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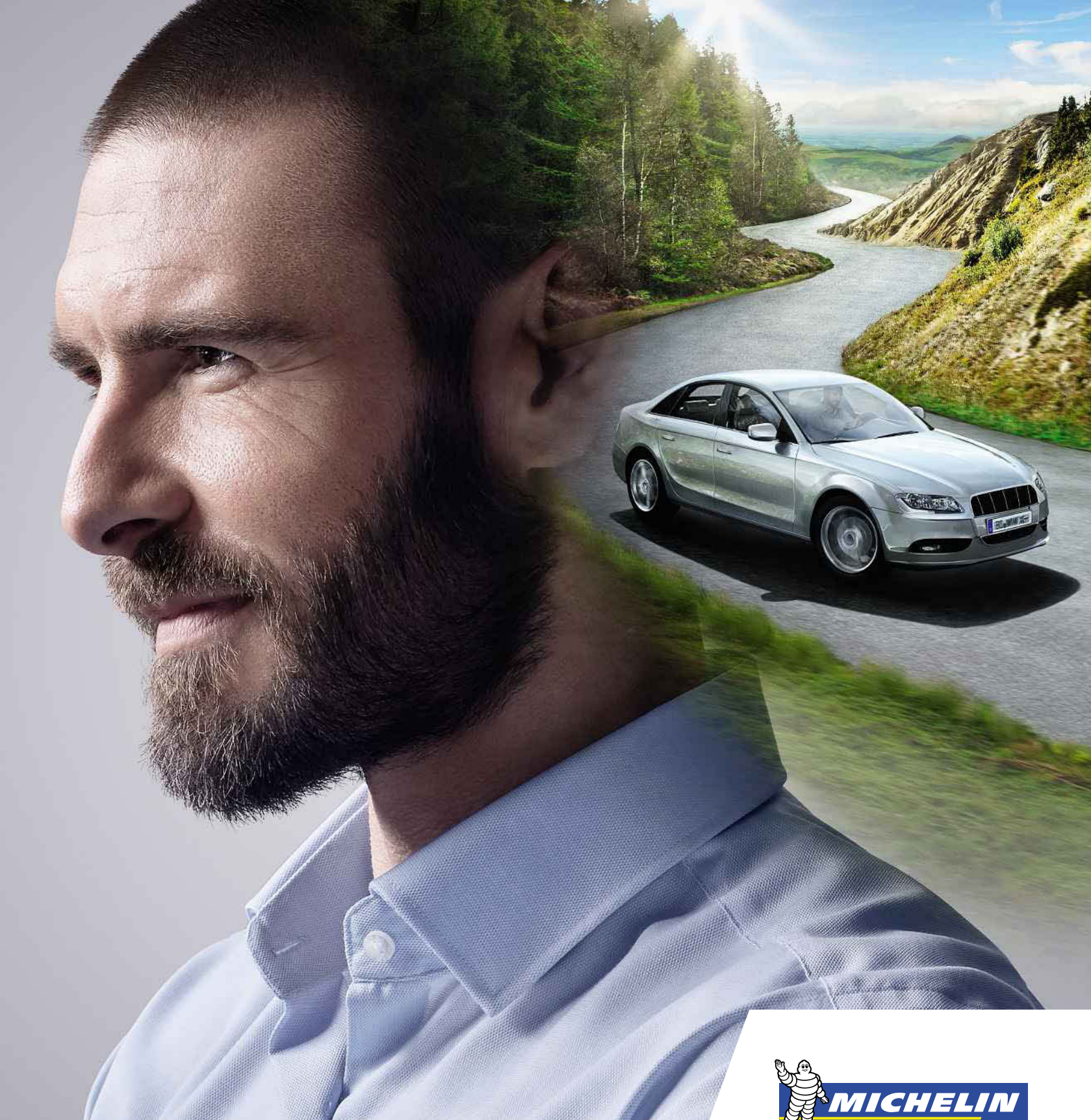
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Michael
MICHELIN Pilot Sport⁴ owner.





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Editorial

Telephone 020 7907 6310

Email eds@evo.co.uk Website www.evo.co.uk

5 Tower Court, Irchester Road, Wollaston, Wellingborough, Northants NN29 7PJ, United Kingdom

Editor Nick Trott
Managing editor Stuart Gallagher
Website editor Hunter Skipworth
Art director Rob Gould
Features editor Henry Catchpole
Road test editor Dan Prosser
Production editor Ian Eveleigh
Senior film-maker Sam Riley
Staff photographer Aston Parrott
Staff writer Antony Ingram
Staff writer Will Beaumont
Subeditor Richard Lane
Contributing editor Jethro Bovingdon
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Columnist Richard Porter
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Office manager Jane Townsend-Emms

Contributing writers

Simon de Burton, Jim Cameron, Colin Goodwin, Peter Tomalin

Contributing photographer

Malcolm Griffiths, Adam Shorrock

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Advertising & Promotions

Telephone 020 7907 6773 Fax 020 7907 6601

ISDN 020 7580 0297 Email ads.evo@dennis.co.uk

30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD

MD of advertising Julian Lloyd-Evans
Brand director Sarah Perks
Advertising manager Tim Deeks
Dealer account manager Laura Holloway
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Senior sales executive Alexander Rumble
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NICK TROTT

@evoNickTrott

Ed Speak



CHECK OUT THE image above. It's one of a pair of turbochargers on the Ferrari F40 that goes into battle with the latest turbo Ferrari, the 488

GTB, on page 90. The F40 is not just one of the greatest turbocharged cars ever made, but also one of the greatest cars ever made full stop, a fact that I believe is curiously related to what would be considered a flaw in modern turbo cars: lag.

The first turbocharged car I experienced was a Renault 21 Turbo (and from the passenger seat). Not a particularly fast car, but it felt fast thanks to lag. And I mean really fast.

The sensation of boost is nowhere near as visceral unless it is preceded by lag. Sure, lag creates a fog between your right foot and wheel rotation, a fog that makes you wonder what's on the other side when you burst through it, but there's no doubt it amplifies your feeling of speed. And in this age of increasing speed and scrutiny on the roads, surely the sensation of speed is more relevant than actual speed?

I thought about this long and hard while driving the McLaren 12C a few years back. The twin-turbo engine was, and is, brilliant – incredible power,

high revs, real flexibility and response. When I took the car to our 'analogue supercars' battle (evo 186), it murdered every other car present – including an F40. But the process of anticipating (and being scared of) the F40's power delivery made it a far more exciting drive at any speed.

I feel car manufacturers should see lag, and a sudden boosty power delivery, as less of a flaw and more of an opportunity. My solution? In age of increasing configurability, build a performance car that has a series of built-in 'turbo maps'. Imagine it: you could download historical boost maps – a new Porsche 991 Carrera with a 962's map, for instance, or going back to the 488 GTB, you could download a F40LM map.

It would work for slower cars, too. Your next Renaultsport Clio could have a map that mimicked the delivery, if not the performance, of the first ever turbocharged Formula 1 car – a rev range that narrowed into a 1000rpm spike of power.

Am I kidding? Only a little bit...

There is a turbo theme to this issue; from a review of the new four-cylinder-turbo Boxster to a trio of Renault 5s. And don't forget the 'turbo tales' on page 98 – send your stories of boost, lag and flaming adventures to nickt@evo.co.uk. ☒

evo Worldwide EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Australia Jesse Taylor China Shawn Lee Croatia Nikola Curic Czech Republic Petr Ehrlich Egypt Ahmed Wakil France Patrick Garcia
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CONTENTS

ISSUE 222 JUNE 2016

FEATURES

068

PORSCHE 718 BOXSTER S

It's lost two cylinders and gained a turbo, so is Porsche's Boxster still the roadster to beat?

078

BMW M4 GTS

Not only is the new M4 GTS the quickest ever BMW, but it could also be one of the best

090

FERRARI 488 GTB v F40

How does the latest turbocharged Ferrari stack up against the greatest? We have the answer

099

TURBO TALES

Andy Wallace and the evo team recall their most memorable turbocharged moments

100

BOOST CONTROL

How exactly do you make a chassis and a modern turbo engine work together?

106

YAMAHA YXZ1000R

The Thrill of Driving doesn't always mean supercars and clipping crisp apices...

114

WEBBER & MONTOYA

WEC champion and former F1 winner talk us through driving the unbeatable 919 Hybrid

120

RENAULT 5 TURBO

evo tests a trio of the Renault 5 Turbos. Have hot hatches ever come madder than this?

REGULARS

011

NEWS

Aston's Vantage GT8, Tesla Model 3, the reborn Jaguar XKSS plus New York motor show

059

COLUMNS

Richard Porter, Dario Franchitti and, for one month only, Henry Catchpole

065

LETTERS

You've had enough of the 911 R, Cayman GT4 and Porsche in general, but still love trackdays

131

LONG-TERM TESTS

Featuring our Bentley Continental GT, Ferrari F40, Golf R and Jaguar F-type R

149

EVO MARKET

GT3 RS, 360CS, M3 CSL: which is the best used road-racer for you?

194

ART OF SPEED

Every detail on McLaren's P1 is designed for speed, none more so than the exhaust

DRIVEN

038

McLaren 675LT Spider

044

Jaguar F-Pace 3.0 V6 Supercharged

048

Volvo V60 Polestar

051

Rolls-Royce Dawn

052

Mercedes-AMG SLC43

055

Ford Mustang 2.3 EcoBoost



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Aston Martin Vantage GT8

Aston's onslaught of
hardcore models continues
with a trackday Vantage

by NICK TROTT



Vantage GT8

ASTON MARTIN HAS released details of the lightest, most focused V8 Vantage yet. Called the GT8, the new car is inspired by the GTE racer that competes in the World Endurance Championship. Production will be limited to 150 cars globally.

The GT8 follows the limited edition GT12 – a similarly lightweight, more hardcore version of the V12 Vantage road car. And with Aston Martin having committed itself to the Vulcan track car programme, and the Adrian Newey-designed hypercar, it is showing hitherto unseen levels of dedication to the sports and extreme-car cause. Of which we approve.

The GT8's most striking feature is

its wide-arch bodywork. Similar but not identical to the GT12's, the body panels are carbon – including the wings, bumpers and rear diffuser. The cutout behind the front wheels is a feature lifted from the GTE racer.

The doors and roof are aluminium, although a carbon roof is optional, as are polycarbonate rear and rear side windows. And if you can no longer control your lightweighting fetish, you can also option a set of machined carbon 'wings' badges.

A titanium exhaust is also an option, as is an Aero Pack, which consists of a rear wing and front-corner splitters. A new alloy wheel design is introduced, with GT12-style magnesium centre-locking an option.

Interestingly, the dampers are a straightforward passive setup.

Aston Martin says that with all the options fitted, the car is around 100kg lighter than a standard V8 Vantage.

Another neat feature is a carbon-lacquered option on the sills, diffuser and front and rear lower 'lips'. And if you're thinking that all these options are costly, you'd be right. We're told the base price for the GT8 is around £165,000, but tick all the boxes and it's well over £200,000.

The GT8's engine is rated at 440bhp – 10bhp higher than the most potent V8 Vantage, the V8 Vantage S. The front-mounted all-alloy, quad-overhead-camshaft, 32-valve 4735cc V8 sends its drive to the rear via

“ The doors and roof are aluminium, although a carbon roof is optional ”



0-60mph time



a mechanical limited-slip diff. Aston's seven-speed single-clutch automated-manual gearbox is fitted, but a six-speed manual is available.

Inside, the lightweight theme continues with manual seat runners and carbon seats. The door panels are exposed carbon.

There will be three 'halo' exterior paint options: China Grey/Flugplatz Blue, Stratus White/Kermit Green and Stirling Green/Lime. However, as ever with Aston Martin, Sir (or Madam) can personalize his GT8 however he (or she) likes.

Deliveries of the GT8 begin in the last quarter of 2016. **evo** will, naturally, bring you a full road test at the earliest opportunity.

COMMENT

How will it drive? I'm fascinated that the dampers are passive, so it's likely that it will have a more hardcore ride/handling setup than the GT12.

Also, the inherent advantages of the V8 should mean a more even weight distribution – it should have a better balance than the GT12. I'm expecting more front-end response and better traction.

I'm told it has cast-iron brakes, not carbon-ceramic (which aren't even an option). Interesting. I hope they stand up to track abuse. Overall, it can and should be the best Vantage yet. **Richard Meaden**

IN-DEPTH



1 AERO

The GT8 will be available with an optional Aero Pack that features front and rear corner splitters. These are shown above and in the main photos by the coloured flashes on the lower corners. The rear-spoiler end plates differ from that of the GT12.



2 WHEELARCH

The body design is clearly influenced by the GTE racer, particularly with the neat cutouts behind the front wheels. It is thought that these cutouts reduce pressure within the wheel well and therefore improve overall aerodynamic efficiency at the front.



150

Production will be limited to just 150 cars globally

100

kg

Weight saving over a standard V8 Vantage

GEARBOX



Of the two gearboxes offered with the GT8, it may come as a surprise that neither is the company's new seven-speed manual, which will be fitted to the new Vantage V12 S.

This seven-speed dog-leg manual is Aston's first and features an auto-blip function on downshifts, called AMSHIFT, that is also linked to the car's driving modes, adjusting throttle response and exhaust note. The manual 'box' also allows for full-throttle upshifts and gives the V12 S a 205mph top speed and 3.9sec 0-62mph time.

THE INSPIRATION

ASTON'S GTE RACE CAR



The GTE race car that competes in the World Endurance Championship uses the same aluminium chassis as the road car and the same V8 cylinder block, cylinder heads and crank shaft. Power is rated at 480bhp – 40bhp more than the GT8.

The GTE weighs 1245kg (the minimum for the class), which is around 265kg lighter than the GT8 road car. Like the road car, however, the GTE racer has carbonfibre panels and similar aerodynamics, albeit not at the rear, where the GTE has a vastly more extended diffuser.

Inside, the race car is stripped of its luxury features, although air conditioning is retained. Impact foam is included in the driver's door, plus removable door glazing and a mandatory roof-access hatch to extract the driver in an emergency.



SPECIFICATION

Engine	V8, 4735cc
Power	440bhp @ 7300rpm
Torque	361lb ft @ 5000rpm
0-60mph	4.4sec (predicted)
Top speed	190mph (predicted)
Weight	c1510kg (in lightest spec)
Power-to-weight	296bhp/ton
Basic price	£165,000

NEW YORK MOTOR SHOW



Nissan GT-R evolves again

No all-new GT-R, but Nissan has developed some welcome improvements to the R35 while we wait

CHANGES TO THE Nissan GT-R for 2017 might be on the subtle side, but with drivetrain improvements, styling tweaks and a higher-quality interior, they're still the most significant alterations to the car since the R35's debut in 2007.

Exterior changes are minimal, but Nissan's 'V-Motion' grille design, a new bonnet and redesigned bumpers improve cooling and aerodynamics.

That extra cooling is required due to the increased demands of a more powerful engine. Changes to ignition timing and extra boost from the pair of turbochargers see the 3.8-litre V6's output climb to 562bhp and 470lb ft of torque –

improvements of 20bhp and 4lb ft.

The twin-clutch transmission has also been refined for less noise and smoother shifts, though we hope the GT-R's busy, aggressive character hasn't been diminished as a result. The bodyshell is stiffer, too, and suspension changes should improve the ride.

Also welcome are those changes to the cabin – not a traditional GT-R strong point. The new model now has a leather-trimmed dash, an eight-inch touchscreen, far fewer buttons and wheel-mounted paddles for the gearbox.

Pricing is still to be confirmed.

Nissan also brought a selection of GT-Rs past to New York, making for a rather neat history lesson...



1969 GT-R KPGC10

The original GT-R used a 2-litre in-line six with triple Mikuni carburetors, for 158bhp. Often called the 'Hakosuka', which roughly translates as 'Box Skyline'.



1973 GT-R KPGC110

Just 197 second-generation Skylines were made, thanks to the onset of the 1973 oil crisis. It featured the same 'S20' in-line six as its predecessor.



1989 GT-R R32

The first GT-R to adopt the 'Godzilla' nickname, thanks to its dominance in Group A. Its 2.6-litre twin-turbo in-line six developed 276bhp... officially, at least.



1997 GT-R R33

Mechanically similar to the R32, the R33's extra technology made it even faster, helping it set a 7min 59sec lap time at the Nürburgring.



1999 GT-R R34

Nissan shipped its rare 2002 M-Spec Nür from Japan for the show. With an improved engine and larger turbochargers, it's said to develop over 330bhp.



2013 GT-R R35

The heavily camouflaged R35 at New York was the car Michael Krumm took around the Nürburgring in only 7min 8.68sec, back in September 2013.

MAZDA MX-5 RF

The new MX-5 RF (for 'Retractable Fastback') swaps a manual folding canvas roof for an elaborate, electrically retractable hard-top. The Ferrari 599-style buttresses lift up, allowing the central roof panel to fold away in 12 seconds. Boot space is unaffected, and

measures to improve refinement should give the RF more of a mini-GT feel than the standard car. Suspension and steering are both retuned to suit, though the 1.5- and 2-litre engines are unchanged. The eye-catching paint seen here is a three-layer finish dubbed 'Machine Grey'. Expect a £2500 premium for the RF when it arrives in 2017.



“ We are not a skunkworks ”

While in New York we asked John Edwards, boss of Jaguar Land Rover's SVO, if he was bothered by the label 'skunkworks'...

'The origins of this division are a skunkworks. It was before my time, but back then the business didn't really mind too much what we got up to because we were so leftfield and relatively insignificant.

'But what we're developing at Special Vehicle Operations is definitely not a skunkworks – it's a serious business. The downside, and perhaps the upside, is that everybody is interested in it.

'So, manufacturing director Wolfgang Stadler is very interested because it affects his business, and the purchasing director is interested because we're talking to his suppliers. When we were a skunk business, no-one really gave a toss.

'Now we have 350 engineers and over 100 designers. This is not ten blokes in a shed, kicking a car around. No, this is very serious.'

“In terms of romantically, it certainly has a nice, big front seat... Know what I mean? ”



Burt Reynolds on the new, Chevrolet Camaro-based 'Bandit Edition' Trans Am

MERCEDES-AMG C63 S CABRIO



The New York show marked the debuts of several new Mercedes, including the new AMG C63 Cabriolet, which will be available in standard (469bhp) and 'S' (503bhp) flavours. Both use the now-familiar twin-turbocharged 'hot

vee' 4-litre V8, though extra weight (an additional 140 and 152kg respectively compared with the coupe) blunts performance a little: 0-62mph takes 4.2sec in the 'basic' car, 4.1sec in the S – both figures 0.2sec slower than the coupe.

TOYOTA GT86

The Toyota GT86 now has more power. Well, 202bhp rather than 197bhp and a whole five more pounds-feet of torque, at 156lb ft. There's a new front bumper arrangement, too, and redesigned rear lights, while

inside you can now have an Alcantara dash (and there's a new wheel to hold). Suspension changes are said to offer 'easier control and increased agility'. UK pricing is unlikely to change much from the current £22,495.



158

KG

The weight penalty of the new R8 Spyder over the coupe – but it's still 113kg lighter than the old R8 Spyder.

AUDI R8 SPIDER

The number most owners will want to know about the new Audi R8 Spyder is 20, which is the time in seconds it takes to drop the roof to better appreciate that glorious 5.2-litre V10. The New York car was the 'regular' 533bhp model; a 602bhp V10 Plus will follow. Audi claims structural changes make the new car 50 per cent stiffer than its predecessor.



evo's New York hits and misses



NICK TROTT EDITOR

Best: Acura/Honda NSX GT3 [left]; not so much for what it currently is, but for what it could be, and that's a new NSX Type R road car. Please Honda, build it.

Worst: Toyota Prius Prime. I'll embrace modern technology, but hate bad design. Looks like it crashed into a set-square factory...



HENRY CATCHPOLE FEATURES EDITOR

Best: Daft, I know, but I'm drawn to the extreme absurdity of the Viper ACR. So much aero, so much power – it looks terrifying, but wonderful.

Worst: The Lincoln Navigator concept [left], for being a shameless rip-off of a Range Rover with Tesla Model X doors.



ANTONY INGRAM STAFF WRITER

Best: The first-generation 'Hakosuka' Nissan GT-R [opposite page]. Immaculate, brutishly handsome, and refreshingly compact next to its modern-day equivalent.

Worst: The Alfa Romeo Giulia [left]. Not as beautiful as its predecessors, and I've decreasing confidence it'll even be any good.

Mini JCW Challenge

Underwhelmed by the latest John Cooper Works, *evo* is on hand to help Mini develop an even more potent model

by DAN PROSSER

WE KNEW THERE WAS MORE TO come. When we group-tested the Mini John Cooper Works against five of its closest rivals in *evo* 211, it finished an underwhelming fourth overall. It earned a decent four stars out of five, but it lacked the focus and intensity of the best hot hatches on the test. It was frustrating, not least because we suspected the squidgy all-season tyres were smothering a keen, agile and entertaining chassis.

Rather than banning us from testing its cars and scratching us from its Christmas-card list, Mini reached out to us. 'We're working on a special John Cooper Works,' they said. 'Would you like to get involved?'

Limited to a run of no more than 100 units, the John Cooper Works Challenge will be the most focused F56-generation Mini to date, and targeted at keen trackday drivers. A UK-only model, it'll cost around £32,000 and the first cars will arrive in June this year.

At the heart of the project are three very passionate individuals, without whom the Challenge would not exist. They are Nicolas Griebner, Mini UK's head of product; James Loukes, Mini John Cooper Works Challenge

project leader; and Chris Fryer, driving dynamics test engineer.

The UK hot-hatch scene is thriving, reckons Griebner, and the Challenge will 'cater to the growing number of customers looking for an even more focused John Cooper Works model'. The list of enhancements will include uprated suspension – which will be adjustable – high-performance tyres and brakes, a limited-slip differential, lightweight wheels and a unique colour scheme. The manual-only Challenge won't get any more power than the 228bhp base model, though, and in a nod to everyday usability it will retain rear seats, air conditioning and Bluetooth.

The JCW Challenge takes inspiration – as well as its name – from the Mini Challenge race series, which has been running for more than a decade. It'll use components from the same companies that supply the race series, many of them British, with the suspension coming from Nitron, the differential from Quaife, the wheels from Team Dynamics and the brake pads from Mintex.

'Quite often a manufacturer will say a road car is derived from a race car,' says Griebner. 'That might have been true in the '60s and





228bhp

The 2-litre turbo engine is unchanged from the standard JCW – it's already amongst the most powerful in its class

< 1200kg

With lightweight wheels and a basic specification, the Challenge will be lighter than the standard JCW

IN DEPTH

1 CHASSIS

With Nitron springs and dampers and front camber plates, the John Cooper Works Challenge will be the first fully adjustable Mini to date. It will also get stiffer anti-roll bars for sharper responses.

2 BRAKES

The Challenge will use the grooved 330mm discs and four-piston Brembo calipers from the Mini Accessories catalogue. The bespoke Mintex pads, however, will be exclusive to the Challenge.

3 DIFFERENTIAL

For the first time since the original GP model of 2006, a Mini will be fitted with a limited-slip differential. The automatic torque-biasing unit is supplied by Quaife, the same company that supplies the Mini Challenge race series.

4 WHEELS

The Team Dynamics wheels save 1.5kg of rotational unsprung weight at each corner. They're still 17 inches in diameter, but at 7.5 inches wide they are half an inch wider than the standard John Cooper Works wheels.



Left: JCW Challenge prototype cars sit among full-on Mini Challenge racers in Building 71 at the company's Oxford plant



BUILDING 71

It looks unremarkable enough, but Building 71 at Mini's Oxford factory is home to the brand's most exciting projects. As well as being the base for the engineering team behind the JCW Challenge, it also houses OX4 Racing. 'This is our race-team workshop. It's been a long-running tradition for the plant to have a motorsport team,' says James Loukes. Today, OX4 Racing runs a handful of Mini racers in various championships, including the official Mini Challenge series. The team is run by plant employees, simply for the love of it – a factory racing team in the purest sense.

RIVAL Ford Fiesta M-Sport Edition

There aren't many small hot hatches that demonstrate the same commitment to track performance as the Mini JCW Challenge. WRC team M-Sport has worked its magic on the Ford Fiesta ST, however, fitting new springs and dampers, as well as a Quaife LSD and uprated brakes. See issue 220 for a full review.



Engine	In-line 4-cyl, 1598cc, turbo
Power	212bhp @ 6000rpm
Torque	236lb ft @ 3000rpm
0-60mph	6.3sec (est)
Top speed	140mph (est)
Weight	1088kg
Power-to-weight	198bhp/ton
Basic price	£21,600

50-100

The UK-only Challenge will be built in very limited numbers, with the final figure yet to be confirmed

6.0sec

With grippier tyres, the Challenge should reach 62mph in close to 6 seconds, down from 6.3

'70s, but nowadays road cars and racing cars are quite different animals. In a credible way, however, we can say we are using the expertise of the Mini Challenge suppliers to achieve the feel of a racing car in a road car.'

'We've worked closely with the suppliers,' adds Loukes. 'We haven't just taken the damper from the racing car and put it on the road car, for instance. We've worked with Nitron to build a bespoke damper to suit.'

The dampers are two-way adjustable and owners will be able to tweak ride height and camber, too, which is almost unheard of in the hot-hatch sector. As standard, the Challenge will sit lower than the JCW and the springs and anti-roll bars will be stiffened for sharper handling. Mini will recommend two suspension settings – one for track and one for road – while affording owners a window of adjustability so they can fine-tune the car.

'We've just done our first test on track, which went well,' says Loukes. 'We've gone through phase one of testing. Now we'll go through various loops of continual testing until we find the perfect setup.'

'It would be easy to pick the best parts out of a box and just throw them at the car,' adds

Fryer, 'but we've got to integrate it all and make sure it all works together.'

'We're testing all the time, on the road as well as the track. Each night James and I take a development car home. We also have a 45-minute test route around the office – on a real mixture of road types. For me the road is the bigger picture because that's where the customer will be using the car the most.'

evo will be joining Loukes and Fryer at Oulton Park to have our say on tyres and suspension setup. You can read about the test session next month. Rest assured we'll be encouraging them to squeeze every drop of potential from the JCW Challenge.



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ZX7

ULTRA HIGH PERFORMANCE SUV TYRE

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MICRO 3D-SIPES



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MADE IN
GERMANY

Jaguar XKSS: the 'first supercar' is reborn

Jaguar calls it the world's first road-going supercar, and now after nearly 60 years it is bringing the legendary XKSS back to life for a strictly limited run

THE XKSS WAS BASICALLY a road-going version of the D-type – a car that scored three successive Le Mans victories between 1955 and 1957. After its second win in 1956, Jaguar boss Sir Williams Lyons made the call to convert 25 unsold and partly completed D-types into road cars, his eye firmly on the lucrative US market, where European sports cars had long been considered the most exotic in the world.

The concessions to road use were minimal – an extra door for a passenger, a taller windscreen, the removal of the iconic tail-fin, a rudimentary hood and side screens, chrome bumpers, and the rear light clusters from the XK140.

Then disaster struck. On the evening of February 12, 1957, nine of the 25 cars were destroyed when a fire broke out in the Browns Lane factory. Of the surviving 16, most found owners in the US and the model became one of the rarest and most desirable Jaguars ever.

Now nine 'continuation' XKSSs are to be built, completing the intended production run of 25. They will be hand-built by Jaguar Land Rover Classic, much like the

Lightweight E-type (evo 215). 'Classic' is the new name for JLR Special Vehicle Operations' Heritage department – a facility dedicated to building, maintaining and restoring early cars.

The nine 'lost' XKSSs will be built to the exact specification of the 1957 cars – right down to the omission of a fuel gauge (neither D-type nor XKSS had one). So the body will be aluminium, mounted on an aluminium monocoque with a steel front subframe. A four-speed manual gearbox will sit between the 250bhp 3.4-litre straight-six and the rear differential.

Each new XKSS will be certified by Jaguar and manufactured at the company's new Experimental Shop in Warwick. The price will be in excess of £1 million and deliveries will commence in early 2017.

Original XKSSs rarely come to market, but it is believed one is currently being offered for £13m. 'It's indisputable that the XKSS was the first supercar,' says Tim Hannig, director of Jaguar Land Rover Classic. 'Taking a car that won Le Mans and turning it into a road car – it was unheard of. And if you drive one today, it is still a race

car – it still gives that feeling.

'The car will be exactly the same spec as the '57 cars. It feels great that we will be able to complete history. And now that we've started to build the first car and we can see it being built, well, it's such a beautiful piece of art.'



McQUEEN'S 'GREEN RAT'

Steve McQueen bought his XKSS, chassis number 713, in 1958 from Bill Leyden, a local TV personality in LA. Originally finished in off-white with a red interior, McQueen had it repainted British Racing Green with black trim, hence its nickname, the Green Rat.

Various tales surround McQueen and the car; one is that the LAPD, fed up with the star's late-night blats up Mulholland Drive, promised an 'expensive steak dinner' to the officer who could write McQueen a ticket. Apparently the dinner remained unclaimed and McQueen sold the XKSS in 1969, uncharacteristically fearing for his licence.

In 1977, McQueen repurchased the car and drove it for three years before his death from lung cancer in 1980. The car now resides in the Petersen Museum in LA.



SPECIFICATION

Engine	In-line 6-cyl, 3442cc
Power	250bhp @ 5750rpm
Torque	240lb ft @ 4000-4500rpm
0-60mph	c5.0sec
Top speed	c145mph
Weight	921kg (271bhp/ton)

921kg

That's 204kg lighter than a Lotus Exige Sport 350

1660

Width in mm, or about the same as a Fiat 500

£13 MILLION

Estimated value today of one of the original XKSSs

RECORD-BREAKING SUMMER AHEAD

Hot on the heels of Nissan breaking the world drift speed record, Subaru has announced plans to break the Isle of Man lap record for cars, and rumours suggest that the Goodwood hill climb record could fall at the 2016 Festival of Speed.



Nissan recently broke the Guinness World Record for the fastest drift using a tuned MY16 GT-R Nismo. Masato Kawabata, a Japanese drift champion, entered the drift at an extraordinary 189.49mph at the Fujairah International Airport in the UAE.

In more record-breaking news, Subaru and rally ace/James Bond stunt driver Mark Higgins are returning to the Isle of Man this year in a Prodrive-built car to beat their own 19min 26sec record.



Finally, we hear that Nick Heidfeld's 41.6-second Goodwood Festival of Speed hill climb record could be challenged this year by an as-yet-unnamed car and driver combo. Could it be a BMW, which is the Honoured Marque this year? Or perhaps Peugeot will return with its insane Pikes Peak 208 T16?



Tesla Model 3

Thousand of deposits indicate that Tesla Motors has hit a sweet spot with its new electric car

TWO HUNDRED AND seventy-six thousand. That's the number of \$1000 deposits Tesla Motors had taken for its new Model 3 electric saloon just 72 hours after order books opened on the day of the car's unveiling.

This should serve as some indication that more than a few people have been waiting for that difficult combination of adequate battery range and a relatively affordable price tag. With a quoted range of 215 miles and a starting price of \$35,000 before incentives (expect a similar figure when the 3 arrives in the UK), that combination has apparently been realised.

The rush for a Model 3 can be explained by other factors, too. Firstly, Tesla's ability to generate an Apple-like hype is unmatched in the car industry, with a devoted following that hangs on CEO Elon Musk's every word.

Secondly, the Model S, which

donates styling cues if not its platform, is a hugely impressive indication of the company's abilities. The saloon is perhaps not as finely honed as some of the industry's bigger players, but it is unmatched in its performance, smoothness and silence, with advanced technology such the self-driving Autopilot function another considerable bonus. If the Model 3 can distil that talent into a smaller, more affordable package, then the hype is absolutely justified.

Also, the Model 3 should be an eminently usable car. The lack of a practical hatchback arrangement is disappointing (it has a small, coupe-style boot opening instead), but there are seats for five, ample performance (0-60mph in 'under' six seconds), and there's the reassurance of a growing Supercharger fast-charge network, too – there'll be more than 600 stations worldwide by the end of

2016, up from 300 in 2015.

The targets are tougher to hit, however. Tesla hopes to sell half a million vehicles per year by 2020. That's something for which its Fremont assembly plant in California is suitably sized, but ten times the company's current production capabilities. Taking orders is one thing, but meeting them is quite another.

Still, Tesla has until late 2017 – the Model 3's projected launch date – to prepare for the rush. And if it does succeed, it could prove a turning point in the market for entirely electric cars.

Antony Ingram

EVO COMMENT

The Model 3 isn't just exciting for its capabilities; it's also exciting because it should be the car to turn Tesla into a significant volume car manufacturer.

The upshot of this is the potential to raise the capital to develop niche models such as the Tesla Roadster on which the company was founded. That car was loosely based on a chassis from Lotus, but a future Tesla sports car would be the company's own work. The Model 3 may spring Tesla into the mainstream, but a new Roadster would be the car to endear the company to *evo* readers.





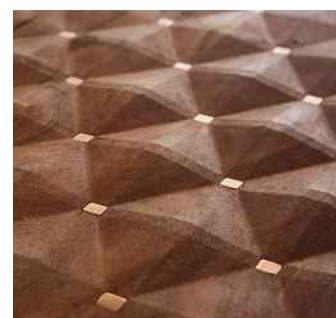
SIMPLY BEAUTIFUL.

Each detail of the all-new XC90 is designed around the people using it, to make driving easier and more enjoyable. It's this purpose which gives the car such natural confidence.

THE ALL-NEW **VOLVO XC90**
MADE BY SWEDEN



Official fuel consumption for the all-new Volvo XC90 in MPG (l/100km) ranges from: Urban 28.8 (9.8) – 45.6 (6.2), Extra Urban 40.4 (7.9) – 52.3 (5.4), Combined 35.3 (8.0) – 134.5 (2.1). CO₂ Emissions range from 186 – 49g/km. MPG figures are obtained from laboratory testing intended for comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect real driving results.



The 'Future of Luxury' revealed

Bentley concept features a holographic butler, but where's the driver?

BENTLEY HAS REVEALED a concept titled 'Future of Luxury', and if you look closely, it doesn't feature a driver.

Speaking to *evo* at a small event in London, Bentley's director of design, Stefan Sielaff (pictured top right), claimed the company invented autonomous driving, 'Because our customers have had chauffeurs for the past 100 years!'

The traditional driver environment does not exist at all in the image revealed by Bentley. There is no steering wheel, no individual driver's seat and no

gearlever or pedals. There are no seatbelts either.

Other features of note include information screens lacquered onto traditional wood panels. At the event, Sielaff demonstrated a bendable, transparent screen just 0.5mm thick that could be used for this purpose. 'It is closer to reality than you may think,' he teased.

Bentley also revealed that 3D printing is likely to be used in the future for components that can't be cast or milled. Moreover, advanced new finishes such as quilted wood (above right) and stone veneer are

“It is closer to reality than you may think”

close to production, as are 'protein leathers and textiles that will appeal to those with a vegan lifestyle'. For traditionalists, the bullseye vents and organ stops will be maintained.

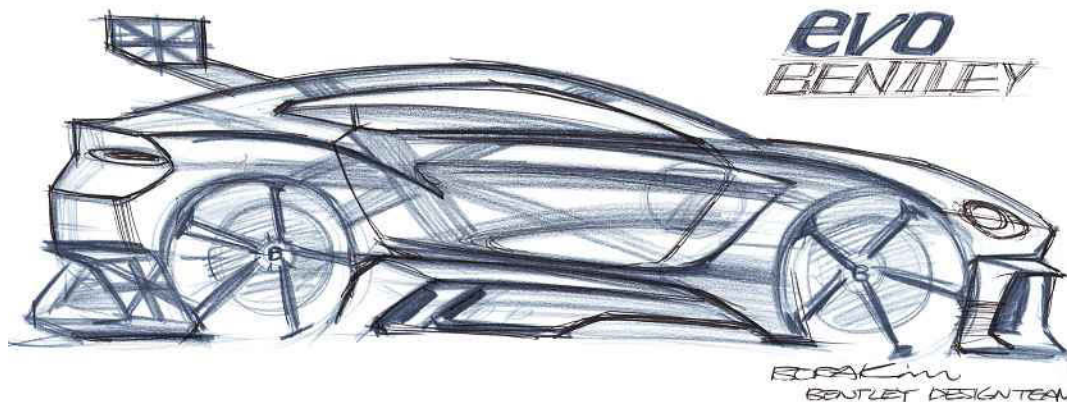
Arguably the most arresting feature of the concept interior image is the holographic 'butler'. This butler would be the primary interface with the vehicle.

German-born Sielaff has been with Bentley since July last year, following a stint at VW as head of group interior design. The self-confessed Anglophile is ultimately responsible for the future of Bentley design, and is following a Bentley trend for 'provocation' that began with the EXP 9 F SUV concept. 'You discover more when you agitate the audience,' explained engineering boss Rolf Frech.

Sielaff will oversee the forthcoming Speed 6 sports car, a new Continental GT and the Bentayga-based SUV coupe.

EXTREME 'EVO' BENTLEY

Created by Bora Kim, exterior designer for Bentley, this sketch shows what an extreme Bentley of 2025 could look like. Kim responded to an *evo* brief that asked for a vision of a high-performance Bentley for road and track. Behind the wings, skirts and Union-flag motifs you will see a shape that's closer to the EXP 10 Speed 6 concept than a Continental GT...





BEAUTIFULLY SIMPLE.

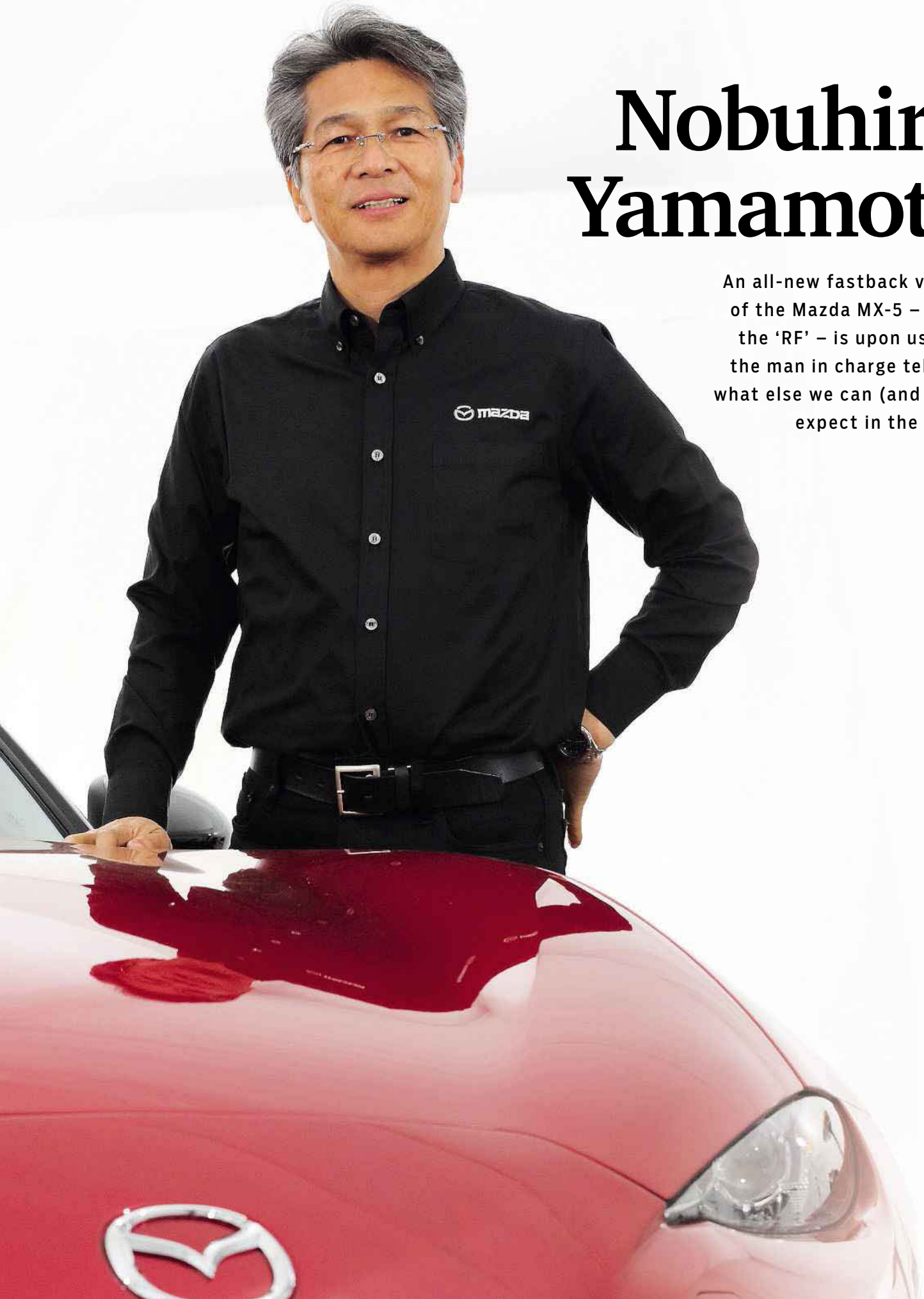
When we designed the cabin of the all-new XC90, we thought as much about what to leave out as what to put in. The result is a relaxed, uncluttered space, whichever of the three rows you sit in.

THE ALL-NEW **VOLVO XC90**
MADE BY SWEDEN

Official fuel consumption for the all-new Volvo XC90 in MPG (l/100km) ranges from: Urban 28.8 (9.8) – 45.6 (6.2), Extra Urban 40.4 (7.9) – 52.3 (5.4), Combined 35.3 (8.0) – 134.5 (2.1). CO₂ Emissions range from 186 – 49g/km. MPG figures are obtained from laboratory testing intended for comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect real driving results.

Nobuhiro Yamamoto

An all-new fastback version of the Mazda MX-5 – called the 'RF' – is upon us. Here the man in charge tells *evo* what else we can (and can't) expect in the future



YAMAMOTO'S AMBITIONS



Uphold Mazda's 'Jinba ittai' ethos of driver and machine in harmony



Launch the targa-roofed RF to bring new people to the MX-5 brand



Continue to innovate to keep the original car's formula relevant



Pursue the latest advances throughout the MX-5's life cycle



Continue building cars that are simply fun for Mazda's customers to drive

OUR MISSION HAS remained the same since the very first MX-5. From the car's conception, it's been about the enjoyment of driving – we want people to have fun behind the wheel. Our goal has been consistent since 1989. What we've changed is the technology – we've always tried to incorporate the latest technologies available while providing an unchanging value of driving fun.

'It was never meant to be just a tool for moving from A to B, either – we see the MX-5 as something that creates a harmony or connection between the person who is driving it, or the person looking at it. It's almost like a part of a family, a partner, and by someone owning this car, it enriches their lives.

'With the fourth generation, we went back to the origins of what the MX-5 was all about. We created a vision of what the MX-5 should be, and this vision was shared among the whole team. The aim was to innovate to preserve the original car's ethos. We adopted that as our motto.

'A lot of people are asking whether we'll offer a sportier version of the car. Usually the pretence behind that is that 'sporty' means harder suspension and no body roll. The question I'm always coming back to is, "Is that *Jinba ittai*?" [A Japanese term loosely translated as 'horse and rider as one'.] Is that what we want to give our customers?'

'For me it's not necessarily better if you have a firmer ride. What's important is that all the suspension is moving as it should, and it's telling the driver what the road is doing. You know exactly how the tyres and wheels are in contact with the road, and we think that's what makes the car fun to drive. So no, I don't think we will have a firmer version of this car.

'The new MX-5 RF will feel slightly different to drive, though. While the open-top car is designed to have ample body rigidity, there's naturally going to be some difference when you put a roof structure on the car. We think that gives you a different feel, different characteristics, different responses. A different taste. We've tried to tune the car so you get a different feeling of rigidity depending on whether you choose the soft-top car or the RF.

'Unfortunately we're not allowed to give you numbers on the weight yet, but I can explain it this way: If you compared

“We've tried to tune the car so you get a different feeling depending on whether you choose the soft-top or the RF”

the soft-top and hard-top versions of the previous car, the difference was around 40kg. The rear element on the new car is slightly bigger, but the mechanism and the other parts are very similar, so it's only slightly heavier than before.

'Our original thinking behind the MX-5 is that we want a wider audience to enjoy open-top driving, but if customers choose cars with a roof, like the RF, that means they are more likely to have the roof closed when they're driving. We said, "Okay, let's make our styling most beautiful when the roof is closed, even though they still have a car that has the potential to open – it gives them another way of enjoying the car."

'With the Mk3 MX-5, the soft top was the basis of the silhouette and was dictated by the shape of the cabin. It was logical to build the hard top to the same silhouette. With the RF we didn't work with those limitations, so that's why we've gone for a flowing fastback design.

'Will there be a full coupe version? No – our aim is to produce a lightweight sports car, but the aim has always been to develop an open car. There are no plans for production versions of the Speedster or Spyder concepts, either – we think the two existing cars offer enough variety.

'The MX-5 has a long life cycle compared to other cars. The first generation was eight years, the second generation also eight years, and ten years for the third. The fourth generation is not going to be an exception, which means there are going to be technological advances made within this life cycle. We always have to keep up with the technical advances so we can incorporate them into the car. I promise that this is something we are always thinking about, always aware of, and something I will keep doing for the future of this MX-5.'

IS MAZDA DOING ENOUGH?

Yamamoto-san's words may leave some of you disappointed. While the MX-5 RF unveiled at the recent New York motor show is undeniably attractive, it's also a sign of Mazda's self-imposed limitations. You get two engines and two body styles, but there are no plans to make the car faster, no intention to reduce the body roll **evo** has previously criticised, and no plans for that elusive full coupe version.

But there's positivity, too. Mazda is absolutely committed to the concept of a simple, lightweight sports car, and that's something to celebrate as cars offer ever more unusable levels of performance. If the Mk3 MX-5 is any indication, the Mk4 should also improve notably throughout its long life cycle – both mechanically and technologically. And the car's success means there'll always be a healthy aftermarket ready to tune the MX-5 to every taste. BBR-tweaked MX-5 RF, anyone? **Antony Ingram**

ASK GOODWIN

Do you think Ferrari will ever make an SUV?

David Shaw,
Marlborough

Sergio Marchionne says not over his dead body, but then I don't think we need to pay too much heed to that. I've heard plenty of promises from Ferrari that have been quietly forgotten.

Production numbers are a one. Many times I've heard the bosses say something like: 'Ferraris are exclusive and we will not make more than 3500 of them a year.' And low and behold, you're at another press conference a few years later and you're being proudly told by a suit that the firm sold 4500 cars that year.

And we've heard it all before, and not just from Maranello. A Bentley was never going to be powered by a diesel engine, and I'm pretty sure there was never going to be a Bentley SUV either. Or a Rolls-Royce 4x4, for that matter. And a front-wheel-drive BMW? Don't be ridiculous. Rear-wheel drive is in the BMW DNA...

The thing is, these companies have shareholders, and these shareholders like to receive nice fat dividends so that they can buy expensive SUVs of their own. They're not much interested in the chassis balance of a mid-engined car; they'll be looking at VW Group making vast amounts of money from the Porsche Cayenne and even bigger amounts from the Bentley Bentayga and they'll say at Ferrari shareholders' meetings: 'We want a bit of that.'

When Porsche announced that it was going to build an SUV, I was ready to man the picket lines in protest, but over the years I've got used to it and have accepted the line: 'The money we make from these cars allows us to make cars like the 911 GT3 RS; the hardcore stuff that you purists like.'

Does it really matter if Ferrari builds an off-roader, as long as the company continues to build some of the most exciting cars in the world?

As long as they don't start talking about front-wheel drive, I'm relaxed.



Bonneville Speed Week

Utah's salt flats play host to an unmissable automotive freak show

MY MOTORSPORT memories of the 1960s are very limited. Graham Hill being interviewed in bed, recovering from his leg-breaking crash at the Watkins Glen GP in his Lotus 49, is one of them. Phil Read winning a motorcycle race is another, and the clearest of all is a TV special on breaking the land speed record. I can't remember details today, but it centred on Craig Breedlove and Donald Campbell's fierce rivalry in the early '60s. It was the first time the name 'Bonneville' came into my orbit and specifically the Bonneville Speed Week.

Of all the motorsport events in the world – the Indianapolis



500, Bathurst, Dakar and others – Bonneville Speed Week is top of my list. I've yet to make it to Bonneville, but I have been to a weekend's racing at El Mirage Lake in the Mojave Desert, near San Bernardino in California. Like Bonneville, the event is run by the gloriously named Southern California Timing Association.

Spectating at the Bonneville Speed Week is for obvious reasons somewhat limited, but the main reason that I want to go there is for the atmosphere and to walk around the pits. I was blown away by the aura of El Mirage and the unbelievable friendliness of the whole scene. It was very much a family affair, with motorhomes large and small, barbecues set up outside, and deckchairs. And then there's the engineering.

The array of classes is baffling, with virtually any combination of powertrain and bodywork being able to find a place in a class. Streamliner with a supercharged nitro-burning 125cc motorcycle engine? There'll be a class to suit.

And if you think American hot-rod engineering is all hammers, pushrods and big engines, you'll get a surprise at an SCTA event. OK, it's not Formula 1, but going very, very fast out in the desert takes an enormous amount of experience – just ask *evo's* own Richard Meaden how challenging it is to break a record at Speed Week in a Skoda.

It's easy to forget that the whole hot-rod and record-breaking scene grew out of Los Angeles' vast aviation industry. Hughes, Grumman and Douglas were awash with engineers and craftsmen. You didn't have to go far to find someone who could bend aluminium into the right shape or turn a billet of steel into a crankshaft.

But to Bonneville. This year's Speed Week is being held on 13-19 August, which makes it a perfect pause in a West Coast holiday, especially as the weather can be a bit fickle and it's not unknown for the event to be washed out.

Now, some logistics. The nearest town to the Bonneville Salt Flats is Wendover. It's practically a one-

horse town and its small number of hotels will likely be completely full for this year and will fill up early for 2017, too. It's a bit like turning up at Le Mans on a Friday evening thinking that you'll get a bed for the night.

You'll be flying into Salt Lake City. British Airways can take you there via Chicago for around £1200. Bonneville is a two-hour drive from Salt Lake City, so it wouldn't be impossible to stay in the city and drive out to the flats each day. The alternative, if you're really up for an adventure, is to bring a tent with you, rent a car and camp out next to the road that leads to the track itself. Regulars and locals call it 'The Bend'. There'll be a great party atmosphere and you'll really get into the spirit of Bonneville.

Because you won't be getting nearer than about a quarter of a mile from the action, you'll need to bring some binoculars along.

Also, sunglasses are not a fashion accessory on the salt, they're essential so that you don't get the equivalent of snow-blindness. For the same reason, bring a brolly. If, like me, the main attraction for you is the pit area, you might also want to rent a bicycle in Salt Lake City, because the pits are two miles long. I'm not saying you or I couldn't walk two miles, but if you're regularly whizzing from one end to the other, say to watch a particular machine being fired up for a run, a bike could come in handy.

For inspiration, go to the SCTA website (scta-bni.org) and check out the 'Records' section. You'll see the amazing variety of machinery that takes part, from steam-powered streamliners via diesel streamliners to a Skoda Octavia. The speeds posted make a Veyron look pathetically slow – yet many are set by machines built in garages on small budgets. ✖



'You might want to rent a bicycle, because the pits are two miles long...'

FOCUS

AUDI'S 'QUATTRO WITH ULTRA TECHNOLOGY'



that the clutch pack is a Haldex unit similar to the one found on the rear axle of the RS3 and TT. Such Haldex setups – which deliver drive to the rear wheels only in reaction to a difference in the rotational speeds of the two axles – don't have a reputation for being the most exciting of four-wheel-drive systems.

Yet it's the Haldex unit that could be one of the parts from the new quattro system that we'll see on performance Audis. The pack not only decouples the propshaft, but it also distributes varying amounts of torque to each axle, meaning it can do the job of the centre locking diff currently used in quattros. However, the new system is simpler and lighter: despite the new components,

AUDI'S LATEST QUATTRO four-wheel-drive system is focused purely on fuel efficiency. Called 'quattro with Ultra Technology', it will eventually make its way onto all of Audi's non-S and non-RS models with longitudinally mounted engines. But is there any technology within the system that we might see on performance Audis in the future?

The new system improves fuel economy by sending drive to the front wheels only when you don't need the extra traction of all-wheel drive. In normal driving, a new multi-plate clutch at the back of the gearbox completely decouples the propshaft that runs to the rear differential. This clutch pack replaces the standard quattro system's self-locking centre mechanical differential.

When drive is not being sent to the rear, the new system also decouples one of the rear driveshafts from the rear diff. This allows the wheel and driveshaft on that side to spin independently of the rear diff, and as there is no locking element to the rear diff, the opposite driveshaft doesn't spin the diff carrier, crown wheel and propshaft, and thus drag losses are further reduced.

To ensure quattro with Ultra

“A multitude of sensors and data help predict when four-wheel drive will be needed”

Technology never serves up just front-wheel drive when the driver expects the traction of all-wheel drive, a multitude of sensors and data help the system predict when four-wheel drive will be needed. The onboard computer monitors driver inputs, including steering and throttle. It also takes into consideration what driving mode you're in and whether you've selected a gear manually. It uses this data not only to decide when to engage drive to the rear wheels, but also to build a profile of the sort of driver you are.

In addition, the system monitors the external temperature and will learn grip levels. It will, of course, also react if it detects any loss of grip at the front axle, although the vast amount of information being processed means that you should already have drive to all four wheels in situations where front-wheel drive alone would be insufficient.

None of that sounds particularly sporty, especially when you learn

quattro with Ultra Technology weighs 4kg less than the basic quattro system.

The system that predicts when four-wheel drive is required is another element that we can see being implemented on all quattro Audis, right up to the R8. (The current systems in performance Audis instead react to changes in wheel speed and grip.) Combine this with Audi's Sport Differential – a torque-distributing differential on the rear axle – and it could send torque to a specific wheel rather than just a whole axle. With the system capable of learning what sort of driver you are, it could potentially use this specific torque distribution to help adapt the car to your style of driving.

Conventional wisdom suggests that economical cars have nothing to offer the world of performance cars. But if some of the systems that go into quattro with Ultra Technology end up in performance Audis, the results could be promising.



GAME-CHANGER

RETRACTABLE WINGS

First production application:

Lancia Thema 8.32

When: 1986

Retractable wings aren't just fitted to cars to highlight to the police that you're driving over the speed limit (most rear wings rise at around 75mph or above), they are designed to increase stability at speed.

The Ferrari-engined Lancia Thema 8.32 was the first road car to sport an electronically raised rear wing. When retracted, the wing's top surface sat flush with the bootlid. When activated, that face would rise up and rearwards, revealing sturdy supports beneath that led down to another panel that now neatly filled the aperture in the bootlid. It was a far more elegant solution than the majority of modern active wings, which often expose an untidy and flimsy-looking mechanism when raised.

The reduction of lift also means an increase in drag, which therefore reduces top speed. Most cars with electronically raised wings therefore sacrifice their ultimate top speed for high-speed stability. However, there are exceptions. When set in its 'top speed' mode, the Bugatti Veyron 16.4 keeps its wing stowed away to achieve its maximum of 253mph (even more in later versions). Conversely, when braking from speeds above 124mph, the rear wing adjusts to an angle of 55 degrees, creating an airbrake that alone can cause deceleration of up to 0.6G.

MONACO

LE SPORTING, MONACO, 14 MAY 2016



1997 Porsche 911 GT1 Evolution Chassis no. GT1 993-117
1966 Ferrari 275 GTS Coachwork by Pininfarina; Chassis no. 07805
2011 Ferrari 599 GTO Chassis no. ZFF70RDB000184577
1955 Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Gullwing Chassis no. 198.040.5500799

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NEWS

GT RADIAL: A BUDGET TYRE YOU SHOULD ACTUALLY BUY?



A CHINESE-PRODUCED, mid-tier 'ultra high performance' tyre? You'll need convincing, and rightly so. GT Radial's SportActive can't simply be cheap, as buyers of premium tyres are much more discerning. To steal market share from the more established brands, the SportActive needs to be as good as, if not better than its rivals, and cheaper.

To find out how good it is, evo undertook three subjective tests with the tyre, the first of which was with a Golf GTI on a tight, partially wet circuit. The opposition performance tyre here was the Victra VS-01 from mid-range rival Maxxis, and the SportActive felt very similar, up to a point. Neither changed the feeling of the car greatly from the other; turn-in felt similarly good and the ABS wasn't activated easily with either tyre.

