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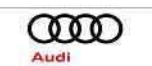
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# Ed speak

**FINALLY, THE ANSWER TO A QUESTION THAT** has cropped up at least twice a month here at **evo** since, oh, I don't know, when we started back in 1998: who is going to buy Lotus?

We've speculated many a time within these pages about the company's future, what it should build and who should take ownership. Some stories have resulted in strongly worded correspondences or lengthy telephone conversations. But as of 1 July, current owners DRB-HICOM will have sold a 51.1 per cent stake in the British car company to Geely, the Chinese owner of Volvo and the London Taxi Company. Not natural bedfellows, I grant you, but Volvo seems to be doing okay.

There was always a sense that DRB-HICOM didn't really know what to do with the maker of the Elise and Exige. There's no denying it supported Lotus through thick and thin (and Dany Bahar), but there appeared to be a distinct lack of strategy.

There has been, however, a sense of stability at Hethel over the last three years. Much of this I put down to current CEO Jean-Marc Gales (there's been no confirmation he will stay in his role). To many, he appears to have done little but launch endless limited-run Elises and Exiges and mothball half of the production facilities. But his strategy of reducing costs, eradicating waste and streamlining production has paid off with this sale. And while the endless specials grated with some, they all sold, and for a profit, too. Lotus also returned to the US under Gales' stewardship.

What now? A new Elise in 2020 if Gales stays and continues with his strategy and vision, but beyond that? The Evora and Exige will need replacing, and I'm sure there are corners of the motoring world that want to see a new Esprit, but that may never happen.

For now, I'm just happy Lotus appears to have a future, one of investment and new models that will focus on the thrill of driving. And that's got to be a good thing, hasn't it? **X**

*Stuart Gallagher, Editor* ————— @stuartg917

*'While the endless specials grated with some people, they all sold, and for a profit, too'*

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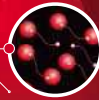
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# briefing



## BACK: BMW'S BIG HITTER

by ANTONY INGRAM &  
STUART GALLAGHER

A new concept car  
paves the way for the  
return of the 8-series –  
and a hot M8, too

**I**T'S ALL CHANGE IN THE WORLD OF BMW'S big coupes. Out goes the 6-series, and most likely the svelte, four-door Gran Coupe version too, and in comes the new 8-series – a badge not seen since 1999, when the original E31 went off sale following a decade of taking on Porsche's 928 and 996-gen 911 and Jaguar's XJS and XKR models.

The new **Concept 8-series (1)** was revealed at the Concorso d'Eleganza at Villa d'Este in May, and 24 hours later a prototype of the forthcoming M8 completed a lap of the Nürburgring Nordschleife as

part of BMW's M Festival celebrations.

The concept is a production car in all but details such as the wing mirrors, light units and bumper designs. What you see on these pages is pretty much the finished car in terms of overall shape, design direction and proportions. The 8-series and M8 are set for production in 2018, with the latter due to be shown in production form when a new GTE race car (based on the road car) makes its debut at the Daytona 24 Hours in January that year, before BMW returns to Le Mans in June.



1



Based on an evolution of the 5- and 7-series' CLAR platform, the new 8 could theoretically be powered by anything from a 2-litre four-pot to a 6.6-litre twin-turbo V12. In reality, expect a range of six- and eight-cylinder petrol and diesel engines, including a hybrid, and a flagship V12. For the M8, the forthcoming M5's twin-turbo V8 will be used, with an output expected to be greater than the M5's 610bhp. That car's switchable 4WD system, which allows drivers to select rear-wheel drive via the car's driving modes, will also feature.

BMW's new 2+2 coupe will return the marque to a segment it hasn't been represented in for nearly 20

years – and since the original 8-series left the price lists, the competition has become stronger. Mercedes' S-class Coupe offers the luxury and performance the BMW will need to match; Aston Martin's DB11 the desire. And, of course, there's the Porsche 911, which is morphing more into a GT with each iteration.

What, then, does this mean for the 6-series, the two-door 2+2 that has been a staple of the BMW lineup for more than 40 years (bar a small hiatus)? It won't disappear completely, although we're not sure what 6-series purists will make of the name appearing on the back of the 5-series GT replacement...

IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THIS magazine, we didn't pay the Volkswagen Golf GTI a great deal of attention. And there was a very good reason for that: it was woeful. VW's fourth-generation Golf might have taken a step up in perceived quality compared to its predecessor, but until the turbocharged 1.8-litre version arrived, Volkswagen had the cheek to offer the GTI solely with a 2-litre naturally aspirated motor wheezing out only 7bhp more than the 108bhp of a Mk1 GTI 1.6 of 1976.

As such, it was down to 2001's Lupo GTI to hold up Volkswagen's GTI honour until the Mk5 GTI arrived. Small, pugnacious and punchy, it



“  
Since the original 8-series left the price lists, the competition has become stronger  
”

3



by ANTONY INGRAM &  
STUART GALLAGHER

**Left:** inside, the Up GTI will get the usual hallmarks of a hot VW, including the familiar 'Clark' plaid upholstery



still holds plenty of appeal today – as evidenced by the price you'll pay for even a ropery example. Why it's taken this long for VW to finally reveal a successor based on the Up, in the shape of the new **Up GTI (2)**, is beyond us. Better late than never.

Recently unveiled at the annual Wörtherseetreffen show in Austria, the new Up GTI packs a more heavily boosted version of the 1-litre TSI three-cylinder found in the quickest existing Up. Power is quoted as 113bhp with a healthy 147lb ft of torque to help it along. That should allow it to match the Lupo's performance, with greater flexibility on the road, and at 997kg it's only

22kg heavier than its predecessor.

We've driven a prototype – see overleaf – and the initial signs are good. The finished product is due to arrive in showrooms early in 2018, but it won't be cheap – VW is aiming for a price of below 20,000 euros in Europe, which means a figure of around £17,000 here.

In contrast, £30,995 for the new **316bhp Honda Civic Type R** seems something of a bargain. We covered the new Type R in detail in issue 234 – and we drive it for the first time next month – but Honda has now confirmed pricing. That outlay nets you the basic model, while the GT version – with satnav, LED fog lights



by ANTONY INGRAM & STUART GALLAGHER

5



and dual-zone climate control – comes in at £1000 more.

Someone is clearly running riot with the industry's pricing gun, as we now also know the figures for **Mercedes-AMG's E63 4Matic+ Estate (3)** and **Audi's RS5 (4)**. The 444bhp Audi starts at £62,900, while AMG's 563bhp offering begins at £81,130, or roughly £2000 more than the saloon. AMG will let you up the ante with the E63 S (£90,490) or the E63 S Edition 1 – £108,780 with Selenite Grey Magno matt paintwork, carbonfibre trim and yellow stitching inside the cabin. You can give your bank manager more vivid nightmares by selecting carbon-ceramic brakes (£6995) and the AMG performance exhaust (£1000).

If you're yet to sign on the dotted line for a **Ford Focus RS (5)**, there is now a new option pack for you to select. The imaginatively named 'Option Pack' brings Nitrous Blue paint with a matt black roof, rear spoiler and mirrors, and black 19in forged alloy wheels too,

but the most significant change is the addition of a Quaife LSD to the front axle. The thinking is that it should increase the car's cornering speed and traction, and mated to the existing four-wheel drive and torque vectoring, the already ferocious pace of a Focus RS should become borderline feral.

Finally, Nissan plans to expand its tuning arm, **Nismo (6)**. While there is a risk that this expansion will dilute the exotic appeal of Nissan's most extreme road and race cars, the new Nismo Cars Business Department is aiming to make the brand's models more consistent. Think less badge-engineering, more performance. The flip-side is that more Nissans will get the Nismo treatment, so performance models such as the GT-R and 370Z and oddities such as the Juke and Patrol Nismo may be joined by Micras and Pulsars. A Micra Nismo to rival the upcoming Toyota Yaris GRMN? We're seeing March Super Turbo versus Toyota Starlet Glanza all over again...

## VW Up GTI prototype drive

By today's hot-hatch standards, 113bhp and 0-62mph in 8.8 seconds sounds pretty snooze-worthy. But don't dismiss the new Up GTI on the stats alone – this little car adds up to more than the sum of its parts.

**evo** was invited to drive a pre-production version at a test session with Volkswagen board members in South Africa, and we came away smiling.

Let's start with the engine. By adding a high-pressure turbo to the little three-cylinder motor and upping the compression ratio, throttle response is surprisingly sharp. The noise piped through the speakers via a sound actuator is perky if not throaty, but it's augmented by an audible *whoosh* from that turbo.

Second gear is a bit too long for our liking (cue engineers shrugging

shoulders, sighing and cursing CO2 requirements), but the six-speed manual gearbox is slick enough, if a little long in the throw.

Although our test was on long, straight roads, the odd bend revealed the Up's steering to be fairly weighty and reasonably direct, thanks to parts of the rack having been taken from the Polo. The uprated brakes also come from the Up's bigger brother.

Surprisingly, given the car's dinky dimensions, a ride-height drop of 15mm and sports suspension, the little GTI rode very well over some pretty decrepit roads. It felt mature, much in the way a Golf GTI does. And while it may not have the ultimate poise of the greatest hot hatches, it has the potential to brighten up even the most mundane of journeys.

**Steve Fowler**



6





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TECH

# AMG Project One powertrain



Mercedes' quest to build a road-going F1 car is coming to fruition, as the recent reveal of its hybrid powertrain demonstrates by David Vivian

**M**ERCEDES' hotly anticipated F1-based hypercar took a step closer to reality at the Nürburgring 24 Hours race in May. Celebrating its 50th birthday, AMG's 'gift' to the assembled media was a close-up encounter with the hybrid powertrain of its 275-off, 2.3million-euro, 1000bhp-plus Formula 1 car for the road. It wasn't disappointing.

The car is named 'Project One' for the time being, and AMG was keen to clarify that everything to the rear of where the seats will

go isn't 'inspired' by F1, doesn't take specific elements from F1 and shouldn't be referred to as 'F1 transfer'. It is F1 in the *literal* sense. With a few alterations to ensure an engine rebuild isn't required every time you pop to the shops, it's the very same EQ Power+ unit that has dominated the championship for the past three years. And at the front? Hefty additional tug delivered and intelligently vectored by an electric motor in each wheel.

We'll come to that. Let's start with the game-changer at the back. As with the current Mercedes F1



car, the rear wheels are driven by a turbocharged 1.6-litre petrol V6 with direct injection and, for the sake of longevity, an 11,000rpm red line. That's eased down from the 13,500rpm Lewis has to play with but still vaguely nuts compared with anything even the driver of the most hyperactive hypercar is used to.

A strategically tamed motor from the latest, W08 F1 car, then? Not exactly. AMG calls it a 'bespoke unit' that marries elements from W06, W07 and W08. The engineering is exactly the same, though. Air is fed into the engine by a combined mechanical and electrically driven turbocharging system, with the exhaust turbine located near the exhaust and the compressor near the roof-mounted air intake. They're joined by a long shaft, to which is connected an 80kW (107bhp) electric motor. This primes the turbocharger to eliminate lag and, according to AMG, gifts the V6 faster responses than a naturally aspirated V8. The electric motor also recovers waste exhaust energy that can then be used to replenish the hybrid battery block or directly drive the MGU-K.

MGU-K? It stands for Motor Generator Unit Kinetic – another electric motor positioned on the side of the crankcase and directly connected to the crankshaft. It can either drive the crankshaft, adding 120kW (161bhp) to the power tally, or be driven by it. AMG claims that the combined petrol-electric elements working as a complete unit achieve an unprecedented thermal efficiency of around 40 per cent against a norm of 30-32 per cent. It's as close as you'll get to guilt-free 1000bhp-plus motoring.

Sitting behind the engine is an all-new eight-speed single-clutch transmission and, above that, the exhaust system, which unlike the F1 version has a silencer and catalytic converter but retains the single tailpipe.

Project One has four-wheel drive thanks to the two additional electric motors at the front axle, each delivering 120kW (161bhp) – and each with a tiny gearbox to permit torque vectoring. The

battery cells, their configuration, connectors and direct-cell liquid cooling are all a direct lift from F1. The 800-volt system (contained in two battery housings) has four times the capacity used in F1. The higher voltage level reduces voltage losses, not least in the cables. It also allows significantly shorter charging times with a constant current level.

The Project One's driving programs will even have an all-electric mode, with just the front axle driven, giving a range of up to 25km (15 miles). The most extreme mode, Dynamic, will apparently adopt settings used in F1 to achieve the best possible lap times in qualifying. It wasn't strictly up for discussion on this 'powertrain reveal', but the suspension system will use race-car-style horizontally packaged pushrod dampers, and there will be a carbon tub, carbon-ceramic brakes and, of course, active aero.

Perhaps most remarkably of all, AMG reckons Project One owners will be able to drive their cars for 50,000km (31,000 miles), rather than for a brisk trip around the houses in Monaco, before the first revision is needed. 'Revision' is a polite word for rebuild, and it will entail removing the engine and transmission and taking them apart to see what's been going on, just like with a race car. But given the evidence that hypercars tend to accumulate quickly covered miles at a leisurely rate, the 50,000km day can probably be put off for a couple of years at least.

No prototypes have been built yet – Project One is still undergoing fine-tuning in simulation phase. But there were some intriguing parting comments from our hosts. Project One will have better traction than a Mercedes F1 car. 'Good for perfect acceleration and record lap times, especially the Nordschleife,' says Mercedes.

As we write this, the car's interior styling is being finalised, and a Project One very close to the finished article will be unveiled at the Frankfurt motor show in September. Deliveries are scheduled to begin in 2019.

## AMG BOSS TOBIAS MOERS ON PROJECT ONE AND HYBRIDS



'Yes, we are the first to make Formula 1 technology road-worthy. Project One redefines the boundaries of what is technically possible. It's the most sophisticated and highly successful technology that has secured three Drivers' and Constructors' world championships in a row.

'There were no benchmarks. Should we do a hypercar like the others, with a V8 or V10? No. Something technologically more challenging. Something more sophisticated. We're not chasing top speed. Acceleration? Maybe that's a different story. Lap times, yes.

'We're going to build 275 but have had 1000 enquiries. Lewis will have one. Project One is a halo car. It points to future AMG hybrid powertrains. There is going to be a change. Fifty years [old] is a perfect situation for us now. We have very successful cars, but we are responsible for having a successful future as well. So there will be electrified powertrains. It's a new era. And it's always best to start a new era with a halo car. People associate hybrid cars with the idea that performance is over. That's not the truth. Project One is our door-opener. At the Geneva motor show we showed the GT Concept with an electrified powertrain. This is our future.

'We'll start approval testing in October or November. We're on track. All we want to achieve within the timing now is to install a new dyno to test the whole powertrain. Project One is still in the digital phase with simulations. But we do have a mule with the engine.'

“  
*Everything to  
the rear of where  
the seats will go  
isn't 'inspired' by  
F1; it is F1 in the  
literal sense*  
”

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

# The Widowmaker's return

For the 991-generation 911, Porsche has skipped the GT2 and gone straight to the GT2 RS. We hitch a ride with Andreas Preuninger, head of Porsche's GT division  
by Kyle Fortune







**Left and above:** GT3 RS body, with a few tell-tale mods, cloaks GT2 RS hardware. Interior is all familiar 911, but with lightweight fixed-back buckets and roll-cage. Preuninger (blue shirt) talks us through changes

“  
The cabin is filled with a melodious note reminiscent of a 930 Turbo’s  
”



**Y**ES, THE GT2 RS IS happening. Porsche's worst-kept secret since the last one is out, and we've called shotgun on a development ride with GT division boss Andreas Preuninger.

Physically, the prototype is a GT3 RS under a black wrap, converted by Preuninger's team to GT2 RS technical specification. They're extremely cagey about details, as the model won't be homologated until the first pre-series cars start running off the line, and that's still a few weeks away.

What they will tell us is that it has a 3.8-litre engine from the Turbo S with water-spray intercoolers fed by a 5-litre tank, plus a bespoke exhaust and revised internals. Outputs will be 'more than 650bhp and 750Nm [553lb ft]'. In true GT2

RS fashion, it's not unreasonable to expect that to be quite a bit more.

Mighty then, but this is a GT2 RS, and that's what buyers expect. It's also, says Preuninger, something of a riposte to those saying the GT division's focus on outright speed has been lost. Expect Walter Röhrl to put in a ludicrously quick Nürburgring time (the rose-jointed suspension is essentially a 911 Cup setup). Preuninger promises that in a straight line it will beat all its internal competition, which means 0-62mph in 2.9sec or less. With rear-wheel drive (and rear-wheel steer) the limiting factor is traction, even with bespoke 325/30 ZR21 rear Michelin Cup 2 tyres. Above 62mph it'll monster the clock, reaching 124mph in under 9 seconds and going on to over 210mph.

Standard PDK helps; Preuninger says it's the only option, not just because it's faster, but to cope with the torque. It also allows the use of the electronically controlled diff with 0-100 per cent locking.

Extensive weight loss sees the RS usefully under 1500kg, and buyers can do their bit by dropping comms and air con, though few will. An optional Weissach pack removes an extra 30kg via a carbon roof (replacing the standard magnesium one), carbon elements in the suspension, a titanium roll cage and magnesium wheels, behind which ceramic brakes are standard.

Visually it'll be a riot: bespoke vanes on the front wing-top outlets, new intakes, a huge rear diffuser and plenty of carbonfibre. Downforce levels will be much the

same as the GT3 RS's, though it'll look even more overt.

We're on roads Andreas knows well. That it's quick is no surprise, but its acceleration is 918 Spyder in its ferocity. The ride is remarkable, too, though Weissach's smooth tarmac is rather flattering. An autobahn run underlines brutal in-gear pace, while the cabin is filled with a melodious note vaguely reminiscent of a 930 Turbo's.

Preuninger raves about the GT2 RS's agility and poise, combined with the effortlessness of the power. He also says this prototype is only about 80-90 per cent there. Final development will bring more of everything. From where I'm sitting that's genuinely difficult to comprehend. But then that's exactly how the GT2 RS should be...



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# 2017 evo track evenings

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



Miss out on **evo's** first track evening of 2017? Not to worry, as there are plenty more dates to come – see opposite for details.

May's event, held at Rockingham, saw an eclectic band of cars lapping the International Super Sports car circuit – the same 1.94-mile layout used by the BTCC – allowing those who had paid their £131 entry fee to experience the seven-degree banking and run on one of the UK's fastest circuits. Join us next time.







Join the **evo** team on track at our 2017 track evenings at **Rockingham** and **Bedford Autodrome**. For more information, visit [www.evo.co.uk](http://www.evo.co.uk)

**evo**

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Friday 18 August, 5pm

**Bedford Autodrome**  
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TECH

## Aftermarket suspension

As factory suspension setups become ever more sophisticated, does the aftermarket still offer a plug 'n' play option?

by Brett Fraser

**U**NLESS YOU'RE a professional chassis engineer, there's a strong argument for leaving your car's suspension well alone: a large team of experts spent tens of thousands of hours fine-tuning the ride and handling to be just-so, therefore the chances of you improving upon all their hard work are, well, slim.

However, the big names in aftermarket dampers – Koni, Bilstein, KW, Öhlins, etc – create products that are developed by professional chassis engineers who have honed their skills in motorsport and have strong ties to the types of car makers that find favour in *evo* (KW, for instance, supplied the coilovers for BMW's extreme M4 GTS). This is why, despite the evermore sophisticated nature of dampers fitted to cars by their makers, the aftermarket continues to thrive, with customers prepared to trade production-car compromise (even on some very

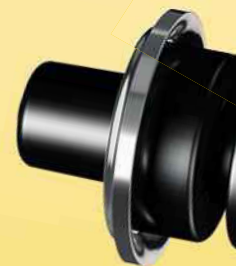
high-performance models) for a sharper focus in extreme conditions on road and track.

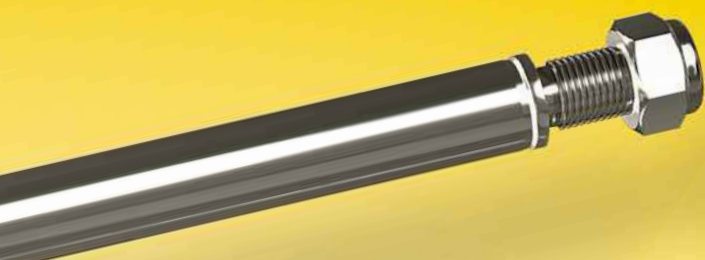
While in some ways it was ever thus, the aftermarket has had to evolve quickly to mirror recent changes in the high-performance market. A decade or so ago, electronically controlled multi-stage dampers were still something of a novelty; these days you'll find them on top-end hot hatches. So the latest aftermarket offerings provide a similar adaptive damping capability for cars that don't have it as standard, and for those cars that do they provide coil-over-damper units (coilovers) that plug into the existing electronics and retain the full functionality of the original system.

KW and Bilstein, for example, have aftermarket adaptive damper setups, based on a coilover configuration. (Öhlins, meanwhile, has been developing electronically controlled suspension technologies

– CES, or Continuously controlled Electronic Suspension – for OEMs since the 1980s.) Bilstein calls its direct replacement adaptive damping system DampTronic, and it's compatible with certain Porsches, BMWs, Mercedes and a handful of others. KW's system is known as DDC (Dynamic Damping Control) Plug & Play, and for the moment is available for just a few BMW and Volkswagen models. Given how sensitive many modern whole-car electronic management systems are to outside interference, the fact that these replacement units can simply slot into the place of the originals is testament to the close relationship between some car makers and aftermarket suppliers.

The list of cars for which adaptive damping can be added where it isn't present from the factory isn't enormous yet, as the kits have to be tailored specially for individual cars and it's a complex process, but on it you will find Audis, BMWs,





“  
*You can store up to five customised settings – one for your daily commute, perhaps, another for a lap of the Ring...*  
 ”

Porsches, VWs, Mercs and the Range Rover Evoque. The KW DDC ECU system provides three settings accessible via a single button on the dashboard – Comfort (when the button illuminates blue), Sport (purple) and Sport+ (red). Bilstein's Ridecontrol system offers the choice of Comfort or Sport, again courtesy of a fascia-mounted button.

Both these German rivals also provide the dedicated chassis fettle the option of wireless control of the damper settings through an app on your smartphone or tablet – KW's system works only on iOS devices, while Bilstein's iRC module is also Android compatible. Both systems provide the regular array of modes (Comfort, Sport, etc), but they then allow you to fine-tune damping rates by small percentage points at a time and on individual axles, as well as setting the ride heights for specific conditions. You can also store up to five personal

customised settings – one for your daily commute, perhaps, another for a lap of the Ring...

Öhlins has focused its aftermarket attentions on further developing 'regular' coilover technology and claims the results, in terms of damper reaction times and overall chassis performance, are superior to what can be achieved with electronically controlled systems. The Swedish company's Road & Track range features what it calls a Dual Flow Valve (DFV), whereby the damper reacts as swiftly during the rebound phase as it does under compression. This means that the wheel stays in better contact with the road surface after, say, hitting a sharp bump that would otherwise bounce it off the deck.

The advantages of DFV, says Öhlins, are manifold. Without sacrificing ride comfort, your car can run with far stiffer springs – in

the case of the Porsche 911 GT3 RS, twice as stiff as standard – reducing squat, dive and roll, and keeping the tyres in better contact with the road surface, while improving steering response and stability, too. Compared with a PASM-equipped 997-generation GT3 RS on a 1min 30sec track, reckons Öhlins, its Road & Track setup gives an advantage of 1.6 to 1.8sec per lap, depending on the driver. A boost in confidence for less experienced track drivers is also claimed.

Adjustability remains a key draw of aftermarket dampers. KW's three-way coilover kit for the BMW M2 amply illustrates this point, with 16 settings for rebound control, 14 for high-speed compression (straight-line driving and very quick corners), and six for low-speed compression (as you turn into sharper bends). Working out the ideal setup might take you a while...



# We can see you...

Hot Renault Sport Mégane and 592bhp Jaguar XE SV Project 8 revealed. Kind of.  
by Stuart Gallagher

**J**AGUAR AND RENAULT HAVE turned to the camouflage wrap this month to 'reveal' the first details of new performance cars.

For Jaguar, this meant asking our friends at Mission Motorsport to apply a wrap to its forthcoming XE SV Project 8. Produced by the same team that brought us the F-type-based Project 7, Project 8 will be the most powerful road-legal Jaguar in history, with a 5-litre supercharged V8 producing 592bhp. It will also have four-wheel drive.

Despite the best efforts of the camo, it's clear from the images that the base XE has undergone some serious architecture redesign. There's a considerably wider rear track, and we're led to believe that

we can expect a model built in the spirit of BMW's M4 GTS.

Only 300 examples will be hand-assembled at the SVO Technical Centre in Coventry, and the car will make its debut at the Goodwood Festival of Speed at the end of June. It will go on sale later this year.

Renault has also invested in a roll of camo-wrap, taking to the streets of Monaco to give us a glimpse of the new Renault Sport Mégane. Set to make its full debut at the Frankfurt motor show in September, the new model will be available with a manual or double-clutch gearbox.

There are no other details so far, although we know that Renault has enlisted works F1 driver Nico Hülkenberg to help develop the car.



## WATCHES: FORMULA 1 PARTNERS



**Bell & Ross BR 03-94 RS17**

**Price:** £4800  
**From:** bellross.com

To mark its second year as a backer of the Renault Sport Formula 1 team, Bell & Ross has launched this limited-edition-of-500 model. It has the familiar B&R instrument-inspired case, here in matt black ceramic and measuring 42mm across. Inside are an automatic movement and a carbonfibre dial, while yellow highlights, including an anodised aluminium start/stop button for the chronograph, reinforce the link to the French racing team.



**Richard Mille RM 50-03**

**Price:** £996,500  
**From:** richardmille.com

McLaren sponsor Richard Mille claims this is the lightest mechanical chronograph ever. Its 44.5mm case, created with help from McLaren Applied Technology, is machined from 600 layers of Thin Ply Technology carbon impregnated with a resin containing graphene – a nanomaterial six times lighter than steel but 200 times stronger. Add a lightweight movement and the whole caboodle weighs just 38g. But it also costs more than a P1 did new...



**Edox Chronorally Sauber F1 Team**

**Price:** CHF 1590 (c£1390)  
**From:** edox.ch

This watch from Sauber partner Edox features smatterings of the Swiss team's signature blue colour, while inside its 48mm titanium case is a carbonfibre dial and a quartz movement with a 'split seconds' function. This means two chronograph seconds hands run together, one superimposed over the other, but one can be stopped independently to allow an elapsed time (a lap time, say) to be accurately observed while the other hand continues timing.

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## FIA World RX of Belgium

**T**IMMY HANSEN PUT IN WHAT HE called 'possibly the best laps I have ever made in my racing career' in the final race at the Belgian round of the FIA World Rallycross Championship in May. However, after Hansen's Peugeot 208 picked up a puncture, Johan Kristoffersson sneaked his VW Polo ahead as Hansen emerged from a last-lap joker – an extra section of track that adds two or three seconds to a lap time and must be completed once during the race.

Hansen had beaten fellow Swede Kristoffersson in the first semi-final, getting the 'holeshot' (i.e. he was

first into the opening corner) in an intense battle that saw nine-time WRC champ Sébastien Loeb forced into the barriers, ruling him out of the final.

It was an even worse day for Timmy's brother Kevin, who suffered a huge accident in the third qualifying round, rolling twice following an altercation with a tyre barrier at a chicane. Kevin climbed out unaided but sore, though the damage to his Peugeot was too severe to repair on-site.

Mattias Ekström finished fourth in the final in his Audi S1, which was enough for him to retain a slim championship lead over Kristoffersson.



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## Error of judgment?

Just read Steve Sutcliffe's review of the Ford GT (**evo** 236). Instead of celebrating 'the thrill of driving', which Sutcliffe admits the car has in spades, he derides its lack of grand touring qualities. When did **evo** decide that a car like this needs to be suitable for every driving occasion?

Other **evo** writers have lamented that supercars have lost their madness; some have derided recent McLarens for being too tidy. Then a crazy supercar comes along and you hand it to a writer who wants a jack of all trades.



The whole premise of 'one car for all occasions' is ridiculous in this category. Any owner of a Ford GT doubtless owns other cars for everyday trips. The point of a car like this is the experience, the drama, the speed. In a brilliant stroke, Ford has created a car that makes Lamborghinis look visually conservative and shows Ferrari what racing technology in a supercar really means. And you let Steve get 'stuffy British motorist' on it. It's depressing.

Perhaps you should start a new mag called *VW GTIs and Similar*. Your 'thrill of driving' card has clearly long since expired.

**Chris Edgett**

*I like 'mad' cars more than most, Chris. But I was simply surprised by how rough and not very ready the Ford GT was on the road. And it is, after all, supposed to be a road car. If you wanted a properly mad, pure track car then you'd be much better off spending \$450k on a second-hand GT3 racing car and a trailer.*

*Don't get me wrong, I found the GT to be a very engaging car indeed on a track. But overall it just wasn't as good as I expected, or wanted, it to be, and I was far from alone in thinking this on the launch event. – SS*

## Back to basics

What a fantastic read 'The Anatomy of a Group B Car' was (**evo** 235). It brought back the fondest of memories and – I'll be honest – a tear to the eye, too. Insane fuels, huge power in unsafe cars, the absolute rawness of the racing – just reading about it will make the hairs stand up on the neck of anyone who was watching rallying at that time.

In an era when it's all about safety (F1 is now one of the duller racing events and the Isle of Man TT is getting so many bad reports each year that we all know it'll be closed down at some point in the future) to read of what we used to watch, I have to admit I miss it.



It's the same with today's supercars. They may be fast with huge horsepower, but they're so full of technical advances that do so much for us. Weren't the old days better? You ask petrolheads which cars stir the soul and it's models like the Ferrari F40, Countach, Pug T16 and Lancia Delta that they'll namecheck, not the latest Golf R!

Sometimes we hark back to the old days because we want that rawness, that 'on the edge' feeling of one man, four wheels and an engine. We don't want stability control, launch control and ABS interfering. Hence why we are



## LETTER OF THE MONTH

# The perfect Porsche

**THERE ARE RUMOURS THAT A 'TOURING PACKAGE' WILL** soon be introduced for the new Porsche 911 GT3. It is said to include a manual gearbox and exclude the rear wing. Apparently the Porsche configurator in Germany briefly listed it as an option and there have even been spyshots of a GT3 without a wing – or could that be a new 911 R?

I hope that such a package makes it to fruition, as it is exactly what I would spec. Judging by the success and desirability of the 911 R and the demand for that model, there would be no shortage of customers – true purist drivers – thinking the same.

Rear seats would be a great option to have with Touring spec too, as it would be the ultimate if you could do the school run, commute to work, blitz the **evo** Triangle on the weekend and occasionally keep up with the track monkeys at Castle Combe.

Sounds like the perfect car. A car that does everything and which you could literally use as a daily. Although I'm not sure doing 12,000 miles a year would do much for its value...

Then again, if I had one, I would never sell it.

**K Li**

## The Letter of the Month wins an Aviator watch

The writer of this month's star letter receives an Aviator Airacobra P45 Chrono. Inspired by the pilots' watches of the 1940s, it has a 45mm case, a Swiss-made quartz movement, and SuperLuminova indexes for outstanding legibility.



Peter Jackson  
THE JEWELLER



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## INBOX



all looking to TVR to do something special again. Here's hoping that it can bring back that rawness and visceral feeling that attracted us to fast cars in the first place.

**Mark Dodd**

## Red H at the Green Hell

As someone recently inaugurated to the Nürburgring Nordschleife, I was deeply impressed by the immense driver courage and commitment on display during the setting of the 7min 43sec front-wheel-drive lap record with the forthcoming Honda Civic Type R [pictured above].

However, as a serial Type R owner, I am less impressed with Honda itself. The original Type R ethos was one of lightweight purity, and scorching pace from an outgunned engine. There is no Nordschleife time for the DC2! But yet again, in the name of Ring times, the new machine has more weight, more rubber, more power...

Please, Honda, progress lies in the opposite direction. Let drivers, not marketers, write the legend's next chapter.

**Simon Chong, Auckland, New Zealand**

## Super TED

Rob Davis raised an interesting and very valid point on the approach to comparing acceleration figures (Inbox, **evo** 236). However, I don't feel that his proposed methods would give tangible results that we can all relate to.

I would like to propose a more realistic real-world comparison, and it's one that readers of this great magazine's forerunner will recall.

Back in the *Performance Car* days you did the TED test – Time Exposed to Danger – which measure the time a car

spent on the wrong side of the road when overtaking a truck travelling at a constant speed. Not only did it give a decent comparison between the cars you were testing, but it gave us something easy to understand and compare with our own choices of transport, irrespective of whether we drove a Ferrari or a Fiesta.

Bring TED back!

**Matt Crofts**

## Sound affects

I did it. I took the plunge. I bought the best-sounding drivers' car that I could afford. I did the man maths and told the family that the car we now 'need' is a Mini John Cooper Works.

It's a simple, all-petrol car, and while its pops and crackles may be engineered-in, it's as close as I can get to exotica.

I had to do it now, before it all goes silent in this new Tesla world that quietly but surely grows around us petrolheads.

Motoring is changing at an ever-faster pace and that car you've promised yourself you'll buy one day can no longer wait – so just do it!

**Carlos Carneiro**

## More £50k garages

Loved the £50,000 garage article (Market Analysis, **evo** 235). It's a question all of us who live in the real world have surely asked ourselves. My real £50k garage is as follows.

BMW 320d for all the boring stuff. Cost: £10,000.

A Porsche (987) Cayman S Sport [above] is my daily driver and more recently has been enjoyed on road trips and **evo**, Castle Combe and Goodwood trackdays. It cost £31,000 when I bought it in 2010.

Finally, there's a Caterham HPC for



raw fun: for blasts around lanes and airfield slaloms and for reminding me what being alive is all about. It's a 1984 car with 8000 miles on the clock and 230bhp, and it cost £14,500.

Nowadays this trio would be much cheaper, of course (except the Caterham), but I'll soon be looking to update my garage, so please keep printing what other readers own or are dreaming of, as I'd love more **evo** inspiration.

**Paul Wilkin**

I've just realised my current three vehicles equate to a £50,000 garage but are not necessarily my fantasy. My 2016 Discovery Commercial is a superb company car that shares driveway space with a 2003 Clio 172 Cup and a Mk2 Golf GTI from 1992.

In fantasy-land I'd be tempted by three vehicles all at a similar price point: a Cayman S from 2007, a pristine Series 1 Elise (I owned one for ten years pre-kids) and, if I have to ferry the pre-teen monsters around, a four-door V8 M3 [above] with a manual gearbox.

**Andy Pearce**

I reckon I am two thirds of the way to my perfect £50k garage. In fact, if my wife hadn't taken out a three-year lease on a Mercedes SLK250 CDI, I would probably be there by now.

The perfect trio? First, a Mk7 VW Golf R with DSG (£27k). Most people need a daily driver capable of carrying four adults, some luggage and maybe a dog. My R has done that in style for the last year, clocking up 27,000 miles without missing a beat and delivering around 30mpg. It never looks out of place in any car park, irrespective of budget, and is brilliantly capable on B-roads. Want a bit more performance? It's easily chipped to around 370bhp. The only real question is, should I have gone for an estate?



Second is an R53 Mini JCW (£5k). Every **evo** reader should have a toy, and late last year I bought an immaculate 2002 JCW to which I added some adjustable coilovers to create a superb-handling track car. OK, it's not as fast as some cars round a track, but the go-kart handling makes corners a hoot and the German build quality means it's good to drive home afterwards.

Finally, and still a fantasy for now, there's a Porsche Boxster S – a 3.4-litre 987 (c£18k). Every fantasy garage should have a convertible, despite the slight shortcomings in handling, and I find it amazing that you can get a low-mileage Porsche with all that refinement, performance and pedigree for less than £20k. OK, it's not a 911, but a Boxster offers 90 per cent of the performance for 70 per cent of the cost and is great when the sun shines. As soon as my wife's SLK lease is up, one will be joining the garage. The only argument seems to be about which colour!

**Hamish Westwater**

### Cobra correction

Having just read Ed Speak in **evo** 235, can I respectfully point out that, contrary to what was implied, the Cobra pictured chasing the TVR at Goodwood [see above] is unlikely to be a 7-litre version.

The pictured Cobra's grille is that of the Mark II, which has the 289 cubic-inch (4.7-litre) engine. The bodywork of cars with the 427 cubic-inch (7-litre) engine has a larger, elliptical-shaped opening, not a flat-bottomed semi-elliptical one as seen.

Yes, many Mark IIs when raced have gained larger wheelarches to cover the wider tyres, but it's still a Mark II Shell.

Enjoying the read nonetheless.  
**P Coombes (Member of the 289 Register)**

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BMW M4 CS // JAGUAR XE S // AUDI SQ5 //  
ROCKETEER MX-5 // VAUXHALL INSIGNIA  
GRAND SPORT 2.0T 4x4





# BMW M4 CS

It's been a bumpy ride – both literally and metaphorically – for the F82-generation M4, but in the CS is the M division finally giving us the car we all crave?

**Photography:** Stephen Hall

**E**VO HAS HAD AN ON-OFF love affair with BMW's M4. We admire its muscle-car looks, performance potential and rear-drive chassis. Being a product of M GmbH also infuses it with a desirability that rivals are still some way from achieving.

Yet it's been a struggle to wholly fall for the M4. Its turbocharged 3-litre straight-six has the punch to fire it down a road and around a track with a force Anthony Joshua would swerve. But this has also been its downfall. So thuggish has been the delivery to the rear tyres that not only do they give up the fight for traction earlier than you are expecting, but so too does the rear suspension, throwing in the towel at the first sign of any loading through its springs and dampers. It makes for an infuriating experience, because on its day, on the right road and in the right conditions – a bone-dry, smooth surface – the M4 is your best mate. But few of us live at the Ascari race resort, so it's often a mate you leave the pub early to avoid.

How, then, is BMW's new M4 CS going to cope with a 29bhp increase to 454bhp and an additional 36lb ft, bringing the total to 442lb ft?

The first part of the answer is the M4 Competition Package of 2016, which brought a lower ride height and stiffer springs, dampers and anti-roll bars. It greatly improved the base M4's behaviour, even with a

power increase to 444bhp. For MY18 cars, the Comp Pack itself has been improved (the upgrade has been upgraded, essentially), and it acts as a basis for the M4 CS we have here.

M division chief Frank van Meel confirms there's been not a single hardware change to the M4 CS's chassis over that of the MY18 M4 Competition Package. Rather, he and his team have been busy with the laptops, reprogramming the M Adaptive suspension to better suit the now standard Michelin Cup 2 tyres. It's the same situation with the electric power steering and the engine ECU, both of which have been optimised to sharpen the CS.

There are a number of further detail changes to the CS. It's only available with the seven-speed MDCT double-clutch gearbox, and in addition to the carbonfibre roof that's already standard on the M4, the front splitter, rear diffuser and bonnet are also carbon, the bonnet being 25 per cent lighter than the regular aluminium panel. The new bonnet also features a sizable vent ahead of the powerdome. The 19in front and 20in rear wheels are lightweight items with 265/35 rubber at the front and 285/30 at the rear, the former being the focus for much of the damper tuning to improve steering precision.

The only big mechanical change is the fitment of a more free-flowing exhaust, and due to the lack of any

**Below right:** carbon-ceramic discs denoted by gold calipers – they're expensive and not that easy to modulate, but are an improvement on the standard, cast-iron pieces; engine not quite in full firebreathing 493bhp GTS spec, but it is mightily potent even so



**‘The M4 CS has all the character and ability of M-cars of old’**



front speakers, there's no sound imposer, meaning you hear an M engine playing its natural tune rather a digitally enhanced one.

Other changes inside include lightweight door-cards from the GTS, a pair of manually adjustable lightweight sports seats and a steering wheel and centre-console trimmed in Alcantara.

All in all, there's a 35kg weight saving, down to 1505kg compared to 1540kg for an M4 with an M DCT gearbox. The CS cracks 62mph in a claimed 3.9sec (two-tenths quicker than the DCT standard M4) and runs on to 174mph. And, of course, there's a Ring lap time of 7min 38sec.

These numbers pale into the insignificant when it comes to the road, though, because whatever

van Meel and his team have done to the underbelly of the CS, it has transformed the M4 from an unpredictable and ultimately frustrating performance car into one with all the character, ability and entertainment of M-cars of old.

It's how the CS reacts to your steering inputs that hits you first. Where previous M4s have an uncomfortable dead spot and take a moment for the front tyres to react, the CS's nose is rich in clarity, speed and precision, delivering instant confidence. The gripper Cup 2 tyres are an obvious factor in this, but the steering and setup changes allow you to commit harder because there's a clearer sense of how the chassis is working beneath you.

Hooked into a corner, the CS

feels much more stable and better balanced, the chassis allowing you to position it so much more accurately at the apex, get on the power earlier and work on your exit speed. With previous M4s this was always a bit of a hit-and-miss affair. Too generous with your right foot and either the traction control went into hyperdrive or, if it was switched off, the rear tyres would vaporise. The car was as frustrating on the road as it was impressive for the cameras on track. That it also acted up when trying to put the power down in a straight line didn't help it win friends, either.

In the CS there's none of this. You can play the hooligan if you wish, but it's so much more rewarding and satisfying to be able to open the throttle early in the corner and drive

through the exit feeling the M-diff hook up and the chassis working the load with newfound precision.

Downsides? The DCT gearbox now feels old in comparison to rivals and the brakes come up short, too. The standard cast-iron discs, with four-piston calipers at the front, two at the rear, are not a match for the car's performance – it takes only a few committed stops for the pedal travel to lengthen, and while retardation doesn't decline, the precision does. The optional carbon-ceramics help.

