bit one-dimensional	★★★★☆
Bentley Continental GT	*255 F*	*'18-'21*	*12/5950*	*626/5000*	*664/1350*	*2244kg*	*283*	*3.7*	-	-	*207*	*+ Astonishing agility for such a big, heavy car - Thirst*	★★★★½
Bentley Continental GT Speed	291 D	£209,900	12/5950	650/5000	664/1500	2273kg	291	3.6	-	-	208	+ Dynamically Bentley's best - A V8 Speed would be better still	★★★★½
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*	★★★★½
Bentley Continental GT V8 S	*204 F*	*'13-'17*	*8/3993*	*521/6000*	*502/1700*	*2220kg*	*238*	*4.5*	-	-	*192*	*+ An even better driver's Bentley - Vast weight makes its presence felt in harder driving*	★★★★½
Bentley Continental GT	*152 D*	*'03-'17*	*12/5998*	*567/6000*	*516/1700*	*2245kg*	*257*	*4.5*	-	-	*198*	*+ Near 200mph in utter comfort - Weight; W12's thirst*	★★★★☆
Bentley Continental Supersports	*234 D*	*'17*	*12/5998*	*700/6000*	*750/2050*	*2205kg*	*323*	*3.5*	-	-	*209*	*+ Massive performance, surprisingly agile - Styling and soundtrack far from descreet*	★★★★½
Bentley Continental GT3-R	*203 D*	*'14-'17*	*8/3993*	*572/6000*	*518/1700*	*2120kg*	*274*	*3.8*	-	-	*170*	*+ The best-handling Continental of its generation - Expensive; it still weighs 2120kg*	★★★★½
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*	★★★★★

