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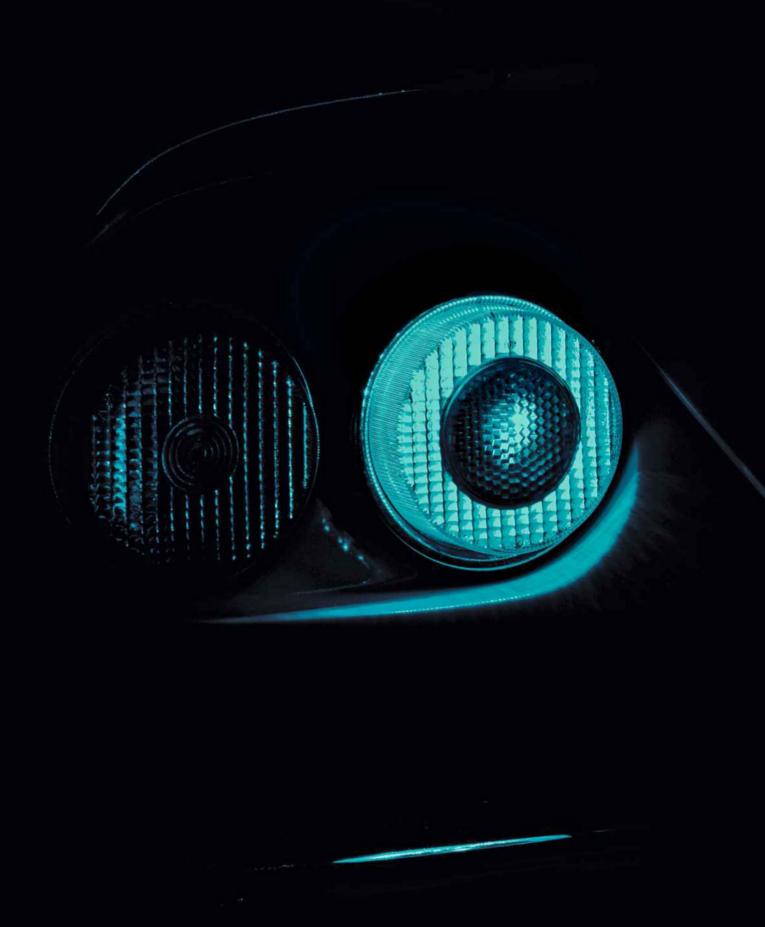
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IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT

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Ed speak



NOT SO LONG AGO THE CEO OF A CAR

company, a small but significant one that plies its trade in the upper echelons of the driver's car market, told me he could never launch a new model with less power than one it replaced. 'The marketing team would crucify me. Our customers would walk away. I don't even want to think about what our dealers would say.' I, and a couple of other journalists present, tried to convince him otherwise, but he was adamant it would be

commercial and career suicide.

But chasing power is one of the leading factors as to why new cars are larger, and therefore heavier and less efficient overall. More power requires improved braking performance and more sophisticated dynamic components that are larger and therefore heavier. More cooling is required, the computing power and associated ancillaries need to increase too... you get the idea. And it all needs somewhere to go, which means more space, which means bigger cars and more raw materials to build them. The cycle never stops.

But it has to. We can't go on like this. The industry for too long has blamed consumers for the power races, the weight gain, the XXXL footprints. But with the best will in the world the consumer doesn't know what it wants until someone tells them what they need and why.

While there is clearly a strong requirement for the automotive sector to evolve to the needs and desires of the markets they operate in, there is also a need to lead and educate.

Cars have to become smaller. They need to be lighter, whether they are hatchbacks – remember them? – or supercars. They need to be more efficient, not only in terms of how much energy they consume to transport their occupants but also the resources and materials required to build them. Because regardless of whether you're a V8-until-you-die person or an EV advocate now you've tried one, everyone benefits from an efficiency race.

Stuart Gallagher, Editor-in-Chief @stuartg917

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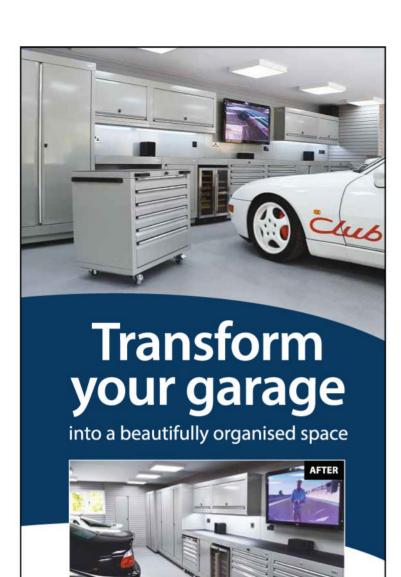


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Driven

stood for super-light, performance, power-to-weight ratio,' says KTM Sportcar managing director Michael Wölfling. 'We still had a good relationship with Audi, and we decided to go with this new aluminium-block 2.5-litre engine.' Slotted transversely amidships, it's the same in-line five found in the Audi RS3 and TT RS, with mapping by Graz-based firm AVL to take its power output from less than 400bhp to 493bhp. (In GT2 race versions, it's as much as 650bhp.) To stick with the original car and implement a newer equivalent to the old four-cylinder engine would have made it much more expensive, Barth adds, with more complex cooling and control systems.

So, more power and a higher price point meant the X-Bow could shift to a more grown-up concept – and take part in grown-up motorsport. The X-Bow had always performed well on track, Wölfling explains, and it had branched out into racing with a GT4 evolution in 2016, but to participate in wider FIA GT racing regulations required a roof and doors. And the raison d'être of the original open-air X-Bow was that it didn't have a roof or doors, or even a windscreen, unless you chose the GT version with a visor-like wraparound screen. Time for a conceptual rethink. Parked next to an original X-Bow on display at the factory, the

difference in size is striking. The GT-XR is a much wider, longer car, the wheelbase alone measuring more than 2.8m, some 40cm longer than the X-Bow's. Ahead of the engine, it incorporates a genuinely capacious (though warm, we'll discover) 160-litre boot and an enormous, near-100-litre fuel tank, making long-distance touring a real, if daunting, possibility.

The first car, built as a racing proof of concept in 2020, won its class in the Barcelona 24 Hours race. Next step was to industrialise it for quality, styling, safety – and to create a road-going production version: partly to keep the KTM sports car marque alive, and partly because certain racing categories require a road version for homologation.

Fast forward and here we are, preparing to board a malevolent-looking pre-production GT-XR, finished in matt clear carbonfibre. (Customers can choose more or less any paint colour they can imagine, or opt for clear carbon in matt or glossy finishes – or tinted, coloured carbonfibre, with the ability to choose the composite's precise ratio between coloured and clear.) 'It's not so much a Batmobile as maybe a car the villain would drive; maybe the Joker,' smiles Wölfling.

Plipping the keyfob or pulling the door handle triggers the GT-XR's party piece, its electric

canopy. The whole glasshouse rises smoothly and silently upwards and forwards, revealing the cockpit set into the carbonfibre monocoque. Aside from the steel subframe at the rear carrying the engine, transmission and rear suspension, the GT-XR is made almost entirely from carbonfibre.

To climb in, either sit on the monocogue's broad shoulders and swivel your legs over, or take a John Cleese-style elongated step over the side, planting your right foot in the channel cut into the centre of the seat's base, and then lowering yourself in. The steering wheel – also carbonfibre – is removable to make things easier, and comes to life instantly when you click it back into place. Its central screen carries all of the instrumentation. For navigation or music, you can click your smartphone into a middash Quadlock mount, with wireless charging and two USB-C ports just below, and Bluetooth it to the speakers built into the monocoque's sides next to the seats. There's a glovebox too, between the seats, a bit like in an MX-5, though there's nowhere else to put anything – also a bit like an MX-5.

The seat is part of the monocoque and doesn't move; the pedals do. The monocoque itself is essentially the same as the original X-Bow's and virtually the only component carried over from that car, albeit a big one, though it weighs only









Clockwise from top left: cockpit is accessed via electrically powered canopy; once open it also reveals pushrod-operated inboard dampers; no rear-view mirrors so driver has three camera screens instead

80kg. You and your passenger are positioned in separate channels, protected by deep sides.

Once you're four-point harnessed in, lift a lever on the centre console and the canopy glides shut, clicking into place and sealing you inside. Maybe I'm being a wimp but I feel a little claustrophobic, for the first few miles at least. It's an odd dichotomy of having an airy, panoramic view ahead through the canopy, and yet feeling a bit trapped. The canopy's side windows can open as doors, so it's always possible to get out, even if you've somehow ended up upside down. And if you were going to have a crash, the GT-XR

is a good car to do it in. The canopy forms an immensely strong assembly with the B-pillar and can withstand forces around six times greater than the X-Bow's weight. (KTM claims 1250kg without fuel but with a nominal 85kg for a driver and luggage, so adjusted to our preferred DINstandard kerb weight – 90 per cent fuel load but no driver or luggage - that equates to 1226kg.)

There's no rear window, nor physical mirrors, so three camera screens take care of your rear view. Their frame rate is superbly fast and they work well, but their positioning requires you to move your head a little more than in most cars, adding to my initial discombobulation. As does the power steering: it's a clever, progressive variable-ratio electric system giving you effortless weight for parking and more resistance to lean on at speed, but it takes a little while to get used to,

particularly at roundabouts where it's featherlight before weighting up abruptly as speed builds. Unsurprisingly, it reminds more of power steering in racing cars than in typical road cars: less about expressive feel and more about reducing fatigue and dealing with high loads when driving hard on track.

And, as the miles tick on and the GT-XR begins to fit like a glove rather than unfamiliar clothes, it becomes clear that's exactly how it wants to be driven. It's perfectly happy trickling around in traffic; one of the main differences between the racing GTX and GT2 versions and the GT-XR road car is that the former have a racing gearbox with straight-cut gears, good for motorway speeds in first gear, where the latter has a smooth, slick dual-clutch road-car gearbox sourced from VW. But it's still a racing car at heart.



As we climb higher into the Styrian Alps, traffic evaporates and a dream-like road unfurls ahead: long, well-sighted straights, fast, cambered curves and tight, stop-press hairpins. The GT-XR relishes it gleefully, like a dog let loose from a lead. In the fast stuff your shoulders are supported by the wraparound seat shrouds, letting you lean into the forces, and in the slow bits brake feel is superb. The pedal needs seriously firm pressure: without the servo assistance of a regular road car, what you press is what you get. But they definitely get it stopped. With such fine feedback it almost feels more natural to left-foot brake, although the pedals in this car are spaced for right-foot braking.

As standard, the GT-XR has similar iron Brembo discs to those used on the Audi R8, albeit in a car that weighs about half a ton less. This car is on the optional carbon-ceramic brakes, which avoid feeling grabby from cold the way some can

and make a sound like fine-grit sandpaper when pulling to a halt.

All kinds of sounds abound throughout the GT-XR driving experience: there are turbo gasps, whooshes and belches, and flutters off-throttle like there's an aviary in the engine bay. Unsurprisingly there's a reasonable amount of road noise from the tyres, and photographer Aston Parrott and I need to raise our voices a fair bit to chat. Our sentences echo around the cockpit's bowled canopy, as do the resounding clacks from the gearchange paddles.

What's missing is the engine's note itself: the Audi five-cylinder sounds mellifluous in the TT RS on **evo**'s Fast Fleet but its note is partly lost in the mechanical hubbub here, and only makes itself heard when you're dashing for the red line. At which point you're travelling *seriously* quickly. There's no question this is a very fast car.

What's holding it back today, and making it difficult to make a definitive judgement on its dynamics, is the set of winter tyres it's wearing – a legal requirement in Austria at the time of our drive. 'Next week we can put semi-slicks on,' head of development Christian Sams had told us back at the factory, while climbing out of a similarly shod development car.

The requirement makes sense: from one corner to another there's bright sunshine and bone-dry tarmac one moment, then the next there's a sudden damp sheen on the road in the shadows under trees. Frost and even patches of snow line the verges in places (and there are no verges in others; just a steep drop or a solid tree). So the winter footwear is probably for the best, but the GT-XR doesn't feel happy on these tyres. The traction-control light is winking away under power right to the top of third gear, and using the













halfway-off ESP Sport mode as a minimum is essential to be able to make any progress out of slow corners. The squirming treadblocks take some of the bite out of the brakes (and no doubt some of the feel out of the steering) and it's more difficult to trust the car and feel its limits – something that's brought home when, in a fast, downhill sweeper, I suddenly find myself needing a reasonably big stab of corrective lock. And a bit of a breather.

I'm sure it's the tyres that are responsible for the lack of feedback at the limit rather than anything inherent in the chassis or suspension. In fact, the suspension seems to be doing a stellar job. This is a low car – its adjustable ride height can sit as low as 90mm – but manoeuvring over bumps in town it never grounds its nose. Running through corners at speed for the camera, Aston's photos show the rear bodywork nearly touching the ground in a compression and the rear tyres finding fresh air over a bump, but all feels relatively serene inside the cockpit.

We raise the canopy for a longer breather and a chance to drink in the GT-XR's arresting lines one more time. With the canopy lifted, the front suspension's inboard dampers are visible, the pushrod set-up operating them positioned to keep out of the airflow. There are no radiators in the nose: all of the car's cooling is in its flanks, avoiding the chances of a race-ending crunch in traffic. The body's entire nose section is attached with just four bolts and one electrical

connection, for quicker replacement in a heatof-battle pit stop. It's all been thought through.

I love the GT-XR conceptually, even if adding more of everything – power, size, price – is at odds with the initial motorcycle-on-four-wheels approach of the first X-Bow. Ah, yes, price. I've been meaning to mention that. Ten years ago a X-Bow GT cost around £73,000. The new GT-XR costs €299,150 plus taxes, so around £316,800 in the UK at current exchange rates. It's a completely different business approach for KTM: going from a strategy based on building a larger number of cars at a lower price point to no more than 100 cars a year, at super- or even hypercar pricing. And it makes a great deal of fiscal sense: the GT-XR is sold out to the end of 2025 and the first 100 special-edition cars off the line were oversubscribed by some margin.

The car is fully homologated worldwide, although there won't be a right-hand-drive version, sadly; that would double production costs. Production has all but ended of the original open-air four-pot X-Bow now, with only a few more cars being built for the US market, where it's not road-legal and used purely for trackdays. The GT-XR is a new start for KTM.

As we visit, production is ramping up. The first three customer cars have been delivered, and one immediately embarked on a 600-mile journey to the Ring, running the engine in on the way. To drive, it truly is a racing car for the road, and a successful one – despite needing to run a

great deal of ballast for Balance of Performance against rivals from Porsche and Audi, the X-Bow GT2 had won at Monza shortly before our visit, for all the good and bad that entails.

As much as I love the presence, character and uniqueness of the GT-XR, I didn't fall in love with driving it quite as much as I thought I would. But I would love to experience it on its natural tyres, and perhaps in its natural habitat of a racetrack. Because there are glimpses of a brilliance – cornering forces squashing me into the seat, kickback-free steering holding a line, carbonfibre body all but brushing an improvised apex marker – that could make a 'normal' supercar feel anodyne and ungainly.

For KTM's customers – many of whom have plenty of cars in their collection already – I can absolutely see its appeal. There's nothing else quite like it, except perhaps Radical's RXC, which is harder work on the road and can't quite compete with the X-Bow's fit, finish and Joker's-wheels allure. It's not for everyone, but the sports car world is a richer place for this car's creation, and KTM's continued presence in it.

Engine In-line 5-cyl, 2480cc, turbocharged Power 493bhp @ 6350rpm Torque 428lb ft @ 5550rpm Weight 1226kg (409bhp/ton) 0-62mph 3.4sec Top speed 174mph Basic price c£316,800

- + A real racing car for the road
- evo rating ★★★★☆

Clockwise from left:

seats are fixed – wheel and pedals move instead; wheel itself is pure race-car, this example fitted with optional carbon-ceramic brakes; Audi turbo 'five' tuned to a fierce 493bhp

'I can absolutely see the appeal. There's nothing else quite like it'





HERE'S A NEW TRACK PACK OPTION available for the Focus ST, a welcome introduction for a car that has, it's fair to say, underachieved over recent years. Ford's all-rounder should be at the core of any hot hatch market, but it's the smaller Fiesta ST that has been far more convincing overall in recent times. Perhaps the Track Pack, available only on the five-door manual Focus ST, not the auto or the estate, can redress the balance.

Excitement for the Track Pack may initially be tempered by learning that what you're really seeing here is, in effect, the upgrades from 2021's 'ST Edition' applied to the facelifted Focus that was unveiled last year, including the Edition's KW coilovers and cosmetic enhancements. But it doesn't quite stop there, because Ford Performance has now also incorporated some larger brakes (four-pot, 363mm Brembos for the front, up from the standard 330mm discs) and

a bespoke Pirelli P Zero Corsa tyre, both items that should significantly enhance the ST's abilities around a circuit and make the Track Pack moniker feel suitably authentic.

Visually, the Track Pack benefits from the same 19-inch flow-formed wheels – lighter by 10 per cent than the regular ST items, apparently – as the ST Edition. These are once again finished in gloss black, along with the roof, rear spoiler, diffuser and mirror caps. That all sounds as though 2008 just called, but the Track Pack ST gets its fair share of admiring glances and petrol station conversations while looking more tasteful than the previousgeneration Civic Type R. A 10mm ride height drop with the factory set-up on the KWs, which can be lowered by a further 15mm if you so choose, makes it look suitably aggressive. The KWs also offer 12 and 16 clicks of manual adjustment for bump and rebound respectively, for further finetuning/ruination (delete as applicable).

The 50-metre test with the ST Track Pack suggests this is going to be a somewhat uncompromising experience, its limbs feeling stiff over urban lumps and bumps. It certainly doesn't have the everyday ease of something like a Golf GTI on adaptive dampers, but you sense that's not what this Ford is about.

It's not crashy, however, and as the speed rises above 30mph so a lot of jiggly commotion seems to melt away, leaving a much more tied-down but precise driving experience than the standard car. Here at last is a Focus ST that seems to have a real enthusiast bent to its personality, turning into corners vivaciously and feeling adjustable on the throttle. In fact, the problem is it turns in all too keenly, because what the Track Pack hasn't tackled is the ST's far too 'fast' steering rack, at just two turns lock-to-lock.

With less-than-convincing feedback too,









particularly in the stodgy Track mode, the car can feel overly nervous when it doesn't need to. That alone can be frustrating when you want to connect corners smoothly, but it's a bad bedfellow for an engine that majors on instant shove with little in the way of subtlety. The truth is in the numbers: 276bhp is merely competitive rather than outstanding in this class, but the fact it's dwarfed by the torque output of 310lb ft is a clue that this engine prefers to lug rather than sing.

That torque peak is delivered between 3000 and 4000rpm, and the natural inclination is to shift up not long after that, falling back once again into the meat of the four-cylinder engine's considerable urge as you might with a performance turbodiesel hatch (remember those?). The calibration is such that it can feel very on/off in its delivery, so when combined with the hyper-sensitive

steering, any torque steer - the Focus ST has an electronically controlled LSD, remember always seems to be exaggerated.

This can make for a frantic drive at times, but one lacking real depth - an initial hit of turbofed torque and darty inputs, but no real flow. We didn't have the opportunity to try the car on a circuit, and to be fair it may well perform better there: the brake-pedal feel is still very sensitive, but there's no quibbling with either braking performance or outright grip.

Other appealing factors are the recently introduced Ford Performance sports seats, which are both supportive and very comfortable for long periods, and the redesigned dashboard with far fewer buttons but a giant, and easy to use, 13.2-inch touchscreen.

So it's a package with considerable appeal, yet it cannot be overlooked that adding the £3000 Track Pack to the price of the ST takes

Top left: lighter wheels are carried over from the ST Edition, while larger brakes are specific to the Track Pack. Above: interior benefits from recent updates. including excellent seats and a new touchscreen

it to just a bullseye short of £40,000, when one of our perennial favourites, the Hyundai i30 N is £35,410 with equivalent spec. Hyundai has had some dreadful post-Covid supply headaches, which has affected i30 N availability, but without wishing to sound too much like the A-Team, if you can find one, then... well, you know the rest.

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 2261cc, turbocharged Power 276bhp @ 5500rpm Torque 310lb ft @ 3000-4000rpm Weight 1433kg (196bhp/ton) 0-62mph 5.7sec Top speed 155mph Basic price £36,950

1 An appealing package of upgrades Overexcitable steering and power delivery; price

evo rating ★★★★☆



NITIALLY LAUNCHED IN 2016 AS ALFA Romeo's most potent Giulia model without a four-leaf-clover badge, the Veloce applies some of the Quadrifoglio's magic to a more affordable, practical saloon. Over half a decade on, the model has been given a midlife update, but are the tweaks enough for it to keep up with the latest German rivals?

Alongside the refresh comes a rationalisation of the Giulia line-up. Quadrifoglio aside, all UK cars now receive the same 2-litre turbocharged 'GME T4' four-cylinder, all with 276bhp and 295lb ft. The 197bhp 2-litre petrol is therefore no more, joining the 2.2-litre diesel in retirement. So while there are three trim levels – Sprint, Veloce and Competizione – the names no longer imply different power outputs. An eight-speed ZF automatic remains standard across the board and is still operated via some of the most tactile column-mounted paddles you'll find outside of Maranello.

While the Giulia's closest rivals, the 254bhp Mercedes-Benz C300 and 288bhp BMW 330e, have turned to hybrid assistance, the Italian has bucked the trend and stuck to combustion power alone. Thanks to this, along with an aluminium block and some surprising weight-saving measures (such as a carbonfibre propshaft that weighs just 7kg, saving 15kg), the Giulia tips the scales at a modest 1429kg. That's some 416kg less than the aforementioned BMW...

Aided by its snappy ZF transmission and the arrival of peak torque at 2250rpm, the Giulia immediately feels more spritely than its power figure might suggest. A 5.7sec 0-62mph time and 149mph top speed are near identical to its rivals' performance stats, and rarely are you left wanting more from the boosted four-cylinder. The Giulia feels genuinely quick.

On the move, the benefits of the Alfa's lower mass and 50:50 weight distribution are easily

felt, inspiring huge confidence with fantastic balance and reassuring feedback through the chassis. Although occasionally crashy, its damping is well suited to a spirited drive on some of the UK's bumpier roads, handling tricky marred surfaces and undulations quickly and without fuss. Its spring rates may be softer than we're accustomed to in 2023, but the Giulia retains a good level of body control while generating strong traction and delivering a ride suitable for everyday duties.

While not as hyperactive as the Quadrifoglio's, the regular Giulia's steering is quick, offering plenty of accuracy and off-centre response. There's little feel, but the way in which the chassis responds helps make up for some of that lost information. The seating position is good, if a little high, and once in Dynamic mode the sharpened throttle allows for the kind of mid-corner adjustability lacking in most of the









Alfa's rivals. At low speeds and from a standstill the gearbox is still a tad clunky, but swift shifts and those tactile paddles help make up for it.

The brake-by-wire system, meanwhile, provides a firm pedal and good consistency at everyday speeds, with Dynamic mode increasing that firmness and reducing pedal travel by 15 per cent. It's a nifty feature that initially appears to work wonders, but the brakes don't inspire huge confidence when you pick up the pace in this mode.

The Giulia's exterior design remains largely familiar, but with tasteful updates to the front and rear bumpers, wheels and lighting units setting it apart from earlier versions. Inside, the new 12.3-inch digital instrument display is the only notable change. The faux-carbonfibre trim won't be for some and its German rivals still have the edge in terms of overall build quality, but there are very few hard plastics, with the

main touchpoints being high quality. While sharper than before, the infotainment system can still be slow to respond, and the new digital dash is near impossible to navigate on the move with the bewildering array of steering-wheel controls.

The middling Veloce trim is expected to be the best seller, and it's easy to see why. For a £4500 premium over the entry-level Sprint you get a limited-slip differential, handsome 19-inch 'petal' alloys and a whole host of other niceties. We also drove the range-topping Competizione, and while most of its hardware matches the Veloce's, its extra features include adaptive dampers. In their default mode the ride is virtually indistinguishable from that of the passively damped car, but enable the soft damper setting – the only other option available – and it's night and day. Not unlike Ferrari's 'bumpy road' mode, it takes the edges off harsh surfaces and provides more compliance.

Costing from £47,759 in Veloce trim (£43,259 for

Above and left: new headlights feature three individual elements in reference to past Alfa models; Veloce trim level brings 19-inch wheels (up an inch over the Sprint items). **Top:** interior gains new digital instruments

the Sprint and £52,259 for the Competizione), the Giulia plugs a gap in the market for a reasonably priced, entertaining rear-drive saloon. Stump up an additional £10.000 and the likes of the BMW M340i xDrive and Audi S4 come within reach, but if you can do without their headline power figures, you can't go too far wrong with the Alfa.

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1995cc, turbocharged **Power** 276bhp @ 5250rpm **Torque** 295lb ft @ 2250rpm Weight 1429kg (196bhp/ton) 0-62mph 5.7sec Top speed 149mph Basic price £47,759

🚹 Inspiring handling, relatively light weight Interior and infotainment off the pace in places

evo rating ★★★★★

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T TOOK A WHILE FOR MASERATI TO jump on the SUV gravy train, launching the Levante in 2016 and then revealing the smaller Grecale in 2021. We drove a late pre-series-production Grecale on winter tyres in issue 305, but this is our first steer of an example as Maserati hopes a great number of people will buy it, and we're driving it on UK roads to boot.

Should you divert your Porsche Macan deposit to your Maserati dealer, the underpinnings of your new performance SUV are favourable. The Grecale is based on a stretched version of Alfa Romeo's Stelvio platform and in this Trofeo model there's a lusty twin-turbocharged V6 based on the MC20's but with a wet sump, new turbos and cylinder deactivation, yet still with the complex pre-chamber ignition system. It means 523bhp, 457lb ft and a sub four-second 0-62mph time for this – wait for it – 2027kg car. And it can feel every one of those kilos if you find yourself in the wrong drive mode.

There's Comfort, GT, Sport and Corsa to choose from, with the default GT masking much of the Trofeo's performance and character, so you need to select Sport or Corsa to find them both. The Grecale's V6 lacks the fireworks of the MC20's (I know, surprising right?) but when you get into the meat of its torque band from 3000rpm the delivery begins to match



expectations, the willingness to rev encouraging you to chase the red line. It's just a shame it lacks the aural drama of the MC20 motor, the natural, guttural growl replaced with a synthetic tone that's borderline nondescript. The eight-speed auto 'box, complete with decent-sized paddles, punches through the upshifts to match the engine's pace, but it's not as quick to downshift and the short gearing can make for a busy powertrain when you're pressing on, with pretty poor economy too - low to mid 20s mpg was our experience.

When you do lean on the Trofeo's performance the chassis is there to support it, although it lacks the poise and directness of a Macan, Stelvio or F-Pace. The active damping and air springs allow more body movement than the aforementioned too, and it can take a leap of faith to start to explore the Grecale's full capabilities. When you

do, there's an initial push that settles into a secure balance that allows you to lean on the chassis harder still, the rear e-diff taking the load and a natural flow accompanying any movement that starts to bubble to the surface. Yet where a Stelvio Quadrifoglio or Macan GTS impresses with a hyperhatch feel and willingness to indulge, the Grecale lacks their overall agility; neither does it have the GT quality of an F-Pace SVR.

A great deal of effort has clearly gone into the interior design and materials. The infotainment and central controls work well, and there's a quality to the finish that raises it above both the Macan and Stelvio. Yet despite this, the Grecale's biggest hurdle is its price: the Trofeo costs £95,860 and our test car with some options tipped in at £107,400 – a price it simply can't carry off. While the performance SUV sector continues to dominate sales charts, and the Grecale is vastly improved over the larger Levante, Maserati still has a battle on its hands to match the establishment.

Engine V6, 3000cc, twin-turbo Power 523bhp @ 6500rpm **Torque** 457lb ft @ 3000-5500rpm **Weight** 2027kg (262bhp/ton) **0-62mph** 3.8sec **Top speed** 177mph **Basic price** £95,860

Accomplished performance, high-quality materials and finish Its price weighs heavy in such a competitive sector

evo rating ★★★☆☆

Driven

by STUART GALLAGHER

BMW i7 xDrive60

All-electric 7-series targets Mercedes' big-selling S-class and EQS duo

ERCEDES STILL DOMINATES THE LIMO world. In 2022 it sold 11,000 S-classes (down seven per cent on the year before) and 7500 examples of its electric EQS, taking first and second places in the European chart for F-segment cars (industry speak for limos). Meanwhile, the combined sales of the cars filling the remaining eight positions in the top ten fall short of the total achieved by just those two Mercedes. That's gotta sting in the boardrooms when signing off a new rival to Stuttgart's unbeatables.

Clearly BMW has an ample supply of Jungle Formula in its boardroom because it's now on its seventh generation of 7-series, which is offered either as a plug-in hybrid with a 3-litre turbocharged straight-six petrol engine, or as an electric-only model, such as this i7 xDrive60.

Unlike Mercedes' EQS and S-class, which sit on two very different platforms, all i7s use the came CLAR underpinnings regardless of powertrain. If experience of the Mercedes pair and BMW's i4 has told us anything it's that BMW has probably backed the right horse, the i4 driving nearly every bit as well as the 3-series it shares so much of its undercarriage with.

This electrically propelled i7 is equipped with a 105kWh battery, 101.7 of which is useable, and this drives two electric motors, one per axle, producing 269lb ft of torque at the front and 280lb ft at the rear, with a combined 536bhp. 'Respectable' best describes the performance, linearity placed over thumping great torque delivery, making the i7 feel exactly as you'd expect a large BMW limo to feel: calm, relaxed, unflustered. Its mid-range roll-on acceleration is more characteristic of an EV, with the instant slug of torque more noticeable, although not so uncomfortable as to disturb your passengers streaming something on the optional 31-inch theatre screen that drops down from the roof behind the front seats. Theatrical? Yes.



The answer to a question not a single living soul asked? Undoubtedly.

With air springs and adaptive dampers the i7 rides, handles and steers far better than its electric Mercedes rival, its body movement and control more natural and 3D in execution compared to the one-dimensional approach the EQS takes. The BMW, thankfully, also has far, far superior brakes and regenerative braking, which are smooth, measured and balance well the needs of the driver wishing to slow and the battery to recoup some energy.

The i7's interior quality is a step up from that of its predecessor and some rivals, even if some of the materials are clearly suited to new markets rather than existing ones. And it's quiet; not silent, as there's wind noise around the A-pillars you wouldn't pick up with a straight-six humming away, but there's next to no tyre noise, which is exactly what you want from a car like this. Although you'd also like it to be able to do more than 280 miles on a charge, but during our few weeks with it it got nowhere close to its claimed 385-mile range, which explains why the S-class remains at the top of the sales charts.

Motors 190kW front, 230kW rear Power 536bhp

Torque 546lb ft Weight 2640kg (206bhp/ton) 0-62mph 6.1sec

Top speed 149mph Basic price £110,545

The best EV limo we've driven
An S-class is still better

evo rating ★★★★☆





HERE ARE MANY EXPERIENCES A racing fan should strive to tick off in their lifetime, but one 'motorsport must' is easier and closer to home than you might expect: the Silverstone Museum. Having opened its doors right next to the iconic circuit in 2019 to tell the story of the home of British motor racing, the Silverstone Museum offers an experience you'll never forget.

Meet your heroes

Within the Silverstone Museum, you'll find a dizzying array of iconic vehicles to have raced at the circuit over the years, covering multiple disciplines including Formula 1, touring cars and Grand Prix motorcycle racing.

There's also the chance to get up close with the overalls and helmets worn by some of the biggest names in racing, which serve as a reminder of how far motorsport safety has evolved since its beginnings. Finally, you can even examine race sign-on sheets bearing a few signatures you might recognise, including those belonging to Ayrton Senna and Michael Schumacher.

Go back to the beginning

The museum delves into the circuit's origins as RAF Silverstone, a Bomber Command training facility. Various uniforms worn by the men and women stationed here are on display, while children (and perhaps some adults too) can enjoy interactive activities including practising shooting down barrage balloons.

The history of the area played a role in the naming of Silverstone Circuit's straights and corners; if you've ever wondered where the likes of Abbey, Maggots, Wellington and Chapel came from, you can rest assured you'll know by the time you leave.

Explore the present

Your visit is about more than just looking to the past. How motorsport works today is a key theme throughout. For instance, you can find out what goes into making a race day possible, including a look at marshalling and the opportunity to try your hand at operating a pit-lane wheel gun.

Meanwhile, the Tech Lab provides an insightful and interactive look at the science behind making cars go fast, from the inner workings of dampers to the differences between tyre compounds and why they matter.

Before and after you leave

After making your way through the museum's many exhibits, you can take a seat in the special effects cinema for a thrilling end show depicting Silverstone's best-known moments, commentated by Martin Brundle, David Croft, and the late, great Murray Walker.

There's still more to do after leaving the building - the Heritage Track Trail allows you to walk on parts of the original track while learning about the current circuit with numerous information panels along the walk.

Plus, each ticket includes access to Luffield Terrace on non-major event days, meaning you can have a great view of any on-track action coinciding with your visit.

A day ticket that lasts a year

Tickets cost just £22.50 for adults and £13.50 for children if purchased in advance. Giftaid your ticket as a UK taxpayer and your ticket will be upgraded to a year-long pass free of charge.

Head to silverstonemuseum.co.uk now to book.





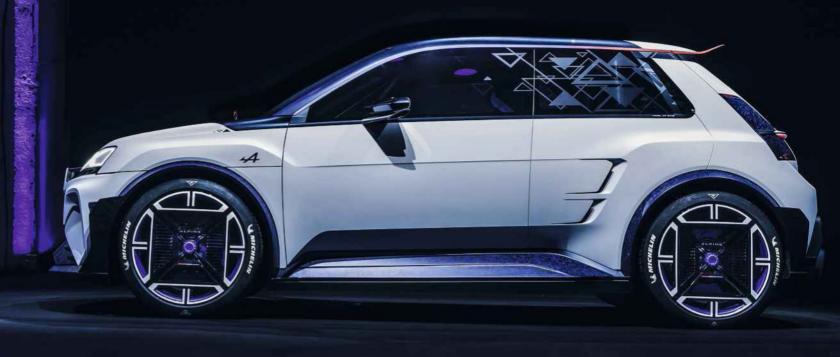


Five alive

Alpine has plans to transform the upcoming electric Renault 5 into a thrilling hot hatch called the A290. This concept gives a tantalising taste of what we can expect

by YOUSUF ASHRAF





HE DEVELOPMENT OF A TAUTER, meaner version of the reborn Renault 5 is no secret, with Alpine having absorbed Renault Sport and taking the retro EV as the basis for a hot hatch. But the end result, if this A290 concept is anything to go by, might have caught you off guard – particularly if you were expecting a subtle visual enhancement in the mould of the mid-'70s Renault 5 Alpine. The A290 is extreme. A hunkered-down, bewinged creation with muscle bursting through its bodywork, and according to Alpine's designers, 85 per cent of what you see here will make it to showrooms in 2024.

The A290 will form part of a three-EV range that will also include an SUV. But with a battery-powered sports car – a joint project with Lotus – completing the set, Alpine clearly isn't planning on abandoning its core customer base of driving enthusiasts in the electric age. Whether said enthusiasts will join Alpine on its EV journey is another matter...

Dubbed the $A290_\beta$, or 'beta', signifying that the car is very a much work in progress, the concept sits on a bespoke platform with dual front motors that bears no resemblance to what the final production car will receive. And while it may look much more A110 R than A110, the message is clear – Alpine's trademark liveability and dynamic bandwidth has been the primary focus. The A290 is intended for daily road use rather than the track, say its engineers, but whether this is by design or forced

by the cooling and energy demands of its electric powertrain remains to be seen.

The CMF-B EV front-wheel-drive architecture from the Renault 5 will sit at the A290's core, and crucially Alpine was involved in its development to ensure that certain parameters could be met for its hot hatch. The underfloor battery pack – of an as-yet-undisclosed capacity – is a stressed member of the chassis, and Renault has invested in a multilink rear axle as opposed to the more basic torsion beam found in the Abarth 500e, for example. The A290 will go further with its own chassis calibration, torque vectoring, A110-derived brakes, and bespoke suspension hardware with hydraulic bump-stops – a token from the now-defunct Renault Mégane RS.

If you're wondering about the A290 β's threeseat cabin, the GMA T.50 isn't about to gain a small French sidekick. The interior of the concept is far from reality, with spartan trim, bare footwells and an arrow-shaped dashboard extending around the driver. Strips of red and blue ambient lighting seep through every surface, but the race-style central bucket seat and full roll-cage certainly restore a sense of focus. The production car will be far more conventional, of course, but the A290 B does tease some elements that will reach showrooms - most notably the 'overtake' button on the rectangular steering wheel, which provides a ten-second burst of extra power when pressed.

Alpines have never been about raw grunt though, and the A290 will be no different – its creators stress that it won't chase headline figures or the whiplash-inducing thrust that's typical of highperformance EVs. This is inevitable given that a dualmotor layout isn't being considered, but the A290 is certain to eclipse the standard Renault 5 with a stronger front motor. With access to Renault's EV toolbox, the Megane E-Tech's 217bhp unit appears to fit the bill, and would pull the A290 comfortably ahead of the 153bhp Abarth 500e.

So what of that design? Alpine's F1 team was involved in creating some of the aero surfacing, which, it's promised, will be largely carried over to the road car. The clean form of the Renault 5 has been swollen to accommodate wider tracks, giving the A290 a square footprint and serious presence for a pint-sized hatch. The show car's wheel design will be carried over (albeit in a smaller 19-inch size) and Alpine's X-shaped light signature will feature in the quadheadlight array, with the pair of inner lamps recalling the spotlights of the Renault 5 Maxi Turbo. Despite such references, Alpine is keen to point out that this car is forward-looking. 'We created something completely geared for the future,' said chief designer Raphael Linari. 'We wanted up-to-the-minute surfaces, details and materials, a vehicle that fulfils every Alpine promise, that's exciting, surprising, and not even remotely nostalgic or backward-looking.'

Most changes for the production version will be driven by cost or legislation, with the forged carbon panels, slimline door mirrors and vented scuttle panel being the key omissions. The fan-like outlets

Below and opposite page: this A290 concept should

in the rear bumper are a reference to PC gaming. strangely, as is the show car's 'beta' moniker. Indeed, the A290 will rely heavily on electronic augmentation to relay the kind of zeal that defines the best hot hatches - Alpine is working on its own driving sound signature to pipe through the speakers, and we're expecting the usual array of drive modes and variable regen, which could add a new dimension to evoke the throttle adjustability of traditional hot hatches. Indeed, the A290's powertrain calibration will largely define its character. The A290 β has served as a test bed for the road car's development, allowing Alpine's chassis engineers to experiment with torque vectoring – albeit with a much more effective dual front motor configuration – to provide a more playful balance at the limit.

With just one electric motor, the production A290 won't be guite as advanced. Still, with precise control over torque delivery to the front wheels, the car's attitude should be easily manipulated through software, a trick that could help mask the inherent weight disadvantage that the A290 will carry as an electric hot hatch. Emulating the feeling of low mass, rather than creating a genuine lightweight car, is the goal here.

The good news is that the Renault 5 will adopt numerous measures to save weight over the 1502kg Zoe supermini it replaces – including a reconfigured battery pack and motor electronics – which should transfer to the Alpine. Even so, instilling it with the essential character of the brand will be a challenge. Will the A290 emulate the engineering purity that catapulted the A110 to evo 5-star status? We're looking forward to finding out. ×















Spyder RS revealed

718's final fling with internal combustion is a roadster equivalent to the hardcore Cayman GT4 RS

UST AS WE RECOVER FROM THE HYPE around the Cayman GT4 RS, the RS badge is back again – and for the first time it's on a Boxster. Revealed 30 years after the original Boxster concept made its debut, the 718 Spyder RS is a convertible counterpart to the hardcore Cayman, pairing Stuttgart's finest flat-six with a pint-sized, lightweight roadster. Not only is it the most powerful iteration of Porsche's mid-engined drop-top so far, it's also said to be the very last 718 model that will feature a combustion engine.

At its core is the 4-litre naturally aspirated flat-six found in the Cayman GT4 RS (and all 992 GT3 models for that matter). Spinning to the same spectacular 9000rpm red line, 1000rpm higher than the regular, £80,200 718 Spyder, it produces 493bhp at a heady 8400rpm – an additional 79bhp over the standard Spyder – with 332lb ft torque at 6750rpm.

Alongside a spine-tingling soundtrack from its

lightweight stainless steel exhaust system and bespoke air intakes, the latter relocated to sit just behind the occupants' outer shoulders, the big flatsix makes for some impressive performance stats. The Spyder RS reaches 62mph from standstill in the same 3.4sec as the Cayman GT4 RS (half a second quicker than the standard 718 Spyder) and goes on to a 191mph top speed – 5mph down on the coupe version but 5mph up on the non-RS Spyder.

As in the GT4 RS, the new model is equipped with a seven-speed PDK transmission only, modified with the final drive from the 991.2 GT3 RS and shortened ratios, designed to improve in-gear acceleration and rid the range-topper of the standard car's overly long gearing. The GT4 RS has proved that, although not perfect, these tweaks go some way to resolving the 718's gearing issues, allowing full exploitation of its incredible powerplant at more sane speeds. A mechanical locking differential is also standard.





In terms of design the front of the Spyder RS is near-identical to its Cayman relative, adopting the same carbonfibre bonnet with dual NACA ducts. Perhaps the most notable design change (aside from the lack of a roof) is the use of a low-profile ducktail spoiler as opposed to the motorsportinspired wing of the Cayman. With this ducktail spoiler producing less downforce at the rear than on the GT4 RS, Porsche has reduced the size of the front splitter to maintain the required level of aerodynamic balance.

As with the regular 718 Spyder, the RS comes with a single-layer, manual soft-top roof, but Porsche has made numerous changes in the pursuit of lowering the kerb weight. Now comprising two parts, the 'sun sail' can be used as a bimini top for protection from the sun, leaving the sides and rear open to the elements. With the 'weather protector' in place, the cabin becomes enclosed, offering full protection from the elements. In total, the unit weighs 7.6kg less than the 718 Spyder's at 18.3kg, with an additional 8kg to be saved if you're feeling confident in the weather forecast and leave the protection at home.

The new RS utilises MacPherson struts at all four corners, as in the standard car and the GT4 RS, but the geometry is entirely new. Coming as standard with electronically controlled Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM) dampers, the ride height is 30mm lower than a regular Boxster's, while the camber, tracking and anti-roll bar settings are manually adjustable, as per the GT4 RS.

One complaint we have with the Cayman GT4 RS is its high spring and damper rates, making driving on the UK's more uneven roads less than



Above: ultra-lightweight soft-top arrangement includes a 'bimini' top for sun protection; carbon-shelled sports seats feature Race-Tex centres; in place of the GT4 RS coupe's high-mounted rear wing, the Spyder RS has a slightly more subtle integrated ducktail spoiler

ideal. For the Spyder RS, though, Porsche has reduced spring and damper rates for a more relaxed set-up in line with the typical use case for a convertible, potentially making it a very attractive proposition indeed.

Behind its 20-inch wheels are six-piston calipers acting upon 408mm discs at the front, with four-piston, 380mm units on the rear axle. This arrangement should have no issue stopping the Spyder RS, particularly as it weighs 10kg less than its coupe counterpart at 1410kg.

The cabin is typically Porsche RS, with unnecessary amenities swapped for a substantial helping of carbonfibre and Race-Tex, Porsche's Alcantara alternative. Exposed carbonfibre bucket seats have their faces upholstered in black leather with a perforated Race-Tex centre and embroidered Spyder RS logos in the headrests. The dashboard is leather-trimmed as standard, but opt for the Weissach package and this too is wrapped with Race-Tex to reduce any glare.

Given its status as the final combustion-powered 718 model and Stuttgart's most focused seriesproduction drop-top, there's no doubt that you'll require a particularly good relationship with your local dealership to secure a new example. If you're one of the lucky few, though, the order books opened on May 10, with prices starting at €151,215 (c£133,700). That's a sizeable premium of around £50,000 over the regular 718 Spyder and some £10,000 over the Cayman GT4 RS, but that's just the start. Opt for a PTS colour, Exclusive Manufaktur options and the Weissach Package, and this figure will rise rather rapidly...



ONTRARY TO WHAT YOUR EYES MIGHT be telling you, this is a new McLaren. It's the 750S to be precise, a model that replaces the 720S, has some 765LT bits in it, and will be the last new product in the company's Super Series line before an all-new supercar arrives in 2026 offering some level of electric propulsion.

Developed over a period of 18 months, with direct input from CEO Michael Leiters (the first McLaren he's been able to get his teeth into before its launch, the Artura already a long way down the road to embarrassing itself when he arrived), the 750S is described as a comprehensive facelift rather than an all-new car. Think of a 911 model stepping from Gen 1 to Gen 2 is how it was described to **evo**. With 30 per cent new parts, many unseen, it's a korma-level update rather than the full vindaloo.

