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**064****2018 TRACK CAR OF THE YEAR**

Twelve cars, five judges, two days, one circuit and several million litres of rain. This year's TCoty was a challenge but the spread of cars from Toyota's feisty Yaris GRMN to McLaren's mighty 570S Track Pack, the ubiquitous Caterham Seven to the, er, ubiquitous Porsche 911 GT3 made the trench foot worthwhile. But there could be only one winner. Or could there...?

---

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*It's still a few months away from its world debut, but that hasn't stopped us from taking the opportunity to drive a prototype of Toyota's all-new Supra*

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**595**

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# Ed speak

## HOW WOULD YOU CHART THE

evolution of the supercar? Forty years ago, when I was testing the strength of skirting board fitted to new-build homes, the genre had a very clear formula: low, wedge-shaped design, preferably drawn by an Italian; mid-engined with a dozen cylinders and capable of unimaginable speeds to someone who travelled to school in a 2CV.

It took many a year to accept that, despite the location of its engine, the less-than-inspiring design and the fact that it only had six cylinders and a piddly 3-litre engine, Porsche's 911 (930) Turbo could also consider itself a signed-up member of the supercar elite, even if it was a ratio short of a full 'box.

Norfolk's mid-engined wedge? A supercar through and through, despite its engine having the same cylinder count as my dad's Renault 18. V12 Jaguars? Seven-litre-engined Aston Martin Vantages? Supercars to their core.

Today, a hot hatch does the numbers that any supercar from my youth would be proud of achieving. Porsche's Cayman GTS is as quick as a 911 Turbo of old; even today's bloated SUVs, such as Lamborghini's Urus, would give a 911 Turbo from 20 years ago a fright.

Then there are today's crop of GT cars that, design aside, are purebred supercars. Near on 800bhp, top speeds comfortably over 200mph, lap times to match cars designed specifically to drive round in circles. But it's the accessibility that's really changed, with used examples of mid-engined, multi-cylindered, hip-high wedges costing the same as a new Audi TT RS. Has there been a better time to own a supercar?

While you're here, could I ask you to spend a couple of minutes completing our evo feedback survey? Visit [evo.co.uk/survey2018](http://evo.co.uk/survey2018) Enjoy the issue.

**Stuart Gallagher, Editor** @stuartg917

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### HETHEL'S DEFINING MOMENT

Why the Elise epitomises the Lotus ethos

## PLUS

- Five decades of Morgan's V8-engined roadster, the Plus 8
- EMPI GTV Beetle: the VW that race legend Dan Gurney took to the track
- Buying guide: Jaguar's legendary luxury saloon, the gorgeous Mk10



## THIS QUARTER

### ASTONS IN THE MOVIES

Secret agent Johnny English's Vantage V8 driven

## PLUS

- Bond's *Goldfinger* DB5 to be reborn
- 70 years of the DB: Behind the wheel of the first of the breed
- Driven: Cygnet V8 and DBS Superleggera



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# Delta Force

Lancia's iconic Integrale hot hatch has been given a thoroughly modern – and rather expensive – makeover



THINK THE LANCIA DELTA INTEGRALE IS already perfect – rust and reliability issues aside? You probably aren't alone. But you've also not accounted for the recent trend in reimagining classic vehicles, updating them with modern build quality standards, trim materials and engineering improvements.

Latest to enter the fray is Automobili Amos, whose Delta Futurista aims to improve one of Italy's greatest driver's cars by reworking almost every aspect while retaining the character and feel of the original.

In the words of company founder Eugenio Amos, the Delta Futurista is 'my romantic vision in a world that is too aseptic, too fast, that runs like the wind, superficial and intangible', and a car that is 'pure, analogic, raw and essential'. Amos has 'cut away the fat', supposedly leaving only what matters.

Or, if you like, it's an Integrale with Singer-esque overtones. Its mooted €300k (£266k) price tag makes it several times the price of a tidy Evo 2, though, so buyers will have to share Eugenio's vision to justify the outlay.



## 1 BODY AND STRUCTURE

Yep, that's a three-door Integrale you're looking at, albeit one whose flares are even more prominent than usual and whose remaining doors are standard-size, resulting in slightly unusual rear-heavy proportions. The rest is further removed from standard: the front and rear bumpers (the latter with a diffuser), bonnet, tailgate, front fascia, front wings, sills and spoiler are all carbonfibre. Elsewhere the bodywork is steel, while elements such as the bonnet vents, front grille and side vents are metal rather than plastic. The headlights are commercially sourced, while the tail lights are custom-made. The structure itself remains the original steel, but the carbon content has helped shed around 90kg from the standard car – 'around 1250kg' is quoted.

## 2 DRIVETRAIN

Once among the quickest of cars down a sodden B-road (even if your name wasn't M Biasion or J Kankkunen), the last couple of decades of technical progress mean even the average hot supermini makes a standard Integrale look a little undernourished these days. Extra power was therefore a given, but at around 330bhp – up from the 182-212bhp of the original Integrales – there's not so much that it'll be unusable. Changes include a tuning kit by Autotecnica, a motorsport ECU, an upgraded wiring loom and improvements to the intercooler and oil cooler, as well as a Group A radiator. Both the induction and exhaust systems are new, too. Meanwhile the four-wheel-drive transmission, differentials and driveshafts have all been upgraded.

## 3 INTERIOR

Inspiration for the cabin came from the Delta S4 Stradale, with Alcantara stretched over virtually every surface. The front seats are Recaros, while the retro three-spoke wheel sports buttons for the indicators and high-beam – a neat rally-inspired touch. The centre console and dashboard panel are carbonfibre, the latter home to a bank of custom-made switches, including one conspicuously coloured red and with a rocketship graphic on it; its purpose had not been revealed as we went to press. A large, LCD gearchange indicator again hints at the car's rallying heritage, while the standard-looking gauges are actually new and are marked with the Automobili Amos logo. Blissfully absent is any form of infotainment system, though there is keyless entry.

**'EXTRA POWER WAS  
A GIVEN, BUT AT  
330BHP THERE'S NOT  
SO MUCH THAT IT'LL  
BE UNUSABLE'**





## 4 CHASSIS

Pretty much everything underneath the Futurista has been either upgraded or replaced. Much of the undercarriage is aluminium, including the front upper and lower control arms and uprights, as well as the mountings for the front and rear anti-roll bars (the bars themselves are steel). The wheels are aluminium, too, and at 18 inches look massive even under the new arches (the Evolution 2's wheels were two inches smaller in diameter). Tyres, at least on this first show car, are Pirelli P Zero Trofeo R 225/40 ZR18s. Brake discs, calipers and pads are new. Notable is the inclusion of electronically controlled dampers, but details on the specifics have not yet been announced, though hopefully they'll take the edge off those larger wheels...



## SPECIFICATION

Engine	In-line 4-cyl, 1995cc, turbo
Power	330bhp
Torque	TBC
Weight	c1250kg
Power-to-weight	c268bhp/ton
0-62mph	TBC
Top speed	TBC
Basic price	c€300,000
On sale	TBC



by STUART GALLAGHER

# Ferrari's past helps shape its future

Maranello's new four-year strategy includes hybrids and retro-inspired specials

FIFTEEN NEW MODELS, OF WHICH 60 PER cent will feature hybrid powertrains; a new V6 engine and further development of its V12; a handful of hand-crafted specials; all of the existing line-up replaced and a couple of new GTs introduced; and not an SUV in sight – not a conventional one at least. Ferrari's new four-year strategy is certainly a busy one – busy enough to keep customers and analysts happy.

