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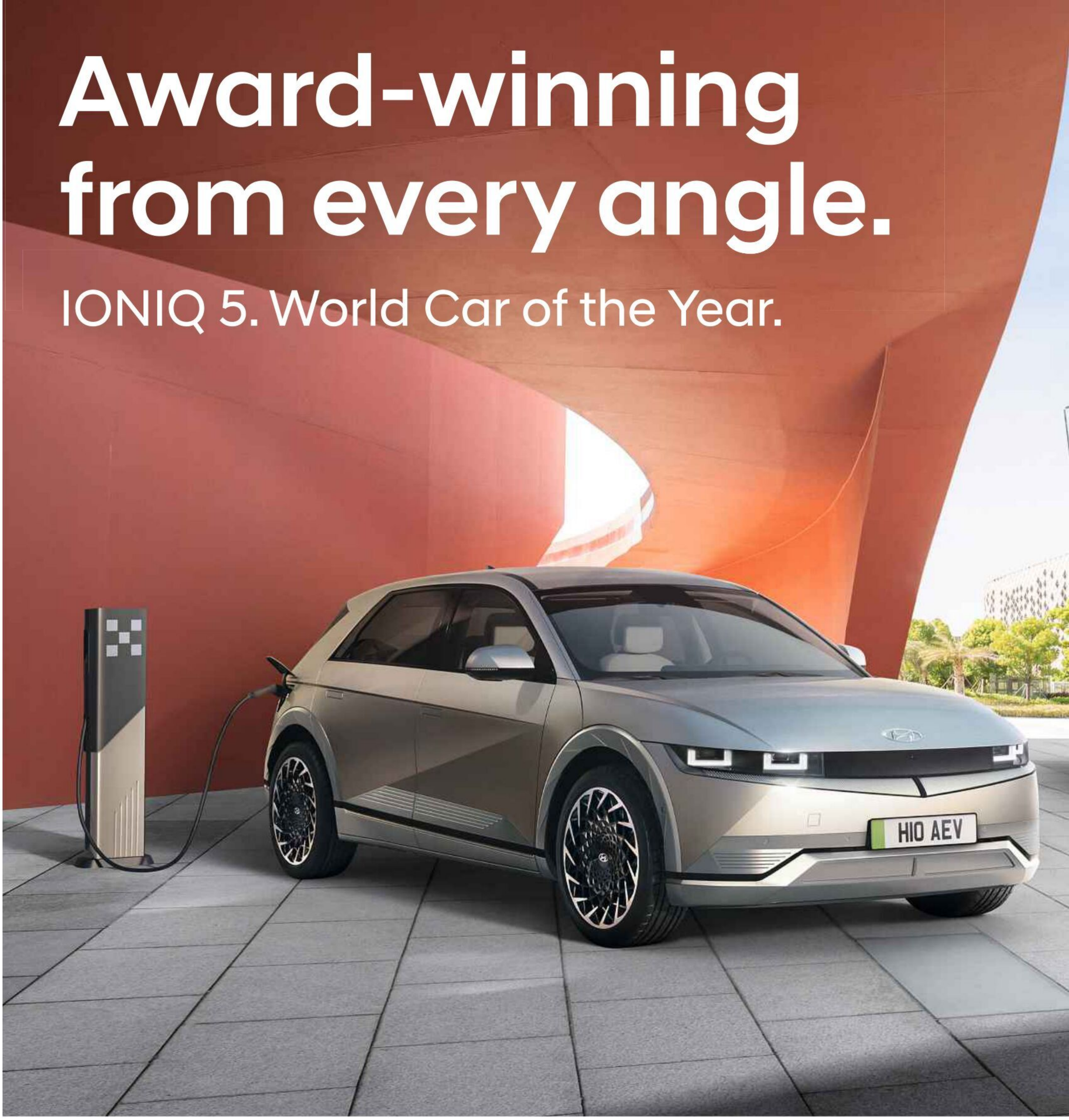
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Ed speak



CARS ARE GETTING TOO HEAVY, TOO powerful and too fast for the road. We can't enjoy them for fear of being papped by a camera poking out from the rear window of a Ford Transit or the self-appointed public police force submitting dashcam footage of us doing something they don't approve of despite it not being remotely dangerous, reckless or illegal.

Yep, driving in the UK hasn't been much fun for a while now and conditions aren't improving anytime soon. Actually, that's not strictly true. It's still possible to gather a (small) group of friends and enjoy a few days away in each other's company on the road and in the restaurant later that night. Such trips might take more planning than they once did, but from our own experience, and from speaking to a number of **evo** readers, an enjoyable tour of some of the UK's finest driving roads is still achievable.

But when the restrictions of the road get too much, that's when the track comes calling. Those with wrists wrapped in luminous plastic briefing bands need no introduction to the escapism a trackday offers, but if you've never attended one, now is the time. Nothing can beat the thrill of experiencing what your car and you can achieve when a circuit replaces the road.

And don't for one minute think your car isn't up for the challenge. If you read this magazine, chances are you already have a car with the core DNA to take on a circuit, and if you still have concerns, this month we've covered everything you need to know about getting on track and letting loose, from core upgrades to tackling Eau Rouge. Trust us, it doesn't matter if you have an SF90 Assetto Fiorano or a second-hand MX-5, the endorphins still flow, albeit at slightly different rates!

If you think you lack the experience for a track session, trust me, you don't. As the seven novices who attended **evo**'s first track evening of 2022 discovered last month at Bedford Autodrome, there really is nothing to worry about when like-minded individuals head out of a pitlane.

And the ultimate experience has to be combining a road trip with a trackday, doesn't it? If you agree, visit evotrackdays.co.uk and register your interest for a planned event with **evo** and RSR at Spa this October.

See you on the track!

Stuart Gallagher, Editor *@stuartg917*

THE NEXT ISSUE OF EVO WILL BE ON SALE WEDNESDAY 6 JULY

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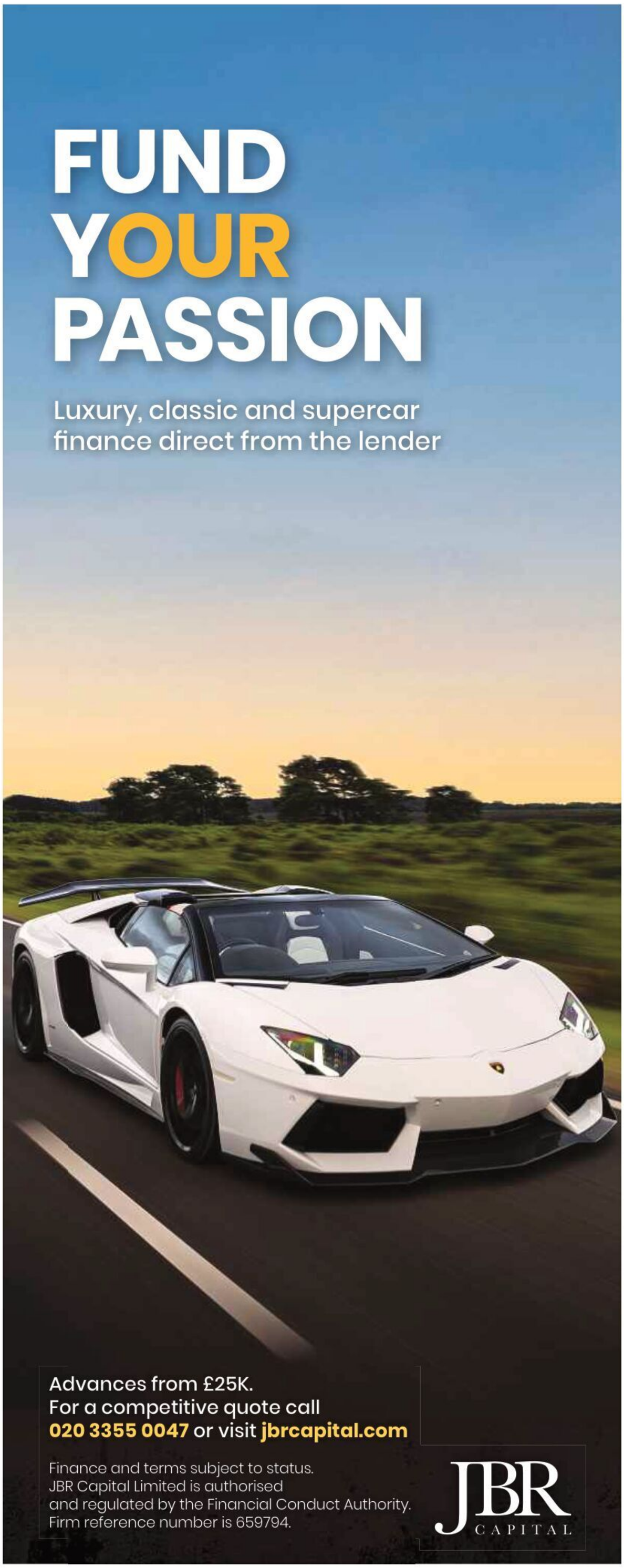






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RENDEZ-VOUS RIVIERA

TWO TOURS – ONE PARTY

There is nowhere quite like Provence and the French Riviera for style, glamour and timeless scenery, and we have created two tours that come together in Saint-Tropez for a spectacular end of summer weekend. You can take part in one of the tours or you can simply join the fun in Saint-Tropez.

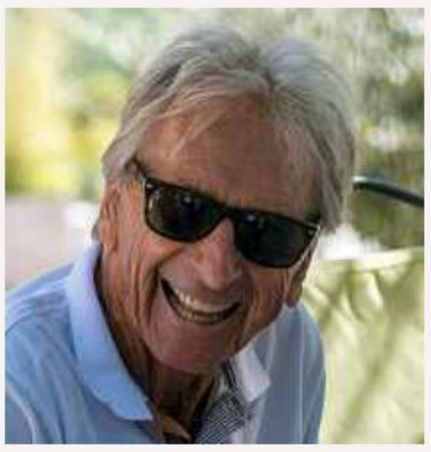
RENDEZ-VOUS RIVIERA AT THE SAINT-TROPEZ POLO CLUB

SATURDAY 1 OCTOBER 2022

Launched in 2021, Rendez-Vous Riviera is a relaxed, intimate concours-style event in the unique surroundings of The Saint-Tropez Polo Club. This year there will be live music with rock and roll legend John Oates, a DJ, gourmet food, rosé and cocktail bars, fashion shows and 50 of the most beautiful cars ever built. All-inclusive tickets are £275 each and limited to just 500.

THE DEREK BELL TOUR MONACO – SAINT-TROPEZ

TUESDAY 27 SEPTEMBER – SUNDAY 2 OCTOBER



Join Derek and 20 cars on a relaxed tour through Provence, taking in some of the finest driving roads in France and stopping off at the best hotels in the region before arriving in Saint-Tropez in time for a party at The Kube on the Friday, Rendez-Vous Riviera on Saturday and a closed-road parade of Saint-Tropez on Sunday.

THE JODIE KIDD TOUR SAINT-TROPEZ – MONACO

FRIDAY 30 SEPTEMBER – WEDNESDAY 5 OCTOBER



Jodie's tour will start with 2 nights in Saint-Tropez including the party at The Kube on the Friday and Rendez-Vous Riviera on Saturday before heading off from the old port after the parade on Sunday morning. Her tour will head back through Provence before arriving on Tuesday for a night at the Hôtel de Paris in Monaco, followed the next day by a farewell lunch on the beach in Cap d'Antibes.









If you are interested in taking part in either The Derek Bell Tour or The Jodie Kidd Tour, or would like tickets for Rendez-Vous Riviera, please get in touch. We have weekend accommodation and ticket packages available.

Contact Chris on +44 (0)1635 867705
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V EVENTS

Driven

by RICHARD MEADEN PHOTOGRAPHY *by* GUS GREGORY/PORSCHE AG

Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 ePerformance

1078bhp EV concept points the way to a future one-make race series, but does it deliver the on-track thrills of Porsche Motorsport's petrol-powered products?

SILENCE. NOT SOMETHING YOU EXPECT when you've just fired-up Porsche Motorsport's hottest new development prototype. But then there's never been a Porsche Motorsport product quite like the 718 GT4 ePerformance.

This full-EV machine – which packs a 1073bhp punch and can lap most racetracks faster than a 992 Cup car – is billed as the future of Porsche's one-make motorsport business. This makes the GT4 ePerformance a Big Deal, both for marking the moment Porsche took another emotive step away from internal combustion, and for the company accepting that its motorsport customers (of which there are thousands) will expect and want to go racing in EV machines.

Crucially, it's also a pointer to what we can expect from Porsche's future EV sports cars, as everything learned in the development of this motorsport test mule will inevitably be fed into future Porsche road car programmes. This makes our test of the ePerformance a tantalising first taste of what Porsche's core sports car range will offer when fully electrified models eventually come to market.

Porsche had two starting points for this project. The first and most obvious is the 718 Cayman GT4 Cup, which Porsche Motorsport build alongside its 911 Cup, GT3 R and RSR racers. This was then adapted to accept an evolved EV powertrain taken from the Mission R concept, which we drove last year (**evo** 293).

Porsche also plundered its racing parts bin, fitting the GT4 Cup with 911 RSR suspension, then wrapping it in a bespoke wide-track body made by Porsche Style. With huge wings and





an even huger rear diffuser it looks every inch the ruthless race car, though lightning bolt test livery aside it offers almost no clues as to what makes it so special.

So much of Porsche's recent racing activity has informed the development of this car. From the e-motor technology employed in the 919 Hybrid to the hugely sophisticated control systems that are the real hotbed of innovation in Formula E. Look back further and the 918 Spyder and 911 GT3 R Hybrid (which you'll recall used a flywheel KERS system) have all played their part. It's reassuring to learn that when you're at the vanguard, motorsport remains the ultimate proving ground for fast-tracking ideas and getting things to work.

We're all having to recalibrate what constitutes impressive power outputs in an EV world, but with well over 1000bhp the ePerformance leaves you in no doubt it's a major-league machine. With two electric motors – one in the nose, approximately where the petrol tank would have sat in the regular GT4, the other where the GT4's flat-six would have been – it's something of a stopgap platform in terms of packaging, but the principle of a robust, serviceable and cost-effective EV racing car is clear to see, with the same gearbox, electric motors and pulse-controlled inverters on the front and rear axles offering smart modularity.

EVs always pay a weight penalty versus ICE, but at 1500kg the 1073bhp, all-wheel drive, widebody ePerformance isn't excessively heavy, especially if you consider the latest rear-drive, narrow-body 500bhp petrol-engined GT4 RS Clubsport weighs 1330kg. Whichever way you slice it, the ePerformance is a whole new level of Porsche GT car.

It's an intriguing car to be around. Sitting impassively on axle stands with a fat charging lead connected to its rump, its headlights blink slowly as its battery cells chug greedily away on charged particles. Unlike a petrol-powered car, the ePerformance seems to have a life force even at rest.

Before we're let loose driving solo we're treated to a passenger ride alongside Timo Bernhard. As one of Porsche's main development drivers on the ePerformance programme he knows the car better than anyone. Unsurprisingly, he's in the groove from the moment we leave the pitlane, punching the throttle and leaving my stomach behind in a way only an EV can. The precision and immediacy of his inputs are almost binary, but this belies a degree of finesse and sensitivity that's making fine adjustments throughout the braking, turn-in and corner-exit phases.

Like Timo we will run in two settings – Drive Mode 3, which is effectively Race mode and yields circa 600bhp, followed by a second run in Drive Mode 9, which equates to Qualifying mode





‘WHICHEVER WAY YOU SLICE IT, THE ePERFORMANCE IS A WHOLE NEW LEVEL OF PORSCHE GT CAR’

Top: one of the two oil-cooled electric motors inside the ePerformance, this one mounted where you’d normally expect to find a Cayman’s ICE engine; together they contribute towards lap times on a par with the current 911 GT3 Cup’s.
Left: our man Meaden behind the yoke





and liberates every last kW the ePerformance has to offer. The former is good for 30 to 40 minutes of racing with no tailing-off of power or performance, while the banzai Quali mode can be sustained for 15 minutes. Again, with no performance drop-off, or 'thermally induced derating' to give it the correct EV terminology.

It's in the heat management of the ePerformance electric motors and battery system that Porsche has made big leaps, thanks to a direct oil-cooling system. This circulates special low-viscosity lubricant through the batteries and the motors via a front-mounted oil cooler to maintain these temperature-critical components at optimum temperature. Because the fluid washes over the full surface area of the battery cells it manages the heat effectively and efficiently.

To allow capacity for regenerative braking to be fed into the battery cells at the first braking zone, the ePerformance starts each session with 85 per cent charge. Porsche says that in the course of a typical race as much as 50 per cent of the total energy used would come from regen, which shows how effective the system is, and how much the batteries have to cope with in terms of rapid charging and discharging.

Above and right: ePerformance is 14cm wider than a Cayman GT4 Clubsport, with wider wheels (11 x 18in front, 12 x 18in rear) wearing race-spec Michelin tyres with a high proportion of renewable materials

Talking of rapid charging, the GT4 ePerformance – which employs 900V EV architecture with a charging capacity of 350kW – is charged via a monolithic charging station that Porsche has brought to the test and placed immediately behind the pit garage. It takes the car from 5 to 80 per cent charge in circa 15 minutes. Oh for that kind of turnaround time at your local public charging station.

Driving the ePerformance is an unforgettable experience. One which begins with a pre-flight routine that's laughably simple and eerily quiet. Once switched on, there are a few clicks and whirrs from within the machine. Then all you need do is put your foot on the brake, select your Drive Mode via a rotary control on the steering wheel, squeeze the throttle and away you go. No fuss, no howling petrol engine or fear of being humiliated by a sharp clutch, just a smooth take-off accompanied by a whirr that's mostly drowned out by the whine and crude clatter of the differentials and other rotating components.

Floor the throttle and the soundtrack switches in an instant, a piercing shriek of the electric motors building endlessly in pitch and volume as speed builds. There are no gears, so you just point and shoot. That limits your sense of interaction with the machine, but it does allow you to focus all your attention on what's fast-forwarding through the windscreen.

From the inside it's a maelstrom of those mechanical components combined with the

otherworldly sound of electrical energy being deployed under acceleration and harvested under braking. From the outside it sounds like a cross between a gas turbine and a low-flying jet. A gridful of these will make a hell of a racket.

In Drive Mode 3 the performance is stonking up to 120mph or so, but then you feel the ferocity of the initial acceleration begin to soften a little. In Drive Mode 9 it is on another level, that unmistakable sensation of accelerative freefall feeling pretty much unrelenting. On Valencia's start-finish straight the difference in V-max is significant, 600bhp taking you to 160mph, while unleashing the full 1073bhp slingshots you to 172mph within the same distance.

That Quali mode speed advantage is mirrored at pretty much every point on the lap, the ePerformance arriving at the braking points some 10-15mph faster. It's a unique challenge that you simply don't get with conventional ICE-powered race cars, and something that really focuses your mind when trying to slow the car at the end of the main straight.

Braking has always been the greatest challenge

'IT HAS PRETTY MUCH ERADICATED THE USUAL EV BRAKING ISSUES'

in any hybrid or all-electric high-performance car. In a race car it's even more critical because braking efforts tend to be 100 per cent, with little or no margin for error. The constantly fluctuating levels of regen and the need to manage this effect can play havoc with pedal feel, which in turn meddles with the consistency you need in order to nail your braking points with absolute confidence. The GT4 ePerformance has pretty much eradicated all of those issues, though it still requires skill to find the limit under braking, but only because you're adapting your technique to find it.

It's a challenge with reward. Unlike 99 per cent of contemporary racing cars, rather than hammering the brake pedal as hard as you can, then bleeding off the pressure as you close in on the slowest point of the corner, you need to apply significant measured pressure that rapidly builds towards maximum braking, then keep it there with sensitive modulation of pedal pressure.

If you're not sensitive enough it's possible to lock, or at least under-rotate, a lightly loaded inside front wheel without being fully aware it's happening. But when you consider you're operating within a ferociously complex brake-by-wire loop, in which braking effort and regen is being continually monitored, balanced and blended between retardation provided by the conventional discs and pads and the resistance from the e-motors when acting as generators, it's a wonder they ever do the same thing twice. The fact you can derive enough feel and control to use your skill to make this system work better is incredible.

The enormous effort Porsche has put into understanding and exploiting the unique dynamic opportunities a super-smart all-wheel drive EV drivetrain affords has resulted in the GT4



ePerformance displaying some very neat tricks. These are most noticeable – and most exploitable – as you enter the final phase of braking and just begin to point the car into the apex. In short, once you begin to understand how it wants to be driven, the ePerformance comes alive.

Nail your braking and segue smoothly from middle pedal to initial steering input and you feel the car magically rotate. Not with enough yaw to need rapid correction, but just enough to make you think you do. It's a wonderful sensation, and a behaviour that has clearly been dialled-in to counter the natural balance of the GT4 ePerformance, which tends to push towards understeer if you don't hold your braking deep enough into the corner to initiate the magical rotation.

This engineered agility serves to take some of the burden away from the front tyres, and also tightens your cornering radius, so you can get the car stopped, turned and pointed towards the corner exit without having to lean so hard on the front tyres. From here it's a case of swallowing hard and nailing the throttle, trusting that there's ample grip and traction to fire you out with minimal drama – aside from the rocket-sled punch, which never feels less than dizzying.

I've made no bones about being lukewarm towards EVs. Partly due to the everyday limitations resulting from a woeful charging infrastructure, but largely because they don't possess the dynamic finesse, warmth of character, depth of engagement and nuanced pleasure that pretty much any half-decent petrol-powered hot hatch, sports car or supercar readily delivers.

The GT4 ePerformance is still a sledgehammer in terms of its heavy-hitting accelerative power, but it also demonstrates an ability to deliver the shades of grey upon which driving experiences that live long in the memory depend. That's immensely reassuring, as it shows those qualities for which Porsche is rightly renowned are being refined, reinvented and reformatted in ways that will enable EV sports cars to deliver deeper and more meaningful driving experiences that genuinely appeal to people like us.

Motors Two, 800kW total
Power 1073bhp in qualifying mode **Torque** n/a
Weight c1500kg (c727bhp/ton) **0-62mph** c2.5sec
Top speed 186mph **Basic price** n/a
evo rating ★★★★☆

\+ More than just a one-trick machine
− Can those tricks be translated to a road car?


PORSCHE


MICHELIN






RECARO



by STUART GALLAGHER

Mercedes-AMG EQS 53

Mercedes' performance division's first all-electric series-production car comes with great expectations

CHANGE PETRIFIES US; REMOVES US from our comfort zone; whips away the security blanket we've clung onto oh-so-tightly to for oh-so-long; leaves us feeling vulnerable and afraid of what comes next. We liked it just the way it was. Why did someone have to change it?

Progress is the answer (or the justification, depending on your level of cynicism) and, in our automotive world, fear-inducing change comes in many forms. When Porsche announced in the mid-90s that the 911 would no longer rely on the atmosphere to keep its flat-six cool, the hand-wringing was so severe it could strip the skin from the gnarliest of knuckles. The switch to automatic or double-clutch gearboxes at the cost of the manual gearbox? Less of a polarising change, more of an answer to market trends but a change that still left many questioning the pursuit of faster shift-times when all we want is a more immersive driving experience.

SUVs and crossovers at the cost of estate cars and hatchbacks? Manufacturers will tell you it's what the customer wants, but when the large majority of car buyers don't actually know what they want, it makes it easier for said manufacturers to push them into cars from which they can maximise profit rather than sell them something that will do everything they need for less.

Which, in a roundabout way, brings us to electric cars, of which the EQS 53 on these very pages is Mercedes-Benz's very latest top model; Mercedes' electric S-class. It might not be the most **evo** of EVs, but we've always admired the S-class for being brilliantly fit for purpose and therefore its new electric alternative should be afforded the opportunity to shine.

It's not what you would call a looker, though. Its Panamericana front grille certainly provides an aesthetic boost over the regular EQS models, but in the pursuit of low drag the EQS 53 is a bit of an anonymous blob of a car, lacking the confidence of Mercedes of the past and the presence of a traditional S-class. If you were being especially cruel you'd call it Mercedes' Ford Sierra moment. It certainly doesn't command your attention like a £157,000 car




297 MBC

should, but then again, in a world where a Golf R costs fifty grand, does any car have the looks to match its price tag?

There is at least method behind the design because EVs live and die by their aerodynamic properties, so what the EQS lacks in statesman-like presence it makes up for by being far slipperier through the air and therefore more efficient, its 0.20 drag coefficient making it, according to Merc, the world's most aerodynamic car.

Technology is never far away from being part of the EQS experience, including door handles that slide out of the body to meet you as you approach (if you play with the settings you can even set the door to open on approach and close when you place your foot on the brake pedal).

Inside is where the EQS gets serious. With a 3-metre wheelbase (the car's over 5 metres long) you don't know whether to sit in the back and enjoy the long-wheelbase S-class-beating legroom, or jump in the front. In the back there's more room than most will know what to do with, but the combination of a high floor (thanks to the massive 107kWh battery and a low seat squab) means it's not as comfortable as it looks, missing that sense of sinking into the car to relax.

Up front, your world is dominated by screens, three of them if the mammoth £7000-plus 'Hyperscreen' option is installed, including a digital TFT display for the driver, an additional screen for the passenger and the 17.7-inch central screen. At first glance it looks impressive, a continuous clean surface wrapping around the cockpit, but look closely and you can see the square edges of the individual screens hidden behind that flush glass frontage. It's a small detail, but in the rush to bring EVs to the market it's a small detail that's a big distraction.

It's through this central screen that the entire car pretty much functions, eradicating as many buttons as possible, apart from on the steering wheel, which still has plenty. Not that Mercedes is to be singled out for such an approach – every car company now considers itself a tech company (though unfortunately a tech company from the late '80s). Invest the time, as any EQS owner would, in setting up your car profile and, once you've used your fingerprint ID to wake the system, it's unlikely you'll need to delve into it beyond this.

Should you do so, you'll discover it suffers from the same bugbears that afflict pretty much every system of its type: the voice recognition is next to hopeless, the controls for the assistance systems involve a game of hide-and-seek to switch them off and the touchscreen has reaction times that only it understands. The campaign to bring back buttons starts here.

So the tech in the EQS frustrates, but the materials and the fit and finish of the interior are of more concern; for a car costing a minimum of six figures and one that is set to replace an S-class or two on users' fleets, it simply isn't good enough. There's some nice, unvarnished wood that is beautifully tactile, the leather that is used is plush, soft to the touch and tightly stitched,

'The range dips almost as quickly as the EQS 53 reaches 62mph'









but unfortunately much of the cabin is trimmed in plastic made to look like leather, and in places it's as convincing as a 12-year-old telling you they haven't taken their phone to bed with them.

Underpinning the EQS is an all-new, bespoke electric platform with that monstrous battery, the largest currently available in Europe, positioned between the axles and providing a fully charged WLTP range of 358 miles in 53 trim. At 2605kg you'll chew through that range if you decide to play with the full 649bhp (751bhp with the AMG Dynamic Plus Package option ticked, as it was in our car, along with 752lb ft of torque). In fact the range dips into the two-hundreds almost as quickly as the 53 reaches 62mph (3.8sec, since you asked).

But while it's quick, it's not a car that stokes your emotions. You're sat too high on the seat, but still not quite high enough to see over the vast instrument display. It's impressively quiet, which is no surprise coming from the company that has spent decades perfecting the S-class ambience. Every external noise is squashed; even the roar from the 22-inch tyres is silenced. But... it doesn't exude the confidence of an S-class. Its air suspension can't provide that calming pillow between you and the surface, and at low speed the intrusions into the cabin over anything but race-track-smooth tarmac are beyond distracting. The secondary ride is just too busy for a car of this type.

Above, from left: Hyperscreen completely dominates the interior; official range is 358 miles, though that soon drops if you enjoy the 649bhp for more than a few brief moments; huge 22-inch wheels contribute to a busy ride

Having a marginally stiffer chassis, the 53's body control is improved over lesser EQS models. But it's a car that feels like it's having a fight with itself, the technology unable to calculate what's required to combat good old-fashioned physics.

The steering actually feels quite nervous for a car designed to be calming. It's quicker than you think it's going to be on turn-in, a feeling exaggerated by the effect of four-wheel steering as it plays its part in shortening the feeling of a long wheelbase and managing the considerable mass. When it comes to braking and the car's regenerative system (controlled by the paddles behind the steering wheel with three distinct settings), the brake pedal sinks to mimic the braking action so when you need to step in and increase the retardation the pedal isn't where you expect it to be. So you stamp on it in a panic and put the car on its nose. It's just another frustrating example of the car feeling a couple of hundred thousand kilometres short of its final sign-off.

That's the thing – inside the EQS 53 there's a good Mercedes bidding to get out, but right now it's a long way from breaking free.

Motors 245kW front, 239kW rear **Power** 649bhp
Torque 700lb ft **Weight** 2605kg (253bhp/ton) **0-62mph** 3.8sec
Top speed 155mph **Basic price** £157,160

+ Refinement and (some) material use
− The non-EV S-class still exists

evo rating ★★★☆☆

by RICHARD MEADEN PHOTOGRAPHY *by* ASTON PARROTT

Bizzarrini 5300 GT Corsa Revival

One of the most desirable race cars of the 1960s is back for a limited run, with road legality a tantalising prospect

WHEN IT COMES TO ITALIAN EXOTICA few cars boast a more evocative name or more mythical status than the Bizzarrini 5300 GT Corsa. Born out of a beef with Enzo Ferrari – boy did that man have a knack for making enemies – this low, lithe and lasciviously curvy machine was the brainchild of a dazzlingly talented engineer by the name of Giotto Bizzarrini. To understand the car you have to understand the man, so before we get under the skin and behind the wheel of the 5300 GT Corsa Revival, let me offer a bit of a history lesson.

Bizzarrini made his mark well before embarking on his eponymous venture; first at Alfa Romeo, where he worked as a test driver and engineer in Alfa's skunkworks, before being headhunted by Enzo Ferrari.

Once at Maranello he was pivotal to the design of both the 250 SWB and 250 GTO, but in 1961 he and a handful of other key players were sacked by the curmudgeonly Old Man in what is referred to as the Palace Revolt. As a gun for hire, Bizzarrini grasped every opportunity to become a thorn in Ferrari's side – a quest embraced by many of Enzo's rivals. Indeed, it was Bizzarrini who Ferruccio Lamborghini commissioned to design the company's first V12 engine, evolutions of which powered every 12-cylinder Lamborghini from the 350 GT in 1963 to the Murciélago in 2010.

Still only in his late-30s, Bizzarrini continued to


3



push the boundaries, further evolving front-engined GT ideas he'd developed during the 250 GTO programme and later with the one-off 250 GT 'Breadvan'. It was when Italian industrialist Renzo Rivolta enlisted Bizzarrini and his Società Autostar engineering consultancy to work on developing sports cars for his intriguing Iso brand that the vision of a truly low-line, lightweight, low-drag machine would fully crystallise, in the magnificent form of the Iso Grifo A3/C.

The A3/C was an extreme evolution of the Iso Grifo A3/L (L for Lusso) road car, which Bizzarrini also designed. A racer at heart, Bizzarrini believed there would be demand for a competition version, so once the A3/L design was defined he set to work on the A3/C (C for Corsa), which he would come to describe as his 'improved GTO'. Both cars would make their debut at the 1963 Turin Motor Show.

Each was a stunning machine, but the A3/C was truly sensational, its lightweight bodywork originally made from exotic Avional alloy (later cars switched to glassfibre) and styled by Giorgetto Giugiaro in his time at Bertone. With refinements applied by Piero Drogo's Carrozzeria Sports Cars – a firm responsible for numerous one-off coachwork commissions and some

'It's a time-warp creation, and jaw-droppingly gorgeous'

of the most memorable Ferrari competition cars of the '60s – the Grifo A3/C was an Italian thoroughbred with a pounding Detroit heart.

With plenty of grunt from its 5.3-litre Chevrolet '327' small block V8– an engine Bizzarrini himself said was more responsive than Ferrari's V12 – and the motor set low and 40mm further back in the chassis for a ground-skimming centre of gravity and perfect balance, it was a truly state-of-the-art machine.

While Iso focused on productionising the road-going A3/L, Bizzarrini concentrated his efforts on developing the A3/C, with a prototype version making a troubled debut at Le Mans in 1964. Production of the Grifo road car commenced the following year, but the collaborative union between Rivolta and Bizzarrini had begun to crumble. The pair would eventually go their separate ways later that same year, but not before an Iso Grifo A3/C won its class and placed ninth overall in that year's Le Mans 24 Hours.

In the fallout from his departure from the Iso project, Bizzarrini founded his eponymous marque, initially building variants of the Grifo A3/L and A3/C called the 5300 GT Strada and 5300 GT Corsa. Over the next five years the company would produce a series of sparkling cars, ranging from the extreme open-cockpit P538 sports prototype from 1966, which was also penned by Giugiaro and powered by a choice of Chevy V8 or Lamborghini V12, to the petite 1900 GT Europa of 1967 – Bizzarrini's far-sighted effort at an entry-level model, which weighed just 650kg and was powered by a 2-litre four-cylinder Opel engine.

Sadly, by 1969 Bizzarrini SpA filed for bankruptcy. Subsequent false starts and low-key one-off commissions followed, but it seemed this incendiary name would forever remain a footnote in the history of Italian exotics. That is until 2018, when the trademarks and intellectual rights to the Bizzarrini marque were acquired by Kuwaiti-owned Pegasus Brands.

Led by Rezam Mohamed Alroumi, Pegasus has



big-league funding and a successful track record in the high-end automotive industry, most notably through its international dealership business in which it represents Aston Martin, Rolls-Royce and Koenigsegg amongst others. Pegasus also owns a significant stake in Aston Martin Works, with Alroumi previously playing a pivotal role in the group of international investors who purchased a majority stake in Aston Martin Lagonda back in 2007.

The new Bizzarrini is a serious venture. One which begins with a limited run of the car you see here, the 5300 GT Corsa Revival, but is driven by people who are serious about bringing Bizzarrini to prominence as a maker of exceptional contemporary cars. Cars which promise not to follow the well-trodden hypercar recipe, and instead feel closer in spirit to those from Pagani.

The first all-new car – currently known only as 'Project C1' – is already well underway, with styling by Giugiaro. Further exploration of the Bizzarrini back catalogue is also likely, in conjunction with an expansion of the contemporary model portfolio that promises to explore a variety of powertrain options that celebrate the past and acknowledge present and future environmental challenges. Bold promises are commonplace at this end of the market, but the quiet yet insistent way Bizzarrini is going about its business feels different.

And so to the 5300 GT Corsa Revival. Built to celebrate Bizzarrini's most famous car and its greatest motor racing success, just 24 Revivals will be built. Using original Bizzarrini blueprints it is a remarkably faithful reproduction of the 1960s masterpiece, albeit with some concessions to modern safety requirements and the adoption of some 21st century materials.

The project is being handled by RML Group (yes, them again), which is enjoying something of a purple patch as the go-to solution for whole-vehicle engineering projects. Using a dedicated standalone building adjacent to the RML Group campus, Bizzarrinis are painstakingly fabricated and built by hand in a mix of time-honoured artisanal methods and state-of-the-art precision, quality control and project management.

True to Giotto Bizzarrini's forward thinking, the 5300 GT Corsa was a highly advanced machine in its day. Its welded steel lower structure was light and strong while its independent suspension all-round was a significant step on from the 5300 GT Strada, which used a de Dion rear axle. Disc brakes at each corner provided decent stopping power for the day – important when slowing this slippery GT from speeds upwards of 180mph at Le Mans.

Rather than Avional or glassfibre, the Revival uses carbonfibre for its bodywork. Given Bizzarrini's love of advanced methods, this feels in keeping with his ethos and ensures the Revival's bodywork is strong, light and beautifully finished. It's a one-piece body – surely one of the largest of its kind – that drops onto the steel lower structure like a 1:1-scale Tamiya model. To increase safety the original steel structure is supplemented by an FIA-approved roll-cage. Likewise the fuel tank is now a modern bag tank situated behind the driver and passenger and not located in each sill like in the original design.