There's another issue. The £89,130 price tag is a £25k premium over a Competition Package, which makes it extremely hard to recommend the CS on price alone, despite it currently being the ultimate M4. ❌

**Stuart Gallagher** (@stuartg917)

**Specification**

Engine	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
In-line 6-cyl, 2979cc, twin-turbo	454bhp @ 6250rpm	442lb ft @ 4000-5380rpm	3.9sec (claimed)	174mph (limited)	1505kg (307bhp/ton)	£89,130

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**evo rating** ★★★★★



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# Jaguar XE S

Updated XE gets AMG-beating power and a host of new tech. But is it enough?

**O**F ALL THE MODELS IN the Jaguar XE range, it's no great surprise that our favourite has been the 3-litre supercharged S, the version best equipped to make the most of the car's sophisticated and sparkingly good chassis. Yet with 'only' 335bhp, and without a rabid SVR halo car to lead interest from the front, the S had looked rather lonely as a range-topper, caught between the everyday and the extraordinary.

Now, as part of a subtle raft of upgrades for the 2018 model year, Jaguar has boosted the power of the S, in effect dropping in an F-type S-specification V6 with 375bhp and 332lb ft of torque (the former figure identical to the F-type's, the latter down by just 7lb ft). That certainly reasserts the XE's authority against its obvious German rivals, the 349bhp Audi S4 and the 362bhp Mercedes-AMG C43 – it's not often that these marques, AMG in particular, find themselves outgunned.

There is something charmingly old-fashioned about the XE S, and that's largely a good thing. The V6's supercharger not only permits a more natural, vocal induction note than the modern breed of oh-so-competent turbocharged engines, but its delivery has a vivacity that the studiously linear turbo units can't match. The

**'It's an expressive sort of car, with an inherent rightness about its approach'**

Jag also deploys all of its 375bhp through the rear wheels alone, something only the 54bhp-less-powerful BMW 340i also offers.

It was the engine's lack of high-rev enthusiasm that let the old car down, but that's now a thing of the past, with those extra horses arriving precisely where the original engine started to die away. With a 0-62mph time of five seconds dead, the XE trails, slightly, its all-wheel-driven competition, but you never feel short-changed from behind the wheel: after all, 20 years ago this was supersaloon power; 30 years ago it was the kind of mojo enjoyed by Ferrari's figurehead production supercar.

The only gearbox available is an eight-speed automatic, and as usual it's a thoroughly decent partner for the V6. If there are reservations, it's when the torque converter isn't quite snappy enough locking up, or when you summon a downshift



and the algorithms believe the car isn't quite ready. In short, there are occasions when a little more control would be desirable. I wonder if the development team built an XE S with a manual 'box'? Now that really would be an old-fashioned idea, and all the more appealing for it.

Everything else about the XE S is largely good. The chassis has an inviting, playful nature that puts the driver in the right mood from the first 100 yards. It's an expressive sort of car, with an inherent rightness about its approach to performance rather than endless, increasingly 'sporty' modes. The steering is quick, needing only small inputs the majority of the time, and this agility combined with ample power to the rear wheels means the XE S often feels neutral at the very least: there's never any doubt that this is a powerful rear-wheel-drive car. Its poise isn't at the expense of ride, either, the Adaptive

Dynamics variable damping always retaining the car's composure.

Inside, there's a new 12.3in 'virtual' instrument cluster and Jag's latest 10in touchscreen. They keep Jaguar in the technology race, but nothing more, and there's still the feeling that the firm is struggling to keep up with rivals in this regard. There's a suite of new driver assistance tech as well, including Forward Traffic Detection and Blind Spot Assist.

Sadly, while the XE's cabin is aesthetically easy on the eye, there's a flimsiness to some of the materials that, as clichéd as it sounds, lacks the perception of quality found in this car's rivals. Given that the Jag is more expensive than any of its competition, that could be an issue in the showroom. Happily, those concerns are likely to be much less of an issue once the car's other talents are understood. **X**

**Adam Towler** (@AdamTowler)

## Specification

Engine	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
V6, 2995cc, supercharged	375bhp @ 6500rpm	332lb ft @ 3500-5500rpm	5.0sec (claimed)	155mph (limited)	1655kg (230bhp/ton)	£48,045

**+** Newfound top-end pace, engaging handling **-** Expensive, cabin quality and space behind rivals

**evo rating** ★★★★★

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# Audi SQ5

Audi's sportiest mid-sized SUV has swapped diesel power for petrol. Is it a change for the better?

**I**T IS A RARE DIESEL THAT finds unanimous approval within the walls of *evo*, and the original SQ5, for all its 479lb ft of torque and associated thundering pace, never quite hit the spot.

Customers like diesels though, and Audi sold 62,000 first-gen SQ5s worldwide following its 2012 debut. They made up a high proportion of UK Q5 sales too, which is probably why there always seems to be one sitting six microns from your rear numberplate on the M1.

Diesel is taking a lower profile within the VW Group these days, so it's not a surprise that a petrol engine is now available in the SQ5 for the first time. In fact it's currently the only engine choice for the Q5. Specifically, it's the same turbocharged 3-litre V6 you'll find in the S4 and S5, with an identical 349bhp and 369lb ft.

While the power output is higher than that of the old SQ5, by 40bhp, the petrol unit develops less twist and consequently isn't quite as smart off the mark. Crossing the 62mph threshold takes 5.4sec – hardly night and day to the old car's 5.1sec, but a deficit nevertheless, and down on a Mercedes-AMG GLC43's 4.9sec too.

The engine is still a class act, pulling from very few revs with a creamy and insistent force all the way to the 6400rpm red line. Thumb the



Drive Select switch into Dynamic and throttle response becomes admirably crisp, while changes from the eight-speed Tiptronic auto are intelligent enough that you rarely feel the need to trouble the aluminium-effect paddles behind the steering wheel unless you're really pressing on.

The silken drivetrain and hushed cabin make the SQ5 a deceptively fast car, just like its diesel predecessor, but therein lie two problems. Firstly, the old diesel offered more of a boot in the kidneys if you were to stand on the throttle at any revs in any gear. And secondly, it all feels a little undramatic. Some will appreciate the SQ5's refinement, but a more rousing soundtrack and a little less linearity to the power delivery would add more fizz.

Just as the drivetrain is held back by its lack of drama, so the SQ5's

**'The silken drivetrain and hushed cabin make the SQ5 a deceptively fast car'**



chassis is held back by that old bugbear of Dynamic Steering – an option, but one fitted to our test car. Even in Dynamic mode it's ultra-light around the straight-ahead, giving an almost nervous feel at speed, with little resistance to work against. You need to wind on a fair degree of lock before any real weighting appears, and feedback fails to make itself known whatever kind of cornering you're undertaking.

That's a shame, since there feels like a fundamentally sound chassis underneath the SQ5. Like other recent Audi S models, the SQ5's balance feels more neutral and adjustable than before. Body roll is kept to a minimum too, without doing too much damage to what feels (on smooth German tarmac, at least) like a pliant ride, one that improves further in Comfort. There's good

grip too, and light work is made of direction changes.

But the SQ5 is not a class-leader. A Porsche Macan S still provides more to entertain the keen driver, and a GLC43 indulges you with a little more character (and noise) for its corresponding lack of Ingolstadt-honed polish. Both are cheaper than the Audi, too.

All is not lost, however, as Audi plans to launch another diesel SQ5 in the future. It's hard not to imagine that eclipsing the petrol in terms of performance, and it should bring about a welcome improvement on the petrol model's 34mpg combined economy figure, too. And for all our apathy towards diesels, there was something rather appealing about the old SQ5's gravelly tone and low-down punch. **X**

**Antony Ingram (@evoAntony)**

## Specification

Engine	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
V6, 2995cc, turbo	349bhp @ 5400rpm	369lb ft @ 1370-4500rpm	5.4sec (claimed)	155mph (limited)	1870kg (190bhp/ton)	£51,200

**+** Styling, deceptive pace, fine chassis **-** Overly light, feel-free Dynamic Steering; lack of excitement

**evo rating** ★★★★★

# Rocketeer MX-5

A 3-litre Jaguar V6 gives a new lease of life to Mazda's iconic little roadster



**B** BRUCE SOUTHEY GRIMACES when I tell him it looks as though there's plenty of space around the chunky-looking V6 sitting under the bonnet of his Mk1 MX-5. Appearances can be deceptive: a phrase that neatly illustrates both the difficulty Bruce and business partner Tom Bullick have had in squeezing the Jaguar unit into a small Japanese roadster, and the character of said roadster when equipped with the aforementioned V6.

Rocketeer, the name of Bruce and Tom's company, speaks of men in sheds, experimenting, engineering, so it's ironic that, given Bruce's day job as a user experience designer at Ford Motor Company, his design methodology is a long way from scratching around on a draughty driveway. That V6 looks almost factory-fitted with good reason: Bruce had the Mazda's engine bay laser scanned first, and an adapter plate designed digitally first.

Currently there are six individual throttle bodies nestling within the 60-degree vee. The finished product will instead feature a pair of carbonfibre intake plenums that will get even more from the V6 than the 230-ish crank horsepower it's

**'Every slightest movement of the throttle results in instant response'**

currently recording. Without room under the bonnet to breathe, the throttle bodies aren't the most effective solution. The plenums are the result of much CAD experimentation, subjecting them to CFD analysis, and rapid prototyping on a 3D printer to get the best possible under-bonnet fit.

The engine itself is a 3-litre Jaguar AJ-V6, a derivation of Ford's contemporary Duratec unit. It was engineered in conjunction with Porsche, uses forged connecting rods, one-piece cast camshafts, and solid rather than hydraulic tappets. More importantly, it has an aluminium block, in contrast to the iron block of the original Mazda four-cylinder. Bruce says that, shorn of its ancillaries, the AJ-V6 is actually 5kg lighter than the 1.8-litre Mazda unit.



Rocketeer tried the Jaguar manual gearbox, too – as found in base-model S-types, which are cheap and plentiful, making them an ideal donor for the conversion – but the Mazda gearbox is actually more than up to the task of handling the power (Bruce notes that the firing pulses of the V6 are easier on gearbox internals than those of a four-pot). The car is currently running a five-speed unit, a recent change from Mazda's six-speed; Bruce thinks it's a sweeter 'box. Final drive is 4.1:1, the same as a 1.8-litre MX-5's, but a longer, more motorway-friendly differential is being considered for production.

Rocketeer has kept the exterior and interior of its demo car largely standard, so prospective punters can concentrate fully on the new powerplant. The V6 takes a moment

to catch and in this pre-production phase it's a little unhappy when cold or on very light throttle openings. But damn does it sound good, with a rich, throaty note.

Every slightest movement of the throttle pedal, once past the initial stutter, results in instant response. Tom says the plenums may dull this slightly, but the trade-off will be perfect manners at low revs and more power at the top end. Today's limit is around 6000rpm but even that's enough to give the growling MX-5 ample pace, with one of the best soundtracks I've heard from a car in years.

Best of all, it doesn't detract from the MX-5 one jot. The lightweight engine means handling is effectively unchanged – though your ability to play with the car on the throttle rises exponentially – and despite the extra performance it doesn't overpower even the standard MX-5 chassis. Enjoy the car's natural balance; be a bit silly; rumble around all day in fifth on the extra torque; the choice is yours. At £7194 for the conversion (plus donor car and V6) it isn't cheap, but for the quality of the components and the experience it's fantastic value. ☒

**Antony Ingram** (@evoAntony)

## Specification

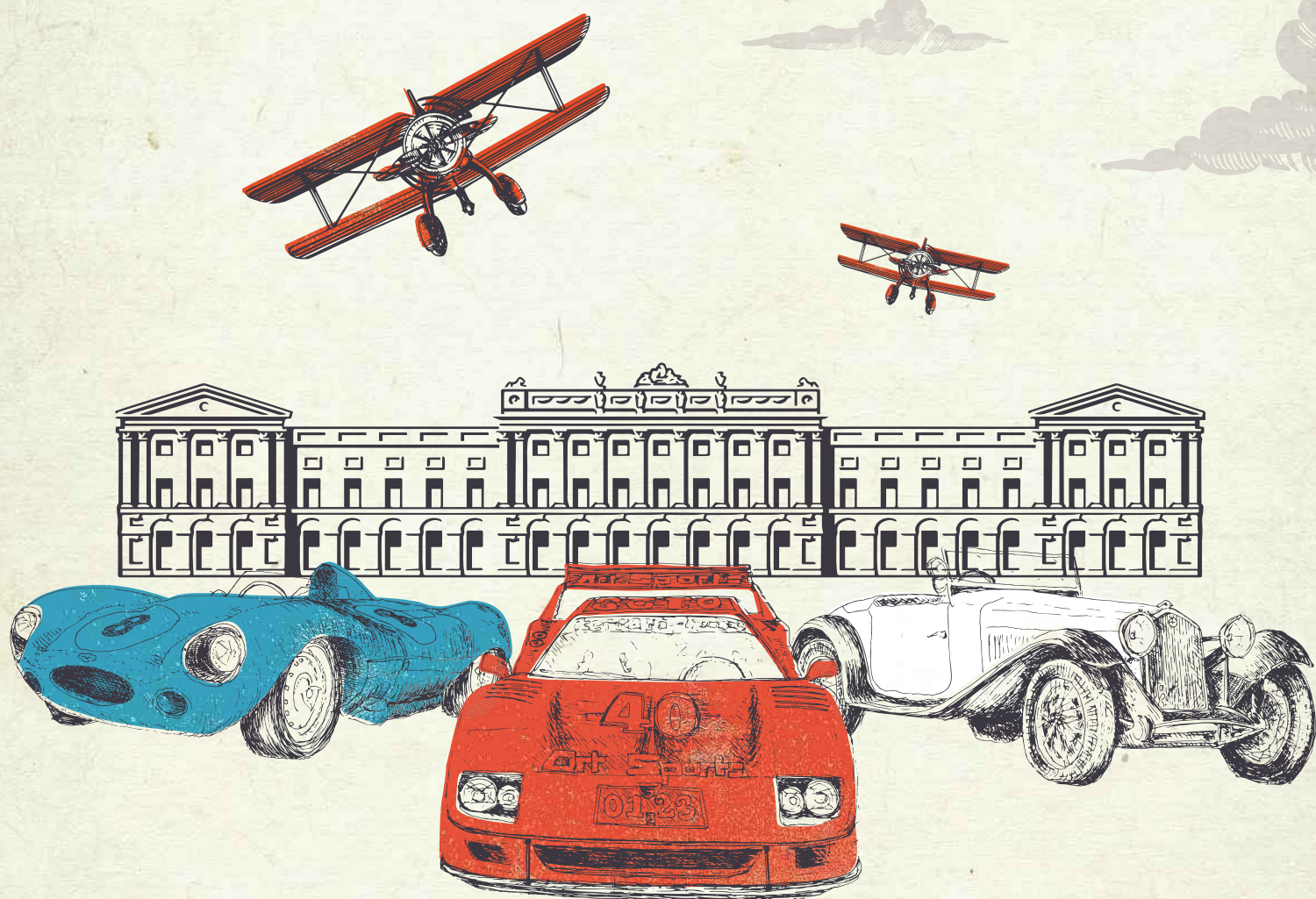
Engine	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Conversion price
V8, 2987cc	c250bhp (see text)	c220lb ft	n/a	n/a	n/a	£7194 (see text)

+ Neat conversion, superb response, terrific soundtrack - A tad pricey

**evo rating** ★★★★★

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# Vauxhall Insignia Grand Sport 2.0T 4x4

Can the range-topping new Insignia deliver on the promise of its sleek looks?



**J**AMES BOND DRIVES AN Aston Martin, Tony 'Iron Man' Stark drives an Audi R8, David Brent drives a Vauxhall Insignia. Life's cruel. It's fair to say Vauxhall's stalwart family hatchback/repomobile has always struggled to slip the surly bonds of mundaneness and touch the face of good. But, for a few years after its 2008 launch, that didn't matter. The Insignia was a particularly comfortable market fit – a sprawling model-range that understood every angle of average, catering for fleet and company car audiences that cared more about putting miles under wheels as painlessly as possible than dynamic flair, classy fittings, cutting-edge tech or straightforward, must-have desirability. Things were simpler then.

But now 'premium' is the new mainstream. Vauxhall's answer is the new, larger, sleeker, classier, kit-dense and cheekily named Insignia Grand Sport. The £27,710 2-litre, 257bhp Elite Nav 4x4, which comes with an eight-speed auto and full-time four-wheel drive, tops out the range. Well, it's as Grand Sporty as it gets for now.

The Insignia Grand Sport is longer, wider and sleeker than the car it replaces but weighs up to 175kg less model-for-model, 60kg of which is down to the body alone. Impressive, too, is the slippery 0.26 drag factor,

## 'The all-drive chassis majors on grip and stability rather than finesse'

won partly by the coupe-like profile. Boot volume has suffered a bit, but there's bags of interior space with Skoda Superb-rivalling rear legroom.

Aesthetic appeal, if not potential ride quality, is certainly enhanced by the standard 20in alloys, but then the deal with this flagship model seems to be to leave no box unticked this side of the kitchen sink – not exactly an original tactic in the bid to blur the allure of more sparsely equipped Mercs, BMWs and Audis, but you can't blame Vauxhall for going for broke this time, or for the appealingly techy bias. As well as an 8in touchscreen, there's a head-up display, Apple CarPlay, adaptive cruise, on-board Wi-Fi, 32-element 'IntelliLux' LED headlights, intelligent satnav, dual-zone climate control and a powerful Bose hi-fi.

For the most part, the Grand Sport is a pleasant steer. Sporty in a grand way? Not even in a minor way. This isn't to say it doesn't cover the



ground swiftly. You might even call it effortless. Engine and transmission work together seamlessly with commendable hush and an always-adequate amount of rush following the merest hint of turbo-lag. Nothing to get the pulse racing, though.

Certainly not enough to overwork the well-shod all-drive chassis, which majors on grip and stability rather than finesse and involvement. The compact four-wheel-drive system incorporates a novel method of torque vectoring (speeding up the outside wheel rather than braking the inner one to quell understeer). If the electric steering isn't overly light, neither is it over-endowed with feel, though it is quite direct and the nose turns in keenly without the torque vectoring being in any way obvious.

Basic body control is pretty good with the adaptive suspension in Normal but the ride becomes fidgety over broken surfaces, more so if

you switch to Sport, though this is definitely the preferred setting for smooth roads if you want to press on. And there can be no doubting the beefiness of a 2-litre turbo four with 257bhp and 295lb ft of torque. Vauxhall claims 0-62mph in 6.9sec and a top speed limited to 155mph.

Seats, driving position, visibility, control layout and overall build and finish are really good, just lacking that touch of class that separates the true premium products from the wannabes. If space, comfort, refinement and kit mean more to you than powertrain personality and dynamic acuity, there's a lot to like. But if you want genuine engagement you don't even have to look as far as the usual German suspects. A Mazda 6 will give you that. The new Insignia gives you more than ever before, but it's caught between just as many stools. ❌

**David Vivian** (@davidvivian)

### Specification

Engine	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight	Basic price
In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbo	257bhp @ 5300rpm	295lb ft @ 2500-4000rpm	6.9sec (claimed)	155mph (limited)	1649kg (158bhp/ton)	£27,710

+ A more spacious and stylish Insignia - Still lacking the performance gene

**evo rating** ★★★★★



# RICHARD MEADEN

*'Too fast for the road' has long been a badge of honour among supercars, but it's now a condition that afflicts most performance cars. Meaden proposes a fix*

**WHAT'S THE FUTURE OF DRIVING? I DON'T** mean everyday motoring. I mean *driving*. For pleasure, in high-performance cars designed to go fast and deliver a thrill. From where I'm sitting – frequently behind the wheel of one of the aforementioned high-performance cars – I'm forced to conclude the conventional view seems pretty bleak.

For as long as there have been cars, engineers have been making them go faster, but in recent years the quick stuff has gone ballistic. Which is great, until you actually drive one of them on roads that are increasingly choked by traffic, with speed limits enforced by average-speed cameras and vans lurking on bridges and in lay-bys. Add the surreptitious scourge of dash-cams and a wider shift towards anti-car sentiments and the life of a car enthusiast doesn't feel like much fun.

Of course, recklessness has never had any place on public roads, but I'll argue until I'm blue in the face that speed and recklessness are not one and the same. Unfortunately for us, whichever way you slice it, the one unarguable truth is you can't justify travelling at the speeds most of today's performance cars will readily deliver.

Wring out a Golf R on a country road and you could very easily be doing 100mph. Put yourself in a 720S and you could add another 50mph to that. More, maybe. Now imagine how that would sound when read out in court, or worse, written in a newspaper. Then try to imagine what you would say in your defence that doesn't make you sound delusional or unbelievably arrogant. Even if you are 'a skilled driver' or were 'travelling well within the capabilities of the car' on a 'well-sighted, near-deserted road', there's no defence.

Why am I writing this in a mag like *evo*? Because I am very close to the point where I think I'm done with fast road cars. Not because I don't get excited by them, or because I've stopped wanting to drive them fast. I'm tired of knowing that if I so much as scratch the surface of the car's potential, I'm risking my licence, livelihood and possibly my liberty. If you can't enjoy the cars, or fear the consequences of being caught if you do, what's the point of it all?

I used to think trackdays offered a solution, but now I'm not so sure. The Nürburgring Industry Pool has long been the most exclusive trackday club of all. And with good reason, for the

Nordschleife is an exceptional place to battle-harden a car's durability. The upside of this is the vast majority of fast road cars now make very capable trackday tools. The downside is it pushes the limits of the cars further beyond what's useable on the road.

So how's this for a vision of our driving futures: instead of developing road cars that fewer and fewer of us dare to enjoy, why don't the manufacturers develop state-of-the-art simulations? F1 teams can create complete cars using CFD and CAD software, and their sims are so accurate that they can arrive at any circuit knowing pretty much exactly what lap time they will achieve. Imagine if car manufacturers did the same, purely for our enjoyment?

If they pooled their resources to co-fund accurate renderings of the world's best driving roads, we could all go for a drive in whatever we want, wherever we want, whenever we want. Crucially, we could also drive as fast as we want, free from risk and post-drive paranoia. With eSports gaining popularity, the simulator hardware will continue to develop in leaps and bounds, so in the next few years there's the possibility of having home virtual-reality setups that offer an immersive and uncannily realistic driving experience. Not cheaply, at least for a while, but given that having a fast car tucked

in your garage isn't exactly for nothing, that is unlikely to deter people like us.

Imagine sim systems built and sold by today's high-performance car marques – engineered in partnership with world leaders in simulator technology and created with the same effort, intelligence and attention to detail they lavish on their high-end cars. The experience would be truly next-level. One that mimics an epic journey to lose yourself in, rather than a quick game or race. All of a sudden you have *Gran Turismo* for grown-ups; *Grand Theft Auto* without the gratuitous murder and mayhem.

Ask me if it's likely to be as good as the reality of driving flat-out up the Col de Vence in an Enzo and I'll tell you no, but that's only because my ridiculous job means I've been fortunate to have experienced just that. Nevertheless, ask me if I can see myself revelling in the chance to drive a perfectly rendered Col de Vence (or better still, a great road I've never driven) in an equally accurate virtual Ferrari (or any other car) – and all from the comfort of my garage, sorry, 'sim room' – my answer is 100 per cent yes. ✘

*'I'm close to the point where I think I'm done with fast road cars'*



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# RICHARD PORTER

*During a recent weekend in Monaco, Porter identified one of the more unusual jobs in the world of motorsport*

**H**OOK-MAN STANDS AND WAITS. THAT'S what hook-man does. Like airbags and insurance policies, the need for hook-man might never come, but you'd be damn glad he was there if you needed him. Until then, he waits, poised with his five-foot hook, hands gripped around the insulated handle, the bare parabola of silver metal at the top hanging somewhere above his head. Being hook-man is to have one of those jobs that's generally quite boring but that could, at a moment's notice, become a heart-racing, adrenalin-spiking, dry-throated flurry of unborings. It's a lot of responsibility being hook-man.

Hook-man works for the Panasonic Jaguar Racing Formula E team. I presume that other teams have their own hook-people, but I never saw them in action. In the Jag pit at the recent Monaco electro-event, I was mesmerised by hook-man at work, even though he was simply showcasing an ability to stand a few feet behind a busy colleague.

The duties of hook-man are simple. He is there to monitor a fellow engineer at work on the powertrain gubbins that live at the rear of the cars and, possibly, to save his life. The motors themselves run off AC power, but the batteries supply DC and there's a large inverter just behind the driver that converts one to t'other. The DC part of that is what gives hook-man his reason to be. Touching or grabbing a live DC component is going to cause your day to take a sudden and rather unpleasant turn for the worse in many respects, one of which I suspect to be odour. The sudden application of DC current causes your muscles to lock, making it impossible for you to let go of the very thing that is trying to fry you. And this is where hook-man comes in.

If someone simply tried to grab the paralysed person connected to the power source, they too would be locked into a rictus of electrocution and the same would happen to anyone else repeating the error until the entire team became immobile together as one sizzling mass, like a very dark moment from *Laurel and Hardy*. So, no direct touching. Instead, in the event of accidental contact with some unexpectedly lively component of the car, the errant and immobile engineer will be yanked away from the thing that

seeks to kill them by a diligent colleague with a ruddy great hook. That's hook-man.

Formula E brings other interesting safety procedures you don't get when cars draw their energy from, say, a highly flammable liquid. In the event of a crash, the marshals are under strict instructions not to run up and touch the driver while he's in the car, in case there's been some breach of the safety systems and the entire thing, including its human content, has become live. As long as the driver remains without a path to ground, he'll be okay. Contact from a well-meaning chap in an orange jumpsuit and he's toast. So that can't happen. For the same reason, all drivers

are trained to 'jump exit' after a smash, since putting one foot on the ground while the other is still in the car could be A Very Bad Thing.

I found all this very interesting. Possibly even more interesting than the actual Formula E race at Monaco. But that's Monaco for you. The race series itself has some promise. The cars look good, and even the noise – a weird spaceship whine overlaid with gearbox chatter – isn't without appeal. It's nice to see some old F1 warhorses duking it out, too. Better yet, as you may have read elsewhere, there's more to come.

Hanging around the Jag pit, you get a sense that they're in it for the long haul. This season's car, they admit, was done in a rush to get into the game and start pulling some data. They're not mucking about with this. And for good reason, since it's no secret that an electric Jaguar road car is almost with us, promising to be a near-facsimile of the i-Pace concept car and therefore a handsome and interesting thing that makes the most of its bespoke, wheels-to-the-corners, electric-car platform. So racing with electricity makes sense for Jag, not just for imminent marketing reasons but also for future engineering gain, hence the road-car techs currently embedded within the team.

There's work to be done to make Formula E truly compelling, but as a work-in-progress it's got potential, not least for the city-centre venues and an attitude that's palpably more adventurous and less stuffy than Formula 1. If everyone sticks it out, Formula E could be quite interesting. And hook-man will be ready and waiting. ❧

**'Putting one foot on the ground while the other is still in the car could be A Very Bad Thing'**

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# TED KRAVITZ

*Bernie Ecclestone's departure from Formula 1 is causing ripples through the sport – not least at one of the top teams*

**I**T'S SUMMER. THAT MEANS FLYING-ANT DAY, HAY fever and the sense of wonder on discovering your air con still works despite lying dormant since September. It also means the annual appearance of two Formula 1 stories: the future of the British Grand Prix and the future participation of Red Bull Racing. Both could disappear, for very different reasons: the former because it doesn't have enough money, the latter because it's got better things to spend its money on.

Red Bull has threatened to quit before, most recently when it tried to dump Renault for a better engine, only to stay with the French marque (on worse terms) and claim it was never serious about leaving in the first place.

But this time the quit-threat is quieter – and more considered. Under its current contract with F1, Red Bull is committed to competing until the end of 2020, but that's not to say it couldn't leave early and accept the financial penalty. Motorsport is a marketing device for Red Bull. Its owners, Dietrich Mateschitz and the Thailand-based Yoovidhya family, love F1, but need to win to justify their spend.

Not only are they not going to win this year's championship, but since Bernie Ecclestone was ousted they've lost their political leverage. Mateschitz and team principal Christian Horner were key allies of Ecclestone and benefitted from that association on and off the track. Indeed, this year's rules were changed according to Ecclestone's idea that the cars should be faster and harder to drive. This was eagerly supported by Red Bull, as the only way to achieve that would be to prioritise aerodynamics over power, and it had the pre-eminent aerodynamicist of the modern era on its books: Adrian Newey.

But with the political hard work done, Newey failed to deliver because he had other things to concentrate on: fulfilling a childhood dream of designing a hypercar, namely the Aston Martin Valkyrie. In Newey's absence, his deputies underachieved, leaving Red Bull behind Mercedes and Ferrari. The team is partly blaming Renault, as usual, but while that tactic arguably worked in the past, Renault is back in F1 properly this season and isn't going to be pushed around by its customer team anymore. Horner let slip recently that Renault Sport pays its engineers on the Red Bull cars less bonus money than engineers doing the same job on the works

cars, with 'understandable motivational results'. Renault isn't messing around here – the physical engines are the same, works to customer, but that's where its generosity ends.

In the past, Mateschitz and Horner would have got Bernie to sort it out, but Bernie has no power anymore. Faced with declining influence as well as declining competitiveness, Red Bull could finally make good on those previously hollow threats to walk away and spend its marketing billions on extreme sports instead.

It would take much less than a billion to save the British GP. In 2010, the British Racing Drivers' Club began a deal with Bernie Ecclestone to keep F1 at Silverstone for 17 years. Bernie put into the contract, as was his practice, an 'escalator' clause, upping the race hosting fee every year. That meant that if the cost in 2010 was, for

example, a just-about-affordable £12million, the BRDC would have to find £600k more in earnings every season, with only one realistic way of doing it: putting up ticket prices. The danger of that, of course, is fewer people come and Silverstone loses more money.

On a really good year, Silverstone breaks even. But the escalator is starting to bite. And it's reckoned that soon the BRDC will have to make a decision: keep staging the race as per its contract and risk going bust, or give it up at the first opportunity (a break clause at the end of 2019) and stay solvent. Tough one.

Bernie's gone, of course, so the BRDC could appeal to Formula One Management's new owners Liberty Media, but Ecclestone's replacement Chase Carey has already said he won't cut Silverstone's fee, despite his commitment to maintaining classic European races and the fact FOM co-director Ross Brawn is a proud BRDC member.

Liberty says it'll help make the customer experience better, so that the circuit can put up ticket prices and give guests more for their money. That's true, insofar as the fan experience at European races this year has been much improved, and British GP audiences are promised even more, with increased access to drivers, competitions to win garage access for the race, festival-style concerts every night, more fairground rides and, of course, the Red Arrows. But will that be enough to justify a hike in the ticket price? We'll see. Government support is even less likely.

So if you haven't been to the British Grand Prix before, go. It might not be around too much longer. ✕

**'Red Bull could finally make good on those previously hollow threats to walk away'**

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by DAVID VIVIAN

# Storm force

*Lamborghini's sensational  
Huracán Performante is the  
fastest standard production  
car yet around the Ring.  
It could also be one of the  
greatest Lambos ever*





## LAMBORGHINI DIDN'T SPARE THE ELECTRICITY FOR THE

international launch of its Huracán Performante. Clearly rocking the idea that expenditure of amps was better served by a multimedia light show and megawatt sound system than investing in any form of performance-orientated hybrid powertrain, it hit the home run with a widescreen projection of the numbers 6:52.01. It's a sequence with a hybrid-hypercar-slaying resonance sure not to have been lost on the audience of hacks clued-up on Nordschleife lap times, though perhaps no easier to comprehend.

Certainly not for me. I've done a quick lap of the Green Hell in a 903bhp P1 with McLaren development 'hand' Chris Goodwin driving. Mildly shattering it was, too. Sub 7? Although McLaren says yes but has never revealed the exact figure, I'd go with a definite maybe. Then there's the 875bhp, 944lb ft Porsche 918 Spyder (Martini livery and lightweight Weissach spec, natch), the car that gave me the most thrilling lap of my life on the **evo** Triangle a few years ago and, with a bloke vastly more talented driving, nailed the Ring in 6:57.00. This was held as an absolutely stunning achievement at the time – not least by Porsche – and seemed to be irrefutable evidence of the advantages conferred by a state-of-the-art hybrid drivetrain underwritten by Porsche's unparalleled racing heritage.

Then, this spring, a 631bhp Huracán Performante goes five seconds quicker. Not five-tenths (which would have been barely believable) but five whole seconds. And this from an essentially trad-tech, naturally aspirated car with no significant previous Nürburgring form and, indeed, a somewhat less-than-perfect scoresheet in standard guise as a drivers' supercar on the road. How did that happen?

Well, we'll soon be at Imola with a bunch of Huracán Performantes and, hopefully, some clues will emerge in the Italian sunshine. In fact, the

**'The hook is that shape. The Huracán has an emotional tug that reaches back to the very dawn of the supercar and the Miura'**

**Below right:** Performante has the most sophisticated aero yet seen on a Lambo, including ducts in the engine cover that feed air to the underside of the rear wing on demand

slow soak to enlightenment starts as we decant from the Audi Q7 that's brought us to the nearby spa retreat where we'll have almost an entire day to ruminate on the event to follow. To ensure the process starts as soon as possible, a matt orange Performante is parked outside reception. Presumably as intended, it stops all of us in our tracks for some pro-level gawping, pointing and critical circling. If the devil is in the detail, there's enough to be getting on with to make the check-in staff visibly restive through the smoked glass doors of the lobby.

The hook, of course, is that shape. It may be expressed in the modern idiom with hints of the fighter jet influences that informed the Reventón's sharply creased lines, but the Huracán has an emotional tug that reaches back to the very dawn of the supercar and the Miura. Lamborghini talks about the Performante being 'shaped by the wind'. It's an apt reference to the car's active aero system, the most prominent aspect of which is the rear wing. But the reason it connects so powerfully resides at an altogether deeper level that awakens our inner child, slows down time and invites us to get lost in an exotic world of rule-snapping craziness.

Perhaps none more so than the fascinating intricacies of Aerodinamica Lamborghini Attiva, which is said to have played a big part in allowing Marco Mapelli to set that remarkable lap time. Unless you look under the car, all you can see from the outside is what seems to be a conventional fixed rear wing made out of the stuff they use for fancy kitchen worktops. It isn't, and it isn't. ALA, for short, actually starts at the nose and a front spoiler with active flaps on the top surface that operate in conjunction with two ducts on the rear engine cover that are connected to the inner channels of the rear wing. When the flaps are closed, the rear wing acts just like a traditional spoiler, providing a claimed 750 per cent more downforce than a wingless standard Huracán. But, when the flaps are open, air is channelled through ridges underneath the wing to reduce drag and let the upgraded 5.2-litre V10 do its best, which in raw data packs down to 0-62mph in 2.9sec, 0-124mph in 8.8sec and 201mph. In Corsa mode, the ducts also operate independently, allowing what Lamborghini calls 'aero vectoring' to make fast cornering even faster by delivering downforce on either side, when and where it's needed. Ingenious, and no one seems to be challenging the 'world first' boast.







And the kitchen worktop? The Performante weighs 40kg less than a regular four-wheel-drive Huracán and part of that is down to the mouldable forged composites that the front spoiler, rear wing, rear diffuser and engine cover are made from. The engine cover is painted body colour and has serrated apertures just wide enough to glimpse the V10's biscuit-coloured cam covers – a nod to Lambo's early V12s, and a refreshing cliché swerve away from red. For the Performante, the high-revving V10 gets a new intake manifold, a lighter and repositioned exhaust system from the Trofeo racer with significantly less back-pressure, and new titanium valves with more lift. The upshot is 631bhp at 8000rpm and 443lb ft of torque at 6500rpm, though the fact that some 70 per cent of that torque peak is available from just above idle rather proves you don't need twin turbos to generate serious push from modest revs.

The fortuitously decorative flecked look of the unpainted composite parts is due to the contrast of silvery chopped carbon fibres embedded in the dark resin mix. There's even some of it on the inside of the car, to provide a little accented relief from the standard-issue swathes of Alcantara. But, for sheer unadulterated eye candy, the 20in alloys and liquorice-wrap Pirelli P Zero Corsas are almost works of art, possibly bettered only by the application of even stickier Trofeo R tyres, as used by the Ring record car. If you really want to exploit every last lick of ALA's trick tech on track, they're available as an option.

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**'On the road, it does have some slightly softer options that sustain involvement levels at lower speeds. You can pull a few shapes with the tail out of slower bends'**



The next morning we're at Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari, aka Imola. I've been here once before, barely out of my teens, to watch an F1 race long before Ayrton Senna's untimely death at Tamburello and the savagely fast left-hander's subsequent remodelling as a still-pretty-pacey left-right sweeper. It doesn't do much to quell the butterflies, especially as grey-bellied clouds have shuttered yesterday's clear skies and started to spit rain. Although its F1 years are long past, recent improvements have seen Imola regain its FIA Grade 1 status and, if the San Marino Grand Prix is ever re-instituted, it will be on what is still reckoned to be one of Europe's greatest, fastest and most challenging circuits.

Pacing the now-glistening pitlane and surveying the immaculately neat rows of pristine Performantes with Lambo boiler-suited technicians hunched at the wheelarches minutely adjusting tyre pressures seems to be ramping up the pressure in other areas, too. So it's good to know that, to co-operate optimally with ALA, the Performante has (optional) magnetorheological dampers and a suspension setup that's 10 per cent stiffer vertically and 15 per cent stiffer in roll than a standard Huracán's. Also, the Huracán's rather blunt optional variable-rack Dynamic Steering has been beefed-up and recalibrated, permitting a much narrower range of variance in Corsa mode for faster responses and, in collaboration with the aero vectoring, sharper turn-in.

We'll get 16 laps of the circuit, split into four sessions,

thankfully following the lines of an Imola-seasoned pro driver in a regular Huracán. Well, a regular Huracán wearing those super-sticky Trofeo R tyres while our Performantes stay on the standard P Zero Corsas. Lamborghini's charming R&D chief, Maurizio Reggiani, reckons that pro wheelmanship and intimate circuit knowledge alone won't be enough to level the playing field and, without the extra grip provided by the Trofeo Rs, the expertly piloted regular Huracáns won't be fast enough to maintain a safe gap back to the inexpertly piloted Performantes behind. I'm not sure I've ever reached for a bigger pinch of salt.

But even on the first few laps of the semi-damp track, it's clear he has a point. Our leaders don't waste much time getting up to speed, but the simple facts are that, even with Trofeos factored-in, the Performante can accelerate harder, brake later, turn in with more precision and conviction and carry more speed through any given bend. What's remarkable is that all these advantages are so transparent and accessible that their cumulative effect more than compensates for the odd fumble, mistimed braking point or, indeed, gung-ho excess and allows us Imola novices to comfortably keep up, while feeling more than a little skid-happy heroic. And, oh, the sensations. The taut immediacy of the way Imola's chicanes are punched through. The finger-snap turn-in. The outrageous exit speeds. The rage in the machine just behind your head that, despite the extra

**Left and below:**  
on the road, the Performante's Sport and Strada modes offer a good balance of civility and involvement



**'The Performante feels like a complete realisation of the Huracán's seemingly forever-elusive potential'**

power and torque (29bhp and 29lb ft respectively), can be fully exploited in the fastest bends, a slave to the tenacity of the chassis and its active aero reinforcements.

Towards the end of the track time, it's clear that the Huracán Performante is something very special – the place where seriously fast, focused and exciting meets extraordinarily biddable and forgiving. It's a notionally perfect spectrum of assets for a supercar, and the elements merge so seamlessly that a circuit experience that initially threatens to intimidate and overwhelm quickly becomes immersive and stubbornly addictive.

Almost as hard to grasp as that Ring lap time is the arrival of what feels like a complete realisation of the Huracán's seemingly forever-elusive potential. It's a transformation that combines a shattering, race-fit soundtrack only a few decibels shy of the Huracán GT3 racer's with searing, inexhaustible straight-line push. The standard car's feel-less helm and edge-of-understeer balance has been replaced with precision, physicality and turn-in acuity that can nail an apex with true aggression or brush it with finely wrought finesse. Perhaps best of all, high-speed stability and grip eases down into playful, throttle-induced or trail-braked oversteer held within beautifully judged limits by the traction and stability electronics.

All this in the extreme, track-optimised Corsa mode, of course. On the road, the Performante doesn't exactly turn into a pussycat but it does have some slightly softer options that sustain involvement levels at lower speeds. Sport mode – like Corsa activated by a button on the steering wheel – is the obvious default. It frees up the ESP just enough to make the car feel a little more supple and loose so you can pull a few shapes with the tail out of slower bends. The third setting, Strada, is softer still and ideal for rolling along without much thought to lighting the fires. Even in this mode, steering effort is slightly higher than it would be in a regular Huracán, which simply feels more reassuring.