Headline news from the Italian firm's Capital Markets Day was that new CEO Louis Camilleri abhors the term SUV and the vehicles it represents. So Ferrari won't be making one. Instead, the 71-year-old company will focus more on its past and investing in and growing its range of GT cars, which will include the 'Purosange'. A four-seater Ferrari like no other Ferrari and like no other car, it's an FUV, or Ferrari Utility Vehicle, not an SUV.

'The Purosange will be unique in so many ways, and it will redefine expectations,' said Camilleri. Currently in development, we won't see the hybrid-powered Purosange

**'THEY'LL GIVE THE CLOSEST F1 DRIVING EXPERIENCE POSSIBLE IN A ROAD CAR'**

until 2022, but before then Ferrari will have executed the majority of its strategy – a strategy, Camilleri was keen to point out, that he had inherited following Sergio Marchionne's passing and just six days before it was to be signed off.

The strategy includes two mid-rear-engined cars, one a replacement for the 488, the other a model to sit above that to ultimately replace the 812. Both will have petrol-hybrid powertrains with a minimum output of 400bhp per litre.

Ferrari sees its biggest growth area as the gran turismo sector. The next Portofino will be offered with both a V8 and a new V6 engine (which won't be for a new Dino: it's not in the product plan), with the GTC Lusso replacement retaining four-wheel drive and being touted as the 'return of the elegant Ferrari gran turismo'.

All future Ferrari GT cars will be front-mid-engined with a transaxle double-clutch gearbox that gives the option of rear- or four-wheel drive. The cars will be built on a new platform with a wheelbase that can be adapted in length according to application, offering a variety of seating layouts from two-seater to full four-seater.

Ferrari has also just launched its exclusive Icona series, represented by the new Monza SP1 and SP2. Ferrari plans to build 500 Monzas at £2million apiece, though there's no word yet on the model split. With styling inspired by the iconic Ferrari sports racers of the same name from the 1960s, the Monza is based on an adapted 812 Superfast platform,



including its running gear, and clothed in an open-top carbonfibre body offering single- (SP1) or two-seater (SP2) configurations.

With a focus on providing the 'closest F1 driving experience possible in a road car', the Monza is just the beginning of Ferrari's plans to reward its customers and special clients with low-volume models that celebrate its past successes in a very 21st century way.

Missing from the strategy is a LaFerrari replacement. A new hypercar is currently under development but won't be launched this side of 2022. Taking into account that Aston Martin, AMG and McLaren plan to launch hypercars within the next five years, this is a very astute decision by Ferrari.

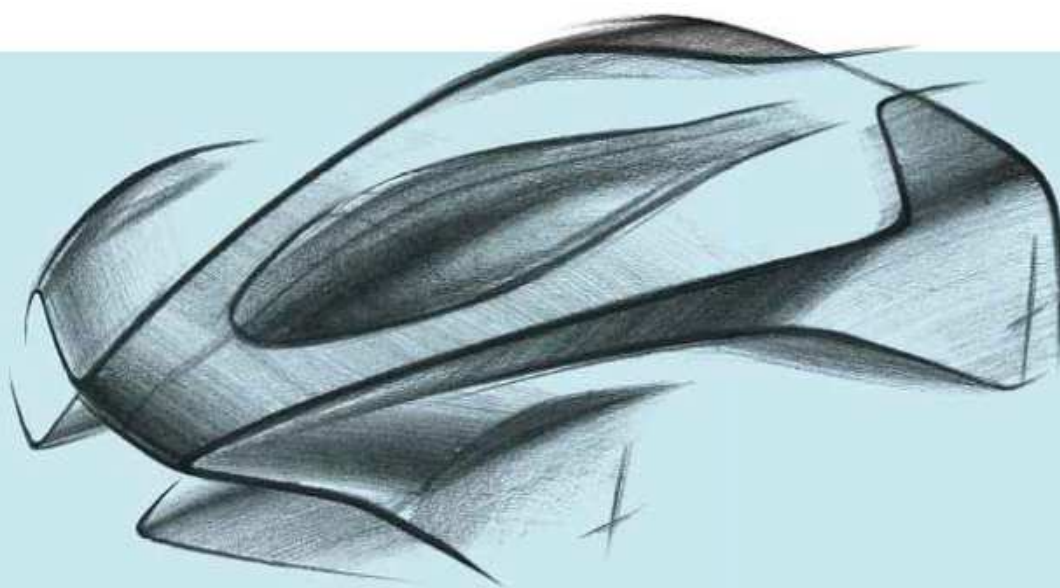




**Below:** Monza SP1 has a single seat, the SP2 a pair of them; just 500 examples will be built in total, costing £2million each



**Above:** the Monza will be road-legal, its 812 Superfast underpinnings doubtless helping considerably with the homologation process



## 003, we've been expecting you

Aston Martin marks IPO confirmation with new £1m hybrid hypercar

WITHIN WEEKS OF CONFIRMING THAT HE will float Aston Martin on the London Stock Exchange, CEO Andy Palmer has revealed the company will launch its third hypercar and the next Vanquish by 2021. And before that there will be a limited run of DB4 GT Zagato Continuations and DBS GT Zagatos.

Codenamed 003, the hypercar will come from the same stable that brought us the Valkyrie (001) and Valkyrie AMR Pro (002) and will be mid-engined, carbon-tubbed and feature a 950bhp turbocharged 3.5-litre V6. Active aero and suspension will provide the coupe with its downforce and dynamic agility, with performance expected to be a step below the Valkyrie's but considerably above that of the current DBS Superleggera and the all-new Vanquish. Adrian Newey and Red Bull Racing will be involved in the project.

Despite those performance claims the 003 will also, says Aston, offer a level of practicality when it comes to road use, which means it will have a boot for the Waitrose haul. The car will be available in both left- and right-hand drive, with production limited to 500 examples worldwide. The first cars should arrive in 2021, priced at £1million, and you can expect a Volante version to follow soon after.

Two years before customers take delivery of their 003s, Aston Martin will be handing over its latest Continuation car, the DB4 GT Zagato Continuation, which customers will be obliged to pair with a DBS GT Zagato that will arrive 12 months later. With the former only legal for track work, the latter will provide the Sunday-morning thrills.

Built to commemorate Zagato's centenary, and the 58 years Aston Martin has worked with the Italian coachbuilder, each pair of cars will be



**Above and top:** sketch hints at the styling of the 003 hybrid hypercar; continuation DB4 GT Zagato can only be bought as a pair with a DBS GT Zagato

sold for the princely sum of £6million plus local taxes (£7.2million for any UK readers interested).

Both Zagato specials will be built at Aston Martin Works in Newport Pagnell, with the DB4 constructed from aluminium over a tubular frame and powered by a 380bhp straight-six. The DBS GT Zagato is currently still in design, but chief creative officer Marek Reichman has said it will feature a new frontal treatment and a truncated tail.