The tried and tested twin-turbocharged M840T V8 continues to rely on burning high-octane petroleum and in this latest iteration benefits from a new triple-layer head gasket, the lighter pistons first installed in the 765LT's motor, revised boost pressure and an additional high-flow fuel pump. It's all controlled by a new ECU map, resulting in 740bhp and 590lb ft of torque, increases of 30bhp and 22lb ft respectively over the 720S.

Drive remains to the rear axle only, but now via the seven-speed gearbox from the 765 that provides a lower final-drive ratio. This means McLaren's latest hits 62mph in 2.8 seconds, 124mph in 7.2 and tops out at 206mph – all academic to the owner unless they start playing Top Trumps with their Ferrari 296 GTB-owning mate, the very car McLaren benchmarked its new model against.

Built around the MonoCage II-S monocoque with aluminium crash structures front and rear, the 750S



retains McLaren's adaptive twin-valve dampers, double wishbones and hydraulically linked PCC III chassis control system, but tuned to sit somewhere between a 720 and 765. The front springs are three per cent softer, the rears four per cent stiffer and the front track 6mm wider to improve front-end turn and enliven the rear end further still. The steering, still hydraulically assisted, is faster too. The car rides on a set of new 19-inch front and 20-inch rear wheels, available with a 245/35 tyre at the front and 305/30 at the rear of Pirelli P Zero, Corsa or Trofeo R flavours. Carbon-ceramic brakes are standard.

The pilfering from the 765LT doesn't stop with its drive ratios, because the active rear wing is also taken from the 2020 eCoty podium finisher. Providing a 20 per cent increase in surface area, it is positioned 60mm higher than the 720's wing, while beneath it is the exit of the new 2.2kg-lighter stainless steel exhaust. There's also new venting around the rear wheelarches, discreet channels modelled into the lower section of the doors to improve airflow, and larger intakes ahead of the rear wheels. At the front

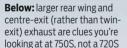
there's a new extended splitter to provide balance to the larger rear wing, and the distinctive 'eye sockets' that house the headlights have been modified to improve airflow to the radiators for the gearbox and the charge air coolers.

As facelifts go it's one of the most subtle we've seen, highlighting that since Rob Melville's departure in July 2022 McLaren's design evolution has very much been on hold. It should be kick-started back into life when Tobias Suhlmann starts as chief design officer in September, at which point, we're told, the company's design language will embark on a more extrovert journey. It's also claimed that a more radical design overhaul would have harmed 720S residuals, something McLaren wasn't prepared to risk. Another benefit is an easier transition from building the 720S to the 750S at Woking.

Inside the new 750S drivers of its predecessor will immediately identify the changes, particularly the new column-mounted instrument display, surrounded by a binnacle that incorporates the controls for changing powertrain and chassis modes in its sides. The steering column itself is now electronically adjustable. On the centre console a new button emblazoned with the McLaren logo gives access to the new McLaren Control Launcher, which enables the driver to call up their preferred aero, handling and powertrain settings with single button push. Beside this is a new touchscreen infotainment system derived from the Artura's and including Apple CarPlay. Finally, the nose-lift controls have been moved to a simpler-to-use switch rather than the frustrating lever control of before.

The 750S is available to order now. Expect a ten per cent increase over the 720S coupe's £222,885 and Spider's £239,230 final prices.

■







by JOHN BARKER



HINK OF MAKING EXHAUST SYSTEMS and you probably imagine basic metalworking with the sound of hammering and the crackle of welding. Yet while there's still a place and a need for skilled metalworkers and artisan welders, today the requirement for modern technology to be used in the design, development and manufacture of an exhaust system is greater than ever. For specialist Milltek Sport it's meant the need to invest £2.5million to deliver significant changes to its business (this was during Covid, incidentally), ones that have improved quality, shortened production times and significantly reduced material waste.

During the lockdown period Milltek also spotted an opportunity to capitalise on its investment. The first was an uptick in sales of systems for current cars, which it put down to the interruption in the supply of new cars. 'When people realised they couldn't get new cars, they decided to maintain or tune what they'd got, make it better,' says Milltek's Phil Woodward. The second trend was for 'classic' systems, says MD Steve Pound. 'A lot of people who had cars hidden away now had lots of time on their hands and that really reinvigorated that market. In the first year of Covid, sales of systems for the VW Corrado VR6 and G60 were more than the previous four years put together.'

To serve this upwards trend, which shows no signs of abating as more modern classics find their way into everyday enthusiasts' garages, the industry has pressed on with developing new products for old cars. For Milltek this involves employing machinery

'A £2.5M INVESTMENT IN TECHNOLOGY AND **AUTOMATION TRANSFORMED** THE BUSINESS'





Above: Milltek has the largest pipe benders in the UK exhaust industry, capable of working 102mm diameter tube. **Top:** complete system for a 911. **Left:** systems are currently in development for new Civic Type R and Emira

such as its vast laser cutter, which takes 6m lengths of steel tube and quickly and quietly cuts them in the most efficient way to create a package of parts for an exhaust system. 'We get as much out of every tube as we can, and the cuts are so clean you can literally run your fingers around the edges,' explains Woodward. A part for a VW Golf R Mk7 redeveloped for the laser cutter saved 1.1 metres of tube and 38 minutes of labour.

Milltek uses European-sourced 'T304L' stainless steel, which is far less susceptible to degradation and discolouration than similar steels. There's also a requirement to work with titanium, Inconel



and mild steel too. The workshop can bend up to 102mm-diameter pipe – for Nissan GTR systems, unsurprisingly! – and uses a five-axis robot for intricate jobs, such as cutting holes in bent tube. The same machines are used to make the exhaust jigs, ensuring precision.

Phil Millington – the Mill in Milltek – started the business in Taunton, Somerset, almost exactly 40 years ago. Back then it was called Falcon Automotive Engineering and produced stainless steel exhausts for British heroes such as the Triumph Stag and MGB on a wholesale basis for the hundreds of exhaust centres that there used to be around the UK. 'You were replacing your exhaust every couple of years back then because they were cheap, aluminised mild steel,' says Pound, who joined the business ten years ago.

Continued growth, expertise and a reputation for quality resulted in Milltek becoming a tier-one supplier to companies such as Bentley and Rover in the late '80s. Around this time, it also started producing more aftermarket performance-related products for Golf GTIs and the like. This side of the business grew quickly and Millington decided to wind down the OE work.

'The classic market has never really gone away,' says Pound. 'We still deal with some customers we were working with 40 years ago, such as Moss, David Manners and Rimmer Brothers. Around seven or eight years ago we decided to look at the more modern classics, and post-Covid we now dedicate a larger element of our development time to adding to that range.'

As the values of classics have risen, investing in a quality exhaust has become an easy choice for owners, especially as a mild-steel OE system is often very expensive but still not of a high quality. When redesigning its classic systems for CAD, Milltek has

'ITS ALL-TIME BEST SELLER IS ITS SYSTEM FOR THE SUPERCHARGED MINI COOPER S'

taken the opportunity to include OE-look tailpipes where perhaps there were once upswept DTM-style pipes, to offer a high-quality, stainless steel exhaust that looks original, enhances the sound a little, and comes with a first-owner, lifetime guarantee.

Despite the increase in demand for systems for '90s and '00s icons, current cars – performance or otherwise – remain core to the business, and these present a new set of challenges. However, with its own research and development workshop, Milltek is able to control every part of an exhaust's journey. 'Everything we make starts its life in here,' says Woodward. Currently, they're working on systems for the new Honda Civic Type R and Lotus Emira. If it's a completely new model they buy one so they can 'understand it and work out what's good and bad'.

Pound is rightly proud of the full, end-to-end control of the process he and his team have. 'Every product is designed, developed and manufactured specifically for that application, to ensure we get the right sound quality, drone and resonance control and noise level, particularly for cars that may be used on track like the Emira and Civic.' To this end Milltek designs and makes the majority of its own silencers, too, while sourcing its less restrictive, 200-cell

Left: founder Phil Millington (on left) and current MD Steve Pound. **Above:** early mock-up of a system that will become Milltek's offering for the Lotus Emira

catalytic converters from German company HJS to ensure its systems are EC and TUV-compliant. It also designs its own valves, around 15 per cent bigger than standard and plug-and-play systems, so that all the car's drive modes – eco, normal, sport, etc – are retained.

The recent adoption of GPFs (Gas Particulate Filters) on new cars has had a dulling effect on tailpipe noise, so GPF-back tail sections have been designed to lift the vocals. GPF delete, and GPF and cat delete options are also possible.

The UK is still the single biggest market for this Derbyshire-based firm, but the rest of the world is growing strongly. Other big markets are Germany and the US, and the company has created satellite operations in both. 'Having a base at the Nürburgring gives us very good, early access to vehicles we're looking to develop products for,' says Pound, 'as well as bringing an additional level of quality and access to testing. We've done projects with Toyota Gazoo Racing, Manthey and Phoenix Racing.

'America has always been a good market but a difficult one to access because of distance and logistics costs,' says Pound. Its new design and production base will resolve this.

Currently its best-selling system is for the Toyota GR Yaris, while demand for the G-series BMW M3/M4 and the Golf Mk7.5 and its VAG ilk is strong and steady. However, Milltek's all-time best-seller is its system for the 1.6-litre, supercharged BMW Mini Cooper S. Sales remain strong, even though the car went off sale in 2011, making it that rare thing: a trend that Milltek didn't predict.





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GYEON°



Layzell learned to drive in karts and a Skoda Rapid - experiences that stood him in good stead for his career as a motorsport artist

by JOHN BARKER PHOTOGRAPHY by MALCOLM GRIFFITHS

IM LAYZELL RECREATES SIGNIFICANT moments in motorsport through his art, which comes in two very different styles: realism and his version of pop art. He's probably more famous for the latter, which zooms in on the action like a drone-mounted camera, the cars and scenery painted with limited colours, the scene given a terrific sense of speed by his trademark bars of colour streaking or swirling to distant points.

They're compelling works, dynamic and authentic thanks to the perfect attitude of the cars. One of his newest pieces, 'The Ultimate Lap', revisits the 1973 Targa Florio to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Porsche's win. You're right there, drawn along in the wake of the Mueller/Van Lennep 911 Carrera RSR as it lifts its inside front wheel mid-corner in pursuit of one of the faster but more fragile Ferrari 312PBs.

Ask Layzell which Ferrari it is and without missing a beat he says 'Arturo Merzario's'. That's the thing about Layzell's work, the moment they portray probably wasn't captured on camera - in the case of his pop art pictures, couldn't have been – but he puts in the hours of research to know all the details: where the sun was, what lap the cars would have been on, what damage they would have had, the race order and so on. What really makes them work, though, is how Layzell gets the attitude of the cars so right, even though he's painting them from an angle he's imagined. That's not chance. That speaks of a real understanding of car dynamics, an appreciation of how cars behave on the limit, so it's no surprise to learn that Lavzell was immersed in motorsport from an early age.

'My dad has always been really interested in cars, loved them, but didn't have loads of money,' says Layzell. 'He had a succession of TVRs. He's still got a Taimar SE, wide-body, non-turbo, which he's had for about 30 years. We used to go to Vintage Sports Car Club meetings, and that started it. I was really

into the ERAs and Bugattis, Jaguar D-types and things like that. I've always been massively inspired by really slidey stuff, drifty people; I used to love watching Peter Hardman at Goodwood.'

Layzell's work was first exhibited at the Coys Festival when he was just 13. He'd been drawing from an early age and got oil paints for his 12th birthday. 'I'd entered a competition in *Classic and Sports Car* magazine and won the class for artists up to the age of 23.' This saw his painting exhibited at Silverstone alongside the work of his early heroes, Michael Turner and Dexter Brown. 'It was a prestigious thing. I went back to Silverstone the next year with four paintings and sold them all, one to a German collector with a RUF CTR. As a thank you he gave me the *Faszination* video. I watched it all the time with my brother.'

Still, Layzell wasn't thinking of art as a career. 'I wanted to be a car designer but I was rubbish at school, rubbish at concentrating. I only worked out what I was supposed to be doing there a long time after I left.' After A-levels he got a job at Gap, the only 'proper' job he ever had. 'I'm really good at folding clothes,' he laughs. He lasted two months. Meanwhile, he was painting at home and selling most of what he produced, enough to earn a living.

His unique, pop art style developed later. Where did it come from? 'An early influence was the late Barry Rowe, an artist who often paints motoring scenes with lots of saturated colour. He sort of tinted my art yellow for a period.' Then in 2004 Layzell met classic car dealer and art collector Gregor Fisken. 'He asked me if I'd done anything different. I'd done some futurist pieces for my A-level art, including a picture of two Ferraris on the 1957 Mille Miglia. I showed Gregor and he said, "Why don't you come up with something new?" So I did. I was quite into Lichtenstein; some of my wife's friends did their own Lichtenstein paintings in their





student house. I was also into George Hamm who did the Monaco GP posters, and railway art. The confluence of all those things led to the picture for Gregor Fisken, which turned out alright.

'After that I did what I would call my first proper pop art picture, of a Ferrari SWB. It ended up on the cover of an *Art and Collectables* supplement for *Octane* and was also used by the *Telegraph* motoring section as the main picture of their coverage of the 2004 Revival. It got busy after that. Then in late 2017 I had the cover on *Christophorus* (the Porsche AG customer magazine) and it went really mental after that. I already had a big waiting list and it went out to two years.'

He paints both realism and pop art styles these days. 'I start with a dark canvas and add the brightness – I rarely do a picture without lots of shadows or darkness. Depth is about building contrast, and I feel that I've nailed that formula now.' In both styles, the authenticity comes from years of watching classics racing and a fanatical approach to research, but to truly understand, you need to have been there. 'I used to do a bit of karting when I was younger, from 8 to 13, and when I was learning to drive my brother had a rear-engined Skoda Rapid. My friends all had Golfs. On the drive home from the pub I'd be drifting the Skoda through the lanes like a cut-price 911!

'My first car was a Volkswagen Polo Coupe. My brother was at Bristol University and we did loads of 12 Car Rallies; they were great, I really miss those. Then I had an Audi 80, just a 1.8 but, again, we put spotlights all over the front and did lots of rallies. It was a brilliant car, so solid, and the handling was really neutral. Our cross-country drive to Silverstone was on epic roads, you'd be disappointed when you dipped below 100. Then I had a Skoda Fabia vRS. At one point I bought a Fabia 1.2 SDI, the slowest car I could find, because I had six points on my licence. Then I had a Midas Gold kit car, which was quite cool, and then I got into my TVRs.

'I had a 1976 TVR 3000M Turbo when I was 20, which was a pretty cool car: blood orange, cream vinyl roof, so it would be very on-trend now. I also had four Chimaeras, because every time I sold one I realised it was a massive error. I lived in Clifton, Bristol, used them almost every day. They're quite practical, massive boot. For all the mickey-taking I think I broke down once in all the time I had them, and that was an alternator, which could go on any car. I still wish I had one now.

'I chopped in a Chimaera for a T350 and saw a step change in dynamics. I did quite a few trackdays in it, quite a few Mission Motorsport days. I'd donate pieces to Mission Motorsport now and again and James Cameron [founder and CEO] asked if I'd bring cars to the trackdays and take people out. It's massively rewarding. As James always says in his speech at the start, most of it is about the

'I'D BE DRIFTING THE SKODA THROUGH THE LANES LIKE A CUT-PRICE 911'

conversation in the car. Quite a few of these people have got PTSD. It can be quite transformational.

'Sometimes they've just got a GT3 or something with paddleshifts, you know, massive tech. In the TVR, I tell them we haven't got any ABS or traction control, there's no door handle, the fire extinguisher is between your legs... Half a lap in they look a bit terrified. Total sensory overload, even though we couldn't run the exhaust that makes it sound like a Lister Jaguar. You can drift it quite a lot but in no way is it relaxing on the limit. You've got to find the gears manually going into Madgwick: miss one gear and you're going off.

'There was a guy who'd been in my Grantura. I saw him two years later and he said it kind of changed his life. He'd not really left the house for a long time. He was a royal engineer, kicking doors in, a superhero kind of action man but then couldn't walk down the street without his back to the wall. He went in my car, then another and it sort of got him on the change. I think he went on to work abroad. So, yeah, it can be very transformational.'

Layzell has now raced. 'Obviously, I wanted it to be a D-type or a 250 SWB...' It was, appropriately, a TVR, the Grantura Mk3 Lightweight, which turned out to be more famous than he thought, having competed in many races at Goodwood. 'I got invited to a Members Meeting... but I didn't have a full race licence. Then I got invited a second time so I borrowed James Cameron's E30, did a few races, did a marshalling day and an advanced ARDS to get my eight stamps and then, literally, I was on the grid at Goodwood. It was ridiculous. I thought "What am I doing here?" I'd done a couple of trackdays in it and a couple of test sessions, and I think I qualified fifth and finished fifth. Had a massive ding-dong battle with an MGB driven by Harvey Stanley of DK Engineering and the 911 of Mark Sumpter of Paragon Porsche. It was a mega race.'

Enthused, he looked for a car to do a different category in and found a 1965 BMW 1800 Ti/SA (Sonder Ausführung – Special Version). It wasn't his first BMW. 'I had an old E34 5-series when I was 19, a bright red 518 so that I looked like a banker, but a

failed banker. The Ti is a brilliant drive. Eddie Cheever had driven it at Goodwood. I de-stickered it, made it kind of retro-looking, more authentic Nürburgring mid-60s. It's so neutral, very drifty. It's got 206bhp, so it's quite powerful but you're obligated to run it at 1000kg, while the Lotus Cortinas are 720kg. And you can't out-drag the Minis, so you have to catch all these cars up in the corners.

'I bought it just before Covid. We did Speedweek in 2020, no crowds, which was just bizarre. We did a day testing and were down in the low 33s, bizarrely only 0.1sec away from the TVR. I shared it with Marino Franchitti for the weekend. Running about 10th in my race, I went to go around the outside of a Cortina at the second part of St Mary's; he didn't really leave enough space and I got a wheel on the grass and span it, 360'd it, which contributed to breaking an engine oil seal. I got oil on the tyres and it was quite a hard battle after that. Some crazy angles. We did finish the race though.

'I raced the TVR at the same meeting in the Stirling Moss Memorial trophy, sharing with Dickie Meaden. We qualified 11th, which was pretty amazing – we were the only car to get the bonnet lifted in scrutineering! We beat the Healeys, E-type Jags and a Ferrari 250 SWB and it was a fantastic race. Stirling had just died – I'd painted him a huge amount over the years so it was pretty amazing to be in that race.

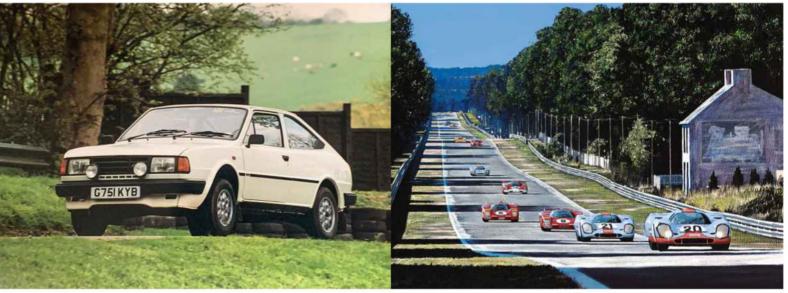
'It's bizarre that, for someone immersed in motorsport, I haven't driven that many tracks. And although I paint it every day and I live it all the time, I've never been to a Grand Prix. How terrible is that?' It doesn't show; now 41, Layzell's art is in great demand. He still goes to selected shows, including the Revival, but commissions account for most of his annual output of 15 to 20 pieces. He has been commissioned to create the posters for the Pebble Beach Concours for over a decade, these sort of hybrid of pop art and realism.

'In pop art, the cars have to be quite large or you lose the sensation of speed, whereas in my realism, over the years the cars have got smaller and smaller.' The dynamic detail is still there, though. Looking at his picture of Fangio chasing down the Ferraris at the 1957 Nürburgring GP, Layzell says: 'Hawthorn liked an understeering car so it didn't have the same body language as Collins's car, which was a lot more oversteery...'

Being 'rubbish' at school hasn't turned out too badly for Tim. 'As a kid, I wanted to paint racing cars, buy a racing car and to race one,' he says, 'so I've completely fulfilled my dream in that sense, which is pretty cool. I'm never happier than when I'm in a four-wheel drift.'

Previous pages: Tim with his study of Fangio's Maserati 250F chasing the Ferraris in the 1957 Nürburgring GP. **Opposite:** his two distinct styles exemplified by the pop art depiction of the Carrera RSR on the 1973 Targa Florio, and the realism of the 917s on the Mulsanne at Le Mans, 1970. Cars in his life have included Skoda Rapid, TVR 3000M Turbo and several Chimaeras







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Rising stars

I enjoyed the '5 Star Heroes' feature in evo 308. It was great to see the Aston Martin V8 Vantage included in the Coupes/GT category. The article stated, 'For the full five-star experience, though, you'll need to move your sights - and budget - to an N430.' The N430 is fantastic, but there are more V8 Vantages that will provide the full five-star experience.

The N430 is a V8 Vantage S (fourand-a-half stars as standard) with certain optional equipment. Any V8 Vantage S with the Sports Pack is mechanically identical to the N430, except for the sports exhaust. Yet since the standard exhaust also sounds epic, the driving experience should be at the same five-star level.

Wait, there's more. The previous (pre-facelift) N420 was also awarded five evo stars. Mechanically, it's identical to a V8 Vantage 4.7 (non-S) with the Sports Pack, again except for the sports exhaust. Given that the standard exhaust sounds absolutely fantastic, a Sports Pack-equipped V8 Vantage 4.7 should provide exactly the same five-star driving experience as the N420.

I've been fortunate enough to have owned and driven some of the great cars, and I've owned a 2009 V8 Vantage 4.7, manual 'box and Sports Pack, from new. After all these years, every drive is still a five-star experience. That it's been completely reliable too is icing on the cake.

Todd Warren, Long Island, NY, USA

Man maths

I've recently decided to sell the Mini Cooper S daily/track car I've owned for two and a half years to enable the purchase of a four-door car.



With £15,000-20,000 to spend I was thinking BMW M135i, M140i at a push, or more leftfield an A45 AMG. However, my curiosity on what else I could get for that figure got the better of me: 'Oh look, darling, a 2010 C63 AMG can be had for £20.000...

'Or a 2007 BMW M5 V10. or a 2012 M5 V8 twin-turbo. Or a Maserati GranTurismo... No, it's not got four doors, but the seats go forward...'

At which point my girlfriend and mother of my five-year-old stepdaughter took my phone off me.

I'm sure all of these cars could ruin my bank balance at any given moment, but it's nice to know someone on a 'normal' wage could get into serious performance cars, albeit at a risk. Maybe just purchase a 2005 Smart ForFour for £800 for when things go wrong...

Matt Hill, Somerset

Priced out

I've been an avid reader since evo came to be and I'm as big a petrolhead as the next man, owning 205 GTIs, hot Alfas and Saabs and, most recently, a nicely modded M140i. However, Ed Speak in issue 309, where editor Gallagher lambasted the EV revolution and finished by stating that EVs are only for the wealthy, made me spit my tea out...

The Driven section in the same issue features a plethora of new cars – of which the average purchase price is £150,000!

And yet you completely ignore cars like the new MG4, a rear-wheeldrive, well-handling, performing and riding EV that costs less than the most basic Ford Focus. Yet this is a car that the average enthusiast could actually afford and enjoy... But



LETTER OF THE MONTH

Maserati madness

THESE ARE, FOR MOST OF US, TESTING FINANCIAL TIMES

in which head will probably be winning the battle over heart when it comes to cars. Clearly there are a different group of people out there, however, or those with a 'special kind of madness' as Richard Meaden so poetically put it in the end-of-term report for your Maserati Ghibli Trofeo (evo 309).

A quick check online reveals that the car in question is less than two years old, but in that time it has dropped from its initial purchase price of £136,500 to a value of £81,500, having covered around 13,000 miles – a financial hit of £55,000 in the intervening period. Say it again, but slowly: fifty-five thousand pounds.

We all read **evo** because a car to us is much more than a mere mode of transport; they are our passion, and there's no doubt many of us will have ruinous ownership experiences, while exhibiting very short memories when the time comes again for a change. That Maserati, however, shows astonishing depreciation by any standard. Magnificent folly, and we do indeed 'salute you', as Dickie said.

Whoever is buying these fabulous distractions, please, for the sake of the rest of us, keep doing it, because it's nice to know that in a world run by accountants there are some wonderful people out there who just don't give a monkey's, while indulging their passion for the rest of us to enjoy.

Euan Gibson, St Abbs

The Letter of the Month wins a Straton watch

The writer of this month's star letter receives a Straton Daily Driver watch worth £239. This affordable chronograph has a 44mm case and a stainless steel bracelet, is water resistant to 200 metres, and is available in nine different colour schemes.

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INBOX





where's **evo**'s group test or opinion on such warm hatches that might interest us?

You are in danger, I believe, of being left behind by your bias towards ultra-expensive (and primarily ICE) vehicles and are moving further and further away from the affordable driver's cars that you used to love, drive and write about.

At the moment, and I hate to say this, I'm finding the mag less and less relevant to my current and future enthusiast needs now that I'm past my teenage dreams of supercar ownership.

C'mon, evo...

Richard Birkin, Derby

We're always eager to champion good affordable performance cars, Richard, but unfortunately we can't control how many such models are launched and when, so some months our Driven section will be more top-heavy pricewise than others. However, you'll be pleased to hear that we will be driving an MG4 – and delivering the **evo** verdict on it – very soon.

Mass communication

I'm reading **evo** 309 and marvelling at the new M2 – not so much the speed and apparent driver appeal of the handling, or the power of the engine, but the weight of it. How on earth can it weigh 1700kg?

I realise it looks a bit dumpy, and in line with BMW's current design regime it's significantly uglier than the last M2, but 1700kg... That's the same weight, give or take a few kilos, as my old seven-seat Mercedes E-class estate! It was a bus and felt like you could drive through your house and out the other side in it, emerging completely unscathed. It had a fair amount of tech, panels so thick they

didn't bend when you bashed them or sat on them, and had a cast-iron-block old-school diesel engine. How could it possibly weigh roughly the same as a brand-new sports coupe with carbonfibre parts and which can barely seat four people?

Your comment about the details being sweated may well be true – BMW clearly shrank a much larger car but made it more dense in the process, and therefore the same weight.

Peter Garforth

Pure disappointment

There is nothing pure-blooded about the new Ferrari Purosangue (evo 308). There is only pure confusion.

I can imagine that it took a lot of courage to stay out of the SUV game all these years. It's OK, Ferrari, we know there is money to be made and you are not running a charity. We shouldn't judge. But what on earth have you created?

Instead of embracing their decision and building a proper SUV, which would compromise dynamic ability and classic Ferrari looks but would at least offer comfort and practicality, they've gone with a crossover design that looks bad (black wheelarches... and have you seen the front?), seems (based on Jethro Bovingdon's notes) to be less fun to drive than the same company's GT cars and is less practical too. The only thing saving it is its V12.

And I think Ferrari knows this too. This is why they tried to wrap it up in a name like Purosangue.

'But people bought it,' you may say. Well yes, rich people like to try new stuff out, but I think to the rest of us, who grew up with Testarossa posters on our bedroom walls, this feels like a bigger disappointment than a bona fide SUV would have been.

Akis Kourelis, Minnesota, USA

Watches

This month's most mesmerising new arrivals



Autodromo Group B Rallysport Chronograph

\$1495 shop.hodinkee.com

Hot on the heels of its first digital model, the Group C (evo 308), Autodromo has launched a new version of its Group B. Called the Rallysport, it takes the angular titanium case design of the original three-hander and introduces a hand-wound chronograph movement. Five colour schemes are offered, each limited to 100 examples.



TAG Heuer Carrera Date

£2750 tagheuer.com

TAG Heuer is marking 60 years of its Carrera line with a host of new variants, including 'sunray' dial options for the 42mm-diameter chronograph and a new mid-sized 39mm chrono in classic monochrome or subtle blue. There's also this 36mm three-hander that follows the current trends for downsized, unisex cases and colorful dials, the most striking being the pictured vibrant pink.



Montblanc Unveiled Secret Minerva Monopusher Chronograph

£35,500 montblanc.com

Launched last year, the 'Unveiled Secret' has its chronograph movement modified so that it can be installed back-to-front, enabling the wearer to better appreciate its workings through the open dial. This new version features a distressed steel case and is limited to 88 examples.





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RICHARD MEADEN

Meaden reflects on the demise of *Performance Car* and the birth of evo

IVE OR TAKE A FEW DAYS, IT'S 25 YEARS since myself, John Barker and the remaining team at Performance Car were taken to one side and told the magazine was closing. Not with immediate effect, but as good as: we had one last issue to produce before being incorporated into Car magazine, which was also published by the once mighty Emap.

The writing had been on the wall for some time, but it still hurt when PC folded. Not least because we'd managed to reverse the dire effects of a woeful publishing decision that forced us into steering PC towards a readership that didn't exist.

Rather than admit they'd been wrong, Emap shrugged its shoulders and left us to our own devices. Looking back, it was the

magazine equivalent of a death march. Except, rather than give up, we slogged on and returned the magazine to something we believed in. Sales increased, but the damage was done. We went down, but not before restoring PC's dignity.

Producing that final issue was genuinely surreal. I suppose you could say we were a bit demob happy. As word spread, we received letters and emails from readers venting their anger and disappointment at PC's imminent demise. We printed them on A3 paper and taped them to the PC office window, in plain view to all and facing the directors' offices on the other side of the corridor. To their credit the suits never made us take them down, but what were they going to do? Sack us?

They probably wished they had when they saw the final printed issue. Not only did the letters page feature much of the correspondence we'd stuck to the windows, but Emap's internal memo announcing PC's fate and the reasoning behind it took pride of place in the regular letter's page slot, 'Me and My Greatest Error of Judgement'. Oh, how we laughed.

Despite the defiance, redundancy was a sad way for an otherwise brilliant phase in my early life as a motoring journalist to end. Magazines were still huge and Emap - at least in the early to mid-'90s - was a vibrant and energised publisher. It was an excellent place to work. That the internet was barely a thing certainly helped. It always amuses me to think back to the time we huddled around editor Brett Fraser's newly installed computer, waiting in vain for a new-fangled email to arrive. We eventually got bored and wandered off, no doubt to skid something around

the Bushfield roundabout. Even if someone had reached out from the ether it wouldn't have come close to the buzz of filching a bottle of Tipp-Ex, a Stabilo Boss highlighter pen (yellow, in case you're wondering) and a packet of windowless self-seal envelopes from the post room. To be honest, few things ever have.

If the making of that final issue of PC was surreal, the prelaunch months of evo were an absolute whirlwind, the last issue of PC hitting the shelves on June 12, 1998 and the first issue of evo going on sale exactly four months later.

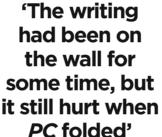
It was a standing start worthy of a Tesla Model S Plaid. Yes, we'd known Harry Metcalfe for several years and had chewed the fat over what our ideal magazine might be, but it wasn't until PC's fate was sealed that we got down to the brass tacks of making that

> self-publishing pipedream a reality. When Hazza said yes it triggered a crazy chain of events. We had to recruit a core editorial and sales team, find an office, and secure a paper supply, print slot and distribution. We had to convince the car brands that they should support us and build a commercial proposition that could be taken to ad agencies. We produced a dummy issue to show the look and feel of what we were going to launch. Issue 000 remains a sacred relic from those heady, hope-filled days. It's hard to define inspiration, but knowing our futures were bound

up in that prototype copy still makes me tingle. A quarter of a century is a long time, even if it does sometimes feel like the blink of an eye. Like many print titles, during that period evo grappled with the transition to digital. I'm pleased to say the outcome is one in which the two mediums have found a way to co-exist, albeit like siblings with a yawning age gap.

evo's next challenge comes not from a publishing revolution (though I'm sure bonus-focused publishers are relishing the prospect of replacing writers with AI bots) but from the automotive industry's own 'digital' moment: the EV revolution.

When your central tenet is The Thrill of Driving it would be a betrayal not to question a future in which EVs are legislated into accession. Perhaps in the same way that print's tactility, tone and varied pace - not to mention loyal readers! - ensured its survival, so the efforts of car makers with a legacy and product portfolio worth protecting will confound legislators by making ICE relevant, appealing and sustainable for those of us who want it. If they do, I hope **evo** is around to celebrate their success. See you in 2048.



@DickieMeaden

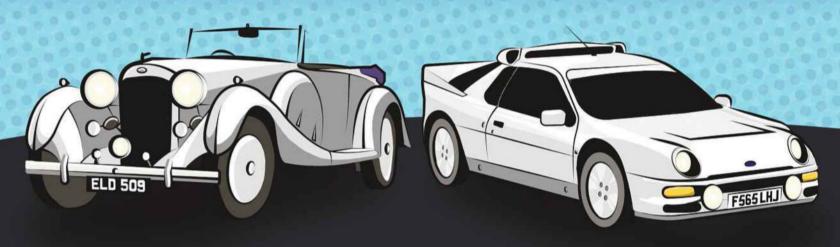
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RICHARD PORTER

A sighting of a 1980s Volvo induces a bout of wistfulness for Porter

HE CAMERA ROLL IN MY PHONE USED TO be dominated by pictures of my wife and my friends. Then I got a dog. Sadly for her, a couple of years later our first child was born, and from that point on it's been the kids that dominate the 'recents' album in my cloud. The only other things to get a look in are meter readings, labels of pasta sauce spotted in foreign supermarkets that appear to say TURD, and, of course, cars. Quite a lot of cars.

The other day, at an event, someone asked to see a photo of a car I own and, naively, I used the search feature that lives within the iPhone photo app. Which was stupid, because searching 'cars' returned thousands of results, mostly of cars I do not and

never have owned. There they were, every tidy 635i, rotting SEAT Marbella and shiny Toyota Century I've ever seen in the wild. Rather than finding a photo of my actual car, it would have been quicker to get a cab 100 miles back to my house and show it to the interested person in real life.

So when I tell you that last week I took a picture of a car, this isn't an earth-shattering revelation. What made this photo notable was that, firstly, it involved a small diversion. I was driving through Gloucestershire, minding my own, when I spotted this car parked outside a garden centre. To get a picture of it involved half a lap of the next

roundabout and then a detour into a car park. So there was a tiny amount of extra effort involved. Which is odd, because I did all of this to take a photo - well, alright, two photos - of a 1989 Volvo 760 saloon.

Not just any 1989 Volvo 760 saloon, mind you. No sir, this was a 1989 Volvo 760 Turbo saloon. With, as the second line of bootlid badging told me, an intercooler. Yet I wouldn't have taken a picture of a 760 when it was current, and not just because I didn't carry a glass rectangle in my pocket with a surprisingly high-quality camera on its back in those days. I wouldn't have taken a picture because I thought the Volvo 760, Turbo or not, was crap.

And I wasn't alone in this view, because when the 760 came out Gordon Murray was quoted in Autocar as calling it 'obscene'. He was back for more in 1990, telling Motor Sport it was part of 'an awful trend' and that 'if everyone drove around in Volvo 760s there'd be no room on the road for you and me!' In its day, however, the size and weight of the 760 weren't what I disliked about the car; it was what it stood for. Those Volvos seemed so fussy and old-fashioned and uncool. They were, literally and philosophically, square.

It's funny what happens when you don't see certain cars every day, or even every month. They take on a totally different dimension. Once upon a time you wouldn't have given a Metro a second glance because they were everywhere. Now, if you've a hint of refined oil in your arteries, you'll do a double take. Especially if it's an early one in Snapdragon Yellow. The same is true here. Once a Volvo 760 was a dull, fusty block driven by

> a smug retiree in financially comfortable trousers. But when you don't see particular cars around, and when they're not current, they take on interesting new qualities.

> For one thing, and with apologies to Gordon Murray, the 760 doesn't look particularly big these days (according to a contemporary brochure it weighs 1435kg so it's not especially heavy by modern standards either). More than that, the styling is quite appealing in a straight-cut and upright sort of way. There's something tasteful about how flat and plain the panels are.

> And where once the 760 would have symbolised smug suburbanism, in 2023

it's apparently seen as quite cool by people who weren't alive in the late '80s. Whereas I was, and for this reason the 760 comes wrapped in a duvet of nostalgia, not for the 760 itself, but for the era it symbolises. It's worth a quick loop around a roundabout on a damp afternoon in Gloucestershire to have a quick hit of a profoundly powerful Proustian rush. But, wistfulness aside, it's probably a sign of middle age that I can now appreciate a little of what people saw in those cars at the time.

There's something stout about them that, as my beard grows grey and my knees become weak, I can really start to enjoy. I know they're slow and they don't handle especially well but, dammit, I bet the door shuts sound absolutely gorgeous. And that's another reason why I paused on a journey to take pictures of a Volvo 760. Plus, I needed something to go alongside those shots of my kids and my dog and all those other cars I don't own.

'Where once the 760 would have symbolised smug suburbanism. in 2023 it's seen as quite cool'





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A brush with disaster causes Jethro to reassess the risks we all take

OWNHILL, COLD WIND WHIPPING AROUND my neck and cheeks and the mighty Eau Rouge (or Raidillon, depending on how pedantic you're feeling) climbing steeply just out of sight. Suddenly we jerk left and right and the sickening

feeling of a pendulum that isn't going to stop takes over. We're into a proper tank-slapper now, the driver meekly calls out 'oh no' in a hopeless lament and the car whips left again. The rear is now fully unloaded and completely out of sync with hurried, panicked steering inputs, and as the pendulum swings one final time the viciousness of the movement sends the world all out of kilter. Now it's my turn to cry out. 'Oh shit, we're going over...'

Once you've accepted the inevitability of what's about to happen, it's strangely peaceful. The violent forces that were whipping you from one direction to the other are dissipating now that you're up on two wheels. The angle slowly becomes steeper and steeper, there's enough time to calculate how best to minimise your shape and, for a moment or two, everything is quiet and calm. Then the impact. The sound of metal scraping along tarmac, the sense that time hasn't just reasserted itself from the slow-mo build-up, but is now running out of control and at double or triple speed. Yet the sequence won't end. The scraping, the twisting of metal, the debris skittering down the road behind us. It just

goes on and on. It's at this point that I decide I will never, ever, let anyone drive me in a golf buggy again.

There is still some mystery as to how and why this happened. It is/was a very quick golf buggy (I'd seen 50kph earlier); it looked a bit pimped-up with diamond stitching for the seats and little alloy wheels, and I think maybe it had been raised an inch or two for that tough off-road look. Perhaps this tweak and the effect it had on the centre of gravity was the single biggest contributor to our bizarre crash on an access road to the paddock at Spa.

Luckily, nobody was seriously hurt. That sounds dramatic, but tipping over in a golf buggy with no seatbelts at maybe 25mph, especially as there were three of us rearwards-facing on the rear bench, is one of those stupid things that sounds funny but could be a bit of a life-changer. I had to drive to the local hospital for two of my colleagues to have X-rays after extensive checks at the medical centre. It was certainly the biggest shunt at the circuit that day.

Strangely, on the way out to Spa I'd been listening to Matt Farah's The Smoking Tire podcast with guest Brian Scotto. You might know him from the Amazon documentary The Gymkhana Files as Scotto was the director for many of Ken Block's maddest and most spectacular videos. The podcast basically covers the issue of what's next for the Hoonigan brand since Ken's untimely passing, and on several occasions whilst listening I'd thought about how it's nearly always something else. Time was when being a racing driver meant you had a high chance of meeting your end in a car. Luckily, that's mostly a thing of the past now (although I write this soon after the tragic news of Craig Breen's passing). So often it's something innocuous or 'recreational'. A freak accident out of nothing.

> Schumacher's skiing accident still haunts me. He was such a hero of mine, so untouchable, not so much man as a machine built for driving with Teutonic efficiency laced with a knife-edge artistry that seemed to be sent directly from the gods. Ken Block was different. So much more accessible, but no less heroic. Ken was just a guy doing things we want to do in our dreams.

> The Gymkhana Files surprised me, mostly because Block didn't come across as a lunatic taking irrational risks. He was considered. Cautious, even. He interrogated ideas from colleagues and at times dismissed certain stunts that were simply too dangerous or impossible to

achieve consistently. You could see his brain ticking along all the time, assessing risk and weighing it against the spectacular results. In the context of this insight, his accident seemed even more cruel.

I'm aware this is turning into a ramble. I guess the point is that paying attention in our cars is crucial. Be safe. Don't take unnecessary risks. But as holiday season approaches it's more of a reminder that crappy hire cars on narrow lanes when your guard is down are even more dangerous, even if they only have 50bhp. That jet-skis and golf buggies and scooters and e-bikes and all that stuff that you don't operate every day and seem fun to muck around on don't have airbags and crash structures. And that 25mph is pretty bloody fast when you're about to impact an access road in Spa with your bonce. Sideways in a Ferrari with lookouts and plenty of slow recce runs? Flat-out in an F1 car on a quali lap? Jumping through San Francisco in a fully prepped WRC machine? That stuff probably won't get you. Everything else could.

'The rear is now fully unloaded and completely out of sync with hurried, panicked steering inputs'

@JethroBovingdon









HE Z06 ISN'T HARD TO FIND IN THE MULTIstorey car park; it's low, wide, festooned with wings, and looks like it's been coloured in with a highlighter pen.

I expect the searing hue to be called Acid Drop or Ballistic Banana but apparently Chevy calls it Accelerate Yellow. Hmmm. Turns out that most of the Corvette colour names are similarly lame: Rapid Blue, Red Mist, Silver Flare... Which is a shame because the rest of the Z06 is a riot.

It was a bold decision by Chevrolet to make the C8 Corvette mid-engined after seven generations and almost 70 years using the classic front-engine, rear-drive layout. It's almost as if the bosses looked at the looming electrified future and thought, well, it's now or never. Turns out that the real reason the C8 went mid-engined is the Z06, though the inevitable ZR1 version, with around 800bhp, will also benefit.

The entry-level C8 Stingray picked up multiple awards, most of them from American magazines it's true, but in one way that makes them more valid, given how revered, finely developed and successful the C7 Corvette was. We too were impressed when we tested a right-hand-drive Stingray over here (evo 303) because while it has the heart of a traditional muscle car - a rumbling, 6.2-litre, pushrod V8 making $475 \mbox{bhp}$ – in terms of dynamics, quality and general finesse it proved more European than any previous Corvette.

So the £82k Stingray aligns with the Porsche 911 Carrera and the Z06 squares up to the 911 GT3. And this is where it gets interesting: the Z06 is powered by a 5.5-litre V8 but it's an all-new, naturally aspirated, flat-plane-crank V8 that revs to 8600rpm and delivers 670bhp. It's called the LT6, or Gemini, and it's the world's most powerful naturally aspirated production V8.

If things had gone according to plan we'd have tested the Z06 in the UK on two gloriously sunny days, including one at Anglesey Circuit with our timing gear, but we were stymied by paperwork issues and so find ourselves near Frankfurt, Germany, on a chilly, grey morning. Our host, long-standing Corvette PR man Patrick Herrmann, hops into the Z06 and fires her up. Moments before, a previousgeneration Corvette had sauntered by, its V8 burbling menacingly. When the Z06 starts up, my first thought is Ferrari 458, because its engine whoops into life with the light, four-cylinder note typical of a flat-plane V8.

The Z06 is a different beast to the Stingray in lots more ways. You get upsized brakes, bigger wheels and tyres and wider arches front and rear to cover them. You get adjustable magnetorheological dampers and springs that are 35 per cent stiffer, an aero pack delivering modest downforce at very high speeds, and a more comprehensive cooling system configured with track use in mind. All the radiators you can see - three in the nose, two in the yawning side scoops – are for water. The flow is front to rear, with some of the water diverted through those



Serious stuff, but this car has more. 'Your colleague, James, requested the car with the Z07 upgrade pack,' Herrmann tells us. For \$8995 on top of the basic \$105,300 starting price, this adds even stiffer springs (up another eight per cent) and more aggressive aero, including canards or dive planes on the front corners and the fixed, stepped carbon rear wing. They help double the downforce to 333kg at 186mph. You also get huge, Brembo carbon-ceramic brakes and massive Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 R tyres – 275/30 ZR20 front, 345/25 ZR21 rear – which look like cut slicks and prefer ambient temperatures a chunk higher than we are currently enjoying. Thanks, James.

This car is also equipped with the optional carbonfibre wheels made by Carbon Revolution, an Australian company. They replace the standard 10 x 20in and 13 x 21in forged aluminium wheels at a cost of \$9999 (\$11,999 in clearcoat) but you'll save the best part of 5kg of unsprung mass per corner. This is such a significant amount that the power steering and ABS have to be recalibrated, and it's claimed that fitting the wheels alone is worth 1 to 1.5 seconds per

lap on mainstream racetracks... The wheels come with a heat-shield lining on the inside of the rim, but given that the bespoke Michelins are only said to give their best towards the end of a 12-lap stint, cool-down laps are apparently essential to avoid melting the spokes.