So, that 6:52.01 Nordschleife lap time. Watch the video. It's incredibly clean, incredibly fast. And then watch the same driver, Marco Mapelli, monster the 100bhp-more-powerful Aventador SV round in 6:59.73. It's heart-in-mouth stuff all the way. You get the impression that Lamborghini hasn't tried to reinvent the supercar with the Huracán Performante, just make a better Lamborghini. The figures, on this occasion, don't appear to lie. 📌



### Lamborghini Huracán Performante

**Engine** V10, 5204cc **Power** 631bhp @ 8000rpm **Torque** 442lb ft @ 6500rpm **Transmission** Seven-speed dual-clutch, four-wheel drive, rear limited-slip differential **Suspension, front and rear** Double wishbones, coil springs, adaptive dampers (optional) **Brakes** Ventilated carbon-ceramic discs, 380mm front, 356mm rear **Wheels** 8.5 x 20in front, 11 x 20in rear **Tyres** 245/30 R20 front, 305/30 R20 rear **Weight (dry)** 1382kg **Power-to-weight (dry)** 464bhp/ton **0-62mph** 2.9sec (claimed) **Top speed** 201mph+ (claimed) **Basic price** £215,000 **On sale** Now

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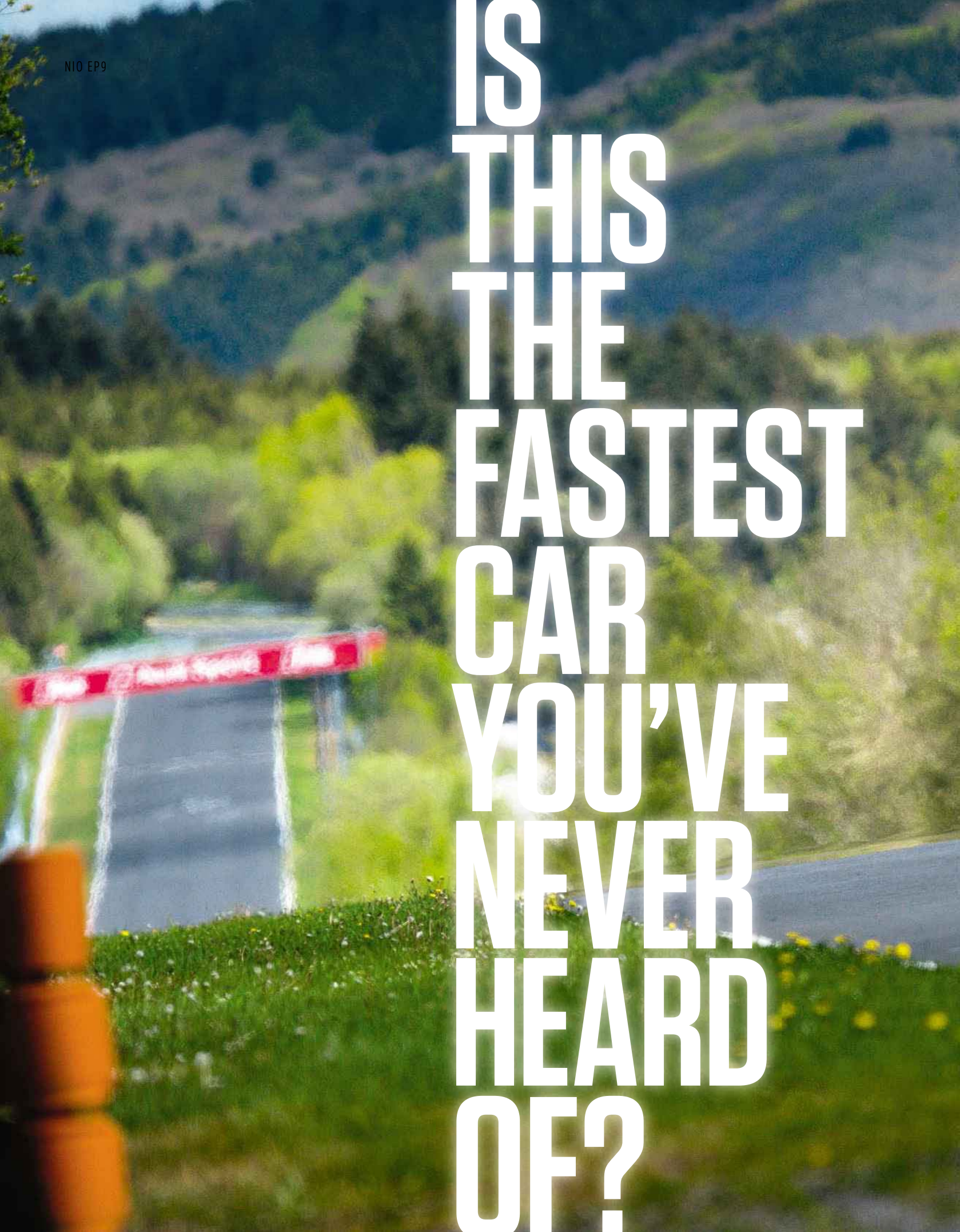
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FASTEST  
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by ADAM TOWLER

*This is the Nio EP9. It's an electric-powered hypercar and it recently set a new Nürburgring lap record, beating even the Huracán Performante's time. Here's how it happened*



**I**N MANY WAYS, THE NIO EP9 WAS just another impossibly low, wide, electrically powered supercar with mind-boggling acceleration. Until ten minutes past four on the afternoon of 12 May 2017, that is. At that precise moment, racing driver and Nürburgring specialist Peter Dumbreck embarked upon his fourth and final lap of the day at the Nordschleife, and six minutes and 45 seconds later had marked his – and Nio's – place in history with a new lap record for a non-series-production car. The one-million-megawatt car was suddenly the talk of the motoring world.

'The EP9 was Martin Leach's brainchild: to make the ultimate car,' says Nio's head of performance programme, Gerry Hughes. An automotive luminary, Leach was vice-president of NextEV, the company behind the emergent Nio brand, but passed away in November. 'The EP9 is a no-compromise car, in terms of strength-to-weight and packaging,' adds Hughes.

Listening to Hughes talking about the incredibly complicated challenges behind the EP9 is like tuning into an alien dialect at times. Instead of turbo boost pressure and damper tech, there are power electronics, regen strategies and, perhaps most importantly, battery temperatures. 'It's all about energy management and thermal management. How much power you can draw from the batteries is the key to it,' says Hughes, whose aim is to stop the cells frying themselves to a crisp. The EP9 has two batteries, four electric motors, DRS capability and very large diffuser tunnels underneath the car.

While the EP9 is not currently road-legal (and Hughes is coy when asked about tyres, saying only that they were 'developed by our tyre partner to cope with the huge amounts of downforce load'), he does confirm that Nio is working with a third-party specialist to determine what's required to homologate the car for key markets. Six EP9s have been built so far, with a further ten currently in production.

Dumbreck first drove the car at the Ring back in October last year, completing four laps in what he describes as more of a shakedown session. In the run-up to May's record attempt, he spent two days at the Aragón circuit, in Spain, with the EP9. 'That allowed me to get comfortable in the car again,' he says. 'I was able to see what happens when you take the car to the



**'The closest reference is an LMP2 car, but you'd never think about running one of those at the Ring – they're too stiff'**



limit and slightly over it, and that's important because, at a place like the Ring, there's no margin for error. You need to know what's going to happen.

'On the day, there's no chance to warm up and get my eye in. It's just line the car up and go. I was happy in the car, so then it's about how hard I can push in the edgy corners. From Flugplatz to Schwedenkreuz is flat in my [BMW M6] GT3 car, but it's quicker still in the Nio. I've got DRS deployed and I'm really honking along there. I was thinking, "Am I going to go flat over the rise? Yes, yes I am." You can see from the video that I'm putting in more steering inputs than I normally would.

'The closest reference is an LMP2 car. You'd never think about running one of those at the Ring – they're too stiff, too quick, have too much downforce. The EP9 is similar. It's too stiff for the bumps, it's got mammoth downforce – we almost need to get rid of some of that and work on the mechanical setup to go quicker. We've certainly not optimised it for the track: we raised the ride height, put a bit more rake in the car for more front end [grip] and worked on the tyre pressures, but there's not endless things you can change like with a GT3 car. The car's strength is immediate power with no hesitation for gearchanges, and the downforce in the smoother sections.'

Moreover, the lap was set with the EP9 running at nowhere near full power. Dumbreck believes he had around 900bhp at his disposal, not the full 1341bhp. 'When Lamborghini did their record attempt, they just filled the car with the petrol they thought they would

**Above:** the EP9's 6:45.90 lap was some 6.11sec faster than the Lamborghini Huracán Performante's record for series-production cars (see page 54)

need. With us it works the other way: we charge it 100 per cent and then work out how we can use the power.' To this end, the team simulated in advance how much power they could deploy while lasting the complete lap.

Even a pro like Dumbreck feels the pressure: 'I had the weight of a billion-dollar company on my shoulders, and I knew everyone wanted it so much. We only had one more lap left that day, and the data from lap three showed it was on. Suddenly I had all the pressure heaped on me because I'd proved it could be done. When I got onto the Döttlinger-Höhe [the long straight at the end of the lap], I knew it was a good lap. We were hitting 174mph at Tiergarten and I said to myself, "Hold it together, keep it tidy, don't go on the grass." In hindsight, I bottled it by a tenth or two.'

Days later a McLaren P1 LM driven by Kenny Bräck took another two seconds off Dumbreck's time. But if Nio can find a 40-second improvement in the course of just eight laps, what's the betting Stefan Bellof's all-time record – a 6:11.13 set in race qualifying with a Porsche 956 in 1983 – isn't one day going to be under threat? ❏





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F10 530D » 305 BHP  
335i/135i/X6 » 370+ BHP (+DE-LIMIT)  
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318D/218D/118D » 225 BHP  
330D E90 » 296+ BHP  
320D E90 » 215 BHP  
420i/320i/220i/120i » 275+ BHP  
435i/ F30 335i » 390 BHP  
428i/328i » 295 BHP  
535D / 335D / X5 SD » 355+ BHP  
640D/335D/535D/435D » 390 BHP  
730D » 305+ BHP  
X5 4.0D / 740D » 370 BHP  
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C350/CLS350/E350/S350 » 315 BHP  
E400 /C450 » 420+ BHP  
C400 » 400 BHP  
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SL65 BLACK » 720+ BHP (+DELIMIT)  
SL65 AMG » 690 BHP (+DE-LIMIT)  
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MASERATI GHIBLI 3.0S PETROL » 470 BHP  
MASERATI GHIBLI 3.0 DIESEL » 312 BHP  
MASERATI GT/OPORT » 438 BHP  
MASERATI GT S / MC » 479+ BHP  
BENTLEY 4.0 T V8 » 690 BHP  
BENTLEY CGT / F-SPUR (INC 2013) » 680+ BHP  
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ALFA ROMEO GIULIA QUADRIFOGLIO v BMW M3 COMPETITION PACKAGE

*Alfa's Giulia Quadrifoglio has already wowed us, but can it hold off the challenge of the M3 Competition Package on tricky UK roads – and in typical UK weather?*

# Six-shooters



YB66 LEU

RJ66 KZB

GIULIA



## This M3 isn't going to be a pushover.

Sure, the F80 generation has taken a while to come good but, having spent a couple of days with this Competition Package version – with its extra 19bhp, upgraded suspension and reconfigured drive modes – I'd say it's pretty much back to full strength. This car drives like it looks – pumped, tense, up for it – and sounds like it looks, too, the growl of the twin-turbo straight-six ever-present, evoking memories of the iconic, naturally aspirated M Power straight-six slotted in the nose of the E46. I don't see any obvious flaws in its armour. But here comes the Giulia Quadrifoglio.

Much praised and now here in the UK, the Alfa is restoring faith in the Italian brand, coming almost out of nowhere to take on the sports-saloon establishment and claim the Nürburgring saloon-car lap record, too. Yet alongside the M3 it looks, dare I say it, a little tame. The Alfa's 19in alloys are typically gorgeous but they look like 18s compared with the GTS-style 20in cross-spokes filling the BMW's expensively, lovingly flared arches. It's an altogether more subtle car, the Giulia, but undeniably handsome with it.

Its strongest statement of intent is, of course, its twin-turbo 2.9-litre V6, whose 503bhp easily outpunches even the uplifted 444bhp of the Competition Pack's 3-litre six.

**Above:** the Giulia Quadrifoglio has impressed every time we've driven it, but how will it fare on tricky Welsh B-roads, and against the M3 at the very top of its game? **Right:** Alfa's cabin can't quite match the ambience of the BMW, but its carbon-shelled sports seats are terrific

**'The growl of the M3's straight-six evokes memories of the iconic M Power six of the E46'**

It sounds like a recipe for 'light the blue touchpaper and retire to a safe distance' performance, in the manner of the original Maserati 3200GT, but while the Alfa's performance is scintillating, it is also effortlessly well mannered and exploitable, even in its most aggressive drive mode.

That comes as a bit of a surprise. So can the Alfa blend this refinement with inspiring on-road handling and involving on-limit track behaviour? To find out we're going to let them loose on Wales's heavenly, raggedy-arsed B-roads and also extract lap times at the Bedford Autodrome.

What instantly stands out is how different their steering feels. The M3's is beefy, even in its lightest, Comfort setting, but it's in character with the firm, heavily sculpted seats, bombastic start-up and taut ride. While you can individually adjust steering, damping and powertrain responses – there's Sport or Sport+ as well as Comfort – even with everything backed-off the M3 is one steely character. It feels heavier than its size, more like an M5 than an M3, but after a few miles you're dialled in to it and the ride comes good, too – it's taut, yes, but comfortably rounded and gets better the faster you go. There's plenty of grip, so the M3 feels solidly planted in corners but, as you'd hope for a punchy sports saloon, you get the sense that there isn't so much stickiness at the rear

that the twin-turbo engine won't be able to overcome it...

Bury the throttle in the low gears and the sound is glorious; deep, metallic and menacing, especially from around 4000rpm when, apparently, the bungs come out of the tailpipes. The delivery escalates in line with the sound, which makes it unexpectedly naturally aspirated in feel, with a decent initial kick low-down, a swelling mid-range and a properly thrilling crescendo at the red line. A few tentative throttle squeezes suggest an easy breakaway in the dry – judging by the flickering stability control light – but given the heft of the steering and not knowing what the power delivery feels like when the tail is loose, I'm happy to wait until the track session to find out what happens.

What a contrast the Alfa is. Its steering couldn't be much more different – light, fast and so responsive that you have to calm your inputs considerably. Yet, as with the BMW, you soon adapt to it and, although it feels soft-riding, the nose darts when you turn the wheel. The Giulia's cockpit features plenty of carbonfibre trim, but overall the ambience feels less expensive and less sporty, even though this car's Sparco seats have the optional carbonfibre shells (£2950). They look a bit flat compared with the BMW's but don't be fooled because they feel superb and offer great support.





It's a surprise, given that it churns out another 59bhp, that the Giulia's biturbo engine isn't spikier in its delivery than the BMW's. The opposite, in fact; it's stronger lower down and builds more gradually to the red line, the ZF eight-speed auto swapping gears with utter unobtrusiveness. To feel the full force of the engine and hear its unmuted voice, however, you've got to twist the mode dial round to its sportiest settings, at which point the stability control is disabled...

Heading to Wales on dark, wet, sometimes bumpy A-roads, I'm not up for that. Set to its most relaxed driving mode, the Alfa has an almost luxury-car demeanour, only the sharpest of bumps getting through, while on a light throttle the V6 settles to a rumble like the lowest note on a church organ – which is probably the cylinder deactivation kicking in. It's a serene place to be and it's hard to imagine it lapping the Ring in 7:32. The only dent in the relaxed feel comes from the brakes, optionally carbon-ceramic (as are the BMW's), which are powerful but tricky to modulate. Are the standard brakes better, we wonder? Still, four hours to the Elan Valley is a breeze. This Alfa is a pussycat, yet to show its claws.

It's exciting to see a couple of over-powered little sports saloons in the pale light of a grey, rainy morning in central Wales. Or maybe that's just me: I see an opportunity to get into their limit handling at low speeds. Alfa first. Your options are unhelpfully restricted in the Giulia because there's no separate stability-control button. If you want to turn it off there's no choice but to twist the Ferrari-style 'DNA' rotary all the way round to Race. This also sharpens the engine and gearbox and firms up the dampers, though you can press the damper button and back them off to their mid setting (again like Ferrari). The bottom line is that you don't have nearly as many setup options as in the M3.

In Race or 'D' you get to hear the V6's lovely, rorty but refined yowl, which is not as loud or edgy as the BMW's but encouraging. The Giulia feels a little firmer, a bit stiff-legged in its mid or firmest damper mode but still rides bumpy Welsh asphalt with impressive capacity and roundedness. The sharper throttle tests the traction more and, out of junctions on a light throttle, the inside wheel over-speeds harmlessly. The rear differential has electronically controlled clutch packs like Jaguar's E-diff and so can deliver locking characteristics to suit the scenario. A provocative stab of the throttle gets both wheels spinning and there's enough low-speed torque that you can easily ride out low-speed slides on a small throttle opening. If you're confident, the same applies at medium speeds, but as the roads dry out patchily and get faster, dropping back to 'D' to re-engage stability control feels prudent, as it does in the BMW. It's now that you feel a bit cheated, not being able to have the best sound and biggest performance *and* stability control on.

Slightly surprising is that neither car's steering offers much genuine feel. Also surprising, given that it seemed ready to slip in the dry, is the M3's behaviour on these sodden, bumpy roads. Set damping and steering to Comfort to give the rear wheels the best grip and have the most manageable steering, set the drivetrain to Sport, and you'd expect to have a car as happy to swing as the Giulia. But no, the rear of the M3 takes some unsticking, and not because you have to rev the engine higher and harder; it just seems to have more mechanical grip. It will go, of course, if you goad it enough, and it's impressive that although there's a bit of a snap when it breaks away, you can balance it easily on the throttle. While the recovery isn't the smoothest, it's OK. And now, to Bedford!

**Left:** both have twin-turbo sixes, but the Alfa's Ferrari-derived V6 is the mightier, delivering a searing 503bhp at 6500rpm. Even the Competition Package's 444bhp at 7000rpm, up 19bhp on the standard M3, can't live with that. Ultimate M3 does look superb though, both inside and out



## ON TRACK

**WE HAVE A LITTLE TIME BEFORE** we can lap the West Circuit, so we bag ourselves a few over-the-limit shots, mindful of preserving the tyres for the business of setting lap times. In a reversal of their wet-weather behaviour, the Alfa doesn't want to let go and fights to get hooked back up, which makes for some clumsy slide-catch-slides, while the M3 goes easily but, as its engine hits its peaks, slip isn't consistent. So in both you need to be on top of your game for a tidy slide. Of course, for a fast lap you keep it neat and use the torque for forward motion...

So BMW first. When you're not trying to provoke a drift, it's more predictable

and effective. With everything set to Sport+ and stability control off, you can feel when you're about to run out of rear grip, and with the engine working hard that's just about everywhere the car isn't straight. Turn-in is positive and it's an exciting lap, balanced on the limit so that small slides are being corrected even on the exit of the fastest corners, something you can do thanks to the confident poise of the M3. The carbon brakes are a little rumbly by the end but still pulling the car up strongly. The best lap is a 1:24.7.

And the Alfa? It doesn't start well, the rear swinging with very little provocation at the first turn – an acute hairpin – but

at the same corner on the first flying lap it's found loads of grip and, as we found earlier, once it's straight it hooks up strongly and will take full power. Body control doesn't feel as stiff as the BMW's but the Alfa is responsive thanks to the sharp steering and brakes. Oversteer is available early in the corners but from the apex there is a degree of understeer to push against, which feels useful in the quicker corners. On the third flying lap there's suddenly no power to be had – the electronic diff has bailed and the stability control has kicked back in. Game over.

No matter, the Giulia has done the job, nailing a best lap of 1:23.6. The





two cars share the spoils in terms of peak speeds before the braking areas but the Alfa carries more speed into the corners, hooks up sooner, and allows throttle-on in the faster stuff. Its gearshifts feel as swift and slick as those of the BMW's DCT, too. Perhaps, though, the speed of the Alfa is betrayed by its tyres: the right front that does most of the work has suffered and the other three look a bit beaten-up, too. A check of their sidewalls reveals that while the M3's Michelin Pilot Super Sports have a Treadwear rating of 300 (an 'eco' tyre would be 400), the Alfa's P Zero Corsas have a rating of 60. Roughly speaking, the Michelins should last five times longer...



## CONCLUSION

**CONSIDERING THEY ARE AIMED AT** the same customer, the Alfa and BMW are distinctly different propositions. On the spectrum from comfort to sportiness they overlap to a surprisingly small degree, the Alfa at its sportiest matching the BMW at its most comfortable. So what you expect from your potent, small sports saloon will probably decide which is the one for you.

The M3 is now the car it should have been from the start. Compared with the Giulia, it's a bit tougher at low speeds, a little less refined, but when it's up to speed it's superbly damped and the chassis balance is spot-on – the £3000 Competition Package is a must. It will feel too hefty for some, but it's a thrilling car with a strong engine note and an exciting delivery that rewards revs. It looks the part, too.

The Alfa is the more nuanced car, more subtle in many ways, with a supple ride and a relaxed long-distance demeanour, yet it always steers with a directness that gives it a wonderfully agile feel. That engine delivers a big hit and works beautifully with the slick auto gearbox, though you have restricted access to its total performance and full-blooded soundtrack – some drivers simply won't ever use Race because it turns off stability control. Even if you don't, we wonder how long a set of those Pirellis will last. And yet, for all that, and the unsatisfactory brake feel, it's hard not to be charmed by the Alfa. ❏

### Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio

**Engine** V6, 2891cc, twin-turbo  
**Power** 503bhp @ 6500rpm  
**Torque** 443lb ft @ 2500-5500rpm  
**Transmission** Eight-speed automatic, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip differential, torque vectoring  
**Weight** 1620kg  
**Power-to-weight** 315bhp/ton  
**0-62mph** 3.9sec (claimed)  
**Top speed** 191mph (claimed)  
**Basic price** £61,300

**evo rating** ★★★★★

### BMW M3 Competition Package

**Engine** In-line 6-cyl, 2979cc, twin-turbo  
**Power** 444bhp @ 7000rpm  
**Torque** 406lb ft @ 1850-5500rpm  
**Transmission** Seven-speed dual-clutch (optional), rear-wheel drive, limited-slip differential  
**Weight** 1560kg  
**Power-to-weight** 289bhp/ton  
**0-62mph** 4.0sec (claimed)  
**Top speed** 155mph (limited)  
**Basic price** £59,595

**evo rating** ★★★★★







# Torque show

*The Mercedes-AMG E63 S has 603bhp and a staggering 627lb ft of torque at its disposal – but is this enough to overwhelm the mighty Porsche Panamera Turbo?*

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by DAVID VIVIAN

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PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT

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**N**

**NOTHING. ACCELERATING FROM** a standstill to 60mph, not even the blink of an eye separates the fastest version of a bulky German saloon (one which, in a more basic spec, is popular with taxi companies around the world) and this year's Porsche 911 GT3 RS. At least by the reckoning of Porsche's own figures

for the GT3 and the data stream from our VBOX suckered to the windscreen of Mercedes-AMG's E63 S. Like an apex athlete and a serial steroid abuser, they punch precisely the same hole in time and space, freezing the clock at 60mph with perfect synchronicity: 3.4sec. I'll give you a moment for that to sink in. And another to acknowledge the presence of another Porsche, the Panamera Turbo. It sticks in a 3.4, too.

Of course, performance is about far more than a benchmark these days considered too paltry a gauge of a car's true speed potential. So let's move the goalposts: 0-100mph. The purist's choice manual version of the GT3, after a perfectly judged start and two peachy gearshifts administered by an expert road tester or racing driver, logs a stunning 7.6sec, according to Porsche. Whoever's driving the torque-drenched, twin-turbo taxi, no international racing licence required, has merely had to engage launch control, flatten the right-hand pedal, hang on and watch its stumpy bonnet draw ever so slightly ahead of the Porsche's low-slung

snout: 7.4sec. Were the race against a PDK-equipped GT3, it would be a dead heat. At this point, the Panamera has dropped back by nearly a second, and will continue slowly to lose ground into speed ranges we shouldn't really talk about outside an autobahn service station. Even so, I reckon there are two stats to savour: the E63 S and Panamera Turbo accelerate from a standstill to 160mph in 19.4 and 22.2sec respectively. And that is simply mighty.

That's how far we've come. Welcome to the new performance paradigm for the well-heeled masses. Thing is, for all their all-weather, all-drive accelerative prowess, both cars face clear and present danger in their own burgeoning megasaloon arena, not just from electric slingshot Teslas but also the forthcoming 'Hulk smash' iteration of the BMW M5, which will also have twin-blower V8 horsepower and all-wheel drive. Something to look forward to. But for the here and now, this is a straightforward duel.

The old Panamera may have been controversially unlovely to look at but the Turbo S was extremely handy for something the size of a baby whale. The new, leaner Turbo S is now a hybrid with tech trickled down from the 918 Spyder, but the new regular Turbo you see here has better stats than the old S as well as the first implementation of the VW Group's new MSB chassis and styling that more successfully realises the 'upscaled 911' intention of the original car. Its twin-turbo, 4-litre V8 develops 542bhp and 568lb ft of torque. Yet, on



**Left:** Mercedes has gifted the E-class huge performance before, but the new E63 takes things to a whole new level. **Right:** cabin is impressive, but the real story is the 603bhp and 627lb ft produced by the most potent version yet of Mercedes-AMG's 4-litre twin-turbo V8



## 'On paper, the Porsche is, for once, battered by its German neighbour'



paper at least, the Porsche is, for once, comprehensively battered by its German neighbour. AMG's idea of a 4-litre, twin-turbo V8 develops 603bhp and 627lb ft, and the E63's 326bhp per ton power-to-weight ratio makes the heavier Panamera's figure of 276 look a little pasty. This is reflected in the performance figures, of course, but it could be a different story on the road.

AMG's long-lived E-class hot-rod rep, gloriously initiated by the 1991 300E Hammer, opens a new chapter here. It's more than the big-engine, medium-sized car disconnect thing that's fed the buzz for so long. Now there's clever, too – specifically with the aim of making the E63 S more driver-focused and finessed than its predecessors. There's a new wet-clutch nine-speed auto that shifts as swiftly as the Panamera's eight-speed PDK for a start. And the four-wheel-drive system, with its electronically controlled rear diff, has been set up to provide a degree of rear-end mobility rather than lots of initial purchase that dissolves into understeer on the limit. There's even a brave button – well, pull back on both steering-wheel paddles in one of the more extreme Dynamic Select settings, it's the same thing – that disengages the front driveshafts and directs all 603bhp and 627lb ft to the rear wheels, intervention free. Drift Mode, big boy tempo.

The Panamera Turbo doesn't have a drift mode but it does have Porsche Traction Management – an active all-wheel-drive system that seeks to balance both understeer and

oversteer with the aim of delivering a nibble-around-neutral cornering balance rather than an entertainingly rear-biased one, which at least sounds like an efficient way to do business with big numbers.

First-gen Panameras weren't perfect but I've always been a bit of a fan, and a recent trip to Porsche's Nardò proving ground in southern Italy to sample the latest 671bhp Turbo S (sadly, only from the passenger seat) could be said to have had a profoundly consolidating effect. Driving the plain Turbo to meet up with staff writer Will Beaumont, photographer Aston Parrott and the E63 S at designated showdown ground zero, it isn't quite the shock and awe machine the S proved to be, but it nails the supersaloon basics with such crushing confidence and Porsche-infused charisma, I can't help thinking that, for all its power, it's the Merc that may be rocked and wobbled when the pair meet.

The new cabin has certainly helped reassert the appeal of the Panamera's snug, low-slung architecture, the old confusing spray of centre-console buttons replaced by sleek, touch-sensitive surfaces and the analogue dials by a trio of crisp, clear digital displays. And it's hard to think of another rear cabin space that feels quite as special, as in sync with the car's dynamic demeanour. The deeply sculpted bucket seats are almost as comfortable and supportive as the ones up front. Not a new approach – I think the Lamborghini Espada got there first – but brilliantly executed nonetheless.

It's obvious on the way to the rendezvous that the big Porsche has the compass to do smooth, supple and subtle as effortlessly as it does ballistic but, when the two cars test their mettle on the same roads, it's clearer still that the Panamera never quite sheds a slightly buffered quality that smothers the edge of excitement. But if the supersaloon market thrives on contrast, that's a good thing, because with the E63 S it's exactly the opposite.

Before I acclimatise, the Merc feels comparatively tall and narrow after the Panamera and, despite being held tight by deeply contoured bucket seats every bit as good as the Porsche's, no amount of high-tech bling, white upholstery or shiny dash trim can disguise the necessarily sensible, four-square, taxi-friendly E-class basics beneath. Naturally, 603bhp and 627lb ft have something to say on the first impressions front and, perhaps unsurprisingly, zap all that boring E-class stuff from immediate recall.

Taps open, the Merc is so relentlessly rampant it squeezes an involuntary chuckle from my upper respiratory system – the sort that commonly accompanies disbelief. I thought the 577bhp GT R supercoupe I'd driven a week earlier was the quickest thing AMG made. Now I'm not so sure. The aural drama is tamped down here – a sort of soft-rock EQ as opposed to the GT R's uncompressed thrash metal – but the heavy, vectored G-forces and wildly accelerated sensory frame-rate are just the same. It's what genuine supercar performance feels like with an elevated view down the road, but without the underlying trepidation.

The steering's surprisingly light, quick and pin-sharp. There isn't much feel, but confidence builds as you start to lean on what seems an almost inexhaustible supply of front-end grip and explore just how much angle can be coaxed from the rear without decoupling drive to the front wheels altogether. More than you might think.

In the sportier Dynamic Select modes, the Merc's suspension can feel drum-taut over broken surfaces. It's the price you pay for zero-tolerance body control but, curiously, firm rarely becomes fidgety. Even the sharpest irregularities fail to fluster; they defer to a resolute underlying composure.

As Will notes: 'It feels alert, far more agile than you'd expect from a car this size, and feels very natural to drive quickly.'

Back in the Panamera Turbo, I get a contrastingly more pronounced elasto-kinematic feel, as if the chassis is having a somewhat convoluted, possibly argumentative, dialogue with the road surface. It's a softer-edged dynamic that has some distinct lateral components, a mild shuffling of the hips, that nevertheless seems sufficiently well contained to keep the Panamera alert and responsive at speed and impressively glued to the tarmac. It's a bit of an acquired taste and Will isn't entirely convinced: 'The steering doesn't have the immediacy of the AMG's, and there isn't the same front-end grip. You have to be patient before the front tyres hook-up and you can get on the throttle. Once settled, you can use full-throttle, the rear tyres push the back around while the fronts try to pull you straight. They feel like they're fighting against one another and trying to tear the tarmac up, but it works and it gains speed very quickly.'

It really does. Despite being down on power and torque (on paper) and still the size of a baby whale, the new Panamera refuses to be properly dropped by the E63 S at any point during the day, summoning reserves of surge from a secret stash Porsche always seems to build into anything with a 'Turbo' badge on its bootlid. It emerges from the encounter slightly bloodied but with its honour surprisingly intact. In the end, though, Will and I concur. For the time being at least, the E63 S is king of the supersaloons.

**'Despite being down on power, the Panamera refuses to be dropped by the E63 S'**

**Below:** Panamera interior has been given a thorough revamp, and it's much improved.

**Below right:** Porsche also has its own new twin-turbo 4-litre V8, good for 542bhp and 568lb ft





## MERCEDES-AMG E63 S 4MATIC+ v PORSCHE PANAMERA TURBO

### ACCELERATION (from standstill, in seconds)

**E63 S 4Matic+** speed (mph)

10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	120	130	140	150	160
0.7	1.2	1.6	2.1	2.7	3.4	4.2	5.2	6.2	7.4	8.7	10.5	11.8	14.4	16.6	19.4

**Panamera Turbo** speed (mph)

10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	120	130	140	150	160
0.6	1.0	1.6	2.1	2.7	3.4	4.3	5.7	7.1	8.3	9.7	11.4	13.1	15.5	18.6	22.2

### QUARTER MILE

**E63 S 4Matic+** seconds

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
11.5sec (127.8mph)												

**Panamera Turbo** seconds

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
11.8sec (121.8mph)												

### BRAKING (100-0mph)

**E63 S 4Matic+** distance (metres)

76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96
94.5m (7.6sec)										

**Panamera Turbo** distance (metres)

76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96
83.4m (5.9sec)										

## ON TRACK

Each car retains its essential character on track, but traits are exaggerated and there's a greater distinction between them. The Panamera feels direct and agile when you turn in aggressively, but beyond the first phase of a corner its softer chassis means it starts to feel heavy, almost cumbersome. Body roll absorbs much of your inputs, meaning it's difficult to make fine corrections, and the front axle pushes on if you're too eager with the throttle. Once you've found a flow, however, the Panamera exhibits that devastating point-to-point pace that it shows on the road.

The E63 feels more at home on track, astonishingly so for an almost-

two-ton saloon. With sharp steering and the damping set to firm, it feels alert, while the bullish engine means there's enough throttle adjustably even when it's driving all four wheels. Its left can't be disguised completely, though; the exit of a corner can be tricky as you deal with a touch of weight transfer.

Activating Drift Mode and uncoupling the front drivshafts illustrates exactly why the E63 has four-wheel drive. It wants to oversteer everywhere and the transition is practically instant, though the long wheelbase means slides are easily held. Not the most effective way round a track, but hugely entertaining. **WB**

### Mercedes-AMG E63 S 4Matic+

**Engine** V8, 3982cc, twin-turbo  
**Power** 603bhp @ 5750-6500rpm  
**Torque** 627lb ft @ 2500-4500rpm  
**Transmission** Nine-speed automatic, four-wheel drive, rear limited-slip differential, torque vectoring  
**Weight** 1880kg  
**Power-to-weight** 326bhp/ton  
**0-62mph** 3.4sec (claimed)  
**Top speed** 155mph (186mph option)  
**Basic price** £88,295

**evo rating** ★★★★★

### Porsche Panamera Turbo

**Engine** V8, 3996cc, twin-turbo  
**Power** 542bhp @ 5750-6000rpm  
**Torque** 568lb ft @ 1960-4500rpm  
**Transmission** Eight-speed dual-clutch, four-wheel drive, rear limited-slip differential, torque vectoring  
**Weight** 1995kg  
**Power-to-weight** 276bhp/ton  
**0-62mph** 3.6sec (claimed)  
**Top speed** 190mph (claimed)  
**Basic price** £115,100

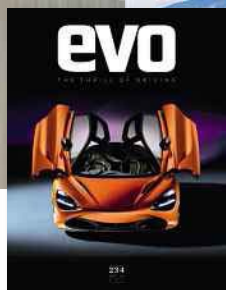
**evo rating** ★★★★★





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by RICHARD MEADEN

PHOTOGRAPHY by  
ASTON PARROTT

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*Never before has  
**evo** assembled such  
an eclectic range of  
trackday machinery.  
All that's left is for you  
to decide which car best  
suits your ambitions*



# 2017 TRACK CAR HEROES



## ASTON MARTIN VULCAN

NOTHING PREPARES YOU FOR YOUR FIRST up-close meeting with the Vulcan. Pictures only tell you so much, and even video fails to communicate the heart-pounding presence of this huge and hugely valuable machine.

Is it an indulgence? Of course. That's rather the point of these millionaires' playthings. Have I questioned the point of these 'can't drive them on the road, but can't race them, either' hypercars? Yes, many times. Yet no matter how sniffy you are about their reason for being, walk up to the Vulcan and all cynicism melts away.

'Awesome' is an over-used term, but it's a description that fits the Vulcan to a tee. The price tag (£2.2m), the power output (820bhp when fully lit), the rarity (just 24 were built) and the downforce (in excess of the car's 1350kg kerb weight) make for a truly remarkable machine. One blessed with beautifully resolved styling and exemplary fit-and-finish but fused with the purity of race-proven hardware and propelled by an engine from the gods.

The more remarkable thing about the Vulcan is that this is no baby-eating monster for professional drivers only. Quite the opposite, in fact. Terrifying your best customers is bad for business, so the Vulcan was built around a carefully structured driver-training programme that brings each customer up to a level where they can confidently enjoy the performance. The car itself has been set-up to be user-friendly, though I'm struggling to believe anything this big, with this much power, grip and downforce, can be a pussycat.

The cockpit is fabulous but intimidating, as you sit a long way back in the chassis. The yoke-type wheel is a work of art and feels as good as it looks. There are three power modes for the engine – 550bhp, 675 and the full 820. As Darren Turner, the works driver who helped develop this car, has already warmed the tyres for us and time is marching on, there doesn't seem any point mucking about: 820bhp it is!

The motor starts almost instantaneously, settling into a fast, urgent race-car idle. The Xtrac sequential 'box is pretty much straight from the GTE/GT3 Vantage, so you only need to use the clutch when pulling away and coming to a halt. It's a hefty thing to depress. The car pulses with the engine's energy and there's plenty of chatter from the transmission and diff at low speeds, but once its aquiline nose is pointed out onto the track, it comes alive.

For the first few laps, you're overwhelmed by the magnificence of it all. The engine is otherworldly, with epic reach and a sensational serrated soundtrack. The six-speed transmission shifts with the snap of a whipcrack, each pull on the deliciously tactile paddles punching up or down with fabulous immediacy. The brakes

**Above:** the view from the Vulcan's hot seat; carbon wheel has controls for adjustable ABS, the pitlane speed-limiter and traction control.  
**Right:** you can really feel the downforce in the Vulcan – it blends beautifully with the massive mechanical grip

## INTRODUCTION

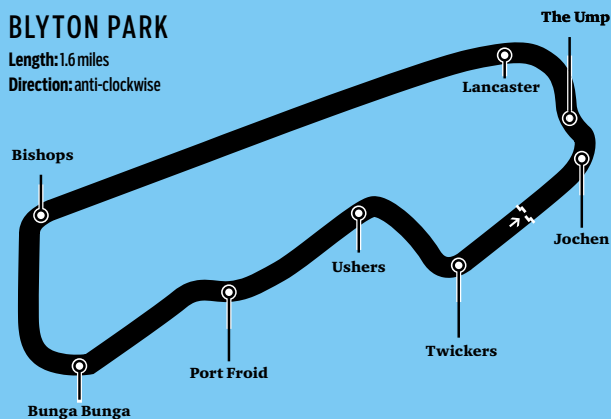
**IN ALL 19 YEARS OF EVO'S EXISTENCE, I DON'T** think we've tested a broader or more intriguing group of track cars than this. Topped by the remarkable £2.2m, 820bhp Aston Martin Vulcan and tailed by the ready-to-race £3500, 67bhp Citroën C1, this is a brilliant, eccentric and eclectic spectrum of racing and trackday cars.

In driving these cars for enjoyment on track, we've peeled back the layers to explore their ability to entertain, then pushed to the limits of their performance (and sometimes our own) to build a complete picture of what this wonderful and weird collective has to offer.

Rich or poor, novice or expert, hardcore racer or trackday tourist, when it comes to flat-out fun in all its forms, we really have never had it so good.

### BLYTON PARK

Length: 1.6 miles  
 Direction: anti-clockwise





'This car compresses braking areas like crushing an empty Coke can, with each interlinking straight devoured'

– gargantuan carbon-ceramic discs gripped by six-piston calipers – have tremendous pedal feel and progression, which you absolutely wouldn't expect in a car so reliant on racing hardware. Right from the off, the car feels on your side.

As you begin to gain confidence, your speed builds naturally. There's enormous mechanical grip, supported by a traction-control system that can be wound in or out according to the conditions and skill of the driver. It's reassuring to know it's there, likewise the ABS, which can also be adjusted. As we'll learn as the test continues, the electronics are supremely subtle – genuine aids to your speed and enjoyment, and certainly not systems to be disabled.

The real genius of the Vulcan reveals itself when the magical sensation of downforce comes into play. Aston has been very clever in melding mechanical and aerodynamic grip

so that the wings are working well before you breach the Michelin slicks' hold of the tarmac. Consequently, when you summon the spuds to really lean on the front end through Blyton's rapid Port Froid esses, the wings and underfloor aero already have you safely in their embrace.

As a result, the Vulcan doesn't force you to make a leap of faith in the way high-downforce racing cars tend to. Instead, as you work the car harder, you feel the nose just start to push wide of your chosen line. Not by much, but just enough to let you know you're properly on it.

Slower corners need more respect, as the tail will loosen under the onslaught of all the torque. That said, the electronics will take the sting out of it if you've got them dialled in, allowing you to apply small amounts of corrective lock and stay on the power before they truly intervene.

Charging down Blyton's straight (we run

without the midway chicane) is an unbelievable sensation. One that assaults all your senses in one great Technicolor surround-sound blur. Braking is best done with your left foot, but it's possible to brake with your right if you prefer. You wouldn't believe how hard you can hit the middle pedal, or how you can dive at the apex with the brakes still applied. This car compresses braking areas like crushing an empty Coke can, with each interlinking straight devoured in just a few lunges through the 8000rpm rev range. And those high-speed corners? Well, they're the Class-A hit.

**evo** has driven some epic kit around here, but nothing comes close to the Vulcan for drama, involvement or entertainment. It's a ludicrous thing, but it distils the best bits of driving a race car and an exotic supercar into one remarkable experience. If you could, you absolutely would.

## McLAREN 570S SPRINT

IT'S SOMETHING OF A TRADITION TO get a fired-up McLaren to our trackday tests, and this time is no exception. This is the 570S Sprint, which to all intents and purposes is the 570S GT4 racer without the motor choked down to a little under 430bhp. Confusingly, the Sprint gets 533bhp (this is effectively a 540C-grade motor), but that's ample in what is a surprisingly close-to-standard car.

The brakes are cast-iron with McLaren's brake-steer system (so no limited-slip diff). The dampers are by Penske and the car runs on slicks. The result is a car that's perfectly suited to track work, and blisteringly quick, but far more approachable than a GT3 car, relying as it does on mechanical grip, not downforce.

The electronic aids are helpful without getting in the way. Indeed, you soon learn to use them as a tool, leaning gently on the TC on corner exit without feeling any intervention that bleeds away speed. Similarly the brakes, which are mighty and ABS-assisted (though you're never aware of this, in the dry at least).

Criticisms? Well, the control weights are light and the engine lacks the kind of bite we know the 3.8-litre V8 can deliver. That said, the car still romps around Blyton, and with none of the drag of a high-downforce GT3 car it tears down the straight, routinely hitting 155mph.

Get to know it and you'll also find a car that's less prescriptive in nature than it first seems. And while you never truly get a sense of physicality, there's a precision and calmness to the 570S Sprint that means you're not hanging on for grim death when you decide to go for it.

At £160,500 it's a serious toy, but there's no question it delivers a memorable, contemporary experience that's related to the road car yet takes you to another level of performance.