While the Continuation cars don't form part of Palmer's Second Century plan, 003 does and will be one of the final models before the strategy is complete. Originating with the DB11, the Vantage and DBS soon followed, interspersed by the Valkyrie. The company's first foray into the profitable SUV market, the DBX, will arrive in 2020. Twelve months later Lagonda will be relaunched as an all-electric luxury car brand (before this Aston will make 155 all-electric Rapide saloons), which along with the DBX will be built at the company's new plant in south Wales.



by ANTONY INGRAM

# Shhhaguar, ho!

Impressive as Jaguar's I-Pace is, it's the electric E-type that appeals the most

PEOPLE ARE STARING. OF COURSE THEY ARE – I'm driving a Jaguar E-type. Even in Monterey in the middle of Car Week, where scissor doors and velocity stacks outnumber SUVs, an immaculately restored example of one of the world's most recognisable automotive shapes still turns heads.

Those facing away as I approach get a little less time for their eyes to linger, however, as they won't know I'm there until the silvery-gold flash enters their peripheral vision. That's because the E-type Zero is electric powered, and unlike even the silkiest of straight-six versions, it's virtually silent.

You may already be familiar with the E-type Zero, if not the earlier concept from 2017's TechFest event in London, then as driven by the Duke of Sussex after the royal wedding earlier in the year. Either that or via internet outrage, as spittle-flecked keyboards were mashed in anger that anyone dare meddle with a British institution.

Tim Hannig, director of Jaguar Land Rover Classic, has heard it all before. He tells me there were plenty of arguments in-house about electrifying old E-types, and the car's internal codename was Project Marmite. I'm not sure whether to take seriously his

off-the-cuff comment that there were death threats, but we are living in 2018.

A benefit of it being 2018 is that Jaguar now has a production electric vehicle on the road, giving JLR Classic ready access to cutting-edge EV componentry. The Zero takes its motor and drivetrain controllers from the Jaguar I-Pace, and its lithium-ion batteries are shared with plug-in hybrids such as the Range Rover PHEV.

The layout is custom, as you'd expect given the 1960s surroundings, but the integration is spectacularly neat. The 40kWh battery stack is good for a real-world 150 miles and sits precisely where the 265bhp XK 'six' would in a standard Series 1 E-type. A 295bhp electric motor lies aft of that, and sends its power through a conventional propshaft to the standard differential and half-shafts. The suspension is also standard, as are the wheels, tyres and brakes. As you'd hope given the Zero's anticipated price tag of around £300,000, customers will be able to upgrade on an individual basis, but Jaguar's aim was for an authentic driving experience.

Hannig runs through JLR Classic's five parameters for the car. One: no structural changes; the car needs no new metalwork

and can, if a subsequent owner chooses, be returned to standard. Two: no compromise for the operator in terms of space, so none of the components impinge upon driver, passenger or luggage space.

Three: 'We said we want the same dynamics in terms of performance as the original car,' says Hannig. 'You can easily do a "limping" E-type with a 60kW air-cooled motor and it'll cruise very respectably, but it's not the performance you would expect.' Hence 295bhp, 0-62mph in 5.5sec, and in production form, a genuine 150mph.

Four (this is the good one): overall weight for the Zero is the same as a fully-fuelled original. As is the weight distribution and centre of gravity. 'Otherwise it starts to feel odd,' says Hannig. Jaguar was lucky: the straight-six is a bit of a boat anchor, together with gearbox and fluids coming in at 350kg or so, and this allowed plenty of wiggle room for heavy battery packs. With standard running gear and near-identical weight to an original, the Zero really is similar to drive.

And finally, five: that 150-mile useable range. 'If it's much less than that, it's going to be tricky to accept,' explains Hannig.

There's no typical owner profile as yet –





## ‘OVERALL WEIGHT IS THE SAME AS AN ORIGINAL, AS IS THE WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION’

Jaguar still isn't sure how many it'll sell. There is apparently strong interest from early-adopter types, who otherwise wouldn't even consider a classic car, and from existing E-type owners looking for the same style but fewer age-related compromises.

Equally, Jaguar sees the Zero approach as a way of future-proofing classics (including, as Hannig confirms, almost any other Jaguar from the late '40s to the mid-'90s), preserving them and making them suitable for more demanding future generations. And Jaguar won't be stripping high-value, matching-numbers cars, by the way – conversions will be carried out on the flotsam and jetsam of the E-type market.

Will those future generations enjoy the Zero? Quite possibly; I rather did. Twisting the key and pulling away so easily and silently feels much stranger than in a modern EV, but the push-to-go performance puts you at ease in a way no recalcitrant classic normally does. Yet overall it still

feels remarkably, well, old, and stripping away the original's soundtrack doesn't neuter the driving experience.

There's still work to be done on the details, such as accelerator mapping, regenerative braking and some of the interior trim, but all the signs are that by the time the first cars are delivered in 2020 it should be a conversion with plenty going for it. And if all else fails, it's still an E-type, so it'll still turn heads.

### SPECIFICATION

<b>Engine</b>	Electric motor
<b>Power</b>	295bhp
<b>Torque</b>	331lb ft
<b>Weight</b>	1250kg (approx)
<b>0-62mph</b>	5.5sec
<b>Top speed</b>	150mph (production spec)
<b>Basic price</b>	c£300,000
<b>On sale</b>	2020



**Left and top:** LED headlights and an absence of exhaust pipes at the rear are the only real external clues that this isn't your typical Series 1 E-type







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# Mild AMG hatch takes aim at S3

302bhp four-wheel-drive A35 revealed; 400bhp-plus A45 to follow

MERCEDES-AMG HAS REVEALED THE first of two hot versions of the new A-class. The A35 is aimed directly at the Audi S3 and Volkswagen Golf R and uses a new 302bhp version of the 'M260' 2-litre turbocharged four-cylinder engine found in the A250.

Delivering its power through a dual-clutch transmission and a four-wheel-drive system, the A35 is able to send up to 50 per cent of the available torque to its rear wheels. A 0-62mph time

of 4.7sec is promised, with top speed limited to 155mph.

Driver modes accessible via the AMG steering wheel will enable the fine-tuning of various components, including the steering, three-stage adaptive dampers, throttle response and stability programme. Also contained within these driver modes is a new system that, in Sport and Sport+ modes, uses the ESP to influence the A35's rate of yaw on turn-in by braking an inside wheel.

Mercedes calls this AMG Dynamics and it should help the A35 feel more agile and adjustable at high speeds – both things we found lacking in the old A45.

Speaking of which, a new A45 will be revealed next year, this time featuring an even more potent, 400bhp-plus power figure and a more aggressive demeanour.

The A35 goes on sale later this year. A price has yet to be announced, but expect it to be competitively pitched against the £35,805 Audi S3.

**Right:** A35 will produce 302bhp and 295lb ft of torque, compared to the Audi S3's 306bhp and 280lb ft



## Old meets new

Peugeot's electric throwback

Peugeot revealed the e-Legend Concept at the Paris motor show, bringing retro back to the French brand. Directly referencing the Pininfarina-designed and built 504 Coupe of 1968-1983, the e-Legend combines classic proportions with modern detailing. Contrasting against its old-fashioned three-box silhouette is an electric drivetrain and autonomous driving capability. Will Peugeot build it? Sadly, we very much doubt it.