Out in the light, the Z06 looks long, wide and purposeful. A bit fussy too, particularly the nose with its jagged detailing of the splitter and the leading edge of the bonnet, but the car sits well, its front wheels tucked into the arches with a smidge of negative camber that will soon be physically evident as we manoeuvre on full lock and feel the tyres judder across the cold, damp asphalt.

Dropping in, there's a lot going on in terms of cockpit sculpting, switchgear, screens and trim. While the mechanical hardware shouts race car, the equipment list whispers luxury car, the tally including electric memory seats, air conditioning, a 14-speaker Bose sound system, a HUD and heated and electrically adjusted wheel, but the spec will make a lot more sense after a couple of days and a few hundred miles.

Switch on and a neat animation shows where the engine is. Push the start button and there's no doubt. The sound is

'FROM 4000RPM THE V8 EXPLODES WITH POWER, LIKE A HUGE, MEGAPUNCHY VTEC'

very 458 but with a slightly different quality to it; there's a deeper note when the exhaust valves open up and generally a little less clarity. The Z06 uses the same eight-speed, dual-clutch transmission as Stingray models, albeit with a shorter final drive to match the extended reach of the flat-plane LT6, while the electronic LSD is standard.

The seats are well shaped and prove perfectly comfy and supportive after extended exposure, while the simple auto gear selector is a lovely bit of design, neat and intuitive. Next to it is a rather stiff, knurled rotary switch that changes drive modes, of which there are many. We're currently in Tour, which could also be called Comfort. It's a surprisingly easygoing set-up that delivers smooth and unobtrusive gearshifts and, despite the increase in spring rates, impressive ride quality. Yes, German roads are generally smoother than UK roads but we'll find all sorts of surfaces and the Z06 will hardly put a foot wrong.

I have a few concerns around the steering, though. The first is that the wheel isn't round, the second that its rim is part leather, part lacquered carbon, both of which seem wrong on a driver's car. Of more concern, the steering is very direct at low speed, over-bright, the nose of the car jinking left and

right with small inputs, and there's not much feedback. I'm wondering how the Z06 will feel at speed, how this might combine with the as-yet-unknown grip/slip character of the Cup 2 Rs and an engine whose numbers suggest it does all of its best work high up the rev range, delivering peak power at 8400rpm and peak torque of 460lb ft at a lofty 6300rpm.

We've been ambling through semi-urban scenery so there hasn't been a chance to extend the engine yet. By the time we find clear road, the V8's temperatures are where they need to be. Showtime! I nail it from 2000rpm and one moment the 5.5-litre engine is hauling through the first 4000rpm with some conviction, the next moment the spark seems to hit the keg. The V8 finds its full voice, slams its shoulder behind the mass of the car and explodes with power, delivering an aural sweet spot between 5 and 6 before wailing to the 8500rpm red line. It's stunning, like a huge, mega-punchy Honda VTEC. Chevy claims 0-60 in 2.6sec, the quarter mile in 10.6 and a top speed of over 200mph, reduced to about 195 with the higher drag Z07 aero kit.

It felt like there was only a little interjection from traction/ stability control, indicating that the lightly treaded rubber is generating some grip despite temperatures in the low





teens, and that there's decent mechanical grip. A quick blat on the autobahn shows that above 60mph the steering weights up and gains a strong self-centring action that makes the car positive in a straight line and damped offcentre too, imbuing a calm confidence. Wind and road noise aren't intrusive, while long gearing settles the V8 to a refined cruise at 2000-3000rpm, its note melting into the background. There's a resonance at around 4500rpm that cuts through like a buzz saw, though.

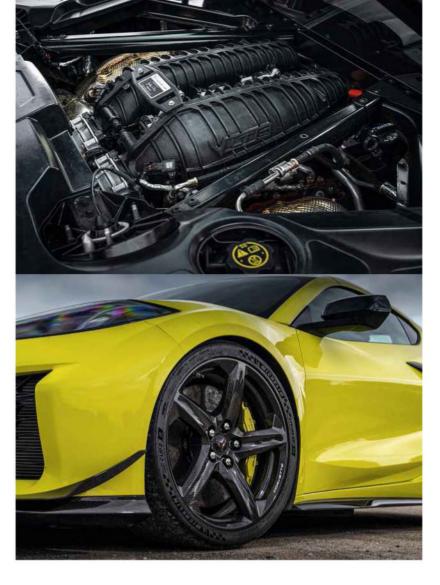
So far, so good for the LT6, though like all these flatplane-crank V8s it can sound rather ordinary when it's not in the zone, whereas a good cross-plane V8 delivers abundant and engaging character right across its operating range. Yet some US journalists seem entranced by the noise. One, KC Colwell, wrote in Car and Driver: 'Flat-plane-crank V8s are a visceral thing. The intake sound reminds us of the sounds of our youth and draws in our adult selves like a siren song. The first time you hear a C8 Z06 start, your head will snap around like a kid getting called in to dinner on a warm summer night.'

Really? I guess it sounds rare and exotic if everything around you, from saloons to sports cars to outsize pickups and lumbering motorhomes rolls by with the heavy beat of a bent-crank V8. Here in the UK and Europe, where fourcylinder engines have long been the norm, a flat-plane V8 sounds, well, a bit flat. I remember feeling let down when Lotus built a V8 for the Esprit, a car crying out for a more exotic engine than the 2.2-litre slant four, only to find that while the brand-new V8 did the numbers, aurally the cylinder count was still four.

That said, thanks to Ferrari and McLaren, the sound signature of the flat-plane V8 has become something of a hallmark of junior European supercars, and there are solid engineering reasons to deploy it. The key advantage is that it pairs firing strokes on opposite cylinder banks and so requires minimal crankshaft balance weights, so it is faster to rev and is capable of higher revs (and therefore higher power) than a cross-plane V8. However, while primary balance is excellent, secondary balance is an issue and vibrations can play havoc with the reliability and durability of ancillary items. It's an issue that can be mitigated to a degree by using lightweight materials for the reciprocating parts, and the LT6 does, employing titanium con rods and short-skirt aluminium pistons (which further improve response), but being so big at 5.5 litres amplifies the secondary balance issue.

Naturally, the Corvette development team benchmarked their rivals, paying particular attention to Ferrari. They bought a stock 458, then the opportunity arose to buy the

'IT DEMANDS QUICK HANDS BUT WILL **OVERSTEER AS TIDILY** AS YOU'D HOPE'

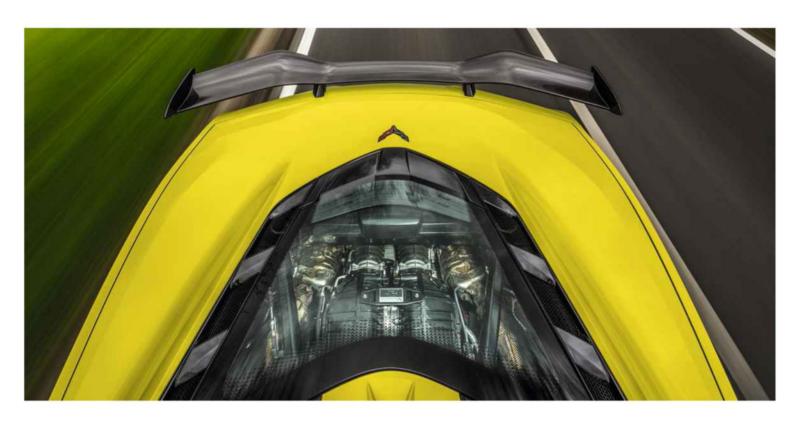


4.5-litre, 597bhp engine from a 458 Speciale, pinnacle of the Ferrari 'F136' V8s. It seemed a bit risky, sending \$25k to Poland, but the engine duly arrived on a pallet at the Chevy engineering division in Pontiac, Michigan. It was worth every dollar, inspiring and informing development of the LT6, particularly in regard to isolating electrical components from vibrations.

A glimmer of sunshine, temperatures now in the heady mid-teens and some looping, sparsely trafficked roads are encouraging and the pace picks up. 'Tour' is still working admirably but there's plenty more in the locker. Some of the drive modes, such as Wet, Tour and Sport, come with fixed parameters, the central screen showing you how various attributes are configured, while others such as Weather and My Mode allow you to adjust those attributes. And then there's Z mode, engaged by a press of the steering wheelmounted button, rather like BMW's M modes. Z mode is inherently sporty and allows you to adjust steering weight, damper stiffness, drivetrain feistiness, traction control and even brake response.

The tyres would probably like another five degrees C but they're delivering, and the Z06 chassis feels direct and positive, its steering accurate and well-weighted. The hammer goes down and the revs stay mostly above 5000rpm for a couple of miles. It's thrilling and absorbing, a challenge to keep the engine in the manic zone and exploit the enormous grip, the Z06 scything through long sweeps and hanging on through the tighter stuff like a conker on a

Top: each LT6 V8 is built by one person, AMGstyle; Chevrolet hasn't quite managed to match the Ferrari 458 Speciale's 133bhp per litre, or even the standard 458 GTB's 125, but 123bhp per litre is still commendable







string. The front end is willing and grippy, but however aggressively it hooks into the apex, the rear never feels like it will get loose. Even with the engine delivering hard, the grip of the now-warmed-up Michelins keeps everything under control.

It's intense, demanding all your attention. The carbon brakes that started the day feeling and sounding a bit grindy are tirelessly arresting the mass, though squealing like they're fitted with racing pads. There is a degree of dynamic adjustability on and off the throttle to trim lines without disturbing the inherent poise of the mid-engined chassis, and when you finally find the limit, stability control prevents the rear breaking loose. Turn everything off, find a corner where the engine is into its power band at the apex and the Z06 demands quick hands but will oversteer as tidily as you'd hope a mid-engined car with a big-capacity, naturally aspirated engine would. Good job, Chevy.

It would be even more engaging, though, with a modicum of steering feel, so that you'd know when the front tyres were reaching their limit and, therefore, that the rears were too. Maybe there's more feel on the Michelin Pilot Sport 4 Ss. Whipping the Corvette along at the pace it's capable of reveals a few other things. Although it's similar in concept to the Ferrari 458/488/F8, it doesn't have their lightness of touch, their feeling of dynamic agility, which is partly down to set-up and partly because the Corvette is about 150kg heavier. It's very long-geared, too; the first three ratios are closely stacked but from fourth they stretch out, with top speed attained in fifth or sixth, making seventh and eighth overdrives.

This brings us back to the contrast between the Z06's race carlike mechanicals and its luxury equipment levels. Despite the aero, semi-slicks and race car engine, the Z06 has remarkable bandwidth, even with the Z07 pack. Select Track mode and the chassis becomes so taut, so positive and planted, you'd think it was a different car. Indeed, there are times when it feels like you're driving a race car on the road, except few race cars have such absorbency.

Then, in a moment you can be back in Tour mode, cruising along in comfort at 80mph, in eighth, with the engine barely audible, maybe with the carbon roof panel locked into its mounts in the rear boot. In short, you could very easily daily a Z06 and have it as your trackday car. Like a 911 GT3, then, but with a better sound system and less austere interior. The only issue would be those Cup 2 Rs in the cold and wet. Oh, and a nose lift would be a boon.

The good news is the Z06 is coming to the UK in right-hand drive; expect it to cost £135-140k with the Z07 pack and carbon wheels. Great value, then, but is it as desirable as a GT3? Or as compelling as a Ferrari F8 Tributo or McLaren 720S? Well, it's not as exotic and it's certainly not as subtle. It is, however, very hard to ignore.

■

Chevrolet Corvette Z06

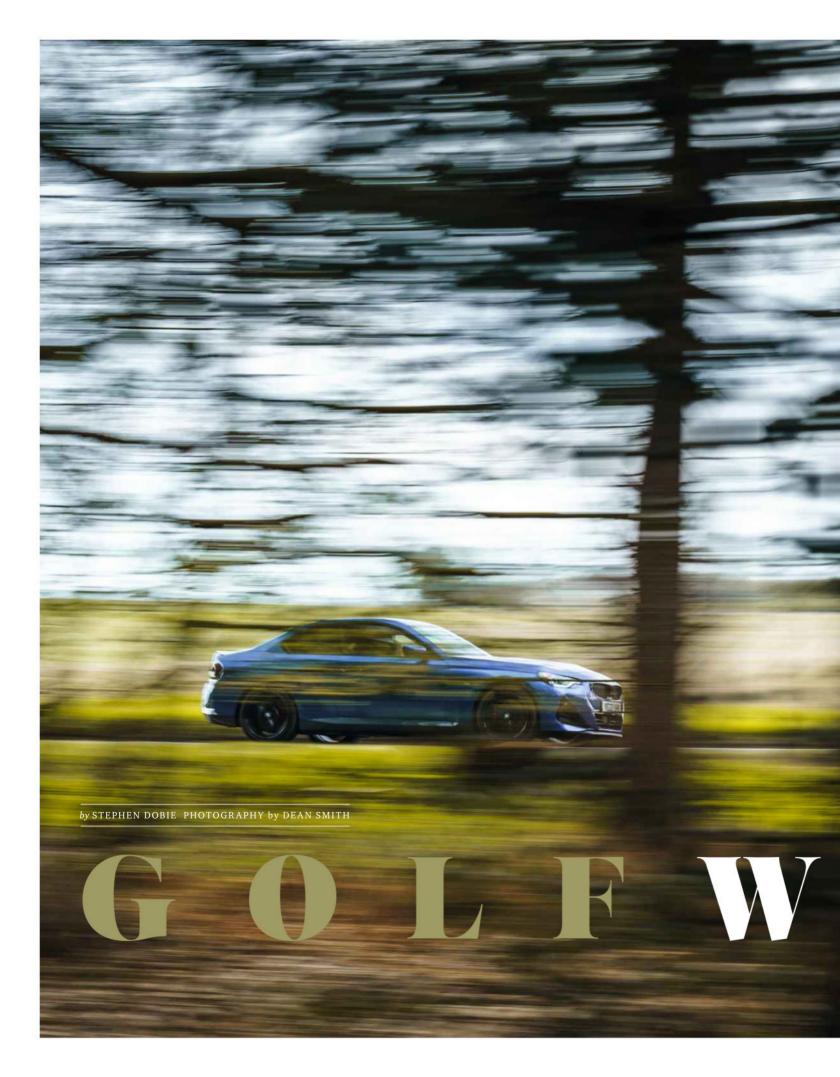
Engine V8, 5463cc **Power** 670bhp @ 8400rpm

Torque 460lb ft @ 6300rpm Weight 1561kg (dry) Power-to-weight 436bhp/ton (dry)

0-60mph 2.6sec Top speed 195mph Price c£135,000 (see text)

evo rating ***







OMBINE THE PRICE TAGS OF THE contenders in this test, including options, and you reach a grand total of £96,820. And no, Dean Smith didn't forget to photograph a car. Or two. Such are the peaks the market continues to scale that a pair of seemingly small, punchy specimens start at forty grand apiece. Then hurtle towards fifty with a handful of extras.

Plenty of people might never notice, leasing either of these for circa £500 a month rather than buying outright. And as hot hatch and coupe icons alike drop from the price lists with worrying frequency, you might even argue we should be thankful this test remains possible at all.

Each car represents the latest iteration of a very familiar recipe. The Volkswagen Golf GTI Clubsport is the firm's topmost front-wheel-drive hot hatch and adds over 50bhp to the regular GTI with 296bhp and 295lb ft peaks from a tuned version of the familiar EA888 2-litre four-cylinder turbo engine. Here it's mated exclusively to a seven-speed DSG transmission with VW's VAQ differential newly gathered into a dynamics management system for more precise reactions. The headline is a 13-second reduction in Ring lap time over a stock GTI, but buyers are more likely to notice the dashing aesthetic makeover. A 15mm drop in ride height, more aggressive camber up front and an assertive (and functional) rear wing add up to a much punchier looking car than we're used to from Wolfsburg.

As standard, it slices a clean line between GTI and R pricing at £41,890, though the car you see here has spiralled up to £49,385 with the help of 19-inch alloys, a panoramic roof, an upgraded media system and – most crucially to folks like us – the £875 DCC adaptive damping that brings

with it a Nürburgring 'Special' mode unique to the Clubsport. And you thought Honda's admittedly brilliant Civic Type R was pricey...

Perhaps surprisingly, then, the BMW 230i M Sport Coupé is the cheaper of the pair. It's £41,065 basic or a plumper £47,435 as tested here in fetching Portimao Blue paint with a trio of major option packs fitted, their most tangible additions being 19-inch alloys, the subtle rear spoiler, uprated brakes and a Harman Kardon stereo.

Walking into a BMW dealer and asking for 'one 2-series, ta' will open up a whole world of complication, given the badge is also applied to a hybrid people carrier, a diesel four-door and an M division sports car. But this appears the purest and simplest of the lot. It's BMW doing what it does best, a slender(ish) two-door coupe with pure rear-drive. Its 2-litre four-cylinder engine – here producing 242bhp and 295lb ft – even allows me to indulge a gratuitous 2002 reference. The two cars cut similar profiles, if on different scales, this G42 2-series coupe fitting neatly into the footprint of an E46 3-series. It's fair to say the 230i's exterior detailing isn't as clean-cut as either of those classics, of course.

detailing isn't as clean-cut as either of those classics, of course.

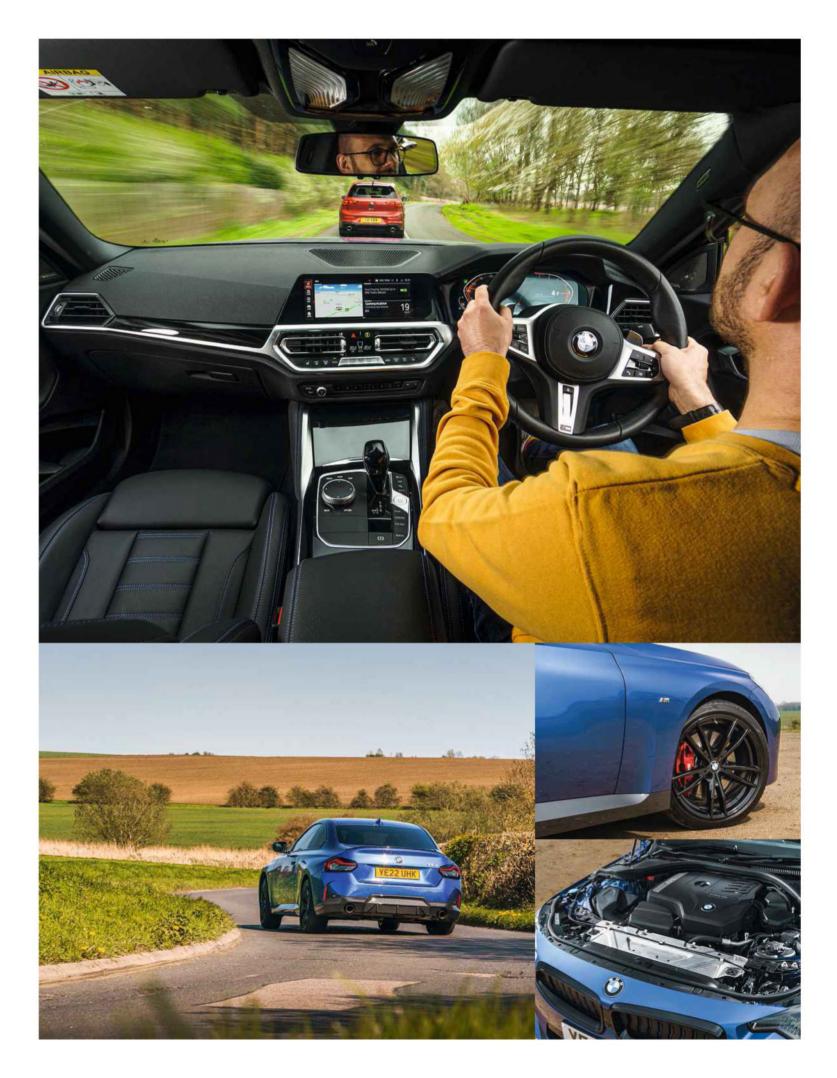
The Clubsport gets off to a promising start, my first few miles in sopping wet conditions where it puts a genuine smile on my face. Every Mk8 Golf I've so far tried has been somewhat underwhelming, GTI and R versions being both dynamically fuzzier and ergonomically rowdier than their Mk7 predecessors. Previous experience of the Clubsport in the dry saw it demonstrate a ruthless attitude to grip and slip and it's certainly a more boisterous partner in the wet, not least because it spins its front wheels right up to fourth gear. Dingier conditions reveal a fallibility that – in a car I'd previously written off as a bit po-faced – can be sympathetically construed as some welcome heart and soul.

The rear end is naturally a mite more mobile too, but everything is relative. With the ESC in its middle Sport setting, any great movements

Below: 2-series is a return to form for BMW's designers, while Mk8 Golf has never looked better



'PERHAPS SURPRISINGLY, THE BMW IS THE CHEAPER CAR'





are usually tidied up swiftly by the car with little correction needed from its driver. The steering is light but quick; never brimful of feel, but you learn to trust it. The delicacy and involvement of that majestic old Mk5 were filtered out some time ago.

Whatever the weather, the engine punches hard and rips right through its rev range. It's stronger, livelier and simply more likeable than BMW's equivalent and it's clear VW's constant evolution of this unit has paid off. A much plumper power-to-weight figure (206bhp per ton versus 161) ensures the Golf is tangibly the quicker car in a straight line - when you're not frittering some of that power away, of course. In the very best LSDequipped hot hatches you play a game of how early and how aggressively you can spool everything up in a corner. Get a differential really working and you revel in the sensation of wringing the mechanical components for everything they're worth, but attempt that here and you meet frustration. You need to get on the throttle later and more smoothly. There's no harm in finessing your driving around a car, of course, but I've a hunch you might have just as much enjoyment in a stock GTI. The Clubsport name could have given VW licence to make the car less everyday-liveable and more aggressive. And it has done so in the past, making it hard to escape the feeling of a missed opportunity for a healthy dose of extra tenacity.

It's flipping firm, mind, with no lack of focus in its suspension. My first few miles saw me shortcut straight to its 'Special' drive setting, honed on the Ring and partially responsible for that 13-second saving. Doing so feels nerdy as hell but the myth that Nordschleife development ruins road cars is one I'll never tire of busting. Indeed, the ride feels nicely judged in Ring mode, making it a shame that the overwrought Sport steering comes with it. A few minutes honing your own set-up in Individual will be time well spent.

That said, there are 15 stages to the optional DCC. And lo and behold, the ideal one sits right in the middle, giving credence to the BMW sitting on passive dampers. But such adjustability can be fun to immerse yourself in. When you truly know a road – right down to every last rut and bump – you can effectively leave the Individual set-up fixed on the screen for on-the-fly set-up changes. I'm well aware it's not a traditional way to find thrills, but it's a welcome layer of involvement at the very least. Such tweaks won't truly transform how the car behaves, but VW very clearly prioritised tech when the Golf entered its eighth generation and you'll enjoy this car more if you lean into its thinking. On which note, the engine sounds better with the Sport sound augmentation activated. I know, I know. Send your letters of complaint to the usual address. But its subtle bass adds even more appeal to chasing the red line. Buy a mollycoddled Mk5 if it all offends you too much...

There are moments of magic to be found, but in the dry they do require commitment into the corner. The GTI isn't the only 300-horsepower hot hatch guilty of such things, but the onslaught of grip and tech has doubtless minimised the easily attainable thrills pioneered by its ancestors. And yes, I've saved some room to criticise its touchscreen and controls. Why does it take two screen presses to activate the heated seats (twice as many as, y'know, a button) but you're forever activating the heated wheel without meaning to in tight corners? And it takes so many steps to begin loosening the ESC that it's easy to assume they'd rather we didn't bother.

All of which means there's an immediate simplicity and rightness to the 230i when you clamber into it after the GTI Clubsport. A sense of purity. You sit lower and more centrally in the wheelbase, a feeling exaggerated by how much of the bonnet visibly rolls out



ahead of you. By comparison the Golf seems to perch you high over the front axle.

Despite its more modest power-to-weight figure, the BMW feels more inherently sporty from the off, as a natively reardriven coupe probably ought to. The 2-series Coupé range kicks off almost four grand cheaper with a 181bhp 220i, a neat little car but one whose power and grip reach something of a stalemate. There's a useful slug of extra torque here, and while it doesn't make the 230i animalistic – its M badges allude to its trim level rather than its engineering team – it's notably livelier than that entry-level car.

There's a tangible connection to BMWs of old thanks to a cohesive melding of modern technology and old-school temperament. You can drive it smoothly and sedately and still sense how well balanced the chassis beneath you is, its weight distribution close to 50/50. But *just* start to push, use the throttle a little more assertively out of each corner, and you'll feel the rear axle work harder and harder without you having to yobbishly pitch the car in on entry. There's clearly great depth to its ability, and more dramatic behaviour to be found, but you can take supreme satisfaction in feeling so keyed into a chassis without over-driving the car. The fact its eight-speed automatic punches home gnarlier shifts than the Golf's seven-

speed DSG (and its extra clutch) is a cherry on top of it all.

All of BMW's mucking about with our emotions with its curious design avenues and that ridiculous XM? This is its apologetic bouquet of flowers and fancy meal out to let us know we still belong in its affections. One of the simplest, cheapest BMWs of its whole range is welcome proof that plenty of Munich's marbles remain accounted for.

Jethro Bovingdon was very fond of the M240i xDrive he ran in Fast Fleet and I suspect the 230i doesn't lag too far behind in terms of useable performance, its power deficit neatly countered by a 165kg-defter kerb weight and the purity of its layout. There's plenty of appeal in squeezing a trademark BMW straight-six into a taut little two-door, of course, and the slightly reedy soundtrack of this in-line four does seem undernourished in comparison. And perhaps you might crave some mechanical differentiation from the other attainable performance BMWs, namely the 128ti and M135i hot hatches, which are more natural (though less talented) foes for the Golf.

You could also argue that the 230's passive suspension set-up feels a touch busy on Britain's increasingly tarnished roads, but I doubt you'll miss the Golf's 15 stages of damping once you're ensconced in the BMW. It's quite refreshing to not spend time worrying about being in exactly the right mode



on any given surface, no anxious 'what ifs'. And it's always got great body control. Over a particularly rutted lane that's untied plenty of performance cars before it, the 230i exhibits utmost assuredness, every bump being acknowledged but without disrupting your progress. It's a confidence that encourages you to keep upping your commitment, digging further and further into the car's dynamic breadth. The steering – almost inevitably – lacks proper feel, and notching into Sport makes it predictably naff, once again prompting you to curate an Individual set-up early in your first stint. But perhaps in the age of EPAS the sign of a good steering system is one you never actively think about. Oh, I'd love to be regaling you with tales of its crispness and constant communication, but reactions this clean, consistent and light are the next best thing.

The whole package feels refined and mature, perhaps no surprise given that the Two is based on a shrunken 4-series platform. And there's probably ample reason to choose it over its bigger, more expensive sibling, such is the quiet comfort it brings to longer journeys, the peace and quiet only disturbed under more aggressive throttle loads and this engine's workmanlike nature with greater revs.

'The Golf is mightily quick – and probably more effective

than the 230i for most people – but when you need that last degree of precision, it doesn't have the BMW's sense of integrity,' observes **evo**'s latest staff writer, Yousuf Ashraf, already wise beyond his 23 years. 'There's a boisterous energy to the chassis that I didn't expect from a standard 2-series and you can work it really hard on the way out of corners. The Golf feels lofty and aloof by comparison.'

This magazine's 25-year timeline is no stranger to an occasional front- versus rear-wheel-drive upset, the Mégane 265 Trophy popping the balloons at the Subaru BRZ's welcome party living long in the memory of all who witnessed it. But today is not one of those days. The Golf GTI Clubsport looks fantastic and is easily the quicker of this pair. For some people that'll be more than enough to sign a lease deal now and get their head around its touchscreen later. But you're reading evo, so it's safe to assume you're not 'some person'. You care about a car filtering back as much detail about the road as its technology allows and providing satisfaction no matter the speed. Today, that car is the BMW 230i. It's not totally immune to Munich's curious aesthetic moodboarding, nor the discombobulation of modern car pricing. Make your peace with those aspects, though, and you'll

BMW 230i M Sport Coupé

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbocharged

Power 242bhp @ 4500-6500rpm Torque 295lb ft @ 1600-4000rpm

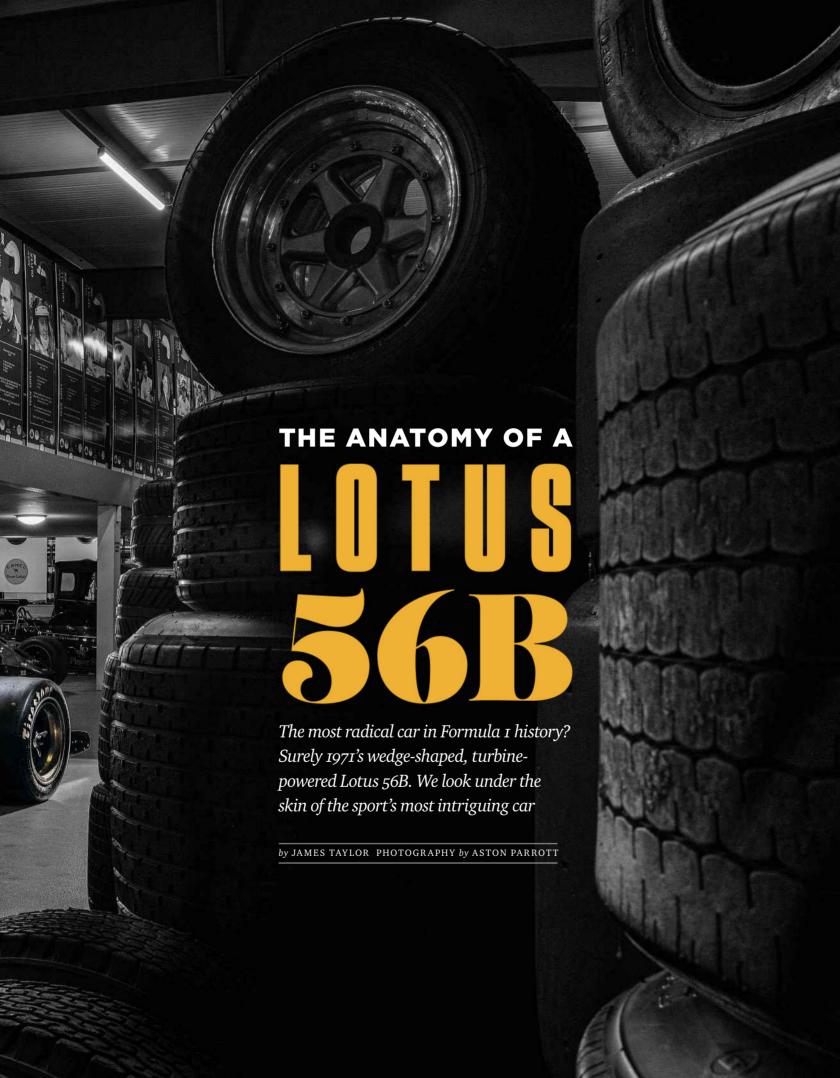
Weight 1525kg Power-to-weight 161bhp/ton 0-62mph 5.9sec

Top speed 155mph (limited) Basic price £41,065

evo rating ★★★★







HE LOFTY BRAVERY LEVELS OF '70S RACING drivers are not generally disputed. But some things add extra context. I'm trying the Lotus Type 56B's lay-down cockpit for size: next to my left elbow, hidden within the monocoque, is a propshaft that would be spinning at goodness-knows-how-manyrpm; just behind my shoulders, a gas turbine engine limited to a casual 37,000rpm; and, back in the 56B's short racing life, there would have been 350 litres of kerosene and petrol swimming around in side tanks to fuel it. I had to point my toes like a gymnast to post my feet under the front axle to the pedals. It's tight in here, precisely packaged to the point of claustrophobia.

We're stationary inside Classic Team Lotus HQ and the turbine is silent, sleeping, but a shiver still runs down my spine. Man, did they have some bottle. And weren't they part of something remarkable too – what a unique, boundary-pushing creation to drive, and what a boundary-pushing, creative era to have been at the heart of.

Few teams pushed the creative boundaries like Team Lotus, of course. The 56B is the only gas turbine car to have competed in Formula 1, and the only one that ever will unless there's a particularly radical rule change. In 2021 it

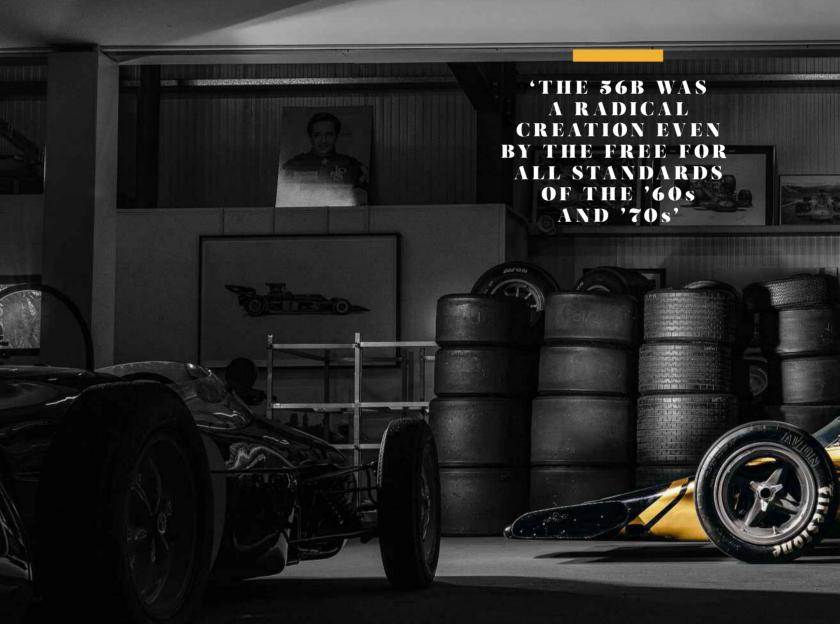
ran again for the first time after an intensive restoration by Classic Team Lotus – pressing play on a moment frozen in time since it crossed the line in its last race, at Hockenheim in 1971, with Emerson Fittipaldi at the wheel.

Here on the upper floor of Classic Team Lotus's purposebuilt HQ, a stone's throw from the Lotus Cars site at Hethel, we're surrounded by a remarkable assemblage of cars, many of which are still run by the team for their owners in historic motorsport. It's almost too much to take in. Here Senna's maiden Grand Prix-winning 97T; over there the outlawed twin-chassis Type 88; multiple Type 72s in glorious JPS livery; but none quite as singular as the 56B.

This is the story of the before, during and after of its short but fascinating racing life.

TYPE 56: THE GENESIS

Gas turbine-powered cars gathered momentum in more ways than one in the '60s. The fascinating Rover-BRM turbine car ran three times at Le Mans, and the pretty Howmet TX from America competed at Daytona, Le Mans and beyond later in the decade, but it was at Indianapolis



that the technology really made its mark. Parnelli Jones very nearly won the 1967 Indy 500 in the STP Paxton turbine car entered by Andy Granatelli, head of the STP motor oil empire. Transmission bearing failure forced retirement from the lead with three laps to go.

Out for revenge on the racing gods, Granatelli commissioned Colin Chapman and Team Lotus to design a follow-up Indy challenger for '68 and the Lotus 56 was born. Four cars were built for the race; tragically, driver Mike Spence was killed in a practice crash, but teammates Joe Leonard and Graham Hill qualified one-two and, again, Granatelli came within a handful of laps of victory only for fuel pump drive failure to scupper Leonard's lead. For the following year, the technical regs were changed, inlet restrictions curbing power to render the turbine cars uncompetitive and effectively obsolete. The gateway to Gasoline Alley was closed. But there was still Formula 1...

With four-wheel-drive traction and a huge horsepower advantage over the Cosworth DFV-powered F1 cars of the time, Chapman could see the inherent potential in the 56, and at the start of 1970 the F1-evolution 56B was born, embarking on a season of testing before its '71 race debut.

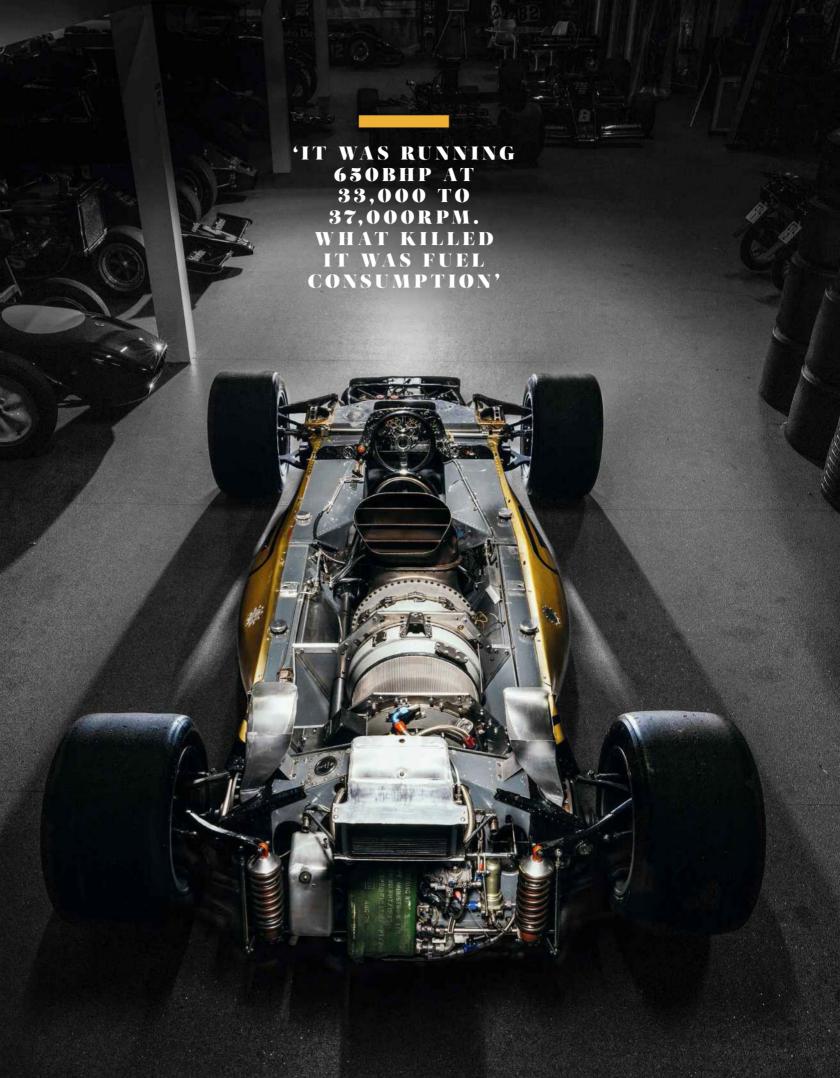
CHASSIS, BODYWORK & AERODYNAMICS

The 56B was a radical creation even by the standards of the design free-for-all '60s and '70s and the inventive minds of Chapman and his Team Lotus colleagues, including designers Maurice Philippe and Martin Waide. Its distinctive, lift-cheating wedge shape (aided by there being no need for a radiator) was wind tunnel-tested and one of the earliest aero-first racing car designs.

The chassis is an aluminium monocoque, with steel bulkheads for the engine and the suspension pick-up points, the bodywork predominantly glassfibre, with a huge one-piece mould for its upper surface, which lifts up and away from the car in one go. Today there's fantastic original patina, carefully preserved rather than refinished: stress cracks in the upper bodywork, a mosaic of stone chips on the low-slung wedge nosecone, crackled paint on the bulkhead, which doubles as the dashboard and cockpit body mount. They're a snapshot of the car as it was when it last crossed the line, and a marker of time's passage since.

Below: 56B's dramatic wedge shape was aimed at reducing lift; blackon-gold colour scheme was an alternative JPS livery to the now-iconic gold-on-black







Bodywork removed, you can see glimpses of the original red/gold Gold Leaf tobacco livery beneath the gold/black colour scheme applied to the car later – an early trial for the JPS colour scheme, which was nearly black-on-gold rather than the iconic gold-on-black.

Classic Team Lotus director Clive Chapman opens one of the broad drawers adjacent to the office's entrance: within are the original drawings for the Type 56 and 56B. The wedge shape is the first thing that strikes you in Philippe's elegant 1:10-scale packaging drawings; the second is the outline of that remarkable power source – one great cylindrical shape, taking up approximately the rear half of the wheelbase, and the driver the front half (minus their ankles)...

THE TURBINE & DRIVETRAIN

Heart of the 56B is a Pratt & Whitney turbine engine, derived from aviation. It's a two-stage turbine: air is sucked into a big inlet ahead of the rear wing and fed into the combustion chamber via a compressor. A row of nozzles around its belly mark its gas stage, almost like a gas hob. Once ignited, that doesn't stop until you cut the fuel. On tickover, the engine generates about 100bhp, meaning the driver must hold the car on the brakes to remain stationary (more on which later...).

What makes it a turbine engine as opposed to a jet is the presence of two rotors: the compressor turbine rotor, and the power turbine rotor. The exhaust gases flow out of a chimney just behind the driver's head (period photos show one hell of a heat haze) while drive is taken via reduction gears to a chain-drive transfer box, and on to a Ferguson torque-splitter centre diff behind the driver's left shoulder. Two propshafts run from there to the front and rear, down the left-hand side of the monocoque. The engine is offset to the right by two inches to accommodate them, balanced by the weight of the transmission. No gears to change: it's twist and go. Or, release the brake pedal and go.

The instruments look more akin to an aircraft's than a racing car's. The two biggest dials are measured in per cent, showing the percentage of the engine's capabilities in the gas section and power turbine sections (with taped-over no-go zones, to encourage the driver not to exceed 100 per cent). Plus, there are multiple gauges for pressures and temperatures. Idle temperature is around 450deg C; during racing it would get up to around 800deg.

Flared side-tanks were added to up capacity to 350 litres after the 56B ran out of fuel in an early race at Brands Hatch. Today it runs on Jet A-1 kerosene-based aviation fuel; in period, it ran on the aforementioned blend of kerosene and petrol.

Like the now-legendary Type 72 cars that Team Lotus was campaigning at the same time, the 56B featured inboard brakes to reduce unsprung mass – and to try to keep them cool. The most remarkable bit of preserved patina is the heat-blistered paint on the vents around the front brake discs. The calipers are huge: 'You can trace the car's development through the different calipers it ran,' says Classic Team Lotus's Lewis Cullington, who led the car's restoration. 'One, two, three, four iterations, getting bigger all the time, and the brake fluid

Far left: glassfibre body removed, the 56B's aluminium monocoque and Pratt & Whitney turbine are laid bare. **Above:** publicity shot shows Emerson Fittipaldi in the car and Colin Chapman on the right; Fittipaldi drove the 56B for its first and last races, at Brands Hatch and Hockenheim respectively

pots get bigger and bigger because they would boil the fluid.'

The DFV in the back of the 72 was running 'around 490bhp by then,' Cullington continues. 'This was running 650bhp, at 33,000 to 37,000rpm. What killed it was fuel consumption – twice that of a DFV – so it had to start the race with twice as much fuel, which meant it couldn't use the 150bhp-plus advantage.' (The 56B weighs around 680kg dry, before taking on all that fuel, compared with a 72's tanked-up 600kg or so.)

RACE HISTORY

Team Lotus ran the 56B in three world championship Grands Prix and several non-championship races through the 1971 season, as an experimental test bed alongside the 72s gunning for the title.

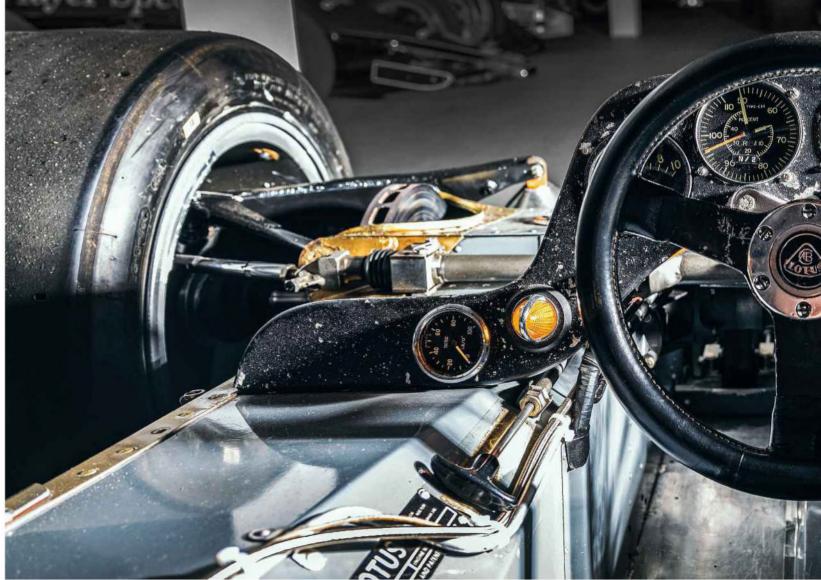
Wet weather was its perfect habitat, where its enormous traction could come to the fore. Its debut was the Race of Champions at Brands Hatch, where Fittipaldi was unbeatable in the wet practice sessions but uncompetitive in the dry race. Australian Dave Walker drove the 56B in the sodden Dutch Grand Prix, starting from the back of the grid before slicing through the field to reach the top 10 by lap 5, lapping faster than the leaders. One lap later, he was out, the 56B beached in the sand after sliding off under braking, much to the team's consternation; a podium, or maybe even better, could perhaps have been on the cards for the turbine car – who knows?