In every other respect the 5300 GT Corsa is a time-warp creation. It really is jaw-droppingly gorgeous, the endless teardrop curves, hip-high roofline and almost horizontal rear screen combining to create a form quite unlike any other car from its day. Race car details add

Above: Meaden travels back in time; race-grade roll-cage and revised steering column construction among measures to improve safety beyond 1960s standards

Driven











to the wonder, from those perfectly faired-in headlamps beneath fulsome Perspex bubbles to the slots, vents and scoops that draw air into and out of the machine. Centre-spline cast magnesium wheels attached with throwing-star spinners are the cherries on top.

The cockpit is equally period-perfect. The instruments are deployed in eccentric fashion, temperature and pressure gauges immediately ahead of you while the all-important tacho is set in the middle of the dash, right at the edge of your peripheral vision. Quilted black leather wraps the broad transmission tunnel, which is topped by a surprisingly petite gearlever. This controls the Borg Warner four-speed ’box, the shift quality of which is workmanlike, though as with all analogue cars its operation improves with practice and positive inputs.

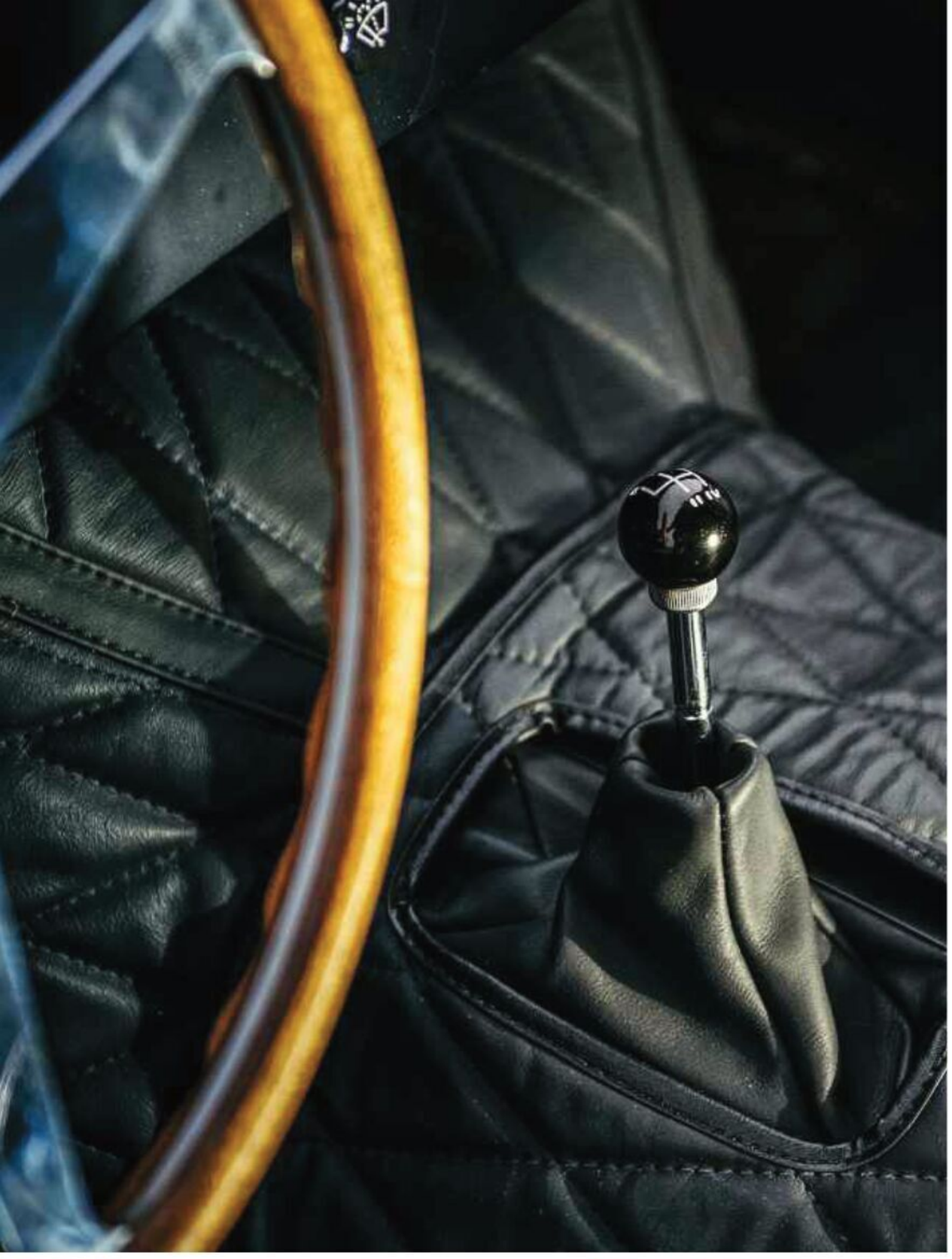
With the engine set so far back, you sit much closer to the rear axle than you do the front. Legend has it that when Bizzarrini mechanics had to adjust the V8’s timing they did so via an access panel on top of the dashboard rather than going in through the bonnet. It really is a fabulous place to sit. Somewhat sobering, too, when you consider in original cars you basically had a Corvette motor on your lap and a pair of huge fuel tanks slung from your hips.

Start the engine and that sense of being in the belly of the beast is intensified with the chatter of the transmission, the thrash of engine pulleys and the suck and snort from the bank of hungry 45 DCOE Weber carburettors. As tested this development Corsa Revival’s motor is running a soft state of tune, though all things are relative. In this case ‘soft’ is circa 400bhp, with the emphasis being a smooth, tractable spread of power and torque. A race-tuned engine built to comply with FIA historic racing regulations would be somewhere between 460 and 480bhp, but would come with a more aggressive and potentially recalcitrant delivery that would have little patience for anything other than maximum attack.

Visibility is hardly panoramic, but what you see through the windscreen is highly inspiring, with the tops of those endless front wheelarches stretching out ahead of you, the left-hand panel topped with a bullet wing mirror that affords you a reflective porthole with which to survey the rising rear haunch and, er, not much else.

Being a race car – albeit one trimmed for perfect period effect – the Corsa is a noisy beast, the engine and transmission joined by the sound of suspension joints and the tight Salisbury mechanical limited-slip differential. It’s

Left: bodywork is now carbonfibre, but otherwise closely replicates that of the originals; magnesium wheels conceal uprated disc brakes at each corner





30
40
20
50
Birmannini
VEGLIA
10
60
GIRI x 100
0
70
ABBAGL.
POSIZ.

Birmannini

3



a raw mechanical cacophony, but the feel of the car is anything but crude. In fact it's surprisingly modern in terms of rigidity and the ability to position it accurately on the road, or in our case Millbrook Proving Ground's Outer Handling Circuit and Alpine Route.

The additional bracing offered by the roll-cage makes a difference, but the fundamentals of the Bizzarrini mean it's a world away from that other great American V8-powered racer of the '60s, the Shelby Cobra. Where that car is an unruly and overpowered amalgam of lightweight alloy bodywork and overwhelmed leaf springs, the 5300 GT Corsa feels beautifully balanced and well able to deploy its ample performance.

At 1250kg the Revival is within a spit of the original in terms of mass, positioning this near-60-year-old machine at current-generation Porsche 911 Carrera GTS levels of power-to-weight. No, the performance isn't as accessible, but honestly that's the point – and appeal – of cars such as this. Besides which, the intrinsic rightness of Bizzarrini's design is evident in everything the car does, not to mention its near-perfect corner weighting, which sees 25 per cent of the car's mass sit evenly on each wheel.

Consequently, not only does it have a brilliant combination of agility and stability, but it also has a consistency and progressiveness of response that's uncommon in cars from this era. Of course, the great caveat is set-up. This car isn't dialled-in for edgy ultimate pace, rather it's tuned for occasional trackday use in the hands of an enthusiastic collector. I have no doubt it would be absolutely sensational to drive the Corsa Revival hard somewhere blessed with the kind of fast, open curves that offer the opportunity to get it where every '60s racer needs to be – just beyond its limit of grip.

'The asking price would be immaterial after your first meaningful drive'

All 24 Corsa Revivals will be finished in this same red-and-gold scheme, which mimics that of the '65 Le Mans class winner. The first customer car is due to be completed in a matter of weeks, with subsequent cars following every few weeks until the production run is completed.

The RML connection brings an added dimension to the Revival programme, too, for although the Corsa is clearly a race car by design, it can be a road car when successfully put through the IVA process – something RML knows better than most, having masterminded that same process for Aston Martin customers who wished to make their DB4 GT and Zagato Continuation cars fully road legal. I'd certainly take a road-legal Corsa Revival over most modern hypercars.

What price this perfectly wrought evocation of '60s Italian exotica? In the UK, £1.65million including taxes. Yes, that's a ton of money (actually a little more than examples of the original car), but it's worth it on looks alone. If you have the means to buy one, I suspect the asking price would be immaterial after your first meaningful test drive.

It's fair to say history regards the 5300 GT Corsa as Giotto Bizzarrini's finest creation. Whether the reborn Bizzarrini brand can top it with any of its forthcoming clean-sheet efforts remains to be seen. What's beyond doubt is that the 5300 GT Corsa Revival is a compelling preface to what will hopefully be a long and unfolding story that finally does his name and engineering genius justice.

Left: 5.3-litre V8 is equipped with Weber 45 DCOE carbs (above left) and is good for over 400bhp in its mildest state of tune, with 480bhp achievable

Engine V8, 5363cc **Power** 404bhp **Torque** 488lb ft
Weight <1250kg (c327bhp/ton) **0-62mph** 3.9sec
Top speed 190mph **Basic price** £1,650,000

+ Delivers an authentic 1960s Bizzarrini experience
− Requires deep pockets

evo rating ★★★★★

Light Fantastic

It takes an extreme diet for a BMW to earn the CSL badge, but this new limited-edition M4 qualifies. Here's everything you need to know

by STEPHEN DOBIE



YOU'RE LOOKING AT THE FASTEST BMW EVER. ON A NUMBER of parameters, too. Which is something of a relief, because the M4 CSL has a lot to live up to. Headline billing in M Division's minor product onslaught during its 50th year, for one thing, counterbalancing the wildly controversial XM plug-in hybrid SUV while it's at it. But those three letters – standing for Competition (formerly Coupé), Sport and Lightweight – put considerable heft on its shoulders. Somewhat ironic given the model's intense weight saving.

Much like GTO Ferraris, the CSL lineage makes sporadic, infrequent appearances, perhaps putting all the more pressure on the spec sheet of each car deemed worthy of the badge. Luckily, the M4 CSL's doesn't disappoint, and its headline figure is an almost suspiciously neat 100 kilos. That's how much weight has been scalloped out of the M4 Competition that provides its base. Given how much stockier the G82 M4 is compared to its predecessors, you might fairly assume it was the focal point of the CSL's development team. Especially if the 'L' isn't to sit too uncomfortably on its newly carbon boot lid.

Can a 1625kg coupe truly be deemed 'Lightweight'? When you learn the thorough ways in which BMW has shed that 100kg you might just







be strong-armed into thinking so. The rear seats have gone – accounting for a fifth of the weight loss – while the incredible new carbon buckets up front save another 12kg apiece. Their height adjustment is by workshop appointment only while their headrests are removable if you wish your helmet not to be interfered with (BMW's words). Above all, they're a sight to behold and something else entirely to sit in; my 11-stone frame is hardly stocky, but the seat fits me like a three-piece suit after a particularly trying lockdown. If you're worried your own construction isn't quite 'Competition, Sport, Lightweight' enough to fit comfortably, you can option the M4's regular buckets back in, complete with their heating elements, electric controls and lumbar adjustment, three things the CSL's bespoke items do happily without.

Everywhere you look, the interior exudes focus. The centre console is now made of carbonfibre, the steering wheel rim is wrapped entirely in Alcantara and some of the regular car's tech has been thinned down, climate control and active safety functions not making the cut (though you can option some stuff – including a head-up display – back in). The focus on keeping weight low has even seen the engineers avoid a cage or rear strut brace in their pursuit of stiffness, instead fixing the rear bulkhead shut with a steel panel. It's almost beautiful in its inelegance – one of those solutions where engineering has very visually kiboshed design, to the delight of handling nerds everywhere.

Left: standard tyres are Cup 2 Rs, measuring 275/35 ZR19 front and 285/30 ZR20 rear; light-alloy wheels contribute to overall weight saving, as do the carbon-ceramic brakes that sit behind them

Carbon-ceramic brakes are standard, cutting a further 14.3kg despite their behemoth size (400mm discs up front, 380 at the rear), while carbonfibre makes plentiful appearances across the bodywork, with the bonnet, bootlid, rear diffuser and side sills made of the stuff in addition to the roof, as per all M4s. Those stripes running through this car's Frozen Brooklyn Grey paintwork (black and white are also available) are unpainted carbon.

I'll admit to gasping when the CSL's cover was first whipped off before me. I felt disappointed it wasn't quite as classy as its E46 M3 namesake of 2003, their ducktails rounding off quite different overall aesthetics. The M4 CSL's is integrated into an all-new carbonfibre bootlid, by the way, and is not merely a spoiler tacked deftly onto a stock 4-series part. BMW has even made the front kidney grilles bolder, on the infinitesimal chance you consider the standard items demure. But their new design saves another 500 grams, and the more time I spend walking around the car, being drip-fed its backstory, the more its slightly over-egged appearance makes sense. Its yellow 'Laserlights', for example, are designed to ape those of the M4 GT3 race car – from which a fair bit of the CSL's know-how has been inherited – and are nearly matched for drama by the intricate threaded pattern of the taillights.

'We want to have an exclusive design here to back up its better performance,' says Dirk Häcker, head of M development. 'We knew at the beginning what the requirements of this next generation of CSL were: its weight, its power, its performance, and the combination of all three.'

Which brings us to the CSL's other headline stats. 'Fastest BMW ever' means 0-62mph in 3.7sec, 0-124mph in 10.7sec and a top speed of 190mph (still electronically limited, apparently). It's clocked a Nürburgring lap time of 7:15.677 on the traditional 12.8-mile Nordschleife layout or 7:20.207 if you're a stickler for the officially Ring-recognised 12.943 miles. Either way, this is comfortably the quickest BMW around the Green Hell; it's nibbling at the heels of the 991.2 GT3 while lapping over half a minute quicker than its E46 forebear.

And it hasn't just got there via a gruelling diet. The powertrain has had a thorough going over, too, with an uprated eight-speed automatic transmission – snappier shifts than a

DCT, promises Häcker – and its 3-litre twin-turbo six tweaked for more power, though not dramatically so. Higher boost pressure ups peak output by 39bhp, now 542bhp at the same 6250rpm, while torque still peaks at 479lb ft from 2750rpm, but that plateau now stretches to 5950rpm rather than 5500rpm. The main focus has been on power delivery at higher revs, perhaps reflecting the committed nature in which BMW expects – or more likely hopes, given the speculator market – the new M4 CSL will be driven. It remains rear-wheel drive, to the benefit of both purity and that overall weight figure.

While the CSL's engine doesn't appear to have enjoyed a transformation, its cooling systems have improved, assisted by larger openings in the apron and remote coolers within the front wheelarches. Further back, a titanium exhaust silencer primarily saves a few more kilos (4.3 to be precise) but also brings (again, in BMW's words) 'an intense racing aura' to proceedings. 'Gearchanges are accompanied by precisely defined engine overshoot,' we're told, 'while distinctive low-frequency sound sequences can be heard on the overrun.' That it sounds pretty gnarly as it's being shuffled carefully around a photographic studio is all we're currently able to confirm.

Then there are the chassis tweaks. My reservations about the chintzy red striping are obliterated once I see just how aggressively cambered the front wheels now are. If those lights are meant to evoke an overtly motorsport vibe, then it's nice that your eyes then naturally wander outwards to something that backs up the claims. The wheels are bespoke forged alloys, 19 inches at the front, 20 at the rear, and come wrapped as standard in Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 R tyres. They're familiar from Motorsport 911s as well as the Ferrari 296 GTB's track pack, though BMW has worked with Michelin on tuning them and they are no doubt a major contributor to those scintillating Nordschleife claims. If you want to hack about in your CSL all year long then you can also have the M4's stock – and still brilliant – Pilot Sport 4 Ss as an option.

The M4's adaptive damping remains standard-fit, but the suspension has been dropped 8mm for the CSL. In addition to the front camber adjustment, additional ball joints on the rear axle take the place of rubber mountings for more precise control, while the more extreme half of the M4's famed ten-stage traction control has renewed focus. This appears to be a car with little slack built into its reactions, and it desires little slack from yours, too. A suite of driving modes remain, as does a lap-timer and the M Drift Analyser, however incongruous that may suddenly seem on a car so focused on track precision. Clearly a sense of humour still lurks beneath all the seriousness.

Quite a package overall, then, and a very exciting cherry atop M's big 50th birthday cake. Häcker and his team are well aware they've had two eCoty wins on the bounce and are quite keen to add a third, though that's doubtless not been the CSL's sole focus. I ask if the CSL represents something of a last stand for extreme, purely petrol-powered performance cars given the maelstrom of electrification circling the M4 – including from within its own Division in the shape of the XM SUV, the second bespoke M product ever (after the 1978 M1) and the brand's most controversial moment by a significant margin.

'I'm not sure if this is the end,' says Häcker. 'We'll take a look at new emissions regulations and see how we can work on power. We have some ideas. Ultimately, the customer will decide whether they want a car like this or if they'll change to an electric car. It's not a decision made only by the manufacturers, it's also a decision made by the customers. I think we'll have some years of the powertrains running parallel.' M Division is hedging its bets and is poised to react whichever way the buying public head.



For now, their decision will be whether to spend £128,820 on one of the 1000 cars of the M4 CSL's short production run, of which 100 will come to the UK. It's a stocky amount of money – almost £50k more than a standard M4 Competition. However, in real terms it works out around ten per cent less than the E92 M3 GTS cost when new in 2010, although that car was V8 powered and significantly rarer. In fact, the M4 CSL's production run outstrips those of the M3 GTS and 2016's (F82) M4 GTS combined, though it falls about a third short of the E46 M3 CSL's run. For reference, the M3 CSL shed 110kg to earn its badge, while the M3 GTS and M4 GTS lost 50 and 60kg respectively.

The M4 CSL's 1000-car production run will stay fixed, too, as the regular M4 will soon receive its mid-life refresh, rendering some of its more mundane parts – those inherited more generally from the 4-series – out of sync. But if you miss the boat, or simply can't afford one, then another badge may just be due a recommission. 'The CSL is the first offer of a special model on the new M4,' says Häcker. 'Perhaps it's not the last one.'

The twinkle in his eye is clear. Rumour abounds that a CS version will follow – just as a CS followed the E46 CSL in 2005 – so perhaps some of the M4 CSL's styling flourishes will live on in a less-extreme, four-seat special. Albeit one that isn't the fastest car ever to come out of Munich.

SPECIFICATION

Engine In-line 6-cyl, 2993cc, twin-turbo **Power** 542bhp @ 6250rpm **Torque** 479lb ft @ 2750-5950rpm **Weight** 1625kg **Power-to-weight** 388bhp/ton
0-62mph 3.7sec **Top speed** 190mph (limited) **Basic price** £128,820





Above right: turbo boost pressure for the 3-litre straight-six is up from 1.7bar to 2.1; new cast aluminium brace brings improvements in body rigidity





Morgan's electric avenue



by JOHN BARKER

How will one of Britain's oldest and most beloved sports car makers cope with the upcoming 2030 ban on petrol car sales? We speak to the people whose job it is to decide – including new CEO Massimo Fumarola, fresh from Lamborghini



OF ALL THE UK'S SPECIALIST CAR MAKERS, MORGAN IS FAR and away the oldest and most celebrated. It was founded in 1909 by HFS Morgan, a motoring pioneer who designed a light and inexpensive three-wheeler as transport for the masses that sustained the company well into the 1930s. By then, HFS recognised it was time for change and in 1936 introduced the 4/4 (four cylinders/four wheels). It was an immediate hit and the handsome Plus 4 derivative has set the style for most subsequent four-wheel Morgans.

Change comes slowly; HFS's sliding-pillar suspension was still in use until 1975 and the third-generation three-wheeler has just been launched (see **evo** 296). Meanwhile, the current Plus Four and Plus Six share the look of the 1950s Plus 4 and, although based on a bonded aluminium chassis since 2017, actually feature more structural wood than that ladder-framed original.

What, then, is Morgan's strategy for dealing with the looming 2030 ban on new internal combustion engine (ICE) cars? Well, the Malvern Link-based car maker is not as technically unadventurous as the above description suggests. Bodies are still largely hand-formed from aluminium and there is lots of wood, but as well as that bonded aluminium chassis the four-wheelers have used globally emission-compliant running gear supplied by BMW. The firm has also researched alternative propulsion, building a hydrogen fuel cell car in 2009, an EV in collaboration with Zytek, the 'Plus E', and most recently a stylish, electric three-wheeler, the EV3.

More than that, the company has the backing to decide its future. In early 2019 Morgan was bought by Investindustrial, a venture capital company that also has an interest in Rimac and has previously held stakes in Ducati and Aston Martin. Just a few weeks ago, Morgan appointed a new CEO, Massimo Fumarola (left), who joins the company from Lamborghini where he was chief project management officer. Steve Morris, who was CEO, is now executive chairman.

Fumarola, 52, has also held senior positions at Iveco, Ferrari and Audi and is a long-standing admirer of Morgan. 'Since I was a boy, I've always been in love with this brand because it's unique, it's authentic, it's timeless,' he tells us. 'So it has been really a very emotional decision to join Morgan. But after four weeks, I can tell you I really am more than happy to be here.

'I've moved from the largest to the smallest car maker in the world,' says Fumarola, but even though a big car maker produces more cars in a week than Morgan makes in a decade, he sees this as an asset, not a hindrance. 'As a brand it has true potential. To leverage and to amplify everything Morgan stands for, to go more international, to go more into lifestyle, to bring Morgan to the next level, this is the challenge that attracted me.'

As for electrification, Fumarola thinks that there will be some different regulations for small car manufacturers in the future, but that

this shouldn't be relied on. 'The big question mark is not about *if* we go electric, but *when* we should go electric.'

To this end, another big signing for Morgan was Matthew Hole, 41, as its new chief technical officer with responsibility for electrification. Hole studied automotive engineering at Oxford Brookes University and after working for Arrows GP moved to Romax Technology, one of the world's leading companies for electrified propulsion systems and transmission simulation. He arrives at Morgan from his role as vice president at transatlantic firm Drive System Design. At DSD he worked with every major Tier 1 electrification company and most of the significant OEMs (in Europe, Korea and the US) building electric cars.

Hole's depth of knowledge could be crucial to Morgan making EVs that are true Morgans; he knows what EV technology is available, what's coming and what is most appropriate for a Morgan. The Malvern Link firm enjoys an excellent relationship with BMW, which currently supplies turbocharged four- and six-cylinder drivetrains and is willing to share its EV technology, but Hole reckons that while it might be convenient and cost-effective, there would be too many compromises.

'We'd really like to keep Morgans small, nimble and lightweight,' he says. 'If we adopt a mainstream platform, one of the key things for us to absorb would be the battery and we'll end up with a wider car, a heavier car, and we'll lose all the elements of the styling of the Morgan. The direction I've been given from the board and investors is "make sure you make the best Morgans, ICE or EV" and that means light weight and nimbleness.'

Hole says bigger OEMs are under pressures that result in them engineering EVs like appliances and he's very conscious that an EV Morgan needs to be fun. 'I'm a fan of driving. One of the reasons for wanting to come to Morgan is to deliver an exciting EV. I think we can do it but the key thing is selecting the right kind of technology and the right partners. That's something we're in reasonably advanced stages of. We're already making progress.'

Arguably, for Morgan, specifying the right size battery pack (and therefore weight) is even harder than for a mainstream car maker because while a Morgan is rarely an owner's first car, some use their cars for weekend blasts and others undertake huge adventures. The firm's recently launched and quickly sold-out CX-T, based on the Plus Four and designed in conjunction with Dakar rally experts Rally Raid UK, is the ultimate expression of that spirit.

'We're still in the midst of – but coming to the end of – consultation with existing Morgan owners and potential Morgan owners,' says Hole. 'The dealers have a good understanding of customers, too. What

Right: Morgan's new chief technical officer, Matthew Hole, is leading the electrification programme. **Opposite page:** heritage will always be important to a company like Morgan



we're doing at the moment is matching drive cycles to different technologies and using a simulation tool to determine the best compromise.

'Some level of modularity has been in our thinking, but we've just got to make sure that the car is ultimately fun and not overly compromised for the few.'

A big part of the appeal is how a Morgan drives. Mass apart, can an EV have the same character? 'The reality is, when you place EV gear in the car, usually you don't stick it in the front if you want to drive the rear wheels, because there's a lot of gubbins that you can dispense with, so that affects the weight balance. But I imagine that the driving dynamics will be similar to existing Morgans – maybe not for all variants, but we'll be trying to keep the same feel of driving a Morgan.'

Weight can really impact fun. A current Plus Four weighs not much more than 1000kg, and it will be difficult for an EV Morgan to get close to that. Has Hole set himself an upper weight limit? 'I have... but I'm not gonna share it with you! I can tell you it is real, it will be something we will be striving for. We'll also be working with the guys supplying the existing platforms to see how we can continue to take weight out of those, which will eventually benefit the electrification platforms in the future.'

Morgan is conscious that it can't move too far away from what's made people buy its cars in the first place. It knows that much of the appeal of a Morgan is how it looks and the craftsmanship that goes into it, but there's no escaping the fact that the petrol engines bring loads of character too.

'MORGAN IS MAKING ITS BIGGEST EVER INVESTMENT IN R&D'

'It being a hand-crafted Morgan will take us most of the way, but we will need to add some spice, some sauce into the mix,' says Hole. 'I'm hell-bent on making EVs that are exciting to drive. That's the thing that's going to keep me up at night. I've done plenty of studies in how to make EVs interesting and exciting and I think the world of psychoacoustics [how humans perceive sounds] will come to fruition through this next round of EV development.'

Morgan is making its biggest ever investment in R&D, mainly for electrification but it will continue to build and develop ICE cars for some time yet, for markets such as the US. 'One of the things that really impressed me about Morgan is there's a real desire to continue to develop the projects,' says Hole. 'There are some developments in the four-wheel cars later in the year that'll surprise people.'

In terms of production, incorporating EVs will throw up considerable issues of complexity. Morgan has been on the same, sloping site in Malvern Link for over 100 years and production is far from a simple production line. That said, great steps have been made in recent years. The production process was streamlined considerably with the introduction of the bonded aluminium 'CX' chassis. Before, there could be 110 cars in various stages of build, but now that is down to just 50. However, adding new models with new technology – battery packs and electric motors and regulators – into the mix presents significant issues.

'One of the key elements of our electrification strategy is how we can manage both within the facility,' says Hole, 'and I think it's our intention to continue building here. So how can we manage both running down the line at the same time, in a safe manner? Then there's our growing dealer network. At the moment they're only used to servicing and maintaining ICE cars. We've got to be really conscious of that because a Morgan dealer is not like a Ford dealer.'

So, when can we expect an EV Morgan? The process has begun but there's no rush; technology is developing rapidly and customers aren't currently demanding an EV Morgan. 'A Morgan is always going to be the third or fourth or maybe even the fifth car in our customers' garage,' says Fumarola. 'Our customers are going to start going electric with the other cars first, so probably we have more time than other car makers.'

MY LIFE & CARS

Richard Banks

Alfa Romeo fettler and Alfaholics founder

Alfaholics' brilliant GTA-R was one of the first examples of the global phenomenon that is the restomod. We meet the man who built the company

by BRETT FRASER

WHEN CHILDREN ARRIVE ON THE SCENE, many of us are forced to swap our toys for the practical implements of family life. Out with the indulgent two-seater coupe, in with the sensible estate. Richard Banks, now co-owner of Alfaholics, the Alfa Romeo restorer and tuner, did things differently. With the pitter-patter of tiny feet imminent, he bought a sports car and then kept buying more.

'Having for years existed hand-to-mouth on motorsport sponsorship, in 1977 I moved from London to the Cambridgeshire fens to start a family,' Banks explains. 'Whilst considering what to do for work, I came across a very nice, low-mileage Alfa Romeo 2000 GTV which had been stolen and recovered and had ended up in a nearby scrapyard. It required minor mechanical work and repainting, and when it was completed I drove it down to Exmoor with my heavily pregnant wife to show her my old haunts on Exmoor.

'I just loved the way that car drove with its superb handling, not too much grip on those 165 HR 14 tyres, but pin-sharp steering and wonderful high-speed stability. Such fun.

'Of course, I was in no position to keep the car – I needed the money. So I advertised it in *Exchange & Mart* and by 9am on the Thursday when it came out, I had an Alfa Romeo enthusiast on the phone wanting to buy it. By the day's end I knew that this would be my new business: RW Banks Alfa Romeo Specialist came into being.'

Although his name is now synonymous with Alfas, Banks's earliest automotive aspiration was for a car produced closer to home. 'My interest in cars was sparked whilst travelling in my parents' 1958 Land Rover when we were overtaken by what I later found out to be a Mk1 Lotus Seven. I was smitten and there and then decided that that was the car I was going to own. This eventually became a reality in 1965 – returning from a one-year posting to New York, the bank I was employed by granted me a handsome bonus. Otherwise I would still have been taking a Green Line bus to Brands Hatch or a train to Crystal Palace to watch my hero Jim Clark.

'My Seven was a 1962 model with a 1340cc Cosworth engine and a close-ratio 'box – pretty much unbeatable on London streets as well as the pre-motorway roads of the '60s before any serious traffic came along to spoil things. Sadly, I was forced to sell it when I went to work for a chum and needed to carry samples to meetings. I exchanged the Seven for a Nathan-tuned Hillman Imp, soon followed by a couple of Mini Coopers and then an innocuous-looking road rally-prepared Mk1 Cortina GT with a 1650cc engine and a limited-slip diff, which crushed many an ego.

'Fortunately, my boss was a petrolhead and I was able to enjoy generous use of his early drophead E-type, Marcos and then, when the office moved out of London to Reading, a Gordon Keeble, which was a bit of a beast but great fun.







At this time I managed to find an Elva Courier with 1622cc MGA power. This was extremely entertaining to drive, a poor man's Elan really. In Reading I met a couple of chaps with a garage who were rallying a Cooper S quite successfully at club level, taking it in turns to drive. We ended up doing the Welsh and RAC rallies before buying a full race Cooper S.'

By this stage, the early 1970s, Banks was dabbling in motorsport sponsorship. 'Through Mini racing I met the very talented Richard Longman. I managed to find sponsorship to run a works-assisted Formula 3 Lotus 69 for Richard, but we were underfunded. We managed a 2nd place at Thruxton but were usually midfield. The car was written off in the rain at the end-of-season Snetterton meeting. Future world champions James Hunt, Jody Scheckter and Alan Jones were all competing in that '72 season: Formula 3 was certainly competitive back then.

'In my constant hunt for sponsors I found White Horse Whisky, who entrusted me with handling all their sports sponsorships. This began with promoting their Group 1 Hillman Avenger GT, very ably driven by Gavin Waugh on British rally championship events. Later that year White Horse decided to sponsor Andrew Cowan and Johnstone Syer in a works-built Escort RS2000 on the 1974 World Cup Rally. What should have been a winning combination fell apart when the back axle failed in the Algerian desert: they finally finished 15th.

'My next excitement was handling general publicity for The Chequered Flag garage. I put forward a case to owner Graham Warner for publicising his Lancia dealership with a Group 4 Stratos in major UK rallies. He bought the works car that had crashed on that year's Monte and hired Ron Pellat, an F1 mechanic, to maintain it. Ron was dispatched to Turin to rebuild the car there and learn its complexities. I went out later to go through the programme with Lancia's rally boss, Cesare Fiorio, and was delighted to meet Mike Parkes, who had left Ferrari and was responsible for Stratos development. The Stratos broke down too often to achieve serious results, but it did garner plenty of publicity for The Flag.'

Banks's next sponsorship deal was to kindle his passion for Alfa. 'Both the BARC and BRSCC had introduced production saloon car championships and I persuaded Trustee Savings Bank to run HPC instructor John Lyon in an Escort Sport. After a couple of decent seasons contesting both championships, and thanks to John's wife working for Worth Perfumes, I secured a budget to run a 2-litre Alfetta GTV in Monsieur Worth colours and thus began my love affair with Alfa Romeo. Worth promised us a second season provided we won the championship. Sadly, we finished second.

'We ran the car again in 1978 as part of the Alfa Romeo Dealer Team with Jon Dooley driving and had another excellent year, although Gerry Marshall in a Dolomite Sprint proved a bit too fast, leaving us runners-up in the 1600-2000 class.'

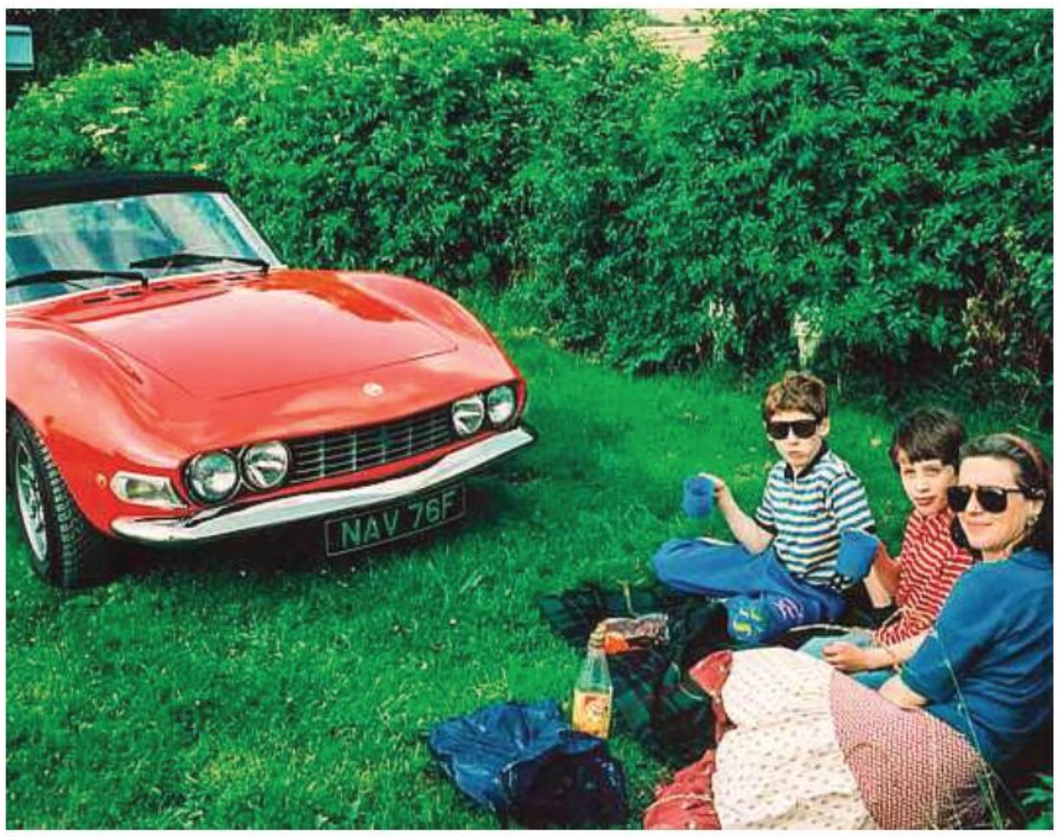
With a young child at home now, Banks shifted focus to his new career as Alfa fettler. 'With the help of my wife I built a three-car garage/workshop brick by brick in our back garden. And then we earned our living from it – a real partnership. Thanks to having a fine mechanical and welding workshop and an exceptional paint shop run by MGA racer Neil Cawthorn in the next town, I was able to take cars to pieces and then carefully build them up again with any new parts that were needed and give them a proper service, ready to sell.

'Unsurprisingly, red 2000 GTVs were the best sellers and red Spiders were never around for long. Many thought its longer wheelbase made the Giulia Super saloon the sweetest handling of the 105 range, but their boxy looks put many would-be Alfa owners off. I loved them and enjoyed one for many years, not only doing towing duties but also the school run as well as family holidays to Italy. Early on I found a Giulia GTC requiring total restoration at a USAF base in Suffolk – it was a

Above: Richard with his sons, Max and Andrew, who run Alfaholics with him as well as regularly racing classic Alfas.
Right: Richard's car history includes, going clockwise from top left, countless 105-series Alfas, a Lamborghini Urraco, roadgoing Stratos, Lotus Seven, Ferrari 250 restoration project, and Fiat Dino Spider, here on family picnic duties


TDV 67J
125 AAA




NAV 76F


NMX 837P


GB
50



small production run of the coupe with the top removed by Touring. Very elegant and with the mechanics from a 2000 GTV implanted was more than a match for a 1600 Golf GTI. Today it might be called a restomod, though hardly what my sons are producing at Alfaholics today.