'There's a precision to the 570S Sprint that means you're not hanging on for grim death when you decide to go for it'

## RADICAL RXC 600R

WHEN IT COMES TO GENUINE RACE CARS for the road, few companies go further than Radical. This is its wildest road-legal offering yet: the 650bhp RXC 600R. Powered by a highly tuned 3.5-litre twin-turbocharged Ford EcoBoost V6, it weighs just 1130kg dry and costs £156,000.

The V6 is a monster, pulling hard from low revs right through to 7000rpm. It's nowhere near as thrilling as Radical's 2.8-litre V8, which is like a baby Cosworth DFV, but the Ford V6 has a buzzsaw soundtrack that cuts through the cockpit. Added percussion comes from the snap of each up- and downshift delivered by Radical's own Quaife-built six-speed transversely mounted transmission. It's just the right side of raw – let's call it medium rare.

There's air conditioning and power steering, the assistance of which can be ramped up or down according to your strength and preference. The 600R is surprisingly civilised, though it lacks the aesthetic polish you might expect from such an expensive car. That said, it easily compensates with bangs for your bucks.

Being the road-legal version, this car is running greater ride height and Dunlop Direzza tyres. The damper settings are at a happy medium that would work on road and track – they're far from super-stiff. You can feel the limitations of the tyres, but this actually makes for a more entertaining car through the slow- and medium-speed corners, where you can feel the tail begin to slide. It's surprisingly playful and happy to adopt big angles, though clearly that's not the fastest way to drive it.

Through the fast direction changes, you feel the aero come into play, squeezing the car into the track and generating immense grip. Again, it's the Direzzas that wilt first, but they do so progressively and the RXC's balance ensures it is the front end that gently pushes wide.

What's impressive is how consistently you can lap at very high speeds without feeling like you're in over your head. The car gives you plenty of feedback to work with but never feels harsh or edgy. You simply jump in and work steadily up to your limit. Best of all, once you're there, it encourages you to explore further without hanging you out to dry.

Our test car is a development RXC, so has no traction control. To be honest, you don't really need it in the dry, but the lusty EcoBoost's generous torque would need careful managing in the rain. That's all part of the challenge and fun, but it's always nice to have some kind of safety net. Production versions will have that.

Is it fast? Of course! Is it fun? Definitely. In fact, it's both fast and fun at the same time, which is a trick not all cars manage to pull off. It's a challenge to exploit all its downforce and



**Above:** the McLaren doesn't prioritise downforce and, as a result, begs to be driven on the limit. **Right:** Radical's latest costs a pretty penny, but it'll eat cars twice its price in terms of lap time and put a grin on your face while it does so

braking capabilities, but it's also flattering. There's no doubt – after a few dozen laps you'll feel like a hero, but you don't need super-human skills to make the RXC 600R fly.

Some of you will struggle with the name, badge and looks. Especially at this price point. We sympathise if that's your view. This is certainly no 991 GT3 for fit-and-finish, but it'll humble cars twice the price and give you a window on junior LMP race car performance. As ever, Radical avoids distractions and gets straight to the heart of the trackday driving experience. When you're working the wheel of this very impressive car, nothing else matters.





## PORSCHE CAYMAN GT4 CLUBSPORT

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING: 'BUT it's got paddles!' That's exactly what I thought on getting into the Cayman GT4 Clubsport for the first time. Ironic, given its road-going sibling had more column inches dedicated to its manual gearbox than any other car in history.

The Clubsport is different in that it's only about the driving. Race driving. Built by the Porsche Motorsport department to compete in global GT4 championships, the Clubsport is for speed and speed alone. That's why the six-speed stick-shift was traded for a seven-speed PDK; why its interior is gutted of luxuries and criss-crossed with a roll-cage. It retains traction and stability control, plus ABS brakes, but all are adjustable to help get the best from expert hands or ham-fists. The brakes are from a GT3 Cup, but the 3.8-litre flat-six remains almost untouched but for some laptop tweakery (it's good for around 380bhp). The suspension of this car is non-adjustable, but an upgrade kit has since been offered to give teams setup options via adjustable dampers and shed some weight through fibreglass doors.

At £97,200, the GT4 Clubsport is serious money but modestly priced in GT racing terms, and as cheap as a factory-built Porsche racing car has ever been. The quality and pedigree shines through, but it's still very much the production-based racer and all the better for it.

The pared-back racing cockpit sets a suitably sporting tone, but it's a cinch to operate. The gearshift is crisp and punchy, the engine as lusty and even more soulful than the road car's. Weight is around 1300kg – what mass is shed in jettisoned luxuries is gained in roll-cage and fire system – but the chassis feels urgent and

energised. The suspension is aggressively stiff, so you need to treat the car with respect on cold tyres, but this gives you an excuse for a bit of weaving to get temperature into the rubber.

Once the tyres begin to bite, you can roll up your sleeves and get stuck in. There's a ton of grip but the chassis retains a Cayman-y feel, so you have the feedback to work methodically towards the limits of the car or your own skill. Up to a point, it's every bit as encouraging and approachable as the road GT4, albeit laced with a slightly edgier balance. Really begin to work it and the limitations of the suspension mean it gets a bit lively over Blyton's lumps and bumps, but it's a challenge with ample rewards.

The brakes are fabulous – powerful, precise and progressive – so you can hit them hard in the big braking areas or work them with subtlety into the slower corners to try and adjust

the balance of the car. Brookspeed, whose car we're using today, has been campaigning in the GT4 European Series and enjoyed a string of podium finishes. And this without the upgrade package that would certainly make the GT4 more adaptable to different circuits.

Though outgunned by the bigger hitters in this gathering, there's no question the Cayman is one of the highlights of the test. And while you might not be interested in pursuing a racing career, when these filter down from frontline GT championships into club-level competition, a GT4 Clubsport will make a prize trackday toy for the discerning weekend warrior.

## BMW M4 GTS

ONE OF THE VERY FEW ROAD CARS IN THIS test, the M4 GTS is BMW's attempt at a 911 GT3. Adjustable suspension and aero, carbon-ceramic brakes, a water-injection system to cool the intake charge and allow an increase in turbo boost, plastic windows to save weight and a spartan interior with race-style seats and a roll-cage – it's a very, very serious effort from BMW's M division.

At £121,780 it's also very serious money, but such is the transformation that the car looks and feels like it's worth the outlay in a way a tuner M4 wouldn't. That increase in boost (from 2.2 to 2.5bar) lifts power and torque to 493bhp and 442lb ft from 425bhp and 406lb ft

**Below:** MX-5 Global Cup is the polar opposite of the monster Radical, and speed is extracted by carrying momentum – even if that means bouncing off the kerbs







'It's not the easiest car to read, but once you bond with the GTS, it really can lay down an impressive lap'

in the regular M4. BMW claims a top speed of 190mph and a 0-100mph time of just 8sec.

There's no point beating about the bush: compared to a standard M4, the GTS feels like a different car. It's only 5kg lighter, but it has a much-increased sense of agility and grip. The front end is absolutely nailed to the track, but the rear-driven chassis still manages to generate strong traction, so you're not forever fighting oversteer and smoking the rear tyres.

The GTS changes direction brilliantly, which gives it a real sense of urgency and aggression, but you need quick hands to stay on top of it because the way it transitions from grip to slip can be spiky. It's not the easiest car to read, so it takes a while to get yourself dialled in to its behaviour. However, once you bond with the thing, it really can lay down an impressive lap. That's thanks to the stonking twin-turbo motor, but also the accuracy with which you can place the car and how close you can get to the limit.

The twin-clutch gearbox is brilliantly precise and responsive, and there's so much torque you really get punched out of corners. You just have to be mindful that this engine doesn't have the reach of an equally powerful naturally aspirated unit, so it's easy to hit the rev-limiter

if you're not attuned to the right upshift points.

It's a tremendous car and a significant step on from the less-than-brilliant base M4. You have to manually adjust the dampers and ride height to get the best from it on track, but that commitment to performance is something to celebrate. Much like the GT3, this M4 GTS would make a really entertaining and capable road car. One born for trips to Spa or the Ring.

## MAZDA MX-5 GLOBAL CUP

WE'RE BIG FANS OF THE MX-5, SO IT STANDS to reason we're seduced by the Global Cup racer before it's even turned a wheel. Developed for Mazda North America (MNA) by Long Road Racing, it's designed for affordable, door-handle-to-door-handle one-make racing. MNA has sold more than 100, so there's clearly an appetite for this kind of car.

You can see why. It looks the part, hunkered down over its slick-shod wheels, roll-cage forming a latticework around the cockpit. As with many one-make cars, costs are kept down by not doing much to the engine. So the Global

Cup retains the road car's 2-litre in-line four and six-speed manual gearbox. There's a fruity exhaust and a racing ECU, but power remains unchanged, at 158bhp. The safety equipment plus additional oil coolers and a larger radiator mean this MX-5 isn't so much lighter than the regular car, but 920kg is about as light as road-based racers get. Long Road Racing went to town with the suspension, fitting Multimatic dampers and a motorsport LSD to extract the most from the bespoke BF Goodrich slicks.

With this in mind, you know getting the best from the car will be all about preserving momentum and working those sticky tyres. There's a thrill in rising to that challenge – one where you have to commit yourself completely to the quick corners but be disciplined in the slow stuff. It's a fabulously agile and grippy car, and you can hustle it way more than any other car here, but given the road car's ability to be playful and place an emphasis on more RWD techniques, the Global Cup's excess of grip and paucity of grunt will come as a let-down to those who expect it to be a more exuberant steer.

With grids of up to 50 cars, the racing must be frenetic in the extreme. The car is no fireball in a straight line, but with corner-speed being the



critical commodity, the braking areas must be absolutely bonkers. The balance of the chassis is just about perfect, so you can – and will! – take liberties in the knowledge it'll remain benign.

What this Global Cup racer does highlight is just how good this latest MX-5 can be on track. Tough as old boots and light on its tyres and brakes – you know it would take plenty of punishment. It involves you every step of the way and demands you get stuck in, working its free-revving motor hard, stirring that manual transmission to keep things on the boil and hitting the brakes as late as you dare.

It's a cracking car as it stands and great value, too (it's \$58,900 ready-to-race), but you can't help think that as a trackday toy it would really come alive with a bit more power and torque. Stick one of UK-based tuning outfit BBR's turbo kits on it and you'd have something akin to a GT4-spec MX-5...

## MINI JCW CHALLENGE

THE JCW CHALLENGE IS A MINI THAT'S right up our street. And so it should be – we helped develop it. Unashamedly hardcore, it draws directly from Mini's popular one-make race series to uprate almost every aspect of the car. That's to say Nitron dampers, Team Dynamics wheels, a Quaife LSD and Mintex brake pads. The only thing unchanged is the engine, which remains at 228bhp in JCW spec. That's a shame, because the engine feels soft, especially in the

upper reaches of its rev range. There's little wrong with *what* it delivers, but the *way* it delivers it is a bit flat.

The Challenge feels combative on the road, but on a circuit it begins to make sense. You can adjust the suspension every which way, so within reason you can tune it to your taste or optimise it for different weather conditions. The car runs Michelin Cup 2 rubber, and once hot, the tyres actually deliver a little too much grip, so rather than feeling edgy and alive, the Challenge can feel a little too planted.

Still, it feels much darter and more nimble than the regular JCW, which is a bit of a mess on track, largely thanks to its lack of an LSD. And, perhaps most important of all, the Challenge captures the essence of speed and aggression that a hot hatch should have in abundance.



Knowing the mischief quick Minis tend to foster in their drivers, trackday fun could well include hunting down a few big beasts in time-honoured fashion. It's not perfect, but it's a quick and convincing effort from a manufacturer that's unafraid to go out on a limb.

## CITROËN C1 RACER

WHAT'S A C1 DOING IN THE PAGES OF *evo*? Good question. One this unlikely racer is more than capable of answering, for against appearances, this is one of the most entertaining cars we've driven in years. No, a 67bhp three-cylinder engine is not ordinarily the kind of engine from which dreams are made. But



when it happens to be the thrumming heart of an ultra-affordable endurance racer, normal frames of reference are bent well out of shape.

Bizarrely, we have the buoyant classic car market to thank for this C1's existence. That and the vision of the Classic 2CV Racing Club, who settled upon the C1 as the perfect successor to its 2CV class, which is being priced out by the scarcity and ballooning values of tin snails.

As you'd expect, the recipe is decidedly bread-and-butter. Steel wheels shod with Nankang tyres and simple Gaz dampers are the extent of the chassis changes. The engine and 'box are left untouched.

Can such a humble concoction be fun? Absolutely. It's absurd, but you can't help but want to get in the C1 and rag it to within an inch of its life. It's slow, but once you start to stir it along, you get drawn into the experience. At first it's a bit of harmless hoonery – hard tyres and stiff suspension mean there's plenty of lift-off oversteer – but when you drive for a time, it all crystallises into the same basic challenge faced by anyone who's ever tried to get a car around a race track as quickly as possible.

In the C1, momentum is more precious than gold. Once you've built some up, you don't want to relinquish any of it, so you find yourself paring back your inputs and being as precise as you can with the brakes. It hops and skips when you've got it nicely loaded into the corners, but if it begins to pogo, you've overdone it. Traction isn't exactly a problem, so the trick is to get back on the power as soon as you can and scribe the smoothest, shortest line from apex to exit.

It's slow in outright terms – probably a bit too slow to mix it with general trackday traffic – but all things are relative. In a one-make racing scenario, so long as you're not as slow as your rivals, you're on your way to winning. And believe me, you'll want to race this car. As much for the fun of clubbing together with some mates, throwing a grand or two in the kitty and experiencing the unique fizz that comes from competitive driving as for the enjoyment you get from the car itself. What a hoot. 📌

**Above:** the Mini has the stamina to be treated as a true trackday toy, thanks to the excellent brakes and super-consistent tyres. **Below:** you only have to scan eBay to appreciate the genius of C1 racing – there's a plentiful supply of Citroën's entry-level hatchback, with many selling for no more than £1000



### McLaren 570S Sprint



**Engine** V8, 3799cc, twin-turbo  
**Power** 533bhp @ n/a rpm  
**Torque** 398lb ft @ n/a rpm  
**Weight** 1425kg  
**Power-to-weight** 380bhp/ton  
**0-62mph** 3.4sec (est)  
**Top speed** n/a  
**Basic price** £160,500

### Porsche Cayman GT4 Clubsport



**Engine** Flat-six, 3800cc  
**Power** 380bhp @ 7400rpm  
**Torque** 310lb ft @ 4750-6000rpm  
**Weight** 1300kg  
**Power-to-weight** 297bhp/ton  
**0-62mph** c4.4sec (est)  
**Top speed** c180mph (est)  
**Basic price** £97,200

### Aston Martin Vulcan



**Engine** V12, 7000cc  
**Power** 820bhp @ n/a rpm  
**Torque** 590lb ft @ n/a rpm  
**Weight** 1350kg  
**Power-to-weight** 617bhp/ton  
**0-62mph** <3.0sec (claimed)  
**Top speed** >200mph (claimed)  
**Basic price** £2.2m (sold out)

### BMW M4 GTS



**Engine** Straight-six, 2979cc, twin-turbo  
**Power** 493bhp @ 6250rpm  
**Torque** 442lb ft @ 4000rpm  
**Weight** 1510kg  
**Power-to-weight** 332bhp/ton  
**0-62mph** 3.8sec (claimed)  
**Top speed** 190mph (claimed)  
**Price when new** £121,780 (2016)

### Mini JCW Challenge



**Engine** In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbo  
**Power** 228bhp @ 5200rpm  
**Torque** 236lb ft @ 1250-4800rpm  
**Weight** 1215kg  
**Power-to-weight** 191bhp/ton  
**0-62mph** 6.3sec (claimed)  
**Top speed** 152mph (claimed)  
**Basic price** £32,000

### Mazda MX-5 Global Cup



**Engine** In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc  
**Power** 158bhp @ 6000rpm  
**Torque** 139lb ft @ 4600rpm  
**Weight** 920kg  
**Power-to-weight** 174bhp/ton  
**0-62mph** 6.8sec (est)  
**Top speed** 135mph (est)  
**Basic price** \$58,900

### Radical RXC 600R



**Engine** V6, 3500cc, twin-turbo  
**Power** 650bhp @ 6800rpm  
**Torque** 500lb ft @ 4200rpm  
**Weight (dry)** 1130kg  
**Power-to-weight (dry)** 584bhp/ton  
**0-60mph** 2.7sec (claimed)  
**Top speed** 180mph (claimed)  
**Basic price** £156,000

### Citroën C1 Racer



**Engine** In-line 3-cyl, 998cc  
**Power** 67bhp @ 6000rpm  
**Torque** 69lb ft @ 3600rpm  
**Weight** 790kg  
**Power-to-weight** 86bhp/ton  
**0-60mph** 12.5sec (est)  
**Top speed** 98mph (claimed)  
**Basic price** c£3500

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# GET ON TRACK.

## YOUR ULTIMATE TRACKDAY GUIDE

BEGINNER • INTERMEDIATE • EXPERT



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### WELCOME

**T**HESE DAYS THE THRILL OF DRIVING IS MORE OFTEN THAN NOT tempered by speed limits, 'safety' cameras and an increasingly congested road network. When was the last time you actually kept your foot pinned to the throttle for more than a couple of seconds on the road? To do this safely you need to get on track, where you can actually experience your car's full capabilities. It's great fun, of course, and you'll likely meet some like-minded individuals with whom you can share tales of derring-doo, but honing your skills behind the wheel will ultimately make you a better driver, too. Our guide will ensure you're fully prepared, but be warned: it's utterly addictive!

# High value protection in one policy.



## Specialist Motor Insurance Policy

Our Hiscox insurance scheme is specially tailored to meet the needs of the prestige & performance car enthusiast. We understand that if you have chosen to drive something a little more special, you require the insurance to match.

Our policy is designed specifically for drivers of higher value cars (with at least 1 vehicle valued above £50,000) and no limit to the amount of vehicles that can be covered under the policy.

We can also offer cover for UK & European track days, giving you added peace of mind if you decide to take your vehicle on track.

Cover for your household insurance can also be combined along with your motor insurance to create a single policy for your home, belongings and cars - with a single renewal date.

## Policy benefits include:

- ✓ Exclusive Pace Ward scheme rates - not available elsewhere
- ✓ Flexible underwriting approach
- ✓ Agreed value & new car replacement (terms apply)
- ✓ Similar courtesy car for any loss to your vehicle
- ✓ Fully comprehensive cover whilst driving other cars
- ✓ Breakdown assistance cover
- ✓ Unlimited Glass cover (£100 excess)
- ✓ Foreign use within territorial limits - no limit on number of trips
- ✓ Optional Track Day cover is available at competitive rates

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# HELMETS

From your first trackday to Formula 1, there's a lid here for every level – and budget



£70-£250



**SPARCO  
CLUB J1**  
FROM £75

It's not fireproof so isn't suitable for motorsport, but this open-face helmet is ECE approved and has an Advanced Thermo Material shell, an anti-dazzle peak and a hypoallergenic lining.



**SPARCO  
CLUB X1**  
FROM £90

This ECE-approved helmet is suitable for trackdays but isn't sanctioned for motorsport. It has vents on the chin, forehead and back of the head to keep you cool. Also available in white.



**OMP  
CIRCUIT HELMET**  
FROM £90

An entry-level full-face item with a wide aperture for decent vision, a clear visor plus air vents on the crown and chin. Not FIA or MSA approved so suitable for trackdays only.



**HEDTEC  
XTREME II**  
FROM £210

With factory-fitted threads for a HANS device and Snell 2015 approval for use in MSA motorsport, this full-face helmet with a fibreglass composite shell packs a lot in at an attractive price.



**RACE SAFETY  
ACCESSORIES PRO**  
FROM £240

This helmet can be bought in standard form with a visor or as a Touring (pictured) with an adjustable peak. Both have Snell 2015 approval and are drilled and tapped for HANS device fitting.



£250-£450



**OMP  
GP8**  
FROM £360

With an adjustable ventilation system and a unique visor locking mechanism, this helmet also features a fire retardant Nomex lining, HANS posts and has Snell and FIA approval.



**BELL  
SPORT 5**  
FROM £370

With a lightweight fibreglass shell and Bell's brake visor mechanism, the classic Sport 5 also has efficient ventilation, a Nomex lining and HANS compatibility. FIA approved.



**BELL  
MAG 9 PRO**  
FROM £430

An open-face helmet with FIA and Snell approval, the Bell Mag 9 Pro features a carbon/Kevlar/glass tri-weave shell, an anti-dazzle peak and a flame retardant liner with removable ear cushions.



**SIMPSON  
BANDIT**  
FROM £440

The Bandit has an impact-absorbing and fire-retardant one-piece liner, is neck and head restraint compatible and has FIA and Snell approval. Available in white or matt black.



**SPARCO  
AIR PRO RF-5W**  
FROM £450

An all-new design for 2017, the Sparco Air Pro has a fibreglass shell, fitted HANS clips, a removable lining, six ventilation points and can accommodate a drinks system. FIA and Snell approved.



£450+



**STILO ST5F N  
COMPOSITE**  
FROM £510

Featuring a lightweight composite shell, the Stilo has been trimmed down for aerodynamic efficiency. HANS ready and with FIA and Snell approval, it also has removable noise-reduction earmuffs.



**OMP  
GP8 CARBON**  
FROM £640

Using a lightweight carbon shell, this helmet has an adjustable airflow system, a soft Nomex lining and FIA and Snell approval, along with HANS posts and a gold iridium visor.



**ARAI  
GP-5WV**  
FROM £790

With a larger-than-most visor opening, this helmet is particularly suitable for glasses wearers and has the option of either a visor or a peak. HANS compatible and Snell and FIA approved.



**BELL  
RS7 CARBON**  
FROM £1045

The Bell RS7 Carbon has a lightweight carbon fibre shell and an optical-grade anti-fog visor. It's Snell and FIA approved and has 14 air intake and extraction vents along with factory-fitted HANS posts.



**ARAI  
GP-6RC**  
FROM £3000

Using Formula 1 technology and hand-laid carbon fibre, the GP-6RC also has an increased visor aperture, factory-fitted HANS posts and conforms to the latest FIA standards.

# KIT & CLOTHING

It's not about looking the part, but feeling comfortable and staying safe



## £500 total

**1 OMP SPORT RACE SUIT FIA**

£270  
racewear.co.uk

**2 OMP FIRST S RACE BOOTS**

£111.54  
gprdirect.com

**3 SPARCO LAND RG-3.1 RACE GLOVES**

£61.49  
demon-tweeks.co.uk

**4 MOMO PROFESSIONAL OPEN FACE BALACLAVA**

£32.39  
gsmotorsport.co.uk

**5 DEMON TWEEKS HELMET BAG**

£24.90  
demon-tweeks.co.uk



## £1000 total

**1 SABELT CHALLENGE TS-3 RACE SUIT**

£478.80  
gsmotorsport.co.uk

**2 SPARCO TOP+ SH-5 RACE BOOTS**

£151.14  
demon-tweeks.co.uk

**3 ALPINESTARS TECH 1 Z RACE GLOVES (2017)**

£129.95  
gprdirect.com

**4 SPARCO DELTA RW-6 NOMEX UNDERWEAR**

(top, leggings, balaclava, socks)  
£209.16  
demon-tweeks.co.uk

**5 ARAI HELMET BAG**

£51.06  
gsmotorsport.co.uk



## £2500 total

**1 ADIDAS CLIMACOOL RACE SUIT**

£1055.99  
demon-tweeks.co.uk

**2 SPARCO SUPERLEGGERA RB-10.1 RACING SHOES**

£406.98  
gsmotorsport.co.uk

**3 SPARCO TIDE RG-9 RACE GLOVES**

£190.74  
demon-tweeks.co.uk

**4 OMP FIA-APPROVED NOMEX COOLSHIRT**

£759  
demon-tweeks.co.uk

**5 SPARCO UNIVERSE KIT BAG**

£119.94  
gprdirect.com







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# **NANKANG** TYRES



## **NS-2R**

- MSA List 1B approved
- **Ultimate grip** without compromising wet weather performance
- **Available** in 13" to 20" sizes
- **2015, 2016 and 2017 Tyre of choice** for BMW Compact Cup



## **AR-1**

- MSA List 1B approved
- **Designed** for the track day driver chasing lap times
- **Available** in 13" to 18" sizes
- **2017 Tyre of choice** for 750MC M3 CUP

# TYRES

Arguably the most important trackday upgrade for your car – here are just some of your options



£50-£85



**FEDERAL  
595 RS-R**  
From £65

**Width:** 195-285mm **Diameter:** 15-18in

Suitable for both road and track, the RS-R has been designed to give high levels of adhesion along with wet-weather abilities and resistance to aquaplaning. MSA-approved (List 1B) for competition use.



**NANKANG  
SPORTNEX NS-2R**  
From £65

**Width:** 175-265mm **Diameter:** 13-18in

A control tyre for many championships, the NS-2R is available in three different compounds. Road legal, and designed specifically for both wet and dry use, it makes a good all-rounder.



**YOKOHAMA  
ADVAN A032R**  
From £65

**Width:** 155-205mm **Diameter:** 10-16in

A road-legal competition tyre, the Advan A032R's 'aquatusk' grooves are designed to improve water displacement, making it suitable for wet use. MSA-approved (List 1C) for competition.



**NANKANG  
AR-1**  
From £85

**Width:** 185-295mm **Diameter:** 13-18in

An up-and-coming name in the trackday market, the AR-1 has been designed as a refined track tyre but is also road legal. It has 5.5mm tread depth and is MSA approved (List 1B). Best in the dry.



**TOYO  
PROXES R888R**  
From £85

**Width:** 185-315mm **Diameter:** 13-20in

A thoroughly updated version of the popular R888, it offers better grip, response and feedback. MSA List 1B approved but not suitable in wetter conditions due to aquaplaning risk.



£90-£125



**YOKOHAMA  
ADVAN A048R**  
From £90

**Width:** 165-255mm **Diameter:** 12-18in

Designed to deliver precise control and predictable grip in dry conditions. Can be used in the damp but there is an aquaplaning risk in the wet. Three different compounds for different cars and uses.



**TOYO  
PROXES R1R**  
From £90

**Width:** 195-205mm **Diameter:** 15-16in

A less aggressive tyre than the R888R, the R1R is suitable for occasional track use in both wet and dry conditions. Toyo says the sidewall is designed to improve steering response and feel.



**KUMHO  
ECSTA V70A**  
From £105

**Width:** 175-335mm **Diameter:** 13-18in

The control tyre for a number of championships, the V70A comes in three compounds and Kumho says it offers superior wet and dry handling characteristics. List 1C MSA-approved.



**AVON  
ZZR**

From £122

**Width:** 185-265mm **Diameter:** 13-18in

The updated ZZR has a new compound and construction aimed at ultimate dry-weather performance (though it's less effective in the wet than Avon's ZS). List 1B and 1C MSA-approved.



**AVON  
CR50**

POA (limited availability)

**Width:** 175-245mm **Diameter:** 13-15in

Designed and developed by Avon's motorsport department for the Caterham Superlight R500, this tyre is also suitable for other smaller-wheeled cars and promises strong wet and dry performance.



£125+



**AVON  
ZZS**

From £125

**Width:** 185-255mm **Diameter:** 13-17in

A high-performance tyre for both road and track, with a tread pattern that's designed to maximise water clearance. Tread-block stability is said to provide good dry-weather grip.



**DUNLOP  
DZ03G**

From £125

**Width:** 185-295mm **Diameter:** 14-18in

The DZ03G has been a control tyre in many championships, but is also road legal. Two compounds are available; both offer strong performance in the dry but can suffer from aquaplaning in the wet.



**MICHELIN  
PILOT SPORT CUP 2**

From £137

**Width:** 215-245mm **Diameter:** 17-21in

Designed for the circuit but homologated for the road, the Cup 2 has reinforced shoulders to slow wear and increased tread depth to delay the onset of aquaplaning. List 1B MSA-approved.



**YOKOHAMA  
ADVAN A052**

From £200

**Width:** 205-315mm **Diameter:** 16-18in

The latest addition to Yokohama's range, this asymmetric tyre has a new compound that Yokohama says offers controlled handling and extreme grip in both wet and dry conditions.



**PIRELLI  
P ZERO TROFEO R**

From £225

**Width:** 205-325mm **Diameter:** 15-21in

Updated dry-weather track tyre for high-end sports cars, with better wear characteristics than the original Trofeo and an increase in stability and lateral grip. Road-legal but not designed for wet use.

# CIRCUITS

Here in the UK we're lucky to have a multitude of tracks – these are the most popular

## KNOCKHILL

Configurations:1  
 knockhill.com  
 01383 723337  
 Trackday organisers:  
 trackscotland.co.uk  
 knockhill.com  
 trackdays.co.uk



## CROFT

Configurations:1  
 croftcircuit.co.uk  
 01325 721815  
 Trackday organisers:  
 javelintrackdays.co.uk  
 bookatrack.com  
 opentrack.co.uk



## LYDDEN HILL

Configurations:1  
 lyddenhill.co.uk  
 01304 830557  
 Trackday organisers:  
 lyddenhill.co.uk



## CADWELL PARK

Configurations:2  
 cadwellpark.co.uk  
 01507 343248  
 Trackday organisers:  
 msvtrackdays.com  
 circuit-days.co.uk  
 javelintrackdays.co.uk



## CASTLE COMBE

Configurations:1  
 castlecombecircuit.co.uk  
 01249 782417  
 Trackday organisers:  
 bookatrack.com  
 opentrack.co.uk  
 javelintrackdays.co.uk



## GOODWOOD

Configurations:1  
 goodwood.com  
 01243 755073  
 Trackday organisers:  
 opentrack.co.uk  
 goodwood.com



## MALLORY PARK

Configurations:2  
 malloryparkcircuit.com  
 01455 502214  
 Trackday organisers:  
 javelintrackdays.co.uk  
 opentrack.co.uk  
 trackdays.co.uk



## BRANDS HATCH

Configurations:2  
 brands Hatch.co.uk  
 01474 872331  
 Trackday organisers:  
 msvtrackdays.com  
 bookatrack.com  
 goldtrack.co.uk



## ANGLESEY

Configurations:4  
 angleseycircuit.com  
 01407 811400  
 Trackday organisers:  
 circuit-days.co.uk  
 javelintrackdays.co.uk  
 opentrack.co.uk



## DONINGTON PARK

Configurations:2  
 donington-park.co.uk  
 01332 810048  
 Trackday organisers:  
 msvtrackdays.com  
 rmatrackdays.com  
 circuit-days.co.uk



## BEDFORD AUTODROME

Configurations:5  
 bedfordautodrome.co.uk  
 01234 332400  
 Trackday organisers:  
 msvtrackdays.com  
 javelintrackdays.co.uk  
 opentrack.co.uk



## BLYTON PARK

Configurations:5  
 blytonpark.co.uk  
 Trackday organisers:  
 javelintrackdays.co.uk  
 lotus-on-track.com  
 trackdays.co.uk



## OULTON PARK

Configurations:3  
 oultonpark.co.uk  
 01829 760301  
 Trackday organisers:  
 msvtrackdays.com  
 javelintrackdays.co.uk  
 circuit-days.co.uk



## PEMBREY

Configurations:1  
 pembreycircuit.co.uk  
 01554 891042  
 Trackday organisers:  
 opentrack.co.uk  
 trackdays.co.uk  
 motorsport-events.com



## ROCKINGHAM

Configurations:5  
 rockingham.co.uk  
 01536 500500  
 Trackday organisers:  
 circuit-days.co.uk  
 bookatrack.com  
 goldtrack.co.uk



## SILVERSTONE

Configurations:4  
 silverstone.co.uk  
 01327 320280  
 Trackday organisers:  
 rmatrackdays.com  
 goldtrack.co.uk  
 bookatrack.com



## THRUXTON

Configurations:1  
 thruxtonracing.co.uk  
 01264 882222  
 Trackday organisers:  
 goldtrack.co.uk  
 thruxtonracing.co.uk  
 trackdays.co.uk



## SNETTERTON

Configurations:3  
 snetterton.co.uk  
 01953 887303  
 Trackday organisers:  
 msvtrackdays.com  
 javelintrackdays.co.uk  
 bookatrack.com





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### ▪ RSRSpa Premium Trackdays

If you're going to drive the circuit, then make it the best possible experience by joining an **RSRSpa Premium Trackday**. These high quality, limited entry days focus on maximising track time for each and every user.

- 7. June 2017 (Wed)
- 20. June 2017 (Tue)
- 6. September 2017 (Wed)
- 28. September 2017 (Thu)
- 13. October 2017 (Fri)
- 4. November 2017 (Sat)

### ▪ RSRSpa Driving Academy

The obsession of every track driver in the world, from amateur to world champion is to go faster, finding those "last few tenths". While many thousands of pounds are spent on modifying cars, the most gains are often found in the area most overlooked; driver training. Regardless of your experience level, the Driving Academy at **RSRSpa** provides customised, one-on-one learning to help you reach your driving goals!

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LOTUS	Exige V6 & Evora		£127.16*	£111.32*	N/A
CATERHAM	7	Greenstuff™ material recommended	£32.06*	£41.86*	N/A
CATERHAM	7	AP race upgrade	£90.06*	£81.29*	N/A
MAZDA	MX-5 (NA)		£67.49*	£71.46*	£221.58*
MAZDA	MX-5 (NB)		£88.28*	£71.24*	£241.08*
MAZDA	MX-5 (NC)		£103.62*	£88.03*	£271.51*
MAZDA	MX-5 (ND)		CALL	£88.03*	Call

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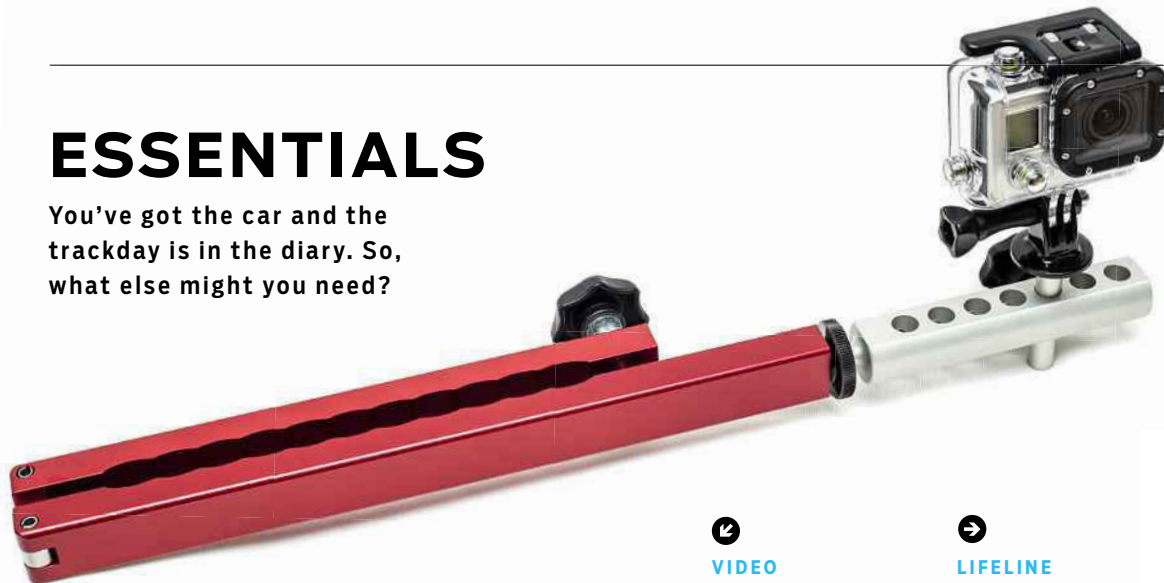


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# ESSENTIALS

You've got the car and the trackday is in the diary. So, what else might you need?



**CAMERA HEADREST MOUNT**  
£120

[headrestmount.co.uk](http://headrestmount.co.uk)

Keep your mates abreast of your latest trackday exploits with a headrest mount for your camera.

**VIDEO VBOX LITE**  
£119.4

[vboxmotorsport.co.uk](http://vboxmotorsport.co.uk)

Record standard-definition video via two cameras with a real-time graphical overlay and 10Hz GPS data-logging.



**LIFELINE HANDHELD FIRE EXTINGUISHER**  
1.75L  
£69.12

[demon-tweaks.co.uk](http://demon-tweaks.co.uk)

MSA-approved for national rallying and some historic racing, this comes complete with a mounting bracket and quick-release straps.



**CASTROL EDGE OIL TOP-UP KIT**  
From £12.95

[opieoils.co.uk](http://opieoils.co.uk)

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**3M VENTURESHIELD PAINT-PROTECTION FILM**  
£ P.O.A

[3mventureshield.co.uk](http://3mventureshield.co.uk)

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**HARRY'S LAPTIMER (PETROLHEAD EDITION)**  
£15.50

[gps-laptimer.de](http://gps-laptimer.de)  
or [Apple app store](http://Apple app store)

The best trackday data- and video-recording app bar none, with predictive lap-timing and enhanced data analytics.



**MICHELIN HIGH-POWER TYRE INFLATOR**  
£36

[halfords.com](http://halfords.com)

If you need to add air to your tyres during your track session, let a portable compressor take the strain of inflation.



**HALFORDS PROFESSIONAL TORQUE WRENCH**  
60-300Nm  
£89.99

[halfords.com](http://halfords.com)

There are few things worse than having a wheel come loose on a trackday, so make sure your wheel nuts are nice and tight before you take to the circuit.





## TRACK DRIVING EXPERIENCES & CAR HIRE

**Worried about damaging your car on a trackday? Then why not sample circuit driving using someone else's wheels?**

**I**F YOU DON'T WANT TO RISK YOUR own car, or perhaps aren't 100 per cent convinced that trackdays are for you, you do still have a couple of options.

Firstly, there are any number of trackday-type experiences you can choose from. Audi and Porsche both run driving-experience days at Silverstone, for example, and BMW has recently revamped its M Driving Experience, which is offered at MSV circuits such as Brands Hatch, Oulton Park and Bedford Autodrome. These manufacturer-backed days aren't cheap – the BMW one costs £595 – but they do offer a good taster for those not wanting to commit too many resources to their first trackday.

We recently sampled the BMW M Driving Experience at Oulton Park. You spend either a morning or an afternoon doing three activities. There's an hour in an MSVM4, with an instructor guiding, and this is split into two sessions that are recorded on VBOX equipment. After your first session, you'll analyse your driving with your instructor, seeing where you can make up

time – the idea being that on your second session you can put this into practice. It seems to work, too, as we shaved five seconds off our lap time. You'll then spend half an hour driving an M2, M4 and M6 round the track, and finally top it off with a handling session with an M3 in the paddock, trying to perfect your car control.

It's a great taster experience, and although quite expensive, once you take into account the cost of a normal trackday – fuel, tyre wear, insurance premium (should you decide to take it out) – it starts to look like better value.

If you're a more experienced track driver, these experiences are less likely to appeal, in which case you might consider renting a car for your trackdays. Several UK-based companies such as BookaTrack and Trackdays.co.uk offer track-prepped machinery for hire, while further afield there's the option of tackling the Nordschleife in anything from a Renault Sport Twingo to a 991 GT3 RS with a company such as RSRNurburg. Be prepared to dig deep for that GT3 though – 12 laps comes in at 5000 euros... ❌





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# TOYOTA MR2 Mk1



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by COLIN GOODWIN

PHOTOGRAPHY by GUS GREGORY

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*Conceived amid the oil crisis of the 1970s, Toyota's brave vision for a sports car that could sip fuel but still give the driver something to think about was a stroke of genius*





# WHEN MY MATE MARCUS BOUGHT A

new car, we'd drop everything and go round to his place at the double. It would always be something dramatic, eight-cylindered and American. His high-point was a 1973 Pontiac Trans-Am in Brewster Green. Not just any Trans-Am, but one of only 252 that left the factory fitted with the mighty Super Duty 455 engine. In the early 1980s, it felt unbelievably fast. So when, in the summer of 1985, the jungle drums rang out that Marcus had got a new car, there was the usual excitement. The car? A bloody Toyota. We couldn't believe it. Turned out he'd bought a new MR2, which I hadn't even heard of. Just under sixteen-hundred cubic centimetres, four cylinders and horsepower barely worth counting.

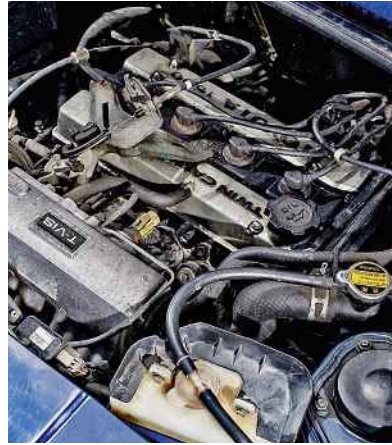
Then, one rainy day, I had a go in this new Toyota. I couldn't believe the car's handling and the way the engine revved past 7000rpm. I felt like a committed atheist who had just seen someone walking on the Thames. In the wet, the Trans Am would have kept up for a few yards and then disappeared through a hedge.

While Pontiac and other American companies were fiddling around with smog-pumps and wondering what on earth to do about the mid-'70s oil crisis, Toyota was thinking about the sort of car it could make that would be fun to drive yet economical. Many layouts were considered and prototypes mulled over until the boss of the testing department, Akio Yoshida, and his colleagues decided that a mid-engine with transverse mounting was the way to go. A prototype codenamed SA-X was built in 1976 but the aforementioned crisis put the mockers on the project until it was revived in 1980. The SA-X was then substantially reworked and a concept called SV-3 built. We'll be dropping a name or two later, but for now all you need to know is that the prototype was tested at length at Willow Springs raceway by Dan Gurney.