Reine Wisell was behind the wheel for the British Grand Prix at Silverstone, but with the car significantly down on power it was 11 laps behind the race leaders when the chequered flag fell.

Fittipaldi finished eighth in the Italian Grand Prix at Monza, and the car's final outing was in an F5000 race at Hockenheim, Fittipaldi at the wheel once more. He was fastest in practice (in the wet), finishing second and setting fastest lap in the (dry) race.

'For a race car in that era, there were a lot of problems to overcome,' Cullington says. 'Everything was mechanical then: air pressure sensors, all the other fine sensor controls.' It's interesting to imagine now, with modern software and materials, where the technology could theoretically go.

Pragmatically, rather than throw more resource at developing the 56B, Colin Chapman and Team Lotus decided to draw a line under the project and concentrate fully on refining the 72, on its way to becoming one of F1's most dominant cars. Too specialised to be used for other purposes or cannibalised for spares, the 56B lay dormant in the Team Lotus storage buildings until nearly two decades into the next century, when Clive Chapman's Classic Team Lotus operation decided to bring it back to life in time for its 50th birthday. 'We restored 56/3 for its American owner and I got to demo it on an oval in LA,' says Clive. 'It was so exciting I resolved then and there that we had to get the 56B running.'



THE RESTORATION

Lewis Cullington was lead mechanic for the 56B's restoration, juggling the project with other Classic Team Lotus activities over three years. Lockdown put paid to most of the regular customer activities, and whilst not good for business, it freed up resources for a project like the 56B.

'It's one of the most original cars here, unchanged as far as possible from when Emerson did the last race,' Lewis explains. 'All the nuts and bolts are original as far as possible, only changed if anything was bent or worn, and essential changes for safety: the brake lines aren't original, some of the steel components were rusting and we had to get a new rear driveshaft made.'

The biggest component replaced is, actually, the engine. 'The original engine was toast, more or less. At the last race, they turned everything up, mixed in more kerosene and told Emerson: "Go for it." That's on display in a museum in America now.'

An equivalent engine had been sourced from the States but it was discovered to have been contaminated with grit. 'At this point, after some bad luck, we got really lucky,' says Clive. 'Lewis started casting around for UK specialists and attracted the support of H+S Aviation. In particular their technician John Dawes became a godsend for us.'

'Once we knew that we'd be okay engine-wise, we got into the rest of the car – then Covid hit, which actually freed up my time,' says Lewis, recalling how the dedicated team kept working as much as possible through the pandemic.

One of the biggest challenges was sourcing a replacement transfer case – the original had been designed specifically for the car. Cullington had previously worked on restoring the 1968 Granatelli Lotus 56 IndyCar, and had that car's case scanned with a view to being able to create a new one, challenging as that might be. Then the Team Lotus treasure trove of stores came good: 'Clive and his son Arthur were in the archive, rummaging around for something and stumbled upon the original.' Result!

'What's it like to work on? It's a complicated car. To take a brake disc off, for example, the upright needs to come off, the shaft comes out, then the disc comes out... It's not very mechanic-friendly,' Lewis smiles. Nonetheless, you can see the pride and affection for the car when he speaks about it.

'It's been one of those projects for me – so different to do from a piston-engined car. I do feel proud; how many other people can say they've built a gas turbine F1 car? Maybe only the surviving people who were working on it at the time.'

Despite the myriad challenges, the team hit the target of the 2021 Goodwood Festival of Speed to celebrate the car's anniversary. Clive Chapman's son (and Colin Chapman's grandson) Arthur piloted the car, as did the late and much-



missed Simon Diffey, before Emerson Fittipaldi himself got in for a whoosh up the hill and down memory lane.

Having witnessed it at first hand, it was a sight and sound like no other, both whistling past on the hill and warming up in the paddock, like a ground-level fighter jet.

DRIVING IT

Apart from the above, and in-period drivers Walker and Wisell, very few people have been behind the 56B's wheel. Its last pilot was ex-F1 star Johnny Herbert, who drove the car at Monza together with other historic Team Lotus cars during the 2022 F1 weekend to mark the anniversary of its last world championship Grand Prix. He was a fan: 'After his first run, he came back and said, "Right, no-one else is driving this: I love it!" Cullington recalls.

Clive has shaken the car down on the Hethel test track, and describes how it feels: 'It's quite intimidating when you're standing next to it as it warms up; when you're actually in the car it's less so. It's really quite pleasant to drive, and remarkably easy. I got up to about 170mph without trying...' (Cullington tells me the current gear ratio is good for around 178mph flat-out, while the theoretical top speed is 220mph.)

'Without even getting the throttle down, you get up to about 100mph on idle,' Chapman continues (and adds that the idle speed was even higher back when the car was racing). 'What makes a massive difference is if you apply some brake at the same time as the throttle, then take your foot off; you get all the acceleration, and bypass the lag.'

Back when Fittipaldi, Walker and Wisell were racing the car, they'd have got on the power while still braking, getting the turbine spinning into its powerband ready for the exit. With all that going on, and bearing in mind the lack of engine braking compared with a regular car, I can't help but feel a pang of sympathy for Walker sliding off under braking in the rain at Zandvoort.

Without a wailing reciprocating piston-powered race engine, it sounds very different on-board too. 'You can hear the springs rattling, and other noises you don't normally hear,' Clive Chapman reveals.

The drivers may have been courageous, but so too were the 56B's designers and engineers: it might be remembered as a dead end in F1 history but in today's era where all Grand Prix cars are virtually the same by dint of prescriptive regulations, and the difference is made by minute data analysis and maximum budget, this level of unbridled creativity is no longer an option in modern Formula 1.

To combat the challenges facing the environment and personal transport today, a little of the no-limits engineering thinking that created the 56B might be just what the world needs. In fact, the turbine engine might even play a small part in transport's interim future, as a range-extender solution in hybrid vehicles − including Ariel's wild Hipercar − which supplement battery power with a compact, petrol-fuelled range-extender turbine.

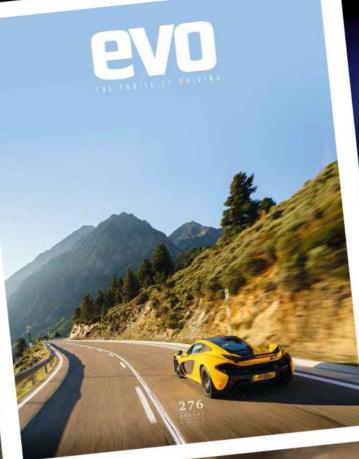
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From the top: packaging is extremely tight – driver has to thread feet under the front axle to reach the pedals; painstaking restoration preserved the 56B's priceless patina while ensuring the car was mechanically fit and safe for demoruns at the Festival of Speed



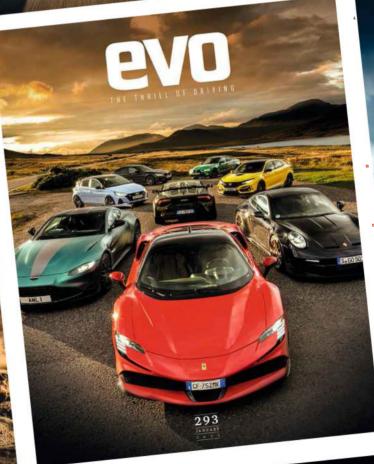














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RY TO FORGET MCRAE IN FULL FLIGHT. THE

horns, whistles and hollers as people realise what's about to come over the hill. Forget that distinctive flat-four noise, the great cracks of anti-lag and the little blue car coming into view at 90 degrees to the direction of travel and then disappearing again in a vortex of mud, gravel and balletic mechanical violence. Forget the ever-more-extreme road cars wearing wafer-thin body panels and cling film-like glass, fitted with literally 'the cheap seats' because they were lighter and likely to be thrown away when the car was competition-prepped anyway. Forget the Spec Cs and Type RA-Rs with trick centre differentials and twin-scroll turbochargers and the sort of focus to make a GT3 or CSL blush. We'll come back to these cars later.

For now, let's look at the facts and the mood circling around these parts. We want lighter, simpler cars. We want manual gearboxes, an end to the ever-spiralling power outputs that necessitate bigger tyres, bigger brakes, stronger components and more sophisticated control systems and lead inevitably to increased cost, greater dimensions and mass that only ever seems to go one way. The cruel truth might just be that what we want – and can't have – is the latest Subaru WRX. The car caught in a time loop, but one that seems to circle around a period when cars were fast, capable and sophisticated but not bloated or weighed down by extraneous technology. Welcome to 2003. Again. Subaru will be your hosts. Annoyingly, you need to fly to the US, Australia or Japan to enjoy the tour.

The WRX is waiting for me in a multi-storey car park near LAX and on the face of it I shouldn't really be excited at all. Everything about this car's stats is underwhelming by 2023 standards, maybe even 2010 standards. However, a conventional ICE car with a characterful 2.4-litre turbocharged flat-four producing 271bhp, and 258lb ft

from 2000rpm, fitted with a six-speed manual gearbox and a rally-proven four-wheel-drive system for \$30,605 (£24,600) doesn't sound too shabby. You might even call it refreshing. I can't wait to try it.

Keep forgetting. Even as you approach the WRX. Forget the utilitarian elegance of the classic Subarus or even the wilful ugliness but sawn-off-shotgun sense of purpose of the later JDM specials from the early to mid 2000s. Because from a purely aesthetic point of view the latest WRX is a crushing disappointment. Gawky like a self-conscious teen and trying to hide its awkwardness behind angular stuck-on plastic wheelarches that channel Gandini but look so cheap and naff. Compared with, say, the tension that agitates the GR Yaris even at a standstill, the WRX is anonymous and just a little bit sad. The interior isn't much better, but I can live with that due to a deep affection for slightly crummy Subaru interiors. Somehow, they used to make the driving experience even more special. Let's hope that's still the case.

Some things are new. The WRX is now built upon the Subaru Global Platform and features the FA24F engine – essentially a turbocharged version of the BRZ/GR86 direct-injection flat-four. It has huge boots to fill, as the old EJ series of engines captivated enthusiasts for decades. Oh wow, those old EJ207s fitted to the Spec Cs and revving to 8000rpm were really special. Not that I'm remembering those old cars right now. But if I was I might think that the new engine's lowly 6100rpm rev limit was a bit of a let-down. Even so, I remain positive. Just the presence of a manual gearbox is enough to keep the spark alive.

It seems odd to focus on the humble manual gearbox quite so much, but it's worth noting how things have changed. The gradual creep of automatic and dual-clutch 'boxes into performance cars is almost complete, but the few remaining manual proponents perhaps hide the extent of the seismic, ahem, shift. Back in 2003, when a Litchfield-fettled JDM Impreza STI Spec C appeared at eCoty, it was one of 11 contenders in the 'Real World' test. The criteria was simple: Fantastic driver's cars with a sub-£30,000 cost of entry. Admittedly,





we included the £38,500 TVR T350C, but the rest were either much less or just hovered around that price point. The Spec C was £27,995.

Of those 11 cars, from a Caterham to hot hatches to coupes to rally reps, precisely none had a self-shifting gearbox. I'm not stupid enough to fall into the manual good/automatic bad trope here, but there's no question that the landscape skewing so far from the peak Subaru years to now has removed a tactile element of driving enjoyment. And provides an opportunity for the WRX, along with cars like the GR Yaris, GR86, BMW M2 and the Porsche GT models, to really exploit.

So has it? Early signs are not hugely promising. I'm not as attached to the much-loved flat-four warble as many. Most of my Impreza memories are from those JDM homologation cars with twin-scroll turbos and equal-length headers, which lost the distinctive sound. But I'd just kill for any character at the moment. The WRX is quiet, the clutch pedal is so light and imprecise and the deep sense of these sorts of cars being a machine – all that gritty, mechanical connection – appears to have evaporated. The car feels rooted in the past but sanitised for modern tastes.

Nothing quite makes sense. The gearbox is really rather lovely. Much faster and sweeter than previously but with the same length to the throw and a similar texture to each shift. A genuine update with tangible benefits. Sadly, the light, springy clutch undermines every interaction. The ride is stiff and unsettled yet the car doesn't seem to dig deep into the surface, hunting for grip, and the smooth, low-effort steering can't convey much about the road that's rattling the car's composure. There's just an odd sense of disconnect. Little glimmers that the WRX still gets it, yes, but it's almost like the development team didn't have the confidence to really chase the prize lurking somewhere in this package.

Day one with the WRX is a bit of a disaster. I hate it. Day two isn't much better. But the little glimmers become more frequent in days three and four. The brake pedal has lovely feel. The ride is busy but the quick steering does help create real agility and the WRX feels light, honest and natural. I wish the engine had more range at the top end and a bit more big-turbo bite, too. But the performance is just about strong enough to challenge the chassis. The torque-vectoring by braking on the front axle even seems to help resist understeer convincingly.

Dynamically the WRX sticks to the path of more recent Imprezas and WRX models rather than drawing inspiration from its wilder

ancestors. It's a little sharper at the front but the rear never really wants to play. Drive hard into a corner on the brakes and the WRX remains resolute. Pour on as much power as the flat-four can summon, even before the apex, and it remains hooked-up and neutral. The fun comes from being precise and carrying speed rather than true throttle adjustability. There's reward in that style... but true thrills? I'm not so sure. The WRX is one of those cars where you're always trying to scratch down beneath the surface to find raw excitement. Ultimately, it's a futile exercise.

Judged purely standing on its own four wheels the WRX does have appeal. It's affordable, robust and there's intrigue in the flat-four configuration and incredibly effective four-wheel-drive system. It flies across the ground, too. However, there's only so long that you can forget the old glories. Even removing the evocative WRC history, those early Impreza Turbos and then STIs and all the iterations they spawned weren't just affordable and characterful, they changed everything. They were unstoppable, unbeatable cross country; they were sharp and angry but brilliantly accessible. They made us feel like heroes and amplified our talents but always required input and commitment. They were forces of nature. Intense, unique, unforgettable.

They were also a moment in time. How do you recreate that impact when hot hatches can rattle off 0-60mph in sub-four seconds over and over again? How do you go supercar chasing when supercars have 800bhp or more and control systems so sophisticated that they can use every last one? How do you connect motorsport so completely with an affordable road car when motorsport has become more complex to showcase new and expensive technologies that by their very nature increase the cost, complexity and weight of a parallel road car project? Where does the WRX go from here?

The answer, sadly, is probably nowhere at all. Or we'll get a press release saying the WRX has been reinvented as an EV with 800bhp. Yawn. Luckily, we still have the memories. Remember. Cherish those old images and sounds and moments of fury. Remember McRae, Burns, Spec Cs and Type RA-Rs. We'll never see their like again. The WRX is no substitute, but there's just enough here to suggest that if Subaru gave itself permission to unleash the potential within, the world would be a much better place. One more STI? A really, properly mad one with no underseal and crappy seats and tin-foil panels and roof scoops? Now that's a car I'd fly to the ends of the earth to drive.









IMPREZA IMPRESSIONS

Our road testers have driven countless Subarus over the years, but which left the biggest marks?

Richard Meaden: Impreza Turbo 2000 AWD

Ask me my most memorable Subaru moment during my time at **evo** and I'd say driving the Impreza P1 in north Wales alongside a Ferrari 550 as the final to our Greatest Driver's Cars feature (issue 066). However, it was my very first drive in the then brand-new Impreza Turbo 2000 AWD back in 1994 that really sticks in my mind.

I was a greenhorn road tester at Carweek, the long-defunct weekly offshoot of Car magazine, and was tasked with writing the first drive on the Impreza Turbo (above left). Nobody on the mag seemed that bothered about the cheap and cheerful Subaru, but I totally fell in love with it.

I haven't driven an early Impreza Turbo for at least a decade, but I'm pretty sure the things I loved about it back in '94 – namely the characterful engine, unpretentious image and brilliant point-to-point performance – would feel even more appealing today. The more powerful special editions grab the limelight, but for me the plain and simple Turbo remains the seminal Subaru.

James Taylor: Impreza WRX STI Version IV

It was the summer holidays, I was ten years old, we were visiting family friends in Wales, and their friend popped round in a new car: a silver Subaru Impreza WRX STI Version IV (top left). Gold wheels, foglight covers, that one-piece arc rear wing. I was captivated.

All the more so when its owner took my dad and me for a passenger ride. I remember the odd, offbeat growling sound the engine made, the acceleration that went with it and, above all, the sheer grip. I couldn't believe a car could go, stop and corner so hard. Nor the way it apparently turned back into what felt, from the passenger seat at least, like an ordinary saloon car when we slinked back into the village. I didn't know a car could have that kind of Jekyll and Hyde character. I've wanted one ever since. Still do.

John Barker: Impreza RB5

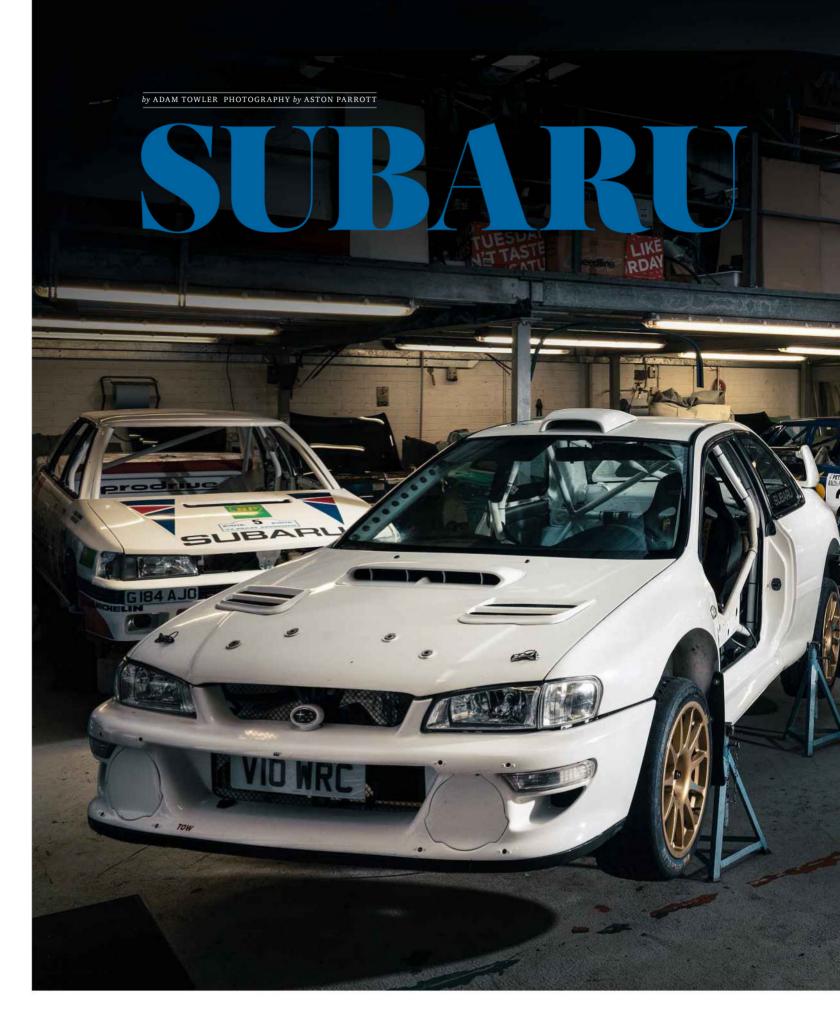
For me, peak Impreza was the RB5 (above right). Sure, the 22B was exotic, being a three-door JDM, but current prices are astonishing. I always liked the everyman feel and affordability of the four-door and how, out of the box, it felt tailor-made for our gnarly roads. Of course, the Prodrive P1 was finely tuned for UK roads, but I simply prefer the saloon's under-the-radar looks.

I recall one particular RB5 very fondly. It was a press car that appeared in these pages a couple of times - T47 JOP. It was my ideal spec: subtle colour, short shift and added PPP – Prodrive Performance Pack – that tickled the power up from 215 to 237bhp, which was just enough to make it endlessly entertaining, to give its lithe, beautifully supple and enthralling chassis more to play with. How good? Third on eCoty 1999, behind 911 GT3 and 360 Modena. Where are you now T47 JOP? According to the DVLA your MOT expired in 2019. I really hope you're getting the restoration you deserve.

Stuart Gallagher: Impreza Turbo 2000 AWD

It has to be the RB5, doesn't it? That pre-dawn dash across Europe, the rendezvous with a then new Audi S3, the thrash back across Europe to be home in time for the pub. The gaffer tape holding the rear wing down and the French customs officer who took an immediate dislike to the haircuts Gus Gregory and I were sporting. Actually, no. It's not the RB5. Not this time.

Before that 20-hour day there was the first Impreza moment. The one that planted the seed. The first time I experienced those light-touch but feel-filled controls. The rubbery gearchange that still managed to be precise thanks to its intuitive gate. The way the body lean encouraged you to push harder; the way it felt up on its toes, deft and agile, responsive and surefooted. That first-ever drive of an Impreza Turbo in the late summer of 1998 will never be forgotten. A seminal car for me and this magazine.





IF WALLS COULD TALK... I'M STARING

at the gentle patina of a well-used workshop, one that has reverberated countless times to the harsh blat-blat of flat-four Subaru World Rally Car engines and the primeval thumpety-thump of a Group A Impreza. But it has also rung to the piercing bark of Ford Cosworth DFVs, maybe Indy Cosworth DFXs too. For this building was once part of the headquarters of March Engineering, the highly successful race car constructor of the '70s and '80s with five Grand Prix victories and five straight Indy 500 wins to its credit. The corridors probably still echo to the footsteps of Robin Herd, Max Mosley and Adrian Newey amongst other famous alumni of the marque. Even the dyno has a tale to tell, having been previously installed at Andy Rouse Engineering, home of arguably the fastest Sierra RS500 Cosworth touring cars ever built. For anyone with a passion for motorsport, this is hallowed ground.

We're visiting Bicester-based Autosportif, one of the world's top restorers and builders of historic Subaru rally cars. Established by ex-Prodrive man Martyn Spurrell in 1994, today it's run by long-standing employee Howard Dent, who took over the business in 2014.

There's some form of rallying Subaru squeezed into every available space in the workshop, though Howard's career started with far less exotic machines, 'fixing Minis and Morris Minors for students and nurses' at his farm-based workshop back in the 1980s. But the world of rallying soon started to exert a pull. 'A friend of mine said he fancied joining a motor club and going rallying,' Howard recalls. 'I liked rallying, but I had never thought about actually doing it. So we built a Chrysler Avenger. It was good fun back then you could do it for peanuts, singlevenue stage rallies. Then we changed that for a Sunbeam, which I bought out his half of, and carried on rallying that car for three or four years. My friend worked at the same place as Martyn Spurrell, and that's how I got to know Martyn - he'd been into rallying for longer, and was a little bit ahead of us, if you like.'

A move to Essex in the early '90s saw Howard getting a job building mainly Ferrari engines at marque specialist Terry Hoyle, where he was able to feed his passion for the prancing horse. He bought a restoration project too, a 365 GT4 2+2, but a move back to Oxford led to a call with Spurrell, and by 1996 a few engine rebuilds had turned into a full-time job at Autosportif, where Howard became the engine and gearbox specialist.

Autosportif's typical work evolved over time. 'As Group A stuff became yesterday's





Above: white S5 Impreza wearing V10 WRC is the last competing WRC99 in the world; it enjoyed huge success with Andrew Nesbitt in Ireland. **Right:** turquoise car is a replica of Grégoire de Mevius's distinctive S5 Impreza

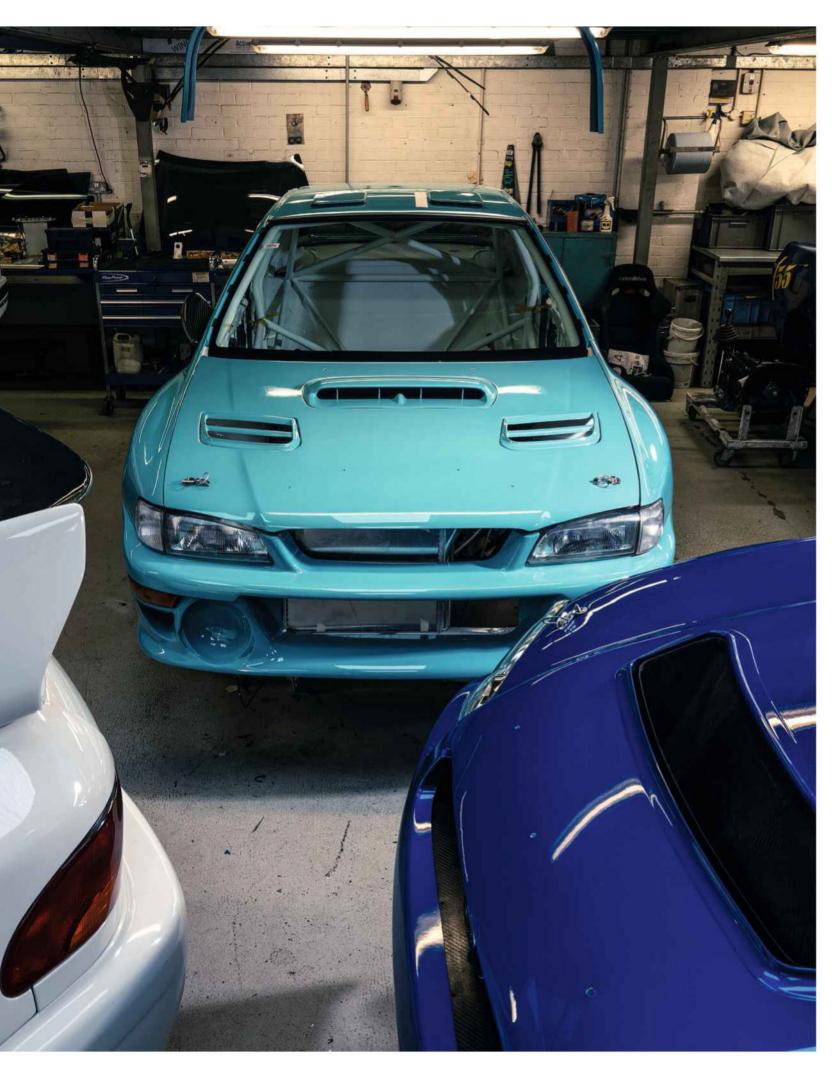
tech, and Prodrive moved on to the World

Rally Car era, it opened up a new business opportunity for us with the older Group A cars,' says Howard. 'We built and ran quite a lot of Imprezas for people – Group N, A and WRC – but Martyn used to say "it's not really worth it"; it's a very expensive operation unless you've got lots of cars and spares, and it eventually dwindled, but we were still doing preparation of cars.'

Another line of work came with the halcyon days of the grey import. In fact, an Autosportiftuned Impreza 22B made an appearance in issue 1 of evo. 'Dealers were specifically told they weren't allowed to touch grey imports. So we were doing engines on cars that were coming in through importers like Park Lane. It was like having a GR Yaris now – the people who liked driving and rallying were buying them. The trouble was, the engines were going pop; they were mapped for Japanese fuel and very short-geared, so the moment you got them on the motorway they'd be revving like mad and running lean. I was doing a lot of engine rebuilds.'

Spurrell retired in 2014, and aged 55 Howard found himself with the keys.

'THERE'S
SOME FORM
OF RALLYING
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INTO EVERY
SPACE'





Above: Autosportif tackles every aspect of prepping and restoring rallying Imprezas and Legacys, but the engine shop (top left) is the heart of the business. Up to 1999 the electronics are fairly basic; after that, things get quite a bit more complicated...

Initially the idea was to concentrate on just engines and gearboxes but soon the requests came in to build or prepare cars, and with ex-employee Jon Hall returning to the business there were soon Legacys and Imprezas everywhere once again, not to mention all manner of other competition cars.

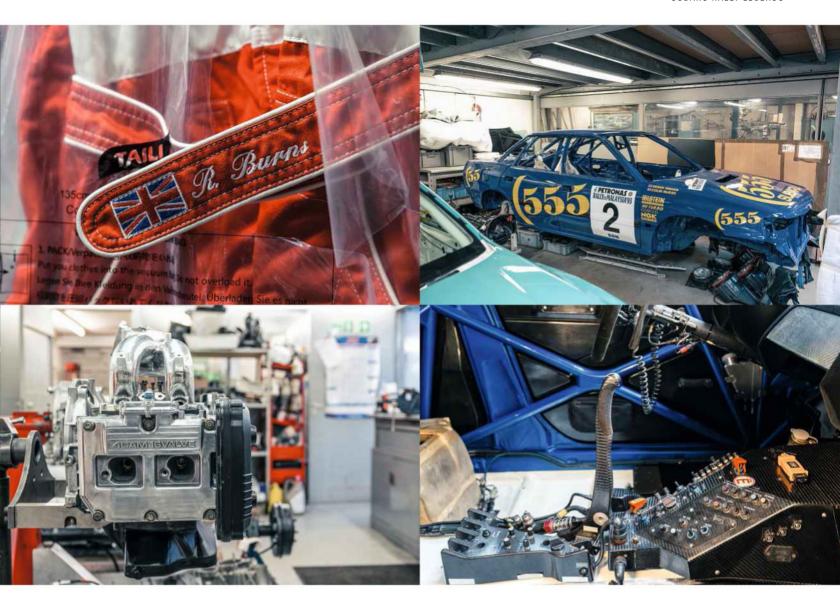
The business evolved yet again in the middle of the last decade, when a customer had an engine failure on his Impreza WRC. That man was arch-enthusiast Steve Rockingham, and the car was R19 WRC, which had won both the Portuguese and Chinese rounds of the 1998 world championship with Colin McRae and Nicky Grist. 'R19' was plain white by now, on account of its later life as Freddy Dor's mount for his privateer 1999 WRC campaign, but Steve decided to restore the car as it was when Colin drove it off the start ramp in Portugal. (We featured the finished car in 'Anatomy of a WRC Car', evo 243.)

'The moment we did that one, people started to think

about restoring them in the same way,' says Howard, 'and the values also started to go up. So we did a couple of other cars, and then Covid came and put the quieteners on the rallying side, but owners started to think more about the cars they'd got. When you can't use them, you spend more time reading about them or looking at pictures, and prices go up... and since then we've got a list of cars to come in for restoration. It's totally changed [as a business], but it's funny because I like car restoration!'

The 'modern classic' rallying scene is beginning to split into two distinct worlds. On the one hand there are the original cars with history, increasing in value and becoming recognised classics in their own right. And then on the other, more and more of the Group A legends are now becoming eligible as historic vehicles for rallies, rather than merely being outdated equipment on events open to all-comers.

'If you've got an original car, the likelihood of using it for historic events – as in more than just demo events



like the Eifel rally - is now low. You need to be "on it". People don't want to be an also-ran and you've got to be on it to win it.' And the reality is that anyone with a valuable original car is not going to want to risk crashing it and eroding the value of their investment. So why not build a new car to period spec that can be campaigned without such concerns?

'That market has been stifled slightly by the availability of transmission parts [for Group A Subarus] because the gearboxes are so expensive and just not available. People think they'll find a second-hand one but they won't... Prodrive never sold anything to anyone if you didn't have a car to start with; it wasn't like a Ford, where you could buy a Cosworth out of the showroom and buy a kit of bits to make a Group N car, then a kit to convert it into a Group A car. Prodrive wouldn't do that.

'We haven't quite got to that point in historic rallying yet, but that will happen, Imprezas will become eligible, and it will take off in a big way and we will be busy.

The Legacy "thing" hasn't quite taken off in the same way yet either, but we've got one in the workshop that's going into that world, and we've supplied another shell and all the parts to Antonio Sainz [Carlos Sainz Snr's older brother] for his workshop to assemble. Now, with the Best Impreza project, those gearboxes and diffs are available: you can build a car to original [Group A/ Prodrive] spec, but there's nothing "original" about it and it will end up doing historics.'

For rally fans it's a tantalising proposition. The Best Impreza project (which we drove in evo 300) has enabled enthusiasts – at a cost – to literally build a Group A Impreza rally car from scratch, just as people have been doing with Mk2 Ford Escorts for years. There are no 'sticking points', confirms Howard, as I strike an informal deal to bring any future lottery-win cash down in a wheelbarrow so he can start work on a box-fresh Impreza 555...

The rumours are that World Rally Cars (from 1997 onwards) won't be allowed into historic events, but Above: Autosportif retains a number of evocative links with Subaru's rallying past, including Richard Burns's race suit; famous cars currently residing in the workshop include the Legacy (top right) with which Colin McRae won the 1993 WRC Rally of Malaysia

Howard reckons these early 2-litre machines will still have their market. 'Early WRC cars have the McRae factor; it's a great looking car and very useable. There were probably about 60 of those made, from the '97-99 S5 to the 2000-season S6/P2000. The '97-99 cars are easy to drive and maintain, so while maybe you can't compete for points you can do the demo runs and they're great cars to do it in. They won't be dead in the water.

'The S6/P2000 is where they start to get complicated. From there through to the S9 of 2003 [the first with 'Blobeye' headlamps] you can plug a laptop into the ECU and run it – it's doable. Their Achilles' heel is the data logger: once they're old they get upset by people putting cards in and out of them, and this can then upset other important parts of the car, and then if the ECU sees things it doesn't like it won't work. They can be a bit of a pain in the arse...

'But the ones that will struggle are the later cars, the S10s, 11s and 12s, because they're too complicated. There are two ECUs, and another box that looks at everything and needs it all to be right before it will even run. I can only monitor boost, oil and water temp; I can't tell you anything else. Prodrive has the TAG software licence for the ECUs, and while they're not impossible, you do need to be friendly with Prodrive because you'll need one of their engineers at some point.'

My brain swimming with an inordinate amount of Subaru rally information, I take a stroll out into the workshop. First you have to walk through the engine build room, which is packed with Impreza engines, but also features today a rebuilt Miura V12 on a stand and Lancia Integrale oily bits. Above lies a mezzanine floor literally packed with Subaru rally parts; in front sits V10 WRC, a '99 WRC S5 that spent most of its life in Ireland, recently sold at auction and now in for the Autosportif treatment. On the ramp is a Group A Impreza, a spare Prodrive shell being built up into a full-house Group A car, while below it the blue Legacy RS is a road car being constructed to full historic Group A spec for competition. Next to that sits LT53 SRT, the S10 driven by Petter Solberg in the 2004 Cyprus round of the WRC, now looking perfect but a project that's taken all of Howard's detective work and fine eye for detail to get it back to this point.

In the far corner is another very special car: the Group A Legacy RS that Colin McRae drove to victory on the 1993 Malaysian rally; the tale of how all its parts came to be reunited is a feature story all in itself. Next to that is a replica S5 WRC in what will be Belgacom livery once it's finished, and in the other corner a fabulous



'YOU CAN
NOW BUILD
A GROUP A
IMPREZA FROM
SCRATCH, AS
PEOPLE HAVE
WITH MK2
ESCORTS FOR
YEARS'

Above: Autosportif boss Howard Dent has been running the business since 2014. **Opposite page:** Legacy RS was the very first Prodrive Subaru World Rally Championship entry back in 1990

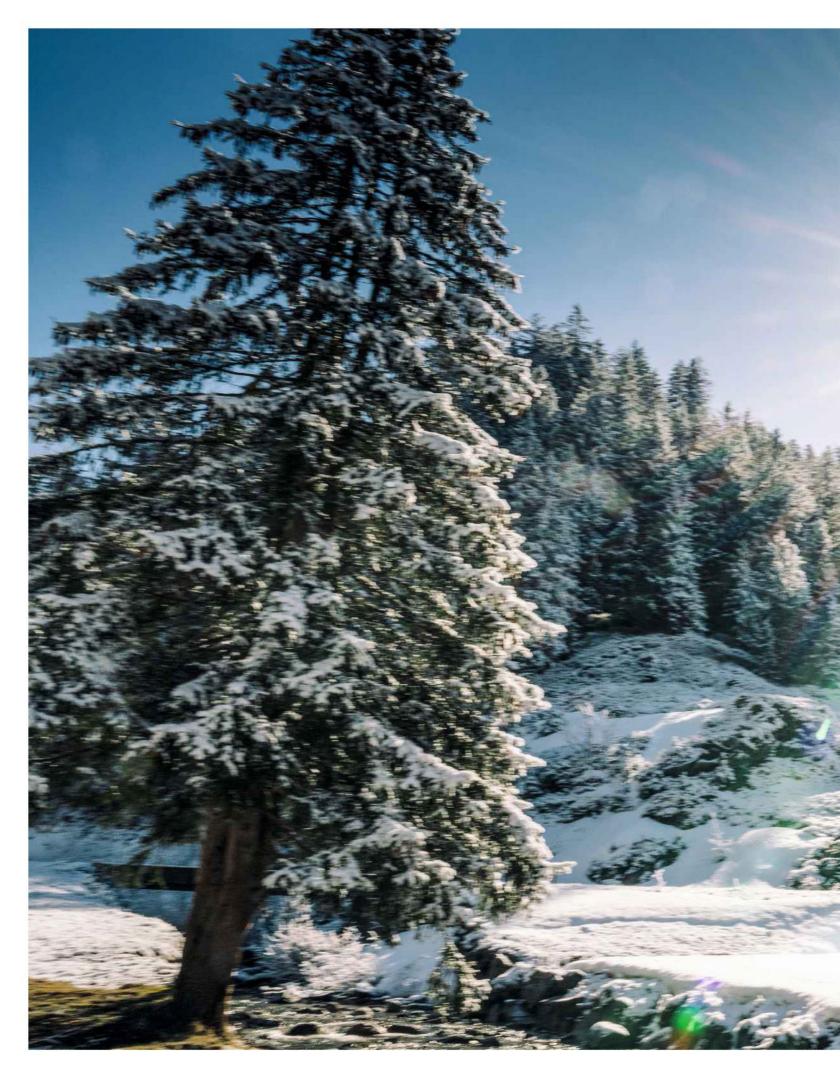
piece of Subaru rallying history in the form of G184 AJO, Prodrive chassis number three, the Legacy that Markku Alén drove on the 1990 Acropolis Rally – the debut for the Prodrive Subaru WRC team. Hiding under a cover is K980 BFC, chassis number 94-018, owned by Autosportif and a car with fabulous history in Italy with Piero Liatti at the wheel.

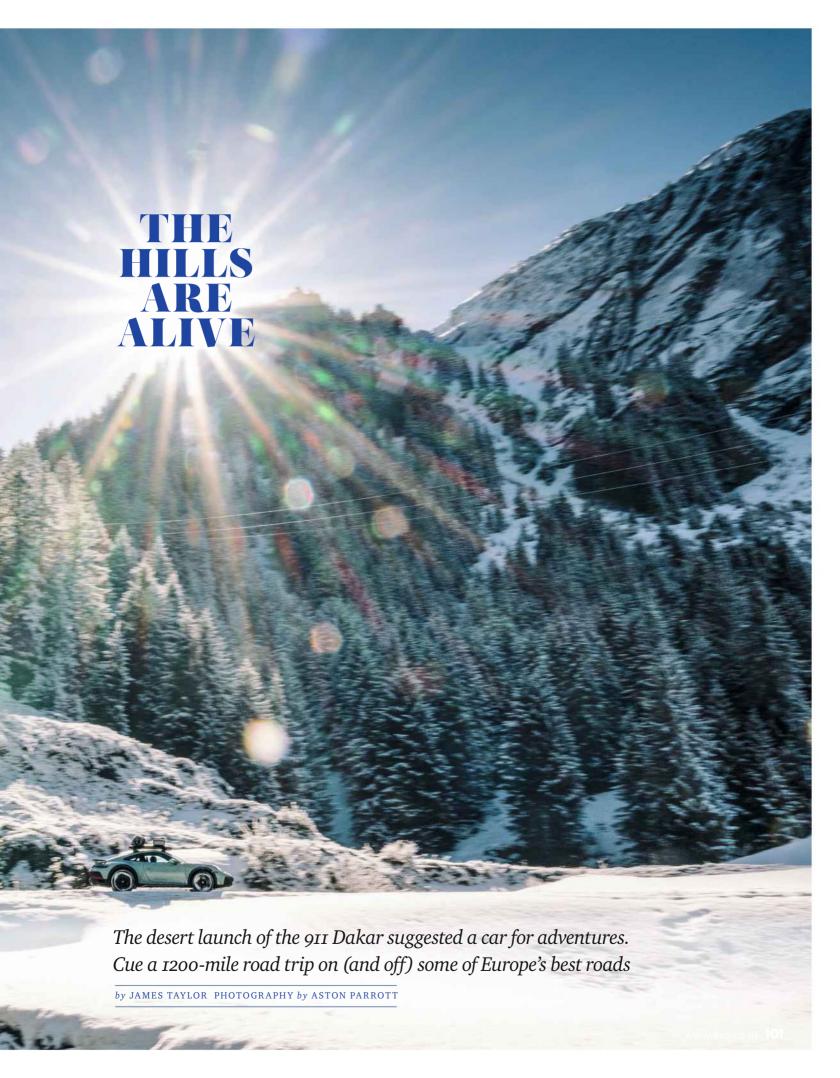
By now I'm rocking back and forth slightly and making Group A Impreza noises. Howard smiles. He's worked with the cars for decades, and what he doesn't know about them could fit inside a wheel nut, but our conversation reveals he has another and highly unusual motoring passion in his free time: he simply loves 1950s BMC cars, and most of all, the rare Morris Isis. He's had 20, currently owns five, lends them out for film work and advises club members on technical matters. The sedate British saloon couldn't be more different to the brutal Japanese rally cars that surround us, but then that's the thing about being a car enthusiast: it's a broad church, and all are welcome.

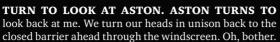












We're in the Austrian Alps, aiming for what promises to be a spectacularly photogenic location via a mountain pass. Only problem is, there's a makeshift barrier in place ahead of us. We're not sure who put it there, or why, or if moving it would technically be trespassing. To get to the location we have in mind by another route would take around three hours, maybe four.

We sink dejectedly a little deeper into the 911 Dakar's carbon bucket seats. Its 3-litre flat-six thrums away patiently behind us, idling expectantly. Google Maps is scrolled. There *is* another possible route. It involves a bit of a detour. And a bit of off-roading. And possibly a bit of charm, or pretence at being stupid English tourists if

somebody stops us. (The latter's not too much of a stretch, for me, at least.) Is the 911 Dakar a proper go-anywhere machine for adventures? Reaching for the ride height lift button, I guess we're about to find out.

REWIND TO STUTTGART, A FEW HOURS AND A FEW hundred miles ago. We meet the 911 Dakar for the first time at Porsche's Zuffenhausen HQ, steady rainfall polishing the highlights on its metallic Shade Green paint. It's the last time this car will be clean until we return it, three and a half days from now.

We have that time to get to know the 911 Dakar properly, and for it to answer some questions that, for now, remain intriguing unknowns. So far, our only Dakar driving-seat exposure has been at its international launch in Morocco, where we got to grips with both the car and the Saharan

















If any prospective 911 Dakar customers happen to be reading this, don't bother with the pricey Burmester system; it struggles to cut through the cumulative effect of all that low-level background noise, all muddy bass and tinny treble. But the Dakar is honestly no hardship to drive on a long motorway slog. You can hold an easy conversation at motorway speeds, and overall it's an undemanding car in which to cover ground. Refined, even. Biggest drawbacks are the bucket seats - ultra-comfy at first then much harder work as minutes become hours - and the effect the roof cargo is having on the fuel consumption. When weather and traffic clear and we begin to press on (the all-terrain tyres are still rated to 149mph), the trip computer reckons on an 18-19mpg average.

But the most interesting question isn't how it feels on the motorway, of course: what does the raised ride height - 50mm loftier than a 911 Carrera on Sport suspension - and knobbly tyres mean for the handling on a winding road? Nearing the border, it doesn't take long to find the perfect setting: friendly cambers, quiet hairpins, fast curves and full-stop braking zones. The sort of road you'd really enjoy in a regular 911, in other words...