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MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR YEARS ON SALE)	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	evo RATING	
BMW M240i Coupé	229 D	£35,865	6/2998	335/6800	369/1520	1470kg	232	4.8	-	-	155	+ Adjustable and plenty of fun - Lacks finesse and precision	★★★★☆
BMW M235i Coupé	*225 F*	*'14-'16*	*6/2979*	*321/5800*	*332/1300*	*1455kg*	*224*	*5.0*	*5.2*	*12.7*	*155*	*+ Powertrain, chassis, looks, size - Limited-slip diff is an option, not standard*	★★★★☆
BMW M2	*243 F*	*'16-'18*	*6/2979*	*365/6500*	*369/1450*	*1495kg*	*248*	*4.5*	*4.9*	*10.8*	*155*	*+ More progressive chassis balance than the M4 - Feels unsettled on rough tarmac*	★★★★☆
BMW M2 Competition	265 F	£49,805	6/2979	404/5250	406/2350	1550kg	265	4.4	-	-	155	+ A more capable and involving M2 - More expensive and heavier, too	★★★★½
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	★★★★½
BMW M4 Competition (G82)	292 F	£76,115	6/2979	503/6250	479/2750	1725kg	296	3.9	-	-	155	+ Accomplished and fun - Weight gain and auto gearbox look questionable	★★★★½
BMW M4 (F82)	*218 F*	*'14-'19*	*6/2979*	*425/5500*	*406/1850*	*1570kg*	*275*	*4.3*	-	-	*155*	*+ Ferociously fast - A handful on less-than-perfect or less-than-bone-dry roads*	★★★★½
BMW M4 Competition (F82)	*262 F*	*'16-'20*	*6/2979*	*444/7000*	*406/1850*	*1570kg*	*287*	*4.3*	*4.4*	*9.2*	*155*	*+ The car the M4 always should have been - Shame everyone specs DCT*	★★★★½
BMW M4 CS (F82)	*254 F*	*'17-'19*	*6/2979*	*454/6250*	*442/4000*	*1580kg*	*292*	*3.9*	-	-	*174*	*+ A further-honed M4 - It ain't cheap*	★★★★½
BMW M4 GTS (F82)	*237 F*	*'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 rivals... - ...except the cheaper 1-series M Coupé*	★★★★★
BMW M3 GTS (E92)	*262 F*	*'10-'11*	*8/4361*	*444/8300*	*324/3750*	*1530kg*	*295*	*4.4*	-	-	*190*	*+ One of the most focused M-cars ever - Good luck trying to find one*	★★★★★
BMW M3 (E46)	*266 F*	*'00-'07*	*6/3246*	*338/7900*	*269/5000*	*1495kg*	*230*	*5.2*	*5.1*	*12.3*	*155*	*+ One of the best BMWs ever. Runner-up in eCoty 2001 - Slightly artificial steering feel*	★★★★★
BMW M3 CS (E46)	*219 F*	*'05-'07*	*6/3246*	*338/7900*	*269/5000*	*1495kg*	*230*	*5.2*	-	-	*155*	*+ CSL dynamics without CSL price - Looks like the standard car*	★★★★★
BMW M3 CSL (E46)	*279 F*	*'03-'04*	*6/3246*	*355/7900*	*273/4900*	*1385kg*	*260*	*4.9*	*5.3*	*12.0*	*155*	*+ Still superb - Changes from the automated single-clutch 'box are... a... bit... sluggish*	★★★★★
BMW M3 Evolution (E36)	*148 F*	*'96-'98*	*6/3201*	*317/7400*	*258/3250*	*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	*097 F*	*'06-'09*	*6/3246*	*338/7900*	*269/4900*	*1420kg*	*242*	*5.0*	-	-	*155*	*+ A real driver's car - You've got to be prepared to get stuck in*	★★★★½
BMW M Coupé	*263 F*	*'98-'03*	*6/3246*	*321/7400*	*261/4900*	*1375kg*	*237*	*5.3*	-	-	*155*	*+ Quick and characterful - Lacks finesse*	★★★★½
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*	★★★★½
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*	★★★★½
BMW i8	210 F	£112,735	3/1499	369/5800	420/3700	1535kg	244	4.4	-	-	155	+ Brilliantly executed concept; sci-fi looks - Safe dynamic set-up	★★★★½
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*	★★★★½
Chevrolet Corvette Stingray (C7)	*197 F*	*'13-'19*	*8/6162*	*460/6000*	*465/4600*	*1496kg*	*312*	*4.2*	*4.4*	*9.4*	*180*	*+ Performance, chassis balance, supple ride - Body control could be better*	★★★★☆
Chevrolet Corvette Z06 (C7)	*227 F*	*'15-'19*	*8/6162*	*650/6000*	*650/3600*	*1598kg*	*413*	*3.7*	-	-	*196*	*+ Mind-boggling raw speed; surprisingly sophisticated - Edgy when really pushed*	★★★★½
Chevrolet Corvette Stingray (C8)	270 F	£77,200	8/6162	475/6450	452/5150	1655kg	292	3.5	-	-	184	+ Stunning achievement for the first mid-engined Vette - There's untapped potential	★★★★½
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	292 F	$74,000	8/5163	760/7300	625/5000	1897kg	407	3.3	-	-	180	+ The power and the fury - The last of its kind?	★★★★½
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 RWD	271 D	£54,965	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 RWD	-	£70,500	8/5000	444/6000	428/2500	1660kg	272	4.6	-	-	177	+ Strong and flexible supercharged V8 - Steering and chassis feel mismatched	★★★½☆
Jaguar F-type R (RWD)	*218 F*	*'14-'17*	*8/5000*	*542/6500*	*501/3500*	*1650kg*	*334*	*4.2*	-	-	*186*	*+ eCoty runner-up in 2014 - Bumpy and boistrous*	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type R (P575 AWD)	271 D	£98,110	8/5000	567/6500	516/3500	1743kg	331	3.5	-	-	186	+ More composed than before; now with SVR power - Eye-watering price	★★★★☆
Jaguar F-type SVR	*224 D*	*'16-'19*	*8/5000*	*567/6500*	*516/3500*	*1705kg*	*338*	*3.7*	-	-	*200*	*+ A marginally better drive than the AWD R - Not by enough to justify the extra outlay*	★★★★½
Jaguar XKR-S	*168 F*	*'11-'14*	*8/5000*	*542/6000*	*502/2500*	*1753kg*	*314*	*4.4*	-	-	*186*	*+ Faster and wilder than regular XKR - The F-type R*	★★★★½
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	★★★★½
Lexus RC F	226 F	£61,310	8/4969	470/6400	391/4800	1765kg	271	4.3	-	-	168	+ Great looks, noise, sense of occasion - Too heavy to be truly exciting	★★★★☆
Lexus LC 500h	241 D	£76,595	6/3456	354	-	1985kg	181	5.0	-	-	168	+ Excellent comfort and refinement; fine chassis - Hybrid system hurts the fun factor	★★★½☆
Lexus LC 500	290 F	£81,750	8/4969	470/7100	398/4800	1935kg	247	4.7	-	-	168	+ Glorious engine, rewarding chassis - Lacks ultimate body control, numb steering	★★★★☆
Lister Thunder	247 D	£139,950	8/5000	666/6000	720/5940	1650kg	410	3.2	-	-	208	+ Deceptively fast reworked F-type - Never feels as ferocious as the figures suggest	★★★★☆
Lotus Exige S (V6)	*209 F*	*'12-'15*	*6/3456*	*345/7000*	*295/4500*	*1176kg*	*298*	*3.8*	-	-	*170*	*+ Breathtaking road-racer; our joint evo Car of the Year 2012 - Gearshift not the sweetest*	★★★★★
Lotus Exige Sport 350	221 F	£62,375	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1125kg	312	3.9	-	-	170	+ Further honed Exige, with vastly improved gearshift - Still not easy to get into and out of	★★★★½