The SV-3 broke ground at the Tokyo motor show in 1983. Little would change on the journey from concept to production car, with the only obvious differences being new front and rear spoilers that were designed to improve the car's stability in crosswinds. And a name change, of course, to MR2, for 'Midship Runabout Two-seater'. In June 1984 the MR2 went on sale in Japan, and sixth months later in the UK. European MR2s were exclusively fitted with Toyota's 4A-GE engine, which had already been used in the AE86 Corolla – the car that inspired today's GT86 coupe. The engine displaced 1587cc and was fitted with Denso electronic port fuel injection. Fairly exotic to have fuel injection and a sixteen-valve head (both of which warranted special badging) in the mid-'80s, let alone multi-point injection. Toyota's T-VIS variable intake system was also fitted and that really was advanced stuff on a small and affordable sports car. Power outputs varied market to market, but UK-spec cars (which didn't feature a catalytic



‘Even a five-speed gearbox was a bit sexy with sports cars such as the Triumph Spitfire and MGB still warm in their graves’



**Clockwise from top left:** air intakes are emblematic of the MR2's geometrically rigid design; 1.6-litre twin-cam not pretty but good for 122bhp; interior hits the spot in terms of ergonomics, but the seats can't match the cornering forces generated; that's a red line that rewards driver commitment

converter) produced 122bhp. Even a five-speed gearbox was a bit sexy with sports cars such as the Triumph Spitfire and MGB still warm in their graves.

The mid-engined layout brought with it five steel bulkheads, and this in the days before high-strength steel was put into strategic positions via the wizardry of computer simulation – a combination that today sees body-in-whites shed kilograms with each new generation. All the same, the MR2 weighed 977kg (split 44:56, front to rear), making it a bit of a fatty compared to contemporary hatchbacks but still commendably light bearing in mind its semi-exotic spec.

MacPherson struts were used at each corner with disc brakes all-round. No power-steering was required in a small and light mid-engined car, of course, so there's just a simple rack and pinion to do the turning. All this slipped under a very distinctive body – lots of flat surfaces and a wedge profile. I challenge you to look from bumper to bumper at the Mk1 MR2 and find a detail half-inched from a rival manufacturer. It's not something that can be said of the Mk2, which as we know can be converted into a comedy Ferrari replica.

The reason Marcus defected from Stars & Stripes to the Rising Sun was that a new job brought with it a car allowance. There was no list of 'allowed' machines, but the car had to be new, which, annoyingly, ruled out a 440 Six-Pack Plymouth Superbird (this would have been my young friend's first choice). So he went for the then-new Toyota MR2 instead.

Several years later, in 1987, Jim Harrison was going through the opposite experience. He'd just been made redundant and did the only sensible thing with his redundancy cheque: 'I bought a sports car,' he says, standing next to his blue MR2 outside his Essex home. Harrison is a

very loyal Toyota customer but not a particularly profitable one from the accountants' point of view. Not only has he owned his MR2 from new, but five years later he bought a Carina E GTI, which he also still owns.

And it's not as if Harrison has spent a fortune at the parts counter buying spares for the MR2, either. 'It's had an alternator, a water pump and a cambelt,' he says. You don't get away from the tin-worm in a car built in 1987, even if over its 30 years and 120,000 miles it has been lovingly cared for by one owner. Frilly rear arches were replaced some years ago and now look perfect. Harrison warned us that his car isn't concours but did say that it was totally original. It wouldn't take much to bring the car up to snuff. Our friend Richard Tipper, the master detailer, could have it looking stunning with a day's work. What would be far harder would be to find a car that hasn't been messed about with.

Harrison's car is a facelifted Mk1, or an AW11B in MR2-speak. A redesigned air intake, different alloys and the availability of a T-roof are the main differences. I never liked the T-bar version, so it's nice that this car has only the factory sunroof (which, as I am about to find out, you need on a hot day because there's no air conditioning).

It's 32 years since I last sat in one of these; the Mk2 had arrived by the time I started writing about cars. The passage of time is fascinating. If you go back 32 years from the launch of the MR2, you are in 1952, before the Mini, before the E-type, and the year Lotus was born. Today, we'd probably call the MR2 a modern classic, but I'd never have referred to a Ford Prefect as a modern classic in 1985.

I remember how the MR2 drove but I remember nothing of its interior. It takes little time to change the ergonomics

'I challenge you to look from  
bumper to bumper at a Mk1 MR2  
and find a detail half-inched from  
a rival manufacturer'



from the owner's settings to something I'm comfortable with. The steering is adjustable for height, not reach, but the seat is fully adjustable. The bliss of a simple instrument and control layout. There's only one stalk and that's for the indicators, and in Japanese fashion for the time, it is on the right. An extended finger from each hand can easily reach the simple knobs that sit each side of the instrument binnacle and control wipers and lights. They're a bit Citroën, which is meant as a compliment.

The engine starts with an immediacy that would have been astonishing to an owner coming in 1985 from a sports car with a pushrod engine, carburettor and choke. Perfectly placed pedals and a footrest in just the right place. There's a dent in the armrest, just in front of the gearlever.

'Thirty years of enthusiastic shifting, Jim?'

'No, a mechanic dented it with his elbow.'

The first thing you notice, and it takes as long as the first pothole or bump, is the Toyota's ride. I don't know which tyre companies supplied the OEM fitment in the day, but this car rides on 185/60 Continentals and original 14in alloys. Perfectly sized aesthetically, and for the power-to-weight ratio of the car. And, it seems, perfectly matched to the suspension. If you go to the Wikipedia page for the MR2 you will read that the suspension had the magic wand of Roger Becker, Lotus's legendary engineer, waved over it. I wasn't so sure about this, so did a bit of detective work. Sadly, Roger Becker died earlier this year. I spoke to his son Matt, who after a career at Lotus is now responsible for the chassis dynamics of all Astons, much to the benefit of its customers. Matt remembers projects with Toyota but can't recall his father mentioning the original MR2.

'I'd give John Miles a call,' he suggested. Which I did. Miles, who raced in F1 for Lotus in the late-1960s before working on the firm's road cars, confirmed that they used an MR2 as a benchmark for the front-drive Elan, but had no recollection

of Becker having worked on the Toyota's suspension. And neither is there any mention of Lotus having done so in Toyota's records. Supra and Corolla, yes, but not the little mid-engined car. Whatever, the MR2 most definitely has a Lotus feel about it.

The dampers, bushes and every part of this car's suspension are original, including the track rod ends. That's amazing. There is a little bit of vagueness in the steering in a straight line, but it's negligible. Could be down to tyre pressures or geometry. We tend to wax on about unassisted steering from cars of this era, but many of them were good on the go yet miserable at parking speeds. I owned a 205 GTI at the time and that is a good example. Try a Griffith with manual steering for further proof. The MR2 combines light steering weight with fantastic feel.

Even mildly sporty family cars today have deeply bolstered seats and I can't remember the last time I drove a car whose seats didn't offer enough support in committed corners. The MR2 is easily capable of generating forces that will have you floating out of your chair. The gearshift isn't as smooth as a modern gearbox's, either, but it's precise and, if you guide the lever accurately, fast. The whole car feels in rude health, with a smooth clutch and well-weighted, firm brake pedal.

Harrison has no idea what his cherished MR2 is worth because he has no intention of selling it. I had no idea, either, but looking in the classifieds revealed several good-looking Mk1s available for around £4000, although they might not be in as fine fettle as this one. I don't think that there is a classic car out there that is as good to drive and as entertaining as a Mk1 MR2 for anything like that money. Series 1 Lotus Elises are at least double, and we know the ridiculous prices being asked for Peugeot 205 GTIs. Perhaps the MR2 has an image of being a bit 'hairstresser', or excessive customising has tainted the car. Either way, driving Jim Harrison's example has been a revelation. 📌

**Below:** Harrison's car looks superb in blue, and is equally good to drive; Goodwin reckons an original Mk1 MR2 is something of an underrated bargain



## Toyota MR2 (Mk1)

**Engine** In-line 4-cyl, 1587cc

**Power** 122bhp @ 6600rpm

**Torque** 105lb ft @ 5000rpm

**Transmission** Five-speed manual, rear-wheel drive

**Front suspension** MacPherson struts, coil springs, dampers

**Rear suspension** MacPherson struts, coil springs, dampers

**Brakes** Ventilated front discs, solid rear discs

**Wheels** 5.5in x 14in front and rear

**Tyres** 185/60 R14 front and rear

**Weight** 977kg

**Power-to-weight** 127bhp/ton

**0-60mph** 8.2sec (claimed)

**Top speed** 124mph (claimed)

**Price when new** £9295.16 (1985)

**Price now** £3000-6000

**evo rating:** ★★★★★



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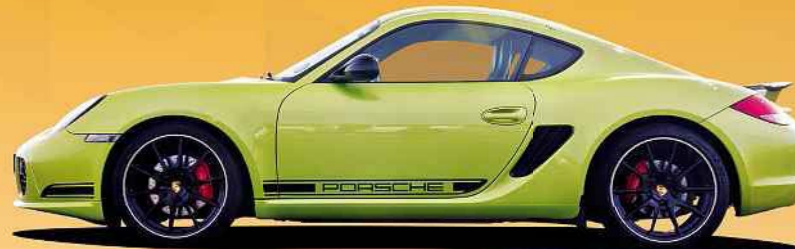
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# Market

WANT IT. BUY IT. OWN IT. LOVE IT.

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## ANALYSIS 2017'S TOP USED BUYS

Want a used performance car that's great to drive but which hasn't had its price driven up by investors yet? Whatever your budget, we've got a suggestion for you

by Bob Harper



## HOT HATCHES

We love a properly sorted hatch, and here are three crackers that won't break the bank but will put a big smile on your face every time you get behind the wheel.

Our first contender is the evergreen VW Golf, here in Mk2 GTI guise: practical, lightweight and old enough to be eligible for classic insurance. Funny to think that in 1984 112bhp was deemed enough to be 'hot', but from 1986 there was a 16v version with 136bhp. Good, original 8-valves start at around £3k, but any sensibly priced Mk2 should provide plenty of depreciation-proof thrills.

If a Golf's too old or lacking in urgency then perhaps a modern classic like the Renault Sport Clio 182 would fit the bill. You'll need to be quick, though, as good examples are being squirrelled away and it's easy to see why: punchy performance (we recorded 0-60mph in 6.6sec), interactive handling and a reputation for being one of the last of the old-school hot hatches that's still affordable. Make sure it's had a cambelt change, check for worn synchros and watch for accident damage, and for £2k you can have a cracker.

Our modern hatch is the Ford Fiesta ST. And for good reason: a brilliant 197bhp turbo 1.6 four, entertaining handling, and it makes a good daily, too. Prices now start at around £10k, making it a bit of a bargain.



## SPORTS CARS/ COUPES

If you don't need the practicality offered by a hatchback then something more sporting could be in order. Our pick for a useable classic here is Toyota's first-generation MR2. As you can read on page 106, it's a characterful thing, with an excellent engine and a sweet mid-



engined balance. Despite its age, parts availability isn't a problem... although rust is. A Mk1 MR2 is never likely to be hugely valuable but it will gently appreciate while you enjoy driving it. And anyway, what other mid-engined machine can you buy for under £5k these days? (No, we don't want an MG F thank you very much.)

If you're after something brawnier, our pick of the modern classics would be TVR's rowdy Tuscan. Launched in 1999, all versions were powered by a straight-six, with outputs ranging from from 350 to 400bhp, and as you'd expect in something weighing little over a ton, performance is vivid to say the least. Early cars were pretty twitchy but suspension upgrades can tame them if done properly. Running costs can be high but you'll be owning a piece of British sports car history.

**'The R8 simply has it all: looks, performance, road manners and surprisingly manageable costs for a supercar'**



Prices are on the up and now start at around £25k.

Even more modern is the Porsche Cayman R. Launched in 2011 and gone by 2013, it's a relatively rare machine. It had 9bhp more than the 987 Cayman S and had been on a diet too, although spec'ing air con and a radio did put back some of the 55kg Porsche had shaved off. There was a limited-slip diff and some new aero, but it was the tweaked suspension that made it a step up from the S. It'll be the most collectible and sought-after 987 Cayman. Right now one could be yours for £40k.

## SUPERCARS

For most of us a supercar has to have a mid-mounted engine, and while our classic choice here might be a little light on the cylinder count, it makes up for it with a turbocharger and a low kerb weight.

The Peter Stevens-styled Esprit Turbo lost some of the edginess of Giugiaro's original, but by the late '80s that design was in need of a refresh. Running gear still included the 2.2-litre 16-valve four-cylinder unit, now good for 215bhp and a 0-60mph time of 5.3sec. Good going for what is 2-litre diesel power these days... A 264bhp SE was launched in 1989, bringing a sub-5sec 0-60mph time. Stunning looks, very decent performance, but a little on the fragile side. Prices start at around £20k.

There wasn't much arguing in the office over our choice of the Audi R8 V8 as a modern-classic supercar. It simply has it all: looks, performance, road manners and surprisingly manageable costs for a supercar if you buy wisely. A future classic in the making? Time will tell. Early 414bhp versions start below £40k.

We've always had a soft spot for the Ferrari 458 Italia, and with a 562bhp 4.5-litre V8 that sounds absolutely sublime it would be hard not to include it in this roundup. It's not just the engine, though – staggering grip, pin-sharp handling and excellent brakes combine to make this one of the best supercar packages ever. £135,000 will get you sitting behind the wheel – almost a bargain given the car's £178k original list price.

**Top:** demand for Cayman R looks set to grow. **Above left:** original Audi R8 V8 is a supercar bargain. **Far left:** Ferrari 458 Italia seems like a sensible way to spend £135,000

## EXPERT VIEW

### VW GOLF GTI MK2

#### ANDY GREGORY

##### VW Heritage

'As you'd expect of a car of this era, the thing to really watch out for is rust. They can vary a huge amount depending on whether they've been pampered or led a hard life, but you still need to check the sills, the seam where the floor panel meets the sill, the wheelarches, the doors, the lower bulkhead and the front suspension subframe.

'Mechanically they're strong and easy to work on too – you can have a stab at finding out what's wrong without resorting to a specialist as they're pretty simple. They can get a little smoky, mainly

down to old valve stem seals, and they can become a little rattly on the bottom end. Gearboxes are generally strong but watch for a failing second-gear synchro. Suspension and brakes are straightforward; rear brakes have a tendency to seize if the car's been standing.

'Most parts are still available and we've had quite a few made for the Mk2, too. The factory Recaros are super desirable but the standard sports seats are pretty good and we now stock the cloth to have them re-trimmed.

'The Mk2 Golf GTI is a very achievable classic. You can buy one for a grand – it'll be rough, but you can get them – and for £5000-6000 you should be able to buy a very good example.'

### PORSCHE CAYMAN R

#### PHILIP RABY

##### Philip Raby Porsche

'The Cayman R is a brilliant machine. Any Cayman is really good and begs the question as to why you'd buy a 911 – and I'm a big fan of 911s. The handling is very neutral and predictable – it's an easier car to drive fast than a 911.

'I drove a Cayman R to Scotland when they were new and even in no-air-con, no-radio spec it was incredibly useable on the drive up there, and of course when we arrived it was brilliant fun on the mountain roads.

'While there were plenty of changes for the Cayman R it's the suspension that makes it feel so good – there's a bit

of weight saving, but that's more a marketing thing as far as I'm concerned, and if I were buying today I would want air conditioning and a radio; I think most people buying would want these in a modern car.

'All Caymans hold their value pretty well, and here the rarity will add value, as will the R badge. If it was badged as an RS it would be worth even more! Sometimes you just can't predict what's going to happen to values but, that said, I think it would be worth taking a punt on a Cayman R – people love anything that's slightly rarer.

'If you're buying, ensure the car you're looking at has an excellent service history – history is key with these cars as many will want them as an investment – and also low mileage and low owners.'

### AUDI R8 V8

#### RICKY ELDER

##### REPerformance

'The R8 is a fantastic car and the earlier V8s represent superb value for money, but there are a number of things to look out for. Probably the most expensive potential pitfall is the mag-ride dampers, as they can leak. They're £1000 each, plus labour. Personally I find them too stiff for road use so I wouldn't say they're a must-have option.

'Clutches can be problematic, especially on early cars. The slave cylinder can seize up – a heavy clutch pedal is the sign. The knock-on effect can be transmission damage or premature clutch wear, and a new clutch is £3600 [fitted, at a specialist]. Some people don't

rate the R-tronic gearbox but I think it's fine if driven properly, with a slight lift on upshifts.

'Brakes can suffer from corrosion where the steel slider plates bolt to the aluminium calipers. This can cause the brakes to start to seize on, which can lead to warped discs.

'Ensure the air con works. The front-mounted condensers can take a battering but it's the compressor that's the big worry because replacement is an engine-out job.

'The engines are incredibly strong but ensure the car has an impeccable history. You can get into a V8 from around £35k, but many cars at the cheaper end of the market need work. A pre-purchase inspection is money well spent.'

## THREE TO BUY



### 1986 VW GOLF GTI MK2

£7995

A small-bumper three-door model, this 8v looks great in silver with grey striped upholstery and those wonderful Pirelli P-slot alloys. It's covered just 69k miles, with history to back this up.

MORSECLASSICS.CO.UK



### 2011 PORSCHE CAYMAN R

£43,950

With a low mileage of 14,000 and in the Peridot Green launch colour, this R looks the part. It has a comprehensive spec that includes a stereo with navigation and telephone function, the Sport Chrono Package Plus and climate control.

MERIDIENMILANO.CO.UK



### 2007 AUDI R8 V8

£44,995

Standing out even more thanks to its blue paintjob, rather than the ubiquitous silver or black, this early manual car has covered just 32,500 miles, backed up by a full history. Like the majority of R8s it has Magnetic Ride dampers.

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# USED RIVALS 'CHEAP' V12 ROADSTERS

by Bob Harper



## ASTON MARTIN DB9 VOLANTE

### SPECIFICATION

Engine	V12, 5935cc
Power	450bhp @ 6000rpm
Torque	420lb ft @ 5000rpm
Weight	1815kg (252bhp/ton)
0-62mph	4.7sec (claimed)
Top speed	186mph (claimed)
On sale	2004-2015
evo rating	★★★★★

### EXAMPLE



**2005 £42,850**  
mcurk.com

A 46,000-mile example in Onyx Black with an extensive history, satnav, a Linn audio system, HID headlights, and heated seats for those cold morning drives.

### BUYING ADVICE

'Condition and service history are key – ensure engine-oil changes haven't been skimped on. Rear-diff oil should be changed regularly, otherwise the diff can snatch a little and get noisy. Earlier cars can suffer from faulty coil packs, although most of these cars will already have had the coil packs and plugs replaced. Astons have a slight oxidation issue that can cause the paint to blister around the door handles and rear arches – it's a simple fix, but it is one of the DB9's Achilles' heels. Hoods don't tend to leak – they seal very well and are relatively quiet. Buy a car that's been well maintained. Prices haven't moved that much recently so it's a great buy that's protected from depreciation.'

Matt Franklin, McGurk Performance Cars



## MERCEDES SL600 (R230)

### SPECIFICATION

Engine	V12, 5513cc, twin-turbo
Power	493bhp @ 5000rpm
Torque	590lb ft @ 1800-3600rpm
Weight	1950kg (257bhp/ton)
0-62mph	4.7sec (claimed)
Top speed	155mph (limited)
On sale	2003-2011
evo rating	★★★★★

### EXAMPLE



**2003 £18,995**  
josephshaw.co.uk

Jasper Blue with beige nappa leather, this 74,000-mile SL600 has a full history and has had an extended warranty for its entire life.

### BUYING ADVICE

'The biturbo V12 is a cracking lump, but you need deep pockets to run one – really deep pockets. Servicing can be costly – 24 spark plugs at £9 each, plus two-and-a-half hours to fit them. The Active Body Control system can be hugely expensive to repair – shock absorbers leak, pipework leaks and the pump can get noisy and leak, and every part is pretty much over £1000. Ball joints and suspension arms wear quite rapidly, too. The turbos are pretty good but the coil packs are notoriously sensitive and cost £1000 each. The roof can also leak quite badly – lift the carpet in the boot and have a look for any signs of moisture. Check all the rubber seals for fitment, too.'

Ollie Stoner, Prestige Car Service

510bhp in later cars). Its chassis will struggle if you demand too much of it, but that V12 is a gem.

The Mercedes SL may be a little more restrained to look at, but that twin-turbo V12 is superb and doles out nearly 600lb ft of torque. The SL600 wasn't the most popular model – the V8 SL500 is far more plentiful – so finding one can take time.

Our last contender is the Bentley Continental GTC. It's a hefty beast at 2.5 tons and is less likely to thrill on the back roads, but it's devastatingly quick and offers more passenger space than either the Aston or the Mercedes.



## BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GTC

### SPECIFICATION

Engine	W12, 5998cc, twin-turbo
Power	552bhp @ 6100rpm
Torque	479lb ft @ 1600-6100rpm
Weight	2475kg (227bhp/ton)
0-62mph	4.8sec (claimed)
Top speed	195mph (claimed)
On sale	2006-2011
evo rating	★★★★★

### EXAMPLE



**2006 £38,000**  
portlandautos.co.uk

This Conti GTC is finished in a discreet, classic black-on-black combination. Its higher mileage (72,000) keeps the price down, but it has a big spec and FBSH.

### BUYING ADVICE

'Engines are close to being bulletproof bar the odd sensor fault or wiring-loom issue. The drivetrain very rarely has major issues, but do make sure oil-change intervals have been adhered to for the gearbox and differentials. Also ensure body drain holes are free of detritus else water will pool and cause corrosion or damage control modules. Suspension and brakes are pretty durable, although anti-roll bar drop links wear every 20,000 to 30,000 miles. Air chambers can leak and are a bit pricey to renew. The hood is reliable and watertight and the only likely problem is a potentiometer that's easy to change and inexpensive. The cars are very good if they get the right attention.'

Stuart Worthington, Phantom Motor Cars

# BUYING JOURNEY

evo reader Neil Tomlinson's lengthy buying history

## THE CARS

**Austin Metro Moritz (1.3)**

**Ford Fiesta 1.4 Ghia (Mk2)**

**Volvo 340 GLS 1.7**

**MGB GT**

**VW Scirocco GTX (Mk2)**

**Porsche 944 (S2)**

**Citroën ZX 1.4**

**Ford Sierra XR4x4**

**VW Golf GTI 16v (Mk2)**

**Citroën ZX 2.0 16v**

**Toyota MR2 Turbo**

**Mitsubishi Evo VIII FQ-330**

**Mazda MX-5 2.0 (Mk3)**

**Porsche Boxster S (986)**

**Nissan 350Z Nismo**

**Honda Civic Type-R (EP3)**

**Honda CRV 2.0**

**Ford Mondeo 2.2 TDCi Titanium X**

**BMW 330d M Sport (E90)**

**MNR Vortex**

**Vauxhall VX220 Turbo**

**Mini 1275 GT (1987)**

**Toyota Corolla T-sport**

**Abarth 500 Esseesse**

**BMW 1-series M Coupe**

**BMW Z4 sDrive35iS**

**Mini John Cooper Works GP (R56)**

**BMW 125d M Sport**

**Ford Fiesta ST (Mk2)**

**Mini Cooper S JCW (R53)**

**Lotus Exige Sport 350 (V6)**

**Porsche Cayman GT4**

**Porsche 911 Turbo (996)**

**N**OT ONLY IS NEIL'S CAR HISTORY vast, it also includes some varied and exceptional models. It started with the obligatory small hatchbacks, but soon took a more left-field approach when he replaced a Fiesta with a Volvo 340 – his first taste of rear-wheel drive.

A classic in the form of an MGB GT saw Neil start to work on his cars himself, but rather than simply maintaining them he also got into modifying: a Toyota MR2 Turbo was tuned to around 300bhp and a Fiesta ST to 330bhp. Today he has a pair of

Minis in his collection: an R53 Cooper S JCW with nearly 250bhp and a 1987 1275 GT that's being built as a trackday special.

It hasn't all been so impressive, though. A Porsche 944 that went catastrophically wrong forced Neil into a Citroën ZX 1.4 – 'The most boring car I've ever driven!' Then, much later, needing a car to tow his Formula Ford meant he bought a Honda CRV. But Neil more than makes up for the dull motors with a selection of proper drivers' cars, from great hot hatches to top-notch sports cars.

### Ford Sierra XR4x4

'This was the antidote to the boring Citroën ZX 1.4. With worn suspension the Sierra wallowed like a boat, but it still had loads of grip and was quick enough to be entertaining, and its V6 made a great noise. I've never had a disappointing Ford.'



### Porsche Cayman GT4

'The Cayman replaced an Exige. The Lotus was great on the right road but it just wasn't built to be left on the drive in the rain. If I'd had the garage space I'd probably still have it. As for the GT4, I really loved it, but with too many of them having been tucked away as investments I simply couldn't justify the depreciation costs of putting miles on mine so I didn't dare use it regularly. I've since replaced it with a 996-generation 911 Turbo, which has similar performance to the GT4 and a manual gearbox. My plan was to keep it standard, but I've already fitted a 997 GT3 RS gearshifter for a shorter throw and I'm thinking of fitting coilovers and adjustable suspension arms soon.'

### Mitsubishi Evo VIII FQ-330

'Probably the one I wish I still owned. I understand that there were only a small number of them in the UK, and they're certainly a rare sight today. I loved how capable and rapid it was cross-country; it made you feel like a WRC hero and every journey was fun. I sold it when a new job significantly increased my mileage and the 4500-mile service intervals became a real problem.'

## WHAT NEXT?

'I'll have to scratch my Nissan GT-R itch at some point. I really enjoyed my 350Z Nismo and so did my wife – she'd love me to have another Nissan. A very good friend sells Nobles and, having driven one, an M600 would definitely be a car I'd buy if I won the lottery.'

Email your buying journey to [eds@evo.co.uk](mailto:eds@evo.co.uk)



# STILL WAITING?



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# Buying guide



## MERCEDES-BENZ C63 AMG (2008-2014)

A V8 muscle car with German build quality and prices starting below £25,000. Is it too good to be true?

by Brett Fraser

**W**HO DOESN'T LOVE A POSH HOT-ROD? Especially one with a 6.2-litre V8 under the bonnet, an AMG badge on the bootlid and Satan's sonata blaring stridently from its quadruple tailpipes. The Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG, which first smoked its way onto British highways in 2008, ensured that the V8-engined BMW M3 never had things all its own way. So compelling was that brutal battle that **evo** threw these savage rivals into the ring together several times during the C63's six-year lifespan.

While records show the M3 emerged victorious in every encounter, the C63 always put up a valiant fight, the BMW's superiority emphatic only at the upper reaches of its dynamic repertoire. Most of the time, for most of the people, the C63's





## CHECKPOINTS

### ENGINE

Both the standard C63 V8 engine and the Performance Pack Plus version with its SLS-sourced internal components are, to quote Ollie Stoner of Portsmouth-based Mercedes specialist Prestige Car Service, 'pretty much bulletproof'.

However, and predominantly with early engines, the valvegear – camshaft lobes and tappets – can suffer from wear, and very occasionally head bolts have been known to snap. Another rare fault, but not unheard of, is for

an injector to stick open, filling the bore with fuel; the hydraulic pressure this creates can break conrods.

Highly unusual though these faults are, a specialist inspection before purchase can pay dividends – a complete engine rebuild can be as much as £8000, and even a top-end overhaul may set you back £3000-4000.

'The facelifted C63 [from 2011] is mostly trouble-free,' says Ollie, 'and is coupled to a better gearbox.' All AMG engines use oil, however, so pay regular attention to the dipstick.

### TRANSMISSION

'The automatic gearbox is extremely reliable,' reckons Ollie. However, it's worth tracking down a car with the limited-slip differential, which was included with the Performance Pack but was otherwise optional. It transforms the C63's handling during hard use. Yet even for cars fitted with AMG's own LSD – as well as for those without it – a popular and highly effective upgrade is a Quaife ATB LSD.

And while we're on the subject of traction, don't skimp on the

tyres: budget brands will ruin the handling and diminish the grip.

### SUSPENSION, STEERING, BRAKES

Aside from the very occasional leaky damper and the need to replace bushes on high-mileage examples, the C63's suspension presents no problems. On some cars you might hear a slight knocking from the front end when passing over bumps – this is most likely to be slack in the steering rack, which can be adjusted relatively easily.

With so much freely

accessible grunt on tap, the C63's brakes can take a hammering when trying to arrest all that speed. Standard discs are a very reasonable £68, but a set of front pads are more than £200. The Performance Pack's floating discs, however, are more like £500 a piece, while a full set of the composite discs found on the Performance Pack Plus can be as much as £1500-2000.

If you're not prone to going completely bananas, a set of pads could last you 25,000 miles – chances are, though, that you'll need to replace the

discs at the same time as they're on the soft side. Meatier discs are a popular upgrade.

### BODY, INTERIOR, ELECTRICS

Be vigilant for accident damage – huge power and rear-drive is a volatile combination in inexperienced hands.

Cabin trim is of very high quality, but the front seats' chunky bolsters can suffer from wear. There are no common electrical issues, but know that there are software updates for the engine and gearbox. These can be carried out by main dealers or specialists.



ability to provide instant gratification through sheer firepower, epic soundtrack and easy willingness to adopt a smoky sideways attitude out of every corner made it a very compelling alternative.

Based on the W204 C-class, the rear-drive AMG C63 – saloon and estate – made its UK debut in mid-2008, its M156 6.2-litre naturally aspirated V8 thumping out 451bhp at 6800rpm and a hearty 442lb ft. Its transmission was a torque-converter automatic, but AMG's seven-speed Speedshift Plus 7G-tronic proved so slick and intelligently programmed (complete with throttle blipping on the downshifts) that it wasn't a handicap.

The optional Performance Pack (PP) beefed up the suspension and brakes, raised the 155mph speed restrictor to 174mph, put a carbonfibre spoiler on the bootlid, and crucially added a highly desirable limited-slip differential. That diff was lost as standard issue with 2010's Performance Pack Plus (PPP), as was the uprated suspension, but the PPP used the lightweight pistons, conrods and crankshaft from the SLS to ramp up power to 480bhp – the engine mods having been previewed in the 513bhp 'DR520' model.

A facelift in 2011 also brought a coupe version, which climaxed in the motorsport-inspired 510bhp Black Series. As well as freshened front-end styling, the facelift included a revised automatic with improved shifts and an extra 'S+' mode for its gearchange strategies. As a farewell to naturally aspirated V8s, in 2013 the Edition 507 arrived, featuring the Black Series' bonnet, larger front discs and meatier calipers, and a power boost to 500bhp.

When new, these Mercedes C63 AMGs suffered fearsome initial depreciation, but values have now stabilised and are even rising for the right cars. Let us help you find one.

**Above left:** 6.2-litre V8 is bursting with character, and is reliable, too; don't skimp on tyres, though: with 442lb ft of torque the C63 needs all the grip it can get. **Below left:** cabin quality is very high indeed

## WHAT TO PAY

Few C63 AMGs dip below £20,000 these days, even with 80,000 or 90,000 miles on the clock. Look to be paying mid-£20,000s for examples with 20,000 to 50,000 miles under their fat tyres, although some dealers are asking more than £50,000 for run-out Edition 507 models from 2014.

Coupes can fetch a couple of grand more than their four-door siblings, while the comparative rarity of estates also generates a premium. Even rarer are Black Series coupes, with their protruded wheelarches, race-car-spec canards and optional rear wing. If you can find one, it'll be £90k-100k.

The car pictured here is a 2014 coupe with 18,500 miles on the clock. It's for sale at L&L Automotive in Hertford, priced at £35,990. Call 01992 726 173.

## INFORMATION

### SPECIFICATION (C63 COUPE)

Engine	V8, 6208cc
Max power	451bhp @ 6800rpm
Max torque	442lb ft @ 5000rpm
Transmission	Seven-speed automatic, rear-wheel drive
Weight	1655kg
Power-to-weight	277bhp/ton
0-60mph	4.4sec [tested]
Top speed	155mph [limited]
Price new	£56,665 [2011]

### PARTS PRICES

Prices for official Mercedes-Benz parts. Cheaper alternatives are available through independent specialists. Tyre price from blackcircles.com. All prices include VAT but exclude fitting charges.

Tyres (each)	£105.53 front, £117.31 rear [Goodyear Eagle F1 Asymmetric]
Front pads (set)	£237.84
Damper (front)	£378
Catalysts	£2469.60 [left], £998.40 [right]
Spark plugs (set)	£136.32
Air filter	£32.64
Pollen filter	£45.72
Oil filter	£14.06

### SERVICING

Prices from prestigecarservice.co.uk, including VAT. Servicing is mileage- and age-dependant: your car's official Mercedes Digital Service Book (DSB) will advise on what your car needs and when.

Minor service	£200
Major service	£500-800

### USEFUL CONTACTS

#### FORUMS, ADVICE, EVENTS

[mercedes-amg.com](http://mercedes-amg.com)

[mbclub.co.uk](http://mbclub.co.uk)

[mercedes-benz-club.co.uk](http://mercedes-benz-club.co.uk)

#### SPECIALISTS

[prestigecarservice.co.uk](http://prestigecarservice.co.uk)

[inautos.co.uk](http://inautos.co.uk)

[staithegarage.co.uk](http://staithegarage.co.uk)

#### CARS FOR SALE

[classicandperformancecar.com](http://classicandperformancecar.com)

[pistonheads.com](http://pistonheads.com)



## 'I BOUGHT ONE'

### RICHARD BRUNT

'For three weeks before I bought the C63, I owned a Monaro VXR. I'd been inspired to get it by a mate who owned a Vauxhall VXR8. I liked the power and the noise, and I definitely wanted a V8. But then I went with another mate to collect his C63... It was better in every way: the way it looked, the way it sounded, the way it was built.

'So I quickly did a bit of research into which model I wanted. My friend's car was a pre-facelift version, but as I looked into it, I realised that a facelifted example would make more sense. It has an improved gearbox and the engine's internals are better.

'I was lucky with my car. It popped up in the classifieds and was reasonably close, and

I bought it within three hours of the ad going live. It's a 2011 Edition 125 saloon in white, with the optional Performance Pack Plus. It's awesome at everything: docile when you need it to be, so it just blends in with the traffic, and loud and ferocious when the mood takes you and the road conditions allow.

'I've since modified it with IPE exhaust headers, sports cats and a remap, and the sound it makes is simply amazing. I've also fitted high-flow air filters and a carbon airbox, but I'm not really sure they've made much difference. Because I always intended to try a trackday or two and a high-speed event in my C63, I immediately replaced the front discs and pads, which cost about £870. And after the

trackday I needed another set of pads, which was another £175.

'The Terminal Velocity event I went to was on a 3.1-mile RAF runway; standstill to however fast you can go. I hit 173mph but I was hoping for more – the run was into a headwind and severe brake fade made me nervous of when to back off. But I'm going back hoping to be quicker.

'Would I ever replace it? With what? To go any faster I'd be spending double the money.'



## IN THE CLASSIFIEDS



### 2010 (10) C63 SALOON PP £24,985

62,808 miles, Iridium Silver, FMBSH, recent replacement of brake discs and pads, Harman Kardon sound system  
via ebay.co.uk



### 2011 (11) C63 SALOON £29,950

24,800 miles, Obsidian Black, FMBSH, Harman Kardon sound system, 19-inch diamond-cut alloy wheels  
AMG Performance Centre, via pistonheads.com



### 2013 (63) C63 EDITION 507 £47,995

20,000 miles, Obsidian Black, FMBSH, black nappa leather, one of the last W204 C63 AMGs built  
davidjarviscars.co.uk

## WHAT WE SAID



### SUPERSALOON GROUP TEST, 2010

'The wild child on track at Bedford Autodrome was always likely to be the C63 AMG, being the most powerful and keenest to smoke a pair of rear tyres. And so it proves, though my main concern is getting the best from the old-fashioned auto gearbox. You have to plan and anticipate every shift. Suss that out, though, and the C63 serves up a generous helping of tail-led entertainment – not the most technically proficient way of circulating, but it puts a smile on your face.

'It could just be a drag-racer, the C63, but it's not. Not by a long chalk. "Although you can light the tyres up with a half-prod of throttle, it's still exploitable and enjoyable, because it's small and has probably the best steering feel of the group," says Henry Catchpole. Indeed, the combination of so much power and a very able and rewarding rear-drive chassis holds immense appeal. "Brilliant at mooching and extremely capable and engaging right up to and over the limit," says Richard Meaden. "Not as sharply focused as the M3, but this arguably makes it the warmer and more rewarding car in all but the most extreme driving. Love it." – evo 151

## RIVALS

### BMW M3 (E90/E92)

The V8-engined M3 is in the same ballpark as the C63 for prices, although you will find more sub-£20,000 examples at the bottom end.

### AUDI RS5

Despite being the C63's dynamic inferior, the four-wheel-drive Audi's used values are similar to, or even ahead of, the bombastic AMG's. From £22,000.

### VAUXHALL VXR8

A bargain when new, the V8 Vauxhall's modest second-hand values (starting at £14,000) undersell its performance and raw but effective charm.



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Black Alcantara **£257,950**



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**8,750 Miles** Rosso Scuderia with  
Blu Scuro **£229,950**



**2009/58 FERRARI 430 SCUDERIA**  
**12,650 Miles** Rosso Corsa with Rosso 3D  
Fabric & Black Alcantara **£209,950**



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## MODEL FOCUS FORD FOCUS ST (Mk2)

**I**F YOU'RE AFTER THE MAXIMUM BANG for your buck in a hatchback, the Ford Focus RS would almost certainly be on your shopping list. But don't discount its little brother, the ST, as it's also a very rewarding machine.

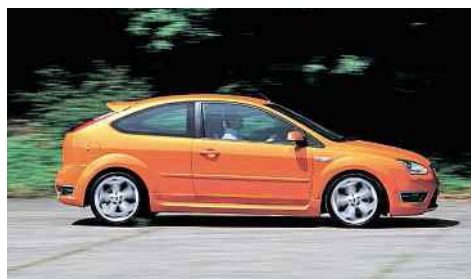
Launched in 2005, this was Ford's first performance model using the Mk2 Focus. It borrowed Volvo's five-cylinder turbocharged engine and, with 222bhp and 236lb ft, it definitely had the 'go' to accompany the aggressive styling – *evo* recorded a 0-60mph sprint of 6.7 seconds. It wasn't all about straight-line speed, though. The ST had nicely weighted and responsive steering, a well-balanced chassis, strong brakes and a remarkably complaint ride. Inside it was pretty racy, with sculpted Recaro seats, a unique steering wheel and an extra instrument pod with three gauges.

Three trim levels were available – ST1, ST2 and ST3 – with the last of those getting full leather interiors. There was a facelift in 2008 (it's the pre-facelift car pictured here) that brought sleeker front-end styling and interior improvements.

The ST's trump card is that it can provide plenty of back-road thrills yet is also an accomplished motorway cruiser. It can be a thirsty beast, though, and cars that have been poorly modified can be a whole host of trouble – stick to ones tuned by known specialists such as Mountune.

Prices start as low as £3000, but for this money the car will be tired and have covered a lot of miles. Lower-mileage cars start at around the £6000-mark.

Looking for performance and entertainment wrapped up in a practical package? Then the Focus ST could be right up your street  
by Bob Harper



**Above:** Recaros grip the driver in the right places, while the additional gauges show oil temperature and pressure, and turbo boost. **Left:** upgraded STs will eat rubber voraciously if you're not careful

## EXPERT VIEW

**STEVE BENNETT**  
ST-FOCUS.COM

'Whoever decided to fit the Volvo five-cylinder engine to a hot Focus was an absolute genius. The engine's just brilliant and gives the car huge tuning potential. You do still see some unmodified cars, but as they lend themselves so well to modifications many have been upgraded.

'While the Mk2 Focus ST is a superb car with 222bhp, a really great state of tune is the 310-330bhp point – and that's quite affordable, too, being achieved with upgrades such as an intercooler, air filter, remap and a sports cat for the exhaust. Ford effectively strangled the engine a little to get it through emissions testing and good results can be achieved if the engine can breathe a bit better. If you want more than that, you'll need to do further work – 400bhp with good driveability is perfectly attainable if you go down the route of uprated pistons and conrods. In fact, this sort of upgrade is becoming more commonplace with the Focus ST.

'These engines are very strong, but it's worth considering a block modification as they can suffer from split liners, especially when modified. For relatively little outlay – £650-700, including a new cambelt and water pump – it's well worth doing and looks like good value when you consider the cylinder head has to be removed.

'Driveshafts can suffer on cars driven without any mechanical sympathy, but apart from that they tend to be in very good condition. Otherwise you might encounter an occasional failed alternator, while oil-filter housings can require replacement, too. A worthwhile upgrade is a Focus RS clutch, as the original was only designed to cope with up to around 260bhp.

'Orange is always a popular colour, but I love the understated Sea Grey. I wouldn't want to drive an orange one as I'm getting on a bit now, but some of the younger guys prefer the brighter colours. The base STs are pretty rare; most buyers went for the ST2 or ST3 as the ST1 didn't have xenon headlights, a heated screen or even traction control. The ST2 had cloth Recaro seats whereas the ST3 had leather.

'Good, sensible-mileage, early cars start at around £5500, but pricing is very dependent on spec, and the later, facelifted cars are unsurprisingly worth more. The most important thing is to buy on condition, history and quality of modifications.'



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**Lamborghini Murcielago LP 670-4 SV**  
Ceramic brakes, high level rear wing, mall decal option, 3,000 miles, 2010, **£399,990**



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Ceramic brakes, high level rear wing, large decal option, 8,000 miles, **£379,990**



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**Lamborghini Huracan LP 610-4 Coupe**  
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**Lamborghini Gallardo LP550-2 Baldoni Edition**  
Lifting Gear, Reverse camera, Clear engine bay cover, Skorpion Alloys, 14,000 miles, 2010, **£164,990**



**Lamborghini Gallardo LP 570-4 Performante Edizione Tecnica.** Ceramic brakes, Carbon Driving Zone, Full Carbon Bucket Seats, Branding pk, Reverse camera, 6,000 miles, 2013, **£164,990**

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# ESSENTIALS

## THE ROUND-UP

New motoring products that have caught our eye this month



### CAR ACCESSORIES

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You may have seen vacuum cups used to attach camera equipment to cars, but here's another use: a luggage rack you can fit to virtually any vehicle. That's great news if you enjoy touring in your Elise, for instance. The Revo-Rack is easy to fit and suitable for up to 20kg of luggage.