'In the early '80s I moved near to Newmarket and was eventually able to garage 15 cars around the courtyard of our house, an old village shop. At this stage I received a letter from a young Italian student offering to find Alfas for me to buy. Thus began four or five years of monthly flights to Rome followed by non-stop drives back to Suffolk in a variety of well-used Alfas, as well as Fiat Dino coupes and Spiders.

'Some cars I was lucky to reach home in and a few I retrieved with one of a series of Citroën CX estates and trailer – those big Citroëns were fantastic tow cars with phenomenal load capacity thanks to their size and ingenious suspension. Nothing else came close. When eventually I ran out of CXs I bought an XM, stupidly changing it for a Mercedes E-class estate. I did manage to clock up 230,000 miles in the unreliable, rusting W210 including a 2500-mile three-day dash to Sweden with a trailer to collect an ex-Autodelta 1600 GTA that had lived there since being used mainly by Jochen Rindt in the 1966 European Touring Car Championship.

'During the '80s and '90s I always strove to have something Italian and non-Alfa to enjoy on a sunny day. Some that come to mind include a 3-litre Lamborghini Urraco that was lovely to behold and made great music, but somehow I always felt vulnerable driving. A Maserati 3500 GT Vignale Spider, one of the five or so right-hookers, I completely restored and enjoyed for a number of years and is the car I most regret selling. Other Maseratis include a 4-litre aluminium-bodied Mistral; Mk1 and Mk2 Sebrings and a Khamsin, which I loved. I had a Ferrari 308 GTS at the same time, one of the very few Ferraris I have owned, but it felt too tame after the Khamsin.

'One car that never felt tame enough was a road-going Stratos – the suspension hadn't been set up properly and it was a bit of a beast. Then I had a real midlife crisis and bought a derelict S2 Lotus Seven and had it restored. I kept it several years then replaced it with an early Elise. But I soon realised I was from the pre-mid-engine-car era. Too many years enjoying 105-series Alfas with an excess of handling over grip; cars that sent early messages of impending loss of grip that made opposite-lock motoring so effortless.

'Having moved to Devon in the early '90s, when classics were in the doldrums, I realised



'105-SERIES ALFAS HAVE AN EXCESS OF HANDLING OVER GRIP'

I needed to change tack. With a shed full of new and used parts and project cars, it seemed logical to use my hard-earned experience to create what I felt could be an exciting Alfa Romeo parts business. Thus in 1999 Alfaholics was formed, offering a full range of parts for Giulia models from 1963 to 1978, including Spiders up to 1994, with the addition of a range of performance upgrades.

'I'd been running a Formula Ford for my elder son Andrew to race, so switching to an Alfa 105 coupe, initially in the AROC Championship and then the GTA Challenge, was perfect for publicity as well as a means of developing a range of performance parts.

'Things really took off after my sons Max and Andrew joined the business and we moved to a modern unit near Bristol. Mail order parts have always been our bread and butter, but the subsequent purchase of a further two units allowed us to set up a large workshop to build the Alfaholics GTA-R restomod, as well as develop and manufacture the complete range of parts that this would require. There was also room for a small race shop, which enabled us to run a 1600 FIA GTA in International Under 2-litre Touring Car races, a series Andrew and Max won in 2017.

'Alfaholics has played a significant part in creating the current popularity of the restomod with the GTA-R and offers a range of parts and parts packages for customers wishing to build or customise their own car.

'Nowadays I enjoy a Jaguar XF as rapid, comfortable, daily transport. And for sunny days I have a Porsche 987 Gen 2 PDK Boxster, which I like to think of as an old man's Elise. And, of course, I still have my beloved GTC, which I pulled out of a Plymouth doctor's orchard in 1985, for a warm sunny day's picnic on Exmoor!' ■

Above: Richard's well-known 1600 GTA, which he originally restored back in the early 1990s and which would become a test-bed for various Alfaholics upgrades, including being fitted with the Alfaholics Fast Road handling pack

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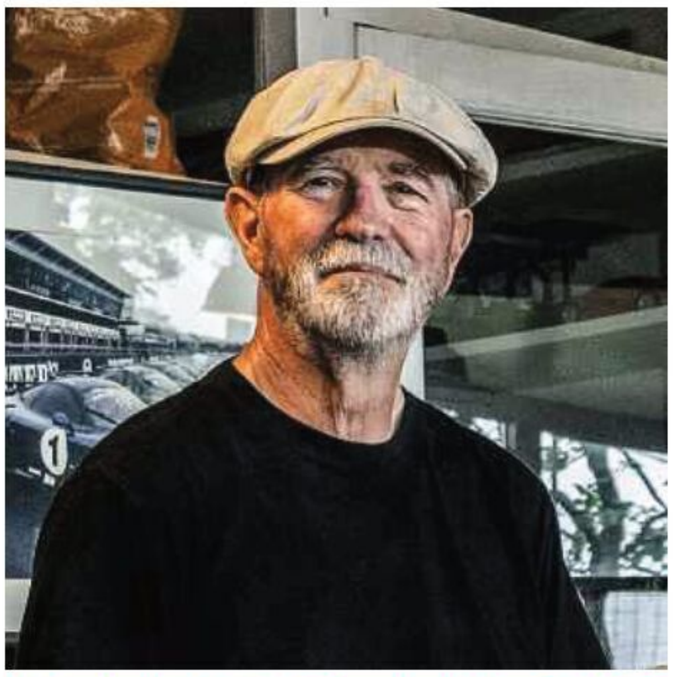
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PETER STEVENS DESIGN BRIEFING

Part 10 What is a supercar?

The Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR Uhlenhaut Coupe that recently sold for a record £114million is definitely a supercar. But what else qualifies?

I HAVE RECENTLY NOTICED AN EVER-increasing amount of internet chatter about what makes a sports car into a 'supercar' or even a 'hypercar'.

The exchanges of opinions quickly become heated, sneering or even abusive. What is it that stirs such passion in people that they feel forced to loudly trumpet their own opinions while savaging those who think differently?

I think that most **evo** readers could go through a set of images of high-performance cars and calmly say 'yes, yes, no, no, yes' as to their deserving to be described as 'supercars', without feeling the need to justify their views with a drawn sword. It is a bit like having to describe the difference between a dog and a cat; we know one when we see it without having to go into the minutiae of details of teeth or whiskers.

In a typical recent internet exchange, the gauntlet was thrown down thus: 'The Porsche 959 competed at Le Mans and is a Paris-Dakar winner, a Group B study that became a German technology demonstrator with a poster presence in teenage youths' bedrooms. A flat-six engine at the rear, challenging in appearance from some angles, to the untrained eye it's just a 911. A fantastic car, the über-GT of the eighties, but not a supercar.' The language has been slightly changed to protect both the innocent and the guilty.

And then come the responses: 'Not a supercar, it's a step above supercars. A technological marvel.'

'So, by your definition the XJ220 isn't either, as it also has a six-cylinder engine.'

'220 was meant to have a V12, so it's a supercar.'

'Does that mean it's not a supercar because it's not mid-engined, so how about the McLaren Mercedes SLR, 599 GTO and Aston One-77?'

'I don't mind if it's not a supercar, I just love it.'

'Your opinion of what makes a supercar is purely subjective as there is no agreed upon definition and it is rather arrogant for you to declare what is and is not a supercar.'

'XJ220 and 911 GT1 are both good examples of 6-cylinder supercars. 959 isn't.'

'Blah Blah Blah... whatever. You are wrong.'

'Look at the 300SL Gullwing, front engine with an in-line 6-cylinder engine, a lot of people regard that as the first supercar.'

'Our generation has some obsession with calling everything "super, hyper, ultra, mega". It's comical.'

'If you think the 959 isn't a supercar then you know nothing about cars. Prove me wrong, I can't wait for you to try.'

'I think you are doing a great job with fan engagement. Controversy sells lol.'

And on and on for pages.

Wikipedia suggests that 'the Lamborghini Miura, produced from 1966-1973, is often said to be the first supercar. By the 1970s and 1980s the term was in regular use, if not precisely defined. One interpretation up until the 1990s was to use it for mid-engine two-seat cars with at least eight cylinders (but typically a V12 engine), a power output of at least 400bhp (298kW) and a top speed of at least 180mph (290km/h). Other interpretations state that "it must be very fast,







Clockwise from above left: Miura qualifies on looks alone, but it was no trendsetter; 959 is dismissed by some for being too closely related to the 911; Bugattis mind-bogglingly fast, but do they appeal to the heart?

with sporting handling to match", "it should be sleek and eye-catching" and its price should be "one in a rarefied atmosphere of its own", while "possessing exclusivity is seen as an important characteristic (i.e. limited production volumes)".

'It is also claimed that the definition of a supercar has always been subjective and is a matter of blind prejudice.'

Back in 1920, the London newspaper *The Times* used the word 'supercar' to try to describe the 6.7-litre Ensign 6 as being of speed and style beyond that of other cars.

In the US during the 1960s, cars that are now considered to be muscle cars were then referred to as supercars, apparently sometimes written with a capital S. The May 1965 issue of the American magazine *Car Life* included multiple references to supercars and 'the supercar club' and a 1968 issue of *Car & Driver* magazine apparently referred to 'the Supercar street racer gang'.

To my mind, if we ignore high performance sports cars from before the Second World War then the first truly impressive supercar must be the 1955 Mercedes 300 SLR Uhlenhaut Coupe. This was a development of the 1954 300 SL 'Gullwing' that was designed by chief motorsport engineer Rudolf Uhlenhaut. It has everything that a super car should embody in the way of advanced technology: a race-derived straight-eight engine with desmodromic, mechanically closed valves, a five-speed rear-mounted transaxle, an ultra-lightweight body and those unique gullwing doors. And of equal importance it looked spectacular. A story about an Uhlenhaut drive from Munich to Stuttgart taking just over an hour for the 220km (137-mile) trip gives the car serious credibility.

This puts the Lamborghini Miura into second place in the claims to have been the first of a new breed of high-performance sports car. If we apply the test of great looks and advanced technology then, whilst the 'looks' are apparent, a transverse V12 engine was not a trendsetter. Later, Ferrari's F40 was a car that most immediately described as a supercar, though it was quite crude in some ways. Lamborghinis, whilst defined by their extreme looks, were generally not useable in a grand touring sense, and this is where opinions can divide: is practical or impractical part of the definition? A 959 Porsche is a technological masterpiece and, like the 918 and Carrera GT, is useable in all road conditions; they will take you there and bring you back with luggage and a feeling of invincibility. But does that make them more or less super?

'I HAVE NEVER FELT ANYTHING BUT A PASSING CURIOSITY FOR ANY RECENT BUGATTI'

After the challenging and slightly rustic F40, the McLaren F1 certainly appeared to break new ground with its superb motor, discreet aerodynamics and carbon construction, although as a carbon road-car it was preceded by the limited-production Jaguar XJR-15. Both UK-built supercars? Yes.

The more recent proliferation of very high-performance sports cars that are all described as 'supercars' by different magazines begins to need serious pruning at this point. There are a number of cars that are great machines but just don't feel like they are special enough to merit the term under discussion. Ferrari 488 GTB, Lotus Esprit V8, Noble M600 and Nissan GT-R have all been described as supercars in various magazines, but none of them induces that sense of astonishment that a Ferrari Enzo, Bugatti Veyron or McLaren P1 can do (I find it hard to take a car called 'Ferrari LaFerrari' seriously, so Enzo is my Ferrari reference here). Incidentally, the P1 creates a problem for McLaren because if that car is the pinnacle of recent McLaren models then logic suggests that any more recent models cannot be 'supercars' however fast they are.

It is here that prejudice comes into the discussion. I have never really felt anything other than a passing curiosity for any recent Bugatti. Certainly they are mind-bogglingly complex and fast – my brave friend Andy Wallace has proved that with a top speed of 304mph – but they just don't capture one's heart.

What is clear from looking at the more recent entrants to this rarefied or non-existent club is that almost all of the talk is around mid- or rear-engined cars. How do front-engined cars fit into this debate? Black Series Mercedes are too near to their regular production models in terms of looks and components to be that special; the Corvette's change from front to mid motor has not elevated them to the top class; the Dodge Viper with its pick-up truck engine was never going to make it; Aston Martins are glorious Grand Tourers and front-engined Ferraris can't really trump their mid-engined siblings, gorgeous though the Roma is.

The Audi R8 is a beautiful piece of engineering, a fine example of great product design and a very accomplished machine in dynamic terms, but accomplishment does not necessarily make a supercar. Instead it is something that stirs the soul, delights the eye and celebrates engineering.





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by RICHARD PORTER

DOA: CHRYSLER ME FOUR-TWELVE

This 850bhp, 250mph, quad-turbo V12 supercar had all the right ingredients – except for its badge

IN THE 1990s CHRYSLER DEVELOPED A conspicuous desire to create more than mumsy minivans and milky rental fleet fodder. It made this clear through ritzy concept cars such as the Phaeton of 1997, an upmarket four-door convertible, and the Chronos of 1998, a huge luxury saloon running the V10 from a Dodge Viper. Also in 1998 a merger with Daimler-Benz gave Chrysler access to German-engineered rear-drive parts that allowed the creation of the more upmarket Crossfire and 300C. But even though the company had been telegraphing its social climbing desires for years, its centrepiece for the 2004 Detroit show still came as a shock because it was this: a Chrysler supercar.

To look at, this concept certainly had the head-swivelling chops to square up to Ferrari, combining low-slung menace with a hint of Chrysler's Neo Deco style of the time. Only the rear lights let it down, constructed from 96 LEDs scattered like acne across the rear end as if created by a lone lunatic in a shed. Under the skin, however, it was anything but amateurish. At its core sat a carbonfibre and aluminium honeycomb passenger cell, to which was attached an aluminium crash structure and, at the rear, a chrome moly subframe cradling a tweaked-up version of the 6-litre twin-turbo AMG M275 V12 from the Mercedes SL65 connected to a Ricardo-built seven-speed twin-clutch 'box. Chrysler engineers had added another couple of turbos for good measure – hence the car's name, short for Mid Engined, Four turbo, Twelve cylinder – and the result was 850bhp in a car claimed to weigh just over 1300 kilos. This meant a power-to-weight figure of over 650bhp per ton – significantly higher than a McLaren F1 could muster – and projected performance figures were very punchy for 2004, seeing 60 in 2.9 seconds and topping out at 248mph.

Of course, it's very easy to make up a bunch of numbers for a one-off concept knowing it'll never move faster than it can be pushed into a lorry to be shipped to its next motor show, but the ME Four-Twelve seemed to have some real depth to it. It was claimed it met US safety regs and it had proper space for two adults in its neatly trimmed, entirely plausible interior. There were even normal door mirrors and a windscreen wiper. Chrysler COO Wolfgang Bernhard boldly claimed he would have a running prototype 'road ready by summer'.

It turned out he wasn't entirely wide of the mark, because later in 2004 Chrysler invited members of the US media to Laguna Seca to have a go in a matt black ME Four-Twelve mule. It wasn't quite 'road ready', and it turned out the quad-turbo V12 had been wound down to protect the prototype gearbox, but it gave a sense of what this car could do. 'If the reception is positive,' Bernhard had crowed, 'we are definitely going to build this baby.'

Unfortunately, things weren't as simple as that. Commissioning concept car specialist Metalcrafters in California to make one show car and one running prototype was easy; getting the car to production while offsetting the lofty development costs of a bespoke chassis with an AMG engine was not. Though a showroom sticker of $150,000 had been whispered at first, subsequent rumours put the price at anywhere between $250,000 and $750,000, and that seemed too much for a Chrysler, even one that could do 248mph. Disgruntled American car fans blamed the Germans for the project's cancellation, claiming Daimler bosses culled it before it could embarrass their flagship Mercedes-McLaren SLR, but it's more likely the cause of death was simple maths. Even for social climbing Chrysler, the ME Four-Twelve was an ambition too far.



'Chrysler had added another couple of turbos for good measure'

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INBOX



Snow blower

Reading Peter Stevens' Design Briefing on 'Getting air in and out' (**evo** 297), particularly his description of the flow-through interior fresh-air system, reminded me of a business trip to Calgary in the winter of 1997.

Anybody familiar with the leeward side of the Rockies will know the humidity can be extremely low and that in winter this results in powdery snow that is so dry it barely feels cold. But this was my first trip to Canada and I wasn't.

After the interminable form-filling at the hire-car desk I was given an enormous device with an ice-scraper at one end and a brush at the other. When I eventually located the hire car (not so simple when they're all camouflaged in snow) I did the usual British thing of starting the car and turning the blower to maximum. I then got out to scrape away the ice. But there was no ice, only dry snow that was being sucked rapidly through the scuttle vents and into the car. So *that's* what the brush was for...

It remained cold and I spent the next two weeks driving around with a cabin full of snow that hardly melted. I wonder what Hertz thought when I dropped it off?

Phil Siddorn, Newbury

Seven heaven

Just taking a few moments to settle into the realisation of a life's dream: there's an actual Caterham CSR 260 in my garage, in beautiful BMW Thunder Grey, which gives it a real sense of menacing, almost predatory purpose.

It's taken several years to find sufficient funds to own my ultimate Caterham, but now, at long last,



it's here. And by all accounts it will be a sound investment, with prices for CSR 260s (when they appear) generally sitting on or even above the original retail price from 15 years ago.

Early impressions are kind of beyond all expectations. The ride is nothing short of miraculous – the car almost 'levitates' across all but the very worst of surfaces, yet still provides the familiar levels of grip and second-nature steering that is synonymous with the Caterham marque.

Early explorations into the limits of grip reveal a far more predictable feel and entry into optimal slip angles front and rear, which suggests that, on track, this car will be hard to hang on to the back of, whatever you're driving. It's early days, but I've found myself almost immediately re-adapting to the driving style required for a high-powered Seven that I honed on my K-series Superlight R back in the early noughties.

After years of driving to the Le Mans 24 Hours in the relative comfort of a sporty estate, I'll be back for this year's race in my new, raucous, rebel-rousing dream machine. Smaller tent, less luxury, and an altogether more memorable experience.

Life thoroughly rebooted!

Brian Towell

My other car...

I've always had a hatred for naff car stickers, but I'm now faced with a dilemma. I've had an Aston Martin Vantage (manual) for five years and recently got a Tesla Model 3 as a daily driver. So, should I have a sticker in my Aston saying, 'My other car is a Tesla'? Or should I have a



LETTER OF THE MONTH

A noble Noble

I WAS IN AWE AND TERRIBLY SAD AT THE SAME TIME when I read your interview with Lee Noble about his fantastic and tragic journey in car production and design (**evo** 297).

Talk about being dealt some lousy hands. He is a modern-day pioneer whose skills, talents and sheer genius have never been adequately rewarded, but by God they should have been.

It's clear that Lee is first and foremost an engineer/designer and not a businessman. But sadly it's even clearer that he had the misfortune to associate with some greedy, selfish people who sought to feast off his genius but who didn't have the moral code to see it through.

It would be a truly sad bio if it weren't for where Lee is at now. I could feel the joy he is experiencing in his own private works, free of debt, doing what he loves and is utterly brilliant at.

Lee, I salute you sir.

Andrew Dewar

The Letter of the Month wins a Straton watch

The writer of this month's star letter receives a Straton Classic Driver MkII watch worth £239. Designed to be an everyday watch that doesn't break the bank, this MkII version introduces a new dial design and is available in three colour variations.

Straton Watch Co.



INBOX



sticker in my Tesla saying 'My other car is an Aston Martin'?

Despite all the years of reading **evo**, I'm still a bit torn on this one...

Daran Brown

Holding back the gears

Issue 295, page 64: 'The insubstantial click for gearshifts is little more than a momentary distraction.'

Jethro... No, no, no, no... The insubstantial click of a crappy plastic afterthought of a switch to change gear on a full-on driver's car – in this case the latest Audi RS3 – is an absolute travesty. A deal breaker. If you 'like cars' and enjoy driving cars, then you care about changing gear.

Yes, I love manuals. However, a good DCT is also a fine thing to use, especially if you have a monster-power car with close ratios and a narrow turbocharged powerband (a Nissan GT-R springs to mind) – but only when the gearshift paddles are a pleasure to use.

For a road car they should be tactile, substantial, large enough to find without looking for them, and preferably attached to the steering column – so they don't swap sides on every roundabout. (We are not F1 drivers who cling to steering devices and never need to shuffle our hands around to find enough lock.)

I change gear a couple of thousand times a week, so it really matters. After steering, braking and accelerating, there is only changing gear that counts. Stablemates Audi and Volkswagen are among the worst offenders for making potentially great driver's cars and then ruining them with awful little gear ears. I eventually sold my RS6 (bought new from the showroom) because I couldn't bear having that V8 and never getting to *enjoy* deciding what gear I was in.



It looks like we'll be driving the current range of purely ICE cars for the rest of our lives now, because there won't be any more manufactured, so this could well be a moot point, but just for the record, for the principle of the thing: don't let the side down, **evo**, not now. Keep saying it how it is. As an ownership proposition, small plastic switches hidden behind the arms of a steering wheel to change gear utterly ruin a car aimed at petrolheads.

Love the mag, and respect to everyone who contributes – as always.

Roland Renshaw, Worcestershire

Return to form

As a 15-year-old impatiently waiting for the minute that I am free to be unleashed onto the open road on my own, every new sports/hypercar should seem fascinating, right? The problem is that, for me, there are very few interesting performance cars that remain. However, having just read **evo** 296, I realise that dream cars do still exist.

Proper Ferraris seem to have been few and far between in recent years. All have either been too ugly, hideously expensive, or simply too heavy to be something that I could allow myself to lust after. But the 296 GTB finally hit the nail on the head. It's a properly beautiful car, evocative of past greats, and is apparently a truly great car to drive too.

evo is one of the few sources I trust when reading about cars, so to hear such wonderful praise for such a fantastic car is music to the ears. Sure, 819bhp may be too much for any sane human being, but sometimes cars that are dream material are just a little bit insane.

Declan Herendeen

Watches

This month's hottest horological releases



Timex Q GMT

From £180 timex.co.uk

'GMT' watches rarely come more affordable than this reissue of a classic 1979 Timex model, which features a fourth hand that enables the wearer to track the time in a second time zone. It's available with a red-and-blue 'Pepsi' bezel (pictured) or a blue-and-black 'Batman' alternative, while a third variant gets an all-black treatment – including the case – matched with a synthetic rubber strap.



Citizen CA7090

€329 citizenwatch.eu

Its looks may be rooted in the '70s, but this new chronograph from Citizen boasts some modern features too. Behind the dial – which is available in blue, red, white or black – is an Eco-Drive movement that uses solar energy to top up the battery. Meanwhile the case and integrated bracelet are made from the brand's 'Super Titanium', which is 40 per cent lighter and five times harder than stainless steel.



IWC Pilot's Watch Chronograph 41 Edition 'Mercedes-AMG Petronas Formula One Team'

£6850 iwc.com

Launched at the Miami Grand Prix, where Lewis Hamilton wore one alongside two other watches as a protest against the FIA's ban on jewellery on track, this snappily titled IWC is the firm's first official team watch with partner Mercedes-AMG Petronas and features the latter's signature green hue.

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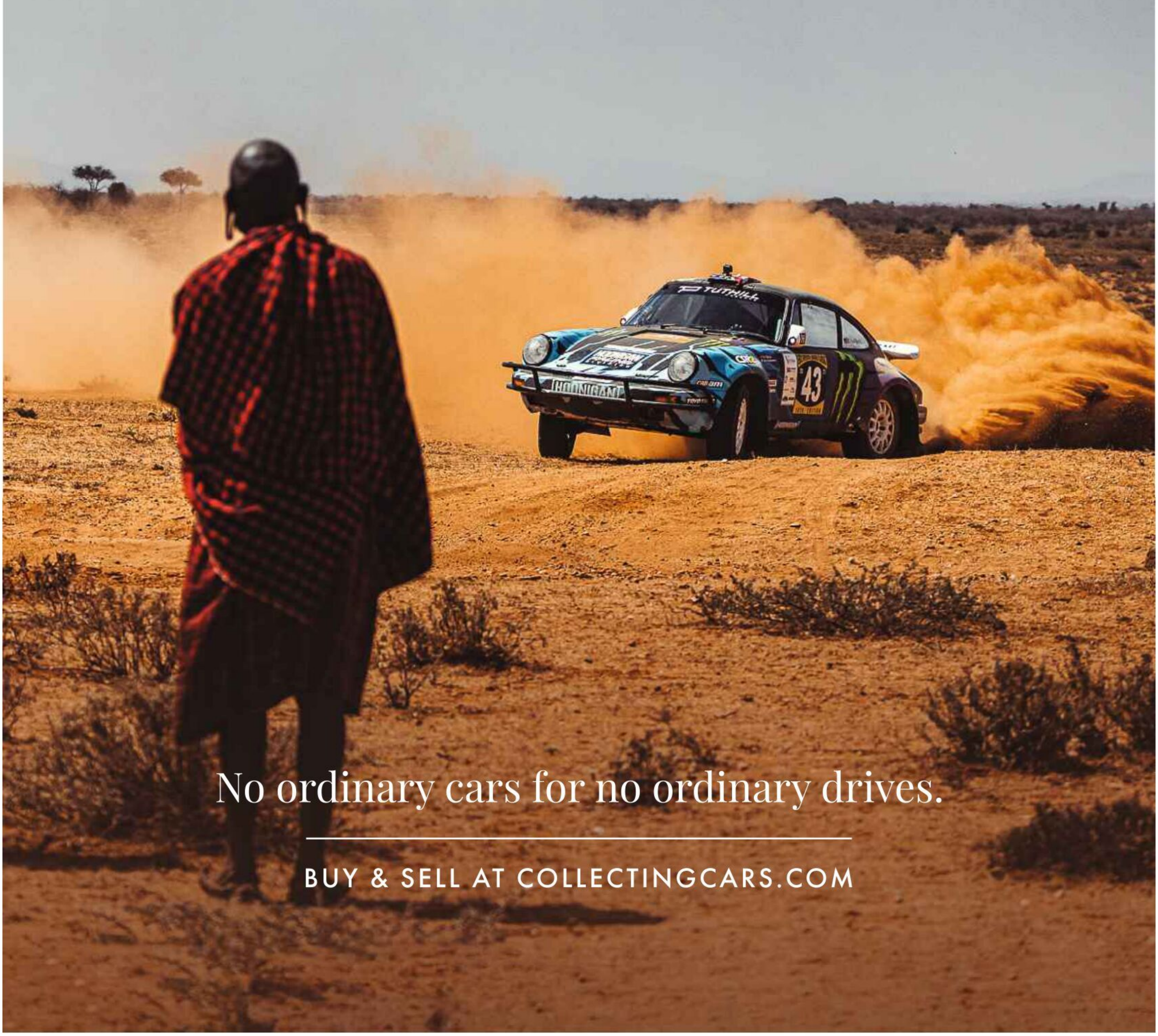
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RICHARD MEADEN

The end of the petrol era has got Meaden shortlisting this century's greats

SHORTLY PRIOR TO THE TURN OF THE millennium, we – that's to say the core team of **evo** staffers and some of our frontline contributors – gathered at Goodwood House for a Car of the Century feature. It appeared on the cover of our November 1999 issue (**evo** 013).

Based around the cheery notion of the world ending as we segued into the 2000s, we posed the following question to ourselves and our readers: 'If you knew the world was going to end on December 31, 1999, which one car would you want for your last tankful of petrol?'

And so, with predictions the Y2K Bug would leave households surviving on the contents of their specially stocked Millennium Cupboards (Meaden Towers' stash comprised baked beans, Pot Noodles and 25 gallons of gin and tonic), we each pondered which car we would want to take for our final apocalyptic drive into oblivion.

The last thing we wanted was a worthy or predictable list of greatest this or fastest that, so instead the cars we featured were intensely personal and highly eclectic. I certainly can't imagine finding a Bugatti Type 51 rubbing tyre shoulders with an Impreza 22B, Ferrari F40, McLaren F1 and Light Car Company Rocket in any other magazine story, yet here they were, along with a Countach, Daytona, C-type Jag, 2.7 RS 911 (you wouldn't expect an **evo** test without a 911, surely?) and another old Bugatti.

What did I choose? A Ferrari 250 SWB once raced at Goodwood in period by Sir Stirling Moss for the great privateer team owner Rob Walker. Looking back, it seems a bit of an esoteric choice, even by my standards, though there's little to question about a front-engined V12 Ferrari in terms of breeding or provenance. I loved the Moss connection, and it was this, combined with the SWB representing a lost era and genre of car – the true road-racer – that had me in its thrall.

Little did we know that 22 years after Y2K we would be planning for a different kind of extinction event: the death of the internal combustion-engined car. For those who don't have a love for cars, our obsessive preoccupation with the demise of a noisy, smelly, century-old propulsion system must seem odd in the extreme. Even as I type, it does make me wonder exactly what it is we love about internal combustion, and why I continue to get the same fizz of excitement and anticipation whenever I turn the key or press the starter and fire an engine into life. The novelty really should have worn off by now.

Were we to repeat the Car of the Century exercise, only this time predicting our last drive before a total ban on internal combustion, what would I choose? Even limiting the choice to petrol-engined road cars that have been launched in this century the number of compelling contenders is colossal. Given the context, there's justification for placing engine over everything, though it must be said this is not a very **evo** way of picking any car. Better, I think, to consider cars that combine an incredible engine with an equally extraordinary all-round driving experience.

'For a last drive before a total ban on internal combustion, which car would I choose?'

For me this means the Carrera GT jumps to the forefront of my mind. The Lexus LFA, numerous Lamborghinis and umpteen Ferraris also vie for the top slot, but if you're saying goodbye to the internal combustion engine then, inevitably, you're also bidding farewell to the manual transmission.

Given Porsche's celebrated supercar has one of the finest powertrains of all time, and falls neatly into our post-2000 timeframe, it's extremely hard to beat. You could also include a Pagani Zonda F, but just as I fell in love with the significance of that Moss-driven 250 SWB in late 1999, so in 2022 the Carrera GT's backstory and Porsche's impeccable racing pedigree seals the deal for me. I'd be curious to know your pick.

What makes this such a strange and unsettling period in the history of the automobile is that even as we're accepting the end of the ICE age, we know there are new ultra-purist, petrol-powered cars that promise to take internal combustion to new heights. Singer's remarkable DLS and Gordon Murray Automotive's upcoming T.50 and T.33 are perfect examples. Few of us are likely to experience them first-hand, but their very existence somehow provides a glimmer of hope.

And if the petrol supplies should be turned off? Well, any of us who have been lucky enough to experience the union of a spine-tingling petrol engine and sweet manual transmission know the magic lives long in the memory. EVs will get better (and better), but they will never offer a substitute for the alchemy to which we are addicted. Perhaps that's why we're so loathed to let go.

@DickieMeaden

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


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RICHARD PORTER

A journey through the familiar sights, sounds and stories of the everyday

FINGERS OF SUNLIGHT CREEP ACROSS THE fields, sliding over hedges and climbing up walls. A blackbird sings, a dog barks, the cat gets shooed off the duvet.

Alarms sound. Phones chirp. The early train clack-clacks out of the station. That warm security blanket smell of toast permeates the house. Butter is spread, milk is spilt, the minister for something or other purrs superciliously from the television. The kettle boils.

The school tie is found, the front door keys are lost, a thousand front doors close on the words, 'DON'T SLAM THE…'

Work shoes click and school shoes scuff across a million miles of pavement. Pigeons flutter, leaves rustle, Alfa Romeo has a new comeback plan.

Noisy knots of pre-teens board the bus as one excitable ball. Car doors slam, starter motors turn, that ubiquitous tune tumbles from the speakers. Drilling. Always someone drilling.

The van hoots, the cab driver swears, the man on the pavement exhales a cloud of vape. A lady florist smiles at a passer-by.

In the cafes and coffee shops the machines that grind the beans and drip-drip the liquids run fast and hot. Laptops plugged in, accounts checked, posts liked. The drink is to go, the pastry is to eat in. Do you have a loyalty card?

Office lights flicker on, monitors power up, Jaguar has a new marketing campaign designed to attract a younger audience.

Machines are turned on. Gossip is shared. Last night's mistakes are reviewed. Log in, log on. Lift doors close and lift doors open. The robots keep working. The minute hand of the conference-room clock in stasis as the meeting grinds on.

The parents meet at the soft play. The plumber says the parts will take two weeks. The kid at the back isn't listening. Planes land, boats dock, tractors trudge across the fields. Rain falls. Clouds part. Red kites cruise above the motorway.

The police helicopter overhead. On social media, people asking why the police helicopter is overhead. The clock chimes. The lunch is served. The train is late. Could this be Ferrari's season?

'Work shoes click across pavement, pigeons flutter, leaves rustle, Alfa Romeo has a new comeback plan'

Sandwiches at desks. Cigarettes by fire exits. Problems with the Zoom call. A familiar riff drifts on the wind. Mangy pigeons, busy bees, wasps bother the yoga mummies. An unexpected item in the bagging area.

Traffic lights change, bus brakes squeal, the *Big Issue* lady isn't in her normal spot. Your package has been left with a neighbour.

Bins are emptied out. Forms are filled in. A broken tricycle in a skip. A baby cries, a grandfather dies, Maserati has ambitious plans to increase sales.

Someone falls in love. Someone falls out of it. Someone's moved the phone charger again.

Messages are sent. Pictures are taken. The wind turbines turn. A tear trickles down her cheek.

The old bank's become a juice bar.

The bell rings. Pre-teen feet stampede through the playgrounds. Keys in doors, bags on floors, homework gets ignored. The kettle boils.

The ball's gone over the fence again. A wistful face at the window, a lone pony in the meadow, they're putting flats where the petrol station used to be.

The warm, tangy smell of a pub in the afternoon. The fund manager is stuffed. The child goes hungry. Would you like fries with that?

Packed trains, hot and sweet from body heat. Empty church halls, dry like the rust on the tea urn. Glasses chink like the weights at the gym. The kids don't care, a woman cuts hair, the AMG One will be ready soon.

Bedtime stories. Cocaine Tories. Oh go on then, just one more.

The moon slides like a seraph from behind grey cloud. In the distance, an owl. Torch light coming across the fields. Lorry drivers bedding in for the night. Security guards staring at phones. The kettle boils.

Footsteps behind her. A final chord, the audience applause, the predictable thrill of an encore. Doomed first dates, failed flirtations, hotels on the company card. A fox has got in the bins again. Lager lads, doner kebabs, you are being connected to your driver. Doors are locked. Shelves are stocked. In the trees by the old railway, bats. Teslas will be fully self-driving within a year.

@sniffpetrol

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

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JETHRO BOVINGDON

There's a gulf between reducing weight and making a true lightweight, says Jethro

WE ARE ALL VERY HUNG UP ON WEIGHT. Perhaps to a fault. Every new performance car variant released is 'too heavy', according to those sage folks on social media. It's the cause du jour amongst enthusiasts. I have to admit it's something that tends to leap to the front of my mind when yet another new car is launched, too. Very often in flashing bold type with klaxons blaring in the background. The latest car to fall victim to this is the BMW M4 CSL.

You see, the new Coupé Sport isn't so Leichtbau. Even stripped to the tune of 100kg thanks to carbon-ceramic brakes, carbonfibre seats, bonnet, roof and bootlid, deleted rear seats and a titanium exhaust, the M4 CSL weighs 1625kg. Even the giant kidney grille is lightened. It doesn't stop the creep. The E46 M3 CSL weighed around 1425kg to the same DIN standard as that M4 figure, i.e. with a 90 per cent full fuel tank, and the E92 M3 GTS was a full 95kg lighter than the new CSL at 1530kg.

This isn't a trend unique to BMW. In fact, perhaps everybody has been a little unfair about the latest extreme M-car. I suppose sticking 'Lightweight' in the name is pretty provocative. However, let's look at the new Lotus Emira. You know Lotus. Chapman. Add lightness. Just saying the name gives people like us Tourette's and this stuff comes spewing out. Anyway, the Emira in its 'lightest form' is 1405kg DIN. I guess that's the four-cylinder car. According to our scales the Emira fitted with the supercharged V6 weighs 1486kg with a full tank. More than a GT4 or GT3. And even taking out 10 per cent of the fuel load, it's only around 150kg lighter than the big 4-series based coupe. This is just where we are in 2022.