Lotus Exige Sport 380	*231 F*	*'16-'18*	*6/3456*	*375/6700*	*302/5000*	*1110kg*	*343*	*3.7*	-	-	*178*	*+ Intense, absorbing and brilliantly capable - Perhaps not an everyday car*	★★★★½
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*	★★★★½
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	*257 F*	*'09-'15*	*6/3456*	*276/6400*	*258/4700*	*1382kg*	*203*	*5.1*	*5.6*	*13.6*	*162*	*+ Sublime ride and handling. evo Car of the Year 2009 - The Evora S*	★★★★★
Lotus Evora S	*168 F*	*'10-'15*	*6/3456*	*345/7000*	*295/4500*	*1430kg*	*245*	*4.8*	-	-	*172*	*+ A faster and better Evora - But one which spars with the Porsche 911*	★★★★★
Lotus Evora 400	*216 F*	*'15-'18*	*6/3456*	*400/7000*	*302/3500*	*1395kg*	*291*	*4.2*	-	-	*186*	*+ Evora excitement levels take a leap - Gearbox still not perfect*	★★★★½
Lotus Evora Sport 410	*230 F*	*'17*	*6/3456*	*410/7000*	*310/3500*	*1325kg*	*314*	*4.2*	-	-	*190*	*+ Even lighter and sharper Evora - Engine and gearbox behind the best at this price*	★★★★½
Lotus Evora GT410	278 F	£85,675	6/3456	410/7000	295/3500	1361kg	306	4.2	-	-	186	+ Fully immersive driving experience - V6 has its limitations	★★★★½
Lotus Evora GT410 Sport	261 F	£88,675	6/3456	410/7000	295/3500	1361kg	306	4.2	-	-	186	+ As above, without the creature comforts - Too pared back for most tastes	★★★★½
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*	★★★★½
Maserati GranTurismo Sport	188 F	£93,145	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1880kg	245	4.8	-	-	186	+ A real sense of occasion to drive; wonderful engine - Rather long in the tooth	★★★★☆
Maserati GranTurismo MC	239 D	£109,740	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1873kg	246	4.7	-	-	187	+ As above but with knobs on - Those knobs don't make it feel any younger	★★★★☆
Maserati GranTurismo	*114 F*	*'07-'17*	*8/4244*	*399/7100*	*339/4750*	*1880kg*	*216*	*5.2*	*5.5*	*12.7*	*177*	*+ Striking, accomplished GT - Doesn't spike the pulse like an Aston or 911*	★★★★☆
Maserati GranTurismo MC Stradale	*193 F*	*'11-'17*	*8/4691*	*454/7000*	*383/4750*	*1800kg*	*256*	*4.5*	-	-	*188*	*+ Brilliant blend of road racer and GT - Gearbox takes a little getting used to*	★★★★☆
Mazda RX-8	*122 F*	*'03-'11*	*2R/1308*	*228/8200*	*156/5500*	*1429kg*	*162*	*6.4*	*6.5*	*16.4*	*146*	*+ Never mind the quirkiness, it's a great drive - Wafer-thin torque output; thirsty*	★★★★½
Mercedes-AMG C43 Coupé	251 T	£50,010	6/2996	385/6100	383/2500	1675kg	234	4.7	-	-	155	+ Fast and instilled with a real sense of quality - Not enough emphasis on fun	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Coupé (W205)	262 F	£78,078	8/3982	503/5500	516/2000	1745kg	293	3.9	-	-	180	+ Mouth-watering mechanical package - Light steering; hefty kerb weight	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Coupé (W204)	*162 F*	*'11-'14*	*8/6208*	*451/6800*	*442/5000*	*1655kg*	*277*	*4.5*	*4.4*	*10.3*	*155*	*+ A proper two-door M3 rival - C63 saloon looks better to most*	★★★★½
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Black Series (W204)	*171 F*	*'12-'13*	*8/6208*	*510/6800*	*457/5200*	*1635kg*	*317*	*4.2*	-	-	*186*	*+ The C63 turned up to 11 - Too heavy; not as fiery as Black Series cars of old*	★★★★½
Mercedes-Benz CLK63 AMG Black Series	*277 F*	*'07-'09*	*8/6208*	*500/6800*	*464/5250*	*1760kg*	*289*	*4.2*	-	-	*186*	*+ AMG goes Porsche-hunting - Dull-witted gearshift spoils the party*	★★★★½
Mercedes-AMG S63 Coupé	251 D	£127,555	8/3982	604/5500	664/2750	1990kg	308	4.2	-	-	155	+ Near-silent progress meets full-blown riot - Don't go thinking it's a GT R	★★★★½
Mercedes-AMG S65 Coupé	209 D	£188,550	12/5980	621/4800	737/2300	2110kg	299	4.1	-	-	186	+ Almighty power, fabulous luxury - Nearly £60k more than the S63!	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG GT	*227 D*	*'16-'19*	*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*	*8/3982*	*515/6250*	*494/1800*	*1570kg*	*333*	*3.8*	-	-	*193*	*+ Fantastic chassis, huge grip - Artificial steering feel; downshifts could be quicker*	★★★★½
Mercedes-AMG GT C	*241 D*	*'17-'19*	*8/3982*	*549/5750*	*501/1900*	*1625kg*	*343*	*3.7*	-	-	*196*	*+ As good at being a GT as it is a sports coupe - Difficult to drive fast and smoothly*	★★★★½
Mitsubishi 3000GT	-	*'90-'99*	*6/2972*	*282/6000*	*300/3000*	*1719kg*	*167*	*5.8*	-	-	*159*	*+ Looks the business, loaded with gizmos - Doesn't do the business*	★☆☆☆☆
Nissan 370Z	*204 F*	*'09-'20*	*6/3696*	*323/7000*	*268/5200*	*1496kg*	*219*	*5.3*	-	-	*155*	*+ Quicker, leaner, keener than 350Z - Not quite a Cayman-killer*	★★★★☆
Nissan 370Z Nismo	*209 F*	*'14-'20*	*6/3696*	*339/7400*	*274/5200*	*1496kg*	*230*	*5.2*	-	-	*155*	*+ Sharper looks, improved ride, extra thrills - Engine lacks sparkle*	★★★★½
Nissan 350Z	*107 F*	*'03-'09*	*6/3498*	*309/6800*	*264/4800*	*1532kg*	*205*	*5.6*	*5.5*	*13.0*	*155*	*+ Huge fun, and great value too - Muscle-car vibe not for everyone*	★★★★☆
Nissan GT-R (2017MY)	242 F	£82,525	6/3799	562/6800	470/3600	1752kg	326	2.7	-	-	196	+ More refinement, much improved interior, still fast - Feels a touch less alert	★★★★½
Nissan GT-R Track Edition (2017MY)	229 D	£94,525	6/3799	562/6800	470/3600	1745kg	327	2.7	-	-	196	+ GT-R regains its sharpness - Getting pricey these days	★★★★½
Nissan GT-R Nismo (2020MY)	289 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	★★★★½
Nissan GT-R (2012MY-2016MY)	*238 F*	*'12-'16*	*6/3799*	*542/6400*	*466/3200*	*1740kg*	*316*	*2.7*	*3.2*	*7.5*	*196*	*+ Quicker and better than before - Stopping your Porsche-owning friends calling it a Datsun*	★★★★★
Nissan GT-R (2010MY)	*252 F*	*'10-'12*	*6/3799*	*523/6400*	*451/3200*	*1740kg*	*305*	*3.0*	-	-	*194*	*+ More powerful version of the original - But they're not worlds apart to drive*	★★★★★
Nissan GT-R (2008MY)	*257 F*	*'08-'10*	*6/3799*	*473/6400*	*434/3200*	*1740kg*	*276*	*3.8*	-	-	*193*	*+ evo Car of the Year 2008 - You won't see 20mpg often*	★★★★★
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*	*'14-'15*	*4/1598*	*266/6000*	*243/1900*	*1280kg*	*211*	*5.9*	-	-	*155*	*+ Rewarding and highly effective when fully lit - Dated cabin, steering lacks feel*	★★★★½
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	★★★★½