## F1 for the road

Hybrid hypercar revealed testing

Mercedes-AMG's Project One has been on our radar for over a year, but the company has now provided a hint of its finished form in a series of 'spy' images of it testing at the Millbrook Proving Ground in the UK. With the car's 1.6-litre V6 hybrid-assisted engine built in Northamptonshire, the bulk of the car's development is being carried out in the UK. Project One is due to reach the road next year, with production capped at 275 units.



## Z4 line-up grows

M40i joined by 2-litre 20i and 30i

We showed you the new Z4 in flagship M40i form last month; now we know that alongside the six-cylinder car will be a pair of 2-litre four-cylinder models badged 20i and 30i, with 194bhp and 254bhp respectively. The engine is essentially the same B48 unit as used in all manner of BMW products, from the Mini Cooper S through to the 740Le iPerformance hybrid limo. Both 20i and 30i will be available only with an eight-speed ZF automatic 'box.





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## HARRY METCALFE

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR  
(1998-2013)

This issue marks the 20th anniversary of *evo* first hitting the newsstand, so who better to ask for their key moments than the magazine's founder?

### Tell us your earliest *evo* memory

Joining John Barker and Dickie Meaden on a *Performance Car* group test in May 1998, where we discussed creating a new car magazine for enthusiasts. *evo* became properly real for me in July 1998 when Damian Smith, our super-talented launch designer, started pinning up potential *evo* covers around the office. I knew we were onto a winner from that moment on.

### What was the first car you drove for *evo*?

The wonderful orange Lotus Elise that graced our dummy issue. I borrowed it from a Lotus dealer in Manchester for a group test we organised for that issue. I had a wonderful drive up to north Wales for the photoshoot, which took place on roads better known today as the *evo* Triangle

### What was your first car launch for *evo*?

That would have been the Maserati 3200GT launch at the factory in September 1998. As soon as we had pressed the button on *evo*, I started pleading with Maserati to allow us on the launch, promising we'd put the car on the

cover. It took weeks of persuading but we got there in the end. I had a 3200GT on order, which maybe helped a bit.

### What's the most memorable *evo* test you have been part of?

That must be our world exclusive Bugatti Veyron group test (issue 096). After the launch in Sicily I kept asking Bugatti for another drive and eventually they offered us a drive back to the factory from Le Mans. I offered to bring some potential customers out with me, which they quickly agreed to. What I didn't say was that the 'potential customers' would be travelling out in their Enzo and Carrera GT and I would be in my Zonda. When we arrived in convoy, Bugatti soon realised they had been hoodwinked into doing a Veyron group test, which wasn't allowed. Somehow we got away with it and have remained friends ever since. That issue ended up being the best-selling *evo* ever.

### And your most memorable *evo* drive?

There are so many. Maybe it was the Lotus 340R to the Klausen Pass for issue 021. It was a crazy 2000-mile round trip to undertake in a car with zero luggage space and no roof (or doors). We were in good spirits when we arrived at the hotel at the base of the pass, but this quickly faded when the owner informed us the pass was still closed due to snow. It was late May and I hadn't bothered to check if

**Below:** Lotus Elise on the cover of issue 000 was Metcalfe's first drive for the magazine



it was open. Long story short, the owner made a few calls and the pass was opened specially for us the next day and we bagged the story by the skin of our teeth.

### Tell us about the most disappointing car you drove while at *evo*

That's easy, the horror that is the Lexus SC 430. An abomination to the world of performance motoring. The designer should have got a gong for making it so ugly; to get it that wrong is impressive work. Inside was a sea of beige plastic and leather carefully treated to make it look like plastic. A truly horrible car.

### Your worst *evo* moment was?

eCoty 2000 (issue 027). I was driving an Alfa 147 on the first morning, which decided to lunch its motor on the way to the first shoot location. David Vivian was following in the TVR Tuscan and offered me a lift. I was struggling to get the seat belt to engage as Viv was pressing on to catch up with the others. As it clicked into place I looked up only to realise we weren't going to make the next corner and we went head-on into a stone wall with all four wheels locked. It wasn't a good moment but there were no injuries. Later, the Lotus 340R got (fatally) pummelled into a bank. One to forget...

### Your favourite *evo* story by a colleague?

Again, almost impossible to choose, but maybe 'The Test' in issue 022 by Peter Tomalin. We'd assembled a wonderful selection of cars, flew out to Bologna and then drove them all down to my house in southern Tuscany. The scene and mix of cars was sensational and Peter's words captured the mood perfectly. Good times.

### What's the one car you wish you had driven during the last 20 years?

That's the Ferrari 288 GTO, which I nearly bought before buying the Zonda.

### And finally, what's your favourite car launched in the last 20 years?

Not an easy decision to make... It could be the Bugatti Veyron or the Carrera GT. Then there's the Ferrari 458 Speciale. But I'll go for the Pagani Zonda Cinque. We first featured Pagani in issue 008 and to then watch the company grow in stature along a similar timeline to *evo* was a privilege. Here's to the next 20 years; who knows what wonders they will bring.



# Essentials

Our pick of the best new motoring products



## AUDIO

**Bang & Olufsen Beoplay E8**  
£269 [beoplay.com](http://beoplay.com)

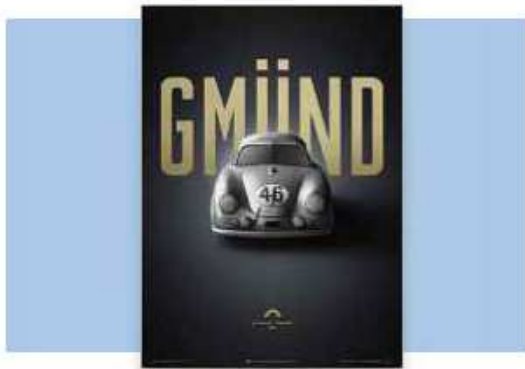
Bang & Olufsen's E8 wireless earbuds are now available in a British Racing Green finish, with classic racing cars cited as the inspiration. In typical B&O style, sound quality is great, and battery life isn't too bad either. All you need now is the Aston Martin to go with it...



## PUZZLE

**3D Porsche 911 R**  
£24.99 [ravensburger.org](http://ravensburger.org)

Still can't quite get hold of a Porsche 911 R? Then build one instead with this three-dimensional puzzle. Split into 108 pieces, it clicks together without any need for glue or fasteners, and once assembled makes up a 1:18-scale model.



## PRINT

**Porsche 356 SL Gmünd**  
\$100 [automobilist.com](http://automobilist.com)

Porsche's 356 SL is an icon of the brand, so why not celebrate it in its very earliest form – those examples built in Gmünd, Austria, before production relocated to Zuffenhausen, Germany – with this limited-edition print?



## ACCESSORY

**KeepCup**  
From £10 [keepcup.com](http://keepcup.com)

There are a million and one reusable cups out there, but the KeepCup is the original and best. Available in a multitude of sizes, there'll be one that fits your car's cupholder. Just try to avoid being tempted by the C3PO special edition...