And the Dakar is genuinely great fun too. It's a bit more remote in feel, but you still know exactly what's going on and feel comfortable driving it to its limits sooner than you would most sports cars. And those limits are much lower: the all-terrain tyres relinquish grip much more readily, but they still do so progressively, and the Dakar doesn't feel clumsy. In fact, having lower limits kind of makes it more fun: in the hairpins, selecting Rallye mode (unique to the Dakar and technically intended for loose surfaces) biases the active torque split to bundle the lion's share to the rear axle, and it's addictively easy to slither around slow corners, the tail taking a wider arc than the front. It's refreshing to have the option to drive a modern car with accessibly low limits, and the tyres regain grip quickly when they slide.

It's still stable in the fast corners, too, perhaps helped by the rear-wheel-steering system, standard fit on the Dakar, doing its thing to virtually lengthen the wheelbase.

The weak spot is under braking, where the Dakar gets up on its treadblock toes and feels reluctant to slow sometimes disconcertingly so. But once you've adapted to it and recalibrated your braking points further up the road, it's a generally lovely thing to drive. Less sharp and responsive than a regular Carrera, of course, but less blunt than its appearance suggests.

The suspension is on longer struts but otherwise its architecture is essentially the same as a regular 911's. And it's still thumpingly fast: the sub-4.0sec official 0-62mph time feels believable. Various weight-saving measures, the lightweight bonnet and rear-seat deletion among them, have kept weight to within 10kg of a regular PDKequipped Carrera 4.

You can fit the Dakar with regular summer or winter tyres but I wonder how it would feel; the spring rates have been softened by a full 50 per cent compared with a Carrera 4, partly because the Scorpion tyres' sidewalls are so stiff. With regular-profile tyres, I wonder if the suspension's movements might actually feel a little baggier as a result - it would be interesting to find out. As it is, ride quality, aided by the standard adaptive dampers, is superb, somehow always the right side of too firm or too soft.

Back to that impasse. We backtrack a few miles down the road, and then leave it completely, travelling by turn

Left and right: riding on Pirelli Scorpion All-Terrain tyres, the Dakar's limits are low, but it slides progressively and communicates clearly, which makes it a something of a hoot on the road – and off it, too







via muddy trails and over lush green hillsides against an Alpine backdrop so picturesque you half expect Julie Andrews and the von Trapp family to appear around the next corner. You can bump the Dakar up a further 30mm, using a pneumatic lift kit powered by a compressor behind the front seats (and, amusingly, it can stay at that height at up to 105mph before lowering automatically), and it has a further bespoke Off Road driving mode, nominally splitting the torque 50:50 - though it's still actively finetuned on the fly - and prioritising traction at all costs. It would be nice to have a manual gearbox to play with but the eight-speed PDK transmission works better with the different drive modes and active all-wheel-drive system, so, understandably, it's the only transmission available in the Dakar. And a slightly annoying one on dual carriageways, too, constantly hunting for the right gear and changing its mind, even on a steady throttle.

At the moment I'm letting it do its own thing, both hands on the wheel and sitting back in mild awe at the terrain passing below the Dakar's mildly strengthened belly. We're into forest now and a steep hillside; the 911 is climbing, climbing, stopping only when it runs out of road, not out of puff. There's no main central radiator, the Dakar instead getting a pair of higher-performance rads either side of its nose, enabling a steeper approach angle at

the front. It's surprising just how steep an incline you can point it at, and how much purchase the tyres find to propel the Porsche up it.

Reversing easily down from this dead end, we try a different tack and find ourselves on a winding road that climbs, narrows, darkens and emerges into a snowy wonderland, like driving through, a wardrobe into Narnia. At one point we find ourselves crossing a narrow but sturdy bridge over a waterfall, not another soul in sight and only the sound of babbling water and distant calling birds on the breeze. Far below us, I can see the valley we started from. We couldn't have got here in a Carrera 4.

We climb further and further still, until we're finally foiled by deep snow. The Dakar gamely motors on, trudging through the snow up to its axles before the tyres finally cry enough and spin on the spot in protest. For a very real moment it looks like we might need the Porsche-branded shovel and tyre tracks after all, but a bit of careful steering and throttle work, and a favourable luck:judgement ratio, sees us reverse clear and backtrack to solid ground.

We haven't reached the El Dorado photo location we'd been heading for. But we've reached somewhere perhaps even better, not only because it's beautiful – a suntrap clearing, fringed with tall trees shedding snowflakes and a backdrop worthy of the *National Geographic* –



but because of the adventure we've had getting here.

By the time we return the Dakar to Stuttgart, mobbed by cameras again outside the Porsche Museum like automotive Beatlemania – or should that be Beetlemania in this case? – we've covered 1200 miles. As far as we are aware, this is the longest trip any magazine has yet undertaken with the Dakar. It's let us get under its skin, and the car ours. Every time we've questioned it, it's had an answer.

Yes, there were times, particularly driving into a down-at-heel part of a random Austrian town en route, that we felt, honestly, a bit self-conscious to be driving a moodboard on wheels, but there were other settings where the car looked fantastic. In an even more subtle colour, with roof bars, perhaps, but without the whole Bear Grylls expedition pack, I reckon it's a car with genuinely deep appeal. The interior could be more special; apart from (optional) rubber floormats and a '911 Dakar' plaque, there's not much to separate it from a regular 911. As a long-distance car, comfort is compromised a little by the fixed shell seats and definitely by the optional half-cage.

But the fact that the Dakar has the bandwidth to shoulder long motorway slogs, park up in a city, blitz a mountain road or venture off that road into the mountains themselves is truly impressive. It may cost £45k more than the 911 Carrera 4 GTS that it uses as its source material,

but it does offer a bigger experience, opens up greater opportunities, turns more of the map into a playground. On the journey's return leg, now knowing the car's capabilities, we feel able to dive off the road at any juncture. A dirt path up to a waterfall spotted in the distance becomes another place to explore; a shallow section of water adjacent to a road becomes a place for the 911 to paddle in, like a rhino paying a visit to a watering hole. As a result it's made memories on this trip that wouldn't have been possible in most 'normal' 911s. Even if some of those memories might have involved borderline trespassing.

Maybe it's the fatigue talking after cramming a lot of miles and landscapes into a short space of time, but I've fallen under the Dakar's spell. Its appeal is real and rounded, and the best answers to any questions asked of it are revealed by using it. As it turns out, it's definitely a car that deserves to have miles put on it, rather than stay put in a collection.

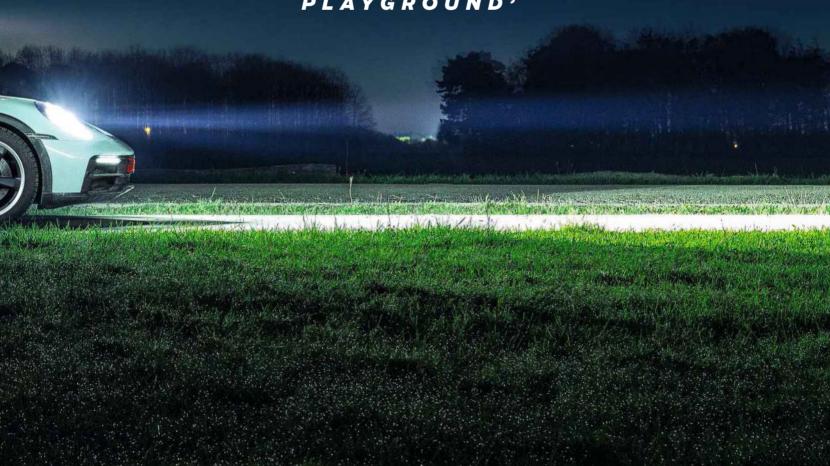
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Porsche 911 Dakar

Engine Flat-six, 2981cc, twin-turbo Power 473bhp @ 6500rpm
Torque 420lb ft @ 2300-5000rpm Weight 1605kg (299bhp/ton)
0-62mph 3.4sec Top speed 149mph Basic price £173,000

evo rating ***

'THE DAKAR
TURNS MORE OF
THE MAP INTO A
PLAYGROUND'







T'S EARLY APRIL AT THE NÜRBURGRING, BMW'S

marketing department have hired the Nordschleife exclusively between the hours of 8am and 4.30pm and have their eyes on setting some impressive lap times. In a workshop nearby, the cars are being prepped. The priority is the new M2, but the M division feels that the M4 CSL and M5 CS have plenty of time left in them. Their previous runs were heavily compromised by patches of damp and a mulchy leaf cocktail. I would love to be a fly on the wall for this little adventure. Who doesn't want to see how these Nürburgring lap times are achieved? Even those windbags who moan about the 'relevance' of the Ring.

Yet for all the excitement I'm in a darkened room, dreading opening the curtains. You see, whilst a road car lap time programme operates from one corner of the Nordschleife car park, I'll be on the other side testing a new M4 GT4 in preparation for the 24-hour race held in late May. The forecast yesterday was pretty good. Ish. But having been away from this place for probably five years, the idea of trying to get heat into a set of wet tyres whilst remembering all the little tricks and foibles of this monster circuit sounds vaguely hellish. I can't hear rain being slapped against the window. There's even a little glow around the edges that suggests it can't be that bad.

In fact, it's even better than that. Sunshine! Not a cloud to be seen. Can this really be? More good news: the jeans I hung over the balcony no longer stink of sizzling steak (any regular at the Ring knows to hang their jeans outside after a visit to the Pistenklause). What a start to the day! With the worry of rain extinguished all I need to concern myself with is being quick enough, not crashing, remembering all the controls on the steering wheel and, maybe, to enjoy myself. How hard can it be?

So, this is Day 1 of my re-introduction to the Nürburgring 24 Hours and my re-introduction to driving around this wild place in general. Well, technically it's Day 2. Yesterday I met the outfit running this media car, the highly successful BMW Team RMG, and looked around their immaculate premises located around 30 minutes from Nürburg in a town called Andernach. Team RMG was founded in 2010 by Stefan Reinhold, who has extensive history working in F1 and GT racing. The operation was set up to partner BMW as it prepared to once again join the DTM championship in 2012.

After a successful stint in DTM, the team has now focused on GT racing and did a huge amount of development work on the new M4 GT3 and 'my' car, the GT4. The trophy cabinets are bursting and empty champagne bottles line the entirety of the mezzanine structure above the workshop floor. We are shown videos and data from their GT3 drivers at certain key points and encouraged to try the simulator. It feels very serious. At this

stage I just want to remember when the bloody track goes left and right. Even my teammate, Christian Gebhardt, the man who sets the Nordschleife times for Sport Auto's Supertests and completes hundreds of laps per

Above right: Bovingdon gets behind the wheel - which is a learning curve in itself (right). Far right: with teammates Weidinger, Gebhardt and Naumann and Team RMG

season, chuckles when we see how Dan Harper makes up a tenth of a second through Hatzenbach.

Christian and I will be joined by Auto Bild journalist Guido Naumann (also very quick and a former teammate of mine in a bog-standard Fiat 500 at the N24. We qualified 180th and dead last. However, we did beat the Prodrive DBRS9 in the race itself on our way to a glorious 148th-place finish) and BMW M's project manager of driving dynamics, Jörg Weidinger. That means his day job is creating cars like the M5 CS. No wonder Jörg is always smiling and it explains how he's quite so handy around this place. Today, he's here to shakedown the GT4 and will be the man tasked with attempting the aforementioned lap records in the M2, M4 CSL and M5 CS. We have also set aside double stints in the night for him if it's pouring with rain. You're welcome, Jörg!

The rain has stayed away but it is freezing. Literally. I scrape ice from evo's Fast Fleet M5 CS before meeting Team RMG and the rest of the guys, and the track itself is lined by deeply frosted grass and Armco glistening with icy crystals. The plan is pretty simple. Jörg will do a couple of shakedown laps, then Christian will do an out lap, a flyer and an in lap. I'll go next, repeating the cycle, and then it's Guido's turn. Should















all go according to plan we'll then each get an eight-lap race-stint simulation. The N24 runs the Nordschleife in combination with the new GP track, but today we'll just worry about the big beast. The new circuit is a place to grab a breather in the race itself, so if we can get comfortable on the real Nürburgring we'll be in a good position come race weekend.

Those first few laps are tentative. It really is cold and slippery and we're running a hard Pirelli slick. The GT4 is an awesome thing. Due to Balance of Performance regulations it doesn't have anything like the punch of the road-going M4, but the sheer stability is confidence inspiring. It feels light, direct and very positive, but there's no nerviness at all. The only real shock is remembering how physical it is to drive around this track at anything approaching racing speeds. The surface drags you in all sorts of directions, the kerbs are vicious and speeds are so high that everything feels critical. There's literally no time to rest.

The GT4 class has really evolved quickly, too. Corner speeds, even in these low temperatures and on a very durable slick, are extremely high. Where early GT4 cars looked like road cars that had been lowered a few millimetres and then decorated with a rather apologetic rear wing, the newest of the breed look like mini-GT3 racers. Flicks and louvres, big swan-neck wings, steering wheel with the complexity of a Le Mans prototype's (well, maybe not but I like to think so) and an aura of toughness that only endurance cars possess.

Wringing everything the GT4 has to offer takes many, many deep breaths, quite a few expletives and a level of commitment that feels slightly deranged around this track. Lap times? Quicker than an M4 CSL (7:15.67). And it will do that all day and all night. At least that's the plan. Lapping the M4 GT4 on an empty Nordschleife for a full stint is exhausting and an extreme challenge for a layman like me. To double stint in the dead of night with 160 other cars scraping splitters, bouncing over kerbs, kicking-up dust and grass and sometimes shedding bodywork on barriers and dripping fluids just where you don't want them? That's the magic of the N24. Hope I can still handle it. 🔀

Follow Jethro's N24 progress live on **evo**'s social channels (18-21 May) and read the deep-dive debrief in the next issue.



IN DETAIL: BMW M4

The M4 GT4 retains the 2993cc, twin-turbocharged straight-six 'S58B30' engine from the road-going M4, with up to 542bhp and 479lb ft of torque available, as per the M4 CSL. However, the GT4's ECU can be manipulated to comply with Balance of Performance requirements at different championships. This isn't a simple reduction in boost, and hence power, in every gear; instead the restriction might just be in gears one to four, for example.

Some GT4 cars now run full race sequential gearboxes with pneumatic shift, but the M4 GT4 sticks with the road car's ZF auto, albeit with seven ratios instead of eight and a new motorsport program for faster shifts. It can still be used as a full automatic or operated with the paddles. In place of the fully variable M Differential there's a Drexler limited-slip diff. There's also a launch control function but this won't be any use in the N24, which has a rolling start.

Driver aids

Many of the features of the M4 road cars remain in the GT4, although with unique programming for the higher forces delivered by race suspension and slick tyres. There's a full DSC mode (good for wet weather but also useable in the dry), plus MDM mode, which still utilises the stability control. The driver can also elect to disable ESC and instead use the variable traction control system, which has ten settings. On a very cold test day, MDM felt very good indeed.

Lightweighting

BMW has collaborated with sustainable lightweighting experts Bcomp on the GT4, replacing carbonfibre components with new items incorporating natural flax fibres. Bcomp's AmpliTex and PowerRibs products are used extensively for the interior, plus externally in the front splitter, bonnet, doors, bootlid and adjustable rear wing. The weaves look more like early carbon-Kevlar and F40 geeks would be pleased to see the patterns beneath the paint and decals. Safety

is also improved as the flaxfibre fabrics don't splinter upon impact.

Suspension

KW supplies the two-wayadjustable motorsport dampers for the M4 GT4, with three options for springs from H&R. The dampers' solid-piston design enables greater control of the hydraulic forces than a conventional damper. Anti-roll bars front and rear have five positions to help further tailor the balance and body control.



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FAST FLET



Mazda MX-5 2.0 GT Sport Tech

At the opposite end of the motorsport spectrum from the N24, our Mazda tries its hand at one of the UK's most accessible forms of motorsport - and does so powered by sustainable fuel alone





p121 Skoda Superb Estate 280



p122 Cupra Born 230



p124 Volkswagen Arteon R



p126 Lambo Huracán Evo Spyder



Motor Club. It's a little like a simplified, higherspeed Autotest: there's no stopping, reversing or J-turns, and cars travel in one direction, so it's possible for more than one car to run on the course at the same time.

Together with other events such as Cross Country, Trials and certain types of rallies, it falls into the category of Motorsport UKsanctioned events known as StreetCar: competitions you can enter in your regular road car, as long as it's taxed and MOT'd. You're not allowed to trailer cars to events, you don't need to wear a crash helmet, you can share the driving with friends or family, and competitors as young as 14 can enter. All you need is a free RS Clubman licence from Motorsport UK.

We're surrounded by a diverse bunch of cars, from superminis to hot hatches to sports cars. We're entered in Class E. for standard twoseater production cars, nicknamed 'The MX-5 Class' by the organisers since Mazda's sports car is so prevalent. But there's also a Honda S2000,

Toyota GT86 and even a new GR86. There's no need for complex set-up changes; some of the competitors around us are tweaking tyre pressures but that's as far as it goes.

Our own pre-event prep is limited to filling the car with sustainable fuel from a jerry can. You may recall in **evo** 306 we drove the Fast Fleet Mazda back to back with another MX-5. one filled with regular pump fuel, the other with a biofuel called Sustain, made by Coryton. The upshot was that the two cars felt, sounded and drove exactly the same, the only difference being that the car running the more energy-

'At the end of the first run my heart's beating fast and I'm full of adrenaline

dense Coryton fuel eked out a little more mpg.

We're continuing the experiment today by seeing if we can compete using only Sustain. I've driven the 90 miles or so from home to the airfield on pump fuel, with a carefully packed can of Sustain on board. I'd deliberately short-fuelled the car at the pump but the light, slight MX-5 is so fuel-efficient I begin to worry on the journey there that I might need to add a victory lap at the end of the route to ensure I've used it all up. But in the end it couldn't have worked out more neatly: I arrive at Abingdon with the needle wrapped around the bottom of the fuel gauge and 0 miles showing on the estimated range, so I glug in a few litres of Sustain (during which it's noticeable that it smells slightly different to regular petrol; similar but not quite the same).

The science behind this fuel is covered in more detail in previous issues and online, but in very general terms Sustain is an advanced biofuel produced from second-generation biomass, i.e. agricultural waste. It's another carbon-neutral



fuel option that could be offered alongside efuel such as that being produced by Porsche at its pilot plant in Chile (evo 309).

Sitting in the queue for my first run, the Mazda's in-line four idles and sounds no different to how it felt on V-Power on the way here. As I'm about to find out, it feels no different at higher revs too. AutoSolo involves a fair bit of track time: there are four courses throughout the day, two in the morning and two in the afternoon, with layouts varying from tight and nadgery to more open and flowing. It's all composed from cones, with red slaloms and gates to negotiate and vellow markers to tell you which side you need to pass through. It's a bit like downhill skiing, I guess. Except it's all on a perfectly level runway. Touch a cone and it's a five-second penalty; miss a gate and you record a 'wrong test', with a far heftier time penalty.

Other than a bit of tyre squeal, wear and tear on the car is minimal, as you're rarely out of first gear; maybe just briefly grabbing second

gear on the more open layouts. At the end of the first run my heart's beating fast and I'm full of adrenaline, just as I would have been after a lap of Silverstone. The good news is I've set a fast time. The bad news is that's because I've missed part of the course out. Oops. 'The trick,' one of the organisers kindly tells me, 'is to always be thinking two or three gates ahead.'

It's a friendly club and a friendly atmosphere. Overall, the fastest cars are, believe it or not, a 1958 Frogeye Sprite, expertly flicked from cone to cone by Keith Pettit ('I'm a 1958 model too,' he jokes) and two little modified Fiats, a 126 and a Cinquecento, sitting on lowered suspension with their tiny wheels cocked at a racy camber. Both look great and are scorchingly quick around the little course. There's one other Mk4 MX-5 in the competition, driven by Paul Ireland, who'll go on to finish eighth overall.

I salvage a bit of **evo**'s honour by recording the fastest time in Class E on the final course layout, though I'm far from the pace of overall winner

Pettit. It's been a safe and genuinely exciting way to explore the MX-5's limits and limber agility, and to try to learn a different type of driving. And I've barely given a thought to the fuel that's made the car's wheels turn throughout the day.

Maybe such fuel might sustain this kind of jumpers-for-goalposts motorsport, and the cars competing in it today, for decades into the future. It's a nice thought. I'd happily compete in an AutoSolo again (visit streetcarmotorsportuk.com to book your go) and would recommend it. The MX-5 was the perfect car for the job – and equally perfect on the long drive home, roof down, on a chilly day that had melted into blazing sunshine. and the warm fuzzy feeling inside that comes from being a part of grassroots motorsport. James Taylor (@JamesTaylorEVO)

Date acquired July 2022 Total mileage 8206 Mileage this month 1655 Costs this month £0 mpg this month 43.1



ID YOU READ JETHRO'S INTRODUCTORY report last month to 'his' M5 CS ownership? Did you question whether a grown man should have such an unhealthy infatuation with an inanimate object? Feel a little bit of sick rise at the back of your throat as you reached the conclusion? Not just me then.

After such fawning praise you may be surprised to hear he left FWW at the back of the **evo** car park this month as he disappeared across the Atlantic with the family. I don't think he left any of his offspring behind, but thankfully he did leave the CS's key.

Like Jethro, I adore the CS. Have done since I first drove one during the second (or was it the third?) lockdown. I fell for it so strongly I added it to the 2021 eCoty shortlist without running it by anyone else first, then passed the car to Jethro who also immediately demanded it was included on the year-defining test. I wasn't surprised it made the top three, or that it won outright, but what did leave me scratching

my head other than the Scottish midges was how had BMW M done it? How had it created a supersaloon that not only put a GT3 Touring and Huracán STO in their places, but its fresher, lighter. more advanced M3 vounger brother too?

Another month with this champion of supersaloons leaves me no less confident that we made the right call in 2021. It still catches your eye, the details seducing you – the yellow DLRs are oh-so-subtle but oh-so-cool – its presence demanding your attention. The F10 M5 was criticised on its arrival five years ago for looking too plain for an M-car; that's not something you can say about the CS.

That original F10, an example of which we also ran on our fleet, was a supreme machine in which to cover big distances and also a car that could play - a bit - on smaller roads, but too often it felt like a premium 5-series rather than an M-car. The subsequent Competition model addressed this

issue to an extent, but the CS's character marks it out as an M-car and nothing else.

As with its E39 and 34 predecessors it feels bespoke from the rest of the range. The steering's weight and calibration are in tune with your expectations, the stiffer spring and damper rates add an edge without eroding quality. There's a deeper level of precision applied to every area of action, the reactions linear and clear.

The nuances are there to interact with regardless of speed, too. There's the rear diff that feels a little tight when manoeuvring but at the first corner you approach instantly gets to work, pushing torque to where it's needed and letting you know even if you're negotiating nothing more taxing than a roundabout. The active dampers need a little warming up before the low-speed ride's sharp edges are smoothed out, and while the Corsa tyres don't want to bite when they are cold, they dig in like a stubborn dog who doesn't want to get off the bed once you push some

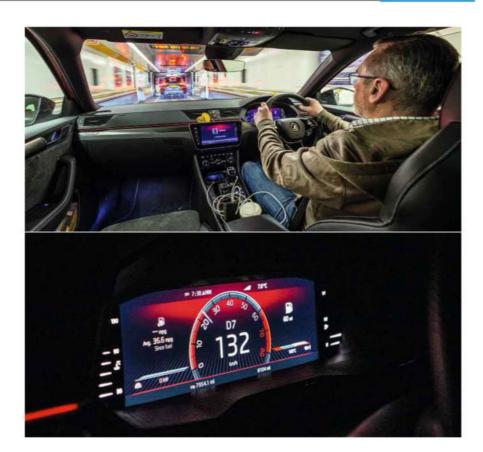


temperature through their broad treadblocks. And the V8? A joy. Burbling, bassy and bloody dynamite when its fuse is lit.

Don't tell Jethro this, but you don't need a month and 1000 miles to get what the CS is about. As with its illustrious six-cylinder and boisterous naturally aspirated V8 forebears, the CS is more than a step ahead of a regular 5-series. It's special in a unique and accessible way, desirable beyond its performance. It's a car you'd want to keep until you could no longer drive it. And while I would normally never wish it upon anyone, I'm hoping Jethro's return flight is delayed until the summer.

Stuart Gallagher (@stuartg917)

Date acquired February 2023 Total mileage 17,460 Mileage this month 1001 Costs this month £0 mpg this month 22.1



Skoda Superb Estate 280 4x4

To the Netherlands and back home on one tank of fuel

N IMPORTANT TEST FOR A FAST ESTATE car is to find out how it performs on a long journey, so when John Barker and I were making plans to visit Maturo Competition Cars in the Netherlands for a recent Ignition story (evo 308), we decided to drive there in our Superb long-termer.

With the car full of photographic kit and luggage, we headed down to the Eurotunnel, brimming the Skoda's tank on the way. After the short train journey to Calais we changed the car's instrument units to kilometres and began our 315km/196-mile drive to Veghel, Comfortable in the sports seats and with podcasts playing to help pass the time, progress was truly effortless. John mentioned how impressed he was by the refined ride and even enjoyed the dual-clutch gearbox, which was perfect for the inevitable Dutch traffic jams. Even despite those hold-ups, just three and a half hours after driving off the train we had arrived at our hotel.

The next day was spent meeting the Maturo team and photographing their incredible Integrales, then as evening approached it was time to head back home. The Skoda's fuel gauge was still showing a healthy level, so John and I set ourselves the challenge of trying to complete our return journey without filling up. And this wasn't

because the business fuel card doesn't work abroad, we promise...

One long, smooth run later, we'd made it back to the UK and all the way to my Hertfordshire home, still with a little fuel to spare. The final tally for our round trip was 658 miles at an average of 36.7mpg, with the last 500 or so miles on a single tank. The 66-litre tank capacity helps, of course, but those figures show just how economical modern petrol performance engines can be.

All of which got me wondering how many people have been tempted by this enviable combination of performance and practicality. Skoda's figures for last year show that 3326 Superbs were sold in total, 272 being 2-litre petrol estates, with 81 of those in SportLine Plus 280 PS 4x4 DSG specification like ours. Not a bad result, but I think that number would be higher if more people knew what they were missing out on, I'm finding our Superb hard to fault, and it has fast become my favourite of all the Skoda long-termers I've had the pleasure of running. Aston Parrott (@AstonParrott)

Date acquired December 2022 Total mileage 8264 Mileage this month 2771 Costs this month £0 mpg this month 36.7



E POSED A VERY SIMPLE QUESTION WHEN the Cupra Born arrived on the evo Fast Fleet eight months ago, namely: is the Born the first all-electric hot hatchback? If you've been following our reports you may already have a sense of what our answer to that question is.

As a refresher, the Born 230 V3 is the flagship of the range, featuring a 228bhp tune for its electric motor, plus extras such as 20-inch wheels and electric seats. Our car also had the larger 77kWh battery (£2770), along with Aurora Blue metallic paint (£840) and the 'Tech Pack L' (£740 and including auto parking, wireless phone charging and a proximity key). These options took the 230 model's base price of £39,205 up to £43,555.

The Born's bespoke EV architecture places its batteries on a flat plane beneath the cabin, with the motor mounted on the rear axle, making it rear-wheel drive. Can you explore its limits of grip? Sort of, if you're slow into a corner, turn in early and get on the

throttle before the apex, but generally there's very little leeway in the traction and stability systems.

It's also not a particularly fast car, as while the power figure might suggest near warm-hatchback performance, the 1906kg kerb weight (on our scales, compared with Cupra's claim of 1875kg) gives it a power-to-weight ratio of 122bhp per ton – or slightly less than that of a Cupra Leon 190 with the 187bhp 2-litre petrol engine. So it's no firecracker in a straight line, even with the electric motor's instant access to full power and torque.

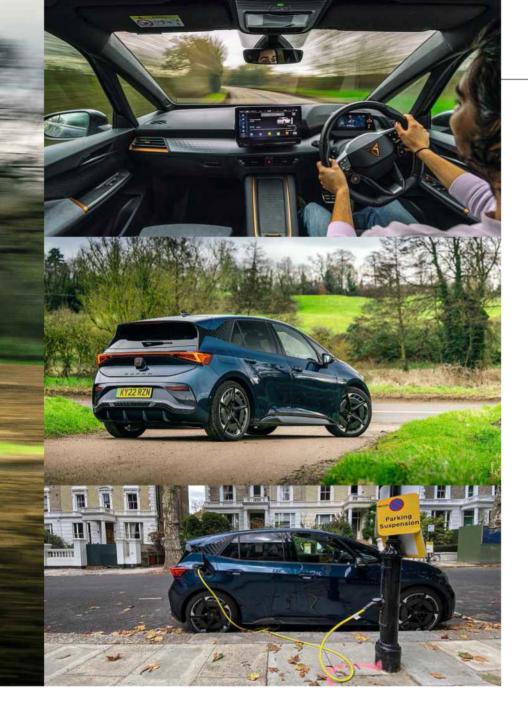
So no. the Born isn't an electric hot hatchback. But what's it like as a daily-driven EV runabout? In this context, the outlook is brighter. The first thing to mention is the impressive range. We often saw up to 280 miles from a full charge in mild weather, reducing to 220 miles in colder conditions. (The official WLTP 'combined' range is 335 miles.) This equates to over 3.6 miles/kWh in those favourable circumstances, dropping to around 2.8 in cooler

temps - pretty good results compared with the Born's EV rivals, so there's one box ticked.

The powertrain is also extremely refined and has one of the best throttle and brake calibrations I've vet experienced in an EV. The 'active' energy recuperation, which varies regenerative braking levels based on the traffic, isn't so clever, mind. No doubt there's a market for it, but I just couldn't stand constantly having to second-guess how much regen would be automatically applied. The alternative is to drive the car in its high-regen 'B' mode - as I did and adopt a (near) one-pedal driving style.

The exasperating user interfaces had no workable alternatives, though. Needing to press four layers of touchscreen buttons just to turn on the heated seats or switch off the irritating lane-keep assist was never not annoying. The same could be said of the lack of illumination for the volume and temperature touchbars when driving at night.

But there was one overarching problem that



outweighed these niggles. Despite the vast amount of money the VW Group is pouring into the development of its electric cars, the MEB platform, on which the Born is based, feels unfinished, and this manifests itself in the way the car drives. Body control could be found lacking, the suspension sometimes running out of travel. At the same time the ride was very poor, rarely feeling truly settled. At low speeds over rough roads the high seating position relative to the car's roll centre gave occupants a jack-in-the-box feeling of being wobbled from side to side in the cabin. The car was also oddly unstable under hard braking, which perhaps explains why its stability system had been given such a firm grip. Ultimately, it felt like a package in need of further refining.

But let's get something straight. The hamfisted legislation being put upon car makers to electrify as quickly as possible has forced them into an impossible situation. They can't hold out too long

before switching to electric, otherwise they'll be throwing money away developing a condemned technology. Cupra has made its first brave leap. At the same time, manufacturers still need to make money from the cars they build, yet the cost of the batteries remains high. So savings need to be made elsewhere, especially on more affordable EV models, which could explain some of the Born's more disappointing aspects.

So perhaps a fairer question to ask is whether the Born is a good EV, all things considered? The answer to that is yes, but we're certain there's better vet to come.

Jordan Katsianis (@JordanKatsianis)

Date acquired August 2022 Duration of test 8 months Total test mileage 5857 Overall mi/kWh 3.5 Total costs £0 Price when new £43,555 Value today £40,380

Ford Puma ST

Our crossover may be a little too compact to cut it as a family car

HERE ARE MOMENTS WHERE THE Puma ST is pretty good fun. Barrelling into a roundabout on the brakes you'll feel the inside-rear wheel lift off the ground and the car carve cleanly around, the opposing front tyre digging in hard and the tail just floating a degree or two wide. Like a real hot hatch. Which is cool.

Yet, despite having convincing outright agility. this ST is a strange old thing to live with dayto-day. I borrowed it for a few weeks recently and never could really understand exactly what it wants to be. The crossover shape says it's a practical car for small families and the ST badge and aesthetic says it's a slightly lifted hot hatch. As it turns out, it falls wide of the mark on both counts.

The boring stuff first. The Puma is small inside and once fitted with thick Recaros, rear legroom is extremely tight. Fit a child seat in the back and the front passenger has to slide way forward with knees hard against the dash. It might be a shade better than a Fiesta but this is not a great family machine. And that's before you start thinking about the ride quality.

In short, it doesn't really have any. The ride is stiff and unsettled and in combination with heavy self-centring to the steering and a light, vague clutch that makes simple low-speed driving a lumpy series of lunges, the ST feels awkward and combative more often than fluid and precise. The effort required just to get down the road smoothly far outweighs the rewards, Luckily, Ford does make a fantastic hot hatch in the shape of the Fiesta ST and an amazingly practical fast family car called the Focus ST Estate.

Jethro Bovingdon (@JethroBovingdon)

Date acquired April 2022 Total mileage 11,611 Mileage this month 601 Costs this month £0 mpg this month 35.2





UR ARTEON HAS MORE THAN LIVED UP to its practical billing during its time on the **evo** fleet so far, its Shooting Brake body style making it the default choice for hauling families or cumbersome items, or sometimes even both at the same time. Yet while this R version is a sharper steer than the R-Line model we ran a while ago, its generous dimensions still make it an unusual choice for a spirited track session.

Nevertheless, this month our big Volkswagen found itself at Brands Hatch, with a remit to tackle the Indy Circuit's challenging corners, dramatic elevation changes and patchwork of surfaces in the company of a number of other fast VWs celebrating the delivery of the company's 10,000th R model in the UK (a Tiguan R. since you asked).

The Arteon R is equipped with the same 4Motion all-wheel-drive system as the Mk8 Golf R, but an extra helping of wheelbase and a 1793kg kerb weight aren't on its side for circuit agility. Thankfully the Golf's 316bhp Evo4 EA888 2-litre turbocharged fourcylinder is also present, and provides decent levels

of grunt for the open road, but as we know, track driving often offers new perspectives.

This was my first time in an Arteon R, but it was immediately apparent that it has strands of the Golf R's DNA beneath its sleek Lapiz Blue skin. Despite the track being wet, the car generated a surprising level of grip thanks to its combination of soft spring rates, bespoke Pirelli P Zero tyres, Adaptive Chassis Control and torque vectoring capabilities. The variable-ratio steering took some getting used to, but it made it very easy to exploit the grip on offer from the front axle, especially at the higher speeds achieved on track. Useful steering feel was almost entirely absent, however, so it was difficult to gauge the limits, although admittedly this wasn't helped by the less-than-ideal conditions. The sodden track also no doubt contributed to the Arteon occasionally transitioning to oversteer with little warning.

Much like on the road, the touch-sensitive controls on the steering wheel were all too easy to accidentally activate through tighter turns such

as Druids Hairpin. While none of these activations changed anything vital to the performance of the car, the appearance of an unexpected dashboard alert isn't the kind of distraction you need while navigating a high-speed section of racetrack!

The Arteon R carries an extra 242kg over a Golf R, and given it has identical power, it didn't come as a surprise that it didn't feel as quick on track. The quoted 4.9sec 0-62mph time is just two tenths down on the Golf's, but straight-line performance actually feels weaker than the numbers and the Arteon's 'most powerful Volkswagen estate' credentials would suggest. Weight is the enemy when it comes

'A trackday is perhaps one of the last places a typical Arteon R owner would take their car'



to performance, of course, and inevitably this becomes even more apparent on track.

Fast lapping also amplified some other shortcomings. The lack of tactility in the shift paddles, the subdued exhaust noise and the shortage of powertrain feedback are minor niggles during normal road driving, but on track they combine to make it difficult to instinctively determine your current revs and gear. More seat time would likely help matters, but there were a few occasions when I shifted a gear too low on corner entry, only realising my mistake when reapplying the power on the exit.

More positively, the brakes felt capable and remained strong throughout the day, coping with numerous 15-minute stints without any significant signs of performance degradation. The Arteon also tackled the full day at Brands then took me the 200 miles back home. in comfort, without a single blip. Granted, Volkswagen did have mechanics on hand to give everything a once-over and carry out a

precautionary refresh of the brakes at the end of the day, but the car coped well regardless.

A trackday is perhaps one of the last places a typical Arteon R Shooting Brake owner would take their car, but it can make very good progress around a circuit nonetheless, achieving consistent lap times as well as peak speeds not far from those achieved by a Golf R on the same stretch. While our car's £64,870 with-options price would give you a choice of countless considerably more talented machines for track work, few, if any, could rival the Arteon's comfort and capaciousness for all those hours we spend driving on public roads. And as we now know, if you did decide to take your Arteon R to a trackday, it certainly wouldn't embarrass itself.

Sam Jenkins (@evosamj)

Date acquired November 2022 Total mileage 13,167 Mileage this month 967 Costs this month £0 mpg this month 22.7

Audi TT RS

Our RS embraces the return of more clement conditions

ITH ITS QUATTRO FOUR-WHEEL drive, the TT has been a trustworthy companion throughout the winter, but the arrival of spring – and therefore dry, warm roads – has brought some welcome opportunities to dig deeper into its abilities again.

One such was on an old favourite route of mine in Lincolnshire, a tortuous and intense rollercoaster of a B-road that can be a riot in smaller cars and not much fun at all in larger ones. A Mk5 Golf GTI and a Series 2 Elise have provided particularly memorable passage along it in the past, and our Audi once again showed its aptitude for technical tarmac by rivalling those two in the entertainment stakes.

Snapping through sharp direction changes seemingly in defiance of its nose-heavy weight distribution (61 per cent over the front wheels) and with its 394bhp making the already short straights seem almost non-existent, it was properly pulse-raising stuff. The only dampener on proceedings was the dual-clutch gearbox. Such a unit ought to be in its element on a road that keeps a driver so busy, but the momentary lag between requesting a new gear and it actually engaging felt a touch out of sync with the guick reactions from the rest of the car.

Another early spring highlight came on a latenight run along some larger-scale roads with more sweeping turns. LED headlights comprehensively illuminating the deserted view ahead, the TT soon settled into a swift, flowing rhythm that lasted for 15 very satisfying miles. Afterwards I realised that I hadn't even switched the car away from Comfort mode, which makes me think it could easily be rebranded in the Drive Select system. 'Fast Road' perhaps?

Ian Eveleigh

Date acquired July 2022 Total mileage 7290 Mileage this month 929 Costs this month £0 mpg this month 28.7





ADORE THE HURACÁN EVO RWD. I ENDED up spending a lot of time in the metallic green press car that got within a whisker of winning eCoty in 2020, driving it in all sorts of conditions, on all sorts of roads, and I enjoyed every V10-enriched moment. So I should love the (all-wheel-drive) Evo Spyder even though I'm not a big fan of convertible supercars. I think they never look as good, their torsional stiffness is often compromised, which makes their dynamics fuzzy, and I rarely want to be blown about, sunburned/frozen and slightly deafened at speed.

I accept that the Huracán is a very good convertible in the sense that the integrity of its mostly aluminium monocoque has been minimally compromised by lopping off the roof. It feels pretty much as solid as the hardtop, so the dynamics are similar and you feel every bit as confident deploying the V10's epic performance as in the coupe.

There's even less between you and the sound of that glorious V10 at your back, which ought to be a

positive but, oddly, isn't. I think it's because even roof up it's noticeably louder, on the cusp of being too loud. So when you drop the fabric roof or push the button to lower the dinky rear screen (an idea nicked from the convertible Audi R8) its volume is just too much. It's like playing a favourite album on a hi-fi whose volume won't go below 8 but does go to 11.

Still, it ensures it's an intense, visceral experience when you nail it. The phenomenal acceleration is even more thrilling, partly because the escalating howl buzzes right through you. Not that you need to go anywhere near 8000rpm to be thrilled. We bang on endlessly about the joy of a supercar with a big-capacity, naturally aspirated engine but it really is endlessly entertaining, both in the measured, predictable way it responds and for the character you can discover by selecting gears manually and working the mighty V10 in the lowest reaches of its rev range. The pace and tone of any drive is up to you.

That said, the fact that in a near-£200k car you can't configure a combination of damping, steering

weight and drivetrain response to your own taste or mood is baffling. But it is thus with all Huracâns. Ditto the teeny luggage space, the ludicrous onscreen volume control and the other HMI quirks.

My time with the Huracán went pretty quickly. The weather was mostly cold and damp, so the roof was down only a couple of times (professional curiosity) and I didn't feel the need to explore the edge of the grip. Yet I also didn't feel like I'd missed out. Some cars you have to rag to the red line and push to the limit to feel like you've truly experienced them, but a moderately paced half an hour in the company of the Huracán's 5.2-litre V10 is wonderfully rich and rewarding, life affirming. Even if it's a bit loud.

John Barker (@evoJB)

Date acquired January 2023 Total mileage 4394 Mileage this month 401 Cost this month £0 mpg this month 16.1



Porsche 911 Carrera (993)

Fresh rubber sees our '90s 911 ready for another summer (and more) of driving adventures

HE 993 HAD BEEN STORED AWAY for a few months while the weather wasn't so great, but with a new MOT needed I finally had an incentive to get back behind its wheel.

The flat-six fired up on the first attempt and I didn't have to travel far before the car put a smile on my face again. The 993 represents everything I love about performance cars, being manual and rear-wheel drive, with great looks and the performance and soundtrack to match. I also appreciate a car that's enjoyable even when driving short distances, and it definitely achieves that – to the point where journeys that are supposed to be short often turn into much longer ones...

A date with an MOT tester ensured things didn't get out of hand on this occasion, and I'm pleased to say there were no problems acquiring a fresh certificate. One advisory, however, was that the semi-slick Yokohama A052 tyres were very close to the end of their life, especially the rears. So to ensure I was prepared for clocking up more miles over the coming months, I started looking into a new set.

This time I wanted to go for something a little less extreme and more suitable for road

'This time I wanted something a little less extreme and more suitable for road driving in all weathers'

driving in all weathers. The winner of last year's **evo** tyre test (issue 304) was the new Bridgestone Potenza Sport, and after re-reading the article and being reminded of the Potenza's table-topping results in our wet handling and aquaplaning tests, backed up with strong results in the dry disciplines too, I decided it should be just what I wanted for the 993.

I arranged to have a set fitted at Silverline 4x4 in Warwickshire, an official Bridgestone specialist with 35 years' experience in fitting tyres to performance cars. This meant they had no issues fitting the tyres to my car's split-rim wheels – which other companies have declined to deal with in the past – and then getting them perfectly balanced afterwards.

I was eager to find out how the Bridgestones would perform on the 993, and on the drive home the car immediately felt different, with the ride noticeably more comfortable and accompanied by a marked reduction in road noise too, which made for a pleasant addition. Having since scrubbed them in over a few more miles, it's clear that the steering feels slightly lighter than with my old tyres, while the front end is a little less aggressive on turn-in – both of which you'd expect when switching from a trackday-biased tyre to something more rounded. Crucially, the Potenzas still give great feedback through the steering – better than the old rubber, in fact, which is making it easier to judge grip levels.

A change for the better, then, and best of all I should now be able to enjoy the 993 in a wider range of conditions, which bodes well for more driving opportunities ahead.

Aston Parrott (@AstonParrott)

Date acquired April 2016 Total mileage 90,380 Mileage this month 151 Costs this month £45 (MOT), £598 (tyres) mpg this month 28.1

ROADSTERS

With the dull days of winter behind us, an open-topped car looks increasingly appealing, bringing the driver closer to the sound of combustion while adding to the senses of speed and occasion. But if you're seeking a secondhand option, what should be on your shortlist? To help you decide, we take a look at four of our favourite used roadsters on the market in 2023.









ABARTH 124 SPIDER

Rare and rorty, the 'Italian MX-5' has simplicity on its side

ABARTH IS KEEN ON MAKING ITS RICH ITALIAN heritage known, and for good reason, but its modern-day 124 Spider began life in Hiroshima, Japan. Launched in 2016 as an homage to the marque's iconic '70s Group 4 rally car, it was in fact based on the same platform as Mazda's talented ND MX-5, with Abarth adding its touch during final assembly in Turin.

Though its rowdy 'Record Monza' exhaust system might suggest otherwise, its turbocharged 1.4-litre four-cylinder produces a modest 168bhp and 184lb ft of torque. Sent to the rear wheels through a six-speed manual transmission (an automated manual was also offered) and a standard limited-slip differential, the 0-62mph sprint happens in a quoted 6.8sec with top speed at 143mph – respectable, but hardly earth-shattering.

Over its relatively short production run the model received mixed reviews, with its high price-point difficult to justify for some. The steering is also a sticking point for many, with a lack of feel making it difficult to place the car when the surface gets tricky. Nevertheless, the 124's chassis is noticeably stiffer than the MX-5's, with spring rates also increased to reduce roll. Combine this with the responsive engine and the amusing sound it produces and you have yourself a surprisingly satisfying drop-top machine.