However, the GT Radial seemed to give up its grip on the tarmac a little bit sooner than the Maxxis, and this was most noticeable under power. The GTI used for the test wasn't equipped with the optional Performance Pack, so it didn't have a limited-slip differential. As a result, the inside front wheel was easily overwhelmed, even on the drier parts of the track. Once grip had been lost, the Maxxis maintained greater composure and control, whereas the GT Radial seemed to crash into the GTI's traction-control system

more abruptly. The differences were minimal, though, and the test highlighted exactly what GT Radial wanted it to: that the SportActive is comparable to a performance tyre from a similar price point.

The second test was on a much more flowing, dry track with a Mini

drive TT generates was evident with both tyres, but the Toyo was grippier and more reluctant to break traction. The GT Radial, however, allowed the TT to generate a flow thanks to marginally lower grip levels, which meant the car felt more adjustable mid-corner. Thus equipped, the TTS

“*The SportActive is comparable to a number of other performance tyres*”

John Cooper Works – and Kumho's Ecsta LE Sports as the rival tyre. These felt extremely similar to the SportActive, but neither tyre suited the JCW. None of the typical Mini traits were noticeable (i.e. razor-sharp turn-in and a lively rear axle), but this was the case for both sets of tyres and previous experience of the current JCW on other tyres suggests the blame for this should be squared with the Mini rather than the tyres.

The final test was in an Audi TTS on a more varied and demanding dry circuit. This test was arguably the most difficult for the SportActive, as it was against a set of Toyo Proxes T1 Sports, but it was also the most illuminating. The traction and huge amount of grip that the four-wheel-

drive TT generates was evident with both tyres, but the Toyo was grippier and more reluctant to break traction.

It will also cost roughly 80 per cent of the price of its premium rivals. But GT Radial's biggest challenge isn't going to be making a tyre that can compete on performance and price. Where it's got work to do is in convincing consumers to put what will be seen as budget or even mid-range tyres on premium performance cars. The SportActive tyre is a good start, and the fact that GT Radial has a European R&D base in Germany and a technical base at the MIRA test track in the UK is a positive message.

We look forward to inviting GT Radial to evo tyres tests in the future.



LATEST EAGLE F1 TECH REVEALED

Goodyear has revealed some of the technology that has gone into improving its Eagle F1 tyre to create the latest Asymmetric 3 version.

Braking distances have been reduced by altering the tread pattern with longer shoulder blocks. Termed Active Braking Technology, it increases the contact patch of the tyre, and therefore grip, during braking. Goodyear has also altered the compound by adding a 'grip booster'. This is an adhesive resin that makes the tyre stickier, improving both wet and dry handling.

Finally, the construction of the new Asymmetric 3 has been changed to make it lighter and stronger. New cords have been added to multiple layers of the construction and the pattern within the tyre cavity has been optimised to add strength. Goodyear says this added strength has improved handling, as well as increasing fuel efficiency and durability.



NEW ROAD-LEGAL TRACK TYRE FROM YOKOHAMA

Last issue we reported how many trackday tyres can no longer be sold for road use. Yokohama has responded by launching a new road-legal sports tyre called the Advan A052. This new tyre replaces the A048 but uses an tread pattern similar to Yokohama's tarmac rally tyre, the A051T.

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How machine learning will transform your satnav

Smarter routes and more accurate arrival-time predictions are on the way



BEFORE WE START, FOR those not in the know, here's a brief explanation of what 'machine learning' is. In simple terms, it is the use of algorithms that can iteratively learn from data, in turn enabling a computer to make predictions and adapt to new situations. This avoids the need for the computer to be explicitly programmed for each situation.

We come across machine learning processes all the time. Amazon's 'you might also like' is one example, as is the technology used in fraud protection. Now machine learning is also making an impact on the automotive world.

Google's self-driving car is a near-perfect execution of the process. Explicitly programming a car with details on how to tackle every possible permutation in a combination of areas including mapping, traffic avoidance and car control would be a mammoth task. Instead Google provides the car with a huge amount of data, all captured from the roads around its headquarters. This data is then

studied by the car, and the patterns and behaviours within it logged, allowing the car to 'learn' how to react to scenarios such as cyclists or pedestrians.

This is at the absolute cutting edge of what machine learning is striving towards, but to the average consumer, the biggest change in the short-term will likely be experienced with satellite navigation.

Inrix, an infotainment technology company, recently rolled out a redesigned version of its 'Traffic' app for iOS and Android. The application works by learning your driving routines and preferences and then creating a personalised predicted list of potential destinations and routes.

On top of this, the application uses a vast network of cloud-connected cars to intelligently map out traffic patterns, the end result being very accurate predicted arrival times and much better traffic-jam avoidance.

This kind of technology is what you can expect to see being integrated more and more into

“It's all about removing the need to 'inform' a computer of what you want it to do”

tech-focused cars in the future. BMW's ultimate vision is to have a car understand and learn your daily routine, then self-drive itself to wherever you need it to.

The current crop of high-tech vehicles feature a plethora of touch inputs, menus and controls for you to communicate with them. Machine learning is all about removing these often complex barriers and the need to 'inform' a computer of what you want it to do. With time, machine learning, combined with accurate voice recognition, should transform in-car infotainment and navigation to something so slick and simple you barely need to think about it.

Hunter Skipworth

NOW & THEN

Racing games

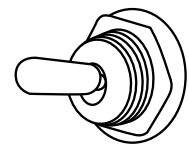


One of the best racing games we've tried in years is now available on consoles. *Dirt Rally*, descendent of Codemasters' *Colin McRae Rally* series, is about as immersive as racing videogames get, being fiendishly difficult and almost as fun as the real thing.

The very first car-based racing game arrived in 1974. *Speed Race*, developed by the man behind *Space Invaders*, was a top-down arcade-cabinet scrolling racer in which passing other sprite-like cars scored points.

One of the most significant early titles was 1982's *Pole Position* (pictured). Originally an arcade title but later available on the Atari console and home computers, it was the first racing game to use a track modelled on a real circuit – Fuji. *Outrun*, in 1986, took a different tack: a seemingly endless open road, a licensed car – the Ferrari Testarossa Spider(!) – and an addictive soundtrack.

The 1990s saw increasingly believable 3D environments, plus more real-world circuits: 1992's *Formula One Grand Prix* was an early pioneer of the simulation genre and 1997's seminal *Gran Turismo* brought realistic handling. Today, the latter is accurate enough to have formed the early careers of Le Mans drivers Jann Mardenborough and Lucas Ordóñez.



ON
OR
OFF?

Automatic wipers

'Enough of this already' writes Kristopher Roe on our Facebook page. 'The auto wipers in my car barely recognise a deluge... until it stops, when they'll sweep back and forth so fast the car shakes.'



Next generation performance

The new GT Radial SportActive. Engineered by GT Radial and independently tested by DEKRA to give you the ultimate driving performance.



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GT Radial UK



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C70 BROOKLANDS 1926
LIMITED EDITION CHRONOMETER

Ninety years ago the first Grand Prix at the iconic Brooklands circuit gave birth to modern motorsport in Britain. This superbly engineered limited edition chronometer celebrates a race that, ironically, was won by two French drivers, Robert Senechal and Louis Wagner, in a French car, the Delage 155.

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WATCH TECH

Bronze cases



Bronze might not seem an obvious material from which to make a watch case, but it has been used surprisingly often over the decades – and seems to be catching on again.

Three years ago, Panerai launched its 1950 3 Days Bronze, said to be inspired by some of the bronze fittings on the firm's vintage sailing yacht, Eilean. Panerai had, however, experimented with the alloy in 1985 for a prototype watch that was eventually produced in titanium.

Three years later another maker, Gérald Genta, created a bronze piece called the Gefica, which was marketed as a hunting watch because, among other things, it wouldn't reflect sunlight.

Various factors make bronze watches appealing, not least that they develop a unique patina over time and offer an almost instant 'vintage' look. One of the most talked about launches at the Baselworld show in March was Tudor's new version of its Vintage Black Bay (pictured), which gets a 43mm bronze case and an in-house chronometer movement. It costs £2730, a price that highlights some other benefits of bronze – it's inexpensive and easy to work with.



THIS MONTH

Zenith Heritage Pilot Café Racer Spirit

Price: £5600
From: zenith-watches.com

Zenith's foray into the world of cars and motorcycles has been extended with the announcement that it is sponsoring the Distinguished Gentleman's Ride. The annual event sees stylishly attired bikers assemble in 410 cities around the world to raise money for cancer charities – and now it has its own watch in the form of this 45mm Heritage Pilot with an 'aged' steel case and an oiled leather strap.



Breitling Duograph 'Sir Jack Brabham'

Price: c£21,500-43,000 (estimate)
From: phillips.com

This split-seconds Duograph, set to cross the block at Phillips' 'Start Stop Reset' auction in Geneva on 14 May, has a blue-chip motorsport connection: it was presented to Sir Jack Brabham in 1960 to commemorate his victory in that year's World Drivers' Championship. The winning bidder will also receive a poster signed by Sir Jack (who died in 2014) and a letter of authenticity from his son, David.



IWC Ingenieur 74th Members' Meeting

Price: £18,000
From: iwc.com

IWC marked its third year as backer of the Goodwood Members' Meeting by unveiling a special version of its Ingenieur chronograph. Featuring a 42mm red gold case of a more classical style than the usual Ingenieur 'tool' watch, the 74-piece edition gets a gloss black dial with indicators highlighted in red, and a beautifully finished strap made from quilted calfskin. It could be a future classic.



TAG HEUER MONACO SIXTY-NINE

As worn by Neill Briggs, co-founder, BAC

'When I was growing up, Heuer was the watch brand most synonymous with motorsport and, in particular, Formula 1. That has stuck with me and I've now built up quite a collection of both vintage Heuers and more modern TAG Heuers. The first one I bought was a 1966 Carrera chronograph in 1995. I also have a vintage

Monza, a late 1990s blue-dial Monaco – the classic Steve McQueen watch – and several quite rare 1980s Heuer dress watches. Probably my favourite of all, though, is my Monaco Sixty-Nine. It is very unusual because on one side it's a conventional mechanical watch, but when you flip the case over there's

another watch with a digital movement. It has two time zones, a chronograph, a perpetual calendar and an alarm. The Sixty-Nine was launched in 2003 and wasn't especially successful. Now, however, it has become quite collectible. I wear mine a lot. It's the ideal watch for taking to a race circuit.'

EVERY NEW EVO CAR THAT MATTERS,
REVIEWED AND RATED

JAGUAR F-PACE 3.0 V6 SUPERCHARGED //
VOLVO V60 POLESTAR // ROLLS-ROYCE DAWN //
MERCEDES-AMG SLC43 // FORD MUSTANG ECOBOOST //
DS 3 PERFORMANCE

Driven

The team

This month, we asked our road testers to name the first 'evo' car they owned...



NICK TROTT
Editor

'A 1275GT Mini in yellow with a broken rear subframe. Cost £90... and £470 to insure'



JETHRO BOVINGTON
Contributing editor

'E36 M3 GT, the "Target eight-minutes" project car. Time for "Target 7.45"?'



STUART GALLAGHER
Managing editor

'BMW E30 325i Sport - Bilsteins, limited-slip diff. My brother drove it through his garage wall'



RICHARD MEADEN
Contributing editor

'A Mini. Blew a fortune on a 1380cc engine, suspension, wheels, tyres and brakes'



HENRY CATCHPOLE
Features editor

'A 2001 Mini Cooper on 15-inch wheels. It was in no-air-con lightweight spec'



ADAM TOWLER
Contributing road tester

'Pug S1 106 Rallye: a rare black one. Simply brilliant. L408 VGT, where are you?'



DAN PROSSER
Road test editor

'A Nissan 200SX that never ran. With a massive exhaust on it, naturally'



WILL BEAUMONT
Staff writer

'BMW 1602. Not that "evo", but then I swapped in a 2-litre engine...'

Test location: A816, Oban, Scotland GPS: 56.21384, -5.52265

McLaren 675LT Spider

Prepare to badly want what you can't have, because the best drivers' car McLaren currently makes has just become even more desirable. And it's already sold out...

B

BANG! A SINGLE explosive report is swept into the damp Scottish slipstream.

Nothing for the deer on the hillsides to worry about, just a gloriously angry gearchange. The upshift doesn't quell the wheelspin, though. A battle has been raging all day between the rear Pirelli tyres and the sodden tarmac, and this current extended flaring of revs is just the latest skirmish. During the initial exchanges there was some very clever and subtle appeasement by the ESP, but with that now turned off, my right foot has free reign to incite frictional warfare. The strange thing is that although provoking a 666bhp, turbocharged fight on wet roads ought to be terrifying, in the McLaren 675LT Spider, it's just fun.

When I looked at the lemon-gold (it's a colour called Solis) Spider

sitting in the rain this morning, I could only conclude that Chuck Norris had joined the McLaren events team. I mean, launching a convertible in Scotland in April is pretty brave. But now that I've had the best part of a day in the car on sopping-wet roads, I'm wondering if perhaps a soggy Scotland wasn't the very best way to showcase the car's talents. From the first slide this morning, it has felt gloriously intuitive. It was a medium-speed left-hander, and the front axle, followed by the rear, broke away so smoothly and predictably that it felt like the most natural thing in the world to hold the slide with steering and throttle.

I happen to love driving in the wet, but you've got to have the right car for it and the 675LT is undoubtedly the right car. The first reason for this is the steering. The weighting, rate of





Right: interior features P1-inspired carbon seats and plenty of Alcantara; air-conditioning is a no-cost option (the real cost being a 16kg weight penalty).

Below: wide-bore titanium exhaust means there's no mistaking a Longtail



response (slightly faster than in the P1) and feedback is some of the best I've felt in any car for a long time. It leaves you absolutely in touch with what the front wheels are doing, so that even when the car wants to hunt around over cambers or the grip levels drop, you still feel connected and in control. The sensation of the front of a car washing away from you in a corner is generally not a nice one. The ghostly lightening of the wheel and the pause as you unwind lock or adjust the throttle to help the weight of grip return to your hands doesn't inspire you to push. However, when the nose of the McLaren starts to slide on a slippery surface, you

still feel connected to the road. The wheel telegraphs that grip has been reduced, but there is still granular feedback – you can play with it.

You feel absolutely connected to the rear wheels as well. It might be a bit of a pain to get into the LT, as you duck-twist under the door and drop over the hurdle of the high, wide sill, but once you're in the deep baseball glove of the driver's seat, you feel very much part of the car. Of course, you can destabilise the rear with the throttle, but you can also throw the car into a corner and get the tail moving with momentum. My personal favourite is the crest that you commit to in the knowledge that

the unweighting will spin up the tyres on a steady-state throttle. In all these scenarios the LT feels totally with you. It feels like any guesswork in how the car moves laterally has been removed, with more solid engine mounts than the 650S's no doubt making as much of an impact on this as the extensive suspension changes.

As with the hard-top 675LT, the spring rates are firmer (by 27 per cent at the front, 63 per cent at the rear) and there is less sound deadening than the equivalent 650S (the car is 100kg lighter overall), so there is appreciably more NVH. The LT doesn't actually feel stripped back when you get in, but on certain surfaces, holding

a conversation with a passenger is something that has to be done with a volume somewhere between a shout and the sort of raised tone you might use to diffidently call out to someone that has dropped a ticket in the street. However, if you pop the roof down – possible at speeds up to 25mph – but leave the windows up, the buffeting is minimal. Thanks to the rear buttresses and relatively high shoulder line, you still feel quite snug and cocooned, too.

Admittedly, the weather has prevented the roof being down for a great deal of today, but even with it up the rear screen can be dropped independently, allowing you to stay



dry and still hear the engine's snuffles, cracks and rumbles more intimately. In Normal mode the 675LT is relatively tame acoustically, certainly nothing remarkable. Pop it into Sport mode, however, and the titanium exhaust becomes more than just an objet d'art. Whereas in Normal the shifts of the seven-speed dual-clutch 'box are performed with an accompanying cylinder cut, in Sport the fuelling continues and the ignition is cut just as the change is made. This is what produces the percussive *CRACK!* like a race car, and although it is engineered, it somehow doesn't sound artificial.

The engine sounds much better under acceleration, too, and there's

'Once you're in the deep baseball glove of the driver's seat, you feel very much part of the car'

something about the angriness of the overall soundtrack that reminds me of that other iconic turbocharged V8, the F40. At 516lb ft, the 675LT Spider has 90lb ft more torque than an F40, but interestingly the engineers at McLaren have ensured that this peak figure doesn't arrive until 5000rpm. The engine is capable of producing it much earlier in the rev range and sustaining it in a plateau, but in order to give a more engaging delivery the engine has a rising torque curve.

I would love to have a go in a 675LT Spider round a track – probably the only place you'd have even a sniff of a chance of noticing the 40kg weight penalty over the coupe – but

a drive along the twisting, bumpy, wet tarmac of the A816 between Lochgilphead and Oban sells this car to me. It just encourages all the time. When you're driving slowly, its feedback fills you with the confidence to push harder, and then it reassures you when you do. McLarens have always been fast (and just for the avoidance of doubt, the 675LT Spider is monstrously fast), but it is the increased interaction and sense of connection with the car at all speeds that is really the LT's greatest achievement. Arguably that is enhanced even more by the ability to put the roof down on this Spider version.



Sadly you can't actually buy a 675LT Spider. The entire run of 500 sold out within two weeks of the order books opening, with 675LT coupe owners being given first refusal (to appease any who were miffed about there being another, previously unplanned, 675LT). The good news for those of us who missed out while we were searching down the back of the sofa for the other £285,400 is that the Longtail range is set to continue. The LTs will be Woking's answer to Porsche's GT cars. McLaren hasn't said what will be next to receive the treatment, but with the 'Ultimate Series' (i.e. P1) dormant, it must surely be the 570. On the basis of this wonderful 675LT, a 570LT is an enticing prospect indeed – wet or dry. ☒

Henry Catchpole
(@HenryCatchpole)

Left and above:
bumpers, side skirts, side intakes, rear lower body and the airbrake are all carbon fibre

'The Longtail range is set to continue and will be Woking's answer to Porsche's GT cars'

Specification

Engine V8, 3799cc, twin-turbo	CO2 275g/km	Power 666bhp @ 7100rpm	Torque 516lb ft @ 5000-6500rpm	0-62mph 2.9sec (claimed)	Top speed 203mph (claimed)	Weight 1368kg (495bhp/ton)	Basic price £285,450
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✚ Forges a real bond with the driver and fosters confidence. Spectacularly fast, too

🔴 It's sold out

evo rating





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Test location: Skaljari, Montenegro
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Jaguar F-Pace 3.0 V6 Supercharged

Coventry's first SUV is here, and it has its sights set on Porsche's Macan. Is it good enough to take on the class leader?

I IS IT POSSIBLE TO overestimate the importance of the F-Pace to Jaguar's future? I don't think so. The XE and XF saloons offer a more than credible alternative to the monotony of Audi, BMW and Mercedes' offerings in the same sectors, but neither car is going to propel Jaguar to the top of the sales charts, swell the market share and, crucially, provide the current account with the regular nine- to ten-figure sums that car companies require to survive and grow in today's

market. However, the F-Pace has the potential to achieve just that.

In 2015 Jaguar Land Rover built 489,923 vehicles, with Jaguars accounting for just over a third of that number. With the F-Pace Jaguar is expecting to double its sales volume, increase its contribution to the parent company and go on to produce some of the halo cars it has teased us with over the years but has not had the financial resource to green light. The C-X75 for example, which everyone within Jaguar wanted to build, was shelved for the

F-Pace, the SUV winning because the market – and profit – for such are far greater than they are for hypercars. So Jaguar would like the F-Pace to do for it what the Cayenne did for Porsche. And so would we if it meant the Coventry concern could start building Carrera GT and 918-style cars and return to top-level motorsport.

Designed by Ian Callum (who else?) the F-Pace sits between Porsche's Macan and Cayenne in terms of footprint; its wheelbase is 2cm shorter than a Cayenne's,



Left and right: styling employs numerous cues from other Jaguar models. **Top:** interior quality is high. **Above:** dials are 'virtual'

'It doesn't take far to appreciate just how good the F-Pace is'

6.8cm longer than a Macan's, but the Jaguar is wider than either Porsche. It has them beaten for comfort, too. The larger of the two Germans has around 20 litres more boot space and a millimetre or two of additional rear headroom, but the Jag has the Porsches nailed for front and rear leg and shoulder space. The F-Pace's interior quality is on a par and Jaguar appears to have finally developed an infotainment system that is functional, intuitive and doesn't leave you wanting to go to work on it with a pair of pliers and a blowtorch.

When the F-Pace arrives at dealerships this summer it will be available with two diesel engines – a 178bhp 2-litre four-cylinder single-turbo motor and a 296bhp twin-turbo 3-litre V6. The only petrol engine on offer at first is the XE/XF/F-type's 375bhp supercharged V6. Jaguar expects 70 per cent of customers to go with the four-pot diesel, 20 per cent the 3-litre diesel and just 10 per cent the V6 petrol. A turbocharged four-cylinder petrol will join the line-up later, so too Jag's 500bhp supercharged V8.

The entry-level 2-litre diesel is available with either rear- or four-wheel drive, the former getting a six-speed manual gearbox, the latter also available with an optional eight-speed auto. The auto is the only transmission for the two six-cylinder models, which can also only be had with Jaguar's AWD system.

Five trim levels are offered at launch – Prestige, Portfolio, R-Sport, S and the limited-run First Edition – with prices starting at £34,170 for a rear-wheel-drive 2-litre Prestige and climbing to £65,275 for a 3-litre supercharged V6 First Edition, of which only 2000 will be built and 200 offered in the UK.

Our test car is a petrol V6 First Edition. In the Montenegro sun it looks a far more resolved design than either Porsche rival; more fast estate that's been jacked up a little than a go-faster off-roader. But it's what's beneath the Callum design that interests **evo** the most.

Initially the benchmark cars for Jaguar's chief engineer of vehicle integrity, Mike Cross, and his team were BMW's X3 and X5 and Audi's Q5. And then Porsche launched the Macan. Cross and his team went back to the drawing board. 'That car was a landmark in the F-Pace's development,' says Cross. 'When we drove it we knew we had a new benchmark to aim for.' To this end, every dynamic area of the F-Pace was re-evaluated and modified accordingly until Cross was confident they had an SUV that



Right: supercharged petrol V6 produces 375bhp. **Below:** First Edition sports 22-inch alloys (other trim levels get 18s, 19s or 20s)



was as good as the Macan and better than the Cayenne.

It doesn't take far to appreciate just how good the F-Pace is. It's one of those cars that you can get into and drive with no requirement to adjust to any idiosyncrasies or learn to read its feedback. It feels as natural as an F-type.

The electronically assisted steering is nicely weighted without feeling artificial, so it reacts to your inputs with a reassuring rate of response, leaving you in no doubt as to where the front wheels are pointing. The body is superbly controlled, with a degree of roll to let you know how hard you are pushing before settling quickly on its adaptive dampers (standard on S and First Edition models) and allowing you to carve an unflustered line through any given turn. Pitch the F-Pace's nose into the apex and it holds a neutral line that has an element of adjustability with

the throttle, either by opening it up or lifting. You can then let the chassis soak up the transition as the line tightens before you summon up the V6's full energy once more.

The F-Pace's agility is supported by an all-wheel-drive system that sends 100 per cent of drive to the rear wheels until the front axle needs help, at which point up to 50 per cent can be transferred forward.

The brakes have a nice pedal feel with good modulation, but it takes fewer than half a dozen runs along a third- and fourth-gear switchback road before a flame or two is licking at the spokes of the Double Helix alloy wheels. Then again, while Jaguar claims a kerb weight 'from 1861kg', our suspicion is that this F-pace weighs closer to 2000kg, if not more. A trip to the weighbridge at **evo's** office will confirm this later in the year.

The F-Pace doesn't have the last five per cent of a Macan's dynamic

'It has far better steering, body control and a tighter chassis than the Porsche Cayenne'

repartee but really, how many customers are going to notice? It does, however, match the small Porsche as the only SUV you should consider if you enjoy driving. It also has far better steering, body control and a tighter chassis than the Cayenne, itself a former class leader, and is far more enjoyable to drive than its Range Rover cousin, the Sport.

At the moment, our F-Pace pick would be a 3-litre diesel, because the supercharged V6, for all its luscious soundtrack, is torque-lite and needs to be worked too hard in order to extract the performance from it, whereas the 516lb ft available from the twin-turbocharged V6 diesel matches the F-Pace perfectly. Right now all that matters is that the F-Pace has hit the spot, and if enough people agree, it's what this will allow Jaguar to achieve next that really excites. ✕

Stuart Gallagher (@stuartg917)

Specification

➕ One of the best-driving Jaguars and a match for Porsche's SUVs

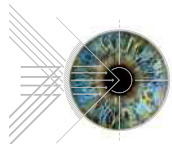
➖ V6 supercharged engine out of its depth

Engine	CO2	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
V6, 2995cc, supercharged	209g/km	375bhp @ 6500rpm	332lb ft @ 4500rpm	5.5sec (claimed)	155mph (limited)	1861kg (205bhp/ton)	£65,275 (First Edition)

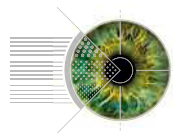
OPEN YOUR EYES



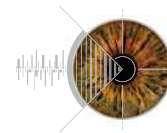
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Volvo V60 Polestar

Latest Polestar-branded estate boasts 362bhp twin-charged four-cylinder engine and has BMW M Sport in its sights

THE DRONE, THUDS AND crackles of racing cars wash over the press presentation of the Volvo V60 Polestar. We're at Paul Ricard and so is the WTCC circus. Among them is a pair of S60s making Volvo and Polestar's debut in this FIA world championship. From what I can hear over the noise of the cars, the V60 Polestar road car should be pretty tasty. It has fully adjustable Öhlins dampers (you adjust bump and rebound through 20 'clicks' on the struts themselves) and a 2-litre supercharged and turbocharged engine producing 181bhp per litre, while the guys from Polestar talk at length about their racing heritage.

Yet at the same time the V60 Polestar is billed as a '365 days' performance car. It has an eight-speed automatic gearbox. The traction control doesn't fully turn off. The Borg Warner (née Haldex)

four-wheel-drive system permits a maximum of 50 per cent of torque to the rear axle. These are mixed messages and, while it's all intelligent engineering and highly reasoned, I can't help wondering if it's enough to get enthusiasts excited about Volvo's relatively new in-house performance arm.

This isn't the first V60 Polestar and it's essentially a refresh of the car we already know to be charismatic and appealing but hardly knee-tremblingly exciting. The big news is that the 3-litre turbocharged six-cylinder engine is gone, replaced by the 2-litre Drive-E unit. Power is up from 345bhp to 362bhp at 6000rpm, while torque drops slightly to 347lb ft at 3100-5100rpm. An added benefit of the switch is a reduction of 24kg over the front wheels and, hopefully, a corresponding increase in agility. Volvo claims the car gets to 62mph

in 4.8 seconds with launch control, while it's limited to 155mph. It will cost just under £50,000 and only 1250 or so will be produced globally, of which around 120 will find their way to the UK. (The saloon equivalent, the S60 Polestar, won't be offered in the UK, incidentally.)

Supplementing the drivetrain and trick dampers are revised suspension bushes, a carbonfibre strut-brace, six-piston Brembo calipers with 371mm discs and a new electric power steering setup with three levels of assistance, plus Normal, Sport and Sport+ settings for the throttle, exhaust and ESC. By turning the ESC (sort of) off, the four-wheel drive is locked 50:50 – as rear-biased as the system allows.

The road route is spectacular but narrow and it's hard to really load-up the chassis to get a sense of that balance. However, it's clear that the Polestar is determined not



‘The balance is fluid and neutral and seems nicely reactive to the throttle’

to wash into messy understeer and it holds its line beautifully. On the few corners where I can carry some speed, the balance is fluid and neutral and also seems nicely reactive to the throttle. That sensitivity creates a four-wheel-drive rather than front-wheel-drive feel that is often a Haldex-type characteristic. However, even greedy throttle applications mid-corner fail to provoke the rear beyond its neutral stance. Neat, tidy and effective, but a shade more attitude wouldn't go amiss.

The eight-speed auto is a huge leap on from the old, often slow-witted six-speeder and hits upshifts with a lovely damped punch, although it's a bit reluctant to change down if you're braking hard into a hairpin and want to use all the engine-braking available. And that evocative-sounding twin-charged engine? In practice it's a bit less dramatic than you'd hope. There's a tiny bit of supercharger whine at low speeds and it does feel properly boosty when it's heading for the 7000rpm red line (it runs 2bar) but it can feel a bit slow to respond on the way out of slower corners and there's no mistaking it's a small engine pushing a chunky 1721kg. Like the rest of the car, it's a bit too polite.

That isn't to say there isn't loads to like about this car. It looks quietly aggressive and the 20-inch wheels give it a nice swagger, the brakes are excellent, the electric power steering has a natural rate of response and it can be hustled along at a great pace. Later, on the circuit, the Polestar roots start to reveal themselves with more noticeable adjustability, the ESC giving plenty of leeway, but this is an expensive car charged with establishing Polestar as a credible AMG, M Division or Audi RS rival and to me it's playing it too safe.

How so? Well, it's getting on for M3 money and the performance feels closer to a Golf R; the racing connection is ethereal rather than tangible (a shame as the engine



Above: inside and out, the new Polestar-tuned V60 is suitably, subtly aggressive. Gearbox is a new eight-speed automatic

really is a trick thing, sharing much with the WTCC unit) and somehow it all feels a bit too constrained. The guys at Polestar are a dedicated and passionate group and they're excited to be on the main stage since Volvo bought them last year. But if Volvo's aim is to boost its longer-term sporting aspirations, then this isn't so much a fanfare as a polite cough to announce it.

Don't get me wrong, I like the V60 Polestar and it'll sell to Volvo acolytes who want a pinch more aggression and excitement, but turning the heads of BMW, Mercedes and Audi customers is a bigger and more exciting challenge. Time to turn it up to 11, guys.

Jethro Bovingdon
(@JethroBovingdon)

Specification

Engine	CO2
In-line 4-cyl, 1969cc, twin-charged	186g/km

+ Subtle, well-executed performance car

- Engine lacks charisma, plays it a little too safe

Power
362bhp @ 6000rpm

Torque
347lb ft @ 3100-5100rpm

0-62mph
4.8sec (claimed)

Top speed
155mph (limited)

evo rating



Weight
1721kg (214bhp/ton)

Basic price
£50,000



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Test location: Stellenbosch, South Africa
GPS: -33.961195, 18.847674

Rolls-Royce Dawn

Latest drop-top Rolls targets a younger audience. But is it our sort of car?



A QUARTER-OF-A-MILLION-pound, 2.5-ton, 2+2 convertible would not be our first choice to set a lap time round Anglesey Circuit. Yours neither, I suspect. And yet, Rolls-Royce's new Dawn is a car that you approach with the same reverential expectation as you do a McLaren P1; the driving experiences they deliver couldn't be further apart, but they both deliver an experience that thrills, albeit in very different ways.

The Dawn is not – and Rolls-Royce is very insistent about this – a convertible Wraith. Over 80 per cent of the body components used during the new car's build at the company's Chichester headquarters are new and bespoke. And the powertrain and chassis have been thoroughly revised, too. That said, a number of the updates will also feature on the forthcoming updated Wraith, such as the raised bonnet line and higher-sitting Spirit of Ecstasy.

Designer Giles Taylor was required to give the Dawn a look and style

that would attract a more youthful customer into RR's showrooms, a quest the company is sharply focused on doing across its portfolio. To this end, Giles was inspired by the American hot-rod scene of the '50s and '60s, introducing a lower roof line, shallower side glass and a lower windscreen (although the rake is still identical to the Wraith's). The Dawn certainly meets that hot-rod goal, especially when finished in a dark hue with a contrasting hand-painted pinstripe. It's not all for show, either, because the design tweaks made to the Dawn's body are also responsible for a reduction in lift.

The suicide doors remain and a hand-finished wooden deck like that first seen on the Phantom Drophead (which will finish its production run later this year) dominates the rear of the car, wrapped as it is with a stainless steel band that runs from A-pillar to A-pillar around the car. It makes a Bentley Continental GT Convertible and the forthcoming S-class Cabriolet look like they're

trying a little too hard. Then again, they do offer a six-figure saving over the Rolls Royce.

The effortless 6.6-litre, 563bhp twin-turbocharged V12 (power is identical to the Ghost, but 61bhp less than the Wraith) is mated to a satellite-controlled eight-speed gearbox that doesn't trouble the driver with such menial tasks as changing gear – there aren't any paddles to swap cogs with even if you wanted to.

Performance is above what you expect, with 62mph dispensed in less than 5 seconds, the mid-range riptide strong each time the needle on the power reserve dial swings ever closer to zero. The ride is serene on the revised air suspension, body control benefiting from new active anti-roll bars and a rear track that is 24mm wider than that of the Ghost. The structure is so stiff that the scuttle is unshakable.

The limits of adhesion are not something you go looking for at every twist and turn and the Dawn is not

a car that you nibble at the edge of the tyres' grip with. You can position it wherever you want on the road and it reacts remarkably crisply, but an Elise it is not. And you wouldn't want it to be, either. Better to immerse yourself in the experience, go with the flow and enjoy the finest open-top motoring experience money can buy.

Automobiles such as the Dawn exist for the owner, driver and passer-by in equal measure. To have access to such a car, no matter how fleetingly, and whether you are sat behind the wheel or enjoying the ride, is an unforgettable occasion. To drive the Dawn is an experience you'll remember equally as fondly as your first time behind the wheel of a supercar. And when you see one on the road you take note, maybe even stop and leave your eyes to linger a little longer before telling a friend you have seen one. The Dawn is no supercar, but it is a super car and further proof that the Thrill of Driving takes many forms. ✘

Stuart Gallagher (@stuartg917)

Specification

+ Attention to detail and an effortless driving experience - Driver involvement not a priority

Engine	CO2	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
V12, 6592cc, twin-turbocharged	330g/km	563bhp @ 5250rpm	575lb ft @ 1500rpm	4.9sec (claimed)	155mph (limited)	2560kg (223bhp/ton)	£250,000

evo rating

★★★★★



Test location: Col de Braus, Sospel, France
GPS: 43.872493, 7.412840

Mercedes-AMG SLC43

A new powertrain and a new name for Merc's hottest baby roadster

THE AMG DOWNSIZING strategy is now complete, with the 5.5-litre naturally aspirated V8 that was once shoehorned into the nose of an SLK retired and replaced by a 3-litre, twin-turbocharged V6. And with the new engine comes a new name: SLC, signifying the end of the SLK badge, which would have celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2016.

On the face of it, transforming the SLK into the SLC doesn't appear to have been a particularly taxing task for the design and engineering teams. Visually there are new front and rear bumpers, new LED lights and fresher AMG side-sills and spoilers. Inside there's a new multi-function steering wheel, 7-inch infotainment screen (up from 5.8in) and new sports seats, and the metal/glass folding roof can now be closed or opened at speeds up to 25mph. It's under the skin that this latest AMG,

one of the 48 that Mercedes will offer in 2016, benefits most. While a near 2.5-litre drop in engine capacity, the loss of two cylinders and 54bhp doesn't make for a great hand in Top Trumps, Mercedes-AMG claims the benefits of the new, more efficient and lighter powertrain far outweigh the perceived losses. It's also the only six-cylinder engine available in the SLC range; the other models in the line-up are available only with four-cylinder petrol and diesels engines.

In the SLC43 the 3-litre biturbo produces 362bhp between 5500 and 6000rpm and 383lb ft of torque from 2000 through to 4200rpm, thanks to a unique engine map and increased charged-air pressure compared with the engine's other application in the company's GLE SUV coupe. Peak power and torque may be lower than with the charismatic and charm-filled V8, but the 5.5-litre's 416bhp arrived at 6800rpm and its 398lb ft

'Keep the engine in its sweet spot and the SLC43 delivers genuine AMG pace'

at 4500rpm, so what the V6 lacks in chunky grunt it should make up for in improved driveability and access to the performance on tap.

For the first time, Mercedes has fitted its latest 9G automatic gearbox to its two-seater roadster, and for the 43 it's been configured to match the car's power and torque delivery, specifically by shortening the shift times, allowing for multiple downshifts, accompanied by an auto-blip when either Sport or Sport+ has been selected via the Dynamic Mode system. In manual mode the 'box won't change up when the engine reaches its rev limit.

Two chassis options are available. The standard set-up is a MacPherson strut front and four-link rear with fixed rate dampers, or you can have AMG Ride Control switchable dampers with three modes: Comfort, Sport and Sport+. A mechanical limited slip diff is an option.



Left and above: the transformation from SLK to SLC is subtle both inside and out. **Below:** new 3-litre V6 twin-turbo replaces old 5.5-litre V8

Larger 360mm front and 330mm rear discs are standard, with four-piston calipers at the front, the 18in wheels are shod with 235/40 and 255/35 tyres front-to-rear, and the steering is Mercedes' latest electro-mechanical speed-sensitive system.

It won't come as a huge surprise to hear that the new SLC43 doesn't sound half as good as the car it replaces. The standard sports exhaust does its best to inject some drama to proceedings, but it's more of a whimper than a roar. Under load, however, the octaves deepen and the soundtrack takes on a harder edge. So, too, does the powertrain.

What the new V6 lacks in character it makes up for in the accessibility of the performance. Its throttle response is much sharper, the engine picking up speed quicker and as a result you hit that lower torque peak earlier. So you're soon giving your fingers a workout on the steering-wheel-mounted paddles. There's little to be gained in hanging on to the revs once you pass peak power, as it tails off pretty sharply and you run the risk of falling into the slushy rev-limiter. But keep the engine in its sweet spot, be prepared to work the gearbox and the SLC43 delivers genuine AMG pace.

On the right road, the SLC43 lives up to its AMG badge. The steering's rate of response isn't the quickest, but it is precise and allows you to place the nose where you need it to be and hold it there. The ride isn't overly stiff, even in the hardest settings, and there's a subtle degree of body roll to lean against. When grip begins to bleed away, the initial push at the front can be managed with small throttle inputs. Or you can just mash the throttle into the bulkhead and leave an expensive line of rubber. And yes, the diff is a must.

Does the more responsive, sharper engine transform the SLC43 into a Boxster beater? No, not quite. The problem isn't the downsized engine, but rather the underpinnings. The 43 is a significant step up from the old car, because the new engine and gearbox allow you to unlock more of the car's performance, but at the same time they highlight the chassis' shortcomings. So the Boxster still rules, but the SLC43 is arguably more rounded than Jaguar's V6 F-type – certainly its engine is more responsive and engaging – and it offers more for the driver than Audi's TTS. There's life in the old girl yet.

Stuart Gallagher
(@stuartg917)



Specification

➕ New engine brings new dimension to Merc's baby roadster ➖ But also highlights the chassis' age

Engine	CO2	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
V6, 2996cc, twin-turbo	178g/km	362bhp @ 5500-6000rpm	383lb ft @ 2000-4200rpm	4.7sec (claimed)	155mph (limited)	1520kg (242bhp/ton)	£45,950

evo rating ★★★★★

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Test location: Aynho, Oxfordshire
GPS: 51.98646, -1.23706

Ford Mustang 2.3 EcoBoost

Most buyers have opted for the 5-litre V8, but should you consider the 'lesser' Mustang?



A MUSTANG SHOULD be left-hand drive, more American than a supersized Big Mac meal and shouldn't pander to poncy European tastes, right?

Well, this time the Mustang has been designed to also be sold to us Europeans. In fact, Ford has taken the matter so seriously that it has made the new car available in right-hand drive, given it fully independent suspension, and is even offering a turbocharged four-cylinder engine. It's the same 2.3-litre EcoBoost unit as in the Focus RS, but with 32bhp less. The resulting 313bhp is 97bhp down on the more conventional 5.0 V8 that it sits beneath in the range.

In the Mustang, the sound of an idling turbocharged four doesn't quite match the acreage of bonnet that stretches out in front of you. Once the revs rise, though, it's clear the noise has been engineered to sound a bit like a V8. The fact that it's even recognisable as such must mean it's relatively successful.

The throttle pedal's travel is long

– about an inch longer than feels natural – and initially this makes the engine seem unresponsive. It's not helped by there not being much shove below 4000rpm. However, once you've adapted to the throttle's travel and press it with a bit more abandon, the engine wakes up. The top third of the rev range is where the engine comes to life and becomes nicely responsive. It likes to rev, too, right out to its 6800rpm limit.

The ratios of the standard six-speed manual gearbox are close enough to keep the engine in its sweet spot. The gear linkage feels direct, with very little slack, but it's not particularly smooth. You have to be determined with each change; if you're not, it's easy to miss a gear.

The V8-engined Mustang (evo 219) is dynamically a cut above what you'd expect from a muscle car. It feels like it would cope on a dusty back-road while being chased by a fat, cantankerous sheriff, and it's happy enough on a Welsh B-road, too. For the most part the EcoBoost

car feels very similar, but there is a perceptible difference in regard to front-end response between the two cars: the four-cylinder Mustang is more willing to change direction than the V8 because much of this car's 65kg weight saving is up front, due to the smaller, lighter engine. So in a succession of short corners, it feels more nimble and there isn't as much body roll. However, the V8, with its abundance of power and torque, is far more adjustable on the throttle, redressing any advantage the EcoBoost might have gained.

Despite its more immediate responses, the EcoBoost Mustang still doesn't like to be rushed. Try to hustle it down a road and it can feel awkward. You become out of sync with the car, attempting to make new inputs while the chassis is still dealing with earlier impacts. Braking deep into a corner only makes things unsatisfying and scruffy. Slow your inputs, giving the chassis time to settle, and the Mustang comes together. Brake early, turn in

and then use the throttle to adjust your line. When the rear is loaded and the nose raised, the Mustang feels content. In tighter corners the EcoBoost engine has enough power to unstick the rear tyres, but the V8 takes better advantage of the long wheelbase, making any resulting slides controllable and serene, where the EcoBoost's are short-lived.

A more relaxed driving style also reduces the need to heel-and-toe. That's a good thing, as the spacing between the accelerator and brake pedals isn't ideal. The characteristics of the pedals are also contrasting, the brake being immediate – a mere touch and you get all the power.

The 2.3-litre EcoBoost is a good engine and complements the Mustang well. It feels quick and has enough oomph to manipulate the chassis. Unsurprisingly, though, the V8 is the better companion and consequently adds more character and more enjoyment. **X**

Will Beaumont
 (@WillBeaumont)

Specification + Ninety per cent as good as the V8 - That last ten per cent is what gives the Mustang its character

Engine	CO2	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
In-line 4-cyl. 2261cc, turbo	179g/km	313bhp @ 5500rpm	319lb ft @ 3000rpm	5.8sec (claimed)	145mph (claimed)	1655kg (192bhp/ton)	£30,995

evo rating ★★★★★



DS 3 Performance

French hatch has the power to compete with the best in class, but is there a chassis to match?

Test location: St Tropez, France **GPS:** 43.26768, 6.64071

AS INTRODUCTIONS TO cars go, a piece of closed road in the hills above St Tropez is about as good as it gets. The sun is shining, there's nothing coming the other way and, as Mike Duff (erstwhile of this parish and the person I'm sharing a car with on this launch) comments, the only thing that could make it better would be a set of pace notes. Duff has been driving hair-raisingly quickly for 45 minutes (and only five of those have been on the closed road) with me in the passenger seat, but now we're swapping places. Time for revenge.

I settle into the big, wing-backed bucket seat and adjust the steering wheel. The interior of this new DS 3 Performance, like the exterior, is very familiar from the old Citroën DS3 Racing, except that now there is a conspicuous dearth of double-chevron badges. This is not a Citroën, even if the urge to call it one is very strong. Twist the key and the 1.6-litre THP engine burbles gently into life. Putting out 205bhp and 221lb ft of



torque, it is more than competitive with rivals such as the Ford Fiesta ST, Mini Cooper S and Peugeot 208 GTi (with which it shares an engine).

A six-speed manual gearbox and a Torsen limited-slip differential bode well, too, while the suspension has visibly dropped compared with a regular DS 3 (by 15mm) and the front and rear tracks have been widened by 26mm and 14mm respectively. As a result, the 18-inch wheels, shod with Michelin Pilot Super Sports, really fill the arches. Completing the promising mechanical menu are Brembo brakes with 323mm discs at the front.

The clutch engages at the top of its travel without much feel, but the shifts into second and third

gears, then back to second as we head towards the first corner, reveal a decently positive action to the 'box. The brakes are strong, too, which is just as well given that the road is narrow and the drop off the unprotected edge is the sort that prolongs accidents for some time.

The engine isn't sparkling company but it is effective and revs freely to its limiter, with the shortened gear ratios encouraging you to thrash it.

Through quicker corners this DS 3 stays flat and jinks pleasingly between direction changes. In tighter turns, however, things are less interesting. The steering is simply too light and lacking in feel, leaving you without any genuine sense of connection with the front wheels. This seriously saps confidence on turn-in, and when you're in a bend it makes it difficult to judge how hard you can lean on the front tyres.

The steering is also the only real option for drastically altering the line, as a lift of the throttle has no discernible effect on the rear axle.

Things are better on the exits of corners, with the LSD giving strong traction and proving easily manageable. In fact, across the ground the pace feels pretty quick, and although turn-in could be an issue, I suspect this DS would set a good lap time round a circuit.

Slowing things down once we're clear of the closed road, the DS 3 actually improves slightly, because although the ride feels a touch too firm, the steering gains a little more feel and better weighting. The chassis setup remains pretty nose-heavy, though, and overall the DS 3 performance feels like a bit of a missed opportunity. It has pace, but beyond that it feels like too much time has been spent designing the colour schemes (one version comes with a matching BRM watch) while forgetting to infuse the chassis with the chuckability and dynamic *joie de vivre* that you expect from a hot hatch. Especially a French one. ❌

Henry Catchpole
(@HenryCatchpole)

Specification

Engine	CO2	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
In-line 4 cyl, 1598cc, turbo	125g/km	205bhp @ 6000rpm	221lb ft @ 3000rpm	6.5sec (claimed)	143mph (claimed)	1175kg (177bhp/ton)	£20,495

➕ All the right ingredients ❌ Undercooked

evo rating

★★★★★

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Outside Line

by HENRY CATCHPOLE



Scale models aren't just for children, says Catchpole, who like many sees them as a primary tool for escapism

THE CRUX MOVE REQUIRES THE LEFT foot on the banisters and the right foot just across the narrow landing on the top shelf of the airing cupboard. Then, judging to a nicety the weight permissible on the warm but slightly rickety mantel (it depends on the current towel quota), I haul myself upwards, switching my right foot mid-flight to a small ledge in the ceiling. Perching on a joist, with my head in the cool dusty darkness and legs dangling through the rectangular opening, I usually take the next moment or two to consider why I still haven't bought a loft ladder. Because it's more fun this way I suppose.

Stooping awkwardly beneath the rake of the rafters, I make my way past the water tank and shimmy around a pair of old ski boots. There, beyond the Christmas decorations, is my Ferrari collection. No, I haven't done a Brocket – I can still remember the indignant anger I felt as a nine-year-old when I heard about his insurance scam – my Ferraris fit up here without being cut up, because they are all scale models.

I'm meant to be finding some lampshades I stashed up here when we moved in, but I can't resist opening up the big plastic storage box for a quick look. There is a black and red logbook resting on top of the bubble-wrapped cars and I shine the torch (I should probably put a light up here when I do the ladder) on a few of the pages. It begins in very junior handwriting, but each careful entry has the model's purchase place, price, date and size. I wasn't really the fastidious cataloguing sort as a child, but mother Catchpole made me do it and I'm glad she did. I sit down on a box of old cycling parts that I probably said I was throwing away and take out the top few cars. Brumm, Polistil, Bburago – how my young mind struggled with that double B.

I probably stopped collecting Ferraris when I learnt to drive, but I've picked up a few more scale models in the years since I started working at **evo**, mostly of cars that I've particularly loved driving. I know a few people that try to buy models of the cars that they have raced or rallied. I know that **evo** columnist Dario Franchitti has matching models for most of the real cars he owns.

So, what's so fascinating about scale models? Why did I amass this small garage? It certainly wasn't just about the desire to collect something, anything, and obsessively assemble the largest hoard I could, because I remember being very selective. If birthday money was being spent, I wasn't about to buy a Mondial (unless it was the 1955 500) and a 330 GT 2+2, even if I could have them both in 1:18-scale for the same price as a 1:43 250 GT SWB. I was as discerning as if I was buying the real things.

Part of the attraction must be the daydreams that these tiny recreations inspire and enhance. Taking each one out of its clear cocoon and releasing it from its plastic plinth, it either brings back memories of seeing one for real or promotes dreams of a time when one might. As adults we might not actually run them round the carpet, trying to mimic the noise of a flat-twelve as a child would (at least not when others are in the house), but nonetheless, just by looking at these die-cast delights you can conjure up the relevant sounds and motions all the more vividly.

Alternatively, you can just admire them as objects. If I like the three-dimensional proportions of a 288 GTO in real life, if I could spend time happily just wandering around one in a dealer's showroom, drinking in the lines and admiring the

'I stopped collecting Ferraris when I learnt to drive, but I've picked up more scale models since'

way the tail flicks up above the four round taillights, then why wouldn't I be happy scrutinising those same features in miniature? I'm sure the sight of his 993 GT2 delights Dario every time he opens the garage door. If he wants he can spend hours at a time standing looking at the real thing, but eventually he will have to retreat inside due to hunger or frostbite or the irritating social expectations that go with having guests for the weekend. So, why not have a method of admiring the same shape inside the house?

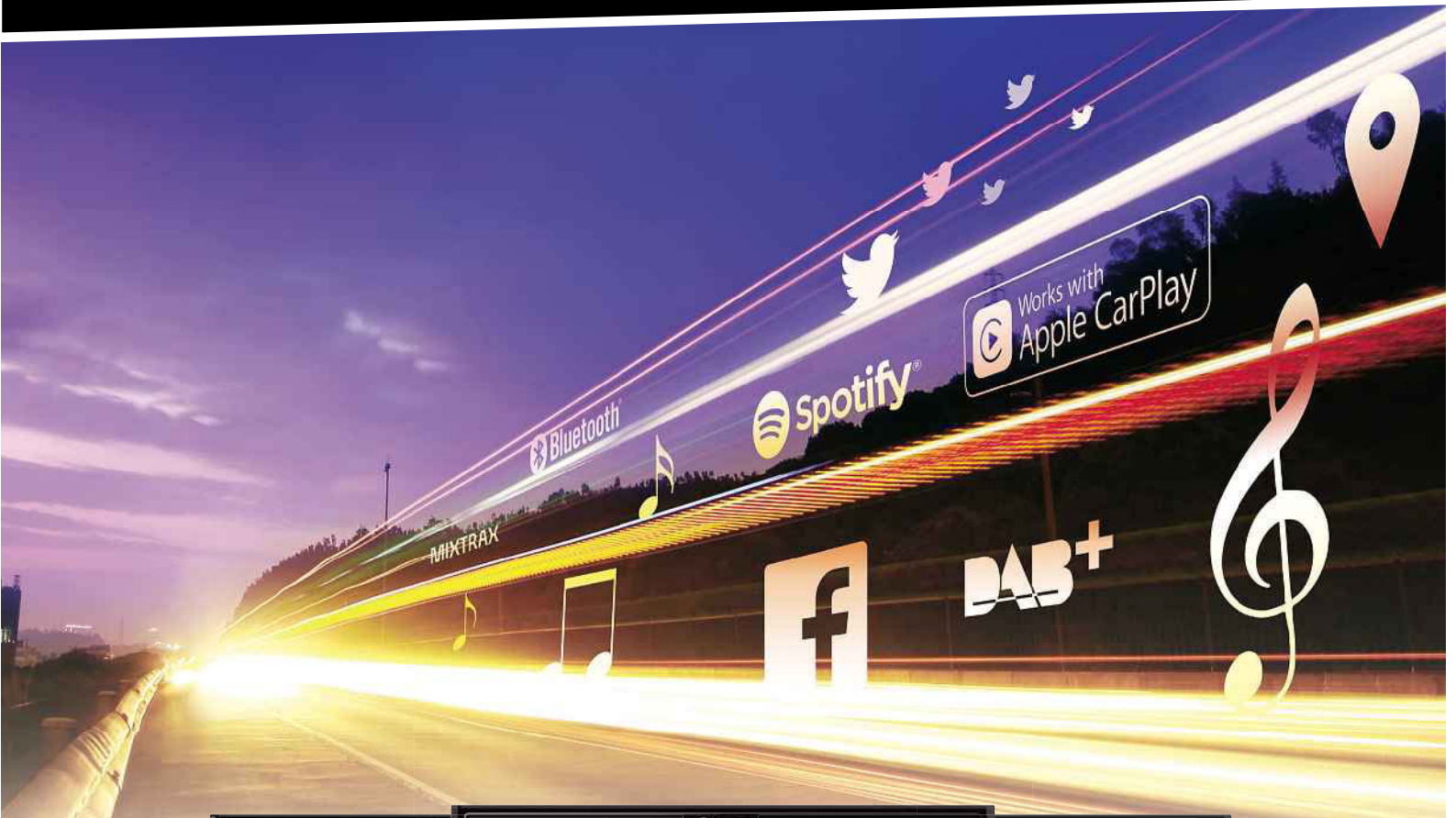
To this end, I've never been happy if a model is poorly wrought or lacking in detail. Obviously I couldn't afford Amalgam levels of intricacy, but I demanded accuracy and some care with the paint and decal work. Which is why I never bought the Revell kits that required self-assembly.

One day I'm determined to have an office where I can bring the models out of storage up here and put them distractingly on display. For now, I decide just to bring two small 1:43s down from the loft. I carefully reverse the crux move with my precious cargo, then reach up and slide the wooden panel back into place in the ceiling with a clunk. At which point I realise that neither a P2 nor Ascari's 375 F1 car looks much like a lampshade. ☒

✉ @HenryCatchpole

Henry is **evo**'s intrepid features editor. Richard Meaden is away this month.

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Petrolhead

by RICHARD PORTER



Next time you point and laugh at that rickety Austin Princess rolling by, spare a thought for car nerds less fortunate, says Porter

LAST YEAR I WROTE A BOOK ABOUT my time working on *Top Gear*. I might have mentioned it in this column. This year the book was translated into Polish and a nice man from the publisher asked if I would go to Warsaw to promote it. This is the sort of thing you're supposed to do if you're mincing about pretending to be a proper author. Also, I've never been to Warsaw and imagined it might be nice to geek out on bleak concrete streets packed with ancient, sputtering Soviet-bloc snotters, so naturally I said yes.

As it turned out, Warsaw wasn't entirely as I imagined. There are, as expected, plenty of extremely wide streets framed by portentous buildings and dotted with towering lamp posts as thick as Nelson's Column, all classics from the planned economy playbook and designed to remind the proletariat how small and insignificant they are. Then, beyond the hulking state-sponsored grandeur of the main boulevards, there are the slabby, brutalist tower blocks that serve as classic Commie porn for Westerners, though they're regarded with rather less affection by the people who have to live and work in them. Architecturally, Warsaw isn't so far from the popular imagination of any British person wanting to pretend they're a character in a Len Deighton novel, sliding furtively under the Iron Curtain in 1979.

Car-wise, however, Warsaw is quite a disappointment. I was hoping the streets might run thick with Fiat 126s, broken FSOs and various Communist-era knackers with the look and smell of a two-stroke welded to a skip.

The truth is very different. The car-scape of the average street is that of any European city in 2016. Astras dice with Fiestas, there are plenty of Audis, the Kia-Hyundai axis seems to be doing good business. If you're feeling really flush, you might even take a trip to Warsaw's particularly swanky Ferrari showroom. I don't know why I expected anything else. It's almost 27 years since Poland slipped from its Communist shackles and the Warsaw of today has the atmos of a thoroughly up-to-date city.

While I was there I found myself apologising to someone for a stupid *Top Gear* item in which we made a mock VW ad depicting Polish people running scared from a new threat of German invasion. 'No, no,' the person replied. 'We liked that advert because there were computers and cars and it showed that Poland is a modern place.' I hadn't the heart to say we shot it around the old BBC Worldwide building in West London.

What interested me was the underlying message of this reaction. Polish people don't want to be seen as soil-stained peasants toiling

under Stalin's cosh; they want only to look forward and that's probably why during my time in Warsaw I saw just one Fiat 126. I did get the chance to sit in an FSO Polonez, but it was being used as a massively ironic promotional item and when I spotted another from my hotel window it had gone by the time I got downstairs. Bit of a shame. I was hoping it was the rare version with the Rover K-series engine.