## CLEANING

**Kent Microfibre Drying Towel**  
£4 [kentcarcare.co.uk](http://kentcarcare.co.uk)

Cleaning cloths aren't exciting but they are something you can't live without. This extra-large one from Kent Car Care measures 5 feet square (800 x 620mm), is lint free and can absorb up to eight times its weight in water.



## APPAREL

**Puma BMW Motorsport T-shirt**  
£30 [puma.com](http://puma.com)

Sportswear brand Puma has had a long affiliation with BMW Motorsport, and now it has brought out a range of M branded goods. This 100 per cent cotton tee features some fetching block graphics – and the E30 M3 doesn't hurt either.

# WATCHES



## Straton Legera

[stratonwc.com](http://stratonwc.com) From c£255

This '70s-inspired piece is offered in several colour schemes, with a quartz or automatic movement, and with regular or bullhead (buttons on top) case options.



## Ikepod Chronopod

[ikepod.com](http://ikepod.com) \$725

The original Ikepod watches of the 1990s were designed by Marc Newson, who would later pen the Apple Watch. Those futuristic designs can now be enjoyed again in lightly updated forms.



## Davosa Argonautic Bronze LE

[classic-time.co.uk](http://classic-time.co.uk) £1095

With a case in *à la mode* bronze, this chunky new arrival from Davosa is available with a blue or black dial and is limited to just 300 pieces in each colour.



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## Season finale

We've just enjoyed our last evo track evening for 2018, where a good time was had by all

THAT'S IT FOLKS. THE EVO TRACK EVENING season for 2018 has wrapped up after our fifth and final event of the year. Held at the Bedford Autodrome, the night was another sell-out date, resulting in a paddock of great variety.

Our 2018 track evening season was held in partnership with BMW, so once again as well as driving their own cars, readers could experience the latest BMW M models from the

driver's seat. They included an M140i, M2, M4 and M5, and to highlight forthcoming models BMW also had an M5 Competition and an i8 Roadster on static display.

The **evo** Fast Fleet was well represented, too, fronted by our rorty Hyundai i30 N and new Abarth 124 Spider (more in this issue's Fast Fleet), plus there was a special **evo** Edition Lotus Elise Sport 220 (see Driven on page 45), built in celebration of the 220's Best

Sports Car going in last year's eCoty issue.

And as always with **evo** trackdays, you brought along many interesting machines, with Porsche Cayman GT4s, a Lotus 3-Eleven, Caterhams en masse, and a selection of Nissan R35 GT-Rs present.

So that was our final event for 2018, but if you didn't get a chance to join us, or want to come back for more, stay tuned as we get ready for an even bigger 2019 season!







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# Driven

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# Mazda MX-5 2.0 184PS

Refreshed roadster gets more power and polish, but the fun isn't diminished

**S**TALES OF AUTOMOTIVE EVOLUTION go, the Mazda MX-5 isn't quite up there with the Porsche 911 and Chevrolet Corvette, but 29 years and almost 1.1million sales prove, once again, that the best ideas tend to stick around. This is a mid-term refresh for the fourth-generation run of the much-iterated front-engined, rear-drive, petrol-only two-seater and, although there are numerous tweaks and mods, the big news is 181bhp for the 2-litre version. That's 23bhp more than before. And you thought the MX-5 was all about feel and finesse.

The car we're testing here is essentially what will be the SE-L Nav+ model in the UK, which means it doesn't have the Bilstein dampers and strut brace of the Sport Nav+ and GT Sport Nav+ range-toppers, but does have the limited-slip differential standard

on all 2-litre-engined examples. The kerb weight remains appropriately trim at 1030kg, so although 181bhp is far from startling by current hot-hatch standards – there are no power-pumping, torque-swelling turbos in the MX-5 playbook – it's enough to slice nearly a second from the 0-62mph time, now a more respectable-looking 6.5sec.

There's a little more breathing space at the top of the rev range, too, the limit raised from 7000 to 7500rpm, which should add a little subjective spice to the stronger urge. As before, the transmission of choice has to be the sweet-shifting six-speed manual – one of the MX-5's finest assets – but there is an auto option for the hard-top RF if you insist.

Benefitting from Mazda's 'SkyActiv' tech – which rather than merely adhering to the usual ECU-remap tuning path takes a more

nuanced, holistic approach – the 2-litre, four-cylinder motor has also had weight shaved from various components to promote pep and boost efficiency beyond that provided by stop/start and braking regen. Included among them are lighter pistons, conrods and flywheel, and these are joined by a wider throttle body, expanded port area and larger bore exhaust valves. Encouragingly, Mazda claims at least 40mpg, however heavy your right foot.

Pure and simple might be the MX-5's mantra but, as time rolls on, sophistication is creeping in. On the better-equipped versions, lane-departure warning and blind-spot monitoring are something of a novelty. Likewise the optional Apple CarPlay display and connectivity hub. Arguably more welcome is a steering wheel that now adjusts for reach (30mm of fore/aft travel) as well as height,





**'It feels eager to entertain and quick to forgive, however ambitious the liberty taken'**



With its more muscular motor, it goes well, too. By MX-5 standards, anyway, but you'll need to use all of the available revs in the intermediate gears if you're serious about making progress. The mid-range performance is notably stronger than before but doesn't exactly punch the air from your lungs. Let's get the reality check out of the way: a well-driven modern hot hatch will still regard a brilliantly driven 181bhp MX-5 as an obstruction.

No matter, if the MX-5 has shown us anything over the years it's that fun doesn't have to equate to speed across the ground, and the root-level rewards of a light sports car with the engine in the nose driving the rear wheels and a 50:50 weight distribution can be considerable. A little more grunt to loosen the purchase of the rear tyres does no harm at all and, in this respect, the mechanical LSD is particularly well judged. It requires big throttle, a low gear and exaggerated turn-in to get things moving in the dry, but backing it in isn't necessary and, with a will to waste the rear rubber, the beefier 2-litre urge could deliver serial mini-drifts all day long.

True, the chassis isn't a standard-setter for delicacy and precision if your benchmark is something still lighter with the engine in the middle, such as a Lotus Elise, but the Mazda's balance is superbly and unerringly neutral, its reflexes keen and its body movements well controlled, even if they don't have the economy

**Left:** steering wheel now adjusts for reach; seats are decent, though regrettably aren't the fab Recaro items restricted to MX-5 'special editions'

of motion of said Lotus. The Bilstein-damped models should get closer. But it feels eager to entertain and quick to forgive, however ambitious the liberty taken. You can hurl the MX-5 at almost any bend, whatever its surface or camber profile, confident in the knowledge that you'll slither past the apex, if not laughing then with a large grin plastered across your face. Although the helm doesn't offer the last word in finely resolved feel, it's meatily weighted, answers inputs alertly and accurately and filters out the rigours of bumpy and poorly surfaced roads with an impressive lack of fuss.

Despite more power and the raft of refinements, the new 2-litre MX-5 starts at a keen £22,295, with the Bilsteined Sport Nav+ at £25,795. With 13bhp less and costing at least £3000 more, its related rival, the Abarth 124 Spider, had better watch its back.