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MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR YEARS ON SALE)	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	evo RATING	
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	★★★★½
Porsche 718 Cayman GTS	*260 F*	*'17-'19*	*4/2497*	*360/6500*	*310/2100*	*1375kg*	*266*	*4.6*	-	-	*180*	*+ Cracking package of upgrades - Have we mentioned the engine...?*	★★★★½
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*	*'13-'16*	*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*	*'14-'16*	*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*	*'15-'16*	*6/3800*	*380/7400*	*310/4750*	*1340kg*	*288*	*4.4*	-	-	*183*	*+ evo Car of the Year 2015 (even though the 991 GT3 RS was there!) - Second-hand 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*	★★★★½
Porsche Cayman R (987)	*158 F*	*'11-'13*	*6/3436*	*325/7400*	*273/4750*	*1295kg*	*255*	*5.0*	-	-	*175*	*+ Total handling excellence - Styling additions not to all tastes*	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera (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	★★★★½
Porsche 911 Carrera S (992)	285 F	£97,450	6/2981	444/6500	391/1700	1480kg	305	4.2	-	-	191	+ An immaculately polished machine - Lacks character unless wrung out	★★★★½
Porsche 911 Carrera 4S (992)	285 F	£103,030	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	★★★★½
Porsche 911 Carrera 4 GTS (992)	291 D	£114,500	6/2981	473/6500	420/2300	1560kg	308	4.1	-	-	192	+ Think Turbo-lite, with a touch of GT3 - Misses some of the subtler aspects of 911-ness	★★★★½
Porsche 911 Carrera (991.2)	*218 F*	*'16-'18*	*6/2981*	*365/6500*	*332/1700*	*1430kg*	*259*	*4.6*	-	-	*183*	*+ Forced induction didn't ruin the Carrera - Purists won't be happy*	★★★★½
Porsche 911 Carrera T (991.2)	*264 F*	*'17-'18*	*6/2981*	*365/6500*	*332/1700*	*1425kg*	*260*	*4.5*	-	-	*182*	*+ Lightweight windows, no rear seats, an LSD... - Only 5kg lighter than a basic Carrera*	★★★★½
Porsche 911 Carrera S (991.2)	*217 F*	*'16-'18*	*6/2981*	*414/6500*	*369/1700*	*1440kg*	*292*	*4.3*	-	-	*191*	*+ Blindingly fast - You'll want the sports exhaust*	★★★★½
Porsche 911 Carrera GTS (991.2)	*238 F*	*'17-'19*	*6/2981*	*444/6500*	*406/2150*	*1450kg*	*311*	*4.1*	-	-	*193*	*+ Everything a 911 Carrera should be - Costs nearly £20k more than a basic Carrera*	★★★★½
Porsche 911 Carrera S (991.1)	*201 F*	*'12-'15*	*6/3800*	*394/7400*	*324/5600*	*1415kg*	*283*	*4.5*	*4.3*	*9.5*	*188*	*+ A Carrera with supercar pace - Electric steering robs it of some tactility*	★★★★½
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*	★★★★½
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	★★★★½
Subaru BRZ	*248 F*	*'12-'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*	*'12-'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)	*237 F*	*'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*	★★★★½
TVR Sagaris	*265 F*	*'05-'07*	*6/3996*	*406/7000*	*349/5000*	*1078kg*	*383*	*3.7*	-	-	*185*	*+ Looks outrageous - 406bhp feels a touch optimistic*	★★★★½
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'*	★★★★½
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*	★★★★½

