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Sierra/Sapphire								Focus MK2 RS	●	●	●	●		●	
Cosworth 2wd	●							Focus MK3 ST250	●	●	●	●		●	
Sierra/Sapphire								Focus MK3 ST TDCi							●
Cosworth 4wd	●							Focus MK3 RS	●		●	●		●	
Escort Cosworth	●							Fiesta MK7 1.6 Zetec S						●	
Escort RS Turbo	●					●		Fiesta MK7 1.0 Ecoboost						●	
Focus MK1 RS	●		●	●		●		Fiesta MK7 ST180	●		●	●		●	
Focus Mk1 ST170	●					●		Fiesta MK8 1.0 Ecoboost							●
Focus MK2 ST225	●	●	●	●		●		Fiesta MK8 ST	●		●		●	●	●



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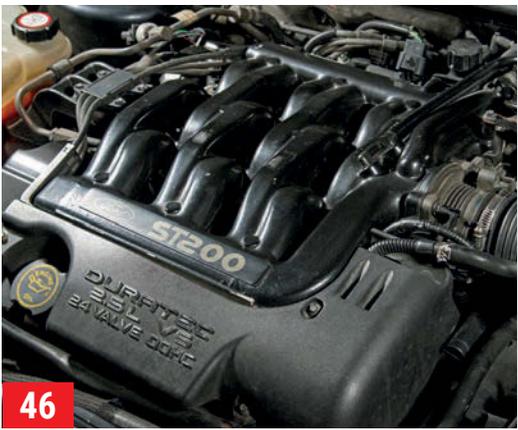
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EDITORIAL

EDITOR Jamie King

ART EDITOR Mark Field

SUB EDITOR Dan Williamson

CONTRIBUTORS Dan Williamson, Graham Robson, Ade Brannan,
Matt Richardson, Chris Wallbank, Davy Lewis, Jon Hill, Carshoot.de

ADVERTISEMENT SALES

ADVERTISING SALES Talk Media Sales

01732 445325, info@talkmediasales.co.uk

MANAGEMENT

CHIEF EXECUTIVE Steve Wright

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER Phil Weeden

MANAGING DIRECTOR Kevin McCormick

SUBSCRIPTION MARKETING DIRECTOR Gill Lambert

RETAIL DIRECTOR Steve Brown

PRINT PRODUCTION MANAGER Georgina Harris

PRINT PRODUCTION CONTROLLERS Kelly Orriss and Hayley Brown

DISTRIBUTION IN GREAT BRITAIN

MARKETFORCE (UK)

121-141 Westbourne Terrace, London W2 6JR

Tel: 0330 390 6555

DISTRIBUTION IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

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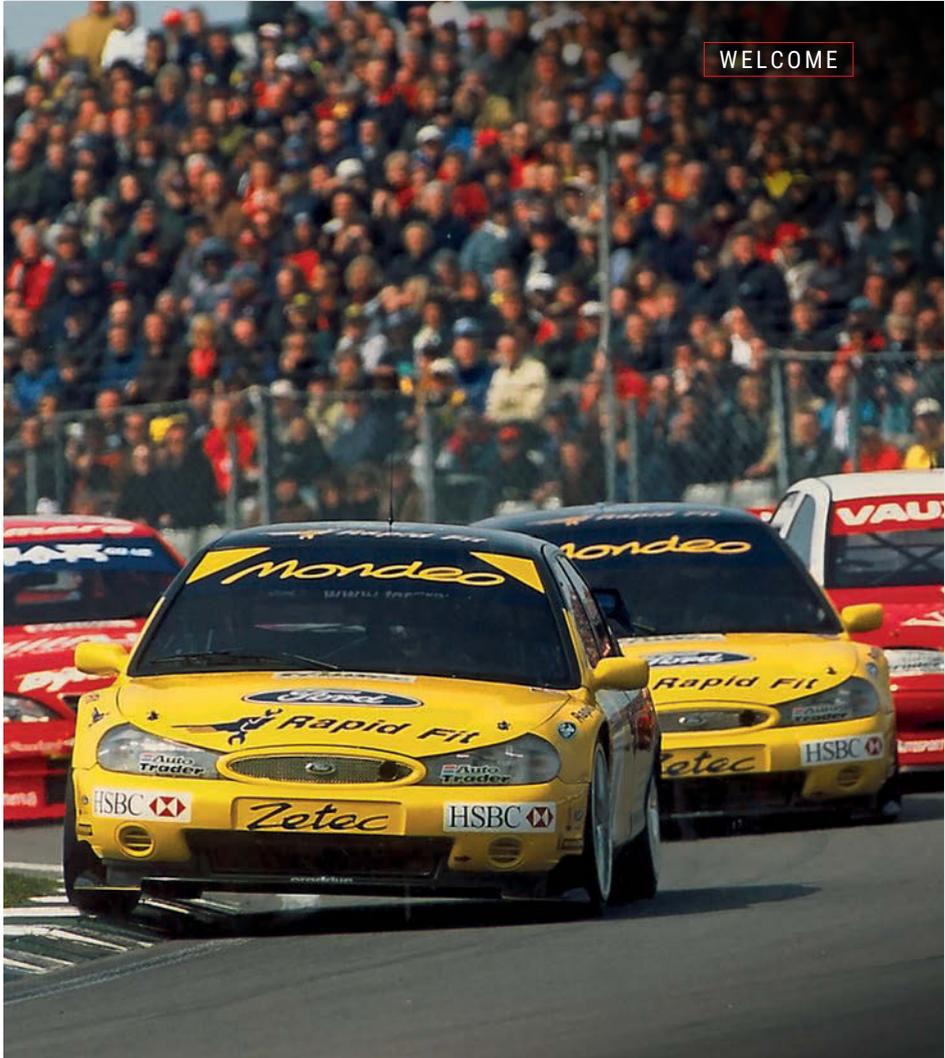
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WELCOME

WELCOME

Growing up watching the BTCC and playing TOCA on the Playstation, I have a real soft spot for the Mondeo. My personal favourite is the Mk2 (it reminds me of Nigel Mansell's BTCC racer) but I have to confess that my old ST220 estate was one of the best fast Fords I've ever driven, let alone owned.

Tony Blair may have coined the famous 'Mondeo Man' phrase for the 1997 general election, but I'll go one further and declare that all true fast Ford fans will own a performance Mondeo at some point in their lives.

And that's despite the Mondeo living most of its life in the shadows of more shouty models. While the Mondeo was in production, the headlines were stolen by the sporty variants of the Focus and Fiesta, but now the Mondeo is no more, car fans are starting to realise what they will be missing.

That's because there is nothing else out there that offers the same blend of performance and practicality as a fast Mondeo.

And that's what we're here to celebrate. While the wider Mondeo story and what the model did for Ford is a remarkable one, for us

petrolheads we're only really interested in the performance versions. So that's precisely what this issue of *Total Ford* is all about.

Inside, we tell the model history of the performance variants, from the earliest Si, through the fearsome ST models, and right up to the last Titanium and ST-Line versions.

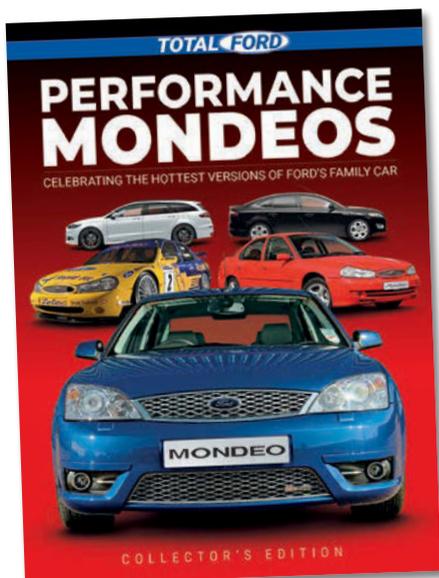
Of course, the Mondeo was heavily linked to the BTCC in the Nineties, so we also look at the Mondeo's BTCC successes, and have full features on two of the most impressive touring cars Ford ever built.

For those looking to buy a performance Mondeo, we've got full guides on three of the most popular sporty models: ST200, ST220, and 2.5T.

And for those who already own a Mondeo and are looking to improve performance, we've got tuning guides on the ST24/ST200 and ST220, as well as an engine guide for the Duratec V6 engines.

All that, plus some of the very best Mondeo feature cars ever to appear in print. This issue of *Total Ford* really is the ultimate guide to performance Mondeos. Enjoy the mag!

JAMIE KING EDITOR



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Fed up with not being able to get hold of performance parts for the Mondeo in the UK, Phil Pratt and Danny Cox looked to the other side of the Atlantic for their tuning products.

Phil recalls the day he bought his Mk1: "My mate owned it, and when I heard it was up for sale I made him an offer. It was a bit of a crowd-puller at shows because of all the ICE it had, but it did lack power."

Danny had much the same story with his Mk2. "I got the car when it was only eight months old, and straight away started tinkering with it to try and squeeze out some more power," he explains.

Phil and Danny met through the Mondeo Enthusiasts' Group. The guys got talking about what they were planning to do with their motors and agreed they wanted to stick with the original 2.0-litre Zetec engines.

Phil tweaked his Mk1 with a few goodies

including a set of high-lift cams, a tubular manifold and a Unichip.

"The car was custom-mapped and made 155bhp. It had nitrous fitted too, and made just over 200bhp with that," Phil grins, "but I wanted it to make that sort of power all the time, and still have the option of nitrous on top."

AMERICA'S GOT TALENT

He wasted no time looking at forced-





U.S. AND THEM

With a host of goodies from America, these two supercharged Mondeos step away from the tried-and-tested and opt for blower power

Words JAMIE / Photos JON HILL



Half-leather seats were robbed from an ST24



Early Alpine sat-nav is keeping it old-school



Boost gauge? On a Mondeo? Yes please!



Twin-exit exhaust system meant the rear bumper had to be modified

MK1 MONDEO

ENGINE 1989cc Zetec Silver Top, Jackson Racing supercharger kit modified to fit Silver Top Zetec, smaller crank pulley for higher boost, Focus Central 65mm throttle body, Jackson Racing inlet manifold ported to accept 65mm throttle body, Ford Racing 42lb/hr injectors, ceramic-coated 4-2-1 manifold, Stage 2 cams, OBX adjustable cam pulleys, Unichip, Snow Performance water injection, Powerflow twin-exit exhaust system

POWER 230bhp (plus 50bhp nitrous)

TRANSMISSION Original Mondeo gearbox, lightened flywheel, Black Diamond uprated clutch

SUSPENSION Flo-Flex uprated front wishbones, tubular adjustable rear control arms, uprated rear drop links, Koni adjustable shocks and Koni -40mm lowering springs, front strut brace

BRAKES Front: Mk3 Mondeo callipers with Focus ST170 drilled and grooved discs, braided brake hoses, EBC Greenstuff pads; rear: Mondeo V6 disc conversion, drilled and grooved discs, Greenstuff pads, braided hoses

WHEELS & TYRES BK Racing BK299 18in alloys in dark chrome, with 215/35x18 Federal tyres (front) and 215/35x18 Toyo Proxes (rear)

EXTERIOR Morette headlights, tinted windows, full RS bodykit, delocked doors, Lexus-style rear lights, custom front grille, Escort Cosworth bonnet vents

INTERIOR White dials, ST24 half-leather seats, gauges mounted on A-pillar, removable Momo steering wheel, stainless inner sill plates, N2O bottle in boot, battery relocated to boot, Alpine head unit, Centurion DVD/MP3 player under seat, custom speaker pods in doors, 6in TV screen moulded into dash surround, TV screens in headrests, Alpine sat-nav system, Genesis amp, JL Audio 12in sub, 80GB M-Station in-car jukebox

induction options.

“There’s not much available here, so I started looking on US forum Focal Jet. They were well into their Zetec stuff and offered turbo and supercharger conversions,” says Phil. After looking at several bolt-on turbo conversions, and all the work involved with fitting, Phil decided the only viable option was a supercharger.

The kit that caught Phil’s eye was the Jackson Racing low-boost bolt-on jobbie. Originally designed for a Black Top Zetec, Phil decided to order it and modify it to suit the Mk1’s earlier Silver Top.

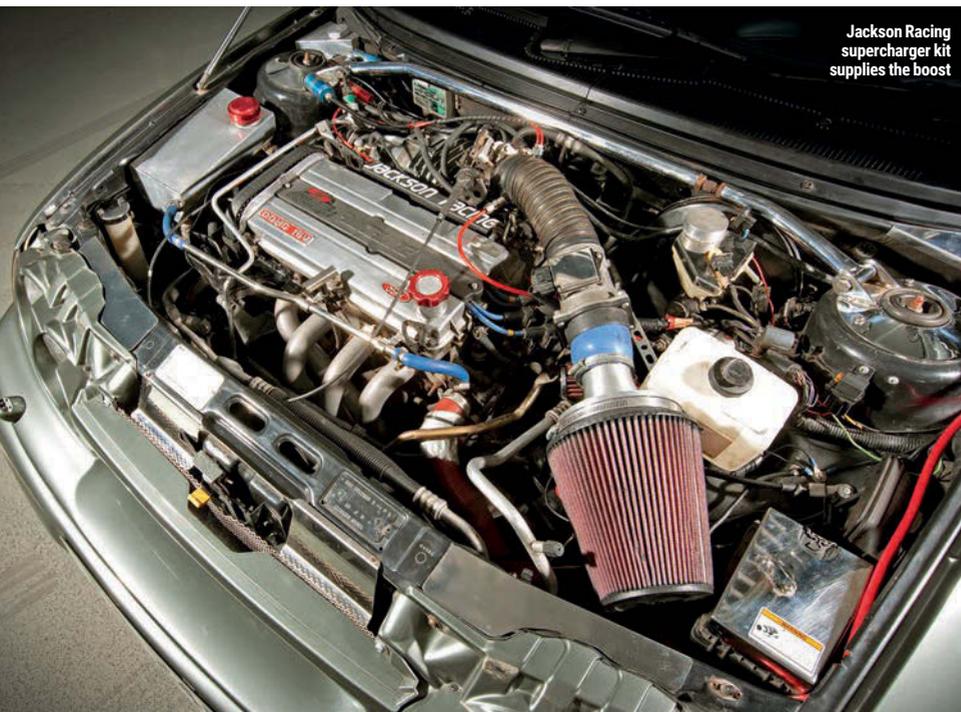
“There wasn’t too much that needed modifying to make it fit,” he grins. “Just a few bits here and there”.

With the kit fitted Phil took the car back to have it remapped. The conversion, running at the lower boost setting of 6psi, made an impressive 207bhp.

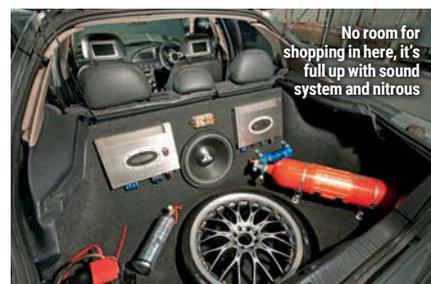
Meanwhile, Danny was also working on his Mk2. It wasn’t long before it featured a Powerflow cat-back exhaust system, induction kit, tinted windows and different wheels.

Danny then turned his attention to the bodywork; he remembers: “The boot got keyed on Boxing Day, so needing to repair it I decided to fill it and go for the smooth look.” →

“I STARTED LOOKING ON US FORUM FOCAL JET. THEY WERE WELL INTO THEIR ZETEC STUFF AND OFFERED TURBO AND SUPERCHARGER CONVERSIONS”



Jackson Racing supercharger kit supplies the boost



No room for shopping in here, it’s full up with sound system and nitrous

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?



BK Racing 18s suit the Mk1 Mondeo



To complement it Danny opted for a modified rear bumper with number plate cut-out, removed the door strips, colour-coded the door handles, and de-locked the doors.

After seeing Phil's Mk1, Danny started thinking about fitting a 'charger to his Mondy. He recalls, "I'd done some research of my own on Focal Jet, but speaking to Phil about his made my mind up."

PIPE DOWN

After that Danny ordered the same kit as Phil's, along with a custom 4-2-1 manifold and

downpipe. He groans, "The downpipe was actually the wrong one. It was for a Mk1 Mondeo, not the Mk2, so I needed to get it modified slightly to fit properly."

Pipecraft in Basildon carried out the job, and with the revised item back, Danny bolted everything together.

Along with the supercharger kit, Danny fitted a larger 65mm throttle body, a set of bigger 30lb/hr injectors and a Focus alternator.

"I had to fit the Focus alternator because the Mondeo one is too big to run with the supercharger. It was the hottest day of the year

when I decided to do it, and with no car I had to cycle eight miles to a scrapyard to get one. I was knackered when I got back," laughs Danny.

With everything fitted, Danny drove the car very gingerly for a week or two until he could get the car mapped. With the 'charger running at a safe 7psi, a Unichip similar to the part on Phil's Mk1 was added and the Mondy was mapped to an impressive 203bhp and 178lb.ft.

BLOWN ENGINE

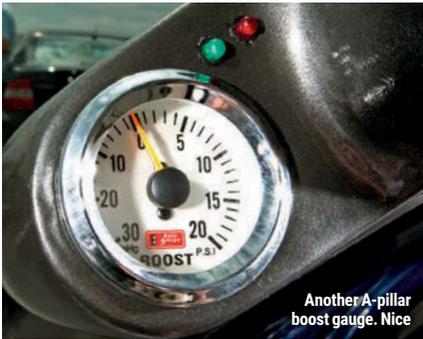
While Danny was busy, Phil was having a few problems with his Mk1. "The old engine had

Mk2 looks menacing with twin headlights





Water injection helps keep temps under control



Another A-pillar boost gauge. Nice



Leather trim courtesy of a Ghia X adds a touch of luxury



Jackson supercharger is a bolt-on upgrade for the later Black Top Zetec

“I’D DONE SOME RESEARCH OF MY OWN ON FOCAL JET, BUT SPEAKING TO PHIL ABOUT HIS MADE MY MIND UP”

seen better days, and I eventually killed it at a track day. The bottom end started rattling. I managed to get a couple of months’ use out of it before it packed up,” he recalls.

Learning from his mistakes, Phil started planning the new engine build. A second-hand Zetec was sourced. Phil then started gathering more parts from America, including a set of ARP rod bolts, bigger injectors, and a smaller pulley for the supercharger, allowing 10psi boost pressure. The fresh engine was built, run-in and then remapped, where it made 230bhp without the gas, and an almighty 257bhp with the nitrous on.

“It only had 25bhp jets in at the time,” says Phil. “Now it’s got a 50bhp shot in it.”

Another thing Phil sourced from the US was a Snow Performance water injection kit, which includes everything needed to wire up the system and can be activated either by the MAF sensor or the boost pressure. The whole kit cost him only £150, and even though it came from the other side of the world, it took only a week to be delivered to Phil’s door.

“I have ordered stuff from UK tuners and it’s

ENGINE 1988cc Zetec Black Top, Jackson Racing supercharger kit, 65mm Focus Central throttle body, Snow Performance water injection, 30lb/hr injectors, Unichip, 4-2-1 manifold with modified downpipe, de-cat pipe, Powerflow twin-exit exhaust system

POWER 203bhp

TRANSMISSION Original Mondeo gearbox, short shifter, uprated organic clutch

SUSPENSION Pi-40mm springs, factory dampers

BRAKES Focus ST170 drilled discs with Mondeo Mk3 callipers, EBC Greenstuff pads all round, braided hoses

WHEELS & TYRES Team Dynamics Diablo 18in alloys with 225/35x18 Falken 452 tyres

EXTERIOR ST front bumper, smoothed tailgate, rubbing strips removed, colour-coded door handles, custom front grilles, smoked rear lights, modified rear bumper with relocated number plate, tinted windows, Morette headlights

INTERIOR Leather trim from Mondeo Ghia X, blue LED conversion, Plasma dials, boost gauge in A-pillar pod, Pioneer head unit, Phoenix Gold component speakers, twin 10in subs in custom boxes, Lanzar amps

taken longer to get to me than stuff I’ve ordered from America,” shrugs Phil.

Phil was so impressed with the water injection kit that he instantly told Danny.

Danny recalls: “Because the supercharger kit doesn’t use an intercooler it’s a good idea to have some way of keeping the inlet temps down, and when Phil ordered his kit, we found the perfect answer. He was chuffed with it, and I knew it would fit my Mk2, so I ordered one too.”

With the engines sorted, Danny and Phil started looking at how to stop the big Mondeos. The answer for both was to fit Focus ST170 discs with Mk3 Mondeo callipers.

“They work really well,” says Danny, “and are a real improvement over the standard setup.”

Phil changed the rears on his Mk1 to V6 discs, and decided to sort the suspension at the same time he was changing the brakes. The standard setup was binned for a set of Flo-Flex front wishbones, a pair of adjustable tubular rear arms and Koni adjustable shocks and springs.

Phil smiles, “It handles like a go-kart now. It’s great. You wouldn’t believe a heavy front-wheel-drive car could handle that well.”

Danny fitted a set of lowering springs and then turned his attention to the interior. A spot of leather from a Ghia X, Plasma dials, a blue LED switch conversion and a pillar-mounted boost gauge completed the interior makeover.

What a pair of beauties – both showcasing what can be achieved when you’ve got a Blue Oval mate to guide you along the way. ■



THE STORY OF PERFORMANCE MONDEOS

For 29 years the Mondeo was Ford's flagship family car, and during that time the range included some special sporting versions...

Words **JAMIE & DAN WILLIAMSON** / Photos **FORD MOTOR COMPANY ARCHIVES**

The last Mondeo rolled off the production lines in 2022. For 29 years it sat proudly as the flagship in Ford's family car line-up, much the like Sierra before it, and Cortina before that. But on 4 April 2022, all

that changed as the last ever Ford Mondeo (in Europe, at least) rolled down the production line at Ford's Valencia plant.

When it first arrived in 1992, the Mondeo had a tough act to follow, replacing the much-loved Sierra. But, unlike the Sierra, the Mondeo was

an immediate hit with buyers when it went on general sale in 1993. Costing a reported £3bn in development, it was available as hatchback, saloon and estate, all of which featured new Zetec petrol engines (only the 1.8-litre turbodiesel was carried over from the Sierra, and



even that was treated to an intercooler upgrade and power increase) and a new range of interior trim options.

The Mondeo proved so popular that in 1996 Tony Blair even coined the phrase 'Mondeo Man' to describe the upwardly-mobile working classes that his Labour Party were targeting for the 1997 general election, which they promptly went on to win.

A facelifted second-generation model appeared in 1996 too, building on the successful foundations of the first-generation. The Mk2 also brought with it the first outwardly sporty versions of the Mondeo: the ST24 and latterly ST200. It was also backed by substantial investment in motorsport, with the Mondeo finally claiming the BTCC crown in 2000.

The year after, the all-new third-generation Mondeo was launched. Bigger, better-equipped, and with an even more powerful halo model – the ST220 – the Mk3 was another instant hit and immediately established itself as the go-to model for growing families. In 2001 Ford sold more than 86,000 Mondeos in the UK alone.

Sadly, that figure slowly began to decline

over the following years, and in 2006 the new Mk4 model was already competing in a marketplace that had started to see buyers shift away from big family saloons and hatchbacks, into SUVs and people-carriers. Still, the Mk4 was a fantastic car – especially for everyday use, as the Peugeot-sourced diesel engines proved much more reliable and frugal than those fitted to the majority of Mk3s.

And it was all about diesel engines by this time too, so much so that Ford didn't even see the need for a specific performance model in the line-up. There was a hidden gem, though: some models were fitted with the same 2.5-litre turbocharged five-cylinder engine as found in the Mk2 Focus ST, offering 217bhp in a very unsuspecting package. Some of the last Mk4s were even fitted with the formidable 236bhp EcoBoost engine.

By the time the fifth generation arrived in 2014 the writing was already on the wall for large family cars like the Mondeo. Gone were the days of 80,000-per-year sales. The Mk2 sold well over 200 vehicles a day in 1996, but by 2020 Ford was struggling to sell that many

per month.

To combat declining sales Ford even tried appealing to the luxury car sector with its Vignale trim level, but even a VIP concierge service wasn't enough to tempt company bosses from their German brands – and at £5000 on top of the cost of the regular Titanium it meant they weren't going to buy one for their regional managers either.

Again, there was no dedicated performance model; the Mondeo ST-Line was about as close as we ever got from Ford – handsome enough, but certainly not as performance-orientated as previous ST models.

The Mondeo name may be resurrected to provide some form of familiarity on a large family car in the Chinese market, but the European Mondeo as we know it has run its course. The Mondeo was one of the most important cars Ford has ever built, and during its 29-year reign we were treated to some fantastic performance versions – cars that still look, sound and perform fantastically even today, and models that will forever be remembered in fast Ford folklore.



MKT MONDEO Si

When the Mondeo first landed, surprisingly it wasn't available with the V6 engine that performance versions later became synonymous with. That didn't arrive until October 1995, where it was fitted to later Si models, as well as the top-spec Ghia X.

That meant when the Mondeo was launched in March 1993, the spiciest model in the line-up was the Si. Sitting below the fully-loaded Ghia in Ford's hierarchy, the Si was above the entry-level Mondeo, the LX and the GLX in the pecking order, and Ford saw it as the high-performing model in the range.

Like all Mondeos, the Si had a fantastic chassis, and sporty details meant it was the best-looking version too – especially if fitted

with the optional RS bodykit. But 136bhp and a 0-to-60mph time of over nine seconds was a bit of disappointment. Even adding 4x4 to the mix didn't improve that; in fact, it made it slower to 60mph (10.1 seconds) and knocked 3mph off the top speed. But the rarity factor makes it a desirable Mondeo to own today.

To help give the Si a zestier image, Ford offered it in Citrine Yellow. The near-fluorescent shade was a mainstream colour at the time (despite rumours that it was a limited batch of 200 cars; it was even available on LX models) and has something of a cult following today.

The top-dog Si, though, was a special edition built by Hendy Ford: the RSi. Based on a regular 2.0-litre Si, the RSi was a limited run of just ten cars: five saloons and five hatchbacks. All had

power increases to around 150bhp – thanks to a set of uprated camshafts and an ECU remap – and the chassis improved with 30mm lowered suspension and adaptive damping. The all-over graphics, 17in diamond-cut alloys and full Raven upholstery was period-perfect for the mid-1990s.

VITAL STATISTICS

MADE BETWEEN 1993 and 1996

PRICE WHEN NEW £14,465

TOP SPEED 129mph

POWER 136bhp

TORQUE 133lb.ft

0-60 9.2 sec



The Si was the hottest Mondeo available at launch



The ST24 was the first time we saw the Sports Technology tag on a Ford



ST200 was the top-spec Mk2



Tweaked version of the ST24 arrived in 1999, named the ST200 because of its 200bhp V6



MK2 MONDEO ST24 & ST200

The forgotten fast Ford – that’s the V6 Mondeo in ST24 or ST200 guise. Powered by a silky-smooth 2.5-litre engine, blessed with a finely balanced chassis, and stacked with standard kit, you’d expect it to rank highly as a future classic in the eyes of Blue Oval enthusiasts. Today, though, even a low-mileage minter is yours for a couple of grand, and useable everyday drivers can be picked up for pocket money.

Developed from the regular Mondeo Si V6, the ST24 was launched in August 1996 to add some sex appeal to Ford’s BTCC-winning family car. The Sports Technology package boasted 16in 12-spoke alloys and half-leather sports seats beyond the Si’s spec, along with lowered

suspension and uprated dampers. The regular 168bhp 2544cc Duratec V6 remained in place, offering near-140mph performance. Not bad.

An ST24 hatchback arrived in April 1997, including four-spoke ‘turbine’ alloys and RSAP (Rallye Sport Appearance Pack). It was joined by an ST24 estate in February 1998.

The ST200 of June 1999 took over the spot as the hottest Mondeo yet. Harder, faster and more focused than the ST24, it boasted 201bhp from its breathed-on V6, adding a multitude of bespoke parts, including polished cylinder heads, improved cams, revised wishbones, uprated dampers and 7x17in 14-spoke alloys.

It looked fantastic too, wearing the RSAP bodykit (modified for a twin-exit exhaust) and

almost-always supplied in Ford Racing Blue. Inside were half-leather Recaros (full leather on later cars), blue instruments and carbon-effect trim.

All ST200s were hatchbacks and estates, except for 300 UK-only ST200 Limited Edition saloons built in July 2000. The LE model boasted black-and-blue heated leather seats, with blue steering wheel and dashboard inserts. All are fast, faithful and cheap to buy. Ideal.

VITAL STATISTICS

MADE BETWEEN 1996 and 2000

PRICE WHEN NEW

£19,190 (ST24), £22,945 (ST200)

TOP SPEED 139mph (ST24), 141mph (ST200)

POWER 168bhp (ST24), 201bhp (ST200)

TORQUE 162lb.ft (ST24), 170lb.ft (ST200)

0-60 8.0 sec (ST24), 7.8 sec (ST200)

“HARDER, FASTER AND MORE FOCUSED THAN THE ST24, THE ST200 BOASTED 201BHP FROM ITS BREATHED-ON V6”

The ST220 was the sportiest of all Mondeo models



MK3 MONDEO ST220

Could the Mondeo ST220 be the best all-rounder that Ford ever built? It had all the looks, presence, practicality and cornering prowess you could ask for, along with loads of toys for a luxurious top-of-the-range feel. Okay, its straight-line performance was somewhat lacking compared to Cosworths of old, but that's not what the ST badge is about. The ST220 was designed to be an effortlessly enjoyable executive car – a role it handled with ease.