Is this depressing? It seems that maybe it is. Except that in the last 12 months I've driven so many cars that weigh well over 1500kg and drive brilliantly. We've already written ad nauseam about the BMW M5 CS, so I won't repeat yet again how superb it is despite weighing in at a hefty 1825kg. But what about the last-hurrah GT-R? Despite hilariously comprehensive weight saving measures – like new wheels that are 25 grams lighter per corner – the GT-R Nismo can't escape its big bones.

At 1703kg the square-shouldered coupe should feel cumbersome at times and a little lazy, yet it just loves to turn and has an almost manic responsiveness. You'd scarcely believe any car could change direction with such unwavering speed and precision. Maybe all those years ago when Kazutoshi Mizuno told a group of journalists, myself amongst them, that the GT-R's weight was an advantage not a hindrance, he was right. The speech itself deserves a column all of its own, but the crux of it was that a contemporary F1 car weighed around 600kg and produced 1300kg of downforce. Adding up to… almost a GT-R with a driver and fuel. It then meandered in all sorts of directions. At one point we thought he was talking about lasers. Anyway, Mizuno argued, passionately, that weight should no longer be demonised. Perhaps we all need to reassess our own prejudices.

The inconvenient truth hits, ironically, like a ton of bricks. The Caterham 420 Cup has taken me out of the pits, along a very short straight and around one hairpin bend. As I grab an upshift just as the wheels rumble over the exit kerbing, foot slammed into the bulkhead, confidence already sky-high and whooping for joy into the thick padding of an Arai helmet, the lesson is as clear as day: Weight is the enemy. Of course it's the enemy! How could I have ever thought differently? This tiny, fierce, frantic and outrageously capable machine seems like the very best idea in the world.

'The benefits only really hit home when you go back to basics'

It's not a new idea, of course, but it's one that feels long forgotten. Even if you pay lip service to weight reduction and strive to save 25 grams per wheel, the benefits only really hit home when you go back to basics. Back to a car that is absolutely defined by its lack of mass. Rediscovering this virtuous circle is a joy. And an education. I long for every other manufacturer to own a Seven and for their engineers and development drivers to test it every three months. To feel the benefits of low mass, to reconnect with driving excitement in such a pure expression of engineering simplicity. To remember just how much fun driving can be.

A dozen laps later the evidence for the benefits of lightweight construction is so compelling that it's irrefutable. Not only am I absolutely enthralled by the 420 Cup for what it can do, I'm also desperately looking for ways that I can improve to try to match the finesse and capability of the car. In reality, I'm too tired and too wired to think. However, the car doesn't show a bead of sweat. No brake fade. No tyre wear. It waits patiently in the pitlane. Ready to go whilst the supercars nearby have new boots fitted. Again.

The Seven still has much to teach us. Many years ago, we decided to no longer take Caterhams to eCoty. In an era where a CSL weighs 1625kg it's time to reverse that decision. The campaign starts here.

@JethroBovingdon

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

by HENRY CATCHPOLE
PHOTOGRAPHY *by* DEAN SMITH

PEAKY



BLINDER?

Is the last petrol-engined Lotus worth the hype? We take the new Emira on a road trip to the south of France, via magnificent Mont Ventoux, to find out



THE ANTICIPATION HAS BEEN HUGE. That combination of excitement and slight trepidation bringing a tight knot in the stomach as the time approaches and you wonder how good it will be. It has seemed like an age since first reading all the various, mouth-watering options available. And now it's here and it looks even better than I expected. The crisp edges, the soft interior… it's a pizza good enough to make a statue salivate.

We're sitting outside Chalet Reynard, about two-thirds of the way up Mont Ventoux, and parked across the road is something equally anticipated and equally spectacular to behold. As I tuck into the circular cuisine of champions, I glance at the new Lotus Emira for the umpteenth time.

'It really does look good, doesn't it?' I mumble between mouthfuls of mozzarella.

Dean Smith nods absentmindedly in response, concentrating on his own doughy delight. To be fair I've probably asked him the question enough times in the last 24 hours that he's now just weary of replying. But I can't quite get over how *supercar* it looks in the real world.

The Lotus marketing motto is 'For the Drivers' (*'Nam regentibus traderent'* is apparently hand-painted underneath the Chapman coat of arms in the new factory at Hethel) but almost regardless of what the hydraulically power-assisted steering is like and how the V6 sounds, this is surely going to seduce based on aesthetics alone. Even in shadow grey, the Emira has the ability to trap neck nerves at fifty paces.

The cinched waist, the deep side-scoops, the perfect proportions. Everybody stops and stares. I suspect if you swapped badges, nobody would question that it was a new, baby Ferrari. The oft-rumoured Dino, perhaps, given that it has a V6, albeit a supercharged one, behind the driver. Certainly it looks as though it's worth way more than the £80,000 that this one would cost to put on your driveway, let alone the sub-£60k that an entry-level four-cylinder will set you back when it arrives early next year. It's stunning.

Yet it also proved passably practical on the drive from Hethel to here. There's plenty of storage in the cabin, with roomy door-pockets, a pair of cup holders, space under the armrest and enough capacity behind the seats for two cases. There's no froot or frunk (depending how you prefer that particular portmanteau) but there is a reasonably deep compartment behind the engine capable of swallowing another couple of squashy bags. Given I'm the average height of an NBA player (195cm, since you ask) and Dean isn't too far behind, I think we can safely declare that the Emira isn't cramped, either.

Fuel economy on the autoroute was in the high 20s and, all in all, it was far more refined than anything Lotus has done… well, probably ever. The switchgear is all Volvo, according to Dean, who had a V90 for a while and has kept pointing out familiar facets from his family wagon, but there is nothing wrong with that. It all feels suitably matching and solid. Things like the metal door handles, the Emiras on the vents, and the gear linkage visible inside the fishnet mesh all combine to give an overall impression of something that has money as well as passion behind it.

Clearly with such an important car we wanted to put it through a thorough test. Jethro will be ringing its neck around Anglesey in a few days' time (see page 96), but first we wanted to take it on a proper road trip. As Lotus was going to be celebrating the life of Colin Chapman at the Monaco Historic GP this year, that seemed like a suitable destination. As for the precise route there, well, Dean and I were still discussing that on the way down yesterday. But after taking weather and time into consideration we've settled on a smorgasbord of **evo** road-testing greatest hits, starting with the location of eCoty 2008.

Mont Ventoux is perhaps best known as a climb in the Tour de France, but between 1902 and 1976 it was also a hill climb for cars. It's the first time I've made the trip to the Giant of Provence without a bicycle (I snuck a Bianchi in the back of an R26.R for the drive down to that 2008 eCoty) and I confess it's rather nice knowing I'm not going to pedal to the top of the 1909m mountain, especially after seeing others battling gravity with pure leg power. Since I last visited in 2019 a small building has been turned into a sort of information centre telling the story of motor cars on the mountain. It's well worth stopping at, if only for the 1920s photos of cars rounding (or not) the Virage de Saint-Estève.

The road up from Bedouin wasn't too busy this morning and I thoroughly enjoyed the meandering middle section of the climb that weaves between the trees. It's a tantalising stretch of tarmac that continually teases you with glimpses through the trunks of the road ahead. But the way the camber rocks this way and that gives it a fabulous feeling of flow in some sections and it's a good introduction to the dynamic side of the Emira. I love the view out, with the tops of the front arches clearly visible, making it easy to place on the road. There is also something light and airy about the way the side windows drop down in a gentle curve to the base of the A-pillar, framing beautiful wing mirrors that have just a suggestion of Pagani Huayra about them.

The steering is surprisingly weighty, and initially there is a tendency to grip the slightly chunky wheel quite tightly

Below and right: Emira takes distances in its stride and returns high-20s mpg on the autoroute; more challenging roads await




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LOTUS
SMIRA



‘JUST BELOW THE FAMOUS BALD, BLEACHED MOONSCAPE OF VENTOUX…’



as a result. But there is also plenty of feedback, and if you loosen your grip a little and let the wheel writhe in your hands you get more of the lovely sensations that a hydraulically assisted rack can deliver. Straight-line a set of bends, traversing the crown of the road as you go, and you can feel the changes in load telegraphing the way the suspension is moving through its generous travel.

It's at the end of the wooded section of Ventoux that we are sitting now, just below the famous bald, bleached moonscape of the upper slopes with the rocket-like weather station on top. It's wonderful up there, the limestone giving it a curiously clean, almost minimalist feeling and the snow poles making you feel like you're on a slalom course, but you do need to be wary of the rockfalls that litter the road with potential puncture opportunities. So, after a few runs up and down and with no desire to push our luck, we're going to continue south-east, destination Digne-les-Bains.

Pizza and Orangina finished, I wander back over to the Emira, press the forward end of the flush handle and drop into the seat. Ingress is suitably sports car, but so much easier than in previous products from Hethel. This particular car has the Sport suspension set-up but the more road-biased tyres, which are Goodyear Eagle F1 Supersports. It also has a limited-slip differential and the Driver's Pack, which adds a Track mode to the Tour and Sport settings, which adjust the engine, exhaust and stability control.

Flip up the two-pronged red guard, press the starter button on the transmission tunnel and the 3.5-litre engine comes to life in a slightly disappointing way. Its slightly thin, metallic thrum makes it hard to distinguish as a V6, to be honest, and after all the supercar promise of the exterior this is a slight reality check.

The pedals are marginally offset towards the middle of the car, but instantly feel well positioned in relation to one another. Dip the clutch (this is the six-speed manual; there's also a six-speed auto option), place your hand on the mostly smooth sphere with the rough textured numerical etching on top and, if you've driven any recent manual Lotus, it feels very familiar as you move the lever across and forwards for first.

Leaving it in the quietest setting for a few miles, the engine has a rather interesting futuristic tone to it. With the subtle, shrill Edelbrock supercharger whine being most audible in this mode, there is almost something of the electric motor about it. The gearshift isn't one to be rushed, particularly when you're moving across the gate.

Above: you really have to work – or use momentum – to get the Emira's tail out; rear grip is prodigious and, besides, lairy oversteer has never been the Lotus way

‘WINDOWS DOWN, A PROPER, ANGRY V6 BARK BOUNCES OFF THE STONEWORK’



Below: Emira design is pure supercar, with distinct hints of Ferrari and McLaren, and is one of its strongest attributes. Toyota's supercharged V6 on the other hand...

It's not ponderous, you just need to be precise and get a feel for its rhythm so that it doesn't baulk. Once you're attuned to it, though, there is a satisfyingly mechanical feel to the engagement of each gear, so that although it's not as slick as a Porsche H-pattern, there is a bit more tactility. It certainly has a distinct character that draws you into the car and its personality.

As does a detail visible in the frameless rear-view mirror. There is a small silver cylinder, with a raised ridge like a Saturn ring around its middle and a simple mechanism that moves a thin metal rod in and out. Some have mistakenly said that it's a throttle linkage, but a few moments watching it shows that it's not in sync with the movements of your right foot. It is in fact a waste valve to protect the supercharger. In an age when most engines reveal few moving parts even with the bonnet up, it is a delight to be able to watch this small part busily doing its thing behind the glass. It's rather like turning over a mechanical watch with a clear case-back and gazing at the escapement. The whole car feels more alive for being able to see it.

After a few miles in Tour, you'll want to tweak the small rocker switch in front of the gearlever and select Sport or even Track. The latter is preferable if only because it brings with it the most legible graphics on the TFT instruments screen, making it easier to see the revs at a glance. This is important because while the supercharger gives instant torque from low revs, it also seems to dilute the crescendo near the rev-limiter, so you need half an eye on the dials if you're going to squeeze the final few rpm from a ratio without running into an electronically imposed stutter.

The lovely thing is that you don't really have to rev it out to make pretty rapid progress. There's superb shove every time you get on the throttle and plenty of flexibility to let you leave it a gear higher in a corner and not feel short-changed.



'THERE'S SUPERB SHOVE EVERY TIME YOU GET ON THE THROTTLE'

Having 394bhp and 310lb ft at your disposal feels like something of a sweet spot; enough to be exciting, but not so much that it feels like you can't use it all.

Digne-les-Bains is where we join the legendary Route Napoléon, and as if to prove our point that this is the sort of road trip that you would want to do with an Emira, we fall into step with a few other British-registered cars. When we stop, I have a nice chat with a Cayman owner who used to work at Lotus about 30 years ago. He and several others enquire as to what the Emira's like, and you can sense the hope that it will be both brilliant and reliable. Plenty of more casual observers ask what it is and on more than one occasion I'm asked if it has 600bhp, confirming that it looks like it should be a league above.

Castellane, scene of many an eCoty food and fuel stop, provides the next waypoint. Despite this car having the firmer of the two fixed-rate suspension options, there is still plenty of compliance in the Emira around towns like this. It doesn't jolt or jar on encountering speed humps or sunken manhole covers. On a couple of more minor roads it seemed to lose its otherwise impeccable composure, but it must have been a particular combination of slower speed and big bumps because on other occasions where I expect it to happen again it is fine. In short, the Sport set-up feels perfectly useable every day.

We make another quick stop for a traveller's affogato (a Magnum and a takeaway espresso) then continue on for the coast. The run from Castellane to Gréolières and on over the Col de Vence is one of my favourite drives anywhere in the world. It has some spectacular scenery in parts but it's the way the road seems to keep you constantly busy that I love. Wide enough to give you room, but tight enough to keep it interesting. The Emira mostly feels fabulous, too. You can really get into a flow with it and there is huge confidence to be had from not only the grip that it generates, but the rate of response to steering inputs. The rack feels ever so slightly slow compared with those of many


LOTUS


LOTUS
V6




EMIRA
FIRST EDITION
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modern cars, but the extra few degrees required to get the same reaction mean that everything feels a touch more considered. Combine that with more roll than you might find in other cars, and it gives you this feeling of time in turns. It's not lazy, it's just calmer.

A few times when pushing a bit harder in the quicker corners you can feel a touch of understeer building, the nose not quite holding the line, but it's quite relaxed and easily managed. The slightly bigger disappointment comes in the tighter corners when you try to really push to the limits. Turn in hard and the front just doesn't seem to support the request, rolling more than you'd want and leaving you with a lack of precision. It's not so much that the grip runs out, just that you don't have much sense of what's happening, with the outside front wheel feeling like it is trying to tuck under. It's not really a car in which you easily unstick the rear end to help matters either, as the grip at the back is prodigious. Unless you have momentum on your side, more throttle will just exacerbate the push at the front. It means the Emira doesn't feel that playful, but then that has often been the way with Lotuses.

We stop for while in the afternoon to take more photos and as we set off again I put the windows down and let the warm, early-evening air rush in. Heading through the famous rock arches on the D2, this reveals a much more appealing side to the Emira's exhaust. Where previously it was mostly crackles on the overrun, the open windows let you hear a proper, angry V6 bark to go with the reports on lift-off. With the soundtrack bouncing theatrically off the stonework it adds another, important dimension to the car.

The final run down the Col de Vence is one I've done many times over the years, mostly in hot hatches and mostly in a tearing rush to get back to Nice airport in time for a flight. It's not a wide road and it's got some terrific technical sections that can catch you out, but the Emira feels right at home. The brakes are tremendous, never showing a hint of fade, and I now feel like I'm in tune with the gearshift, throttle response and steering. The whole car rewards smoothness and feels best when you stop just short of trying to really wring its neck. Carry speed, find the flow and it is very, very satisfying.

The last few miles are done in darkness and it's a relief to find that Lotus hasn't skimped on the headlights. I've driven plenty of otherwise fun cars that appear to have been given budget bulbs to light the way at night. But the Emira's are easy to use, quick to respond and bright enough to make driving in the dark enjoyable. Another tick in a box.

Mind you, there is enough light coming from Monaco that it's a wonder you need lights at all in the hills above. Tomorrow we will head into the famous principality and I think the Emira will look just as at home there as it has felt on the fabulous roads on the way here. It's a car that will sell on appearance alone, but thankfully there is a lot to enjoy about the way it drives as well. The dynamic balance is more planted than playful, which won't be to everyone's taste, but it does feel like a Lotus, which will please an equal number. And this V6 manual also has character and tactility in abundance.

It would be fun to sneak it onto the circuit while we're down there tomorrow, to race around Rascasse and sweep through Sainte Devote. But a track test will have to wait. That anticipation again. But only for a couple more days. Over to you, Jethro… ✖

Lotus Emira

Engine V6, 3456cc, supercharged **Power** 394bhp @ 6000rpm
Torque 310lb ft @ 3500rpm (manual)
Weight c1482kg **Power-to-weight** c270bhp/ton
0-60mph 4.3sec **Top speed** 180mph
Price £79,110 (First Edition)

evo rating ★★★★☆

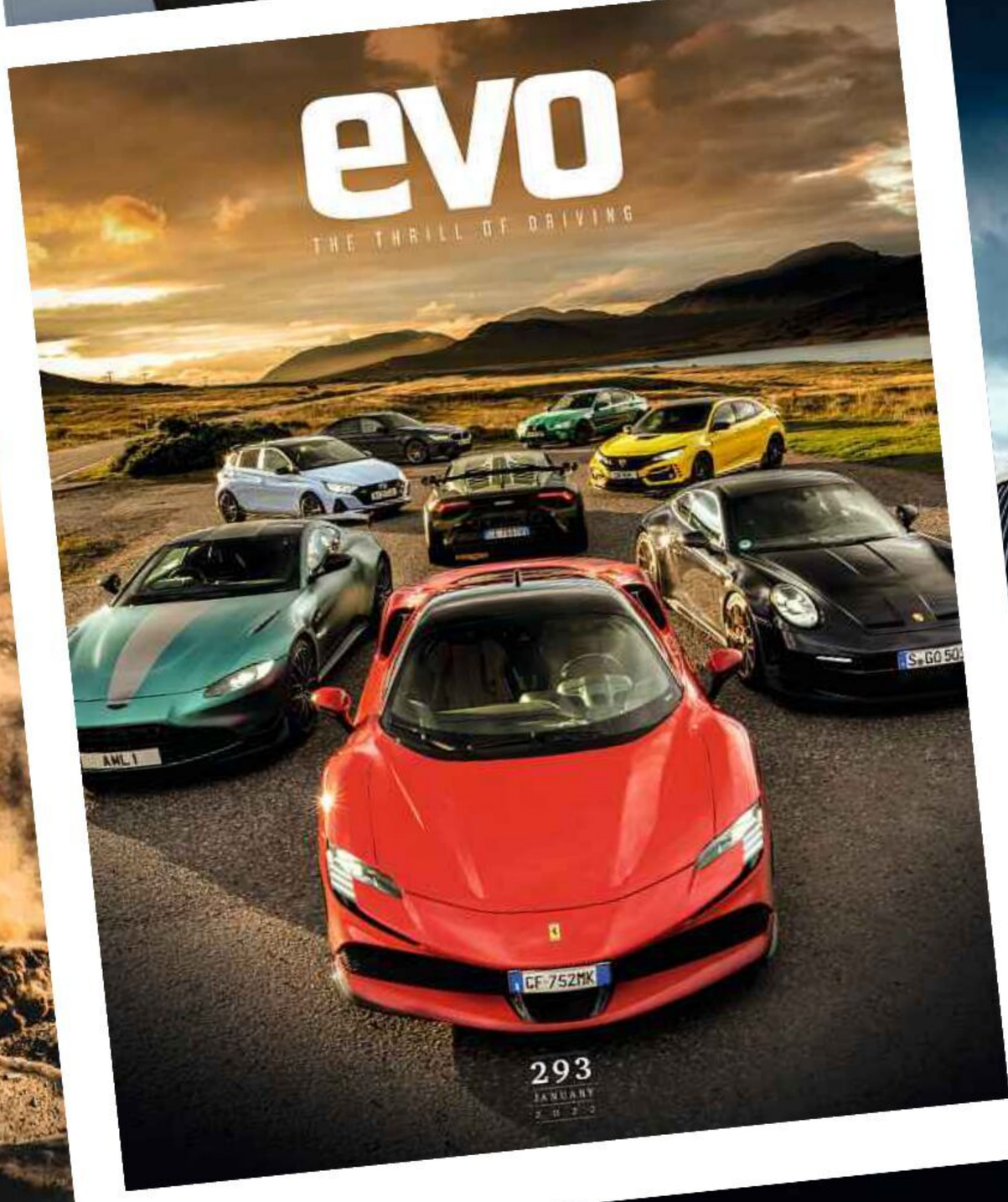



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JULY
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AUGUST
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SPA TR

by RICHARD MEADEN PHOTOGRAPHY *by* GUS GREGORY

EK3

*It's the time of year for getting on track. We start the season in adventurous style by putting a trio of core **evo** machines through their paces around the legendary Spa-Francorchamps circuit*

IF A EUROPEAN ROAD TRIP IS A PETROLHEAD rite of passage, then a road trip to one of the world's greatest race circuits is about as good as it gets. With overland travel back to normal and the trackday season in full swing, we're hitting the open road. Destination Spa-Francorchamps.

Finding track time at Spa isn't difficult. Many of the UK's best trackday companies have slots in their calendars, but on this occasion we're attending an open pitlane day organised by RSR. With an impressive base just outside the circuit gates and a fleet of track-prepared cars available to hire – from Hyundai i30 N to 991.2 GT3 RS – RSR offers more than a dozen dates spread evenly across the year.

So, you're heading to Spa, but what do you take? We wanted to reflect the cars we see readers enjoy at an **evo** trackday rather than simply call the friendliest press office with the juiciest cars. So representing the real(ish) world and today's compact, four-wheel-drive, circa-400bhp hyperhatch/saloon is our Audi RS3 long-termer. At the other end of the spectrum is the latest trackday road car from Porsche, the 718 Cayman GT4 RS. And in the middle, perhaps the sweet spot, is the daily driver that's been tuned to be far more exploitable on track while still remaining useable on the road, here represented by the Life110 Alpine A110. It's a disparate trio that echoes down the ages. Replace the Audi with an Impreza or Evo, the Alpine with an S2 Lotus Exige, and the Cayman with a Gen 2 996 GT3 RS and you have the same mix, rewound by two decades.

We arrive at Spa on Sunday evening in good time for a few beers and dinner. But a pilgrimage to this place also demands a reverential lap of the mighty old Spa road circuit. Ideally punctuated with a pit stop at the Masta Friterie – an evocative if somewhat insalubrious chip shop located on the exit of one of the most fearsome corners in motorsport.

Back in the '70s, Porsche 917s, Ferrari 512s and V12 Matras would approach this spot at the best part of 230mph, shimmying through the Masta Kink at 180mph then onward for the blistering run from Stavelot to the La Source hairpin. The scale, speed and hair-raising nature of this old 8.7-mile public road circuit is jaw-dropping.

Contrary to the forecast, Monday dawns clear. Up in the F1 paddock the Audi and Alpine make a welcome change from the hoards of Porsches and BMWs, but it's the Cayman that's the star. Especially amongst the Porsche owners, who clamour to pore over the car they've read so much about but have yet to see in the metal. I doubt there's a hotter car in the world right now.

This example is optioned with the Weissach and Clubsport packages, with superfluous kit such as the PCM system deleted. It's as hardcore as they come, yet like all Caymans it swallows luggage and looks after its occupants. The four-hour drive from Stuttgart to Spa was no hardship, though the GT4 RS is *vocal* on all but the barest tickle of throttle. Ironically, it's now a bit short-geared for motorway driving, but it still has some reach, with a lunge to an indicated 304kph (189mph) on some derestricted autobahn limbering us up nicely for the fun to come.

With its long straights and speed-sapping inclines, Spa is a power circuit, but such are the challenges of its twists and turns you also need a chassis to make use of it. On paper the 394bhp (and 369lb ft) Audi RS3 has all the stonk you want from its warbling 2.5-litre five-cylinder motor. Combined with an all-wheel-drive system that includes a torque-vectoring rear diff, this miniature supersaloon blends everyday practicality with big-league ballistics.



Above and top right: exploring the old road circuit and partaking in the ritual of frites and mayonnaise. **Right:** Meaden, Pook and Towler sign on and get fully briefed

'THE PILGRIMAGE DEMANDS A REVERENTIAL LAP OF THE OLD SPA ROAD CIRCUIT'

It certainly means business powering down the steep hill from the F1 pitlane exit towards the newly reprofiled Eau Rouge, gravity assistance and the effortless DSG gearshifts making the plunge feel impressively headlong. Our RS3 is fitted with the optional RS Dynamic Pack, which includes carbon-ceramic brakes and adaptive dampers, but being a UK car it doesn't come with the Pirelli P Zero Trofeo R tyres offered as options in other markets. Shame.

Had it been raining we wouldn't have missed the extreme rubber, but in the dry the Bridgestone Potenza Sports don't offer the bite and sidewall stiffness the car deserves and Spa demands. The RS3's contrived agility makes it entertaining on the road when you're shy of the limit, but it doesn't sit so happily with Spa's long corners, the front end unable to sustain the car's eager initial rotation.

You can mitigate this by blending in and out of the throttle, but because the lateral loadings are high and the tyres are immediately working at or beyond their limit, it's tricky to find a fine balance between rear-end yaw and front-end push. The sweet spot proves elusive, at least until you learn that dialling things back to what feels like 80 per cent helps the Audi find its feet. You can't really attack the circuit – something those Trofeo Rs would have helped with – but with discipline it's possible to carry proper speed through the ballsiest corners and slice satisfyingly through the medium-speed sections.

On the plus side, Spa's scale and speed play to the RS3's overall strengths more than a smaller, twistier track. Ironically, I suspect its best chance of shining would be just across the border, with a few tourist laps of the Nürburgring Nordschleife. Next time, perhaps.

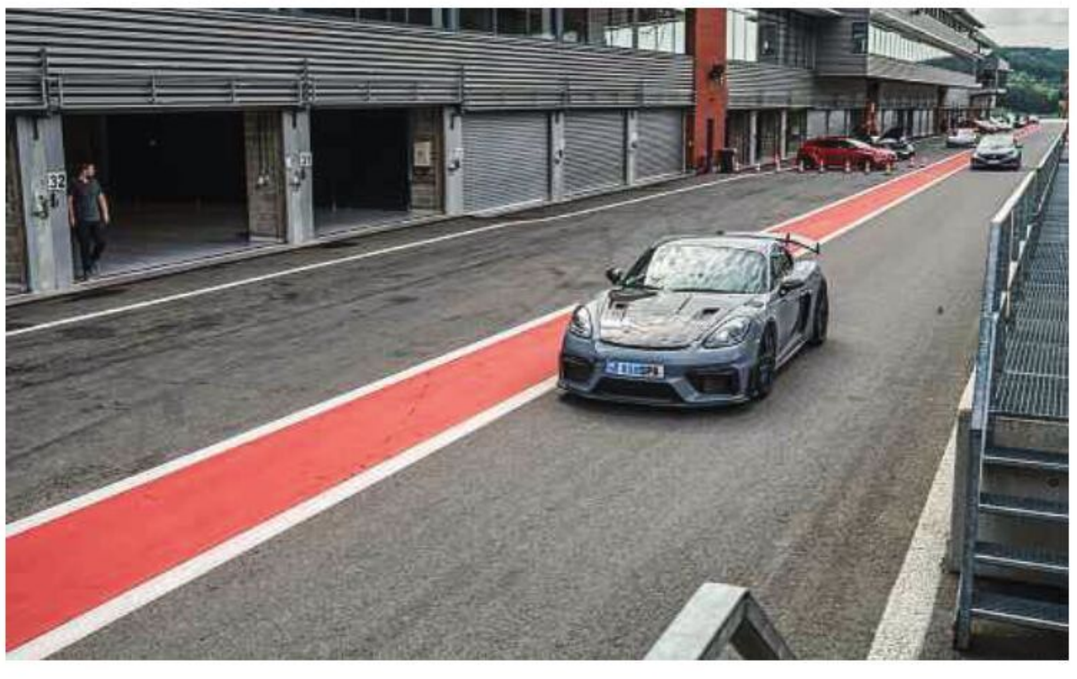
Climbing into our other RS illustrates the gulf between a fast road


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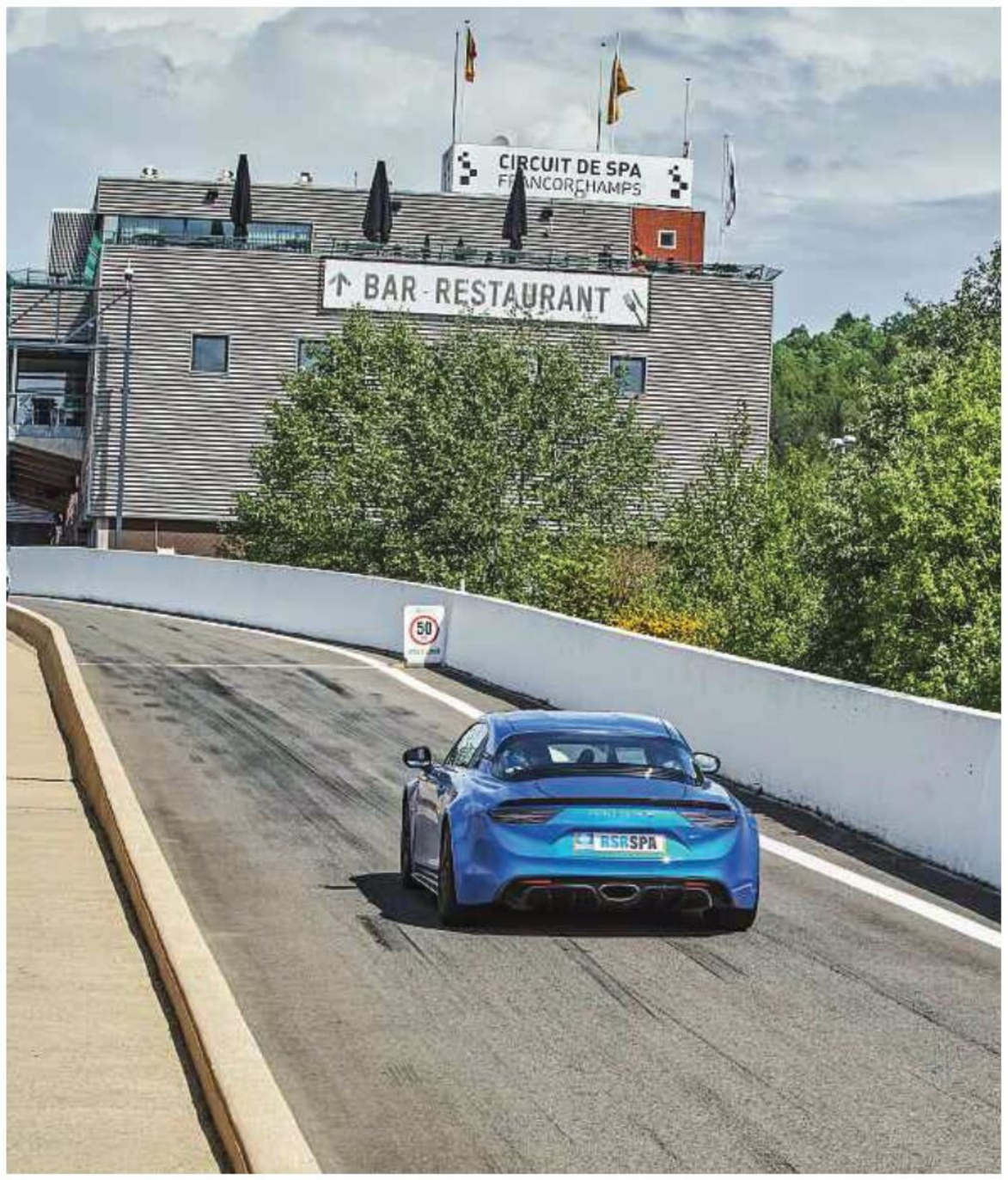







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car such as the Audi and a fast road car optimised for track use. The GT4 RS is truly hardcore. The shorter gearing injects tremendous energy into its actions, and when you open the throttle wide the engine and induction noise is all-consuming. The PDK ’box is a cracker, thanks to the incorporation of some internals from the Clubsport race car. In Sport the shifts are like rifle shots and match the keen edge of the motor perfectly. It seems gratuitous to wind the 493bhp engine round to the red line at every opportunity, but it thrives on such treatment. In a straight line there’s very little in it against the 991 and 992 GT3s.

Above: RS3 struggles to find a rhythm; stickier rubber would help. **Left and far left:** Life110 Alpine is ideally modified for the job in hand, while the GT4 RS proves simply sublime on track

It’s telling that when I decide to pit it’s because I need to calm down, not the car. Motor, gearbox, brakes and chassis all feel entirely happy being worked flat-out for six- or seven-lap stints. Even the tyres – Michelin Cup 2s – shrug off the punishment. Utterly addictive and truly unforgettable, I would venture to say it’s the best road car I’ve ever driven on a racetrack.

And so to the Alpine. We’ve tracked the progress of Life110 since the company first appeared on the scene, but for those of you who don’t know the backstory, here’s a quick summary. The UK-based Alpine tuning company was founded by ex-Jaguar vehicle development engineer David Pook. With the Project 8 on his CV and an E46 CSL and 911 GT3 amongst his back catalogue of personal cars, his connection with the A110 was forged through a combination of ownership and the engineer’s urge to improve things.

The car we have at Spa is Pook’s own. It has done all the development work for his growing range of upgrades and now sports the most focused suite of enhancements yet. Encompassing chassis hardware and geo changes, aero kit, engine and aesthetics, this Track Spec is aimed at owners who want to sharpen their car for trackday use, but don’t want to sacrifice its on-road capabilities.

If you were to fit the whole shebang – that’s to say wheels, tyres, geo set-up, A110S anti-roll bars, super-cool R53 two-way coilover suspension (factoid: R53 kit is also fitted to the GMA T.50), braided brake lines and upgraded pads, aero package and engine upgrade – it would cost £12,000. That’s a substantial amount, but with early A110s on the used market for circa £45k, this means you could have a fully optimised Track Spec Life110 Alpine for less than the price of a new, factory-standard A110S.

The way it tackles Spa’s demanding undulations, technical twists and daunting high-speed curves is a big change from the A110 we fell in love with back in 2018. It punches harder through the gears, summons more grip, corners flatter, feels more stable when you need it to, yet the reinvention is a sympathetic one.

There’s the lightness, of course, both in terms of physical mass and delicacy of control weights, but there’s a freeness to the way this Alpine makes progress that’s genuinely joyful. Yes, it lacks the steely precision and immense control of the GT4 RS, while the pepped-up powertrain doesn’t have the grunt and purposeful vocals of the RS3’s five-pot, but it compensates with a familiar sense of the car flowing across the tarmac rather than clawing into it.

Stepping from the GT4 RS you notice the Alpine moves around a little under braking, and that the tail isn’t as tied down, but through the slow and medium corners it lends the A110 a playfulness that’s fun in those moments where the Porsche is deadly serious and the Audi tends towards flat-footedness. The fast corners are where you’d like a bit more harmony between front and rear, for although the nose is steadfast, that rear-end mobility makes blending out of the throttle through 100mph-plus corners such as Pouhon and Blanchimont a little trickier than ideal. What remains unfailingly impressive about the Life110 Alpine is its effervescence. Spa is a big stage on which to play with 300bhp, but despite its relative lack of stonk, it shines. It’s quick enough that the straights don’t drag, and there’s so much enjoyment to be had from the corners that the satisfaction from the previous one lasts until you’re lining-up for the next.

This A110 sits neatly between the Audi and the Porsche. It follows a well-trodden path that many trackday regulars head down when upgrading their road car for track use, its modifications not extreme enough to render it a hindrance on the road, yet the car feeling special enough to make every trip an occasion.

Speaking of which, if you’ve been putting off a road trip to Spa – or the Ring or any other track for that matter – now is the time to reconsider. Whatever car you drive.















GET ON TRACK

If you're new to trackdays, it pays to listen to the experts. We hear from the guys at RSR

RSR HAS BEEN RUNNING EVENTS AT SPA AND the Nürburgring for more than 20 years, ever since owner Ron Simons (pictured bottom right) started making the trip from his native South Holland to the Ring in one of his Alfa Romeo 75s and began offering trackday hire and tuition. These days his business has grown into a leading proponent of the trackday scene, with bases at Spa, the Ring and elsewhere, an impressive fleet of rental vehicles and a client base from all over the world. Which makes Ron and RSR operations manager Jonathan Chan ideally placed to give anyone new to trackdays some top tips on how to look after your car, your own well-being, and your wallet.