No one I talked to had much to say about the Polonez. There were plenty of stories about the 126, universally nicknamed 'Maluch', or 'small one', but it was usually just the car their dad had when they were little or the car in which they learnt to drive. I didn't sense much affection. No one wants a Maluch now. It's a pattering representation of a darker time and therefore has little

'No one wants a Maluch now. It's a pattering representation of a darker time and therefore has little currency as a classic'

currency as a classic, taking up valuable garage space that could be occupied by a brand-new Golf GTI or Mini Cooper or some other shiny symbol of how far Poland has come in such a short amount of time.

But this has a knock-on effect to the contents of the average car park. When you renounce the past, you take away layers of strata that make car nerdery interesting. No chance encounters with tidy examples of cars you liked in the '80s. Small hope of spotting a well-preserved family saloon like the one your dad had when you were a nipper. Little prospect of a sunny day drawing out the delightful playthings that have hidden all winter in a garage. Not for the Poles the sudden delight of spotting a Lotus Sunbeam zipping past, the pang of lust on noticing a well-tended '80s Range Rover, the warm nostalgia of finding a pristine Sierra on a street in the 'burbs. Or even the respective Cold War equivalents. And that, I thought, was a shame.

Warsaw is an interesting city. The people are charming, the food is excellent, the vodka is crisp and cold. But it did make me glad to live in a place where car history didn't reset in 1989. ❧

📧 @sniffpetrol

Richard is **evo's** longest-serving columnist and the keyboard behind sniffpetrol.com



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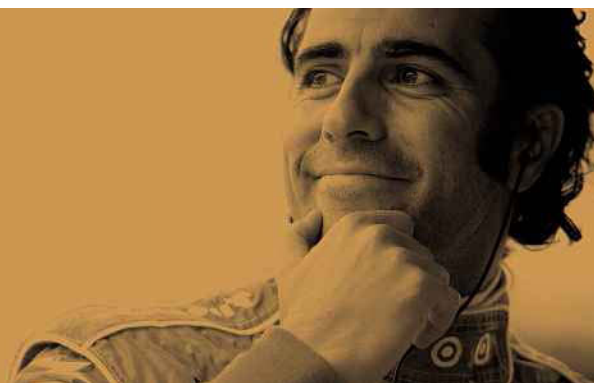
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Champ

by DARIO FRANCHITTI



As the debate surrounding head protection for Formula 1 drivers rages, Dario has his say

F **FORMULA 1 CAN BE SO IRRITATINGLY** nuanced at times that it's difficult for everyone to engage in the debate, be it about tyre compounds, aero regs, engine tokens or the format of qualifying – there's always something! The discussion concerning protection for the drivers' heads is something we can all get stuck into, however, because before all the technological or regulatory elements, there are ethical and cultural dimensions that will weigh heavily on any rule-change the FIA ultimately makes. Any changes made will be developed in F1 as that is the FIA's main focus, but they'll affect all open-wheel championships eventually. So before I give my take on the idea of a 'halo' device, I'd like to ask for yours – send them to letters@evo.co.uk.

Head-protection for single-seaters was a divisive topic even before Red Bull and Mercedes revealed 'solutions' to the problem earlier this year. That Mercedes' halo concept, a three-pronged carbon cage, and Red Bull's more conventional device, which takes the form of a screen, both fundamentally change the appearance of an F1 car has only stirred the pot.

From the F1 driver's perspective, on one hand you've got a four-time world champ who feels that such a device, however displeasing to the eye, should be welcomed if it improves safety. That's a strong endorsement, particularly given that Vettel has also said he believes Henry Surtees and Justin Wilson would still be with us had their cars been so equipped. But then there's Lewis Hamilton, who has said he'd remove such a device if one were fitted to his car. Le Mans-winner Nico Hulkenberg is also against halo devices, but has been slapped down by Daniel Ricciardo for trying to be a 'hero'. It goes on. Like I said, it's a divisive issue.

Certainly, from a purist's perspective, an open-cockpit racer should be just that – open – but you can't say this definition hasn't been slowly diluted for decades. Things have changed since the 1950s, when the drivers were almost unbelievably exposed and you got to see them wrestling with a big old steering wheel, catching powerslides and working obstinate gearboxes – practicing their art, in other words.

Over the years the drivers have receded ever further into the cars, and between 1994 and 1995 – after Senna and Ratzenberger had been killed on the same weekend – the bodywork finally sprouted head-surrounds, which have saved many lives, including my own. Since then the driver has, as far as onlookers are concerned, become an even smaller component of the car – its cerebellum – tucked away from fans that can no longer perceive any physical activity.

There are, of course, precedents to suggest that a halo device will eventually be accepted as an integral safety component. Back in the early 1960s when seatbelts were introduced in F1, most drivers hated the idea, preferring to be thrown free of any wreckage or to jump out before they were immolated in the ensuing blaze. Racing without seatbelts is simply unthinkable now. And when HANS devices arrived, I wouldn't wear one because I couldn't get comfortable with it, never mind the fact that these awkward contraptions have since saved hundreds if not thousands of racing drivers (again, myself included) from potentially fatal basilar skull fractures. That was back in 2002, in CART. The HANS numbed my right arm, so it was either slacken

'The potential for unintended consequence is always enormous within motor racing'

my seatbelt or ditch the thing. Eventually the design was altered and I relented, but would I get back in a 900bhp CART car without a HANS today? No chance.

It now looks as though Mercedes' design will be introduced as early as next season, which gives a team led by Ferrari and Mercedes scant time to undertake a thorough risk assessment and standardise the design. However, so far the system is said to offer good protection from flying wheels, which is truly excellent news given the horrific consequences of a high-speed collision between a human skull and 10kg of rubber and carbonfibre.

I can see why some still have doubts beyond the aesthetics. The potential for unintended consequences is always enormous within motor racing. In this case, those range from trapping a driver in the car to debris deflecting into the crowd. But in terms of vision, it's the same as with the antennae on the nose of an IndyCar: you don't see it; you simply look through it. And in any case it's rare that you're looking completely straight ahead.

I'm a purist and also appreciate that two-dozen cars travelling at over 200mph is never going to be what you'd call 'safe', but having lost three very good pals to injuries that might have been prevented by a halo device, I think you know where I stand. ❧

✉ [@dariofranchitti](https://twitter.com/dariofranchitti)

Dario is a three-time Indy 500 winner and four-time IndyCar champ



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Inbox

What limited edition have you missed out on this month?



Letter of the Month

Criminal matter

I've owned four Porsches in the last 20 years, including a GT3 when you could actually buy the things. These days my once favourite car maker just makes me want to shout from the rooftops... not with joy, but frustration.

The 911 R is yet another car we can't buy! In your first look at the model (evo 221) you said it'll be criminal if they are treated purely as investments. Better call the police. 911 Rs will be flipped for £500k with almost no mileage on the clock. Of course they're not going to get driven.

If models like the 911 R are intended to create a 'halo effect' on sales, Porsche needs to seriously reconsider. I know of many genuine buyers, myself included, who aren't buying Porsches further down the food chain. On the contrary – we've walked in the opposite direction and into the arms of another marque.

Steve Newell



The Letter of the Month wins an Aviator watch

The writer of this month's star letter receives an Aviator MIG-29 Chrono, worth £465. With a design inspired by the cockpit instruments of a MIG-29 fighter jet, it has a 45mm case, a Swiss-made quartz movement, and SuperLuminova indexes for outstanding legibility.



www.aviatorwatch.ch



www.peterjackson.co.uk

Back to basics

Beautiful though the 911 R is, a feeling has been nagging at me. It became more clear when reading your introduction to the car. In it, Porsche's Andreas Preuninger is quoted as once having said: 'Maybe we need another sort of car, too. One which is purely about the driving.'

Forgive me, but isn't this supposed to be the role filled by the Carrera models? Why has it become the responsibility of the Porsche Motorsport team to build a 911 in which you can have fun on the road?

It's been a while since a base level 911 was in the running for eCoty, let alone since one won it. And with that thought in mind, I'm going for a drive in my 996 C2 – to remind myself there was a time when a 911 focused on agility and driver involvement wasn't reserved for the collections of the wealthiest 991 of Porsche's customers.

Dave Tickle

Enough Porsche!

For a minute I thought the wrong magazine had dropped through the letterbox. Nope, I checked the front and it was indeed evo.

But... 23 pages on Porsche unobtainium (911 R then Cayman GT4)? Surely a bit much? Yes, I agree they're very nice cars, but I would have bought a Porsche-dedicated magazine if I really wanted so much print on the P-machines.

What's in next month's issue? A pull-out Preuninger prayer mat?

Karl Sumner

Trackday convert

I would like to express my appreciation for your recent 'Get on Track' guide (evo 221). Having enjoyed a number of fast German saloons as daily drivers,

I started to wonder what the point of 500-plus bhp was, as it became impossible to get even close to the limit at safe speeds.

I am now searching for a used Caterham and your guide has been invaluable in helping me choose the right kit to go with it.

I'm now looking forward to some safe and smile-inducing opposite lock action this summer.

Ian Chisnall

Trackday trick

I enjoyed your trackday guide, but I feel you missed something out.

As someone who has been track driving regularly since the late '90s, I have noticed that anyone who looks to upgrade their car turns straight to modifications. But while upgraded suspension and brakes will make you faster, I have found that giving the car's key components a refresh also makes a huge difference.

For example, I have mainly used Renaultsport Clio 172s and 182s, and while fitting coilovers and stripping out their interiors made them feel more like race cars, replacing wishbone bushes, ball joints, engine mounts, suspension top mounts, steering rack bushes, steering tie rods and track rod ends returned the cars to how they were from the factory. This brought bringing back the feel and playfulness of their chassis – and improved the way the cars drove on the road, too.

Russ Fitch

Creating a Storm

Thanks for the VW Corrado Storm feature in issue 220. It re-ignited the desire that I had for one back in my 20s and caused me to buy a 1994 VR6 as a daily driver! My better half is not impressed...

Glenn Churton



Above: after last month's trackday guide, Ian Chisnall is looking for a Caterham



Above: our recent revisiting of the Corrado VR6 has landed Glenn Churton in trouble

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Talking Point

The perfect Porsche

Last month, we looked at the new Porsche 911 R. For many it will be the ultimate Porsche, so we asked you what your perfect Porsche would be. Here's what you said...

Well, Singer springs immediately to mind...

Antoine Bretzel

The 911 R is pretty much it. Or a GT4 with a more aggressive final drive.

Y.A.

GT4 minus the rear wing, and with shorter gearing and the full-monty GT3 RS engine.

kiwi_dave

RS 4.0 engine in a GT4, with 918 seats and rear-wheel steering.

Alex Burnett

GT4 with a Porsche GT2 RS engine, manual six-speed gearbox, 15-inch ceramic rotors, Brembo six-pot calipers. Perfect!

MortalC011

Although 911s are growing on me, the 928 is the one. Late GTS for me. Restomod that with Panamera Turbo S underpinnings and drivetrain. Focus on GT cruising ability rather than making a road-racer.

DeskJockey

I'd love a modern 928 GT with a new take on the V8, and working electrics.

Barry

918 Spider with the Carrera GT V10 standing in for the V8 (but retaining the all-wheel-drive hybrid drivetrain).

David_Yu

Well that saves me some typing.

Mark BT52

GT3 RS lightweight. 900kg all-in with 500bhp-plus from a hybrid drivetrain.

wayne

As I live out in the countryside, a Tuthill Safari-spec 911, please.

Marv

959 body and engine with the PDK gearbox, carbon seats, carbon brakes, suspension and wheels from the GT3 RS. Plus a carbonfibre roof, bonnet and rear wing.

Graham Cardwell

A pre-73 911 Targa with the 911 R's drivetrain, suspension, brakes, tyres...

Charlie Ajaib

2.7 RS body, 997 GT3 mechanicals, 918 number-plate screws.

Maccmike

For trackdays: GT3 RS light. For the road: Cayman GT4 Clubsport (PDK) with 4WD (i.e. 911 Turbo).

Jean-François Barcelonne

A 911 R with PDK would do just fine.

Ravin Raktoc

A re-interpretation of the 912: new 2.0 four-cylinder boxer engine from 718, very narrow body, 18-inch wheels, six-speed manual, very light equipment, limited choice of options and colours.

UF

Panamera, with the slowest diesel engine. Blue exterior, beige interior, smallest wheels.

simongardner

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The best comments will be published here each month

Thread of the Month

DeskJockey

Car mistakes on film

Was just catching up on the last series of *Silent Witness* and they had an early E39 5-series on a 54-plate. Nope! What mistakes have you spotted recently?

There's an episode of *Narcos* where an E39 5-series is featured. Pablo Escobar died two years before the E39 was released.

mattcambs

After all the effort to get the period-correct Land Cruisers and Hilux...

N

I was watching *Gone in 60 Seconds* when this thread started. There wasn't enough time to post each mistake as it happened.

NotoriousREV

Stunts where they substitute the car they have been driving for the past five minutes for an older version for the final crash/roll. The telltale puff of gas from air cannons used to flip cars. Cars instantly exploding whenever crashed. Clearly visible roll-cages. Neck and neck in a high speed race then suddenly finding an extra 50 per cent of throttle travel and powering to victory. The same tyre squeal sound effect used every time a car turns a corner at high speed. Million-speed gearboxes...

integrale_evo

In the *Ronin* car chase [pictured] they switch between two models of XM: an older one with the Citroën logo on the left of the grille and a more recent one with the logo in the middle.

pilouil

The Getaway Car. All of it.

unzippy

The opening scene in *Quantum of Solace* when the Alfa 159s keep up with the DBS.

Alex_

The DB5 keeping up with the 355 in *GoldenEye*. Cringeworthy.

Zonda_

The latest *Mission: Impossible* film uses a new M3 in the chase that becomes a boggy 3-series with different wheels when it drives down some steps.

scotta

It would be quicker to list the TV shows and movies that get things correct in respect of cars and motorbikes. Here is the list:

Tim



Thread of the Month wins a Road Angel safety camera & blackspot alert device worth £159.99



The originator of the best **evo** forum thread wins a Road Angel Gem+. The Gem+ automatically updates its camera database as you drive and allows users to share the locations of 'live' camera vans.

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revo

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The new 718 Boxster embodies a myriad of changes, but by far the most significant is a smaller, turbocharged flat-four engine. So, in losing two cylinders has it retained its soul?



Still fab with four?

by DAN PROSSER

PHOTOGRAPHY by DEAN SMITH

THESE ARE UNCERTAIN TIMES.

Britain's membership of the EU hangs in the balance, a man with Shredded Wheat for hair is marching towards the White House, and the Porsche Boxster has a four-cylinder engine. A turbocharged four-cylinder engine, no less.

At least you can always depend on the Scottish Borders. The B6357 that runs between Bonchester Bridge and Newcastleton is the kind of road that draws drivers and bikers from far and wide. Skirting the border with England, it packs three or four different personalities into its 14 miles, sometimes fast and flowing with a billiard table surface, sometimes tight and twisty as it tumbles down a hillside, and at other times lumpen, broken and poorly sighted. It has hosted more than one evo Car of the Year test because it's a superb road on which to assess a performance car, the sort that can flatter a stiffly sprung car one moment and tie it in knots the very next. Today, it'll be the stage on which the new 718 Boxster S has to prove that a downsized, turbocharged four can be just as effective and every bit as evocative as a naturally aspirated six.

Dean Smith and I are up early to beat both the sunrise and the logging lorries to the B6357. The road spears through the heart of the Borders' timber region and I want to get in a run or two before the great trucks begin their laborious back-and-forth. Before I cake the Boxster's taut flanks in road grime, though, I take a few moments to absorb the new look.

It's clearly a Boxster – while almost every body panel is new, the basic structure beneath is the same as before – but in the details it's quite different. The front end is familiar, but cleaner and smoother now, almost as though something is missing. It's like seeing an old friend who has lost their eyebrows. It's the back end that really distinguishes this new model from the old one, however, with rear lights like the narrowed eyes of a predator. The reflector strip that runs between them, emblazoned with the Porsche script, looks slightly tacky in pictures but is more convincing in the flesh.

The cabin is largely unchanged, save for the new and much improved infotainment system, which is to say that the standard of fit and finish is very good and the seating position is just about spot-on. With a deep front boot and a decent storage space over the rear axle, this is as useable as two-seater sports cars get.

That hasn't changed, but in the engine bay it's all new. Porsche has introduced a pair of

**'It has to
prove that a
downsized,
turbocharged
four can
be just as
evocative as
a naturally
aspirated six'**



engines for the updated Boxster range: both are boxers (some things are still sacred) with four cylinders (but most things aren't), displacing 1988cc in the entry-level model and 2497cc in this S version. Unlike the new 911's twin-turbocharged engine, both Boxster units use a single turbocharger.

The range-topping model is more powerful than ever with 345bhp and 310lb ft of torque, gains of 34bhp and 45lb ft over the outgoing Boxster S. What matters more than the torque increase, though, is the rev-band across which it's available – it arrives at 1900rpm and doesn't start to fade until 4500rpm, which should equate to a much stronger mid-range than with the peaky, high-revving, naturally-aspirated engines of old. The red line is set at 7500rpm, which is relatively high for a turbo unit.

With a claimed 0-60mph time of 4.0sec, we can file the PDK-equipped 718 Boxster S in the 'properly fast' folder. The manual version is no slouch, either: we recorded a 0-60mph time of 4.4sec, matching Porsche's claim (see p77 for our complete performance figures). And with a 13 per cent reduction in fuel consumption over the previous model, the new turbo engine makes a very strong case for itself on paper. As we'll find out, though, the reality is not quite so convincing.

The chassis has been reworked, too, but not so



drastically. The rear axle is stiffer, the electric power steering system from the 911 Turbo – which is a little more direct than the old system – has been fitted and buyers can specify the Porsche Active Suspension Management ‘sport chassis’, which lowers the car by 20mm as well as adding adaptive dampers. The basic PASM adaptive dampers are still available and that option lowers the car by 10mm. The OE tyres are the latest Pirelli P Zeros and there’s now an intermediate Sport setting for PSM that allows the driver a little more freedom before intervening. As standard the new Boxster S borrows the 911 Carrera’s front brakes, with Porsche Carbon Ceramic Brakes a £4977 extra.

Our test car is as fit as the 718 comes, for now at least, fitted as it is with the PASM sport chassis (£1133), ceramic brakes, Sport Chrono (£1125) and Porsche Torque Vectoring with a limited-slip diff (£890). If this 718 doesn’t hit the right dynamics notes, no 718 will.

With its optional 20in wheels (£971) and the lower ride height, the car’s stance is just about spot-on, but rather than being unbearably crashy on the road it actually feels quite pliant

‘With its more direct steering, the Boxster S feels more urgent on initial turn-in than ever before’

and reasonably well cushioned over lumps and bumps. The 20in wheels matched with the non-adaptive chassis would be too much, though.

With its more direct steering, the Boxster S feels more urgent and more immediate on initial turn-in than ever before. And with taut body control and massive grip from its P Zeros, the overriding impression is of heightened agility and responsiveness. As has always been the case with Porsche’s mid-engined roadster, the chassis balance is sublime, with both axles sharing the cornering forces almost evenly. The front axle will begin to push a little right at the limit, with the rear letting go fractionally later, but it is expertly judged for fast road driving.

For the most part, the default PASM setting covers all bases but, when you really start to fling the car along a twisting, weaving road, it pays to switch into the stiffer damper mode. There is still enough pliancy over all but the very worst stretches of blacktop, but with a touch more support at each corner the Boxster feels more immediate and better controlled. The slight rear-end porpoising that can be felt in the softer mode is eradicated and the

Right: side air intakes now feed a turbo four. **Far right:** six-speed manual suits the car perfectly, but PDK is available as an option. **Below right:** dial allows you to switch to Sport or Sport Plus modes

very modest sensation of the outside front wheel tucking underneath the car on turn-in is gone, too.

Whatever the setting, the way the car soaks up big compressions is staggering. Our test road is littered with such impacts, and time and again the Boxster lands in them with real composure, no hint of it running out of suspension travel, and none of those heart-in-mouth moments as the dampers struggle to control the rebound forces.

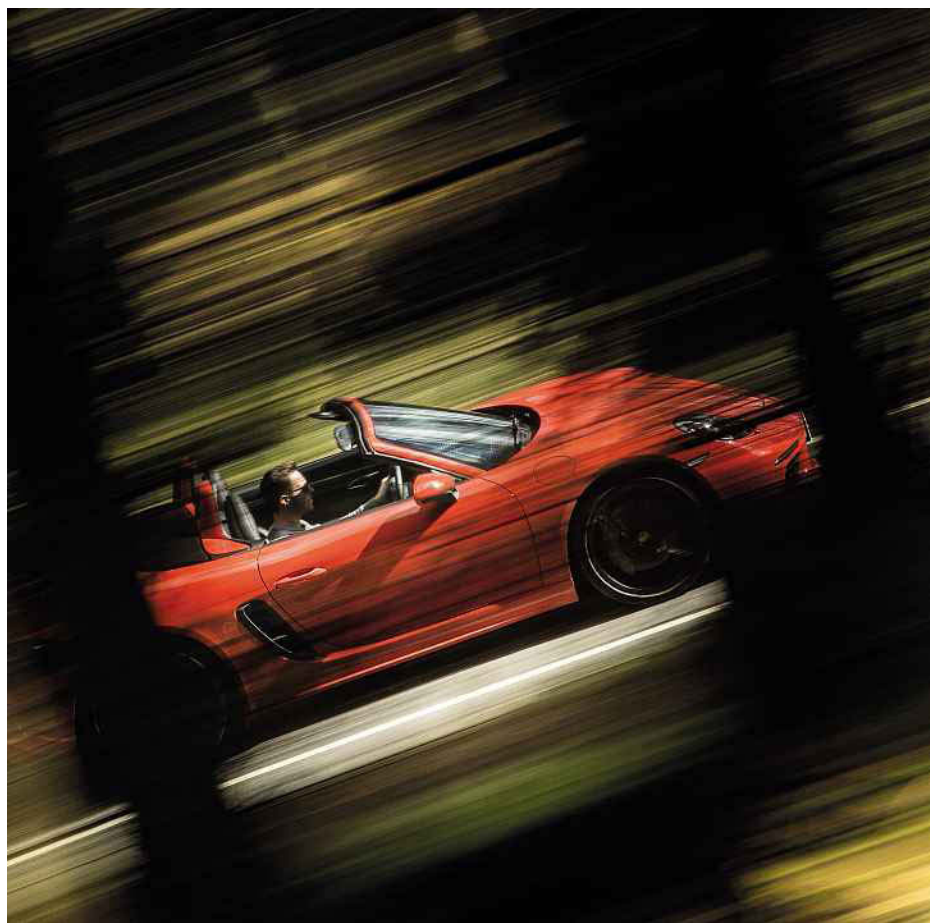
The chassis is a work of genius, then, but the steering is a weak point. It's actually not as glassy as a 911 Carrera's and doesn't leave you guessing quite so often. It just isn't particularly talkative. Whereas the best steering systems will chatter endlessly through a corner and let you know exactly how much grip the front axle is finding, the 718's only does so when the car has already started to push, which is a bit like calling 'man on' as your teammate is being tackled.

That said, the steering is superbly accurate, so you can place the car with real precision, but I still miss the textured, granular steering feel of much older Boxsters, both in terms of high-speed driving and as a connection point between car and driver at much lower speeds. The optional GT steering wheel, 15mm smaller than the standard item, is a delight to hold, however.

This car's limited-slip diff means traction away from tighter corners is simply huge. You do have to unsettle the car a little on the way into a corner to get the back end working from the apex onwards but, with so much more torque than before, it is actually easier to manipulate the rear axle on the throttle. In damp conditions the sharp throttle response and tight differential afford you really fine control of the driven wheels, which means you can meter-out neat little slides with impunity.

The brakes are enormously strong and, even after several runs across the B6357, they were confidence-inspiring. The pedal travels through an inch or so of sponginess – this is a road car, after all – after which it is firm and full of feel.

The six-speed manual gearbox is a delight and is, surely, the correct transmission for a two-seat roadster, the sort of car in which interaction matters so much more than outright performance. The shift action is one-part mechanical and one-part organic, as though flesh and tendons have been splined into the linkages. The lever moves through its gate with a direct and tightly sprung action, and with a touch more heft as you change down into second gear than before. It's exactly the kind of tactility that makes driving a sports car at normal speeds such a joy; exactly the kind of tactility that I miss in the Boxster's steering.





And so to the engine. We have to accept before we go any further that a turbocharged four is a very different beast to an atmospheric six. Breathing through the optional sports exhaust it doesn't want for volume at idle, flooding the surrounding air with a deep, dirty warble, with touches of Subaru and a dash of V8. What it does lack, though, is tune.

Once on the move, that sonic signature ramps up several notches in terms of quantity, but the Boxster never finds its old singing voice. Between 3000 and 6500rpm the note is constant and flat. Only over the final 1000rpm does it harden, but at no point does it light up and howl in the way the old engine did so

brilliantly. You do get more character from the exhaust with the roof lowered – hood up it really does drone away – but, nonetheless, the Boxster is no longer a car that can be enjoyed for the way it sounds.

We've said much the same about the revised 911's turbocharged sixes, but we've also praised them for how responsive and linear they are. The Boxster's four is different. Whereas the six disguises its forced induction, feeling naturally aspirated for the most part, the Boxster engine wears its turbo like a badge of honour. In the very lower reaches it's flat and lifeless, but at 2800rpm the turbo arrives in a sudden, furious whirlwind. It's much more switch-like

than I had expected. A typical turbocharged hot hatch engine, such as the 296bhp unit in a Golf R, begins to boost from lower engine speeds and builds progressively, but this is wholly more aggressive. If the switch arrived 1000rpm later I'd call it terrible turbo lag, but as it happens at pretty low engine speeds I don't mind trotting out an old cliché and calling it characterful. That aggressive switchover is actually quite good fun and the remaining rev-band is so wide that you never drop off boost in quick driving. Throttle response is fantastically sharp, too, with no hint of lethargy as you blip on a downshift, and no clumsiness as you make fine throttle inputs mid-corner.

Porsche 718 Boxster S

Engine Flat-four, 2497cc, turbo

CO2 184g/km

Power 345bhp @ 6500rpm

Torque 310lb ft @ 1900-4500rpm

Transmission Six-speed manual, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip differential, Torque Vectoring (option)

Front suspension MacPherson struts, coil springs, PASM adaptive dampers (option), anti-roll bar

Rear suspension MacPherson struts, coil springs, PASM adaptive dampers (option), anti-roll bar

Brakes Ventilated and cross-drilled ceramic composite discs (option), 330mm front, 299mm rear, ABS, EBD

Wheels 8 x 20in front,

10 x 20in rear (option)

Tyres 235/35 ZR20 front, 265/35

ZR20 rear (option)

Weight 1355kg

Power-to-weight 259bhp/ton

0-62mph 4.6sec (claimed)

Top speed 177mph (claimed)

Basic price £50,695

Price as tested £68,234

On sale Now

evo rating: ★★★★★

Straight-line performance is very strong, but this is still Boxster performance, the 718 doesn't suddenly feel supercar-fast. With so much more torque throughout the mid-range you don't need to work the gearbox quite so hard, nor do you have to chase the red line with the same single-mindedness. The gear ratios are unchanged from the old car, which is to say they are very long indeed. You do still use second gear more often than you would in other sports cars, then, and you don't actually need to use fourth or above on the road because third will happily pull three figures. The new engine does actually encourage you to work through the gears more often, though, simply because it

doesn't demand that you be in the lowest gear possible at all times or that you squeeze every last rev out of the engine before changing up. That's progress in a sense, because now you can enjoy that sublime gearshift more often.

The automatic throttle blip in Sport and Sport Plus, meanwhile, is effective and really good fun, too, but such systems should always be switchable independently of other variables.

So the performance is there and throttle response is sharp once the engine has hit its stride, but the soundtrack has gone. The intensity and drama of the old engine has been lost, too, and that's even harder to forgive. The flat-six felt as sharp as a shard of glass, but with

this new engine that shard has been rolling around in the sea for several years; the edges have been worn away and the overall driving experience just isn't as memorable as a result.

Porsche has a habit of refining new tech in the two or three years after its introduction, so perhaps there is more to come from this flat-four. The 718 Boxster S is still a sensationally capable sports car and on a road like the B6357 it is tremendously good fun to drive. Whipping through the Borders countryside, spring sunshine flooding into the cabin and chassis doing what it does oh-so well, however, I just can't help but wish that I had six naturally aspirated cylinders firing away behind me.

Under the skin

by DAN PROSSER

Drivetrain

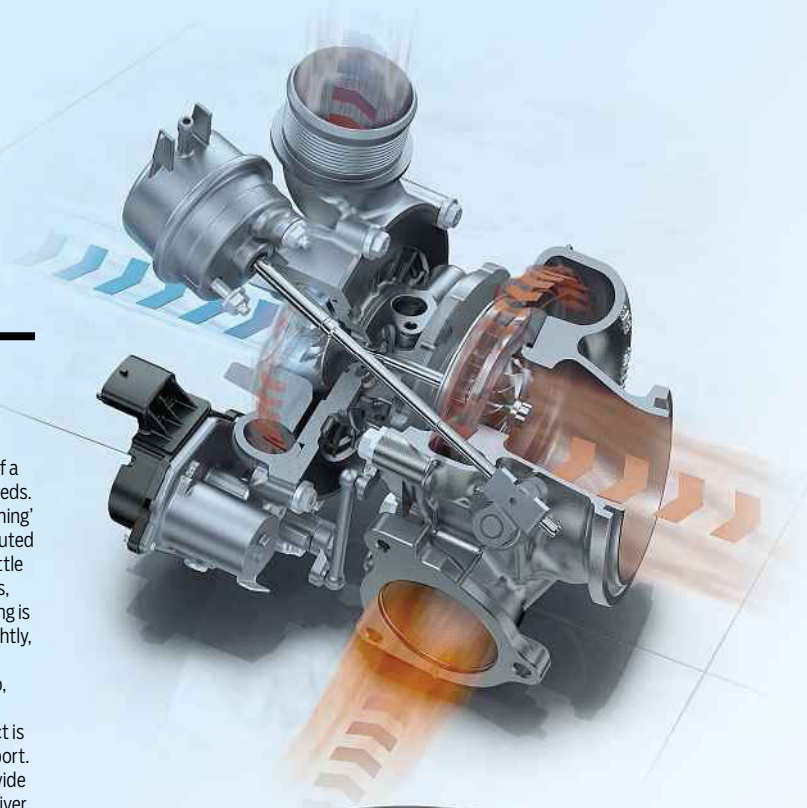
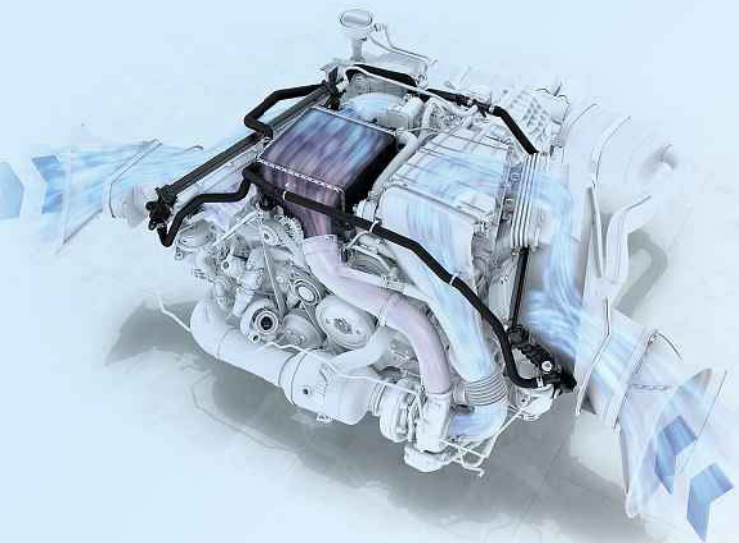
Porsche has introduced two new flat-four engines for the 718 Boxster – a 2-litre in the base model and a 2.5 in the S version – and, naturally, most of the pioneering technology is centred on the turbocharger. The engineers have worked hard to maintain the free-revving characteristics of a naturally aspirated engine, which is demonstrated by the relatively high 7500rpm red line. Peak power is generated at 6500rpm and the drop-off from there to the limiter is only five per cent, which, Porsche claims, is a best-in-class figure.

There are important differences between the two engines beyond displacement. The more powerful version uses variable-turbine geometry (above right), a technology that has filtered down the Porsche model hierarchy from the 2007 911 Turbo. By adjusting the vanes' angle of attack, the turbocharger can respond

quickly to throttle inputs at low engine speeds, much like a small turbo, then generate the greater boost pressures of a much bigger turbo at higher engine speeds.

Both units feature the 'pre-conditioning' and Dynamic Boost functions that debuted on the revised 911 Carrera. On part throttle in the Sport and Sport Plus drive modes, the bypass valve is closed, ignition timing is retarded and the throttle is opened slightly, which increases charge pressure. This primes – or 'pre-conditions' – the turbo, giving more immediate response when the driver applies full throttle. The effect is more pronounced in Sport Plus than Sport.

Dynamic Boost leaves the throttle wide open for up to two seconds after the driver lifts off the throttle pedal. This means boost pressure isn't dumped, so when the driver reapplies the throttle there's no delay as boost builds back up again.



Chassis

Although the new engines will steal the headlines, Porsche has made several significant updates to the chassis, too. The rear axle, for instance, has been strengthened to improve precision and lateral stability, while the damper pistons and cylinder tubes have been beefed up to improve wheel control. The rear wheels, meanwhile, are half an inch wider than before to give a greater footprint on the road, and therefore more mechanical grip.

The 718 uses the electrically assisted steering system from the 911 Turbo, albeit with bespoke calibration for the Boxster. Porsche says it's ten per cent more direct than the previous set-up, making the new car more agile in all types of driving.

For the first time, Porsche offers two versions of its PASM adaptive damper system. The basic version brings a 10mm drop in ride height while the new 'sport chassis' option, which is only available on the Boxster S, drops the car by 20mm and further lowers its centre of gravity.

Porsche has chosen the latest-generation Pirelli P Zero to be the standard fit tyre for the new 718 Boxster. As well as better overall grip, which increases cornering ability and shortens braking distances, the new P Zero has lower rolling resistance than the previous generation. That improves fuel efficiency and contributes to a 13 per cent reduction in fuel consumption over the previous model.

Against the clock

by HENRY CATCHPOLE

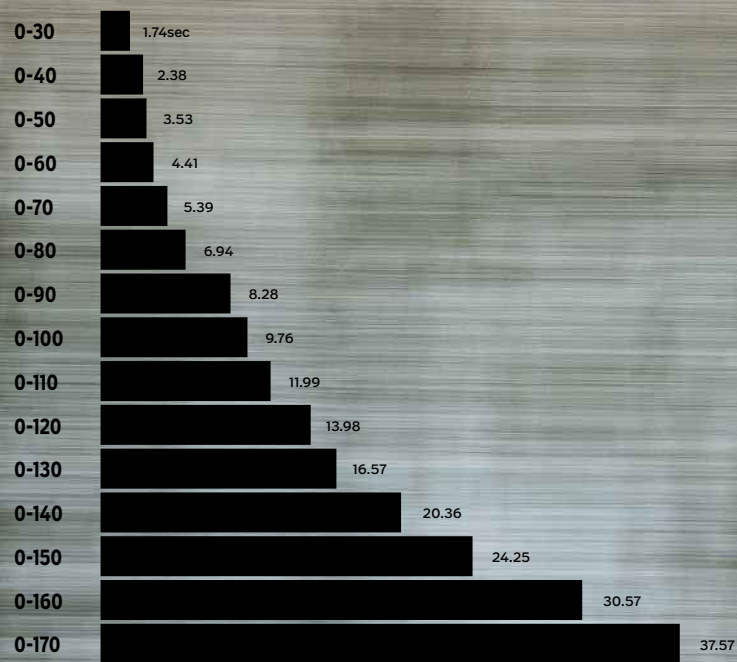
Getting a 0-60mph time out of the 718 looked, initially, as though it should be fairly simple. With Sport Plus selected, PSM off and the throttle flat to the floor, the revs hold at about 4800rpm. You would assume that these would be the ideal revs for a perfect getaway, but if you side-stepped the clutch the engine simply bogged down and dropped off boost. It wasn't entirely ineffective, as we recorded a 4.6sec 0-60mph time with

this method, but it was obvious that with a few more revs off the line the 718 could be so much quicker. Sadly, no matter what we tried, the electronics wouldn't allow us to rev any higher while static. As a result it wasn't possible to get the tyres juuuust over-rotating and keep the boost sustained for that perfect start.

So a bit of road tester guile was needed. It's tricky to do, but if you judge it just right

then you can do something of a granny start with far fewer revs, slipping the clutch ever-so-slightly and then mashing the throttle as soon as the tyres are rotating. It worked on the second attempt (a small chirrup from the tyres attesting to this) and yielded 4.4sec to 60mph (spot-on Porsche's claim) and 9.8sec to 100mph. I think the 718 could go still faster without that pesky initial rev-limiter, but the figures are pretty impressive nonetheless.

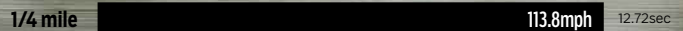
Standing-start acceleration



Braking



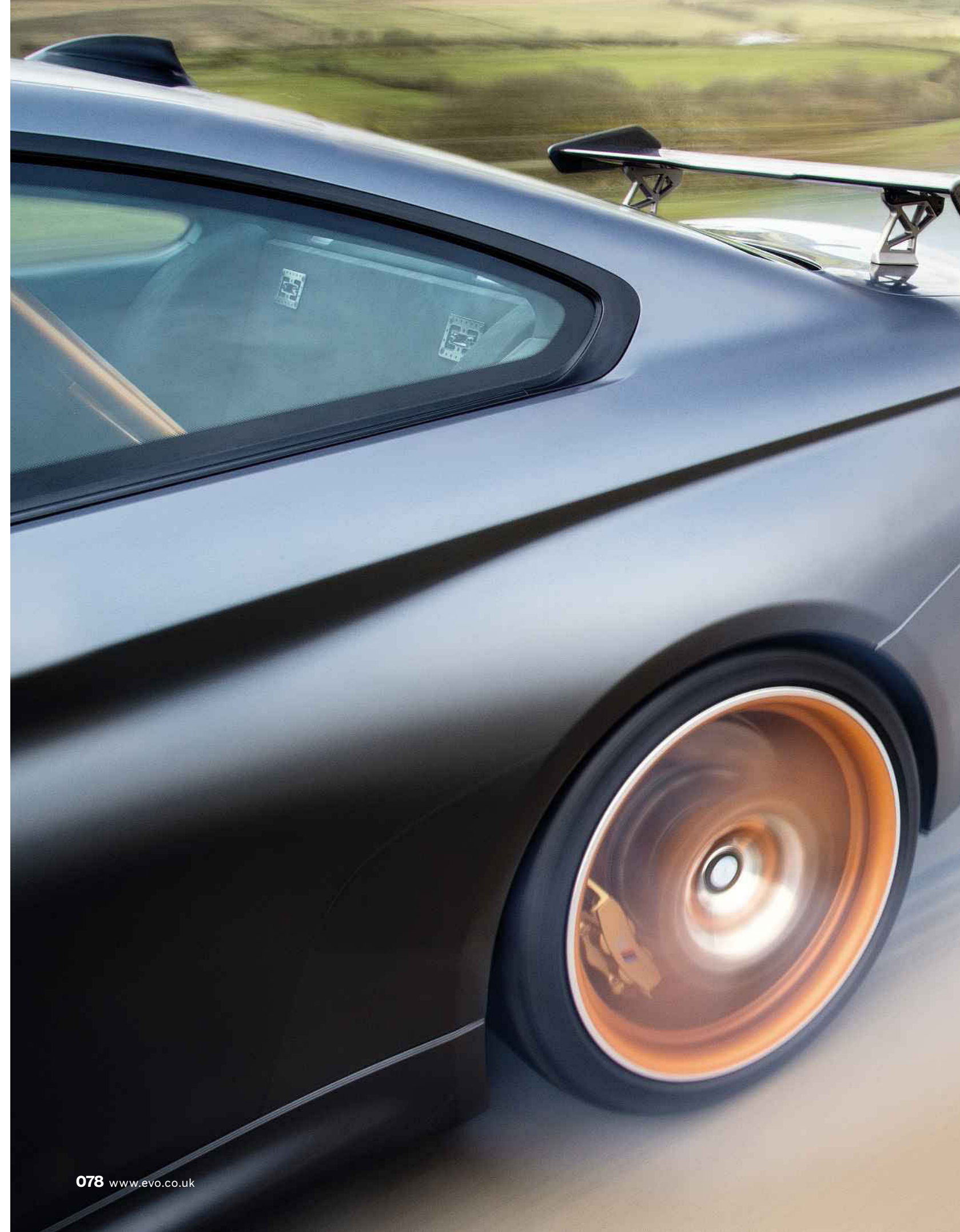
Quarter mile



In-gear acceleration

MPH	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
20-40	2.25	3.74			
30-50	1.8	2.67	3.37	4.7	6.66
40-60	1.84	2.45	2.92	3.71	4.95
50-70	1.91	2.5	3.05	3.72	4.41
60-80		2.54	3.11	3.85	4.59
70-90		2.64	3.18	4	4.81
80-100		2.89	3.31	4.07	5.12
90-110			3.57	4.26	5.38
100-120			3.92	4.63	5.68
110-130			4.59	5.13	6.15
120-140				5.77	6.73
130-150				6.97	7.62
140-160				9.86	9.01
V-max	79.39mph	109.69mph	136.49mph	163.41mph	





BMW M4 GTS

by JETHRO BOVINGDON

PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT

M Phwoar!

With 493bhp, a reworked chassis, water injection and a 190mph top speed, the new M4 GTS is an M4 we can get genuinely excited about

O H HOW WE SCOFFED

when the M3 GTS was revealed back in 2009. We could get on board with the Jägermeister-orange look, but the pretty pathetic little rear wing, an extra 362cc for the normally aspirated V8 bringing a small 30bhp hike in power, and a sprinkling of carbonfibre, Perspex and titanium saving 75kg? It didn't seem a huge return for an asking price of £117,630. To put it into context, that was more than twice the price of an E92 M3 Competition Package, which was £55,365 at the time. You could only reason that you'd have to be mad to buy the GTS. Then we drove one and realised it was pretty special. Then we drove one again – this time extensively, on great roads, at the Nürburgring and anywhere else we could get our hands on it. The price suddenly seemed a lot less important. The car was sensational.

So today I'm going to try to put my cynicism to one side and remember just how magical the M3 GTS felt, particularly during one amazing lap of the Ring that will stay with me for a very long time. Even in the company of a 997 GT3 RS 4.0 (evo 171), its balance, feel and performance were pretty much perfect. Can the new M4 GTS match that magic and in so doing blow away our doubts about the M4's rather dull turbocharged engine and spiky, slightly numb chassis? I really hope so.


Before we find out, let's collectively scoff – just a bit. After all, the M4 GTS is £120,500 and doesn't bump the 3-litre straight-six's capacity by a single cc. The turbochargers are unchanged, there are no trick new forged internals. It is more powerful than a standard M4, though. Power is up to 493bhp (from 425bhp) at 6250rpm and torque to 442lb ft (from 406lb ft) at 4000-5500rpm thanks to a new water injection system, which cools the intake temperature, feeds the combustion chamber with denser air and allows a boost increase from 2.2 to 2.5bar. It works under full load above 5500rpm, and during track use the 5-litre water tank located in the boot will need a refill with distilled water at the same time the fuel tank needs a fill-up.

The GTS also features all the lightweight savings you'd expect: no rear seats, a carbonfibre bonnet, carbon-ceramic brakes and a full titanium exhaust system. You can even order 'M Carbon Compound' wheels

'The GTS is so far removed from an M4. It feels every bit as hardcore as I'd hoped'







(carbon rim, alloy centres). But add in the roll-cage and the plumbing for the water tank and you get up to 1510kg, just 30kg less than the standard car with the same DCT gearbox (the GTS isn't available with a manual 'box). Disappointing. However, with the new extendable front splitter and adjustable rear wing, there are sizeable aerodynamic gains, with up to 28kg of downforce at the front and 93kg at the rear at 186mph (or 12kg front, 40kg rear at 124mph). The GTS also features KW adjustable dampers that allow you to tailor the ride height, low- and high-speed compression damping and the rebound settings, too. BMW provides a recommended road setup and a track setup, but of course you're free to click and experiment as you like.

It's 9pm when I collect the GTS from BMW UK's headquarters in Farnborough. It's parked in a puddle of orange light and looks, to my eyes, utterly bewitching. Sure, it lacks the razor-edged modernity of an Audi R8 or the evocatively distended drama of a 911 Turbo or GT3 RS, but the satin effect Frozen Dark Grey finish beautifully picks out its slim muscularity. There's a selfish race-car functionality to the M4 GTS that many people just won't 'get' but that hits each and every one of my buttons. Already I can imagine it streaked in brake dust and traces of spent rubber, tick-tick-ticking in a pitlane after a hard workout. Just 700 of these cars will be produced and I hope they all find their way onto racetracks regularly.

I've got a long motorway slog ahead of me and can't spend too long daydreaming, so I stumble into the low-set Recaros, press the starter button and wince as a dry, harsh, resonant note

pours out of the titanium exhaust. It disappears as quickly as it arrived, but dialling up the drivetrain setting to Sport or Sport+ re-ignites the soundtrack. It is ferociously loud. I settle for Sport for the drivetrain (I can't bring myself to drive this thing in 'Efficient') and Comfort for the steering and get on my way.

By the time I leave the car park, the GTS feels so far removed from an M4. The low-speed ride is tough, the steering is heavy and gives the impression the front tyres are running lots of negative camber and the whole vibe is one of grumpy impatience. Out on the arterial roads I quickly discover that on cold Michelin Pilot Cup 2 tyres about 1mm of throttle equates to a spike of wheelspin and I'm berated by the traction control system. Yikes. It feels every bit as hardcore as I'd hoped. Maybe more so. On the motorway there's an almost laughable level of tyre roar but the ride actually settles down nicely. It never morphs back into a standard M4, though. Every twitch of the steering wheel provokes a big reaction, every degree of extra throttle about another 10dB. I think I need a very good night's sleep before really exploring this car's character and capabilities.

YOU CAN ONLY SLEEP SO WELL in a service station hotel and I haven't got the time for a strong cup of coffee this morning, but the GTS is a pretty good way to shake off any remnants of tiredness, even on another short motorway hike. The road that peels off the three-laner runs for 36.1 miles before reaching the point where I'll find photographer Aston Parrott eating a full English breakfast. You can tell how good this piece of road is by the satnav's estimate that it'll take me one hour and five minutes to make that distance despite only the lightest sprinkling of villages. I hit it at around 7.45am and it's blissfully empty save for the odd tractor (dragging deeply treacherous mud). For the most part the surface is dry but very cold, but with already-warm Michelins that's not so much of an issue and immediately I decide that Sport for the drivetrain, Sport+ for the steering (the added weight for once connects you more fully to the front tyres) and a quick prod of the DSC button to select the more lenient MDM mode is the perfect setup.

Some time less than an hour and five minutes later I roll up to the hotel. The GTS has scared me two or three times thanks to unexpected-claggy-mud-meets-2.5bar-of-boost moments, deafened several birds, cows and sheep, and sucked half a tank of fuel and a good jug of distilled water from its trick injection system. It's filthy, hot and, I decide, completely magnificent. 'What's it like?' asks Aston. We can't really print my reply but it ends with 'mega' and starts with the letter F. I had a

'The whole car just zings with feedback. And it's telling you that you're just scratching the surface'



suspicion that today might be fun but it's shaping up to be completely idyllic. Sorry for the lack of suspense, but I *adore* the M4 GTS.

After initial exposure to a car you really love, it's often hard to understand quite why you love it. Instead you just drive with a bit more commitment, little-by-little, until you feel absolutely connected. Buzzing across the landscape in a bubble of excitement, just immersed in it all. So you grab at words here and there that might go some way towards summing it up. With the GTS I'd probably go for 'extreme' and 'agile' to start with, but really what shines out is 'balance'. Beneath the fury, the noise, the moments of terror when the torque gets ahold of the rear wheels over a crest or on a damp patch and fizzes them up in a heartbeat, there's an innate and extraordinary balance that gives an underlying confidence that you can deal with whatever comes next. It really is exquisite and for a car with such enormous potential, extremely accessible. Over the course of the day more detail floods in to add colour and texture to the picture but the overriding impression remains the same. The M4 GTS is big, big fun.

We climb up from a village and the GTS stares out across another challenge. It looks forbidding: a long squiggle of bumpy, weather-beaten tarmac that streams through the moor. Not the usual destination for a hardcore, track-focussed machine. The only relief is that the claustrophobic tunnel of hedgerows is gone so I should be able to lean on the front tyres on corner entry and see how the chassis copes. With a bit more room to explore I can wring the engine out, too. That wicked exhaust note is erring towards the absurd but it does give the engine some much-needed character and upgrades it from an impressive, business-like power unit to an engine you want to provoke and exploit. It hits really hard in the low and mid range but then gathers pace towards maximum power. Throttle response is sharp and although the delivery doesn't sparkle at the top end there is a newfound energy. I'd say Sport+ creates a throttle that's a little too binary but in Sport it feels responsive and intuitive.

The GTS howls and crackles across the moor, the M DCT 'box snapping through changes almost imperceptibly. In the old M3 GTS the gearchanges felt more mechanical and more satisfying as there was no slack at all in the tight, normally aspirated drivetrain. Here as in, say, the 488 GTB, the precision of the gearchanges seems slightly softer-edged beneath the turbocharged delivery. We're talking degrees here, but it's worth noting nevertheless. I guess the truth is that despite the astonishing soundtrack the engine hasn't magically morphed into one of the true greats.

There are plenty of other ingredients of sky-high quality, though. The steering is so precise, and because the suspension is so aggressive in its damping and geometry, the whole car just zings

'You feel
absolutely
connected.
Buzzing across
the landscape
in a bubble of
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just immersed
in it all'



Water injection system

The inherent problem with turbocharging is that by compressing the air in the intake chamber you also significantly increase its temperature. Hot air is less dense, less oxygen means less fuel can be ignited. The M4 is already fitted with an air-to-water intercooler to help cool the intake temperature, but the GTS goes further with its water injection system.

It works by injecting a fine mist of water directly into the air chamber of the intake system. This water significantly cools the intake temperature and hence more fuel can be ignited, allowing the point of ignition to be advanced to improve power and efficiency. The temperatures of the pistons, exhaust valves and the turbochargers themselves are also reduced, as the exhausts gases are cooler.

As a result, boost pressure is increased from 2.2bar to 2.5bar. The lower temperatures are also said to reduce the formation of harmful emissions, particularly NOx. The system also means there is less over-fuelling for cooling purposes and BMW claims that the M4 GTS is about ten per cent more fuel efficient in hard track use thanks to its water injection system.

On track

Separate from our UK road drive, we also got to sample the M4 GTS on the F1 track in Barcelona during the car's international press launch. We were permitted just six laps and we were also told that there was to be no drifting. About ten times.

The cars were running the recommended track setup – much lower, stiffer and with the front splitter pulled right out and the rear wing running at its steepest angle. The car felt transformed again, with even more weight for the steering, plus a chassis with the authentic reactions of a race car. It was busy on the brakes and thumped over bumpier sections, but the way it floated through the turns teetering on the edge remained.

There was a physicality to the M4 GTS. It felt low, wide and created big forces, but there remained a progression to it that's rare and deeply addictive. Just six laps wasn't enough, but it was enough to know that the M Division has done a proper job with this car.

‘My heart thumps when I remember the rear wheels spinning-up. I can still feel that easy, effortless balance’

BMW M4 GTS

Engine In-line 6-cyl, 2979cc
CO2 199g/km
Power 493bhp @ 6250rpm
Torque 442lb ft @ 4000-5500rpm
Transmission Seven-speed dual-clutch, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip differential
Front suspension MacPherson struts, coil springs, adjustable dampers, anti-roll bar
Rear suspension Multi-link, coil springs, adjustable dampers, anti-roll bar
Brakes Carbon-ceramic discs, 400mm front, 380mm rear, ABS, EBD
Wheels 19in front, 20in rear
Tyres 265/35 R19 front, 285/30 R20 rear
Weight 1510kg
Power-to-weight 332bhp/ton
0-62mph 3.8sec (claimed)
Top speed 190mph (limited)
Basic price £120,500
On sale Now

evo rating: ★★★★★

Clockwise from top

left: carbonfibre bonnet; titanium exhaust; light-alloy wheels wearing Cup 2 tyres; weight-saving fabric door pulls; tank for water injection system; distilled water for refilling the tank

with feedback. (It helps that you're locked into those lovely Recaros, of course.) What's it telling you? Mainly that you're just scratching the surface. Body control is excellent in the recommended road setting (ride height 624mm front, 631mm rear; rebound set at 6 clicks front and 7 rear, low-speed compression at 3 clicks front and 2 rear, high-speed compression at 6 front and 7 rear – just so you know). It's not so low and stiff that it's scraping body parts on the surface, nor is it being flung around by the bumps, but it does feel light, agile and also supremely controlled. Yes, it'll hunt a bit for cambers under braking and the solidly mounted rear axle might occasionally thump over a series of rapid-fire bumps, but for the most part it just eats up direction changes, dances over rough roads and feels remarkably light on its feet. It might be just 30kg lighter than a standard M4 but it feels more like 300kg.

As mentioned, this control and connection is underscored by simply delicious balance. On clear-sighted corners you can roll the GTS into the apex and feel the front tyres start to slip wide, but as they do so the rear moves to match and then just overtake their angle, creating a sensation of amazing accuracy and fluidity. Gun the throttle and you'll get a spike of oversteer to remind you that this is not some sort of playful giant MX-5 – but that only adds to the thrill. You're in control of a car with biting performance and high lateral limits and yet you're on top of it, making it move to your beat. The odd reminder that this car has sharp edges if you make a mistake or misjudge the surface... well, that's where the satisfaction comes from.

Little niggles creep in at times. The ceramics

aren't quite as feelsome as those of a GT3 RS and the pedal isn't so heroically consistent as those hardcore Porsches'. I think I might tinker with the front suspension settings to tighten up response still further – or maybe extending the front splitter (it has 60mm of adjustment and is fully retracted today) would do the trick. The MDM mode for the traction control still feels a bit too restrictive to me, too. The steering wheel also has a ridiculously thick rim. And that engine... Much as I love the pops and bangs and crackles and howls, it's just not inspirational like the old M3 GTS engine nor quite as ferocious as something like a GT-R or 911 Turbo unit.

Yet even as I write this stuff I can't help smiling. My heart thumps when I remember the rear wheels spinning-up over sharp bumps, I can still feel that easy, effortless balance through one cresting corner in particular that ended every time with a fast-paced lick of oversteer. On that day, on that road, I enjoyed every second. There are plenty of hard questions for the M4 GTS to answer, though. Perhaps the most pressing is how can Porsche (them again) re-engineer a Cayman from front to back and price it just £9000 above the model below, yet BMW has to double the price of an M4 for that water injection system, a bit of carbonfibre, a tweak to the M Diff, some new suspension components and some lovely dampers? Given that, I'm sure plenty of you can't see the appeal of the M4 GTS in a world of GT3s, R8s and the 570S. You might be right. But if you measure the value a car offers by the smiles it creates and the memories it sears, then the M4 GTS is worth every penny. Just remember to warm up the tyres.

Earlier extreme M3s

BMW M3 GTS (E92)

Engine V8, 4361cc
Power 444bhp @ 8300rpm
Torque 324lb ft @ 3750rpm
Transmission Seven-speed dual-clutch, rear-drive, limited-slip diff
Weight 1530kg
Power-to-weight 295bhp/ton
0-62mph 4.3sec (claimed)
Top speed 190mph (claimed)
On sale 2010-2011 (150 built)
evo rating: ★★★★★

BMW M3 CSL (E46)

Engine In-line 6-cyl, 3246cc
Power 355bhp @ 7900rpm
Torque 273lb ft @ 4900rpm
Transmission Six-speed SMG, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip diff
Weight 1385kg
Power-to-weight 260bhp/ton
0-62mph 4.9sec (claimed)
Top speed 155mph (limited)
On sale 2003-2004 (1383 built)
evo rating: ★★★★★

BMW M3 GT (E36)

Engine In-line 6-cyl, 2990cc
Power 291bhp @ 7000rpm
Torque 238lb ft @ 3900rpm
Transmission Six-speed manual, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip diff
Weight 1460kg
Power-to-weight 203bhp/ton
0-62mph 5.9sec (claimed)
Top speed 155mph (limited)
On sale 1995 (350 built)
evo rating: ★★★★★

BMW M3 Sport Evolution (E30)

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 2467cc
Power 235bhp @ 7000rpm
Torque 177lb ft @ 4750rpm
Transmission Five-speed manual, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip diff
Weight 1200kg
Power-to-weight 199bhp/ton
0-62mph 6.5sec (claimed)
Top speed 154mph (claimed)
On sale 1989-1990 (600 built)
evo rating: ★★★★★



Against the clock

by HENRY CATCHPOLE

'If it's slightly damp or even just cold it won't be worth trying to get figures,' said Jethro when I picked the M4 GTS up from him. He was right. When I arrived at Bruntingthorpe in the morning it was initially impossible to even get enough traction for the in-gear times for second and third gears. However, as the morning progressed, the sun came out and

heated things up to a balmy 9 degrees C.