### MODEL

Minichamps Porsche 959 1:18  
£77  
[racingmodels.com](http://racingmodels.com)

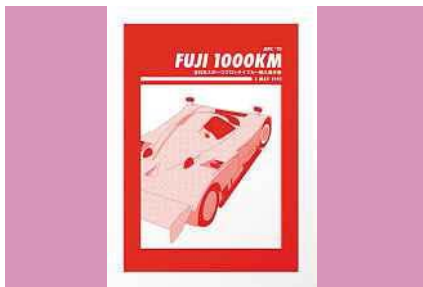
The 959 is comfortably one of Porsche's most fascinating cars – initially designed for Group B, it packed some of the era's most advanced automotive tech. This metal model by Minichamps isn't quite as high-tech, but it's fantastically detailed and a lot easier to fit on your desk.



### AUDIO

Esavox  
€19,000  
[ixoot.it](http://ixoot.it)

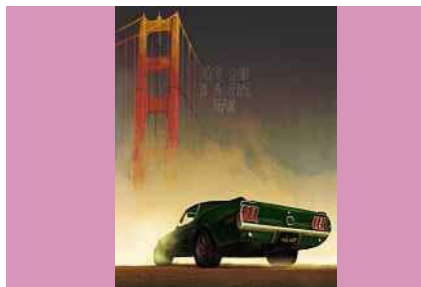
Are you the Lamborghini owner who has everything? We're here to report that you don't have everything until you've got an Esavox – a carbonfibre, 1600-watt sound system shaped like the nether end of an Aventador. It's styled by Mirco Pecorari, who's a sports-aircraft designer.



### PRINT

Fuji '91  
From \$27  
[society6.com/jakeyorath](http://society6.com/jakeyorath)

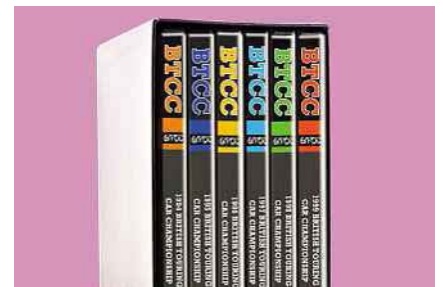
This print by illustrator and graphic designer Jake Yorath depicts the unmistakable shape of the Mazda 787B. Best known for winning Le Mans in 1991, a 787B also finished sixth at the same year's Fuji 1000km. The price shown is for the 8 x 10in 'mini' print; sizes up to 21 x 28in are available.



### POSTER

Bullitt by Nicolas Bannister  
£40  
[richardgoodallgallery.com](http://richardgoodallgallery.com)

Nicolas Bannister has produced dozens of unique posters focusing on the rear-three-quarter views of iconic movie and TV cars. This image of Frank Bullitt's Mustang is probably the coolest (against strong competition) and, like all of Bannister's prints, features a quote from the movie.



### VIDEO

BTCC 1994-1999 box set  
£49.99  
[dukevideo.com](http://dukevideo.com)

It's all too easy to don rose-tinted specs when it comes to motorsport, but is there anyone who doesn't think 1990s BTCC provided some of the very best tin-top racing we've ever seen? This DVD box set of the series' greatest years, from 1994 to 1999, is an absolute must-have.

# THE ICONIC FERRARI 550 MARANELLO

The iconic Ferrari 550 Maranello is the embodiment of Renaissance Classics: it's refined, sophisticated and stands as a beacon for quality.



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The 550 Maranello marked Ferrari's return to front-engine Grand tourers, coming 23 years after the last, the legendary Daytona. Presented in 1996 after 30 months of development, this new generation of GT was powered by a front mounted 5.5l V12 (which is also where it claims its name). As with all V12 creations from Maranello, the 550 sings more as you climb in revs. This engine is paired with a 6-speed manual gearbox that, tied in with its exhaust and engine notes, begs the driver to drive it as it as a Ferrari should be driven. Its exterior appearance was crafted by none other than Pininfarina and departs massively from the cars that came before it such as the Testarossa and F512. The Maranello offers elegant lines and that long sloping bonnet that differ so greatly to the angular and aggressive lines of its predecessors.



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FORD CAPRI V8 // MERCEDES-AMG C63 S COUPE // DS 3 PERFORMANCE // MAZDA MX-5 RF //  
SKODA OCTAVIA ESTATE vRS 230 // AUDI R8 SPYDER V10 // MINI JCW CHALLENGE // BMW i8

WELCOME BACK

## Ford Capri V8

Not seen in these pages for over four years, John Barker's Mk1 Capri and its 5.3 litres of V8 are back!



**L** LET'S GET THE MOST frequently asked question out of the way up front: 'Is it finished?'

Well, that depends on what you mean by 'finished'. This month I fitted the final component, the driver's door card. There wasn't one with the car when I bought it back in 2001, when it was a partially disassembled 1600GT in Modena Green (that's a colour, not a place) with a black vinyl roof, so I've been looking for one for a long time. Happily, there's now a company, Aldridge Trimming, making new door cards for all sorts of cars, including early Capris. But that door card nearly didn't get fitted...

For a long time, there were three V8-engined Capris in Oundle (I know!), but now there are only two. Qprep, which does a great job of looking after mine, had another booked in for a bit of work. Late one afternoon at the back end of last year, it arrived and was driven into the workshop, at which point, unfortunately, an under-bonnet fire broke out. It caught quickly, extinguishers were ineffective, and the bonnet was too hot to push the car out. Sadly, it burned out, devastating the workshop.

I'm glad to say that despite this massive setback, Qprep has resumed business. A great deal of stock had to be skipped and the whole place has been completely refurbished and looks better than ever. Amazingly, the Capri door card was just a couple of yards from the

fire, in its cardboard packaging, yet was untouched. It's now been fitted, along with the replica Springalex RS steering wheel I'd promised myself, so from an inventory perspective the car is finished.

It is, however, a project car, so there is some stuff I'd still like to do, and that includes driving it a bit, which I've been rubbish at. I am ashamed to say that it hasn't exactly 'racked up' the miles since the last report. In fact, if my nearest MOT station were 50 miles away rather than just around the corner, it would have accrued more miles. My last running report, way back in issue 179, showed the Capri had covered 1847 miles. The odometer now reads like the date it will be 'finished' – 2039. The longest trips have been to Blyton Park for the launch day of the circuit and, last year, to Brands Hatch, where my mate Andy Noble runs his business, Sevens and Classics.

Those of you with long memories will recall that in that last running report, in February 2013, Proflex had just delivered replacement suspension damper struts. From the outset, the Capri was intended to be a fast-road/trackday car, so quite why the lads that built it asked Proflex to supply forest-spec dampers is beyond me. The combination of 15-inch wheels (not the usual 13s that rally Escorts wear) and a lowered ride height meant that the dampers were not operating in the right portion of their travel. So the damper struts were

returned to Proflex to be reworked and, as technology has moved on since these parts were originally supplied in 2003, the dampers were re-specified, recommissioned and returned with three-way adjustment, rather than two-way. They also came back with the requested adjustable strut tops, giving more geometry options.

The suggested road setup from Proflex has proved very good, with lots more low-speed compliance, more effectively controlled travel and a balance that's loading the rear more, for traction, which is in short supply with 320lb ft available. There's a clip on *evo's* Instagram account, @officialvomagazine, taken at some bends local to me on a nippy morning.

The Capri had a competition debut, too. Sort of. In December 2015 it was the course-opening car for the second Oundle Classic Sprint. Sadly, by lunchtime it had got a bit hot and bothered with all the hanging around and refused to go again. So it went back to Qprep, who solved the mystery by changing all the plugs and finding that there was no gap on the hardest one to get to, and so the last plug, obviously!

I'm pleased to report that the 5.3-litre Rover V8 has since felt reinvigorated – stronger, smoother and more responsive than it had for a while. It's still only managing 20mpg at best, but it does turn that petrol into delicious heaps of torque and lashings of woolly noise. ✕

**John Barker** (@evoJB)





'It is a project car, so there is some stuff I'd still like to do, and that includes driving it a bit'

**Far left:** monster V8 is good for 320lb ft of torque. **Left:** Springalex RS steering wheel looks the part in the Capri's spartan cabin. **Right:** the final touch: fitting the door card at Qprep



<b>Date acquired</b>	October 2001
<b>Total mileage</b>	2039
<b>Mileage this month</b>	122
<b>Costs this month</b>	£0
<b>mpg this month</b>	around 15mpg

# Mercedes-AMG C63 S Coupe

## END OF TERM

This German muscle car was always going to have to deliver something special to justify its eye-watering price-tag. So did it?

**I** IT'S FITTING THAT MY last drive in the C63 S was one of the best: a one-day round-trip to Anglesey Circuit to drive the new 911 GT3. It was a long day in the saddle; one that started with a 4.30am alarm and finished with me arriving back home just before 9pm. In between was the best part of 500 miles of motorways, majestic A-roads and nadgey B-roads, all dispatched in effortless, engaging style.

As I've discovered over the last six months and nearly 10,000 miles, that's the nub of the C63 experience. I'd never run a Mercedes before, let alone an AMG model. I suppose deep down I never considered myself a Merc person. This car has made me revise that belief. It did everything so well, and with such big-hearted enthusiasm that even if the journey was a stinker I always found plenty to savour about the car.

Star of the show is the 4-litre biturbo V8. In 'S' spec it's an absolute powerhouse, feeling good for every last one of its 503bhp and 516lb ft. It's smooth and refined, with a ton of endlessly elastic low- and mid-range thrust, so in most

situations you just dip into its vast reserves of performance. Yet when you do extend it, there's proper fire at the top end. It's a thoroughbred powerplant, no question. And fuel economy? I'm pleasantly surprised to report that over the six-month loan period the average was 22.9mpg. Yes, I saw sub-15mpg on a particularly enthusiastic commute to the *evo* offices, but the car countered that with a hugely impressive 29mpg on an epic 700-mile Cambridgeshire-Ayrshire-Cambridgeshire day-trip. Merc's muscle cars aren't the dipsomaniacs they used to be.

Being an AMG, there were plenty of modes to choose for the engine,

gearbox, chassis and exhaust, from Comfort through Sport, Sport+ and Race. Comfort and Sport were my preferred and most-selected modes. They just seemed to offer the best blend of response, fuss-free pace and comfort for most trips. However, when I did elect to blitz a few A- and B-roads, Sport+ was hugely effective and great fun. The seven-ratio Speedshift automatic transmission could really up its game and was uncannily prescient with downshifts. Unless I was in a particularly committed frame of mind, Race mode was a bit full-on, but even that had its moments.

KN66 ZPB was very generously equipped, with options including

carbon-ceramic brakes (£4285), lightweight forged alloys (£1735) and the AMG Driver's Package (£765), which elevates the speed-limiter to 180mph. All in, the price shot up from £68,710 to £82,875: a lot of money for a BMW M4 rival. That said, the car's fit, finish and looks backed up the big ticket. Sleek and compact, with a purposeful stance and a muscled physique, the C63 S had plenty of presence without showing off. The leather, Alcantara and carbon interior was a delight, with the glass roof and Burmester hi-fi (part of the £2595 Premium Package) adding to the feel-good factor.

We often criticise cars for a lack of connection, and I was worried





the C63 S might be a bit numb. Those concerns weren't entirely unfounded, as it quickly became clear the Merc's feedback was muted and finely filtered. The steering feel was hardly sparkling, but you could build a picture of what the front end was doing, and its rate of response was well judged. Just as importantly, the rear end's communication skills were good enough that you always knew when traction was at a premium. I knew where I was with the car, in dry or wet conditions. It helped that the stability-control system was on the ball, and could be relaxed enough to let you have fun yet still remain effective when run in Sport mode.

The ceramic brakes had great feel and made light work of stopping the 1725kg coupe, even when we had a quick hoon down the runway at the Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground. The Michelin Pilot Sport 4S tyres worked well through the winter and generated plenty of grip. And there was still a useful amount of meat left on them when the car went back. Must try harder next time.

Traction? Well, that was at the mercy of my right foot and/or the electronics, but I was surprised how much performance the software enabled you to deploy in the wet. In the dry, the car easily nailed 0-100mph in nine seconds, and I was amused to find it would hit 60mph in

**'Star of the show is the 4-litre biturbo V8 – in this spec it's an absolute powerhouse'**

<b>Date acquired</b>	October 2016
<b>Duration of test</b>	6 months
<b>Total test mileage</b>	9955
<b>Overall mpg</b>	22.9
<b>Costs</b>	£0
<b>Purchase price</b>	£82,875
<b>Value today</b>	£62,500-68,000

seven seconds while performing an epic rolling burnout.

Dislikes? Well, I quickly switched off most of the semi-autonomous driver-assist widgets (lane-assist and the like). The coasting mode, which disengages drive when you're cruising off the throttle to save fuel, was annoying too, so I frequently switched that off as well.

I tend to miss long-term test cars when they go, but this one really got under my skin. It was special in ways that transcend objectivity, and I can honestly say I enjoyed every one of those 9955 miles. You can't ask for more than that. 📧

**Richard Meaden**  
(@DickieMeaden)



## DS 3 Performance

NEW ARRIVAL

evo's visual content editor gets his hands on Citroën's posh hot hatch to see if it delivers as a drivers' car

**1** 'IT'S FAST, IT'S GOT A manual gearbox and it's yellow.' When the editor used those words to hint at what I'd be driving for the next few months, the DS 3 Performance (DS being the luxury sub-brand of Citroën) wasn't the first car that came to my mind, but perhaps that's one of the reasons why it's such an intriguing prospect.

The ingredients for the Fast Fleet's latest arrival are interesting. It has a 1.6-litre turbocharged engine with 205bhp and 221lb ft of torque, making the car good for claims of

0-62mph in 6.5sec and 143mph flat out. There's also a close-ratio six-speed 'box, a Torsen limited-slip differential, Brembo brakes, DS Performance sports suspension (a wider track and a 15mm lower ride height than the standard DS 3) and a set of Michelin Pilot Super Sport tyres. It's a car to be taken seriously, then, even in Bumblebee spec. The colour won't be to all tastes, but I happen to think Sport Yellow works well with the DS 3's quirky looks.

For the basic price of £23,335 you get a seven-inch touchscreen, DAB radio, xenon headlights and

'There's a contrast between the DS brand ethos and my personal expectations of a good hot hatch'

18-inch alloy wheels. The optional GT Pack fitted here (£1000) adds an upgraded hi-fi system, satnav, a reversing camera, predictive city braking and parking sensors.

I'm cautiously optimistic about the DS 3 Performance, as the spec looks promising and I really want it to deliver. However, I have a conflict burning in the back of my mind, namely the contrast between the DS brand ethos and my personal expectations of a good hot hatch. DS, in Citroën's words, is 'an exclusive blend of technology, craftsmanship, avant-garde style and attention to detail'. I can't be the only one who reads that and thinks it sounds more leather furniture maker than hot-hatch builder. Great hot hatches are usually the opposite of all of those things: basic, slightly unhinged and even a little rough around the edges. But I'll keep an open mind.

My first drive in the DS 3 proved enlightening, as the car had to deal with a multitude of different scenarios in a single journey: tight country lanes around our office in Bedfordshire, 45 miles of motorway and, as I'm a Londoner, the crater-like potholes of the city's streets. Pleasingly, the DS 3 handled all of these with relative ease. That said, the car is noticeably stiff, although this does send out the right message and contradicts my preconception that this could be more of a warm hatch than a properly hot one.

Whether this is actually the case is something we'll discover over the coming months; the DS 3 is a curious package and one that I suspect will reveal itself in small but significant ways every time I drive it. It's certainly not an obvious hot hatch choice, but it could be a refreshing option for those seeking something a little different. Whether it's a good kind of different or proof that you should stick to what you know, I'm looking to finding out. ✕

**Louis Shaw** (@L\_Shaw\_)

<b>Date acquired</b>	May 2017
<b>Total mileage</b>	1490
<b>Mileage this month</b>	1216
<b>Costs this month</b>	£0
<b>mpg this month</b>	41.8

## Skoda Octavia Estate vRS 230

Overarching VW Group strategy means Skoda models often don't get the power they could. But there is a remedy

**W**HILE THE OCTAVIA'S 227bhp is a commendable amount of shove, it's some way short of the 280bhp-plus that the hottest Volkswagen Golf and SEAT Leon models deliver, yet all these cars use essentially the same 2-litre turbo engine. With the vRS 230 sporting an electronically controlled limited-slip differential and adaptive chassis control, just like those more potent Golfs and Leons, I reckon it would cope well if given, say, 25 per cent more go.

So this month I've looked into

some of the remap options that are available – the kind you might want to consider if you own a vRS – and it turns out the figures that can be achieved for quite modest amounts of money are eye-widening.

One of the more affordable offerings is from Superchips, who for £399 will increase the vRS 230's peak power by 59bhp and torque by 68lb ft, taking the totals to 286bhp and 326lb ft.

DMS Automotive, meanwhile, takes things a little further. Its remap lifts power to 305bhp and torque from 258lb ft to 332lb ft. The price for this is £690, but it does include an individual mapping session in one of the company's dyno centres.

Finally, there's Revo Technik, a company whose wares this magazine has experienced before in the form of a 371bhp Golf R capable of cracking 60mph in 3.7sec (see Driven, *evo* 204).

Revo offers upgrade packages that comprise electronic changes alone or include further hardware modifications. Its Stage 1 package for the latest Octavia vRS is purely electronic and results in a scarcely

believable 319bhp (as a minimum, apparently). That's more potency than a Golf GTI Clubsport S.

The company's development Octavia, fitted with a Stage 1 pack, has posted a 0-100mph sprint of 11.2 seconds. The cost? £599, or £7 per extra horsepower.

Any of these remaps would make the Skoda a very quick car, and as some of these tuners claim, the difference in fuel economy when driving steadily should be negligible if not non-existent – something that our experience of the more powerful factory versions of this engine would confirm.

Pretty enticing, isn't it? Sadly, though, my hands are tied, as **evo's** Octavia is owned by Skoda, not us. But if any Octavia owners out there have had an aftermarket power hike, do get in touch at [fastfleet@evo.co.uk](mailto:fastfleet@evo.co.uk) – I'd love to hear about your experience.

**Aston Parrott**  
(@AstonParrott)

<b>Date acquired</b>	November 2016
<b>Total mileage</b>	14,655
<b>Mileage this month</b>	943
<b>Costs this month</b>	£0
<b>mpg this month</b>	30.6



**END OF TERM**

# Audi R8 Spyder V10

It's farewell to our drop-top supercar – and its magnificent V10. But will we miss having an R8 as a daily driver?







**K**NOCKING ABOUT IN A drop-top supercar for half a year is likely to sit pretty high up on any petrolhead's bucket-list. Running an R8 Spyder was, of course, a brilliant experience – one I may never be lucky enough to repeat. And with the Spyder's £129,990 base price taken up to £167,740 by options such as carbon-ceramic brakes (£7700), the gloss carbon exterior styling pack (£4900) and the Sport Plus Pack (bringing Audi's three-mode magnetic adaptive dampers, Dynamic Steering and a sports exhaust, for £3500), this R8 really was deep into supercar territory. But before I get into the many reasons why it was such fun, there are a few (decidedly first-world) irritations I want to air.

My first complaint relates to the attention a car like the Spyder gets out on the road. Mostly the waves and the thumbs-ups and the friendly

**'There will be drivers out there who'll have vivid memories of a bright red projectile firing off into the distance'**

**Left:** Prosser took the R8 to north Wales for a farewell drive. Where better to enjoy that mighty, 533bhp V10 one last time?

comments are all quite fun, but what I could have done without was the steady stream of morons who were determined to lure me into a street-race on motorways and dual carriageways. I'm no saint, and there will be drivers out there who'll have vivid memories of a bright red projectile firing off into the distance, but mostly I just let them go.

You could spot these bargain-bin Brian O'Connors a mile off. They'd approach at speed, then suddenly stand on the brakes when they clocked the R8's extra-wide rump. They'd sit behind for a little while, too close for comfort, before pulling alongside. I never looked over to make eye contact, instead fixing my stare on the road ahead. From here they might circulate the car once or twice, or sit in front of it, or even flash their lights to try to get my attention. After a short while, once they'd realised there was no sport to be had, they'd disappear, probably to recount to their mates the time they roasted an R8 on the A43.

Then there was the fact that a car such as this one stands out wherever it's parked. I was always nervous about leaving it out on the street overnight (living in a city, I had no other choice), a concern that was realised one morning when I found the driver's window had been smashed. Unless you happen to have secure parking wherever you go, I suspect that underlying nervousness is, sadly, part of the supercar ownership experience.

There were a few annoyances relating specifically to the R8, too, notably the fixed-back bucket seats (a £3000 option), which I've written about far too often already, and the width of the thing, which made certain car parks hell to navigate. It also needed a quiet-start function, as my poor neighbours will attest.

Does this all sound a bit moany? Perhaps it does. Regardless, in just about every other sense, running the Spyder was utterly brilliant. How could it not be? I always smiled to myself when I caught a glimpse of it. I made a point of dropping the little window behind the seats on every single journey, no matter

how tedious, and stretching the magnificent engine all the way around to the 8500rpm red line, with the exhaust in sport mode, just to let the V10 howl flood into the cabin. There's no better way to start the day. Or finish it, for that matter. I suggested when the car arrived that this exercise would be more a case of living with a whacking great V10 engine than running a particular car, and it's certainly true that the motor dominated the entire R8 experience.

Once the weather improved, sometime in March, I could actually use the car as its maker intended by getting the roof down. I found that quite a calming experience. I wouldn't drive the car particularly hard with the hood lowered, but instead would stroke it along and enjoy the sounds and the smells and the fresh air. It isn't often you can use 533 wild horses to their full potential on the road, so having something to enjoy about the R8 at moderate speeds was a massive boon.

The car averaged around 23mpg, with high-20s just about achievable on a long, steady run. It didn't need a service during its time with us, but it did need a fresh set of Pirelli P Zeros (just over £1000 fitted) soon before it went back to Audi. Smashed window aside, the R8 didn't once let me down in any way – which, of course, is how it should be.

One final thought. Having run a bona fide supercar as my everyday car, I'm not certain I'd be in a hurry to do it again. Not because the R8 was in any way taxing – given its massive performance and handling ability, it was actually very easy to use – but because I wouldn't want to normalise what is actually a very special thing. I think I'd keep the supercar for weekends and driving holidays. After all, eating steak every night would soon wear thin. ❧

**Dan Prosser**

<b>Date acquired</b>	November 2016
<b>Duration of test</b>	6 months
<b>Total test mileage</b>	9667
<b>Overall mpg</b>	22.8
<b>Costs</b>	£1048 four tyres
<b>Purchase price</b>	£167,740
<b>Value today</b>	£120,000-135,000

## Mazda MX-5 Mk1 & MX-5 RF

How does the latest RF compare with Mazda's original MX-5?

**R**UNNING EVO'S MX-5 RF alongside my old Eunos Roadster is proving a fascinating experience. Few other cars, aside from perhaps the Porsche 911, have stayed so true to the same formula over the course of a quarter-century or more – and even the 911 has both grown in size and undergone fundamental changes, first from air to water cooling and then from natural aspiration to turbocharging.

The MX-5, meanwhile, has stuck rigidly, for better or worse, to the same formula. It's broadly the same size, the Mk4 being only 60mm wider and 5mm taller than the Mk1, but 35mm shorter, and in basic 1.5-litre form its engine differs in capacity by a scant 102cc, in favour of the older car. There's still an aluminium bonnet and Mazda still uses its 'Power Plant Frame' concept, which ties together the gearbox and differential down the transmission tunnel to reduce unwanted twisting effects from the propshaft.

Our Mk4 is a 2-litre model, of course, and in Retractable Fastback form it's a fair chunk heavier than the original (though still lightweight by modern standards, at 1045kg) while being a great deal faster. But there are still overt similarities between old and new; little details that give you a hint into Mazda's way of thinking, and characteristics that some engineer back in Hiroshima probably agonised over as they tried to marry facts and figures with the intangibles of character and fun.

I love the short, notchy action of the RF's gearshift. It's not quite as mechanical in feel as that of my older car and maybe seems a little



**Above:** Ingram's own Eunos Roadster (left side) rolled off the production line at Hiroshima in 1992, and when compared with our 2017-spec RF it's clear that the fundamental MX-5 package has hardly changed

### 'The MX-5 has stuck rigidly to the same formula for a quarter of a century'

flimsy alongside a 911's, but it's still a major point of interaction with the car and one Mazda has decided not to smother under layers of modern refinement. The pedals, too, somehow pair supermini ease with the weights, placement and responses you'd want from a sports car – just like in my old MX-5.

The three-spoke steering wheel? It has a slim grip, narrow spokes and a surprisingly large diameter, just like the Momos and Nardis that came as standard in old MX-5s – or the wood-rimmed Nardi I've swapped into my Eunos to give the leather of the original wheel a break.

Open the bonnet and Mazda's 2-litre SkyActiv is almost a spitting image of the 'B6ZE' 1.6-litre four in the original, its own cam cover designed to ape the look of old Lotus twin-cam units and the like. Mazda didn't have to make its brand-new engine look like an old one – it could have thrown a big plastic cover over the lot, like most manufacturers do – but even though you'll rarely see it (MX-5s have always been reliable), it looks good anyway.

And the differences in how the two cars drive? I'll be writing about that in a future report. ✉

**Antony Ingram** (@evoAntony)

<b>Date acquired</b>	Feb 2015 / Feb 2017
<b>Total mileage</b>	95,925 / 5644
<b>Mileage this month</b>	150 / 1488
<b>Costs this month</b>	£0
<b>mpg this month</b>	28.1 / 41.7

# Mini JCW Challenge

Our hardcore Mini continues to dazzle when the road suits it, but suspension problems persist

**Right and below:** adjustable Nitron dampers seem to lack the finesse they should be capable of delivering

**I** ONLY DROVE OUR JCW Challenge briefly before it returned to Mini last year for a front-suspension fix (an unnamed pre-production part had failed), and since it returned to us in March it's been busy. Not always by choice, though, and now after driving it again I can understand why.

There are, I should say, moments in this car that make you wish the road would never end; that a sequence of 90-degree corners would keep coming; that third-gear bends could be at the end of every straight, allowing you to pull the tread of the Michelin Cup 2 tyres to



its limits and squeeze every drop of retardation from the Pagid pads.

There's something unique about how the Challenge tackles a road – unique for a modern Mini, that is. If you have driven a well-sorted classic with more power extracted from its A-series engine, wider tyres spread over its Minilites and with shortened springs and tightened dampers, our Challenge will have a familiar feel: honed and focused and very much fit for purpose. And in a brilliantly good way, too; so good that I wish the team at Plant Oxford had found a Peco backbox behind a cupboard that they could have fitted to complete the modern backdate.

And then I took it home. Home being 80-odd miles from **evo's** office via two-dozen miles of back-roads (exceptional), 30 miles of sweeping A-roads (good) and 30 miles of a British motorway, which was bad. Very bad; as in how can a car be so brilliant at one thing and so bad at another? It's perplexing, and I'm not

the only one who has returned to the office and asked if Mini replaced the previously acceptable (if a little stiff) Nitron dampers with a chunk of freshly fired aggregate when it was with them.

We've adjusted the dampers to the optimal settings decided upon during the car's development (15 clicks front, 25 rear), but still something isn't right. The ride is inconsistent, with next to no compliance and at times a sense you're running on the bump stops. If it were just me, I'd put it down to my age, but even those who enjoy life in the hard lane are making excuses to give the Challenge a swerve. A return to Oxford beckons. **✉**

**Stuart Gallagher**  
(@stuartg917)

<b>Date acquired</b>	July 2016
<b>Total mileage</b>	7944
<b>Mileage this month</b>	711
<b>Costs this month</b>	£0
<b>mpg this month</b>	28.8



'There are, I should say, moments in this car that make you wish the road would never end'





## BMW i8

Three years after driving one for the first time, Richard Meaden revisits the i8. Have his feelings about it changed?



**T**HE TROUBLE WITH the future is it quickly becomes the present and then, in equally short order, the recent past. The first time I drove an i8, during eCoty 2014 (the silver car pictured here), it very much felt like I was in some kind of time machine. The looks, the technology and, yes, the driving experience all felt like something very fresh.

A few years later and that bold Bavarian vision of the future is parked outside my house, thanks to the benevolence of editor Gallagher, who wants to share the i8 love.

Its presence has certainly taken the sting from losing my old Fast Fleeter, the stonking AMG C63 S (the final report for which you may have read on p148). I'm struggling to think of two more different takes on the quick, premium, German two-door, but the contrast is very good for revealing what I like and dislike about BMW's statement of intent.

Do I miss a big, ballsy combustion engine? When I press the i8's starter

**'Chassis-wise, it's competent but a bit of a cold fish. The numb steering is the weakest element'**

button, yes, of course I do. The AMG was like a shot of adrenalin, whereas the i8 starts with an aural cue much like turning on a laptop. The funny thing is, so long as it has some juice in the batteries, that disappointment lasts just as long as it takes to pull the gear-selector into D and whirr off down my drive on near-silent electric propulsion. No, that novelty never wears off.

Sadly, the thrum of the i8's triple-cylinder petrol engine is less endearing – unless you really clog it, at which point it starts to become interesting. I didn't mind it so much

back in 2014, but expectations have grown in 2017. In fact, I'm the first to admit the most satisfying solution could easily be more/all electricity and less/no internal combustion. As it stands, the i8 feels like it's caught between two worlds – those of an all-electric future and a past rooted in performance cars requiring petrol engines to feel authentic.

Does it feel quick? When you floor it with all 357bhp, absolutely. The torque-fill from the electric motor really does deliver a decent shove, and the tall gearing adds to the sense of reach and elastic, accessible performance.

Chassis-wise, it's competent but a bit of a cold fish. The numb steering is the weakest element, which is a shame as you do feel inclined to drive the i8 at a decent pace on fun roads. The damping is firm but the body is nicely controlled, so it'll find a flow on a good A-road. Some of the lack of feel can be blamed on the tyres, which generate decent grip in the

dry but lack progression when you exceed their limits. And it all gets a bit spooky in the wet, with a glassy feel that offers little clue as to how much grip there is to play with.

What the i8 does brilliantly is provoke thought and reaction. Kids love it – surely a good thing to enthuse new generations of car nuts – and even those adults I'd have down as diehard petrolheads are intrigued by the looks, technology and driving experience.

You can't directly compare the i8 in value-for-money or bang-per-buck terms with conventional rivals. But as a bold attempt at reconciling a love of cars and driving with an environmental conscience, this BMW has plenty going for it. ❌

**Richard Meaden**  
(@DickieMeaden)

<b>Date acquired</b>	November 2016
<b>Total mileage</b>	12,526
<b>Mileage this month</b>	1074
<b>Costs this month</b>	£0
<b>mpg this month</b>	37.2

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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, FF = Fast Fleet). 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	★★★★☆
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	13	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	13-16	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1395kg	216	<b>5.4</b>	<b>12.5</b>	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	15-16	5/2480	362/5500	343/1625	1520kg	242	<b>3.6</b>	-	155	189	34.9	+ Addictive five-cylinder noise; monster pace - Chassis not exactly playful	★★★★☆
Audi S3	106 R	10-12	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1455kg	183	<b>5.6</b>	<b>13.6</b>	155	198	33.2	+ Very fast, very effective, very... er, 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	+ Very fast, very effective, very... er, quality, with added five-pot character - A little too clinical	★★★★☆
BMW 125iM 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	<b>5.2</b>	-	155	188	35.3	+ Powertrain, noise, chassis, price - M235i looks nicer, and has an LSD option	★★★★☆
BMW 130iM Sport	106 R	05-10	6/2996	261/6650	232/2750	1450kg	183	<b>6.1</b>	<b>15.3</b>	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	930kg	130	<b>7.6</b>	<b>22.6</b>	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	11-12	4/1598	204/6000	203/2000	1240kg	167	6.5	-	146	149	-	+ A faster, feistier DS3 - Not as hardcore as its 'Racing' tag suggests	★★★★☆
DS 3 Performance	222 D	£20,495	4/1598	205/6000	221/3000	1175kg	177	6.5	-	143	125	50.4	+ All the right ingredients - Undercooked	★★★★☆
Fiat Panda 100HP	132 R	06-11	4/1368	99/6000	97/4250	975kg	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	197/5700	214/2500	1088kg	184	<b>7.4</b>	<b>18.4</b>	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 ST200	225 R	£22,745	4/1596	212/6000	236/2500	1088kg	198	6.7	-	143	140	46.3	+ Massive fun - Mountune version offers the same power for considerably less	★★★★☆
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 ST	075 D	05-08	4/1999	148/6000	140/4500	1137kg	132	7.9	-	129	-	38.2	+ Great looks, effective 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	<b>6.7</b>	<b>16.8</b>	150	224	30.4	+ Value, performance, integrity - Big engine compromises handling	★★★★☆
Ford Focus RS (Mk3)	229 R	£31,250	4/2261	345/6000	347/2000	1524kg	230	<b>4.7</b>	<b>12.4</b>	165	175	36.7	+ Torque-vectoring 4WD brings new sensations to hot hatch sector - Needs to be driven hard	★★★★☆
Ford Focus RS (Mk2)	195 R	09-11	5/2522	300/6500	324/2300	1467kg	208	<b>5.9</b>	<b>14.2</b>	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	<b>5.6</b>	<b>12.7</b>	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	1278kg	169	<b>5.9</b>	<b>14.9</b>	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	1285kg	179	6.2	-	137	-	-	+ The ultimate Essex hot hatch - Unmodified ones are rare, and getting pricey...	★★★★☆
Ford Racing Puma	128 R	00-01	4/1679	153/7000	119/4500	1174kg	132	<b>7.8</b>	<b>23.2</b>	137	-	34.7	+ Exclusivity - The standard Puma does it so well	★★★★☆
Honda Civic Type R	227 R	£30,000	4/1996	306/6500	295/2500	1378kg	226	<b>5.4</b>	<b>12.4</b>	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	<b>6.8</b>	<b>17.5</b>	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 (EP3)	075 R	01-05	4/1998	197/7400	145/5900	1204kg	166	<b>6.8</b>	<b>16.9</b>	146	-	31.7	+ Potent and great value - 'Breadvan' 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 2.15 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	<b>6.3</b>	<b>14.5</b>	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	<b>3.9</b>	-	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	<b>4.3</b>	<b>10.6</b>	155	161	40.9	+ Blisteringly quick everywhere - Not as rewarding as some slower rivals	★★★★☆
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	£32,050	4/1998	228/5200	236/1250	1200kg	193	6.3	-	153	155	42.2	+ Fast, agile, nimble - Chassis lacks sparkle found in previous JCWs	★★★★☆
Mini John Cooper Works Challenge (F56)	224 R	£32,000	4/1998	228/5200	236/1250	1215kg	191	6.3	-	152	155	42.2	+ A more hardcore JCW, honed with help from evo! - Just 100 being built	★★★★☆
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	<b>7.0</b>	-	142	136	48.7	+ New engine, Mini quality - Front end not quite as direct as the old car's	★★★★☆
Mini John Cooper Works (R56)	184 R	08-14	4/1598	208/6000	206/2000	1160kg	182	<b>7.2</b>	<b>16.7</b>	148	165	39.8	+ A seriously rapid Mini - Occasionally just a little unruly	★★★★☆
Mini John Cooper Works GP (R56)	231 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	<b>7.8</b>	<b>19.9</b>	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 13	★★★★☆
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	<b>6.8</b>	<b>17.9</b>	143	125	47.9	+ Agile chassis works well on tough roads - Could be more involving	★★★★☆
Peugeot 208 GTI by Peugeot Sport	225 R	£21,995	4/1598	205/5800	221/1750	1185kg	176	6.5	-	143	125	47.9	+ The most focused small hatch on sale - Nearly £4k more than a Fiesta ST Mountune	★★★★☆
Peugeot 308 GTI by Peugeot Sport	223 R	£26,855	4/1598	246/6000	243/1900	1205kg	207	6.2	-	155	139	47.1	+ A very capable hot hatch... - ...that lacks the sheer excitement of the best in class	★★★★☆
Peugeot 308 GTI 270 by Peugeot Sport	229 R	£28,890	4/1598	266/6000	243/1900	1205kg	224	6.0	-	155	139	47.1	+ Thrilling and engaging on smooth roads - A real handful on bumpy ones	★★★★☆
Peugeot 205 GTI 1.9	195 R	88-91	4/1905	130/6000	119/4750	910kg	145	7.9	-	124	-	36.7	+ Still scintillating after all these years - Brittle build quality	★★★★☆

## evo videos!

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Leaderboard: Porsche 911 GT3





**OUR CHOICE**

**Volkswagen Golf R.** The Mk7.5 Golf R continues the Mk7's trick of being the answer to just about every automotive question, combining four-wheel-drive security with impressive pace and a truly engaging driving experience. It's both classy and classless, and there's even an estate version.



**BEST OF THE REST**

If the Golf R is too mature to appeal, try the Ford Focus RS (pictured), or if front-drive is your thing, consider the Golf GTI Clubsport Edition 40 or SEAT's Leon Cupra 300. Amongst the smaller hatchbacks, the Fiesta ST Mountune just edges the Peugeot 208 GTI by Peugeot Sport.