Let's start with you, the driver. 'If you're coming to Spa for the first time,' says Jonathan, 'one of the best things you can do is get an instructor alongside you. You can be confident about what you're doing on the track, and the traffic around you.' RSR provides instructors for either half or full days.

'The biggest problem we see is guys driving outside the limits of the car, the track and themselves – so if you're hiring, we can help with choosing a level of car you're confident in driving. The main bit of kit you need is a crash helmet. You don't need a race suit unless you really want to wear one.'

'And don't drink too much the day before,' quips Ron. 'Generally speaking, trackdays are quite gentlemanly,' says Jonathan. 'It's not a race, there's nothing to win. If you are slower [than the car behind], just lift off the gas a bit [to let them past]. But don't slam on the brakes – that's even worse!'

Clearly, car prep is vital, but it's sometimes overlooked. 'Some guys, particularly we find with those coming from the UK, arrive with worn brakes and tyres,' notes Jonathan. 'They'll be here for two to three days, but by lunchtime on the first day they'll be needing brake pads, and then there's a panic to get them fitted – usually expensively, on a Sunday. So have your car checked over before you come, not six months in advance. Make sure it's all tight underneath, there're no oil or fluids weeping, nothing like a split driveshaft boot. Make sure the oil is topped up. Anything that needs sorting over here is a waste of your track time, so even throwing away a 50 per cent worn tyre will save you money in the long run. If you're doing two days here, bring a second set of tyres or organise to have them here waiting to be fitted. After all, if it starts to rain you'll also want to get home without a problem!'

Ron agrees, adding: 'Refresh your brake fluid and make sure the pads are of a certain thickness. There's a lot of wear and tear of brakes on a circuit, but Spa is not a high brake-wear track like Zolder or Monza. The Nordschleife you don't need much brakes at all, and you don't have that much tyre wear either as it's a natural, flowing track with low-grip tarmac.'

As for car choice, Jonathan has this advice: 'When anyone asks me what the ideal car for a trackday is, I tend to mention something like a Porsche Cayman. You want something that's quite lightweight, so it's easier on tyres and brakes.'

'The best car is so personal,' adds Ron, 'and is very different from the Ring to Spa. At the Ring you don't need a fast car, the track is so fast down the hill anything will run 120mph easily, so you can get into a lot of trouble. So the best bang for buck is a Clio or Mégane RS, or an M2 or Cayman, but even those [latter two] are already very fast for a beginner. At Spa you can learn the track in two hours, what gear to be in, and then you can push a bit, and the track is very forgiving so you can make a mistake and only go slower, as opposed to the Ring where you will need to replace the guardrail afterwards. So at Spa everyone can drive a GT3 – you may not use it to its full potential, but if that's what you want to do you can [hire one from us and] do it. We have everything from a Twingo RS to an LMP car.'

Most of RSR's fleet is run on road tyres to make them more forgiving for beginners. Their BMW M2s, for example, use Michelin Super Sports and standard discs, but with an endurance brake pad that gives longer life but doesn't generate the sort of heat that can easily warp a disc. However, adds Jonathan, 'You can't drive an M2 like a Porsche Cup car. You have to drive to the level of the car and not over it.' It's a good piece of advice for anyone taking their own road car.

RSR get around 250 miles per set of tyres on one of their rental Mégane RSs, with brake pads lasting 500-600 miles. A disc change is carried out after the third pad change. With the 911 GT3s, the tyres last about the same amount of time, with pads making only 400-500 miles. As a general rule, the company believes their costs are £2-3 per trackday mile for one of the Renaults, rising from there. They'll inspect the car before every time it goes out, which means some cars are examined almost daily. And while they stick to the makers' oil change schedule, they're regularly checking and changing the brake fluid.



ATTENDEE'S VIEW

MELVIN SPEAR

PORSCHE (964) 911 CARRERA CUP

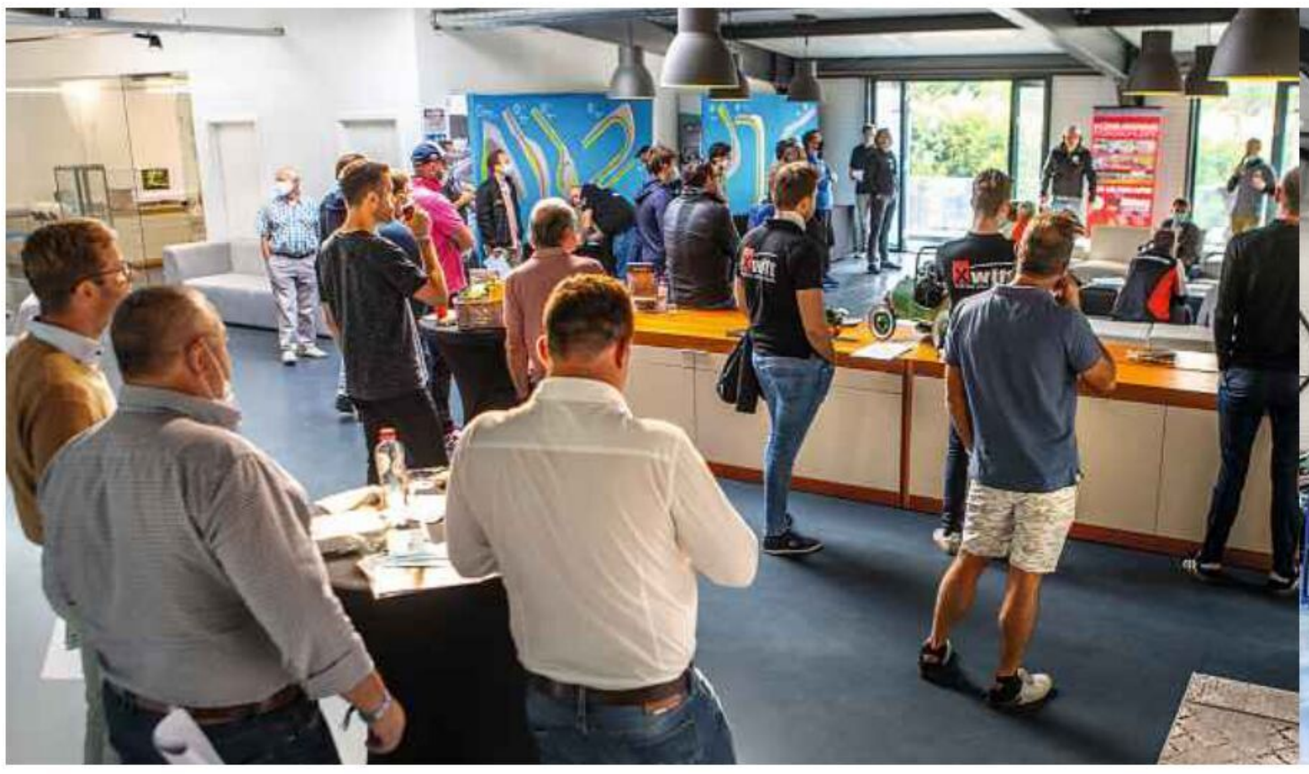
'I'm from England and I've owned this 964 Cup car since 2001, but I've been attending trackdays since 1994. I've probably done them every year since then – in the Noughties maybe doing 1000 miles a year, just on track. I've lost count of how many times I've driven here [Spa], maybe 15-20 times?

'The good things about driving at Spa is that you're never sure what the weather is going to be like, it's a mega fast track, and it's good to give this car some beans. I was getting 220kph [137mph] into Eau Rouge – I don't think I could get that anywhere in England.

'My advice for a trackday newcomer is get an instructor. Or at least get a passenger ride with someone who knows what they're doing and isn't showing off, and you'll learn something. And don't worry about falling off. There's a certain amount of self-preservation; everyone's worried about damaging their car, but you won't.

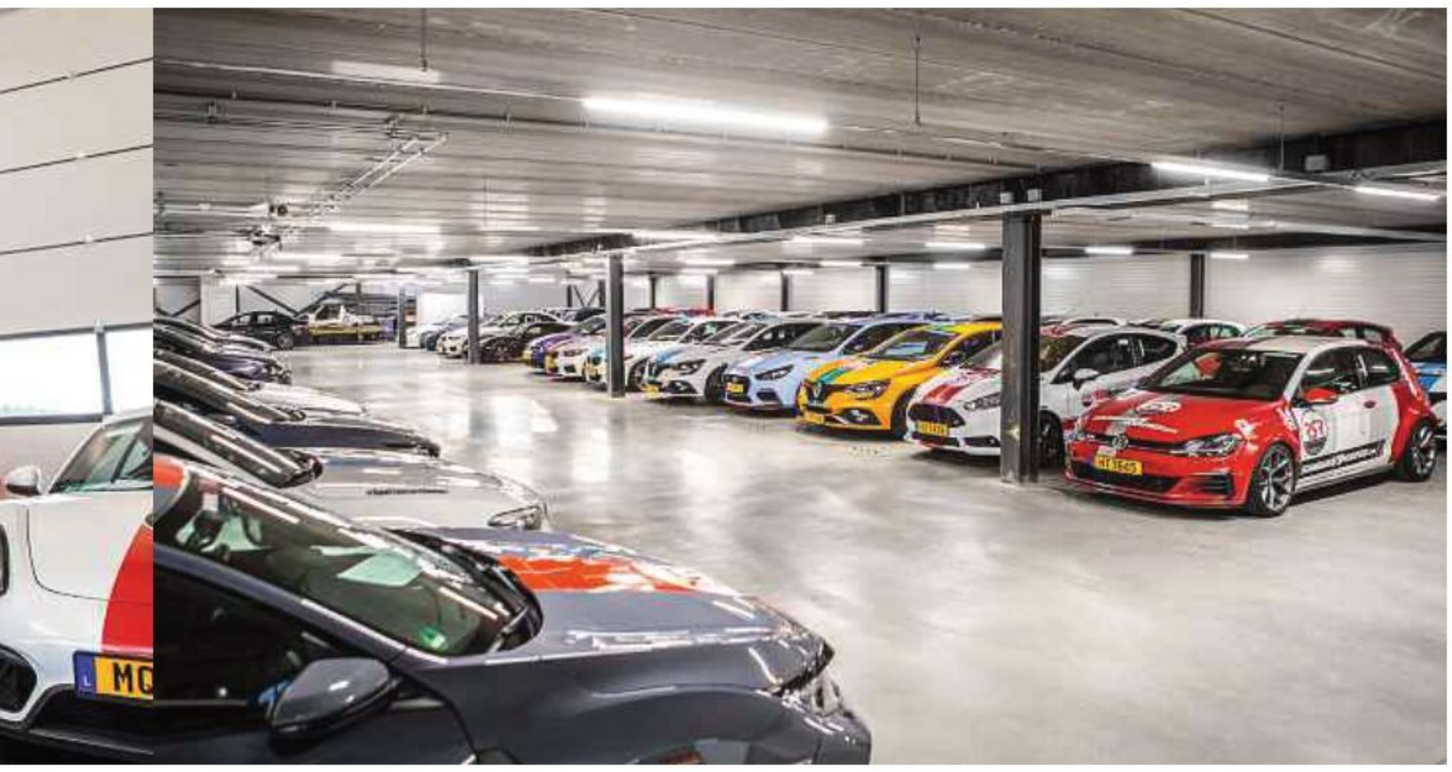
'I had a 964 Carrera 4, and an instructor said I'd got to the end of the car, and had I considered an RS? I went looking for one but came across this car instead, and I've competed in hill climbs and speed events as well as trackdays for many years. It also happens to be an appreciating asset, so that's a bonus!'






MQ 9065





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V90 DEG

by JETHRO BOVINGDON & STEVE SUTCLIFFE
PHOTOGRAPHY *by* DEAN SMITH & ASTON PARROTT

THE NEED FOR SPEED

We take a prime selection of fabulous driver's cars to Anglesey in search of the hottest possible laps, culminating in an attack on the road car record with the sensational SF90 Stradale


STO
GJ 830DM

LAMBORGHINI HURACÁN STO & CATERHAM SEVEN 420 CUP

The STO and 420 Cup are two very different ways to get your trackday thrills, both delivering the purest performance possible, as Jethro Bovingdon discovers

IT'S THE FERRARI'S DAY. THE ITALIAN CREW BUZZ around the SF90 with tyre pressure monitors, and leaf blowers to cool the brakes and reduce heat soak into the hubs, and they hoist it into the air for new carbonfibre wheels (£14,000 a set) and Cup 2 R tyres after every session. It's fascinating and the commitment is admirable. Ferrari is a car manufacturer, but at its heart it's still a race team. Enzo would approve.

By comparison, support for the Lamborghini Huracán STO and Caterham Seven 420 Cup is more understated. Each car has two handlers but they're present to answer questions and just in case there's a mechanical or electrical gremlin. Neither car is plugged in, jacked up or taken into a shuttered garage at any point. In many ways, they feel like the undercard to the main event. The support band playing to a crowd still filtering in, buying drinks and meandering from place to place to find their perfect spot to witness the superstar to follow.

Yet even as the Ferrari warps around the circuit, literally leaping out of corners and piling on speed in a frankly alien, frightening manner, the STO and 420 Cup pull the crowd from the pit-wall down into the pitlane the moment their engines fire. Compared with the SF90, these are simple cars. The 420 Cup is simple compared with any car. But they have a magnetism. They're headliners in their own right.

Of course, a 5.2-litre V10-powered supercar and a raucous, highly tuned four-cylinder Seven could scarcely be more different. In terms of mass, weight distribution, driving position, power and torque, control weights and gearbox operation they're worlds apart. What they share is crucial, though. Each is absolutely focused on performance and creating a unique and unforgettable driving experience. Most of all, they challenge the person holding the steering wheel rather than acting on algorithms and mu calculations and powertrain strategies. Oh, and they really love to rev. They're trackday cars, pure and simple. This isn't a comparison test. It's a celebration.

A celebration. In the past, this term has been used to placate PRs who don't want their car to be thrown into a group test against a 'rival' that is too good/cheap/expensive (delete as applicable). And you might think Lamborghini had placed some stringent terms to our loan, especially as the STO is photographed here with a Caterham costing from £55,000. The STO costs £260,012 without an option. However, for once 'celebration' means just that. There are conclusions to be drawn but none is more important than the simple fact that these are very special cars. Even better, it takes less than a lap in either to know you're in the presence of greatness.

Earlier in the day, all of our cars rolled onto the weighing scales one-by-one, each brimmed with fuel. The Lamborghini, despite its one-piece carbonfibre front clamshell, thin glass and total lack of sound deadening came in at 1548kg (Lamborghini claims 1339kg 'dry'), with a 41.6/58.4 front/rear weight distribution. It's best to think of the STO as 'lightened' rather than truly lightweight, then. Luckily it has 631bhp at 8000rpm and 417lb ft of torque to push it along. With the rear wing set to maximum rake, Lamborghini also claims the STO produces 420kg of downforce at 174mph.

We could have probably lifted the £54,990 420 Cup onto the weighing pads rather than rolling up the metal ramps. With 33 litres (23.7kg) of fuel on board it comes in at 578kg, shared 49.1/50.9 between the front and rear axles. Its 2-litre Duratec engine produces 210bhp and 150lb ft and it drives through a six-speed Sadev sequential gearbox and limited-slip differential. It's also fitted with very sticky Avon ZZR tyres. Downforce? Depends how much the driver weighs…

There are other numbers to interrogate. Peak speeds, minimum apex speeds, lateral G force and overall lap times. They can wait. In the STO there is no time to think beyond the





‘YOU SIT OVER THE REAR WHEELS, THE TINY STEERING WHEEL DANCING IN YOUR HANDS’

next gearshift, the next braking point, the next time you feel the nose lock onto line and the rear follow obediently before it gently, inevitably, deliberately starts to adopt yaw. The ‘U’ word has been levelled at Lamborghini perhaps more than any other sports- or supercar manufacturer, but the STO is a whole different animal. Slow corners or fast, it wants to oversteer.

The sharp, on-the-nose balance seems perfectly suited to a car that is ferocious in every sense. And, my god, that V10 is almost overwhelmingly exciting. Response is instant, the noise pure and brutally loud, and yet the delivery is wonderfully precise. The engine’s character is mirrored in the whole experience. The STO can feel shockingly violent on the one hand, but the quality and accuracy just below the befuddling sensory overload provides absolute control. Intimidation becomes confidence almost like a light switch.

The seven-speed dual-clutch gearbox is a perfect match for the V10. Shifts are fast and the paddles beautifully responsive, as is the quick, fixed-rate steering and the quite stupendous Brembo CCM-R brakes. The STO just does what you ask of it. No lag, no delay. At times this can make the car feel just a little jumpy. Usually when a small steering correction is required. It’s generally smaller than you think, and when grip comes back, the car obeys your mistake. Within a few laps those errors disappear and the STO just flows. It really does have the most delicious balance.

Despite competition-car looks and Bridgestone tyres marked ‘Race’ the STO is not one of those cars that has mechanical grip to blow your mind. The Bridgestones don’t look as extreme as the benchmark Cup 2, let alone the near-slick 2 R, but they’re a crucial part of the STO’s expertly judged balance between power and grip. The data reveals that the STO’s corner speeds are almost identical to those of the 911 GT3 Touring running P Zero Corsa tyres. We know the 992 GT3 has very good grip and stability so that’s a strong result. Better still, in the middle of the corner you have an extra 128bhp to play with and a chassis that allows stunning accuracy once the rear tyres are over-speeding. It’s an absolute riot.

Almost unbelievably, the Caterham is just as exciting, even more challenging and has a bizarrely similar balance: the front is nailed on line and the rear is completely dictated by throttle inputs. Of course, it requires a little more dedication to reach this point than most cars. Even a luminous Lamborghini. First, you need to climb onto the top of the (optional) roll-cage. Now dangle legs through and lower yourself down, pausing to stand on the seat and then wriggling legs into the footwell until you’re clamped into position between transmission tunnel and the outer bodywork. Click the steering wheel into position, fasten the four-point harness and you’re ready to go. At this point it really stings if you’ve left the keys in the kitchen…

The sequential ’box is easy to use but does require confidence and a bit of brute force. From neutral (signified on a small digital read-out), depress the clutch and tug firmly back on the lever. You’ll feel a clunk and the hard, flat tone of the engine will drop just a little. Pulling away is easy. The engine might have over 100bhp per litre but it’s plenty torquey enough to get the featherweight Caterham rolling without any throttle input at all. Now it’s just a matter of pulling hard for upshifts or slamming the lever forwards for downshifts. There’s no

clutch required on the way up but don't expect auto-blip here. Learn to heel-and-toe or expect to spin. Frequently.

The 420 Cup is based on the top-level Seven Championship UK 420R racer, only with a bump in power from 180bhp to 210bhp and unique adjustable Bilstein dampers. There are 10 clicks and today they're set to 9 all around. This is pretty much identical to the racer's fixed-rate set-up, and it feels just about perfect from the moment I pull out of the pits. Although that realisation is at first completely drowned by the sudden sense of space. Anglesey is huge! Where before I'd try to nibble some inside kerb on the lap's second corner, a 180-degree right-hander, in the 420 Cup I can put the whole car on it should I want. Every corner suddenly has endless scope for new lines and can be straightened out so easily.

The Caterham's slight build is such a boon, amplified by the fact you can see exactly where the front wheels are on the track, and enhanced by masses of mechanical grip and wonderfully responsive steering. The Seven is way more physical to drive than the Lamborghini but the weight of the controls never manifests as reluctance. Input and output are perfectly matched. And, just as in the STO, you are bombarded with information. You sit over the rear wheels, the side-exit exhaust bellowing just to your right, the tiny steering wheel dancing in your hands. Everything is high energy, almost overwhelmingly so. Yet very quickly your senses emerge from a state of emergency and tune into the key messages. Just as with the STO, after a very brief period of acclimatisation the 420 Cup's frantic capability brings an eerie sense of calm.

And, once you're on top of it, the Caterham is utterly sublime. The front has so much grip and if you're confident to really lean on it on turn-in, the rear is instantly alive. Measure the power correctly and you'll sense the car pivoting, almost as if it's about to slide into oversteer. But as there's so little weight to contain and so much grip on hand, the 420 Cup simply stays neutral and allows full throttle unnaturally early. It's a fantastic feeling, the Caterham just on the edge but never tripping over it.

Get more aggressive and you can create a bigger oversteer angle, yet the car still finds amazing drive and it barely slows you down. Mixing this much precision with such adjustability is rare, and when you add the noise, the sights and sounds and the physical effort to really make this car fly, there's nothing quite as intense and rewarding. Coming back onto the pit straight, one hand catching a slide, the other grabbing an upshift just as the rear wheels start to clatter over the exit kerbing, I'm not sure I've ever felt so heroic in a car. Sounds silly, but this Caterham is just absurdly enjoyable, intense and creates unforgettable moments on every single lap.

Fast, too. At the fastest point on the circuit the Cup is only doing 119.6mph to the STO's 142.2mph, but it claws back so much time through every turn. For example, its minimum speed through the first corner is 75.2mph to the STO's 66.4mph. It's almost 10mph faster through one of the later turns, too, and although the braking points are very similar across the lap, the Caterham always needs to shed less speed and can get back on the power earlier.

In the final reckoning the lap times are just 4/10ths apart. The Lamborghini clocks a 1:12.7 to the Caterham's 1:12.3. I suspect I could do 100 laps and still not shave much from the STO's time but there's clearly more to be had in the 420 Cup. If I'd have hooked up all my best sectors there was a 1:11.8 on the table. Incredible for a car with 210bhp. As it is, the 420 Cup matched the Ariel Atom 3.5R – a car that also weighs circa 550kg, features a paddleshift sequential 'box and has 310bhp. It's a mighty performance.

There's normally a clear favourite at this point, but not this time. I can't recommend either car highly enough. **JB**




GJ 830DM
STO
7
GRZ 737


UK
AU22 BUV

LOTUS EMIRA

It impressed on our road trip to Monaco; how will it fare on track?

FOR A MAN WHO CYCLES UP MOUNTAINS OF HIS OWN FREE will and lives on a diet of chocolate chip cookies and double chocolate chip cookies, Henry, at times, shows remarkable wisdom. Towards the end of his Emira road trip (p64) he said: 'The whole car rewards smoothness and feels best when you stop just short of trying to really wring its neck.'

You can decide for yourself if that sounds like your sort of sports car, but it certainly doesn't sound like a recommendation for a new trackday hero. Even so, I'm excited as the Emira emerges from Anglesey's pitlane and the track unravels ahead. It's a new Lotus. It *has* to be good.

The feel-good factor is high. Lotus has nailed the overall look and feel of the interior. Grasping the lovely, cool manual gearshifter and with the brawny V6 thumping the Emira along at a fair old lick even at low revs as the fluids warm through, it's hard to believe Lotus has made something that feels so fresh, new and desirable for so little money. There's plenty of junior Ferrari about the Emira, and that can only be good.

The squared-off steering wheel detracts slightly. I can live with the shape but the thickness of the rim combined with the physical weight of the rack combine to erode the sense of delicacy that comes through the supple, relaxed chassis. There's more inertia than expected.

This car rides on Sport suspension but comes with the less aggressive Goodyear F1 tyres fitted as standard on the Tour-spec car. Lotus felt the combination would be best for Henry's drive, as they feared he might run into bad weather over the Alps-Maritime. On a dry day at Anglesey we crave the Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2s that should be fitted to a Sport model. Lotus couldn't support our track activity with tech back-up or Cup 2s, but has said it will be able to do so at a later date.

We crave greater precision and urgency in other areas, too. The six-speed manual gearbox can't be rushed. Try to snick through an upshift from second to third in a hurry and, more often than not, you'll get a nasty graunch and no gear. I can't think of a manual 'box fitted to any production car that would be trickier to manage on a circuit.

Lotus has done wonders with the humble Toyota V6 that's been a staple of the Exige and Evora in recent years, injecting character and volume into a unit that was never engineered to have much of either. Spectators at Anglesey would probably think it's one of the world's great engines as the Emira zips around the track emitting a deep, hard-edged note that would make a Ferrari F8 Tributo owner jealous. The drama is less intense inside and so is the performance. The Emira feels quick but doesn't rev as freely as you'd like, and it's all too easy to hit the limiter, which kicks in at just 6800rpm. It's a decent engine but not a source of joy.

More curious still is the Emira's reluctance around Anglesey's corners. Henry's right that it's a car you can't really attack with, but even when treated with kid gloves the chassis doesn't find equilibrium. There's not enough precision on turn-in and the front washes into understeer. More throttle just pushes the front tyres further off line. Approach the corner differently with aggressive trail-braking and the rear seems to fall into messy, time-consuming oversteer. Lotus generally makes cars that reward a very neat style, but in this instance that sweet spot is elusive.

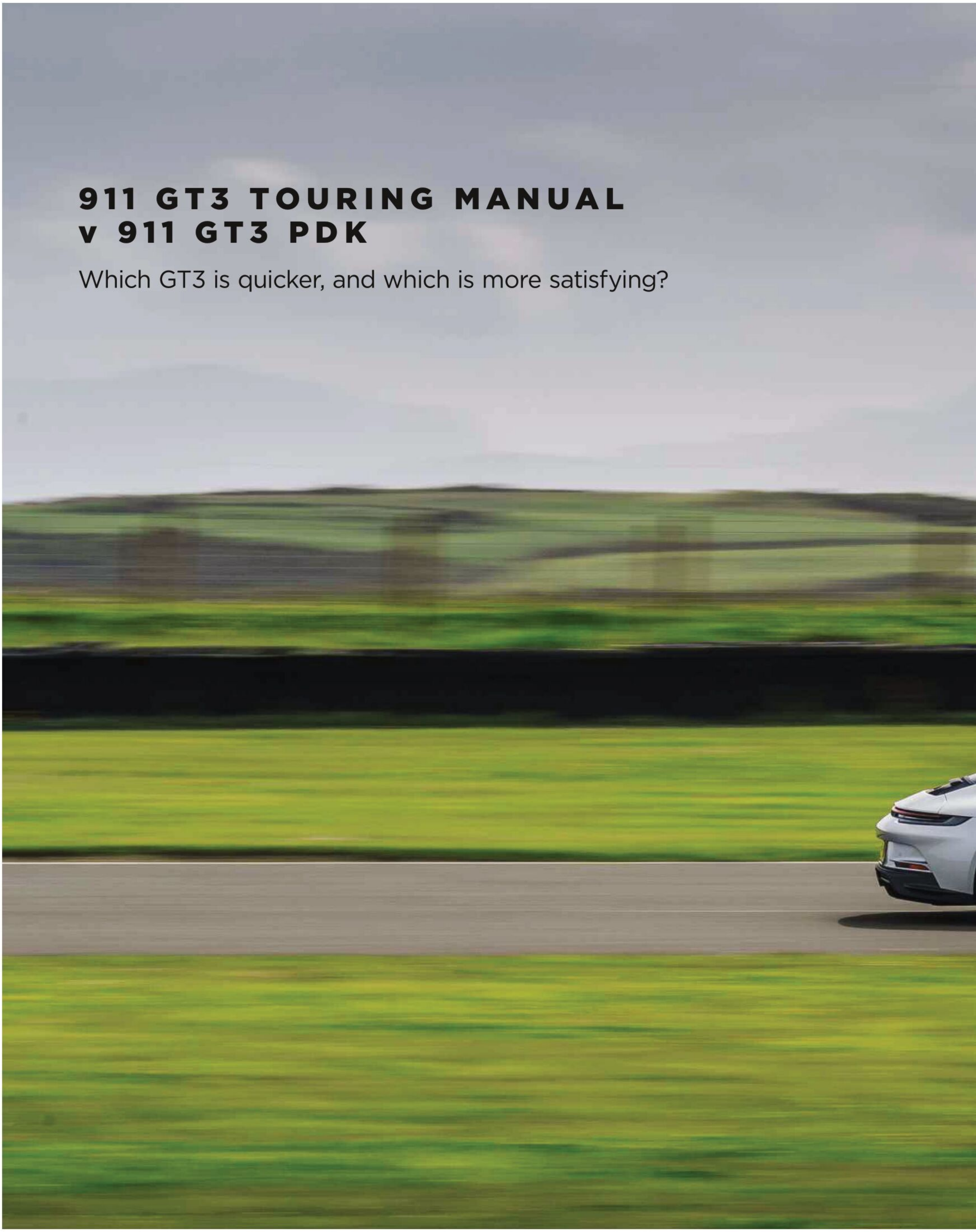
Perhaps it's me. I'm just having an off-day? But no. John Barker and Steve Sutcliffe experience the same reluctance to hit an apex and the same sense that the Emira is lacking control. Steve looks a little shocked. 'Why does it feel so heavy?' he asks (it actually tips our scales at 1486kg, with more than 60 per cent of the weight – more than in a 911 GT3 – over the rear axle). John is equally perplexed. 'The prototype that Dickie drove [**evo** 296] was flat mid-slide, settled and balanced, a willing accomplice. This car doesn't feel at all like that car looked. It's a wrestling match.'

Even so, the lap time is a respectable 1:18.5 and with the Cup 2s that would surely improve by a significant margin. It's not a million miles behind a 991.1 Carrera (1:17.9) and in the ballpark. If only extracting the time was a more enjoyable process. Perhaps the Sport chassis and Goodyear tyres just don't mix? It's possible. However, we can only report on what we find, and this Emira just did not work on track and had some fundamental issues that would surely detract on road, too. John's succinct summation is telling and gets to the heart of the matter: 'This Lotus feels like a car *before* it's been to Lotus, the raw clay waiting for that sprinkling of magic.' **JB**



911 GT3 TOURING MANUAL v 911 GT3 PDK

Which GT3 is quicker, and which is more satisfying?



ARGUMENTS RAGE. TO WING OR NOT TO WING? To change or not to change? Proponents of either camp fiercely extol the virtues of their chosen philosophy. The question of GT3 vs Touring and manual vs PDK is not something, realistically, one should lose sleep over. However, I love how it's come to symbolise some sort of philosophical war that purists and enthusiasts can wage over pints in the pub, on Twitter or internet forums, and – for the lucky ones – in their own minds before speccing their new Porsche GT3. A sane person with no real skin in the game would surmise this hand-wringing is absurd. Of course, there's no time for sanity here.

So here we have two GT3s that represent each side of this dilemma. In the Dolomite Silver corner is a GT3 Touring fitted with a manual six-speed gearbox. In the White corner, also hailing from Flacht, is a GT3 wearing all its battle finery and a seven-speed PDK 'box. Our scales reveal that the Touring, brimmed with fuel, is 1458kg and the PDK comes in at 1472kg. The weight advantage would be more substantial still, but the Touring has standard iron discs as opposed to the GT3's optional ceramics hiding behind those black rims.

In simple terms the PDK model should simply eke out time every time a gearshift is required. Not only is the dual-clutch 'box faster than me at the physical act of shifting, but a shorter final drive ratio (4.19 versus 3.96) means the gears are more tightly stacked, too. In short, the PDK is phenomenally fast and gives greater access to the really juicy part of the rev-range.

However, whilst this should be a tale of two gearboxes, there's another factor at play. The Touring model is on Pirelli P Zero Corsa tyres, whilst the PDK car is fitted with Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 rubber. If we had to guess we'd say that the



‘THE MANUAL TOURING ACCELERATES FASTER OUT OF TURNS THANKS TO BETTER TRACTION’



PDK car has a tyre advantage here. Ceramic brakes, greater downforce, higher performance tyres and that incredibly effective 'box – it appears to hold all the aces.

I'm afraid there are other extenuating circumstances. Our schedule was packed and although the SF90 was at Anglesey to do a Ferrari-style lap-time blitz and came with dozens of sets of tyres, fuel that would make your eyeballs melt at 30 paces and two full days to extract the ultimate time, the GT3 comparison was a simpler affair: jump in, do two timed laps, move on to the next car. Also, the Touring's tyres were box fresh for our loan but the PDK car's Michelins looked to have covered a couple of thousand road miles before they got to us. Think of these times as a snapshot rather than empirical data.

On the out lap there's so much rubber pick-up on the Michelins that the car feels lumpy and vibrations thrum back through the structure. Cleaning them up and getting heat into them takes two full laps and it's quite a shock how low grip levels are when the tyres are cold. The GT3 just wants to understeer or, should you trail-brake, fall immediately into oversteer. By contrast, the fresher Pirellis need no such ceremony. Grip levels are good immediately and they inspire confidence. The standard brakes feel better, too, the pedal firmer, with a shorter, more linear travel. I've never felt ceramics quite as inconsistent on a Porsche. They bite hard… eventually… but the unnaturally long pedal makes measuring out the retardation very tricky and I often trigger the ABS on corner entry, further eroding confidence.

Even so, the PDK car does post a quicker time. Its 1:12.8 is a full seven-tenths quicker than the manual Touring and, despite the older tyres and braking issues, faster than a 991.1 GT3 RS and half a second up on the 991.2 GT3 fitted with a PDK 'box. On Cup 2 Rs (or just fresh Cups) that time would fall significantly. The data bears out the feeling that this car is slightly compromised. The manual Touring accelerates faster out of turns thanks to better traction and holds that advantage along the more significant straights, reaching a peak speed of 141.8mph to the PDK's 139.4mph. In fact, all of the PDK's time is found in the slower, busier sections as it grabs downshifts in places you wouldn't dream of doing in the manual and gets more torque to the rear wheels.

Despite all the compromises, the results are what you'd expect: PDK beats manual. What the times can't convey is the different feel of the cars. For me, the no-lift shifts of the manual are fantastically exciting and mastering the downshift (should you turn off the auto-blip function) is hugely satisfying. If that costs a few tenths then it's a price I'm happy to pay. I also like the feel of the mechanical differential fitted to the manual car. In theory it increases understeer on corner entry and doesn't have such powerful lock-up characteristics. In practice it feels a little 'rougher' but also more natural. This is purely a taste thing and clearly both have their advantages. I'll mix and match – a GT3 with a wing and three pedals. But I wouldn't fight you if you wanted to go the other way. **JB**

FERRARI SF90 STRADALE

It disappointed at eCoty. It doesn't disappoint here...

YOU NEED TO GET YOUR IMAGINATION IN THE right place before attempting any kind of a quick lap in the SF90. Because, to be honest, even just the idea of 'pushing it' in this car is a little bit terrifying.

It does have 1000 PS (or 987bhp) after all. I won't go back over its specification in too much detail here because we've already written about it several times previously. But the bits that matter most are as follows: it has one 4-litre V8 engine, two turbochargers, three electric motors and eight forward gears. It also has carbon-ceramic brakes, generates 390kg of downforce and costs half a million pounds as optioned. Oh yes, and it can accelerate from 0 to 124mph (200kph) in the same time it takes a McLaren F1 to do 0-100mph.

So it's quite fast. But according to our scales it also weighs 1742kg (Ferrari only quotes a dry weight of 1570kg). So it's heavy as well as vein-detonatingly rapid, which means it also carries a fair amount of inertia around with it. Especially when you are pushing it. The accident you could have in the SF90 could therefore be massive and go on for a very long time indeed if you went off in the wrong place at Anglesey. Correction, if you went off anywhere at Anglesey.

And by 'pushing it' I don't just mean opening it up a bit down the straights and seeing what it can do in the corners, then timing it over a couple of laps against the stopwatch. I mean leaning on it hard enough to get a lap time that the eight-strong brigade of Ferrari engineers and PR people who are here today will be happy with. Given that they've turned up with a truck that contains three different types of tyres – including grenade-spec Cup 2 Rs that are good for two laps, and two laps only, they say – it's obvious they aren't here to muck about.

More worrying still, they've got a simulation time for the SF90 around the Coastal Circuit that's been established back at the factory on a computer. So they know precisely how fast it *should* go, assuming the conditions are perfect. And guess what, just for once at Anglesey, they are. The sun is out, the





sky is blue, there's not a cloud to spoil the view and… it's not so much raining in my heart as pounding with a heady mix of anxiety and adrenaline-fuelled excitement as I climb aboard for my first timed run.