The GTS still needed its Cup 2 tyres warming to get a decent launch, and if you aborted a run then the transmission required some time to recover before you could have another go. With the engine set to Sport+, DSC off and the gearbox in its fastest setting, you simply put your left foot on the brake

and floor the throttle. The revs then stabilise at just under 3000rpm with the message Launch Control Active. But it wasn't quite as simple as side-stepping the brake pedal, because if you kept the throttle buried then you simply lit up the rear tyres with far too much wheelspin. However, a very slight feathering of the throttle just tempered

the wheelspin through first gear (1.7sec to 30mph is pretty impressive for a front-engined, rear-drive car), after which you could return the pedal to the bulkhead and just enjoy the ride with the 'box shifting itself.

BMW claims 0-62mph in 3.8sec (0.3sec quicker than a regular M4 equipped with DCT). Here's what we recorded.

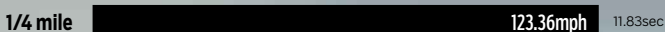
Standing-start acceleration



Braking



Quarter mile



In-gear acceleration

MPH	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th
20-40	1.27	2.34				
30-50	1.26	1.82	2.67			
40-60	1.35	1.76	2.35	3.08	4.09	
50-70		1.85	2.38	3.10	3.88	5.66
60-80		2.00	2.52	3.13	3.98	5.44
70-90		2.29	2.69	3.23	4.12	5.75
80-100		2.97	2.86	3.45	4.36	6.07
90-110			3.21	3.72	4.62	6.50
100-120			3.81	4.00	5.11	7.16
110-130			4.94	4.51	5.70	7.98
120-140				5.50	6.09	9.16
130-150				7.00	6.63	10.09
140-160				10.03	7.74	
15-170					9.93	
V-max	66.86mph	100.41mph	133.58mph			



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by RICHARD MEADEN

PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT

SPECIAL DELIVERY

There's nothing quite like the rush of a turbocharged supercar. Ferrari's F40 and 488 are separated by almost 30 years and their characters couldn't be more different, yet the way they deliver their power is equally intoxicating



4500rpm in third gear.

With the cast alloy throttle pedal pinned to its stop, this is the moment when the F40 grabs you by the lapels and reminds you why it's still the boss of boost. If it's been a while since you've driven one, or if you haven't driven one before, you'll have spent the considerable time it takes for the tachometer needle to creep round the first half of the dial wondering whether the fearsome reputation is justified. Big mistake.

When the boost does arrive, it's not switch-like. It's more impressive than that. Where once there was calm, those IHI turbos deliver fury and wheelspin in an overwhelming wave of torque that twists the tarmac out from under the rear Pirellis like a bitumen rug. The initial effect is at once explosive, exhilarating, eye-widening and buttock-clenching, and it continues to grow in intensity until you run out of revs or, more likely, nerve.

The first time it happens you feel like you've swallowed your tongue, then the flood of adrenalin hits and you hoot, and I mean hoot, with giddy, manic laughter until your ribs hurt. Then, just as surely as night follows day, you relax your death grip of the steering wheel, wipe one sweaty palm and then the other on your jeans, put both hands back on the wheel and immediately steel yourself to repeat the process. Welcome to your addiction to that strongest of Class A automotive drugs.

Ferrari's first relationship with turbocharging was much more than a flirtation. From fire-spitting F1 cars to 208 tax-dodger, glorious 288 GTO and legendary F40, forced induction was an all-consuming quest through the meat of the '80s, even if the mainstream production models didn't reflect this. That it's the F40 that fused itself into turbo folklore as firmly as a melted piston is no surprise. It was conceived at the height of an era intoxicated by turbocharging's steroidal effects. It looked like no Ferrari before it and it went like no Ferrari before it. Or since, as we're in the process of reminding ourselves...


Once the boost has kicked in, one thing you come to terms with very swiftly is that 471bhp has never felt so fierce. Okay, so there's a good chance Ferrari's claimed power figures were a little shy of the mark. True also that a well-sorted F40 has never felt fitter than it does today, but still the bald figures are less than startling in 2016. Don't be fooled. For starters there's 426lb ft of torque at 4000rpm. Then





**‘The F40
delivers a
singular and
searingly
honest driving
experience’**





there's the fact an F40 weighs just 1100kg. When it comes to fast cars, fun and physics are one and the same. A fact underlined by a sub-4sec 0-60mph time and a 0-100mph time of 7.8sec, and this in the days before launch control and paddleshift gearboxes.

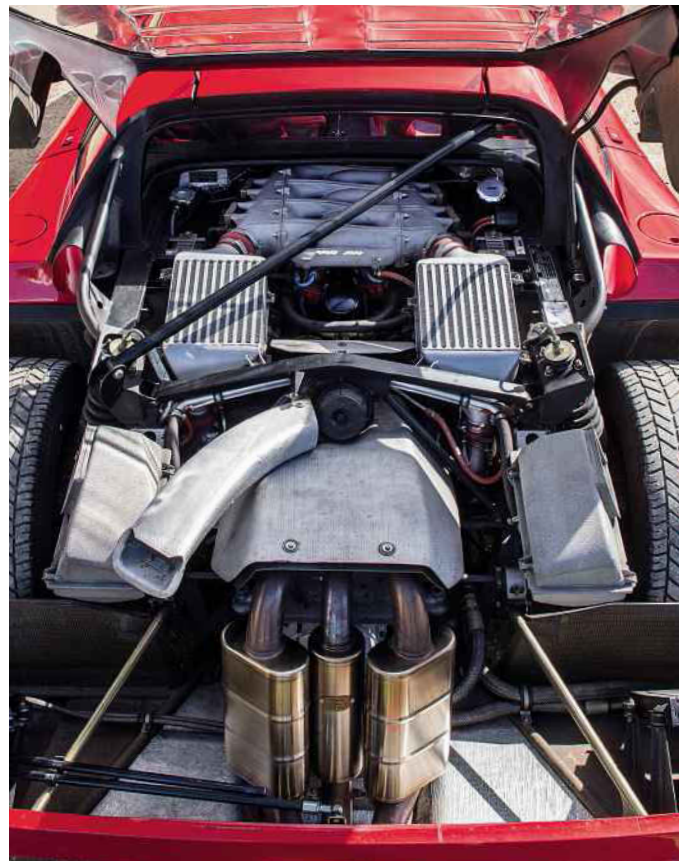
But even this does little to capture the essence of what it is to feel the accelerative force of a fully lit F40, for the process of being punched towards the horizon is as much defined by the lulls of off-boost lag as they are on-boost ballistics. Like a great orator, the F40 is a master of the dramatic pause. The wait for those turbine wheels to spool-up might cost precious time against the clock, but the anticipation that comes with building boost pressure is a winner every time.

On- or off-boost, the brittle, cammy zing of the 2.9-litre V8 is angry and industrial. Busy, no-nonsense and no-frills, this is a Ferrari from the days when the Old Man still had a hand in how things were done. There's more than a pinch of Enzo's curmudgeonly arrogance in its unflinching commitment to the hardest of hardcore performance.

If you're not prepared to work at extracting that performance, don't bother strapping yourself in. If you're not feeling on your mettle, don't embarrass yourself by provoking it. And if you are, be ready, for the questions come thick and fast. Are you serious? Do you have the skill and sensitivity? Can you summon courage yet retain sufficient clarity of thought? And, perhaps most crucially, do you have the awareness and self-control to know when you've pushed your luck far enough? Answer 'yes' to all of those and it will still be a wild ride, but one that's intense and intoxicating. I think you can guess what's likely to happen if you're found wanting.

That's why the F40 still stacks up, despite being profoundly flawed. The ride is terrible, the brakes adequate at best, the driving position kinked and contorted, the balance of torque and traction tipped almost suicidally in favour of the former, and the power delivery feels like you're controlling the throttle via satellite. And yet it's precisely because you have to make allowances and, ultimately, successfully pit yourself against the machine in order to form a bond with it that the F40 delivers such a singular and searingly honest driving experience.

By contrast it's the flawlessness of the 488 that blows your mind. We tend to celebrate cars that are a challenge, but the way the 488 does what it does is genuinely breathtaking. It's a fully rounded, three-dimensional car. Comfortable and civilised, refined, smooth, beautifully built and one of the easiest and



'Imagine the F40's power delivery with all the gaps filled in and that's the 488'



most intuitive supercars to simply get in and drive. An occasion without the ordeal.

Of course that ensures it'll never garner the hero status of the F40, nor should it, for the 488 was never intended to be the wild child of the family. Just don't let that trick you into thinking the 488 is in any way soft. Yes, it has pliancy to go with the pin-sharp responses, and yes, you can press the button marked 'A' and let the car change gear itself. You can let the E-diff and stability control nanny you in 'Wet' mode so you barely feel the tail shimmy, even as you squeeze into the 3.9-litre twin-turbo V8's huge reserves of torque while the tyres are still cold. Your surroundings and the soundtrack might be a lot more exotic, but, in terms of driving effort, a 488 is as taxing as an Audi A3 when running in its mildest settings.

Work your way through the manettino's five modes and you gradually peel back the layers of the 488's ability, upping the tempo with each click. Such is the seamlessness with which each and every critical dynamic element of the car ups its game that you're treated to a building feeling of urgency, immediacy and aggression. There are no rough edges, things just get sharper, harder, steelier. Everything is in harmony, with no one element dominating. The gearbox is exceptional, the brakes firm and as progressive at low speed as they are emphatic at high speed. The steering response and damping both share the same tight control and clarity, the chassis mirroring this with exceptional agility and an abundance of grip to lean on.

Imagine the F40's power delivery with all the gaps filled in and that's the 488. It's there under your right foot at all times, ready to respond to the smallest increase in pedal pressure. That's not to say it's on a hair-trigger but, where the F40 has yawning moments of turbo lag followed by the impression eight sticks of Semtex have just gone off in the combustion chambers, the 488 responds with a solid wall of shove accompanied by a deep, purposeful engine note overlaid with the muffled hiss of the turbos force-feeding the cylinders.

Such is the muscularity of the motor, you can give the throttle a modest squeeze in 5th, and, were it not for the gear indicator, you'd swear the car was in 3rd. If there's a downside, it's the fact you can make outrageous progress without needing to do much in the way of paddle-flapping, but, unlike in the F40, should you wish to work up and down the gears you can do so instantly. At which point you enter a realm of increasingly head-spinning acceleration,

the F40's dramatic pause exchanged for a deranged attack on the middle distance. It's never less than breathtaking and sometimes a little unsettling as longitudinal g-force gathers you up and holds you in your seat.

As you work your way into the more extreme manettino modes, the 488 gives you increasingly vivid reminders that although it can be there to help you, it also gives you the option to take control. If you do, it pays to heed the warnings, for cars of this potency are not to be messed

with. Such instant torque makes massive demands on the tyres and, without the discreet flattery of the supremely judged stability control, you can light up the 488's rears on part throttle. Being a turbo, more revs equal more boost, which if you're not careful leads to even more wheelspin.

April showers and an F40 are a fearsome combination, but turn the driver aids off in the 488 and you're consumed by the exact same clammy heart-in-mouth feeling, knowing every input you make to throttle and steering is absolutely critical.

Of course, the big difference between the F40 and 488 is you don't have a choice in the F40, but it's a vivid reminder that big boost and damp roads are as spiky a combination as they ever were. It's also a head-scrumbling demonstration of how, thanks to advances in electronics, the 488 spans the extremes of day-to-day docility and day-of-days ferocity.

The F40 is an icon with good reason. Tricky, demanding and at times downright scary, it feels like a car built by engineers clawing their way up a precipitous learning curve. Too committed to head back down into the comfort zone of natural aspiration, but too far from the summit to clearly see their objective. That the crudity and violence of the F40's delivery was and remains the essence of its appeal is as irrational as it is reassuring.

In many respects you couldn't find a more different car than the 488. So clearly the work of a team of engineers at the top of their game, it feels like they embarked on their journey armed with all the answers when the F40 development team hadn't even been furnished with all the questions. Of course the two cars set out to achieve very different objectives, but somehow that makes the 488 even more freakish. A car so user-friendly literally anyone could drive it safely in its mildest mode, yet one that will make your palms sweat and your heart pound in time-honoured turbocharged fashion. ☒

Ferrari F40

Engine V8, 2936cc, twin-turbo
CO2 n/a
Power 471bhp @ 7000rpm
Torque 426lb ft @ 4000rpm
Transmission Five-speed manual, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip differential
Front suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar
Rear suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar
Brakes Ventilated iron discs, 330mm front and rear
Wheels 8 x 17in front, 13 x 17in rear
Tyres 245/40 ZR17 front, 335/35 ZR17 rear
Weight 1100kg
Power-to-weight 437bhp/ton
0-62mph 4.1sec (claimed)
Top speed 201mph (claimed)
Price when new £193,000 (in 1987)
Value today c£850,000
evo rating: ★★★★★

Ferrari 488 GTB

Engine V8, 3902cc, twin-turbo
CO2 260g/km
Power 661bhp @ 8000rpm
Torque 560lb ft @ 3000rpm
Transmission Seven-speed dual-clutch, rear-wheel drive, E-Diff3, F1-Trac, SSC2
Front suspension Double wishbones, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar
Rear suspension Multi-link, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar
Brakes Carbon-ceramic discs, 398mm front, 360mm rear, ABS, EBD
Wheels 9 x 20in front, 11 x 20in rear
Tyres 245/35 ZR20 front, 305/30 ZR20 rear
Weight 1475kg
Power-to-weight 455bhp/ton
0-62mph 3.0sec (claimed)
Top speed 205mph+ (claimed)
Basic price £183,964
On sale Now
evo rating: ★★★★★



Turbo Tales

by STUART GALLAGHER



‘RACING A TURBOCHARGED Group C car was like driving a Ferrari F40 on steroids,’ says Le Mans winner, Bugatti test driver and *evo*’s fastest pair of hands Andy Wallace. ‘The normally aspirated XJR-12 was a bit of a pussycat by comparison. You could control it on the throttle, knew exactly what the engine would do at any given speed and it was remarkably easy to drive in hindsight.’

‘It was still phenomenally fast with 750bhp but at least you knew it would be the same for lap after lap. By comparison the XJR-11 [above] felt pretty much undrivable at times.’

‘The problem was that the electronics weren’t as clever as the human brains designing the engines and couldn’t keep up with the development. Whereas in the V12 we could map the throttle exactly how we wanted it, with the turbo engine there was a map for the boost, the fuel and the ignition, but even then the throttle pedal would still have only three positions: idle, quarter-throttle or full throttle.’

‘The engines produced around 1100bhp, but there was no way you could use anywhere near that consistently, not in qualifying or the race. The race tyres couldn’t cope with much more than 700bhp anyway and even with qualifying tyres fitted you couldn’t drive the car to its full potential with all 1100bhp available. So the engineers would set a map for qualifying and we’d go out on used race tyres to make sure it was working:

the electronics were so unstable there was no guarantee the engine would run properly first time out. You’d put in a lap to determine there was at least 900bhp there, come back to the pits shaking and confirm it was all working and beg for some qualifying rubber.’

‘That 900bhp was useable for most of the qualifying lap, but you knew there were sections that the full 1100bhp would make a difference so we had a boost button fitted that we’d press to get that extra 200bhp. And then after two runs of three laps and that initial banker lap, the head bolts were stretched, the engine was losing water and it needed a rebuild.’

‘As well as pressing the boost button, the engineers would also be on the radio telling us to adjust the boost, fuel and ignition using three cockpit buttons, A, B and C, but you had to press them in the correct order or you’d blow the engine. They even fitted a pipe in the V of the engine and fed it into the driver’s helmets so we could listen out for detonation and switch it off before she blew.’

‘They were remarkable times, real experimental times. Although when the 3.5-litre V10s came in the following season they demonstrated just how much turbo lag we had been dealing with. But it’s amazing what you get used to. The amazing thing now is that a Bugatti Chiron feels faster and more impressive under full-bore acceleration than the XJR-11 ever did.’

Wait for it...

Romeo Ferraris

Comedy turbo lag was more or less a thing of the past by the time I started road-testing, but I did get a taste of what those very early turbocharged cars might have been like to drive when I had a go in a Romeo Ferraris Fiat 500-based racer. It still used a 1.4-litre engine, like the standard road car, but it had been boosted to a massive 370bhp. Naturally, that meant the turbo spooled up very aggressively and way up the rev-range – at around 5000rpm, in fact! Getting a clean exit away from corners in wet conditions was pretty much impossible.

Dan Prosser, road test editor

Audi S1 EKS World RX supercar

Imagine eating the hottest chilli on the Scoville scale, but instead of the heat, stomach cramps, sweats and nausea developing over a period of minutes, imagine all of the symptoms wracking your body the instant the pepper touches your tongue. That would be food ALS. You’d think an anti-lag system would make a turbocharged car more driveable. No mountain of boost to drive around. But in the EKS World RX car it just meant all 600lb ft hit the driveshafts as soon as I touched the throttle. Combined with gearing shorter than Dickie Meaden, it provided the fiercest driving experience I’ve ever had.

Henry Catchpole, features editor

Ruf Yellowbird

It was only the second time I had met Alois Ruf, and only the second time I’d driven one of his remarkable cars. That car was the Yellowbird.

I didn’t need to slip on white socks and loafers like Stefan Roser and head to the Nürburgring to get the ‘Bird; instead I scared myself stupid on a German B-road when I thought a straight was long enough for a 1150kg 911 with 469bhp and 408lb ft. There was some lag... and then an air-cooled flat-six reminded me that few things are as scary as an angry twin-turbo Porsche being driven by someone clearly way out of their depth. I loved it.

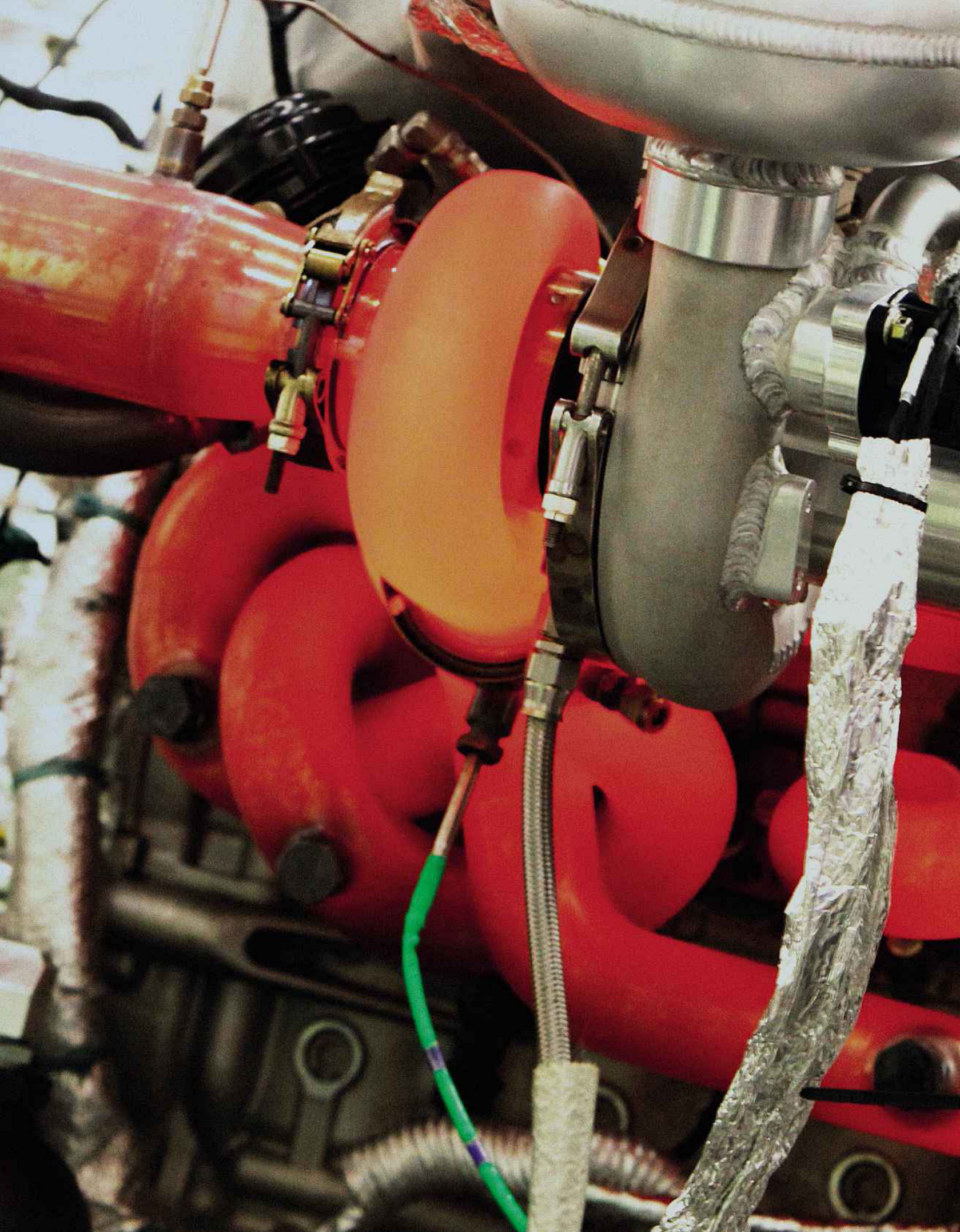
Stuart Gallagher, managing editor

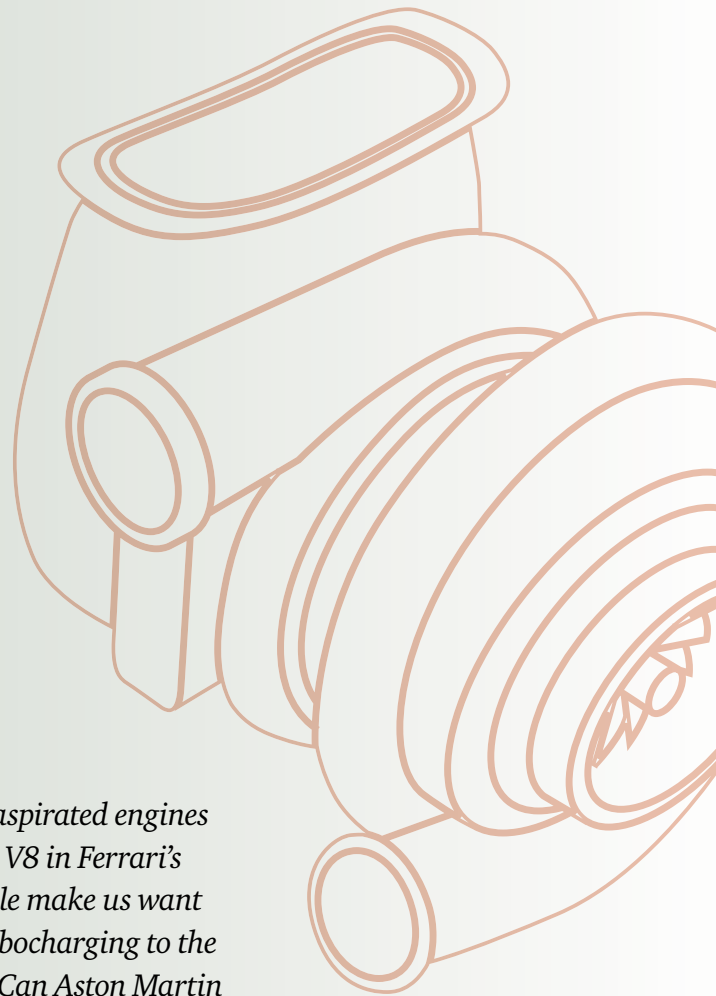
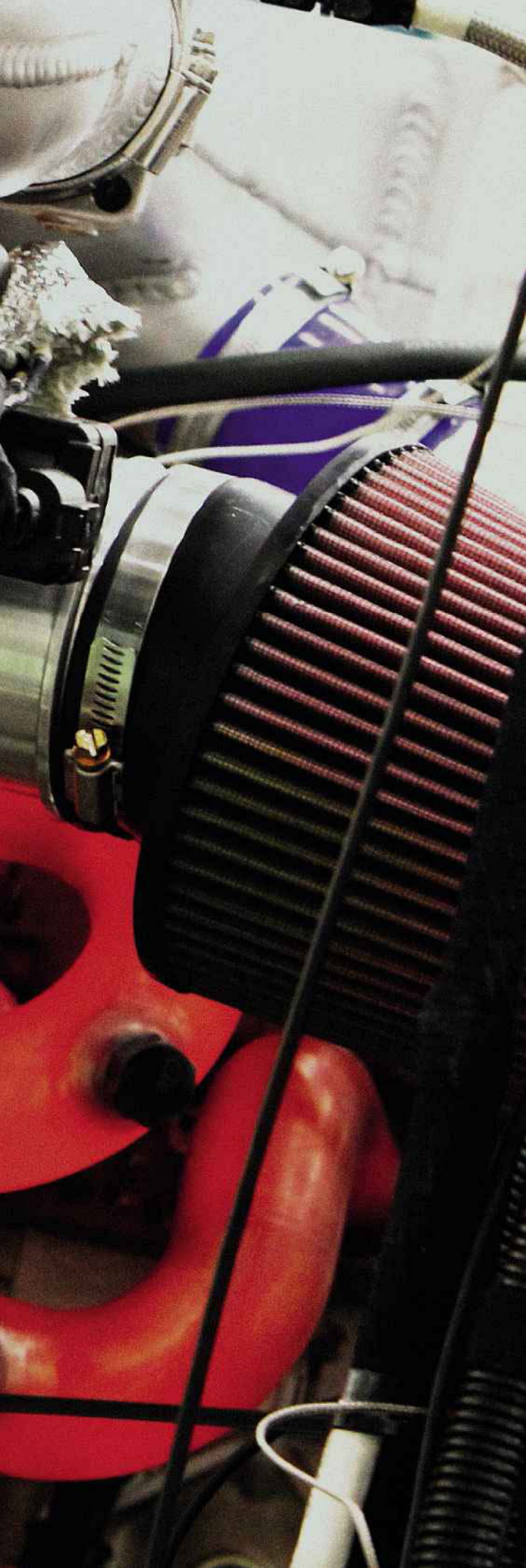
Bugatti Veyron Super Sport

I’m at a banked oval test track in Spain driving a Bugatti Veyron Grand Sport Vitesse. On the straight and at around 160mph I can see the banked corner ahead snaking off to the right. It looks like a wall, and every cell in my body is screaming ‘brake!’. But the man in the passenger seat, supercar test driver Loris Biccocchi, signals me to ‘floor it’. So I do.

The Veyron surges forward: 160, 170, 180mph. Then we hit the turn and the world tilts right. I feel like a pilot steering a jet fighter through a canyon. As we exit the banking the Veyron continues charging. At 228mph Loris waves a hand. Time to brake. Wow. So that’s how four turbos and 1183bhp feel. I simply can’t imagine what the 1500bhp Chiron will be like.

Nick Trott, editor





Naturally aspirated engines such as the V8 in Ferrari's 458 Speciale make us want to fight turbocharging to the bitter end. Can Aston Martin and Bugatti's top engineers change our minds?

FORCING THE ISSUE

by JETHRO BOVINGDON

GREAT ENGINES MAKE unforgettable cars. It's that simple. The McLaren F1, perhaps the most unforgettable of all, might well be the expression of an engineering genius with unprecedented freedom to innovate, but it's defined by its 6.1-litre V12 engine. The greatest of them all, its noise, response and exquisitely violent performance is absolutely at the centre of everything it does, everything you feel as a driver or stunned passenger.

At the other end of the scale there are some pretty ropey cars that are forgiven because they have special engines: Ferrari's Testarossa, perhaps. Virtually any modern-day V6-powered Alfa, the Maserati 4200 GT and so many more. We need great engines to imbue cars with charisma and excitement, and because they make the machines we love feel like living, breathing monsters.

There are no hard and fast rules to what makes a great engine, but there are some sweeping generalisations that, for the most part, hold true. The biggest of them all is that nothing matches the quality and excitement of atmospheric engines. There are exceptions, and there's no doubt the raw thrill of riding

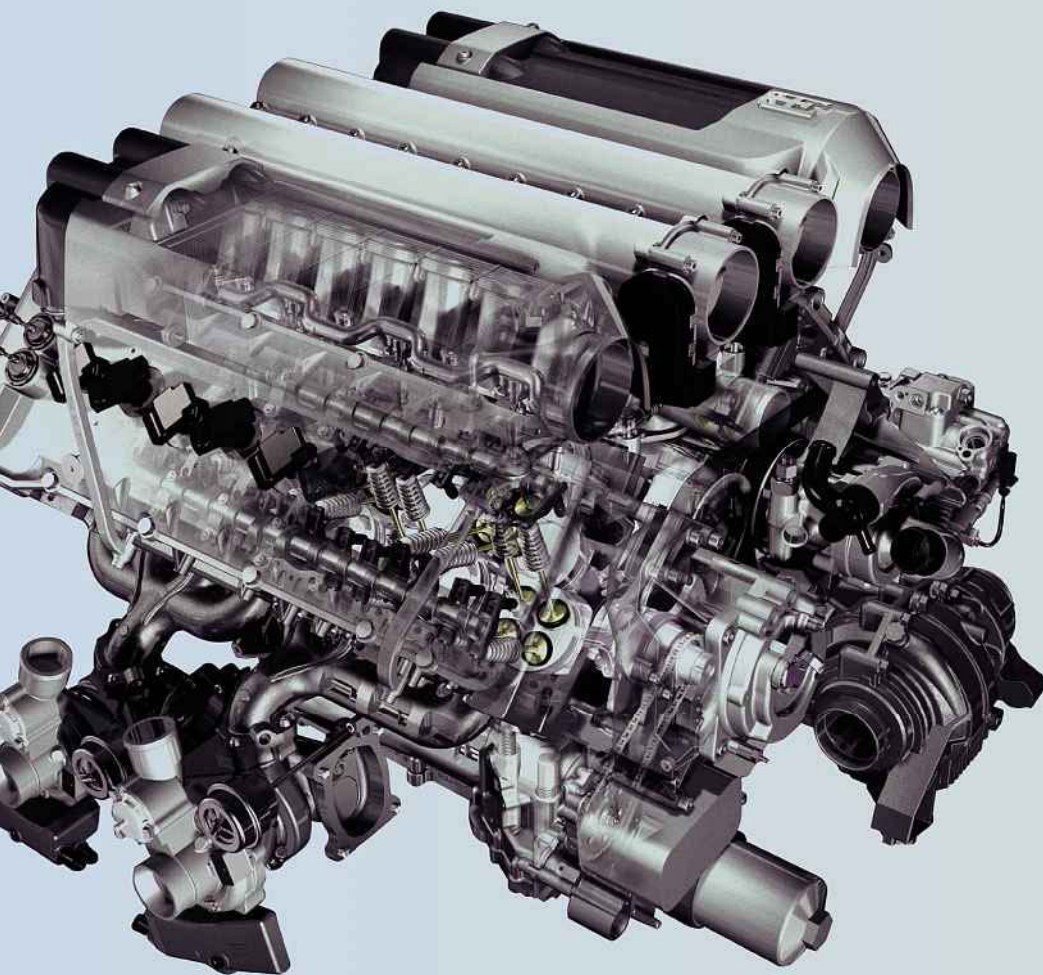
the lag/boost cliff of an F40 is intense and shocking, and a GT2 RS virtually rearing up on two wheels under acceleration is a massive thrill, but compared to an F50 at 7500rpm or the way your right foot, the engine and the rear tyres seem to react as one in a GT3 RS 4.0? No contest. At a more attainable level, the sweet precision of the outgoing Boxster or the searing energy of something like an E46 or E92 M3 as it hones in on the limiter is worth a million moments of surging turbocharged torque.

But we don't want to be accused of being luddites (not again, anyway) and we're ready to embrace a new generation of great engines. Great turbocharged engines. Why? Well, we've got no choice, so let's hope the greatest engineering minds will teach us that normal aspiration can be eclipsed. Where to start? Bugatti Chiron and Aston Martin DB11 sounds as good a place of any, so here we speak to Bugatti's head of engineering, Willi Netuschil, and Aston Martin powertrain chief engineer Dr Brian Fitzsimons about the challenges of developing turbocharged engines, the benefits and the future of the technology.

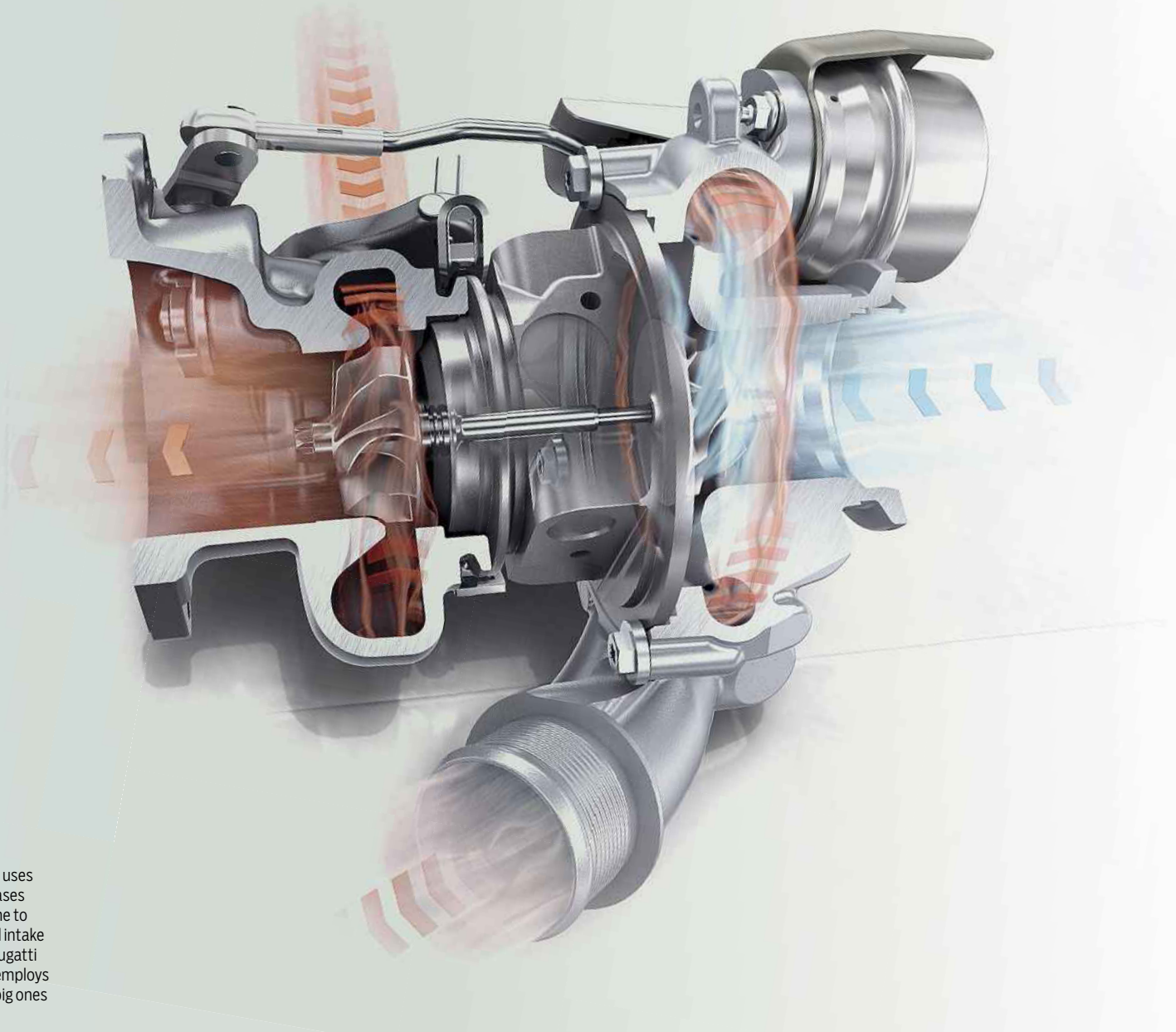
First, the engines themselves. The Bugatti has

a 7993cc W16 engine with four turbochargers and utilises water-to-air intercoolers. The turbos are single-scroll units and *big*. In the search for a massive power output of 1479bhp at 6700rpm and 1180lb ft from 2000rpm to 6000rpm, Bugatti increased the relative size of the turbochargers over an original Veyron by 69 per cent. The compressor wheel of each turbo is 74mm in diameter and the turbine wheel 64.4mm. For comparison, a Nissan GT-R turbocharger has a 56.1mm compressor wheel and 52.4mm turbine. The Chiron's absolute boost pressure is 2.85bar, as compared to 2.25bar in a Veyron or 2.30bar in a Veyron Super Sport. Big turbos usually equal big lag, but the Chiron uses Bugatti's new two-stage system to reduce this significantly. At engine speeds between idle (650rpm) and 3800rpm, the Chiron utilizes all of its exhaust energy to boost just two turbochargers, spinning them up very quickly. Above that engine speed, all four turbos are in operation.

The DB11 uses a new, 5204cc V12 with two twin-scroll turbochargers (which separate out conflicting cylinder pulses to increase efficiency) featuring electronically controlled wastegates.



‘Big turbos usually equal big lag, but the Chiron uses a new two-stage system to reduce this significantly’



Right: a turbo uses hot exhaust gases to spin a turbine to compress cold intake air. **Left:** the Bugatti Veyron's W16 employs four turbos – big ones

It produces 600bhp at 6500rpm and 516lb ft from 1500rpm to 5000rpm. The compressor wheel of each Japanese turbocharger is 68mm in diameter and the turbine 56mm (and they spin at up to 152,000rpm). The engine also features cylinder-bank deactivation to improve fuel consumption and emissions.

Fitzsimons is glowing with pride about the DB11's new engine and hearing him speak passionately about its development really whets the appetite. 'The first decision was that we were going to keep a V12 engine,' he begins. 'The environment for that is harsh – people want more horsepower but lower emissions. Quite frankly, the only way to do that is to pressure-charge the engine to give you a really high ceiling in terms of horsepower and torque.'

So the decision was driven by pragmatism, and the on-paper efficiency gains are sizeable, as Fitzsimons explains: 'In doing that, it affords you the opportunity to make the engine a bit smaller – we downsized our engine, not significantly, just to 5.2 litres – but nevertheless it's significant enough to give a benefit. The

other massive opportunity it gives you is that if you can design that engine with lots of low-speed torque, you can use pretty tall gearing and under normal driving conditions have sufficient torque yet rotate the engine at a fairly low speed, which significantly helps fuel consumption. It's known as down-speeding.'

This isn't the stuff to make an enthusiast's heart sing, but we're assured the engine will do just that. 'Let's deal with response first,' Fitzsimons says as he warms up when I suggest turbocharged engines struggle in this respect. 'It's a perception out there – and a reality in certain instances – that small, highly pressure-charged engines will not respond as well as a bigger, normally aspirated engine. We recognise that and so we looked at what was best-in-class out there and set very aggressive targets for ourselves. Secondly, we haven't really downsized this a lot. There's still 5.2 litres of naturally aspirated power available. So the key is to use that 5.2 litres as best as you can. So when designing the turbocharger system and air path, our aim was to make sure the naturally

aspirated operation of the engine was as good as possible. That worked an absolute treat.'

Aston Martin looked at everything from electric turbochargers to superchargers, but found a pair of twin-scroll turbochargers offered the best results.

'Our objective was to get something reliable and with proven technology. There's a lot of technology out there that maybe doesn't deliver what it says on the box. So we selected a twin-scroll turbo for each bank of cylinders with an electrically operated wastegate to give us very precise control and good distribution of the pulsations from each bank of six cylinders. And that's a really lovely number of cylinders to work with because the pulsations are well suited to keeping a turbocharger spinning, and indeed easing out any flow pulsations. The key things are low inertia in the turbines, good attention to detail in the bearing packs and robustness – and the ability to control that wastegate very precisely, which we have.'

Producing 516lb ft from 1500rpm will have caused the chassis guys a headache, but there



Left: it might be turbocharged, but as Aston Martin points out, there are still 5.2 litres of naturally aspirated power to be tapped before the effects of forced induction are felt

‘It’s good to hear that engineers are addressing the drawbacks of turbocharging with such resource and passion’

was no temptation to follow Ferrari’s lead and produce torque maps for each gear to enhance traction and mimic a normally aspirated feel.

‘We looked at it and the 488 GTB has a fantastic engine and gives a fantastic driving experience. Hats off to them, brilliant job,’ says Fitzsimons. ‘Our philosophy was different. We’ve got all that torque... use it. It’s a turbocharged engine, unashamedly a turbocharged engine that provides a fantastic experience. Give the customer what’s there.’

That’s an attitude of which Bugatti would surely approve. Head of engineering, Willi Netuschil, is deadpan when discussing the Chiron’s development. ‘When we started the discussion about the successor to the Veyron about three and a half years ago, the clear figure and the clear target was to achieve a new world record [top speed]. And we then directly decided how many horsepower we would need and it was deemed to be 1500.’ Of course it was. ‘It’s clear we investigated different solutions for this – also hybrid systems – but after this investigation there was a decision in the group that we will continue with the combustion engine. Hybrid was counted out not only in terms of weight, but if you look around, nobody can achieve the high speed.’

A top speed of over 261mph isn’t particularly relevant for, well, anyone. However, the two-stage turbocharging system is a simple but ingenious innovation. ‘At first you have to understand that in the Veyron we also started with eight litres of displacement with 1000bhp

and 922lb ft,’ explains Netuschil. ‘That means now, with the same base engine, we’re talking about 50 per cent more power, so we had to rework the whole engine and increase the size of the turbos. By doing this you also directly reduce the response of the engine. You have bigger turbo-lag. We developed the special two-stage system to avoid this. So from idle speed we start with two turbochargers – one on each side – and bring all the energy of the exhaust system to only one turbocharger, speeding it up much faster. For idle speed that’s 650-700rpm and at 2000rpm you have maximum torque. So from idle speed to maximum torque is just 1300rpm.’

Can this system create the instantaneous response of something like a 918 Spyder? Netuschil is refreshingly honest on this point: ‘Let me say if I drive a state-of-the-art hybrid like a LaFerrari, you can push and have torque directly from the hybrid system. The reaction in the first three metres is much faster – there is no other chance [to beat it] – but after three or four metres we are much better. And then you have that performance over the whole range.’

Perhaps electric turbos could soon provide a means to match the response of hybrids?

‘Yes, but with such a big turbocharger, you need really much more electrical energy to reap the advantages. With a normal electrical system it’s less beneficial. But let us look to this in the future... There’s one more important feature to this. If you’re looking at electrically operating much bigger turbos and requiring

bigger generators, then you need to look at hybrid technology. We had a lot of discussions with our customers and because nobody can guarantee what will happen in 20 years with these hybrid and electric systems, there was a clear recommendation from our customers to stay with the combustion engine.’

The final judgement on whether these engines achieve true greatness will have to wait, of course. But in a world marching towards ubiquitous turbocharging for petrol engines, it’s good to hear that engineers recognise and are addressing the drawbacks of turbocharging with such resource and passion.

Fitzsimons is convinced the DB11’s delivery will be a real surprise. ‘Of course it has significantly more torque at a lower revs,’ he says. ‘Then it just keeps coming on and on. There are a lot of turbocharged engines that don’t have their peak power at a high revs. We have our peak at 6500rpm and we rev it out to 7000rpm... It doesn’t run out of breath.’

The Chiron promises a sort of controlled lunacy. Netuschil’s matter-of-fact delivery is broken up by incredulous chuckles when he recalls driving the Chiron for the first time. ‘I drove with the 1000bhp Veyron to the Ehra-Lessien test track, tried the Chiron prototype, and when I got back in the Veyron I thought there was something damaged in the engine. Then I knew we were on the right way...’

The mind boggles. Now we just need to see if the quality of the experience matches the quantity of the performance. ❏

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SAND



YAMAHA YXZ1000R

by JIM CAMERON

*Does the Thrill of Driving
end where the tarmac stops?
With Yamaha's new YXZ1000R
sports all-terrain vehicle and
some Arizonan sand dunes,
we're about to find out*



BLAST

‘WHO IS THIS GUY? PETER WHO?’

The pensioner in the shorts, socks and sandals looks perplexed. At the entrance to the Quechan Casino Resort in Arizona there’s a bit of a fuss around some foreign guy – enough to make the pensioner pause his busy schedule of wasting his life savings and show some interest. I tell him: ‘That’s Stéphane Peterhansel. He won Dakar eleven times.’

‘Never heard of him,’ is the response. He returns to feeding his bucket of quarters into the gaming machines.

The sports all-terrain vehicle market is, I suppose, typical of the States. Like all the best American motorsport, the demand for sports ATVs originated when people took their vehicles out into the backcountry and raced them. ATVs have always had a working background, but over time the product lines evolved. Yamaha is late to the party with a pure sports variant, but the presence of a superstar like Peterhansel underlines the significance of the YXZ1000R’s arrival.

Yamaha entered the quad-bike market at the outset, back in the mid-’80s, and quickly found success, but it was 2004’s Rhino that took utilitarian ‘side-by-side’ machines into the recreational market. With it, Yamaha moved the

game on and the Rhino was a great success, but by 2007 enthusiasm was waning. And while the revenue from sales dried up during the banking crisis, there was no let up in the lawsuits from customers who’d found the limits of their talent and rolled. There were also tuned variants with R1 motorcycle engines in them. These were raced, and they were popular, but for Yamaha it was all a bit too risky.

The company instead sought to do something different, so unlike in any other ATV, the YXZ1000R driver is greeted by three pedals in the footwell and a sequential, manually operated gearbox, rather than the constantly variable transmissions that dominate the sector. There’s also a lot of technology crossover from snowmobiles, motorcycles, quad bikes and jet skis, and Yamaha chose a three-cylinder 998cc engine tuned for torque to suit this four-wheeled, 699kg application. It’s dry-sumped in order to handle the demands of racing and to lower the centre of gravity, while all four corners are suspended on huge, remote-reservoir Fox Racing dampers. Like in an Ariel Atom, you can see the suspension working from the driver’s seat, and while the electric power steering isn’t the last word in feedback, these things aren’t about the subtle sensing of the texture of the road.

Get over the huge Maxxis tyres and the vast suspension travel and the powertrain dominates the driving



Left: double-wishbone suspension uses remote-reservoir dampers. **Right:** cockpit is unapologetically bare; note the grab handle for brave passengers



‘TWENTY
YARDS IN AND
I’M GRINNING
LIKE AN IDIOT.
THESE THINGS
ARE ALL ABOUT
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DELIVERS IN
SPADES’



experience. The five-speed gearbox is centrally placed, sitting directly under the gearlever with a straight bar connecting the driver to the hardware. There's a reverse gear too, while the shift from four- to rear-wheel drive is merely a matter of flicking a large switch on the centre console. It is a testament to the development team how easy the wet clutch is in operation. All bike-engined cars are easy to stall, so with the extra rolling resistance of soft tyres and the deep sand of the Glamis Dunes in California, I was expecting a struggle. I was wrong.

Twenty yards in and I'm grinning like an idiot. These things are all about fun, and the Yamaha delivers in spades. It squats as it launches, the flat-shifting drivetrain subsequently fizzing through the gears. It smashes up the faces of dunes, pivots at the top and howls back down. Flicking it into rear-wheel-drive mode on the flatter sections means the back axle can be kicked out and the ATV steered with your right foot and momentum.

It's properly lively, and as our hosts assemble groups to explore the dunes, I quickly ensure that I'm going to be easily categorised as 'the idiot at the back'. These things appeal to a wide customer base, so Yamaha has invited a

troop of 'lifestyle' journalists from across the world. There's some nervousness about the team, as several colleagues from other countries have already let themselves down somewhat. The Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area, to give it its full name, is an extreme place and provides a unique challenge. Fluff it badly out here and you've got a long walk home. Assuming you walk the right way and not onto the US Air Force bombing range. Handily, I've got form for deserts and heavy ordinance, so I've been selected from a cast of one to be **evo's** man for the job. The man from Yamaha eyes me nervously.

This isn't like any desert of the Middle East, though. Because this is America, drag racing across the flat sand and up the steep faces of the monster dunes is a big thing, and so ATVs and huge, tubular-framed, V8-engined 'sand rails' with paddle rear tyres are the order of the day. We pass a family parked up with an air-conditioned RV, a sand rail, an ATV for mum and quads for the kids. It all looks very American, and, I'll admit, ridiculously cool.

The dunes are so big it's easy to lose perspective. Get right up top and the hard mountains in the distance give you a horizon for reference, but when carving lines in the

'A GREAT SLAB
OF SAND SHIFTS
SIDEWAYS
UNDERNEATH ME.
THE ENGINE STALLS.
THE HORIZON TIPS,
ALARMINGLY. PLEASE
DON'T ROLL. PLEASE
DON'T ROLL'

bowls between the ridges it can be hard to gauge the speed required to make increasingly ambitious rides up the main 'wall' at Glamis.

Making progress is about carving smooth lines, and I'm getting confident. Momentum is everything on the sand. How hard can it be? I've seen how it's done on YouTube. I'm keeping it pinned; I'm Baja 1000-winner BJ Baldwin, and just over the next dune I'm going to jump over a bunch of girls in bikinis. The guy in front of me slows at the top of his run up the wall and as I'm closing on him fast, instinctively I lift off the throttle. Big mistake. Gravity and deep sand slow the Yamaha so quickly that it feels like I've hit the brakes. Smashing the accelerator back down as the YXZ slows just embeds the wheels into a dune that is now itself mobile, a great slab of sand shifting sideways underneath me. The engine stalls. The horizon tips, alarmingly. Please don't roll. *Please* don't roll.

I don't roll, but suitably chastened, I do re-evaluate my competence level, thank my unphased European Quadcross Champion rescuer and then set off again. Our multinational crowd of journalists (less the two sent home early for repeated rolling) spend the heat of midday rehydrating in the shade of

Right: three-cylinder petrol engine revs to 10,500rpm; it's linked to a five-speed sequential 'box with a beefed up clutch.
Below: high-speed dune descents at Glamis are not for the faint of heart



‘SCRUB
 BUSHES
 BECOME
 APICES, THE
 YXZ NAILED
 TO THE LINE,
 TAIL DRIFTING
 WIDE’

our camp – without me. I’m happily playing the mad Englishman and putting in some extra miles learning everything I can from Matt Barr, Yamaha test engineer and my patient instructor. I’m determined to get the hang of this.

The Glamis Dunes lie in a belt five miles wide between an interstate highway and that military area. Rising to 400 feet, the fine sand is sculpted into a shifting mosaic of interlocked dunes, with dusty scrubland on the dried lakebed that sits underneath. On Halloween weekend, this area is mobbed as 200,000 enthusiasts fill the RV parks and head up onto the sand, but today we’ve pretty much got the place to ourselves. The dunes are normally criss-crossed with tracks, but a violent storm tore through the area the night we arrived. All traces of previous use were deleted and the dunes are pristine, crisp; nature’s Etch A Sketch has been properly shaken. Less untouched was the desert camp, but while the Yamaha press team has to head into town to buy new awnings, we get to experience Glamis at its absolute best.

Such extreme surroundings come at a cost, however, as it does make it hard to separate the Yamaha’s competencies from the widescreen, in-your-face experience that is the Imperial

Yamaha YXZ1000R

- Engine** In-line 3-cyl, 998cc
- Power** 105bhp
- Torque** 600lb ft
- Transmission** Five-speed sequential, switchable four/rear-wheel drive
- Front suspension** Double wishbones, coil springs, adjustable dampers, anti-roll bar
- Rear suspension** Double wishbones, coil springs, adjustable dampers, anti-roll bar
- Brakes** Ventilated discs, 245mm front and rear
- Tyres** 27 x 9-14 front, 27 x 11-14 rear
- Weight** 699kg
- Power-to-weight** 153bhp/ton
- Basic Price** \$19,799

evo rating: ★★★★★



Sand Dunes. Yes, the Weston Beach Race in Somerset is on sand, but you'll struggle to find anything comparable in Europe, let alone in the UK.

The Yamaha offers a more car-like experience than the ATV crowd are used to, but out in the dunes, the spike in torque that changing gear unleashes is a liability, not an asset. I get caught out a couple of times on the slopes in soft sand where a CVT transmission would cope well. It's on the harder valley floor that the sequential 'box really comes into its own and you can make use of more than just second and third gears.

Pick up the speed and the bespoke Fox dampers really shine, too. To prevent bottoming out they use a trick system with an additional piston that engages in a closed cup at the end of the damper's travel. I test this extensively – hidden rocks, ruts and bars of blown sand are ironed out, the three-cylinder bark of the engine right behind the seats revving out to 10,500rpm. The clutch is hydraulically operated and the connection between the crankshaft, the rear wheels and the driver is in a different league to the elastic drivetrain and constant blare of CVT-equipped machines. It's really rewarding, when you get it right.

Like most things nearly as wide as they are long, the Yamaha

is pretty lively in anything other than straight line, and is particularly keen to wag its tail on the brakes and while in rear-wheel-drive mode. Weight transfer is so obvious in long-sprung off-road machines, so the YXZ telegraphs its movements well, the grin inside my motocross helmet widening all the while. We follow a winding path, switching to four-wheel drive as we mount the dunes, then hanging back and flicking to rear-wheel drive on the flatter sections. There's a massive digital speedo with an upshift light right in the driver's line of sight. This simply begs you to wring the engine out, although there's not much rewarding or tuneful about the exhaust note.

Scrub bushes become apices, the YXZ nailed to the line, tail drifting wide, the view down the steep nose allowing the front to be placed with real precision, steering through both hands and feet. I get told off, obviously. We are the last group to return to camp, and my fellow testers look pretty exhausted, keen to retire to the shade to chat and make notes. But as the sun is dropping in the sky, I suddenly remember the extra GoPro shots I promised the editor I'd get. I just need a Yamaha guy to go with me... Matt looks resigned. 'Okay.' He grins. 'Let's have a go at drag racing up one of those big ones.' 🚩



HOW DO YOU DRIVE THE MOST SOPHISTICATED RACING CAR IN THE WORLD?

*evo asks World Endurance Champion Mark Webber
and 'rookie' Juan Pablo Montoya just what it takes to
tame the 1000bhp Porsche 919 Hybrid*

by NICK TROTT





Porsche Team

919

OMG MARI

CHOPARD

PORSCHE
MOTORSPORT

adidas
MICHELIN

POOL

DISP
BRAKE
MULTI
RECLIP
STRONG
TC CON

IT'S THE DAY AFTER THE FINAL RACE OF THE 2015 WORLD ENDURANCE

Championship decider. Sitting high and alone in one of the mega-grandstands at Bahrain's Sakhir Circuit, you settle in to watch a day of testing. With no racing, no crowds and no funfairs to distract, you can simply sit and watch the majesty of some of the greatest racing cars ever built pounding relentlessly around this challenging desert track.

The first car appears. A Porsche 911. A familiar shape in endurance racing for more than 40 years. It approaches through a fast esses, nose porpoising but maintaining startling pace. Then it accelerates, stops, turns into a hairpin, and explodes onto the straight with extraordinary, ruthless speed.

What you didn't notice was the car behind. You didn't see it because you couldn't hear it – not over the 911's flat-six scream. And because it appeared so quickly, as if bursting from a wormhole. This low, edgy, geometric collision of wings, slats and endplates tucks in behind the 911 then hits some kind of hyperdrive. *Zaaap!* It simply surges past the Porsche in a display of brutal acceleration. Within a blink it's pulled 100 metres on the 911, then it changes direction like something hitherto only seen above Roswell and is gone.

Wow.