Available from May 2002, the ST220 was produced in saloon, hatchback and estate

bodystyles featuring deep front bumpers with honeycomb inserts, side skirts and rear spoiler. Six exterior colours were offered, with three shades of leather-trimmed, heated Recaro seats inside, along with a piano-black fascia.

Packing 223bhp (thus the 220 badge) from its 3.0-litre V6 engine, the ST220 became the fastest-ever Mondeo, offering 150mph-plus performance with roadholding to match – thanks to reworked (lowered and uprated) suspension and 18in 16-spoke alloys beneath flared front wheelarches.

A June 2003 facelift found the ST220 fitted

with a six-speed MMT6 gearbox rather than the MTX-75, providing improved fuel economy and a little more top speed. Meanwhile, a revised dashboard and revamped ECU came into play.

A final facelift followed during 2005, adding red stitching to the interior, optional Alcantara seat centres, plus a load of distinctly un-sporty chrome exterior trim.

Production ended in March 2007, since when the ST220 has become a low-profile performance bargain for those in the know. It's a big fast Ford that's well worth seeking out.



“THE ST220 BECAME THE FASTEST-EVER MONDEO, OFFERING 150MPH-PLUS PERFORMANCE WITH ROADHOLDING TO MATCH”

VITAL STATISTICS

MADE BETWEEN 2004 and 2007

PRICE WHEN NEW £21,745

TOP SPEED 151mph (five-speed), 155mph (six-speed)

POWER 223bhp

TORQUE 203lb.ft

0-62MPH 6.8 sec (five-speed), 7.6 sec (six-speed)

MK4 MONDEO TITANIUM

James Bond had a Mk4 Mondeo Titanium X in *Casino Royale*. And if it's good enough for 007, it's good enough for us.

Inside, the top-spec Titanium X had enough gadgets to keep all those at Q-branch happy, while the 217bhp 2.5-litre five-cylinder turbo engine was based on that found in the Focus ST. And that's the reason you want this car; the fantastic five-pot is subtle, smooth, and incredibly tuneable.

Plus, 152mph capability and 7.3 seconds to 60mph, wrapped up stealthy Mondeo styling, means it certainly raises some eyebrows.

The ST badge and outwardly sporty styling was dropped with the Mk4, but the X Sport trim level did offer some welcome styling tweaks for UK buyers, notably the front and rear bumpers and side skirts. Australians could buy a Mondeo XR5 from October 2007, featuring the same 18in

alloy wheels, lowered sports suspension and bodykit as the X Sport cars in the UK.

Regular Titaniums had 17in 15-spoke alloys (Y-spoke from 2008), blue-tinted glass, sports seats with New York upholstery, brushed chrome dashboard, silver-finished grilles and chrome door trims; the Titanium X added Alcantara/leather upholstery, adaptive headlights, auto wipers, heated seats and Ford Power Start button. All were offered with Sport Pack of 18in Y-spoke wheels, sports suspension and rear spoiler.

The Mondeo's suspension and handling have always been strong suits, and the Mk4 continued this tradition of feeling much more fun to drive than a car this size really should. Yet, even with the sports suspension, it was never bone-crushing like Ford's out-and-out performance models such as the Fiesta ST and Focus RS.

The 2.5T was replaced by the 236bhp 2.0-litre

EcoBoost engine towards the end of the Mk4's life in 2011, but from an era when turbo-diesels ruled the roads, the Mondeo 2.5T is today quite a rare beast.

Few modern cars offer the practicality or space of a Mk4 Mondeo (especially the estate) and 2.5s tend to be particularly well-equipped. They're astonishingly smooth mile-munchers yet can be tuned to become a track terrier too.

VITAL STATISTICS

MADE BETWEEN 2007 to 2010

PRICE WHEN NEW £17,995 to £21,095

TOP SPEED 152mph

POWER 217bhp

TORQUE 236lb.ft

0-60 7.3 sec



No sporty styling, but the same five-cylinder turbo engine as fitted to the Focus ST gave the Mk4 plenty of get-up-and-go



James Bond drove a Titanium X in *Casino Royale*



The ST-Line offered sporty looks on a stock Mk5



MK5 MONDEO ST-LINE

By the time the fifth-generation Mondeo arrived in 2014, Ford already knew the market for big family hatchbacks was dying; prospective buyers had all jumped into SUVs and people-carriers, so it came as no real shock when Ford announced it would stop producing the Mondeo for the European market in 2022.

That's a shame, because the last-of-the-line Mondeo was a cracking car. To appeal to the premium market, Ford launched the Vignale range – a plush, well-trimmed, superbly-equipped top-end Mondeo complete with VIP concierge experience. But buyers wouldn't be persuaded to drop their German whips for the Blue Oval.

Besides, what Ford does best is affordable, fast, and practical fun. Therefore, a full-fat ST version (perhaps using the same 325bhp

2.7-litre EcoBoost V6 and all-wheel-drive as fitted to the very similar Fusion for the US market) may have been a better direction to take. Alas, we never received such a beast, and the closest Mk5 Mondeo the UK received to a 'sporty' version was the ST-Line in 2016.

The suspension was dropped by around 10mm over 18in or optional 19in alloys, and the funky looking bodykit gave the family wagon some much needed kerb appeal, but apart from that the ST-Line was identical to the rest of the Mk5 range. The ST-Line brand was all about looking like an ST, but without the added expense and higher running costs... And, as a result, performance.

The 1.5-litre EcoBoost engine in the regular ST-Line was perhaps slightly underpowered for such a big car, but the 240PS 2.0-litre unit fitted in the top-spec ST-Line X

and ST-Line Edition provided enough grunt for a playful drive.

The Mk5 was never going to be about performance versions, though, and instead proved a very successful platform for Ford's latest hybrid technologies. But we're not here to talk about eco cars; we're here to look at performance Mondeos, and sadly the ST-Line X was about the best we got from the Mk5. ■

VITAL STATISTICS

MADE BETWEEN 2016 and 2021

PRICE WHEN NEW £29,545 (2.0 petrol),
£24,330 (2.0 diesel)

TOP SPEED 149mph (2.0 petrol),
140mph (2.0 diesel)

POWER 236bhp (2.0 petrol), 177bhp (2.0 diesel)

TORQUE 251lb.ft (2.0 petrol),
295lb.ft (2.0 diesel)

0-60MPH 7.6 sec (2.0 petrol), 8.0 sec (2.0 diesel)

“THE CLOSEST MK5 MONDEO THE UK RECEIVED TO A ‘SPORTY’ VERSION WAS THE ST-LINE IN 2016”

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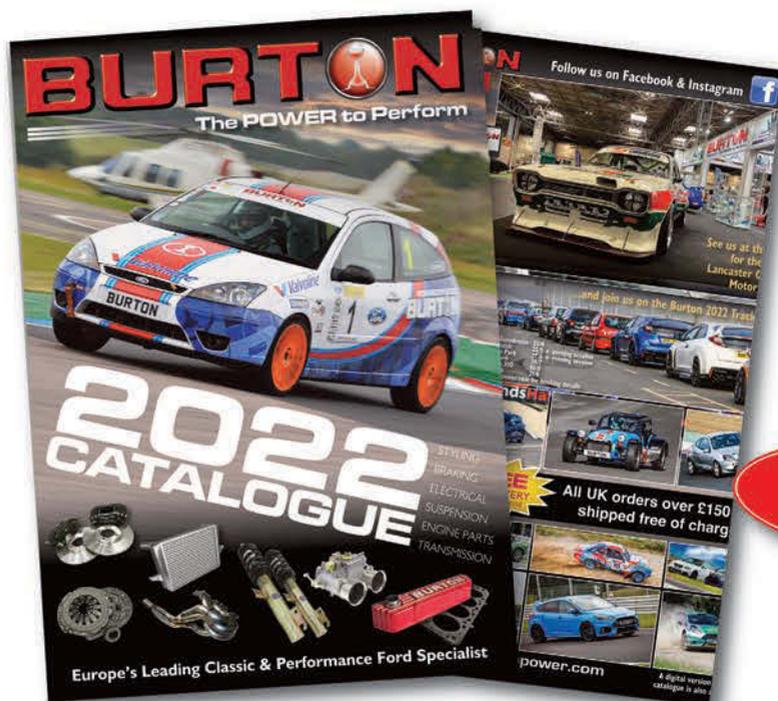
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Certain models of car are more tuneable than others. Fact. So, if you happen to own something that's not popular with tuners, you'll have your work cut out modifying the bugger. But that's not to say it can't be done. It just means you'll need to think outside the box, and be prepared for some epic problem solving.

Now, while other Fords with an ST badge have many off-the-shelf upgrades available, the big Mondeo ST220 kind of got left behind. Which is a shame, because anyone who's driven Ford's beefy V6 will tell you that they're cracking

motors. They offer plenty of torque from that silky-smooth six-cylinder engine, nimble handling for their size, a quality Recaro interior, and decent looks thanks to a subtle bodykit. They certainly hit the spot for Andy Martin.

"I'd always wanted a V6 Mondeo," says Andy, "and I saw this at a local dealer and fell in love with it." A deal was done, and he drove away in the mint Performance Blue Ford.

With all the toys and an effortless 220bhp engine, he was a very happy camper. But the honeymoon period was short-lived.

He groans, "The engine blew up after just

20,000 miles. I went through the usual process to get Ford to repair it, but they blamed it on normal wear and tear, and they wouldn't budge. They wanted over £4000 to fix it."

A very despondent Andy had a choice: pay big bucks to get the standard engine rebuilt, or get rid of it.

"The thing is, I really wanted to keep the car," he says. So, he began looking at other options.

YEAR OFF

"A mate of mine said he could rebuild it and turbocharge it," Andy goes on. But sadly, →



MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

There's a reason you don't see many tuned Mondeo ST220s – because there aren't many modified bits available. But that didn't stop Andy Martin creating this 300bhp, throttle-bodied winner

Words DAVY LEWIS / Photos CHRIS WALLBANK



this was kick in the nuts number two.

“The bloke had the car for 12 months and it turned out to be a complete waste of time,” he says. With the promise of big turbo power gone and a Mondeo that still wasn't running, Andy was almost at breaking point.

“I'd totally lost heart in the car and didn't know what to do,” he admits. But just when he was considering throwing in the towel, a local guy came to the rescue.

“I spoke to Steve Critchley from SDC Motors in St Helens and he suggested getting it rebuilt properly with forged internals. With a strong base, the V6 could then be tuned for more power.” Better still, Steve also recommended a talented local engine builder, John at The Head Shop, who previously worked for Aston Martin.

The 3.0-litre V6 was stripped down and rebuilt with some choice upgrades, which included strong Carrillo rods, ARP bolts, ACL shells and Arias oversized forged pistons. The V6 lump is much more popular with tuners in the US, so the pistons were specially ordered, taking three months to arrive. But Andy was happy that things were being done the right way. Up-rated valve springs were added, and water and oil pumps were replaced. Nothing was being left to chance this time.

With the engine coming on well, it seemed a shame not to treat it to a bit of extra grunt, so Andy had the heads ported and polished to get a better flow of air. Next came a full stainless exhaust system with custom manifolds.

With the cats removed, the system is much

freer-flowing than standard, and as a happy by-product gives the V6 an angry sound. At this stage, Andy could have settled for the modest gains, but he felt there was to more to come from the Duratec.

Although supercharger and turbo kits offer good potential gains, they require a lot of →

MONDEO ST220

ENGINE 2967cc 24-valve V6, fully rebuilt using K1 Carrillo rods, ACL shells and Arias oversize forged pistons, fully balanced and blueprinted, polished and ported heads, Mountune cams, uprated valve springs, uprated Pico injectors, uprated Walbro fuel pump, full straight-through exhaust system with de-cat, custom manifolds and exhaust, Jenvey ITBs, Omex 710 stand-alone management system

POWER 300.6bhp, 244.6lb.ft torque

TRANSMISSION Six-speed manual, Quaife ATB LSD, Noble M400 AP Racing clutch and cover, Fidanza aluminium single-mass flywheel, Noble M400 modified throw-out bearing

SUSPENSION H&R lowering springs

BRAKES HiSpec six-pot Monster brake conversion with custom -made Goodridge lines

WHEELS & TYRES Mk2 Ford Focus 19in RS wheels with Eibach hubcentric spacers and 235/35x19in Continental ContiSport Contact 3 tyres all round

EXTERIOR Factory ST220 bodykit, Subaru Impreza bonnet vent to clear throttle bodies

INTERIOR ST220 leather Recaros and trim



Jenvey throttle bodies give good power but won't clear a stock bonnet



Uprated oil breather system is needed for high revs

Focus RS 19in alloys look right at home on the ST220





"JUST POTTERING AROUND IT'S VERY CIVILISED, BUT AT 5000RPM THE POWER COMES IN AND IT SOUNDS FANTASTIC"



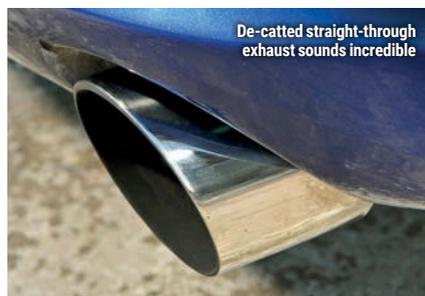
Interior remains largely as Ford intended



ST220 Recaros are awesome, so there's no need to change them



Bonnet scoop is needed to clear the throttle bodies



De-catted straight-through exhaust sounds incredible



Hi-Spec brakes peek out from behind the spokes

fettling to fit the ST, and Andy was keen to get the car back. So, he took some advice from the guys at Noble Motorsport. These fellas know the Noble M400 supercar inside out and, because it uses a lot of Ford bits, including the 3.0-litre V6 (albeit with two dirty great turbos bolted on), lots of it is interchangeable with the Mondeo lump. The plan was to utilise uprated parts, designed for the Noble, on the humble Mondeo.

BATTLE OF THE BULGE

First up, a set of Jenvey individual throttle bodies was fitted. The six trumpets are tucked away under a Noble Motorsport filter and dominate the ST's engine bay. But even this caused issues. Because they're usually fitted to kit cars using the Duratec V6, they stick up about 3in, so the bonnet wouldn't close, which is why the Impreza scoop was required.

"If it had been possible, I'd have liked to keep a standard bonnet, as I prefer the sleeper look," says Andy. The fuel rail also required some custom work, and shorter Pico injectors had to

be fitted. Fortunately, as Andy is an engineer, he was able to fabricate a bespoke item using bits of a Jaguar fuel rail. It still caused him a major headache, though.

To liberate some more power, a set of Mountune cams were dropped in, together with a lighter flywheel. The single mass unit was ordered direct from Fidanza in America and weighs in at just 8lb compared with a hefty 36lb for the standard unit. Unsurprisingly, response is transformed.

Next came an AP Racing clutch, which can take 400bhp but according to Andy is really light to use, actually improving driveability.

CHIPPING IN

With a Walbro uprated fuel pump, the ST was mapped to 260bhp, but the stock ECU was holding it back, so Noble Motorsport recommended Omex management. With this fitted and mapped, the final figure was a dyno-proven 300.6bhp and 244lb.ft. Impressive gains for a naturally-aspirated engine. But what does

it feel like?

"It just goes and keeps pulling," comments Andy. "My mate has a 300bhp Mk1 Focus RS and I pretty much keep up with him. Plus, I don't have to wait for the turbo to kick in."

With the ITBs, the noise is pretty special. "Just pottering around it's very civilised, but at 5000rpm the power comes in and it sounds fantastic. With no cats and a straight-through system the noise on the overrun is great."

With 300bhp to deal with, the front wheels had their work cut out. So, Andy wisely went for a Quaife diff. He also fitted a set of Mk2 Focus RS multi-spoke wheels, which with a bit of spacing out really suit the big Ford.

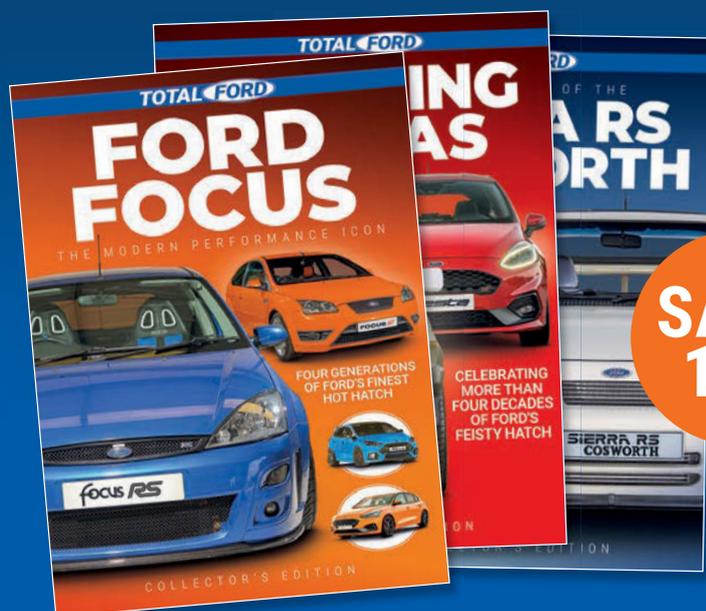
So, after a nightmare two years, Andy finally got the ST220 he always wanted. And it goes to prove that if you keep going and work through problems, nothing is impossible. ■

THANKS Steve Critchley at SDC Motors St Helens, Mike and the lads at Noble Motorsport, the lads from the ST Drivers website.

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MISSED MONDEO

MK1 V6 4X4

A V6-powered 4x4 Mk1 Mondeo was more than feasible, and it very nearly made production

Words GRAHAM ROBSON / Photos FORD MOTOR COMPANY ARCHIVES

When the Sierra was retired in 1992, it was replaced by the original Mondeo; an all-can-do medium-sized family car that dealers all around the globe expected to sell in huge quantities. They were right, of course – one reason being that the car was eventually sold in a bewildering number of derivatives.

For driving enthusiasts, the good news was that the Mondeo was all-new – from stem to stern – as apart from the diesel engine option there were few carry-over parts from the old Sierra. The Mondeo, therefore, not only had a

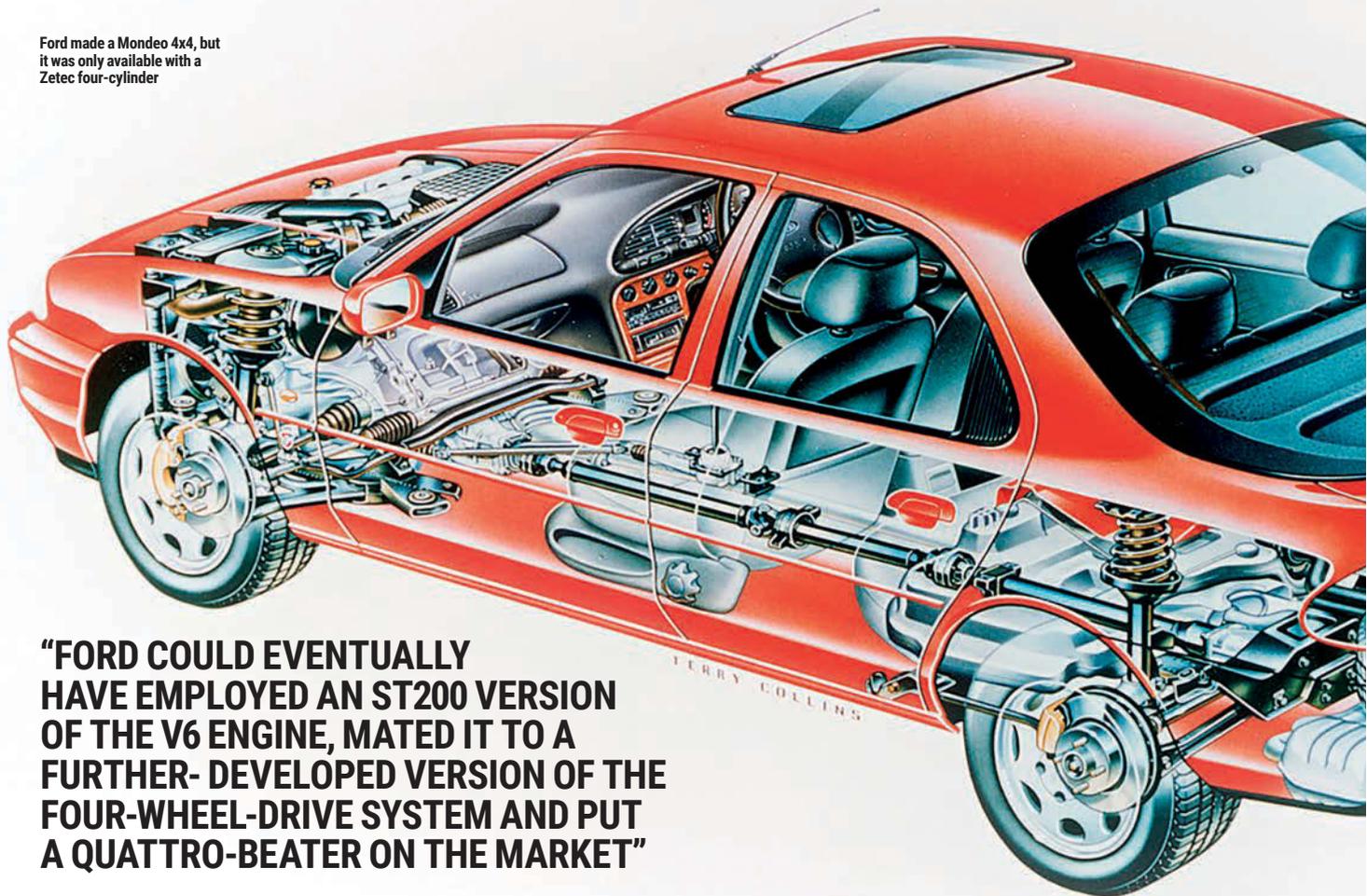
raft of modern engines, but all-independent suspension and front-wheel drive. Not that these arrived all at once; it was more than a year before the powerful V6-engined versions came on stream, and four-wheel drive was rather belatedly added in 1995.

Originally the transverse engine/four-wheel-drive package had been developed for the Mk5 Escort, but only in 2.0-litre four-cylinder form. The top-of-the-range 2544cc 168bhp V6 power unit, complete with twin overhead camshafts, on the other hand, was available in the Mondeo, but never linked with four-wheel drive.

Here in the UK, the Mondeo 4x4 that went on sale was only available with the 2.0-litre four-cylinder engine and the Ghia trim package. Somehow, though, it was an embarrassing sales flop; although sales had begun in 1995, by the time the Mondeo was extensively facelifted and technically reworked in the autumn of 1996 for the Mk2 model, the 4x4 transmission option was nowhere to be seen.

The only Mondeo 4x4 that got any attention by the public was one that took part in a crazy TV-orientated stunt where a specially-equipped 2.0-litre 4x4 version, allied to a Maverick SUV,

Ford made a Mondeo 4x4, but it was only available with a Zetec four-cylinder



“FORD COULD EVENTUALLY HAVE EMPLOYED AN ST200 VERSION OF THE V6 ENGINE, MATED IT TO A FURTHER- DEVELOPED VERSION OF THE FOUR-WHEEL-DRIVE SYSTEM AND PUT A QUATTRO-BEATER ON THE MARKET”



The Mondeo 4x4 drove from London to New York

set out from London to reach New York, all by road except for a passage across the 55-mile-wide Bering Straits, which separate Siberia from Alaska. In the depths of the 1994-to-1995 winter, with every possible support vehicle tagging along (including what doubled as mobile caravan/trucks) that was finally achieved but was never again attempted.

Now, hang-on for a moment. If AVO had still existed in those days, we can be sure that the V6 engine would have been mated to the four-wheel-drive system, and the team could have turned the Mondeo into a rival for Audi's Quattro. But it never happened. Not officially, at least, but new readers start here...

Ford engineers (those working on the Mondeo were mainly based in Ford-Germany) certainly had time (and some development funds) to play mix-and-match with the available hardware, so we know that all manner of combinations were tried out; some of them only in the 'why don't we?' category.

Even so, it was not as easy as it sounds.

Naturally there were ill-informed pundits who suggested that since a V6-engined front-wheel-drive Mondeo



The 4x4 system would have worked perfectly with the V6's extra grunt



already existed, and that a 2.0-litre 4x4 Mondeo was already on sale, then surely it would be easy to mate the two. Well yes and no.

Serious changes were needed to ensure that the complex transfer gearbox – which was needed to steal some of the engine's torque before feeding it down a propeller shaft to the rear suspension – would be robust enough for the added grunt of the V6.

Then, of course, there was the marketing aspect. Ford's top sales bosses were not at all convinced that the public would buy such a car, which would have to be the most expensive of all Mondeos. Audi's Quattro was an obvious market rival they would have to match, preferably beat, but the fact is that neither GM-Europe (Opel and Vauxhall) nor VW had any intention of entering

this rather slim market.

Unhappily – for us, that is – they were right. And except for the odd development car, no V6-powered 4x4 Mondeo was ever put on the road. The pessimists, it seems, were quite right to be cautious about this installation, for (although Ford never confirmed the figures) it seems that only about 300 4x4 Mondeos were ever delivered to the UK.

And yet, if technical bravery and high hopes had been rewarded, Ford could eventually have employed an ST200 version of the V6 engine, mated it to a further-developed version of the four-wheel-drive system, and put a Quattro-beater on the market with a 145mph top speed. What a great car that would have been. A Mondeo RS, perhaps? ■

BEST OF BOTH

What happens when sensible and practical load-lugger meets lairy performance car? You get this awesome, Focus RS-inspired Mondeo estate...

Words JAMIE / Photos CARSHOOT.DE



When it comes to finding the perfect car, we all have a specific set of criteria that it needs to fulfil. Whether that's good mpg, loads of boot space, or – more likely if you're reading this – it needs to go like a stabbed rat with a shot of

adrenalin up its backside. But finding a car that meets all our expectations is not an easy task.

Take German Ford fan Nils Seehof, for example. He loves the Mondeo Mk3 estate – he's owned six of them. And no wonder – it's practical, handles incredibly well for a big car,

and the sporty ST220 version has more than enough grunt to do what you need. But what it doesn't have is the eye-catching looks and immediately noticeable presence of the more lairy RS-branded Fords. RS models have always been at the top of the tree when it comes



to getting noticed – whether that’s the whale tail on the original Sierra RS Cosworth, the anabolic bulkiness of the Escort RS Cosworth, or just the plain lunacy and aggression of the Mk2 Focus RS.

But Ford never thought somebody would want

these styling cues on the (what is supposed to be) practical, family Mondeo. But the great Blue Oval was wrong.

RS-INSPIRED

When Nils decided he wanted his Mk3 to stand

out from the crowd, he chose to combine the ultra-aggressive looks of the Mk2 Focus RS with the understated practicality of the Mk3 Mondeo and create a truly unique Mondeo ‘RS’ estate.

Having already successfully grafted a Mk2 Focus bumper to another Mk3 Mondeo, he →

MONDEO ST220 ESTATE

ENGINE 2967cc Duratec V6, custom air filter with cold air feed, custom exhaust system with genuine Focus RS rear tailpipes, custom remap by CTH

POWER 252bhp, 300Nm (owner's estimate)

TRANSMISSION ST220 Getrag MMT6 six-speed gearbox, original clutch

SUSPENSION KW Variant1 coilovers all round

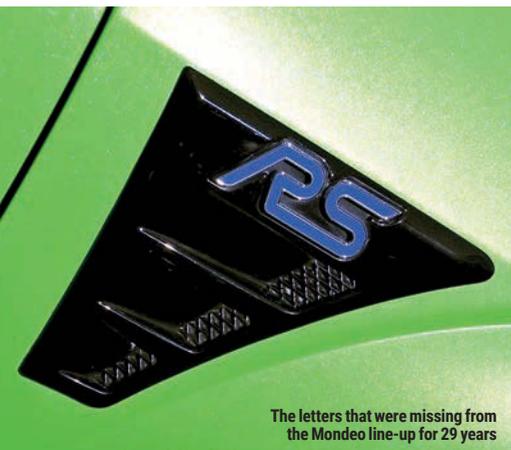
BRAKES Front: ST220 original callipers with Tarox discs and Cosworth StreetMaster pads, Goodridge steel hoses; rear: ST220 original callipers with Zimmermann discs and ATE ceramic pads

WHEELS & TYRES 8.5x19in Focus RS Mk2 alloys painted in Ford Piano Black, 235/35x19 tyres, 15mm front and 20mm rear spacers

EXTERIOR Full respray in Ultimate Green, front grille, diffuser, roof, spoiler, fog light surrounds, mirrors all sprayed in Ford Piano Black, modified front bumper using ST220 and genuine Focus RS items, modified rear bumper to incorporate genuine Focus RS rear diffuser, Focus RS bonnet and wing vents, C-Max door mirrors with integrated indicators, modified CSR rear spoiler, rear wiper removed

INTERIOR ST220 Recaro trim, recovered in genuine RS green cloth and black Alcantara material, rear bench modified to two-seater as per Focus RS, retrimmed door cards using RS green cloth, Focus RS gearknob, all stitching removed and restitched using Focus RS blue threads, centre console dipped with carbon effect print, kick plates with RS logo, custom build number '11,501' plaque

“THIS WAS DIFFICULT TO GET RIGHT, AS THE FOCUS PARTS ARE VERY ANGULAR AND THE MONDEO IS GENERALLY QUITE ROUNDED”



The letters that were missing from the Mondeo line-up for 29 years



Seats are retrimmed to RS-spec



Admit it. If Ford had built it, you'd have bought it



RS 19in alloys complete the look

knew that it could be done.