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 MPGS	EVO RATING
Peugeot 306 GTI 6	020 R	'93-'01	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1215kg	139	<b>7.2</b>	<b>20.1</b>	140	-	30.1	★ One of the great GTIs - They don't make them like this anymore
Peugeot 306 Rallye	095 R	'98-'99	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1199kg	142	<b>6.9</b>	<b>19.2</b>	137	-	30.1	★ Essentially a GTI-6 for less dosh - Limited choice of colours
Renault Twingo GT	231 D	£13,755	3/898	109/5750	125/2000	1001kg	111	9.6	-	113	115	54.3	★ Nippy performance - Less fun than a rear-engined Renault Sport-fettled car should be
Renaultsport Twingo 133	175 R	'08-'13	4/1998	131/6750	118/4400	1050kg	127	8.6	-	125	150	43.5	★ Renaultsport experience for pocket money - Optional Cup chassis gives bouncy ride
Renaultsport Clio 200 Auto	184 R	£20,445	4/1618	197/6000	177/1750	1204kg	166	<b>6.9</b>	<b>17.9</b>	143	144	44.8	★ Faster, more refined, easier to drive - We miss the revvy nat-asp engine and manual 'box
Renaultsport Clio 220 Trophy	229 D	£22,425	4/1618	217/6050	206/2000	1204kg	183	6.6	-	146	135	47.9	★ Willing chassis - Awful paddleshift gearbox
Renaultsport Clio 200 Cup	195 R	'09-'13	4/1998	197/7100	159/5400	1204kg	166	<b>6.6</b>	<b>16.7</b>	141	190	34.5	★ The hot Clio at its best - They don't make it anymore
Renaultsport Clio 197 Cup	115 R	'07-'09	4/1998	194/7250	158/5550	1240kg	161	6.9	-	134	-	33.6	★ Quick, polished and capable - Not as much sheer fun as 182 Cup
Renaultsport Clio 182	066 R	'04-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1100kg	165	<b>6.6</b>	<b>17.5</b>	139	-	34.9	★ Took hot hatches to a new level - Flawed driving position
Renaultsport Clio 182 Cup	187 R	'04-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	168	6.5	-	139	-	34.9	★ Full of beans, fantastic value - Sunday-market upholstery
Renaultsport Clio Trophy	231 R	'05-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	168	<b>6.6</b>	<b>17.3</b>	140	-	34.9	★ The most fun you can have on three (sometimes two) wheels - Just 500 were built
Renaultsport Clio 172 Cup	048 R	'02-'04	4/1998	170/6250	147/5400	1011kg	171	<b>6.5</b>	<b>17.7</b>	138	-	-	★ Bargain old-school hot hatch - Nervous in the wet, no ABS
Renaultsport Clio V6 255	231 R	'03-'05	6/2946	251/7150	221/4650	1400kg	182	5.8	-	153	-	23.0	★ Supercar drama without the original's edgy handling - Uninspired interior
Renaultsport Clio V6	029 R	'99-'02	6/2946	227/6000	221/3750	1335kg	173	<b>5.8</b>	<b>17.0</b>	145	-	23.0	★ Pocket supercar - Mid-engined handling can be tricky
Renault Clio Williams	233 R	'93-'96	4/1988	148/6100	126/4500	981kg	153	<b>7.6</b>	<b>20.8</b>	134	-	26.0	★ One of the best hot hatches ever - Can be fragile
Renault 5 GT Turbo	195 R	'87-'91	4/1397	118/5750	122/3000	855kg	140	7.3	-	120	-	28.4	★ Clio Williams' grand-daddy - Few unmodified ones left
Renaultsport Mégane 275 Cup-S	223 D	'16	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1394kg	198	5.8	-	158	174	37.7	★ Cup chassis, LSD, the same engine as the Trophy-R - Could be too hardcore for some
Renaultsport Mégane Nav 275	-	'16	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1394kg	198	5.8	-	158	174	37.7	★ A more luxurious 275 - Cup chassis is an option
Renaultsport Mégane 265 Cup	195 R	'12-'15	4/1998	261/5500	265/3000	1387kg	191	<b>6.4</b>	<b>14.8</b>	158	174	37.7	★ A hot hatch benchmark - Cupholder could be better positioned
Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy	212 R	'14-'15	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1376kg	200	5.8	-	159	174	37.7	★ Another cracking Trophy model - Stripped-out Trophy-R is even more thrilling
Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy-R	231 R	'14-'15	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1297kg	212	5.8	-	158	174	37.7	★ As absorbing as a 911 GT3 RS on the right road - Too uncompromising for some; pricey
Renaultsport Mégane 250 Cup	139 R	'09-'12	4/1998	247/5500	251/3000	1387kg	181	<b>6.1</b>	<b>14.6</b>	156	190	34.4	★ Fantastic chassis... - partially obscured by new-found maturity
Renaultsport Mégane dCi 175 Cup	119 R	'07-'09	4/1995	173/3750	265/2000	1470kg	119	<b>8.3</b>	<b>23.5</b>	137	-	43.5	★ A diesel with a genuinely sporty chassis - Could take more power
Renaultsport Mégane 230 FI Team R26	195 R	'07-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1345kg	171	<b>6.2</b>	<b>16.0</b>	147	-	-	★ The car the R26.R is based on - FI Team stickers in dubious taste
Renaultsport Mégane R26.R	231 R	'08-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1220kg	189	<b>5.8</b>	<b>15.1</b>	147	-	-	★ One of the true hot hatch heroes - Two seats, plastic rear windows
SEAT Ibiza Cupra	225 R	£18,100	4/1798	189/4300	236/1450	1185kg	162	6.7	-	146	145	45.6	★ Quick, competent, refined, and manual only - Not exciting enough
SEAT Ibiza Cupra	183 D	'10-'15	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1259kg	144	6.9	-	142	139	47.9	★ Punchy engine, unflappable DSG - Lacks engagement, DSG only
SEAT Leon Cupra 300	234 R	£29,840	4/1984	296/5900	280/1800	1300kg	231	5.7	-	155	158	40.9	★ Already potent Cupra gets yet another 10bhp - The Mk7.5 Golf R
SEAT Leon Cupra 290	227 R	'16-'17	4/1984	286/5900	258/1700	1300kg	224	6.4	13.4	155	156	42.2	★ Serious pace and agility for Golf GTI money, now with an extra 10bhp - The Mk7 Golf R
SEAT Leon Cupra 280	220 R	'14-'15	4/1984	276/5600	258/1700	1300kg	216	5.8	-	155	149	44.1	★ Serious pace and agility for Golf GTI money - The Mk7 Golf R
SEAT Leon Cupra	105 R	'07-'11	4/1984	237/5700	221/2200	1375kg	175	6.3	-	153	190	34.0	★ Great engine, composure - Doesn't have adjustability of old Cupra R
SEAT Leon Cupra R	139 R	'10-'12	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1375kg	193	<b>6.1</b>	<b>14.0</b>	155	190	34.9	★ Bold car, blinding engine - Lacks the character of its rival mega-hatches
SEAT Leon Cupra R 225	067 R	'03-'06	4/1781	222/5900	206/2200	1376kg	164	6.9	-	150	-	32.1	★ Cross-country pace, practicality, value - Not as thrilling as some
Skoda Fabia vRS (Mk2)	146 D	'10-'14	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1218kg	148	7.3	-	139	148	45.6	★ Well priced, well made, with great engine and DSG 'box - Dull steering
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk3)	187 D	£24,230	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1345kg	164	6.8	-	154	142	45.6	★ Quick, agile, roomier than a Golf - Ride is harsh for what could be a family car
Skoda Octavia vRS 230 (Mk3)	215 D	£26,350	4/1984	227/4700	258/1500	1345kg	171	6.7	-	155	142	45.6	★ Limited-slip diff makes for a sharper steer - It could handle more than the extra 10bhp
Skoda Octavia vRS TDI 4x4 (Mk3)	223 D	£27,590	4/1968	181/3500	206/1750	1475kg	125	7.6	-	142	129	57.7	★ Four-wheel drive tightens the vRS chassis - Diesel and DSG only
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk2)	163 R	'05-'13	4/1998	197/5100	206/1700	1395kg	143	7.3	-	149	175	37.7	★ Drives like a GTI but costs much less - Green brake calipers?
Subaru Impreza STI 330S	124 R	'08-'10	4/2457	325/5400	347/3400	1505kg	219	4.4	-	155	-	-	★ A bit quicker than the STI... - ...but not better
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk2)	175 R	£13,999	4/1586	134/6900	118/4400	1045kg	130	8.7	-	121	147	44.1	★ The Swift's still a great pocket rocket - But it's lost a little adjustability
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk1)	132 R	'05-'11	4/1586	123/6800	109/4800	1030kg	121	8.9	-	124	165	39.8	★ Entertaining handling, well built - Lacking in steering feedback
Vauxhall Corsa VXR	211 R	£18,125	4/1598	202/5800	206/1900	1278kg	161	6.5	-	143	174	37.7	★ Begg to be wrung out - You'll need the £2400 Performance Pack
Vauxhall Corsa VXR	154 R	'07-'14	4/1598	189/5850	192/1980	1166kg	165	6.8	-	140	172	38.7	★ Looks snazzy, punchy engine - Lacks feel, uncouth compared with rivals
Vauxhall Corsa VXR N'ring/Clubsport	167 R	'11-'13/'14	4/1598	202/5750	206/2250	1166kg	176	6.5	-	143	178	-	★ VXR gets more power and a limited-slip diff - But they come at a price
Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk2)	207 R	£27,850	4/1998	276/5500	295/2500	1475kg	190	5.9	-	155	184	34.9	★ Better than the car it replaces: loony turbo pace - Lacks RS Mégane's precision
Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk1)	102 R	'05-'11	4/1998	237/5600	236/2400	1393kg	173	<b>6.7</b>	<b>16.7</b>	152	221	30.7	★ Fast and furious - Lacks a little composure and precision
VW Up/SEAT Mii/Skoda Citigo	171 R	£8275+	3/999	59/5000	70/3000	854kg	70	14.1	-	99	105	62.8	★ Accomplished city car is dynamically sound... - ...but predictably slow
VW Polo GTI	211 R	£19,125	4/1798	189/4200	236/1450	1197kg	160	6.7	-	146	139	47.1	★ Smooth and brawny - Fiesta ST is more engaging
VW Polo GTI	154 R	'10-'14	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1184kg	153	6.8	-	142	139	47.9	★ Modern-day mk1 Golf GTI gets twin-clutch DSG - It's a little bit bland
VW Golf GTI (Mk7.5)	233 D	£27,865	4/1984	227/4700	258/1500	1289kg	179	6.4	-	155	145	44.8	★ Still the most capable all-round hot hatch - Should be more thrilling
VW Golf GTI Performance (Mk7.5)	236 R	£29,280	4/1984	242/5000	273/1600	1312kg	187	6.2	-	155	154	42.8	★ A GTI with an extra 15bhp and an LSD - Could still be more thrilling
VW Golf R (Mk7.5)	235 D	£32,310	4/1984	306/5500	280/2000	1408kg	221	5.1	-	155	148	44.1	★ Outrageous yet accessible performance - Manual gearshift isn't the best
VW Golf GTD (Mk7)	200 D	£26,955	4/1968	181/3500	280/1750	1302kg	141	7.5	-	143	114	64.2	★ Pace, fuel economy, sounds good for a diesel - Lacks the extra edge of the GTI
VW Golf GTI (Mk7)	229 R	£28,515	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1276kg	173	6.5	-	153	139	47.1	★ Brilliantly resolved - Lacks the punch of newer rivals
VW Golf GTI Clubsport Edition 40 (Mk7)	230 D	£30,935	4/1984	286/5350	280/1700	1300kg	224	6.3	-	155	162	40.4	★ A faster, sharper, more entertaining GTI - Some rivals are more exciting on track
VW Golf GTI Clubsport S (Mk7)	229 R	'16	4/1984	306/5800	280/1850	1285kg	242	<b>5.8</b>	<b>12.8</b>	165	172	38.2	★ Runner-up at Evo Car of the Year 2016 - Only 400 built
VW Golf R (Mk7)	220 R	£31,685	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1401kg	215	<b>5.2</b>	<b>12.4</b>	155	165	39.8	★ A VW 'R' model you can take seriously - Mégane 275 just edges it as a pure drivers' car
VW Golf GTI (Mk6)	172 R	'09-'13	4/1984	207/5300	207/1700	1318kg	160	<b>6.4</b>	<b>16.5</b>	148	170	38.7	★ Still a very accomplished hot hatch - 207bhp isn't a lot any more
VW Golf R (Mk6)	140 D	'10-'13	4/1984	266/6000	258/2500	1446kg	187	5.7	-	155	199	33.2	★ Great engine, tremendous pace and poise - High price, adaptive dampers optional
VW Golf GTI (Mk5)	195 R	'04-'09	4/1984	197/5100	207/1800	1336kg	150	<b>6.7</b>	<b>17.9</b>	145	192	35.2	★ Character and ability: the GTI's return to form - Lacking firepower?
VW Golf R32 (Mk5)	087 R	'06-'09	6/3189	246/6300	236/2500	1466kg	170	<b>5.8</b>	<b>15.2</b>	155	257	26.4	★ Traction's great and you'll love the soundtrack - We'd still have a GTI
VW Golf GTI 16v (Mk2)	195 R	'88-'92	4/1781	139/6100	124/4600	960kg	147	5.9	-	129	-	26.6	★ Still feels everyday useable - Very hard to find a standard one
Volvo C30 T5 R-Design	122 R	'08-'12	5/2521	227/5000	236/1500	1347kg	165	<b>6.6</b>	<b>16.9</b>	149	203	32.5	★ Good-looking, desirable Volvo - Lacks edge of best hatches. Avoid auto

**Don't miss these great evo videos...**



**Driven**

Tajima Rimac Pikes Peak car



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**Unwrapped**

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BEST OF THE REST

Mercedes-AMG's new E63 S 4Matic+ (pictured) has set the bar high for the next M5, while Porsche's Panamera Turbo feels good for its 7min 38sec Ring time. Move down a size and the Mercedes-AMG C63 S is a highly desirable package, although some may prefer the more focused feel of BMW's M3.

	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LD FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 g/km	EC MPGS	EVO RATING
Alfa Romeo Giulia 2.0 Turbo Super	234 D	£31,180	4/1995	197/5000	243/1750	1429kg	140	6.6	-	146	138	47.9	★★★★★
Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio	229 R	£59,000	6/2891	503/6500	443/2500	1524kg	335	3.9	-	191	198	40.3	★★★★★
Alfa Romeo Stelvio	234 D	£35,000	4/1995	276/5250	295/1750	1660kg	169	5.7	-	143	-	-	★★★★★
Alpina D3 Biturbo (F30)	192 D	£47,950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1585kg	221	4.6	-	173	139	53.3	★★★★★
Alpina B3 Biturbo (F30)	188 D	£57,450	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1630kg	252	4.3	-	190	177	37.2	★★★★★
Aston Martin Rapide S	201 D	£147,950	12/5935	552/6650	465/5500	1990kg	282	4.2	-	203	300	21.9	★★★★★
Aston Martin Rapide	141 R	10'-13	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1990kg	240	5.2	-	188	355	-	★★★★★
Audi S3 Saloon	192 D	£32,330	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1430kg	210	5.3	-	155	162	26.4	★★★★★
Audi RS3 Saloon	235 R	£46,000	5/2480	394/5850	354/1700	1515kg	264	4.1	-	155	188	34.0	★★★★★
Audi S4 (B9)	225 D	£44,000	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1630kg	218	4.7	-	155	166	38.7	★★★★★
Audi S4 (B8)	166 D	10'-16	6/2995	328/5500	324/2900	1705kg	195	4.9	-	155	190	34.9	★★★★★
Audi RS4 Avant (B8)	216 R	12'-15	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1795kg	251	<b>4.5</b>	<b>10.5</b>	174	249	26.4	★★★★★
Audi RS4 (B7)	231 R	10'-08	8/4163	414/7800	317/5500	1650kg	255	<b>4.5</b>	<b>10.9</b>	155	-	-	★★★★★
Audi RS4 (B5)	192 R	10'-02	6/2671	375/6100	325/2500	1620kg	236	<b>4.8</b>	<b>12.1</b>	170	-	17.0	★★★★★
Audi RS2	214 R	94'-95	5/2226	315/6500	302/3000	1595kg	201	<b>4.8</b>	<b>13.1</b>	162	-	18.0	★★★★★
Audi S5 Sportback	233 D	£47,000	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1660kg	214	4.7	-	155	166	38.7	★★★★★
Audi S6	091 D	106'-11	10/5204	429/6800	398/3000	1910kg	228	5.2	-	155	299	22.4	★★★★★
Audi RS6 Avant (C7)	203 R	£78,505	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1935kg	290	<b>3.6</b>	<b>8.2</b>	155	223	29.4	★★★★★
Audi RS6 Avant Performance (C7)	224 D	£86,420	8/3993	597/6100	553/2500	1950kg	311	<b>3.7</b>	-	155	223	29.4	★★★★★
Audi RS6 Avant (C6)	116 R	108'-10	10/4991	572/6250	479/1500	2025kg	287	<b>4.3</b>	<b>9.7</b>	155	333	20.2	★★★★★
Audi RS6 Avant (C5)	052 R	102'-04	8/4172	444/5700	443/1950	1865kg	242	<b>4.8</b>	<b>11.6</b>	155	-	19.3	★★★★★
Audi RS7 Sportback	208 R	£84,485	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1920kg	292	3.9	-	155	229	28.8	★★★★★
Audi S7 Sportback	171 D	£64,380	8/3993	414/5000	406/1400	1945kg	216	4.6	-	155	225	-	★★★★★
Audi S8 Plus	217 D	£98,395	8/3993	597/6100	553/2500	1990kg	305	3.8	-	155	229	28.2	★★★★★
Audi RS Q3	206 D	£46,120	5/2480	335/5300	332/1600	1655kg	206	4.8	-	155	203	32.1	★★★★★
Bentley Flying Spur V8	200 D	£132,800	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2342kg	217	4.9	-	183	254	25.9	★★★★★
Bentley Flying Spur V8 S	230 D	£142,800	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2342kg	226	4.6	-	190	254	25.9	★★★★★
Bentley Flying Spur	185 D	£154,900	12/5998	616/6000	590/1600	2400kg	261	4.3	-	200	343	19.0	★★★★★
Bentley Bentayga	217 D	£162,700	12/5950	606/5000	664/1350	2400kg	258	4.0	-	187	296	21.6	★★★★★
Bentley Mulsanne	178 F	£229,360	8/6752	505/4200	752/1750	2610kg	197	5.1	-	184	342	19.3	★★★★★
Bentley Mulsanne Speed	235 D	£252,000	8/6752	530/4000	811/1750	2610kg	206	4.8	-	190	342	19.3	★★★★★
BMW 340i M Sport Touring (F31)	228 D	£41,635	6/2998	321/5500	332/1380	1615kg	202	5.1	-	155	158	41.5	★★★★★
BMW M3 (F80)	211 R	£56,605	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1520kg	284	<b>4.1</b>	<b>8.6</b>	155	204	32.1	★★★★★
BMW M3 (E90)	123 R	108'-11	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1605kg	262	<b>4.9</b>	<b>10.7</b>	165	290	22.8	★★★★★
BMW M3 CRT (E90)	179 R	11'-12	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1580kg	285	4.4	-	180	295	-	★★★★★
BMW M5 (F10M)	208 R	11'-16	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1870kg	300	4.3	-	155	232	28.5	★★★★★
BMW M5 (E60)	129 R	104'-10	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1755kg	289	4.7	10.4	155	-	19.6	★★★★★
BMW M5 (E39)	110 R	99'-03	8/4941	394/6600	369/3800	1795kg	223	<b>4.9</b>	<b>11.5</b>	155	-	-	★★★★★
BMW M5 (E34)	110 R	92'-96	6/3795	340/6900	295/4750	1653kg	209	<b>5.9</b>	<b>13.6</b>	155	-	-	★★★★★
BMW M6 Gran Coupe	190 D	£95,665	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1875kg	299	4.2	-	155	232	28.5	★★★★★
BMW M760Li xDrive	233 D	£132,310	12/6592	602/5500	590/1550	2180kg	281	3.7	-	155	294	22.1	★★★★★
BMW X5 M50d	191 D	£65,240	6/2993	376/4000	546/2000	2190kg	155	5.3	-	155	173	42.8	★★★★★
BMW X6 M	212 D	£93,100	8/4395	567/6000	553/2200	2265kg	245	4.2	-	155	258	25.4	★★★★★
BMW X6 M	134 D	109'-15	8/4395	547/6000	502/1500	2305kg	241	4.7	-	171	325	20.3	★★★★★
Cadillac CTS-V	148 R	£67,300	8/6162	556/6100	551/3800	1928kg	293	3.9	-	191	365	18.1	★★★★★
Cadillac CT6	226 D	£69,990	6/2997	411/5700	409/2500	1950kg	214	5.7	-	149	223	28.2	★★★★★
Honda Accord Type R	012 R	98'-03	4/2157	209/7200	158/6700	1306kg	163	<b>6.1</b>	<b>17.4</b>	142	-	29.4	★★★★★
Infiniti Q50S Hybrid	195 D	£39,995	6/3498	359/6800	402/5000	1750kg	208	5.1	-	155	144	45.6	★★★★★
Jaguar XE 2.0d AWD	227 D	£33,825	4/1999	178/4000	311/1750	1615kg	112	7.5	-	140	123	60.6	★★★★★
Jaguar XE S	213 D	£44,865	6/2995	335/6500	332/4500	1635kg	208	4.9	-	155	194	34.9	★★★★★
Jaguar XF S	214 D	£49,945	6/2995	375/6500	332/4500	1710kg	223	5.0	-	155	198	34.0	★★★★★
Jaguar XF S Diesel	219 D	£49,945	6/2993	296/4000	516/2000	1750kg	172	5.8	-	155	144	51.4	★★★★★
Jaguar XFR	181 D	109'-15	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1800kg	284	<b>4.8</b>	<b>10.2</b>	155	270	24.4	★★★★★
Jaguar XFR-S	208 R	113'-15	8/5000	542/6500	501/2500	1800kg	306	4.4	-	186	270	24.4	★★★★★
Jaguar XJ 3.0 V6 Diesel	148 D	£58,690	6/2993	271/4000	442/2000	1835kg	150	6.0	-	155	167	46.3	★★★★★
Jaguar XJ R	191 D	£91,755	8/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1875kg	294	4.4	-	174	270	24.4	★★★★★
Jaguar F-Pace 3.0 V6 Supercharged	222 D	£65,275	6/2995	375/6500	332/4500	1884kg	202	5.1	-	155	209	57.7	★★★★★
Land Rover Discovery Sport	205 D	£32,395	4/2179	187/3500	310/1750	1863kg	100	9.8	-	117	159	46.3	★★★★★
Lexus GS F	221 D	£69,995	8/4969	470/7100	391/4800	1790kg	267	4.6	-	168	260	25.2	★★★★★
Lexus IS F	151 R	107'-12	8/4969	417/6600	372/5200	1714kg	247	<b>4.7</b>	<b>10.9</b>	173	270	24.4	★★★★★


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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	EG MPG	EVO RATING	
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, ride lacks decorum	★★★★★
Maserati Quattroporte GTS	226 D	£110,405	8/3798	523/6800	479/2250	1900kg	280	4.7	-	193	250	26.4	+ Still pretty - Off the pace dynamically	★★★★★
Maserati Levante Diesel	221 D	£54,335	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	<b>5.1</b>	<b>12.1</b>	174	365	18.0	+ A QP with the bhp it deserves - Grille 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	£44,595	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 C43 4Matic Estate	228 D	£45,250	8/2996	362/5500	383/2000	1660kg	222	4.7	-	155	181	35.8	+ Incredibly fast and composed - Difficult to engage with	★★★★★
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	<b>4.4</b>	<b>9.7</b>	160	280	23.5	+ Monstrous pace and extremely engaging - Same-era M3 is just a little better...	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz C55 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 E43 4Matic (W213)	236 D	£57,275	8/2996	395/6100	383/2500	1765kg	227	4.6	-	155	192	33.6	+ Some of the E63's looks and performance - Not enough of its performance	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG E63 S 4Matic+ (W213)	231 R	£87,745	8/3982	603/5750	627/2500	1880kg	326	3.4	-	155	203	31.7	+ Fast, refined, effective and fun - At nearly two tons, it's not 911 nimble	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG E63 S (W212)	208 R	'13-16	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	+ Indulgent chassis, brilliant engine, now with an extra 1lbhp - Steering still vague	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212)	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	<b>4.8</b>	<b>10.2</b>	155	-	21.9	+ M5-humbling grin, cossetting 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 GLE63 AMG S	218 D	£94,405	8/5461	577/5500	560/1750	2270kg	258	4.2	-	155	276	23.9	+ Stonking 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	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	<b>5.2</b>	<b>13.9</b>	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	<b>4.3</b>	<b>10.9</b>	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	-	-	+ Extra pace, extra attitude - Extra money	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo VII	031 R	'02-03	4/1997	276/6500	282/3500	1360kg	206	<b>5.0</b>	<b>13.0</b>	140	-	20.4	+ Terrific all-rounder - You tell us	★★★★★
Mitsubishi Evo VI Tommi Mäkinen Edition	231 R	'00-01	4/1997	276/6500	275/2750	1365kg	205	4.6	-	150	-	-	+ Our favourite Evo - Subtle it is not	★★★★★
Porsche Panamera Turbo	227 D	£113,975	8/3996	542/5750	568/1960	1995kg	276	3.6	-	190	212	30.0	+ Saving pace with body control that's a real step up; superb rear wing, too - Still very heavy	★★★★★
Porsche Panamera GTS	208 R	'11-16	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	'10-16	8/4806	493/6000	516/2250	1970kg	274	<b>3.6</b>	<b>8.9</b>	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	<b>4.5</b>	<b>11.1</b>	165	208	30.7	+ Doesn't feel like an SUV - Not a match for a proper sports saloon	★★★★★
Porsche Macan Turbo Performance Package	236 D	£69,505	6/3604	434/6000	442/1500	1925kg	229	4.4	-	169	224	29.7	+ Staggeringly quick and hugely capable - Do you really need this much power?	★★★★★
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 S (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	£118,455	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 Si4	160 D	£46,660	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	222 FF	£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	2355kg	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	1595kg	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 RB320	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	<b>5.2</b>	<b>12.9</b>	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	<b>5.4</b>	<b>14.6</b>	144	-	27.2	+ Destined for classic status - Thirsty	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza PI	200 R	'00-01	4/1994	276/6500	260/4000	1283kg	219	<b>4.9</b>	<b>13.3</b>	150	-	25.0	+ One of our favourite Imprezas - Doesn't come cheap	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza RB5 (PPP)	187 R	'99	4/1994	237/6000	258/3500	1235kg	195	<b>5.0</b>	<b>14.1</b>	143	-	-	+ Perfect blend of po	

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## OUR CHOICE

**Lotus 3-Eleven.** It may not be groundbreaking but it is hugely exciting. The V6 sounds fabulous and the open linkage on the manual gearbox looks fantastic. A circuit is obviously its natural habitat but it has surprisingly civilised road manners, so you could happily drive to and from a trackday in it.



## BEST OF THE REST

Jaguar's F-type (pictured) impresses in most forms, and we'd defy anyone not to be charmed by Aston Martin's V8 or V12 Vantage S Roadsters. Unsurprisingly, you won't find a duffer in Lotus's Elise and Exige Roadster ranges, and the same goes for Caterham's evergreen Seven.

	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	GDC G/MIN	EC MPG	EVO RATING
Abarth 124 Spider	225 D	£29,850	4/1368	168/5500	184/2500	1060kg	161	6.8	-	143	148	44.1	★☆☆☆☆
Alfa Romeo 4C Spider	223 R	£60,255	4/1742	237/6000	258/2200	940kg	256	4.5	-	160	161	40.9	★☆☆☆☆
Alfa Romeo 8C Spider	161 R	09-'11	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1675kg	273	4.5	-	181	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Alpina D4 Biturbo Convertible	212 D	£54,950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1815kg	193	5.0	-	171	156	47.9	★☆☆☆☆
Alpina B4 Biturbo Convertible	227 D	£62,950	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1840kg	223	4.5	-	187	186	35.3	★☆☆☆☆
Ariel Atom 3.5 Supercharged	180 D	£38,000	4/1998	310/8400	169/7200	550kg	573	2.7	-	155	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Ariel Atom 3.5R	205 R	£64,800	4/1998	350/8400	243/6100	550kg	647	2.6	-	155	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Ariel Atom 3 245	113 D	08-'12	4/1998	245/8200	155/5200	500kg	498	3.2	-	150	-	33.0	★☆☆☆☆
Ariel Atom 3 Supercharged	138 R	09-'12	4/1998	300/8200	162/7200	550kg	554	3.3	-	155	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Ariel Atom Mugen	165 R	12-'13	4/1998	270/8300	188/6000	550kg	499	2.9	-	150	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Ariel Atom V8 500	165 R	10-'12	8/3000	475/10,500	284/7750	550kg	877	3.0	5.8	170	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Ariel Nomad	210 R	£33,000	4/2354	235/7200	221/4300	670kg	365	3.4	-	134	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Aston Martin V8 Vantage Roadster	130 R	£89,994	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1710kg	250	4.7	-	180	328	20.4	★☆☆☆☆
Aston Martin V8 Vantage S Roadster	161 R	£108,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1690kg	258	4.6	-	189	299	21.9	★☆☆☆☆
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S Roadster	212 R	£147,000	12/5935	565/6750	451/5750	1745kg	329	4.1	-	201	343	19.2	★☆☆☆☆
Aston Martin V12 Vantage Roadster	175 R	12-'14	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1700kg	294	4.4	-	190	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Aston Martin DB9 Volante	150 D	05-'12	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1815kg	263	4.6	-	190	368	18.2	★☆☆☆☆
Aston Martin DBS Volante	133 D	09-'12	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1810kg	286	4.3	-	191	388	17.3	★☆☆☆☆
Audi TTS Roadster	207 D	£41,085	4/1984	306/5800	280/1800	1450kg	214	5.2	-	155	169	38.7	★☆☆☆☆
Audi TTS Roadster	122 D	08-'14	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1455kg	187	5.6	-	155	189	34.9	★☆☆☆☆
Audi TT RS Roadster	133 D	09-'14	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1510kg	225	4.7	-	155	212	31.0	★☆☆☆☆
Audi R8 V8 Spyder	186 D	11-'15	8/4163	424/7900	317/6000	1660kg	259	4.8	-	187	337	19.6	★☆☆☆☆
BAC Mono	189 R	£124,255	4/2261	280/7700	206/6000	540kg	527	2.8	-	170	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Bentley Continental GT V8 Convertible	168 R	£150,200	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2395kg	212	4.7	-	187	254	25.9	★☆☆☆☆
Bentley Continental GT V8 S Convertible	194 D	£180,500	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2395kg	221	4.5	-	191	258	25.4	★☆☆☆☆
Bentley Continental GT Speed Convertible	187 D	£181,000	12/5998	626/6000	605/1700	2420kg	263	4.1	-	203	347	19.0	★☆☆☆☆
BMW Z4 sDrive 35i M Sport (Mk2)	186 D	£43,005	6/2997	302/5800	295/1300	1505kg	204	5.2	-	155	219	30.1	★☆☆☆☆
BMW Z4 3.0si (Mk1)	094 D	06-'09	6/2996	265/6600	232/2750	1310kg	205	5.7	-	155	-	32.9	★☆☆☆☆
BMW Z4 M Roadster	091 R	06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1410kg	244	4.8	-	155	-	23.3	★☆☆☆☆
BMW M Roadster	002 R	98-'02	6/3246	325/7400	258/4900	1375kg	240	5.3	-	155	-	25.4	★☆☆☆☆
BMW 435i Convertible	194 D	£45,680	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1740kg	176	5.6	-	155	190	34.8	★☆☆☆☆
BMW M4 Convertible (F83)	202 D	£61,145	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1750kg	247	4.6	-	155	213	31.0	★☆☆☆☆
BMW Z8	026 R	00-'03	8/4941	400/6600	369/3800	1585kg	256	4.8	11.1	155	-	14.4	★☆☆☆☆
Caterham Seven 160	205 R	£19,710	4/660	80/7000	79/3400	490kg	166	6.9	-	100	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Caterham Seven 270	219 R	£23,795	4/1596	135/6800	122/4100	540kg	254	5.0	-	122	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Caterham Seven 310R	227 D	£24,995	4/1596	152/7000	124/5600	540kg	286	4.8	-	126	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Caterham Seven 360	209 R	£27,795	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	560kg	327	4.8	-	130	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Caterham Seven 420	223 R	£30,795	4/1999	210/7600	150/6300	560kg	381	4.0	10.3	136	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Caterham Seven 620S	220 D	£44,995	4/1999	310/7700	219/7350	610kg	516	3.4	-	155	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Caterham Seven 620R	187 R	£50,795	4/1999	310/7700	219/7350	572kg	551	2.8	-	155	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Caterham Seven CSR	094 R	£47,295	4/2261	256/7500	200/6200	565kg	460	3.8	-	155	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Caterham Seven Roadsport 125	105 R	07-'14	4/1596	125/6100	120/5350	539kg	235	5.9	-	112	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Caterham Seven Roadsport	165 R	11-'14	4/1596	140/6900	120/5790	520kg	273	4.9	-	120	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Caterham Seven Supersport R	180 D	13-'14	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	535kg	342	4.8	-	130	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Caterham Seven 270	150 R	09-'12	4/1999	175/7000	139/6000	515kg	345	4.5	-	140	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Caterham Seven Superlight R500	123 R	08-'14	4/1999	263/8500	177/7200	506kg	528	2.9	-	150	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Caterham Levante	131 R	09-'10	8/2398	550/10000	300/8500	520kg	1074	4.8	8.2	150	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Caterham Seven R300	068 R	02-'06	4/1796	160/7000	130/5000	500kg	325	4.7	-	130	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Caterham Seven R500	200 R	99-'06	4/1796	230/8600	155/7200	460kg	510	3.6	8.8	146	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Ferrari California T	229 D	£155,254	8/3855	553/7500	557/4750	1729kg	324	3.6	-	196	250	26.9	★☆☆☆☆
Fiat 124 Spider	228 R	£19,545	4/1368	138/5000	117/2250	1050kg	134	7.5	-	134	148	44.1	★☆☆☆☆
Honda S2000	118 D	99-'09	4/1997	237/8300	153/7500	1260kg	191	6.2	-	150	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Jaguar F-type Convertible	186 R	£56,260	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1587kg	214	5.5	-	161	234	28.8	★☆☆☆☆
Jaguar F-type S Convertible	183 R	£66,260	6/2995	375/6500	339/3500	1604kg	238	5.3	-	171	234	28.8	★☆☆☆☆
Jaguar F-type R Convertible	-	£92,310	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1665kg	331	4.0	-	186	255	26.4	★☆☆☆☆
Jaguar F-type SVR Convertible	230 D	£115,485	8/5000	567/6500	516/3500	1720kg	335	3.5	-	195	269	25.0	★☆☆☆☆
Jaguar F-type Project 7	212 R	15	8/5000	567/6500	501/2500	1585kg	363	3.9	-	186	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Jaguar F-type V8 S Convertible	183 R	13-'14	8/5000	488/6500	461/2500	1665kg	298	4.3	-	186	259	25.5	★☆☆☆☆
Jaguar XKR Convertible	130 R	09-'14	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1725kg	296	4.6	-	155	292	23.0	★☆☆☆☆
Jaguar XKR-S Convertible	167 R	11-'14	8/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1725kg	319	4.2	-	186	292	23.0	★☆☆☆☆
KTM X-Bow GT	183 D	£95,880	4/1984	281/6400	310/3200	875kg	326	4.1	-	144	189	34.0	★☆☆☆☆
KTM X-Bow R	165 R	£87,480	4/1984	296/5500	295/3300	818kg	368	3.6	-	144	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
KTM X-Bow	138 R	08-'12	4/1984	237/5500	229/2000	818kg	294	3.8	-	137	-	-	★☆☆☆☆
Lotus Elise Sprint 220	236 D	£44,300	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	878kg	251	4.1	-	145	173	37.7	★☆☆☆☆
Lotus Elise Cup 250	224 R	£45,600	4/1798	243/7200	184/3500	931kg	265	3.9	-	154	175	37.7	★☆☆☆☆
Lotus Elise 1.6 Club Racer	183 R	11-'15	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	852kg	160	6.0	-	127	149	45.0	★☆☆☆☆
Lotus Elise S Club Racer	189 D	13-'15	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	905kg	244	4.2	-	145	175	37.5	★☆☆☆☆

## PAST MASTER



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scalpel. The unassisted steering is perfectly weighted, the gearshift pleasingly notchy and mechanical. The front-end generates enormous amounts of grip, which fills you with confidence to attack every turn. The tail matches it for adhesive quality, and the balance feels wonderfully neutral

and adjustable.

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## ISSUE 054, APRIL 2003

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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 R	068 R	'04-'11	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	860kg	223	<b>5.6</b>	<b>13.9</b>	150	196	34.4	+ Most thrilling some Elise yet - Blaring engine note	★★★★★
Lotus Elise SC	131 R	'08-'11	4/1794	218/8000	156/5000	870kg	254	<b>4.5</b>	<b>11.4</b>	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	<b>6.3</b>	<b>18.7</b>	127	-	37.2	+ Brilliant entry-level Elise - Precious little	★★★★★
Lotus Elise IIIS	049 R	'02-'04	4/1796	156/7000	129/4650	826kg	199	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	860kg	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	<b>4.7</b>	<b>12.1</b>	135	-	-	+ Fabulous trackday tool - Pricey	★★★★★
Lotus Elise (S1)	235 R	'96-'01	4/1796	118/5500	122/3000	731kg	164	<b>6.1</b>	<b>18.5</b>	126	-	39.4	+ A modern classic - A tad impractical?	★★★★★
Lotus Exige Sport 350 Roadster	221 R	\$55,900	6/3456	345/7000	296/4500	1125kg	312	3.7	-	145	235	28.0	+ An Exige with added sunny-day appeal - A Boxster would be more practical	★★★★★
Lotus Exige Sport 380 Roadster	231 R	\$67,900	6/3456	375/6700	302/5000	1110kg	343	3.5	-	178	242	27.2	+ Like the 350 Roadster, but faster and even purer - A Boxster would still be more practical	★★★★★
Lotus Exige S Roadster	186 R	'13-'15	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1166kg	301	3.8	-	145	235	28.0	+ Like the hard-top Exige S, but more road-friendly - 981 Boxster S is a better all-rounder	★★★★★
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	<b>4.5</b>	<b>12.5</b>	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	317	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 1.8i (Mk4)	230 F	\$18,495	4/1469	129/7000	111/4800	975kg	134	8.3	-	127	139	47.1	+ Lightest MX-5 since the Mk1 - Lacks intensity	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 2.0 Sport Nav (Mk4)	228 R	\$23,695	4/1998	158/6000	147/4600	1000kg	161	7.3	-	133	161	40.9	+ Brilliant basic recipe - The desire for stiffer suspension and more power	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 RF (Mk4)	234 R	\$23,095	4/1998	158/6000	147/4600	1045kg	154	7.4	-	134	161	40.9	+ Drives just like its soft-top brother - Significant wind noise with the roof down	★★★★★
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	123/4500	1080kg	108	9.3	-	122	-	-	+ Gearchange, interior - Lost some of the charm of old MX-5s; dubious handling	★★★★★
Mazda MX-5 1.8i (Mk2)	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	970kg	120	9.0	-	114	-	-	+ The original and still (pretty much) the best - Less than rigid	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG SLK43	222 D	\$45,950	6/2996	362/5500	383/2000	1520kg	242	4.7	-	155	178	26.2	+ Twin-turbo V6 well-suited to baby roadster - But also highlights the chassis' age	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLK 55 AMG	186 R	'12-'15	8/5461	416/6800	398/4500	1615kg	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	8/5439	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	110 R	'07-'08	8/5439	394/5750	383/3750	1495kg	268	<b>4.9</b>	<b>11.2</b>	174	-	-	+ AMG gets serious - Dull-witted TG-Tronic auto box, uneven dynamics	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Cabriolet	226 D	\$68,115	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1850kg	276	4.1	-	155	208	31.7	+ A born hooligan - Body flex takes away some control	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG SL63	228 D	\$114,115	8/5461	571/5500	664/2250	1770kg	331	4.1	-	155	234	28.0	+ Effortless performance - Needs more involvement to go with the pace	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG GT C Roadster	235 D	\$139,445	8/3982	549/5750	502/1900	1678kg	332	3.7	-	196	259	24.8	+ Drop-top version of arguably the best AMG GT yet - Road noise can get wearing	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL500	169 D	'12-'16	8/4663	429/5250	516/1800	1710kg	255	4.6	-	155	212	31.0	+ Wafty performance, beautifully engineered - Lacks ultimate sports car feel	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SL63 AMG	171 D	'12-'16	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	'13-'16	12/5980	621/4800	737/2300	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	518/6800	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 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 SL S 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 (understandingly) loses the gullwing doors	★★★★★
Morgan 3 Wheeler	198 R	\$31,140	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	-	-	+ It's an Aero 8 with a V8 and targa 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 718 Boxster	224 D	\$41,739	4/1988	296/6500	280/1950	1335kg	225	5.1	-	170	168	38.2	+ Chassis as good as ever - Four-cylinder's tuneless din would be hard to live with	★★★★★
Porsche 718 Boxster S	222 R	\$50,695	4/2497	345/6500	310/1900	1355kg	259	<b>4.4</b>	<b>9.8</b>	177	184	34.9	+ Still sensationally capable - Turbo four-cylinder engine lacks appeal of the old flat-six	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster (981)	172 R	'12-'16	6/2706	261/6700	206/4500	1310kg	202	5.4	-	164	192	34.5	+ Goes and looks better - Shame about the electric steering	★★★★★
Porsche Boxster S (981)	186 R	'12-'16	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	'14-'16	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)	2123 R	'15-'16	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 S (987)	161 R	'05-'12	6/3436	306/6400	265/5500	1355kg	229	5.3	-	170	223	29.7	+ Second-gen Boxster's as brilliant as ever - It's a typically Porsche redesign	★★★★★
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 S (986)	070 R	'99-'04	6/3179	256/6200	229/4600	1320kg	200	5.7	-	164	-	26.9	+ Added power over the non-S Boxster is seductive - Very little	★★★★★
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	★★★★★
Renault Sport Spider	231 R	'96-'99	4/1998	148/6000	136/4500	930kg	157	6.5	-	131	-	-	+ Rarity, unassisted steering - Heavier than you'd hope; disappointing engine	★★★★★
Rolls-Royce Dawn	222 D	\$250,000	12/6592	563/5250	575/1500	2560kg	223	4.9	-	155	330	20.0	+ Effortless driving experience - Driver involvement not a priority	★★★★★
Toyota MR2	187 R	'00-'06	4/1794	138/6400	125/4400	975kg	141	<b>7.2</b>	<b>21.2</b>	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	-	175	-	-	+ 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	<b>4.8</b>	<b>11.2</b>	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	<b>4.8</b>	<b>11.2</b>	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	<b>4.2</b>	-	145	-	-	+ Neutral and exploitable - Prescriptive balance	★★★★★

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OUR CHOICE

**Porsche 911 Carrera GTS.** Super-agile, ultra-responsive and very rewarding to drive, the 991.2-generation Carrera GTS is everything a 911 should be. It even has the best steering yet in a 991 Carrera. Just make sure you order the two-wheel-drive, manual coupe version.



BEST OF THE REST

Lower down the 911 range, the 991.2 Carrera and Carrera S haven't been ruined by the addition of turbos. Elsewhere, Jaguar's F-type R Coupe (left) is a real hoot, and we'd take a Mercedes-AMG C63 S Coupe over BMW M4, while Lotus's Exige and Evora continue to offer sublime handling in all guises.