If you could write a list of ingredients to create the Ultimate Race Car, it would read like the Porsche 919 Hybrid's spec. It has ultra-advanced aero bodywork shrink-wrapped over a carbon tub, and slick tyres that account for around a third of the width of the car. It has four-wheel drive, a compact turbocharged engine with hybrid hardware, and hydraulically interconnected self-levelling suspension. Carbon brakes? Tick. Advanced electronics? Tick. Titanium, magnesium, aluminium? Tick.

Porsche says the 919 has 500bhp at the rear axle from a V4 turbo petrol engine and another 400bhp from an electric motor at the front axle – but we hear that combined it has exceeded 1000bhp (and then some) in certain scenarios. The powertrain recovers energy from exhaust gases and braking, storing it in a 'reservoir' (a lithium-ion battery) positioned next to the driver's right arm. Fully lit the car will do 0-124mph in 4.8 seconds. That's nearly two seconds faster than a Bugatti Chiron.

Sophistication and speed haven't met like this before – not in a sportscar – which must make it an infernally tricky car, right?

'Not really,' explains works driver and WEC 2015 champion Mark Webber. 'The driving interface has to be simple – it has to be user-friendly. The technology is brutally advanced, but for the driver, endurance racing has to be simple.'

So if you want your sportscar to be interminably difficult to drive, you're not going to get it here. Webber explains that a huge chunk of the development testing before the 919 raced for the first time in 2014 revolved around making it behave in a conventional manner. Why? The Australian says that racing drivers cannot necessarily unlearn their talent, so even the most advanced machines still have to 'feel like a racing car'. Considering the immensely complicated but interconnected systems, that this is the case with the 919 is a minor miracle.

'It's true,' says Webber. 'There are a huge amount of driveability systems going on in the background, like on the recoup side when we're trying to get energy back in the braking. This harvesting has an effect on how we're braking.'

'Then on the drive phase – when we're trying to get out of the corner – we have all this power, but how the car is going to put it down best on each corner consistently with all the different yaw characteristics going on is something else...'

Webber explains that it's during this drive phase that the car's systems could trip each other up: 'The car has to have lots of different throttle angles for slightly different yaw and lateral movements, and each wheel has to do its own thing.' The genius is that the 919 is doing this in the background – the car is juggling performance, harvesting, braking, lateral loads and so much more but the driver rarely feels it.

But with the car optimising so much performance, what difference does the driver actually make? It could be construed as a rude question, but Webber shrugs it off.

'We still have to put the car on the limit. We have to cut the perfect lines. We have to work the traffic. And don't forget that the computers can't talk to the engineers. They can measure, but you need the human component to validate. Adrian Newey was always big on that – the human component inside the 800 computers telling you what's really happening. You need the middle ear, the balance, to put the car on the limit.'

Asking Webber at which point the 919 is delivering its optimum performance – just above or below slip (understeer or oversteer) – he links this back to the difference a driver makes.

'It's a little bit over. That's what a racing driver's job is – we have to have that tyre just slightly over the edge. I'm talking a couple of per cent, if that. Managing the throttle through the corner or managing on braking – manipulating those inputs, that's what we're always sussing out.'

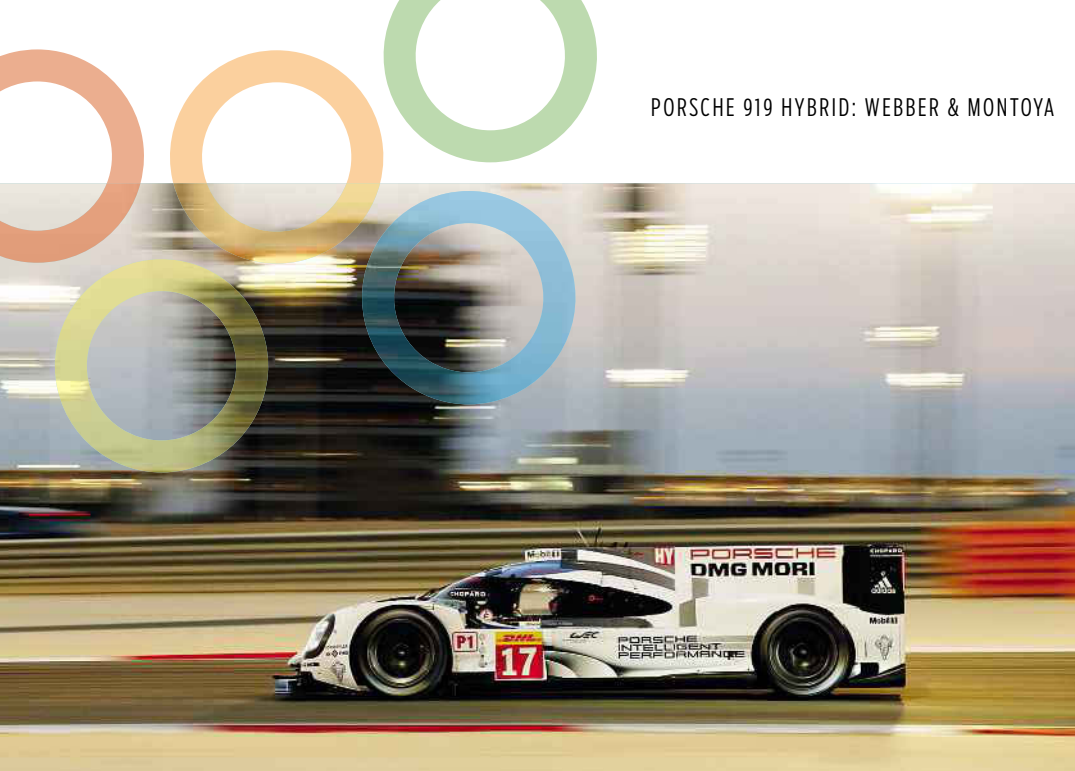
If you add this to Webber's assertion that at Le Mans in particular the car is 'flat-out, all the time', then you realise that the Porsche works drivers gently slide through every corner

'One of the joys of switching from F1 to WEC is that he never hears an engineer tell him to slow down'



Above: the 919 Hybrid won at Le Mans last year and secured the WEC title for Porsche. **Left:** Montoya in the hot seat – and immediately on the pace. **Right:** Webber and teammates Brendon Hartley and Timo Bernhard celebrate their 2015 World Endurance Drivers' Championship win





What happens when you lose control?

'You're trying to minimise damage to the car,' explains Webber. 'If it's slow speed, you just turn the car and go. If it's a really fast corner, you want to get an idea of your trajectory and where the barriers are and if possible you want to get off the brakes to a degree. With flat-spotting and everything, you try to get away with minimum brake pressure but still retard the big movement or slide. If you're going to the barrier, you pop your hands off wheel and brace yourself. The car is pretty quiet – there's no torque through the engine, some noise from the tyres, and some weird acoustics because the air is going over the car in the wrong direction. But mostly you're just thinking about grabbing first gear and getting going again.'

Above: four-wheel drive courtesy of an electric motor on the front axle makes the 919 monstrously fast out of corners. **Above right:** Webber spills the beans to Trott

or transition for 24 hours and 3100 miles, the car exquisitely controlled and manipulated by the human at the controls.

Interestingly, Webber believes part of the reason why drivers can do this is how they sit in the car, and how much of their body physically connects with the car. 'You feel 60 per cent through your arse, 40 per cent through the wheel and there's a little through your feet. The steering weight – the amount of grip you're getting back through the front tyres, especially in the rain – is important. The same goes for high-grip scenarios, where you use all your balance cues to sense where the car's at. But this comes down to the way you're strapped into the car – a lot of your body is in connection with the car.'

Webber goes on to explain that one of the joys of switching from F1 to WEC is that he never hears an engineer tell him to slow down. He says that racing drivers want to drive on the limit, and 'to conserve' is unnatural.

'Racing drivers don't have that built into them. With this car, it has been built to take a beating. In terms of systems, we don't have to look after anything. *Nothing*. Whether we're doing one hour or a 30-hour test, the systems just have to take it. You will never hear an engineer come on the radio and ask you to fuel save either.'

In terms of job satisfaction, that must make a difference?

'Yeah, but so does the way we work together as a team. Part of the success of our car has been this – that the egos have been dropped at the door and we've struck up a great relationship.' Mark goes on to explain that the three drivers work on their driving styles with the target of 'the car not knowing who's in the car'.

How do they achieve this? 'We're constantly working on keeping the communication up; talking about technique and having super-granular driver coaching with each other. If we see a line, we tell each other. We're always trying to be one driver.'

WITH THAT, WEBBER SHAKES YOUR HAND AND HEADS over to have a chat with Juan Pablo Montoya, considered one of the most single-minded racers of his generation. Since leaving F1 in 2006, Montoya has raced in NASCAR and IndyCar – championships and cars from a different planet to the 919. Montoya is old-school. The 919 is not. It's one of the most intriguing motorsport mashups in history. So you head back to the grandstand to watch...

Here he comes. First lap. He looks fast. Through the esses he's pushing; the nose runs a little wide. The tyres are still coming up to temperature. Lap two, he's on it. His lines are perfect. He looks like he's driven the car all year. On lap three, you put a stopwatch on him. He's within a few tenths of the quickest laps from the Bahrain WEC race. Slowly, hacks emerge from the press room where they've been writing their end-of-year opuses. 'We saw his times on the monitor – and had to watch it.'

Montoya does a full three-hour stint. Then comes into the pits. You pray Porsche puts him on fresh rubber and gives him full boost for a qualifying simulation. It happens, and for the next ten minutes Montoya is absolutely on it. He finishes around a second slower than the pole time from the race, in track conditions considered less than ideal. Jaws are dropped.

'The car was easy,' says Montoya. 'You just drive it. It's really a race car, and you adapt to it a little bit.' The Colombian is famous for his horizontal attitude, and the 'Montoya shrug' is an oft-used inflection during interviews. He doesn't romanticise about driving, and isn't particularly interested in going into technical detail. If you're born with his kind of talent, you let your driving do the talking. 'For me, I just get in the car, drive the hell out of it. That's what I've done my whole career.'

Webber and Montoya trade laughs. They raced together for years and the respect is clear to see. But their approaches are wildly different. If Montoya raced with Porsche, the seemingly conflicting attitudes would yield an astonishing soap opera. It won't happen in 2016, with Porsche dropping down to a two-car entry, but if the Stuttgart outfit returns in 2017 with three cars, there's little doubt Montoya would have a seat. Book your grandstand ticket now. ❏



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by RICHARD MEADEN

PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT



F I V E S T A R S



The Renault 5 Turbo was one of the 1980s most outrageous four-wheeled creations. Some 36 years after its unveiling, we've gathered together three interpretations – from an immaculate road-going example to a rally-winning Group B machine – to see how the legend is faring



W

WHEN I WAS AN IMPRESSIONABLE YOUTH BACK

in the last quarter of the 20th century, the word 'turbo' really meant something. Throttle response you could measure with an egg timer, certainly, but it also possessed a blend of menace and madness born of rallying and grenade-spec F1 Grand Prix cars.

Of all the cars to come from that hedonistic high-boost era, the Renault 5 Turbo is one of the few to still hold us in its thrall. The lunacy of the mid-engined, wide-body concept surely sees to that, but reputation, rarity and rally pedigree are the magical fairy dust that ensures it retains a mystique and potency matched by few forced-induction cars before or since.

To see a solitary Turbo is special. To see a brace is exceptional. To see three, in distinct states of tune, from factory-standard perfection to full factory Group B rally specification, is an amazing day indeed. It's all come about thanks to Renault 5 Turbo specialist Olly Melliard,

who correctly deduced that if he could assemble the right cars, **evo** would snatch his arm off to drive them. That one has been trailered all the way from Greece for the test only makes the gathering more remarkable.

And so to Rockingham Motor Speedway. Not, it has to be said, the first place you'd imagine finding a trio of Renault's iconic Supercinq, but as good a place as any to get a taste of what they have to offer, and a safe environment in which to at least attempt to explore the notoriously tricky limits of this no-prisoners hatchback.

It makes sense to work my way up to the full-on rally car, which is fine by me as it means my first port of call is Darren Monk's magnificent late-model Turbo 2. As its name suggests, the Turbo 2 was the second iteration of the mid-engined Renault 5. The original Turbo, built from 1980 to 1983, had its doors, tailgate and roof made from aluminium for homologation purposes. The Turbo 2, produced from 1983 to 1986, had these panels in steel to help keep costs down, but is no less fearsome for it.

Monk's car is acknowledged as the finest standard T2 in the UK, and one of the best in the world. The condition and colour – listed as a 'Brun 769', in case you were wondering – are absolutely perfect. Walking up to the driver's door and sliding behind the wheel, I reckon I know just how the original owner felt when the car was delivered to Ringles Garage in Sussex. After a short while and minimal miles,

Above: huge arches helped accommodate the wider rear track and wheels; this car is on original-spec Michelin tyres.

Above right: Turbo 2 interior was toned down from that of the original Turbo to help keep the model's price down; the Turbo 2 still cost around £13,000 when new – call it £40,000 in today's money



the car was sold to a buyer in Northern Ireland who used it until 1994, at which point it was put in storage. It emerged 14 years later, only to be sold back to Britain and spend a further seven years in storage before Darren rescued it and recommissioned it. Refreshed, but absolutely not restored, its originality (even down to the fitment of fresh OE Michelin TRX tyres) is mind-blowing.

Ignore the wide arches. When you sit in a T2 you're effectively sat in a regular R5. That means a small and narrow cabin with the upright windscreen sat on the end of your nose. The gearlever is long, the driving position and pedals are offset, and the steering wheel is canted so your left arm feels more outstretched than your right. The plush seats so typical of Renaults of this era, but not of Renault 5s or indeed rally specials, are comfortable and supportive, while a sweet array of Jaeger dials with orange graphics completes the period '80s look.

There's decent weight to the controls and the throttle

pedal has a *long* travel. The gearshift is light, precise and has a shorter throw than the length of the lever leads you to expect. Look ahead and you can kid yourself you're in a mildly sporty R5, but look behind you and you're left in no doubt you're in something altogether more extreme.

The engine sounds bigger and ballsier than its capacity suggests, with an endearing off-beat burble and gruff, throaty note when working hard. The boost gauge begins to twitch at around 3000rpm and whips round beyond 4000rpm, but you need full throttle to wake the little 1.4-litre pushrod motor. By modern standards the power and torque figures are rather feeble, the Turbo's reputation setting an expectation that 160bhp can't really hope to meet, yet once boosting it feels undeniably strong.

During the getting-to-know-you phase, the chassis has a nice, neutral balance. The unassisted steering's not too fast, but not too slow, either. The front end has decent bite and there's roll and compliance in the suspension, so you

'The engine sounds bigger and ballsier than its capacity suggests, with an endearing off-beat burble and gruff, throaty note'

RENAULT 5 TURBOS

**‘Waspish,
rapid, sharp and
vocal, this car
is an absolute
firecracker’**





feel it soak up the lateral load. You can kid yourself there's little more to learn, until you decide to provoke it, at which point you discover there's another side to the Turbo. One in which the tail is happy to take to control.

You know you're in a hatchback, and an old hatchback at that, but there are hints of 911 about it – an uncorrupted feel to the steering and a slightly pendulous response from the tail that you have to respect but can use to your advantage – that set it apart as something special and a car that takes some learning. It must have felt pretty darned quick in its day, not to mention a challenge to people's perception of what Renault was about and a real threat to the established performance benchmarks of the day.

If Monk's T2 is a snapshot of all-original perfection, Tony Campbell's extensively modified example is a lesson in detail, quality and authentic period upgrades. Like Monk's car, B803 AGJ was originally supplied to the UK, and as was typical at the time, it was converted to right-hand drive by the first owner. Campbell acquired the car in 2012 and embarked upon a full nut-and-bolt restoration with a view to meeting Group 3 and 4 homologation regulations, so the car could be eligible for historic rallying.

Using a bodyshell with Group 4-spec structural reinforcement and coilover suspension and a Group 3 engine with a 'Cévennes' exhaust manifold and intercooler, a modified Garrett T3 turbo and Bosch K-Jetronic fuel injection, it was built and developed by acknowledged

classic Renault restorer JL Engineering. It bristles with energy and attitude, and Campbell's take on the period 'Gitanes Blondes' livery is the icing on the cake.

Stripped of most creature comforts but still a useable road car, it's an altogether angrier proposition. All the inherent qualities and characteristics of Monk's car remain, but the power delivery (220bhp @ 6900rpm) and handling balance are compressed into a tighter, more intense zone of performance. Harder to tap but a bigger thrill to experience, it's much closer to the headbanger that legend would have you expect.

The gearshift is sharper thanks to an AP carbon-ceramic paddle clutch. There's also strong grip and traction and greater bite from the more abrasive brake pads, so you feel more inclined to drive with genuine aggression. You get the same messages, but they come at you faster and you have to act on them more immediately and emphatically if you're to stay on top of things. If you provoke this car you have to mean it, and be ready to deal with the consequences. It requires quick, confident hands and feet to catch, balance and see a slide through to a smooth conclusion. Lose confidence and things will only get worse. Waspish, rapid, sharp and vocal, this car is an absolute firecracker, even though it's still some way short of Campbell's intended ultimate specification.

For that you need look no further than the white and yellow first-gen Turbo of Dimitris 'Taki' Manolopoulos.

Above: homologated for historic racing, this Turbo 2 boasts 220bhp, which allows it to behave as the model's reputation suggests. **Left:** the engine may have been moved to the middle of the car, but the Turbo was still based around a regular Renault 5's monocoque, albeit heavily modified



Originally built by the factory and campaigned as a works car in the World Rally Championship, this fabulous old warhorse made its competition debut and sole works outing at the 1981 Monte Carlo Rally, sporting the famous red and orange Calberson livery and with Bruno Saby at the wheel. Retiring from the event midway through, after an accident, the car was taken back to Renault Sport headquarters in Dieppe, where it was repaired and rebuilt to the same to Group 4 spec. Renault then honoured a sale agreement to Greek rally driver and renowned buyer of works Renault competition cars Alexandros 'Leonidas' Maniopoulos, who privately entered the 1982 Acropolis Rally and scored an impressive eighth-place finish.

With the imminent transition from Group 4 to Group B, Leonidas sent the car back again to Dieppe to be updated, whereupon it was placed on the production line of the 20 'evolution' cars required to comply with regulations. The car assumed its new factory Group B identity as 'Tour de Corse Evolution' before being delivered back to Greece in the factory yellow and white colours for the 1983 season. Taki then acquired the car in 1984 and has campaigned it with his son, Thomas, in the Greek Hill Climb and Greek National Rally Championships for the last three decades. Scoring some 200 wins, the pair – and car – have achieved cult status amongst Greek fans.

Taki has never let anyone but Thomas drive the car, so you can imagine my apprehension as he straps me in, instructs Thomas to give me a pre-flight briefing, then steps back to let me head out onto the track. This is the real deal. It smells of sweat and speed, of tortured soft-compound rubber and high-octane fuel. Original spare parts are rarer than dodo doo-doo, and such is the state of tune that once its warm you have to keep the engine working hard to avoid fouling the plugs. It's a no-nonsense, no-prisoners nutter of a thing, and I love it already.

It's so much more extreme to drive than the others. The noise, the explosive power delivery, the ultra-tight gear ratios and the sharper, grippier chassis making even Campbell's car feel as mild as a cup of camomile tea. Such is the grip, there's little sense of the rearward weight bias, even though there's a far keener rate of turn-in response. On the tight twists and turns of a mountainous tarmac rally stage, I'm sure the added agility and power (around 300bhp, according to Taki) must be an explosive combination, albeit one that takes immense concentration and physical effort to stay on top of. Even with all this grip, in the heat and dust of a flat-out rally stage I'm equally sure it would bite if you misjudged a tightening corner or caught a patch of unseen gravel. The sting in the tail.

The noise is mighty – that characteristic hollow-

Above: this Turbo – chassis number 20 – started out in Group 4 spec but was later given the full Group B treatment. It's currently up for sale, and could be yours if you've got £225,000 to spare



‘It smells of sweat and speed, of tortured rubber and high-octane fuel’

sounding Group B blare that hardens as the boost builds, then pops and bangs with a fusillade of gunshots as the throttle is snapped shut. It’s almost impossible to believe that this small-capacity four-cylinder engine – just 1397cc – can generate so much sound and fury, but then you recall that when this car was at the cutting edge, this is what turbocharging was all about: fire and brimstone, not flat, featureless plateaus of torque and micromanaged boost pressure.

Taki speaks about as much English as I do Greek, but as I switch off the engine and climb out of the car, my face glistening with sweat and my hands quivering mildly with the adrenalin rush, we exchange a smile that speaks volumes. Were we able to discuss the experience of driving his car in a common tongue, I suspect it would be mostly in words comprised of four letters and unsuited to the pages of *evo*. Yet despite all this, when it comes to Renault’s most compelling road car, I’m pleased to confirm it’s that magical five-letter word that still packs the biggest punch: *Turbo*. ☒

Huge thanks to Olly Melliard, Darren Monk, Tony Campbell and Dimitris and Thomas Manolopoulos. Both the brown Turbo 2 and Group B Turbo are for sale. For more info contact Olly Melliard on tub2@hotmail.co.uk or 07933 320444.



Renault 5 Turbo 2

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1397cc, turbo
Power 160bhp @ 6000rpm
Torque 155lb ft @ 3250rpm
Weight 970kg
Power-to-weight 168bhp/ton
0-60mph 7.7sec (claimed)
Top speed 126mph (claimed)



Renault 5 Turbo 2 Group 3/4

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1397cc, turbo
Power 220bhp @ 6900rpm
Torque n/a
Weight 880kg
Power-to-weight 254bhp/ton
0-60mph sub-5.0sec (estimated)
Top speed 130mph (estimated)



Renault 5 Turbo Group B

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1397cc, turbo
Power 300bhp @ 7000rpm
Torque n/a
Weight 910kg
Power-to-weight 335bhp/ton
0-60mph sub-4.0sec (estimated)
Top speed 130mph (estimated)



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NEW ARRIVAL

Bentley Continental GT V8 S

Our latest long-termer gets off to a good start – as it should with an Alfa 4C’s-worth of options!

S SIX MONTHS WITH A Bentley. Yes, life is pretty sweet on the long-termer front. More often than not I chase cars I’ve really enjoyed in group tests, to see if they stack up as an ownership proposition. In the case of the Conti GT, it’s as much about wanting to reacquaint myself with the brand as getting under the skin of the company’s most **evo** model.

Bentley is one of the few marques that retains a bit of mystique. Chances to test the cars are few

and far between, so knowledge and opinion can lag behind the pace of product development. I know the Conti V8 S to be a mighty machine, but the nuances of its character and capabilities remain something of a mystery. The next six months are my chance to fill in those gaps and share the experience with you.

Seeing a car on a configurator spec sheet is one thing. Seeing where it was built and meeting some of the people who built it is quite another. Bentley’s Pymms

Lane factory in Crewe is huge and hugely impressive. The place really is buzzing with activity, especially with the new Bentayga production line up and running. Technology plays its part, but a Bentley wouldn’t be a Bentley without a high level of hand-craftsmanship. It was fascinating to see how the interiors are trimmed and to have a go at the hand-stitching myself. (Don’t worry, I was only let loose on a sample swatch. Probably just as well given my squinty, tongue-out efforts!)



When I finally got my first sight of our V8 S, it looked spectacular. Given that it's a £149,800 car with a further £45,060 of options, so it should, but the Light Onyx paintwork really is fabulous – a great mix of greys, blues and greens that really pops in sunlight. It's part of the extended paint range and accounts for £4285 of the options bill. Solid black for the mirrors, sills, splitter and diffuser provides a subtle contrast and tones down the bling nicely.

Chunkiest of the options-list upgrades is the £14,380 Extended Sports Specification, which features carbon-ceramic brakes (the 420mm front discs are the largest fitted to any series-production car), breeze block-sized red calipers, a sports exhaust system, carbonfibre fascia panels and carbonfibre centre and roof consoles.

Then there's the Mulliner Driving Specification (£7185), comprising 21-inch five-spoke directional alloy wheels, bright alloy 'jewel' fuel

'The Conti shows a startling turn of speed and hugely impressive composure'

Above left: Blower Bentley reminds you of the company's glorious past. **Above centre:** Meaden has a go at stitching. **Above right:** the largest brake discs of any series-production car

Date acquired	February 2016
Total mileage	3019
Mileage this month	1654
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	22.1

and filler caps, drilled alloy pedals, indented hide headlining and quilted hide for the seats, door panels and rear quarter panels.

Finally there's the Premier Specification (£6730), the main component of which is a thumping 'Naim for Bentley' audio system. Also included are ventilated front seats (complete with a massage function), a rear-view camera, front armrests and a valet key.

Most of the miles I've done so far in the Conti have been on motorways. Few cars in my experience relieve the tedium so completely, yet on the few occasions I've had a proper go on my local B-roads, the V8 S has shown a startling turn of speed and hugely impressive composure. I'm looking forward to swapping the winter tyres for some summer rubber, but until then I'm just going to revel in what's already proving to be a uniquely impressive and appealing car. ✕

Richard Meaden
(@DickieMeaden)

BMW 2002

The restoration continues with the completion of a truly superb paintjob

S SHANE AT FAIRCHARM Restorations is to my car what Michelangelo is to the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, what Rudolf Nureyev is to *Swan Lake* and what Bow Wow Wow are to 'I Want Candy'. He has transformed the 2002 from just a car into a piece of art.

I might be getting a little carried away, but trust me: the finish of the paint is exceptional. Rather than steel, the body now looks like it's made from thick blue liquid, with only surface tension holding it in the shape of a bare BMW 2002.

To get to this stage, three layers of two-pack gloss have been applied. Between each coat, a lot of rubbing down was done to make the surface incredibly smooth. Then, once the topcoat had been applied, it was sanded and polished.

The interior was given a different treatment. It was first covered in a tough 'stone chip' coating before the topcoats were applied, so it doesn't have the same exceptional finish as the outside, but it still looks great.

Everyone I have shown the car to has been incredibly impressed, but most importantly, I love it too. There's no point in pretending that it hasn't cost a lot of money, but that cost is completely justified. Shane kept me up to speed with everything that happened to the car, and encouraged me to see it at every stage of the process. His openness (and thorough documentation through photos) means that not only am I aware of how much skilled work went into the shell, but I also know that no corners have been cut.

I've had many compliments on the colour, too. I absolutely love it, but I didn't think it would be so universally liked. Perhaps people have been overwhelmed by just how smooth and shiny the paint is, tricking them into liking it. If the finish hadn't

been this immaculate, maybe even I wouldn't have been convinced. As it is, I couldn't be happier. In fact, I'm so happy, I put the '02 in my conservatory.

OK, putting it in there wasn't my first choice. I would rather have put it in the workshop, but with no major mechanical work required on the car for a little while, it wasn't practical to take up the single workshop space just yet. In the conservatory I can trim the interior, fit the glass and the cage, and prepare the car to finally install the engine, drivetrain and suspension.

I was slightly anxious about putting the shell in a room that is boiling during the day then freezing at night. With sunlight beating down

'There's no point pretending it hasn't cost a lot of money, but that cost has been justified'

on the paint, seemingly magnified by the glass, I needed something to protect it, but as 2002s are not particularly common cars, finding a cover for one proved a struggle. However, Classic Additions recommended its Super Soft Stretch Indoor cover, which contains Lycra, so clings to whatever car it is pulled over. I opted for a bottle-green cover with a silver **evo** logo on the nose. Despite the '02s pointy front and boxy shape, the cover fits excellently, so I can now sleep comfortably in the knowledge that my paint isn't being faded by the sun. ☒

Will Beaumont
(@WillBeaumont)



Date acquired	July 2008
Total mileage	146,050-ish
Mileage this month	0
Costs this month	£4000 paint
	£135 car cover
mpg this month	n/a



Honda Civic Type R

The devil's in the detail, and those details are adding up to something special

W WE DON'T DRIVE MANY Hondas here at *evo*, so it's refreshing to get behind the wheel of one on a daily basis. For starters, it hasn't got the kind of bland, identikit cabin that afflicts most hot hatches. Instead you have distinctive features such as a dash architecture that wraps around the driver (a bit like in McLaren's Super Series models), instruments split over two levels (with those above the steering wheel perfectly visible, unlike in a Peugeot 208 GTi) and 12 bright shift lights at the base of the windscreen (much easier to refer to than any rev counter). It all helps make the Civic feel special.

The driving experience contributes to this feeling, too. For example, work your way above 4000rpm and the steering wheel, gearknob and pedals vibrate lightly with the engine. Many other manufacturers

would damp this away, yet it makes the car feel alive.

That minimalist damping also benefits the gearshift, giving it a particularly pleasing mechanical feel. (Incidentally, the 40mm shift stroke is identical to the 2002 NSX-R's. Nerdy car facts don't come much better than that!) And then there's the ride, which in its softer setting is noticeably more jiggly than would be considered acceptable in most hot hatches in their default mode. As for the ride in '+R', it's so stiff I wonder if it should come with a 'do not use on the public highway' warning akin to that seen when activating the McLaren P1's Race mode.

For a car so focused, it's surprising that there is no track-biased tyre on the options list. The Renaultsport Mégane, SEAT Leon Cupra and Ford Focus RS are all available with such, but the Honda can only be had

'Above 4000rpm the steering wheel, gearknob and pedals vibrate lightly with the engine'

with Continental SportContact 6s. However, I have come to see the absence of a semi-slick temptation as a blessing in disguise, because instead of spending half my time tip-toeing around compromised wet-road performance, I've been admiring the Contis' compatibility with grubby winter tarmac, on which they deal impressively with the Civic's 306bhp and communicate the car's grip limits beautifully.

I can't say I've found myself craving more grip in the dry, either. Perhaps I'll change my mind in the midst of summer, but for now the Contis seem the right way to go. **X**

Ian Eveleigh

Date acquired	January 2016
Total mileage	3877
Mileage this month	1862
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	32.8

Mazda MX-5

Additional practicality comes in the form of a car-sized bum bag

THE ONLY THING THAT has been putting me off a European jaunt in the MX-5 has been the limited space on offer both in the cabin and the boot. For this reason, I've bought something called a Boot-bag. Designed to strap onto the rear of the car and offer an extra 50 litres of waterproofed space, it basically gives you a suitcase's worth of additional luggage capacity for £90. (There's also a larger, 75-litre Boot-bag available for £117.90.)

Installation is simple, with straps fitting underneath the bootlid and a rectangle of foam preventing the underside of the bag from damaging the paintwork. It could do with being a little more secure, but it's definitely a handy way to occasionally increase the load-carrying capabilities of the MX-5 – or any other car with

a bootlid – as long as you don't mind your view in the mirror being obscured while it's fitted.

In other storage-related news, thanks must go to **evo's** followers on Twitter for informing me that the MX-5's cupholders can be detached from their location behind the driver's left elbow and clipped into a notch on the passenger side of the transmission tunnel. I've had no more spills since.

A battery warning light has appeared, however. We're not sure why, so we've got the car booked in for a checkup. At least it hasn't stopped the MX-5 from continuing to demonstrate how handling can be just as exciting as power. Nor that it's just the right side of simple, the wind noise and a slightly uncomfortable ride still not grating even this far into 'ownership'.



What is becoming an issue is the driving position. The pedal offset and lack of reach adjustment for the steering wheel are starting to cause me back problems. I wonder if the Recaro seats in the new, limited-run Sport Recaro edition offer a better driving position? ✘

Hunter Skipworth
(@HunterSkipworth)

Date acquired	October 2015
Total mileage	5998
Mileage this month	621
Costs this month	£90.90 Boot-bag
mpg this month	37.2

Ford Focus ST TDCi Estate

Our diesel wagon gets a nasty surprise, but it's not all bad news



JUST AS I WAS GETTING used to my new Michelin Pilot Alpin winter tyres (rather good – no wheelspinning in second gear), I was the victim of a road accident.

On a run to a studio for a video shoot, I got caught in early morning traffic. After about the sixth time of having to come to a halt, I heard the dreaded sound of locked wheels behind me. Figuring I was about to get rear-ended, I tried to pull onto the hard shoulder, but although I managed to not domino into the police car in front, there was no avoiding the Mercedes C-class sliding in my direction. It hit the Focus's rear bumper at probably less than 20mph and cracked the left-hand side of it.

The damage wasn't too bad, and this is probably a testament to the Ford's build quality. The Merc, on

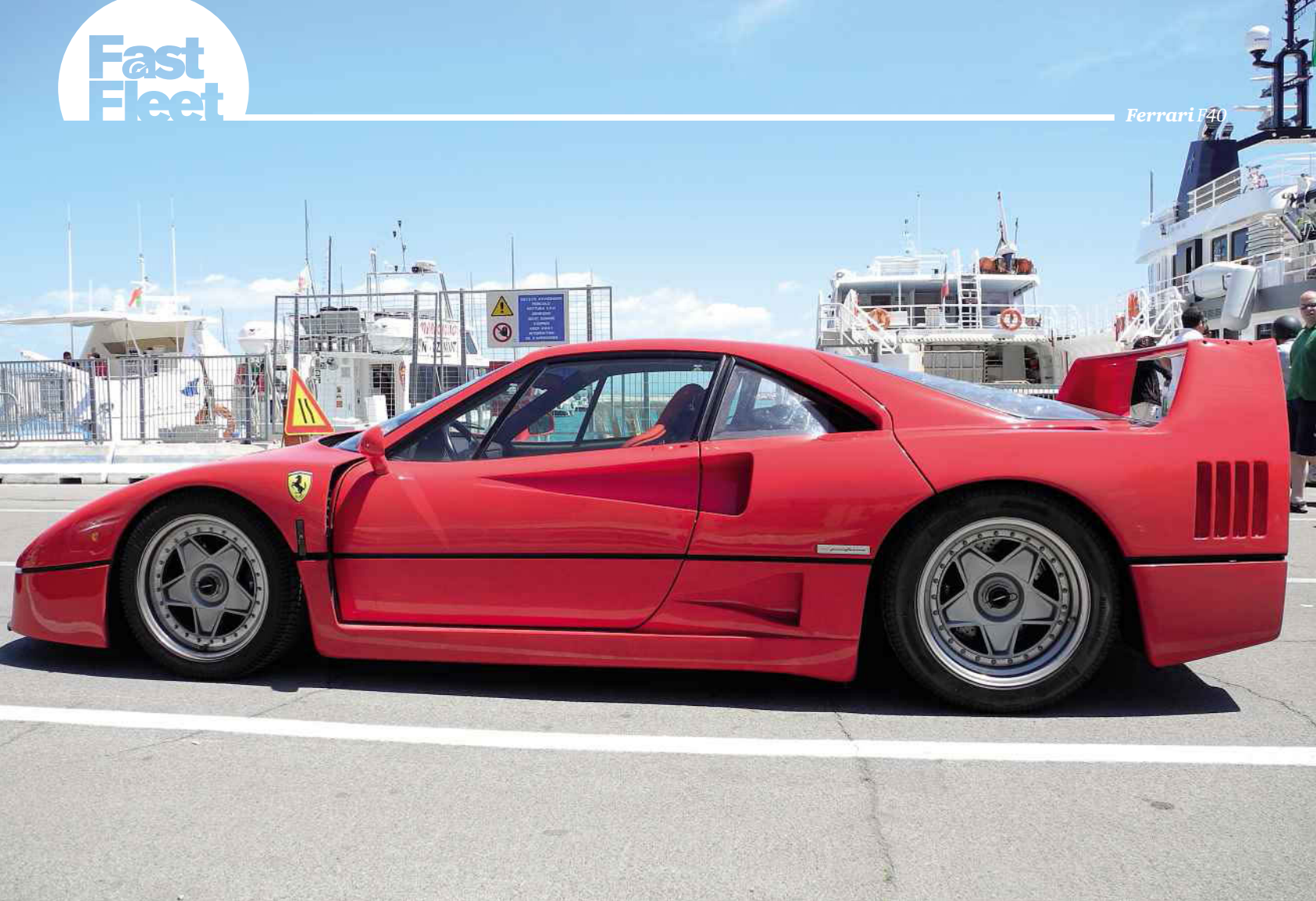
the other hand, was a bit of a mess. (The policeman in front got out and gave the driver a good ticking off, too.) When the incident reports were complete, I was able to carry on with my journey, and within a couple of hours I had an insurance broker asking me about whiplash...

The friendly folks at Ford have sent us a petrol ST while our diesel model gets bandaged up. First impressions of the 2-litre EcoBoost car are pretty positive. It is quicker than the diesel but I wouldn't say it's *massively* quicker. It sounds good, though. Would I want the swap to be made permanent? Erm, yes. ✘

Sam Riley (@samgriley)

Date acquired	August 2015
Total mileage	13,881
Mileage this month	271
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	43.2

Ford Focus ST TDCi Estate



Ferrari F40

The F40's annual service has its owner keeping his fingers crossed for a modest bill

A AS SURELY AS HEATHROW will go into panic mode at the sight of the first snowflake, February brings forth the F40's annual jaunt to the service bays of Carrs Ferrari in Exeter. Regardless of where the F40 has been living or how many miles it has covered, the timing of the service is sacred.

The last few services have included a number of jobs that I would classify as part of a 'rolling restoration'. This time around, however, the list was bare as we'd addressed all the major concerns. Indeed, the 2016 service was, fortunately, completely routine. The only items that needed replacing were a couple of bulbs.

The tyres were checked for both wear and age, which revealed they should be good for at least one more year. F40 rubber is becoming increasingly difficult to get hold of, so I've already put in an advanced order for a set of tyres for December delivery. The light surface cracking on the brake discs remains unchanged, which given that the discs might as well now be made of unobtainium was a major relief.

After the suspension threw a fit when Jethro borrowed the F40 last summer (you can see it in the 488 GTB review video at [youtube.com/evo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evo)), I was very concerned that the system was not faring well in storage. However, its behaviour at this service was impeccable. This

'I was concerned that the adjustable suspension system was not faring well in storage'

was great news, as rebuilding the system is a real wallet-drainer.

With the service completed, the F40 will be returned to storage. It will need to live there for one more year before it turns 25 and I can bring it across to the New World. With two trips to the UK coming up in the next couple of months, I should be able to find a couple of days to take the F40 out for a good long run, too. ✉

Secret Supercar Owner
(@SupercarOwner)

Date acquired	November 2006
Total mileage	47,069km
Mileage this month	558km since the last service
Costs this month	£1299.65
mpg this month	It's an F40...

Jaguar F-type R Coupe AWD

'Unspinnable' Jag proves to be not quite as locked-down as we thought

N NOBODY REALISES UNTIL they see the badge. However, once they clock the TLA proclaiming 'AWD' on the rear, they always seem to view the F-type slightly differently. In many ways they would be right to as well. For a car that retains the R Coupe's essentially RWD (I'm going all-in with the Three-Letter Abbreviations now) nature, it feels considerably more secure in everyday driving. Where the standard R will wag its tail like a puppy in a tennis-ball factory, with the AWD car 542bhp and 501lb ft has rarely felt more deployable.

This is assuming a vague sense of right-foot decorum, of course – something that few at **evo** seem to possess. 'Still lairy when you push it, isn't it?' said Jethro when he handed the car back, while Stuart admitted to two impromptu 'cornering shots' when he had it for the weekend. Certainly in the wet it is still easy to get the rear moving, and when I had half an hour spare on the track at Bicester Heritage recently (in the

pouring rain) I had considerable fun exploring the limits beyond the ESP.

Initially it felt harder to handle, because the breakaway limit felt higher and snappier. Then, even when I thought I was committed to a slide, it felt like the car was grabbing back control too quickly. Interestingly, though, the system is programmed to learn the grip levels and after a couple of passes through the same corner everything did seem to flow much more easily, the F-type maintaining a lovely stable, throttle-guided slide.

When we had an AWD R Coupe on test last year on a dry track, Dan and I found it incredibly stable, to the point where it was almost too constrained. The word 'unspinnable' was actually bandied about. My car has newer, updated software, so now that spring is here I'll have to see if some more of its wet-weather OFF (Oversteer Fun Factor) has been made available on dry tarmac. ✕

Henry Catchpole
(@HenryCatchpole)



Date acquired	January 2016
Total mileage	4335
Mileage this month	1643
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	27.0

Kia Proceed GT

Our facelifted GT shows its strengths as an everyday car



I IN A PERFECT WORLD, Fast Fleet cars would be driven only as their maker intended. In this case, that would mean scratching up and down B-roads appreciating the changes

Kia has made to the GT's engine and enjoying its foolproof chassis.

The reality is that they're frequently used for the less appealing trips this job demands, for example a gridlocked M25 outside Heathrow airport. Such a journey is *possible* in my Eunos Roadster, despite gearing that puts you at almost 4000rpm at 70mph and NVH levels that weren't quite contemporary even in 1992, but in the Kia such a trip could almost be described as being pleasant.

The Recaro seats are great, for a start. Firm, and mounted a little too high perhaps, but very comfortable. The easy action to all the controls is welcome, too. They somehow manage the dual requirements of being up to the task when you're having fun but fading into the background when you need them to.

The media system is also almost perfect. Its satnav is easy to

program, and the audio setup both recognises my iPhone immediately and provides large, clear on-screen controls to access my tunes. Even our F-type needs a degree of faffing to accomplish that, though I concede its V8 has the Kia's piped-in growl beaten for aural appeal.

The Proceed GT is smooth, quiet, comfortable, stylish and packed with kit. If you didn't know better, I might be describing a Golf GTI, and that really does feel like the car Kia has benchmarked. Just like the GTI, the GT isn't the most exciting hatch available, but it's capable of turning those journeys from hell into something a lot more bearable.

Antony Ingram (@evoAntony)

Date acquired	December 2015
Total mileage	4912
Mileage this month	1113
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	32.2

Nissan GT-R

We've confirmed our GT-R is standard in terms of power, but how does standard power translate into speed?



S SO LAST MONTH WE discovered just how much power my 'press-spec' GT-R is delivering. In case you missed it, the final figures on the Litchfield dyno were 558.6bhp at 7065rpm and 480.9lb ft at 3825rpm. These are perfectly in line with other 2015 GT-Rs Litchfield has seen and so it seems a press GT-R is very much like a customer GT-R after all. Well, an unmodified customer GT-R. Of which there appear to be just a handful in the UK. It seems circa 560bhp isn't enough for most!

I wanted to see what those numbers on the dyno translated to on the tarmac. So at 8.30 on a sunny but freezing-cold Sunday morning, I pointed the GT-R towards Santa Pod, which is just a few miles from

the **evo** office. It was a public 'Run What Ya Brung' day and I thought the GT-R might be pretty quick even in feeble standard form.

I'll concede that the quarter-mile strip isn't as much fun as a full-on trackday, but it's still a really enjoyable way to spend a few hours on a Sunday. It's also a lot cheaper – just £10 to get in and another £25 to sign on for unlimited runs. If you're in something quick, bring a helmet, because if your terminal speed exceeds 110mph you'll need one.

It's bizarrely nerve-wracking, lining up under that famous gantry with the drag strip disappearing towards the horizon ahead of you. Even if my first race was against a Fiesta ST. Don't laugh; I remember many years ago seeing a Lamborghini Diabolo

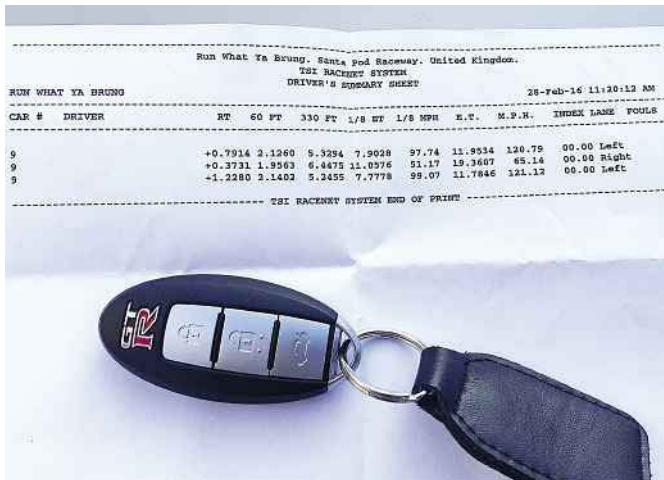
being beaten by a Fiat 126 at a RWYB and driving straight out of the gates after the humiliation.

The rules are pretty simple. Creep forward until the yellow 'pre-stage' and 'stage' lights on the Christmas tree confirm you're on the start line. When your competition has done the same, the stack of three yellow lights below the staging lights run in fast sequence and finally a green light tells you to go. It happens in the blink of an eye, so basically just launch as soon as you see the yellows start to glow.

With the external temperature gauge reading just 3C, I reckoned the GT-R would still need launch control to get off the line sweetly. The track is prepped with a glue-like spray, so a good few revs are

required to prevent bogging down. So with the drivetrain toggle set to R, the suspension in Comfort (for a bit more squat/traction) and the stability control in R, I lined up, depressed the brake pedal with my left foot and pinned the throttle to the floor. The GT-R was held at 4000rpm and when the lights glowed I jumped off the brake (just like dumping the clutch). The Nissan ripped off the line, wheelspinning through first and then eating second and third on the way to the finish line. The Fiesta was toast. I ran an 11.95sec at 120.79mph.

The next launch was even better, taking 1.96sec to reach the 60ft marker where the first run took 2.13sec, but then a clutch warning flashed up on the dash and the GT-R



'I remember many years ago seeing a Diablo get beaten by a Fiat 126'

wouldn't accelerate. I crossed the line at 65mph. Oh dear. I couldn't go out like that, so I did one more run.

The launch wasn't so good but the run was an improvement on the first: an 11.78sec at 121.12mph. Not bad. It's still hard for us Brits to understand quarter-mile times though, right? So later I figured the GT-R on a bumpy and slightly damp surface, again at around 3C. It ran 3.5sec to 60mph and 7.7sec to 100mph. A standard GT-R is fast enough for me. ✕

Jethro Bovingdon
(@JethroBovingdon)

Date acquired	November 2015
Total mileage	17,677
Mileage this month	1225
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	18.7



BMW 730Ld M Sport

The four-wheel steering gets scrutinised, while broken roads get the better of our BMW again

FASCINATING MONTH FOR weather in the UK. With heavy frosts, balmy evenings, floods and everything in between, no two days have been the same in terms of the road surface and conditions. Perhaps the mighty 730d has been creating the weather – it really does shift a lot of air. Either way, it's had everything thrown at it.

As you might expect, this hasn't been a time to drive the Seven on its door handles, so my focus has been to investigate how it manages its bulk in changeable weather and, in particular, to look at how the £1195 Integral Active Steering works.

In addition to the variable-ratio steering rack that the words 'Active Steering' usually denote in BMW-speak, IAS adds steering from the rear wheels by up to three degrees. At low speeds the rear wheels turn in the opposite direction to the fronts, reducing the turning circle, while the (front) steering rack reduces the turns required to achieve full lock. At higher speeds the rear wheels turn in the same direction as the fronts – increasing stability, particularly in crosswinds and during lane changes – while the rack 'relaxes'.

Does it work? Yes, dammit. There are a number of gimmicks on the 7-series that have little appeal beyond the showroom, but this is

not one of them. The big BMW is far more manoeuvrable than you'd think, and while it won't out-slalom a 205 GTI, it offers measured, consistent and responsive low-speed handling. And at high speeds? It tracks like a supersonic dart, impervious to cambers, crowns and crosswinds.

The most interesting element is that this all happens without anaesthetised controls. We're not talking Lotus levels of feedback, but the 730d's steering is not devoid of information – far from it.

On a different subject, it's no coincidence that after last month's cracked windscreen, the BMW has now suffered a puncture. The weather has fractured Britain's roads, with potholes and loose tarmac springing up everywhere. It was the former that caused the puncture and the latter that cracked the screen. BMW has now fitted a new windscreen (£504 for the glass and trim, plus three hours' labour), while Sycamore in Peterborough efficiently collected the car to replace the tyre (£242.40). ✕

Nick Trott (@evoNickTrott)

Date acquired	December 2015
Total mileage	9227
Mileage this month	1383
Costs this month	See text
mpg this month	33.0

Skoda Octavia vRS Estate

The vRS has improved in a couple of very practical ways

T THE vRS RECORDED ITS 12,000th mile this month. It still feels as fresh as it did 11,951 miles ago when it first crunched the gravel outside the office, and if I find the time to clean it, it looks as fresh as it did when new, too, but it has certainly evolved in a few key areas.

The standard Bridgestone Potenza S001 tyres were, for the first 2500 miles, noisy buggers on anything but the smoothest of surfaces. But with miles the drone has subsided, and while it's not 7-series whisper quiet inside, it's much improved. The Bridgestone's 'extra load' specification also adds a sharp edge to the car's ride, but this



and the noise aren't insurmountable issues that a switch of brands wouldn't rectify.

With more miles has also come an improvement in fuel economy. It's not a subject that occupies the **evo** road test department's thoughts often, but as I'm responsible for the budget that fuels their superunleaded addiction, one of us has to be seen to be making an

effort. With the vRS now recording a mid-40s mpg average, the fuel card account is looking much healthier. A bigger fuel tank would be welcome, though, as the 50-litre tank pegs the range back to circa 400 miles whereas I would much prefer a figure that starts with a six.

On the housekeeping front, the 2-litre TDI engine asked for a litre of oil this month. A nasty crack has also

appeared on the heated windscreen, having spread from a chip in the bottom-right corner, but to date it's the only blemish on the vRS. ✘

Stuart Gallagher (@stuartg917)

Date acquired	October 2015
Total mileage	12,478
Mileage this month	3012
Costs this month	£18.99 oil
mpg this month	42.5

Audi RS Q3

Audi RS Q3

Nice interior. Shame about the puncture

A AFTER THE LONGEST, darkest, wettest, coldest, most exhausting of days, there's nothing like climbing into a well sorted, feel-good interior like the RS Q3's. The materials ooze quality, the layout is simple, and despite the road testers' empty sandwich packs and rotting banana skins strewn throughout, it still somehow retains its 'new Audi' smell.

The cover shoot for issue 218 (the Porsche 991.2 Carrera and rivals) was one of those days. With a tight brief meaning over 50 photos needed to be taken to be combined into one final image, it was a long night for all. After five hours' work for that single image, we were all in need of some



hot food. For some reason we let **evo** web editor and YouTube legend Hunter Skipworth lead the way.

Within two miles we were heading the wrong direction on Anglesey's bumpiest, narrowest off-piste roads and within three miles the tyre pressure monitor warning had flashed on the dash of the Audi. A quick inspection of the tyre revealed the dreaded hissing noise and a nail embedded at the edge of the tread pattern. Bugger.

For some reason it's not possible to specify a spare wheel for the RS Q3; your only option is a can of tyre foam, a 12V pump and some luck. Staff writer Will Beaumont and staff photographer Aston Parrott got to work with the tyre foam as I made myself busy pretending to take photos. After 30 minutes of faffing around with apertures and focal lengths, the boys finally had the tyre re-inflated.

And that's how it stayed for two



whole weeks until I finally had it replaced. Tiger Tyres managed to supply and fit (at Brake & Service World) a 20-inch, Audi-specific Pirelli P Zero in 255/35 for £171, which I thought was a bit of a bargain. ✘

Dean Smith (@evoDeanSmith)

Date acquired	October 2015
Total mileage	7804
Mileage this month	3133
Costs this month	£171 tyre
mpg this month	24.7

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Volkswagen Golf GTI Mk2

Spot the difference? The classic Golf is now wearing its carbon parts

I IT HAD BEEN THREE WEEKS since I dropped the Golf off at Reflex Auto Design in Northampton. It wasn't the first time that the guys there had worked their magic on this particular GTI: seven years ago the previous owner had had a full body respray carried out by Reflex. In fact, the amazing paintjob was partly why I purchased this car in the first place.

This time the main task had been to paint and fit a couple of new and unashamedly exotic parts. Walking into the workshop, my eyes immediately locked on to my car. The new carbonfibre bonnet and tailgate I'd bought (see *evo* 217), now sprayed in Tornado Red to match the rest of the car, looked stunning. The guys had done such a good job that I couldn't tell they were aftermarket parts at all.

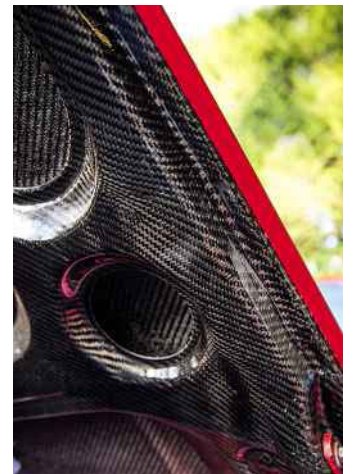
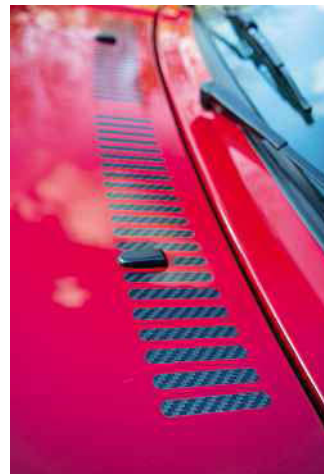
Well, actually, there was one clue, but it's also one of my favourite

details. The carbonfibre bonnet doesn't have vents at its trailing edge like the original steel panel, but Reflex created the look of the vents by leaving some carbon weave visible. Jonny the spray-gun master explained that this was a hard job on his eyes and nerves as he had to apply stencil stickers in the shape of the vents before spraying, then afterwards had to peel the stencils back off. Delicate work, but I'm blown away with the results. The carbon tailgate, meanwhile – wiperless and with a lightweight Lexan window – looks equally brilliant.

With the car at Reflex, I thought it would be a good time to get the only bit of rust on the body fixed. The fuel filler area on Mk2 Golfs is renowned for getting rusty and apparently the only way to totally remove the rust and stop it coming back is to cut out a big square around the filler cap and replace it with a new OEM panel. That now done, and with the new carbonfibre parts in place, the car is looking better than ever. **x**

Aston Parrott (@AstonParrott)

Date acquired	April 2012
Total mileage	178,755
Mileage this month	757
Costs this month	£1025
mpg this month	27.3



Volkswagen Golf R

Our all-season hatchback proves itself in the snow



M MY FRIDAY EVENING DASH from *evo*'s Northants office back to Bristol takes me over the Cotswolds. It's a pretty good drive when it's quiet and I can generally learn a fair amount about whatever car I happen to be driving. A couple of weeks ago I was back in

the Golf R after some time apart, and just before I passed under the M40 I noticed a few snowflakes swirling around in my headlight beams. Then a few more. By the time I got to Chipping Norton a thick layer of the white stuff had settled.

The roads hadn't been gritted and I had visions of becoming stranded in a line of cars on a bleak Oxfordshire hillside, so I stopped to brim the tank and buy some supplies (chilli Doritos and a Boost). Thankfully the snow all but disappeared somewhere between Stow and the M5 so my journey was only briefly interrupted, but I was struck by how unflustered the R was in those conditions. It didn't once struggle for traction and was quite happy in corners and under braking, even on summer tyres.

Speaking of which, the original Bridgestones are getting close to

their wear indicators, particularly the fronts, so I'll have a new set fitted soon. Rubber aside, the car just isn't showing any sign of its 13,000 miles, inside or out. Average fuel economy seems to be creeping up, too.