“Unfortunately, at that time I couldn’t get any RS parts at a sensible price, so we did the conversion using facelift Mk2 Focus bits instead,” recalls Nils.

But this time he wasn’t going to endure all that effort to end up with a standard Focus bumper on a fairly tame TDCi version of the Mondeo. No, this time the end result would be something altogether more special. This time he was going to sculpt on the front bumper (and consequently a whole lot more) from a Mk2 Focus RS. And not to any old Mk3 – this time he would start with a much more suitable base – a top-of-the-range, one-owner, late-model ST220.

“Ever since we finished the first conversion, I had been looking for a decent ST220 to use for an RS-style project,” remembers Nils, “and I saw this one, then a Midnight Blue 2006-year example, which seemed to be a perfect starting point.” The deal was done back in the early

part of 2012, and Nils instantly started work on creating his RS version in March of that year.

You might think the first steps would involve ripping the front end apart and offering up the RS parts to see what fits, but you’d be wrong. If this Mondeo was going to look like an RS it needed to go like an RS too, and one thing RS models have in abundance is power.

V-POWER

“The first step was to improve the power output,” smirks Nils. So, a remap from German tuner CTH was fitted, along with an uprated air filter and a custom exhaust system, complete with genuine Focus RS tailpipes. The result is an RS-worthy 252bhp.

The next job was to get the big Mondeo sitting right, so Nils spoke with KW Automotive about getting a set of V1 coilovers made. Now the estate sits much closer to the ground and has a much more RS-worthy stance about it, thanks in →



part to a set of genuine RS 8.5x19in alloys, and 15mm front and 20mm rear spacers to ensure they fill the arches appropriately.

With the fundamentals taken care of, Nils could then get to work making his Mondeo look like an RS.

SPECIAL BLEND

After a summer of collecting RS parts, the Mondeo was dropped off at DieLack, where Andreas Blatt meticulously blended a genuine Focus RS front bumper and the original ST220 item together. He then performed the same trick with a genuine Focus RS rear diffuser section and the ST220's rear bumper.

"This was difficult to get right, especially as the Focus parts are very angular and the Mondeo is generally quite rounded," explains Nils, "but nothing is impossible."

While at DieLack, the Mondeo also saw RS vents grafted to its bonnet, RS wing vents, and a modified CSR rear spoiler fitted, before the whole car was treated to several coats of the Focus RS's trademark colour – Ultimate Green. All the peripherals were also given a fresh spray job, in Ford's Piano Black – including the wheels, grille, rear diffuser, fog light surrounds, mirrors and roof.

The final step in the transformation was to address the interior. The ST220's Recaro seats are beautiful things, comfy and supportive, but the black leather simply didn't match the RS theme. So, Nils went searching for enough original Focus RS seat material to cover the entire Mondeo interior. And when he did, he had the Recaros retrimmed in genuine Focus RS green cloth and black Alcantara.

"The goal was to build a Mondeo RS that Ford would have built, so it needed to be genuine material and genuine Recaro seats," says Nils. That's why the retrimmed seats boast the RS logo and blue stitching that you'd expect to find on genuine Focus RS seats.

In fact, the attention to detail is so incredible that Nils has had every seam of the interior redone to match that of a Focus RS – the steering wheel, gear gaiter and handbrake lever have all been painstakingly unpicked and re-stitched with the correct blue thread in the search for total perfection.

When the car was finally unveiled, Nils says that it got positive responses wherever he went with it. Which just goes to prove that you can have a car that does it all, something that meets all your criteria no matter how wacky or contradictory – you just have to work at it and

make it happen, that's all. ■

THANKS "Andreas Blatt and the guys from DieLack for the bodywork, my saddler for the retrim, CTH www.car-tuning-haham.de for the engine work, Danny O for the photos, Tony, my fiancé Simone, Mondeo-Mk3.de for forum and anyone else who helped."



Custom 11,501 build plaque



Modified spoiler looks OEM



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WHY SO SERIOUS?

*Po-faced and sensible, this Mondeo ST220 needed shaking up.
Enter the agent of chaos...*

Words EMMA WOODCOCK / Photos MATT RICHARDSON



Have you ever looked at a car and wanted to smile? Well, this ST220 smiles back: a frozen, unstoppable grin. It drips down the badges, shouts out of the engine bay and rolls around the wheels. Maddening and unwavering, it just keeps on grinning. Mondeo Man has turned into a growling, prowling super villain and Darren Down is the man responsible. Do you want to know how he got this car?

Like so many in the community, Darren is a Ford man through and through. Growing up, his older brother had an MG Montego Turbo – we mustn't judge him too harshly as it was, after all, a long time ago – but his sibling's scene

thronged with Ford's finest. The die was cast and, having passed his driving test at the earliest opportunity, our man was soon behind the wheel of a Mk3 Fiesta.

The humdrum hatchback was succeeded by a pair of Orions, both of which would receive engine transplants. The first small saloon gained a US-market tall-block 1.9-litre CVH, a swap Darren still remembers fondly. The upgrade applied to his next Orion was less successful; the Escort RS Turbo engine failing with exasperating regularity.

He explains, "I regretted fitting that engine every day. It spent more time each week in the garage than on the road. I wanted to get it

in a magazine but it was out of my life before anything was ever organised. I still regret selling it, though, and I'd love to own another."

The whole affair put Darren off modified motors for several years. He turned to all the normal, adult things, saving up to buy a house, but soon found himself becoming bored. Fast cars were calling again.

He owned a couple of ST220s before casting his net beyond Mondeos, trying an MG ZS180, a Seat Leon Cupra R and a 2.0-litre Focus Sport.

Yet, as he explains, "None of the others came close for value, styling, performance and comfort of a Mondeo. For me, the ST220 really has the whole package." →



Custom airbrushing is no joke

MONDEO ST220

ENGINE 2967cc Duratec V6, custom stainless steel exhaust system, KODE carbon-fibre sealed induction unit, custom remap, Focus RS Ultimate Green engine bay respray with airbrushed Joker images by Foz airbrush projects

POWER 245bhp (owner's estimate)

TRANSMISSION Original Getrag MMT6 six-speed gearbox

SUSPENSION BC Racing fully adjustable coilovers all round

BRAKES Front: 360mm discs with KODE six-pot billet forged callipers finished in Ultimate Green; rear: ST220 rear discs and callipers

WHEELS & TYRES KODE 8.5x18in (front) and 9.5x18in (rear) alloys with airbrushed Joker centres, hubcentric spacers with PCD conversion to 5x114

EXTERIOR 3M carbon-fibre roof wrap, KODE custom roof spoiler from a BMW F30 3-Series bodykit, smoothed front bumper with filled-in recess, Mark 1 Focus RS bumper vents, KODE carbon-fibre bonnet vents, Triple R composite front splitter, LUKE tow strap bolted directly to chassis, ST220 facelift side skirts with KODE skirt extensions, KODE custom rear diffuser from a Honda Jazz bodykit, custom-extended wheelarches, Specialist Paints deep base pearl purple velvet repaint, Joker badging

INTERIOR ST220 leather Recaros, Joker badging, purple KODE gear lever

So, he found another.

Darren didn't set out to emulate the Joker. Not at first, anyway. When he bought the car, he was just looking for a good, standard fast road car. It didn't take long before the first upgrade was made: a carbon-fibre-effect wrap on the roof and mirrors. Darren took his slightly tweaked Mondeo to a local show-and-shine where he soon realised, "It was the most boring car there." Changes had to be made.

His first move was mechanical. He bought another Mondeo ST220 – Performance Blue, like the Joker Mondeo once was – to act as a parts car. The donor was a lower-mileage example and he planned to drop its engine into the Joker car. It didn't take long for that plan to evaporate: the donor V6 was knocking and Darren couldn't face risking it in his project car.

Instead, he ordered a brand new 3.0-litre Duratec directly from Ford and set about fitting it himself.

He explains, "It wasn't an especially hard job. I took my time, cleaned everything in the engine bay and fitted a new clutch. In the end, I completed the swap over two weekends. Once you remove the subframe the engine drops straight out, and you just reverse the process to fit the new one."

Around the same time, Darren was lending a hand at KODE – a local tuning company known for its work on Japanese cars – in the workshop and at shows across the country.



KODE inspired a lot of elements of the build





The stance is so serious



Kwok, KODE's owner, takes up the story: "I was taking Darren to all of these shows, looking at the tuned cars there and saying, 'It's got to be all out or nothing at all'. I like to think I reopened his eyes to the tuning scene: if you don't build something truly remarkable, you aren't going to be known in the community."

Darren was soon hankering for a show car of his own: something different and distinctive. A flash of colour led the way: he replaced the hoses with vivid lime pipes and resprayed the brake callipers and engine bay in iconic Ultimate Green. A set of BC Racing coilovers followed, the first step towards the ST220's current eye-catching stance.

Kwok then suggested a widened track with some of KODE's JDM-style alloys, using custom spacers to push the wheels out and change

the PCD to take Japanese wheels. In turn, the wheelarches were sliced open and 1.5in of metal added on each side to cover the new rubber. The result is subtle from some angles and striking from others: when Darren takes the ST220 to shows, he's always being asked whether the arches have been altered.

More bodywork changes followed. "I wanted to keep the bodywork largely standard but just give it a little lift: the arches; the vents; the diffuser," says Darren.

A smoothed front apron with filled-in number-plate recess gives the bumper some bite, while Mk1 Focus RS bumper vents and a Triple R splitter add some intrigue. They're balanced by a subtle rear diffuser that Darren's especially pleased with.

He says, "It's only got two strakes, but →



Comfy cabin remains untouched



Custom gearknob continues the colour scheme on the inside



it makes a huge difference in person.” You’d never guess it was from a Honda Jazz.

Indeed, with so little aftermarket availability for the Mondeo, KODE had to get creative when modifying the body. The side-skirt extenders and roof spoiler come from BMW bodykits, while the carbon fibre bonnet vents were produced in-house by the Kent firm.

Darren adds, “I’m super fussy with stuff like that. I had to make sure they were smoothed in. You see a lot of cars where the vents look fine from outside but the underbonnet is all cut about. I couldn’t have that.”

Only then, with the build almost complete, did thoughts turn to a new paint scheme. The car had just been resprayed metallic purple when fate intervened.

Darren says, “We were going to get rid of the green details after adding the purple but

I opened the bonnet post-paint and it was written in the stars. It had to be the Joker. I’m more of a Marvel guy – Iron Man especially – but that’s not green and purple. The Joker is. Monster Munch and Ribena didn’t really fit in the same way.”

Darren took the Mondeo, now all-but-finished to Foz Airbrush Projects and asked for some Heath Ledger imagery, from the 2008 *Batman: The Dark Knight* film.

Foz disagreed: “With those colours, it suits the cartoon. It’s got to be cartoon Joker.” Don’t worry, he wasn’t thinking of the child-friendly Sixties’ farce. Oh no. Instead, Foz chose images from *The Killing Joke*, a 1988 graphic novel that showcases the Joker at his most psychotic. It shows in the final artworks: this Mondeo isn’t for small families any more... The novel also creates a background story where the Joker

was permanently discoloured by a chemical vat, driving him mad: a perfect parallel for the freshly-repainted ST220.

Much like the tenacious terror that inspired the build, we won’t be seeing the last of the Joker Mondeo any time soon.

“I bought it with inheritance from my granddad so it’ll be sticking around for the long run,” Darren adds.

The interior will soon boast a pair of Corbeau front seats and a retrim in green leather with purple diamond stitching. Two-piece forged 20in alloys are on the way, and Darren would like to add more flashes of green to the exterior. In the longer term, he’d love a bigger engine.

Sometimes it’s good to be bad. ■

THANKS KODE and Foz for their work on the car.



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Subtle styling tweaks made the Steeda Mondeo Sport one of the best-looking Mk5s money could buy

TEST DRIVE

STEEEDA MONDEO SPORT

We get behind the wheel of Steeda's sporty offering for Mondeo owners, the aptly-named Steeda Mondeo Sport...

Words & Photos JAMIE

Steeda Autosports may be a huge household name in the USA – it is the world's biggest privately-owned Ford tuning specialist, after all – but in recent years the firm has started making its mark on the UK Ford tuning scene.

Steeda UK offers all kinds of goodies for fast Ford fans, but the most eye-catching offerings include Steeda Serialized Vehicles – complete turnkey upgrades with a full warranty. For UK buyers this means tuned Mustangs and the Mk5

Mondeo 'Steeda Mondeo Sport' were available to buy direct from the dealer, complete with fully-fitted performance upgrades.

And it's the latter we were lucky enough to take out for a test drive back in 2017 when it was in the showroom at Haynes of Maidstone.

The car we tested was based on an automatic-transmission 2.0-litre EcoBoost-powered Mondeo Titanium, but the Steeda Mondeo Sport package was also available on manual versions, and there was even a kit to suit the 1.5-litre

TECH SPEC

Mondeo Titanium automatic, Steeda Mondeo Sport warranty-approved upgrade comprising Steeda high-flow cold air intake system, Steeda cat-back exhaust system (manufactured by Magnaflow), Steeda progressive-rate lowering springs, Steeda rear anti-roll bar upgrade, Steeda performance wheel alignment, Steeda graphics package, OZ Racing Leggera HLT alloys with Michelin Pilot Sport high-performance tyres

EcoBoost models.

The Steeda upgrade included a cold air intake and a Magnaflow cat-back exhaust system, and on the 2.0-litre versions the package boosted power to 250bhp and 265lb.ft torque. The beefier induction noise, coupled to the encouraging note from the twin tailpipes, did wonders to liven up the driving experience of the Mk5, and the car felt peppier than the stock version too. It had a surprising amount of get-up-and-go for a car with such basic hardware upgrades.

And, as Steeda was keen to point out, it showed that the physical hardware modifications were working well, as those power gains were achieved while retaining the OE software. So, the Sport benefited from more power and torque than the factory example, but without any drawbacks – and it was all fully covered by the manufacturer's warranty.

But the performance increase really was only half the story with the Steeda Mondeo Sport, as perhaps the most appealing part of the package

was the way it looked. The standard package included 19in OZ Racing Leggera HLT alloys, but you could choose to upgrade to 20in versions that were fitted to the car we tested; both options came wrapped in grippy Michelin Pilot Sport rubber. And because the Mondeo was such a big car it could swallow up the 20s with ease – they were our preference over the 19s.

Coupled to the lightweight wheels, the Steeda package also included a set of performance lowering springs, an uprated rear anti-roll bar, and a full wheel alignment check after installation to make sure everything was set up correctly. This took care of the stance and the handling simultaneously.

The Mondeo had impressive handling in stock form, and the Steeda upgrades built on these excellent foundations to make for a very capable car indeed. That's not to say it was super-stiff and shaky like many performance cars, as it certainly wasn't. In fact, Steeda hit the nail right on the head for the audience with this car. It was not aimed at the same market as things like the Focus RS or Mustang. Instead the Mondeo Sport was targeted at the regular man in the street – someone who needed a reliable car for daily commuting, something big enough to get the weekly shop in the boot, and something sensible enough to ferry the kids around at the weekend. But for those moments when the kids are safely tucked up at home, and it's just you and an empty stretch of road ahead, the Mondeo Sport offered something considerably more exciting than you could ever hope to get from standard models.

And you must admit, with those HLTs and the lower ride height, the Steeda Mondeo Sport was a handsome brute – especially finished in Ruby Red (as tested) or Deep Impact Blue.

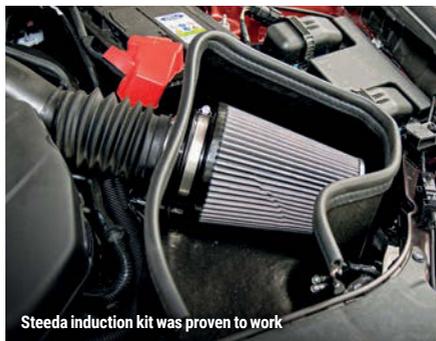
We were quite taken by the Mondeo Sport. It was big, incredibly comfortable, surprisingly capable (in a straight line and through the corners) and, when provoked, fun to drive too.

But, for many, the Mondeo's ace up its sleeve was the fact that it combined all the above with the ability to double-up as a regular family wagon. This made it the ideal choice for those who couldn't justify the expense of owning multiple cars, or those whose lifestyles dictated the need for a sensible car. Sensible never needs to mean boring.

The Steeda Mondeo Sport was available to order exclusively through Haynes of Maidstone, which makes it quite a rare car on the second-hand market today. But if you can find one, you'll enjoy a car that combines style with genuine performance and practicality; it is arguably the last performance Mondeo ever made. ■



The 2.0-litre EcoBoost benefited from hardware upgrades



Steeda induction kit was proven to work



20in OZ Leggera HLTs looked perfect on the Mondeo Sport



Sports springs gave a better stance and improved handling



CONTACT

STEEDA UK
www.steeda.co.uk



ENGINE GUIDE

DURATEC V6

Let's take a closer look at how to coax even more performance from those torquey Duratec V6s

Words JAMIE / Photos FAST FORD ARCHIVES

We first saw the Duratec name on a V6 in the 1994 Mondeo, in 2.5-litre capacity as the aptly-named Duratec 25 (not to be confused with the USA four-cylinder variant). The '25' powered all Mk1 and Mk2 Mondeo V6s including

WE LOVE...

- Smooth, modern, reliable engine
- ST200 bits bolt straight on
- Many US-spec SVT parts will fit

WE HATE...

- Poor head gasket design (2.5)
- Minor gains from tuning
- Poor selection of UK tuning parts

the first ST-badged Ford – the ST24. Power was increased for the ST200, but the capacity was still 2.5-litre. That increased to 3.0-litre with the Duratec 30 in the ST220.

The sportiest ST200 and ST220 versions really were very well optimised straight from the factory, so don't expect to see the same huge initial performance gains as you might from other models in Ford's range. That said, the Duratec V6 is an underrated engine, and with some well-placed upgrades you can really bring one to life. Here's how.

BLOCK AND INTERNALS

Both the 2.5- and 3.0-litre variants are based on the same aluminium block design, and as such feature the same 79.5mm stroke. The ST220's

3.0-litre unit gains the extra displacement from an increased bore size of 89mm, up from 82.4mm found in the 2.5-litre version.

As both blocks are so similar it's quite common for Mk2 Mondeo owners (including ST24 and ST200) to fit the larger ST220 bottom end, which is a much more cost-effective way of increasing the displacement and raising the compression ratio than ordering custom rods and pistons.

Both the stock 2.5-litre and 3.0-litre bottom end will deal with mild increases in power and torque (around 250bhp is quite comfortable) but the larger 3.0-litre will yield higher rewards due to the increased displacement.

But you are unlikely to reach the limits of the bottom end without spending an absolute

VITAL STATS

CAPACITY	2495cc–2544cc (2967cc)
BORE/STROKE	82.4x79.5mm (89.0x79.5mm)
COMPRESSION RATIO	9.7:1 (10:1)
MAX POWER	168bhp–202bhp (220)
MAX TORQUE	162lb.ft–173lb.ft (207)
CYLINDERS	Six, in 60-degree vee configuration
CYLINDER HEAD	Cast aluminium
BLOCK	Cast aluminium
VALVE GEAR	Four valves per cylinder, DOHC, belt-driven
INDUCTION	Naturally aspirated

fortune elsewhere on the engine or investing in a forced-induction conversion – so upping to a 3.0-litre base is about as far as you'll want to go without deep pockets full of cash.

HEAD AND CAMS

The top end of the engine is where all the hard work is done, and is the main reason for the ST200's improved performance over the stock 168bhp 2.5-litre unit. In fact, the ST200 is quite highly-strung as standard, which unfortunately means there isn't a lot of room for improvement.

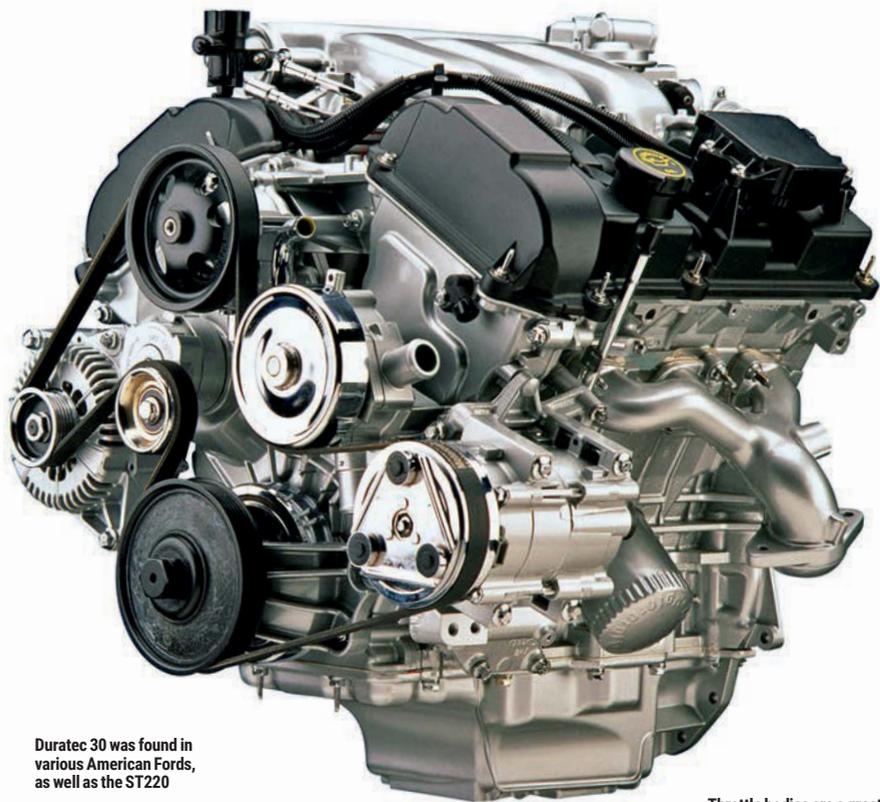
But it does mean there's a readily available bolt-on upgrade for less-powerful V6s. This includes the upper and lower intake manifolds, the larger throttle body, the more aggressively profiled camshafts, and the larger injectors – all of which are easily transferred from the ST200 to other 2.5-litre V6s.

The ST200 heads were themselves better flowing than others due to being extrude honed – an aerospace process that forces a fine grit putty-like material through the ports and runners to highly polish and smooth out the inlet tract, resulting in less restrictions for the air/fuel to contend with.

As for the ST220, there is some debate as to just how good the later top-end is, but ST220 heads did feature significantly larger valves than the 200's. But, as they don't support the variable-length intake runners, most owners and engine builders opt to fit these larger valves to the ST200 heads instead. This is a process that can be used even on the ST220 3.0-litre bottom end. Getting the 200 heads to fit the 220 block does require some minor fettling and blanking a couple of oilways to get everything to line-up correctly again.

Doing so also means that the whole engine can be run using the original engine management system, although most people also upgrade to the ST200 ECU too, which yields even more power if appropriately remapped.

To give an example, we've seen a 3.0-litre ST24/200 hybrid make 231bhp on a stock ST24 ECU, so the potential for 250bhp is well within reach with a suitable map or aftermarket →



Duratec 30 was found in various American Fords, as well as the ST220



Aluminium block keeps the overall weight of the engine down



Throttle bodies are a great way to unlock power



ST200 has variable-length inlet manifold runners, but the control unit is prone to failure

management system.

For ST220 owners, it may seem a bit weird dismantling the newer engine to retrofit the top-half of an older, less powerful engine – but it does work. But if you want to leave the engine intact (and this goes for any Duratec V6) the biggest improvement you can make is getting air/fuel into the engine as quickly as possible. Therefore, a set of throttle bodies and aftermarket management would be the best investment. We have seen a 3.0-litre ST220 unit pumping out over 300bhp in N/A guise with a set of Jenveys fitted – although this was with ported heads, Mountune camshafts and a forged bottom end – but you could realistically see around 250bhp with ITBs on a stock ST220.

ST200 AND ST220 ENGINES

The sporty ST200 model produced, as the name would suggest, 200bhp and therefore featured various uprated component parts in comparison to other non-ST200 2.5-litre Duratec V6s. They were domed pistons, revised camshaft timing/profiles, hollow camshafts, different heads, bigger fuel injectors, lighter flywheel, different map, less restrictive inlet manifolds (upper and lower), larger SVT throttle body, and a different airbox (with extra inlet).

The ST220 engine differed again slightly, although it shared more in common with its 3.0-litre base engine than the ST200 did with the standard 2.5-litre unit. The ST220 V6 had less-aggressive cam profiles than the ST200, and fixed-length inlet manifold runners (no IMRC like the ST200), but the main differences could be found deep inside the engine. The increased displacement came from a larger bore size (although stroke remained the same), and the compression ratio was increased from 9.7:1 to 10:1 at the same time. The ST220 also featured larger valves: 35mm inlet as opposed to 28mm, and 30mm exhaust rather than 28mm.

FORCED INDUCTION

Someone once said 'there's no replacement for displacement', but this is a bare-faced lie. There is a replacement; it's called a turbo! But when you couple this with an already large-capacity engine like the 2.5- to 3.0-litre V6s we've discussed here, then you are pretty much guaranteed a shedload of power and torque.

Turbocharging or supercharging an engine can be quite a complex mission, and with some very clever aftermarket component parts available these days it's all too easy to overcomplicate things. Before you start to look at how to install a turbo/supercharger, let's take a quick look at how it works, and why it gives an increase in power and torque.

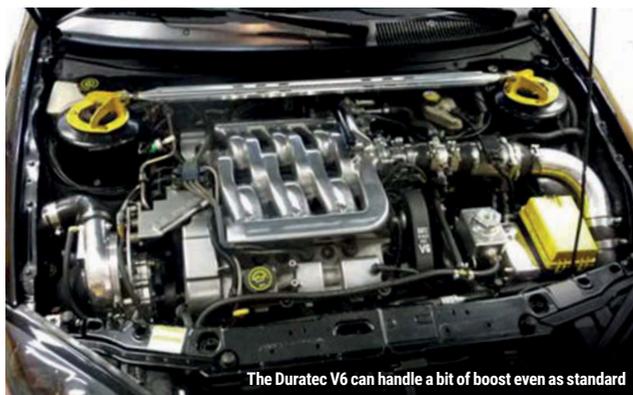
Basically, an engine's ability to produce power is governed by how much air it can physically move – which is why generally bigger-capacity engines make more power than smaller engines.



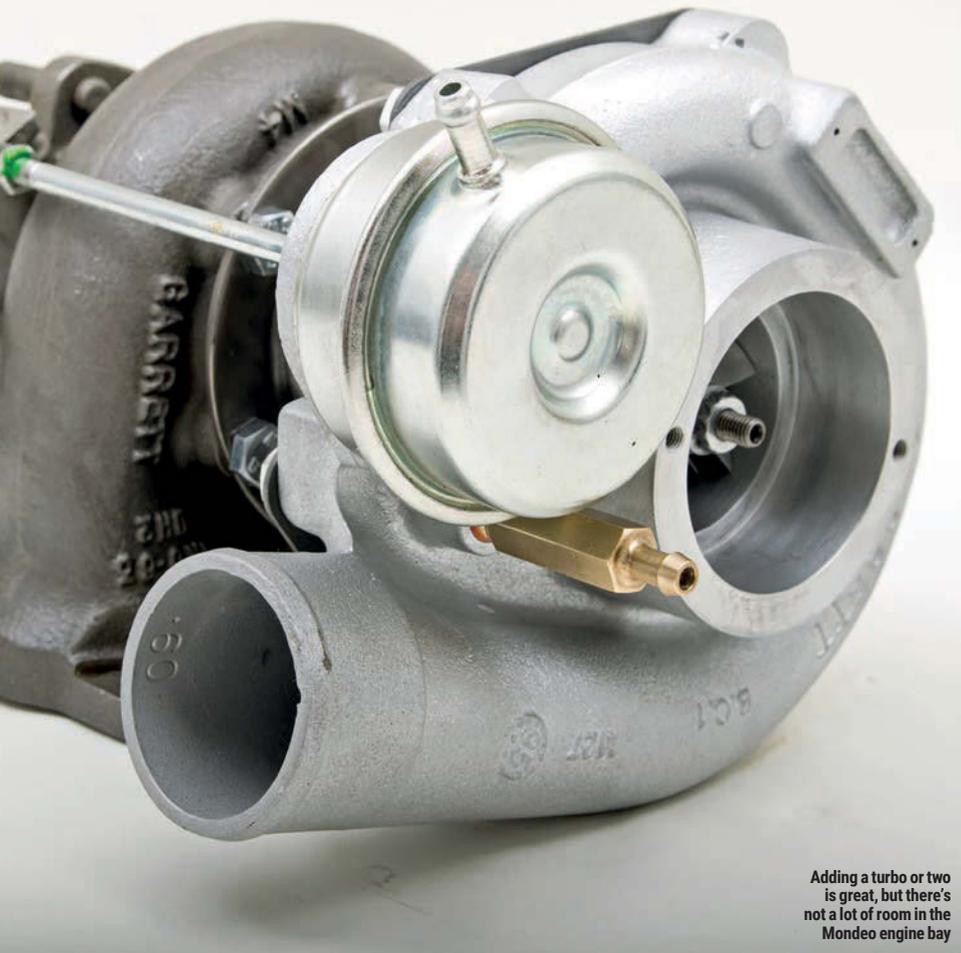
Supercharging the V6 is not a simple bolt-on job



Throttle bodies are needed for big power if not adding boost



The Duratec V6 can handle a bit of boost even as standard



Adding a turbo or two is great, but there's not a lot of room in the Mondeo engine bay

“THE NOBLE M400 SAW SOME IMPRESSIVE RESULTS (UP TO 450BHP) BY WHACKING A PAIR OF BLOWERS ONTO THE SIDE OF THE DURATEC V6 ENGINE”

engine when at idle/light throttle conditions, to name a few.