Despite its trusty Mazda underpinnings, the 124 isn't without issues. Overall reliability is perhaps stronger than its Abarth 500 relatives, and the Multiair engine they share is relatively trouble free, but electrical gremlins have been known to make an appearance. While we would always opt for the manual, some

automatic cars have been known to shift down erroneously at speed, while fuel pump failures are also not uncommon. Both of these problems were rectified with a recall though, meaning you shouldn't experience them if the car has been updated.

With the same wonderfully simplistic manual roof as the MX-5, there aren't the potential issues of a complex powered mechanism, and once you've mastered the action you can lower the roof far quicker than electric motors could. While soft-tops will always require some level of care and attention if left outdoors for extended periods, the simple nature of the roof adds appeal as a used buy. For just shy of £5000 you can purchase the carbonfibre hard-top of the 124 GT, but that rather defeats the purpose...

The United Kingdom has proven to be Abarth's biggest market worldwide, but it seems the 124 did little to contribute to this. In 2019, just three years after its launch, FCA axed the Fiat and Abarth 124 Spider for the UK market, citing poor profitability. Towards the end of that run you'd pay just shy of £30,000 for a factory-fresh Abarth 124, before options, but almost four years later you can find examples in the classifieds for close to half that sum. It might be wise to spend a little more, mind, and £18,000 is enough for a manual car with 25,000 miles, while automatic examples command a slight premium. The only issue with searching for an Abarth 124 Spider is the lack of choice – perhaps an indicator of the low sales volume. There were just 30 examples on the market as we went to press, with only half of those manual, so if you're looking for a particular spec you might need to be patient.



JAGUAR F-TYPE CONVERTIBLE

Characterful, a genuine contender and now quite the bargain

LAUNCHED IN 2013 AS JAGUAR'S FIRST TRULY competitive sports car since the E-type, the F-type replaced the XK to go head-to-head with established heavyweights such as the Porsche 911, Aston Martin V8 Vantage and Audi R8 V8. There are duds throughout its extensive range, but if an entertaining, desirable, top-down machine is what you're looking for, the F-type Convertible is a strong contender.

While Jaguar has sold the F-type in a bewildering number of variants and trim levels since its launch, its sleek design and dramatic proportions have remained largely constant. Despite their increasing affordability, early cars still turn heads a decade on, a testament to Ian Callum's timeless design.

In early form, the F's long, sculpted bonnet covers either JLR's ubiquitous 5-litre supercharged V8 or a 3-litre supercharged V6. While the V8 (especially in earlier, non-GPF cars) has one of the best soundtracks of any car in this class, the V6 S has become the sweet spot of the range as far as value for money is concerned.

Its outputs of 375bhp and 339lb ft of torque eclipsed those of the contemporary 911 Carrera Cabriolet and are still healthy today, getting the car from standstill to 62mph in a quoted 4.9sec and on to a 171mph top speed. With a claimed kerb weight of 1614kg – although every F-type we've put on our scales has exceeded Jaguar's official figure for it by around 100kg or more – it was heavier than its obvious rivals, but, especially in rear-drive form, the F-type has plenty to offer in the dynamics department. While some of its competitors are more composed, the Jaguar has just as much pace, with its traditional front-engine, rear-drive balance bringing the entertainment.

Opting for the drop-top undoubtedly compromises structural rigidity, but the F-type manages to disguise this well – take in the sights of your surroundings and the sound of that vocal V6 and this disadvantage pales into insignificance. Pity, then, that in 2019 Jaguar axed the V6 altogether, a 2-litre Ingenium four-cylinder taking its place. Lower 297bhp output aside, this new unit lacks the character and enthusiasm of the V6 it replaced, with little top end and a complete lack of auditory feedback.

Being a relatively modern offering, refinement in the F-type Convertible is very strong with the roof up, with cabin noise near-identical to its coupe counterpart. Aside from a small cabin and a lack of luggage space, owners have few complaints with the model. Mechanically they're sound, but as is the case with many JLR products, they can occasionally suffer from electrical gremlins. A small number of owners have reported a faulty folding roof, while troublesome retracting centre dashboard vents and sticking exhaust valves are more common issues. All are worth keeping an eye out for when buying used, and specialists recommend putting aside up to £1500 a year for maintenance, this being enough to cover the likes of a gearbox service, which is recommended at around 70,000 miles. (Jaguar says the unit is 'sealed for life', but it's probably wise to ignore this.)

Punt on an early, high-mileage V6 S and you'll need just £23,000, but spare up to £30,000 and you'll have yourself a fine example with anything from 20,000 miles on the clock. If you're brave enough to run a 5-litre V8 in 2023, an early V8 S can be had from £27,000, with prices rising to around £35,000 for lower-mileage cars with more desirable options.



TOYOTA MR2 (MK3)

The last Midship Roadster majors on lightweight appeal

AS FAR AS VALUE FOR MONEY GOES, YOU WON'T DO

much better than a Mk3 MR2. While they might lack the exotic appeal of the F-type and modern amenities of the Abarth 124, they bring drop-top driving back to basics. Sold between 1999 and 2007 as Toyota's alternative to the MX-5, it offered the same mid-engined, rear-drive layout as its predecessors, and was the marque's last true sports car before the launch of the GT86.

Chief engineer Tadashi Nakagawa described the Mk3 MR2 as having broken the 'cycle of growth' in the industry, something almost completely unheard of today. The car's dimensions and weight were both notably lower than its predecessor's, making it a much more desirable driver's choice.

Pair its 975kg kerb weight with its 1.8-litre DOHC naturally aspirated four-cylinder, and its 138bhp output feels much more spritely than in the Celica the engine is borrowed from. Driving the rear wheels through a five-speed manual gearbox, 0-62mph is gone in a respectable 8.0sec with top speed at 132mph. A fivespeed automatic gearbox became available not long after launch, with the five-speed manual replaced by a six-speed in 2002.

The MR2 was a strong performer from its launch, but new crossmembers, front and rear braces and rear struts, plus modifications to the floor pan and transmission tunnel, increased rigidity in 2004. Regardless of whether you opt for a pre- or postfacelift car, though, you'll be in possession of a cracking driver's drop-top. Though not as exotic as the MX-5's double-wishbone layout, the MR2's MacPherson struts still perform well, helping it outhandle cars in a much higher price bracket.

As is becoming increasingly apparent in 2023, running a lightweight performance car benefits more than just the driving experience. Running costs are considerably lower, with consumption of fuel, brakes and kinematic components all reduced - and when you do finally need to replace components, they also tend to be much cheaper than those for heavier machines.

As with most cars of this age, there are a few things to be aware of when buying used. Its aluminium wheels are known to corrode more than you might usually expect, causing irreparable damage and the potential for complete structural failure should it be particularly bad. Check elsewhere for rust, particularly on the rear subframe, and if the car looks to have been used on track there are obvious risks of increased wear to a variety of components regardless of mileage. Drain holes for the roof are also prone to blockages, something that can cause water ingress into the cabin.

The engine is a solid unit overall, but pre-cat failure can cause debris to fall back into the engine, which is obviously undesirable. This problem is more common on pre-facelift cars produced before 2003 and can be solved with the removal of the pre-cat. Early warning signs are an oxygen lambda sensor warning light, excessive oil use and smoke – if you spot any of these when viewing a car, it's probably worth your while to walk away.

Predictably, the MR2 is the most affordable of this selection by far, with prices for early, six-figure-mileage cars starting at just over £1000. A sensible budget would be somewhere in the region of £3000, though, with the very best examples with c30,000 miles costing from around £7000.



MERCEDES-BENZ SLK55 AMG

AMG's hot-rod brings the big-capacity entertainment

AT THE OTHER END OF THE SCALE FROM THE MR2

is the SLK55, a five-and-a-half-litre V8 roadster with near-identical dimensions to a V6 Lotus Exige. The absolute epitome of AMG's early 2000s approach, the SLK55 was arguably one of Affalterbach's wildest creations, taking the small-car, big-engine formula to the next level.

Sold only with a mediocre automatic transmission and weighing more than we'd like, the SLK55 undoubtedly has its flaws. But with even full-fat AMG '63' models today coming with 2-litre four-cylinder engines, the draw of such a ludicrous car is hard to ignore.

In R171 form (2004-2010), output from its M113 5.4-litre naturally aspirated V8 stands at a strong 355bhp, with 376lb ft of torque, considerably more than any of its contemporary rivals and enough for a 4.9sec 0-62mph time and 174mph top speed (when equipped with the Performance Package). Numbers aside, this engine has superb response with character in abundance.

In this early form, Mercedes applied an 'F1-inspired' design with an SLR-esque nose and also fitted striking multispoke diamond-cut wheels similar to those worn by the later fixed-roof SLK55 Black Series of the same generation.

At the Frankfurt motor show in 2011 the R172 (pictured) was revealed, introducing a complete redesign inside and out. Improved refinement, a snappier gearbox, more interior tech, a capacity increase to 5.5 litres for the V8 and a new 415bhp output made it much more appealing on paper. In reality though, many consider its predecessor to be the model of choice, with a more attractive, retro design, more feelsome steering and a less restrictive exhaust system.

Regardless of which you opt for, the SLK55 has an engaging, responsive chassis that allows for brisk progress. If you can look past the frustratingly intrusive ESP system, it's a thrilling driver's car of a kind we'll never see again.

A V8 AMG might conjure up thoughts of sky-high maintenance costs, but the SLK55 isn't as ruinous as you might think. The M113 V8 is a reliable unit, so only consumables such as brakes, tyres and fuel increase costs over a more sensible alternative. Road tax isn't particularly cheap, though, currently standing at £395 and £330 for the R171 and R172 respectively.

When buying used, look out for corrosion on the rear axle and brake lines, and pay close attention to the mechanism for the folding hard-top – a minor issue with the latches between the roof storage compartment and luggage area can cause it to jam open or closed, while water ingress has been reported by some owners. A variety of electrical gremlins can surface following a battery change or jump start, and the optional Airscarf (hot-air fans below the head restraints) is temperamental for some. Mercedes recalled the SLK55 for airbag issues, so ensure this has been seen to.

The classifieds aren't home to a huge number of SLK55s in 2023, but those that are there are evenly split between early and late cars. Around £13,000 is enough for a leggy R171, but spend closer to £20,000 and sub-40,000-mile Performance Package cars are within reach – on both generations, this package adds uprated brakes, suspension, an Alcantara steering wheel, 18-inch wheels, carbonfibre interior trim, a limited-slip differential and a top speed hike to 174mph. Opt for a later R172 car and you'll pay from £20,000, rising to just shy of £30,000 for the very best examples. \blacksquare



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Price: £69.99 Visit: alcosense.co.uk





Nextbase dash cam

A dash cam provides effective protection against insurance fraud. To ensure the view ahead is captured with clarity, the multi-award-winning Nextbase 522GW dash cam records through a 1440p HD sensor and a polarising lens, helping cut down on reflections. Meanwhile, a three-inch touchscreen ensures the unit is easy to use, and there's also the option of adding a rearfacing camera for additional protection. The 522GW is currently priced at £149, a saving of £20, and is available at major retail chains including Halfords, Argos and Currys.

Price: £149.99 Visit: nextbase.co.uk



Bilt Hamber Double-Speed Wax

Every keen home detailer should have a good wax in their cleaning kit, as these products form a protective layer at the end of the cleaning process, sealing in all the hard work. Winner of Best Wax/Sealant category at evo sister title Auto Express's product awards, Bilt Hamber Double Speed Wax gives long-lasting protection and a deep, glossy finish that's water repellent and resistant to detergents. It's better value than expensive paste waxes, coming supplied in a 250ml tin with an applicator and a microfibre cloth for only £16.95.

Price: from £16.95
Visit: bilthamber.com/product/double-speed-wax

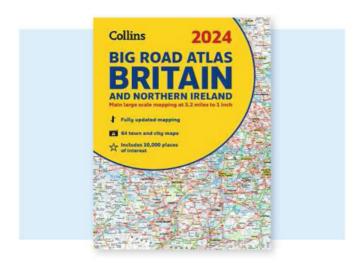
Gyeon Q²M Iron and Q²M Tar

Not everyone has the time to keep on top of car cleanliness at home, while some may find traditional polishing and waxing too physically demanding. Gyeon Q²M WetCoat provides a solution to anyone in that situation; it's an easy-to-use spray and rinse sealant for car exteriors that quickly gives a wet-look shine, combined with impressive water beading. Thanks to strong self-cleaning properties, treated finishes will stay a lot cleaner between washes. It's an inexpensive gift, at just £13.50, and based on it being used every other month, one bottle will last a whole year.

Meanwhile, if you're buying for someone who can and will spend many hours detailing at home, there's the option of Q²M Wax. This gives a highly water-repellent, glossy finish that's durable, meaning the car will enjoy long-lasting protection. It's easy to apply and just as simple to remove, and it can also be layered for a further enhanced finish. The wax is priced at £38.00, for which you're getting enough product to treat a medium-sized car more than 10 times, plus an applicator pad and a buffing towel in the box.

Price: From £13.50 visit: mycarcleaning.co.uk/collections/gyeon





Collins Big Road Atlas Britain 2024

Even in the age of omnipresent online navigation, it's still handy to have a physical map as both a backup and a tool for planning road trips and days out. The Collins Big Road Atlas Britain 2024 is fully updated and easy to use with a 3.2 miles to one-inch format, plus 22 major urban areas mapped out at one mile per one inch. The spiral-bound map also features 1,000 point-of-interest postcodes covering 30 categories including sports venues, theme parks and mountain bike trails.

Price: £14.99 Visit: collins.co.uk



Leatherman Bond multi-tool

Leatherman's Bond is a UK legal-carry, feature-packed multi-tool that's ideal for day-to-day usage. Contained in its lightweight stainless steel chassis are 14 useful tools, including a non-locking 420HC knife blade, two types of pliers, several screwdrivers, can and bottle openers, wire cutters/strippers, and an eight-inch ruler. Each multi-tool comes with the reassurance of Leatherman's 25-year warranty and is supplied with a durable nylon sheath for comfortable carrying. It's a great-value Father's Day gift at just £69.95.

Price: £69.95 Visit: whitbyandco.co.uk

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Milltek

For those wanting to improve the noise and appearance of their performance car, a system from Milltek Sport is a great option. Milltek exhaust systems are designed, developed and manufactured in Derby, UK, using T304L stainless steel for longevity. The company's products have been proven through years of motorsport research in series like the British Touring Car Championship, and benefit from Nürburgring Nordschleife testing. Most performance models, from the 1980s right the way through to recently launched cars like the 'FL5' Honda Civic Type R (Road Plus system with brushed titanium tips pictured), are catered for, and prices start at £700.

Price: From around £700 Visit: millteksport.com





Roue TPS watch

The motorsport-themed TPS watch from Roue pays homage to the 910 racing car with which Porsche snared a long-awaited 'home victory' at the Nurburgring 1000km. To celebrate this, the TPS features an embossed image of the famous car on its caseback. Inside is a proven, reliable Seiko movement, while the triple-layer dial features Swiss Super-Luminova for excellent legibility in the dark. The watch can be purchased in six distinct forms, including the panda-style TPS Two. Each is limited to 1,000 pieces, but despite the exclusivity, this is a very affordable timepiece, at £250 including shipping and two pre-colour-set interchangeable leather straps.

Price: £250 Visit: rouewatch.com



Motor Folios

If you've managed to keep a full service history for your cherished car, it makes sense to keep all the documents safe, organised and easily accessible. This can be done in an aesthetically pleasing way with Motor Folios. Made with hand-finished, bonded leather, Motor Folios are available in four colours with a matching suede-effect lining and nickel corners. The finishing element is a plaque proudly displaying your car's marque, plus a choice of either the chassis or registration number.

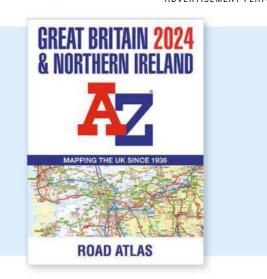
Price: £89.99 Visit: motorfolios.com



evo track days

Our first Bedford event in May has sold out but there are still tickets on sale for the three remaining events at Goodwood, Brands Hatch and Bedford across August and September. All attendees will benefit from complimentary photography, free helmet hire and the opportunity to book one-to-one tuition. Find out more information by visiting the website below or scanning the QR code with your smartphone.

Price: From £219 for evenings Visit: evotrackdays.co.uk



A-Z Great Britain & Northern Ireland Road Atlas 2024

The iconic A-Z has been helping motorists travel around the UK since 1936, and there's now a fully updated version of the A-Z Great Britain & Northern Ireland Road Atlas for this year. It comes in a large and clear A3 format with 3.5 miles to one-inch road mapping, and numerous extra features handy for planning days out and holidays. These include a mileage chart to provide average journey times, 70 detailed city and town centre maps, 16 port and airport plans, and a map of the Channel Tunnel terminus in Folkestone.

Price: £12.99 Visit: collins.co.uk



Heel Tread Socks

Socks have been a go-to gift for generations – but these days you can really hit the mark by giving car-themed foot attire, courtesy of Heel Tread. There's a wide range to suit pretty much all automotive interests – for example, the motorsport selection includes classic rallying Minis, Mazda's glorious rotary-engined 787B Le Mans winner, and the blue-and-yellow livery of Subaru's iconic Impreza World Rally Car. You can choose individual pairs, or bulk up with gift packs of various prices and sizes – so Heel Tread's socks are a great gift for all budgets. They're designed and manufactured in Portugal, using high-quality knitting for a comfortable product that's also made to last.

Price: From £10.50 Visit: heeltread.com



TruTrak FMT100

The sad fact is that performance cars aren't just desirable to us petrolheads - they're also coveted by thieves. A tracking device can give peace of mind, as such devices dramatically increase the chance of recovery if theft occurs. TruTrak's FMT100 transmits location data every 60 seconds and each time the car makes a 50-degree or more turn for accurate, real-time reporting. The device can be self-installed, comes with a 12-month warranty, and is contract free; you simply top up data with TruTrak's portal for £5.99 a month. The FMT100 is also waterproof and suitable for any type of vehicle.

Price: £39.99 (plus data costs) Visit: trutrak.co.uk



"M2 performance with newfound precision and control."

- EVO Magazine ★★★★

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

- BMWCar Magazine ★ ★ ★ ★

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- Autocar ★★★★★



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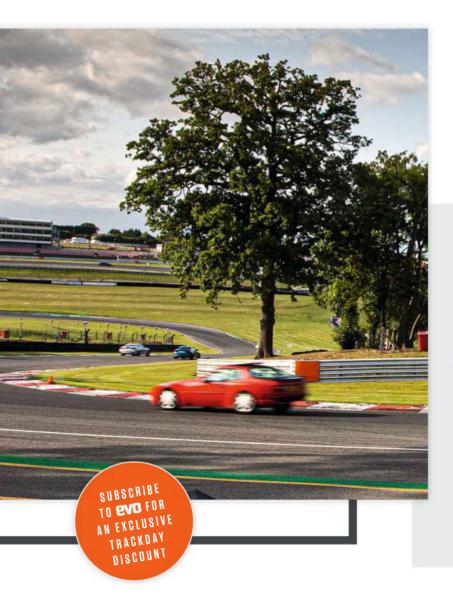




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The Knowledge

RATINGS

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

enew entry this month. Cars in italics are no longer on sale. Issue no. is for our most recent major test of the car (D = Driven, F = feature). Engine shows details of the car's combustion engine, or for BEVs the total output of the electric motors in kW. Weight (claimed) is as quoted by the manufacturer, with a manual gearbox if offered. In most cases this figure is to DIN standards, i.e. with fluids, including a 90 per cent full fuel tank, but without a driver. However, where only a 'dry' weight is quoted (i.e. without any fluids) this is indicated by * Note that a dry weight makes a car's power-to-weight ratio (bhp/ton) appear more favourable. Weight (tested) is our measurement of a test car, with all fluids, including a full tank of thel, but no driver. Note that test cars may be equipped with options that increase their weight. bhp/ton (claimed) is always calculated using the manufacturer's weight figure. O-62mph (claimed) is the manufacturer's figure, with a manual gearbox where offered. Our O-60mph (tested) figures could be with either a manual or automatic/dual-clutch transmission.

SUPERMINIS / HOT HATCHES



OUR CHOICE

Honda Civic Type R. Improving upon its already phenomenal FK8 predecessor, the FL5 Type R feels special from the moment you drop into its driver's seat, then on the move offers feedback of a quality rarely found at any price. Its looks shouldn't be a hurdle this time around, either.



BEST OF THE REST

The **Hyundai i30 N** (left) is a thoroughly engaging hot hatch in the classic mould. The **Mercedes-AMG A45 S** matches a ludicrously potent in-line four with a genuinely involving 4WD chassis, while the **Audi RS3 Sportback** offers more than just impressive stats too. For affordable supermini fun, look no further than the **Hyundai i20 N** and **Ford Fiesta ST**.

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE OR YEARS ON SALE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT (CLAIMED)	WEIGHT (TESTED)	BHP/TON (CLAIMED)	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	EVO RATING	
Abarth 595 Competizione	256 D	£21,985	4/1368	178/5500	184/3000	1035kg	-	175	6.7	-	140	+ Spirited engine; still looks great - Favours fun over finesse	***
Abarth 595 Esseesse	264 D	£25,295	4/1368	178/5500	184/3000	1044kg	-	173	6.7	-	140	+ A bundle of fun if you're in the mood for it - Dynamically dated; expensive	****
Abarth 695 Biposto	205 F	2014-18	4/1369	187/5500	184/3000	997kg*	-	191	5.9	-	143	+ Engineered like a true Abarth product - Expensive for a city car	****
Alfa Romeo 147 GTA	187F	2003-06	6/3179	247/6200	221/4800	1360kg	-	185	6.3	6.0	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	2014-18	4/1984	228/6000	273/1600	1315kg	-	176	5.8	-	155	+ Compliant and engaging chassis; quick, too - Looks dull without options	***
Audi A1 quattro	264 F	2013	4/1984	253/6000	258/2500	1420kg	-	181	5.7	-	152	+ Polished 253bhp 4WD A1 - Just 19 came to the UK, with a Porsche Cayman price	****
Audi S3 Sportback	279 D	£38,475	4/1984	306/5450	295/2000	1500kg	-	207	4.8	-	155	+ Less one-dimensional than its predecessor - Breaks little new ground	****
Audi S3	188 F	2013-20	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1395kg	-	216	5.2	5.4	155	+ Lots of grip and one of the best-sounding four-pot turbos - Still a little too clinical	***
Audi RS3 Sportback	292 D	£55,230	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	2017-21	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	***
Audi RS3 Sportback	221F	2015-16	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	***
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	2012-15	6/2979	321/5800	332/1300	1430kg	-	228	5.1	5.2	155	+ Powertrain, noise, chassis - M235i looks nicer, and has an LSD option	****
Citroën DS3 1.6 THP	142 F	2010-15	4/1598	154/6000	177/1400	1240kg	-	126	7.3		133	+ A proper French hot hatch - Petrolheads might find it too 'designed'	****
Citroën DS3 Racing	153 D	2011-12	4/1598	204/6000	203/2000	1240kg	-	167	6.5		146	+ A faster, feistier DS3 - Not as hardcore as its 'Racing' tag suggests	****
Citroën AX GT	195 F	1987-92	4/1360	85/6400	86/4000	722kg		120	9.2	_	110	+ Makes terrific use of 85bhp - Feels like it's made from paper	****
Cupra Leon e-Hybrid	280 D	£34,495	4/1395	242	295	1596kg	-	154	6.7	-	140	+ Steers and handles neatly; tax-friendly - Can't decide if it's a hot hatch or a Prius rival	***
Cupra Leon 300	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	****
DS3 Performance	222 D	2016-18	4/1598	205/6000	221/3000	1175kg	-	177	6.5		143	+ All the right ingredients - Undercooked	***
Fiat Panda 100HP	273 F	2006-11	4/1368	99/6000	97/4250	975kg	1028kg	103	9.5	_	115	+ About as fun as small cars get - Optional ESP can't be turned off	****
Ford Fiesta ST (Mk8)	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	****
Ford Fiesta ST Edition / Performance Edition		£28.770	3/1497	197/6000	214/1600	1187kg	-	169	6.5	-	144	+ Like the regular Fiesta ST, but with added composure - How much?!	****
Ford Fiesta ST (Mk7)	207F	2013-17	4/1596	197/5700	214/2500	1088kg	1193kg	184	6.9	7.4	137	+ Chassis, price, punchy performance - Have you heard of Mountune?	****
Ford Fiesta ST200 (Mk7)	309 F	2015 17	4/1596	212/6000	236/2500	1088kg	- III	198	6.7	-	143	+ Massive fun - Wasn't around for long	****
Ford Fiesta Zetec S (Mk7)	123 D	2008-13	4/1596	118/6000	112/4050	1045kg		115	9.9		120	+ A very entertaining supermini - Renault Sport Twingo and Suzuki Swift are even more fun	****
Ford Fiesta ST (Mk6)	075 D	2005-08	4/1999	148/6000	140/4500	1137kg		132	7.9	<u>-</u>	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	****
Ford Focus ST (Mk3)	207 F	2015-18	4/1999	247/5500	265/2000	1362kg		184	6.5	_	154	+ Excellent engine - Scrappy when pushed	***
Ford Focus ST (Mk2)	119 F	2005-10	5/2522	222/6000	236/1600	1392kg		162	6.8	6.7	150	+ Value, performance, integrity - Big engine compromises handling	****
Ford Focus RS (Mk3)	246 F	2015-18	4/2261	345/6000	347/2000	1547kg	1569kg	227	4.7	4.9	166	+ Torque-vectoring 4WD brought new sensations to a hot hatch-Needs to be driven hard	****
Ford Focus RS Edition (Mk3)	246 D	2013-10	4/2261	345/6000	347/2000	1547kg	- -	227	4.7	4.9	166	+ Front limited-slip differential brings more precise handling - Pricey and still heavy	****
Ford Focus RS (Mk2)	195 F	2009-11	5/2522	300/6500	324/2300	1467kg	-	208	5.9	5.9	163	+ Huge performance, highly capable FWD chassis - Body control is occasionally clumsy	****
Ford Focus RS500 (Mk2)	256 F	2010-11	5/2522	345/6000	339/2500	1467kg		239	5.6	5.6	165	+ More power and presence than regular Mk2 RS - Pricey	****
Ford Focus RS (Mk1)	207 F	2002-03	4/1998	212/5500	229/3500	1278kg	_	169	6.7	5.9	143	+ Some are great - Some are awful (so make sure you drive plenty)	****
Ford Escort RS Cosworth	201 F	1992-96	4/1993	224/6250	224/3500	1275kg		179	6.2	5.9	137	+ The ultimate Essex hot hatch- Unmodified ones are rare, and pricey	****
							-	120	9.2	8.6	122		****
Ford Puma 1.7	095 F 262 F	1997-2002 2000-01	4/1679 4/1679	123/6300 153/7000	116/4500 119/4500	1041kg		132	7.9	7.8	137	+ Revvy engine, sparkling chassis, bargain used prices - Rusty rear arches	****
Ford Racing Puma		£46.995				1174kg		230	5.4			+ An affordable exotic - Corroding rear arches	****
Honda Civic Type R (FL5)	307 F		4/1996	324/6500	310/2500	1429kg	1437kg			-	171	+ Still at the top of its game - Can feel too stiff on rough roads	
Honda Civic Type R (FK8)	288 F	2017-21	4/1996	316/6500	295/2500	1380kg	1409kg	233	5.8	5.9	168	+ One of the greatest hot hatches ever - Its looks are challenging for some	****
Honda Civic Type R Limited Edition (FK8)	293 F 227 F	2021	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)		2015-17	4/1996	306/6500	295/2500	1378kg	-	226	5.7	5.4	167	+ Great on smooth roads - Can be punishing on less-than-smooth roads	****
Honda Civic Type R (FN2)	102 F	2007-11	4/1998	198/7800	142/5600	1267kg	-	158	6.6	6.8	146	+ Looks great, VTEC more accessible - Steering lacks feel, inert balance	****
Honda Civic Type R Mugen (FN2)	248 F	2009-11	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)	287F	2001-05	4/1998	197/7400	145/5900	1204kg	-	166	6.8	6.8	146	+ Potent and great value - Duff steering	****
Honda Civic Type R (EK9)	210 F	1997-2000		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	6.2	-	143	+ A serious threat to the Fiesta ST - Ride can be a bit thumpy	****
Hyundai i30 N	307 F	£34,595	4/1998	276/5500	289/2100	1419kg	1465kg	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	****
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	***



NEW & IMPROVED

												V-FOW		
MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE OR YEARS ON SALE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT (CLAIMED)	WEIGHT (TESTED)	BHP/TON (CLAIMED)	O-62MPH (CLAMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	EVO RATING		
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	***	
Lancia Delta HF Integrale Evoluzione II	271 F	1993-94	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 Mercedes-AMG A45 S	267 F 288 F	£43,440 £60,628	4/1991 4/1991	302/5800 415/6750	295/3000 369/5000	1480kg 1550kg	-	207 272	4.7 3.9	-	155 167	+ A formidable A-to-B device - Some front-drive rivals are more fun + A 21st-century reincarnation of late-'90s Imprezas and Evos - It costs £50k	****	
Mercedes-AMG A45 5	200 F	2015-18	4/1991	376/6000	350/2250	1480kg	-	258	4.2	3.9	155	+ A Zist-Certaily reincamation of late-90s implezas and evos-11 costs £50k + Tremendously fast - But not a true great	***	
Mercedes-Benz A45 AMG	194 F	2012-15	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1480kg	-	244	4.6	4.3	155	+ Blisteringly quick everywhere - Not as rewarding as some slower rivals	***	
Mini Cooper (F56)	254 D	£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	***	
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	***	
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 237 F	£33,895 2016-17	4/1998 4/1998	302/1750 228/5200	332/1750 236/1250	1255kg	-	244 191	5.2 6.3	-	164 152	+ Street-fighter looks, illustrious predecessors - Better at style than it is substance	****	
Mini John Cooper Works Challenge (F56) Mini Cooper (R56)	237 F 185 F	2010-17	4/1598	120/6000	118/4250	1215kg 1075kg	_	113	9.1	-	126	+ A more hardcore JCW - The ride could be considered a little too hardcore + Brilliant ride and composure; could be all the Mini you need - You'll still buy the 'S'	****	
Mini Cooper S (R56)	149 F	2006-14	4/1598	181/5500	177/1600	1140kg	-	161	7.0	7.0	142	+ Like the Cooper, but with added shove - Google 'Mini death rattle'	****	
Mini John Cooper Works (R56)	184 F	2008-14	4/1598	208/6000	206/2000	1160kg	1228kg	182	6.9	7.2	148	+ A seriously rapid Mini - Occasionally just a little unruly	****	
Mini John Cooper Works GP (R56)	231 F	2013-14	4/1598	215/6000	206/2000	1160kg	1178kg	188	6.3	-	150	+ Brazenly hyperactive - Too much for some roads and some tastes	****	
Mini John Cooper Works Coupé (R58)	164 F	2011-15	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)	077F	2002-06	4/1598	168/6000	155/4000	1140kg	-	143	7.2	7.8	135	+ Strong performance, quality feel - Over-long gearing	****	
Mini Cooper S Works GP (R53) Nissan Juke Nismo RS	262 F 208 D	2006 2015-17	4/1598 4/1618	215/7100 215/6000	184/4600 206/3600	1090kg 1315kg	-	200 166	6.5 7.0		149 137	+ Storming engine, agility - Almost too mannered for a road racer + Quirky character and bold styling - Not a match for a pukka hot hatch	****	
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 2)	273 F	1997-98	4/1587	103/6200	97/3500	865kg	889kg	121	8.8	-	121	+ Bargain no-frills thrills - Not as much fizz as original 1.3	****	
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 1)	095 F	1994-96	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	1997-2004	4/1587	120/6600	107/5200	950kg	-	128	7.4	-	127	+ Fine handling supermini - Looks its age	****	
Peugeot 208 GTi by Peugeot Sport	254 F	2015-18	4/1598	205/6000	221/3000	1160kg	1195kg	180	6.5	-	143	+ A brilliantly focused small hatch - Obscured dials	****	
Peugeot 208 GTI	184 F	2012-16	4/1598	197/5800	203/1700	1160kg	1210kg	173	6.8	6.8	143	+ Agile chassis works well on tough roads - Could be more involving	****	
Peugeot 205 GTI 1.9 Peugeot 308 GTI hy Peugeot Sport	195 F 245 F	1988-91 2015-18	4/1905 4/1598	130/6000 256/6000	119/4750 251/2100	910kg 1205kg	- 1316kg	145 224	7.6 6.0	6.0	124 155	+ Still scintillating after all these years - Brittle build quality + A great entertainer with a cracker of an engine - Tiny steering wheel	****	
Peugeot 308 GTi by Peugeot Sport Peugeot 306 GTi 6	020 F	1993-2001	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1205kg 1214kg	1310Kg -	140	7.9	7.2	140	+ A great entertainer with a cracker of an engine - Thry steering wheel + One of the great GTIs - They don't make them like this any more	****	
Peugeot 306 Rallye	095 F	1998-99	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1163kg		146	7.8	6.9	137	+ Essentially a GTi 6 for less dosh - Limited choice of colours	****	
Renault Sport Twingo 133	175 F	2008-13	4/1598	131/6750	118/4400	1050kg	-	127	8.7	-	125	+ Renault Sport experience for pocket money - Optional Cup chassis gives bouncy ride	****	
Renault Sport Clio 200 Auto	184 F	2013-18	4/1618	197/6000	177/1750	1204kg	1294kg	166	6.7	6.9	143	+ Faster, more refined, easier to drive - We miss the revvy NA engine and manual 'box	***	
Renault Sport Clio 220 Trophy	229 D	2016-18	4/1618	217/6050	206/2000	1204kg	-	183	6.6	-	146	+ Willing chassis - Awful paddleshift gearbox	***	
Renault Sport Clio 200 Cup	247F	2009-13	4/1998	197/7100	159/5400	1204kg	-	166	6.9	6.6	141	+ The hot Clio at its best - They don't make 'em like this anymore	****	
Renault Sport Clio 197 Cup Renault Sport Clio 182	115 F 066 F	2007-09 2004-05	4/1998 4/1998	194/7250 180/6500	158/5550 148/5250	1240kg 1110kg	-	161 165	6.9 7.1	6.6	134 139	+ Quick, polished and capable - Not as much sheer fun as 182 Cup + Took hot hatches to a new level - Flawed driving position	****	
Renault Sport Clio 182 Cup	187 F	2004-05	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	2005-06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	-	168	6.9	6.6	140	+ The most fun you can have on three (sometimes two) wheels - Only 500 were built	****	
Renault Sport Clio 172 (Phase 2)	034 F	2001-03	4/1998	170/6250	147/5400	1110kg	-	156	7.2	7.1	138	+ Poised, predictable, fast - Lacks aggressive edge	****	
Renault Sport Clio 172 Cup	048 F	2002-03	4/1998	170/6250	147/5400	1011kg	-	171	6.9	6.5	138	+ Bargain old-school hot hatch - Nervous in the wet, no ABS	***	
Renault Sport Clio 172 (Phase 1)	146 F	2000-01	4/1998	170/6250	147/5400	1035kg	-	167	7.2	6.6	138	+ Brilliantly accomplished - Imperfect driving position	****	
Renault Clio Williams	233 F	1993-96	4/1988	148/6100	126/4500	981kg	-	153	7.8	7.6	134	+ One of the best hot hatches ever - Can be fragile	****	
Renault 5 GT Turbo Renault Sport Clio V6 255	255 F 294 F	1987-91 2003-05	4/1397 6/2946	118/5750 251/7150	122/3000 221/4650	855kg 1400kg		140 182	7.3 5.8	-	120 153	+ Clio Williams' grandaddy - Few unmodified ones left + Supercar drama without the original's edgy handling - Uninspired interior	****	
Renault Sport Clio V6	029 F	1999-2002	6/2946	227/6000	221/3750	1410kg	-	164	6.6	5.8	145	+ Pocket supercar - Mid-engined handling can be tricky	***	
Renault Mégane RS (280)	267 F	2018-20	4/1798	276/6000	288/2400	1407kg	1464kg	199	5.8	6.3	158	+ Outrageous grip and agility - Cup chassis option doesn't do its composure any favours	***	
Renault Mégane RS 300	298 F	2020-21	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	***	
Renault Mégane RS Trophy	267 F	2018-21	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	****	
Renault Mégane RS Trophy-R	280 F	2019-21	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 195 F	2016 2012-15	4/1998 4/1998	271/5500 261/5500	265/3000 265/3000	1394kg	-	198 191	5.8 6.0	6.4	158 158	+ The same engine as the Trophy-R - They don't make it anymore + A hot hatch benchmark - Cupholder could be better positioned	***	
Renault Sport Mégane 265 Cup Renault Sport Mégane 275 Trophy	212 F	2012-15	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1387kg 1376kg	-	200	5.8	- 0.4	159	+ A not tracer benefithing *- Cupriolaer Could be better positioned + Another cracking Trophy model - Stripped-out Trophy-R is even more thrilling	****	
Renault Sport Mégane 275 Trophy-R	231F	2014-15	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	2009-12	4/1998	247/5500	251/3000	1387kg	-	181	6.1	6.1	156	+ Fantastic chassispartially obscured by new-found maturity	****	
Renault Sport Mégane dCi 175 Cup	119 F	2007-09	4/1995	173/3750	265/2000	1470kg	-	119	8.3	8.3	137	+ A diesel with a genuinely sporty chassis - Could take more power	***	
Renault Sport Mégane 230 F1 Team R26	195 F	2007-09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1345kg	-	171	6.5	6.2	147	+ The car the R26.R is based on - F1 Team stickers in dubious taste	****	
Renault Sport Mégane R26.R SEAT Ibiza Cupra	276 F 225 F	2008-09 2016-18	4/1998 4/1798	227/5500 189/4300	229/3000 236/1450	1220kg 1185kg	-	189 162	6.0 6.7	5.8	147 146	+ A true hot hatch great - Two seats, plastic rear windows + Ouick, competent, refined, and manual only - Not exciting enough	****	
SEAT IDIZA CUPTA SEAT IDIZA CUPTA	183 D	2010-16	4/1/90	178/6200	184/2000	1259kg	-	144	6.9		140	+ Punchy engine, unflappable DSG - Lacks engagement, DSG only	***	
SEAT Leon Cupra 290	267 F	2016-20	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	2018	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	2007-11	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 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	2013-17	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) Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk3)	250 F 267 F	2017-20 £17,249	4/1984 4/1373	242/5000 138/5500	<i>258/1600</i> 170/2500	<i>1370kg</i> 975kg	-	179 144	6.6 8.1	7.6	<i>155</i>	+ A credible, entertaining performer - You won't get out of bed at 4am to drive it + Composed and brisk - Adjustability and character have been diluted	****	
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk2)	175 F	2012-17	4/15/86	134/6900	118/4400	1045kg	-	130	8.7	-	121	+ Still a great pocket rocket - Not quite as adjustable as the original	****	
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk1)	132 F	2005-11	4/1586	123/6800	109/4800	1030kg	-	121	8.9	-	124	+ Entertaining handling, well built - Lacking in steering feedback	***	
Toyota GR Yaris	299 F	2020-22	3/1618	257/6500	265/3000	1280kg	1280kg	204	5.5	-	142	+ A proper homologation special - More Subaru Impreza than Mitsubishi Evo	****	
Toyota Yaris GRMN	254 F	2018	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	2014-18	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 Vauxhall Corsa VXR Nürburgring/Clubsport	154 F 164 F	2007-14 2011-14	4/1598 4/1598	189/5850 202/5750	192/1980 206/2250	1166kg	-	165 176	7.2 6.8		140 143	+ Looks snazzy, punchy engine - Lacks feel, uncouth compared with rivals + VXR gets more power and a limited-slip diff - But they come at a price	****	
Vauxhall Astra GSe	307 D	£40,500	4/1598	202/3/30	265/-	<i>1166kg</i> 1703kg	-	132	7.5		145	+ Polished dynamics, neat looks - Lacklustre hybrid drivetrain and lack of performance	****	
Vauxhall Astra/GTC VXR (Mk2)	207F	2012-18	4/1998	276/5500	295/2500	1475kg	-	190	6.0	-	155	+ Loony turbo pace - Hasn't got the precision of a Renault Sport Mégane	***	
Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk1)	102 F	2005-11	4/1998	237/5600	236/2400	1393kg	-	173	6.4	6.7	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	2001-04	4/1598	123/6500	112/3000	1038kg	-	120	8.2	8.9	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	***	
Volkswagen Polo GTI Volkswagen Polo GTI	211 F 154 F	2015-17 2010-14	4/1798 4/1390	189/4200 178/6200	236/1450 184/2000	1197kg		160 153	6.7 7.4		146 142	+ Smooth and brawny - Fiesta ST is more engaging + Modern-day Mk1 Golf GTI gets twin-clutch DSG - It's a little bit bland	***	
Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk8)	279 D	£38,320	4/1390	242/5000	273/1600	1184kg 1429kg		172	6.4	-	155	+ Modern-day MRT Golf GTT gets TWIN-Clutch USG - It's a little bit bland + An alluring blend of the best GTT ingredients - The competition is stiffer than ever	****	
Volkswagen Golf GTI Clubsport (Mk8)	290 F	£40,655	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	£42,850	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 R '20 Years' (Mk8)	307 F	£48,250	4/1984	328/5200	310/2100	1555kg	1529kg	214	4.6	-	168	+ Appealing package if you're a Mk8 R fan - Lacklustre driving experience is unchanged	***	
Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk7.5)	233 D	2017-20	4/1984	227/4700	258/1500	1289kg	-	179	6.4	-	155	+ A highly capable all-round hot hatch - Could be more thrilling	****	
Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR (Mk7.5)	267F	2017-20	4/1984	286/5400	280/1950	1410kg	15001	206	5.6	-	155	+ Quicker than a regular GTI - It's no Clubsport S	****	
Volkswagen Golf R (Mk7.5) Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk7)	267 F 236 F	2017-20 2013-17	4/1984 4/1984	296/5500 217/4500	295/2000 258/1500	1450kg 1276kg	1508kg 1401kg	207 173	4.7 6.5	4.5	155 153	+ Fulsome, accessible performance - Proper excitement is sometimes elusive + Brilliantly resolved - Lacks the punch of newer rivals	****	
	230 D	2015-17	4/1984	286/5350	280/1700	1300kg	-	224	6.3	_	155	+ A faster, sharper, more entertaning GTI - Some rivals are more exciting on track	****	
Volkswagen Golf GTI Clubsnort Edition 40 (Mk7)		_0.0 //				1285kg	-	242		5.8	165	+ Runner-up at evo Car of the Year 2016 - Only 400 were built	****	
Volkswagen Golf GTI Clubsport Edition 40 (Mk7) Volkswagen Golf GTI Clubsport S (Mk7)	280 F	2016	4/1984	306/5800	280/1850	IZOJNS		242	5.8	5.0		+ Kullilei-up at evo Cal of the feat 2010 - Only 400 were built		
		2016 2014-17 2009-13	4/1984 4/1984 4/1984	306/5800 296/5500 207/5300	280/1800 280/1700	1401kg 1318kg	-	215 160	5.8 5.1 6.9	5.2 6.4	155 148	+ Ruminer-up at evocar of the rear 2016 - 0 mily 400 were oblit. A VW 'R' model you can take seriously - Mégane 275 just edges it as a pure driver's car. + Still a very accomplished hot hatch - 207bhp isn't a lot any more.	****	

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE OR YEARS ON SALE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT (CLAMED)	WEIGHT (TESTED)	BHP/TON (CLAMED)	O-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	мах мрн	EVO RATING	
Volkswagen Golf R (Mk6)	140 D	2010-13	4/1984	266/6000	258/2500	1446kg	-	187	5.7	-	155	+ Great engine, tremendous pace and poise - High price, adaptive dampers optional	****
Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk5)	259 F	2004-09	4/1984	197/5100	207/1800	1336kg	-	150	7.3	6.7	146	+ Character and ability; the GTI's return to form - Lacking firepower?	****
Volkswagen Golf R32 (Mk5)	087F	2006-09	6/3189	246/6300	236/2500	1466kg	-	170	6.5	5.8	155	+ The traction's great and you'll love the soundtrack - We'd still have a GTI	****
Volkswagen Golf R32 (Mk4)	053 F	2002-04	6/3189	237/6250	236/2800	1477kg	-	163	6.6	6.4	154	+ Charismatic - Boomy engine can be tiresome	****
Volkswagen Golf GTI 16v (Mk2)	195 F	1988-92	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	1982-84	4/1781	112/5800	109/3500	860kg	-	132	8.2	-	114	+ The car that started it all - Tricky to find an unmolested one	****

SALOONS / ESTATES / SUVs



OUR CHOICE

Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio. It may be a four-door saloon, but the Giulia Quadrifoglio oozes with all the passion, verve and spirit you'd hope for from an Italian sports car, feeling truly exotic in a way its rivals can't match and bringing real joy to every journey. Bravo, Alfa!