I did some exploratory laps earlier on regular Cup 2s to try to work out what the car can do – and what I can't. But that was just experimenting with it, to be honest. Seeing how much throttle it can take here, working out if it's quicker to short-shift in certain places to avoid bonfiring the rear tyres out of certain corners – something it will do readily even in fifth gear if there's some load in the outside rear tyre. And that's despite it being four-wheel drive courtesy of the 200-plus horsepower that's intermittently fed to the front axle via the electric motors whenever the car's main brain thinks drive is required at the front wheels.

Even just working out how much kerb it can handle on the entry, apex and exits of all the corners takes quite a while to establish, because there are all sorts of variations to play with at Anglesey, some of which the SF deals with very well, some of which it does not. The trouble is the amount of torque it has. On some of the fruitier exit kerbs you need to be careful with the throttle to avoid a 'yours-mine-yours' exit technique, whereas on the smoother kerbs you can give it everything in third or fourth gear and, with a bit of luck, it just sticks. The resulting traction and acceleration it can then produce is spectacular.

It also takes patience and yet more laps to suss which engine and chassis modes to use for a fast lap. Not for the juice setting, because you want as much as possible at all times, but rather for the ESP and TC systems. The engineers say to use Qualify mode for the motor and CT-off for the chassis, which means full beans and no traction control but still a small amount of stability control. I'm fairly sure that switching the whole lot off and hanging on tight would be faster, eventually, maybe. But it's so damn easy to light the rear tyres up in any of the first five gears, it's actually quite nice to have a small bit of safety net to fall back upon. Even one that has quite big holes in it.

Whatever the quickest mode may be (I go for the factory recommendation in the end) one thing becomes clear during my exploratory laps in the SF90. This is *not* the same car we drove in Scotland last year for our eCoty contest, in which the Ferrari finished flat last. It feels like a completely different car. Why? Because unlike the one we drove in Scotland, this one has the optional Assetto Fiorano pack fitted which, amongst other things, brings very different Multimatic dampers that aren't electronically actuated and make the whole car feel far more natural in its responses. It's also slightly lighter and has more downforce than the eCoty car, plus it's not raining at Anglesey, when it did some of the time in Scotland.

Anyway, back in the pitlane with the 'correct' SF90, and with all the other stuff mostly worked out in my head, I climb back in, heart thumping, eyes on stalks, belts done up tighter than an **evo** editorial budget, with a shiny new set of Cup 2 Rs fitted. To get these up to the right temperature and pressures, the Ferrari techs ask me to do two slow laps with no aggressive inputs, then to come back in. The SF feels lovely even on the warm-up laps. Back in the pits they then

Above: SF90 feels absolutely mighty around Anglesey, thanks in no small part to the fitment of the Assetto Fiorano pack to this particular car

check and drop the pressures a touch, then the main man gives me a thumbs up and says the magic words with a great big smile across his chops. 'Time to push,' he says. 'And to enjoy!'

Even on the out lap the SF90 feels different, with a snap to its steering response that simply wasn't there on the regular Cup 2s. It also has more grip, everywhere, and more bite from its brakes. The whole car feels primed and ignited in a way that it hasn't quite up to this point. And on the flying laps it feels absolutely incredible, at which point everything about the SF90 crystallises and makes perfect sense. Its purpose – to simply cover ground as fast and as efficiently as possible – becomes blindingly clear. And I have to admit, I fall in love with it completely at this moment.

There isn't a huge amount of feel on offer from any of its controls in a traditional sense. The steering is super-light and super-precise, allowing me to put the nose pretty much exactly where I want in any corner. But the joy comes purely from the speed it can carry into and through the turn, and from the severity with which it stops for those corners. Whatever 'feel' there is, it's negligible, but to be honest it doesn't really matter.

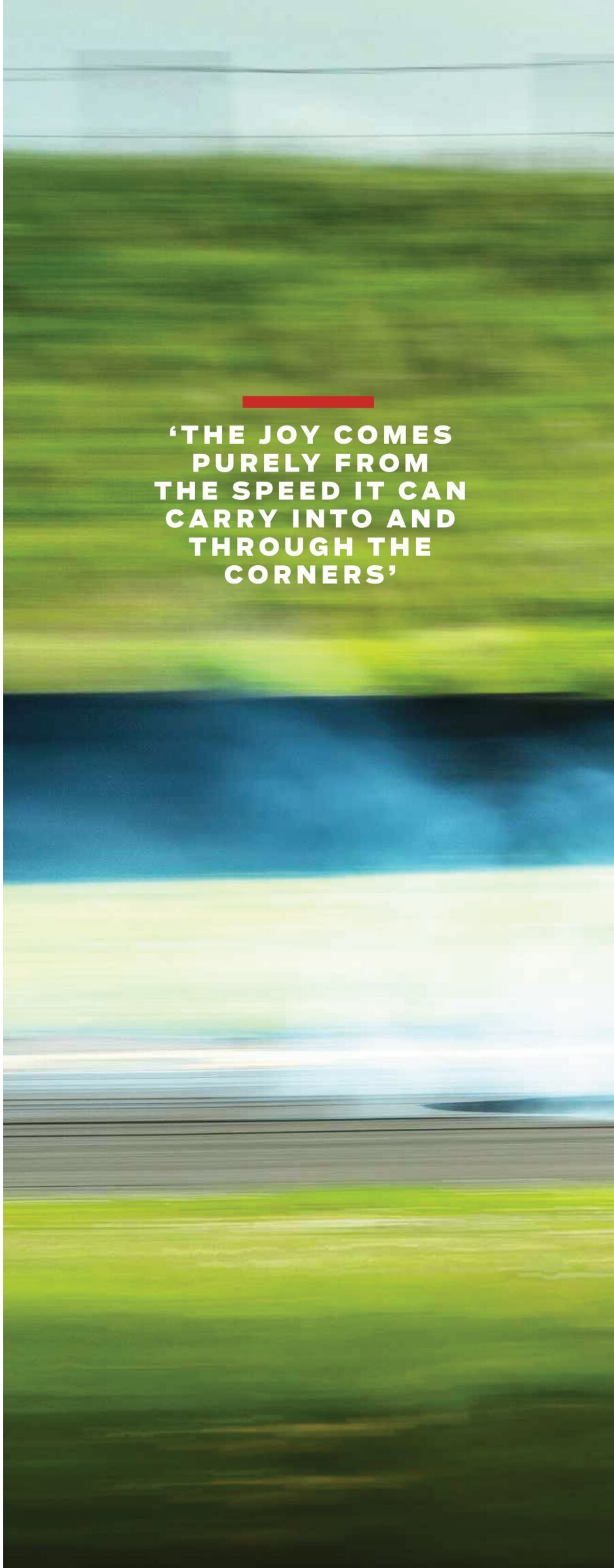
It also generates *much* more traction and *much* more grip on the 2 Rs, to a point where I can use one gear higher than I have previously in at least three corners. The brakes also feel immense on these tyres, while the speed and precision of the gearbox allow you to shift gears in a way, and in places, that would be outright impossible with a manual, or even with most other dual-clutch autos.

But it's through the terrifying 'is it or isn't it flat' kink on the back straight that the SF90 feels most incredible of all with the 2 Rs fitted. And where the inertia it supposedly has just seems to evaporate. Instead, it just hunkers down and feels glued enough to give me the confidence to keep the throttle wide open in sixth, whereas previously I'd been short-shifting to seventh because it felt too wild, and too damn scary, to keep it nailed in the lower gear.

According to the car's on-board data-logger, it hit 247kph at this point before braking for the left-hander at the top of the hill. That's 153.4mph. No other car I've driven round Anglesey has ever hit 150mph through here as far as I recall. That's how efficient the SF90 is at covering ground.

In the end, after a couple more runs in which it went a touch quicker still, it did a 1:09.99 lap. And although I almost felt like a bit of a passenger for much of that lap, watching the game unfold in the windscreen, it felt pretty out of this world at the same time. I climbed out oscillating just a touch afterwards, I don't mind admitting.

It also beat Ferrari's sim lap by a whisker and set a new production car lap record in the process, one that may not be beaten for a little while. Then again, who knows what they'll come up with next at Maranello. Either way, for the time being the SF90 rules. **SS**



LAP TIMES

Ferrari SF90 Assetto Fiorano	1:10.0
Caterham Seven 420 Cup	1:12.3
Lamborghini Huracán STO	1:12.7
Porsche 911 GT3 (PDK)	1:12.8
Porsche 911 GT3 Touring (manual)	1:13.5
Lotus Emira	1:18.5

Porsche's Cayman GT4, Mazda's MX-5 and Toyota's GR Yaris are among our favourite

MODS AND

by JOHN BARKER

PHOTOGRAPHY *by* ASTON PARROTT

trackday cars, but can they be improved? We pit standard against modified to find out

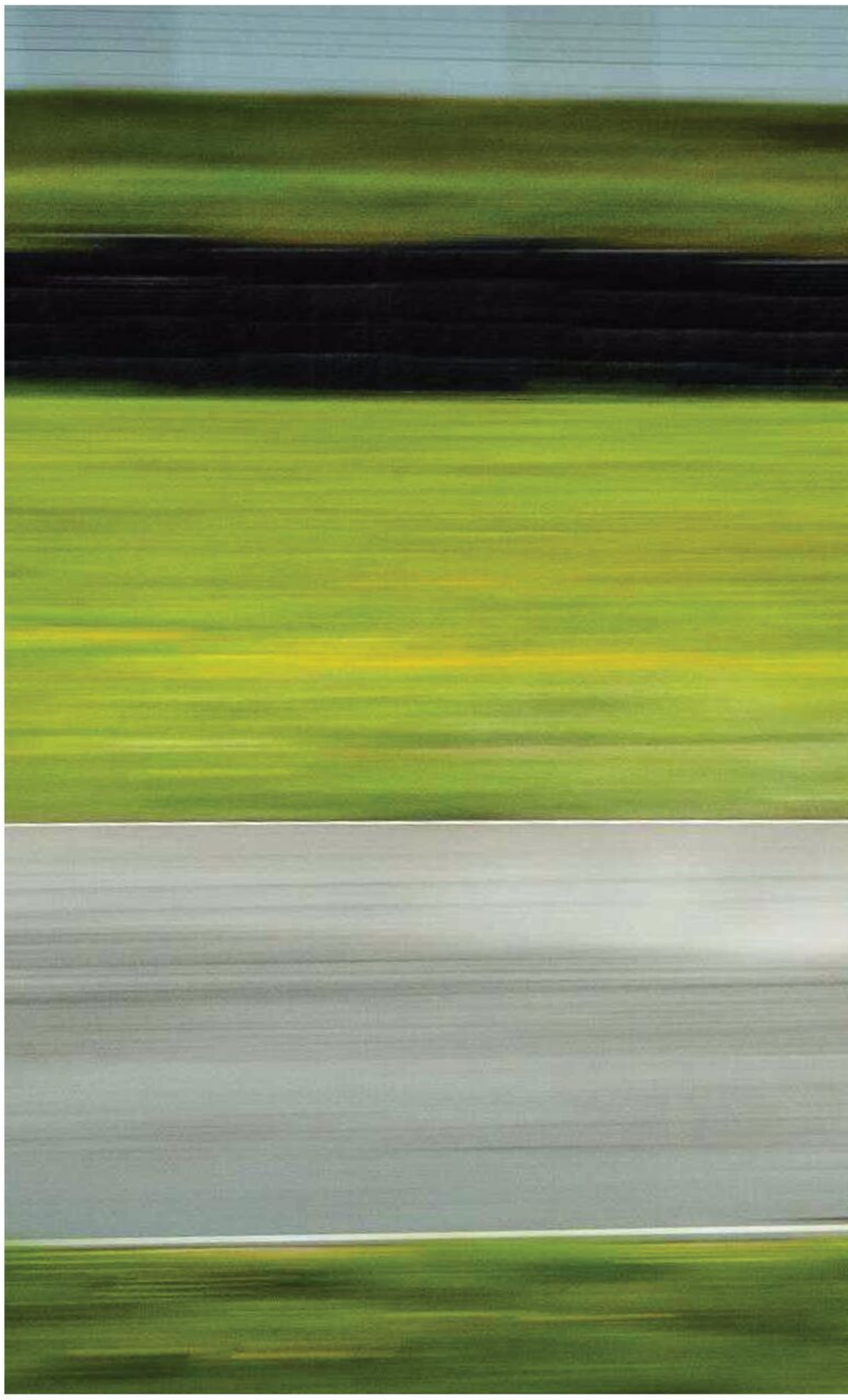
STOCKERS



‘THIS ISN’T PANNING OUT QUITE as expected,’ I think, as I wind on a bit more opposite lock to correct the MX-5’s trajectory and ensure that its rear wheels kiss the yellow-and-blue kerbing on the exit. The rain is properly lashing down now, but I’m comfortable with how the little Mazda responds, happy that its nose stays hooked up while the rear doesn’t, even in one of the fastest corners. The unexpected bit is that this is the standard MX-5, the current ‘Sport Tech’ model with 181bhp, rather than the previous-generation BBR GTI tuned car with a supercharged 250bhp that we’re comparing it with. Interesting…

Tuned cars exist for a number of reasons, and in the case of the MX-5 it’s because from the very first model in 1989 it’s always felt like it could handle a bit more power. BBR has been satisfying that demand almost from the start, supplying a turbocharger kit officially through Mazda dealers for the Mk1 MX-5. Yet on track at Anglesey in the rain, this standard current ‘ND’ model feels beautifully balanced, dynamically and as a package. Same goes for the stock GR Yaris and 718 Cayman GT4: they each feel right at home on the circuit, tucking in eagerly to its slower turns, playful, adjustable and predictable. Seems like the BBR MX-5 and 320bhp Litchfield-modified Yaris have their work cut out, as does the RPM Technik-fettled GT4 MR with its shorter gearing and Manthey Racing suspension.

Alongside the last-generation BBR car, the current MX-5 appears delicate, spindly on its narrow-shod 17-inch wheels, its body looking as if the edges have been shaved off with a gigantic file, removing material to make it as light as possible. In a world of spiralling kerb weights, you have to admire Mazda’s commitment to reducing weight over the previous model. With a full tank, the MX-5 measured



Left and above: Standard ‘ND’ Sport Tech with 181bhp feels beautifully balanced around a very wet Anglesey, but BBR’s supercharged ‘NC’ (above) is an altogether more serious proposition with 250bhp on tap



1073kg on our scales. That's not much more than an Elise, yet there is a stylish, fully stocked, fully trimmed cockpit.

A clue to the quality and delicacy of the MX-5's handling comes from the steering wheel, which has a thin rim and is bound in a lovely, soft, smooth leather. It ought to feel a bit out of place on a circuit, especially one with a couple of long, high-speed sections, and if it was dry it might, but with suspension that's soft vertically and in roll, it feels well-suited to the wet conditions. As standard, the Sport Tech model has Bilstein dampers and a limited-slip diff, which help make it remarkably effective. Its narrow Bridgestones hang on admirably, but you can sense there's fun to be had through getting on the power earlier and earlier and bringing the rear fully into play.

Stability control turned off, there's sufficient grunt from the engine to push the rear wide in slow-to-medium-speed corners and keep it there for a while, the MX-5 dancing on the wet surface. The best cars look after you when you venture into new territory, responding in a way that lets you know the engineers have been there before you. That moment in the MX-5 comes in the fast right-hander onto the back straight. Not wanting to lose any hard-won speed, I turn in at around 70mph, the nose takes the line obediently… and the rear slides gently wide. Slightly panicked, I fish for the correct amount of opposite lock and discover the steering is calm and doesn't upset the car.

BBR makes tuning kits for all generations of MX-5 but we (dep ed Towler, actually) chose the 250bhp, supercharged NC for a few reasons. First, because it's one of the best we've driven, second because it shows that you can get a properly quick, rear-drive sports car for £20k (a used NC MX-5 for £10k and the BBR engine and chassis upgrades for another £10k) and third because it's a bit roomier than the ND, so dep ed Towler will fit in it.

This car, weighing in at 1202kg, has been BBR's demonstrator for a few years now and has racked up over 35,000 miles, and it's a testimony to the build quality of the base car that it feels almost box-fresh. It's not quite as stylish inside as the ND but there's the same short and snappy gearshift and lightweight feel, and an engine that's got a bit more character thanks to the supercharger. Oh, and a whole lot more power and torque, of course.

BBR's lowered and stiffened suspension (adjustable Koni dampers revalved to suit BBR springs) is paired with Michelin Pilot Sport 4 S tyres, and it's an effective combo. Unexpectedly, the fatter-rimmed steering wheel offers less

weight and, I soon establish, there's less front-end bite too on the rain-slick asphalt, though that can be seen simply as an invitation to test your throttle and opposite-lock skills. There's an abundance of torque delivered in a more linear, predictable fashion than would be the case with a turbocharger, so you can get just what you need, whether that's just enough to neutralise the understeer or a bootful to kick the tail out and keep it hanging there in oversteer equilibrium. Either way, it's much faster between the corners than the standard car, and if it was dry it would romp away in a couple of corners. But whether standard or tuned, the MX-5 is impossible to ignore as a driver's car.

THE TRACK *WAS* DRY WHEN WE WENT OUT IN the Yarises and, continuing the theme, the standard example – here in Circuit Pack spec – proves remarkably biddable and resolutely hooked-up. It's not especially sharp in feel but it settles into a satisfying flow around the lap and, with stability control disabled and Track mode selected, it turns in, hangs on and powers out without ever feeling like it's punishing its tyres. Impressive considering our scales show that its 1280kg is split 60/40 front/rear, so it's quite nose-heavy. It feels like it's got closer to 300bhp than the quoted 257bhp, with a firm delivery right the way through to 7000rpm.

There's plenty of scope for improvement, though, and if you want more punch, more bite and more thrills, what you need is the standard Yaris's evil twin, the 320bhp Litchfield Yaris.

It weighs in at 13kg heavier than the standard car and is winning even before it's turned a wheel. Just look at its stance, and that colour. The dark metallic green paint is actually a painted wrap that Litchfield calls Paint Protection Spray. Nitron suspension sits the car lower, while filling the arches perfectly are wider (at 9.5 inches) Protrack rims that weigh about the same as the stock items but are shod with semi-slick but road-legal Nankang AR1s, which are very heavy. Litchfield is trying them having seen them on a few customers' Nissan GT-Rs. The only other trackday tyre that lasts on the heavyweight Nissan is the Toyo R888R. The Nankangs are not only more reasonably priced, they will also survive three or four trackdays, Litchfield says.

'YOU CAN FEEL THE INCREASED SUSPENSION STIFFNESS FROM THE OFF'

A remap lifts power and torque to 320bhp and 320lb ft with the help of a new intercooler, and there's a fruitier exhaust too, but perhaps the biggest win of all is inside, where you'll find lowered seats. The standard ones sit you oddly high and, for some, preclude the wearing of helmets. The drop of 40-50mm solves this problem and improves the driving position generally, while the replacement Corbeau seats are trimmed to match the rest of the interior.

While the standard car has a soft, loping, three-cylinder burble, this car fires up with a rawer, more hollow and resonant bark. You can feel the increased suspension stiffness from the off but for the first couple of laps I find myself distracted by the immense amount of noise created by the semi-slick Nankangs. It's a rolling rumble that makes it sound like the tyres aren't round. A lap or two later they're warming up and starting to deliver an amazing amount of grip, but are still noisy. The uprated engine punches much harder when you step on the throttle mid-corner but it never feels like it's going to get the better of the grip, the result being thrilling, sling-shot exits from corners.

Dynamically, it's not quite sorted. This is the first time it's been on these tyres and its first time at Anglesey, and the adjustable Nitron suspension is probably a bit stiff at the front and soft at the rear. It's revealing bumps that go unnoticed in other cars, nose a-bobbing in the braking area for the big, cambered hairpin, while at the surface change on the off-camber corner onto the pit straight it's lifting a front wheel. Of course, part of the fun with a modified car is being able to tweak it to maximise performance or adjust it to the conditions.

With the standard GR Yaris already proving popular at trackdays while also being a car that responds well to a tuner's deft touch, you can expect its paddock popularity to continue for some time to come.





Left: standard GR Yaris settles into a satisfying flow around Anglesey. **Top right:** Litchfield-tuned Yaris looks stunning in dark green with its arches fully filled and its ride height lowered

Below: modified GT4 MR tracks standard car; shorter gearing and a lightweight flywheel address one of the GT4's few flaws, though in fact the transformation is more evident on the road than the track

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS AN UNIMPROVABLE CAR, but some get closer to perfection than others. The 718 Cayman GT4 falls into the category of almost flawless. Our Car of the Year 2019 is a properly exciting and rewarding sports car that oozes character. It has a gearshift that's short, snickety and as slick as if the lever dropped straight into the gearbox, while the swirling, detailed, gravelly note of the 4-litre flat-six is a shifting, evolving aural delight as it climbs from tickover to red line. Add in a perfectly judged brake pedal that makes heel-and-toe shifts a cinch, steering that feels meaty at low speed but is perfectly weighted and tactile in corners, and a chassis that's poised and connected, and it's five stars all day long.

But it's not perfect because the gear ratios of the six-speed manual are monumentally and occasionally frustratingly long. This is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that peak power (at 7600rpm) in second gear is 80mph, so in the UK you can only legally hit the red line on the public road in first. Oddly, such long gearing doesn't feel like a great handicap on track. Most of the lap is in second gear, with third on the longer sections, and it's such a flexible, torquey engine that it can still test the chassis at almost every corner, so you're not missing the ability to adjust the balance with the throttle. The chassis is wonderfully transparent and malleable: dive for the apex, back off to shift the weight forward, get back on the throttle and exit with the car neutral or with as much oversteer as you want (and a trackday will allow…).

Consequently, the benefits of the work of Porsche specialist RPM Technik are not as immediately apparent as you might expect. RPM has developed a new crownwheel and pinion that lowers the gearing by 14 per cent, so peak power in second gear is now at 69mph and in third 96mph (instead of 111mph). There's also a lightweight flywheel but the engine delivers the same 414bhp and it rides on the same Michelin Cup 2 tyres. It is on lower, stiffer suspension developed by legendary Porsche fettlers Manthey Racing, but, as with the Litchfield Yaris, it hasn't been dialled in for Anglesey and there is a little front-end push in the fastest



corners. The upshot is that there is more kick available mid-corner, but as this is something that isn't obviously missing in the standard car, it seems only a marginal gain.

The twist is that I drove to Anglesey in the standard GT4 in convoy with RPM Technik's commercial director, Darren Anderson, in the GT4 MR. We took the interesting route across country from Welshpool and I thought the stock GT4 had held its own. However, within a couple of miles of slipping behind the wheel of the GT4 MR I was utterly gobsmacked; on the road the shorter gearing completely transforms the experience.

Suddenly the GT4 is alive, ever-ready with a solid slug of torque or power, and it revs out so much more quickly there's so much more urgency to the car. Whatever the speed, it responds harder and quicker and revs faster, which changes the character of the engine, giving it an almost VTEC-like appetite. And thanks to the lightweight flywheel, heel-and-toe shifts are snappier and the shift feels even slicker. It's sensational: a different, better car, almost like the regular GT4 but 200kg lighter. (On that subject, we weighed the stock car at 1460kg and the MR at 1439kg.) And, at a road pace, the chassis feels spot-on too, carrying speed more confidently into corners and never feeling weighty, which the standard car can occasionally.

So, the unexpected conclusion is that the standard road cars are great fun on track and the tuned cars are great, too, but even better on the road. Why? Because on the road you don't have the freedom to get cars moving about, so you want sharper, more precise steering and more immediate engine and braking response. I'd driven the Litchfield Yaris previously on standard wheels and tyres and, even without the trackday rubber, it's a much more positive car dynamically and puts an ever-ready slug of torque at your disposal, too. It also gives you a better seat from which to enjoy the action, of course. The BBR MX-5 is also a more composed, punchier road car that delivers a more focused, more intense drive. But the most dramatic transformation is wrought by the lower final drive and lightweight flywheel in the Cayman GT4 MR. It's astonishing how much more performance is available and how much keener it feels. The standard road cars are great, but the right mods make them greater.





LIFE THROUGH A LENS

TOM SALT

A passion for adventure and the unpredictable has given Tom Salt a unique style among automotive photographers. Here he talks to evo about his career to date and shares some of his favourite images

by BRETT FRASER





SOME CAR PHOTOGRAPHERS ARE rabid car enthusiasts. Tom Salt, not so much. For most of his career he's made a living from shooting everything from Abarths to Yugos, but his fascination is not with the cars themselves, rather with the places they can take you, the people you can meet in them and the adventures they can take you on. He refers to this cocktail of opportunities as the 'potential' within the car, and during his career he has actively sought out jobs likely to unlock that potential.

'The cars themselves are merely a vehicle for your imagination,' remarks Salt, 'and what they are is unimportant. I was walking back from town today and there was a Citroën Berlingo parked around the corner, and I can honestly say I would be just as happy to go on a road trip in that car as in a Porsche or a Lamborghini, just as long as where we were going was somewhere interesting.

'That for me is the key – go somewhere interesting, meet some interesting people, and hopefully have some sort of adventure. What I love about that is the fact that the story then makes itself. You have to have your eyes open the whole time to recognise the opportunities, but then the story writes itself. You have to work so hard on some stories these days because there is no story – pretend you've driven big miles with no time to do it. It takes time to experience things; you can't sit in the car the whole while, you've got to stop, get out, you've got to take risks.'

Road trips are a big part of Salt's work and his creativity thrives on the unpredictability of long journeys into unfamiliar territory. 'For me, the most interesting pictures are those that happen spontaneously,'



Targa Florio (previous pages)
'I've been to the Targa Florio on previous occasions, but always later in the year when the summer sun had turned the countryside golden. So for me it was amazing to be there in the spring when the whole countryside was absolutely green: it was an incredible landscape.'

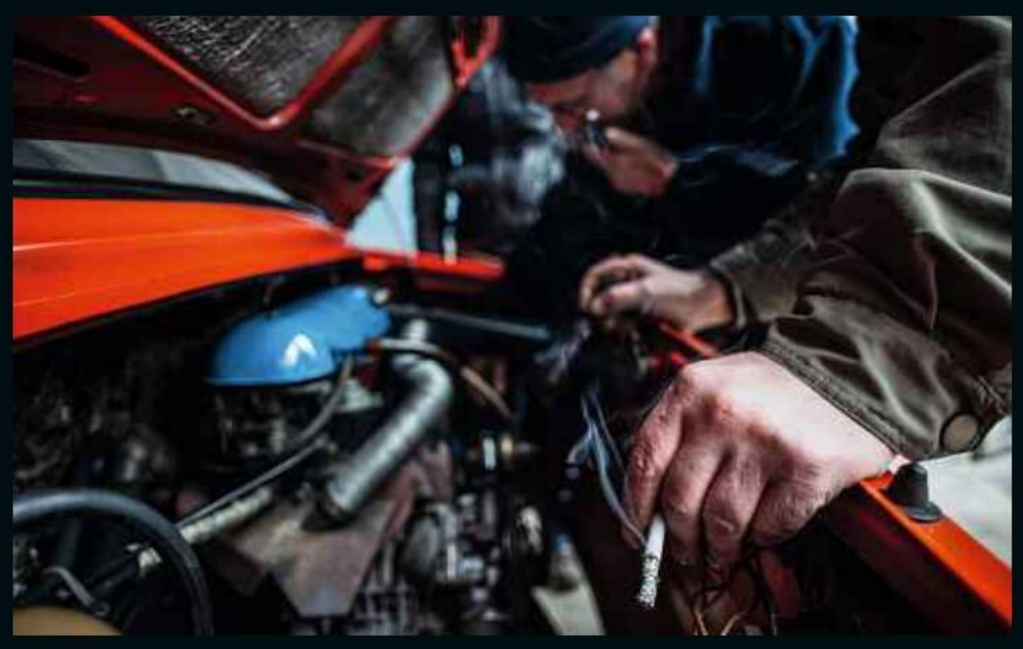
Under the G (above)
'I really love *Duel*, the early Steven Spielberg movie; it's so pure, so visceral, so honest. I thought I remembered a camera angle from underneath the truck that was chasing Dennis Weaver's Plymouth, and this monster Merc G-Wagen lent itself perfectly to recreating that image. As it turns out, this angle actually isn't in the film, but it doesn't matter.'

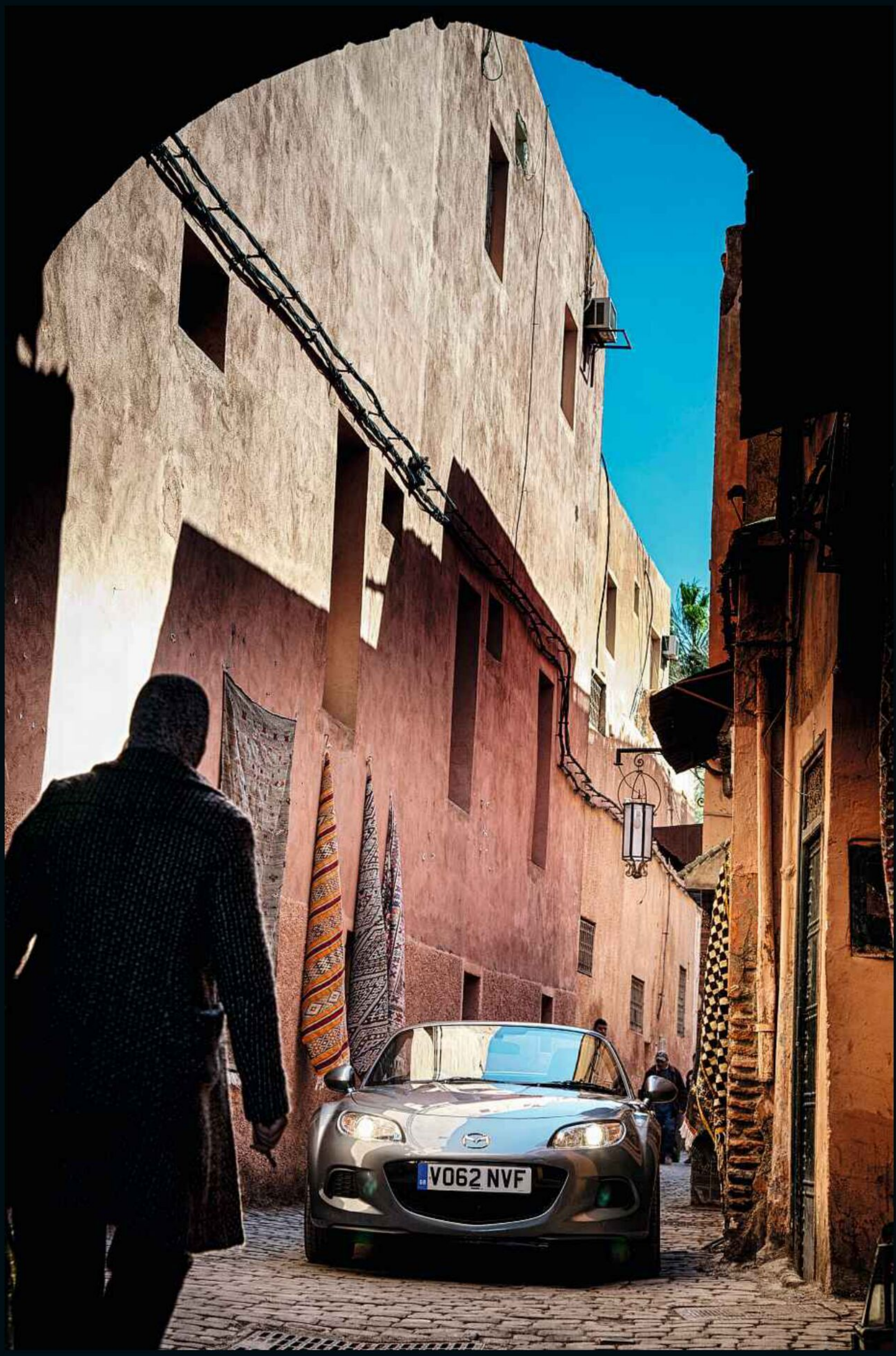
Tractor and Yugo (right)
'The sun was setting, the journalist was ready to head back to the hotel, but I insisted we keep going a little bit further... There was no way I could have planned this shot with the Serbian farmer and the Yugo, and it proves the worth of being able to act spontaneously.'

Skoda repair (far right)
'We'd bought a rear-engined Skoda in Berlin for a story and on the second day, in Poland, it wouldn't start. Two Lithuanians spent hours fixing it for us, constantly smoking as they worked. With some ingenuity and at considerable cost, they managed to get it going again and we all cheered.'








V062 NVF







MX-5 in Morocco (left)
'Shooting in Marrakesh is a nightmare – the streets are packed and nobody wants you to park. Luckily our fixer brought along a mate who was the Moroccan equivalent of George Clooney – if we had any difficulties, "George" would get out and suddenly anything was possible. It'd be good to have a "George" on every shoot.'

Opel and Dakota (top)
'The Opel in this shot has Australian heritage and so does the old Royal Australian Air Force Dakota aircraft – it was part of the Berlin airlift at the end of World War II.'

Europe non-stop (middle)
'We were attempting to drive through 17 or 18 European countries in 24 hours, so couldn't stop much for photos. These bug splats gave the necessary sense of travelling, while the backlight added drama.'

Shoe forms (above)
'Ciccio lives in Sicily and hand-made leather racing shoes for all the famous Grand Prix drivers – he used to take his notebooks to races and trace their feet. These shoe forms were in his workshop. That's Jacky Ickx's on the top of the pile.'

reckons Salt. 'You just happen to be there at that moment to capture them. Some of it's luck, but you always have to be attentive to everything that's around you, that great light breaking through the clouds, that bit of wind whipping sand across the road.

'There's a book by Steven Pressfield called *The War of Art*, which my wife gave me, the basic premise of which is that nothing will come to you unless you go out and give yourself the opportunity for things to happen. Your next best picture could be around the next corner, so don't stop, keep going. And if you're not out there, it's never going to happen.

'Sometimes it doesn't happen – the sun goes down and you haven't got the shot. But sometimes you go around the corner and all of a sudden, there it is. On a job with a Yugo we'd been chasing a location all afternoon and the journalist said, "It's over, it's too late. Back to the hotel." But I was like, "No, let's go up this hill," and there's a guy ploughing a field with his tractor. So I ran into the field and the farmer's looking at me as though I'm crazy. Click, click, click. For me that image captured everything I wanted. It couldn't have been better had I planned it – I'm a great believer in spontaneity and the need to simply be there.'

Salt's wanderlust and artistic inclination may well be rooted in his upbringing. Although British, he was born in New York. His father, John Salt, was an abstract painter who in the mid-1960s transitioned to become a photorealist painter, specialising in images of rusting and wrecked American cars. 'Whenever we were on holiday in America my dad would manage to carve off a bit of time to find the seedy parts of wherever we were and take photographs as reference. In the end he wasn't just painting cars, he was painting general American junked-out trailers and back lots, car parks, things like that.

'I guess I was sub-consciously influenced by his work. I love the aesthetic; the burnt-out, rusted-out abandoned detritus of the world really interests me, the feeling of decrepitude, the leftovers. It's why I've been drawn to many stories in eastern Europe – a Lada we took to Chernobyl, a Skoda we bought in Berlin and drove back to the factory.'

Salt studied art at A-level and then took a degree in Media Production at Newcastle University, before returning to the States. 'I lived in Chicago for three years working as a photo assistant for an amazing company that was an architectural photography firm. They had started their work in the 1930s and they had this amazing lighting style, almost Hollywood-style movie lights. We used to

travel around the States with 17 flight cases of lights. It was unbelievable! I'd come from college where I'd used no lights, so the time I spent with this company in Chicago was like a second degree.'

Back in Blighty, Salt bagged himself a job as junior photographer on *Autocar*. 'It was trial by fire,' he recalls. 'I was shooting from the first day I arrived, constantly working, constantly making mistakes, but it was a pretty good way to figure out what works and what doesn't. But when I moved to *Car* as senior photographer it was a much better fit for me – the art director was very encouraging of experimentation and the budgets weren't an issue.'