For a basic conversion it's possible to leave the remainder of the engine untouched, but you will be limited to a low boost conversion of just a few psi. A halfway house, and cheap way of lowering the compression ratio is to fit a decompression plate – this will allow you to run slightly more boost but is quite a crude way of doing things, and not favourable among many tuners.

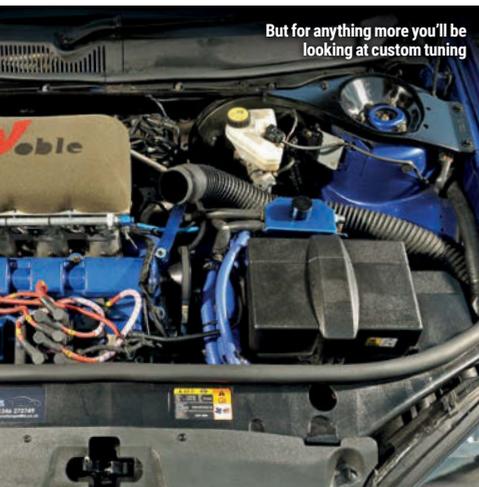
The best way is to pull the engine apart and build it specifically to run as a forced-induction motor, with appropriate internal components designed for the job. This adds to the cost considerably but is the only way you can reliably run a high-boost, big-bhp turbo conversion.

You may think that converting a naturally-aspirated Duratec V6 to a turbocharged engine would be something left to enthusiastic home-mechanics with their wild and wacky ideas, but you'd be wrong. The 2.5- and 3.0-litre Duratec V6 units were treated to a full-blown turbo conversion from the factory, albeit not the Ford factory. The Noble M400 and M12 saw some impressive results (up to 450bhp) by effectively whacking a pair of blowers onto the side of the Duratec V6 engine.

Unfortunately, the physical constraints of the Mondeo engine bay make it impossible (without a lot of cutting and welding) to get the Noble setup to fit, but there is still a wide selection of forced-induction solutions available from specialists all over the world, including the likes of Nautilus Performance in America. ■



Simple tuning mods will give an ST220 around 250bhp...



But for anything more you'll be looking at custom tuning

But when you add a turbo or supercharger to the side of an engine, it compresses the air that the engine consumes – so it is consuming a greater volume of air within the same physical size, hence producing a bigger bang and thus more power from the same capacity engine.

To get a turbocharger to work you'll need some custom manifolds that allow the turbo(s) to be mounted and fed with the spent exhaust gases, the required pipework to send the compressed air to the inlet manifold, an uprated fuel system using a rising rate fuel pressure regulator to match the increased amounts of air being consumed, and some form of boost control, as well as a suitable map to run everything (which in most cases means switching to aftermarket engine management in order to control everything).

Depending on the installation there are a few other things to consider too, such as oil drains from the turbo(s), whether the turbo(s) is water-cooled or not, and whether you are passing the air through an intercooler or not.

A supercharger installation is equally complex, posing its own set of problems to overcome, including methods of oil control and preventing the boosted air from entering the

CONTACTS

BURTON POWER

020 8518 9136
www.burtonpower.com

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01375 378 606
www.specialisedengines.co.uk

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0115 919 6160
www.boostperformance.co.uk

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NAUTILUS PERFORMANCE

www.nautilusperformance.com



TUNING THE ST24 & ST200

Already well-optimised from the factory, there is still room to improve the Mk2 ST24 and ST200 if you know where to look

Words DAN WILLIAMSON / Photos FAST FORD ARCHIVES

ENGINE

Although the ST24 and ST200 share what's basically the same 2.5-litre Duratec, the ST200 left the factory with its tuning turned up to ten. But even an ST200 can be cranked to 11...

The starting point for an ST24 should be to convert it to ST200 spec – you'll need the cylinder heads, cams, upper and lower intake manifolds, enlarged throttle body and dual-inlet airbox (or an induction kit with cold-air feed). To make it all run properly you'll have to sort out the fuelling – an ST200 ECU would do the trick, but you'd be better off investing in an aftermarket remap, which would also improve driveability of an ST200.

The ST200's bigger injectors aren't necessary, but its free-flowing exhaust system is beneficial.

Better still would be a sports system with de-cats. It won't release much power but will certainly boost that V6 roar. Sports manifolds aren't really worth the expense.

Further cylinder head work and reprofiled cams will optimise the engine, but UK tuners are thin on the ground; you may need to look across the Atlantic for performance parts designed to fit the Contour SVT (America's version of the Mondeo ST).

You could even fit a set of Jenvey throttle bodies and aftermarket ECU, but the gains almost certainly don't justify the cost.

ENGINE CONVERSIONS

For a serious performance increase, the most sensible money goes into an ST220 engine

transplant. With more than 220bhp as standard from the 3.0-litre Duratec 30, it adds a healthy, unstressed dollop of torque.

ST220 engines are easily available and reasonably cheap, and bolt straight into the Mk2 body. The best method is to use the ST220's cylinder block and injectors, adding its bigger valves inside the superior ST200 heads, which means blanking off a couple of oilways.

It does, though, allow you to keep the Mk2's variable-length intake runners and ECU; suitably remapped, you could hope to see around 250bhp.

Don't forget that the Noble M12 used a mildly-reworked ST220 powerplant, boosted by a pair of turbos. Although there's no way this setup will fit into a Mondeo's engine bay (unless you're

prepared to chop the bulkhead), it proves the toughness of the bottom end. Up-rated pistons and rods are available from the USA, but not strictly necessary unless you're talking 400bhp-plus figures.

So don't be scared to look into the Yanks' methods of forced induction, notably the single turbo kit of Nautilus Performance or now-discontinued Vortech supercharger setup. A screaming, boosted ST200? Sounds great, but it'll not be easy – or cheap.

TRANSMISSION

The stock gearbox in each model is the MTX-75, which should easily handle anything you throw its way –including a mild dose of forced induction, if you're brave enough.

The clutch is also tough, although failure can occur much sooner than you'd expect – especially considering the cost and difficulty of replacement. If you're running an ST24, swap to the ST200's mildly-uprated clutch and slightly

lighter flywheel while the car's in pieces, but it's not worth the effort otherwise. In contrast, a Quaife ATB differential is said to be a great upgrade, and is readily available because the same transmission was found in early Focus RS Mk1s and ST220s.

Later ST220s were equipped with the even-stronger MMT six-speed gearbox, which could be persuaded to fit a Mk2 if you were feeling giddy (the five-cog has a nicer change anyway). If it's strength you seek, a company like Competition Transmission Services would provide you with a shot-peened gear set. Or if it's silliness you require, why not convert your

ST24 to four-wheel drive, using Mk1 Mondeo 4x4 underpinnings (and maybe a few Jaguar X-Type V6 bits).

HANDLING

The ST24 and ST200 handle superbly for their size (and age), and you'll be doing well to improve on Ford's efforts for general road use.

The ST200 was thought to be overly stiff as standard, and the ST24 (15mm lower than a regular Mondeo, sitting on Boge gas shocks) wasn't far behind.

When it comes to upgrades, the ideal setup for either ST Mondeo model would be a set →

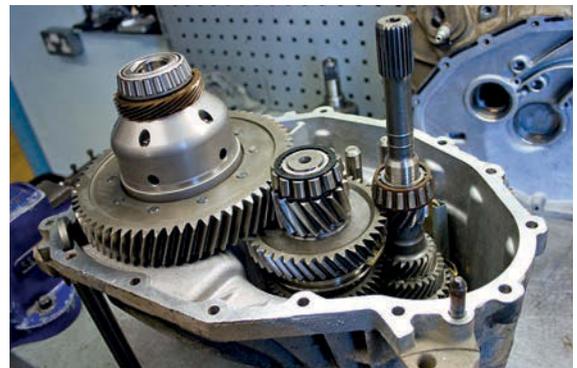
“THE BEST METHOD IS TO USE THE ST220'S CYLINDER BLOCK AND INJECTORS, ADDING ITS BIGGER VALVES INSIDE THE SUPERIOR ST200 CYLINDER HEADS”



Fitting ST200 heads to a 3.0-litre bottom end gives great results



MTX-75 can handle plenty of power



Invest in an ATB-type diff





of Eibach lowering springs and Bilstein or Koni dampers, which will give a meaner stance and improved cornering ability, with no detriment to the car's ride comfort. Polyurethane suspension bushes are available, which tighten everything up a tad.

If you want a bigger drop – or you've some track-day ambitions – it's worth looking to America, or even a set of coilovers. You might find them a bit jarring, though.

Mondeos tend to ride best on 16in ST24 wheels (which came in four-spoke or 12-spoke styles, the latter oddly offered in quickly-flaky chrome finish) with 50-series rubber, but the ST200's 17in alloys with 45-section tyres look far better. The choice is yours...

Choose the right design (say, a subtle multi-spoke), and 18s really fill the arches on 215/40 or 225/35 tyres, while 19s and 20s have been known – but they won't go on without extra-skinny rubber and/or wheelarch mods.

BRAKES

Never the Mondeo ST's greatest attribute, the brakes are adequate at best – and with the onset of age or application of mods, they're awful.

Early V6 models wore Escort Cosworth-type front callipers on Mondeo-specific carriers, along with 278mm discs. But to make matters worse, Ford fitted post-1999 models with a poorer setup featuring the 278mm discs and stock four-cylinder Mondeo callipers.

The early V6 anchors are a cheap, easy upgrade; when combined with fast-road pads (because they fit Cossies, there's a massive choice available), they provide decent stopping power.

But for a few quid more, you might as well

Mk3 Mondeo callipers and Focus ST170 discs provide an affordable and effective brake upgrade



swap to Mondeo Mk3 callipers and Focus ST170 (four-stud) 300mm discs, which are a direct fit – needing only 3mm spacers and slightly longer bolts. The only drawback is they don't fit behind ST24 16in alloys; ST200 17s go on just fine.

Better still, look for a set of Focus RS Mk1 Brembo four-pot front callipers, 324mm discs and custom brackets. Focus ST stoppers will also work, but you'll need to redrill the five-stud discs to fit Mk2 Mondeo four-stud hubs. Or, if you're feeling really flush, an AP Racing upgrade simply can't be beaten.... ■



MISSED MONDEO

THE RS MONDEO THAT NEVER WAS

Ford never released a full-fat Rallye Sport version of the Mondeo, but the ST250 concept was tantalisingly close

Words JAMIE & STEVE SAXTY / Photos FORD MOTOR COMPANY ARCHIVES

You may think the ST200 was the top-dog Mk2 Mondeo, but you'd be wrong. The ST250, unveiled as a concept car at the Geneva International Motor Show in 1999, was much, much better. Like all concepts it was, of course, concerned with environmental issues, and combined normal unleaded petrol with LPG – which was tuned to well beyond the European emissions standards at the time.

Don't think it was all 'tree-hugging' without any grunt to back it up, though. The 2.5 Duratec V6 fitted to the road-going ST200 had been significantly beefed up thanks to an increase in displacement to 3.0-litre, and a whacking great supercharger was bolted onto the side. And the fact it used LPG actually helped when it came to tuning the ECU software, as it is more resistant to detonation than conventional petrol.

On the outside, you could clearly see it came from the Mk2 Mondeo family, but more like the tougher, harder, bigger brother of the ST200. It could have easily passed as a Mondeo RS.

But in the late Nineties Ford saw the RS brand as old-hat. This was a time when the Blue Oval was bankrolling the Stewart Ford Formula One



LPG-powered and supercharged 3.0-litre V6



If any Mondeo was going to wear the RS badge, it should have been the ST250

team, and all new motorsport-related specialist machines would be termed 'Racing' (like the Puma), while volume-selling mainstream cars were branded ST for Sports Technology.

The Mondeo ST250 Eco Concept was conceived as a brand-building ST halo car designed by Ian Callum (who had previously worked on the RS200 and Escort Cosworth, joined TWR to design race cars, led the design of Aston Martin's DB7, and then moved on to the ST250 project).

Ian created an aggressive aero kit set off by High Intensity Discharge front lights and 18in wheels. Inside, the car featured Recaro seats and a clutchless gearchange developed by Prodrive – which was building mighty Mondeo BTCC race cars at the time. It's believed that Roush Engineering, which built many one-off cars for Ford's Special Vehicle Engineering team, constructed up to four mules plus this show car. Roush had developed a prototype supercharged 2.5-litre V6 for the rare Mondeo 4x4, and a 3.0-litre version of the engine available in the US-market Taurus (which was later fitted to the Mk3 Mondeo ST220).

The blue ST250 combined the larger 3.0-litre engine with the installation from the prototype supercharged 2.5-litre unit. To this was added a provision to run on LPG, lending the car the 'eco' credentials it needed.

The result was a thrilling combination of

Callum's TWR design talent, Prodrive's race technology and Roush's engineering that met the brief perfectly – to create a halo for the new ST200. Perhaps it was too good, for it looked far better, and was more technically interesting than the regular model.

Obviously, the suspension, steering and brakes were all tweaked to tame the hike in power, and drive was transmitted through a five-speed Autoshift (fancy automatic with push-button-shift actuation) transmission.

No power figures were ever claimed, although with a name like ST250 it's not surprising what it was expected to produce. Conservative estimates would say 250PS, but early mule 2.5-litre versions were reported to have made 240PS, so the larger 3.0-litre was expected to easily produce the claimed 250PS.

It seemed ready for the road, but sadly the ST250 never saw production. And even more sadly, neither did the supercharger kit it was fitted with. A shame – it deserved a better fate and an appropriate name. Given its provenance, this could easily have been the Mondeo RS.

If ever a Mondeo deserved the Rallye Sport name, then this was it: TWR Design, Prodrive technology and Roush engineering could have given us one of the greats. Add in AWD from the never-released Mondeo V6 4x4, and we could have seen a giant-killer. ■



TUNING THE ST220

The ST220 is one of the best all-rounders Ford ever produced, but it can be made even better. It's not easy, but here's our guide to tuning the top-spec Mk3

Words JAMIE & DAN WILLIAMSON / Photos FAST FORD ARCHIVES

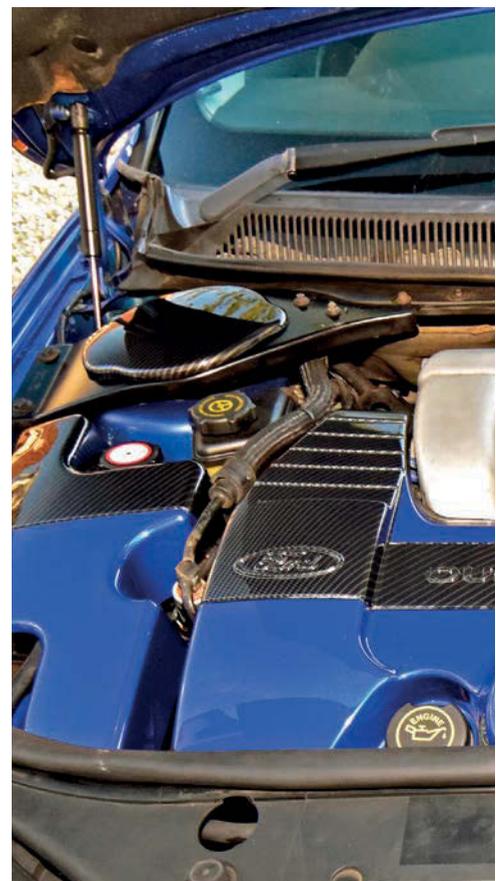
ENGINE

Unlike its predecessor (the Mondeo ST200), the ST220 featured an internally-standard Ford V6 engine – this time the 3.0-litre, alloy-block Duratec ST, a derivative of the American Duratec 30. For the ST220 it was mildly breathed on, having free-flowing inlet manifolds, uprated airbox, sports exhausts and revised fuelling to take power to 223bhp.

Unfortunately, unleashing more grunt is far

from easy. Most ST220s are by now equipped with an aftermarket air filter, which won't give any performance gains; a cold-air induction kit may enhance throttle response and will definitely increase the grin factor when you hear that V6 roar.

Similarly, a free-flowing exhaust improves the aural experience and may add a few horses too. A few folk have fitted de-cat pipes, but they're difficult to reach, awkward come MOT





Remaps give a tad more power



K&N 571 kit is a tried-and-tested upgrade

time, and offer marginal benefits.

Better breathing is great groundwork for remapped engine management software, but this is where the ST220 hits its first snag. Few tuners are able to crack the ST220's ECU, and none supply off-the-shelf software upgrades. A couple of remap handsets used to be available: Superchips Bluefin (which is still available and gives conservative gains of around 12bhp) and Dreamscience's Stratagem, which was said to have been tested to 250bhp, removed the first- and second-gear torque limiters, and could be set to give greater gains on super-unleaded petrol (the ST220 has no knock sensor, so 95 RON is normally all you need).

Your best bet these days is to look for a specialist who can custom map the original ECU or look at upgrading to an aftermarket ECU, but that is highly expensive and not worthwhile unless you're chucking a lot more fuel into the engine. Having said that, we've seen Duratec 30s running throttle bodies and around 300bhp, but it's very difficult getting enough air into the Mondeo's underbonnet area.

ST220 cylinder heads are good as standard, albeit lacking the improved ports of the ST200.

Yes, it's possible to retrofit ST200 heads, but it's doubtful you'd see benefits. The ST220's valves are significantly larger and, although its camshafts are less peaky, the head and cams were good enough to be used as stock in the Noble M12 sports car.

Talking of which, Noble bolted a pair of turbos onto an almost-standard ST220 bottom end to produce over 300bhp. The Mondeo's bulkhead means there's no way the Noble setup will fit into an ST220 engine bay, but it proves the bottom end is tough – in fact, some Nobles are making 700bhp on the standard crank and block, along with forged pistons and rods, ported big-valve heads and uprated valve springs, along with standalone management, uprated fuel system and big single turbo.

If you reckon forced induction is worth a try, look towards the Americans. Search for a now-discontinued Vortech supercharger setup or call Contour SVT (the Yank version of our ST200) specialist, Nautilus Performance. There are single-turbo kits available in intercooled and non-intercooled versions, with big-power potential. You'll need to move the Mondeo's battery out of the way, but otherwise it should all bolt up.

Finally, if you've got very deep pockets, check out Nautilus's awesome 3.5-litre conversion, using a big-bore version of the Duratec 30 block (as opposed to the USA-only Duratec 35 and 37 units, which won't fit the Mondeo).

“BETTER BREATHING IS GREAT GROUNDWORK FOR REMAPPED ENGINE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE, BUT THIS IS WHERE THE ST220 HITS ITS FIRST SNAG. FEW TUNERS ARE ABLE TO CRACK THE ST220'S ECU”

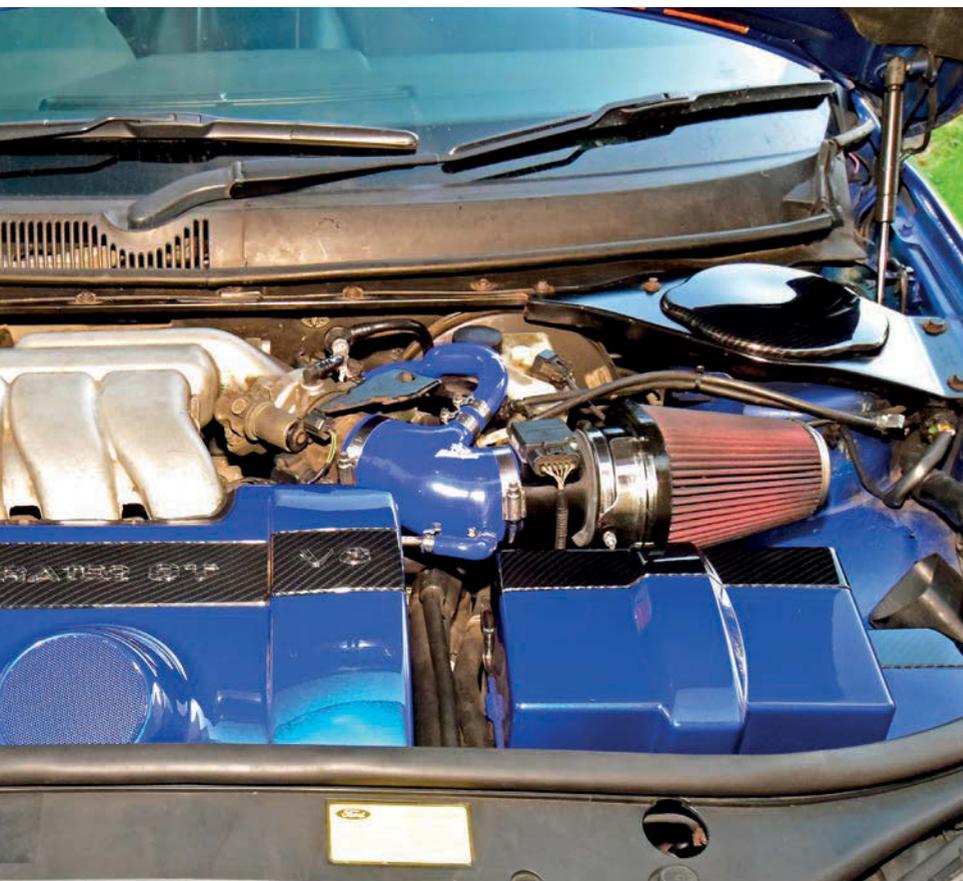
TRANSMISSION

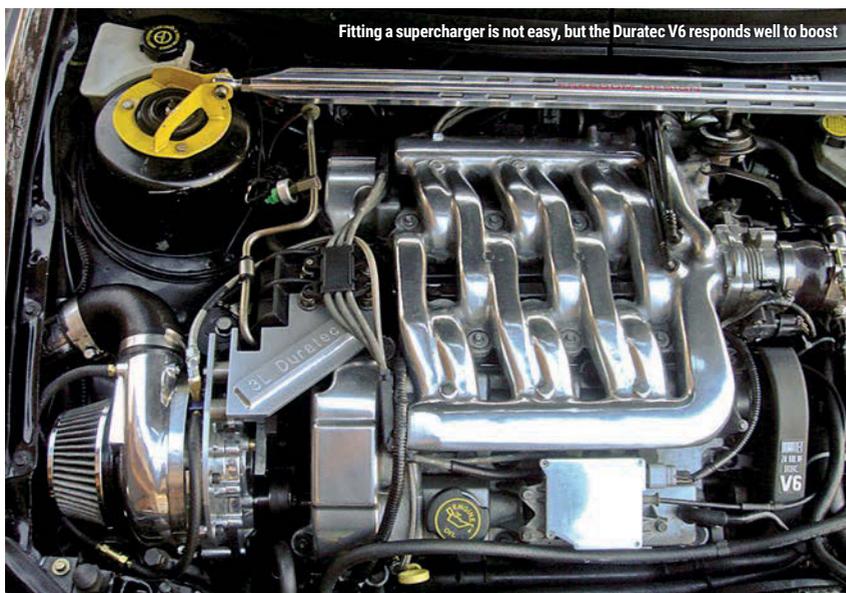
Early ST220s were equipped with the strong, slick MTX-75 five-speed gearbox, complete with revised ratios for optimum performance. From June 2003 it was swapped for an arguably-tougher MMT6 six-speeder, meaning better fuel economy and higher top speed, along with a slight acceleration disadvantage.

Although it's possible to swap the gearbox from one model to another, it's not a straightforward job, and certainly isn't worth the effort. Likewise, it's impossible to imagine any eventuality in which you'd need to upgrade either the MTX-75 or the MMT6 – even a 500bhp turbocharged ST220 wouldn't exceed the limits.

You may, though, choose to follow the lead of Noble owners, and add uprated selector forks and bearings to a six-cog variant. Shot-peened gear sets are also available for both 'boxes, as is a Quaife ATB limited-slip differential, which reportedly provides decent benefits in traction.

Generally, we'd advise against upsetting the smooth Duratec V6 by fitting a solid flywheel in favour of the factory-fitted dual-mass flywheel (DMF). But if you're pushing big power, it's possible to use Ford Transit solid flywheel components, along with a new crank pulley – or if you look towards America or Noble tuning, you'll be able to source a lightened flywheel and uprated clutch kit too. →





Finally, if you're feeling very brave, how about a four-wheel-drive conversion? It's been tackled on at least one ST220, using a mixture of Mk1 Mondeo 4x4 and Jaguar X-Type V6 underpinnings. Bear in mind that the four-wheel-drive X-Type used a Mondeo estate rear suspension layout, so an ST220 wagon could, potentially, make a fabulous starting point for a 4x4 Ford all-rounder.

SUSPENSION

Without a doubt the ST220's finest aspect – its handling – provides incredible poise on road or track, with a comfortable ride that hot hatchbacks could only dream about.

The factory suspension and steering setup combined Mk3 Mondeo components with a Jaguar X-Type 3.0 front end, specially tuned dampers, 15mm lowered springs and shorter anti-roll bar links.

If anything, the ride height is still a little lofty,

so a set of lowering springs take the car's body down to the wheels, resulting in a much tougher stance. It makes sense, too, to add a set of Bilstein shock absorbers, giving the perfect balance for fast road use.

Coilovers are available for the ST220, and may reap rewards if you've bought a cheap car to use for track days or genuinely prefer a tarmac-hugging pimped-up appearance. Otherwise, though, why would you spoil the ST220's impeccable road manners?

Having said that, a set of polyurethane suspension bushes are well worth considering, even if only for the rear subframes of saloon and hatchback models – it saves replacing the standard parts every couple of years, after all.

BRAKES

Ford made many boastful claims about the ST220's standard brakes but, unfortunately, they were pretty poor even from new. The ST220 used

exactly the same anchors as a base-model Mk3, including 300mm vented front discs and 280mm solid rears – good for a 113bhp diesel, not so hot for double that output.

Fast-road pads and decent-quality OE discs are a slight improvement, and a set of braided hoses helps pedal feel in the majority of cases. Renew the fluid, make sure those dodgy rear callipers are up to scratch, and you've optimised the standard components.

But don't stop there. Because Focus ST225 320mm front discs, callipers and carriers bolt straight onto the Mondeo, are readily available second-hand for sensible money, and make the kind of improvements you'll wish you'd done sooner – even if you bought the car yesterday... Ford's ST225 discs and pads are fine for most owners, but for track days it could be worth trying a harder compound.

But will Focus RS Mk2 callipers go on instead? The short answer is no. Although it's possible to make them fit using custom brackets, they're big and heavy, and aren't substantially better than the ST anchors.

If you really, really need bigger or better brakes (which is hugely unlikely on any road-going ST220), invest in an AP Racing 343mm four-pot calliper conversion. Basically, whatever will fit on the front of a Focus ST225 will also work on the ST220 – providing you've got the wheels (and wallet) to suit.

WHEELS AND TYRES

Stylish and distinctive, an ST220 doesn't look quite right unless it's wearing its factory 16-spoke 7.5x18in alloys and 225/40R18 tyres. Unfortunately, the original diamond-cut finish looked great for only a matter of months before the lacquer peeled away and corrosion took hold from underneath.

Refurbishing the wheels properly is an expensive, expert task, but powder-coating, respraying or replacing is an easier solution. And, while rims from other Ford models will fit with ease, an ST220 on Zetec S or Focus ST 18s isn't to everyone's tastes.