BEST OF THE REST

The first ever **BMW M3 Touring** (left) is everything we hoped it would be, and its saloon sibling is highly desirable too. Need something a size larger, or just want to bag something with a V8 while you still can? 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	***
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 244 D	2021 £79.819	6/2891 6/2891	533/6500	442/2500	1580kg	-	343 279	<i>3.6</i> 3.8	<u>-</u>	<i>186</i> 176	+ A sensational saloon car with a truly infectious character - It's a bit pricey	***
Alfa Romeo Stelvio Quadrifoglio Alpina D3 S Touring	286 D	£79,819 £55,950	6/2993	503/6500 350/5500	442/2500 538/2500	1830kg 1935kg	-	184	4.8	-	167	+ Rivals the Macan GTS - Needs optional P Zero Corsa tyres to give its very best + The best fast diesel you can buy - The B3	****
Alpina B3 Touring Alpina B3 Touring	281 D	£67,950	6/2993	456/5500	516/2500	1865kg	-	248	3.9		186	+ A richer, smoother drive than an M-car - Little different to an M340i at low speeds	***
Aston Martin Rapide	141 F	2010-13	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	2013-19	12/5935	552/6650	465/5500	1990kg	<u> </u>	282	4.4	<u>-</u>	203	+ Oozes star quality; gearbox on 2015MY cars a big improvement - It's cosy in the back	***
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	***
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	****
Audi RS3 Saloon	307 F	£56,230	5/2480	394/5600	369/2250	1570kg	1597kg	255	3.8	-	155	+ Improved chassis makes the RS3 a contender at last - Engine and gearbox hold it back	***
Audi RS3 Saloon	243 F	2017-21	5/2480	394/5850	354/1700	1515kg	-	264	4.1	3.6	155	+ Mini RS4 looks; stonking pace - Not the most involving driving experience	***
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 isn't to everyone's taste	***
Audi S4 (B9, petrol)	225 D	2017-19	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	£67,465	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 Competition (B9)	304 D	£84,600	6/2894	444/5700	442/1900	1745kg	-	259	3.9	-	180	+ Corsa tyres and manually adjustable coilover suspension - Not as hardcore as it sounds	
Audi RS4 Avant (B8)	216 F	2012-15	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1795kg	-	251	4.7	4.5	174	+ Looks and sounds the part, thunderously fast - Unnatural steering, dull dynamics	***
Audi RS4 (B7)	250 F	2005-08	8/4163	414/7800	317/5500	1650kg	-	255	4.7	4.5	155	+ 414bhp at 7800rpm! And there's an estate version too - Busy under braking	***
Audi RS4 (B5)	192 F	2000-02	6/2671	375/6100	325/2500	1620kg	-	236	4.9	4.8	170	+ Effortless pace - Not the last word in agility; bends wheel rims	***
Audi RS2	214 F	1994-95	5/2226	315/6500	302/3000	1595kg	-	201	4.8	4.8	162	+ Storming performance (thanks to Porsche) - Try finding one	***
Audi S5 Sportback	233 D	2017-19	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1660kg	-	214	4.7	-	155	+ More capable than you think; strong V6 engine - Gearbox frustrating in auto mode	***
Audi RS5 Sportback	264 D	£72,095	6/2894	444/5700	442/1900	1720kg	-	262	3.9	-	155	+ High-speed composure - Flat-footed on more technical roads	***
Audi DS6 Avant (C8)	263 D 307 F	£63,930	6/2967	344/3850	516/2500	2020kg	21001/-	173 290	5.1	-	155 155	+ Diesel suits the S6 ethos - Poor low-end engine response	***
Audi RS6 Avant (C8)		£106,020	8/3996 8/3993	592/6000 552/5700	590/2050	2075kg	2188kg		3.0	3.6	155	+ Power, poise, build - Needs Dynamic Ride Control suspension to be at its best	***
Audi RS6 Avant (C7) Audi RS6 Avant Performance (C7)	203 F 224 D	2013-18 2015-19	8/3993	597/6100	516/1750 553/2500	1935kg 1950kg		290 311	3.9	3.0	155	+ Performance, foolproof powertrain, beefy looks - Feels a bit one-dimensional + The extra power is no hassle for the chassis - But it is a stern test of your self-control	***
	116 F	2015-19	10/4991	572/6250	479/1500	1985kg	<u>-</u>	293	4.5	4.3	155		***
Audi RS6 Avant (C6) Audi RS6 Avant (C5)	258 F	2008-10	8/4172	444/5700	413/1950	1865kg		242	4.5	4.8	155	+ Was the world's most powerful estate - Power isn't everything + The ultimate estate car? - Numb steering	***
Audi RS7 Sportback	268 D	£100,055	8/3996	592/6000	590/2050	2065kg	-	291	3.6	4.0	155	+ Surprisingly agile and involving - Sometimes feels its weight	****
Audi RS e-tron GT	284 D	£113,915	495kW	637	612	2003kg 2347kg	-	276	3.3		155	+ A fine GT - Range not up to touring	***
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	***
Bentley Flying Spur Hybrid	295 D	£168.000	6/2894	536	553	2505kg	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	217	4.1		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	<u> </u>	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	2016-19	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2417kg		219	4.9		190	+ Old-school approach to comfort and luxury - Old-school tech	***
Bentley Flying Spur	185 D	2013-18	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	
Bentley Frying Spail Bentley Bentayga V8	247 D	£179,600	8/3996	542/6000	568/1960	2388kg		231	4.5	-	180	+ More enjoyable than the W12 - A top-end Range Rover is still more polished	***
Bentley Bentayga Vo	301D	£187,800	8/3996	542/6000	568/2000	2416kg	-	228	4.5	_	180	+ The best Bentayga to drive - Far from the most elegant Bentley	***
Bentley Mulsanne Speed	279 F	2014-20	8/6752	530/4000	811/1750	2685kg		201	4.9	<u>-</u>	190	+ The last Bentley with the 'six-and-three-quarter' - We won't see its kind again	***
BMW 320d xDrive M Sport (G20)	262 D	£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	***
BMW M340i xDrive Touring	309 F	£60,605	6/2998	369/5500	369/1900	1795kg	-	209	4.6	-	155	+ As fast as your family wagon should need to go - You still want an M3 Touring, don't you?	
BMW i4 M50	296 D	£63,905	400kW	536	586	2215kg	-	249	3.9	-	139	+ A compelling daily EV - Heavy and expensive compared with 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	***
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	****
BMW M3 Competition Touring xDrive (G81)	307 F	£80,550	6/2993	503/6250	479/2750	1865kg	1858kg	274	3.6	-	155	+ Feels smaller and more capable than the CSL - Less refined than most super-estates	***
BMW M3 (F80)	266 F	2014-20	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1560kg	-	277	4.3	4.1	155	+ Looks, performance, practicality - Body control on rough roads; engine lacks character	***
BMW M3 Competition Package (F80)	237F	2016-19	6/2979	444/7000	406/1850	1560kg	-	289	4.2	_	155	+ The car the F80 M3 should have been from the start - Less refined at low speeds	****
BMW M3 CS (F80)	250 D	2018-19	6/2979	454/6250	442/4000	1585kg	-	291	3.9	-	174	+ Improved chassis and mid-range urge - Cost over £20k more than an M3 Comp Pack	***
BMW M3 (E90)	123 F	2008-11	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1605kg	-	262	4.9	4.9	165	+ Every bit as good as the E92 M3 coupe - No carbon roof	***
BMW M5 (F90)	244 F	2017-20	8/4395	592/5600	553/1800	1855kg	-	324	3.4	-	155	+ Fun in two- or four-wheel drive - Insufficient steering connection and engine character	***
BMW M5 Competition (F90)	282 F	£109,615	8/4395	616/6000	553/1800	1895kg	-	330	3.3	-	155	+ Incredible performance, sharper handling - It's still a big old bus	***
BMW M5 CS (F90)	297 F	2021-22	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	2011-16	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	2004-10	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1755kg	-	289	4.7	-	155	+ Close to being the ultimate supersaloon - SMG gearbox feels old-tech	***
BMW M5 (E39)	268 F	1998-2003	8/4941	394/6600	369/3800	1795kg	-	223	5.3	4.9	155	+ Magnificent V8-engined supersaloon - We'd be nitpicking	***
BMW M5 (E34)	110 F	1988-95	6/3795	335/6900	295/4750	1725kg	-	197	5.8	4.9	155	+ The Godfather of supersaloons - The family can come too	***
BMW M5 (E28)	258 F	1984-88	6/3453	282/6500	251/4500	1431kg	-	200	6.1	-	156	+ The original storming saloon - Understated looks	***
BMW M6 Gran Coupé	190 D	2013-18	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1875kg	-	299	4.2	-	155	+ Enormous performance, stylish looks - Looks overpriced next to rivals, M5 included	***
BMW XM	309 D	£148,060	8/4395	644	590	2710kg	-	241	4.3	-	168	+ Stunning high-speed cruising ability - Heavy and clumsy	***
Ford Ranger Raptor	309 D	£58,900	6/2956	288/5500	362/2300	2454kg	-	119	7.9	-	111	+ Character, on-road civility, off-road capability - Not living near a desert	***
Ferrari Purosangue	308 D	£313,220	12/6496	715/7750	528/6250	2033kg*	-	357	3.3	-	193	+ Drives like a Ferrari should - Not as practical as rivals or as desirable as other Ferraris	***
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	***
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	2018-20	8/5000	592/6500	516/3500	1745kg	1793kg	345	3.7	3.5	200	+ Beautifully controlled and amazingly agile - They only made 15 in Touring spec	***
Jaguar XFR	181 D	2009-15	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1800kg	-	284	4.7	4.8	155	+ Brilliant blend of pace and refinement - Doesn't sound as special as it is	***
Jaguar XFR-S	208 F	2013-15	8/5000	542/6500	501/2500	1800kg	-	306	4.6	-	186	+ XF turned up to 12 - Tyres aren't cheap	***
Jaguar XJR	191 D	2014-17	8/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1875kg	-	294	4.6	-	174	+ Hot-rod vibe, fine cabin - Opinion-dividing looks	***
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	***
Kia EV6 GT	306 F	£62.645	430kW	577	546	2200kg	-	266	3.5	-	162	+ Shows glimmers of character - Becomes more one-dimensional the harder you push	***



		3											
MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE OR YEARS ON SALE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT (CLAIMED)	WEIGHT (TESTED)	BHP/TON (CLAMRB)	O-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	EVO RATING	
Kia Stinger GTS	242 D	2018-22	6/3342	365/6000	376/1300	1780kg	-	168	4.7	-	168	+ Playful handling, deep-chested performance - Engine lacks soul, steering lacks feel	****
Land Rover Defender 110 (P400) Lamborghini Urus	273 F 249 F	£90,195 2018-23	6/2996 8/3996	394/5500 641/6000	406/2000 627/2250	2388kg 2200kg	-	168 296	6.4 3.6		129 190	+ A great off-roader - If off-roading is your thing + A freakish manipulator of physics - But also rather one-dimensional	****
Lamborghini Urus S	309 D	£188,000	8/3996	657/6000	627/2300	2197kg	-	305	3.5	-	190		***
Lamborghini Urus Performante	309 D	£209,000	8/3996	657/6000	627/2250	2150kg	-	310	3.3	-	190	+ Dynamically superb on track - Unexpectedly hard work on the road	***
Lexus ISF	151 F	2007-12	8/4969	417/6600	372/5200	1714kg	-	247	5.2	4.7	173 177	+ Shockingly good Lexus - The M3's available as a four-door too	****
Lotus Carlton Lucid Air Dream Edition P	292 F 298 D	1990-93 \$170,500	6/3615 1000kW	<i>377/5200</i> 1111	<i>419/4200</i> 1025	1658kg 2360kg	-	231 478	5.4 2.5	4.8	168	+ The Millennium Falcon of saloon cars - Every drive is a work-out + An EV that engages the driver - Sacrificies ultimate handling for a longer range	****
Maserati Ghibli Trofeo	290 D	£110,900	8/3799	572/6750	538/2250	1969kg	2076kg	295	4.3	-	203	+ Subtle performance elegantly delivered - It's quite expensive	****
Maserati Grecale Trofeo	305 D	£95,950	6/3000	523/6500	457/3000	2027kg	-	262	3.8	-	177		***
Maserati Quattroporte S	184 D	2013-18	6/2979	404/5500	406/1750	1860kg	-	221	5.1	-	177		****
Maserati Quattroporte GTS Maserati Quattroporte Trofeo	226 D 287 D	2016-18 £134,285	<i>8/3798</i> 8/3799	<i>523/6800</i> 572/6750	479/2250 538/2250	1900kg 2000kg	-	<i>280</i> 291	4.7 4.5	-	193 203	+ Still pretty - Off the pace dynamically + An alluring alternative to the German defaults - How much?!	****
Maserati Quattroporte S	137F	2008-12	8/4691	425/7000	361/4750	1990kg	-	216	5.4	5.1	174	+ A QP with the bhp it deserves - Grille is a bit Hannibal Lecter	****
Maserati Quattroporte Sport GTS	141 F	2008-12	8/4691	433/7000	361/4750	1990kg	-	221	5.1	-	177	+ The most stylish of supersaloons - Slightly wooden brakes, unforgiving ride	****
Maserati Levante Diesel	221D	2016-20	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 Mercedes-AMG CLA 45 S Coupé	271 F 273 D	£41,660 £60,965	4/1991 4/1991	302/5800 415/6750	295/3000 369/5000	1495kg 1600kg	-	205 264	4.8	-	155 167	+ Fun when you want it to be, secure when the heavens open - Others are even more fun + Speed, ability and involvement - CLA35 offers a similar experience for less outlay	****
Mercedes-AMG CLA 45 S Shooting Brake	278 D	£61,965	4/1991	415/6750	369/5000	1630kg		259	4.0	-	155	+ Same stellar performance and involvement as the A45 - See above	****
Mercedes-AMG C43 Saloon (W206)	301D	£64,110	4/1991	402/6750	369/5000	1690kg	-	242	4.6	-	155	+ Hugely accessible performance - Sterile steering, some transmission jerkiness	****
Mercedes-AMG C63 S E Performance Estate	306 D	c£90,000	4/1991	671/6750	638/5250	2115kg	-	322	3.4	-	168	+ Hybrid tech works brilliantlybut brings excess weight	***
Mercedes-AMG C63 Estate (S205)	216 F 282 F	2015-20 2015-21	8/3982 8/3982	469/5500	479/1750	1710kg	-	279	4.2	-	155 180	+ Much more fun than it looks - Gearbox dim-witted at low speeds	****
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Estate (S205) Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG (W204)	282 F	2015-21	8/6208	503/5500 451/6800	516/2000 442/5000	1670kg 1655kg	-	306 277	4.1	4.4	155	+ One of the finest all-round compact performance cars - Baffling array of driver settings + Monstrous pace and extremely engaging - Same-era M3 is just a little better	****
Mercedes-Benz C55 AMG (W203)	088 F	2004-08	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	1989-92	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	2018-20	8/3982	563/5750	553/2250	1875kg	-	305	3.5	-	155	+ More rounded than the E63 S - Could be a little too discreet for some tastes	****
Mercedes-AMG E63 S (W213) Mercedes-AMG E63 S Estate (S213)	286 F 272 F	£116,995 £118,995	8/3982 8/3982	604/5750 604/5750	627/2500 627/2500	1935kg 1995kg	2085kg	317 308	3.4	3.4	186 180	+ Fast, refined, effective and fun - At nearly two tons, it's not 911 nimble + As above - It's even heavier than the saloon, and five metres long	****
Mercedes-AMG GT63 S 4-Door Coupé	269 F	£150,440	8/3982	630/5500	664/2500	2045kg	-	313	3.2	-	196	+ Agile and immensely quick - Lacks the coupe GT's drama	****
Mercedes-AMG GT63 S E Performance	308 D	£178,704	8/3982	831	1084	2305kg	-	366	2.9	-	196	+ Can feel absolutely indomitable - Benefits of more power defeated by added weight	****
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212)	187 D	2013-16	8/5461	549/5500	531/1750	1770kg	-	315	4.2	-	155	+ Power, response and accuracy in spades - A little lacking in originality	****
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212)	208 F 165 F	2013-16 2011-13	8/5461 8/5461	577/5500 518/5250	590/1750 516/1750	1795kg 1765kg	1971kg -	327 298	4.1	-	155 155	+ Effortless power; intuitive and approachable - Sluggish auto 'box + Turbo engine didn't dilute the E63 experience - Sometimes struggles for traction	****
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212) Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212)	134 D	2009-11	8/6208	518/6800	465/5200	1765kg	-	298	4.4	Ē.	155	+ Indulgent chassis, brilliant engine - Steering still vague	****
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W211)	096 D	2006-09	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	2003-06	8/5439	469/6100	516/2650	1760kg	-	271	4.7	4.8	155	+ M5-humbling grunt, cosseting ride - Speed limits	****
Mercedes-AMG S63 L (W222)	246 D	2013-20	8/3982	604/5500	664/2750	1940kg	-	316	4.3 3.8	-	<i>155</i> 155	+ Performance doesn't come at the expense of luxury - But pure driving thrills do	****
Mercedes-AMG EQS 53 Mercedes-AMG GLC 63 S Coupé	299 D 253 D	£157,160 £94,270	8/3982	649 503/5500	700 516/1750	2605kg 1945kg		253 263	3.8		174	+ Refinement - The non-EV S-class + Unquestionable performance - Lacks adjustability and engagement	****
Mercedes-AMG GLE 63 S	218 D	£120,725	8/5461	577/5500	560/1750	2270kg	-	258	4.2	-	155		***
Mercedes-AMG GLE 63 S Coupé	213 D	£130,000	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	£164,550	8/3982	577/6000	627/2500	2485kg	-	236	4.5	-	137	+ Vastly improved chassis, fabulous engine - Dynamic ability still limited	****
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-300 SST Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-330 SST	118 F 134 F	2008-14 2008-14	4/1998 4/1998	290/6500 324/6500	300/3500 322/3500	1590kg 1590kg	_	185 207	4.5	5.2	155 155	+ First Evo with a twin-clutch transmission - Not as exciting as its predecessors + Great engine and gearbox combo - It still lives in the shadow of the Evo IX	****
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-360	122 D	2008-14	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	2009-10	4/1998	403/6500	387/3500	1560kg	-	262	3.8	-	155	+ Most powerful factory Evo everabout X grand too much when new	***
Mitsubishi Evo IX FQ-340	088 F	2005-08	4/1997	345/6800	321/4600	1400kg	-	250	4.2	4.3	157	+ Gives Porsche drivers nightmares - Points. Lots of	****
Mitsubishi Evo IX MR FQ-360 Mitsubishi Evo VIII	181 F 055 F	2005-08 2003-05	4/1997 4/1997	366/6887 276/6500	363/3200 289/3500	1400kg 1410kg	-	266 199	4.0 5.1	-	157 157	+ Well-executed engine upgrades - Prison food + The Evo grows up - Brakes need beefing up	****
Mitsubishi Evo VII	031F	2002-03	4/1997	276/6500	282/3500	1360kg	-	206	5.1	5.0	140	+ Terrific all-rounder - You tell us	****
Mitsubishi Evo VI Tommi Mäkinen Edition	271F	2000-01	4/1997	276/6500	275/2750	1365kg	-	205	4.6	-	150	+ Our favourite Evo - Subtle it is not	****
Peugeot 508 SW PSE	309 F	£56,575	4/1598	355	383	1875kg	-	192	5.2	-	155	+ A hybrid worth considering - Especially if someone else is paying	****
Polestar 2 Polestar 2 BST Edition 270	280 D 306 D	£46,450 £68,990	300kW 350kW	402 469	487 501	2048kg	-	199 222	4.7	-	127 127	+ A credible Tesla alternative - Avoid the super-hard-riding Performance upgrade + Adjustable Öhlins dampers great for track But surely this is a road car?	****
Porsche Panamera GTS	279 D	£110,700	8/3996	473/6500	457/1800	2146kg 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	£149,100	8/3996	671	627	2325kg	-	293	3.4	-	192	+ Shows some Stuttgart magic in the corners - It weighs 2.3 tons!	****
Porsche Panamera GTS	208F	2011-16	8/4806	434/6700	383/3500	1925kg	10001 -	229	4.4	-	178	+ Vivacious V8, entertaining balance - Feels light on performance next to turbo'd rivals	****
Porsche Panamera Turbo S Porsche Taycan (Performance Battery Plus)	159 D 283 D	2011-13 £83,654	8/4806 350kW	<i>542/6000</i> 375	590/2250	<i>1995kg</i> 2130kg	1996kg	<i>276</i> 179	3.8 5.4	-	190 143	+ Pace, excellent ergonomics - Steering feel, ride + Half the price of a Taycan Turbo S - Less is less	****
Porsche Taycan GTS Sport Turismo	294 D	£111,200	380kW	510	-	2310kg	-	224	3.7	-	224	+ One of the best performance EVs yet - Charge anxiety	****
Porsche Taycan Turbo Cross Turismo	287 D	£126,800	460kW	616	-	2320kg	-	270	3.3	-	155		****
Porsche Taycan Turbo S	267 D	£148,300	460kW	616	-	2295kg	-	273	2.8	-	161		****
Porsche Macan T Porsche Macan S	307 D 257 D	£58,400 £59,800	4/1984 6/2997	261/5000 349/5400	295/1800 354/1360	1865kg 1865kg	-	142 190	6.2 5.3	-	144 157	+ All the usual Porsche dynamic qualities - With none of the performance + Great for an SUV - Every positive still needs to be suffixed with 'for an SUV'	****
Porsche Macan GTS	244 F	2016-18	6/2997	355/6000	369/1650	1895kg		190	5.2	-	159	+ Handles like an SUV shouldn't - Still looks like an SUV	****
Porsche Cayenne S (Mk3)	253 D	£77,300	6/2894	434/5700	406/1800	2020kg	-	218	5.2	-	164		****
Porsche Cayenne Turbo (Mk3)	243 D	£112,400	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	£115,100	8/3996	542/5750	568/2000	2200kg	-	250	3.9	-	177		****
Porsche Cayenne Turbo GT Porsche Cayenne GTS (Mk2, V6)	290 D 211 D	£150,500 2015-17	8/3996 6/3604	631/6000 434/6000	627/2300 442/1600	2220kg 2110kg		289 209	3.3 5.2	-	186 163	+ A car this big and heavy shouldn't drive this well - It's still big and heavy + The driver's Cayennebut why would a driver want an SUV?	****
Porsche Cayenne GTS (Mk2, V8)	173 D	2012-15	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	****
Range Rover Sport P510e	309 D	£112,040	6/2996	503	516	2735kg	-	187	5.4	-	150	+ Hybrid powertrain provides a genuine benefit - Feels big and heavy, because it is	****
Range Rover Sport P530 First Edition	303 D	£119,580	8/4395	523/5500	553/1800	2430kg	-	219	4.5	-	155	+ Does effortless speed and luxury very well - Not quite so good at the 'sport' bit	****
Range Rover Autobiography P530 Rolls-Royce Ghost	298 D 280 D	£142,260 £265,420	8/4395 12/6749	523/5500 563/5000	551/1800 627/1600	2585kg 2490kg	-	206 230	4.6	-	155 155	+ Quieter and more capable - Heavier and more expensive + Unrivalled luxury and refinement - Still better to be driven in than to drive	****
Rolls-Royce Phantom	054F	2003-17	12/6749	453/5350	531/3500	2560kg	-	180	5.7	-	149	+ Rolls reinvented for the 21st century - The roads are barely big enough	****
Subaru WRX STI S209	272 F	2020	4/2457	341/6400	330/3600	1580kg	-	219	4.9	-	162	+ That old Impreza magic is alive and well - Only 209 were built, and only for America	****
Subaru WRX STI	253 F	2014-18	4/2457	296/6000	300/4000	1534kg	-	196	5.2	-	158		****
Subaru Impreza STI ('Hawkeye')	090 F	2005-07	4/2457 4/1994	276/6000	289/4000	1495kg	-	188	5.3	- 5.2	158 148	+ Stunning to drive - Not so stunning to look at	****
Subaru Impreza WRX STI PPP ('Blobeye') Subaru Impreza Turbo ('Classic')	073 F 011 F	2003-05 1993-2000	4/1994	300/6000 215/5600	299/4000 214/4000	1470kg 1235kg	-	207 177	5.4 5.8	5.4	148	+ A Subaru with real edge - Bit too edgy in the wet + Destined for classic status - Thirsty	****
Subaru Impreza RB5	187 F	1999	4/1994	237/6000	258/3500	1235kg	-	195	6.1	5.0	144	+ Perfect blend of poise and power - Limited numbers	****
Subaru Impreza P1	259 F	2000-01	4/1994	276/6500	260/4000	1283kg	-	219	4.7	4.9	150	+ One of our favourite Imprezas - Doesn't come cheap	****
Subaru Impreza 22B STI	282 F	1998-99	4/2212	276/6000	268/3200	1270kg	-	220	5.3	5.0	150	+ The ultimate Impreza - Prices reflect this	****
Tesla Model 3 Performance Vauxhall Insignia VXR SuperSport	263 F 189 D	£57,990 2013-17	330kW 6/2792	444 321/5250	471 321/5250	1847kg 1825kg		244 179	3.5 5.6	-	145 170	+ Quicker round a track than an M3 - Lap times aren't everything + A 170mph Vauxhall - Should be a more engaging steer	****
Vauxhall VXR8 GTS	215 D	2013-17	8/6162	576/6150	546/3850	1834kg	-	319	4.2	-	155	+ A Tromph vauxhaii - Should be a more engaging steer + Monster engine; engaging driving experience - Woeful interior	****
Vauxhall VXR8 GTS-R	272 F	2017	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	309 F	£56,760	4/1984	316/5350	310/2000	1793kg	-	179	4.9	-	155	+ Sleek looks, spacious interior - Joyless engine, unresolved dynamics	****

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.

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE OR YEARS ON SALE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT (CLAIMED)	WEIGHT (TESTED)	BHP/TON (CLAIMED)	O-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	мах мрн	EVO RATING	
Abarth 124 Spider	256 F	2016-19	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 8C Spider	161 F	2009-11	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1675kg	-	273	4.4	_	181	+ Beauty meets beast. They hit it off - Boot is useless for touring	***
Ariel Atom 4	273 F	£39,975	4/1996	320/6500	310/3000	595kg	-	546	2.8	-	162	+ Sensory overload - Turbo engine lacks the old supercharged unit's frantic soundtrack	****
Ariel Atom 3 245	248 F	2018-12	4/1998	245/8600	177/7200	520kg	-	479	3.1	-	145	+ Even better than its predecessors - Can still be a bit draughty	****
Ariel Atom 3.5 Supercharged	180 D	2013-18	4/1998	310/8400	169/7200	550kg	608kg	573	2.7	-	155	+ As mad as ever - Rain	****
Ariel Atom 3.5R	255 F	2014-18	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	2020	4/1998	335/7200	243/4300	c700kg	-	c486	2.9	-	134	+ Intriguing and effective mash-up of track car and off-roader - They only made five	****
Aston Martin Vantage Roadster	279 D	£131,250	8/3982	503/6000	505/2000	1745kg	-	293	3.8	-	190	+ Builds on the already excellent coupe's attributes - Interior design lags behind exterior	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage Roadster (4.7)	130 F	2009-16	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1710kg	-	250	4.8	-	180	+ Sportiest, coolest drop-top Aston in years - Feels dated compared with contemporaries	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage S Roadster	161 F	2011-17	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1690kg	-	258	4.8	-	189	+ Sounds amazing, looks even better - Still not the best drop-top in its class	****
Aston Martin V12 Vantage Roadster	175 F	2012-14	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1760kg	-	294	4.5	-	190	+ As good as the coupe, with amplified V12 rumble - Just a smidgen shakier	****
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S Roadster	212 F	2014-17	12/5935	565/6750	457/5750	1745kg	-	329	4.1	-	201	+ A brilliant two-seat roadsterlet down by a frustrating automated manual gearbox	****
Aston Martin DB11 Volante	258 D	£167,200	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	£56,435	4/1984	302/5400	295/2000	1495kg	-	205	4.8	-	155	+ Highly capable - Most will want more than 'capable'	***
Audi TT RS Roadster (Mk3)	250 D	£59,915	5/2480	394/5850	354/1700	1530kg	-	262	3.9	-	155	+ Terrific engine is the best thing about it	***
BAC Mono 2.5	229 F	£167,940	4/2488	305/8000	227/5500	580kg*	645kg	534	2.8	-	170	+ 3.5sec faster around Anglesey Circuit than a McLaren P1 - A bit less practical than a P1	****
BAC Mono R	302 D	£218,000	4/2488	342/8800	243/-	555kg*	-	626	2.5	-	170	+ Astonishing pace and excellent drivability - Only 40 are being made	****
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	****
Bentley Mulliner Bacalar	286 F	£1.5m	12/5950	650/5000	664/1500	2384kg	-	277	<3.8	-	200+	+ A luxury cruiser that's a bit of a rebel roadster - They're only making 12, at £1.5m each	***
BMW Z4 M40i	256 D	£56,475	6/2998	335/5000	369/1600	1535kg	-	222	4.6	-	155	+ Inherent agility and ability - Undemanding and unengaging	***
BMW Z8	026 F	2000-03	8/4941	400/6600	369/3800	1585kg	-	256	4.7	4.8	155	+ M5-powered super-sportster - M5's more fun to drive	****
Caterham Seven 170R	291 F	£32,585	3/660	84/6500	86/4000	440kg*	-	194	6.9	-	105	+ The lightest production Caterham yet - Could do with another 10bhp	****
Caterham Seven 360	209 F	£40,085	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	£43,585	4/1999	210/7600	150/6300	560kg*	-	381	3.8	4.0	136	+ It's the one we built for ourselves - Trickier on the limit than lesser-powered Sevens	****
Caterham Seven 420 Cup	299 F	£54,990	4/1999	210/7600	150/6300	560kg*	578kg	369	3.6	-	136	+ Intense and rewarding - They'll soon be electric	****
Caterham Seven 620S	220 D	£56,990	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	£64,990	4/1999	310/7700	219/7350	572kg*	580kg	551	2.8	-	155	+ Banzai on track, yet still relevant on the road - £50k for a Seven?	****
Caterham Seven 160	239 F	2013-17	3/660	80/7000	79/3400	490kg*	-	166	6.9	-	100	+ The fabulous Seven formula at its most basic - Gets pricey with options	***
Caterham Seven Roadsport 125	105 F	2007-14	4/1596	125/6100	120/5350	539kg*	- 1	235	5.9	-	112	+ Great debut for Ford-engined model - Bigger drivers need SV model	****
Caterham Seven Supersport	165 F	2011-14	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	2013-14	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	535kg*	-	342	4.8	-	130	+ One of the best road-and-track Sevens - Impractical, noisy, uncomfortable	****
Caterham Seven Superlight R300	150 F	2009-12	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	2006-17	4/2261	256/7500	200/6200	565kg*	598kg	460	3.1	3.8	155	+ Brilliant for high days, holidays and trackdays - Wet Wednesdays	****
Caterham Seven Superlight R500	123 F	2008-14	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	1999-2006	4/1796	230/8600	155/7200	460kg*	-	510	3.4	3.6	146	+ The K-series Seven at its very best - No cup holders	****
Chevrolet Corvette Stingray Convertible (C8)	292 D	£97,890	8/6162	475/6450	452/4500	1692kg	-	285	3.5	-	184	+ Strong V8 engine, fine value - Not as quick as we were hoping	****
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	****
Elemental Rp1 (2.3)	255 F	£139,800	4/2261	320	354	620kg*	-	557	2.6	-	165	+ Captivating, explosive, exploitable - Price will test your level of commitment	****
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	****
Honda S2000	243 F	1999-2009	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	£84,125	8/5000	444/6000	428/2500	1660kg	-	272	4.6	-	177	+ Strong and flexible supercharged V8 - Steering and chassis feel mismatched	***
Jaguar F-type Project 7	212 F	2015	8/5000	567/6500	501/2500	1585kg	-	363	3.9	-	186	+ Noise, performance, adjustability - Expensive, and not the GT3 rival we would have liked	
KTM X-Bow GT	183 D	£95,880	4/1984	281/6400	310/3200	875kg	-	326	4.1	-	144	+ Extraordinary ability, now in a more road-friendly package - Price	***
KTM X-Bow R	165 F	£87,480	4/1984	296/6300	295/3300	816kg	-	369	3.9	-	144	+ Sharper handling, more power - Pity it's not even lighter, and cheaper	****
Lotus Elise Club Racer (S3)	183 F	2011-15	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	2017-20	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	2018-19	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	2021	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	2016-21	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	2018-19	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	2003	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	2006-10	4/1794	134/6200	127/4200	860kg	-	158	6.1	6.3	127	+ Brilliant entry-level Elise - Precious little	****
Lotus Elise 111S (S2)	049F	2002-04	4/1796	156/7000	129/4650	860kg	-	197	5.1	-	131	+ A genuinely useable Elise - As above	****
Lotus Elise SC (S2)	131 F	2008-11	4/1794	218/8000	156/5000	870kg	-	254	4.6	4.5	145	+ All the usual Elise magic - Supercharged engine lacks sparkle	****
Lotus Elise (S1)	235 F	1996-2001	4/1796	118/5500	122/3000	731kg	-	164	5.9	6.1	126	+ A modern classic - A tad impractical?	****
Lotus 3-Eleven	220 F	2016-17	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	2017-19	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	2007-11	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	720kg	-	267	4.5	-	140	+ Not far off the supercharged 2-Eleven's pace - You want the supercharged one, don't you?	****
Lotus 2-Eleven Supercharged	123 F	2007-11	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	2000	4/1796	190/7800	146/5000	701kg	-	275	4.5	4.5	126	+ Hardcore road-racerthat looks like a dune buggy from Mars	****
Mazda MX-5 1.5 (Mk4)	230 F	£25,825	4/1496	129/7000	111/4800	975kg	-	134	8.3	-	127	+ Lightest MX-5 since the Mk1 - Lacks intensity	***
Mazda MX-5 2.0 (Mk4, 184PS)	299 F	£30,410	4/1998	181/7000	151/4000	1052kg	1073kg	175	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	£32,310	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	2015-18	4/1998	158/6000	147/4600	1000kg	-	161	7.3	-	133	+ Brilliant basic recipe - The desire for stiffer suspension and more power	***
Mazda MX-5 2.0i (Mk3.5)	212 F	2009-15	4/1999	158/7000	139/5000	1098kg	-	146	7.6	-	138	+ Handles brilliantly again; folding hard-top also available - Less-than-macho image	****
Mazda MX-5 1.8i (Mk3)	091 F	2005-09	4/1798	124/6500	123/4500	1080kg	-	108	9.3	-	122	+ Gearchange, interior - Lost some of the charm of old MX-5s; dubious handling	***
Mazda MX-5 1.8i (Mk2)	017F	1998-2005		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	1989-97	4/1597	115/6500	100/5500	971kg	- 1	120	8.8	-	174	+ The original and still (pretty much) the best - Less than rigid	****
Mercedes-AMG SLC 43	222 D	2016-19	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 SL55 4Matic+	305 F	£147,715	8/3982	469/5500	516/2250	1875kg	1940kg	254	3.9	-	183	+ Impressive damping and 4WD - Is neither chilled-out cruiser or AMG GT replacement	***
Morgan Super 3	300 F	£43,165	3/1432	118/6500	110/4500	635kg*	-	189	7.0	-	130	+ The three-wheeler gets modernised - Driving experience is still vintage	****
Morgan 3 Wheeler	198 F	2012-21	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	£71,830	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	****
Morgan Plus Six	269 F	£90,390	6/2998	335/6500	369	1075kg*	- 1	317	4.2	-	166	+ Rapid, exciting, and a bit of a hooligan - Interior could feel more special	****
WIOI BUILLI IUS SIN					201/2/00			212		-	170	+ Glorious sound, view over bonnet, dynamics - Awkward-looking rear	****
Morgan Aero 8	105 F	2001-10	8/4799	362/6300	361/3400	1180kg*	, - , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	312	4.5		110	· Glorious sound, view over bornier, dynamics Awkward looking real	A A A A A



	JE NO.	ARS ON SALE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	FT/RPM	WEIGHT (CLAIMED)	WEIGHT (TESTER)	BHP/TON (CLAMED)	O-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	HMH		
MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	PRICE OR YEARS	ENG CYL	붊	ä	WEI	WEI	뭂	0-6 (CLAIN	0-6 TEST	MAX	EVO RATING	
Porsche 718 Boxster	224 D	£53,800	4/1988	296/6500	280/1950	1335kg	-	225	5.1	-	170	+ Chassis as good as ever - Four-cylinder's tuneless din would be hard to live with	****
Porsche 718 Boxster S	222 F	£63,800	4/2497	345/6500	310/1900	1355kg	-	259	4.6	4.4	177	+ Still sensationally capable - Turbo four-cylinder engine lacks appeal of the old flat-six	****
Porsche 718 Boxster GTS	249 D	2018-19	4/2497	360/6500	310/1900	1375kg	-	266	4.6	-	180	+ The best four-pot Boxster spec - Doesn't come cheap	****
Porsche 718 Boxster GTS 4.0	286 D	£75,300	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	£80,200	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	2012-16	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	2012-16	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	2014-16	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	2015-16	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	2005-12	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	2010-12	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	1999-2004	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	£126,000	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	£126,000	6/2981	444/6500	391/2300	1640kg	-	275	4.4	-	189	+ Distinctive; driving experience is barely touched - You can't get a rear-drive Targa	****
Radical Rapture	274 F	£108,000	4/2261	360/6000	360/3500	765kg*	-	478	3.0	-	165	+ Unfiltered and utterly addictive - It's more at home on the track than the road	****
Renault Sport Spider	231 F	1996-99	4/1998	148/6000	136/4500	930kg	-	157	6.5	-	131	+ Rarity; unassisted steering - Heavier than you'd hope; disappointing engine	****
Toyota MR2 (Mk3)	258 F	2000-06	4/1794	138/6400	125/4400	975kg	-	141	8.0	7.2	131	+ Tight lines, taut dynamics - Minimal luggage space	****
TVR Tamora	070 F	2001-07	6/3605	350/7200	290/5500	1060kg	-	335	4.2	-	175	+ Well-sorted soft-top TVR- Awkward styling	****
TVR Chimaera 5.0	258 F	1993-2003	8/4997	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	-	307	4.4	-	167	+ Gorgeous noise, tarmac-rippling grunt - Details	****
TVR Griffith 4.3	068 F	1992-93	8/4280	280/5500	305/4000	1040kg	-	274	4.4	4.8	155	+ The car that made TVR. Cult status - Mere details	****
TVR Griffith 500	009 F	1993-2001	8/4997	320/5500	320/4000	1060kg	-	307	4.1	-	167	+ Gruff diamond - A few rough edges	****
Vauxhall VX220 Turbo	066 F	2003-05	4/1998	197/5500	184/1950	930kg	-	215	4.9	-	151	+ Nothing comes close for the money - Marginal everyday usability	****

COUPES / GTs



OUR CHOICE

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



BEST OF THE REST

The **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	209F	2013-19	4/1742	237/6000	258/2200	895kg*	-	269	4.5	-	160	+ Carbonfibre tub, mini-supercar looks - Hot hatch engine, clunky gearbox	***
Alfa Romeo 8C Competizione	120 F	2007-09	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1585kg	-	288	4.2	-	181	+ Looks, exclusivity, noise, balance - Cost more now than they did new	****
Alpine A110	285 F	£52,490	4/1798	249/6000	236/2000	1102kg	1094kg	230	4.5	4.6	155	+ Fast, fun and genuinely different - If only it had a manual gearbox	****
Alpine A110 GT	304 F	£62,490	4/1798	296/6300	251/2400	1119kg	-	269	4.2	-	155	+ The Goldilocks A110 for road driving - Trackdays	****
Alpine A110 S	268 D	£62,490	4/1798	296/6300	251/2400	1109kg	-	271	4.2	-	171	+ Firmer and faster - But not necessarily better	****
Alpine A110 R	307 D	£94,990	4/1798	296/6300	251/2400	1082kg	-	278	3.9	-	177	+ An even lighter and more extreme A110 - Falls short on track with no power hike	****
Aston Martin Vantage	280 F	£124,400	8/3982	503/6000	505/2000	1685kg	-	303	3.6	4.5	195	+ Performance that's a huge leap forward - Chassis struggles when really pushed	****
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	****
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	***
Aston Martin V8 Vantage (4.3)	288 F	2005-07	8/4280	380/7000	302/5000	1630kg	-	237	5.0	5.2	175	+ Gorgeous; awesome soundtrack - Can't quite match a 911 dynamically	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage (4.7)	169 D	2008-16	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	2011-17	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	-	271	4.8	-	190	+ Keener engine, V12 Vantage looks - Slightly sluggish auto only	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage N430	218 F	2014-16	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	-	271	4.8	-	189	+ Malleable, involving - Never feels rampantly quick	****
Aston Martin Vantage GT8	274 F	2016-17	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	2009-13	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1680kg	-	308	4.2	4.4	190	+ The car we hoped the V8 Vantage would be - Erm, a tad thirsty?	****
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S	285 F	2013-17	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	2015-16	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 D	£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	2017-18	12/5204	600/6500	516/1500	1800kg	-	339	3.9	4.0	200	+ A great GT - Suffers in outright handling terms as a result	***
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	****
Aston Martin DB9 GT	214 D	2015-17	12/5935	540/6750	457/5500	1785kg	-	307	4.5	-	183	+ More power; still has bags of character - Needs an eight-speed auto 'box	****
Aston Martin DB9	178 F	2004-16	12/5935	510/6500	457/5500	1785kg	_	290	4.6	<u>-</u>	183	+ A great start to Gaydon-era Astons - Automatic gearbox could be quicker	****
Aston Martin DBS	142 F	2007-12	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1695kg	_	306	4.3		191	+ Stupendous engine, gearbox, brakes - Pricey; can bite the unwary	****
Audi TTS (Mk3)	261 D	£44.610	4/1984	302/5400	295/2000	1405kg		218	4.5		155	+ Exceptional grip and traction - Excitement fades after the first few corners	***
Audi TT RS (Mk3)	249 F	£53,905	5/2480	394/5850	354/1700	1450kg	1487kg	276	3.7	3.5	155	+ Soundtrack; tremendous point-to-point pace - A bit one-dimensional in the long run	***
Audi TTS (Mk2)	193 F	2008-14	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1395kg	140/Kg	195	5.4	-	155	+ A usefully quicker TT, with a great drivetrain - Still steers like a computer game	***
Audi TTRS (Mk2)	158 F	2000-14	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1450kg		235	4.7	4.4	155	+ Sublime five-cylinder turbo engine - Rest of package can't quite match it	****
Audi S5	252 F	2009-14	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370		-	220	4.7	4.4	155		
						1615kg	17001		3.9	2.0	155	+ Chassis rewards commitmentbut doesn't offer a challenge. Plain engine, too	****
Audi RS5	240 F	£68,985	6/2894	444/5700	442/1900	1655kg	1799kg	273		3.6		+ Lighter, quicker; makes green paint look good - Lacks the character of the old V8	****
Audi RS5	206 F	2010-16	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1715kg	-	263	4.5	4.3	155	+ Brilliant engine and improved chassis - Lack of suspension travel; inconsistent steering	
Bentley Continental GT (V8)	290 F	£176,400	8/3996	542/6000	568/2000	2165kg	-	254	4.0	-	198	+ Pace, quality, polish - A bit one-dimensional	****
Bentley Continental GTS	309 D	£198,600	8/3996	542/6000	568/2000	2090kg	-	263	4.0	-	198	+ Unparalleled comfort, unexpected performance - Lacks dynamic flourish of some rivals	
Bentley Continental GT (W12)	255 F	2018-21	12/5950	626/5000	664/1350	2244kg	-	283	3.7	-	207	+ Astonishing agility for such a big, heavy car - Thirst	****
Bentley Continental GT Speed	296 F	£219,400	12/5950	650/5000	664/1500	2273kg	-	291	3.6	-	208	+ Dynamically Bentley's best - A V8 Speed would be better still	****
Bentley Continental GT V8	178 F	2012-17	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2220kg	-	229	4.8	-	188	+ A proper driver's Bentley with decent economy - Makes the W12 seem pointless	****
Bentley Continental GT V8 S	204 F	2013-17	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2220kg	-	238	4.5	-	192	+ An even better driver's Bentley - Vast weight makes its presence felt in harder driving	****
Bentley Continental GT (W12)	152 D	2003-17	12/5998	567/6000	516/1700	2245kg	2360kg		4.5	-	198	+ Near 200mph in utter comfort - Weight; W12's thirst	****
Bentley Continental Supersports	234 D	2017	12/5998	700/6000	750/2050	2205kg	-	323	3.5	-	209	+ Massive performance, surprisingly agile - Styling and soundtrack far from discreet	****
BMW M240i xDrive Coupé	303 F	£47,515	6/2998	369/5500	369/1900	1690kg	1695kg	222	4.3	-	155	+ A pocket GT with bulging muscles - You might baulk at the bulk	****
BMW M2 (G87)	309 F	£65,885	6/2993	454/6250	406/2650	1700kg	-	271	4.3	-	155	+ Still has that brilliant big-engine-in-a-little-car hot-rod feel - Tough ride quality	****
BMW M240i Coupé (F22)	229 D	2016-21	6/2998	335/6800	369/1520	1470kg	-	232	4.8	-	155	+ Adjustable and plenty of fun - Lacks finesse and precision	***
BMW M2 (F87)	243 F	2016-18	6/2979	365/6500	369/1450	1495kg	-	248	4.5	4.9	155	+ More progressive chassis balance than the M4 - Feels unsettled on rough tarmac	****
BMW M2 Competition (F87)	265 F	2018-21	6/2979	404/5250	406/2350	1550kg	-	265	4.4	-	155	+ A more capable and involving M2 - More expensive and heavier, too	****
BMW M2 CS (F87)	285 F	2020-21	6/2979	444/6250	406/2350	1550kg	-	291	4.2	-	155	+ evo Car of the Year 2020 - Such quality comes at a price	****
BMW 1-series M Coupé	277 F	2011-12	6/2979	335/5900	369/1500	1495kg	-	228	4.9	-	155	+ Character, turbo pace and great looks - Came and went too quick	****
BMW M440i xDrive	282 D	£54,645	6/2998	369/5500	369/1900	1740kg	_	215	4.5		155	+ Punchy drivetrain with a chassis to match - That grille	****
BMW M4 Competition (G82)	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	****
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	****
BMW M4 CSL (G82)	305 F	£128,820	6/2993	542/6250	479/2750	1625kg	1640kg	339	3.7	_	190	+ Ballistic pace, beautiful cornering balance - Whole package doesn't quite gel	***
BMW M4 (F82)	218 F	2014-19	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1570kg	-	275	4.3	-	155	+ Ferociously fast - A handful on less-than-perfect or less-than-bone-dry roads	****
BMW M4 (192) BMW M4 Competition (F82)	262 F	2014-19	6/2979	444/7000	406/1850	1570kg	1645kg	287	4.3	4.4	155	+ The car the M4 always should have been - Shame everyone specs DCT	****
BMW M4 CS (F82)	254 F	2010-20	6/2979	454/6250	442/4000	1570kg	1610kg	292	3.9	4.4	174	+ The Car the M4 always should have been - Shame everyone specs DCT + A further-honed M4 - It ain't cheap	****
BMW M4 CS (F82) BMW M4 GTS (F82)	234 F 237 F	2017-19	6/2979	493/6250	442/4000	1510kg	-	332	3.9	3.7	190	+ A fulfuler-noned M4 - It aim t cheap + Vast improvement on lesser M4s - So it should be, given its price	****
			8/3999	493/6250							155		
BMW M3 (E92)	266 F	2007-13	8/3999	414/0300	295/3900	1580kg	-	266	4.8	4.3	ככו	+ Fends off all of its rivalsexcept the cheaper 1-series M Coupé	***