**David Vivian** (@davidvivian)

**Engine** In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc **Power** 181bhp @ 7000rpm  
**Torque** 151lb ft @ 4000rpm **Weight** 1030kg  
 (178bhp/ton) **0-62mph** 6.5sec **Top speed** 136mph  
**Basic price** £22,295

- + Extra power extends chassis' repertoire
- Still no fireball, dull engine note at modest revs

**evo rating** ★★★★★☆

making a snug driving position a little more relaxed for the long of limb.

Good seats complement a fine driving position, age-perfected control relationships, spot-on pedal placement and the stubby, super-snappy gearchange. And we now have an engine note that sounds better the harder you push it, though below 5000rpm you'd never suspect the blossoming top-end sonics.



# Torquing point



There seems to be an acceptance these days that quality costs money, whether it be a car, suit - or watch. But the C7 Rapide Chronograph Quartz is proof that buying something well made needn't be accompanied by a stratospheric sum. With a Swiss-made quartz chronograph movement housed inside our motorsport collection's dynamic four-piece case, it'll make you question that if we can make watches like this for at such a price, why can't everyone else?

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# Mercedes-AMG GT63 S 4-Door

630bhp four-door takes top billing as the most powerful AMG you can buy

**I**T'S A MOMENTUM CAR, THE Mercedes-AMG GT 4-Door. Not in the traditional keep-it-pinned, door handle-shaving sense of something modestly motivated such as a VW Up GTI, of course. More that as your two-ton bolide hurtles towards a hairpin, you're momentarily conscious of just how much momentum you're carrying and, by extension, how much you'll have to lose in order to make that corner.

The truth of the situation is a little more nuanced. You *are* carrying obscene amounts of speed and you *do* have to stand on the left-hand pedal a little sooner and for a little longer than you might in something with less meat on its bones. The difference is in the details – the sharp, ultra-positive turn-in, the distinct lack of understeer in tight corners, the agility and rock-solid stability in faster ones. It shares these traits with the car Mercedes-AMG would

have you believe the GT 4-Door sits closest to in the AMG range: the AMG GT coupe.

Here, too, there are more layers to the story than appear at face value. The 4-Door is actually underpinned by a version of Mercedes' MRA platform, as used on cars such as the E-class, not an aluminium-intensive architecture like the low-slung hot-rod.

There are a few reasons for this. One is that the GT's front-mid-engined layout pushes its cabin right back, and the packaging required to fit four passengers in such a location would be interesting to say the least. The second is that unlike the AMG GT, the 4-Door is all-wheel drive, and the GT was never designed with that in mind. And thirdly, the GT 4-Door will be available with AMG's new 43 and 53 in-line-six mild-hybrid drivetrains in some markets, and the more conventional platforms are already designed to accommodate these.

The visual compromise is obvious: the 4-Door's bonnet line is nothing like as sleek nor as thrusting as that of the GT, its roofline closer to neck height than hips, and its proportions far from as dramatic. There's a hint of Panamera to the rear quarters but the GT details are all there, from the ovoid grille to the rounded rump with its slimline tail lights. Importantly, it shares little with Mercedes' own four-door coupe, the CLS, and while it may lack drama alongside the coupe, the 4-Door is a striking shape in isolation.

Differences under the skin are more significant. The body-in-white is steel, with aluminium front strut towers and front and rear subframes. AMG has paid particular attention to stiffening the shell, with several high-strength lateral cross-members tying the body together from underneath, and a pair of enormous diagonal members connecting



‘The GT S is behind only the SL65 Black Series as AMG’s most potent model ever’



**Above right:** dual screens dominate the cabin. **Right:** purpose of the two buttons on the inner steering-wheel stalk changes depending on mode

the trailing edge of the sills to the boot floor. The outer skin of the boot floor itself and the rear bulkhead are both carbonfibre. Despite the lightweight materials, kerb weight clocks in at 2045kg; this is undoubtedly still a luxury car at heart.

Power comes from the 3982cc, twin-turbocharged V8 used in all 63-badged AMGs. In S form it becomes the most powerful AMG on sale (and behind only the SL65 Black Series as AMG’s most potent model ever), producing 630bhp at 5500-6500rpm and 664lb ft of torque from 2500 to 4500rpm. Non-S models produce 577bhp and 590lb ft. All drive through an AMG Speedshift 9G nine-speed automatic transmission and an AMG 4Matic



all-wheel-drive set-up. Drive to the rear wheels is permanent, with power sent towards the front pair as and when it’s needed – and as with the E63 S, 63 S versions of the GT 4-Door will let you expedite the 295-section rear tyres’ demise courtesy of a drift mode.

Dynamic Select makes a return here alongside AMG Dynamics, which actively influences how the car reacts. Drive programmes range from Slippery – which

softens the V8’s delivery – through the usual Comfort, Sport, Sport+ and Individual, to Race. That last one winds engine, transmission, steering and dampers up to their most intense settings and enables Sport Handling Mode and a fully-off option for the ESP. All GT 4-Doors come with rear-axle steering and the 63 S gets an electronically controlled locking rear differential. According to AMG chief executive Tobias Moers, the GT 63 S will lap the Nürburgring Nordschleife in 7min 30sec.

Road first. Creeping through Texan traffic the GT 4-Door certainly feels closer to an E63 than it does the GT coupe. The GT’s seductive letterbox view down a classically long bonnet is absent, and the E-class-style dual screens pull rank on the broad GT centre console as the cabin’s dominant feature.

The console features the usual switchgear for dampers, exhaust and the like, but helpfully





**‘There’s enough control and so little roll you’ll rarely feel the need to explore firmer settings’**

Drive Select is replicated on a rotary control on the steering wheel, with two buttons on the opposite spoke changing depending on the mode – in Sport+ you’ll get exhaust and suspension setting options, whereas Race lets you change suspension and ESP.

There really is space in the back seats, too, so it’s easy to believe AMG’s claim that the GT 4-Door can function as a family GT, and while a pair of individual seats is standard, UK buyers will also have the option of a more conventional three-seat bench.

Rough sections of concrete paving cause a resonance to echo through the shell, but otherwise the GT 4-Door is no less refined than its E-class and CLS stablemates. There’s a firm edge to the ride but it’s not inappropriate for a car of this performance, and there’s enough control and so little roll even with the dampers in Comfort that you’ll rarely feel the need to explore the firmer settings.

At the Circuit of the Americas – a daunting venue for the launch of a 630bhp car, throwing 20 turns (some blind, others off camber) at you in the space of just over 3.4 miles – the GT finally feels closer to its coupe sibling. It powers down the back straight with the kind of sustained force and thunderous noise we have always loved in this engine, and tops 150mph before the downhill braking zone into Turn 12. The brakes are powerful and progressive, and

**Below:** active aero includes multi-stage rear wing, which adopts its position according to the driving style and driver mode selected



little more than a quarter-turn of lock hooks the nose into the apex. How you exit depends on which buttons you’ve pressed beforehand, but opt for speed rather than smokescreen and the 63 S’s huge traction slingshots you through with just a hint of rotation.

Faster corners are a similar story: reassuring turn-in, plenty of grip and an amazing ability to change direction for something that crests two tons. It quickly feels natural to twist the dial on the wheel to Race and relax the stability control, with no sense that the 4-Door will bite if you do so.