SUPERCARS / HYPERCARS



OUR CHOICE

McLaren 765LT. Runner-up at **evo** Car of the Year 2020, where it finished ahead of the Lamborghini Huracán Evo RWD and Ferrari F8 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 Huracán STO** (left) finally shows the full potential of Sant'Agata's V10 model, while the **Ferrari F8 Tributo** takes Maranello's mid-engined V8 line to a new state of the art. The latest **Porsche 911 GT3** once again brings improvements to an already brilliant model line, and the **Audi R8 V10** remains a corking entry-level supercar.

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'	★★★★½
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	★★★★½
Aston Martin Vanquish S (Mk2)	*260 F*	*'17-18*	*12/5935*	*595/7000*	*465/5500*	*1739kg*	*348*	*3.5*	*3.9*	*8.3*	*201*	*+ Noise, poise, drama and charm - Not as rounded as the DB11*	★★★★½
Aston Martin Vanquish S (Mk1)	*110 F*	*'05-'07*	*12/5935*	*520/7000*	*425/5800*	*1875kg*	*282*	*4.8*	*4.9*	*10.1*	*200*	*+ Vanquish joins the supercar greats - A tad intimidating at the limit*	★★★★½
Aston Martin V12 Speedster	287 F	£765,000	12/5204	690/6500	555/5000	c1700kg	c410	3.4	-	-	298	+ Amusing to drive; genuine depth to its development - It's not the last word in anything	★★★★☆
Aston Martin One-77	*179 F*	*'10-'12*	*12/7312*	*750/6000*	*553/7600*	*1740kg*	*438*	*3.7*	-	-	*220+*	*+ The engine, the looks, the drama - Gearbox hates manoeuvring; only 77 were made*	★★★★★
Audi R8 V10 RWD	273 F	£117,325	10/5204	533/7900	398/6400	1595kg	340	3.7	-	-	199	+ More affordable than a 4WD R8 - But not more entertaining	★★★★½
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 V10 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	★★★★½
Audi R8 V10 RWS(Mk2)	*254 F*	*'17-'19*	*10/5204*	*533/7800*	*398/6500*	*1590kg*	*341*	*3.7*	-	-	*199*	*+ The first rear-wheel-drive Audi for 40 years - Drives largely like its 4WD counterpart*	★★★★½
Audi R8 V10 (Mk2)	*234 F*	*'15-'19*	*10/5204*	*533/7800*	*398/6500*	*1640kg*	*330*	*3.5*	-	-	*198*	*+ All the R8 you really need - You can't get a manual gearbox*	★★★★½
Audi R8 V10 Plus (Mk2)	*250 F*	*'15-'19*	*10/5204*	*602/8250*	*413/6500*	*1580kg*	*387*	*3.2*	*2.9*	*6.3*	*205*	*+ Timeless drivetrain, huge performance - Sometimes seems ordinary at steady speeds*	★★★★★
Audi R8 V10 (Mk1)	*254 F*	*'09-'15*	*10/5204*	*518/8000*	*391/6500*	*1620kg*	*325*	*4.1*	*3.9*	*8.4*	*194*	*+ Real supercar feel - The V8 is cheaper, and still superb*	★★★★½
Audi R8 V10 Plus (Mk1)	*190 F*	*'13-'15*	*10/5204*	*542/8000*	*398/6500*	*1570kg*	*351*	*3.8*	-	-	*198*	*+ An R8 fit to take on the 458 and 12C - Firm ride may be too much for some*	★★★★★
Bugatti Chiron	244 F	c£2.5m	16/7993	1479/6700	1180/2000	1995kg	753	2.5	-	-	261	+ Backs up the numbers with feel and emotion - Limited top speed(!)	★★★★★
Bugatti Veyron 16.4	*134 F*	*'05-'11*	*16/7993*	*987/6000*	*922/2200*	*1888kg*	*531*	*2.5*	*2.8*	*5.8*	*253*	*+ Superbly engineered four-wheel-drive quad-turbo rocket - Er, lacks luggage space?*	★★★★★
Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Super Sport	*151 F*	*'10-'11*	*16/7993*	*1183/6400*	*1106/3000*	*1838kg*	*654*	*2.5*	-	-	*258*	*+ Was once the world's fastest supercar - Limited to 258mph for us mere mortals*	★★★★★
Bugatti EB110	*078 F*	*'91-'95*	*12/3500*	*552/8000*	*451/3750*	*1618kg*	*347*	*3.6*	-	-	*213*	*+ Superbly engineered four-wheel-drive quad-turbo rocket - It just fizzled out*	★★★★½
Ferrari Roma	290 F	£170,720	8/3855	611/5750	560/3000	1570kg	395	3.4	-	-	199+	+ Not far off being a front-engined F8 - Choosing between a Roma and an F8	★★★★★
Ferrari Portofino M	288 D	£175,345	8/3855	611/5750	560/3000	1664kg	373	3.5	-	-	199	+ Matches useability to supercar performance - Lacks the passion of the best Ferraris	★★★★½
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*	*'15-'19*	*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*	★★★★½
Ferrari 458 Italia	*288 F*	*'09-'15*	*8/4497*	*562/9000*	*398/6000*	*1485kg*	*384*	*3.4*	*3.2*	*6.8*	*202+*	*+ An astounding achievement - Paddleshift only*	★★★★★
Ferrari 458 Speciale	*274 F*	*'13-'15*	*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*	★★★★½
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 812 Competizione	292 F	£446,970	12/6496	819/9250	510/7000	1487kg*	560	2.9	-	-	211+	+ Phenomenally exciting - Requires plenty of respect at all times	★★★★★
Ferrari F12 Berlinetta	*275 F*	*'12-'17*	*12/6262*	*730/8250*	*509/6000*	*1630kg*	*455*	*3.1*	-	-	*211+*	*+ 730bhp isn't too much power for the road - Super-quick steering is an acquired taste*	★★★★★
Ferrari F12tdf	*230 F*	*'17*	*12/6262*	*769/8500*	*520/6250*	*1520kg*	*514*	*2.9*	-	-	*211+*	*+ Alarmingly fast - Doesn't flow like a 458 Speciale*	★★★★½
Ferrari 599 GTB Fiorano	*275 F*	*'06-'12*	*12/5999*	*611/7600*	*448/5600*	*1690kg*	*368*	*3.7*	*3.5*	*7.4*	*205*	*+ evo Car of the Year 2006 - Banks are getting harder to rob*	★★★★★
Ferrari 599 GTO	*161 F*	*'11-'12*	*12/5999*	*661/8250*	*457/6500*	*1605kg*	*418*	*3.4*	-	-	*208+*	*+ One of the truly great Ferraris - Erm, the air con isn't very good*	★★★★★
Ferrari 575M Fiorano Handling Pack	*200 F*	*'02-'06*	*12/5748*	*508/7250*	*434/5250*	*1688kg*	*298*	*3.7*	*4.2*	*9.6*	*205+*	*+ Fiorano pack makes 575 truly great - It should have been standard*	★★★★★
Ferrari 550 Maranello	*275 F*	*'96-'02*	*12/5474*	*478/7000*	*420/5000*	*1690kg*	*287*	*4.4*	-	-	*199*	*+ Everything - Nothing*	★★★★★
Ferrari GTC4 Lusso T	*246 D*	*'17-'20*	*8/3855*	*602/7500*	*560/3000*	*1865kg*	*328*	*3.5*	-	-	*199*	*+ Effortless, comfortable GT - Misses the richer soundtrack of the V12*	★★★★½
Ferrari GTC4 Lusso	*264 F*	*'16-'20*	*12/6262*	*680/8000*	*514/5750*	*1920kg*	*360*	*3.4*	-	-	*208*	*+ Rear-wheel steering increases agility - Not as engaging as other Ferraris*	★★★★½
Ferrari FF	*194 F*	*'11-'15*	*12/6262*	*651/8000*	*504/6000*	*1880kg*	*347*	*3.7*	-	-	*208*	*+ Four seats and 4WD, but a proper Ferrari - Looks divide opinion*	★★★★½
Ferrari 612 Scaglietti	*090 F*	*'04-'11*	*12/5748*	*533/7250*	*434/5250*	*1875kg*	*289*	*4.0*	*4.3*	*9.8*	*199*	*+ Awesomely capable grand tourer - See above*	★★★★★
Ferrari SF90 Stradale	293 F	£376,048	8/3990	986/7500	-	1570kg*	638	2.5	-	-	211	+ Hugely fast hybrid-hypercar - So complex it can feel different corner to corner	★★★★½