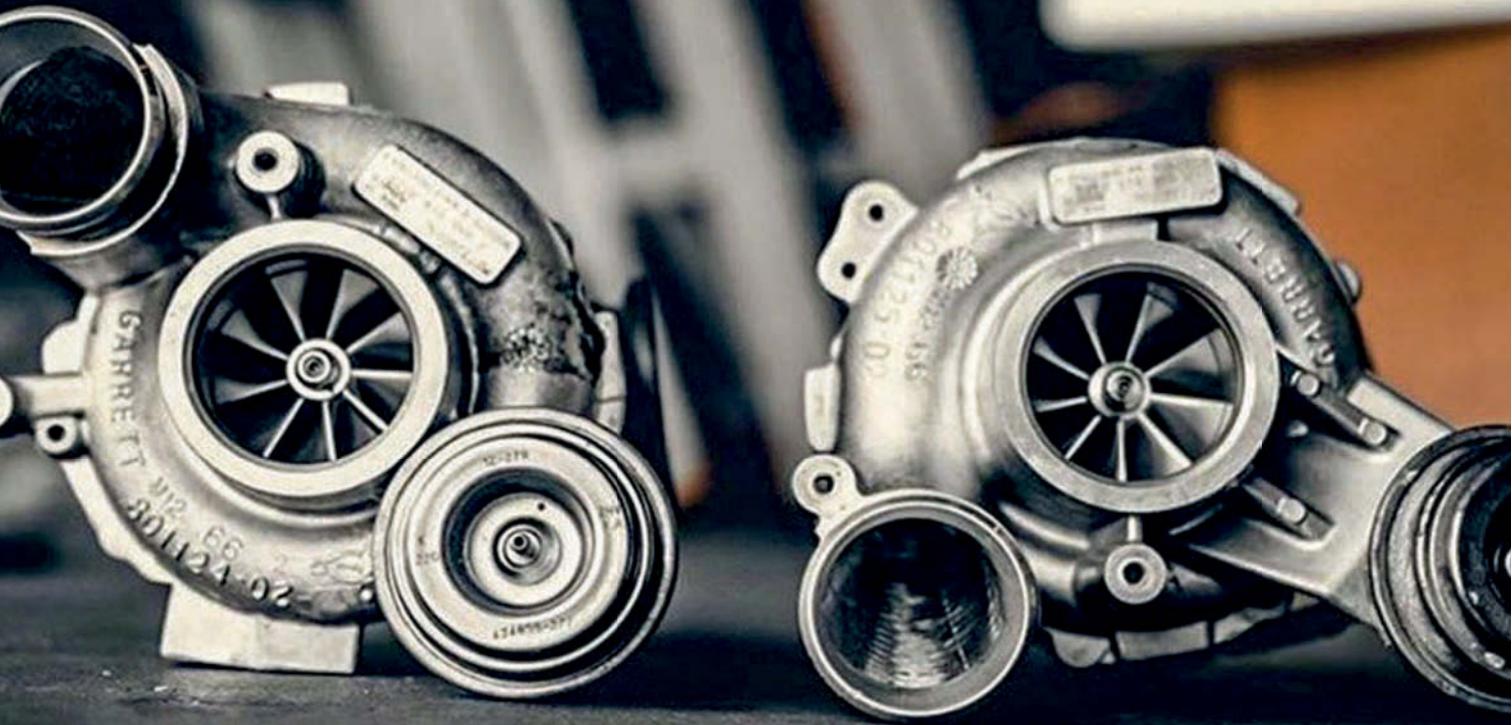
That said, Focus RS Mk2 19in alloys give a fabulous OE-plus effect, especially on a lowered ST220. They retain the traditional ST multi-spoke style, but dramatically fill the wheelarches too.

RS Mk2 rims have a 63mm offset rather than the Mondeo's 52.5mm, so you'll have to add some 15mm or 20mm spacers to make them fit, along with 235/35x19 tyres.

You can even increase to 20in diameter for maximum pose factor without adversely affecting the way the '220 drives.

Finally, if you're choosing aftermarket wheels (for looks, or for a stronger, lighter rim), it's worth noting that an ET45 to ET35 offset should be fine in place of the stock 52.5mm, with the lower number poking out and bulking up the arches that bit better. ■

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COMPLETE GUIDE

MONDEO ST TDCi

The Mk3 Mondeo saw the first sporty diesel, the ST TDCi. Here's our complete guide to buying, owning, and tuning one

Words **DAN WILLIAMSON** / Photos **FORD UK & FAST FORD ARCHIVES**

When you want a sporty Ford but don't want to splash out on big fuel bills; when you need practicality but don't necessarily need balls-out power; the answer? That's the Mondeo ST TDCi.

Launched in July 2004, this UK-only Blue Oval oil-burner offered ST220 styling along with enough mid-range grunt to produce comparable in-gear acceleration to the flagship petrol-powered version. Yes, it was a somewhat cynical attempt at a high-performance diesel, but it hit the right spot with the fleet market and family buyers alike. Only the badges and single exhaust tailpipe told neighbours you were too tight to buy the proper V6...

Under the bonnet was a box-stock 2.2 Duratorq TDCi, as found in less-sporty Mondeos and developed from the previous 2.0-litre diesel to produce 155bhp and 265lb.ft. Okay, the engine

note was uninspiring, but the six-speed gearbox, 15mm lowered suspension and 18in alloys made for an enjoyable drive.

Best of all, the ST TDCi really looked the part. It kept the ST220's bulky front wheelarches, extended bumpers, side skirts and rear spoiler, and even offered pretty Performance Blue paintwork for extra cost. Saloon, hatchback and estate bodies were available.

The interior was slightly watered-down, with part-leather heated seats, but the ST220's Recaros were an optional extra – as were a variety of luxury touches.

No wonder the ST TDCi became immediately desirable, and remains a firm choice as an everyday driver that combines plenty of substance with meagre running costs. Today, boasting a low purchase price, 46mpg and 180bhp only a remap away, there's nothing not to like...

HOW MUCH TO PAY

£500 TO £1500

You might find cheaper ST TDCis, but they'll be salvage cases, non-starters or heavy smokers. In this bracket you'll need to be wary of clocked and generally tatty examples.

£1500 TO £3000

The bulk of ST TDCis in this bracket are early models and/or higher-mileage (100,000-plus) examples. At this price you should expect a good, useable Mondeo that'll last a few years.

£3000 UPWARDS

Low-mileage ST TDCis, late-models and high-sped examples are worth paying extra for – as are decent dealer warranties. Keep looking for your ideal car because it's bound to be out there.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Condition is crucial when searching for an ST TDCi – there are plenty of dogs masquerading as decent motors, so shop carefully for the right car. If your budget is healthy, go for the most recent, lowest-mileage example you can find, safe in the knowledge that it will make a great everyday motor for many years to come.

Bodystyle will make an impact on your decision, of course. The saloon – despite its cavernous boot – is less useful than the hatchback, so should be worth a few quid less; the enormous estate is top of the tree.

Colour may affect your choice, too. Performance Blue is always a winner but you may prefer a more subtle shade if you don't want hot hatches baiting what appears to be a big V6...

If possible, look for a spec with the option boxes ticked. Bluetooth, sat nav and xenon headlamps are all worthy extras, but full leather is most desirable – ST220 Recaros transform the feel behind the wheel.

If bling is your thing, the minor 2005 facelift added extra chrome trim, fairground tail lights, rear reflectors, curvier side skirts, and red stitching on the cockpit leather. Note, too, that some very early ST TDCis were reported to lack heated seats.

Any ST TDCi with its proper 16-spoke alloys in excellent condition is good, too – the diamond-cut/lacquered finish is extremely prone to corrosion, and costs a fair bit to put right.

Finally, if you find a clean car with recent receipts for a clutch/flywheel change and new injectors, you could be saving on future repairs.

INSURANCE

It's a Mondeo, and it's a diesel – so we're very much talking about mainstream insurance policies here.

Start with the usual online comparison sites and high-street brokers, many of which view the ST TDCi as just another oil-burning saloon/hatchback/estate. If you've got a decent driving history and a little no claims discount, this is one Ford for which you'll have no trouble gaining cost-effective cover.

That said, the insurance group of 27 is pretty high for the performance on offer, and mainly reflects the ST badge and price of repair parts, rather than the model's tendency to be bought by boy racers. Family-man racers, maybe...

If you make the most of the TDCi by investing in a cheeky remap, don't forget you'll (legally) be obliged to tell your insurer (not that most companies will ever know any different). If so, don't forget to try a specialist broker for the best deal – not just in price, but in agreed modification value too.

WHAT TO AVOID

Mondeo diesels make great minicabs, and large numbers of ST TDCis have been through the hands of private-hire firms. Needless to say, they've covered huge mileages – and some have undoubtedly been clocked once or twice.

So, steer clear of an ST TDCi showing lots of cabin wear, ropey bodywork and a smoky engine and/or turbo seals. Any example should manage well over 150,000 miles before looking like a scrapyards reject.

Nasty noises from beneath the bonnet are also a big no-no. They could be caused by the auxiliary belt tensioners (many early ST TDCis were updated during a Ford recall, but all will need replacing eventually), identified by excessive rumbling at the front of the engine – or even the rattling of a tired timing chain on a very high-mileage machine.

Worse, though, is clattering from the clutch or starter motor. Chances are this will be due to a faulty dual-mass flywheel, which can mean a four-figure bill for replacement – or sending your car for scrap.

Fuel injector faults can also be particularly problematic. Many need to be cleaned or replaced

after a few years or around 60,000 miles, so look out for excessive black smoke from the exhaust or poor running; they're £200-plus per injector plus the cost of programming to the car's ECU – and if they fail altogether, they can do some serious damage to the engine. Beware a TDCi with the dashboard's glow plug lamp staying lit.

Aside from the obvious DMF and injector failures, the most likely fault you'll find is a knackered EGR valve – and you'll probably experience the same issue several times. You'll know it's knackered (or in need of a good clean) when the car's running badly, it's smoking, the engine management throws up an error code or the glow plug lamp lights up. This can also be caused by other issues (including injectors, sensors and so on), but chances are the EGR valve is to blame.

Finally, don't forget to check for rust. Pre-November 2004 Mondeos had poorly-flanged doors, which trapped moisture and led to corrosion. But don't be complacent, and check all cars around the doors, rear wheelarches, tailgate, back lights, bonnet edges and inner wings for signs of rot.





ENGINE

Although the ST TDCi benefited from no engine modifications over the standard Mondeo 2.2 Duratorq TDCi, its 155bhp/265lb.ft powerplant is ripe for improvement – if you know where to look.

Your first step (after ensuring the engine's running smoothly, and blanking off that EGR valve) should be an off-the-shelf remap, especially if it's the only modification you have planned. Improving the software on the 2.2's ECU is a quick, simple operation done by tuners (or, in some cases, using a hand-held device) through the car's OBD (on-board diagnostics) port, and fully reversible (if required) should you choose to sell the car.

We'd strongly advise using a recognised Ford specialist (rather than a generic diesel map or eBay tuning box) to ensure the best results. Power, driveability and fuel economy are improved, while the editing of torque restrictors gives a more exciting seat-of-the-pants feel.

A performance air filter or – better still – cold air induction kit shouldn't do any harm, but a de-cat pipe (perfectly legal on a diesel) and full sports exhaust system will aid breathing and improve the soundtrack too.

A bigger intercooler is next on the list. Fortunately, the 2.2's intercooler is the same as a Focus ST component, meaning there's plenty of stuff available off the shelf. You'll not do any better than an Airtec, which is good quality, adds about 5bhp and 30lb.ft on its own and – most importantly – will allow you to run more boost. With a custom remap, you'll easily see 200bhp and up to 370lb.ft. In-gear acceleration will finally match the ST220 you really wanted...

Tuning a turbo-diesel engine doesn't end there. A hybrid turbo is the next mod, despite being more than most tuners have tackled.

We've seen a Mondeo 2.2 Titanium up to 230bhp using a Garrett GT17/21V turbo, and even more with a selection of VNTs on custom manifolds is possible.

Remaps help unleash lots of torque



Intercooler upgrades are readily available



TDCi engines have issues with aux belts and tensioner



TRANSMISSION

A slick, six-speed Durashift MMT6 gearbox was a selling point for Ford's TDCi-engined Mondeos, and quite rightly – it's a great setup. Even in a boosted torque monster, you'll be very unlikely to cause the transmission any serious grief.

It does, though, have a series Achilles' heel – the factory-fitted dual-mass flywheel (DMF), which was designed to dampen vibrations from the diesel engine. Prone to breaking up, rattling and eventually failing altogether, the DMF is sensitive to abuse from using the wrong gear in the wrong rev band.

DMF replacement is a dear job, so some owners swap to a solid flywheel conversion instead, generally using recognised Ford Transit components, along with a new crank pulley. Results are mixed, with reports of extra harshness from the drivetrain. There are also tales of gearbox and/or engine failure after changing to a solid flywheel, but are in most instances unsubstantiated.

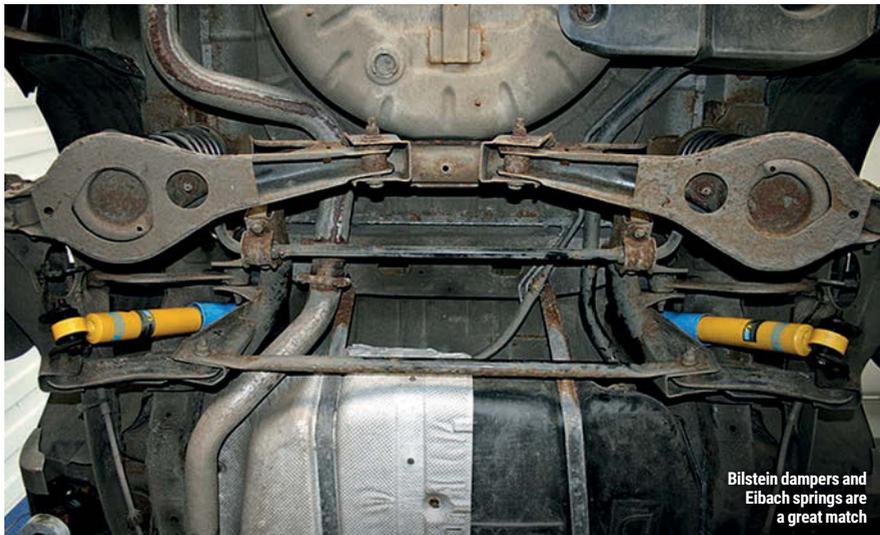
Solid flywheels are generally used when TDCis have had torque levels increased substantially (with turbo upgrades and beyond), by which time it's perhaps worth looking at an uprated gear set. At that point, a Quaife ATB is available off the shelf to drop straight into the gearbox too.

SUSPENSION

Although the ST TDCi looked like an ST220 on the outside – especially considering its 15mm lowered coil springs – its underpinnings were subtly different. Rather than the ST220's lower wishbones, steering setup and such like (which were shared with the 3.0 Jaguar X-Type), the ST TDCi made do with a regular Mondeo diesel chassis.

It's fair to say most drivers are hard-pressed to tell the difference, and an overall swap probably wouldn't yield worthwhile results. Far better would be to follow the usual upgrade path of good-quality aftermarket springs and dampers; an Eibach/H&R and Bilstein combination can't really be beaten for fast road use, along with great ride quality. Steer clear of coilover kits, unless your aim is for an absolutely ground-scraping stance – in which case you'll compromise the Mondeo's great handling characteristics.

Polyurethane suspension bushes are readily available for the Mk3 Mondeo, and come well recommended – especially for the rear subframes of saloon and hatchback models.



Bilstein dampers and Eibach springs are a great match

Injector issues can cause TDCi trouble



Bilsteins work wonders on a Mondeo



WHEELS AND TYRES

Like its petrol-powered ST220 counterpart, the ST TDCi featured 16-spoke 7x18in alloys and 225/40R18 tyres. They look fantastic when new – in a smart diamond-cut finish – but appear decidedly less so once the lacquer has peeled away and corrosion entered from underneath. Which happens very quickly...

Your options are to have the wheels refurbished (a pricey job), powder-coated, repainted silver or simply replaced. Some owners have swapped them for other Mondeo 18in rims (such as those from the Zetec S) but somehow it always looks like a bodge...

A far more satisfying solution is a set of Focus RS Mk2 8.5x19in 15-spoke alloys, which retain the same multi-spoke (and incredibly hard-to-clean) style, but fill the arches that bit better – especially if you've lowered the suspension too. The Focus has a 63mm offset rather than the Mondeo's 52.5mm, so you'll need a set of 15mm or 20mm hubcentric spacers to get them on properly. Use 235/35x19 tyres and you'll be fine.

Focus ST brake upgrade is cheap and easy to fit



BRAKES

When the Mk3 Mondeo was launched, its 300mm vented front discs and 280mm solid rears were widely praised – and considered to be pretty large for a mainstream family motor.

With a set of fast road pads clamping against the OE discs, they're still a respectable way to haul an ST TDCi to a halt – providing everything is up to scratch.

But with a few miles under its belt, old fluid and the help of a tasty remap, you may find yourself wishing your Mondeo had better brakes. Like those off a Focus ST, for example... Yes, the ST225's 320mm front discs, callipers and carriers bolt straight onto the Mondeo, and really do make a genuine improvement you'll notice straight away.

Add a set of braided hoses, renew the fluid, and it's highly unlikely your oil-burner will ever be lacking in the anchor department.

Still, if you feel the need to spend cash (or you'd simply like to see sexy stoppers behind the ST TDCi's 18in alloys), any upgrade designed for the Focus can also be applied to the front of a Mondeo. Whether that's simply a set of race pads or a full-on AP Racing 343mm four-pot calliper conversion, the only limitations are the size of your wheels (and, of course, your wallet). ■



Stock diamond-cut alloys are expensive to repair



LAST CHANCE SALOON

Taken together, the Mk1 and Mk2 Ford Mondeo represent the longest-lived of all Super Tourers, making their eventual triumph in the final years of the Super Touring era all the more remarkable...

Words JAMIE ARKLE / Photos FORD ARCHIVES & PSP IMAGES

Really, the Ford Mondeo British Touring Car Championship programme deserves to be better remembered than it is. If nothing else, because it neatly encapsulates how high-profile the series was throughout the 1990s, how committed Ford was to winning, and how much money it was willing to invest to do so.

The idea of a car maker, any car maker, sinking millions upon millions into a domestic, national touring car championship today is laughable, but that's precisely what Ford did with its Mondeo programme.

Here's how it came about.

SUPER TOURER ERA

The adoption of the Super Touring car regulations as Europe's premier tin-top championship regulation (DTM aside) was, at least in part, a response to Ford's wholesale, Sierra-shaped domination of Group A racing a few short years previously.

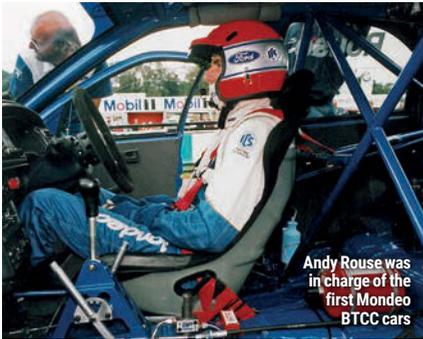
Yet the idea of being able to campaign front-wheel-drive machines with a clear, visual link to the road car range appealed to the Blue Oval as much as its rivals, and as such it wasn't much of a surprise when Ford announced it would be campaigning its then-new Mondeo from 1993.

The task of preparing the new car for a life

spent trading paint with its supermarket car-park rivals fell to another name writ large in Ford folklore, Andy Rouse Engineering. Fresh from recent success with Toyota, Rouse set about transforming the Mondeo Si into a Super Tourer, soon settling upon the front-wheel-drive, Xtrac-shod setup as favoured by the majority of the grid (despite a brief dalliance with rear-wheel drive, in common with Vauxhall).

ON THE PACE

Where Ford's challenger differed from the majority of its rivals was in engine configuration, the Mondeo sporting a tiny,



Andy Rouse was in charge of the first Mondeo BTCC cars



Alain Menu won the BTCC in 2000 in a Prodrive-prepared Mondeo



The Mk1 was immediately on the pace and secured several race wins



“PAUL RADISICH WAS ON THE PACE FROM THE GET-GO, FINISHING THIRD OVERALL AND COLLECTING A TRIO OF RACE WINS ON THE WAY”



Under the bonnet, the BTCC Mondeos looked nothing like the road cars

2.0-litre V6. The all-alloy motor was mounted incredibly low within the chassis of the car itself, both to aid its centre of gravity and, uniquely, so that the front driveshafts could run between the cylinder banks. Power was a whisker over 300bhp, delivered to the front wheels via six-speed sequential and through the previously-mentioned Xtrac diff.

Development of the new car was protracted, and the new machines debuted midway through the 1993 season at Pembrey. The Mondeos of Andy Rouse and Paul Radisich were on the pace from the get-go, and the latter would finish the season in third overall, collecting a trio

of race wins on the way. It was a remarkable performance and underscored the Mondeo's innate pace.

SECOND SEASON SYNDROME

Sadly, for those of us of a Blue Oval persuasion, the following season would prove to be a barren one for any team not running the Alfa Romeo 155, the aero advantage of the Italian cars all but insurmountable. Radisich won twice and again led the Mondeo charge, ending the season in third once more. Ford matched this in the manufacturers' standings.

If anything, 1995 was even more

disappointing. The now-fully-developed Mk1 Mondeo was comprehensively beaten by the equally mature Vauxhall Cavalier, with Ford's cause not helped by the Mondeo's propensity to consume tyres as the laps ticked by.

This was blamed on the weight of the V6 and, in part, because of the increased aero demands placed upon the car by the newly sprouted wings and splitters. Ford's Kiwi (Radisich) won just twice all year, and at the end of the season Ford awarded the Mondeo contract to West Surrey Racing (WSR) instead.

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

WSR's tenure marked the Mondeo's low-water mark in terms of its BTCC competitiveness. By 1996, the Mk1 Mondeo was decidedly old hat and failed to trouble the top step of the podium all year, while 1997 and 1998 were marked by maddeningly poor reliability for the new Mk2-shape car.

The team's cause wasn't helped by the loss of Radisich to Peugeot at the end of 1997, nor its inability to find a suitable long-term replacement lead driver.

All of this meant that Ford once again opted to reassign responsibility for the Mondeo programme at the end of 1998, settling upon WRC and Subaru stalwart, Prodrive. →

The move was matched by an increased financial commitment from Ford itself, in line with the ever-increasing cost of the Super Touring formula.

The sheer amount of money required to partake would eventually see the series move to a more modest, production-based formula from 2001, giving Ford and Prodrive just two years to save the Mondeo from being a (relative) failure.

SPLASH THE CASH

It wasn't hard to see where the increased FoMoCo millions had been invested; the new Mondeo was by some margin the most advanced Super Tourer of them all, and by extension the most advanced BTCC car to ever grace a grid.

New aero was only part of the package, with one of the most effective alterations being the remounted 24v V6 engine. This was canted forward at a near-incomprehensible angle to aid induction and weight distribution, so much so that the lower bank of cylinders was almost horizontal; an angle that also placed the crank in line with the bottom of the bulkhead.

Prodrive's efforts were marshalled by David Lapworth (of Impreza WRC fame) and George-

Howard Chappell, and the pair were effectively given free rein to do whatever was needed to bring the Mondeo to the front of the grid. Ignition and exhaust tweaks were found to be effective (not least because the pair focussed on packaging as much as performance), as was a revised approach to suspension geometry.

Now, Ford was in a position to win. Or at least it was come 2000, because the preceding season proved to be something of a disappointment. The combined efforts of Alain Menu and Anthony Reid weren't enough to overcome the might of Nissan and its Primera, and in any case, the new Mondeo was beset by teething troubles.

In 2000, and with the end of Super Touring very much in sight, Ford doubled down on its investment yet again by expanding to a three-car team; a rumoured cost of £12 million for the season alone.

Menu and Reid were joined by Rickard Rydell, and the Mondeos would face-off against Vauxhall and Honda for overall supremacy, marking the final opportunity for Ford to recoup its significant investment in the series.

In truth, there was never any doubt as to which car maker's trophy cabinet the 2000 BTCC

trophy was going to wind up in, as the Mondeos proved to be the class of the field from the off. The only area of uncertainty concerned which driver would have the honour of rounding out the championship's most competitive era, and it wasn't long before Menu, Reid and Rydell were fighting it out, tooth and nail, in three of the most visually impressive race cars of the era.

WINNERS

In the end, it was Menu who came out on top to secure his second BTCC title, confirming his status as the most successful driver of the Super Touring era. Ford, its work done, pulled out of the championship, and the curtain was brought down on the Mondeo's competition career.

Ford's desire to turn the Mondeo into a championship winning proposition took the best part of a decade, involved three different race teams and cost untold millions. It saw the company locked in combat with some of its biggest rivals on the forecourt, and it only finally came good in the dying moments of the era.

But that doesn't really matter. Not when you consider the noise, pace and spectacle offered by the Prodrive-built Rapid Fit-livery cars. ■



Radisich leading, as he so often did

The very first Mondeo BTCC cars were rear-wheel drive, but soon switched to front-wheel drive to save weight and improve pace





That's one moody-looking Mondy



MISSED MONDEO

DTM V8 RACE CAR

Ford was serious about taking the Mk3 Mondeo racing with the DTM. So serious that a prototype was built to evaluate the options

Words JAMIE AND ADE BRANNAN / Photos ADE BRANNAN

After winning the BTCC with the Prodrive-run Mk2s in 2000, and subsequently withdrawing from the championship after rule changes came into force for 2001, Ford went looking for somewhere else to race.

The German DTM series very nearly proved the perfect answer.

As we now know, that didn't happen. But as this special prototype that lives in the museum at Cologne proves, Ford was quite serious about

the idea. This car's a one-off, fully Ford-backed DTM prototype, built to the 2001 regulations.

As the DTM regulations were so adaptable, the silhouette racer is largely spaceframed and contains several ultimate-spec components from the Ford range and proven competition parts suppliers. Power is from a Mustang-derived 4.0-litre V8, which in race-spec was said to produce an air-restricted 500bhp at 9000rpm.

There's no transverse front-wheel-drive installations here as with the complex Mk1 and

Mk2 BTCC machines. Instead, the V8 is mounted so far back it's almost in the dash. And power is sent straight to a rear-mounted transaxle.

Testing proved the car to be on a very competitive level, but sadly the management in charge at the time decided not to pursue DTM competition.

So the project was shelved, and this extremely high spec one-off was saved by Wolfgang Laufer's collection, and lives in the secret museum based at Ford's Cologne factory. ■



SALOONACY

We get the lowdown on Alan Strachan's amazing Super Touring Mondeo, one of the last cars built by the legendary Andy Rouse Engineering

Words **JAMIE ARKLE & JAMIE** / Photos **MATT DEAR & FORD FAIR**

Aside from the flame-belching Group B machines from the heyday of the WRC, few categories of motorsport have captured the public's attention quite as much as Super Touring of the 1990s. The non-restrictive rules that gave free rein to designers to create highly specialised race machines clothed in saloon bodyshells proved to be a potent combination for fans and manufacturers, and the grids of

national touring car championships across Europe ballooned. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the UK, and there's little argument that the BTCC was the world's premier tin-top series for most of the decade.

These cars are now very much part of fast Ford folklore, right up there with other Blue Oval greats like the Sierra and Escort Cosworth and the RS200. The thing is, nothing dates faster than yesterday's race car, and for a long while

towards the start of the last decade it was quite hard to sell Super Tourers – but not any more...

The car you see here is one of the very best. Certainly, if you were to pick any one of Ford's BTCC Mondeos from that era, then this would be very near the top of your wish list. It's currently owned by Alan Strachan; a man who started his career with Andy Rouse Engineering, the firm that built BTCC Mondeos in the first place.

Ford was involved from 1993, of course – it



Andy Rouse-built Mondeos were Ford's first footsteps back into the BTCC after the all-conquering RS500s were banned

had little choice once the rules were changed to render the all-conquering Sierra RS500 obsolete. It was also the ideal opportunity to promote the firm's all-new and very important world car, the Mondeo. The Super Touring regulations had been penned with precisely this in mind; an attempt to lure more manufacturers into touring car racing with the promise of race cars with a tangible visual link to the motors littering their forecourts. Alan's car is resplendent in iconic 1995 Valvoline livery but it was built at the end of that year and intended to be raced in the 1996 season. Ford eventually decided to take business to West Surrey Racing instead, possibly thanks to a disagreement over what engine the car should run.

"Chassis 96-001 was actually built with a four cylinder in mind but when the contract went to WSR we changed it back to 2.0 V6 spec," recalls Alan of how the car came to be. "At the same time, it reverted back to full 1995 setup, so to all intents and purposes this is a car from that year. It was then sold to a Czech privateer to use in their national championship, then spent a few years on the European hillclimb circuit."

Alan's time spent on the front line of the BTCC during its heyday meant he was ideally placed to set about restoring the Mondeo when it came up for sale a few years ago.

He muses, "There was a period about 20 years ago when you'd have struggled to get much more than about £5000 for a Super Tourer, but the increase in popularity has changed all that. Even at current prices they're a relative bargain – they cost well over £150,000 each when built, and that was in the early 1990s."

Despite being advertised and sold as →

You can see just how much the wheelarches are modified to accept the 18s and low ride height





BENDING THE RULES

Discussing the details of 1990's BTCC racing with Alan is nothing short of a revelation for anyone who followed the sport at the time. Not only is he able to shed much-needed light on some of the rumours that've built up around the whole series since it was canned, he's happy to discuss the specifics of the cars and the teams. Alan points out that the series became a lot more competitive after Alfa Romeo began racing the 155s with advanced aero packages, and these played a large role in Gabriele Tarquini's dominance of the 1994 season.