There's no sign of tiredness in the chassis, but I'm convinced there's a new sound emanating from one corner or another. It happens when I lift off the throttle over 40mph and coast. I can't yet decide if it's a whistling sound or a very light grinding noise. I'll keep an ear out and report back if it develops into something more worrying. **x**

Dan Prosser (@TheDanProsser)

Date acquired	September 2015
Total mileage	13,594
Mileage this month	2360
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	33.2

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ESSENTIALS

THE ROUND-UP

The new motoring products that have caught our eye this month



DRIVING SHOES

Honda HT3 £77

jackthreads.com/uk



CAR CARE

Paragon Microfibre Shampoo Mitt £8.95

paragonmicrofibre.com



DASHCAM

Nextbase 212 Lite £69

nextbase.co.uk



ELECTRONICS

TomTom GO 6100 £299.99

tomtom.com



POSTER

M3 Touring Cars £29.95

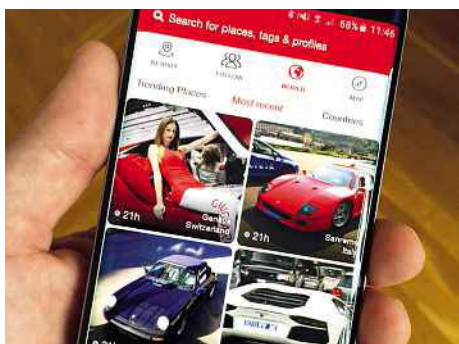
8380labs.com



VIDEOGAME

Dirt Rally (PS4/Xbox One) £41.99

amazon.co.uk



APP

'Carcandy' carspotting app £FREE

itunes.apple.com/play.google.com



BOOK

Alfa Romeo – All The Cars €21.25

giorgionadaeditore.it



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8380labs.com



RacingModels.com

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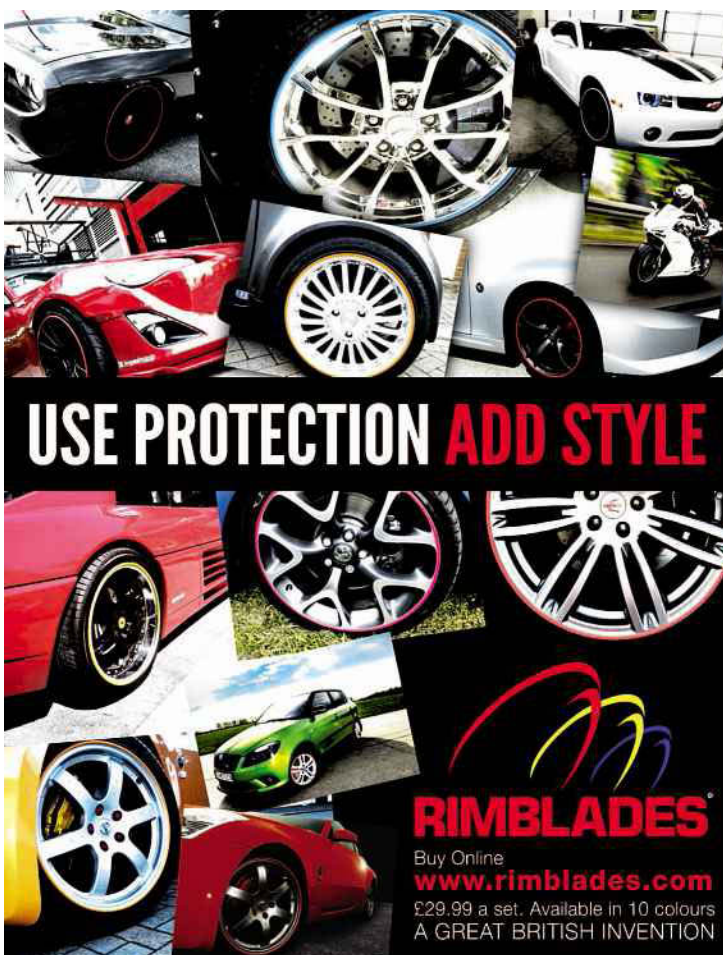
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Market

WANT IT. BUY IT. OWN IT. LOVE IT.

Analysis.....	149	Buying Guide	156
Used Rivals	153	Model Focus	160
Buying Journey	154	Upgrades	163



ANALYSIS: **PORSCHE** **996 GT3 RS,** **FERRARI 360 CS** **& BMW M3 CSL**

The era-defining road-racers that are becoming collectors' favourites by Adam Towler

ALL THREE OF THESE WONDERFUL cars defined the term 'road-racer' during the first half of the 2000s. Of course, all three were also solid five-star *evo* cars. And there was a time when it was possible to wander into successive Ferrari, Porsche and BMW showrooms and buy them all in an afternoon's shopping. Anyone wealthy/mad/inspired enough to go on such a spree would have scooped three of the most desirable *evo* cars ever made and, if they had kept them until now, would currently be faced with a strongly performing investment portfolio. 'Icon' is an overused term these days, but...

The Porsche and Ferrari are the truest to their competition pedigree, the GT3 being the homologation road car for Weissach's motorsport





Left: CS and RS values well above their respective new prices of £133k and £84k. **Opposite page:** CSL was £58k new and similar now



‘These cars straddle the analogue and digital eras’

activities throughout the decade, and the GT3 RS model acting as an ‘evolution’ to homologate a new rear suspension location. The Ferrari – albeit the standard 360 Modena – also formed the basis for a GT racer, and the Challenge Stradales were actually built from one-make-series 360 Challenge shells.

In comparison, the M3 CSL was always a pure road car, taking inspiration from the original 3.0 CSL of the early 1970s in its weight saving and aerodynamic embellishments (the latter being more subtle and more high-tech than its forebear’s).

Although all three cars occupied different price points when new, and do to this day, they have also suffered a similar case of depreciation and

now a boom in values. They also straddle the analogue and digital eras, the RS representing the former with its six-speed manual gearbox and non-adaptive suspension, and the other pair embracing a brave new world with their paddleshift-operated transmissions (albeit of the temperamental and flawed single-clutch type). It’s these gearboxes, perhaps more than anything else, that date these cars.

The 360 CS has never been a ‘track hack’ in the sense that the other two have, but this is surely what it was designed for. Although it possesses just 26bhp more than the regular 360, resulting in 420bhp, it’s substantially lighter – by some 110kg – with considerable honing in every

department, including faster shifts, 50 per cent more downforce and carbon-ceramic brakes.

Both our experts (see opposite page) cite the traditional red as being the colour everyone wants, with the infamously expensive Tricolore racing stripe also keenly sought-after. In the trade, 3000 miles is seen as low mileage – effectively minimal use over 12 years. A Challenge Stradale is not overly expensive to run, as long as you don’t damage any of the bespoke parts.

The 996 GT3 RS was unashamedly the pure trackday car of the GT3 family. While that makes it an unyielding road car, there are many who prefer its single-minded attitude. There’s little new that

FOUR TO BUY



FERRARI 360 CS
£POA

A 2004 360 CS that began its life in Japan, although it was ordered with left-hand drive, in line with the fashion for expensive imports onto the island. In Rosso Corsa with a black leather interior, it’s travelled 15,500 miles and has the Tricolore stripe.

4starsupercars.com
01420 479909



BMW M3 CSL
£49,990

This CSL has done 70,000 miles and is priced accordingly. It also has climate control and xenon headlamps. A ‘Chassis Strengthening Kit’ presumably means the ubiquitous subframe/boot-floor repair, and there’s a complete service history.

dsi-performance-cars.co.uk
01306 731761



PORSCHE 996 GT3 RS
£159,000

This white/blue 996 GT3 RS was originally supplied to Hong Kong, hence its ‘C15’ chassis code, but it was imported to the UK in 2004. It’s covered 14,525 miles since, and features front and rear roll-over sections plus inertia and harness belts.

jzmporsche.com
01923 269788



FERRARI 360 CS
£334,990

How much? But then this is a 2000-mile 360 CS, so you’d expect it to be like buying a new one. It may not be red, but in Nero Daytona with the fixed side windows and the Tricolore stripe, it does look absolutely gorgeous. Folly? Or canny investment?

marque1cars.com
01223 755911

can be written about the famous Mezger flat-six (here with 375bhp); suffice to say it inspires supreme confidence through its durability, while delivering a delightful assault on your eardrums.

There was a period in the not-so-distant past when the 996-generation GT3 RS was distinctly overshadowed by its 997-based successors, with prices down around the £60,000 mark. Today you'll pay around £150,000 for a really nice example, with very low mileage cars advertised for even more.

Read anything about the M3 CSL these days and it's hard to not be confronted with endlessly gushing

praise for this legendary car. However, despite favourable reviews at launch, values initially took a dive and for a while it was possible to pick one up relatively cheaply. The CSL was criticised for its SMG gearbox and ineffective brakes. What could never be faulted was the spine-tingling 355bhp straight-six engine, with its guttural roar through that carbon airbox. So too the way the car drove, or just how right the CSL additions looked on an already handsome body.

Prices have risen strongly in recent years, with eyebrows raised as the £50,000-mark was passed. However, low-mileage examples are now changing hands for up to £80,000.



Expert view



JONATHAN FRANKLIN

Hexagon Modern

'These cars are similar in terms of desirability – it just depends how much you have to spend. Collectors are putting the Ferrari into storage now. Think £200,000-250,000 for a low-mileage right-hand-drive car, but some are trying those cars now at over £300,000. Most buyers want Rosso Scuderia, Nero inside, and the stripe is very well regarded.

'Black CSLs are more rare, but some prefer the grey as it offsets the carbon roof. I haven't spoken to any customer who takes their CSL on track – they're too valuable now.

'The Porsche sits in the middle of the other two: around £150,000 for a good, low-mileage car.'

hexagonclassics.com
0208 3485151



JAMES MANN

4Star Supercars

'When the 964 Carrera RS and 993 Carrera RS went ballistic, the 996-generation 911s – the GT3s, GT2s, Turbos and even the C4S – were dragged upwards. However, the air-cooled market has now slackened off a bit so that has had an effect on 996s. I'd personally hang on to a GT3 RS at the moment if I had one – they'll weather the storm and the market will recover.

'There's a lot of demand for the M3 CSL, despite it having no real racing history. It used to be only a little bit more valuable than a regular M3, but it's pulling away strongly now, and CS prices are on the rise below it.'

4starsupercars.com
01420 479909

SUMMARY

Some of the heat may have left the market for these cars, but the consensus is that they're only heading in one direction. As a limited edition Ferrari, the 360 CS appears to be the next best thing to minting your own money. But the tragedy – as much as for owners as for fellow enthusiasts – is that this makes them almost unusable for fear of compromising that investment. Anyone who has heard a CS at full chat on a circuit will know what a waste this is.

All of the above applies to the Porsche and the BMW, it's just that the amount of money can roughly be halved each time as we work through the three cars. With the RS and the CSL, plenty were once used as trackday machinery, so the comment 'never seen a track' should be viewed with some suspicion. If you owned one, the temptation would be to use it on track at every opportunity, and that remains true to this day.

OPINION

'I BOUGHT ONE'

CHARLES MALLARD

BMW M3 CSL

'It's a great all-rounder: happy touring, winding up through the Stelvio, screaming through Alpine tunnels, or blasting around the Ring. It's sure-footed, although less so in the wet. Relatively easy to maintain, and an appreciating asset – every drive is a joy.'

THE SPECIALIST

JOHN GREATOREX

Ferrari specialist

'Don't buy a 360 CS to drive it – they're too valuable, plus if you break any of the bespoke parts, you can't get replacements. I've had two customers get out of them recently. They made money but they're upset to not have the car.'

EVO ROAD TESTER

STUART GALLAGHER

Spending upwards of £250k on a car that we 'can't drive' instantly discounts the 360. Such a shame, but in today's climate it just doesn't make sense. The CSL pulls at our heartstrings, and is still a car you can use and enjoy, but the first water-cooled RS is such a very special car it has to be our pick.



TVR FACTORY FOR SOUTH WALES

TVR has announced that it is to build a factory in south Wales. The new facility will be in the Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone, next to the planned site for the Circuit of Wales. The factory will employ 150 people and TVR will receive an investment from the Welsh Government of £30million over the next five years.



VATANEN 205 T16 UP FOR AUCTION

A genuine Group B legend is to be sold at auction in Monaco. The Peugeot 205 T16 Evolution 1 that Ari Vatanen won the 1985 Monte Carlo and Swedish rallies with will go under the hammer at RM Sotheby's Côte d'Azur auction. **evo** will be broadcasting the auction live – head to evo.co.uk on Saturday 14 May at 6pm to watch it.



PORSCHE CLASSICS ON TOUR

Porsche has revealed that it will be exhibiting models from its museum at a number of events around the world. Eleven events have been announced so far; eight are in Europe but sadly none are in the UK. Porsche clearly values its legacy: it recently announced a network of dealers that will cater for its classic models.

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1989	FERRARI 328 GTS (ABS) Rosso Corsa/Crema, Rear Aerofoil, Great History File, 5,000m FSH, Unbelievable Condition.....	£149,950
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13	FF Canna Di Fucile/Charcoal E/Seats, Sat Nav, Carbon Fibre Interior, Rear DVDs, R'Camera, Privacy, Shields, 20" Dark Painted Alloys, Massive Spec, 8,000m FSH.....	£174,950
98	F355 SPIDER F1 Giallo Fly/Black Stitched Yellow, Yellow Calipers, Shields, 14,000m, Fantastic Service History, As New.....	£124,950
12	CALIFORNIA 2+2 Silver With Black Roof/Black Daytona E/Seats, Sat Nav, Carbon Driving Zone & LEDs, Magneride, 20" Alloys, Massive Spec, 12,000m FSH.....	£109,950
52	575M F1 LHD Nero Daytona/Black E/Daytona Seats, Fiorano Handling Pk, Shields, Carbon Fibre F1 Paddles, 8,000m.....	£114,950
97	550 MARANELLO LHD Rosso Corsa/Nero E/Seats, Leather Headlining, 31,500m.....	£114,950
94	DIABLO Black/Black Leather, Carbon Interior, Large Rear Wing, Split Rim Alloys, Sports Exhaust, 32,000m.....	£129,950

PORSCHE

15	918 SPYDER Carrera White/Black Stitched Green, Sat Nav, Magnesium Alloys, Green Calipers, 2,500m, Stunning.....	£POA
05	CARRERA GT GT Silver/Ascot, Sat Nav, Full Fitted Luggage, 9,000m FSH, Immaculate Throughout.....	£579,950
114	991 TURBO 'S' CAB PDK Basalt Black/Black Leather, PCM, Burmester, Sport Chrono, Carbon Interior, Glass Roof, PDC, Massive Spec, 4,000m FSH, As New.....	£111,950
15	991 CARRERA 7 SPEED MANUAL Rhodium Silver/Espresso Heat & Ventilated Seats, PCM, PDLs, Sports Pipes, Phone, Privacy, 5,000m, As New.....	£69,950
03	996 GT3 CLUBSPORT Silver/Black Racing Seats, Front & Rear Roll Cage, A/C, Radio, CD, Special Features, 21,000m, As New.....	£69,950

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16	BENTAYGA FIRST EDITION Dark Sapphire/Linen, Naim, Adaptive Cruise, Panoramic Roof, Cameras, Many Bespoke Features, Delivery Mileage.....	£265,000
13	GHOST EWB Royal Blue/Magnolia, Sat Nav, Rear DVDs, Picnic Tables, Cameras, Panorama Roof, 20" Polished Alloys, Massive Spec, 25,000m FSH, Perfect.....	£159,950
11	CONTINENTAL SUPERSPORT 4 SEATS Ice White/Black Stitched White, Carbon Interior, Ceramics, 32,000m FSH, As New.....	£72,950

MERCEDES-BENZ & McLAREN

08	SLR ROADSTER Crystal Galaxite Black/Black Contrast Red Stitching, BOSE, 19" Turbines, Red Calipers, UK Supplied, 9,900m FSH.....	£365,000
61	SLS AMG ROADSTER Le Mans Red/Black Designo H/Seats, Comand, Carbon Interior & Exterior Mirrors, Painted Alloys, R'Camera, Huge Spec, 9,800m, As New.....	£164,950
65	AMG GT-S Silver/Black & Red Nappa, Comand, Sports Exhaust, AMG Ride Control, 10 Spoke Alloys, Big Spec.....	£106,950

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USED RIVALS: NOUGHTIES SUPERSALOONS

by Adam Towler



JAGUAR S-TYPE R

Engine	V8, 4196cc, supercharger
Power	390bhp @ 6100rpm
Torque	399lb ft @ 3500rpm
Weight	1800kg (220bhp/ton)
0-62mph	5.6sec (claimed)
Top speed	155mph (limited)
On sale	2002-2007
evo rating	★★★★★

'I BOUGHT ONE'

'I've had the car for a year and I love it. It's my first Jag, and it's everything I expected. It has cost me a lot to get it how I want it. It's dear to run, too, but you don't buy a car like this expecting it to be cheap. Every time I get out of it I'm smiling – I absolutely love the combination of power and comfort.'

Paul Tucker

EXAMPLES



2006 £10,990
Nuova London

A late R with 60,000 miles. In Pacific Metallic with Dove Grey leather. Just serviced.

BUYING ADVICE

'Corrosion is the big thing. Look behind the sill covers. It's easy to miss and awkward to put right. The rear suspension bushes also perish – they're under a lot of strain. We use upgraded replacements so you no longer have to buy the complete arms. Most of the car is strong, however, and while they eat brakes, parts prices are reasonable. The supercharged engine is bombproof.'

Gary Robinson, swallows-jag.co.uk



MERCEDES-BENZ E55 AMG

Engine	V8, 5439cc, supercharger
Power	476bhp @ 6100rpm
Torque	516lb ft @ 2650-4500rpm
Weight	1760kg (275bhp/ton)
0-62mph	4.7sec (claimed)
Top speed	155mph (limited)
On sale	2003-2006
evo rating	★★★★★

'I bitterly regret selling mine. It's a very guttural car – raw, always straining at the leash as you drive. It can be very comfortable, though, and it's very understated. It doesn't shout about its performance, and I love that. Finding a good one now is difficult, and it will catch you out if you don't maintain it. I'd buy another.'

Tony Bartle



2004 £16,995
AMG Collection

An Obsidian Black E55 saloon with Anthracite leather interior. With 76,000 miles and FSH.

'You can pick up "cheap" E55s for £6000, but most of the clean, lower-mileage ones are £10,000-plus. Most have done 100,000 miles now, but that's no bad thing – it's just vital it has a good service history, including a gearbox oil change every 40,000 miles. Discs and pads are expensive, too, and suspension joints and bushes wear out. Most make over 500bhp as standard, and 560bhp is straightforward.'

Olly Stoner, prestigecarservice.co.uk



AUDI RS6 (C5)

Engine	V8, 4172cc, twin-turbo
Power	444bhp @ 5700-6400rpm
Torque	413lb ft @ 1950-5500rpm
Weight	1840kg (245bhp/ton)
0-62mph	4.9sec (claimed)
Top speed	155mph (limited)
On sale	2002-2004
evo rating	★★★★★

'After ten years I'm thinking of selling my C5 RS6 saloon, as I've bought a Tesla Model S 85D. I've done 100,000 miles in the Audi and it's been the most reliable car I've had, but I've invoices as thick as a telephone directory! It brings a smile to my face every day, and I'm really going to miss the noise of the twin-turbo V8 engine.'

Ross Gunn



2003 £8489
Motorhub

Finished in grey with white leather Recaro seats piped with black. 129,000 miles on the clock.

'These are a good all-rounders and they're fairly reliable. The issues with Dynamic Ride Control are in the past as most cars have coilovers now. The auto 'boxes aren't bad, but they're outdated. Abuse will cause them to fail, and it's a £4000 job to sort. It's easy to get a £1000 service bill, but they'll do 540bhp with Stage 2 tuning, and Bilstein PSS9 coilovers mean the ride can be made more compliant.'

Martin Adams, unit20.com

THE EVO CHOICE

Excluding BMW's E39 M5 certainly spices things up. When the S-type R went head-on with the Munich warrior (evo 042), it took a surprising victory, chiefly because it allowed you to enjoy its performance more of the time. But it won't have aged as well as the BMW (or the others), and that puts us off.

Fast Audis have evolved to be more involving machines (well, some have) since the C5 RS6 arrived, and this Ingolstadt icon is from the sledgehammer-to-crack-a-nut school of performance. Today they offer good tuning potential but their one-dimensional approach to driving wouldn't suit us.

This leaves the E55, which is no bad thing when you consider that its V8 is one of the most charismatic engines you can buy for this money. Bills can be scary, but no more so than for the other two. It's a genuine supersaloon, and it's our choice.

Stuart Gallagher

BUYING JOURNEY

From Peugeot to Ariel, an **evo** reader lays out his speed-chasing ownership history

2015



7th **BMW M3 (E92)**

'Bored of my X3 daily driver, I did the man-maths and decided the extra fuel costs were OK, so I bought a BMW M3 E93. The sound of that V8 will live with me forever.'



HAMISH WESTWATER

1st **Peugeot 205 GT 1.4**

'Within a week of getting my first job I bought myself a stunning little 205 GT. Turned out to be a lemon. Soon replaced with a Tornado Red Mk2 Golf GTI 8-valve.'



1990



2012

6th **Ariel Atom 3 300**

'At this point I realised I could buy my dream toy, as I didn't actually need any practicality when only covering 3000 miles a year. After lots of searching, I bought an Ariel Atom 3 300.'



2nd **VW Golf VR6 (Mk3)**

'My first experience of real power – something that would cost me dearly in later years – but in the middle of the car-crime years it didn't feel safe parked up, so it had to go.'



2010

5th **Porsche 911 Turbo (996)**

'A step up in terms of performance over the M12, but somehow lacked the Noble's character. Whilst getting it MOT'd, I noticed my annual mileage was only 3000.'



1994



Tip

Not much beats an Atom, but how about a Caterham 620R for a different take on the lightweight theme?

What's next?

'What, if anything, can replace the Atom? No other car has made me grin every time I drive it, and that hasn't changed in three years of ownership. I won the Ultimate Scottish Street Car at Craik Raceway last year, so there isn't anything that's much faster. Oh, and it has probably gone up a few grand in value, too. Now all of that really is the Thrill of Driving to me.'

2002

3rd **Subaru Impreza WRX**

'My first brand-new car. I loved this one. I swapped it for a black STI model in a deal that included £1000 of fuel, which was handy with my mileage increasing.'



2008



4th **Noble M12 GTO**

'I decided I needed a toy alongside my BMW 330d. What a sense of occasion the M12 was, combined with superb handling. However, two problems: it was not as fast as I had hoped, and as it turned out, it was not that reliable either!'

evo view

Hamish's journey has taken him a long way since his 'lemon' of a 205, developing along the classic dual lines of daily transport and weekend toy. Those early years were all about the VW Golf: two Mk2 GTIs followed by a sonorous VR6. A Mazda 323 replaced the VR6, with Hamish remarking wryly how he kidded himself that the 24-valve V6 made it a sports car. This is also a man that put 60,000 miles on a CR-X del Sol in just four years.

The daily-use Imprezas gave way to BMW 330d and Audi A5 cabriolets and then an X3 M Sport, with more exotic metal saved for weekends. Not many have found a Noble lacking in performance, but then Hamish's love for his current supercharged Atom speaks volumes for his personal speed barometer. The M3 has departed, replaced by, you guessed it, a Golf R. 'Feels like I've gone full circle in 25 years,' he notes.

Tell us your buying journey. Email eds@evo.co.uk



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BUYING GUIDE: HONDA ACCORD TYPE R 1998-2003

A sports saloon touched with genius, and now a bargain – if you know what to look out for

by Peter Tomalin

Photography by Adam Shorrock



WE GO BACK A LONG WAY, THE Accord Type R and **evo**. Right back to the very beginning, in fact. Our original Driven piece on the then-new Type R appeared in our very first issue, November 1998, sandwiched between an Astra SRi and an Impreza 22B. Those were the days, my friends...

By the late '90s, Honda was encamped deep in enthusiast territory. The NSX had transformed perceptions of the marque; the Integra Type R had blazed its way into our hearts with its combination of fizzing VTEC engine and peachy road manners; the Accord itself was a front-runner in the BTCC, and now there was a road-going version to provide Type R thrills in a four-door saloon.

As John Barker wrote at the time, the ATR was a

genuine attempt to capture the thrills of the racer in a road car. Much sanitised and oodles more practical, of course, but spirited, rewarding and focused enough to make a plausible connection between racing and the road.

Rear aerofoil aside, the hot Accord was actually a fairly subtle machine for a road-racer, with a tasteful bodykit, handsome five-spoke 17-inch alloys and discreet Type R badges. Underneath, though, it certainly meant business. Extra bracing stiffened the shell by 40 per cent, the double-wishbone suspension was lower and firmer, and the brakes featured NSX-spec discs. The 2.2-litre all-alloy four with its VTEC trickery revved to well over 7000rpm and produced its 209bhp without the aid of turbocharging. It drove the front wheels

via a close-ratio five-speed manual gearbox with a helical limited-slip diff. To help save weight, a good deal of soundproofing had been discarded, along with the sunroof, while new kit inside included body-hugging Recaros, a leather-trimmed Momo wheel and a titanium gearknob. We loved it.

There was a mild facelift in 2001, distinguished chiefly by a slatted (as opposed to mesh) grille. All ATRs came well-equipped as standard; of the options, air-con is probably the most desirable.

Today, with decent examples available from as little as two grand, it's one of the most affordable ways to own a genuine piece of Type R engineering brilliance. And with numbers declining as unloved examples are cannibalised for parts, the best are starting to become sought-after.

CHECKPOINTS

ENGINE

Maz Christofi, boss of Type R specialists Hond-R, is a big fan of the ATR. 'Brilliant cars,' he says, 'and for the money unbeatable. There's nothing difficult about servicing them, and parts are easy to get. The engine is basically bulletproof, if properly serviced.'

The main recurring issue is failure of the hydraulic cambelt

tensioner.' The clue it's on the way out is a diesel-like rattle between 2000 and 3000rpm. Ignore it and you could face a top-end engine rebuild. 'We offer a mechanical tensioner which fixes it,' says Maz. 'Check the car's history to see if it's had a cambelt and balancer belt. If it hasn't in the last couple of years, budget to get it done. Tensioner and belts

cost around £420 fitted. If you get the two pulleys done at the same time – and a lot of people do – add about another £200.'

The EGR valve can get sooted-up, causing poor running, but cleaning it is a DIY job. The engines use oil, so check the dipstick – and the exhaust for smoke. The previous owner should be aware of the need to check the oil regularly. Also

check for oil leaks from the sump – there's no gasket.

TRANSMISSION

The single most common issue, particularly on pre-facelift cars, is the synchro on fifth gear failing. There was a recall where Honda fitted carbon-lined synchros, but proof the work has been carried out can be tricky to come by. 'It's vital to

make sure every gear selects smoothly,' says Maz. 'If it's tricky to select fifth and the gears crunch, the synchro is on the way out.' Check reverse, too. A rebuild could cost c£800, so if it's crunching, walk away.

SUSPENSION, STEERING, BRAKES

Just the usual wear-and-tear items, so check for worn bushes,

creaky springs and leaky dampers. 'It should steer and handle with real precision,' says Maz. 'If it feels loose, it's bushes and dampers. We usually fit Tein or BC Racing – they're comfortable but they do what they're meant to do.' Anti-roll bar drop-links sometimes break – listen for a telltale knocking noise – but they're not expensive to replace.



Above: discs came from NSX. **Right:** driver's seat bolsters on higher-mileage cars may need a retrim. **Bottom:** VTEC engine largely reliable



BODY, INTERIOR, ELECTRICS

Rust is starting to become an issue. Look in the usual places – around the rear arches, etc. Of most concern, though, is the upper bulkhead between the engine and the cabin. 'It's an inherent design problem,' says Maz. 'Where the wheelarch meets the bulkhead there's a water trap.'

So check at the back of the engine bay,

looking down, then get into the driver footwell and look up behind the pedals using a torch. Pull the carpet away to see the metal. 'If it's rusty, a proper fix is a dashboard-out job,' says Maz. 'It's probably £600-700.'

Also check the headlights for hazing; some of it can be polished out but it eventually becomes an MOT failure; you have to buy a whole unit, which can cost hundreds.

RIVALS

SUBARU IMPREZA WRX

Decent, late '90s/early '00s Imprezas start around £3000. Similar power to the Accord (215bhp) but loads more torque and, with 4WD too, usually quicker point-to-point.

BMW E46 3-SERIES

All manner of diesel and petrol E46 Beemers available for ATR money. If four doors aren't crucial, a 330Ci (228bhp 3-litre straight-six) for around £2500 could be tempting.

ALFA ROMEO 156

Plenty of cheap 156s around, both petrol and diesel four-cylinder versions. More exotic is the 190bhp 2.5 V6. The tricky bit is finding one that's not been run on a shoestring.

INFORMATION

HONDA ACCORD TYPE R

Engine	In-line 4-cyl, 2157cc
Max power	209bhp @ 7200rpm
Max torque	158lb ft @ 6700rpm
Transmission	Five-speed manual, front-wheel drive, lsd
Weight	1306kg
Power-to-weight	163bhp/ton
0-60mph	6.1sec (tested)
Top speed	142mph (claimed)
Price new	£22,995 in 1999

PARTS PRICES

Prices from hond-r.com. Tyre price from blackcircles.com. All prices include VAT but exclude fitting charges.

Tyres (each)	£52.84 (215/45 R17, Toyo Proxes T1-R)
Front pads (set)	£145 (Ferodo DS2500)
Front discs (pair)	c£200 (grooved)
Coilovers (set of four)	£650 (BC Racing)
Clutch	£240 (Honda)
Performance flywheel	£210
Exhaust (cat-back)	£575 (Honda)
Spark plugs (four)	£65
Oil filter	£11.50

SERVICING

Prices from hond-r.com, including VAT. Service usually at 6000 miles or annually.

Minor service	c£100
Major service	c£300
Cambelt change	c£420 (including mechanical tensioner)

USEFUL CONTACTS

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type-r-owners.co.uk

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'I BOUGHT ONE'

ADAM SHORROCK

'I bought mine in June 2013. I was working as a designer on **evo** and was about to go freelance, which meant no more long-term test cars; I had to buy a car of my own. I thought about a "breadvan" Civic Type R, but the Accord gives you so much more for your money. Mine was a 1999 car, 97,000 miles, completely standard and had clearly been very well looked after. I paid £2000 for it.

'It was awesome – once I got used to hanging on to the revs! I did about 20,000 miles in it in around two and a half years. Generally it wasn't too expensive to run. Being a pre-facelift car, it needed high-octane fuel, but if you drove carefully you'd get 30mpg, and

if you enjoyed yourself it was mid-20s. Road tax, being pre-2001, was just £230.

'There were a few big bills. The exhaust was falling apart so I splashed out £450 on a Mongoose stainless steel system. Then it cost me £700 to get it through the MOT last year – most of that on lambda sensors and a new cat, which was about £180. The automatic levelling on the headlights was playing up, too, which was a right pain. In the end the garage just fixed them in position.

'The biggest issue I had was a wobbly crankshaft pulley. In my first week with the car, the pulley came off! I

had it replaced and tightened as much as possible. Maybe I was wrong to fit a second-hand one, but eventually it started wobbling again, to the extent that it threw the belt off. The engine overheated and warped the head. I decided to get rid and have just sold the car for £1000 to a guy who has an engine to go in it. It was really unfortunate because overall it's a great car, an increasingly rare one, and the cheapest way into the whole Type R culture.'



IN THE CLASSIFIEDS



2002 ACCORD TYPE R £2350

103,000 miles, red, full Honda history to 70k miles, just serviced, new brake pads, MOT to Feb '17, car in Northern Ireland
gumtree.com



1999 (V) ACCORD TYPE R £2595

124,000 miles, black, 17in Team Dynamics alloys, lowered 40mm, cambelt just done, full service history, MOT to August 2016
gumtree.com



2002 (52) ACCORD TYPE R £3495

129,000 miles, metallic silver, two owners, full service history, 11 Honda main dealer stamps, long MOT
carkings.co.uk

WHAT WE SAID



DRIVEN, NOVEMBER 1998

'You know what the Accord Type R is going to do, but it's still a surprise when it does it. Even knowing what Type R stands for, feeling the taut ride, seeing a mirror full of high wing and noting the red paint at 7500rpm, the instant the engine changes from mild-mannered to Supercam is a thrilling, giggly moment..

'Fire it up and it idles meekly, with a light, jangly note. There's plenty of low-down grunt, so the Accord picks up speed briskly, suspension describing the surface finish in detail, gearlever snicking cleanly through a tight gate. The revs rise, the needle hits 5500 and *Click!* you're in the VTEC zone. It's like someone has let the handbrake off, the Accord surging forward and finding its voice simultaneously.

'In the Integra Type R this is the cue for frantic sounds and controlled, exploitable dynamics. The Accord is the same. It responds to the power but isn't overwhelmed, tracking true and cornering with precision. Fabulous traction is delivered with very little fuss, and the balance of the chassis is remarkable. Back off mid-bend and the tail holds its line resolutely.

'It's not perfect. Its steering is firm but feedback and initial response are a tad muddy, yet you can lay down full power in tight turns without any deflection from line, which is admirable. No question: the Accord is a genuine Type R.' – **evo** 001

WHAT TO PAY



In the bargain basement you'll find cars with 150k-plus miles, multiple owners and shady histories for as little as £1200, but £1500-2000 is probably a better starting point for average- to high-mileage cars with some history. £2000-3000 should buy an honest car with a full history, and if you can stretch to £3500 you'll have your pick of cars that have clearly been cherished. At the very top end, a 60,000-miler in immaculate condition with just one or two owners might fetch £4000+.

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MODEL FOCUS: FERRARI FF

Breathtakingly rapid thanks to the Enzo's V12 and with space for four adults... Tempted?

by Adam Towler



THE FF REPLACED THE 612 SCAGLIETTI in Ferrari's line-up, and although it was still a very large four-seater, it marked something of a departure for the marque in this niche. Out went the stretched-coupe style of the 612 and in came a more practical 'shooting brake' body that offered not only plenty of room for four passengers, but also reasonable boot space – 450 litres, rising to 800 litres with the rear seats folded. The centre section of the rear seats also folded down to accommodate items such as skis.

Up front was a direct-injection V12 engine producing 651bhp and sending drive through a seven-speed dual-clutch gearbox. A novel four-wheel-drive solution saw torque for the front wheels taken directly from the crankshaft, on demand, and a top speed of 208mph made the FF one very quick everyday hatchback.

When it launched in 2011, the FF cost £227,107 before options. This means that, today, most who bought one new have lost at least £100,000 in depreciation if they've done a reasonable 20,000 miles over, say, three years.

But what a car: a genuinely useable, practical Ferrari, albeit one that you'll need to drive very carefully if you're to meet the official 18.3mpg combined fuel-consumption figure. At least with a 91-litre tank, fuel stops needn't be too frequent.

The FF's replacement, the more extravagantly titled GTC4 Lusso, was first shown at the recent Geneva motor show, and offers more power and enhancements in all areas.



Expert view

MATT HONEYSETT at SIMON FURLONGER
simonfurlonger.co.uk 01233 638308

'A large proportion of FF buyers come out of 612 Scagliettis, and compared to that car the FF is a lot more useable. The new 'box is a revelation after the 612's F1 'box for town driving, and the four-wheel-drive system is not a gimmick.

'The seating layout and boot size are also fantastic. It's a genuine, practical car and we have customers who use their FFs daily. You could even put your dog in one!

'Currently we're not seeing them drop below £150,000 for a 20,000 to 25,000-mile car, but I'd imagine if you had a car with more than 50,000

miles, it would be nearer £125,000. The new GTC4 Lusso model might affect that, but that's probably some way off. I can't see an FF down at £70,000 – more like £100,000 at some point.

'It's quite a heavy car, and the styling isn't for everyone. And despite the seven-year dealer service plan, I'd say you still need £2000-3500 a year to run one.

'Dark colours such as black and grey are the strongest sellers, preferably with a contrasting light interior. You want a good spec, too, including items such as cruise control, the Scuderia shields, the carbon driving zone and the infotainment system. The exterior colour is more important on this model than others in the range.'

SERIAL BUYER

JOHN REIDY

John recently purchased an FF from Simon Furlonger, but ran a 612 Scaglietti for four years before that, so is ideally placed to compare Ferrari's big four-seat cars in the modern era.

'I spent two years doing my research before getting the 612,' he says, 'and I realised that there isn't much in the marketplace if you want a true GT that can seat four adults. I bought it in 2012, and it was the dream car for me. Mine was literally the last one into the UK, and I never thought I'd go on from there. But the FF ticks boxes that I hadn't really thought about at the time. I want to drive my car in the winter and there's the 4x4 system, plus the shooting-brake body makes the FF incredibly practical.

'With the 612 having gone nicely up in value, I could do a good deal to get the FF. I thought the 612 had fabulous Italian engineering, but the FF is different – it's perfect, nearly Germanic. The gearbox is brilliant. You rarely get to use all the power but the engine is so smooth and the controls are wonderfully thought out. I don't need to have another practical car with the FF; there's more boot space than in your typical hatchback. I am like a child with the car at the moment. When I first sat in it, after two minutes I just said, "Wow!"'





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SHOULD YOU KEEP IT?

Porsche Cayman (987)



Car outgunned by newer machinery? Then take a look at the latest options to upgrade and improve it **by Antony Ingram**

THE PORSCHE CAYMAN GT4 IS THE car we wanted the Cayman to be all along. Not that you should feel down about owning a 'lesser' Cayman. Even the first-generation, 987-series version is still excellent – and ripe for GT4-style improvement.

Suspension is a good starting point. Owners rate Bilstein's PSS10 coilover package highly (£2278.55 from porscheshop.co.uk, without PASM). It features adjustable dampers and lowers the car by 30-60mm. Porscheshop also

sells a factory GT3 front anti-roll bar for £300.

A lightweight flywheel will give you sharper engine response. RPM Technik fits one to all its CSR-upgraded models; it's £762 (with a spring-loaded friction plate) from rpmtechnik.co.uk.

A fruitier exhaust note wouldn't go amiss either, so you can appreciate the faster throttle blips – £956 buys you a manifold-back system made by Remus, from design911.co.uk.

A GT4? Not quite, but you'll have a sharper, more involving Cayman for your troubles.

Aftermarket news



NEW SINGERS UNVEILED

The two latest Porsche 911s to be re-imagined by Singer Vehicle Design were revealed at the Amelia Island Concours in March. A 1991 'Blood Dark Red' car (pictured) is going to an owner in North Carolina, while a 'Hemingway Blue' 1990 car is named after its owner's Florida location.



TECHART MAGNUM SPORT

Those of considerable means and dubious taste may be tempted by the latest aerodynamic addenda from TechArt for their Porsche Cayenne. The kit includes winglets, intakes, outlets and a diffuser. A power upgrade is also available, taking the Turbo S to 690bhp.



MORE POWER FOR CONTINENTAL GT

Bentley has released details of two new models in the Continental GT model line: the GT Speed and Black Edition. Both receive a more powerful 6-litre, twin-turbocharged W12 engine (633bhp and 619lb ft) resulting in a 3.9sec 0-60mph time and 206mph.



SUPERCHIPS HONDA CIVIC TYPE R

Renowned remapper Superchips now offers a package for the latest Civic Type R. The upgrade gives 364bhp and 380lb ft, up from the standard car's 306bhp and 295lb ft. Driveability is said to be unaffected and the cost is hard to argue with, at £399 including labour.

NEXT MONTH

ANALYSIS

Should you buy a used turbocharged performance car? And if so, which one?

USED RIVALS

The trackday heroes you can use every day: Mini GP v Mégane R26.R v Mitsubishi Evo RS.

BUYING GUIDE

Aston Martin Rapide: the quirky four-door V12 Aston that's a bargain super-GT car.

MODEL FOCUS

Renault Clio 200: has the first turbocharged hot Clio evolved into a great used buy?

'Why I've kept it'

DAVID ASHTON

LOTUS ELISE 111S



'The reason I've kept my car isn't because of a period of forgotten ownership, or a job move, or not having the required funds to keep it on the road, but because when I bought my Elise 111S new in 2002, it was always my intention to keep it until I could no longer legally drive.

'This kind of ownership has become a bit of a family tradition. My grandfather bought an MGA new in 1955 and, when he had to surrender his licence, passed it on to my father. By that time Dad had already bought a Triumph Spitfire, which he then handed to me, along with the MGA, when he decided he was no longer fit enough to drive. The three of us had, coincidentally, all bought our British sports cars around our 33rd birthday.

'My S2 started life as my only car, but I commuted by train to London so the miles only piled on when I went on my annual summer driving holiday – two weeks in Europe that has taken me to southern Spain and as far as Montenegro. I did this for the first ten years of ownership before the future Mrs Ashton asked if we could leave the Elise at home and have a holiday on our own.

'Since then the Lotus has joined the other two British icons as a "second" car. I know the Elise comes in for criticism for niggling reliability issues, but apart from regular servicing, a head-gasket upgrade and one set of new brake discs when 50,000 miles ticked by, I haven't had any issues that have kept the car off the road. I think the key is finding a good specialist and taking their advice as to when items should be replaced. Now all I hope is that the new addition to the Ashton family likes her British sports cars, because she'll be inheriting three of them.'

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Lamborghini Diablo Roadster 5.7 Sports exhaust, Full leather interior, 30,000 miles, 1997, **£179,990**



Lamborghini Huracan LHD Coupe Ceramic brakes, Branding Pk, Transparent engine cover, 4,000 miles, 2015, **£159,990**



Lamborghini Gallardo Superleggera LP570-4 Rear Lifting Gear, Rear Camera, High level rear wing, 25,000 miles, 2010, **£124,990**



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Lamborghini GALLARDO Spyder RARE MANUAL Switchable sports exhaust, Calisto Alloys, 34,000 miles, 2006, **£79,990**



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Ferrari F12 BERLINETTA Ferrari F12 BERLINETTA JBL sound upgrade, LED and Carbon steering wheel, 8,000 miles, 2013, **£227,990**



FERRARI 599 GTB Full Electric Heated Seats, Satellite navigation system, 26,000 miles, 2006, **£119,990**



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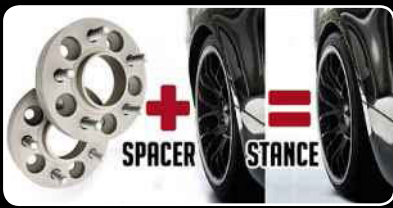
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THE KNOWLEDGE

⊕ = new entry this month. * = grey import. Entries in italics are for cars no longer on sale. **Issue no.** is for our most recent major test of the car (D = Driven, R = Road test or group test, F = Feature). Call 0844 844 0039 to order a back issue. **Price** is on-the-road including VAT and delivery charges. **Engine** is the car's main motor only - additional hybrid tech isn't shown. **Weight** is the car's kerb weight as quoted by the manufacturer. **bhp/ton** is the power-to-weight ratio based on manufacturer's kerb weight. **0-60mph** and **0-100mph** figures in bold are independently recorded, all other performance figures are manufacturers' claims. **CO2 g/km** is the official EC figure and **EC mpg** is the official 'Combined' figure or equivalent.

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING	
Abarth 595 Competizione	196 D	£19,090	4/1368	158/5500	170/3000	1035kg	155	7.4	-	130	155	43.5	+ Spirited engine, still looks great - Favours fun over finesse	★★★★☆
Abarth 695 Biposto	205 R	£33,055	4/1369	187/5500	184/3000	997kg	191	5.9	-	143	-	-	+ Engineered like a true Abarth product - Desirable extras make this a £50k city car	★★★★☆
Alfa Romeo Giulietta QV	199 D	£28,330	4/1742	237/5750	251/2000	1320kg	182	6.0	-	151	162	40.3	+ Still looks good, and now it's got the 4C's engine - Pricey, and it has more rewarding rivals	★★★★☆
Alfa Romeo Giulietta Cloverleaf	144 D	10*-14	4/1742	232/5500	251/1900	1320kg	179	6.8	-	150	177	37.2	+ Shows signs of deep talent... -...but should be more exciting	★★★★☆
Alfa Romeo 147 GTA	187 R	03*-06	6/3179	247/6200	221/4800	1360kg	185	6.0	15.5	153	-	23.3	+ MK1 Focus RS pace without the histrionics - Slightly nose-heavy	★★★★☆
Audi S1	211 R	£25,595	4/1984	228/6000	273/1600	1315kg	176	5.8	-	155	162	40.4	+ Compliant and engaging chassis; quick, too - Looks dull without options	★★★★☆
Audi A1 quattro	181 R	73	4/1984	253/6000	258/2500	1420kg	181	5.7	-	152	199	32.8	+ Polished 253bhp all-wheel-drive A1 - Just 19 for UK, Porsche Cayman price	★★★★☆
Audi S3	188 R	£31,230	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1395kg	216	5.4	12.5	155	162	40.4	+ Lots of grip and one of the best-sounding four-pot turbos - Still a little too clinical	★★★★☆
Audi RS3 Sportback	221 R	£40,795	5/2480	362/5500	343/1625	1520kg	242	4.3	-	155	189	34.9	+ Addictive five-cylinder noise; monster pace - Chassis not exactly playful	★★★★☆
Audi S3	106 R	06*-12	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1455kg	183	5.6	13.6	155	198	33.2	+ Very fast, very effective, very... err, quality - A little too clinical	★★★★☆
Audi RS3 Sportback	156 R	11*-12	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1575kg	216	4.5	-	155	212	31.0	+ Above, with added five-pot character - Again, see above...	★★★★☆
BMW 125i M Sport	176 D	£27,060	4/1997	218/5000	228/1350	1420kg	156	6.4	-	155	154	42.8	+ Performance, price, running costs - Dull four-pot soundtrack	★★★★☆
BMW M135i	212 R	£32,010	6/2979	321/5800	332/1300	1430kg	228	5.1	-	155	188	35.3	+ Powertrain, noise, chassis, price - M235i looks nicer, and has an LSD on its options list	★★★★☆
BMW 130i M Sport	106 R	05*-10	6/2996	261/6650	232/2750	1450kg	183	6.1	15.3	155	-	34.0	+ Fantastic engine - Suspension can still get a little boingy	★★★★☆
Citroën Saxo VTS	020 R	97*-03	4/1587	120/6600	107/5200	935kg	130	7.6	22.6	127	-	34.9	+ Chunky, chuckable charger - Can catch out the unwary	★★★★☆
Citroën AX GT	195 R	87*-92	4/1360	85/6400	86/4000	722kg	120	9.2	-	110	-	-	+ Makes terrific use of 85bhp - Feels like it's made from paper	★★★★☆
Citroën DS3 1.6 THP	142 R	10*-15	4/1598	154/6000	177/1400	1240kg	126	7.2	-	133	155	42.2	+ A proper French hot hatch - Petrolheads might find it too 'designed'	★★★★☆
Citroën DS3 Racing	153 D	06*-12	4/1598	204/6000	203/2000	1240kg	167	6.5	-	146	149	-	+ Faster, feistier version of above - Not as hardcore as its 'Racing' tag suggests	★★★★☆
Fiat Panda 100HP	132 R	06*-11	4/1368	99/6000	97/4250	917kg	103	9.5	-	115	154	43.5	+ Most fun per pound on the market - Optional ESP can't be turned off	★★★★☆
Ford Fiesta ST	207 R	£17,545	4/1596	179/5700	214/1600	1088kg	167	7.4	18.4	137	138	47.9	+ Chassis, price, punchy performance - Not as powerful as key rivals	★★★★☆
Ford Fiesta ST Mountune	213 R	£18,144	4/1596	212/6000	236/2750	1088kg	198	6.4	-	140	138	-	+ One of the best mid-sized hatches made even better - Badge snobbery	★★★★☆
Ford Fiesta Zetec S	123 D	08*-13	4/1596	118/6000	112/4050	1045kg	115	9.9	-	120	134	48.7	+ Genuinely entertaining supermini - Grown up compared to Twingo/Swift	★★★★☆
Ford Fiesta Zetec S Mountune	132 R	08*-13	4/1596	138/6750	125/4250	1080kg	130	7.9	-	120	134	48.7	+ As above, with a fantastically loud exhaust... -...if you're 12 years old	★★★★☆
Ford Fiesta ST	075 D	05*-08	4/1999	148/6000	140/4500	1137kg	132	7.9	-	129	-	38.2	+ Great looks, decent brakes - Disappointing chassis, gutless engine	★★★★☆
Ford Focus ST TDCi Estate	219 D	£23,295	4/1997	182/3500	295/2000	1488kg	124	8.3	-	135	110	67.3	+ Performance not sacrificed at the altar of economy - Gets ragged when really pushed	★★★★☆
Ford Focus ST	207 R	£22,745	4/1999	247/5500	265/2000	1362kg	184	6.5	-	154	159	41.5	+ Excellent engine - Scrappy when pushed	★★★★☆
Ford Focus ST Mountune	187 D	£23,940	4/1999	271/5500	295/2750	1362kg	202	5.7	-	154+	169	-	+ Great value upgrade - Steering still not as feelsome as that of some rivals	★★★★☆
Ford Focus ST	119 R	05*-10	5/2522	222/6000	236/1600	1392kg	162	6.7	16.8	150	224	30.4	+ Value, performance, integrity - Big engine compromises handling	★★★★☆
Ford Focus ST Mountune	137 R	08*-11	5/2522	256/5500	295/2500	1392kg	187	5.8	14.3	155	224	-	+ ST takes extra power in its stride - You probably still want an RS	★★★★☆
Ford Focus RS (Mk3)	220 R	£29,995	4/2261	345/6000	347/2000	1524kg	230	4.7	-	165	175	36.7	+ Torque-vectoring 4WD brings new sensations to hot hatch sector - Engine isn't thrilling	★★★★☆
Ford Focus RS (Mk2)	195 R	05*-11	5/2522	300/6500	324/2300	1467kg	208	5.9	14.2	163	225	30.5	+ Huge performance, highly capable FWD chassis - Body control is occasionally clumsy	★★★★☆
Ford Focus RS500 (Mk2)	181 R	10*-11	5/2522	345/6000	339/2500	1467kg	239	5.6	12.7	165	225	-	+ More power and presence than regular Mk2 RS - Pricey	★★★★☆
Ford Focus RS (Mk1)	207 R	02*-03	4/1998	212/5500	229/3500	1478kg	169	5.9	14.9	143	-	-	+ Some are great - Some are awful (so make sure you drive plenty)	★★★★☆
Ford Escort RS Cosworth	157 R	92*-96	4/1993	224/6250	224/3500	1275kg	179	6.2	-	137	-	-	+ The ultimate Essex hot hatch - Unmodified ones are rare, and getting pricey...	★★★★☆
Ford Puma 1.7	095 R	97*-02	4/1679	123/6300	116/4500	1041kg	120	8.6	27.6	122	-	38.2	+ Revvy engine, sparkling chassis, bargain used prices - Rusty rear arches	★★★★☆
Ford Racing Puma	128 R	00*-01	4/1679	153/7000	119/4500	1174kg	132	7.8	23.2	137	-	34.7	+ Exclusivity - The standard Puma does it so well	★★★★☆
Honda Civic Type R	216 R	£29,995	4/1996	306/6500	295/2500	1378kg	226	5.7	-	167	170	38.7	+ Great on smooth roads - Turbo engine not as special as old NA units; styling a bit 'busy'	★★★★☆
Honda Civic Type R (FN2)	102 R	07*-11	4/1998	198/7800	142/5600	1267kg	158	6.8	17.5	146	215	31.0	+ Looks great, VTEC more accessible - Steering lacks feel, inert balance	★★★★☆
Honda Civic Type R Champ'ship White	126 D	09*-10	4/1998	198/7800	142/5600	1267kg	158	6.6	-	146	-	31.0	+ Limited-slip diff a welcome addition - It's not available on the standard car	★★★★☆
Honda Civic Type R Mugen	195 R	09*-11	4/1998	237/8300	157/6250	1233kg	195	5.9	-	155	-	-	+ Fantastic on road and track - There's only 20, and they're a tad pricey...	★★★★☆
Honda Civic Type R (EP3)	075 R	01*-05	4/1998	197/7400	145/5900	1204kg	166	6.8	16.9	146	-	31.7	+ Potent and great value - Bredvan' looks divide opinion, duff steering	★★★★☆
Kia Proceed GT	217 D	£20,205	4/1591	201/6000	195/1500	1359kg	143	7.3	-	150	170	38.2	+ Fun and appealing package - Soft-edged compared to rivals	★★★★☆
Lancia Delta Integrale	194 R	88*-93	4/1995	207/5750	220/3500	1300kg	162	5.7	-	137	-	23.9	+ One of the finest cars ever built - Demands love, LHD only	★★★★☆
Mazda 2.1 S Sport	132 R	£15,995	4/1498	102/6000	101/4000	1030kg	107	10.4	-	117	135	48.7	+ Fun and funky - Feels tiny after a Mini	★★★★☆
Mazda 3 MPS	137 R	06*-13	4/2261	256/5500	280/3000	1385kg	188	6.3	14.5	155	224	29.4	+ Quick, eager and very good value - The steering's iffy	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG A45	221 R	£39,995	4/1991	376/6000	350/2250	1480kg	258	4.2	-	155	162	40.9	+ Tremendously fast - But not a true great	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz A45 AMG	194 R	12*-15	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1480kg	244	4.3	10.6	155	161	40.9	+ Blisteringly quick everywhere - Not as rewarding as some slower rivals	★★★★☆
MG3 Style	190 D	£10,499	4/1498	104/6000	101/4750	1155kg	91	10.4	-	108	136	48.7	+ Decent chassis, performance and price - Thrashy engine, cheap cabin	★★★★☆
Mini Cooper (F56)	194 D	£15,485	3/1499	134/4500	162/1250	1085kg	125	7.9	-	130	105	62.8	+ Punchy three-cylinder engine, good chassis - Tubby styling	★★★★☆
Mini Cooper S (F56)	196 D	£18,840	4/1998	189/4700	206/1250	1160kg	166	6.8	-	146	133	49.6	+ Still has that Mini DNA - Expensive with options; naff dash displays	★★★★☆
Mini John Cooper Works (F56)	211 R	£23,050	4/1998	228/5200	236/1250	1200kg	193	6.3	-	153	155	42.2	+ Fast, agile, super-nimble - OE tyres lack outright grip	★★★★☆
Mini John Cooper Works Coupe (R58)	164 R	11*-15	4/1598	208/6000	206/2000	1175kg	180	6.3	-	149	165	39.8	+ The usual raucous Mini JCW experience - But with a questionable 'helmet' roof...	★★★★☆
Mini Cooper (R56)	185 F	09*-14	4/1598	120/6000	118/4250	1075kg	113	9.1	-	126	127	52.3	+ Brilliant ride and composure; could be all the Mini you need - You'll still buy the 'S'	★★★★☆
Mini Cooper S (R56)	149 R	06*-14	4/1598	181/5500	177/1600	1140kg	161	7.0	-	142	136	48.7	+ New engine, Mini quality - Front end not quite as direct as the old car's	★★★★☆
Mini Cooper SD (R56)	158 D	11*-14	4/1995	141/4000	225/1750	1150kg	125	8.0	-	134	114	65.7	+ A quick diesel Mini with impressive mpg - But no Cooper S alternative	★★★★☆
Mini John Cooper Works (R56)	184 R	08*-14	4/1598	208/6000	206/2000	1160kg	182	7.2	16.7	148	165	39.8	+ A seriously rapid Mini - Occasionally just a little unruly	★★★★☆
Mini John Cooper Works GP (R56)	195 R	13*-14	4/1598	215/6000	206/2000	1160kg	188	6.3	-	150	165	39.8	+ Brazenly hyperactive - Too much for some roads and some tastes	★★★★☆
Mini Cooper S (R53)	077 R	02*-06	4/1598	168/6000	155/4000	1140kg	143	7.8	19.9	135	-	33.6	+ Strong performance, quality feel - Over-long gearing	★★★★☆
Mini Cooper S Works GP (R53)	144 R	06	4/1598	215/7100	184/4600	1090kg	200	6.5	-	149	-	32.8	+ Storming engine, agility - Tacky styling 'enhancements'	★★★★☆
Nissan Juke Nismo RS	208 D	£21,995	4/1618	215/6000	206/3600	1315kg	166	7.0	-	137	165	39.2	+ Quirky character and bold styling - Not a match for a pukka hot hatch	★★★★☆
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 2)	-	97*-98	4/1587	103/6200	97/3500	865kg	121	8.8	-	121	-	34.0	+ Bargain no-frills thrills - Not as much fizz as original 1.3	★★★★☆
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 1)	095 R	94*-96	4/1294	100/7200	80/5400	826kg	123	10.6	-	118	-	35.6	+ Frantic, thrashy fun - Needs caning to extract full potential	★★★★☆
Peugeot 208 GTI	184 R	£18,895	4/1598	197/5800	203/1700	1160kg	173	6.8	17.9	143	125	47.9	+ Agile chassis works well on tough roads - Could be more involving	★★★★☆



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OUR CHOICE

Renaultsport Mégane 275. This generation of Mégane has got better and better with every update, and the 275 is simply sublime. Optional Ohlins dampers and Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 rubber (taken from the Trophy-R) aren't essential, but improve things even further.



BEST OF THE REST

The latest Ford Focus RS (left) is our favourite super-hatch, with the more grown-up Golf R close behind. The SEAT Leon Cupra 290 (which replaces the 280 and has an extra 10bhp), is a real buzz, especially with the Sub8 pack and sticky tyres, while the Fiesta ST Mountune is our pick of the smaller hatches.