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	ISSUE NO.	PRICE OR YEARS ON SALE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT (CLAIMED)	WEIGHT (TESTED)	BHP/TON (CLAIMED)	0-62MPH (01.4MBD)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	мах мрн		
MAKE & MODEL	88	Æŝ	2 E	蓄	99	WE	WE	품증	0-6 8.4	9-8	MA	EVO RATING	
BMW M3 GTS (E92)	262 F	2010-11	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1530kg	-	295	4.4	-	190		****
BMW M3 (E46) BMW M3 CS (E46)	266 F 219 F	2000-07 2005-07	6/3246 6/3246	338/7900 338/7900	269/5000 269/5000	1495kg 1495kg	-	230 230	5.2 5.2	5.1	155 155		*****
BMW M3 CSL (E46)	279 F	2003-07	6/3246	355/7900	273/4900	1385kg	-	260	4.9	5.3	155		****
BMW M3 Evolution (E36)	148F	1996-98	6/3201	317/7400	258/3250	1515kg	-	215	5.5	5.4	158		****
BMW M3 (E30)	279 F	1989-90	4/2302	212/6750	170/4600	1165kg	-	185	6.7	6.7	147		****
BMW Z4 M Coupé	097F	2006-09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1420kg	-	242	5.0	-	155		****
BMW M Coupé (Z3)	263 F	1998-2002	6/3246	321/7400	261/4900	1375kg	-	237	5.3	-	155		****
BMW M840d xDrive BMW M850i xDrive	260 D 256 F	£76,270 £99,525	6/2993 8/4395	316/4400 523/5500	501/1750 553/1500	1830kg 1890kg	-	175 281	4.9 3.7	-	155 155		****
BMW M8 Competition	272 D	£123,435	8/4395	616/6000	553/1800	1885kg	-	332	3.2	-	155		**** ****
BMW M6 (F13)	218 F	2012-18	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1850kg	-	303	4.2	-	155		****
BMW i8	210 F	2014-20	3/1499	369/5800	420/3700	1535kg	1544kg	244	4.4	-	155		****
Chevrolet Camaro Z/28	220 F	2014-16	8/7008	505/6100	481/4800	1732kg	-	296	4.2	-	175	+ Scalpel-sharp engine, great chassis (really) - Feels very stiff on UK roads	****
Chevrolet Corvette Stingray (C8)	303 F	£92,890	8/6162	475/6450	452/5150	1655kg	-	292	3.5	-	184		****
Chevrolet Corvette Stingray (C7)	197F	2013-19	8/6162	460/6000	465/4600	1496kg	-	312	4.2	4.4	180		****
Chevrolet Corvette Z06 (C7) Ferrari Roma	<i>227F</i> 290 F	2015-19 £170,720	<i>8/6162</i> 8/3855	650/6000 611/5750	650/3600 560/3000	<i>1598kg</i> 1570kg		<i>413</i> 395	<i>3.7</i> 3.4	-	196 199+		****
Ford Mustang 5.0 V8 GT	266 F	£41,430	8/4951	444/7000	390/4600	1768kg		255	4.9	<u> </u>	155		****
Ford Mustang Mach 1	295 F	£56,995	8/4951	454/7250	390/4900	1754kg		263	4.8	-	166		****
Ford Mustang Shelby GT500	292 F	\$74,000	8/5163	760/7300	625/5000	1897kg	-	407	3.3	-	180		****
Honda Integra Type R (DC2)	259 F	1996-2000		187/8000	131/7300	1101kg	-	173	6.7	6.2	145		****
Jaguar F-type P300 RWD	271 D	£54,965	4/1997	296/5500	295/1500	1520kg	-	198	5.7	-	155		****
Jaguar F-type P450 RWD Jaguar F-type R (RWD)	- 218 F	£70,500 2014-17	8/5000 8/5000	444/6000 542/6500	428/2500 501/3500	1660kg 1650kg	- 1803kg	272 334	4.6		177 186		****
Jaguar F-type R (P575 AWD)	271 D	£98,110	8/5000	567/6500	516/3500	1743kg	-	331	3.5		186		****
Jaguar F-type SVR	224 D	2016-19	8/5000	567/6500	516/3500	1705kg	-	338	3.7	-	200		****
Jaguar XKR-S	168 F	2011-14	8/5000	542/6000	502/2500	1753kg	-	314	4.4	-	186		****
Jannarelly Design-1	279 F	£85,969	6/3498	321	274	950kg	-	343	3.9	-	135		****
Lexus RC F	295 F	£66,000	8/4969	470/6400	391/4800	1765kg	-	271	4.3	-	168		****
Lexus LC 500	290 F	£81,750	8/4969	470/7100	398/4800	1935kg	-	247	4.7	-	168		****
Lotus Exige S (V6)	209F	2012-15 2016-21	6/3456	345/7000 345/7000	295/4500	1176kg		298	3.8 3.9	-	170		****
Lotus Exige Sport 350 Lotus Exige Sport 380	221 F 231 F	2016-21	6/3456	375/6700	295/4500 302/5000	1125kg 1110kg		312 343	3.9		170 178		****
Lotus Exige Cup 380	240 D	2017	6/3456	375/6700	302/5000	1105kg		345	3.6		175		****
Lotus Exige Sport 410	283 F	2018-21	6/3456	410/7000	310/3500	1110kg	-	375	3.4	-	180		****
Lotus Exige Cup 430	253 F	2018-21	6/3456	430/7000	325/2600	1093kg	-	400	3.3	-	180		****
Lotus Exige S (S2)	253 F	2006-11	4/1796	218/7800	158/5500	930kg	-	238	4.3	-	148	0 0 , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	****
Lotus Exige (S1)	200 F	2000-01	4/1796	192/7800	146/5000	780kg	-	247	4.6	-	136		****
Lotus Evora	302F	2009-15	6/3456	276/6400	258/4700	1382kg	-	203	5.1	5.6	162		****
Lotus Evora S Lotus Evora 400	168 F 216 F	2010-15 2015-18	6/3456	345/7000 400/7000	295/4500 302/3500	1430kg 1395kg	-	245 291	4.8		172 186		****
Lotus Evora Sport 410	230 F	2017	6/3456	410/7000	310/3500	1325kg	-	314	4.2	_	190		****
Lotus Evora GT410	278 F	2020-21	6/3456	410/7000	295/3500	1361kg	-	306	4.2	-	186		****
Lotus Evora GT430	246 F	2018	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	****
Lotus Emira First Edition	299 F	£71,995	6/3456	394/6000	310/3500	-	1486kg	269	4.3	-	180		****
Maserati GranTurismo Trofeo	307 D	c£160,000	6/2992	542/6500	479/3000	1795kg	-	307	3.5	-	199		****
Maserati GranTurismo Sport Maserati GranTurismo MC	188 F 239 D	2013-19 2017-19	8/4691 8/4691	454/7000 454/7000	383/4750 383/4750	1880kg	-	245 246	4.8	-	186 187		****
Maserati GranTurismo MC Stradale	193 F	2017-19	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1873kg 1800kg	-	256	4.7	-	188		**** ****
Mazda RX-7 (FD)	226 F	1992-95	2R/1308	237/6500	218/5000	1284kg	-	188	5.4	-	156		****
Mazda RX-8	122 F	2003-11	2R/1308	228/8200	156/5500	1429kg	162	6.4	6.5	16.4	146		****
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Coupé (W205)	262 F	£78,078	8/3982	503/5500	516/2000	1745kg	1847kg	293	3.9	-	180		****
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Coupé (W204)	162 F	2011-14	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	-	277	4.5	4.4	155	. —	****
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Black Series (W204)	171 F	2012-13	8/6208	510/6800	457/5200	1635kg	-	317	4.2	-	186		****
Mercedes-Benz CLK63 AMG Black Series Mercedes-AMG S63 Coupé	277F 251 D	2007-09 £127,555	<i>8/6208</i> 8/3982	500/6800 604/5500	464/5250 664/2750	1760kg 1990kg	-	<i>289</i> 308	4.2	-	<i>186</i> 155		****
Mercedes-AMG S65 Coupé	209 D	£188,550	12/5980	621/4800	737/2300	2110kg	-	299	4.2		186		****
Mercedes-AMG GT	227D	2016-19	8/3982	469/6000	465/1700	1540kg	-	309	4.0	-	189		****
Mercedes-AMG GT S	216 F	2015-19	8/3982	515/6250	494/1800	1570kg	-	333	3.8	-	193		****
Mercedes-AMG GT C	241D	2017-19	8/3982	549/5750	501/1900	1625kg	-	343	3.7	-	196		****
Mitsubishi 3000GT	-	1990-99	6/2972	282/6000	300/3000	1719kg	-	167	5.8	-	159		***
Nissan 370Z	204F	2009-20	6/3696	323/7000	268/5200	1496kg	-	219	5.3	- 5.5	155 155		****
Nissan 350Z Nissan GT-R (2017MY)	107 F 242 F	2003-09 2017-22	6/3498	309/6800 562/6800	264/4800 470/3600	1532kg 1752kg	-	205 326	5.6 2.7	<i>5.5</i>	196		****
Nissan GT-R Track Edition (2017MY)	229 D	2017-22	6/3799	562/6800	470/3600	1745kg		327	2.7	_	196		****
Nissan GT-R Nismo (2020MY)	298 F	2020-22	6/3799	592/6800	481/3600	1703kg	-	353	2.8	-	196		****
Nissan GT-R (2012MY-2016MY)	238 F	2012-16	6/3799	542/6400	466/3200	1740kg	1783kg	316	2.7	3.2	196		****
Nissan GT-R (2010MY)	252 F	2010-12	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	2008-10	6/3799	473/6400	434/3200	1740kg	-	276	3.8	-	193		****
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R34)	265 F	1999-2002	6/2568	276/7000	289/4400	1560kg	1653kg	180	4.8	4.7	165		****
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R33) Noble M400	196 F 297 F	1997-99 2004-06	6/2568	276/6800 425/6500	271/4400 390/5000	1540kg 1060kg	-	182 407	4.9 3.5	5.4	155 185		*****
Polestar 1	269 D	£139,000	4/1969	592/6000	737	2350kg		256	4.2	-	155		****
Porsche 718 Cayman	287 F	£46,540	4/1988	296/6500	280/2150	1335kg	-	225	5.1	-	170		****
Porsche 718 Cayman T	270 F	£53,870	4/1988	296/6500	280/2150	1350kg	-	223	5.1	-	170		****
Porsche 718 Cayman S	249 F	£56,300	4/2497	345/6500	310/2100	1355kg	1449kg	259	4.6	3.9	177		****
Porsche 718 Cayman GTS 4.0	303 F	£68,700	6/3995	394/7000	310/5000	1405kg	-	285	4.5	-	182		****
Porsche 718 Cayman GT4	299 F	£78,750	6/3995	414/7600	310/5000	1420kg	1460kg	296	4.4	-	188		****
Porsche Cayman GT4 RS	305 F	£108,370 2013-16	6/3996 6/3436	493/8400	332/6750	1415kg	1460kg 1371kg	354 247	3.4 5.0	4.5	196 175		****
Porsche Cayman S (981) Porsche Cayman GTS (981)	202 F 219 F	2013-16 2014-16	6/3436	321/7400 335/7400	273/4500 280/4750	1320kg 1345kg	-	253	4.9	4.5	177		*****
Porsche Cayman GT4 (981)	265 F	2014-10	6/3800	380/7400	310/4750	1340kg	-	288	4.4	-	183		****
Porsche Cayman S (987)	231 F	2006-13	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1350kg	-	237	5.2	-	172		****
Porsche Cayman R (987)	158 F	2011-13	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	£89,800	6/2981	380/6500	332/1950	1505kg	-	257	4.2	-	182		****
Porsche 911 Carrera T (992)	305 D	£98,500	6/2981	380/6500	332/1950	1470kg	-	263	4.5	-	181		****
Porsche 911 Carrera S (992)	285 F	£102,800	6/2981	444/6500	391/1700	1480kg		305 295	4.2	-	191 190		****
Porsche 911 Carrera 4S (992) Porsche 911 Carrera GTS (992)	285 F 296 D	£108,800 £114,800	6/2981	444/6500 473/6500	391/1700 420/2300	1530kg 1510kg		318	4.2	-	190		****
Porsche 911 Carrera 4 GTS (992)	290 D 291 D	£114,800 £120,800	6/2981	473/6500	420/2300	1560kg	_	308	4.1	-	193		****
		,500			-300	0						, and a section deposits of 111 11000	

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MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE OR YEARS ON SALE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT (CLAIMED)	WEIGHT (TESTED)	BHP/TON (CLAIMED)	O-62MPH (CLAMB)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	мах мрн	EVO RATING				
Porsche 911 Dakar (992)	307 F	£120,800	6/2981	473/6500	420/2300	1605kg	-	299	3.4	-	149	+ An absolute blast in the right circumstances - Do you live near a desert?	****			
Porsche 911 Carrera (991.2)	218 F	2016-18	6/2981	365/6500	332/1700	1430kg	-	259	4.6	-	183	+ Forced induction didn't ruin the Carrera - Purists won't be happy	****			
Porsche 911 Carrera T (991.2)	264 F	2017-18	6/2981	365/6500	332/1700	1425kg	-	260	4.5	-	182	+ Lightweight windows, no rear seats, an LSD Only 5kg lighter than a basic Carrera	****			
Porsche 911 Carrera S (991.2)	217 F	2016-18	6/2981	414/6500	369/1700	1440kg	-	292	4.3	-	191	+ Blindingly fast - You'll want the sports exhaust	****			
Porsche 911 Carrera GTS (991.2)	238 F	2017-19	6/2981	444/6500	406/2150	1450kg	-	311	4.1	-	193	+ Everything a 911 Carrera should be - Costs nearly £20k more than a basic Carrera	****			
Porsche 911 Carrera S (991.1)	201 F	2012-15	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1415kg	-	283	4.5	4.3	188	+ A Carrera with supercar pace - Electric steering robs it of some tactility	****			
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.2)	121 F	2008-11	6/3800	380/6500	310/4400	1425kg	-	271	4.7	-	188	+ Poise, precision, blinding pace - Feels a bit clinical	****			
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.1)	249 F	2004-08	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 (996.1)	249F	1998-2001	6/3387	296/6800	258/4600	1320kg	-	228	5.2	-	174	+ The first evo Car of the Year, and it still stacks up today - Might feel a smidge dated	****			
Rolls-Royce Wraith	205 D	£240,768	12/6592	624/5600	590/1500	2360kg	-	260	4.6	-	155	+ Refinement, chassis, drivetrain - Shared componentry lets cabin down	****			
Subaru BRZ	248 F	2012-20	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 GR86	305 F	2022	4/2387	231/7000	184/3700	1276kg	1280kg	183	6.3	-	140	+ The car the GT86 always wanted to be - Sold out in 90 minutes	****			
Toyota GT86	286 F	2012-20	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1240kg	1227kg	161	7.6	6.9	140	+ Puts playfulness ahead of outright performance - Feels strategically hobbled	****			
Toyota GR Supra 2.0	287 F	£49,495	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	303 F	£53,495	6/2998	335/5000	369/1600	1502kg	-	227	4.6	-	155	+ Better than its BMW Z4 cousin, especially with a manual - Not better than an M240i	****			
Toyota MR2 (Mk1)	237F	1984-89	4/1587	122/6600	105/5000	977kg	-	127	8.2	-	124	+ Mid-engined fun comes no more affordable - Finding a good one will take time	****			
TVR Sagaris	265 F	2005-07	6/3996	406/7000	349/5000	1078kg	-	383	3.7	-	185	+ Looks outrageous - 406bhp feels a touch optimistic	****			
TVR Tuscan S (Mk2)	076 F	2005-07	6/3996	400/7000	315/5250	1100kg	-	369	4.0	-	185	+ Possibly TVR's best ever car - Aerodynamic 'enhancements'	****			
TVR Cerbera Speed Six	004 F	1998-2004	6/3996	350/6800	330/5000	1130kg	-	315	4.4	5.0	160+	+ Accomplished and desirable - When it's running	****			

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BEST OF THE REST

The Ferrari 296 GTB (left) and McLaren Artura both demonstrate how rewarding a hybrid supercar can be, the Lamborghini Huracán STO and Tecnica remind us why big-capacity naturally aspirated engines still hold huge appeal, and the current Porsche 911 GT3 is another highly desirable addition to the celebrated model line.

Aston Martin DBS Superleggera	264 F	£225,000	12/5204	715/6500	664/1800	1770kg	-	410	3.4	-	211	+ Broad spread of talents - It's not really 'Superlight'	****
Aston Martin DBS Superleggera Volante	273 F	£247,500	12/5204	715/6500	664/1800	1863kg*	-	390	3.6	-	211	+ Dazzling looks, immense performance - Width and weight bring compromises	****
Aston Martin Vanquish S (Mk2)	260 F	2017-18	12/5935	595/7000	465/5500	1739kg	-	348	3.5	3.9	201	+ Noise, poise, drama and charm - Not as rounded as the DB11	****
Aston Martin Vanquish S (Mk1)	110 F	2005-07	12/5935	520/7000	425/5800	1875kg	-	282	4.8	4.9	200	+ Vanquish joins the supercar greats - A tad intimidating at the limit	****
Aston Martin One-77	179 F	2010-12	12/7312	750/6000	553/7600	1740kg	-	438	3.7	-	220+	+ The engine, the looks, the drama - Gearbox hates manoeuvring; only 77 were made	****
Aston Martin Valkyrie	308 F	£2.5m	12/6500	1139/10,600	681/7000	1270kg*	-	911	3.0	-	220	+ Unique and uncompromising - Horrendous cockpit noise	****
Audi R8 V10 RWD	273 F	2020-21	10/5204	533/7900	398/6400	1595kg	-	340	3.7	-	199	+ More affordable than a 4WD R8 - But not more entertaining	****
Audi R8 V10 Performance RWD	305 F	£131,725	10/5204	562/7800	406/6400	1590kg	1640kg	359	3.7	-	204	+ Poise and polish - Newer mid-engined rivals feel sharper, faster and more capable	****
Audi R8 V10 quattro	261 F	2020-21	10/5204		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	£151,830	10/5204	611/8250	428/6600	1595kg	-	389	3.1	-	205	+ Stunning V10; approachable performance - Optional Dynamic steering feels unnatural	****
Audi R8 V10 GT RWD	305 D	c£200,000	10/5204	611/8000	411/6400	1570kg	-	395	3.4	-	199	+ New aggression brings out the best in RWD R8 - We need to try it on UK roads	****
Audi R8 V10 RWS (Mk2)	254 F	2017-19	10/5204	533/7800	398/6500	1590kg	1640kg	341	3.7	-	199	+ The first rear-wheel-drive Audi for 40 years - Drives largely like its 4WD counterpart	****
Audi R8 V10 (Mk2)	234 F	2015-19	10/5204	533/7800	398/6500	1640kg	-	330	3.5	-	198	+ All the R8 you really need - You can't get a manual gearbox	****
Audi R8 V8 (Mk1)	284 F	2007-15	8/4163	424/7900	317/4500	1560kg	1624kg	276	4.6	4.1	188	+ A true 911 alternative - The V8 engine got dropped too soon	****
Audi R8 V10 (Mk1)	254 F	2009-15	10/5204	518/8000	391/6500	1620kg	-	325	4.1	3.9	194	+ Real supercar feel - The V8 is cheaper, and still superb	****
Bugatti Chiron	244F	2016-22	16/7993	1479/6700	1180/2000	1995kg	-	753	2.5	-	261	+ Backs up the numbers with feel and emotion - Limited top speed(!)	****
Bugatti Chiron Super Sport	307F	2021-22	16/7993	1578/7050	1180/2250	1995kg	-	804	2.4	-	273	+ Hit 304.77mph in pre-production form - Are you Andy Wallace enough to go there?	****
Bugatti Veyron 16.4	134 F	2005-11	16/7993	987/6000	922/2200	1888kg	-	531	2.5	2.8	253	+ Superbly engineered four-wheel-drive quad-turbo rocket - Er, lacks luggage space?	****
Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Super Sport	151 F	2010-11	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	1991-95	12/3500		451/3750	1618kg		347	3.6		213	+ Superbly engineered four-wheel-drive quad-turbo rocket - It just fizzled out	****
Ferrari F8 Tributo	281 F	£203,476	8/3902	710/8000	568/3250	1435kg	_	503	2.9	-	<i>2</i> 11	+ 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	2015-19	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	2013-19	8/3902	710/8000	568/3000	1385kg	-	521	2.9		211+	+ Searingly fast and effortlessly capable - Takes a while to fully appreciate it	****
Ferrari 458 Italia	288 F	2010-20	8/4497	562/9000	398/6000	1485kg		384	3.4	3.2	202+	+ An astounding achievement - Paddleshift only	****
	301F	2013-15	8/4497	597/9000			-		3.0	J.Z -	202+		
Ferrari 458 Speciale					398/6000	1395kg	-	435	4.0		196+	+ evo Car of the Year 2014 - If you don't own a regular 458, nothing	****
Ferrari F430	254 F	2004-10	8/4308	483/8500	343/5250	1449kg	127// -	339		-		+ Just brilliant - Didn't you read the plus point?	****
Ferrari 430 Scuderia	274 F	2007-10	8/4308	503/8500	347/5250	1350kg	1374kg	378	3.6	3.5	198	+ Successful F1 technology transplant - Likes to shout about it	****
Ferrari 360 Modena	163 F	1999-2004		394/8500	275/4750	1390kg	-	288	4.5	-	183+	+ Worthy successor to 355 - Not quite as involving as it should be	****
Ferrari 360 Challenge Stradale	274 F	2003-04	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	1994-99	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	1993	8/3404	316/7200	239/5000	1180kg*	-	276	5.0	-	175	+ Utterly absorbing, with exceptional dynamics - Steering a little woolly	****
Ferrari 296 GTB	305 F	£245,000	6/2992	819/8000	546/6250	1470kg*	1660kg	566	2.9	-	<i>2</i> 05	+ Indulgently powerful, responsive, makes a success of hybrid tech - It's rather pricey	****
Ferrari 296 GTS	304 D	£279,248	6/2992	819/8000	546/6250	1540kg*	-	540	2.9	-	<i>2</i> 05	+ Magical when you're in its groove - Lacks the last degree of control of the GTB	****
Ferrari 812 Superfast	275 F	£262,963	12/6496	789/8500	529/7000	1630kg	-	492	2.9	3.1	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	2012-17	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	2017	12/6262	769/8500	520/6250	1520kg	-	514	2.9	-	211+	+ Alarmingly fast - Doesn't flow like a 458 Speciale	****
Ferrari 599 GTB Fiorano	275 F	2006-12	12/5999	611/7600	448/5600	1690kg	-	368	3.7	3.5	205	+ evo Car of the Year 2006 - Banks are getting harder to rob	****
Ferrari 599 GTO	161 F	2011-12	12/5999	661/8250	457/6500	1605kg	-	418	3.4	-	208+	+ One of the truly great Ferraris - Struggles for traction on poor surfaces	****
Ferrari 575M Fiorano Handling Pack	200 F	2002-06	12/5748	508/7250	434/5250	1688kg	-	298	3.7	4.2	205+	+ Fiorano pack makes 575 truly great - It should have been standard	****
Ferrari 550 Maranello	275 F	1996-2002	12/5474	478/7000	420/5000	1690kg	-	287	4.4	-	199	+ Everything - Nothing	****
Ferrari GTC4 Lusso T	246 D	2017-20	8/3855	602/7500	560/3000	1865kg	-	328	3.5	-	199	+ Effortless, comfortable GT - Misses the richer soundtrack of the V12	****
Ferrari GTC4 Lusso	264 F	2016-20	12/6262	680/8000	514/5750	1920kg	_	360	3.4	-	208	+ Rear-wheel steering increases agility - Not as engaging as other Ferraris	****
Ferrari FF	194 F	2011-15	12/6262	651/8000	504/6000	1880kg	_	347	3.7		208	+ Four seats and 4WD, but a proper Ferrari - Looks divide opinion	****
Ferrari 612 Scaglietti	090 F	2004-11	12/5748	533/7250	434/5250	1875kg		289	4.0	4.3	199	+ Awesomely capable grand tourer - See above	****
Ferrari 456 GT	209F	1992-97	12/5474	436/62500	406/4500	1690kg*		262	5.2	-	186	+ A genuine GT supercar - Running costs	****
Ferrari SF90 Stradale	299 F	£376,048	8/3990	986/7500	-	1570kg*	1742kg	638	2.5	-	211	+ Hugely fast hybrid-hypercar - Can feel clumsy when hustled	****
Ferrari SF90 Spider	300 D	£418.233	8/3990	986/7500	-	1670kg*	-	600	2.5		211	+ Mesmerising V8 with expertly integrated hybrid system - You need to pack light	****
Ferrari Daytona SP3	300 D	£410,233 c£2m	12/6496	828/9250	514/7250	1485kg*	-	566	2.9		211		****
										-		+ Epic naturally aspirated V12; sports prototype looks - We didn't get invited to buy one	
Ferrari LaFerrari	203 F	2013-15	12/6262	950/9000	664/6750	1574kg	-	613	3.0		217+	+ Perhaps the greatest Ferrari ever - Brakes lack a touch of precision on track	****
Ferrari Enzo	275 F	2002-04	12/5999	651/7800	485/5500	1365kg	-	485	3.7	3.5	217+	+ Intoxicating, exploitable - Cabin detailing falls short of a Zonda or F1 's	****
Ferrari F50	275 F	1995-97	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	1987-92	8/2936	471/7000	426/4000	1100kg*	-	437	4.1	-	201	+ Brutally fast - It's in the dictionary under 'turbo lag'	****
Ford GT	253 F	\$450,000	6/3497	647/6250	550/5900	1385kg*	-	475	2.8	-	216	+ Everything it does on track - Too many of the things it does on the road	****
Ford GT	200 F	2004-06	8/5409	550/6500	500/3750	1583kg	-	353	3.9	-	205	+ evo Car of the Year 2005 - Don't scalp yourself getting in	****











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	ISSUE NO.	OE ARS ON SALE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT (CLAIMED)	E) (B)	BHP/TON (CLAMBD)	O-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH		
MAKE & MODEL	188	PRICE OR YEARS	S K	눒	ä	WEIN	WEIGHT (TESTED)		0-6	0-9 III	WA	EVO RATING	
Hennessey Venom F5	302 D	c£1.5m	8/6555	1817/8000	1198/5000	1360kg	-	1357	2.6	-	311		****
Honda NSX Honda NSX (NA2)	270 F 188 F	£144,765 1997-2005	6/3493 6/3179	573 276/7300	476/2000 224/5300	1776kg 1410kg	-	328 196	2.9 5.7	3.0	191 168		*****
Honda NSX-R (NA2)	301F	2002-03	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1270kg	-	221	4.4	-	168		****
Jaguar XJ220	157 F	1992-94	6/3498	542/7200	475/4500	1470kg	-	375	3.7	-	213		****
Koenigsegg One:1	202 F	2014-15	8/5065	1341/7500	1011/6000	1360kg	-	1002	2.9	-	273		****
Koenigsegg Agera R	180 F	2011-14	8/5032	1124/7100	885/2700	1435kg	-	796	2.8	-	273		****
Koenigsegg CCXR Edition	118 F	2008-10	8/4800	1004/7000		1280kg*	1557/1-	797	2.9		250+		****
Lamborghini Huracán Lamborghini Huracán Evo RWD	209 D 281 F	2014-19 £164,400	10/5204 10/5204		413/6500 413/6500	1422kg* 1389kg*	1554kg	430 440	<i>3.2</i> 3.3	-	<i>201+</i> 202	+ Defies the numbers; incredible point-to-point pace - Takes work to find its sweet-spot + The most complete Huracán yet - Prescriptive driver modes still frustrate	****
Lamborghini Huracán Evo	264 F	£198,307	10/5204		442/6500	1422kg*	_	451	2.9	-	202+		****
Lamborghini Huracán Evo Spyder	269 F	£218,137	10/5204		442/6500	1542kg*	_	416	3.1	-	202		****
Lamborghini Huracán Performante	242 F	2017-19	10/5204	631/8000	442/6500	1382kg*	-	464	2.9	-	201+		****
Lamborghini Huracán Tecnica	301 D	£212,000	10/5204	631/8000	417/6500	1379kg*	-	450	3.2	-	202	+ The Huracán bows out on an all-time high - We won't see its like again	****
Lamborghini Huracán STO	301F	£260,012	10/5204		417/6500	1339kg*	1548kg	479	3.0	-	193		****
Lamborghini Gallardo LP550-2 Balboni	138 F	2009-10	10/5204		398/6500	1380kg*	-	399	3.9	-	199		****
Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4 Lamborghini Gallardo LP570-4 Superleggera	180 D 152 F	2008-13 2010-13	10/5204		<i>398/6500</i> <i>398/6500</i>	1410kg* 1340kg*		398 426	3.7 3.4	3.5	202 202		****
Lamborghini Gallardo	094 F	2003-08	10/4961	513/8000	376/4250	1430kg*		364	4.0	4.3	196		****
Lamborghini Aventador	194 F	2011-17	12/6498	690/8250	509/5500	1575kg*	-	445	2.9	-	217		****
Lamborghini Aventador S	246 F	2016-21	12/6498		509/5500	1575kg*	-	471	2.9	-	217		****
Lamborghini Aventador SV	216 F	2015-17	12/6498	740/8400	509/5500	1525kg*	-	493	2.8	-	217+		****
Lamborghini Aventador SVJ	282 F	£360,000	12/6498	759/8500	531/6750	1525kg*	-	506	2.8	-	218		****
Lamborghini Aventador SVJ Roadster	268 D	£387,987	12/6498	759/8500	531/6750	1575kg*	-	490	2.9		217+		****
Lamborghini Aventador LP780-4 Ultimae Lamborghini Sián FKP 37	300 F 284 F	£324,000 £3.120.000	12/6498 12/6498	769/8500 808/8500	531/6750 531/6750	1550kg* 1595kg*	-	504 515	2.8		221		****
Lamborghini Countach LPI 800-4	300 F	£2,000,000		802/8500	531/6750	1595kg*		511	2.8	-	221		****
Lamborghini Murciélago	089 D	2001-06	12/6192	572/7500	479/5400	1650kg*	-	351	4.0		206		****
Lamborghini Murciélago LP640	275 F	2006-11	12/6496	631/8000	487/6000	1665kg*	-	385	3.8	-	211		****
Lamborghini Murciélago LP670-4 SV	200 F	2009-11	12/6496	661/8000	487/6500	1565kg*	-	429	3.3	3.2	212	+ A supercar in its truest, wildest sense - Be prepared for stares	****
Lamborghini Diablo VT 6.0	275 F	2000-02	12/5992	543/7100	457/5500	1625kg*	-	343	3.9	-	208		****
Lexus LFA/LFA Nürburgring	200 F	2010-12	10/4805		354/6800	1480kg	-	379	3.7	-	202		****
Lotus Esprit Sport 350 Maserati MC20	<i>171 F</i> 305 F	1999-2001 £204,520	8/3506 6/2992	349/6500 621/7500	<i>295/4250</i> 538/3000	1299kg	- 1700kg	274 428	4.3	-	175 203		****
Maserati MC20 Cielo	304 D	£204,520 £231,885	6/2992	621/7500	538/3000	1475kg* 1560kg*	1/UUKg	404	2.9	nīje e	203		*****
McLaren 570S	229F	2015-19	8/3799	562/7500	443/5000		-	393	3.2	-	204		****
McLaren 570GT	261 F	2016-18	8/3799	562/7500	443/5000		-	381	3.4	-	204	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	****
McLaren 600LT	257 F	2018-21	8/3799	592/7500	457/5500	1356kg	-	444	2.9	-	204		****
McLaren 620R	268 F	2020-21	8/3799	611/7500	457/5500	1386kg	-	448	2.9	-	200		****
McLaren GT	296 F	£165,230	8/3994	612/7500	465/5500	1530kg	-	406	3.2	-	203		****
McLaren Artura	305 F 262 F	£189,200 £208,600	6/2993 8/3994	671/7500 710/7250	530/2250 568/5500	1498kg	1560kg	455 508	3.0	2.9	205 212		****
McLaren 720S McLaren 720S Spider	288 F	£242,000	8/3994	710/7250	568/5500	1419kg 1468kg		491	2.9	2.9	212	·	*****
McLaren 765LT	281 F	£280,000	8/3994	754/7500	590/5500	1339kg	-	572	2.8	-	205		****
McLaren 765LT Spider	306 F	£310,500	8/3994	754/7500	590/5500	1388kg	-	553	2.8	-	205		****
McLaren 650S	196 F	2014-17	8/3799	641/7250	500/6000	1428kg	-	456	3.0	-	207	+ Better brakes, balance and looks than 12C; more power too - Which all comes at a price	****
McLaren 675LT	248 F	2015-17	8/3799	666/7100	516/5500	1328kg	-	510	2.9	-	205		****
McLaren 12C	264 F	2011-14	8/3799	616/7500	442/3000		1466kg	435	3.3	-	207		****
McLaren Senna McLaren Elva	252 F	£750,000	8/3999	789/7250	590/5500	1198kg*	-	669	2.8	-	211		****
McLaren P1	294 D 276 F	£1,425,000 2013-15	8/3994 8/3799	804/7500 903/7500	590/5500 664/4000	1269kg 1490kg	-	644 616	2.8		203 217		****
McLaren F1	228 F	1994-98	12/6064		479/4000	1138kg	-	560	3.2	-	240		****
Mercedes-AMG GT R	261 D	£158,285	8/3982	577/6250	516/2100	1575kg	-	372	3.6	3.3	198		****
Mercedes-AMG GT R Pro	269 F	2019-20	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	****
Mercedes-AMG GT Black Series	283 F	£335,000	8/3982	720/6700	590/2000	1520kg	-	480	3.2	-	202		****
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG	264 F	2010-15	8/6208	563/6800	479/4750	1620kg	-	335	3.9	4.1	197		****
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Black Series Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren	204 F 228 F	2013-15 2003-07	8/6208 8/5439	622/7400 617/6500	468/5500 575/3250	1550kg	-	408 370	3.6 3.8	-	196 208		****
Noble M600	186 F	2003-07	8/4439	650/6800	604/3800	1693kg 1198kg*		551	3.5	3.8	225		****
Pagani Huayra	185 F	c£1m	12/5980	720/5800	737/2250	1350kg*		542	3.3	-	224		****
Pagani Zonda S (7.3)	096 F	2002-05	12/7291	547/5900	553/4050	1280kg*	-	434	3.7		197		****
Pagani Zonda F	295 F	2005-06	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)	299 F	£135,700	6/3996	503/8400	347/6100	1418kg	1472kg	360	3.9	-	199		****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (992)	304F	£178,500	6/3996	518/8500	343/6300	1450kg	-	363	3.2	-	184		****
Porsche 911 GT3 (991.2)	256 F	2017-19	6/3996	493/8250	339/6000	1413kg	1452kg	355	3.9	-	198		****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991.2) Porsche 911 GT2 RS (991.2)	278 F 257 F	2018-20 2018-19	6/3996 6/3800	513/8250 690/7000	347/6000 553/2500	1430kg 1470kg	-	364 477	3.2 2.8	-	193 211		*****
Porsche 911 GT3 (991.1)	206 F	2013-16	6/3799	468/8250	324/6250	1470kg	1448kg		3.5		196		****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991.1)	223 F	2015-16	6/3996	493/8250	339/6250	1420kg	-	353	3.3	3.0	193		****
Porsche 911 R (991.1)	229 F	2016	6/3996	493/8250	339/6250	1370kg	-	366	3.8	-	200		****
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.2)	182 F	2009-11	6/3797	429/7600	317/6250	1395kg	-	312	4.1	4.2	194		****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (3.8, 997.2)	248 F	2010-11	6/3797	444/7900	317/6750	1370kg	-	329	4.0	-	193		****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS 4.0 (997.2)	274 F	2011-12	6/3996	493/8250	339/5750	1360kg	1463kg	368	3.8	-	193		****
Porsche 911 GT2 RS (997.2) Porsche 911 GT3 (997.1)	204 F 182 F	2010-13 2007-09	6/3600 6/3600	611/6500 409/7600	516/2250 298/5500	1370kg 1395kg	1452kg	453 298	3.5 4.3	4.3	205 192		*****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (997.1)	102 F	2007-09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1375kg	-	302	4.2	-	192		****
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.2)	221F	2003-05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1380kg	_	272	4.5	4.3	190		****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (996.2)	068 F	2004-05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1360kg	-	280	4.4	-	190		****
Porsche 911 GT2 (996.2)	072 F	2004-06	6/3600	475/5700	472/3500	1420kg	-	338	4.0	-	198	+ Revisions made it even more of a star than the 456bhp 996.1GT2 - Care still required	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.1)	266 F	1999-2001	6/3600	360/7200	273/5000	1350kg	-	271	4.8	4.5	187		****
Porsche 911 Turbo S (992)	295 F	£168,900	6/3745	641/6750	590/2500	1640kg	-	397	2.7	-	205		****
Porsche 911 Turbo (991.2)	234 F	2016-19	6/3800	533/6400	524/1950	1595kg	-	340	3.0	2.6	198		****
Porsche 911 Turbo S (991.2) Porsche 911 Turbo S (991.1)	223 F 217 F	2016-19 2013-15	6/3800	572/6750 552/6500	553/2250 553/2200	1600kg 1605kg	- 1613kg	363 349	2.9 3.1	2.6	205 197		*****
Porsche 911 Turbo (997.2)	218 F	2009-13	6/3800	493/6000	479/1950	1570kg	-	319	3.7	3.2	194		****
Porsche 911 Turbo (997.1)	094F	2006-09	6/3600	472/6000	457/1950	1585kg	-	303	3.7	4.0	193		****
Porsche 911 Turbo (996)	249 F	2000-06	6/3600	414/6000	413/2700	1540kg	-	273	4.2	4.1	190		****
Porsche 911 Turbo (993)	066 F	1995-98	6/3600	402/5750	398/4500	1500kg	-	272	4.3	-	180		****
Porsche 918 Spyder	233 F	2013-15	8/4593	875/8500	944/6600	1674kg	-	531	2.6	-	211		****
Porsche Carrera GT	200 F	2004-06	10/5733	604/8000	435/5750	1380kg	-	445	3.9		<i>205</i> 256		****
Rimac Nevera	307 F	c£2.1m	1400kW	1888	1740	2300kg		834	2.0		230	+ Staggering speed; equally impressive dynamics - Electric hypercars aren't light	****





DOA: MASERATI QUATTROPORTE II

Progress on this Citroën SM-derived four-door stalled when the French firm faltered in the mid-'70s

HE ORIGINAL MASERATI QUATTROPORTE of 1963 was a Frua-styled, V8-powered saloon accurately summed up by the words in an Italian-market ad that said it was 'fast, elegant, comfortable, sober'. In 1968 Citroën took control of Maserati and the following year the Quattroporte was retired without replacement. But the French company had big plans for its new acquisition and they included an all-new four-door, the genes of which would arrive in 1970 when Citroën announced a bold new grand touring coupe, the SM.

Under the flying-saucer styling, the SM married the far-sighted chassis systems of the DS to a new 2.7-litre V6, developed by Maserati in double-quick time using its own V8, the one found in the old Quattroporte, as a starting point. For reasons that might never be explained, the SM became the darling of heavy-handed political leaders, boasting Idi Amin, Haile Selassie, Leonid Brezhnev and the Shah of Iran as owners. In its early days, however, the first prominent politician to declare a fondness for the SM was car-loving French president Georges Pompidou, who commissioned Citroën to build a longer version for state duties.

Chapron was subcontracted to make this a reality and in 1972 two extended-wheelbase, four-door convertible SMs were delivered to the Élysée

Palace. Then, later in '72, and having got its eye in with these presidential prototypes, Chapron announced the SM Opera, a four-door saloon with 30cm let into the coupe's wheelbase. This was the starting point for the second-generation Quattroporte. Maserati upped the capacity of the V6 to 3 litres and widened the rear track, but this was to be, to all intents and purposes, an Italianised take on the four-door SM, right down to the front-wheel-drive chassis, oleopneumatic suspension, Citroën's aggressively self-centring DIRAVI hydraulic steering, and a dashboard that used many SM bits.

On the outside the SM parts catalogue was raided for the door handles and glassed-in headlights, but the rest of it was to a unique style created by Bertone's Marcello Gandini that looked like a badly drawn Mk2 Granada. Working through the four qualities ascribed to the original Quattroporte, the new model looked certain to be comfortable, especially given the amount of space in the back permitted by the front-wheel-drive powertrain. You could also argue that it appeared sober, though elegant was much more of a stretch. And there was a really big problem with the fourth word on that list: fast.

The original SM was famously not a fireball and the new Quattroporte, even with an engine capacity stretch to wring out 210

horsepower, wasn't shaping up to have the kind of performance expected of a Maserati. So in 1974 Citroën authorised the Italians to develop a new V8 based on the V6 they had developed from an old V8. It probably made sense at the time. The result was a 4-litre prototype making somewhere around 275bhp, which was installed into an SM for testing. Unfortunately, Citroën went bankrupt shortly afterwards and in 1975 Maserati was sold to De Tomaso, who scrapped the V8 project and, eventually, the car it was destined for.

But there's a twist because, while this page generally deals with cars that got far along the development process and died before they reached the showroom, the Quattroporte II did, technically, go on sale. Maserati never got around to homologating it for sale within the European Economic Community, and De Tomaso lacked either the funds or the inclination to do anything about that, but it was offered in Spain, which was yet to join the EEC, and the Middle East. It's generally accepted that just 12 V6-powered cars were made, plus one prototype.

As for the V8, when that plan was cancelled the lone running engine was removed from the SM test hack and put into storage, only to be rescued and revived some 40 years later, and in 2009 a French Citroënista was able to install it once again in the nose of an SM.



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