"The rules stated that the race cars had to be available to the general public, hence why Alfa Romeo produced and sold the 155 Silverstone. As far as I'm aware, Alfa only sold the one in the UK that year – and that was to the parts guy at Rouse Engineering. We sent him round to buy one from the local Alfa dealer to check just how close the road cars were to the race cars, to work out whether they were sticking to the letter of the law. It turned out they weren't, as the full aero kit wasn't actually bolted into place – it was simply left on the back seat," recalls Alan.

Further evidence of Ford's commitment to winning at all costs can be seen in the willingness to experiment with different drive layouts. At the time, BTCC rules stated that a manufacturer could run front- or rear-wheel drive in race cars, providing a similar model was available to the general public. Ford got around this by claiming that the 4x4 Mondeo may as well be rear-wheel drive (as did Vauxhall with the Cavalier) and spent the early part of 1993 campaigning an RWD car.

"It turned out to be a nicely balanced, well-mannered car, but the weight penalty for running rear-wheel drive turned out to be too much to overcome. The decision to revert to front-wheel drive was made soon after."

These stories underline how seriously firms took the BTCC, and how much money they were willing to invest in winning.



2.0-litre V6 was based on the Mazda-built 2.5-litre from the Probe

being ready to race, the Mondeo was actually anything but. Alan and the team at AWS Engineering had little choice but to commence an intensive recommissioning process, though luckily the all-important 2.0-litre V6 engine (and its incredibly expensive bespoke heads) was in situ and in good order. Also still in place and still in good working order was the sophisticated Xtrac sequential gearbox and differential, an important point as a failure here could well have derailed the entire project.

Alan says, "Some parts can still be sourced nowadays, though even then it's something of a struggle, but specialist components like the gearbox are very hard to track down. Xtrac supplied a large portion of the field in period, but such was the amount of money flowing around at the time that one gearbox won't fit another engine – they're almost totally bespoke for each team and each car."

The bodyshell itself had weathered the years

remarkably well but tackling the little bits and pieces that were required provided the team with an opportunity to reacquaint themselves with just how far removed the Super Tourers actually were from their showroom-bound cousins. Alan goes on to explain that you could probably make a half-decent visual replica of one of the BTCC cars using a regular Mk1 Mondeo, but that you'd never have a hope of getting it down to the low weight enjoyed by Andy Rouse Engineering at the time.

He says, "The shells actually arrived at our workshop covered in massive yellow stickers declaring 'not for road use, competition only'."

"They were built on the same Genk assembly line as the regular cars but only when the rest of the line was closed for maintenance and upgrade. The workers would cut off any unnecessary trim and brackets there and then, so the weight saving began before we'd even seen the shells."



It looks fast just sitting in the garage



Manufacturers were also given a remarkable degree of freedom when it came to building these cars, with one of the only areas strictly specified by the FIA being suspension mounting points and associated brackets and assemblies. Even then there was still room for innovation, with an allowance of 20mm made for suspension location points – you could put your strut anywhere you wanted so long as it fell within a 20mm area. A peek at the strut tops on this Super Tourer will reveal that they are markedly different from a road-going car, with just a fraction of the top assembly left in place on the touring car.

All this focussed development resulted in race cars that were the very definition of uncompromising. If you've ever wondered why pretty much all Super Touring replicas look a little odd it's because the race cars were so focussed; 19in wheels would just about sit behind standard-ish arches, but only until the

“IT'S EVERY BIT AS FAST AS YOU'D EXPECT OF SOMETHING WITH SO MUCH MONEY INVESTED AND SO MUCH CAREFUL DEVELOPMENT”

cars were used in anger – then the wheels would force the wafer-thin metal out in order to give enough clearance.

Alan points out that pushing the Mondeo around the workshop can take up to 20 minutes, as it only has five degrees of steering lock and because the tyres kiss the arch when stationary.

They might not have had the kind of fit and finish enjoyed by the road cars, but don't mistake this for a lack of proper preparation on behalf of the team at Andy Rouse Engineering. By 1995 the Rouse workshop was constantly flat-out building race and spare cars, for the UK Ford team and the various European concerns, all of them hugely competitive and very expensive.

The high-water mark of all this European Super Touring competition was undoubtedly the Touring Car World Cup shoot-outs at Monza in 1993 and Donington in 1994, the latter made more significant for Ford after Alfa Romeo's dubious rule-bending and out-and-out domination of the BTCC in 1994.

“It was never said explicitly, of course, but we all knew that beating Alfa was one of the biggest factors behind Ford's decision to field such a strong team at the '94 Touring Car World Cup,” laughs Alan. “Everyone was delighted when Paul Radisich took the win.”

In period the Rouse-prepared Mondeos were always a force to be reckoned with, particularly with drivers like Radisich and, for 1993 and '94, Andy Rouse himself. The former saw the Rouse-prepared Mondeos compete in a handful of races towards the end of the season (the car was still being developed at the time), but Radisich still managed to win at Brands, Donington and Silverstone, results that left him third overall; a result he repeated in 1994.

Ford had to wait until 2000 to finally win the championship, but that doesn't mean the car you see here is in any way a poor relation, particularly as Super Touring is enjoying something of a nostalgic renaissance at present.

Alan explains, “Partly I decided to buy and race the Mondeo as I knew it'd be a good business opportunity, but there's also a lot of nostalgia associated with this car, for me and the fans. It's a wonderful car to drive, every bit as fast as you'd expect of something with so much money invested and so much careful development – it's certainly quicker than I am.”

Alan goes on to explain that there were a number of unexpected hurdles to overcome

MONDEO BTCC

ENGINE Mazda-derived 2.0-litre V6 with forged pistons, H-section conrods, steel crank, Piper cams with custom profiles, dry sump setup, race-spec fuel system, individual throttle bodies, custom race manifolds and exhaust system, original Stack data-logging system controlling gear position, track mapping, G-force, brake pressure, suspension movement, fuel tank mounted in carbon fibre case under rear floor

TRANSMISSION Six-speed Xtrac sequential with magnesium casing bespoke to V6 Mondeo, flat-shift gearchange and clutch-less downshifts

SUSPENSION Front: billet aluminium MacPherson strut coilovers with Pro-flex remote damper reservoirs, fabricated subframe with modified suspension pickup points, adjustable TCAs and compression struts; rear: billet aluminium MacPherson strut coilovers with Pro-flex remote damper reservoirs, modified cast-aluminium subframe, rose-jointed tubular rear arms

BRAKES Front: 380mm vented discs with twin four-pot AP Racing callipers; rear: 280mm non-vented discs with two-pot AP Racing callipers

WHEELS & TYRES 19in Dymag centre-lock alloys, 210/650R/19 Hoosier tyres

EXTERIOR Lightweight Ford Motorsport Mondeo shell with full 1995 Ford Valvoline livery, lightened front and rear bumpers, FIA-mandated carbon fibre rear wing and carbon fibre front splitter sitting 45mm off the ground when static as per regulations (it may be lower out on the circuit, but we couldn't possibly say)

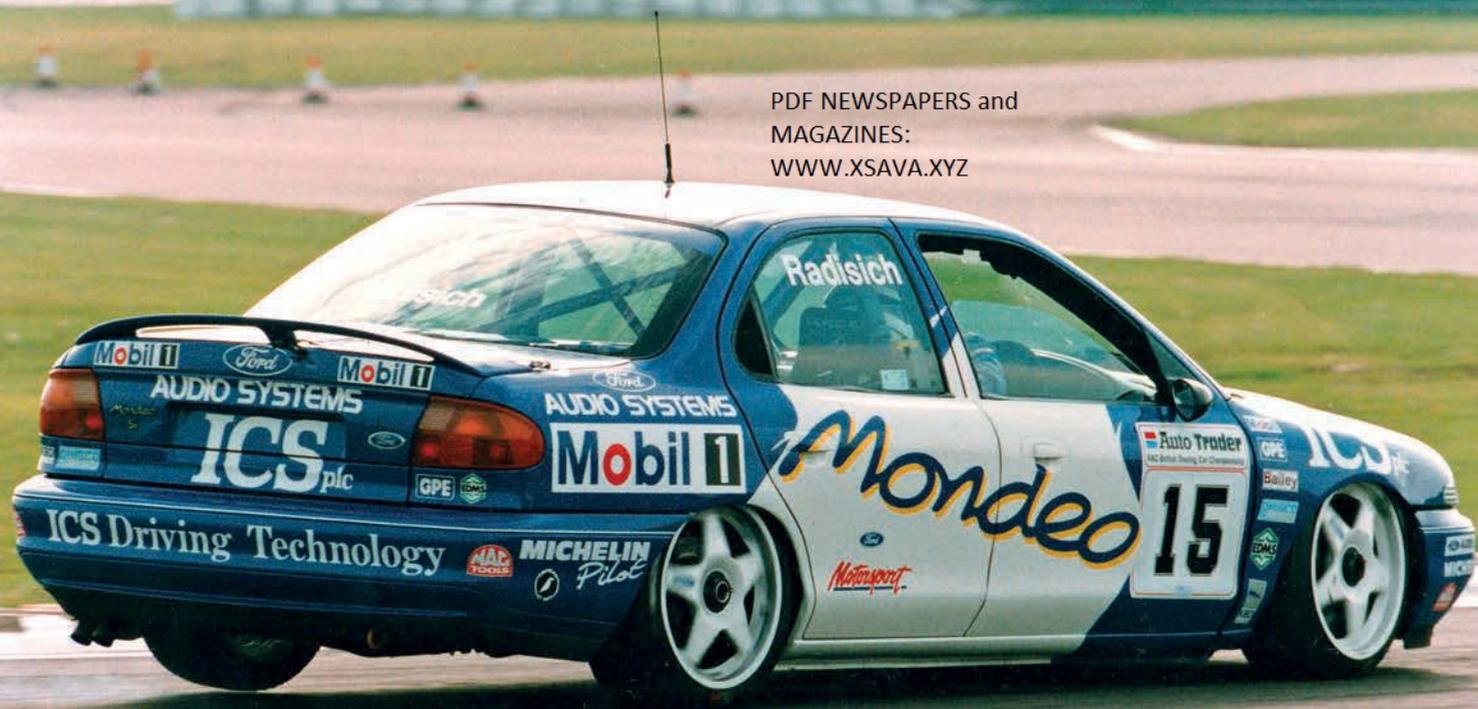
INTERIOR Fully-strengthened and braced with Stack gauges, carbon fibre centre console, dash and door cards, OMP bucket seat with Willans multi-point harnesses, full FIA-spec weld-in multi-point roll cage, FIA-mandated Lifeline fire suppression system, remote engine and fuel shut-offs

when it came to actually racing the car, one of which centred around tyres: “It would've had Michelins back in 1995 but we weren't able to find the correct size and spec nowadays, hence why we're now running Hoosiers. Finding the type of tyre that came closest to replicating the feel of the car back in the day took a long time and for a long time it suffered from scary snap oversteer, which wasn't exactly fun.”

The Super Tourers can compete in historic racing in the Dunlop Saloon Car Cup, organised by the Historic Sports Car Club (HSCC). The racing sees a wide variety of cars compete (including Super Tourers, Group A and Group One cars) and the majority of drivers race them in the manner they were designed to be – hard, fast and with no compromises.

Alan raced in a handful of events, and is keen to use the Mondeo more, but at present he has his hands full with continuation-builds of the famous Andy Rouse Sierra RS500s. ■

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The Mondeo BTCC cars used Mazda-derived V6s with devastating effect

MISSED MONDEO

MK1 WITH MAZDA V6

After the RS500 was banned in touring car racing, Ford turned to Mondeos with Mazda engines for the next championship success – and almost built a road-going version too...

Words GRAHAM ROBSON / Photos FORD ARCHIVE

Since the 1960s, Ford had been prominent, and often dominant, in saloon car racing.

During the 1980s the Sierra RS500 Cosworth was unstoppable and made mincemeat of all its rivals. When the authorities changed the rules to reset the RS500's dominance, by imposing a new formula for

normally-aspirated 2.0-litre cars (which would have to be rev-limited to 8500rpm) Ford then dropped out for the next two seasons.

Even so, when Ford decided to return in 1993, the decision caused controversy inside and outside the company. Choosing to use front-wheel-drive Mondeos was logical enough, but to power them with Mazda-manufactured V6

engines..? What?

This story goes back to two principal sources. First, Ford had set up links with Mazda in 1974, and by the 1990s was on its way to taking financial control. Also, a series of different but closely-related models – Fords and Mazdas – were being manufactured in the USA, where one shared building block was the Mazda 24-valve 2.5-litre V6 engine as fitted to the Ford Probe.

The second factor came courtesy of a Super Touring Car ruling, which stated that a car could be eligible to race with any – repeat, any – of its parent company's current engines, even if that particular combination was not on general sale to the public.

Before race car development began, investigation by Andy Rouse Engineering and Cosworth concluded that the most suitable engine of all was the Mazda power unit, even though Ford-UK was currently using a fine inline-four cylinder, 16-valve RS2000 engine, and was selling Mondeos with a totally different 24-valve V6 engine, which was being built in North America for Ford-USA.

For road use, this was how those two V6 engines compared:

Ford V6: 82.4x79.5mm, 2544cc, 168bhp @ 6250rpm.

Mazda/Ford V6: 84.5x74.2mm, 2497cc, 166bhp @ 5600rpm.



The Mazda engine did appear in the Ford Probe, and nearly in a sporty Mondeo too



Both had aluminium cylinder heads and blocks, and both had four-valves-per-cylinder/DOHC cylinder heads. In either case, it would be simple to reduce their size from 2.5-litres to 2.0-litres by using short-stroke crankshafts. But even before any race-tuning and test-bed work began, it became clear that the Mazda engine – lighter, smaller and more delicately engineered – had the most promise.

By the time the first Rouse-prepared cars raced in 1993 (they began winning almost at once) Cosworth's patient work had produced an FC 2.0-litre type (Ford always branded them as Zetec V6-R), which delivered 300bhp at 8500rpm. Paul Radisich used such Cosworth-powered Mondeos to win the World Touring Car Cup events in 1993 and 1994.

This was when Ford of Europe faced something of a dilemma; no one had ever made a secret of the use of the Mazda-based engine in a Ford race car, because the championship rules were crystal clear about this.

On the other hand, some critics suggested that there must be something wrong with the Mondeo's usual V6 – which was of course quite untrue. Motorsport publicity men had to work very hard to convince the media that they were doing nothing wrong – although it helped that their rivals at Alfa Romeo were using Lancia Delta-based engines in their race cars.

Ford, though, could see a possible solution: it was already importing a limited number of USA-manufactured Probe GTs (it was hoped this car would turn into a Capri-successor, but that strategy would fail), which were already fitted with the Mazda engine in 166bhp form.

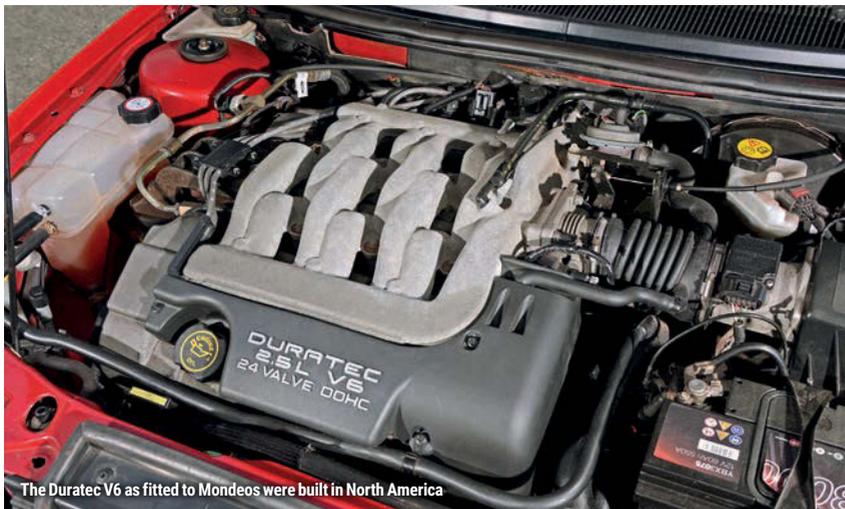
Therefore, a proposal was worked up for a top-of-the-range Mondeo in which the Mazda engine with Ford markings could be used.

In engineering terms, development would be straightforward enough, and could be achieved rapidly; it would involve the relatively simple substitution of one transversely-mounted V6 engine by another, while retaining the same front-wheel-drive transmission and needing no changes to pressed metal panels in and around the engine bay.

At this point, the only discussion was whether to leave the Mazda-type engine tune strictly standard – in other words, as it was in the Probe GT, which the Ford dealer chain was just getting to know – or whether to use a mildly tuned-up version to turn this Ford-Mazda project into a truly unique machine.

This was all well and good, but when it became clear that the Probe GT was a marketing failure, it meant the use of the Mazda engine in a European product made no economic sense.

Even so, and just to round up a good story, Mondeos with Mazda engines continued to race with success for the rest of the 1990s, ending their careers with a British championship victory in 2000 with the Prodrive-run Mk2s. ■



The Duratec V6 as fitted to Mondeos were built in North America



The engines in BTCC cars were cantilevered over for better weight distribution

MONDEO

The most expensive BTCC car ever built is, as you'd expect, completely bonkers

Words **DAN WILLIAMSON** / Photos **CHRIS WALLBANK**

When Ford sets out to win, winning big is the only option. The original GT40 was Uncle Henry's revenge against Ferrari. The Sierra Cosworth came about because Capris were being trounced by Rovers. And as for the Mondeo Super Touring, it was the Blue Oval's budget-busting way to blow away every rival in the BTCC (British Touring Car Championship) – a task it managed so easily that the 2000 crown

was already won by halfway through the season.

But success for the Mondeo didn't come without its failures. It wasn't until late in 1999 that Team Mondeo – run by Prodrive on behalf of Ford – started to scalp the opposition.

The car on these pages was an integral part of that process. Chassis 004 was the final Mondeo Zetec constructed by Prodrive for the 1999 season, and driven by Anthony Reid during the latter half of the year. Its →



main achievements were battling through Snetterton's night race and picking up a third place at Silverstone in the last round of 1999.

Not bad, but this particular Mondeo was also used by Prodrive to develop parts for the all-conquering 2000 BTCC weapons, being put into testing duties over winter with some of the fanciest hand-built goodies ever seen on a tin-top race car.

IT'S IN YOUR HEAD

We're talking about cylinder heads that were said to cost more than Formula One parts. Underfloor aerodynamics using a flat-bottomed fuel tank. An engine mounted so low and far back into the bulkhead that the custom-made driveshafts ran through the vee of the V6 – itself a scarcely-recognisable unit based on the Ford Probe's Mazda-sourced powerplant, reduced from 2500cc to 2.0-litre for BTCC eligibility, and overwhelmingly reworked by Prodrive in minute detail.

Team Mondeo was the epitome of no-compromise, no-excuses, cheque-book motorsport. Changes were made without a second thought, and each mega-budget race car was easily expendable.

Which explains why, after its usefulness was over, this million-pound Mondeo was discarded, and sold on for (relative) peanuts to the privateer circuit-racing fraternity.

Alex Schooledge purchased the machine back in 2009 from a well-intentioned former keeper. "It was owned by a guy who bought it

BTCC MONDEO

ENGINE Ford/Mazda KL 1998cc, 24-valve, alloy-block V6 built by Prodrive with completely custom-made alloy cylinder heads and internals, six throttle bodies with carbon fibre inlet, Pectel engine management, custom exhaust manifolds, dry sump

POWER 305bhp-plus @ 8500rpm

TRANSMISSION Xtrac six-speed sequential gearbox with triple-plate carbon fibre clutch, Xtrac viscous/mechanical differential, custom-made driveshafts and mounts

SUSPENSION Koni/Prodrive hand-built coilover remote dampers, custom-made suspension arms, uprights and mounts, adjustable anti-roll bars front and rear

BRAKES Front: water-cooled AP Racing six-pot callipers and 380mm ventilated discs; rear: four-piston callipers with 280mm discs; driver-adjustable bias pedal box

WHEELS & TYRES OZ magnesium 9x19in wheels with Dunlop 210/650/19 tyres

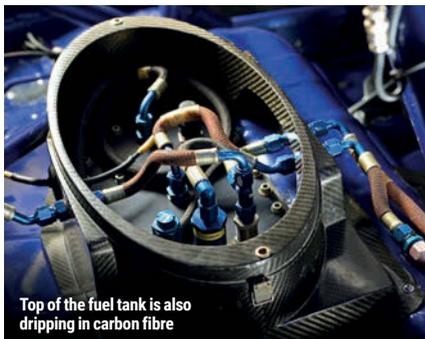
EXTERIOR Steel production-line-modified Mondeo Zetec five-door bodyshell rebuilt by Prodrive with custom front wings, alloy inner wings, fixed polycarbonate/Isoclima windows, carbon fibre front splitter and rear wing

OVERALL WEIGHT 975kg without driver

INTERIOR Centre/left-mounted Sparco Circuit 2 race seat, Sparco harness, Mondeo half-dashboard, Pi instrument display, Sparco steering wheel, carbon fibre panels, integral roll cage, driver's air blower ducting mounted under dashboard



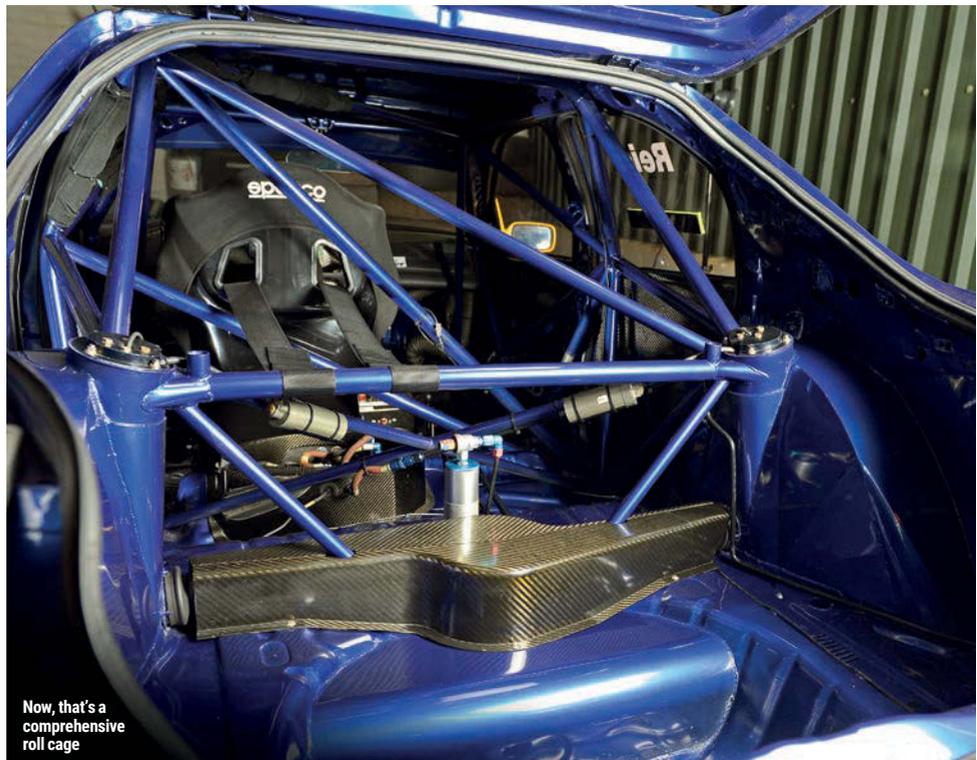
Prodrive-built 2.0-litre V6 is a 300bhp work of art



Top of the fuel tank is also dripping in carbon fibre



Extinguisher system and battery are mounted as low and as centrally as possible



Now, that's a comprehensive roll cage



“THIS PARTICULAR CAR WAS USED BY PRODRIVE TO DEVELOP RACE-WINNING PARTS FOR THE ALL-CONQUERING 2000 CARS”

directly from Prodrive,” he recalls. “He kept it as something to look at more than to race, so it had been sitting around for ten years in an open barn. I was looking for a project, so I made him an offer.”

To most of us, deciding to buy a retired, bona fide touring car would be an astronomical gamble. And to Alex... Well, it was no different. Despite spending half his working life restoring motorsport machines (alongside his dad and a crew of mechanics, known as Outpace Racing), nothing prepared him for the complexity of rebuilding a full-on BTCC legend.

Alex groans, “It took three times longer than I expected because it had got into a bad state and I didn’t realise how much work would be involved.”

Bodywork repairs presented the biggest problems, due partly to minor battle scars, but mainly owing to rust. Yes, this is essentially a low-mileage Mondeo hatchback plucked from the production lines 22 years ago, but

that’s where the similarity ends. Rumour has it that Ford selected 100 shells from the Genk factory, chopped, changed and slimmed down the steelwork, then continued assembly at Prodrive’s Banbury headquarters.

The inner wings were replaced by curved 2mm alloy sheets, the chassis rails were strengthened, and even the roof was temporarily removed to install a beautifully intricate roll cage.

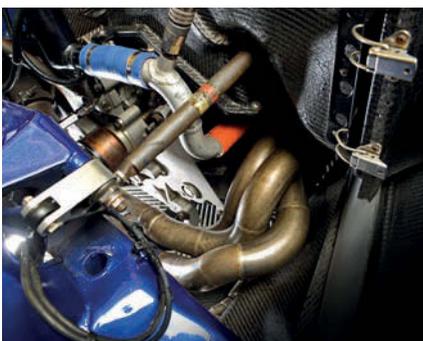
In the quest for ultimate weight reduction, no primers were used prior to painting – there was just one glossy coat, and zero protection. Which explains why Alex found a whole load of corrosion beneath the decals.

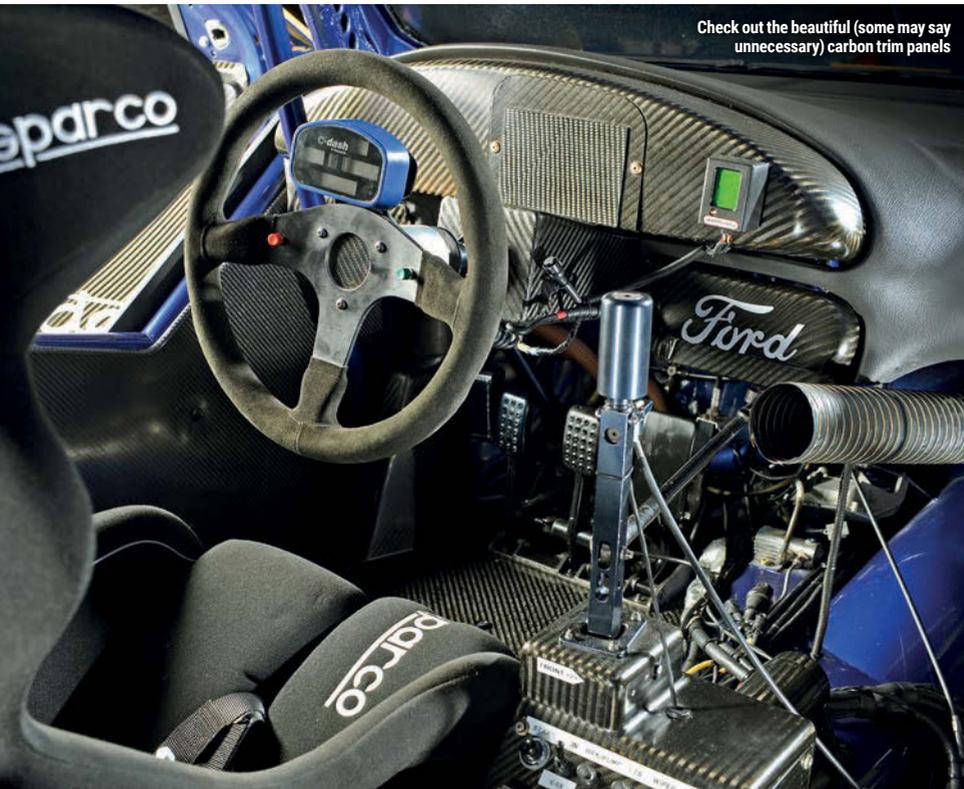
He says, “I thought it just needed a respray, but it was easier to replace than repair. The original stickers had to be scraped off because they’d been on so long, and we stripped it down to a bare shell.

“It would take a day and a half to make standard doors fit (their height is okay, →



Every component was custom-made for this car





Check out the beautiful (some may say unnecessary) carbon trim panels



Strap yourself in for some fun





Massive 380mm brakes means this Mondeo stops... Instantly



Is there anything more 1990s' BTCC than OZ rims?

but you'd never get one to close where the rear quarters are beefed up), so we cut and shut new door skins."

BACK TOGETHER AGAIN

Fortunately, the hand-made steel front wings (they're massively flared over 19in magnesium wheels, allowing plenty of steering lock) were fine after a bit of prep work, and are backed up by a spare pair in case of future incidents. The plastic front and rear bumpers are new Mk2 Mondeo parts, with their insides hacked away for lightness.

Rather than risk future rot, Alex opted for a bare-metal respray comprising several coats of primer, two blue, two yellow, with lacquer on top. Half a day was then spent designing an exact replica of the 1999 livery.