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 g/km	EC MPG	evo RATING
Peugeot 208 GTI by Peugeot Sport	219 R	£21,995	4/1598	205/5800	221/1750	1185kg	176	6.5	-	143	125	47.9	★★★★★
Peugeot 308 GTI 270	215 D	£28,250	4/1598	266/6000	243/1900	1205kg	224	6.0	-	155	139	47.1	★★★★★
Peugeot 205 GTI 1.9	195 R	'88-'91	4/1905	130/6000	119/4750	910kg	145	7.9	-	124	-	36.7	★★★★★
Peugeot 306 GTI 6	020 R	'93-'01	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1215kg	139	7.2	20.1	140	-	30.1	★★★★★
Peugeot 306 Rallye	095 R	'98-'99	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1199kg	142	6.9	19.2	137	-	30.1	★★★★★
Renaultsport Twingo 133	175 R	'08-'13	4/1598	131/6750	118/4400	1050kg	127	8.6	-	125	150	43.5	★★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane Clio 200 Auto	184 R	£20,445	4/1618	197/6000	171/1750	1204kg	166	6.9	17.9	143	144	44.8	★★★★★
Renaultsport Clio 220 Trophy	213 R	£21,780	4/1618	217/6050	206/2000	1204kg	183	6.6	-	146	135	47.9	★★★★★
Renaultsport Clio 200 Cup	195 R	'09-'13	4/1998	197/7100	159/5400	1204kg	166	6.6	16.7	141	190	34.5	★★★★★
Renaultsport Clio 197 Cup	115 R	'07-'09	4/1998	194/7250	158/5550	1240kg	161	6.9	-	134	-	33.6	★★★★★
Renaultsport Clio 182	066 R	'04-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1110kg	165	6.6	17.5	139	-	34.9	★★★★★
Renaultsport Clio 182 Cup	187 R	'04-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	168	6.5	-	139	-	34.9	★★★★★
Renaultsport Clio Trophy	200 R	'05-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	168	6.6	17.3	140	-	34.9	★★★★★
Renaultsport Clio 172 Cup	048 R	'02-'04	4/1998	170/6250	147/5400	1011kg	171	6.5	17.7	138	-	-	★★★★★
Renaultsport Clio V6 255	057 R	'03-'05	6/2946	251/7150	221/4650	1400kg	182	5.8	-	153	-	23.0	★★★★★
Renaultsport Clio V6	029 R	'99-'02	6/2946	227/6000	221/3750	1335kg	173	5.8	17.0	145	-	23.0	★★★★★
Renault Clio Williams	195 R	'93-'96	4/1988	148/6100	126/4500	981kg	153	7.6	20.8	134	-	26.0	★★★★★
Renault 5 GT Turbo	195 R	'87-'91	4/1397	118/5750	122/3000	855kg	140	7.3	-	120	-	28.4	★★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane 275 Cup-S	-	£23,935	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1376kg	200	6.0	-	158	174	37.7	★★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane Nav 275	-	£25,935	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1376kg	200	6.0	-	158	174	37.7	★★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane 265 Cup	195 R	'12-'15	4/1998	261/5500	265/3000	1376kg	191	6.4	14.8	158	174	37.7	★★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy	212 R	'14-'15	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1376kg	200	5.8	-	159	174	37.7	★★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy-R	215 R	'14-'15	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1297kg	212	5.8	-	158	174	37.7	★★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane 250 Cup	139 R	'09-'12	4/1998	247/5500	251/3000	1387kg	181	6.1	14.6	156	190	34.4	★★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane dCi 175 Cup	119 R	'07-'09	4/1995	173/3750	265/2000	1470kg	119	8.3	23.5	137	-	43.5	★★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane 230 FI Team R26	195 R	'07-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1345kg	171	6.2	16.0	147	-	-	★★★★★
Renaultsport Mégane R26.R	200 R	'08-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1220kg	189	5.8	15.1	147	-	-	★★★★★
SEAT Ibiza Cupra	218 D	£18,100	4/1798	189/4300	236/1450	1185kg	162	6.7	-	146	145	45.6	★★★★★
SEAT Ibiza Cupra	183 D	'10-'15	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1259kg	144	6.9	-	142	139	47.9	★★★★★
SEAT Leon Cupra 290	221 D	£28,375	4/1984	286/5900	258/1700	1300kg	224	5.8	-	155	156	42.2	★★★★★
SEAT Leon Cupra 280	220 R	'14-'15	4/1984	276/5600	258/1750	1300kg	216	5.8	-	155	149	44.1	★★★★★
SEAT Leon Cupra	105 R	'07-'11	4/1984	237/5700	221/2200	1375kg	175	6.3	-	153	190	34.0	★★★★★
SEAT Leon Cupra R	139 R	'10-'12	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1375kg	193	6.1	14.0	155	190	34.9	★★★★★
SEAT Leon Cupra R 225	067 R	'03-'06	4/1781	222/5900	206/2200	1376kg	164	6.9	-	150	-	32.1	★★★★★
Skoda Fabia vRS (Mk2)	146 D	'10-'14	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1218kg	148	7.3	-	139	148	45.6	★★★★★
Skoda Fabia vRS (Mk1)	077 R	'04-'07	4/1896	130/4000	229/1900	135kg	100	9.6	-	127	-	13.9	★★★★★
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk3)	187 D	£24,230	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1345kg	164	6.8	-	154	142	45.6	★★★★★
Skoda Octavia vRS 230 (Mk3)	215 D	£26,350	4/1984	227/4700	258/1500	1345kg	171	6.7	-	155	142	45.6	★★★★★
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk2)	163 R	'05-'13	4/1998	197/5100	206/1700	1395kg	143	7.3	-	149	175	37.7	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza WRX	125 D	'08-'10	4/2457	251/5400	288/3000	1395kg	180	5.5	-	130	270	-	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza STI 330S	124 R	'08-'10	4/2457	325/5400	347/3400	1505kg	219	4.4	-	155	-	-	★★★★★
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk2)	175 R	£13,999	4/1586	134/6900	118/4400	1045kg	130	8.7	-	121	147	44.1	★★★★★
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk1)	132 R	'05-'11	4/1586	123/6800	109/4800	1030kg	121	8.9	-	124	165	39.8	★★★★★
Vauxhall Corsa VXR	211 R	£18,125	4/1598	202/5800	206/1900	1278kg	161	6.5	-	143	174	37.7	★★★★★
Vauxhall Corsa VXR	154 R	'07-'14	4/1598	189/5850	192/1980	1166kg	165	6.8	-	140	172	38.7	★★★★★
Vauxhall Corsa VXR Nring/Clubsport	164 R	'11-'13/'14	4/1598	202/5750	206/2250	1166kg	176	6.5	-	143	178	-	★★★★★
Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk2)	207 R	£27,850	4/1998	276/5500	295/2500	1475kg	190	5.9	-	155	184	34.9	★★★★★
Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk1)	102 R	'02-'11	4/1998	237/5600	236/2400	1393kg	173	6.7	16.7	152	221	30.7	★★★★★
VW UP/SEAT Mii/Skoda Citigo	171 R	£8275+	3/999	59/5000	70/3000	854kg	70	14.1	-	99	105	62.8	★★★★★
VW Polo GTI	211 R	£18,900	4/1798	189/4200	236/1450	1280kg	150	6.7	-	146	139	47.1	★★★★★
VW Polo GTI	154 R	'10-'14	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1184kg	153	6.8	-	142	139	47.9	★★★★★
VW Golf GTD (Mk7)	200 D	£26,570	4/1968	181/3500	280/1750	1377kg	134	7.5	-	143	109	67.3	★★★★★
VW Golf GTI (Mk7)	207 R	£27,135	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1351kg	163	6.5	-	153	139	47.1	★★★★★
VW Golf GTI Clubsport (Mk7)	218 D	£29,000	4/1984	286/5350	280/1700	1375kg	211	6.0	-	160	155	40.9	★★★★★
VW Golf R (Mk7)	220 R	£31,120	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1476kg	204	5.1	-	155	165	40.9	★★★★★
VW Golf GTI (Mk6)	172 R	'09-'13	4/1984	207/5300	207/1700	1318kg	160	6.4	16.5	148	170	38.7	★★★★★
VW Golf R (Mk6)	140 D	'10-'13	4/1984	266/6000	258/2500	1521kg	178	5.5	-	155	199	33.2	★★★★★
VW Golf GTI (Mk5)	195 R	'04-'09	4/1984	197/5100	207/1800	1336kg	150	6.7	17.9	145	-	-	★★★★★
VW Golf R32 (Mk5)	087 R	'06-'09	6/3189	246/6300	236/2500	1510kg	165	5.8	15.2	155	-	26.4	★★★★★
VW Golf R32 (Mk4)	053 R	'02-'04	6/3189	237/6250	236/2800	1477kg	163	6.4	16.3	154	-	24.6	★★★★★
VW Golf GTI 16v (Mk2)	195 R	'88-'92	4/1781	139/6100	124/4600	960kg	147	7.9	-	129	-	26.6	★★★★★
VW Golf GTI (Mk1, 1.8)	095 R	'82-'84	4/1781	112/5800	109/3500	840kg	135	8.1	-	112	-	36.0	★★★★★
Volvo C30 T5 R-Design	122 R	'08-'12	5/2521	227/5000	236/1500	1347kg	165	6.6	16.9	149	203	32.5	★★★★★

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OUR CHOICE

BMW M5. The turbocharging of BMW's M-cars met with scepticism, but the current M5's 4.4-litre twin-turbo V8 feels a perfect fit. It's a brutally fast car, and there are clever (and useable) adjustable driving modes. The '30 Jahre' special edition, which has an extra 40bhp, is especially worth a look.



BEST OF THE REST

Mercedes' E63 AMG offers intoxicating performance, especially with the S upgrade (pictured). BMW's M3 is an appealing all-round package, but its C63 AMG rival has more approachable limits. If you must have an SUV, take a look at BMW's X6 M or Porsche's Macan Turbo, Macan GTS or Cayenne GTS.

	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 g/km	EC MPG	EVO RATING	
Alpina D3 Biturbo (F30)	192 D	\$46,950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1585kg	221	4.6	-	173	139	53.3	+173mph from a 3-litre diesel! Brilliant chassis, too - Auto only	★★★★★
Alpina B3 Biturbo (F30)	188 D	\$54,950	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1610kg	255	4.2	-	190	177	37.2	+Understated appearance, monster performance - E90 M3 is better on the limit	★★★★★
Alpina D3 (E90)	120 R	'08-'12	4/1995	211/4000	332/2000	1495kg	143	6.9	-	152	-	52.3	+Excellent chassis, turbodiesel oomph - Rather narrow powerband	★★★★★
Alpina B5 Biturbo	149 D	\$75,150	8/4395	533/5200	538/2800	1920kg	282	4.5	-	198	244	26.9	+Big performance and top-line luxury - Driver not really involved	★★★★★
Alpina B7 Biturbo	134 D	\$98,800	8/4395	533/5200	538/2800	2040kg	265	4.6	-	194	230	28.5	+Massive performance and top-line luxury - Feels its weight when hustled	★★★★★
Aston Martin Rapide S	201 D	\$147,950	12/5935	552/6650	465/5500	1990kg	282	4.2	-	203	300	21.9	+Oozes star quality, gearbox on 2015MY cars a big improvement - It's cosy in the back	★★★★★
Aston Martin Rapide	141 R	'10-'13	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1990kg	240	5.2	-	188	355	-	+Better than its DB9 sibling - More a 2+2 than a proper four-seater	★★★★★
Audi S3 Saloon	192 D	\$33,540	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1430kg	210	5.3	-	155	162	26.4	+On paper a match for the original S4 - In reality much less interesting	★★★★★
Audi S4 (B8)	166 D	\$39,610	6/2995	328/5500	324/2900	1685kg	198	4.9	-	155	190	34.9	+Great powertrain, secure chassis - The RS4	★★★★★
Audi S4 (B7)	073 D	'05-'08	8/4163	339/7000	302/3500	1700kg	206	5.4	-	155	-	-	+Effortless V8, agile handling - Lacks ultimate finesse of class leaders	★★★★★
Audi RS4 Avant (B8)	216 R	'12-'15	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1795kg	251	4.5	10.5	174	249	26.4	+Looks and sounds the part, thunderously fast - Unnatural steering, dull dynamics	★★★★★
Audi RS4 (B7)	088 R	'05-'08	8/4163	444/7800	317/5500	1650kg	255	4.5	10.9	155	-	-	+414bhp at 7800rpm! And there's an estate version too - Busy under braking	★★★★★
Audi RS4 (B5)	192 R	'00-'02	6/2671	375/6100	325/2500	1620kg	236	4.8	12.1	170	-	17.0	+Effortless pace - Not the last word in agility, Bends wheel rims	★★★★★
Audi RS2	214 R	'94-'95	5/2226	315/6500	302/3000	1595kg	201	4.8	13.1	162	-	18.0	+Storming performance (thanks to Porsche) - Try finding one	★★★★★
Audi S6	091 D	'06-'11	10/5204	429/6800	398/3000	1910kg	228	5.2	-	155	299	22.4	+Even faster, and discreet with it - Very muted V10	★★★★★
Audi RS6 Avant (C7)	203 R	\$77,995	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1935kg	290	3.6	8.2	155	229	28.8	+Performance, foolproof powertrain, looks - Feels a bit one-dimensional	★★★★★
Audi RS6 Avant (C6)	116 R	'08-'10	10/4991	572/6250	479/1500	2025kg	287	4.3	9.7	155	333	20.2	+The world's most powerful estate - Power isn't everything	★★★★★
Audi RS6 Avant (C5)	052 R	'02-'04	8/4172	444/5700	413/1950	1865kg	242	4.8	11.6	155	-	19.3	+The ultimate estate car? - Numb steering	★★★★★
Audi RS7	208 R	\$84,480	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1920kg	292	3.9	-	155	229	28.8	+Stonking performance, great looks - Numb driving experience	★★★★★
Audi S7	171 D	\$63,375	8/3993	414/5000	406/1400	1945kg	216	4.6	-	155	225	-	+Looks and drives better than S6 it's based on - Costs £8000 more	★★★★★
Audi S8 Plus	217 D	\$97,700	8/3993	597/6100	553/2500	1990kg	305	3.8	-	155	229	28.2	+Fantastic drivetrain, quality and refinement - Dynamic Steering feels artificial	★★★★★
Audi RS Q3	206 D	\$45,495	5/2480	335/5300	332/1600	1655kg	206	4.8	-	155	203	32.1	+Surprisingly characterful, better than many RSs - High centre of gravity	★★★★★
Bentley Flying Spur V8	200 D	\$142,800	8/3997	500/6000	487/1700	2342kg	217	4.9	-	183	254	25.9	+Effortless performance with real top-end kick - Determinedly unsporting	★★★★★
Bentley Flying Spur	185 D	\$153,300	12/5998	616/6000	590/1600	2400kg	261	4.3	-	200	343	19.0	+More power than old Flying Spur Speed - Feels its weight, engine sounds dull	★★★★★
Bentley Bentayga	217 D	\$160,200	12/5950	600/5000	664/1350	2347kg	260	4.0	-	187	296	21.6	+Sublime quality, ridiculous pace, capable handling - Inert driving experience, SUV stigma	★★★★★
Bentley Mulsanne	178 F	\$229,360	8/6752	505/4200	752/1750	2610kg	197	5.1	-	184	342	19.3	+Drives like a modern Bentley should - Shame it doesn't look like one too	★★★★★
Bentley Mulsanne Speed	210 D	\$252,000	8/6752	530/4200	811/1750	2610kg	206	4.8	-	190	342	19.3	+Characterful, superb build quality - A bit pricey...	★★★★★
BMW 320d (F30)	168 R	\$29,475	4/1995	181/4000	280/1750	1495kg	123	7.4	-	146	120	61.4	+Fleet-friendly new Three is economical yet entertaining - It's a tad noisy	★★★★★
BMW 328i (F30)	165 D	\$30,470	4/1997	242/5000	258/1250	1430kg	172	5.8	-	155	149	44.8	+New-age four-pot 328i is great all-rounder - We miss the six-cylinder soundtrack	★★★★★
BMW 330d M Sport (F30)	180 D	\$36,975	6/2993	254/4000	413/2000	1540kg	168	5.6	-	155	129	57.6	+Great engine, fine handling, good value - Steering confuses weight with feel	★★★★★
BMW 435i Gran Coupe	203 D	\$41,865	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1585kg	194	5.5	-	155	174	34.9	+Superb straight-six, fine ride/handling balance - 335i saloon weighs and costs less	★★★★★
BMW M3 (F80)	211 R	\$56,590	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1520kg	284	4.1	8.6	155	204	32.1	+Looks, performance, practicality (E92 M3 coupe - No carbon roof)	★★★★★
BMW M3 (E90)	123 R	'08-'11	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1605kg	262	4.9	10.7	165	290	22.8	+Every bit as good as the E92 M3 coupe - No carbon roof	★★★★★
BMW M3 CRT (E90)	179 R	'11-'12	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1580kg	285	4.4	-	180	295	-	+Saloon chassis + weight savings + GTS engine - best E90 M3 - Just 67 were made	★★★★★
BMW 535i (F10)	141 D	\$44,560	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1685kg	182	6.1	-	155	185	34.9	+New 5-series impresses... - But only with all the chassis options ticked	★★★★★
BMW M5 (F10M)	208 R	\$73,960	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1870kg	300	4.3	-	155	232	28.5	+Twin-turbocharging suits all-new M5 well - Can feel heavy at times	★★★★★
BMW M5 (E60)	129 R	'04-'10	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1755kg	289	4.7	10.4	155	-	19.6	+Close to being the ultimate supersaloon - SMG gearbox feels old-tech	★★★★★
BMW M5 (E39)	110 R	'99-'03	8/4941	394/6600	369/3800	1795kg	223	4.9	11.5	155	-	-	+Magnificent V8-engined supersaloon - We'd be nit-picking	★★★★★
BMW M5 (E34)	110 R	'92-'96	6/3795	340/6900	295/4750	1653kg	209	5.9	13.6	155	-	-	+The Godfather of supersaloons - The family can come too	★★★★★
BMW M5 (E28)	182 R	'86-'88	6/3453	282/6500	251/4500	143kg	200	6.2	-	151	-	-	+The original storming saloon - Understated looks	★★★★★
BMW M6 Gran Coupe	190 D	\$98,145	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1875kg	299	4.2	-	155	232	28.5	+Enormous performance, stylish looks - Price tag looks silly next to rivals, M5 included	★★★★★
BMW X5 M50d	191 D	\$64,525	6/2993	376/4000	546/2000	2190kg	155	5.3	-	155	173	42.8	+Straight-line pace - Driving experience identical to standard X5, despite the M badge	★★★★★
BMW X6 M	212 D	\$93,080	8/4395	567/6000	553/2200	2265kg	245	4.2	-	155	258	25.4	+Big improvement on its predecessor - Coupe roofline still of questionable taste	★★★★★
BMW X6 M	134 D	'09-'15	8/4395	547/6000	502/1500	2305kg	241	4.7	-	171	325	20.3	+Fast, refined and comfortable - But it definitely lacks the M factor	★★★★★
BMW 750i	174 D	\$71,575	8/4395	449/5500	480/2000	2020kg	226	4.7	-	155	199	-	+Well specced, impressively refined - Lags far behind the Mercedes S-class	★★★★★
Brabus Bullit	119 R	€330,000	12/6233	720/5100	811/2100	1850kg	395	3.8	-	217	-	-	+Seven hundred and twenty bhp - Three hundred thousand pounds	★★★★★
Cadillac CTS-V	148 R	\$67,030	8/6162	556/6100	551/3800	1928kg	293	3.9	-	191	365	18.1	+It'll stand out among M-cars and AMGs - But the novelty might wear off	★★★★★
Ford Sierra RS Cosworth 4x4	141 R	'90-'93	4/1993	220/6250	214/3500	1305kg	159	6.6	-	144	-	24.4	+Fast and furious - Try finding a straight one	★★★★★
Honda Accord Type R	012 R	'88-'03	4/2157	209/7200	158/6700	1306kg	163	6.1	17.4	142	-	29.4	+One of the finest front-drivers of all time - Lack of image	★★★★★
Infiniti Q50S Hybrid	195 D	\$39,995	6/3498	359/6800	402/5000	1750kg	208	5.1	-	155	144	45.6	+Good powertrain, promising chassis - Lacklustre steering, strong rivals	★★★★★
Jaguar XE S	213 D	\$44,865	6/2995	335/6500	332/4500	1590kg	214	4.9	-	155	194	34.9	+Great chassis; neat design - V6 loses appeal in the real world	★★★★★
Jaguar XF S	214 D	\$49,945	6/2995	375/6500	332/4500	1635kg	233	5.0	-	155	198	34.0	+Outstanding ride and handling balance - Engine lacks appeal	★★★★★
Jaguar XF S Diesel	219 D	\$49,945	6/2993	296/4000	516/2000	1675kg	180	5.8	-	155	144	51.4	+Great chassis, good looks, better engine than V6 petrol - It's still a diesel	★★★★★
Jaguar XFR	181 D	'09-'15	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1800kg	284	4.8	10.2	155	270	24.4	+Brilliant blend of pace and refinement - Doesn't sound as special as it is	★★★★★
Jaguar XFR-S	208 R	'13-'15	8/5000	542/6500	501/2500	1800kg	306	4.4	-	186	270	24.4	+XF gets turned up to 12 - Tyres aren't cheap	★★★★★
Jaguar XFR-S Sportbrake	203 R	'14-'15	8/5000	542/6500	501/2500	1892kg	291	4.6	-	186	297	22.2	+Looks fantastic, huge performance, nice balance - Not as sharp as the saloon	★★★★★
Jaguar XJ 3.0 V6 Diesel	148 D	\$58,690	6/2993	271/4000	442/2000	1700kg	162	6.0	-	155	167	46.3	+A great Jaguar - But not as great as the XJR...	★★★★★
Jaguar XJR	191 D	\$91,755	8/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1805kg	302	4.4	-	174	270	24.4	+Hot-rod vibe, fine cabin - Opinion-dividing looks	★★★★★
Land Rover Discovery Sport	205 D	\$32,395	4/2179	187/3500	310/1750	1863kg	100	9.8	-	117	159	46.3	+Style, packaging, refinement - Will need to prove Sport tag in UK	★★★★★
Lexus GS F	221 D	\$69,995	8/4969	471/7100	391/4800	1790kg	267	4.6	-	168	260	25.2	+Superb engine, exploitable chassis - Gearbox is off the pace	★★★★★

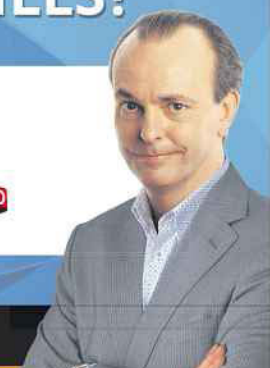
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	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE Cyl/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING	
Lexus IS F	151 R	'07-'12	8/4969	417/6600	372/5200	1714kg	247	4.7	10.9	173	270	24.4	+ Shockingly good Lexus - The M3's available as a (second hand) four-door too	★★★★★
Lotus Carlton	170 R	'91-'93	6/3615	377/5200	419/4200	1658kg	231	4.8	10.6	176	-	17.0	+ The Millennium Falcon of saloon cars - Every drive a work-out	★★★★★
Maserati Ghibli	186 D	£52,615	6/2979	325/5000	406/1750	1810kg	182	5.6	-	163	223	29.4	+ Bursting with character; good value compared to Quattroporte - It's still a big car	★★★★★
Maserati Ghibli S	198 D	£63,760	6/2979	404/5500	406/4500	1810kg	227	5.0	-	177	242	27.2	+ Stands out from the crowd: sounds good too - Chassis lacks finesse, engine lacks reach	★★★★★
Maserati Quattroporte S	184 D	£80,115	6/2979	404/5500	406/1750	1860kg	221	5.1	-	177	242	27.2	+ Tempting alternative to V8 - Feel-free steering, secondary ride lacks decorum	★★★★★
Maserati Quattroporte GTS	179 D	£108,185	8/3798	523/6800	479/2250	1900kg	280	4.7	-	190	274	23.9	+ Performance, sense of occasion - Lacks the charisma and edge of its predecessor	★★★★★
Maserati Levante Diesel	221 D	£653,000	6/2897	271/4000	442/2000	2205kg	125	6.9	-	143	189	39.2	+ Impressive blend of ride and handling - Diesel performance is mild for a Maserati	★★★★★
Maserati Quattroporte S	137 R	'08-'12	8/4691	425/7000	361/4750	1990kg	216	5.1	12.1	174	365	18.0	+ A QP with the bhp it deserves - Gille is a bit Hannibal Lecter	★★★★★
Maserati Quattroporte Sport GTS	141 R	'08-'12	8/4691	433/7000	361/4750	1990kg	221	5.1	-	177	365	18.0	+ The most stylish supersaloon - Slightly wooden brakes, unforgiving ride	★★★★★
Maserati Quattroporte	085 R	'04-'08	8/4244	394/7000	333/4500	1930kg	207	5.1	-	171	-	17.9	+ Redefines big-car dynamics - Don't use auto mode	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.5-16	185 F	'89-'92	4/2498	201/6750	177/5500	1360kg	147	7.2	-	142	-	24.4	+ M-B's M3 alternative - Not as nimble as the Beemer	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz CLA45 AMG	186 D	£42,270	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1510kg	239	4.6	-	155	161	31.0	+ Strong performance, classy cabin - Pricey compared to A45 AMG hatchback	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG	205 R	£54,595	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1510kg	239	4.8	-	155	175	37.7	+ An aggressive and focused sports crossover - Low on driver interaction	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG C63	209 D	£59,800	8/3982	469/5500	479/1750	1640kg	291	4.1	-	155	192	34.5	+ Fast and feelsome - Lacks the ultimate finesse and response of the C63 S	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG C63 Estate	216 R	£61,260	8/3982	469/5500	479/1750	1710kg	279	4.2	-	155	196	33.6	+ Much more fun than it looks - Gearbox dim-witted at low speeds	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG C63 S	211 R	£66,545	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1655kg	309	4.0	-	155	192	34.5	+ Tremendous twin-turbo V8 power - Not quite as focused as an M division car	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG	151 R	'07-'14	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	277	4.4	9.7	160	280	23.5	+ Monstrous pace and extremely engaging - Same-era M3 is just a little better...	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG	088 R	'04-'08	8/5439	367/5250	376/4000	1635kg	228	5.2	-	155	-	23.7	+ Furiously fast, commendably discreet - Overshadowed by M3 and RS4	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG E63	187 D	£74,115	8/5461	549/5500	531/1750	1770kg	315	4.2	-	155	230	28.8	+ Power, response and accuracy in spades - A little lacking in originality	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG E63 S	208 R	£84,710	8/5461	577/5500	590/1750	1795kg	327	4.1	-	155	229	28.8	+ Effortless power; intuitive and approachable - Dim-witted auto 'box	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212)	165 R	'11-'13	8/5461	518/5250	516/1750	1765kg	298	4.2	-	155	230	28.8	+ Turbo engine doesn't dilute E63 experience - Sometimes struggles for traction...	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212)	134 D	'09-'11	8/6208	518/6800	465/5200	1765kg	298	4.5	-	155	295	22.4	+ As below, but with an extra 1lbhp and squarer headlights - Steering still vague	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W211)	096 D	'06-'09	8/6208	507/6800	465/5200	1765kg	292	4.5	-	155	-	19.8	+ Brilliant engine, indulgent chassis - Vague steering, speed limits	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz E55 AMG	052 R	'03-'06	8/5439	476/6100	516/2650	1760kg	271	4.8	10.2	155	-	21.9	+ M5-humbling grunt, cosseting ride - Speed limits	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz S63 AMG L	191 D	£119,835	8/5461	577/5500	664/2250	1995kg	294	4.4	-	155	237	27.9	+ Monster pace - Average steering feel	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG S	199 D	£86,500	8/5461	577/5500	590/1750	1795kg	327	4.1	-	155	231	28.5	+ Remains quick and characterful - Dated gearbox, no four-wheel drive option in the UK	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG	178 R	'11-'14	8/5461	518/5250	516/1700	1795kg	293	4.2	-	155	231	28.5	+ Monster performance, 549bhp an option - Not as desirable as a Bentley or Aston	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG	099 R	'06-'11	8/6208	507/6100	464/2650	1905kg	270	4.5	-	155	345	19.5	+ Beauty, comfort, awesome performance - M5 has the edge on B-roads	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz GLE63 AMG S	218 D	£94,405	8/5461	577/5500	560/1750	2270kg	258	4.2	-	155	276	23.9	+ Stomping pace, extreme refinement - Feels remote	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz GLE63 AMG S Coupe	213 D	£96,555	8/5461	577/5500	560/1750	2275kg	258	4.2	-	155	278	23.7	+ Subtler than an X6 M - More force than finesse	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz ML63 AMG	176 R	£87,005	8/5461	518/5250	516/1750	2270kg	232	4.7	-	155	276	23.9	+ Great engine, surprisingly good dynamics - £85K buys a Boxster and an ML350...	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG	172 D	£124,000	8/5461	537/5500	560/2000	2475kg	220	5.4	-	130	322	-	+ It exists; epic soundtrack - Ancient chassis, silly price	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-300 SST	118 R	'08-'13	4/1998	290/6500	300/3500	1590kg	185	5.2	13.9	155	256	26.2	+ Evo gets twin-clutch transmission - Not as exciting as it used to be	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-360	122 D	'08-'13	4/1998	354/6500	363/3500	1560kg	231	4.1	-	155	328	19.9	+ Ridiculously rapid new Evo - A five-speed gearbox?	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-330 SST	134 R	'08-'12	4/1998	324/6500	322/3500	1590kg	207	4.4	-	155	256	-	+ Great engine and gearbox combo - It still lives in the shadow of the Evo IX	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-400	181 R	'09-'10	4/1998	403/6500	387/3500	1560kg	262	3.8	-	155	328	-	+ Most powerful factory Evo ever... - About X grand too much when new	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo IX FQ-340	088 R	'05-'07	4/1997	345/6800	321/4600	1400kg	250	4.3	10.9	157	-	-	+ Gives Porsche drivers nightmares - Points. Lots of	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo IX MR FQ-360	181 R	'05-'07	4/1997	366/6887	363/3200	1400kg	266	3.9	-	157	-	-	+ Well-executed engine upgrades - Prison food	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo VIII	055 R	'03-'04	4/1997	276/6500	289/3500	1410kg	199	5.1	-	157	-	-	+ The Evo grows up - Brakes need beefing up	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo VIII MR FQ-300	057 R	'03-'05	4/1997	305/6800	289/3500	1400kg	221	4.8	-	157	-	20.5	+ Extra pace, extra attitude - Extra money	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo VII	031 R	'02-'03	4/1997	276/6500	282/3500	1360kg	206	5.0	13.0	140	-	20.4	+ Terrific all-rounder - You tell us	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo VI Makinen Edition	200 R	'00-'01	4/1997	276/6500	275/2750	1365kg	205	4.6	-	150	-	-	+ Our favourite Evo - Subtle it is not	★★★★★
Porsche Panamera 4S	186 D	£86,000	6/2997	414/6000	383/1750	1870kg	225	4.8	-	177	208	31.7	+ Strong performance and typically fine Porsche chassis - Misses characterful V8 of old 'S'	★★★★★
Porsche Panamera GTS	208 R	£93,391	8/4806	434/6700	383/3500	1925kg	229	4.4	-	178	249	26.4	+ Vivacious V8, entertaining balance - Can feel light on performance next to turbo'd rivals	★★★★★
Porsche Panamera Turbo	137 R	£108,006	8/4806	493/6000	516/2250	1970kg	254	3.6	8.9	188	270	24.6	+ Fast, refined and dynamically sound - It still leaves us cold	★★★★★
Porsche Panamera Turbo S	159 D	'11-'13	8/4806	542/6000	590/2250	1995kg	276	3.7	-	190	270	24.6	+ Pace, excellent ergonomics - Steering feel, ride	★★★★★
Porsche Macan S	205 R	£43,648	6/2997	335/5500	339/1450	1865kg	183	5.4	-	157	204	31.4	+ No less compelling than the Turbo - Although lacks its ultimate speed and agility	★★★★★
Porsche Macan GTS	217 D	£55,188	6/2997	355/6000	369/1650	1895kg	190	5.2	-	159	212	30.7	+ Handles like an SUV shouldn't - Still looks like an SUV	★★★★★
Porsche Macan Turbo	207 D	£59,648	6/3604	394/6000	406/1350	1925kg	208	4.5	11.1	165	208	30.7	+ Doesn't feel like an SUV - Not a match for a proper sports saloon	★★★★★
Porsche Cayenne GTS (Mk2, V6)	211 D	£72,523	6/3604	434/6000	442/1600	2100kg	209	5.2	-	163	228	28.3	+ The driver's Cayenne... - But why would a driver want an SUV?	★★★★★
Porsche Cayenne GTS (Mk2, V8)	173 D	'12-'15	8/4806	414/6500	380/3500	2085kg	202	5.6	-	162	251	26.4	+ Dynamically the best SUV of its era - At two tons, it's still no sports car	★★★★★
Porsche Cayenne Turbo (Mk2)	212 D	£93,574	8/4806	513/6000	533/2250	2185kg	239	4.5	-	173	261	25.2	+ Remarkable performance, handling, completeness - Vague steering, dated engine	★★★★★
Porsche Cayenne Turbo S (Mk2)	184 D	£118,465	8/4806	562/6000	590/2500	2235kg	255	4.1	-	176	267	24.6	+ More power and torque than a Zonda S 7.3 - In an SUV	★★★★★
Range Rover Evoque Coupe S4i	160 D	£46,650	4/1999	237/6000	251/1900	1670kg	144	7.0	-	135	199	-	+ Striking looks, sporting dynamics - Hefty price, and petrol version is auto-only	★★★★★
Range Rover Sport SDV8	-	£84,350	8/4367	334/3500	546/1750	2359kg	144	6.5	-	140	219	33.6	+ A brilliant long-distance machine - Doesn't live up to the 'Sport' branding	★★★★★
Range Rover Sport V8 Supercharged	186 D	£84,350	8/5000	503/6000	460/2500	2335kg	219	5.0	-	155	298	21.7	+ Deceptively quick and capable sports SUV - It's still got a weight problem	★★★★★
Range Rover Sport SVR	212 D	£95,150	8/5000	542/6000	501/3500	2335kg	236	4.5	-	162	298	21.7	+ Characterful drivetrain; genuine off-road ability - Not a match for its rivals on the road	★★★★★
Range Rover SDV8	180 D	£80,850	8/4367	334/3500	516/1750	2360kg	144	6.5	-	140	229	32.5	+ Lighter, more capable, even more luxurious - Diesel V6 model feels more alert	★★★★★
Rolls-Royce Ghost	186 D	£216,864	12/6592	563/5250	575/1500	2360kg	242	4.7	-	155	317	20.8	+ It's quicker than you think - It's more enjoyable driven slowly	★★★★★
Rolls-Royce Phantom	054 R	£310,200	12/6749	453/5350	531/3500	2560kg	180	5.7	-	149	377	18.0	+ Rolls reinvented for the 21st Century - The roads are barely big enough	★★★★★
Subaru WRX STI	201 R	£28,995	4/2457	296/6000	300/4000	1534kg	196	5.2	-	158	242	27.2	+ Fast Subaru saloon returns (again) - Without a power increase	★★★★★
Subaru WRX STI	151 D	'10-'13	4/2457	296/6000	300/4000	1505kg	200	5.1	-	158	243	26.9	+ Fast Subaru saloon returns - Without the blue paint and gold wheels	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza WRX GB270	109 D	'07	4/2457	266/5700	310/3000	1410kg	192	5.2	-	143	-	-	+ Fitting final fling for 'classic' Impreza - End of an era	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza STI	090 R	'05-'07	4/2457	276/6000	289/4000	1495kg	188	5.3	-	158	-	25.9	+ Stunning to drive - Not so stunning to look at	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza RB200	105 R	'07	4/2457	316/6000	332/3750	1495kg	215	4.8	-	155	-	-	+ Fitting tribute to a rallying legend - Too hardcore for some?	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza WRX STI PPP	073 R	'03-'05	4/1994	300/6000	299/4000	1470kg	207	5.2	12.9	148	-	-	+ A Subaru with real edge - Bit too edgy in the wet	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza Turbo	011 R	'98-'00	4/1994	215/5600	214/4000	1235kg	177	5.4	14.6	144	-	27.2	+ Destined for classic status - Thirsty	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza PI	200 R	'00-'01	4/1994	276/6500	260/4000	1283kg	219	4.9	13.3	150	-	25.0	+ Ultimate old-shape Impreza - Prices reflect this	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza RB5 (PPP)	187 R	'99	4/1994	237/6500	258/3500	1235kg	195	5.0	14.1	143	-	-	+ Perfect blend of po	

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OUR CHOICE

Porsche Boxster Spyder. If you want six cylinders in your Boxster, best grab a 981-generation version before they're all gone, as the four-cylinder 781 Boxster will be along any minute. Of the 981s, the Spyder would be our pick, but the 3.4-litre GTS and S, and even the basic 2.7, are all true five-star cars, too.



BEST OF THE REST

Lotus's Exige S Roadster counters the Boxster with a more focused driving experience, while the more-affordable Elise continues to defy its age. Jaguar's F-type also impresses in both V6 (left) and V8 forms, but for the ultimate thrills, get a Caterham 620R, Ariel Atom or Radical.

	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING
Alfa Romeo 4C Spider	211 D	\$59,500	4/1742	237/6000	258/2200	940kg	256	4.5	-	160	161	40.9	+ Stunningly beautiful; better steering than coupe - Still has the coupe's other foibles ★★★★★
Alfa Romeo 8C Spider	161 R	09-'11	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1675kg	273	4.5	-	181	-	-	+ Beauty meets beast. They hit it off - Boot is useless for touring ★★★★★
Alpina D4 Biturbo Convertible	212 D	\$54,950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1815kg	193	5.0	-	171	156	47.9	+ As much torque as a 997 Turbo - A diesel convertible wouldn't be our choice of Alpina ★★★★★
Ariel Atom 3.5 Supercharged	180 D	\$38,000	4/1998	310/8400	169/7200	550kg	573	2.7	-	155	-	-	+ As mad as ever - Rain ★★★★★
Ariel Atom 3.5R	198 R	\$64,800	4/1998	350/8400	243/6100	550kg	647	2.6	-	155	-	-	+ Remarkable balance, poise and pace - Pricey ★★★★★
Ariel Atom 3 245	113 D	08-'12	4/1998	245/8200	155/5200	500kg	498	3.2	-	150	-	33.0	+ The Atom just got a little bit better - Can still be a bit draughty... ★★★★★
Ariel Atom 3 Supercharged	138 R	09-'12	4/1998	300/8200	162/7200	550kg	554	3.3	-	155	-	-	+ It's brilliant - It's mental ★★★★★
Ariel Atom Mugen	165 R	12-'13	4/1998	270/8300	188/6000	550kg	499	2.9	-	150	-	-	+ Perfect engine for the Atom's chassis - Only ten were made ★★★★★
Ariel Atom V8 500	165 R	10-'12	8/3000	475/10,500	284/7750	550kg	877	3.0	5.8	170	-	-	+ An experience unlike anything else on Planet Car - £150K for an Atom ★★★★★
Ariel Nomad	210 R	\$33,000	4/2354	235/7200	221/4300	670kg	365	3.4	-	134	-	-	+ Off-road capabilities make for a super plaything - No Bluetooth ★★★★★
Aston Martin V8 Vantage Roadster	130 R	\$89,994	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1710kg	250	4.7	-	180	328	20.4	+ Sportiest, coolest drop-top Aston in years - Starting to feel its age ★★★★★
Aston Martin V8 Vantage S Roadster	161 R	\$108,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1690kg	258	4.6	-	189	299	21.9	+ Sounds amazing, looks even better - Still not the best drop-top in its class ★★★★★
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S Roadster	212 R	\$147,000	12/5935	565/6750	457/5750	1745kg	329	4.1	-	201	343	19.2	+ A brilliant two-seat roadster... - Jet down by a frustrating gearbox ★★★★★
Aston Martin V12 Vantage Roadster	175 R	12-'14	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1760kg	294	4.4	-	190	-	-	+ As good as the coupe, with amplified V12 rumble - Just a smidgen shakier ★★★★★
Aston Martin DB9 Volante	150 D	\$141,995	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1815kg	263	4.6	-	190	368	18.2	+ Consummate cruiser and capable when pushed - Roof-up wind noise ★★★★★
Aston Martin DBS Volante	133 D	09-'12	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1810kg	286	4.3	-	191	388	17.3	+ A feelgood car par excellence - It's a bit of a heavyweight ★★★★★
Audi TTS Roadster	207 D	\$41,085	4/1984	306/5800	280/1800	1450kg	214	5.2	-	155	169	38.7	+ A serious proposition, ranking close behind a Boxster S - Coupe still looks better ★★★★★
Audi TTS Roadster	122 D	08-'14	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1455kg	187	5.6	-	155	189	34.9	+ Effortlessly quick - Long-term appeal open to question ★★★★★
Audi TT RS Roadster	133 D	09-'14	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1510kg	225	4.7	-	155	212	31.0	+ Terrific engine... - Is the best thing about it ★★★★★
Audi S5 Cabriolet	130 D	\$46,770	6/2995	328/5500	325/2900	1875kg	178	5.6	-	155	199	33.2	+ Gets the S4's trick supercharged engine - Bordering on dull ★★★★★
Audi RS5 Cabriolet	179 D	\$69,505	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1920kg	235	4.9	-	155	249	26.4	+ Pace, looks, interior, naturally aspirated V8 - Not the last word in fun or involvement ★★★★★
Audi RS4 Cabriolet	094 D	06-'08	8/4163	414/7800	317/5500	1845kg	228	4.9	-	155	-	-	+ That engine - Wibble wobble, wibble wobble, jelly on a plate ★★★★★
Audi R8 V8 Spyder	186 D	11-'15	8/4163	424/7900	317/6000	1660kg	259	4.8	-	187	337	19.6	+ More delicate and subtle than the V10 - The V10 sounds even better ★★★★★
BAC Mono	189 R	\$124,255	4/2261	280/7700	206/6000	540kg	527	2.8	-	170	-	-	+ The most single-minded track car available - That means no passengers... ★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT V8 Convertible	168 R	\$150,200	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2395kg	212	4.7	-	187	254	25.9	+ One of the world's best topless GTs - Still no sports car ★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT V8 S Convertible	194 D	\$160,500	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2395kg	221	4.5	-	191	258	25.4	+ A true drivers' Bentley - Excessively heavy, feels like it could give more ★★★★★
Bentley Conti GT Speed Convertible	187 D	\$181,000	12/5998	626/6000	605/1700	2420kg	263	4.1	-	203	347	19.0	+ Effortless performance, style - Running costs a tad on the high side ★★★★★
Bentley Continental Supersports	147 D	10-'12	12/5998	621/6000	590/2000	2395kg	263	3.9	-	202	388	17.3	+ Fast, capable and refined - Coupe does the Supersports thing better ★★★★★
BMW M235i Convertible	207 D	\$37,710	6/2979	321/5800	332/1300	1600kg	204	5.2	-	155	199	33.2	+ Neat styling, great drivetrain - Loss of dynamic ability compared with coupe ★★★★★
BMW Z4 sDrive 35i M Sport (Mk2)	186 D	\$43,005	6/2979	302/5800	295/1300	1505kg	204	5.2	-	155	219	30.1	+ Looks, hard-top versatility, drivetrain - Clumsy chassis is upset by ragged surfaces ★★★★★
BMW Z4 3.0si (Mk1)	094 D	06-'09	6/2996	265/6600	232/2750	1310kg	205	5.7	-	155	-	32.9	+ Terrific straight-six - Handling not as playful as we'd like ★★★★★
BMW Z4 Roadster	091 R	06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1410kg	244	4.8	-	155	-	23.3	+ Exhilarating and characterful, that engine - Stiff suspension ★★★★★
BMW M Roadster	002 R	98-'02	6/3246	325/7400	258/4900	1375kg	240	5.3	-	155	-	25.4	+ Fresh-air M3, that motor, hunky looks - M Coupe drives better ★★★★★
BMW 435i Convertible	194 D	\$45,680	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1740kg	176	5.6	-	155	190	34.8	+ Impressive chassis, smart looks, neat roof - Extra weight, not as composed as coupe ★★★★★
BMW M4 Convertible (F83)	202 D	\$61,145	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1750kg	247	4.6	-	155	213	31.0	+ As good as fast four-seat drop-tops get... - but still not as good as a coupe or saloon ★★★★★
BMW M3 Convertible (E93)	119 D	08-'13	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1810kg	232	5.3	-	155	297	22.2	+ M DCT transmission, pace, slick roof - Extra weight blunts the edge ★★★★★
BMW M3 Convertible (E46)	035 D	01-'06	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1655kg	207	5.3	-	155	-	23.3	+ That engine - Gets the wobbles on British B-roads ★★★★★
BMW Z8	026 R	00-'03	8/4941	400/6600	369/3800	1585kg	256	4.8	11.1	155	-	14.4	+ M5-powered super-sportster - M5's more fun to drive ★★★★★
Caterham Seven 160	198 R	\$19,710	4/660	80/7000	79/3400	490kg	166	6.5	-	100	-	-	+ The fabulous Seven formula at its most basic - Gets pricey with options ★★★★★
Caterham Seven 270	219 R	\$23,795	4/1595	135/6800	122/4100	540kg	254	5.0	-	122	-	-	+ Feisty engine, sweetly balanced, manic and exciting - The temptation of more power ★★★★★
Caterham Seven 360	209 R	\$27,795	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	560kg	327	4.8	-	130	-	-	+ Extra power is welcome - You'll need the six-speed gearbox to make the most of it ★★★★★
Caterham Seven 420	220 R	\$30,795	4/1999	210/7600	150/6300	560kg	381	4.3	-	136	-	-	+ It's the one we built for ourselves - Trickier on the limit than lesser-powered Sevens ★★★★★
Caterham Seven 620S	220 D	\$44,995	4/1999	310/7700	219/7350	610kg	516	3.4	-	155	-	-	+ Ludicrous, near-620R pace, with added habitability - Well, 'habitable' for a Seven... ★★★★★
Caterham Seven 620R	187 R	\$50,795	4/1999	310/7700	219/7350	572kg	551	2.8	-	155	-	-	+ Banzai on track, yet still relevant on the road - £50k for a Seven? ★★★★★
Caterham Seven CSR	094 R	\$47,295	4/2261	256/7500	200/6200	565kg	460	3.8	-	155	-	-	+ Brilliant for high days, holidays and trackdays - Wet Wednesdays ★★★★★
Caterham Seven Supersport 125	105 R	07-'14	4/1595	125/6100	120/5350	539kg	235	5.9	-	112	-	-	+ Great debut for new Ford-engined model - Bigger drivers need SV model ★★★★★
Caterham Seven Supersport	165 R	11-'14	4/1595	140/6900	120/5790	520kg	273	4.9	-	120	-	-	+ One of the best Caterhams is also one of the cheapest of its era - It's quite minimalist ★★★★★
Caterham Seven Supersport R	180 D	13-'14	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	535kg	342	4.8	-	130	-	-	+ One of the best road-and-track Sevens - Impractical, noisy, uncomfortable ★★★★★
Caterham Seven Superlight R300	150 R	09-'12	4/1999	175/7000	139/6000	515kg	345	4.5	-	140	-	-	+ Possibly all the Caterham you need - They're not cheap ★★★★★
Caterham Seven Superlight R500	123 R	08-'14	4/1999	263/8500	177/7200	506kg	528	2.9	-	150	-	-	+ Better power-to-weight ratio than a Veyron - Until you add the driver ★★★★★
Caterham Levante	131 R	09-'10	8/2398	550/10000	300/8500	520kg	1074	4.8	8.2	150	-	-	+ Twice the power-to-weight ratio of a Veyron! - Not easy to drive slowly ★★★★★
Caterham Seven R300	068 R	02-'06	4/1796	160/7000	130/5000	500kg	325	4.7	-	130	-	-	+ Our 2002 Trackday Car of the Year - Not for wimps ★★★★★
Caterham Seven R500	200 R	99-'06	4/1796	230/8600	155/7200	460kg	510	3.6	8.8	146	-	-	+ The K-series Seven at its very best - No cup holders ★★★★★
Donkervoort D8 GT0 Performance	185 R	\$120,000	5/2480	375/5500	350/1750	695kg	548	2.8	-	168	-	-	+ There's nothing else like it - Pricey for a car with a five-cylinder engine ★★★★★
Ferrari California T	212 D	\$154,460	8/3855	552/7500	557/4750	1729kg	324	3.6	-	196	250	26.9	+ Turbocharged engine is a triumph - Still places daily usability above outright thrills ★★★★★
Ferrari California	171 D	08-'14	8/4297	483/7750	372/5000	1735kg	283	3.8	-	193	299	-	+ Revised with sharper performance and dynamics - We'd still take a 458 Spider ★★★★★
Honda S2000	118 D	99-'09	4/1997	237/8300	153/7500	1260kg	191	6.2	-	150	-	28.2	+ An alternative and rev-happy roadster - The Boxster's better ★★★★★
Jaguar F-type Convertible	186 R	\$56,745	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1587kg	214	5.5	-	161	234	28.8	+ Beautiful, enjoyable, responsive - Noticeably junior to the V6 S ★★★★★
Jaguar F-type S Convertible	183 R	\$65,745	6/2995	375/6500	339/3500	1604kg	238	5.3	-	171	234	28.8	+ Better-damped and more rounded than the V8 S - A Boxster S is £20k cheaper ★★★★★
Jaguar F-type R Convertible	-	\$92,295	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1665kg	331	4.0	-	186	255	26.4	+ Pace, characterful V8 - Costs £25k more than the S ★★★★★
Jaguar F-type Project 7	212 R	15	8/5000	567/6500	501/2500	1585kg	363	3.9	-	186	-	-	+ Noise, performance, adjustability - Expensive, and not the GT3 rival we would have liked ★★★★★
Jaguar F-type V8 S Convertible	183 R	13-'14	8/5000	488/6500	461/2500	1665kg	298	4.3	-	186	259	25.5	+ Wilder than the V6 S - Could be too exuberant for some ★★★★★
Jaguar XKR Convertible	130 R	09-'14	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1725kg	296	4.6	-	155	292	23.0	+ Fantastic 5-litre V8 - Loses sporting ground to its main foes ★★★★★
Jaguar XKR-S Convertible	167 R	11-'14	8/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1725kg	319	4.2	-	186	292	23.0	+ Loud and mad, most exciting Jag in years - It was also the most expensive in years ★★★★★
KTM X-Bow GT	183 D	\$95,880	4/1984	281/6400	310/3200	875kg	326	4.1	-	144	189	34.0	+ Extraordinary ability, now in a more road-friendly package - Price ★★★★★
KTM X-Bow R	165 R	\$87,480	4/1984	296/5500	295/3300	818kg	368	3.6	-	144	-	-	+ Sharper handling, more power - Pity it's not even lighter, and cheaper ★★★★★
KTM X-Bow	138 R	08-'12	4/1984	237/5500	229/2000	818kg	294	3.8	-	137	-	-	+ Mad looks, real quality feel - Heavier and pricier than you'd hope ★★★★★

PAST MASTER



HOLDEN HSV GTS-R

It looked like an Omega on steroids, but this Australian import was a genuine M5 rival, as John Barker discovered

I doubt that BMW engineers are having sleepless nights on account of the latest HSV Holden. I doubt they've even driven a GTS-R. But perhaps they should, because it can teach the M5 a thing or two.

Twist the key and the 401bhp Calloway-reworked 5.7-litre Chevy

V8 sounds like thunder. Introduce the throttle to the carpet and the GTS-R thumps up the road with a sledgehammer punch.

It feels remarkably wieldy, too. Its steering is quick-witted and well-weighted and has a wonderfully direct action that makes the M5's feel a little dull.

The responses of the limited-slip diff can seem erratic, allowing wheelspin in tighter turns but locking in faster curves so that you can steer on the throttle. But the fact that you feel comfortable playing with over 400bhp is a testimony to the Holden's poise and feedback.