	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	£77,000	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1585kg	288	4.1	-	181	-	-	+ Looks, exclusivity, noise, balance - They're all sold	★★★★★
Alpina B4 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	★★★★★
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 Vantage GT8	229 R	£165,000	8/4735	440/7300	361/5000	1530kg	292	4.4	-	190	-	-	+ Enough drama to fill a Netflix mini-series - Just 150 being made	★★★★★
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S	224 D	£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 (so get the manual)	★★★★★
Aston Martin Vantage GT12	214 R	£250,000	12/5935	592/7000	461/5500	1565kg	384	3.5	-	185	-	-	+ The GT3-style Vantage we've been waiting for - Only 100 being made	★★★★★
Aston Martin V12 Vantage	146 R	£97,100	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 DB11	235 R	£252,500	12/5204	600/6500	516/1500	1770kg	344	4.0	8.1	200	333	19.8	+ An excellent GT - Suffers in outright handling terms as a result	★★★★★
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 DB9	178 R	£97,100	12/5935	510/6500	457/5500	1785kg	290	4.6	-	183	368	18.2	+ A great start to Gaydon-era Astons - Automatic gearbox could be quicker	★★★★★
Audi TT 2.0 TFSI (Mk3)	204 R	£29,915	4/1984	227/4500	273/1650	1615kg	225	4.0	-	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	273/1650	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	168	38.7	+ Dynamically interesting (for a TT) - Still not as interactive as a Cayman	★★★★★
Audi TT RS (Mk3)	230 R	£59,180	4/2480	394/5850	354/1700	1440kg	278	3.4	-	155	187	34.4	+ Soundtrack: tremendous point-to-point pace - A bit one-dimensional in the long run	★★★★★
Audi TT RS (Mk2)	158 R	£97,100	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1450kg	235	4.4	11.1	155	209	31.4	+ Sublime 5-cylinder turbo engine - Race of package can't quite match it	★★★★★
Audi S5	233 R	£47,000	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1615kg	220	4.7	-	155	170	38.2	+ Chassis rewards commitment... - ...but doesn't offer a challenge. Plain engine, too	★★★★★
Audi RS5	206 R	£59,870	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1515kg	263	4.5	-	155	246	26.9	+ Brilliant engine and improved chassis - Lack of suspension travel; inconsistent steering	★★★★★
Audi R8 V8	201 R	£97,100	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 drivers' Bentley with decent economy - W12 suddenly seems pointless	★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT V8 S	204 F	£149,800	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2200kg	238	4.3	-	192	250	26.4	+ An even better drivers' 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	230 D	£168,900	12/5998	633/5900	620/2000	2245kg	286	4.1	-	206	338	19.3	+ Desirability meets exclusivity and performance - We'd still have the V8	★★★★★
Bentley Continental Supersports	234 D	£212,500	12/5998	700/6000	750/2050	2205kg	323	3.5	-	209	-	18.0	+ Massive performance, surprisingly agile - Styling and soundtrack far from discreet	★★★★★
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	£71,100	6/2979	335/5900	369/1500	1495kg	228	4.8	-	155	224	-	+ Character, turbo pace and great looks - Came and went too quick	★★★★★
BMW M240i Coupe	229 D	£35,090	6/2998	335/6800	369/1520	1470kg	232	4.8	-	155	179	36.2	+ Adjustable and plenty of fun - Lacks finesse and precision	★★★★★
BMW M235i Coupe	225 R	£44,160	6/2979	321/5800	332/1300	1455kg	224	5.2	12.7	155	189	34.9	+ Powertrain, chassis, looks, size - Limited-slip diff is an option, not standard	★★★★★
BMW M2	230 R	£44,080	6/2979	365/6500	369/1450	1495kg	248	4.5	-	155	199	33.2	+ More progressive chassis balance than the M4 - Feels unsettled on rough tarmac	★★★★★
BMW M4	218 R	£57,055	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1515kg	285	4.3	-	155	204	32.1	+ Ferociously fast - A handful on less-than-perfect or less-than-bone-dry roads	★★★★★
BMW M4 Competition Package	226 R	£60,065	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 M4 GT5	232 R	£76	6/2979	493/6250	442/4000	1510kg	332	3.7	8.0	190	199	34.0	+ Vast improvement on lesser M4s - So it should be at this price	★★★★★
BMW M3 (E92)	196 R	£97,100	8/3999	444/8300	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 GT5 (E92)	232 R	£107,111	8/4361	414/8300	324/3750	1530kg	295	4.3	-	190	295	-	+ Highly exclusive, one of the most focused M-cars ever - Good luck trying to find one	★★★★★
BMW M3 (E46)	066 R	£60,000	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230	5.1	12.3	155	-	23.7	+ One of the best BMWs ever. Runner-up in eCoty 2001 - Slightly artificial steering feel	★★★★★
BMW M3 CS (E46)	219 R	£67,000	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230	5.1	-	155	-	23.7	+ CSL dynamics without CSL price - Looks like the standard car	★★★★★
BMW M3 CSL (E46)	200 R	£63,000	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 Evolution (E36)	148 R	£96,900	6/3201	321/7400	258/3250	1515kg	215	5.4	12.8	158	-	25.7	+ Performance, image - Never quite as good as the E30	★★★★★
BMW M3 (E30)	165 R	£86,900	4/2302	212/6750	170/4600	1165kg	185	6.7	17.8	147	-	20.3	+ Best M-car ever! Race-car dynamics for the road - Prices have got out of hand	★★★★★
BMW Z4 M Coupe	097 R	£60,000	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1420kg	242	5.0	-	155	-	23.3	+ A real drivers' car - You've got to be prepared to get stuck in	★★★★★
BMW M3 GT5	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 (F13)	106 R	£95,100	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 M6 (E63)	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	★★★★★
BMW i8	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 Camaro Z/28 *	197 R	£62,470	8/6162	460/6000	465/4600	1496kg	312	4.4	9.4	180	279	23.5	+ Performance, chassis balance, supple ride - Body control could be better	★★★★★
Chevrolet Corvette Stingray (C7)	227 R	£89,620	8/6162	650/6000	650/3600	1598kg	413	3.7	-	196	291	23.1	+ Mind-boggling raw speed; surprisingly sophisticated - Edgy when really pushed	★★★★★
Ford Mustang 2.3 EcoBoost	222 D	£30,995	4/2261	313/5500	319/3000	1655kg	192	5.8	-	155	179	35.3	+ Ninety per cent as good as the V8 - Missing ten per cent is what makes the Mustang	★★★★★
Ford Mustang 5.0 V8 GT	225 R	£34,995	8/4951	410/6500	391/4250	1711kg	243	4.8	11.6	155	299	20.9	+ Looks, noise, performance, value, right-hand drive - Comes undone on rougher roads	★★★★★
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	-	28.9	+ Arguably the greatest front-drive car ever - Too raw for some	★★★★★
Honda NSX (NA2)	188 R	£97,000	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1410kg	196	5.5	-	168	-	22.8	+ The useable supercar - 276bhp sounds a bit weedy today	★★★★★
Honda NSX-R (NA2) *	100 R	£92,000	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1270kg	221	4.4	-	168	-	-	+evo Car of the Year 2002 - Hard to find in the UK	★★★★★
Infiniti Q60S	228 D	£42,990	6/2997	400/6400	350/1600	1799kg	226	5.0	-	155	208	31.0	+ Impressive tech - Electronic systems reduce feeling of involvement	★★★★★
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	227 D	£91,660	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1730kg	318	3.5	8.1	186	269	25.0	+ Better than the rear-drive R in the wet - Less involving in the dry	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type SVR Coupe	224 D	£110,000	8/5000	567/6500	516/3500	1705kg	338	3.5	-	200	269	25.0	+ A marginally better drive than the AWD R - Not by enough to justify the extra outlay	★★★★★
Jaguar XKR	168 R	£97,100	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	£117,140	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	★★★★★
Lexus RC200t F Sport	225 R	£36,495	4/1998	242/5800	258/1650	1675kg	147	7.5	-	143	168	39.2	+ Fluid ride - Lacks body control and outright grip	★★★★★
Lexus RC F	226 R	£59,995	8/4969	470/6400	391/4800	1765kg	271	4.5	-	168	251	26.5	+ Great steering, noise, sense of occasion - Too heavy to be truly exciting	★★★★★
Lexus LC500	231 D	£85,000	8/4969	470/7100	398/4800	1935kg	247	4.4	-	168	-	-	+ Glorious engine, rewarding chassis for a GT car - Numb steering, messy ergonomics	★★★★★
Lotus Exige Sport 350	221 R	£55,900	6/3456	345/7000	2									

# Specialist Car Insurance

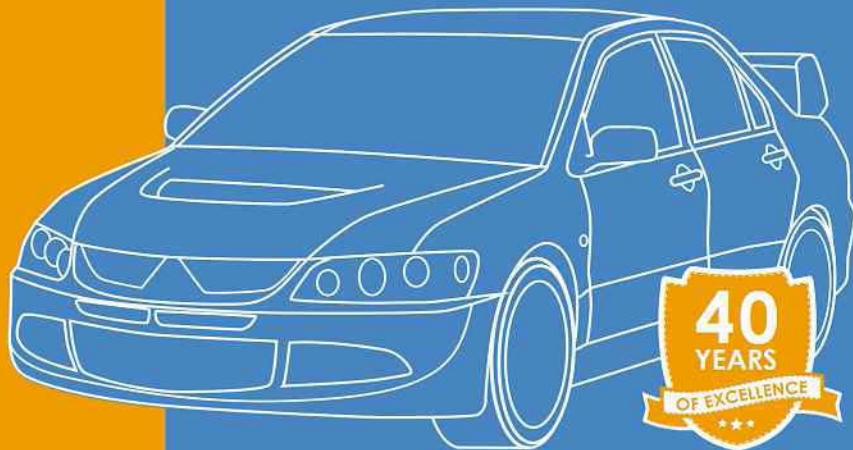
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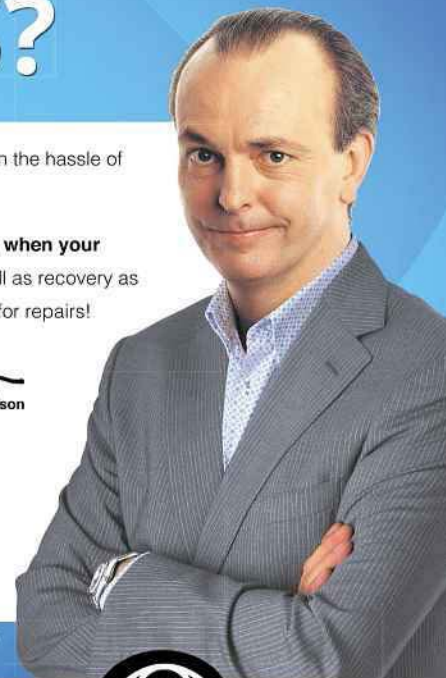


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	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 g/km	EC MPG	EVO RATING	
Lotus Exige Sport 380	231 R	£67,900	6/3456	375/6700	302/5000	1110kg	343	3.5	-	178	242	27.2	+ Intense, absorbing and brilliantly capable - Perhaps not an everyday car	★★★★★
Lotus Exige S (V6)	209 R	12-15	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	★★★★★
Lotus Exige S (S2)	105 R	06-11	4/1796	218/7800	158/5500	930kg	238	4.5	-	148	199	33.2	+ Lightweight with a hefty punch - Uninspiring soundtrack	★★★★★
Lotus Exige (S1)	200 R	00-01	4/1796	192/7800	146/5000	780kg	247	4.6	-	136	-	-	+ Looks and goes like Elise racer - A tad lacking in refinement	★★★★★
Lotus Evora 400	216 R	£72,000	6/3456	400/7000	302/3500	1395kg	291	4.1	-	186	225	29.1	+ Evora excitement levels take a leap - Gearbox still not perfect; punchy pricing	★★★★★
Lotus Evora Sport 410	230 R	£82,000	6/3456	410/7000	310/3500	1325kg	314	3.9	-	190	225	29.1	+ Even lighter and sharper Evora - Engine and gearbox behind the best at this price	★★★★★
Lotus Evora	138 R	09-15	6/3456	276/6400	258/4700	1382kg	203	5.6	13.6	162	217	30.3	+ Sublime ride and handling. Our 2009 Car of the Year - The Evora S	★★★★★
Lotus Evora S	168 R	10-15	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1430kg	245	4.6	-	172	229	28.7	+ A faster and better Evora - But one which spars with the Porsche 911...	★★★★★
Maserati GranTurismo	114 R	£82,890	8/4244	399/7100	339/4750	1880kg	216	5.5	12.7	177	330	19.8	+ Striking, accomplished GT - Doesn't spike the pulse like an Aston or 911	★★★★★
Maserati GranTurismo Sport	188 R	£91,420	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1880kg	245	4.8	-	185	331	19.7	+ The best everyday GranTurismo yet - Starting to get long in the tooth	★★★★★
Maserati GranTurismo MC Stradale	193 R	£110,740	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1800kg	256	4.5	-	188	360	18.2	+ Brilliant blend of road racer and GT - Gearbox takes a little getting used to	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG C43 4Matic Coupe	233 R	£47,605	8/2996	362/5500	383/2000	1660kg	222	4.7	-	155	178	36.2	+ Fast and instilled with a real sense of quality - Not enough emphasis on fun	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Coupe	229 R	£69,205	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1725kg	296	3.9	-	155	200	24.8	+ Mouth-watering mechanical package; better than an M4 - Light steering	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Coupe	162 R	11-14	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	277	4.4	10.3	155	280	23.5	+ A proper two-door M3 rival - C63 saloon looks better	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Black Series	171 R	12-13	8/6208	510/6800	457/5200	1635kg	317	4.2	-	186	286	-	+ The C63 turned up to 11 - Too heavy, not as fiery as Black Series cars of old	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz E400 4Matic Coupe	234 D	£50,775	8/2996	328/5200	354/1600	1770kg	188	5.3	-	155	189	34.9	+ Good looks, classy cabin, relaxed performance - Not much here in the way of real thrills	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG S63 Coupe	205 D	£125,595	8/5461	571/5500	664/2250	1995kg	294	4.2	-	155	237	28.0	+ Thunderously fast S-class built for drivers - Lacks badge appeal of a Continental GT	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG S65 Coupe	209 D	£183,075	12/5980	621/4800	737/2300	2100kg	299	4.1	-	186	279	23.7	+ Almighty power, fabulous luxury - Nearly £60k more than the S63!	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG GT	227 D	£98,195	8/3982	456/6000	442/1600	1540kg	301	4.0	-	189	216	30.4	+ A true sports car that also does luxury - Takes time to reveal its talents	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG GT S	216 R	£110,495	8/3982	503/6250	479/1750	1570kg	326	3.8	-	193	219	30.1	+ Fantastic chassis, huge grip - Artificial steering feel; downshifts could be quicker	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG GT R	232 R	£143,245	8/3982	577/6250	516/1900	1555kg	377	3.3	7.1	198	259	24.8	+ Fun and blisteringly fast; a true rival for the 911 GT3 - Could prove too stiff for UK roads	★★★★★
Nissan 370Z	204 R	£27,445	6/3696	323/7000	268/5200	1496kg	219	5.3	-	155	248	26.7	+ Quicker, leaner, keener than 350Z - Not quite a Cayman-killer	★★★★★
Nissan GT-R Nismo	209 R	£37,585	6/3696	339/7400	274/5200	1496kg	230	5.2	-	155	248	26.6	+ Sharper looks, improved ride, extra thrills - Engine lacks sparkle	★★★★★
Nissan GT-R (2017MY)	230 R	£79,995	6/3799	562/6800	470/3600	1725kg	326	2.7	-	196	275	24.0	+ More refinement, much improved interior, still fast - Feels a touch less alert	★★★★★
Nissan GT-R Track Edition (2017MY)	229 D	£91,995	6/3799	562/6800	470/3600	1745kg	327	2.7	-	196	275	24.0	+ GT-R regains its sharpness - Getting pricey these days	★★★★★
Nissan GT-R Nismo (2017MY)	232 R	£149,995	6/3799	592/6800	481/3600	1725kg	349	2.7	-	196	275	24.0	+ Incredibly focused - Still too firm to be at its best on UK roads	★★★★★
Nissan GT-R (2012MY-2016MY)	218 R	12-16	6/3799	542/6400	466/3200	1740kg	316	3.2	7.5	196	275	24.0	+ GT-R is quicker and better than ever - But costs over £20k more than its launch price	★★★★★
Nissan GT-R Track Edition (2016MY)	223 R	15-16	6/3799	542/6400	466/3200	1740kg	316	3.4	7.7	196	275	24.0	+ Recreates much of the Nismo's ability, without the rock-hard ride - Interior feels dated	★★★★★
Nissan GT-R Nismo (2014MY)	205 R	14-16	6/3799	592/6800	481/3200	1720kg	350	2.6	-	196	275	24.0	+ Manages to make regular GT-R feel impressive - Compromised by super-firm suspension	★★★★★
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R34)	196 R	99-02	6/2568	276/7000	289/4400	1560kg	187	4.7	12.5	165	-	20.1	+ Big, brutal, and great fun - Needs more than the standard 276bhp	★★★★★
Peugeot RCZ R	209 R	£32,250	4/1598	266/6000	243/1900	1280kg	211	5.9	-	155	145	44.8	+ Rewarding and highly effective when fully lit - Dated cabin, steering lacks feel	★★★★★
Porsche 718 Cayman	229 D	£39,878	4/1988	296/6500	280/1950	1335kg	225	5.1	-	170	168	47.1	+ Chassis remains a dream - Engine feels strangled and sounds horribly harsh	★★★★★
Porsche 718 Cayman S	230 R	£48,843	4/2497	345/6500	310/1900	1355kg	259	4.4	-	177	184	26.4	+ Faster and better to drive than ever - Turbo four-cylinder is utterly charmless	★★★★★
Porsche Cayman S (981)	202 R	13-16	6/3436	321/7400	273/4500	1320kg	247	4.5	10.5	175	206	32.1	+ The Cayman comes of age - Erm...	★★★★★
Porsche Cayman GT3 (981)	219 F	14-16	6/3436	335/7400	280/4750	1345kg	253	4.9	-	177	211	31.4	+ Tweaks improve an already sublime package - Slightly 'aftermarket' looks	★★★★★
Porsche Cayman GT4 (981)	221 R	15-16	6/3800	380/7400	310/4750	1340kg	288	4.4	-	183	238	27.4	+ Evo Car of the Year 2015 (even though the 991 GT3 RS was there!) - Second-hand prices	★★★★★
Porsche Cayman S (987)	231 F	05-13	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1350kg	237	5.2	-	172	223	29.7	+ Still want that 911? - Yeah, us too	★★★★★
Porsche Cayman R (987)	158 R	11-13	6/3436	325/7400	273/4750	1295kg	255	4.7	-	175	228	29.1	+ Total handling excellence - Styling additions not to all tastes	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera (991.2)	218 R	£76,412	6/2981	365/6500	332/1700	1430kg	259	4.6	-	183	190	34.0	+ Forced induction hasn't ruined the Carrera - Purists won't be happy	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera S (991.2)	217 R	£85,857	6/2981	414/6500	369/1700	1440kg	292	4.3	-	191	199	32.5	+ Blindingly fast - You'll want the sports exhaust	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera GTS (991.2)	233 D	£94,316	6/2981	444/6500	406/2150	1450kg	311	4.1	-	193	212	30.1	+ Everything a 911 should be - But only in rear-drive coupe form	★★★★★
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	+ A Carrera with supercar pace - Electric steering robs it of some tactility	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera 4S (991.1)	179 R	13-15	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1465kg	273	4.5	-	185	233	28.5	+ More satisfying than rear-drive 991.1 Carreras - Choose your spec carefully	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera 4 GTS (991.1)	208 D	15	6/3800	424/7500	324/5750	1470kg	293	4.4	-	189	233	28.5	+ The highlight of the 991.1 Carrera line-up - Pricey for a Carrera	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.2)	121 R	08-11	6/3800	380/6500	310/4400	1425kg	271	4.7	-	188	242	27.4	+ Poise, precision, blinding pace - Feels a bit clinical	★★★★★
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	+ Evo Car of the Year 2004; like a junior GT3 - Tech overload?	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 (991.2)	236 R	£111,802	6/3996	493/8250	339/6000	1413kg	355	3.9	-	198	290	21.9	+ Almost impossible to criticise - Not the easiest car to place an order for	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 (991.1)	206 R	13-16	6/3799	468/8250	324/6250	1430kg	333	3.5	-	196	289	23.0	+ Evo Car of the Year 2013 - PDK only	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991.1)	223 R	15-16	6/3996	493/8250	339/6250	1420kg	353	3.0	7.1	193	296	22.2	+ Sensationally good to drive - They aren't all painted Ultra Violet	★★★★★
Porsche 911 R (991.1)	229 R	16	6/3996	493/8250	339/6250	1370kg	366	3.8	-	200	308	21.2	+ Evo Car of the Year 2016 - Limited availability	★★★★★
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	+ Even better than the car it replaced - Give us a minute...	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (3.8, 997.2)	200 R	10-11	6/3797	444/7900	317/6750	1370kg	329	4.0	-	193	314	-	+ Our favourite car from the first 200 issues of Evo - For people like us, nothing	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS 4.0 (997.2)	187 R	11-12	6/3996	493/8250	339/5750	1360kg	368	3.8	-	193	326	-	+ Evo Car of the Year 2011 - Unforgiving on-road ride; crazy used prices	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.1)	182 R	07-09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1395kg	298	4.3	9.4	192	-	-	+ Runner-up Evo Car of the Year 2006 - Ferrari 599 GTB	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (997.1)	105 R	07-09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1375kg	302	4.2	-	193	-	-	+ Evo Car of the Year 2007 - A chunk more money than the brilliant GT3	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.2)	221 R	03-05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1380kg	272	4.3	9.2	190	-	-	+ Evo Car of the Year 2003 - Chassis is a bit too track-focused for some roads	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (996.2)	068 R	03-05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1330kg	286	4.2	9.2	190	-	-	+ Track-biased version of the brilliant GT3 - Limited supply	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.1)	182 R	99	6/3600	360/7200	273/5000	1350kg	271	4.5	10.3	187	-	21.9	+ Evo Car of the Year 1999 - Porsche didn't build enough	★★★★★
Radical RXC	189 R	£94,500	6/3700	350/6750	320/4250	900kg	395	2.8	-	175	-	-	+ A real trackday weapon - Can't match the insanity of a Caterham 620R	★★★★★
Radical RXC Turbo	205 R	£129,000	6/3496	454/6000	500/3600	940kg	491	2.6	-	185	-	-	+ Eats GT3s for breakfast - Might not feel special enough at this price	★★★★★
Radical RXC Turbo 500	209 D	£143,400	6/3496	530/6100	481/5000	1100kg	490	2.6	6.8	185	-	-	+ Huge performance, intuitive adjustability, track ability - Compromised for road use	★★★★★
Radical RXC Turbo 500R	227 D	£201,000	6/3496	600/6700	465/4200	1070kg	561	2.8	-	185	-	-	+ Immense accessible performance - Fit, finish and detailing lacks finesse at this price	★★★★★
Subaru BRZ	204 R	£22,495	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1230kg	163	7.6	-	140	181	36.2	+ Fine chassis, great steering - Weak engine, not the slide-happy car they promised	★★★★★
Toyota GT86	234 R	£22,495	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1240kg	161	6.9	16.5	140	181	36.2	+ More fun than its Subaru BRZ cousin - Same lack of torque, poor interior quality	★★★★★
VW Scirocco GT 2.0 TSI	155 R	£26,125	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1369kg	158	6.5	-	153	139	47.1	+ Golf GTI price and performance - Interior lacks flair	★★★★★
VW Scirocco R	200 D	£32,580	4/1984	276/6000	258/2500	1426kg	187	5.7	-	155	187	35.3	+ Great engine, grown-up dynamics - Perhaps a little too grown-up for some	★★★★★

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



**OUR CHOICE**

**Ferrari 488 GTB.** It's got a stunning turbocharged engine and the chassis to exploit it, but the 488 is also a fully rounded, three-dimensional car: civilised, refined, smooth, intuitive and beautifully built. Clearly the work of a team of engineers at the top of their game.



**BEST OF THE REST**

With the 540C, 570S (left) and 570GT, McLaren's Sports Series offers some corking entry-level supercars. For true supercar drama, look no further than Lamborghini's Aventador, especially in Superverce form, though the Pagani Huayra rivals it for theatre – albeit at four times the price.

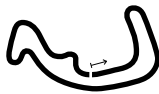
	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-60MPH	0-100MPH	MAX MPH	CO2 G/KM	EC MPG	EVO RATING
Aston Martin Vanquish (Mk2)	203 R	£192,995	12/5935	568/6650	465/5500	1739kg	332	3.6	-	201	298	22.1	+ Much better than the DBS it succeeds, especially in 2015MY form - It's no Ferrari F12
Aston Martin Vanquish S (Mk2)	235 R	£199,950	12/5935	595/7000	465/5500	1739kg	348	<b>3.9</b>	<b>8.3</b>	201	302	21.6	+ Noise, poise, drama and charm - Not as rounded as the DB11
Aston Martin Vanquish S (Mk1)	110 R	'05-'07	12/5935	520/7000	425/5800	1875kg	282	<b>4.9</b>	<b>10.1</b>	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	234 R	£122,450	10/5204	533/7800	398/6500	1595kg	340	3.5	-	198	272	24.8	- All the R8 you really need - Some may hanker after a manual gearbox
Audi R8 V10 Plus	229 R	£134,520	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	<b>3.9</b>	<b>8.4</b>	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 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 Chiron	235 R	c£2.5m	16/7993	1479/6700	1180/2000	1995kg	753	<2.5	-	261	516	12.6	+ Backs up the numbers with feel and emotion - Limited top speed(!)
Bugatti Veyron 16.4	134 R	'05-'11	16/7993	987/6000	922/2200	1950kg	521	<b>2.8</b>	<b>5.8</b>	253	596	11.4	+ Superbly engineered 4WD quad-turbo rocket - Er, lacks luggage space?
Bugatti Veyron 16.4 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	<b>3.8</b>	<b>7.6</b>	205	355	18.8	+ Huge pace and character - Take plenty of brave pills if there's rain
Ferrari 488 GTB	228 R	£183,964	8/3902	661/6500	561/3000	1475kg	455	3.0	-	205+	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	- All the usual 488 thrills, but with the wind in your hair - See left
Ferrari 458 Italia	221 R	'09-'15	8/4497	562/9000	398/6000	1485kg	384	<b>3.2</b>	<b>6.8</b>	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	<b>3.5</b>	<b>7.7</b>	198	-	15.7	+ Successful F1 technology transplant - Likes to shout about it
Ferrari 360 Modena	163 R	'99-'04	8/3586	394/8500	275/4750	1390kg	288	4.5	<b>9.0</b>	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 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 F12tdf	230 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	<b>3.5</b>	<b>7.4</b>	205	415	15.8	+evo Car of the Year 2006 - Banks are getting harder to rob
Ferrari 599 GTO	161 R	'11-'12	12/5999	661/8250	457/6500	1605kg	418	3.4	-	208	-	-	+ One of the truly great Ferraris - Erm, the air con isn't very good
Ferrari 575M Fiorano Handling Pack	200 R	'02-'06	12/5748	508/7250	434/5250	1730kg	298	<b>4.2</b>	<b>9.6</b>	202	-	12.3	+ Fiorano pack makes 575 truly great - It should have been standard
Ferrari 550 Maranello	169 R	'96-'02	12/5748	478/7000	420/5000	1690kg	287	4.3	<b>10.0</b>	199	-	12.3	+ Everything - Nothing
Ferrari GTCA Lusso	225 D	£230,430	12/6262	680/8000	514/5750	1920kg	360	3.4	-	208	350	18.8	+ Rear-wheel steering increases agility - Not as engaging as other Ferraris
Ferrari FF	194 R	'11-'15	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 LaFerrari	203 R	'13-'15	12/6262	950/9000	664/6750	1255kg	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	<b>3.5</b>	<b>6.7</b>	217+	545	-	+ Intoxicating, exploitable - Cabin denting 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	222 R	'87-'92	8/2936	471/7000	426/4000	1100kg	437	4.1	-	201	-	-	+ Brutally fast - It's in the dictionary under 'turbo lag'
Ferrari GT	236 R	\$450,000	6/3497	647/6250	550/5900	1385kg	475	2.8	-	216	-	-	+ Everything it does on track - Too many of the things it does on the road
Ford GT	200 R	'04-'06	8/7400	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	233 R	£143,950	6/3493	573	476/2000	1776kg	328	<b>3.0</b>	<b>6.8</b>	191	228	28.2	+ Blisteringly quick and brilliantly engineered - Limited range on a full tank
Koenigsegg Agera R	180 R	c£1.09m	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...
Lamborghini Huracán RWD	229 R	£155,400	10/5204	572/8000	397/6500	1389kg	418	3.4	-	199	278	23.7	+ More seductive than the 4WD Huracán - Feels like there's more to come
Lamborghini Huracán	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 LP640-4	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 Gallardo	094 R	'06-'08	10/4961	513/8000	376/4250	1520kg	343	<b>4.3</b>	<b>9.4</b>	196	-	-	+ On a full-bore start it spins all four wheels. Cool - Slightly clunky e-gear
Lamborghini Aventador	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 - Can feel a little clumsy
Lamborghini Aventador S	233 R	£271,146	12/6498	730/8400	509/5500	1575kg	471	2.9	-	217	394	16.7	+ A more agile, more connected Aventador - Erm... expensive?
Lamborghini Aventador 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 LP640	093 R	'06-'11	12/6496	631/8000	487/6000	1665kg	385	3.8	-	211	-	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	487/6000	1565kg	429	<b>3.2</b>	<b>7.3</b>	212	-	-	+ A supercar in its truest, wildest sense - Be prepared for stares
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
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
McLaren 540C	234 R	£126,000	8/3799	533/7500	398/3500	1311kg	413	3.5	-	199	258	25.5	+ An excellent junior supercar - The 570S is still better to drive
McLaren 570S	229 R	£143,250	8/3799	562/7500	443/5000	1440kg	397	3.1	-	204	249	26.6	+ A truly fun and engaging sports car - McLaren doesn't call it a supercar(!)
McLaren 570GT	228 R	£154,000	8/3799	562/7500	443/5000	1495kg	382	3.4	-	204	249	26.6	+ Blurs the line between grand tourer and supercar brilliantly - 570S is more involving
McLaren 720S	236 R	£208,600	8/3994	710/7250	568/5500	1283kg	562	2.9	-	212	249	26.4	+ Astonishingly, effortlessly fast - Oddly unexciting
McLaren 650S	196 R	'14-'17	8/3799	641/7250	500/6000	1428kg	456	3.0	-	207	275	24.2	+ Better brakes, balance and looks than 12C; more power too - Which all comes at a price
McLaren 675LT	228 R	'15-'17	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 675LT Spider	222 D	'16-'17	8/3799	666/7100	516/5500	1368kg	495	2.9	-	203	275	24.2	+ Spectacularly fast; involving, too - Might mess up your hair
McLaren 12C	228 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	228 R	'13-'15	8/3799	903/7500	664/4000	1490kg	616	2.8	-	217	194	34.0	+ Freakish breadth of ability - At its mind-bending best on track
McLaren F1	228 R	'94-'98	12/6064	627/7500	479/4000	1137kg	560	3.2	<b>6.3</b>	240+	-	-	+ 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	<b>4.1</b>	<b>8.4</b>	197	308	21.4	+ 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	228 R	'03-'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	<b>3.8</b>	<b>7.7</b>	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-prickling as the Zonda's
Pagani Zonda 760RS	170 R	£1.5m	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 T.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
Porsche 911 Turbo (991.2)	234 R	£128,692	6/3800	533/6400									

# 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
BAC Mono 2.5 (fastest sports car)	1:07.7	229	Yes
Radical RXC Turbo 500 (fastest coupe)	1:10.5	-	Yes
McLaren P1 (on Pirelli 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
Ferrari 488 GTB	1:12.8	228	Yes
McLaren 675LT	1:12.8	228	Yes
⊕ Porsche 911 GT3 (991.2)	1:13.4	236	Yes
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991.1)	1:13.6	-	Yes
Porsche 911 Turbo S (991.1)	1:13.6	-	Yes
Ferrari 458 Speciale	1:14.2	198	Yes
McLaren 570S	1:14.5	-	Yes
Porsche 911 Turbo (991.1)	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 (991.1)	1:17.8	199	Yes
Porsche Cayman (981)	1:18.9	209	-
Aston Martin N430	1:19.1	210	-
Lotus Evija S (V6)	1:19.1	209	-
SEAT Leon Cupra 280 Sub8 (fastest hot hatch)	1:19.1	212	Yes
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	-

## 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	Yes
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Saloon	1:24.0	211	Yes
VW Golf GTI Clubsport S	1:24.1	227	-
SEAT Leon Cupra 290 (on optional Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres)	1:24.2	227	-
Ford Focus RS (Mk3, on optional Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres)	1:24.6	227	-
Honda Civic Type R (FK2, on Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres)	1:24.6	227	-
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

## BLYTON PARK OUTER CIRCUIT

LOCATION Lincolnshire, UK  
GPS 53.460093, -0.688866  
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)	1:01.9	205	Yes
Caterham Seven 620R	1:02.1	189	-
Nissan GT-R Nismo	1:02.1	205	Yes
Mercedes SLR AMG Black Series	1:02.5	204	Yes
Pagani Huayra	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 Evija S (V6)	1:04.4	177	-
Porsche 911 Carrera (991.1)	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
Vuhti 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 275 Trophy-R (fastest hot hatch)	1:07.3	205	Yes
SEAT Leon Cupra 280 Sub8	1:07.6	220	-
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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Y111 AAB	P121 BUL	P21 DMB	G5 GKC	P29 JLS	N13 LER	T28 NAR	N11 PSF	K33 SFC
F28 AAC	P24 BUN	P21 DMD	B18 GMA	P121 JLW	Y121 LET	P31 NAS	X2 PTD	H7 SFM
N99 AAR	H4 BUY	P24 DMH	M9 GME	YC02 JMC	N123 LJM	P26 NCH	R321 PUG	N6 SGF
T16 ABA	Y700 CAB	R21 DMJ	M31 GMH	P23 JML	R121 LJS	J30 NDA	S503 RAC	L11 SGJ
T26 ABE	M60 ADN	M90 DMT	R31 GMS	W400 JMM	V19 LJW	V999 NDY	Y200 RAE	P29 SHP
S18 ABH	P23 ADR	C13 CAJ	R321 DMW	P31 GOT	N300 JMP	G70 NED	Y888 RAF	S600 SHY
C12 ABM	S99 ADW	X14 CAN	G514 DOG	L111 GPH	ME53 JMS	S933 NLL	Y15 RAG	P29 SJA
S111 ABP	P31 ADY	R475 CAR	N99 DOL	L9 GPK	P24 JMT	Y333 LMC	R26 NER	P121 SJG
Y400 ABY	S171 AFC	R29 CAW	DO09 DOM	Y2 GRR	R935 JMW	Y900 NES	B27 RAO	P80 SJT
Y20 ACC	P11 AFH	R26 CCC	T999 DOW	L33 GRS	S11 JNW	P26 LMR	R121 NEW	J800 SJL
T700 ACK	P26 ACW	G11 CDR	T9 DPF	X70 GSW	P21 JOB	P24 LMW	G8 NGB	P26 SLA
P21 ACL	P600 ADB	P26 CDS	R15 DPH	L700 GTS	P28 JDJ	W44 LOD	N600 NJB	P321 SLC
H9 BSR	S156 ADM	N15 AGM	AC52 CES	N23 DRB	Y400 GUS	L777 JOR	R29 LOG	P121 SLH
P121 BUL	M60 ADN	S111 AGP	P27 DRC	P29 GYM	X92 JPB	D42 LOK	P333 NJC	P123 SLR
P24 BUN	P23 ADR	K7 CGD	N100 DRH	P31 HAD	P28 JPH	P24 LOT	P121 NIK	P321 SLM
H4 BUY	S99 ADW	P27 AGS	K17 CGD	C14 DRP	P123 HAT	P24 JPM	R123 NKY	P29 SLR
P24 DMH	P31 ADY	Y16 AJA	N200 CHE	P121 CHR	S800 DRS	P333 JPW	S333 LOT	R29 SLS
M9 GME	S171 AFC	Y321 AJD	P121 CHR	P26 CJA	R24 DRW	P27 HAW	P123 JRC	X700 SMC
M31 GMH	S171 AFC	R121 AJF	P26 CJA	R77 CJF	P23 DSB	P29 JRM	R28 LOW	M444 SMM
R31 GMS	S171 AFC	Y666 AJG	R23 CJB	R23 CJB	P28 DSC	P99 HED	K18 JRR	P31 SMM
W400 JMM	S171 AFC	V321 AJT	Y111 CJR	P11 DSK	P11 DSK	P444 HEM	J14 JRR	P31 SMM
N300 JMP	S171 AFC	BMW M4	L2 CKH	L11 DTP	B3 DTW	R321 HEP	V222 JRW	T21 SOM
ME53 JMS	S171 AFC	BMW i8	R333 CLA	R121 CLB	W26 DUF	P29 DUF	P29 DUF	R28 SOW
P24 JMT	S171 AFC	Honda Civic Type R (FK2)	C40 CLH	P29 CLM	K9 DUM	R28 EAM	P24 EAR	L2 SOW
R935 JMW	S171 AFC	Renaultsport Mégane Trophy 275	P121 ALP	ALT 45T	P31 CLR	P24 EAR	P121 ECK	P31 SPB
S11 JNW	S171 AFC	BMW M5 Competition Pack (F10M) (fastest saloon)	P31 CMP	R26 ALW	P31 CMP	P121 ECK	N60 ECM	P11 SFF
P21 JOB	S171 AFC	Audi TTS (Mk3)	JD06 COB	LX09 ALX	JD06 COB	P121 ECK	P11 EDB	C11 SPL
P28 JDJ	S171 AFC	Audi R8 V8 (Mk1)	N400 AME	P123 AME	N400 AME	N60 ECM	P11 EDB	P123 SPR
R29 LOG	S171 AFC	BMW M135i	Y15 AMJ	UH05 COT	Y15 AMJ	X006 EDD	P7 EDH	T999 SPY
P24 LMW	S171 AFC	Nissan 370Z Nismo	M14 COV	M14 COV	M14 COV	P7 EDH	J6 EDP	P28 SRJ
R29 LOG	S171 AFC		R121 AML	S29 COW	S29 COW	J6 EDP	X25 EDS	P25 SSY
R121 LLS	S171 AFC		R121 AMM	K2 CPE	K2 CPE	X25 EDS	P23 EDW	T400 STV
Y333 LMC	S171 AFC		R29 AMO	E5 CPL	E5 CPL	N23 EJB	P23 JJA	P121 STR
P26 LMR	S171 AFC		Y123 AMR	C15 CPJ	C15 CPJ	P555 JAF	P24 JSS	P28 STV
P24 LMW	S171 AFC		Mercedes-AMG C63 S Saloon	SL14 AND	R26 CPR	S888 EJM	N21 JAL	P121 TAG
R29 LOG	S171 AFC		VW Golf GTI Clubsport S	Y321 ANJ	P66 CPS	P31 ELE	M94 JAP	P600 TAL
R29 LOG	S171 AFC		SEAT Leon Cupra 290 (on optional Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres)	M29 ANO	W8 CRD	P121 ELS	Y333 JAR	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC		Ford Focus RS (Mk3, on optional Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres)	R27 APC	N888 CRG	P27 EMB	N562 JAT	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC		Honda Civic Type R (FK2, on Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres)	V5 APF	L600 CRS	P23 EMB	P27 JAW	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC		VW Golf R (Mk7)	P27 APR	P24 CRW	H14 ERL	V777 JBM	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC		Audi RS3 Sportback (2015MY)	P321 APS	P21 CRY	T400 ERN	C14 JCD	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC		Ford Fiesta ST Mountune	R26 ARC	P99 CSB	P900 ERS	P21 JCG	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC		Mazda MX-5 2.0i Sport (Mk4) (fastest sports car)	S321 ARC	V9 CSD	P21 ERY	P31 JCH	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			P321 ARD	P21 CUN	N60 ESA	S888 JCH	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			P123 ARH	L700 CUB	R26 ESH	P24 JCM	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			P23 ARB	P29 DAB	C8 ESM	P28 JCP	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			P121 ARK	N121 DAC	B7 ESW	V333 JCS	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			P121 ARK	B12 DAE	R123 EVS	P321 JCW	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			P121 ARN	P29 DAF	P31 FAR	AB02 JDB	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			R321 ARR	N24 DAI	P121 FAT	P26 JDC	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			L500 ARY	RI23 DAL	M2 FCH	N111 JDD	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			R23 ASB	M471 DAL	P23 FEB	P111 JDL	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			T800 ATH	Y123 DAR	W200 FEE	J77 JDL	N700 TAP
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R29 LOG	S171 AFC			R321 ATS	MG03 DAV	P29 FLO	P21 JDR	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			N27 ATT	X002 DAY	P6 FMH	P50 JDW	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			P24 AUG	R29 DCH	P25 FOS	M555 JDW	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			P121 BAB	N88 FRA	N88 FRA	J28 KMG	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			P26 BAK	P21 DCM	B20 FRD	Y28 JEB	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			P29 BAL	E12 DCS	R123 FRY	T37 JEC	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			X28 BAS	A5 DDG	NI FSM	N23 JED	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			P28 BAX	R121 DEC	P6 FSR	X002 JEF	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			T90 BBB	Y33 DEG	Y800 FUN	P31 JEL	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			R9 BCM	DH06 DES	R121 GAB	R29 JEP	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			P29 BED	D16 DET	M111 GAC	M7 KSP	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			Y700 BEE	T222 DEW	P27 GAM	R121 JER	N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			J9 BEH				N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			N30 BEK				N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			R121 BER				N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			P28 BES				N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			A38 BEW				N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			R29 BJH				N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			P555 BJM				N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			DF05 BMM				N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			T999 BOD				N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			P25 BON				N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			P900 BOY				N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			G2 BPC				N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			P321 DJG				N700 TAP
R29 LOG	S171 AFC			S15 BRA				N700 TAP
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N9 DFR	A6 GBW	S30 JGM	N900 LAD	R26 MRB	P28 PDR	P25 SCO	P121 POL	J31 WJS
G2 DFS	A15 GCG	P28 JHN	P27 LAR	F412 MRC	R121 POL	P24 SCT	P77 SCW	A3 WMG
M33 DHC	J97 GCM	X68 JHH	R27 LAL	T200 MRG	R121 POL	P77 SCW	G2 SDF	C8 WMM
K11 DHW	H10 GCR	P123 JHH	OX02 LAM	W29 MRH	P123 POO	G2 SDF	R27 SDM	J90 WMS
P123 DJA	Y555 GEE	T111 JLL	R321 LAN	K80 MRM	P121 POP	R27 SDM	N99 SDP	M21 WOP
P321 DJG	P123 GEE	V31 JJM	P31 LAN	P23 MTR	R28 POP	N6 POS	R25 PRB	B3 WRH
T17 DJK	W60 GER	P88 JJR	N27 LAR	R25 MRM	N6 POS	R25 PRB	P20 SEA	Y21 WYH
P27 DJL	L13 GES	P123 JJS	P25 LAT	VW59 MUM	R25 PRB	P20 SEA	P31 SEC	R31 XXX
P121 DJP	P28 GET	R24 JJW	R24 LAY	P121 NAB	P26 PRC	P31 SEC	P400 SEL	P31 YAN
W321 DJT	H9 GFC	P121 JLC	S194 LEC	R121 NAG	J14 PRG	R321 SEC	P121 PRM	P333 YAS
P28 DJT	P21 GJB	R121 JLH	R25 LED	N23 NAL	P21 PRM	P400 SEL	P23 SEP	R15 UYO
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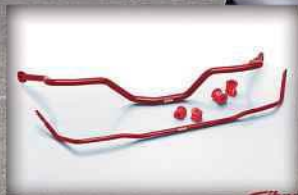


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