The polycarbonate windows were refreshed, with the front and rear 'screens made from Isoclima (which doesn't steam up). The finishing touches were those dramatic Super Touring wings, now reinforced and recovered with new carbon fibre.

COMPLETE PACKAGE

Mechanically the Mondeo was complete, albeit not race-ready. The rebuilt (hugely expensive) engine sealed the deal for Alex, featuring 2000-spec upgrades (682 of 806 components were reputedly modified or changed by Prodrive from the previous Cosworth setup), along with a host of as-new spares.

Alex says, "The suspension, discs, wheel bearings and pads were all too far gone to be reused, so we had everything replaced or reconditioned. You have to go for the same spec – you can't take the gamble in case something else is wrong. All the suspension was hand-made to specific tolerances by Prodrive, but they've moved on so much that all the records and diagrams are gone.

"The dampers are very trick; in 1999 they were a major step ahead. Rebuilding them was too much for my normal company, but I managed to track down a Prodrive engineer from the BTCC days, and he still had all the spec sheets for the dampers, with special seals and bearings."

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

Alex had already tested the Mondeo before buying – raised on its internal air jacks, he could blast through every gear – but it's fair to say he couldn't prepare for the thrill of finally getting this monster back onto tarmac. A couple of test sessions and hot-lapping Silverstone was enough to tell Alex what was in store.

"I wouldn't say it's hard to drive, but it is different," he grins. "You can't compare with a road car. The driver is centred to the middle, and you sit by the B-pillars for weight distribution. There's no power steering (the rack comes

BUDGET? WHAT BUDGET?

Team Mondeo was rumoured to be the most expensive saloon car racing setup of all time, with figures of £8,000,000 to £12,000,000 reckoned to run the 2000 season alone.

Even the 1999 team was budgeted at £4,000,000 to £5,000,000, with each car costing £850,000-plus to build, plus at least two of everything as spares. For example, the ultra-trick Koni/Prodrive dampers were roughly £6000 each, and there were three sets per car per track; instead of changing settings they'd swap the dampers completely. Similarly, the six-speed Xtrac transmission has different gear clusters for each race circuit, which simply unbolt from the main case – all tested and timed to perfection.

As for the engine, it's only just recognisable as the Mazda-sourced Ford Probe 2.5 V6 on which it's based. Bits were chopped off, many were welded up, and plenty were completely remanufactured; 40 individual parts were welded to the heads alone. Chances are, even the allegedly production-spec cylinder block was little more than similar to look at. But there's no denying it worked.

When Prodrive took over Team Mondeo for the 1999 and 2000 seasons, Ford was keen to develop cars under one roof – until then, it was a combination of West Surrey Racing, Reynard and Cosworth. By the end of the first year, the Mondeo had scooped its first win, but the following season was an onslaught.

The existing team of Alain Menu and Anthony Reid was joined by Rickard Rydell, who finished the BTCC championship in first, second and third spots respectively. Between them they won 11 of the 24 races, and scooped the manufacturer's crown for Ford.

Major rule changes meant there was no Team Mondeo for 2001, but most of the cars live on – either as polished museum pieces or hard-charging combatants in historic racing series.

"YOU NEED TO GIVE 90 PER CENT-PLUS OR YOU WILL STRUGGLE. YOU'VE NO TORQUE, IT'S ALL TOP END, SO YOU CAN'T DROP ANY REVS"

through the bulkhead and up to the column), no brake servo, and very little pedal travel. Any slight movement of the accelerator and you're revving very highly – imagine a motorbike.

"You need to give 90 per cent-plus or you will struggle. You've no torque, it's all top end, so you can't drop any revs. Power is 6000rpm to 8500rpm – a novice can't give that in every gear."

Alex admits, "I'd prefer it to stay in one piece, so I don't know if we'll race it or put it away and polish it." But if this car ever does return to the track in anger, it won't be there to win. It'll be there to win big. ■

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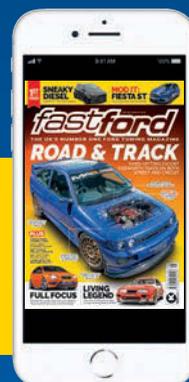
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BUYING GUIDE

MONDEO ST200

Hero of the BTCC's golden age but bizarrely overlooked today, Ford's motorsport-inspired Mondeo ST200 is a fast, faithful and extremely affordable family favourite

Words DAN WILLIAMSON / Photos MATT RICHARDSON

WHY YOU WANT ONE...

- British Touring Car Championship racing was at its peak during the Mondeo's reign, and the ST200 was the closest road-going relation to the ultra-cool Super Touring series.
- ST200s are an unfathomably cheap route into the Recaro seat of a retro fast Ford – and with such heritage, ever-increasing rarity and burbling V6 soundtrack, their prices are sure to rise.
- Still enormously practical and usable everyday, a Mk2 Mondeo is a faithful companion with loads of standard kit and 140mph performance. What's not to love?

WHY YOU DON'T...

- Gaffer-taped bumpers and minicabs are the old-Mondeo image, despite a classic-Ford status tantalisingly close to fruition.
- Rust can be the end of the road for a Mk2 Mondeo. If it's rotted through the sills, inner arches and floors, it's a substantial project – or, most likely, a scrapper.
- BTCC looks, maybe, but the ST200 isn't quick by modern standards. And because it was well-tuned by Ford, improvements aren't easy.

HOW MUCH TO PAY

PROJECT: £500 TO £1500

Typically offered for 'spares or repairs', a cheap ST200 will be rusty – perhaps hopelessly rotten – and in need of major repairs. Rebuilding a scrapper to roadworthy condition won't be cost-effective, and a full restoration would set you back far more than it's worth.

GOOD: £1500 TO £4000

Mechanically-sound ST200s start here, hopefully with fewer than 150,000 recorded miles. At the lower end, they may need welding on the sills or wheelarches, but higher-priced cars should be fit for faithful service. Pay extra for a saloon.

CONCOURS: £4000 TO £8000-PLUS

Rust-free ST200s are worth the extra cash, but beware of overpriced cars with optimistic (or cynical) dealers. Genuine very-low-mileage examples can double this value, but always take a long time to find a buyer.



IDENTITY

Fast Fords have always been targeted by thieves and fraudsters, but the ST200 thankfully escaped most of the serious attention. Even so, you'll need to invest in a thorough history check to ensure your Mondeo has not been stolen, written-off, scrapped or the subject of outstanding finance.

Check the chassis number on the logbook matches the sticker on the driver's-side B-pillar, the stamps on the bulkhead (there's a cutout in the insulation), and a plate on the nearside dashboard (visible through the windscreen from outside).

It's also worth checking the car is a real ST200, as opposed to a tarted-up lesser model. By far the majority of British ST200s were Imperial Blue, and early examples (there were reportedly two press cars) were painted Imperial Blue on the inner wings, as opposed to primer. Diamond White, Panther Black, Stardust Silver and Radiant Red were also offered in mainland Europe.

The ST200 LE of July 2000 is particularly rare, having been sold in the UK as the only type of ST200 saloon; 201 were produced. The LE tends to be valued higher than the regular ST200 hatchback or estate (Germany and Belgium also got LE hatchbacks and estates). Ensure any LE has black-and-blue heated leather seats, blue steering wheel and dashboard

inserts, plus a Limited Edition badge on the bootlid and numbered plaque on the ashtray (quoting a number out of 300, despite a 322 having been produced; it's assumed the plaques were dealer-fitted, and not in numerical order).



Check the visible VIN in the windscreen

VITAL STATS

MADE BETWEEN 1999 to 2000

PRICE WHEN NEW £22,945

POWER 201bhp @ 6500rpm

TORQUE 170lb.ft @ 5500rpm

TOP SPEED 141mph

0-60MPH 7.8 seconds



ST200 always looked smart in Imperial Blue – and still does today

INTERIOR

Mk2 Mondeo cabins are hard-wearing, so even a high-mileage example shouldn't look scruffy; if it is, suspect it's had a hard life – perhaps used years ago as a minicab or even police car (especially if it's one of the rare white-painted ST200s), which left the factory with cloth seats. That said, a few rattles and creaks can be expected in a Ford of this age.

Tatty trim, scuffed seats, damaged door cards or a drilled dashboard can be replaced fairly easily, unless it's an ST200 Limited Edition with mottled blue fascia panels. All regular ST200s were equipped with carbon-look interior panels and door pulls, plus a perforated-leather steering wheel, blue dials with ST200 logo, carbon-effect ST200-badged gearknob, six-disc CD changer, climate control, all-round electric windows, trip computer, ST200 kick plates and now-rare floor mats. Start asking questions if any pieces are missing from your potential purchase.

Electric window and central locking motors are regular causes for complaint when their motors stop working. The parts are shared with basic Mondeos, so don't tend to be dear, although second-hand parts are becoming harder to find.

Make sure the heater blower activates on all settings (a common Mondeo fault), and check the air conditioning blows cold. Ensure the dashboard isn't displaying warning lights, especially lamps for

the ABS (typically due to a sensor fault) or airbag (often caused by a poor connection in the loom under the front seat).

Be especially wary of a battery warning light, which could suggest alternator failure or a tired battery. Flickering or pulsing headlamps may also be evident, but could be related to an alternator wire, which was a cheap and simple repair covered under a Ford technical service bulletin.

Early ST200s included Recaro front seats with half-leather upholstery, or full-leather as an optional extra. From summer 1999, full leather seats were standard.

Worn bolsters, cracked leather and broken bases are quite normal by now, and the electric motor mechanisms tend to stop working due to stripped gears; several ST200s have been retrofitted with pre-2003 Mondeo ST220 seats, which look similar but have a more reliable motor assembly.

Lift the mats in both front footwells to feel for dampness; if water has been leaking through the bulkhead or pollen filter, the carpets may be mouldy and the floorpan rotten – very bad news.

Boot floors of saloons and hatchbacks corrode due to leaks from the rear light seals, so check beneath the mats and spare wheel. Be sure to look under the rear seat bolsters for rotten seat belt mounts, which warn of terminal rot.



ST200 LE blue dashboard



All ST200s got blue dials

MONDEO ST200

ENGINE 2544cc, 24V, V6 Duratec VE with 10.3:1 (ST200) compression ratio, chain-driven quad cams, dual-phase induction system, Ford EEC-V management, extrude-honed primary and secondary cylinder head intake ports, reprofiled hollow inlet and exhaust camshafts, extrude-honed upper and lower intake manifolds, enlarged throttle body, dual-inlet air cleaner, Bosch green injectors, revised ECU software mapping and increased-diameter twin-tailpipe exhaust system

TRANSMISSION MTX-75 five-speed manual, lightened flywheel, uprated clutch, revised gear ratios, traction control

BRAKES Front: 278mm ventilated discs; rear: 253mm solid discs; ABS

SUSPENSION Front: MacPherson struts with uprated springs and dampers, lower A-arms, anti-roll bar, front subframe and wishbones; rear: Quadralink with independent struts (saloon/hatch), trailing arms (estate), revised springs, dampers, anti-roll bar

WHEELS AND TYRES 7x17in multi-spoke alloy wheels with 215/45x17 tyres

INTERIOR Half-leather Recaro front seats (full leather from summer 1999), perforated-leather steering wheel, dark blue instrument cluster, carbon-look interior panels, door pulls and gearknob, ST200 kick plates and mats

EXTERIOR Mondeo four-door saloon/five-door hatchback/five-door estate with Si rear boot/tailgate spoiler, mesh front grille, RSAP bodykit comprising side skirts, front and rear bumpers, twin-exhaust outlets in rear bumper, heated windscreen

ENGINE

ST200s were known for being well-tuned by Ford in Germany – taking the ST24's 168bhp 2544cc Duratec V6 to 201bhp thanks to polished cylinder heads, sportier cams, honed inlet manifolds, beefier throttle body and dual-inlet airbox.

Although that means it's tricky to enhance power output, it thankfully doesn't result in an overly-stressed engine.

The early Duratec V6 had a reputation for head gasket failure, but that's rare on an ST200. Even so, check for symptoms: mayonnaise on the dipstick and steam from the exhaust would be unusual – a blow to atmosphere from near cylinder one on the front bank would be more likely. Failure would sound like a blowing exhaust manifold, which is fortunately the most likely cause – leaking from a gasket or sheered bolt; listen for the ticking getting louder as you increase the engine revs.

Blowing from the EGR system can cause ticking too, so EGR deletion works well. Misfiring could also result from head gasket failure, but the most likely culprits are the coil pack, plugs or leads.

Poor performance is common, often due to a knackered IMRC (inlet manifold runner control), which opens the secondary inlet butterflies at 3500-to-4000rpm, giving a surge of power under full throttle. The IMRC lives above the exhaust manifold; a transistor on its circuit board overheats and fails, causing sluggish acceleration at higher revs. It can be replaced, repaired (you'll need expert soldering skills) or bypassed altogether

to keep the secondary inlets permanently open, with mixed results. If you're lucky, you may find the secondaries are just dirty, so a quick clean-up could be the cure.

Duratec V6s tend to burn a little oil, so letting it run low could be catastrophic – destroying the crankshaft bearings, resulting in heavy knocking and the need for a rebuild. Neglecting oil changes can cause camshaft wear: listen for tapping from the top of the engine, especially from cold. Clattering could point to a tired timing chain tensioner; they've been known to wear out from as early as 60,000 miles, but repairs are expensive. Some ST200 owners have sourced timing chain kits from Japan or America to save money.

Slow-sounding starter motors are common, albeit not overly expensive. Alternator faults can be frequent but they're awkward to change, thanks to being at the back of the engine beneath the rear exhaust manifold. A duff alternator can lead to several other issues, so make sure the alternator light (battery symbol) comes on with the ignition, goes off when the engine is started and doesn't flicker under high revs.

Fuel pump failure is problematic, causing the car not to start; listen for buzzing underneath. OE replacements are costly, but non-genuine pumps are available to save cash.

Allow the engine to get warm, and ensure the cooling fans cut in. They sometimes seize altogether, leading to eventual meltdown.



All British ST200 saloons were Limited Editions



Highly-tuned Duratec V6 kicked out 201bhp from the Ford factory



TRANSMISSION

Ford's MTX-75 five-speed manual gearbox is known for being tough; in the ST200 it gained revised gear ratios, a lighter flywheel and uprated clutch. It's unlikely to cause any bother.

That said, a few high-mileage 'boxes have had differential problems, and a gearbox oil change at 100,000 miles has been mooted as beneficial. On the flip side, it's an opportunity to invest in a limited-slip diff...

Listen for whining from the transmission – the telltale groan sounds similar to worn driveshafts but will generally be accompanied by torque steer when driving in a straight line.

Check for rumbling or rattling from the gearbox (suggesting worn bearings), and be wary of gear selection problems, especially on third – which points to knackered synchromesh and the impending need for a replacement 'box. It's especially likely if the Mondeo has minicab-rivalling mileage.

You're more likely to experience clutch trouble, even on a lesser-used ST200. Take a test drive and ensure the pedal feels light; if it's heavy, the springs or pressure plate are on their last legs; if the biting point is high or gears are tricky to select, it's ready for replacement. Clutch slip will be evident if you drive in fourth gear at 2000rpm and floor the throttle; if the engine revs increase but the road speed doesn't, expect to spend heavily on getting the clutch renewed.

Worry less about clicking on full steering lock, which will be due to tired CV joints; they're not pricey to replace, but are best swapped sooner than later.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO INSURE?

Group 34 insurance means it's not cheap, although the relatively low value and just-a-Mondeo image will usually result in a reasonably-priced premium if you shop around or use online comparison sites. A concours or modified ST200 will require a limited-mileage policy through a specialist broker to appreciate the modern-classic status – and to value the car accordingly in the event of disaster.

WHERE DO I FIND ONE?

In December 2021, Neil Haste of the Mondeo ST Owners' Club calculated there were 737 surviving ST200s in the UK, so they're pretty rare – but a steady flow can be found in private hands on eBay and Facebook groups. Some severely overpriced ST200s are offered by hopeful dealers, and concours cars occasionally crop up at classic car auctions or collectors' car dealers. Always ask around club members before investing.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO RUN?

If fuel economy is your greatest concern, the ST200 isn't for you – the V6 engine has a drink habit. But it evens out by taking parts and overall running costs into account, and the Mondeo doesn't suffer any silly RS tax.

WILL VALUES RISE OR FALL?

Prices are still on their knees, and – believe it or not – ST200s are typically cheaper than the equivalent ST24s on which they were based. Values will inevitably climb over time, but not in any real rush.

SHOULD I MODIFY IT?

Probably not. Tuning an ST200 is a thankless task, and will serve only to decrease its overall value. It's also almost impossible to improve an ST200 aesthetically.



EXTERIOR

Corrosion is the number one killer of ST200s, and many of today's survivors are exhibiting rot. Typically, if a Mondeo is rusty, the tinworm will be extensive – and often prohibitively expensive to repair if it's really taken hold.

Rusty rear wheelarches will be obvious, but check inside the inner arch (extending to the rear seat belt mounts), all the way down to the sills, and behind the side skirts. Feel behind the skirts as far as you can reach, pressing on the inner sills. Corrosion could have spread to the floorpan, so examine the underside, including chassis rails and boot floor. Remove the wheels and inspect the inner arches behind the wheelarch liners.

Repairs here will be expensive, but if it's been done correctly – chopping out all the rot and adding cavity wax protection – there's no need to be alarmed.

Look around the fuel filler flap and examine all the doors, paying attention to their frames and the weather strips alongside the windows; when rusty they tend to scratch the glass, so budget for a set of new seals. Some Mk2s have rotted quite severely around the windscreen rubbers too.

The bonnet may be corroded – generally due to stone chips – and the fog lamps need checking to ensure they're not cracked. Of course, the ST200 is a Mk2 Mondeo, so its bumpers are naturally inclined to crack or fall apart; gaffer-taped bumpers were traditional for Mondeo owners, yet the ST200's RSAP bodykit (shared with the ST24, among others) is relatively easy to find second-hand – except for the twin-exhaust back bumper. For hatchbacks and

SUSPENSION AND BRAKES

You may be surprised by how nicely an ST200 drives. The stock setup included lowered springs and stiffer dampers, resulting in a firm and sporty ride (reckoned to be too hard by some testers), not to mention great poise on the twisty bits.

The problem is ST200s were fitted with bespoke suspension components, including unique front suspension arms; like normal Mk2 Mondeos, they regularly destroy front wishbone bushes, resulting in wandering at speed and clonking over bumps; unlike normal Mondeos, the replacement parts are rare and expensive. The ball joints can be replaced separately, but owners tend to get the main subframe bushes from America by buying Ford Contour components.

Broken anti-roll bar drop links also cause knocking noises, as do snapped coil springs or even faulty dampers. Beware, because the springs and shock absorbers are ST200-specific, and OEM dampers are particularly difficult to source.

Likewise, banging at the back may result from fractured springs or defective drop links; saloons and hatchbacks are also susceptible to broken rear subframe bushes, which make the rear end feel soggy. Upgrading to polyurethane solves the problem. Estates have their own issues because their self-levelling rear dampers are ultra-pricey; ST220 (Mk3) versions will suffice instead.

Like all Mondeos, the ST200 is sensitive to wheel geometry settings (leading to wandering) and worn

wheel bearings at high mileages; listen for rumbling, and jack up each corner of the car to wiggle the wheels and feel for excessive play.

ST200 stoppers were sub-standard from new (basic Mondeo callipers with 278mm discs), so expect them to feel poor by modern levels. Juddering from the pedal is common (typically due to warped/contaminated discs/pads), while sponginess is mainly caused by air in the system – perhaps from the fluid having overheated. Basic servicing should fix the faults, using the best pads you can afford.

Heavy juddering and pulling to one side during braking probably stem from a seized front calliper (if not an aforementioned wishbone bush). Rear callipers are particularly prone to sticking, often with the handbrake failing to function; jack up the car and spin the wheels to check.

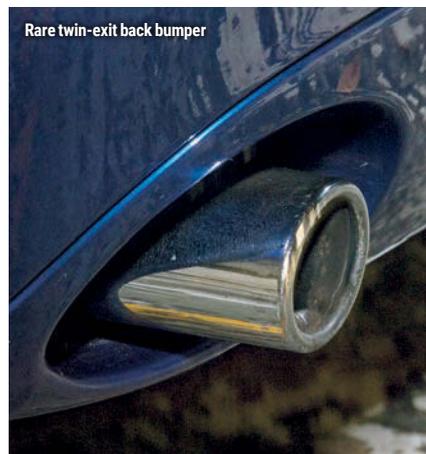
Ensure the ABS system works properly: the warning light should glow when you turn on the ignition, and go out again after starting the engine. If it stays alight, it's usually due to a dodgy (dirty or failed) sensor, but it could also be caused by the ABS pump or module.

Many ST200 owners have by now added upgraded front brakes, which are a bonus when buying. Mk1 Mondeo V6 callipers, ST170 discs with Mk3 callipers, or Focus ST225 callipers with redrilled discs (from five- to four-stud) are all tried-and-tested solutions.

saloons they're rare, but ST200 estate rear bumpers are almost impossible to find – resulting in the car potentially being written-off by the insurer if the back end gets damaged.

Bear in mind any severely crispy ST200 could be fit for scrap, so it's preferable to find a better car than indulge in a lengthy restoration.

Tread carefully around any ST200 that doesn't sport Imperial Blue bodywork. A few were built in other colours, and 66 UK police cars were Diamond White – rare, yes, but often subjected to a hard life. ■



Rare twin-exit back bumper



ST200 paintwork is prone to stone-chips

CONTACTS

MONDEO ST OWNERS' CLUB
www.mondeostoc.com

MONDEO OWNERS UK
www.facebook.com/groups/1899868830129749/

ST DRIVERS
www.stdrivers.co.uk

CONTOUR ENTHUSIASTS' GROUP
www.contour.org

NAUTILUS PERFORMANCE
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BUYING GUIDE

MONDEO ST220

Now Ford's pulled the plug on the Mondeo, the 2002-to-2007 ST220 reigns supreme as the best, the fastest and the final fast Ford family saloon. Here's how to buy a car that combines V6 grunt with perfect poise, luxury equipment and rapidly increasing rarity

Words DAN WILLIAMSON / Photos FAST FORD ARCHIVE

WHY YOU WANT ONE...

- Ford will never again build a machine like this: normally-aspirated V6 petrol power and sublime handling in a big, family-car package.
- If you're looking for practicality, the ST220 takes some beating – the saloon and hatchback have massive boots, and the estate's load space is truly cavernous.
- Anyone in the know appreciates the ST220 as a genuine driver's car – and as they're becoming rare, their value should rise higher than the running costs.

WHY YOU DON'T...

- Mondeo Man infamy still lingers from the autocracy of Tony Blair, and it's unlikely the ST220 will ever recover from an image of mid-range mundanity.
- Running costs can be extortionate for the performance on offer, with low-20s to the gallon being common, and jaw-dropping road tax for late-spec ST220s.
- Still lingering in banger territory means many ST220s are poorly serviced, badly modified and in the process of rotting away.

HOW MUCH TO PAY

PROJECT: £500 TO £1500

There's no such thing as a cheap ST220 – unless you're in it for the long haul. Breakers with blown engines and slipping clutches are inexpensive to buy but costly to fix. If you want something useable, spend a little more...

GOOD: £1500 TO £3000

A decent ST220 shouldn't break the bank, but beware of rust and aim to keep mileage below 150k. Shop around for your preference of bodystyle, colour and cabin trim.

CONCOURS: £3000 TO £5000

Condition and mileage are becoming more important than age, specification and colour scheme, although such factors do affect the value. Sub-30,000-mile ST220s will easily exceed £5000, but are few and far between.

IDENTITY

Check the VIN number on the V5 logbook matches the sticker on the driver's-side B-pillar, stamped into the bulkhead (behind the plenum chamber) and VIN visible through the windscreen on the outside. If possible, plug a code reader into the OBD port and confirm the chassis number matches.

As always, an identity report is vital to ensure your ST220 isn't recorded as stolen or written off, or subject to outstanding finance.

ST220s aren't really faked, but it's worth checking the spec tallies with the year: original ST220s (until June 2003) were fitted with a five-cog MTX-75 gearbox, whereas facelifted versions had a six-speed MMT6; six-speed cars also feature the updated fascia layout rather than piano-black trim. Post-2003 ST220s have a remappable ECU and standard

cruise control (rare on early cars).

Remember that all ST220s are expensive to run, but cars registered after March 2006 are in a higher road tax bracket, costing significantly more each year.

As always, if you see a Mondeo with cloth trim, single exhaust pipe, noisy engine, and unrefined ride/handling, it's an ST TDCi. There's no such thing as an ST220 diesel.



VITAL STATS

MADE BETWEEN 2002 to 2007

PRICE WHEN NEW £21,745

POWER 223bhp @ 6250rpm

TORQUE 203lb.ft @ 4900rpm

TOP SPEED 151mph (five-speed), 155mph (six-speed)

0-62MPH 6.8 seconds (five-speed), 7.6 seconds (six-speed)



A worn steering wheel means mega miles

INTERIOR

Mondeo cabins wear pretty well, but their age (and usually, mileage) means many have rattly trim and squeaky plastic. Wind noise from the rear window seals is very common.

Leather upholstery was standard, and very durable – but expect to see wear on the driver's seat bolster. It can be dyed very easily by a DIYer. Black has tended to be the most popular shade, but Infra Red leather has become sought-after.

Early ST220s had a piano-black fascia, replaced in June 2003 by an updated dashboard; such facelifted cars were equipped with a six-speed gearbox and more standard kit, including auto wipers and lights, cruise control, multi-position electric seat adjustment and variable-

position seat heaters. Desirable options also became available, including sat nav and Bluetooth.

ST220s gained red stitching on the leather from 2005, and Alcantara seat inserts became available. Expect to pay extra for this cabin.

Pay less if the interior is badly scuffed, especially if there's an IRS logo on the speedometer – a telltale sign of the ST220 being an ex-cop car.

ST220s had loads of electrical goodies, so make sure they all work; heated seat pads are fiddly to fix, heated windscreens exhibit dodgy elements (costly to replace without insurance cover), six-disc head units often become problematic, and central locking motors break – but are fortunately the same as other Mk3 Mondeos.



Late-spec dash with desirable sat nav



Leather Recaros are comfy but can show wear after a high mileage



Late-model ST220s wear lots of chrome trim

MONDEO ST220

ENGINE 2967cc 24-valve V6 DOHC Duratec-ST (MEBA) with alloy cylinder block and heads, 10:1 compression ratio, chain drive, multi-point fuel injection system, Black-Oak ECU (revised in June 2003), twin stainless exhausts

TRANSMISSION Front-wheel drive with MTX-75 five-speed manual gearbox or (from June 2003) Getrag MMT6 Durashift six-speed manual gearbox, 240mm clutch and dual-mass flywheel

BRAKES Front: 300mm ventilated discs; rear: 280mm solid discs; ABS with Emergency Brake Assist (EBA) and Electronic Stability Programme (ESP)

SUSPENSION Front: MacPherson struts, uprated dampers, 15mm lowered coil springs, anti-roll bar; rear: Quadralink independent suspension with anti-roll bar and 15mm lowered coil springs (saloon/hatchback) or independent short-long arm with anti-roll bar and lowered coil springs

WHEELS AND TYRES 7.5x18in 16-spoke alloys and 225/40R18 tyres

INTERIOR Recaro heated front seats in Ebony Black, Infra Red, Graphite or Light Flint leather with matching rear seat (leather with Alcantara inserts available from mid-August 2005), leather-rimmed steering wheel, gearknob and handbrake handle (with red stitching from 2005), climate control, six-disc CD head unit. Facelift in June 2003 included revised fascia and standard cruise control. Optional heated rear seat, stereo upgrades including DVD, sat nav, Bluetooth and rear-seat audio, Family Pack (dog guard and rear-seat audio system)

EXTERIOR Mondeo four-door saloon, five-door hatchback or five-door estate with bodywork extensions including honeycomb grilles, flared front wheelarches, sports front and rear bumpers, side skirts and rear spoiler, body-coloured door handles and tailgate/boot lid handle. Facelift in June 2003 included rear lights (saloon and hatch), rain-sensing wipers, automatic headlamps and puddle lights, plus (from June 2005) chrome grille surround, revised side skirts, rear lights and chrome door handles. Metallic paint in Ink Blue, State Blue, Infra Red, Machine Silver, Magnum Grey, Panther Black, Stardust Silver, Sea Grey, Performance Blue (at extra cost) or non-metallic Diamond White (police). Optional rear parking sensors, rear privacy glass, xenon headlamps, electric sunroof, Technology Pack (xenon headlights and privacy glass)



Replacement decals are available for faded badges

ENGINE

All-alloy American-built Duratec-ST is well-made but complex and crammed tightly into the Mondeo's engine bay. Terminal failure has killed many ST220s.

Servicing is due at 12,500 miles but it's on timing chains, which last the life of the engine; if it's rattling, it often signals the end of the engine's life.

Listen for knocking noises – which if they're from the bottom end simply aren't worth the risk. Ticking could come from camshaft bearing caps or belt tensioners (relatively minor fixes) but big issues may be lurking.