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	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING	
Lotus Elise 1.6	144 D	£30,900	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	876kg	155	6.0	-	127	149	45.0	+ New 1.6 Elise is light and fantastic - Smaller engine could put some off	★★★★★
Lotus Elise 1.6 Club Racer	183 R	£30,900	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	852kg	160	6.0	-	127	149	45.0	+ Even lighter, even more focused - A touch pricey for a stripped-out Elise	★★★★★
Lotus Elise S	172 R	£37,200	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	924kg	239	4.2	-	145	175	37.5	+ New supercharged Elise boasts epic grip and pace - £37k before (pricey) options...	★★★★★
Lotus Elise S Club Racer	189 D	£37,200	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	905kg	244	4.2	-	145	175	37.5	+ Purist approach intensifies ability - Lightest, option-free spec requires commitment	★★★★★
Lotus Elise S Cup	207 D	£43,500	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	932kg	237	4.2	-	140	175	37.5	+ Rewards precision like no other Elise - You can't remove the roof	★★★★★
Lotus Exige S Roadster	186 R	£55,500	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1166kg	301	3.8	-	145	235	28.0	+ Like the hard-top Exige S, but more road-friendly - Boxster S is a better all-rounder	★★★★★
Lotus Elise R	068 R	04-'11	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	860kg	223	5.6	13.9	150	196	34.4	+ Most thrilling Elise yet - Blaring engine note	★★★★★
Lotus Elise SC	131 R	08-'11	4/1794	218/8000	156/5000	870kg	254	4.8	11.4	148	199	33.2	+ All the usual Elise magic - Supercharged engine lacks sparkle	★★★★★
Lotus Elise S 1.8	104 R	06-'10	4/1794	134/6200	127/4200	860kg	158	6.3	18.7	127	-	37.2	+ Brilliant entry-level Elise - Precious little	★★★★★
Lotus Elise IIIS	049 R	02-'04	4/1796	156/7000	129/4650	860kg	197	5.1	-	131	-	40.9	+ A genuinely useable Elise - Air-con? In an Elise?	★★★★★
Lotus Elise Sport 135	040 D	03	4/1796	135/6200	129/4850	726kg	189	5.4	-	129	-	-	+ One of our fave S2 Elises - Brakes need more bite and pedal feel	★★★★★
Lotus Elise Sport 190	044 R	03	4/1796	190/7800	128/5000	710kg	272	4.7	12.1	135	-	-	+ Fabulous trackday tool - Pricey	★★★★★
Lotus Elise (S1)	126 R	96-'01	4/1796	118/5500	122/3000	731kg	164	6.1	18.5	126	-	39.4	+ A modern classic - A tad impractical?	★★★★★
Lotus 3-Eleven	220 R	£82,500	6/3456	410/7000	302/3000	925kg	450	3.3	-	174	-	-	+ A fantastically exciting Lotus - If not exactly a groundbreaking one	★★★★★
Lotus 2-Eleven	126 R	07-'11	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	720kg	267	4.3	-	140	-	-	+ Not far off supercharged car's pace - Pricey once it's made road-legal	★★★★★
Lotus 2-Eleven Supercharged	123 R	07-'11	4/1796	252/8000	179/7000	670kg	382	3.8	-	150	-	-	+ Impressive on road and track - Not hardcore enough for some	★★★★★
Lotus 2-Eleven GT4	138 R	09-'11	4/1796	266/8200	179/7200	670kg	403	3.7	-	155	-	-	+ evo Track Car of the Year 2009 - It's a 76-grand Lotus with no roof	★★★★★
Lotus 340R	126 R	00	4/1796	190/7800	146/5000	658kg	293	4.5	12.5	126	-	-	+ Hardcore road-racer... that looks like a dune buggy from Mars	★★★★★
Lotus Elan SE	095 R	89-'95	4/1588	165/6600	148/4200	1022kg	164	6.7	-	137	-	21.0	+ Awesome front-drive chassis - Rather uninvolved	★★★★★
Maserati GranCabrio	142 D	£98,940	8/4691	434/7000	332/4750	1980kg	223	5.2	-	177	337	19.5	+ As good to drive as it is to look at - Lacks the grunt of some rivals	★★★★★
Maserati GranCabrio Sport	161 D	£104,535	8/4691	444/7000	376/4750	1980kg	228	5.0	-	177	377	19.5	+ Looks, performance, cruising ability - Brakes could be sharper	★★★★★
Maserati GranCabrio MC	185 D	£112,370	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1973kg	234	4.9	-	179	337	19.5	+ Most powerful GranCabrio yet - The GranCabrio is starting to show its age	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 2.0i Sport (Mk4)	219 R	£22,505	4/1998	158/6000	147/4600	1000kg	161	7.3	-	133	161	40.9	+ Lightest MX-5 since the Mk1 - Lacks intensity	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 2.0i Sport Tech (Mk3.5)	212 R	09-'15	4/1999	158/7000	139/5000	1098kg	146	7.6	-	138	181	36.2	+ Handles brilliantly again; folding hard-top also available - Less than macho image	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 1.8i (Mk3)	091 R	05-'09	4/1798	124/6500	1080kg	108	9.3	-	-	122	-	-	+ Gearchange, interior - Lost some of the charm of old MX-5s; dubious handling	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 1.8i (Mk2)	017 R	98-'05	4/1839	146/7000	124/5000	1065kg	140	8.6	-	123	-	32.5	+ Affordable ragtop don't get much better - Cheap cabin	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 1.6 (Mk1)	131 R	89-'97	4/1597	115/6500	100/5500	971kg	120	9.0	-	114	-	-	+ The original and still (pretty much) the best - Less than rigid	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLK 350 Sport	161 R	£44,605	6/3498	302/6500	273/3500	1465kg	209	5.5	-	155	167	39.8	+ Best non-AMG SLK yet - Still no Boxster-beater	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLK 55 AMG	186 R	£55,345	8/5461	416/6800	398/4500	165kg	262	4.6	-	155	195	33.6	+ Quicker and more economical than ever - Needs to be sharper, too	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLK 55 AMG	087 R	05-'10	8/6208	355/5750	376/4000	1575kg	229	4.9	-	155	-	23.5	+ Superb engine, responsive chassis - No manual option, ESP spoils fun	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLK 55 AMG Black Series	107 R	07-'08	8/5439	394/5750	383/3750	1495kg	268	4.9	11.2	174	-	-	+ AMG gets serious - Dull-witted 7G-Tronic auto box, uneven dynamics	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL500	169 D	£81,915	8/4663	429/5250	516/1800	1710kg	255	4.6	-	155	212	31.0	+ Wafly performance, beautifully engineered - Lacks ultimate sports car feel	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL63 AMG	171 D	£112,510	8/5461	530/5500	590/2000	1770kg	304	4.3	-	155	231	-	+ Monster performance, lighter than before - Still heavy, steering lacks consistency	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG	183 D	£170,815	12/5980	621/4800	731/2300	1875kg	336	4.0	-	155	270	24.4	+ Chassis just about deals with the power - Speed limits	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL63 AMG	117 D	08-'13	8/6208	516/6800	464/5200	1970kg	278	4.6	-	155	328	20.0	+ More focused than old SL55 AMG - Lost some of its all-round appeal	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL55 AMG	070 R	02-'07	8/5439	493/6100	516/2650	1955kg	256	4.6	10.2	155	-	-	+ As fast as a Murielago - Not as much fun	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG	071 D	04-'10	12/5980	604/4800	737/2000	2035kg	302	4.1	-	155	-	-	+ Gob-smacking performance - Gob-smackingly pricey	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Roadster	167 R	12-'14	8/6208	563/6800	479/4750	1660kg	345	3.7	-	197	308	21.4	+ Loses none of the coupe's talents - But (understandably) loses the gullwing doors	★★★★★
Morgan 3 Wheeler	198 R	£25,950	2/1976	82/5250	103/3250	525kg	159	6.0	-	115	215	30.3	+ Quirky, characterful, brilliant - Can become a two-wheeler if you push too hard	★★★★★
Morgan Plus 8 Speedster	202 R	£71,140	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1000kg	368	4.2	-	148	282	23.3	+ Fantastic old-school roadster experience - Gets unsettled by big bumps	★★★★★
Morgan Plus 8	171 R	£86,345	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1100kg	334	4.4	-	155	256	25.7	+ Hilarious mix of old looks and new mechanicals - Refinement is definitely old-school	★★★★★
Morgan Aero SuperSports	145 R	£128,045	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1180kg	312	4.2	-	170	-	-	+ As above, with a V8 and target top - It's proper supercar money	★★★★★
Morgan Aero 8	105 R	02-'08	8/4799	362/6300	361/3400	1100kg	334	4.5	-	170	-	25.2	+ Glorious sound, view over bonnet, dynamics - Awkward-looking rear	★★★★★
Nissan 370Z Roadster	143 R	10-'14	6/3696	326/7000	269/5200	1554kg	213	5.5	-	155	262	25.2	+ The Zed's old-school character remains intact - Its purposeful looks don't	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster (981)	172 R	£38,810	6/2706	261/6700	206/4500	1310kg	202	5.4	-	164	192	34.5	+ Goes and looks better; cleanest Boxster ever - Steering now electric to help cut CO2	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster S (981)	186 R	£47,035	6/3436	311/6700	265/4500	1320kg	239	5.1	-	173	206	32.1	+ Boxster steps out of 911's shadow - But gets 911's less appealing electric steering	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster GTS (981)	203 D	£52,879	6/3436	325/6700	273/4500	1345kg	246	5.0	-	174	211	31.4	+ Superb dynamics, fantastic engine, great looks - Sport suspension is very firm	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster Spyder (981)	215 F	£60,459	6/3800	370/6700	310/4750	1315kg	286	4.5	-	180	230	28.5	+ The fastest, most rewarding Boxster yet - Feedback trails the Cayman GT4's	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster (987)	219 R	05-'12	6/2893	252/6400	214/4400	1335kg	192	5.9	-	163	221	30.0	+ Another brilliant Boxster - Lighter steering than before	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster S (987)	161 R	05-'12	6/3436	306/6400	265/5500	1355kg	229	5.3	-	170	223	29.7	+ As above, but with more power - As above	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster Spyder (987)	188 R	10-'12	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1275kg	252	5.0	-	166	221	29.1	+ Lighter, more driver-centric Boxster - Collapsed-brolly roof not the most practical	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster (986 2.7)	049 R	99-'04	6/2687	228/6300	192/4700	1275kg	182	6.3	-	155	-	29.1	+ Still an impeccable sports car - Very little	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster S (986)	070 R	99-'04	6/3179	260/6200	228/4700	1320kg	200	5.5	-	164	-	26.9	+ Added power is seductive - As above	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera S Cabriolet (991.1)	171 R	12-'15	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1485kg	270	4.7	-	187	228	29.1	+ Drives just like the coupe - Which means the same artificial steering	★★★★★
Radical SR3 SL	174 R	£69,840	4/2000	300/6000	265/4000	775kg	393	3.4	-	161	-	-	+ Our 2011 Track Car of the Year, and it's road-legal - You'll need to wrap up warm	★★★★★
Radical SR8LM	138 R	09-'12	8/2800	460/10,500	260/8000	680kg	687	3.2	-	168	-	-	+ Fastest car around the Nordschleife - Convincing people it's road legal	★★★★★
Renault Sport Spider	183 R	96-'99	4/1998	148/6000	136/4500	930kg	157	6.5	-	131	-	-	+ Rarity, fabulous unassisted steering feel - Heavier than you'd hope	★★★★★
Toyota MR2	187 R	00-'06	4/1794	138/6400	125/4400	975kg	141	7.2	21.2	130	-	38.2	+ Tight lines, taut dynamics - Minimal luggage space	★★★★★
TVR Tamora	070 R	01-'07	6/3605	350/7200	290/5500	1050kg	338	4.5	-	160	-	-	+ Well-sorted soft-top TVR - Awkward styling	★★★★★
TVR Tuscan Convertible	091 R	05-'07	6/3996	365/6800	315/6000	1100kg	337	3.8	8.1	195+	-	-	+ Spirit of the Griff reborn - Over 195mph? Really?	★★★★★
TVR Chimera 5.0	007 R	93-'03	8/4988	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.6	-	167	-	26.4	+ Gorgeous noise, tarmac-ripping grunt - Details	★★★★★
TVR Griffith 4.3	068 R	92-'93	8/4280	280/5500	305/4000	1060kg	268	4.8	11.2	148	-	-	+ The car that made TVR. Cult status - Mere details	★★★★★
TVR Griffith 500	009 R	93-'01	8/4988	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.8	11.2	167	-	22.1	+ Griff diamond - A few rough edges	★★★★★
Vauxhall VX220	023 R	00-'04	4/2198	145/5800	150/4000	875kg	168	5.6	-	136	-	34.4	+ Absurdly good Vauxhall - The badge?	★★★★★
Vauxhall VX220 Turbo	066 R	03-'05	4/1998	197/5500	184/1950	930kg	215	4.7	-	151	-	-	+ Nothing comes close for the money - Marginal everyday usability	★★★★★
Vuhl 05	220 R	£59,995	4/2000	285/5600	310/3000	725kg	405	3.7	-	152	-	-	+ Impressive pace and quality - You can get a more thrills from a Caterham at half the price	★★★★★
Zenos E10 S	214 R	£30,595	4/1999	250/7000	295/2500	725kg	350	4.2	-	145	-	-	+ Neutral and exploitable - Prescriptive balance	★★★★★

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OUR CHOICE

Porsche Cayman GT4. Porsche's Motorsport department has finally been let loose on the Cayman and the result is exactly what we all hoped for. In fact it's so good it won our 2015 Evo Car of the Year test – even despite the 991-generation 911 GT3 RS also being in attendance. Who saw that coming?



BEST OF THE REST

The 911 GT3 RS is still fabulous, of course (it came third at eCoty 2015). If you fancy something less hardcore, the 911 Carrera (left) and Carrera S haven't been ruined by the addition of turbos, Aston Martin's Vantages are thoroughly entertaining, and Jaguar's F-type R Coupe is a hoot.

	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING	
Alfa Romeo 4C	209 R	\$51,500	4/1742	237/6000	258/2200	895kg	269	4.5	-	160	157	41.5	+ Carbonfibre tub, mini-supercar looks - Hot hatch engine, clunky gearbox	★★★★★
Alfa Romeo 8C Competizione	120 R	\$77,009	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1585kg	288	4.1	-	181	-	-	+ Looks, exclusivity, noise, balance - They're all sold	★★★★★
Alpina D4 Biturbo	206 R	\$50,950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1585kg	221	4.6	-	173	139	53.3	+ Fifth-gear oversteer - Sounds like a diesel; fuel economy not as good as you might hope	★★★★★
Alpina B4 Biturbo	206 R	\$58,950	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1615kg	254	4.2	-	188	177	37.2	+ More fluid than the M4; better traction, too - Not as precise as the M-car over the limit	★★★★★
Alpina B3 GT3 (E92)	176 D	\$12,713	6/2979	402/6000	398/4500	1535kg	266	4.4	-	186	224	-	+ Alpina's M3 GTS alternative - Auto gearbox frustrates when pressing on	★★★★★
Aston Martin V8 Vantage	169 D	\$84,995	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1630kg	262	4.7	-	180	328	20.4	+ 2012 upgrades keep the V8 Vantage on song - Starting to feel a little dated, though	★★★★★
Aston Martin V8 Vantage N430	218 R	\$89,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	271	4.5	-	189	321	20.5	+ Malleable, involving, can still hold its own - Never feels rampantly quick	★★★★★
Aston Martin V8 Vantage S	168 R	\$94,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	271	4.5	-	189	299	21.9	+ Keener engine, V12 Vantage looks - Slightly sluggish auto only	★★★★★
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S	190 R	\$138,000	12/5935	565/6750	457/5750	1665kg	345	3.7	-	205	343	19.2	+ Amongst the best Astons ever made - Old-school automated 'box	★★★★★
Aston Martin Vantage GT12	214 R	\$250,000	12/5935	592/7000	461/5500	1655kg	384	3.5	-	185	-	-	+ The GT3-style Vantage we've been waiting for - Only 100 being made	★★★★★
Aston Martin V12 Vantage	146 R	\$99,133	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1680kg	308	4.4	9.7	190	388	17.3	+ The car we hoped the V8 Vantage would be - Erm, a tad thirsty?	★★★★★
Aston Martin V12 Zagato	181 F	\$13	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1680kg	308	4.2	-	190	388	17.3	+ The looks, the noise, the way it drives - It's several times the price of a V12 Vantage	★★★★★
Aston Martin DB9	178 R	\$133,495	12/5935	510/6500	457/5500	1785kg	290	4.6	-	183	368	18.2	+ Better than the old DB9 in every respect - Automatic gearbox could be quicker	★★★★★
Aston Martin DB9 GT	214 D	\$140,000	12/5935	540/6750	457/5500	1785kg	307	4.5	-	183	333	19.8	+ More power; still has bags of character - Needs eight-speed auto 'box	★★★★★
Aston Martin DBS	142 R	\$77,012	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1695kg	306	4.2	-	191	388	17.3	+ Stupendous engine, gearbox, brakes - Pricey. Can bite the unwary	★★★★★
Audi TT 2.0 TFSI (Mk3)	204 R	\$29,915	4/1984	227/4500	273/1650	1230kg	188	6.0	-	155	137	47.9	+ Desirable, grippy and effortlessly quick - Still not the last word in interaction	★★★★★
Audi TT 2.0 TFSI quattro (Mk3)	203 D	\$32,860	4/1984	227/4500	273/1600	1335kg	173	5.3	-	155	149	44.1	+ Looks, interior, decent performance and handling - Lacks ultimate involvement	★★★★★
Audi TTS (Mk3)	209 R	\$38,790	4/1984	306/5800	280/1800	1365kg	228	4.9	-	155	-	-	+ The most dynamically interesting TT yet - Still not as interactive as a Cayman	★★★★★
Audi TTS (Mk2)	193 R	\$88,194	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1395kg	195	5.4	-	155	184	35.8	+ Usefully quicker TT; great drivetrain - Still steers like a computer game	★★★★★
Audi TT RS (Mk2)	158 R	\$99,133	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1450kg	235	4.4	11.1	155	209	31.4	+ Sublime 5-cylinder turbo engine - Rest of package can't quite match it	★★★★★
Audi TT RS Sport (Mk2)	185 D	\$124,714	5/2480	355/5500	343/1650	1450kg	249	4.3	-	174	209	31.4	+ Stonkingly fast cross-country - Shockingly expensive for a TT	★★★★★
Audi TT S Plus (Mk1)	081 D	\$55,006	4/1781	237/5700	236/2700	1390kg	173	5.9	-	155	-	-	+ Deliciously purposeful interior, crisp chassis - Numb steering	★★★★★
Audi S5	189 D	\$43,665	6/2995	328/5500	325/2900	1675kg	199	4.9	-	155	190	34.9	+ Supercharged V6 makes S5 cleaner and faster - Poor body control	★★★★★
Audi RS5	206 R	\$59,870	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1715kg	263	4.5	-	155	246	26.9	+ Brilliant engine and improved chassis - Lack of suspension travel; inconsistent steering	★★★★★
Audi R8 V8	201 R	\$77,015	8/4163	424/7900	317/4500	1560kg	276	4.1	9.9	188	332	19.9	+ A true 911 alternative - Exclusivity comes at a price	★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT V8	178 R	\$140,300	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2220kg	229	4.6	-	188	246	27.0	+ A proper driver's Bentley with decent engine - W12 suddenly seems pointless	★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT V8 S	204 F	\$149,800	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2220kg	238	4.3	-	192	250	26.4	+ An even better driver's Bentley - Vast weight makes its presence felt in harder driving	★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT	152 D	\$150,500	12/5998	567/6000	516/1700	2245kg	257	4.3	-	197	338	19.5	+ 200mph in utter comfort - Weight, thirst	★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT Speed	212 D	\$168,300	12/5998	626/6000	605/1700	2245kg	283	4.0	-	206	338	19.5	+ Desirability meets exclusivity and performance - We'd still have the V8	★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT3-R	203 D	\$237,500	8/3993	572/6000	518/1700	2120kg	274	3.6	-	170	295	22.2	+ The best-handling Continental ever - Expensive; it still weighs 2120kg	★★★★★
BMW 1-series M Coupe	188 R	\$77,112	6/2979	335/5900	369/1500	1495kg	228	4.8	-	155	224	-	+ Character, turbo pace and great looks - Came and went too quick	★★★★★
BMW M235i Coupe	209 R	\$34,535	6/2979	321/5800	332/1300	1455kg	224	5.0	-	155	189	34.9	+ Powertrain, chassis, looks, size - Limited-slip diff is an option, not standard	★★★★★
BMW M2	220 R	\$44,070	6/2979	365/6500	369/1450	1495kg	248	4.5	-	155	199	33.2	+ More progressive chassis balance than M4 - Engine isn't inspirational	★★★★★
BMW M4	218 R	\$57,055	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1497kg	288	4.3	-	155	204	32.1	+ Ferociously fast - A handful on less-than-perfect or less-than-bone-dry roads	★★★★★
BMW M4 Competition Package	221 R	\$60,005	6/2979	444/7000	406/1850	1515kg	298	4.3	-	155	204	32.1	+ Better tied-down than the regular M4 - Torque delivery still rather abrupt	★★★★★
BMW M3 (E92)	196 R	\$67,013	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1580kg	266	4.3	10.3	155	290	22.8	+ Fends off all of its rivals - ...except the cheaper 1-series M	★★★★★
BMW M3 GTS (E92)	171 R	\$10,711	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1530kg	295	4.3	-	193	295	-	+ Highly exclusive, one of the most focused M-cars ever - Good luck trying to find one	★★★★★
BMW M3 (E46)	066 R	\$50,007	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230	5.1	12.3	155	-	-	+ One of the best BMWs ever. Runner-up in eCoty 2001 - Slightly artificial steering feel	★★★★★
BMW M3 CS (E46)	219 R	\$75,007	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230	5.1	-	155	-	-	+ CSL dynamics without CSL price - Looks like the standard car	★★★★★
BMW M3 CSL (E46)	200 R	\$33,004	6/3246	355/7900	273/4900	1385kg	260	5.3	12.0	155	-	-	+ Still superb - Changes from the automated single-clutch 'box are... a bit... sluggish	★★★★★
BMW M3 (E36)	148 R	\$93,908	6/3201	321/7400	258/3250	1460kg	223	5.4	12.8	157	-	-	+ Performance, image - Never quite as good as the original	★★★★★
BMW M3 (E30)	165 R	\$86,900	4/2302	212/6750	170/4600	1165kg	185	6.7	17.8	147	-	-	+ Best M-car ever! Race-car dynamics for the road - LHD only	★★★★★
BMW Z4 M Coupe	097 R	\$67,009	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1420kg	242	5.0	-	155	-	-	+ A real driver's car - You've got to be prepared to get stuck in	★★★★★
BMW M Coupe	005 R	\$98,002	6/3246	321/7400	258/4900	1375kg	237	5.3	-	155	-	-	+ Quick and characterful - Lacks finesse	★★★★★
BMW 640d	165 D	\$62,295	6/2993	309/4400	465/1500	1790kg	175	5.5	-	155	144	51.4	+ Great engine and economy, excellent build - Numb steering, unsettled B-road ride	★★★★★
BMW M6 (Mk2)	218 R	\$93,150	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1850kg	303	4.2	-	155	231	28.5	+ Mighty ability, pace, technology - You'll want the Competition Package upgrade too...	★★★★★
BMW M6 (Mk1)	106 R	\$75,005	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1635kg	311	4.8	10.0	155	342	19.8	+ Awesome GT, awesome sports car - SMG gearbox now off the pace	★★★★★
BMW i8	210 R	\$99,590	3/1499	357/5800	420/3700	1485kg	244	4.4	-	155	49	134.5	+ Brilliantly executed concept; sci-fi looks - Safe dynamic set-up	★★★★★
Chevrolet Camaro Z/28 *	220 R	\$71,750	8/7008	505/6100	481/4800	1732kg	296	4.2	-	175	-	-	+ Scalpel-sharp engine, great chassis (really) - Feels very stiff on UK roads	★★★★★
Chevrolet Corvette Stingray (C7)	197 R	\$62,450	8/6162	460/6000	465/4600	1539kg	304	4.4	9.4	180	279	23.5	+ Performance, chassis balance, supple ride - Body control could be better	★★★★★
Chevrolet Corvette Z06 (C7)	206 R	\$87,860	8/6162	625/6400	650/3600	1598kg	413	3.2	-	186	-	-	+ Mind-boggling raw speed; surprisingly sophisticated - Edgy when really pushed	★★★★★
Ford Mustang 5.0 V8 GT	219 R	\$34,495	8/4951	410/6500	391/4250	1720kg	242	4.8	-	155	299	20.9	+ Looks, noise, performance, value, right-hand drive - Comes undone on rougher roads	★★★★★
Ford Mustang Shelby GT350 *	221 R	\$48,695	8/5162	526/7500	429/4750	1715kg	312	4.3	-	180	-	-	+ Engaging when driven fast - Doesn't flatter half-hearted commitment	★★★★★
Ginetta G40R	165 R	\$35,940	4/1999	175/6700	140/5000	795kg	224	5.8	-	140	-	-	+ A race-compliant sports car for the road - Feels too soft to be a hardcore track toy	★★★★★
Honda Integra Type R (DC2)	200 R	\$96,000	4/1797	187/8000	131/7300	1101kg	173	6.2	17.9	145	-	-	+ Arguably the greatest front-drive car ever - Too raw for some	★★★★★
Honda NSX	188 R	\$90,005	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1410kg	196	5.5	-	186	-	-	+ The useable supercar - 270bhp sounds a bit weird today	★★★★★
Honda NSX-R *	100 R	\$22,003	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1270kg	221	4.4	-	168	-	-	+ Evo Car of the Year 2002 - Honda never brought it to the UK	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type Coupe	204 D	\$51,260	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1567kg	217	5.5	-	161	234	28.8	+ Drop-dead looks, brilliant chassis, desirability - Engine lacks top-end fight	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type S Coupe	211 D	\$60,260	6/2995	375/6500	339/3500	1584kg	241	5.3	-	171	234	28.8	+ Exquisite style, more rewarding (and affordable) than roadster - Scrappy on the limit	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type R Coupe	218 R	\$85,010	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1650kg	334	4.0	-	186	255	26.4	+ Looks, presence, performance, soundtrack - Bumpy and boistrous	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type R Coupe AWD	217 R	\$91,660	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1730kg	318	4.1	-	186	269	25.0	+ Better in the wet - Less involving in the dry	★★★★★
Jaguar XKR	168 R	\$99,133	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1678kg	305	4.6	-	155	292	23.0	+ Fast and incredibly rewarding Jag - The kids will have to stay at home	★★★★★
Jaguar XKR-S	168 R	\$77,114	8/5000	542/6000	502/2500	1678kg	328	4.2	-	186	292	23.0	+ Faster and wilder than regular XKR - The F-type R Coupe	★★★★★
Jaguar XKR-SGT	193 R	\$74,000	8/5000	542/6000	502/2500	1638kg	336	3.9	-	186	292	23.0	+ The most exciting XKR ever - Very limited numbers	★★★★★
Lexus RC F	206 R	\$59,995	8/4969	470/6400	391/4800	1765kg	271	4.5	-	168	-	-	+ Great steering, noise, sense of occasion - Too heavy to be truly exciting	★★★★★
Lotus Evija Sport 350	221 R	\$55,900	6/3456	365/4700	295/4500	1125kg	312	3.7	-	170	235	28.0	+ Further honed, and with a vastly improved gearbox - Still not easy to get into and out of	★★★★★
Lotus Evija S (V6)	209 R	\$72,175	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1176kg	298	3.8	-	170	235	28.0	+ Breathtaking road-racer; our joint 2012 Car of the Year - Gearshift not the sweetest	★★★★★

BUYING GUIDE



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	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 g/km	EC MPG	evo RATING
Lotus Evija S (S2)	105 R	'06-'11	4/1796	218/7800	158/5500	930kg	238	4.5	-	148	199	33.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lotus Evija (S2)	068 R	'04-'08	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	875kg	219	4.9	-	147	-	32.1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lotus Evija (S1)	200 R	'00-'01	4/1796	192/7800	146/5000	780kg	247	4.6	-	136	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lotus Evora	138 R	'52-'50	6/3456	276/6400	258/4700	1382kg	203	5.6	13.6	162	217	30.3	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lotus Evora S	168 R	'63-'95	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1430kg	245	4.6	-	172	229	28.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lotus Evora 400	216 R	'82-'00	6/3456	400/7000	302/3500	1395kg	291	4.1	-	186	225	29.1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Maserati GranTurismo	114 R	'82-'89	8/4244	399/7100	339/4750	1880kg	216	5.5	12.7	177	330	19.8	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Maserati GranTurismo Sport	188 R	'91-'20	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1880kg	245	4.8	-	185	331	19.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Maserati GranTurismo MC Stradale	193 R	'11-'10	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1800kg	256	4.5	-	188	360	18.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Maserati Coupe	064 R	'03-'07	8/4244	390/7000	333/4500	1680kg	237	4.8	-	177	-	17.6	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Maserati GranSport	073 R	'04-'07	8/4244	400/7000	333/4500	1680kg	239	4.8	-	180	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Mazda RX-8	122 R	'03-'11	2R/1308	228/8200	156/5500	1429kg	162	6.5	16.4	146	299	24.6	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Coupe	217 D	'68-'07	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1725kg	296	3.9	-	155	200	24.8	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Coupe	162 R	'11-'14	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	277	4.4	10.3	186	280	23.5	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Black Series	171 R	'12-'13	8/6208	510/6800	457/5200	1635kg	317	4.2	-	186	286	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Mercedes-Benz CLK63 AMG	092 D	'06-'09	8/6208	481/6800	464/5000	1750kg	278	4.6	-	155	-	19.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Mercedes-Benz CLK63 AMG Black Series	106 R	'07-'09	8/6208	500/6800	464/5250	1760kg	289	4.2	-	186	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Mercedes-AMG S63 Coupe	205 D	'12-'15	8/5461	577/5500	664/2500	1995kg	294	4.2	-	155	237	28.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Mercedes-AMG S65 Coupe	209 D	'18-'23	12/5980	621/4800	737/2300	2100kg	299	4.1	-	186	279	23.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Mercedes-AMG GT S	216 R	'11-'09	8/3982	503/6250	479/1750	1570kg	326	3.8	-	193	219	30.1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Morgan AeroMax	120 R	'08-'09	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1180kg	312	4.1	-	170	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Nissan 370Z	204 R	'07-'05	6/3696	323/7000	268/5200	1496kg	219	5.3	-	155	248	26.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Nissan 370Z Nismo	209 R	'07-'08	6/3696	339/7400	274/5200	1496kg	230	5.2	-	155	248	26.6	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Nissan 350Z	107 R	'03-'09	6/3498	309/6800	264/4800	1532kg	205	5.5	13.0	155	-	24.1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Nissan GT-R (2012MY onwards)	218 R	'08-'02	6/3799	542/6400	466/3200	1740kg	316	3.2	7.5	196	275	24.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Nissan GT-R Track Edition	216 D	'68-'56	6/3799	542/6400	466/3200	1740kg	316	2.7	-	196	275	24.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Nissan GT-R Nismo	199 R	'12-'00	6/3799	592/6800	481/3200	1720kg	350	2.6	-	196	275	24.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R34)	196 R	'99-'02	6/2568	276/7000	289/4400	1560kg	187	4.7	12.5	165	-	20.1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R33)	196 R	'97-'99	6/2568	276/6800	271/4400	1540kg	182	5.4	14.3	155	-	22.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Noble M12 GTO-3R	200 R	'03-'06	6/2968	352/6200	350/3500	1080kg	332	3.8	-	170	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Peugeot RCZ 1.6 THP 200	155 R	'07-'15	4/1598	197/5500	202/1700	1421kg	141	7.3	18.1	147	155	42.1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Peugeot RCZ R	209 R	'12-'15	4/1598	266/6000	243/1900	1280kg	211	5.9	-	155	145	44.8	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche Cayman (981)	209 R	'09-'11	6/2706	321/7100	214/4500	1330kg	207	5.7	-	165	195	33.6	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche Cayman S (981)	202 R	'08-'11	6/3436	321/7400	273/4500	1320kg	247	4.5	10.5	175	206	32.1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche Cayman GT3 (981)	219 F	'05-'09	6/3436	335/7400	280/4750	1345kg	253	4.9	-	177	211	31.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche Cayman GT4 (981)	221 R	'06-'13	6/3800	380/7400	310/4750	1340kg	288	4.4	-	183	238	27.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche Cayman S (987)	132 R	'06-'13	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1350kg	237	5.2	-	172	223	29.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche Cayman R (987)	158 R	'11-'13	6/3436	325/7400	273/4750	1295kg	255	4.7	-	175	228	29.1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 Carrera (991.2)	218 R	'07-'14	6/2981	365/6500	332/1700	1430kg	259	4.6	-	183	190	34.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 Carrera S (991.2)	217 R	'08-'15	6/2981	414/6500	369/1700	1440kg	292	4.3	-	191	199	32.5	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 Carrera S (991.1)	201 R	'12-'15	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1415kg	283	4.3	9.5	188	223	29.7	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 Carrera 4S (991.1)	179 R	'13-'15	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1465kg	273	4.5	-	185	233	28.5	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 Carrera 4 GT (991.1)	208 D	'09-'15	6/3800	424/7500	324/5750	1470kg	293	4.4	-	189	233	28.5	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.2)	121 R	'08-'11	6/3800	380/6500	310/4400	1425kg	271	4.7	-	188	242	27.4	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.1)	070 R	'04-'08	6/3824	350/6600	295/4600	1420kg	246	4.6	10.9	182	-	24.5	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 Carrera (996 3.4)	008 R	'98-'01	6/3387	296/6800	258/4600	1320kg	228	5.2	-	174	-	28.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 GT3 (991)	206 R	'10-'05	6/3799	468/8250	324/6250	1430kg	333	3.5	-	196	289	23.0	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991)	216 R	'09-'11	6/3996	493/8250	339/6250	1420kg	353	3.3	-	193	296	22.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.2)	182 R	'09-'11	6/3797	429/7600	317/6250	1395kg	312	4.2	9.2	194	303	22.1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (3.8, 997.2)	200 R	'10-'11	6/3797	444/7900	317/6750	1370kg	329	4.0	-	193	314	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS 4.0 (997.2)	187 R	'11-'12	6/3996	493/8250	339/5750	1360kg	368	3.8	-	193	326	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.1)	182 R	'07-'09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1395kg	298	4.3	9.4	192	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (997.1)	105 R	'07-'09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1375kg	302	4.2	-	193	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.2)	221 R	'03-'05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1380kg	272	4.3	9.2	190	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (996.2)	068 R	'03-'05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1330kg	286	4.2	9.2	190	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.1)	182 R	'99	6/3600	360/7200	273/5000	1350kg	271	4.5	10.3	187	-	21.9	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Radical RXC	189 R	'94-'00	6/3700	350/6750	320/4250	900kg	395	2.8	-	175	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Radical RXC Turbo	205 R	'12-'09	6/3496	454/6000	500/3600	940kg	491	2.6	-	185	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Radical RXC Turbo 500	209 D	'14-'13	6/3496	530/6100	481/5000	1100kg	490	2.6	6.8	185	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Rolls-Royce Wraith	205 D	'12-'15	12/6592	624/5600	590/1500	2360kg	260	4.6	-	155	327	20.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Subaru BRZ	204 R	'12-'15	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1230kg	163	7.6	-	140	181	36.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Toyota GT86	219 R	'12-'15	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1240kg	161	7.6	-	140	181	36.2	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
TVR Sagaris	097 R	'05-'07	6/3996	406/7500	349/5000	1078kg	383	3.7	-	185	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
TVR Tuscan S (Mk2)	076 R	'05-'07	6/3996	400/7000	315/5250	1100kg	369	4.0	-	185	-	-	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VW Scirocco GT 2.0 TSI	155 R	'06-'15	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1369kg	158	6.5	-	153	139	47.1	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VW Scirocco R	200 D	'12-'15	4/1984	276/6000	258/2500	1426kg	187	5.7	-	155	187	35.3	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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



OUR CHOICE

McLaren 675LT. The 'long-tail' is the step forward we've been hoping for from McLaren's super-series cars, adding a real sense of involvement to the incredible pace that's been building since the 12C. In fact, the 675LT is so intense it might even make you question if you need a P1.



BEST OF THE REST

The Ferrari 488 GTB (left) has a stunning turbocharged engine and the chassis to exploit it. Lamborghini's Aventador offers true supercar drama, especially in Supervoce form, while the Pagani Huayra rivals it for theatre (albeit at four times the price) and was our joint 2012 Car of the Year.

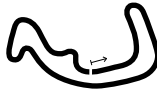
	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE Cyl/CC	BHP/RPM	Lb Ft/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING
Aston Martin Vanquish (Mk2)	203 R	£192,995	12/5935	568/6650	465/5500	1739kg	332	3.6	-	201	298	22.1	+ Much better than the DBS it succeeds, especially in 2015MY form - It's no Ferrari F12 ★★★★★
Aston Martin Vanquish S (Mk1)	110 R	'05-'07	12/5935	520/7000	425/5800	1875kg	282	4.9	10.1	200	-	-	+ Vanquish joins supercar greats - A tad intimidating at the limit ★★★★★
Aston Martin One-77	179 R	'10-'12	12/7312	750/6000	553/7600	1740kg	438	3.7	-	220+	-	-	+ The engine, the looks, the drama - Gearbox hates manoeuvring; only 77 were made ★★★★★
Audi R8 V10 Plus	217 R	£134,500	10/5204	602/8250	413/6500	1555kg	393	3.2	-	205	287	23.0	+ Timeless drivetrain, huge performance - Needs to be driven hard to really engage ★★★★★
Audi R8 V10	181 D	'10-'15	10/5204	518/8000	391/6500	1620kg	325	3.9	8.4	194	346	19.0	+ Real supercar feel - The V8 is cheaper, and still superb ★★★★★
Audi R8 V10 Plus	190 R	'13-'15	10/5204	542/8000	398/6500	1570kg	351	3.8	-	198	346	19.0	+ An R8 fit to take on the 458 and 12C - Firm ride may be too much for some ★★★★★
Audi R8 GT	169 F	'10-'12	10/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1520kg	369	3.6	-	199	-	-	+ Everything we love about the R8 - Not as hardcore as we wanted ★★★★★
Audi R8 LMX	208 R	'15	10/5204	562/8000	398/6500	1595kg	358	3.4	-	198	299	21.9	+ More of everything that makes the R8 great - S-tronic transmission not perfect ★★★★★
Bugatti Veyron 16.4	134 R	'05-'11	16/7993	1000/6000	922/2200	1950kg	521	2.8	5.8	253	596	11.4	+ Superbly engineered 4WD quad-turbo rocket - Er, lacks luggage space? ★★★★★
Bugatti Veyron Super Sport	151 R	'10-'14	16/7993	1183/6400	1106/3000	1838kg	654	2.5	-	268	539	12.2	+ The world's fastest supercar - Limited to 258mph for us mere mortals ★★★★★
Bugatti EB110	078 R	'91-'95	12/3500	552/8000	451/3750	1566kg	358	3.4	-	212	-	-	+ Superbly engineered 4WD quad-turbo rocket - It just fizzled out ★★★★★
Chevrolet Corvette ZR1	133 R	'09-'13	8/6162	638/6500	603/3800	1528kg	424	3.8	7.6	205	355	18.8	+ Huge pace and character - Take plenty of brave pills if there's rain ★★★★★
Ferrari 488 GTB	216 R	£183,964	8/3902	661/6500	561/3000	1475kg	455	3.0	-	204	260	24.8	+ Staggeringly capable - Lacks a little of the 458's heart and excitement ★★★★★
Ferrari 488 Spider	216 D	£204,400	8/3902	661/6500	561/3000	1525kg	440	3.0	-	203+	260	24.8	+ As above, but with the wind in your hair - See left ★★★★★
Ferrari 458 Italia	221 R	'09-'15	8/4497	562/9000	398/6500	1485kg	384	3.2	6.8	202+	307	20.6	+ An astounding achievement - Paddleshift only ★★★★★
Ferrari 458 Speciale	203 R	'14-'15	8/4497	597/9000	398/6000	1395kg	435	3.0	-	202+	275	23.9	+ evo Car of the Year 2014 - If you don't own a regular 458, nothing ★★★★★
Ferrari F430	163 R	'04-'10	8/4308	483/8500	343/5250	1449kg	339	4.0	-	196	-	18.6	+ Just brilliant - Didn't you read the plus point? ★★★★★
Ferrari 430 Scuderia	121 R	'07-'10	8/4308	503/8500	347/5250	1350kg	378	3.5	7.7	198	-	15.7	+ Successfully FI technology transplant - Likes to shout about it ★★★★★
Ferrari 360 Modena	163 R	'99-'04	8/3586	394/8500	275/4750	1390kg	288	4.5	9.0	183	-	17.0	+ Worthy successor to 355 - Not quite as involving as it should be ★★★★★
Ferrari 360 Challenge Stradale	068 R	'03-'04	8/3586	420/8500	275/4750	1280kg	333	4.1	-	186	-	-	+ Totally exhilarating road-racer. It's loud - It's very, very loud ★★★★★
Ferrari F355 F1 Berlinetta	163 R	'97-'99	8/3496	374/8250	268/6000	1350kg	281	4.7	-	183	-	16.7	+ Looks terrific, sounds even better - Are you kidding? ★★★★★
Ferrari F12 Berlinetta	190 R	£241,053	12/6262	730/8250	509/6000	1630kg	455	3.1	-	211	350	18.8	+ 730bhp isn't too much power for the road - Super-quick steering is an acquired taste ★★★★★
Ferrari F12tdt	217 R	£339,000	12/6262	769/8500	520/6250	1520kg	514	2.9	-	211	360	18.3	+ Alarmingly fast - Doesn't flow like a 458 Speciale ★★★★★
Ferrari 599 GTB Fiorano	101 R	'06-'12	12/5999	611/7600	448/5600	1688kg	368	3.5	7.4	205	415	15.8	+ evo Car of the Year 2006 - Banks are getting harder to rob ★★★★★
Ferrari 599 GTB	161 R	'11-'12	12/5999	661/8250	457/6500	1605kg	418	3.4	-	208	-	-	+ One of the truly great Ferraris - Er, the air isn't very good ★★★★★
Ferrari 575M Fiorano Handling Pack	200 R	'02-'06	12/5748	508/7250	434/5250	1730kg	298	4.2	9.6	202	-	12.3	+ Fiorano pack makes 575 truly great - It should have been standard ★★★★★
Ferrari 550 Maranello	169 R	'97-'02	12/5474	485/7000	415/5000	1716kg	287	4.3	10.0	199	-	12.3	+ Everything - Nothing ★★★★★
Ferrari FF	194 R	£238,697	12/6262	651/8000	504/6000	1880kg	347	3.7	-	208	360	15.4	+ Four seats and 4WD, but a proper Ferrari - Looks divide opinion ★★★★★
Ferrari 612 Scaglietti F1	090 R	'04-'11	12/5748	533/7250	434/5250	1840kg	294	4.3	9.8	199	470	13.8	+ Awesomely capable grand tourer - See above ★★★★★
Ferrari LaFerrari	203 R	'13-'15	12/6262	900/9000	664/6750	1555kg	769	3.0	-	217+	330	-	+ Perhaps the greatest Ferrari ever - Brakes lack a touch of precision on track ★★★★★
Ferrari Enzo	203 R	'02-'04	12/5999	651/7800	485/5500	1365kg	485	3.5	6.7	217+	545	-	+ Intoxicating, exploitable - Cabin detailing falls short of a Zonda or F1's ★★★★★
Ferrari F50	186 R	'96-'97	12/4699	513/8500	347/6500	1230kg	424	3.9	-	202	-	-	+ A better drivers' Ferrari than the 288, F40 or Enzo - Not better looking, though ★★★★★
Ferrari F40	199 R	'87-'92	8/2936	471/7000	426/4000	1100kg	437	4.1	-	201	-	-	+ Brutally fast - It's in the dictionary under 'turbo lag' ★★★★★
Ford GT	200 R	'04-'06	8/5409	550/6500	500/3750	1583kg	353	3.7	-	205	-	-	+ Our 2005 Car of the Year - Don't scalp yourself getting in ★★★★★
Hennessey Venom GT	180 R	£900,000	8/7000	1244/6500	1155/4000	1244kg	1016	2.5	-	270	-	-	+ 0-200mph in 14.5sec, and it handles too - Looks like an Exige ★★★★★
Honda NSX	217 R	c£140,000	6/3493	565	476	1725kg	333	2.9	-	191	-	-	+ Like a baby Porsche 918 - Lacks typical Japanese character ★★★★★
Jaguar XJ220	157 R	'92-'94	6/3498	542/7200	475/4500	1470kg	375	3.7	-	213	-	-	+ Britain's greatest supercar... - ...until McLaren built the F1 ★★★★★
Koenigsegg Agera 1	180 R	c£109m	8/5032	1124/7100	885/2700	1435kg	796	2.8	-	273	-	-	+ As fast and exciting as your body can handle - It's Veyron money ★★★★★
Koenigsegg One:1	202 R	c£2.0m	8/5065	1341/7500	1011/6000	1360kg	1002	2.9	-	273	-	-	+ The most powerful car we've ever tested - It's sold out; we couldn't afford one anyway... ★★★★★
Koenigsegg CCRX Edition	118 R	'08-'10	8/4800	1004/7000	796/5600	1280kg	797	2.8	-	250+	-	-	+ One of the world's fastest cars - Spike power delivery ★★★★★
Lamborghini Huracán LP580-2	218 R	c£160,000	10/5204	572/8000	391/6500	1389kg	418	3.4	-	199	278	23.7	+ More seductive than the 4WD Huracán - Feels like there's more to come ★★★★★
Lamborghini Huracán LP610-4	209 D	£186,760	10/5204	602/8250	413/6500	1532kg	399	3.2	-	202+	290	22.6	+ Defies the numbers; incredible point-to-point pace - Takes work to find its sweet-spot ★★★★★
Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4	180 D	'08-'13	10/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1410kg	398	3.7	-	202	325	16.0	+ Still a missile from A to B - Starting to show its age ★★★★★
Lamborghini LP570-4 Superleggera	152 R	'10-'13	10/5204	562/8000	398/6500	1340kg	426	3.5	2.2	202	325	20.6	+ Less weight and more power than original Superleggera - LP560-4 runs it very close ★★★★★
Lamborghini Gallardo	094 R	'06-'08	10/4961	513/8000	376/4250	1520kg	343	4.3	9.4	196	-	-	+ On a full-bore start it spins all four wheels. Cool - Slightly clunky e-gear ★★★★★
Lamborghini Gallardo Superleggera	104 R	'07-'08	10/4961	522/8000	376/4250	1420kg	373	3.8	-	196	-	-	+ Lighter, more agile - Grabby carbon brakes, clunky e-gear ★★★★★
Lamborghini Aventador LP700-4	194 R	£260,040	12/6498	690/8250	509/5500	1575kg	445	2.9	-	217	370	17.7	+ Most important new Lambo since the Countach - Er... expensive? ★★★★★
Lamborghini Aventador LP750-4 SV	216 R	£321,723	12/6498	740/8400	509/5500	1525kg	493	2.8	-	217+	370	17.7	+ More exciting than the standard Aventador - ISR gearbox inconsistent ★★★★★
Lamborghini Murciélago	089 D	'01-'06	12/6192	570/7500	479/5400	1650kg	351	4.0	-	205	-	-	+ Gorgeous, capable and incredibly friendly - V12 feels stressed ★★★★★
Lamborghini Murciélago LP640	093 R	'06-'11	12/6496	631/8000	487/6000	1665kg	385	3.3	-	212	-	21.3	+ Compelling old-school supercar - You'd better be on your toes ★★★★★
Lamborghini Murciélago LP670-4 SV	200 R	'09-'11	12/6496	661/8000	487/6500	1565kg	429	3.2	7.3	212	-	-	+ A supercar in its truest, wildest sense - Be prepared for stares ★★★★★
Lamborghini Diablo 6.0	019 R	'00-'02	12/5992	550/7100	457/5500	1625kg	343	3.8	-	200+	-	-	+ Best-built, best-looking Diablo of all - People's perceptions ★★★★★
Lexus LFA/LFA Nürburgring	200 R	'10-'12	10/4805	552/8700	354/6800	1480kg	379	3.7	-	202	-	-	+ Absurd and compelling supercar - Badge and price don't quite match ★★★★★
Maserati MC12	079 R	'04-'05	12/5998	621/7500	481/5500	1445kg	437	3.8	-	205	-	-	+ Rarer than an Enzo - The Ferrari's better ★★★★★
McLaren 570S	217 R	£143,250	8/3799	562/7500	443/5000	1313kg	435	3.1	-	204	258	25.5	+ A truly fun and engaging sports car - McLaren doesn't call it a supercar(!) ★★★★★
McLaren 650S	196 R	£195,250	8/3799	641/7250	500/6000	1428kg	456	3.0	-	207	275	24.2	+ Better brakes, balance and looks than 12C; more power too - Costs an extra £19k ★★★★★
McLaren 675LT	216 R	£259,500	8/3799	666/7100	516/5500	1328kg	510	2.9	-	205	275	24.2	+ Runner-up at eCoty 2015; asks questions of the P1 - Aventador price tag ★★★★★
McLaren 12C	187 R	'11-'14	8/3799	616/7500	442/3000	1434kg	435	3.1	-	207	279	24.2	+ Staggering performance, refinement - Engine noise can be grating ★★★★★
McLaren P1	205 R	'13-'15	8/3799	903/7500	664/4000	1395kg	658	2.8	-	217	194	34.0	+ Freakish breadth of ability - At its mind-bending best on track ★★★★★
McLaren P1	205 R	'14-'15	12/6064	627/7500	479/4000	1137kg	560	3.2	6.3	240+	-	19.0	+ Still the most single-minded supercar ever - There'll never be another ★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG	159 R	'10-'15	8/6208	563/6800	479/4750	1620kg	335	4.1	8.4	197	308	21.2	+ Great engine and chassis (gullwing doors too!) - Slightly tardy gearbox ★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Black Series	204 R	'13-'15	8/6208	622/7400	468/5500	1550kg	408	3.6	-	196	321	20.6	+ Stunning engine, superb body control - Be careful on less-than-smooth roads... ★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren	073 R	'04-'07	8/5439	617/6500	575/3250	1693kg	370	3.7	-	208	-	-	+ Zonda-pace, 575-style drivability - Dreadful brake feel ★★★★★
Noble M600	186 R	c£200,000	8/4439	650/6800	604/3800	1198kg	551	3.8	7.7	225	-	-	+ Spiritual successor to the Ferrari F40 - It's a bit pricey ★★★★★
Pagani Huayra	185 R	c£1m	12/5980	720/5800	737/2250	1350kg	542	3.3	-	224	-	-	+ Our joint 2012 Car of the Year - Engine isn't as nape-pricking as the Zonda's ★★★★★
Pagani Zonda 60RS	170 R	£15m	12/7291	750/6300	575/4500	1210kg	630	3.3	-	217+	-	-	+ One of the most extreme Zondas ever - One of the last Zondas ever (probably) ★★★★★
Pagani Zonda S 7.3	096 R	'02-'05	12/7291	555/5900	553/4050	1250kg	451	3.6	-	197	-	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2001 (in earlier 7.0 form) - Values have gone up a fair bit since then ★★★★★
Pagani Zonda F	186 R	'05-'06	12/7291	602/6150	575/4000	1230kg	497	3.6	-	214	-	-	+ Everything an Italian supercar ought to be - Looks a bit blingy next to a Carrera GT ★★★★★
Pagani Zonda Cinque Roadster	147 D	'09-'10	12/7291	669/6200	575/4000	1400kg	485	3.4	-	217+	-	-	+ The best Zonda ever - Doesn't come up in the classifieds

TRACK TIMES

+ = new this month. **Red** denotes the car is the fastest in its class on that track.

ANGLESEY COASTAL CIRCUIT

LOCATION Anglesey, UK
GPS 53.188372, -4.496385
LENGTH 1.55 miles



Car	Lap time	issue no.	YouTube
Radical RXC Turbo 500 (fastest coupe)	1:10.5	-	Yes
McLaren P1 (on P Zero Trofeo R tyres) (fastest supercar)	1:11.2	200	Yes
Porsche 918 Spyder	1:12.4	200	Yes
McLaren P1	1:12.6	200	Yes
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991)	1:13.6	-	Yes
Porsche 911 Turbo S (991)	1:13.6	-	Yes
Ferrari 458 Speciale	1:14.2	198	Yes
Porsche 911 Turbo (991)	1:15.2	210	Yes
Aston Martin Vantage GT12	1:16.0	214	Yes
Nissan GT-R (2014MY)	1:16.9	210	Yes
Mercedes-AMG GT S	1:17.0	210	Yes
Porsche 911 Carrera S Powerkit (991)	1:17.6	201	-
Porsche 911 Carrera (991)	1:17.8	199	Yes
Porsche Cayman (981)	1:18.9	209	-
Aston Martin N430	1:19.1	210	-
Lotus Exige S (V6)	1:19.1	209	-
SEAT Leon Cupra 280 Sub8 (fastest hot hatch)	1:19.1	212	-
BMW M4	1:19.2	199	Yes
BMW i8	1:19.4	210	-
Honda Civic Type R (FK2)	1:19.5	212	-
Renaultsport Mégane Trophy 275	1:19.6	212	-
BMW M5 Competition Pack (F10M) (fastest saloon)	1:19.7	-	Yes
Audi TTS (Mk3)	1:19.9	209	-
Audi R8 V8 (Mk1)	1:20.1	201	-
BMW M135i	1:20.4	212	-
Nissan 370Z Nismo	1:20.5	209	-
Alfa Romeo 4C	1:20.7	209	-
Mercedes-AMG S65 Coupe	1:21.4	-	Yes
VW Golf R (Mk7)	1:21.6	212	-
Peugeot RCZ R	1:22.0	209	-
Toyota GT86 TRD	1:23.7	193	-
Jota Mazda MX-5 GT (Mk3) (fastest sports car)	1:24.6	193	-

BEDFORD AUTODROME WEST CIRCUIT

LOCATION Bedfordshire, UK
GPS 52.235133, -0.474321
LENGTH 1.8 miles (track reconfigured May 2015; earlier times not comparable)



SEAT Leon Cupra 280 Ultimate Sub8 (fastest hot hatch)	1:23.1	215	-
BMW M3 (F80) (fastest saloon)	1:23.3	211	Yes
Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy-R	1:23.6	215	-
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Saloon	1:24.0	211	Yes
Honda Civic Type R (FK2)	1:24.9	215	-
VW Golf R (Mk7)	1:26.1	-	Yes
Audi RS3 Sportback (2015MY)	1:26.6	-	Yes
Ford Fiesta ST Mountune	1:29.5	213	-
Mazda MX-5 2.0i Sport (Mk4) (fastest sports car)	1:29.8	-	Yes
Toyota GT86 (fastest coupe)	1:29.9	-	Yes

BLYTON PARK OUTER CIRCUIT

LOCATION Lincolnshire, UK
GPS 53.460093, -0.688666
LENGTH 1.6 miles



Ariel Atom 3.5R (fastest sports car)	0:58.9	205	-
Radical RXC Turbo (fastest coupe)	1:00.4	205	Yes
BAC Mono	1:01.4	189	-
Porsche 911 GT2 RS (997.2) (fastest supercar)	1:01.8	204	Yes
Porsche 911 GT3 (991)	1:01.9	205	Yes
Caterham Seven 620R	1:02.1	189	-
Nissan GT-R Nismo	1:02.1	205	Yes
Mercedes SLS AMG Black Series	1:02.5	204	Yes
Pagani Huayra	1:02.5	177	-
McLaren 12C	1:02.7	187	-
Radical RXC	1:02.9	189	-
Ariel Atom 3.5 310	1:03.4	189	-
Audi R8 V10 Plus (Mk1)	1:03.4	-	Yes
Porsche Cayman GT4	1:03.6	221	Yes
Lotus Exige S (V6)	1:04.4	177	-
Porsche 911 Carrera (991)	1:05.1	177	-
Chevrolet Camaro Z/28	1:05.1	220	Yes
Porsche 911 GT3 (997)	1:05.2	-	Yes
Porsche Boxster S (981)	1:05.5	177	-
Porsche Cayman GTS (981)	1:05.5	-	Yes
Porsche Cayman S (981)	1:05.5	189	-
Caterham Seven 420R	1:05.7	220	Yes
Jaguar F-type S Convertible	1:06.5	-	Yes
Vuhi 05	1:06.5	220	Yes
Zenos E10 S	1:06.6	214	-
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Black Series	1:06.9	177	-
Renaultsport Mégane Z75 Trophy-R (fastest hot hatch)	1:07.3	205	Yes
SEAT Leon Cupra 280 Sub8	1:07.6	220	Yes
BMW M135i	1:07.7	177	-
Porsche Cayman (981)	1:07.7	-	Yes
BMW M235i	1:08.7	-	Yes
Mini John Cooper Works GP (R56)	1:08.7	181	-
Renaultsport Mégane R26R	1:08.9	181	-
Ford Focus RS500	1:09.4	181	-
VW Golf GTI Performance Pack (Mk7)	1:10.3	192	-
Toyota GT86	1:12.8	177	-



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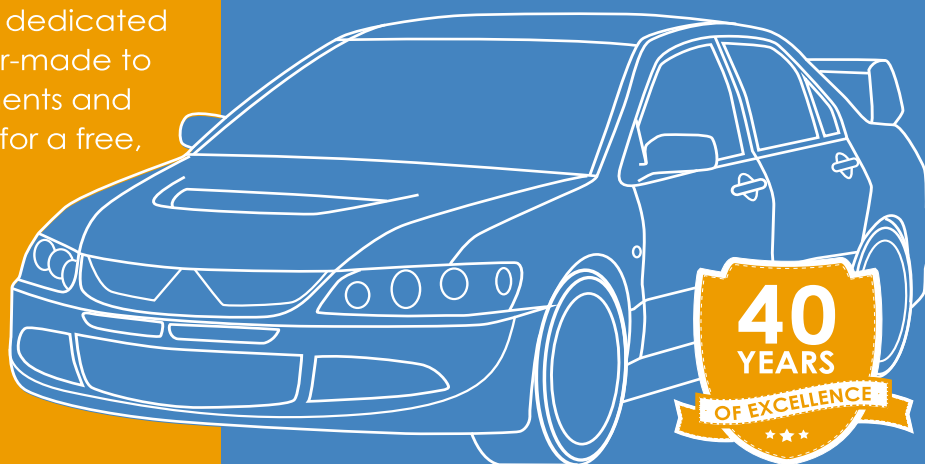
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Art of speed



McLaren P1 exhaust

by RICHARD LANE | PHOTOGRAPHY by DEAN SMITH

GOOD PHOTO, ISN'T IT? DICKIE MEADEN, WHO'D somehow found space in his diary to fly out to Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi and conduct *evo's* first drive of the mighty McLaren P1, may have been shifting up a gear, but it's more likely that a fleeting lift of the throttle to balance the chassis mid-slide was the impetus for a moment of rich-running. And suddenly you're sideways in a £866,000 blowtorch.

But maybe Meaden did neither. Trawl through online P1 footage and you'll notice that when it's not forming clouds or firing hot globules of Pirelli Trofeo R at tracking cars, it's spitting flames. In one extraordinary clip at the end of the video that accompanies this photo, it's as if someone has lit a firework, the exhaust ejecting an uninterrupted stream of fire as the car bolts flat-out down the length of an entire straight. Drive it as you should, then, and the McLaren P1 spends more of its time 'lit' than not.

Unbolt the clamshell at the back of the carbon body and you'll see why. The titanium mouth of the exhaust, gaping and central, is within touching distance of a 3799cc V8 flanked by turbos operating at 980C and 1.4bar; the tubing exits each of the engine's cylinder heads separately before merging and making arrow-straight for the open-worked rear of the car.

The flame is the combined result of the enormous temperatures generated in the pursuit of the combustion engine's 727bhp and this truncated respiratory tract. Were the exhaust longer, the gases would have cooled further before entering the warm air of the Persian Gulf and instead oxidised with a yellow flame. On balance, sky blue is probably more in keeping with the P1's super-high-tech vibe.

There is, of course, more to the P1's pipe than histrionics. It's built in the style of a Formula 1 exhaust, and while that might not mean that McLaren will subtly lengthen it to give you a tad more torque on a trackday at Cadwell Park, it is made from Inconel, a nickel-chromium-molybdenum superalloy that's almost indestructible. Furthermore, the exit is so broad that McLaren puts it to good use, matching it to the angle of the rear of car and so creating an area of low pressure. When you've told the press that your new hypercar will develop 600kg of downforce at 160mph, every little helps.

And yet despite all this, the P1's exhaust was actually blinged down. The initial concept revealed at the Paris motor show in 2013 used gold-leaf heat shielding (McLaren allegedly ordered too many rolls from NASA for the F1 road cars), but this was ditched for the production version. We're sure it's nothing MSO couldn't reinstate – for a fee, naturally. ☒

evo NEXT MONTH
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📍 Caterham racing 📍 Volkswagen Golf GTI Clubsport 📍 BMW M2 in the UK

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