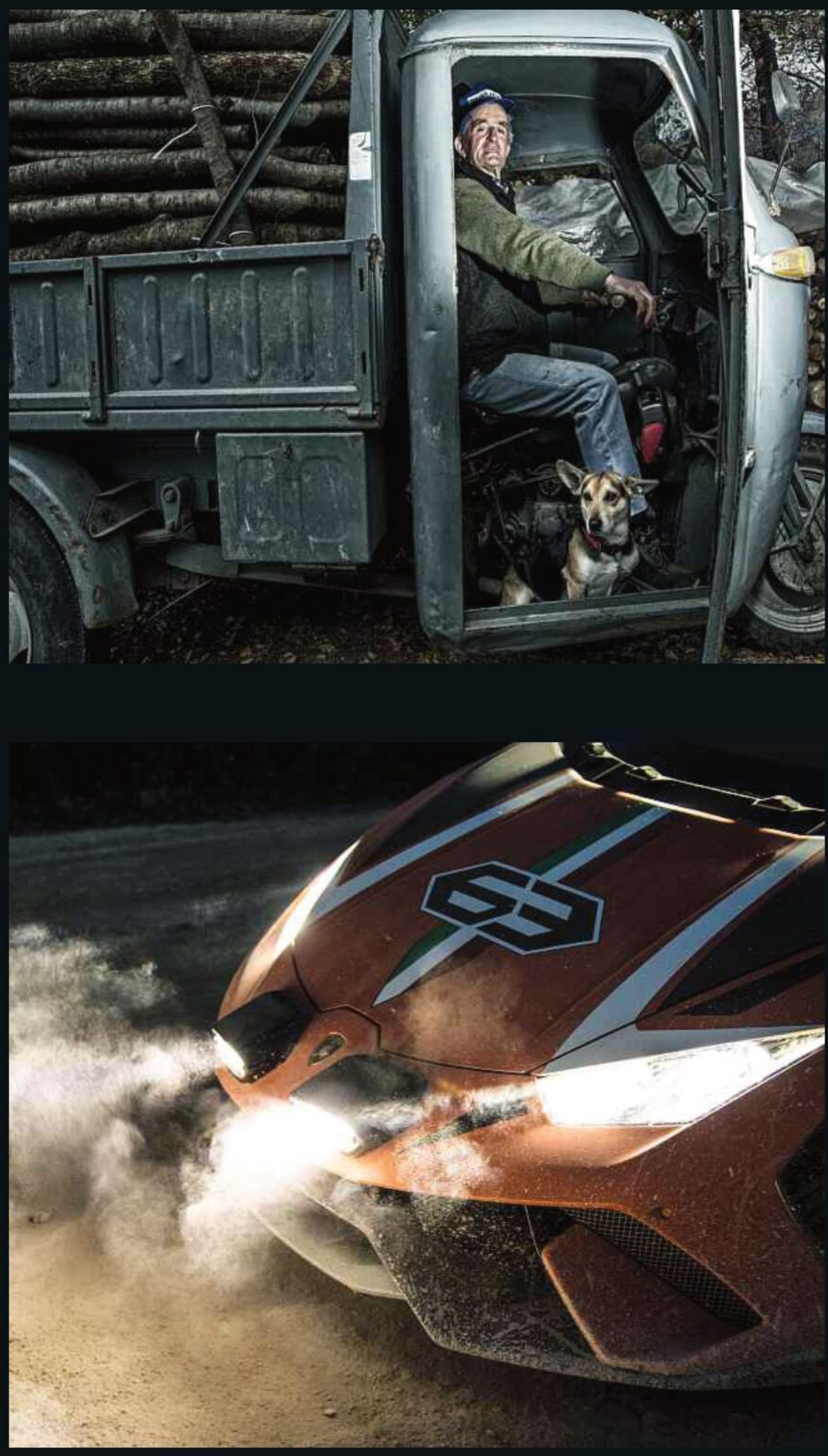
After a couple of years, though, in 2001 Salt hit the freelance trail, favouring editorial photography over advertising, despite how lucrative the latter can be – he prefers the freedom, the greater chance of adventure. That said, he praises the Volvo customer magazine: 'I went to South Korea and only had to have the car in about one and a half pictures and they were happy. That for me was like a dream – I got to shoot the people and the landscapes and there wasn't the obsession with having to get the car into every shot.'

Although he uses digital cameras (Nikons), he's not a fan of excessive digital manipulation, opting for what he calls a more analogue style of photograph. 'To my mind an awful lot of images have no soul, no spirit; they're characterless. This drive for perfection looks fake, to the point that you may as well CGI it. But readers see through it, can see when images have been doctored.

'That's why I think there's still a place for the genuine image – leave a few reflections on the car, that's the real world. And I don't like road trips where the car is clean; the car should be dirty, because that's what actually happens when you spend days on the road.'

The stories about which Salt becomes most animated involve rickety old bangers undertaking epic journeys into faraway lands, where there's no guarantee the car will make it. 'For me, that jeopardy is what makes these sort of stories so interesting. Will they get there? Because they might not. When I was growing up those were the stories in motoring magazines that really caught my imagination, that were the most stimulating, and I'm convinced that they still enthral readers even in our modern age.

'I've been trying to follow that path of adventure stories whenever the opportunities arise – I'm lucky to work with journalists who like coming up with fresh ideas. Times are tough for print media, but I keep dreaming that high-quality editorial will manage to endure.'



Farmer and dog (top)
'He was nothing to do with the car or the story I was in Italy for, but this farmer and his dog were the most interesting things I found that day on the shoot. It's great when you chance upon a subject in unexpected circumstances – it's one of the things I enjoy about this job.'

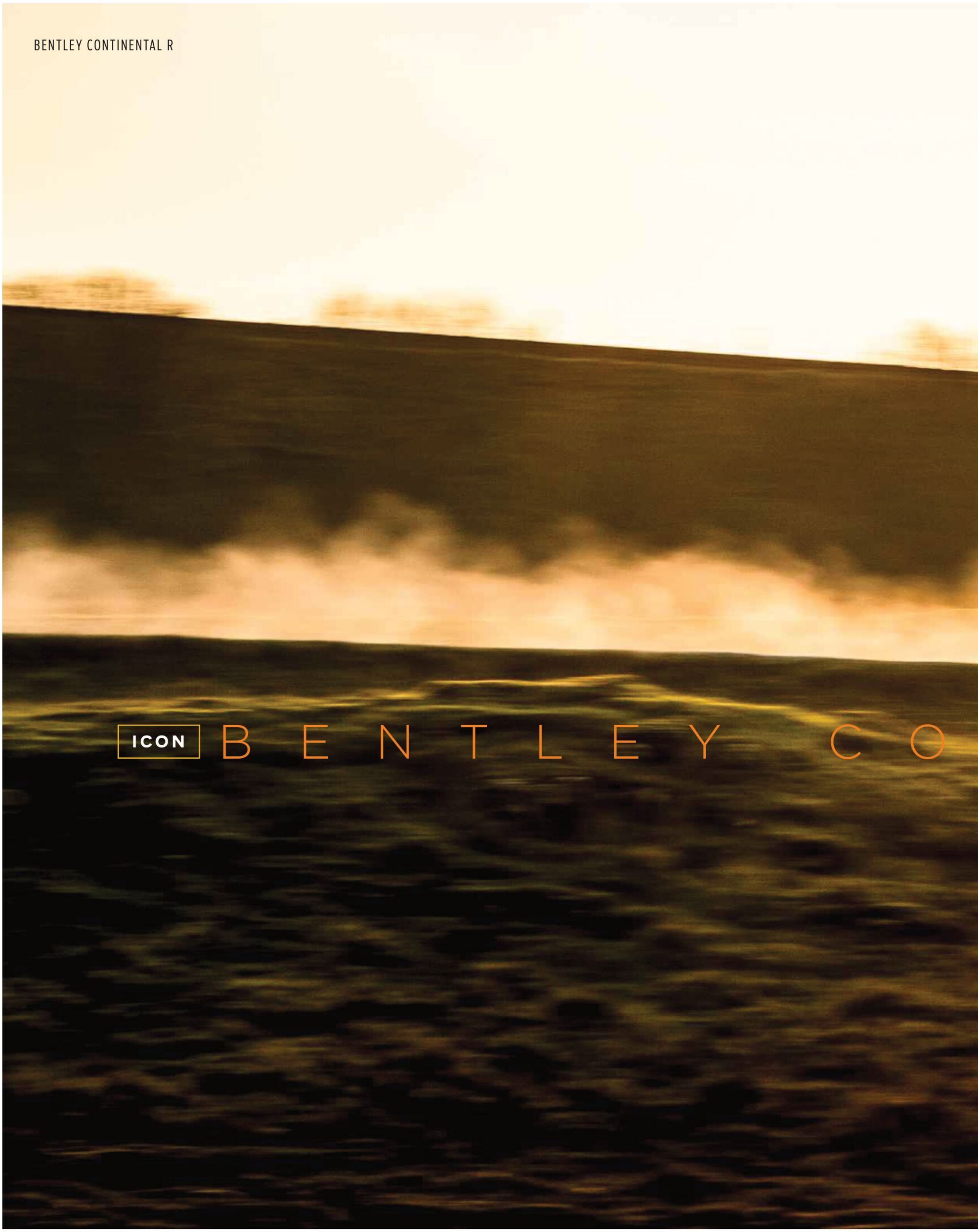
Raging Bull (above)
'Chance. Luck. Serendipity. Call it what you will, but sometimes a powerful image appears out of the blue. In the daytime this shot wouldn't have amounted to much, but at night the rising dust looks as though this Lamborghini Huracán is snorting out clouds of angry breath.'

Horse power (top right)
'I was desperate, the weather was awful and I was trying to make something happen. Suddenly I heard clip-clop and the horses and carriage came across the bridge. They came into shot, didn't stop, and then were gone. I had a guardian angel that day.'

Sandstorm (right)
'We were heading to an old diamond-mining ghost town on the coast of Namibia called Kolmanskop. A sandstorm blew in to create a great image – pure luck, but unless you're out doing these jobs, you'll never get the chance to take these pictures.'



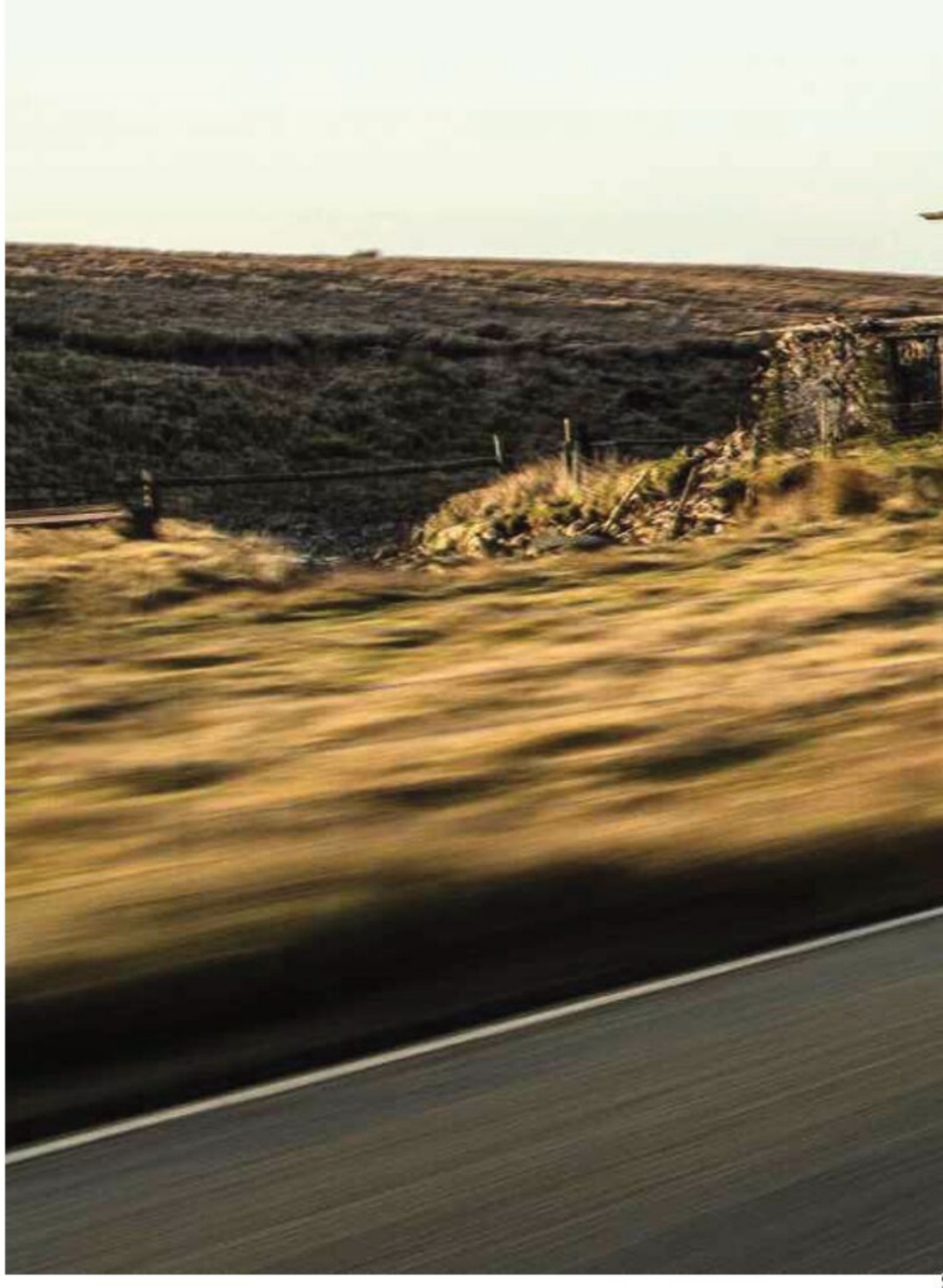



ICON
BENTLEY CO

A sublime GT with a stonking, turbocharged 6.75-litre V8, the 1990s Continental R was a landmark car for Bentley

N T I N E N T A L R

by PETER TOMALIN PHOTOGRAPHY *by* ASTON PARROTT



THE RIBBLEHEAD VIADUCT AND THE Bentley Continental R. One dominating the landscape with its sheer scale, a colossal feat of engineering, a towering monument to a bygone age… the other a Victorian railway viaduct.

Sorry, couldn't resist. But there *is* something reassuringly substantial and undeniably last-century about this Bentley. From doors that shut like those of an Edwardian railway carriage to the solid metal eyeball vents in the dash, to the magnificent 6.75-litre V8, the origins of which can be traced back to the 1950s, this is a motor car heavy with old-school engineering and craftsmanship. Just how heavy? Two thousand, four hundred and fifty kilos.

That's a lot of Bentley. To propel it briskly down the road requires considerable motive force, hence the single, very substantial Garrett AiResearch turbocharger attached to that venerable V8. The peak outputs are 420bhp at 4000rpm and a truly gargantuan 650lb ft of torque at just 2200rpm. That's enough shove to get the Bentley from 0 to 60mph in 5.8sec and, despite a CdA only marginally better than Windsor Castle, on to a top speed of 170mph.

Such a compelling combination of old-world Bentley charm, handsome, square-jawed lines and thunderous performance is more than enough to qualify the Continental for **evo** icon status. But there's more, because the Conti was actually a rather significant car, a true landmark in the Bentley story.

Opposite and below: Mulliner took the tuned V8 and pumped-up bodywork of the Conti T and blended it with the Conti R's longer wheelbase. Final Edition added quilted leather and piano black trim

When it was launched in 1991 it was the first Bentley with an entirely bespoke body since the mid 1960s. It was born at a time when Bentleys were usually little more than rebadged Rolls-Royces, although the Turbo R saloon had shown there was an appetite for something a little sportier. The Continental R, designed by John Heffernan and Ken Greenley, took the Turbo R underpinnings as a starting point but clothed them in a two-door coupe body that had no Rolls-Royce equivalent. Here was a marque in the process of re-forging its own identity.

The first Continental Rs had 325bhp and 450lb ft, though at the time the power was quoted in traditional Bentley parlance as 'sufficient'. In 1994 the attentions of Cosworth – then also part of the parent Vickers group – saw outputs rise to 360bhp and 500lb ft. But it was with the introduction of the Conti T in 1996 that things got really interesting – a shortened wheelbase and chassis upgrades made it a touch more agile; a wider body with extended wheelarches made it look more of a beast, and from 1998 the power was ramped up to the aforementioned 420bhp and 650lb ft, which at the time was the highest torque output of any production car on sale.



So the T was a bit of an upper class thug, a bit Oliver Reed, and it quickly gained cult status. The only problem was that the 4in (10mm) shorter wheelbase came at the expense of rear legroom, which had become distinctly marginal (to travel comfortably in the back you'd need to be legless, and not in an Oliver Reed sort of way). So Bentley also decided to offer the hot engine and wide body with the R's longer wheelbase.

This new model was launched as the Continental R Mulliner in 1999. And that's essentially what you see here, though this is one of the Final Series cars, which gained some extra cosmetic features to mark the end of the model's production – most visibly Bentley-branded brake calipers, extra badging, black lacquered woodwork and diamond quilted leather.

When production ended in 2003, a total of 1854 Contis had been produced, including 158 Mulliner editions, and just eleven Final Series cars. The example we're about to drive was the very last built and retained by Bentley at the famous Pyms Lane factory in Crewe, which is where we're collecting it on a blissfully warm and sunny spring day.


C1 BML




PRND32
RPM x 100


C1 BML




BENTLEY
ENGINE OIL

And boy, has the site changed since the last time I was here. Pyms Lane itself is now closed to general traffic and the factory site has expanded on the other side of the road to include impressive new R&D facilities as the company works towards being fully electric by 2030. By then cars like the Continental really will be relics from a bygone age. But what a lovely old thing it is, gleaming in the sunshine outside the impressive new reception building.

And absolutely huge. It might be slightly lower slung than the R-R and Bentley saloons of the period, but it's almost five and a half metres long, most of which seems to be either bonnet or boot. You pull open the fantastically heavy door with its big chromed handle, slide straight onto the plump driver's seat – the floor is high and flat with no lip at the sill – and survey the cliff-face of a dash with its myriad dials, knobs and switches, rather like the flight deck of a 1990s light aircraft. The ignition barrel is set into the right hand side of the facia; insert the surprisingly diminutive key, twist, then thumb the centrally mounted starter button. That immortal V8 smoulders into life; distant, immense. Select D with the console-mounted shifter for the four-speed GM auto, and away…

The last time I drove a Continental of this generation was back in 2000, when we took a then-current Conti T down to Pau on the French/Spanish border (**evo** 026). It was an epic journey, the best part of two thousand miles there and back, so I can certainly vouch for the Bentley's grand touring ability. I can also vouch for the fact that c110mph is very much its natural cruising gate.

Today's journey is rather more modest, not least because of the current cost of fuel. A quick calculation reveals that at the Bentley's typical 15mpg it would cost the best part of a grand in petrol to get to Pau and back. With a mind to the wellbeing of Mr Gallagher's editorial budget, we set our sights rather closer to home – on the Yorkshire Dales and specifically the Ribblehead Viaduct, built in Victorian times to carry steam trains travelling from Settle to Carlisle.

Such a feat of railway engineering is an appropriate destination for a Bentley, whose home town is steeped in the rail industry; the huge Crewe Works were one of Britain's main centres for building and maintaining locomotives; founder WO Bentley himself began his career designing railway machinery, and the earliest Bentleys had a certain locomotive scale and weight to them. The very welcome bonus is that the Dales offer some very fine roads as well as a suitably magnificent backdrop.

An hour and a half after leaving Crewe, we turn off the northbound M6 and point the Continental's massive prow down the first of those roads. The motorway miles were meat and drink to the Bentley – silken powerplant pulsing somewhere below decks, 2000rpm at an indicated 80mph, tall 285/45 ZR18 Pirellis soaking up all but the worst pockmarks and







Left and right: turbocharged 6.75-litre V8 churns out 650lb ft of torque at just 2200rpm; body-roll in tight bends is almost comical, but Conti R clings on gamely


C1 BML



‘THE BENTLEY PICKS ITSELF UP AND LAUNCHES FOR THE HORIZON’

potholes, your immediate surroundings like the leather-lined study of a rather raffish count with a gadget fetish. But now it faces a much sterner test. How does a 20-year-old luxury car weighing two and a half tons cope when you start asking serious questions of its chassis?

Surprisingly well, it soon becomes apparent. The basic underpinnings were carried over from the Rolls and Bentley saloons of the day, so the Silver Spirit and the Mulsanne, which in turn were developed from the 1960s Shadow – none exactly paragons of handling acuity. But the engineers worked small miracles with unpromising source material. The engine and transmission were now controlled by electronics; the then-new GM 4L80-E was the state of the torque-converter auto art; there was traction control and ABS for the vast, vented disc brakes, the fronts having two sets of calipers per disc. The all-independent suspension had hydraulic self-levelling with Automatic Ride Control.

There was even a Sport button on the transmission tunnel to switch to more sporting gearbox mapping and stiffen the suspension. I’ll be honest, when I press the button I can detect little meaningful change in the suspension, though the gearbox does hold on to each gear a touch longer under acceleration. But if it’s a sports car you want, then you may be looking in the wrong place. This is a GT car in the grandest sense.

Yes, it rolls a lot – and floats over crests, and pitches under braking and acceleration too – but power it through a bend and it feels settled and composed, carrying surprising speed and clinging gamely to the chosen line. The chassis deals well with mid-corner bumps, too. The steering is weightier than you might anticipate for a two-door limo, and while you wouldn’t expect Lotus levels of feedback, you do at least feel a connection with the machinery. In summary, it’s as much fun as a two-and-a-half-ton luxury mile-eater with roots in the middle of the last century could reasonably be.

The only black mark is for the brakes – or rather the pedal feel. The first four inches feels like pushing through a thick duvet, the next two like standing on a dead sheep, before eventually they start to bite.

But what you’re really here for is to experience the propulsive thrust of 650lb ft of torque brought to bear on a prime piece of English Heritage. So when the road eventually opens up for a clear half a mile or so ahead, you squeeze the big, floor-hinged throttle pedal half-way to the carpet… There’s a momentary hesitation while the request for full steam reaches the engine room, then the nose lifts, the tail squats a touch, the muffled V8 rouses itself with a deep, rumbling growl as the blower fills its cheeks, and the Bentley picks itself up and launches for the horizon.

The sensation of such vast forces at work, and all at such low revs – the red line is at 4500, but with peak torque at 2200rpm you don’t even need to go to those dizzy heights – cannot fail to make you grin, perhaps even laugh out loud. A current Speed model Bentley

would trounce it by every objective measure. But that doesn't make the experience here any less stirring, while the Conti's old-money ambience makes it all the more unlikely and all the more entertaining.

At sunset, photographer Aston lines up the Bentley beneath one of Ribblehead's towering arches. There are 24 of them, each with a span of 45ft and the viaduct is more than 100ft above the valley floor at its highest point. It is quite awe-inspiring to stand beneath it. Work started in July 1870 and would take a little over four years. Up to 2300 men were engaged in its construction, around 100 of whom lost their lives in construction-related accidents, or from outbreaks of violence or smallpox in the shanty towns that sprung up to house the workforce and their families. Different times…

Cruising back to nearby Ingleton and our hotel for the night, the Bentley is deeply seductive. Dial back to seven tenths or so and it covers the ground effortlessly and in great style, the deep background burble of the V8 overlaid by the occasional shushing of the turbo and the gentle whirring of what sounds like a compressor, presumably the hydraulic pump for the rear self-levelling system. It all somehow adds to the car's rich character.

We've an early start the next morning to catch the sunrise, and dawn light reveals the silken depth of the Conti's Silver Pearl coachwork, picks out the swollen arches, glints off the brightwork. It's a handsome thing all right; stately with just enough muscularity to hint at the potency beneath.

Aston's happy. Back at the hotel just before 9am, we tuck into a full English breakfast, Fellsman-style, which basically means all the components are doubled up, just like the Bentley's front brake calipers. It's what WO would have wanted, we decide.

On the run back to Crewe, I reflect on the significance of this car. The Continental was compelling evidence that Bentley could stand as a marque in its own right – a key factor in VW's decision in 1998 to buy the brand, triggering the massive investment that has seen Crewe transformed over the last two decades. But while the Conti was the harbinger of a new dawn, it was also the last of the old, coach-built guard – new platforms and new manufacturing techniques were already being ushered in, even before VW's takeover.

One thing that did live on, though, was that mighty engine. When in 1998 Rolls-Royce launched an all-new Bentley saloon, the Arnage, it was designed around a new, much lighter and more efficient BMW twin-turbo quad-cam 4.4-litre V8. But new custodian VW was understandably wary of being dependent on BMW, so it quickly adapted the Arnage to take the old V8 as an option. Perhaps to no-one's great surprise, customers much preferred the old, torque-heavy 6.75-litre single-turbo engine. So much so that it would continue on, albeit in much-modified form, until the demise of the 2010 Mulsanne in 2020, a truly astonishing run of six decades.

That V8 is the strong, slow-beating heart of the Continental R Mulliner and fundamental to its appeal all these years later. It's a car with a monumental quality, arguably the ultimate expression of a line that can be traced right back to the late 1960s. A car of unique character. The full English.

Bentley Continental R Mulliner

Engine V8, 6750cc, turbocharged
Power 420bhp @ 4000rpm **Torque** 650lb ft @ 2200rpm
Weight 2450kg **Power to weight** 174bhp/ton
0-60mph 5.8sec **Top speed** 170mph
Price new £230,000 (£400,000 in today's money)
Values today c£80,000-£120,000

evo rating ★★★★☆











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FAST FLEET

NEW ARRIVAL

Ford Puma ST

It's a close relative of one of our favourite hatchbacks – the feisty Fiesta ST – so is the Puma ST being unfairly overlooked? A stretch on the Fast Fleet will reveal all

FORD'S 2019 CROSSOVER REBOOT of the Puma was met with a fair amount of scepticism, and although an ST variant helped matters, it's always been overshadowed by its more lithe Fiesta counterpart. But does the Puma ST deserve more attention? To give us an opportunity to better understand its blend of crossover practicality and hot hatch underpinnings, this month we've welcomed one onto our long-term fleet.

With the arrival of the three-cylinder Fiesta ST, Ford Performance demonstrated that a reduced cylinder count needn't mean reduced fun. Said Fiesta mated a potent and characterful turbocharged 1.5-litre triple with some of the most engaging dynamics in the supermini segment, and the Puma ST aims to replicate that formula in its own class. It starts by using the same engine, with identical outputs of 197bhp at 6000rpm and 236lb ft of torque between 2500rpm and 3500rpm. There's a little extra weight to move around, of course – 1283kg to the Fiesta's 1205kg – so straight-line performance takes a hit, but a revised final-drive ratio ensures it doesn't fall too far behind: 0-62mph happens in 6.7sec, two tenths behind the Fiesta, while top speed drops from 144mph to 137.

The Puma's chassis is Fiesta-derived too, with the suspension set-up comprising



p135 BMW M4 xDrive



p136 McLaren GT



p140 Peugeot 508 SW PSE



p142 Lamborghini Urus







MacPherson struts up front and a twist-beam rear axle modified to suit the new form factor. Although physics dictate that the Puma can't quite match its smaller sibling for finesse, first impressions are that it can provide plenty of entertainment regardless.

The entertainment begins before you press the start button, though, with the Puma's divisive but distinctive styling enhanced in our car's optional Desert Island Blue shade (a £400 option). Unique 19-inch wheels, a bespoke front splitter, a rear lip spoiler, dual exhaust tips and enlarged intakes further help the ST stand out from more ordinary Pumas. Unfortunately the offside front wheelarch trim on EO22 TKA already seems to have lost its ability to remain flush to the bodywork, but we're sure this will be an easy fix.

The Puma ST starts at £29,460 – a circa £3000 premium over a similar-spec Fiesta – and there aren't many crossovers that can match it for driver appeal. A six-speed manual transmission paired to an old-school mechanical Quaife limited-slip differential (when fitted with the £950 Performance Pack, like our car) is a recipe for success, while a quicker steering ratio than the Fiesta ST keeps things feeling keen. Being the latest iteration of the model, the old Recaro bucket seats have been swapped for Ford Performance's own, and they're a change for the better.

Performance aside, the number of useful niceties in the Puma is refreshing to see in today's world of gimmicky extras. One notable (though admittedly not particularly **evo**) feature is the impressive boot capacity, with a false floor concealing an additional 80 litres of storage space – Ford calls it the MegaBox – into which you could easily fit a pair of weekend bags. It even has a drain hole should you want to transform it into a makeshift drinks cooler on a hot summer's day...

Also nestled discreetly within the walls of the boot is the subwoofer for the B&O sound system. This ten-speaker set-up comes as standard, and it's truly impressive. In fact it's on a different level to many previous upgraded Ford systems, which seemed to focus solely on the addition of bass rather than genuinely improving sound quality.

So the Puma ST has plenty going for it and is off to a good start for its time on our fleet. Over the coming months we'll find out just how much compromise you make on driving thrills to get that additional dose of practicality that it offers.

Sam Jenkins *(@evosamj)*

Date acquired April 2022 **Total mileage** 2499 **Mileage this month** 1501 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 33.0

BMW M4 Competition xDrive

Who knew the 2022 M4 had so much in common with a '90s Ferrari?

WE ALL KNOW THAT IT'S SOMETIMES fun to set arbitrary parameters when searching for a car. And if you were trying to spend under £100,000 on a red car with a power-to-weight ratio of between 287 and 288bhp per ton, then you might find yourself comparing a new BMW M4 xDrive with a Ferrari 550 Maranello. Stranger things have happened.

Until this month I hadn't driven the car that was crowned **evo** Car of the Decade in issue 066, but, thanks to Bell Sport & Classic and a generous owner, the situation was rectified on a sunny spring day in Buckinghamshire. Now, I'm not about to launch into a retrospective road test of the 550, but a couple of things struck me in relation to my long-termer.

The first is purely aesthetic. As front ends go, neither 550 nor M4 has the most attractive snout. To my eyes at least, that single bonnet nostril on the Pininfarina-designed Ferrari is just not very pretty. It's one step away from an Impreza intake. Yet I don't remember there ever being a great deal of hue and cry about it, certainly not to the extent of that surrounding the M4. Perhaps the difference is simply social media. Having said that, I can certainly look past the Ferrari's nose and increasingly so with the M4 too. In the metal, the BMW's beaver teeth just don't bother me as much as they do in photos.

Then there is the weight. I was surprised to see that according to official figures, the two-seat Ferrari tips the scales in Maranello at 1690kg. Which is really quite a lot. There is a tendency to think that everything in the past was under 1200kg dripping wet, but that's not the case. And once again, I don't remember people making a big deal about the 550's portliness, it was simply assessed on how it felt to drive.

One of the things that riles people about the G82 M4 is that it's too heavy, and of course on principle I'd like to see it nearer 1500kg, but it really doesn't drive like you think nearly 1800kg should. The stiffness of its structure and the response to inputs means it has a fabulous tautness and sense of agility. Over some of the bigger bumps on my local roads you are momentarily more aware of the mass, but even then it always feels contained. You do find yourself winding up the damper stiffness as you drive faster, but I found the same was true of the 550, with it really only coming alive in the corners in Sport mode.

Anyway, I'm pretty sure the latest M4 will never be viewed with the same reverence as the 550 Maranello, but that's all the more reason to make the comparisons. There is also one, final, tenuous link between the Ferrari and one of my other long-termers, because the gentleman that I bought my Clio 182 from has subsequently purchased a lovely 550 (with rather more than I gave him for the Clio, I hasten to add!). I like to think that one day I might replace the Renault in a similar fashion!

Henry Catchpole *(@HenryCatchpole)*

Date acquired January 2022 **Total mileage** 5208 **Mileage this month** 1434 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 28.3



END OF TERM

McLaren GT

Our ‘grand touring’ McLaren has departed. Did we get to the bottom of what it’s all about?

IT LOOKS LIKE A SUPERCAR AND SOUNDS like a supercar; it probably even smells and tastes like a supercar. Yet look for the McLaren GT on its maker’s website and you will find it not alongside the 720s, the 765s and the Artura under the ‘Supercars’ section, but on its lonesome under the heading ‘GT’. A grand tourer it is, then. Possibly.

It’s still hard to imagine that it might be one when you open the dihedral door – like supercars have – and then lower yourself way down into its driver’s seat, supercar-style. Or when you start the engine and are greeted not by a warm, rich, muted hum, but by the coarse, flat tone we know well from other McLarens. Y’know, the supercars.

It’s only when you pull away that the GT’s GT side really makes itself felt, and it strikes you within just a few metres: no supercar has a ride that’s this relaxed, this absorbent, this comfortable. Is that enough to make it a car you’d want to go grand touring in, though, or at the very least one you might want to use every day, as McLaren suggests you could? That’s what we set out to discover by running GT06 MCL for several months and through some of the worst weather of the year.

Stuart Gallagher had the first stint with our GT’s key and was quick to discover long journeys were indeed among this 612bhp, 203mph car’s fortes. He found he happily used it for trips where he’d leave a 720S at home and noted that he arrived at his destinations feeling ‘calmed rather than frazzled’. When John Barker took his turn, he praised the GT for the way it was happy to mooch and commented that he found it more everyday useable than he’d expected.

Inevitably, there was a trade-off for these abilities. While the GT was still astonishingly fast when you got the opportunity to wind it up – its detuned version of the 720’s 4-litre twin-turbocharged V8 saw to that – when really pushing on its chassis wasn’t quite as crisp and reassuring in its feedback as those of other McLarens. For this reason, Barker admitted he had no inclination to wind back the stability control. As a counterpoint to that, my own time with the GT coincided with some particularly foul weather and I found its relatively relaxed demeanour made it far more enjoyable to use in such conditions than a more conventional, more highly strung supercar would have been.

Helping the GT’s wet-weather appeal was its feelsome hydraulically assisted steering – something we all agreed was a genuine treat to experience. Something else that we were all in agreement on was that our car’s full Batmobile colour scheme, both outside and in, was far too dour. A switch to some diamond-cut alloys for the last few weeks of our loan took the edge off the unremitting blackness, and prior to this we went with the cheaper option of leaving the car covered







in a layer of wintry grime. (OK, we also did this because nothing looks cooler than a properly filthy supercar. I mean grand tourer.)

Reliability-wise, our GT didn't miss a beat. Its fuel calculator was rather optimistic, though, sometimes claiming mpg averages well into the 30s when around 20mpg was closer to the truth. In practical terms it had an OK-sized front boot – on a par with a rear-drive 911's – and in theory offered nearly three times as much capacity again in the rear. However, whatever you placed in the long, narrow and shallow space above the engine and beneath the hatchback – an area that Barker nicknamed 'the trouser press' – was visible through the rear glass, and if you had lots of bags you'd lose your rearwards view too.

But as long as you didn't want to take the kitchen sink with you, you could conceivably use the McLaren GT for grand touring, and you could absolutely use one every day, all year round, if you felt so inclined. The question is, would you? It's much easier to imagine someone having a Range Rover or RS6 or Bentley for such duties, with a more focused 720S or similar on standby for when the conditions and journey suit. But if you really crave that supercar-style buzz more of the time, but without all the compromises usually associated with doing big miles in a supercar, McLaren's grand tourer has you covered.

Ian Eveleigh

Date acquired December 2021 **Duration of test** 4 months **Total test mileage** 2391 **Overall mpg** 20.5 **Total costs** £0 **Purchase price** £170,700 **Value today** £159,900



Porsche 911 Carrera (993)

The joys of driving a classic

RECENTLY I'VE BEEN EXCITED TO GET out and drive the 993 as much as possible. The latest upgrades – a '9m lite' flywheel and Sachs Pro Street clutch kit (see **evo** 296) – have made it even more addictive to push on and explore the available performance. The entire car has come to life, encouraging you to keep your foot down to hear that glorious flat-six note change after 5000rpm, which now arrives noticeably quicker.

There's always a risk when modifying a car that you might spoil it rather than improve it – just ask Adam Towler about his 996 – so I've been pleased to discover that the 993's ability to drive around town and in traffic hasn't changed. The only thing that's less easy is reversing: it's a little more tricky than before to do it completely smoothly, but nothing that can't be mastered.

Spending large amounts of time in new cars is brilliant, and the advancements in technology and performance are mind-blowing, but every time I get back in the 993 I'm reminded that there is still something to be said for smaller, older performance cars. Not only is it refreshing not having to worry about the width of the car on narrow B-roads, but you also get to enjoy the thrill of driving at much lower, saner speeds. For these reasons, cars like the 993 really do feel like they were built for British roads.

I'm really happy with how my 933 is turning out. Every step I've taken to improve it has delivered what I was looking for, enhancing the magic that's already there. I can't wait to drive it more this year and I have lots of car shows and road trips already pencilled in. Now let's just hope fuel prices magically start to go down...