Exhaust smoke is a major warning sign, with white pointing to head gasket and/or cylinder head failure, or blue suggesting a worn-out engine. Head gasket failure often results in misfires, so don't trust a seller claiming their ST220 just needs a coil pack or spark plugs (albeit the rear three are tricky to change and typically neglected).

The airflow meter, throttle position sensor, perished vacuum hoses, fuel system or ECU may also be to blame for misfires, rough idling, poor performance and high fuel consumption; a full diagnosis is crucial but won't necessarily identify the cause.

Oil leaks are similarly awkward to solve. Most ST220s have gunge around the front exhaust manifold – usually dripped from the filler neck when being topped up – but grubby timing chain covers and sump need further investigation.

Fuel pump failure is common at around 100,000



miles, which means dropping the tank to replace it; bodgers cut a hole in the floor instead, confirmed by looking beneath the back seat.

Coolant leaks can be catastrophic, so check the condition of the hoses for splits or holes. The V6 is tight in the engine bay, causing pipes and wires to chafe. Inspect the loom around the battery, bulkhead and alternator, which can cause chaos with the smart-charging system. The alternator is especially prone to failure thanks to its proximity to the rear exhaust manifold/cat. Early signs of impending failure are the battery light glowing on the dashboard, followed by the air conditioning and stereo ceasing to work.

Examine the cooling fans too, which are prone to seizing. Check them by ensuring they run when the air conditioning is switched on.



ST220 four-door saloons were rare when new, and very scarce today



Silky-smooth V6 but prone to problems and pricey to repair



TRANSMISSION

Two types of gearbox were available with the ST220: until June 2003 it was Ford's MTX-75 five-speed manual, after which it was the Getrag MMT6 Durashift six-speed. The earlier car had a slicker gearshift, dual airbox intakes and quicker acceleration; the six-speed boasted better economy, higher top speed, improved ECU and a facelifted fascia.

Both 'boxes are strong, and neither should cause trouble, but the clutch is a different matter, usually requiring replacement before 100,000 miles. On the rest drive, check for slip by leaving it in fourth, accelerating hard and ensuring the road speed increases with the engine revs; ensure all the gears engage without baulking.

Beware of vibrations felt through the clutch pedal, warning of DMF (dual mass flywheel) failure. The ST220's isn't as prone to failing as the diesel-powered Mondeo's, but it will wear out eventually, meaning an expensive repair.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO INSURE?

It's just a family car with an oversized engine, so the insurance group of 33 is relatively high. Even so, the lowest premiums are usually found via high-street brokers and online comparison sites.

WHERE DO I FIND ONE?

ST220s on their last stop before being broken for spares can be found on eBay and Facebook. Better examples are also generally in private hands, while backstreet dealers sometimes advertise ST220s on Auto Trader. Concours cars occasionally crop up with specialist traders for big money.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO RUN?

Well, er, that's the downside. You'll be lucky to average 25mpg, some parts are pricey, and road tax is high (currently £360) – worse still for ST220s registered after March 2006, which are in a higher road tax bracket (£615).

WILL VALUES RISE OR FALL?

They're already rising, albeit steadily. As rusty and non-running ST220s are gradually confined to the scrapyard, prices of tidy cars buck the trend of Mondeos being ignored by Ford collectors – especially since production ended.

SHOULD I MODIFY IT?

Yes, but keep it tasteful. Big family cars don't lend themselves to being adorned with motorsport graphics or too much bling, but every stock ST220 should sit a little lower.



Wheels often exhibit flaky finish

SUSPENSION AND BRAKES

Even a tired ST220 should feel fine behind the wheel, but if it doesn't drive precisely, there's something wrong.

ST220 front suspension is based on the Jaguar X-Type 3.0; vague handling could be caused by a dry steering column bush, worn anti-roll bar bushes (which are inherently weak) or poor wheel alignment – Mondeos are particularly sensitive – resulting in excessive wear to the 225/40R18 rubber; make sure the tyres are a decent brand.

ST220 rear suspension is shared with the regular Mondeo, so saloons and hatchbacks munch through subframe bushes, leading to clonking and sloppiness at the rear; polyurethane replacements are advisable. ST220 estates have the Jaguar X-Type setup, which doesn't eat bushes but needs the rear arms checking from underneath for distortion from careless jacking.

Wheel bearings are a common problem – listen for rumbling – while front wishbones, ball joints and suspension links may be worn; use X-Type replacements to save cost. Rear wheel bearings are standard Mondeo parts.

Wheels themselves are often tatty, with lacquer peeling away from the stock diamond-cut finish and corrosion taking hold. Refurbishment is a pro job, but repainting or powder-coating is a simple cure unless you're going for concours spec.

Don't be surprised to feel juddering from the front brakes – it will need new discs and pads, which are cheap-and-cheerful stock Mk3 300mm vented fronts and 280mm solid rears. Many ST220s have thankfully been upgraded to Focus ST225 front 320mm discs, callipers and carriers, which make a massive improvement.

ST220 rear brakes exhibit common Mondeo complaints of seized callipers, particularly on pre-2004 models. Jack up the back to see if the wheels spin freely with and without the handbrake engaged; the cause is likely to be the handbrake mechanism on the calliper, although stretched cables and sticking pistons are sometimes to blame. Replacement callipers are cheap to buy.

ABS sensors sometimes fail, causing the warning light to glow on the dashboard. They're inexpensive and easy to replace.

EXTERIOR

Rust is the enemy. Even when relatively new, many ST220s were repaired and repainted under warranty due to bodywork corrosion.

Pre-2005 Mondeos suffer most around the door bottoms where the flanges trap moisture. Wheelarches also suffer, as do sills behind the side skirts. Inspect the bonnet edges, inner wings (inside and out), tailgate, beneath the fuel cap, around the windscreen and back lights.

Rear bumpers tend to sag on saloons and hatchbacks, but they can be easily fixed with new foam supports to replace those that are missing or broken. Second-hand bits are easy to source.

Choice of bodystyle is personal preference, and makes little difference to price. Saloons are a tad stiffer, estates are immensely practical (and traditionally most expensive), and hatchbacks sit in

the middle as more common.

Colour used to affect values, but today it's preferable to buy on condition instead of spec. Still, Performance Blue remains popular, and some owners prefer the post-2005 chrome trim. Look out for desirable options such as xenon headlamps and (rare) electric sunroof.

Reversing sensors were also available, but tend to play up or need regular cleaning; headlamp washer jets suffer the same fate. Washer covers go missing, but non-genuine replacements cost pennies to buy, if not to paint.

Look out for white ST220s, which were usually purchased by police forces (among other colours, especially silver). Rare yes, but these cars led very hard lives, and ex-police cars generally have plenty of damaged bodywork, scratches and filler. ■

KEY POINTS

ENGINE

Nasty noises, smoke or misfires are a major warning of a hefty bill coming your way.

OVERALL CONDITION

Some ST220s have been cosseted, while many have been run on the cheap. Beware of poor cosmetic mods, rattly interiors, lack of servicing and Chinese-branded tyres.

TRANSMISSION

Run away from any ST220 with clutch slip. Vibrations from a knackered DMF may be more costly still.

EXTERIOR

Corrosion can be a killer. Check the door bottoms, sills, inner arches, rear wheelarches and tailgate.

ELECTRICS

Beware of dashboard warning lights. A knackered alternator is very bad news, and could cost loads of cash to replace.



Front end tends to suffer from stone chips

CONTACTS

ST220 ENTHUSIASTS

st220enthusiasts.club

MONDEO ST OWNERS' CLUB

www.mondeostoc.com

ST DRIVERS

www.stdrivers.co.uk

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BUYING GUIDE

MK4 MONDEO 2.5T

Bag your very own James Bond car – a 217bhp, turbocharged, five-cylinder bargain that's fast, rare and the most practical everyday motor in this bookazine. Yep, it's the Mk4 Mondeo 2.5T...

Words DAN WILLIAMSON / Photos FORD UK

WHY YOU WANT ONE...

■ Who doesn't hanker after a James Bond car? For 2006's *Casino Royale*, Daniel Craig drove a Tonic (metallic blue) 2.5T in a blatant scene of product placement.

■ Few modern cars offer the space or practicality of a Mk4 Mondeo – they're enormous – and 2.5s tend to be particularly well-equipped. They're astonishingly smooth mile-munchers.

■ The rumbling five-pot motor is shared with the Focus ST225 and Mk2 RS, so it's extraordinarily tuneable and could make an epic sleeper.

WHY YOU DON'T...

■ Ford sold hardly any Mk4 2.5s, so you could be searching forever to find the right choice of bodystyle, colour, trim and spec.

■ Mondeo Man isn't exactly a cool image: you'll not fend off mates' minicab/pensioner jokes by repeating 'it's the same engine as the Focus RS, you know'...

■ The five-cylinder engine doesn't half like a drink, and you'll be lucky to see 30mpg. It's also prone to suffering from split cylinder liners, so it's far from cheap to run.

HOW MUCH TO PAY

PROJECT: £1000-£2000

Breakers with blown engines can be picked up for less than £500, but complete running cars fetch four figures if needing work. Don't be surprised to spend £1500 on a 2.5 with 200k on the clock.

GOOD: £2000-£3000

You'll need upwards of £2k for anything useable, although there's no reason why a high-mileage (150,000-plus) Mondeo won't go on for many years. Expect to spend more cash on an estate than saloon or hatch.

CONCOURS: £3000-£5000

Any Titanium X without intergalactic mileage is in this budget; look for lots of service history – especially cambelt and water pump changes. Titanium X Sports can cost £5000 or more, but at that price you're getting into (newer) EcoBoost version territory.

IDENTITY

Mondeos aren't prime targets for theft and fakery, but a history check is nevertheless vital to ensure it's not a ringer, write-off or subject to outstanding finance. Check the VIN on the logbook matches the numbers on the sticker on the driver's-side B-pillar, stamped under a flap in the carpet on the driver's side sill (just in front of the seat) and on the nearside dashboard, visible through the windscreen.

Ideally, connect an OBDII reader to the Mondeo's diagnostic port (beneath the steering wheel, under the dashboard) and compare the VIN numbers.

If you're concerned about which model you're buying – it's easy to get caught out – the Ghia, Titanium and Titanium X were all offered as four-door saloons, five-door hatchbacks or estates, while the Titanium X Sport could be bought only in hatchback or estate form.

The Ghia had wood-effect dashboard and interior trim details, Gillos cloth upholstery (optional perforated leather), 17in 7x3-spoke alloy wheels, chrome grilles, chrome door/window trims, and chrome strips in the door handles.

Titaniums had 17in 7x15-spoke alloys (Y-spoke from

2008), blue-tinted glass, sports seats with New York upholstery, brushed chrome dashboard, silver-finished grilles and chrome door trims; the Titanium X added Alcantara/leather upholstery, adaptive headlights, auto wipers, heated seats and Ford Power start button. All were offered with Sport Pack of 18in Y-spoke wheels, sports suspension and rear spoiler (on five-door and estates).

The Titanium X Sport was available only as a hatch or estate, and came as standard with Sport Pack plus full bodykit, Alcantara/leather seats with red stitching, alloy pedals, xenon headlights and sports suspension.



VITAL STATS

MADE BETWEEN 2007 and 2010

PRICE WHEN NEW £17,995 to £21,095

POWER 217bhp @ 5000rpm

TORQUE 236lb.ft @ 1500-4800rpm

TOP SPEED 152mph (estate: 150mph)

0-60MPH 7.3 seconds (estate: 7.5 seconds)



INTERIOR

Mk4s had a durable cabin, with choice of executive trim levels for the 2.5. Any example with a tatty interior has either been abused or travelled a few laps of the planet.

Rattling, creaking or loose trim are potential complaints, especially around the dashboard, glovebox, centre console and front doors.

Some owners report problems with the seats, with broken headrests, side bolsters collapsing, and general lack of support. Even sporty models lack the figure-hugging comfort of a Recaro seat, and most came with manual adjustment (other than electric raising and lowering); multi-function memory seats were a rare option, and full leather is less common still.

Check the instruments for warning lights. Seatbelt deactivation is common (and easily cured without a diagnostic tool), as are dancing dials, accompanied by the stereo turning itself on and off; a software update is the cure, but disconnecting the battery gives a temporary fix.

Worn-out button lettering/diagrams aren't necessarily a sign of age – they're quite common – and sticky cruise control switches are often rectified with contact cleaner.

Problems with the audio system are varied, including Bluetooth voice control being tricky to connect, DAB radio not working, flickering satellite navigation/reversing camera display, and faulty parking sensors. Software updates are sometimes the cure.

All 2.5s had dual-zone climate control, so ensure the air conditioning works properly and gets ice-cold; condenser failure is relatively common and expensive to fix.

Many Mk4 owners have reported fuses blowing for no apparent reason, early failure of the remote-control key fob (always use a good-quality CR2032 battery), and temperamental electric window and central locking mechanisms caused by faulty door units; give the key a few presses to ensure all works as it should.

Titanium X Sport was the range-topping Mondeo Mk4





M66 was shared with the Focus ST

MONDEO MK4 2.5T

ENGINE 2521cc in-line five-cylinder, 20-valve, DOHC Duratec with alloy block and head, 9.0:1 compression ratio, toothed belt drive, VVT (variable valve timing), KKK-Warner turbocharger, sequential electronic fuel injection, Bosch ME 9.0 ECU, electronic distributorless ignition

TRANSMISSION Front-wheel drive with Getrag Ford Durashift M66 six-speed manual gearbox

BRAKES Front: 300mm ventilated discs; rear: 302mm solid discs; ABS with electronic brake force distribution

SUSPENSION Front: MacPherson struts, coil springs, lower control arms with hydro-bushing, anti-roll bar; rear: independent control blade multi-link system, coil springs, anti-roll bar; 30mm lowered springs on Sport Pack and Titanium X Sport; ESP; optional interactive vehicle dynamic control (IVDC)

WHEELS AND TYRES 7.5x17in alloys and 235/45x17 tyres or 8x18in alloys and 225/40x18 tyres (depending on model)

INTERIOR Sports-style seats (Titanium models), electrically-height-adjustable driver's seat, heated seats (Titanium X and X Sport), Alcantara/leather upholstery (Titanium X), Alcantara/leather upholstery with red stitching (Titanium X Sport), leather gearknob and handbrake handle, leather steering wheel, steering wheel with polished spokes and red stitching (X Sport), dark-wood effect dashboard (Ghia), brushed chrome dashboard (Titanium and X), carbo-tex dashboard (X Sport), alloy pedals (X Sport), electrically-operated windows, keyless with Ford Power starter button (X and Sport), ambient lighting, climate control with second-row air vents. Optional electric passenger seat, climate-controlled seats, leather upholstery (Ghia), wood steering wheel (Ghia), integrated sun blinds, Technology Pack II (tyre pressure monitoring system, keyless entry, eight-way power driver's seat with memory; X and X Sport only), various audio upgrades

EXTERIOR Mondeo Mk4 four-door saloon, five-door hatchback or five-door estate with automatic headlights and wipers (Ghia, Titanium X and Sport), electric/heated door mirrors with puddle lights, heated windscreen, xenon headlamps (X Sport; optional on others), adaptive front lighting (Titanium X; optional on others), parking sensors (X and Sport), bodykit and exhaust finishers (Titanium X Sport). Optional sunroof, Sport Pack (18in alloys, rear spoiler (hatchback and estate only) and sports suspension), rear privacy glass, solar-reflect windscreen, metallic paint

TRANSMISSION

Mondeo 2.5's Getrag M66 six-speed manual gearbox was also found in the ST225, so it's strong and durable.

The same can't be said for the clutch, which will expire immediately when faced with even a Stage 1 remap. Check for clutch slip by driving in fifth gear at 2000rpm and flooring the throttle; if the rev counter spins but the road speed doesn't increase, the clutch is knackered. A Focus RS Mk2 clutch, with pressure plate and flywheel, is a direct-fit, a cost-effective upgrade, which can handle 450bhp.

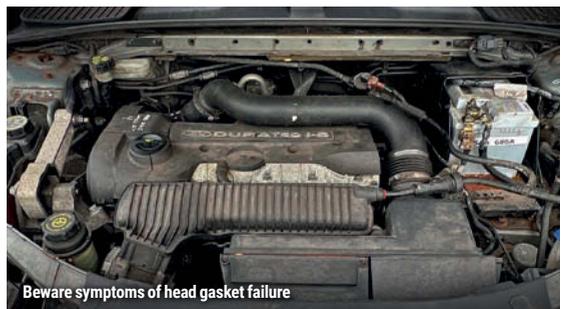
A clutch swap should be accompanied by a replacement dual-mass flywheel (DMF) and slave cylinder, which increases the cost but alleviates further problems; a tired DMF will be rattling at idle, with vibrations felt through the clutch pedal.

Signs of a failed slave cylinder will be a clutch pedal that doesn't return to the up position after pressing; the symptom can also arise after a clutch change or overheated fluid, so may only need bleeding. Check carefully.

Listen for clonking or grinding from the front end while in first or reverse gear, which could point to a worn or damaged driveshaft, or simply a need for lubrication. Clicking on full lock will be due to a failed CV joint, which is relatively cheap to repair.



Volvo/Focus five-pot was also in the Mondeo 2.5T



Beware symptoms of head gasket failure



ENGINE

Almost the same as the five-pot found in the Focus ST225 and RS Mk2, the Mondeo's 2521cc Volvo-sourced engine is susceptible to the same issues. Indeed, Collins Performance says the Mondeo's additional weight puts greater strain on the components, and cracked cylinder liners are proportionally more common in the larger car.

Check for symptoms of split liners, which are similar to head gasket failure: water in the oil and/or misfiring after a cold start. Watch out for an engine that's been upgraded with the well-known 'block mod' (shims between the liners) because it's sometimes done to reduce water leakage on a knackered block instead of as the preferred precautionary measure.

Check the oil filler cap for sludge – most likely from a failed oil filter diaphragm housing, which makes a whistling noise at idle and can cause the cam seals to leak. An uprated diaphragm should be fitted instead.

The Mondeo is no fireball, but particularly poor performance could come from a boost leak or blown sensor – often the boost control solenoid, which is a cheap and easy fix.

Rough running can be caused by MAP or MAF sensor issues. Air leaks are common, from split intercooler hoses or knackered sound symposer (fixed with a blanking plug); the engine management

light will probably be aglow.

Look for coolant leaks from the thermostat housing, radiator top hose and turbo feed. Listen for gruff noises, especially at start-up – possibly from the exhaust or manifold gasket, especially on the turbo side. Squealing is probably a tensioner pulley or belt – it needs changing to avoid damage.

High-mileage Mk4s aren't uncommon, and 200k isn't a concern if well-maintained. Oil changes should be 5W30 yearly/every 12,000 miles, and cambelt at ten years/100k miles (ideally at 60,000 miles/five years); expect to spend £500 on the job.

Don't assume you can simply bung an RS engine into a Mondeo, or use the Mk4's 2.5 to repair a knackered ST225: although the internals, head and ancillaries are the same, the cylinder block casting is different for the driveshaft supports. The Mondeo's is the same as in the S-Max, Galaxy and Kuga 2.5T, and can be upgraded by installing RS pistons and rods into the Mondeo block.

But the fuelling setup is completely different: Mondeos have Volvo-type variable fuel pressure (2-bar at idle; up to 5-bar at high revs) instead of the Focus's static 4-bar in-tank fuel pump. This makes modifying more complex – Collins says 250-to-280bhp is the sweet spot, so beware of a Mk4 claiming more than 300bhp. At this level, an uprated intercooler is also essential.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO INSURE?

It's just a Ford Mondeo – an everyday car with everyday insurance needs. Its engine-sharing sibling, the Focus ST225, languishes in group 34, whereas the 2.5T Mondeo drops down to group 26 for Ghia and Titanium models, with Titanium X and Sports in 27. An online comparison site is the way to go, unless you add modifications – in which case you'll need a specialist broker.

WHERE DO I FIND ONE?

The 2.5T is a rarity, so you'll need to shop around and look everywhere: non-franchised dealers, Auto Trader, eBay and anywhere else you can think of. The newest is now 12 years old, so don't expect main-dealer warranties.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO RUN?

Well, you know how the Focus ST225 is renowned for being heavy on fuel? Well, the bigger and weightier Mondeo needs even more juice to pull around. Expect average economy to be in the low-20s, but you could get 30mpg on a run if taking it easy, or single figures when having fun...

WILL VALUES RISE OR FALL?

They're still going down, but with so few 2.5Ts around, it's going to be a case of supply and demand. Don't be surprised if values of excellent examples hold firm – and rise eventually.

SHOULD I MODIFY IT?

Oh yes – even if only a cheeky remap and lowered suspension. But remember more grunt means you'll need an uprated clutch too.

Hatchback is the most plentiful bodystyle



Y-spoke alloys are a common sight on Mk4s



SUSPENSION AND BRAKES

Mk4 Mondeos are massive – bigger than the last Granada/Scorpio – and feel it too, so it's not a sporty drive. But for a large car they're nimble and engaging, so there should be no sloppiness in the suspension or vagueness when driving.

All Mk4s share the same steering, suspension and brakes (apart from Sport Pack and Titanium X Sport, which wear lowering springs), so the 2.5 suffers from the same few issues.

Mk4s are known for PAS (power-assisted steering) problems, so listen for whining or groaning noises, and ensure the steering isn't heavy or notchy. A slight hum on full lock is normal, but anything else could point to failure of the PAS pump or steering rack – both are expensive to fix, although if well-maintained and caught early, regular fluid changes may help.

Knocking felt through the steering could be caused by failed anti-roll bar drop links or – more likely – front suspension top mount bearings. Parts are cheap, but replacement means dropping the MacPherson struts.

Front subframe bushes should be checked too; worn oil-filled versions can be swapped for polyurethane upgrades without detriment.

Rear suspension bushes are a common

weakness; check the trailing arms and subframe, even on a low-mileage Mondeo. Trailing arm bushes aren't overly pricey but need a special tool to avoid having to remove the entire arms from the car. A visual inspection should be enough, but the rear end will knock if the bushes are completely shot. Check the subframes for excessive corrosion while you're there.

IVDC electronic damping was optional, although rarely specified. If fitted, check the wiring under the wheelarches, which can chafe and wear though.

Listen for rumbling wheel bearings, and check the tyre treads; the 2.5 is heavy on rubber (especially fronts), so don't be surprised to find cheap and noisy Chinese tyres ruining the Mondeo's ride and handling.

Despite their performance potential, 2.5s wore the same brakes as bottom-of-the-range Mk4s, so wear rates can be high, and taxi-special pads won't feel great. Mondeos were recalled due to an ABS fault, which caused the brakes to lock under heavy use, but it's unlikely to be an issue these days.

More likely, you'll experience sticking callipers, especially on the rear. Jack up the car and spin the wheels, ensuring the handbrake works on both sides, in the on and off positions.

KEY POINTS

WHICH ONE?

Various trim options, bodystyles, options and rarity of the 2.5 mean you may struggle to find your ideal Mk4. But it's probably out there, so keep searching.

ENGINE

Misfires, water mixing with oil and white smoke from the exhaust tell you to run away – cracked cylinder liners are the likely cause, meaning a replacement engine is required.

TRANSMISSION

Any Mk4 running more than standard power – even a Stage 1 map – will kill its clutch quickly. Take a test drive and test for slip by booting the throttle in a high gear.

SUSPENSION

PAS problems can be pricey, so listen for nasty noises. Clonking and knocking is more likely worn bushes or suspension top mounts.

INTERIOR

Tatty cabin? Lots of rattles? Collapsed driver's seat? Worn-out carpet? You don't need to spot beaded seat covers or vomit in the back seat to suspect any Mk4 Mondeo has been used as a minicab...



EXTERIOR

Rusty Fords are common, but not if it's a Mk4 Mondeo. Signs of serious bodywork corrosion suggest badly-repaired accident damage (look for overspray, creases, poor panel gaps and signs of body filler).

Don't be surprised to see minor rust around the rear wheelarches and within the inner arches (behind the plastic wheelarch liners, which hold moisture).

Early hatchbacks were particularly prone to rainwater leaking into the luggage compartment, flooding down beside the seals and into the boot. The problem was cured on cars built from mid-2008 onwards, but check carefully for dampness and even resultant corrosion. It's only a matter of time...

Boot locks occasionally stick, as does the bonnet lock and cable; regular lubrication/maintenance avoids these problems. All Mk4s are prone to losing the weather seals that run beneath the doors thanks to fragile clips.

A sunroof is a rare (and desirable) option, which may judder when opened or leak into the cabin; replacement seals are the answer. Parking sensors were also an option – and useful, given the Mk4's bulk – but also play up. A heated windscreen was standard, but elements sometimes fail.

Headlamps and indicators have strange quirks, sometimes operating for no reason or going out and giving a flash on the dashboard. It's reckoned to be a body ECU fault, although some owners find success with spraying the light connectors with contact cleaner. ■



Faulty headlamps may need contact cleaner



Titanium X sports exhausts

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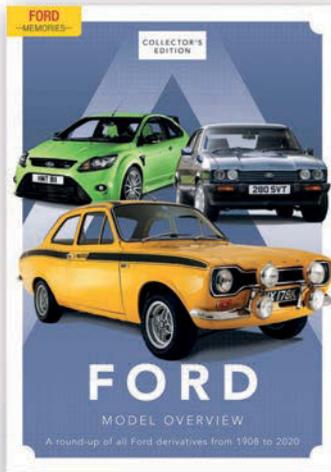
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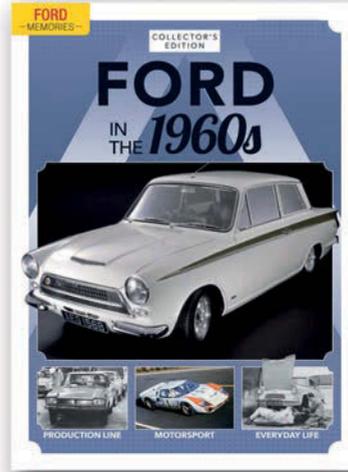
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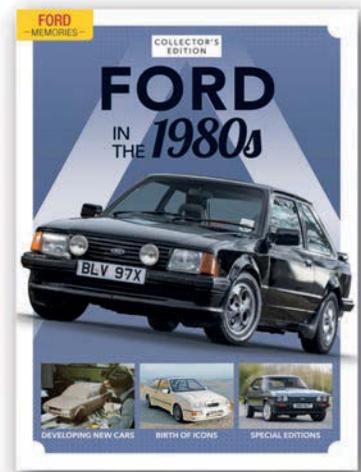
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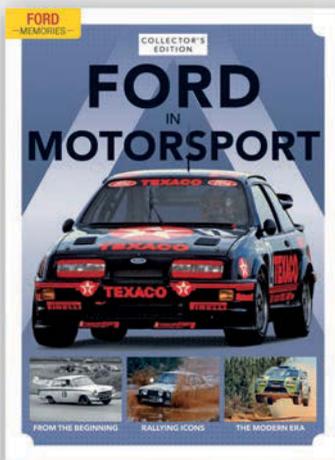
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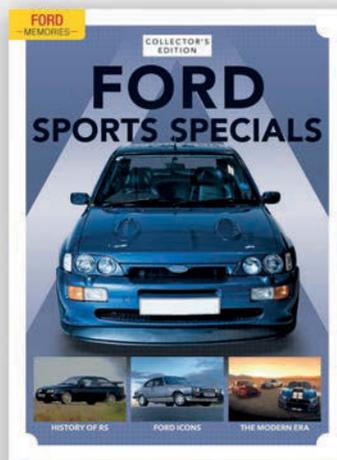
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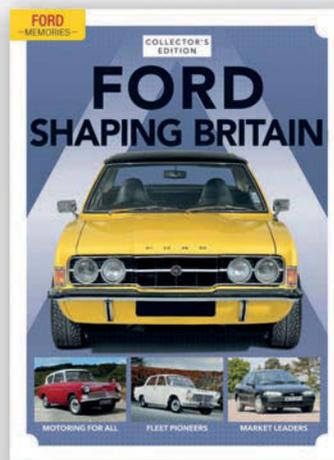
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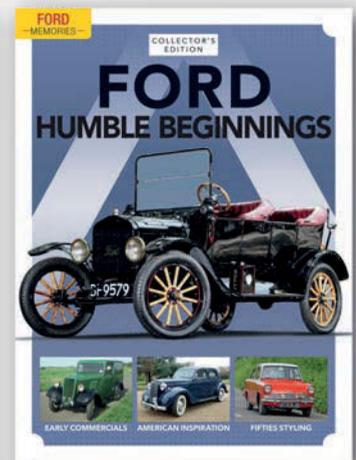
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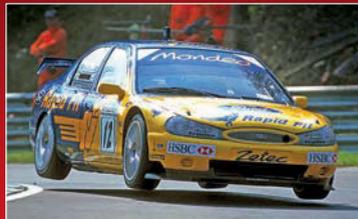
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Cars got bigger, more powerful and better-specced throughout the years, but declining sales and the public's shift towards SUVs meant the Mondeo stopped production in 2022. After 29 years, the Mondeo is a household name for Ford fans, and today the performance versions are highly sought after by enthusiasts and collectors alike.

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