1

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MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE (OR YEARS ON SALE)	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	evo RATING	
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+*	+ *Intoxicating, exploitable* - *Cabin detailing falls short of a Zonda or F1's*	★★★★★
Ferrari F50	*275 F*	*'95-'97*	*12/4699*	*513/8500*	*347/6500*	*1230kg**	*424*	*3.9*	-	-	*202*	+ *A better driver's Ferrari than the 288, F40 or Enzo* - *Not better looking, though*	★★★★★
Ferrari F40	*275 F*	*'87-'92*	*8/2936*	*471/7000*	*426/4000*	*1100kg**	*437*	*4.1*	-	-	*201*	+ *Brutally fast* - *It's in the dictionary under 'turbo lag'*	★★★★★
Ford GT	253 F	$450,000	6/3497	647/6250	550/5900	1385kg*	475	2.8	-	-	216	+ Everything it does on track - Too many of the things it does on the road	★★★★½
Ford GT	*200 F*	*'04-'06*	*8/5409*	*550/6500*	*500/3750*	*1583kg*	*353*	*3.9*	-	-	*205*	+ *evo Car of the Year 2005* - *Don't scalp yourself getting in*	★★★★★
Honda NSX	270 F	£144,765	6/3493	573	476/2000	1776kg	328	2.9	3.0	6.9	191	+ Blisteringly quick and brilliantly engineered - Limited range on a full tank	★★★★★
Honda NSX (NA2)	*188 F*	*'97-'05*	*6/3179*	*276/7300*	*224/5300*	*1410kg*	*196*	*5.7*	-	-	*168*	+ *The original useable supercar* - *276bhp sounds a bit weedy today*	★★★★½
Honda NSX-R (NA2)	*100 F*	*'02-'03*	*6/3179*	*276/7300*	*224/5300*	*1270kg*	*221*	*4.4*	-	-	*168*	+ *evo Car of the Year 2002* - *Hard to find in the UK*	★★★★★
Jaguar XJ220	*157 F*	*'92-'94*	*6/3498*	*542/7200*	*475/4500*	*1470kg*	*375*	*3.7*	-	-	*213*	+ *Britain's greatest supercar...* - *...until McLaren built the F1*	★★★★☆
Koenigsegg One:1	*202 F*	*'14-'15*	*8/5065*	*1341/7500*	*1011/6000*	*1360kg*	*1002*	*2.9*	-	-	*273*	+ *One of the most powerful cars we've tested* - *We couldn't afford one*	★★★★★
Koenigsegg Agera R	*180 F*	*'11-'14*	*8/5032*	*1124/7100*	*885/2700*	*1435kg*	*796*	*2.8*	-	-	*273*	+ *As fast and exciting as your body can handle* - *It's Veyron money*	★★★★★
Koenigsegg CCXR Edition	*118 F*	*'08-'10*	*8/4800*	*1004/7000*	*796/5600*	*1280kg**	*797*	*2.9*	-	-	*250+*	+ *One of the world's fastest cars* - *Spiky power delivery*	★★★★★
Lamborghini Huracán RWD	*229 F*	*'16-'19*	*10/5204*	*572/8000*	*397/6500*	*1389kg**	*385*	*3.4*	-	-	*199*	+ *More seductive than the 4WD Huracán* - *Feels like there's more to come*	★★★★½
Lamborghini Huracán	*209 D*	*'14-'19*	*10/5204*	*602/8250*	*413/6500*	*1422kg**	*430*	*3.2*	-	-	*201+*	+ *Defies the numbers; incredible point-to-point pace* - *Takes work to find its sweet-spot*	★★★★½
Lamborghini Huracán 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+	+ Performante engine, trick chassis - Badly needs an 'Ego' mode for road driving	★★★★☆
Lamborghini Huracán Evo Spyder	269 F	£218,137	10/5204	631/8000	442/6500	1542kg*	416	3.1	-	-	202	+ Drop-top driving enhances that epic V10 - Being mistaken for a King's Road poser	★★★★☆
Lamborghini Huracán Performante	*242 F*	*'17-'19*	*10/5204*	*631/8000*	*442/6500*	*1382kg**	*464*	*2.9*	-	-	*201+*	+ *The realisation of the Huracán's ever elusive potential* - *Kitchen-worktop carbonfibre*	★★★★★
Lamborghini Huracán STO	293 F	£260,012	10/5204	631/8000	417/6500	1339kg*	479	3.0	-	-	193	+ The Huracán's full potential finally unleashed - A touch showy, perhaps?	★★★★★
Lamborghini Gallardo LP550-2 Balboni	*138 F*	*'09-'10*	*10/5204*	*542/8000*	*398/6500*	*1380kg**	*399*	*3.9*	-	-	*199*	+ *Mad, rear-wheel-drive Lambo* - *Limited numbers*	★★★★½
Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4	*180 D*	*'08-'13*	*10/5204*	*552/8000*	*398/6500*	*1410kg**	*398*	*3.7*	-	-	*202*	+ *Still a missile from A to B* - *Feels a little dated next to some rivals*	★★★★☆
Lamborghini Gallardo LP570-4 Superleggera	*152 F*	*'10-'13*	*10/5204*	*562/8000*	*398/6500*	*1340kg**	*426*	*3.4*	*3.5*	-	*202*	+ *Less weight and more power than original Superleggera* - *LP560-4 runs it very close*	★★★★½
Lamborghini Gallardo	*094 F*	*'03-'08*	*10/4961*	*513/8000*	*376/4250*	*1430kg**	*364*	*4.0*	*4.3*	*9.4*	*196*	+ *On a full-bore start it spins all four wheels. Cool* - *Slightly clunky e-gear*	★★★★½
Lamborghini Aventador	*194 F*	*'11-'17*	*12/6498*	*690/8250*	*509/5500*	*1575kg**	*445*	*2.9*	-	-	*217*	+ *Most important new Lambo since the Countach* - *Can feel a little clumsy*	★★★★½
Lamborghini Aventador S	246 F	£271,146	12/6498	730/8400	509/5500	1575kg*	471	2.9	-	-	217	+ A more agile, more connected Aventador - Synthetic steering	★★★★½
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	★★★★½
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*	★★★★½
Lamborghini Aventador SVJ	282 F	£360,000	12/6498	759/8500	531/6750	1525kg*	506	2.8	-	-	218	+ A significant step on from the SV - Have we mentioned the gearbox?	★★★★½
Lamborghini Aventador SVJ Roadster	268 D	£387,987	12/6498	759/8500	531/6750	1575kg*	490	2.9	-	-	217+	+ Increased exposure to that V12 - Next time it'll have electric assistance	★★★★½
Lamborghini Sián FKP 37	284 F	£312,000	12/6498	808/8500	531/6750	1595kg*	515	<2.8	-	-	220	+ Our kind of hybrid - Ferociously expensive	★★★★★
Lamborghini Murciélago LP640	*275 F*	*'06-'11*	*12/6496*	*631/8000*	*487/6000*	*1665kg**	*385*	*3.8*	-	-	*211*	+ *Compelling old-school supercar* - *You'd better be on your toes*	★★★★★
Lamborghini Murciélago LP670-4 SV	*200 F*	*'09-'11*	*12/6496*	*661/8000*	*487/6500*	*1565kg**	*429*	*3.3*	*3.2*	*7.3*	*212*	+ *A supercar in its truest, wildest sense* - *Be prepared for stares*	★★★★★
Lamborghini Murciélago	*089 D*	*'01-'06*	*12/6192*	*572/7500*	*479/5400*	*1650kg**	*351*	*4.0*	-	-	*206*	+ *Gorgeous, capable and incredibly friendly* - *V12 feels stressed*	★★★★★
Lamborghini Diablo VT 6.0	*275 F*	*'00-'02*	*12/5992*	*543/7100*	*457/5500*	*1625kg**	*343*	*3.9*	-	-	*208*	+ *Best-built, best-looking Diablo of all* - *People's perceptions*	★★★★½
Lexus LFA/LFA Nürburgring	*200 F*	*'10-'12*	*10/4805*	*552/8700*	*354/6800*	*1480kg*	*379*	*3.7*	-	-	*202*	+ *Absurd and compelling supercar* - *Badge and price don't quite match*	★★★★★
Lotus Esprit Sport 350	*171 F*	*'99-'01*	*8/3506*	*349/6500*	*295/4250*	*1299kg*	*274*	*4.3*	-	-	*175*	+ *Lotus's pukka V8-powered supercar* - *Weight of that V8 makes it more intimidating*	★★★★☆
McLaren 570S	*229 F*	*'15-'19*	*8/3799*	*562/7500*	*443/5000*	*1452kg*	*393*	*3.2*	-	-	*204*	+ *A truly fun and engaging sports car* - *McLaren doesn't call it a supercar!*	★★★★★
McLaren 570GT	*261 F*	*'16-'18*	*8/3799*	*562/7500*	*443/5000*	*1498kg*	*381*	*3.4*	-	-	*204*	+ *Blurs the line between grand tourer and supercar brilliantly* - *570S is more involving*	★★★★★
McLaren 600LT	*257 F*	*'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*	+ *A true 911 GT3 RS rival* - *The GT3 RS has a more scintillating engine*	★★★★★
McLaren GT	271 F	£163,000	8/3994	612/7500	465/5500	1530kg	406	3.2	-	-	203	+ Fiery performance; refinement - Don't expect a 720S to emerge on a great road	★★★★☆
McLaren 720S	262 F	£208,600	8/3994	710/7250	568/5500	1419kg	508	2.9	2.9	5.6	212	+ evo Car of the Year 2017 - Favours precision over emotion	★★★★★