Aston Parrott *(@AstonParrott)*

Date acquired April 2016 **Total mileage** 89,871 **Mileage this month** 151 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 28.1

NEW ARRIVAL

Skoda Kodiaq vRS

The biggest vRS joins our fleet in petrol-powered form. Will it be as entertaining as it is practical?

AFTER SIX MONTHS IN A SKODA OCTAVIA vRS (see **evo** 295 for the end-of-term round-up) I was looking forward to a new driving experience and had been wondering what, from all the possibilities available, might come my way. And now here it is, my new long-termer: a Skoda Kodiaq vRS!

OK, so it's another Skoda, but this might actually be the perfect photographer's car. It will also be the first SUV I have driven from the Skoda range, but it's not the first we've had on our fleet. You may recall that **evo** art ed Rich Browne ran a Kodiaq vRS back in 2019. That one was the 236bhp diesel version; this time we've got the 242bhp petrol, which mates its 2-litre TSI unit to a seven-speed DSG gearbox and four-wheel drive, enabling 0-62mph in 6.6sec and a top speed of 144mph.

The recently facelifted Kodiaq certainly makes a strong first impression. I'm a fan of the vRS's body styling and especially like our car's Race Blue metallic paint (a no-cost choice), which contrasts nicely with the black roof rails, door mirrors and radiator grille. Only the wheels let the side down slightly, the massive 20-inch 'Sagitarius' design – the only style available on the vRS – featuring black plastic aero covers that look more 'eco' than **evo**, which is a shame.

Being a Skoda, the equipment levels are strong. In fact the only options fitted to our car are blind-spot detection at £575 and tow-bar preparation at £200, resulting in a grand total of £46,810. Standard kit includes Dynamic Chassis Control and also Full Matrix LED headlights, which have beams that adapt according to other traffic, your speed and location (urban, countryside, motorway, etc) and even, apparently, the weather. Should be useful on those long, late-night drives home from distant photoshoots.

Inside, there's the usual vRS styling, with comfortable sports seats upholstered in Microsuede with red stitching, a leather sports steering wheel with the familiar VW Group paddles attached, and faux carbonfibre for the dash and door inserts, which as we all know adds at least 10bhp. The infotainment system employs a whopping 9.2-inch touchscreen with the usual smartphone connectivity; I just hope it isn't as glitchy as the unit in our Octavia was. The sound system is by Canton and manages to fill the large seven-seater cabin very well.

'Being a Skoda, the standard equipment levels are strong'

And on the subject of the vRS's ability to carry more occupants than is the norm, I've had a quick play with the two extra seats in the rear and, unsurprisingly, boot space is very limited with them upright. I can see how they might be useful for, say, large families, but I'll be keeping them stowed flat for maximum boot space.

Carrying all my photography gear won't be an issue for the Kodiaq, though. Its big challenge will be proving it can live up to the vRS badges that it wears. We'll find out if it does over the coming months.

Aston Parrott *(@AstonParrott)*

Date acquired March 2022 **Total mileage** 2011 **Mileage this month** 611 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 29.2





Alpine A110 Légende GT 2021

The GT's 'best of both worlds' status comes with a caveat

THE GT HAS BEEN CALLED THE Goldilocks model in the Alpine line-up, combining as it does the more powerful engine from the A110S with the softer suspension from the standard car. It's been said many times before, but that non-S chassis really is refreshing when you're tackling a typical British B-road, allowing the car to breathe with the surface passing beneath it and clearly feeling set up for road driving rather than lap times. To experience it is to be reminded how so many other modern performance cars pummel their way along the asphalt as their suspension attempts to provide maximum control while managing excessive weight.

That said, from what I'd read and heard about the basic A110's ride, I had expected our similarly suspended GT to be even smoother than it is. Specifically, I thought it would round off those minor imperfections that litter almost every UK road – the patches and the potholes, the joints and the drain covers – a little more than it does. Having never driven a standard A110, I assumed I was simply expecting too much, but then John Barker tried our long-termer for a few days recently and, upon returning it, said he remembered the regular A110 being a touch more compliant, and I've since noticed a few comments elsewhere suggesting the same.

So if the GT's suspension truly is what it's claimed to be, what's the score? Well, along with the S's engine, the GT also gains the sportier model's larger brakes, while its wheels grow from 17 inches in diameter to 18. So there's less tyre sidewall to absorb those harsh little inputs, and more unsprung mass being set in motion by them too. It's also worth noting that, thanks to those upgrades and some other extra kit, the Légende GT carries an additional 36kg overall compared with the lightest A110 of all, the recently discontinued A110 Pure. This may not sound like much, but given the Pure weighs just 1098kg, you're talking about an increase of more than three per cent for the Légende.

For me, the GT's slightly busy secondary ride isn't an issue. It's detailed rather than crashy or thumpy, and I only tend to notice it at slower speeds in urban environments. But if it's a truly unadulterated A110 experience you're after, it may be one of the lighter, smaller-wheeled but also less powerful entry-level versions that will satisfy your needs best.

Ian Eveleigh

Date acquired February 2022 **Total mileage** 7307 **Mileage this month** 729 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 34.0

Cupra Leon 310 Estate

It's talented, but hard to love

AS OUR TIME WITH THE LEON WAGON continues, so its limitations are beginning to show. The perennial issue with kit such as the Cupra is that while its speed, grip and traction are never in doubt, it's the less tangible, empirical stuff that's missing; qualities much harder to explain when you're asked, 'What's it like?'

You could say it's a practical estate car that will blast past 150mph with ease, would surely run rings around an old Subaru Impreza Turbo in poor conditions, and features all the modern convenience tech anyone could desire. At that point non-car people just wouldn't get the grievances. But that's the point of **evo**, isn't it? To look beyond mere numbers and to drill down into what makes one car genuinely appealing to the point you might spend almost your last penny on it, while another, if you never drove it again, would hardly raise a glimmer of regret. I don't suppose I need to tell you which camp the Leon falls into.

That's such a shame, but as an example its primary controls lack fidelity and precision. You can simply tell there's been little love lavished on the car during its gestation, as if the VW Group's focus has already shifted to the terrifying cash drain that is EV development. On a more practical note, I'm also finding the Cupra surprisingly unrefined, chiefly because there's an awful lot of road noise in the cabin. Maybe this is a peculiarity of the Hankook tyres, or of the more open estate interior, but it's really noisy, and many passengers have picked up on this. Thankfully the strange blast of cold air that appeared in the footwell during hard cornering from time to time has disappeared.

Maybe we'll discover some hidden talents to the Cupra during the next month, but from present form that seems unlikely.

Adam Towler *(@AdamTowler)*

Date acquired February 2022 **Total mileage** 2561 **Mileage this month** 601 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 34.1





Peugeot 508 SW PSE

Its a handy hybrid, but experiencing it at its dynamic best isn't easy

I'VE NOW PUT ALMOST 3000 MILES ON the 508 and in many respects it fits my life very neatly. It's plenty roomy enough running a couple of 6ft-plus schoolboys around, sometimes with a couple of black Labs in the back, and it swallows my mountain bike with ease. Many of the runs I do can be accomplished on electric, or very nearly, even though the range on a full charge has settled at 23 miles against a brochure claim of 26. It's refined and comfortable on longer journeys too, and also returns good mpg. In fact, it was a surprise to find that the tank of this big car only takes 43 litres.

What of the dynamics? It's not a car that gives up its abilities freely. I find the ride a little tough, and when pottering around in Hybrid mode select Comfort to take the edge off. That said, the body and wheel control over big events is seriously good; there's a devilish bit of road I travel along frequently that rolls and kicks because of subsidence and the Peugeot is among the best cars I've driven over it.

Carry speed into a corner, however, and the steering gets heavy quickly, drawing attention to the mass of the car. Unquestionably, the best mode if you want to be engaged is Sport. This deploys both ICE and electric power, which gives the 508 the pace to match its looks, but crucially sharpens and beefs up the throttle response so it really does feel like there's over 350bhp available. The whole car feels energised and up for it, in sharp contrast to its general demeanour, yet the steering weight in corners doesn't seem consistent.

The other issue is that you get this liveliness only when there's enough electric energy available. Chasing Aston Parrott across some fantastic, empty Somerset roads heading for a meeting at Ariel recently, the 508 had long depleted its battery and so was a big, quite heavy, 200bhp car pursuing our friskier and smaller Ford Puma ST.

Increased home energy costs have had an impact on the effective mpg. Charging its 11.5kWh battery has shot up from about £2 to £3, though by my reckoning that's still about half what it would cost in petrol for the short (up to 30 miles), cold-start, round trips I've been doing. In the last two weeks I've charged and depleted the battery 16 times and used a quarter of a tank of petrol to cover 430 miles, which works out at about 49mpg. That contributes to an average of around 46mpg, which is decent for a big car with this much potential performance.

On the infotainment side, phone pairing is very much miss more than hit, and one of the first things I do is turn off Lane Keep Assist because it irritates me how it gently messes with steering feel. Unexpectedly, though, Night Vision has shown its worth already, a couple of times spotting deer and a dog walker on the verge and triggering an alert in the instrument pack well before they became visible in the headlamps.

John Barker *(@evoJB)*

Date acquired March 2022 **Total mileage** 3292 **Mileage this month** 1739 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 46.1



Audi RS3 Saloon

They're mostly mighty, but our RS's ceramics have an unsettling quirk

THERE'S SOMETHING ABSURD about an Audi A3 fitted with carbon-ceramic brakes, but I love the geekiness of it. They're part of the RS Dynamic Pack, a £5500 option that also adds RS Adaptive Suspension with Audi Drive Select (including the additional RS Individual, RS Performance and RS Torque Rear modes) and the RS sports exhaust system. In case you hadn't realised, the RS3 is an RS and all options must be prefixed with RS. Oh, it also includes a top speed increase to RS 180mph.

I am generally a huge fan of ceramics, not just for their durability but also because the huge savings in unsprung and rotational mass really do enhance steering feel, ride quality and roll-on acceleration. However, I would love to try an RS3 on standard discs just to see if that holds true here. I've only ever done a back-to-back ceramics versus iron test with a 981-generation Porsche Cayman – a subtle, deeply sensitive and brilliantly communicative car, so the ceramics made a stark and tangible difference. Would it be so noticeable on the slightly more brutal RS3? Perhaps not.

The reason I've been thinking about this issue is that I've had a couple of little scares with the ceramics. Each time the pattern has been the same: a long period of motorway driving in wet conditions with no braking input required, followed by a fairly significant deceleration needed quickly. Each time the result has been just enough to induce mild panic. The brake pedal feels fine but there's very little retardation for a couple of heartbeats. Almost none, in fact. It's momentary and once they recover I've always had loads of time to stop. I suspect the lag is tiny if measured on a stopwatch. But it's just enough to undermine confidence.

Over years driving 911s and Caymans fitted with ceramics, not to mention Aston Martins and Ferraris, this has never happened to me. So it's a curious thing to experience and deeply odd that it should happen in a more 'conventional' car, where owners are probably less likely to think about things like brake temperature. Of course, once there's just a little heat in the RS ceramic brake system they're massively powerful and completely confidence-inspiring. Maybe that contrast is what makes the wet-weather hiccups seem all the more of an RS-clencher.

Jethro Bovingdon *(@JethroBovingdon)*

Date acquired December 2021 **Total mileage** 9857 **Mileage this month** 1200 **Costs this month** £16 (1 litre of oil) **mpg this month** 30.4

Chevrolet Corvette Stingray

Don't look up…

'INSANITY IS DOING THE SAME THING over and over again and expecting different results.' So goes the quote often misattributed to Albert Einstein. Well, if that quote is true, then I'm an insane idiot. Let me explain...

I once got a Land Rover County 110 with a metal Safari roof rack wedged under the concrete ceiling of an underground car park. We had to let most of the air out of the tyres to budge it.

On another occasion I managed to scratch the top of the roof tent on my kids' Jeep Renegade Trailhawk. Not because the car park ceiling was too low, but because the vehicle was too high.

So I have history with car parks. Car park barriers too. My Wrangler 392's front end is so high that I didn't spot one such barrier recently. As I drove forward it got pushed up onto the top of the bonnet, and then proceeded to repeatedly karate chop it in indignation.

You may, therefore, think I'd have learned my lesson before rushing the C8 Corvette out of its underground lair in Geneva for its last drive before being shipped back to America. I'd promised to take my daughter to her exam mocks in it with the roof down, for good luck, so as I drove through the garage, I pressed the button to put the roof down.

It's something I'd done before, no problems, the rear engine cover pivoting up, the roof balletically folding itself, then the cover lowering back down. But this time I managed to perfectly synchronise the high part of its arc with the lowest part of the concrete ceiling...

So the C8 is still in Switzerland. With part of its roof sticking up like a dainty little bit of unplanned aero. I need to get it fixed before shipping it back to the US, so maybe I'll keep the Vette here for spring and summer. Bad luck or good fate? Time will tell.

David Price

Date acquired September 2021 **Total mileage** 2221 **Mileage this month** 3 **Costs this month** A lot **mpg this month** n/a



END OF TERM

Lamborghini Urus

It was monumentally rapid and turned plenty of heads, but was it Lamborghini enough in other respects?

OUR URUS RETURNED TO LAMBORGHINI before we headed to Anglesey this month, which meant it missed its weigh-in and an opportunity to kill its set of Pirelli P Zeros. Then again, the Huracán STO we did have was the far more suitable attendee for a track session, and what would we have learned from throwing a (claimed) 2200kg around Anglesey's Coastal Circuit, other than that the Irish Sea looks perilously close when you're sitting up high, and that 641bhp and that much mass takes some stopping? Not much more, I suspect, because during its time with us Lamborghini's take on the VW Group SUV never felt like a machine you would dial yourself into, rather it's a blunt instrument to crack as many nuts as you can find.

But isn't that true of every SUV that claims to be a performance car? Not really. Porsche's Cayenne Turbo GT, with which the Urus shares so much of its componentry, has demonstrated that these behemoths can be made to dance to your tune, allowing you to finesse how you use the performance on offer rather than simply unleashing it all and hoping for the best. Then again, the Porsche is the result of an extreme workout carried out by the company's GT department, so you'd expect nothing less.

Even Aston Martin has achieved a high bar with its DBX, delivering an SUV that's as much a GT car as it is a rival to the serious end of the supersaloon market. Crucially, both the Porsche and the Aston drive, steer, handle and stop as you'd expect from cars wearing such badges. The Urus? After several months and several thousand miles it never felt like a Lamborghini.

It had the straight-line performance of a Lamborghini and then some. Even when you left the driver modes alone it was feral as it roared its way to the vanishing point on the slightest of throttle openings. Step up the mode ladder and its performance became explosive, its pace frightening as you realised the world really isn't big enough for an unleashed Urus. Driving an Aventador SVJ on Pirelli Corsas in a monsoon is a less intimidating experience than a Urus at full chat in the dry.

A busy ride and a powertrain that never felt relaxed made for a tiresome car at low speed, but on those days when you needed to cover big miles it would settle down and munch away until you reached your destination calm and chilled. But it feels old inside the Urus, the Audi switchgear and infotainment system missing the mark in a car that

'Its frightening pace made you realise the world isn't big enough for an unleashed Urus'

has a £150,000+ starting price; next year's update can't come soon enough.

But as with all cars you shouldn't really like, there were moments when the Urus made you grin like a child. It could, and would, quite regularly fire you through a series of corners with utterly unexpected precision and control, finding grip at the front where it had no right to and relinquishing just enough at the rear to allow you to drive out of a corner rather than simply be fired from the apex into oblivion.

Yet ultimately the Urus struggled to convince us of its purpose. While it has the looks that mark it out as a Lamborghini, it sacrifices the sense of occasion we enjoy and relish from the cars from the Sant'Agata stable for a brutish force that's very un-Italian.

And yet the Urus is an unquestionable success. More than 10,000 have been built since its 2017 launch, and just as the financial rewards of the Cayenne benefited Porsche's sports cars, so the Urus has helped fund a series of rear-drive Huracáns, from the sublime Evo to the mad STO and hopefully the best of the bunch, the Tecnica. That residual values for the Urus in the UK are some of the strongest around (a 40,000-mile 2018 example still commands a six-figure price starting with a two) highlights that while it's far from Lamborghini's finest and far from what a Lamborghini should be in our book, it's clearly found favour with new customers who will hopefully one day make the move to owning a real Lambo.

Stuart Gallagher *(@stuartg917)*

Date acquired December 2021 **Duration of test** 4 months **Total test mileage** 3411 **Overall mpg** 17.1 **Total costs** £0 **Purchase price** £215,170 **Value today** £253,400



Alfa Stelvio

Why don't more SUV buyers take the plunge with an Alfa?

IF THE CAR INDUSTRY EVER WANTED an insight into the target audience for mid-range SUVs, then the view from the top-floor window (second treadmill from the right) of the David Lloyd gym in Peterborough would be a great place to start.

Plodding aimlessly along to the soundtrack of *Rocky IV*, I noticed the car park below was awash with an endless sea of grey Jaguar E-Paces, Range Rover Evoques, Volvo XC60s, Volkswagen Tiguans and a new invasion of Ford Pumas – all ejecting a seemingly endless conveyor belt of middle-class mums and dads struggling with children and juggling hot yoga classes.

And then, amongst them, I spotted our Stelvio. It's easy to see as it looks completely different from its bland SUV cousins, its elegant design and bold blue hue standing out (in a good way). And then it hit me: you really don't see many around. In fact, in the months I've been driving ours I don't think I've seen another, and that, quite frankly, is puzzling and a massive shame.

Perhaps lease costs have something to do with it; maybe people still have reliability concerns about Alfas too. (For the record, our Stelvio Veloce has been faultless.) But my suspicion is that people are just a bit conditioned in their views and are scared to try something different.

Don't get me wrong, I'm sure the cars I named earlier are all perfectly fit for purpose for those who have chosen them, but at the end of my 5km slog I could still barely tell one from another.

Later, as I slung my kit bag into the Stelvio's ample boot, a chap in a matt black Range Rover pulled up in the space next to me. 'Nice car, mate,' he said. 'What is it? An Alfa?'

Richard Browne *(@washlander)*

Date acquired January 2021 **Total mileage** 5200 **Mileage this month** 723 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 24.2

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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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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, 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** serve up supermini fun at a more affordable price level. The latest **Audi RS3 Sportback** finally offers more than just impressive stats, and the **Mercedes-AMG A45 S** delivers big numbers *and* involvement.

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	£38,440	4/1998	302/5000	332/1800	1525kg	201	4.8	-	-	155	+ Strong performance, monster 4WD traction - Engine lacks character	★★★☆☆
BMW M235i xDrive Gran Coupé	274 D	£39,315	4/1998	302/5000	332/1800	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 Edition (Mk4)	294 D	£35,785	4/2261	276/5500	310/3000	1433kg	196	5.7	-	-	155	+ Elevates the Focus ST from its underdog status - Needs a better engine and steering	★★★★½
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	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 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	*294 F*	*'03-'05*	*6/2946*	*251/7150*	*221/4650*	*1400kg*	*182*	*5.8*	*-*	*-*	*153*	*+ Supercar drama without the original's edgy handling - Uninspired interior*	★★★★½
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	*298 F*	*'20-'21*	*4/1798*	*296/6000*	*310/4000*	*1443kg*	*209*	*5.7*	*-*	*-*	*158*	*+ Finally combined the Trophy's more potent engine with the softer chassis - Auto only*	★★★★½
Renault Mégane RS Trophy	*267 F*	*'18-'21*	*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*	*'19-'21*	*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	295 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*	*+ Fulsome, 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
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?*	★★★★★

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 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 **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 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*	*'21*	*6/2891*	*533/6500*	*442/2500*	*1580kg*	*343*	*3.6*	*-*	*-*	*186*	*+ A sensational 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
Aston Martin DBX707	297 F	£189,000	8/3982	697/6000	663/2600	2245kg	315	3.3	-	-	193	+ Monster power, but a rounded performer too - It still weighs 2.2 tons	★★★★½
Audi RS3 Saloon	295 F	£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 Hybrid	295 D	£168,000	6/2894	536	553	2505kg	217	4.3	-	-	177	+ Silent refinement at its best - V6 not as refined as you'd expect	★★★★☆
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 i4 M50	296 D	£63,905	400kW	536	586	2215kg	249	3.9	-	-	139	+ A compelling daily EV - Heavy and expensive compared to an M340i	★★★★☆
BMW M3 Competition (G80)	293 F	£76,115	6/2993	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	6/2993	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 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)	297 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*	★★★☆☆
Genesis G70 Shooting Brake 2.0T Plus	265 D	£40,700	4/1998	241/6200	260/1450	1717kg	143	6.4	-	-	146	+ Striking looks, quality interior - Lacklustre engine; dull and unresolved handling	★★★☆☆
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 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
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	★★★★☆

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	
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*	★★★★★
Lucid Air Dream Edition P	298 D	$170,500	1000kW	1111	1025	2360kg	478	2.5	-	-	168	+ An EV that engages the driver - Sacrificies ultimate handling for a longer range	★★★★☆
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	£108,810	8/3996	473/6500	457/1800	2040kg	236	3.9	-	-	181	+ The most engaging Panamera - Still a heavy old thing	★★★★☆
Porsche Panamera 4S E-Hybrid Sport Turismo	298 D	£105,830	6/2894	552	553	2240kg	250	3.7	-	-	182	+ Retains Porsche's core DNA - The Panamera GTS and Taycan also exist	★★★★☆
Porsche Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid Sport T.	272 D	£146,340	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 GTS Sport Turismo	294 D	£104,990	380kW	510	-	2310kg	224	3.7	-	-	224	+ One of the best performance EVs yet - Charge anxiety	★★★★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 P530 Autobiography	298 D	£134,875	8/4395	523/5500	551/1800	2585kg	206	4.6	-	-	155	+ Quieter and more capable - Heavier and more expensive	★★★★☆
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*	★★★★★
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	★★★★☆

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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

Porsche 718 Spyder. Effectively a drop-top version of the eCoty-winning 718 Cayman GT4, the Spyder shares its naturally aspirated flat-six, slick manual 'box (PDK is an option) and even its 1420kg kerb weight with its coupe counterpart, but adds the ability to enjoy it all with the wind in your hair. What's not to love?



BEST OF THE REST

The **Aston Martin Vantage Roadster** (left) bests the 911 Cabriolet for character, the **Porsche 718 Boxster GTS 4.0** is essentially a cut-price 718 Spyder, the **Caterham Seven** remains an exemplar of sports car purity across the range, while the **Ariel Atom** strips what you need for driving thrills to the bare minimum.

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	294 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	1745kg	293	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 i8 Roadster	*258 F*	*'19-'20*	*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 RWD	271 D	£77,460	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*	*'21*	*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*	*'16-'21*	*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*	★★★★★
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	★★★★☆



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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*	*'12-'21*	*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	294 F	£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	£48,400	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	£58,160	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	£68,560	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	£77,110	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	★★★★☆

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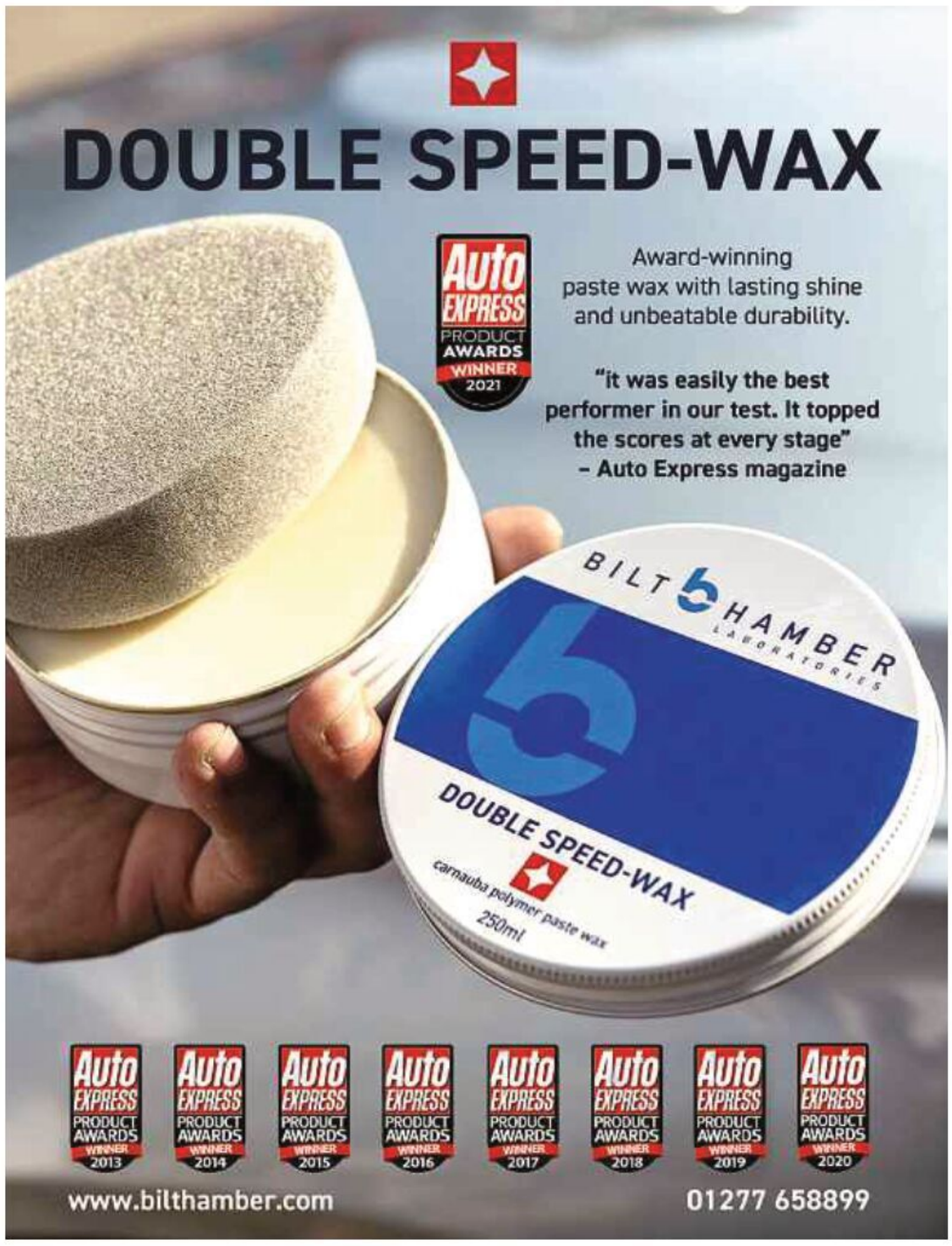
Porsche 718 Cayman GT4. With a naturally aspirated flat-six, a manual gearbox, extraordinary damping and fulsome feedback, the second GT4 is even better than the original and laughs in the face of turbocharged engines, automatic transmissions and monster power outputs.



BEST OF THE REST

The **Alpine A110** (left) gives the four-cylinder 718 Cayman a true rival to worry about, while the **Aston Martin Vantage** is a genuine 911 beater. The C8-generation **Chevrolet Corvette Stingray** is a lot of mid-engined V8 coupe for the money and the **Bentley Continental GT Speed** combines high-end GT refinement with highly polished handling.

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
Aston Martin Vantage	280 F	£124,400	8/3982	503/6000	505/2000	1685kg	303	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	1570kg*	341	3.6	-	-	195	+ Hones the Vantage recipe - Not the trackday refugee the stickers and spoilers suggest	★★★★½
Aston Martin V12 Vantage	298 F	£265,000	12/5204	690/6500	555/5000	1795kg	391	3.5	-	-	200	+ The last of its kind - Hobbled by ham-fisted handling	★★★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	296 F	£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*	★★★★★
BMW M240i xDrive Coupé	297 D	£45,795	6/2998	369/5500	369/1900	1690kg	222	4.3	-	-	155	+ A pocket GT with bulging muscles - You might baulk at the bulk	★★★★½
BMW M240i Coupé	*229 D*	*'16-'21*	*6/2998*	*335/6800*	*369/1520*	*1470kg*	*232*	*4.8*	-	-	*155*	+ *Adjustable and plenty of fun* - *Lacks finesse and precision*	★★★★☆


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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 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*	*'18-'21*	*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*	*'20-'21*	*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	6/2993	503/6250	479/2750	1725kg	296	3.9	-	-	155	+ Accomplished and fun - Weight gain and auto gearbox look questionable	★★★★½
BMW M4 Competition xDrive (G82)	295 F	£79,775	6/2993	503/6250	479/2750	1775kg	288	3.5	-	-	155	+ Preferable to the already excellent rear-drive M4 - 4WD adds another 50kg	★★★★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*	*'14-'20*	*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 Mach 1	295 F	£56,995	8/4951	454/7250	390/4900	1754kg	263	4.8	-	-	166	+ A 'Mustang Plus' for Europe - It's no GT500	★★★★☆
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	★★★★☆
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	295 F	£66,000	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*	*'16-'21*	*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*	*'18-'21*	*6/3456*	*410/7000*	*310/3500*	*1110kg*	*375*	*3.4*	*-*	*-*	*180*	*+ A first-rate swansong for the V6 Exige - Didn't come cheap*	★★★★★
Lotus Exige Cup 430	*253 F*	*'18-'21*	*6/3456*	*430/7000*	*325/2600*	*1093kg*	*400*	*3.3*	*-*	*-*	*180*	*+ The ultimate Exige - With a price tag to match*	★★★★★
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*	*'20-'21*	*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*	*'19-'21*	*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*	★★★★☆
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*	*'17-'22*	*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*	*'17-'22*	*6/3799*	*562/6800*	*470/3600*	*1745kg*	*327*	*2.7*	*-*	*-*	*196*	*+ Sharper than the standard GT-R - Pricier too*	★★★★½
Nissan GT-R Nismo (2020MY)	*298 F*	*'20-'22*	*6/3799*	*592/6800*	*481/3600*	*1703kg*	*353*	*2.8*	*-*	*-*	*196*	*+ Addictive performance - Track Edition gets 90 per cent there for a lot, lot 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 - 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*	★★★★★
Noble M400	*297 F*	*'04-'06*	*6/2968*	*425/6500*	*390/5000*	*1060kg*	*407*	*3.5*	*-*	*-*	*185*	*+ Devilishly fast - Demon Tweeks interior*	★★★★★
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	£46,540	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	£53,870	4/1988	296/6500	280/2150	1350kg	223	5.1	-	-	170	+ A further-honed 2-litre Cayman - Flat-four soundtrack still disappoints	★★★★½
Porsche 718 Cayman S	249 F	£56,300	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 4.0	283 F	£66,700	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	★★★★★

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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 GT4	277 F	£78,750	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 718 Cayman GT4 RS	297 F	£108,370	6/3996	493/8400	332/6750	1415kg	354	3.4	-	-	196	+ The Cayman we always dreamed of - Although we dreamt it'd have a manual 'box	★★★★★
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 GTS (992)	296 D	£111,380	6/2981	473/6500	420/2300	1510kg	318	4.1	-	-	193	+ Adds the missing final layer of 911 polish to the 992 - 911s have lost their affordability	★★★★★
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, the **Ferrari F8 Tributo** takes Maranello's mid-engined V8 line to a new state of the art, the latest **Porsche 911 GT3** brings more improvements to an already brilliant model, and the **Maserati MC20** is a refreshing new addition to the supercar class.

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*	*'21-'22*	*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*	*'20-'21*	*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 Performance RWD	297 D	£132,805	10/5204	562/7800	406/6400	1595kg	358	3.7	-	-	204	+ Magnificent V10 engine - Rear-drive chassis lacks the sparkle of the quattro's	★★★★☆
Audi R8 V10 quattro	*261 F*	*'20-'21*	*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 quattro	256 D	£152,910	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 (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
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 hybrids are coming	★★★★★
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 296 GTB	296 F	£245,000	6/2992	819/8000	546/6250	1470kg*	566	2.9	-	-	205	+ Indulgently powerful, responsive, makes a success of hybrid tech - It's rather pricey	★★★★★
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
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*	★★★★★


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4


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5

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 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*	*'16-'21*	*12/6498*	*730/8400*	*509/5500*	*1575kg**	*471*	*2.9*	-	-	*217*	*+ A more agile, more connected Aventador - Synthetic steering*	★★★★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 Aventador LP780-4 Ultimae	298 F	£324,000	12/6498	769/8500	531/6750	1550kg*	504	2.8	-	-	221	+ The final traditional V12 Lambo - We'll never see its kind again	★★★★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	*089 D*	*'01-'06*	*12/6192*	*572/7500*	*479/5400*	*1650kg**	*351*	*4.0*	-	-	*206*	*+ Gorgeous, capable and incredibly friendly - V12 feels stressed*	★★★★★
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 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*	★★★★☆
Maserati MC20	294 F	£190,275	6/2992	621/7500	538/3000	1475kg	428	2.9	-	-	203	+ A triumphant return to form for Maserati - Rorty engine is at odds with rest of the car	★★★★½
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	296 F	£165,230	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 Elva	294 D	£1,425,000	8/3994	804/7500	590/5500	1269kg	644	2.8	-	-	203	+ Stupendous performance - Lacks the connection of the 765LT	★★★★½
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 D	£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*	*'09-'18*	*8/4439*	*650/6800*	*604/3800*	*1198kg**	*551*	*3.5*	*3.8*	*7.7*	*225*	*+ Spiritual successor to the Ferrari F40 - Quite a lot rarer*	★★★★★
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*	*547/5900*	*553/4050*	*1280kg**	*434*	*3.7*	-	-	*197*	*+ evo Car of the Year 2001 (in earlier 7.0 form) - Values have gone up a fair bit since then*	★★★★★
Pagani Zonda F	*295 F*	*'05-'06*	*12/7291*	*594/6150*	*560/4000*	*1230kg**	*491*	*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 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)	295 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	★★★★½
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



Supercar smackdown

Could anything be faster along the deristricted roads of the Isle of Man than Porsche and Lamborghini's latest supercars? Well, yes…

IT'S 2008 AND YOU'RE IN A NEW Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4 on a derestricted piece of road, trying to keep up with John Barker in a new Porsche 911 GT2. And it's properly derestricted, because you're on the Isle of Man, so as long as you're not doing anything stupid, you don't need to worry about the speedometer. Consequently this would usually mean that you don't have to worry too much about your mirrors. After all, you're in a 552bhp Lamborghini. Not much is faster than you. But this is the Isle of Man.

Left round the Ramsey Hairpin, right round the Gooseneck and then up onto the Mountain proper. John is not hanging around and I'm using all of the V10's revs to keep up. Past the low, white walls of Guthrie's and then onto the Mountain Mile. This is where I seem to remember noticing something in the mirror. A glint in the soft evening glow.

Now there was always the chance when Kenny P was the photographer on a shoot (as he was on this one for issue 122) that you could be made to look very silly by a slightly baggy blue Mondeo loaded to the gunwales and being driven with the commitment of a disgruntled Nigel Mansell. But on this occasion it isn't Kenny; there was just a single headlight, travelling fast.

A couple more corners and then it's on me. I don't even have a chance to think about letting him through because he's past and into the gap between the slanted nose of the Lambo and the fat, gilled rump of the Porsche. I back off a touch to give him a bit more room through the next bend but I'm still close enough to have everything framed perfectly in the widescreen windscreen of the Gallardo. Still at speed, howling revs hovering as I wait for my own chance to accelerate, I watch the 911 squat down and then see the angled rear tyre of the bike paint a thin black line on the tarmac as its rider shifts his weight and lines up his next victim.

John and the big 325-section Pilot Sport Cups of the GT2 do just enough through the four, linked corners of the Verandah but the bike's alongside down the next straight and then sweeps through the following open left, leaving another dark tattoo on the tarmac as though signing off with a flourish on the whole brief event. Two supercars left feeling powerless.

John and I stop just up the road at Creg-ny-Baa, where we're meeting Kenny.

'That kid was on it,' says John, to the ticking accompaniment of cooling metal.

Our egos agree that he must be one of the riders practising for the Manx GP in a couple of weeks' time.

The next day, we're queuing for the ferry and a chap wanders over.

'Old bloke I work with said he saw you on the Mountain last night. He was on his way home from work and said there were these two white supercars tramping on a bit.'

'What was he driving?' John asks, but we already know what's coming.

'Well, he's got a company car but he goes everywhere on his bike. Loves it. Said he overtook the Lambo on the way up and then nipped past the Porsche out of the Verrandah.'

Bloody commuter traffic.



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