An E63 offers this confidence too, but not



with the same levels of precision or agility. The GT 4-Door is as expressive and involving as AMG’s other saloons, but despite its extra doors and extra weight, also offers dynamic ability very close to that of the AMG GT coupe.  
**Antony Ingram (@evoAntony)**

**Engine** V8, 3982cc, twin-turbo **Power** 630bhp @ 5500-6500rpm **Torque** 664lb ft @ 2500-4500rpm **Weight** 2045kg (313bhp/ton) **0-62mph** 3.2sec **Top speed** 196mph **Basic price** c£135,000

**+** Agile, immense speed, striking looks

**-** Lacks GT coupe’s drama, heavy

**evo rating** ★★★★★





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## AC Cobra 378

The Cobra's got a new V8 from a surprising source, and is easier to live with too. But is it a better drive?

**C**OBRA AFICIONADOS WILL NO DOUBT be apoplectic about AC's latest take on its own legendary sports car from the 1960s. Why? Because it is powered not by a Ford V8 but, shock-horror, by a 6.2-litre (or 378-cubic-inch) GM V8 that's been lifted straight out of the engine bay of a Camaro.

Once they've picked themselves up off the floor, however, even the Cobra diehards might eventually admit that AC's all-new but still 100 per cent authentic-looking Cobra is, in fact, still a deeply appealing car. Especially if they open the bonnet and see just how nice a fit the GM-sourced engine is, and realise how neat and tidy and, well, modern everything looks. Although admittedly the big plastic engine cover does seem a touch corporate compared with a double-quartet of silver induction trumpets and some MSD ignition cables, and maybe some actual oil to wipe away in places.

If they were to then pull on one of the door handles – which come in the form of a cord

on the inside of the door – they'd soon realise that there have been more improvements made inside the cabin, too. For starters, the build quality appears to be exceptionally high, even though the look and feel of the cabin is absolutely straight out of the '60s. This includes a pair of leather chairs that look great but which provide almost no side support whatsoever. Instead you lean against the door or cling on like mad to the AC-embossed Moto-Lita steering wheel when cornering, just like they did in the good old days.

Secondly, there's a fair bit more space on offer inside, with more room for flailing elbows to the sides, a slightly less cramped footwell in which your feet can now dance to their heart's content on better-positioned pedals, plus a lot more rearward travel on the driver's seat. Hood down, therefore, the all-new-but-still-old-looking AC Cobra can be driven by almost anyone, of any shape, size or height.

Ultimately, such increased driveability is

fundamentally what this new Cobra is all about. 'We didn't really want to build the same old car, with the same old issues,' says AC boss Alan Lubinsky, even though he admits that his team has done its utmost to ensure the car is all but identical visually to a MkIII Cobra from the '60s, or the 427 as it was also known – that's the one with the big rear wheelarches, rather than the 289, which was less muscle-bound generally.

As such, the clutch is way lighter than of old, the six-speed gearbox deliberately slick and easy in its operation (but still using that same distinctive long gearlever, which points straight at the windscreen), while the throttle is also light and simple to use, easy to modulate. They wanted to make a Cobra that just about anyone could fit into and then drive, explains Lubinsky. 'And pretty much 365 days a year if the weather is right.'

And the price? Well there are two different versions available, both made in Port Elizabeth,



**‘It still sounds like an AC Cobra should, with a decent V8 rumble that rises to a proper roar over the last 2000rpm’**



On the move, the new Cobra feels usable and, yes, much easier to drive than any other Cobra I've driven – original, kit or otherwise. But it still feels authentic, despite the light clutch, the slick gearchange, the extraordinarily smooth throttle and the extra sense of space when behind the wheel.

You still naturally rest your right elbow out on top of the driver's door, just like you always have in a Cobra, but this time there's less sense of being cramped, and the pedals are indeed all much better positioned, even if they are still offset towards the centre.

What's not in any doubt, however, is the way the new AC Cobra sounds. Or goes. With 440bhp and a claimed kerb weight of just under 1100kg, the numbers still look pretty tasty on paper. AC claims 0-60mph in 'around four seconds' but I reckon it feels even quicker than that. The traction the car generates is phenomenal given how short the gearing is and how much torque there is. I guess this is down to a combination of those typically fat Mickey Thompson rear tyres, allied to a fairly soft set-up for the ladder-frame chassis and its multi-link rear suspension.

Either way, it goes like stink when you crack the throttle open in any of the first four gears, failing to break traction even on full beans in second gear – in the dry at least. And while the noise it makes might not quite burst your eardrums or make your heart explode, it still sounds right. It still sounds like an AC Cobra

**Left:** exterior styling has changed little, but the ergonomics inside the cabin (above) have been sympathetically improved. **Top right:** engine looks incongruous, but there are no quibbles with its performance or soundtrack

should, with a decent V8 rumble that rises to a proper roar over the last 2000rpm.

Plus, surprise, surprise, it rides not too badly, has power steering that is better than so-so (but still not what you'd call seminal; never was, never should be in a Cobra), while the handling and body control are both similarly well sorted, given the fundamental age of design of the underpinnings.

In short, the new AC Cobra is more than good enough dynamically, is unquestionably more usable and practical than ever before and it still looks a million dollars on the road. I'm not sure why, but it even feels like something of a bargain at ninety grand as well. Then again, logic has never been part of the argument when it comes to the AC Cobra. Long may that remain the case.

**Steve Sutcliffe**

**Engine** V8, 6162cc **Power** 440bhp @ 5900rpm

**Torque** 445lb ft @ 4600rpm

**Weight** 1099kg (407bhp/ton) **0-60mph** c4.0sec

**Top speed** 140mph+ **Basic price** £90,000

**+** Easier to drive, more practical, goes like stink

**-** Engine bay a let-down

**evo rating** ★★★★★

South Africa, both featuring the exact same pre-preg composite MkIII bodyshell, which appears extremely well assembled and has laser-like panel gaps and a level of paint finish to make your heart flutter, assuming this test car is typical. Version one – which is what we're driving here – has 440bhp and 445lb ft and costs £90,000. Version two has 550bhp and 550lb ft thanks to the addition of a supercharger, and costs £102,500.

So I guess the sixty-four thousand dollar question is: have they ruined the AC Cobra by making it more approachable and just easier to live with generally, or have they made it better than ever to drive?

I come away after a day at the wheel thinking many thoughts, just about all of which are positive. And I certainly don't think they've ruined it, even if the sight that greets you when you lift that exquisitely finished bonnet is, to be honest, just a little bit unappetising, albeit only from a traditional viewpoint.





# Vauxhall Corsa GSi

The GSi badge returns to Vauxhall's supermini on a VXR lookalike with a 54bhp deficit

**Y**OU'D BE FORGIVEN FOR THINKING that Vauxhall had given up on the whole high-performance thing. With the VXR brand seemingly moribund and the supply of rear-drive Holdens for rebadging cut off permanently, the list of cars from Luton worth the consideration of people like us is depressingly short. Yes, there's the Insignia GSi (Driven Too, **evo** 246), but quick and composed though it is, it's more mildly racy repmobile than it is serious sports saloon; a car that looks and feels only marginally more exciting than the standard version, which is to say not very.