McLaren 720S Spider	288 F	£242,000	8/3994	710/7250	568/5500	1468kg	491	2.9	-	-	212	+ Every bit as ballastic as the coupe - But a fraction less precise	★★★★½
McLaren 765LT	281 F	£280,000	8/3994	754/7500	590/5500	1339kg	572	2.8	-	-	205	+ Intense, extreme, insane - How much do you value your driving licence?	★★★★★
McLaren 765LT Spider	293 D	£310,500	8/3994	754/7500	590/5500	1388kg	553	2.8	-	-	205	+ Everything the 765LT coupe is and more - Ferociously expensive, especially with options	★★★★★
McLaren 650S	*196 F*	*'14-'17*	*8/3799*	*641/7250*	*500/6000*	*1428kg*	*456*	*3.0*	-	-	*207*	+ *Better brakes, balance and looks than 12C; more power too* - *Which all comes at a price*	★★★★½
McLaren 675LT	*248 F*	*'15-'17*	*8/3799*	*666/7100*	*516/5500*	*1328kg*	*510*	*2.9*	-	-	*205*	+ *Runner-up at eCoty 2015; asks questions of the P1* - *Aventador price tag*	★★★★★
McLaren 12C	*264 F*	*'11-'14*	*8/3799*	*616/7500*	*442/3000*	*1434kg*	*435*	*3.3*	-	-	*207*	+ *Staggering performance, refinement* - *Engine noise can be grating*	★★★★☆
McLaren Senna	252 F	£750,000	8/3999	789/7250	590/5500	1198kg*	669	2.8	-	-	211	+ Astounding performance, stellar presence - Only 500 being made	★★★★★
McLaren P1	*276 F*	*'13-'15*	*8/3799*	*903/7500*	*664/4000*	*1490kg*	*616*	*2.8*	-	-	*217*	+ *Freakish breadth of ability* - *At its mind-bending best on track*	★★★★★
McLaren F1	*228 F*	*'94-'98*	*12/6064*	*627/7500*	*479/4000*	*1138kg*	*560*	*3.2*	-	-	*240*	+ *Still the most single-minded supercar ever* - *The air con was a bit weak*	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG GT R	261 I	£158,285	8/3982	577/6250	516/2100	1575kg	372	3.6	3.3	7.1	198	+ Fun and blisteringly fast; a true rival for the 911 GT3 - A touch showy, perhaps	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG GT R Pro	*269 F*	*'19-'20*	*8/3982*	*577/6250*	*516/2100*	*1561kg*	*376*	*3.6*	-	-	*198*	+ *A GT R fine-tuned for the track* - *A 911 GT3 RS has the edge*	★★★★½
Mercedes-AMG GT Black Series	283 F	£335,000	8/3982	720/6700	590/2000	1520kg	480	3.2	-	-	202	+ Terrifyingly fast and capable - Subtle it ain't	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG	*264 F*	*'10-'15*	*8/6208*	*563/6800*	*479/4750*	*1620kg*	*335*	*3.9*	*4.1*	*8.4*	*197*	+ *Great engine and chassis (gullwing doors too!)* - *Slightly tardy gearbox*	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Black Series	*204 F*	*'13-'15*	*8/6208*	*622/7400*	*468/5500*	*1550kg*	*408*	*3.6*	-	-	*196*	+ *Stunning engine, superb body control* - *Be careful on less-than-smooth roads...*	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren	*228 F*	*'03-'07*	*8/5439*	*617/6500*	*575/3250*	*1693kg*	*370*	*3.8*	-	-	*208*	+ *Zonda-pace, 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	+ Spiritual successor to the Ferrari F40 - It's a bit pricey	★★★★★
Pagani Huayra	185 F	c£1m	12/5980	720/5800	737/2250	1350kg*	542	3.3	-	-	224	+ Joint evo Car of the Year 2012 - Engine isn't as nape-prickling as the Zonda's	★★★★★
Pagani Zonda S 7.3	*096 F*	*'02-'05*	*12/7291*	*555/5900*	*553/4050*	*1280kg**	*441*	*3.7*	-	-	*220*	+ *evo Car of the Year 2001 (in earlier 7.0 form)* - *Values have gone up a fair bit since then*	★★★★★
Pagani Zonda F	*186 F*	*'05-'06*	*12/7291*	*602/6150*	*575/4000*	*1230kg**	*497*	*3.6*	-	-	*214+*	+ *Everything an Italian supercar ought to be* - *Looks a bit blingy next to a Carrera GT*	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 (992)	293 F	£127,820	6/3996	503/8400	347/6100	1418kg	360	3.9	-	-	199	+ Agile, sharp and hugely desirable - Deciding if you want standard or Touring spec	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 (991.2)	*256 F*	*'17-'19*	*6/3996*	*493/8250*	*339/6000*	*1413kg*	*355*	*3.9*	-	-	*198*	+ *Almost impossible to criticise* - *Wasn't the easiest car to place an order for*	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Speedster (991.2)	*263 F*	*'19*	*6/3996*	*503/8400*	*347/6250*	*1465kg*	*349*	*4.0*	-	-	*192*	+ *Essentially a topless GT3* - *Only 1948 were made*	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991.2)	*278 F*	*'18-'20*	*6/3996*	*513/8250*	*347/6000*	*1430kg*	*364*	*3.2*	-	-	*193*	+ *Even better than the 991.1 RS* - *Demand exceeded supply*	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT2 RS (991.2)	*257 F*	*'18-'19*	*6/3800*	*690/7000*	*553/2500*	*1470kg*	*477*	*2.8*	-	-	*211*	+ *A proper, angry turbocharged Porsche* - *'Limited availability'*	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 (991.1)	*206 F*	*'13-'16*	*6/3799*	*468/8250*	*324/6250*	*1430kg*	*333*	*3.5*	-	-	*196*	+ *evo Car of the Year 2013* - *PDK only*	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991.1)	*223 F*	*'15-'16*	*6/3996*	*493/8250*	*339/6250*	*1420kg*	*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*	*'16*	*6/3996*	*493/8250*	*339/6250*	*1370kg*	*366*	*3.8*	-	-	*200*	+ *evo Car of the Year 2016* - *Limited availability*	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.2)	*182 F*	*'09-'11*	*6/3797*	*429/7600*	*317/6250*	*1395kg*	*312*	*4.1*	*4.2*	*9.2*	*194*	+ *Even better than the car it replaced* - *Give us a minute...*	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (3.8, 997.2)	*248 F*	*'10-'11*	*6/3797*	*444/7900*	*317/6750*	*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*	*'11-'12*	*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)	*221 F*	*'03-'05*	*6/3600*	*375/7400*	*284/5000*	*1380kg*	*272*	*4.5*	*4.3*	*9.2*	*190*	+ *evo Car of the Year 2003* - *Chassis a bit too track-focused for some roads*	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (996.2)	*068 F*	*'04-'05*	*6/3600*	*375/7400*	*284/5000*	*1360kg*	*280*	*4.4*	-	-	*190*	+ *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*	+ *evo Car of the Year 1999* - *Porsche didn't build enough*	★★★★★
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	★★★★½
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*	+ *Enormous performance* - *Not as thrilling as some rivals*	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Turbo S (991.1)	*217 F*	*'13-'15*	*6/3800*	*552/6500*	*553/2200*	*1605kg*	*349*	*3.1*	-	-	*197*	+ *Superb everyday supercar* - *At times disguises the thrills it can offer*	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Turbo (997.2)	*218 F*	*'09-'13*	*6/3800*	*493/6000*	*479/1950*	*1570kg*	*319*	*3.7*	*3.2*	*7.3*	*194*	+ *The Turbo at the very top of its game* - *Favours outright grip over adjustability*	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Turbo (997.1)	*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 (996)	*249 F*	*'00-'06*	*6/3600*	*414/6000*	*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 (993)	*066 F*	*'95-'98*	*6/3600*	*402/5750*	*398/4500*	*1500kg*	*272*	*4.3*	-	-	*180*	+ *Stupendous all-weather supercar* - *It doesn't rain enough*	★★★★★
Porsche 918 Spyder	*233 F*	*'13-'15*	*8/4593*	*875/8500*	*944/6600*	*1674kg*	*531*	*2.6*	-	-	*211*	+ *Blistering performance; cohesive hybrid tech* - *Added weight and complexity*	★★★★★
Porsche Carrera GT	*200 F*	*'04-'06*	*10/5733*	*604/8000*	*435/5750*	*1380kg*	*445*	*3.9*	-	-	*205*	+ *Felt ahead of its time* - *Needs modern tyres to tame its spikiness*	★★★★★

by HENRY CATCHPOLE



Diamonds in the rough

How three of 2010's best cars made unplanned excursions on that year's eCoty

IN THE LAST ISSUE, JETHRO MENTIONED the eCoty that nobody speaks of. Could get you kicked out of Fight Club that sort of behaviour. Anyway, as he's loosened the drawstrings and the cat is scrabbling to get out, I thought I might as well tell you what happened in 2010.

John Barker got the ball rolling with a big one…

'Cadwell on a dark, chilly, rainy Tuesday was risky, especially with a couple of the cars being on lightly treaded, trackday-style rubber. One of them was the Gallardo LP570-4 Superleggera. On my first lap I noticed that there was a small flow across the track at the bottom of the deep dip on the back straight, Park Straight. On the second, faster lap it had doubled in volume. We hit it at over 100mph and the Lambo snapped sideways.

'We were now 90 degrees to the track, fully on the wet grass to the right. Armco flashed by in the windscreen mere feet away… but got no closer as we climbed up the other side of the dip. The Armco ended – phew! – but we were still travelling sideways at speed, and looking up the hill through the passenger-side window I could see the marshal's post fast approaching. Luckily our trajectory changed when the ground rose on a hillock and the Gallardo compressed into it, the carbon diffuser digging in a bit. So, after about 200 metres sideways, we rotated again and took a trajectory past the post and across the track, finally coming to rest on the grass on the opposite side.

'I'd like to say that never have I been so close to crashing for so long, but I can't. On the other side of the hill back in 1993, in *Performance Car* days, I slid off the asphalt on the right-hander, Chris Curve, in a 968 Clubsport and travelled about the same distance on the grass. However, on that occasion I found the tyre barrier at the Gooseneck. I was photographed leaning on its rear spoiler… while it was hooked up to the recovery truck.

'I can't believe I got away with it in the Gallardo. There was grass trapped between the wheels and tyres, bits of carbon missing from the diffuser and the front splitter, but we hadn't hit anything solid and the car was dynamically none the worse for it.'

An hour or so later, I wasn't so lucky. On a slowing-down lap in the Audi R8 GT I saw a sodden Matt Howell with his camera poised on the outside of the left-hander Mansfield. I thought I'd be helpful and put the Audi at a decent angle. Sadly I reached the lock-stops, went past the desired decent angle and continued going… all the way round.

Not really a problem given that I wasn't travelling that quickly. Except that, as John had already proved, you don't need a lot of speed to travel a long way on wet grass. I saw the bank coming and tried everything I could to pull up short, but it was futile. From memory it did both ends and of course Matt was in prime position to capture the moment for posterity. I drove the R8 back to the pits but it went no further in the test. A manual R8 Spider was subbed in in its place. Always thought that was a better car anyway.

All of which leaves very little room to tell you about Dickie having to do an emergency stop in an SLS for a sheep in Yorkshire. The wandering woolly survived but the seat fabric in the GT2 RS following behind was puckered irrevocably. An airborne Chris Harris had seen the braking Mercedes but was unable to do anything about it for what must have felt like forever. When tyre touched tarmac he hit the middle pedal, missed the Merc by millimetres (there was video footage to prove it) and took evasive action stage left through the heather. The GT2 RS eventually emerged from the moorland under its own steam, but let's just say the geometry was not quite in its factory approved settings.

So that's the story of eCoty 2010. Now let us never speak of it again.

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