So the omens aren't good for the new Corsa GSi, which aims to fill a much-needed hot hatch hole in Vauxhall's price lists. The good news is that it borrows heavily from the old Corsa VXR, including much of that car's suspension set-up and its aggressive visuals. The bad news is that the VXR was hardly

youthful when it died, being based on the firm's archaic (and heavy) SCCS platform, the exact age of which can only be determined by carbon dating. Oh, and whereas the VXR had a fairly fiery 202bhp turbocharged 1.6-litre engine to play with, the GSi has a more modest 148bhp 1.4.

Still, it looks the part. At a glance you'd struggle to tell it apart from the more powerful machine, because there's the same deep front bumper, side skirts and prominent rear spoiler. Only the deletion of the VXR's trapezoidal centre-exit exhaust – replaced by a more modest single pipe that pokes out from underneath the bumper – marks this out as the more tepid version.

Inside it's business as usual, with the Corsa's tightly built and decently finished cabin enhanced by the fitment of a chunky three-spoke steering wheel and some natty metal-trimmed pedals. Excellent leather-

trimmed Recaro seats remain an option, and there's still a square-edged, roughly stitched knob for the gearlever, which is uncomfortable to hold as it looks.

The GSi's turbocharged four-cylinder will be familiar to owners of Astras and Insignias, and in this application it delivers an under par 148bhp at 5000rpm. On the plus side, there's a healthy 162lb ft of torque in a plateau from 2750rpm to 4500rpm (although that's still 44lb ft down on the VXR).

Despite the promising torque output, the GSi feels a little flaccid at low revs, a feeling no doubt exaggerated by the car's 1278kg kerb weight. Vauxhall claims the six-speed gearbox is packed with closely stacked ratios, for keener performance. That's as may be, but a sixth gear that's turning around 28mph per thousand rpm suggests the transmission has been tuned for efficiency and lower emissions rather than performance.





‘There’s bags of grip and the GSi takes a satisfying four-square stance through bends’



It’s only beyond 4000rpm or so that the engine starts to feel like it belongs in a warm hatch, pulling with greater gusto and accompanied by a pleasingly growly exhaust note. So to get the most out of the GSi you need to make plenty of use of that six-speed manual, which is a bit of a mixed bag. The shift action is light and precise enough, but the awkwardly shaped lever and springy clutch action can be a pain, particularly when mooching around town.

Also irritating is the ride. At low speed the GSi hops and jiggles down the road, the springs and dampers barely bothering to react to surface imperfections. Up the pace a little and get some load through the suspension and matters improve, the Corsa attempting to absorb bumps rather than being deflected by them. It’s still far from perfect, mind, with potholes and expansion joints being dealt with so violently that you wince – and

occasionally even shout out in shock.

The upshot of the rigid suspension is that the GSi corners fast and flat, particularly when the road is smooth. There’s bags of grip too, and the car takes a satisfying four-square stance through bends as the front and rear axles take up their share of the efforts.

Factor in the quick steering and strong turn-in bite and the Vauxhall is a surprisingly agile and quick-witted little device through a series of corners. So it’s a shame that the electrically assisted steering is so light and devoid of feel, making it near impossible to judge just how much grip you’ve got to play with. Another frustration is the brakes, which suffer from an overservoed pedal action, making it difficult to slow smoothly and progressively, the level of retardation rarely matching your effort at the pedal.

Yet it’s not the rigid ride, the snatchy brakes and the lifeless steering that derails the Corsa

**Above and above left:** styling is carried over from the Corsa VXR, as are the leather Recaros (top left), although you’ll pay extra for those

GSi’s bid for your attention. No, it’s the hefty £18,995 price tag (and that’s before you’ve added the £1900 GSi Plus Pack that brings 18-inch diamond-cut alloys, bi-xenon headlamps and those Recaros). Because for £250 more than the Vauxhall’s base price you can have a 197bhp Ford Fiesta ST, a rival that is in a different league. Nuff said.

**James Disdale**

**Engine** In-line 4-cyl, 1364cc, turbocharged  
**Power** 148bhp @ 5000rpm **Torque** 162lb ft @ 2750-4500rpm  
**Weight** 1278kg (129bhp/ton) **0-62mph** 8.9sec  
**Top speed** 129mph **Basic price** £18,995

**+** Lots of grip, agility, eager performance

**-** Older than time itself – and feels it

**evo rating** ★★☆☆☆



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## Lotus Elise Sport 220 evo Edition

Hethel celebrates the Elise's Best Sports Car title from eCoty 2017 with a model that has our name on it



**T**HIS IS AWKWARD. HOW CAN YOU objectively assess a car with your name emblazoned all over it? It's a conflict of interests, surely? Fortunately we're professionals here at **evo**, so we won't be swayed by something as flattering as having our logo liberally applied to a limited-edition Lotus Elise. But if you still have any lingering doubts, it might help to point out that the model upon which this special edition is based – the regular Sport 220 – is already a five-star **evo** car and was awarded the Best Sports Car accolade in our 2017 eCoty issue. This **evo** Edition is in celebration of that fact and will be limited to just 15 examples.

So, what have we got? **evo** logos adorning the wings, rear bumper and seat backrests, metallic paint in a similar bright orange hue to that of the S1 Elise on the cover of the pre-launch 'Issue 000' of **evo** back in 1998, and forged alloy wheels from the Sprint model (saving 5kg in total) plus carbon kick plates (cutting 0.8kg), helping this Elise to tip the

scales at just under 900kg. These additions would add £5000 to the regular Sport's £39,300 price tag, so at £42,000 this special is decent value. And if our choice of spec doesn't suit, you can turn to Lotus's Exclusive division and specify pretty much whatever you fancy.

The Sport 220 delivers pretty much the perfect blend of power, poise and grip, so it's understandable that Lotus has left the oily bits untouched. The only change is to the Yokohama tyres, which have an updated compound.

Even a brief blast in a 220 will leave you invigorated. Peak torque (184lb ft) arrives at a relatively heady 4600rpm, but with so little mass to move, the Elise responds quickly and eagerly even at low revs, meaning you can lazily short-shift through the six ratios and still make remarkable progress. The gearbox is a delight, with a quick, precise action, while the brakes are powerful and easy to modulate.

Work the engine harder and the Elise really takes flight. It doesn't accelerate rabidly, but it's quick enough that you wonder whether

you'd ever really need to go faster on the road.

Yet it's the chassis that dominates the experience, seeming to both float above the road's surface and yet keep you intimately keyed into its every nuance. Meanwhile the unassisted steering requires little more than gentle wrist flicks through quicker bends, its rim gently writhing as it delivers non-stop commentary to your fingertips.

Yes, you can slacken off the stability control and bully the Elise into adopting all sorts of angles on the entry to corners, but it responds best to being driven neatly and precisely. It's a thrilling little car, worthy of its **evo** badging.

**James Disdale**

**Engine** In-line 4-cyl, 1798cc, supercharged  
**Power** 217bhp @ 6800rpm **Torque** 184lb ft @ 4600rpm  
**Weight** 898kg (246bhp/ton) **0-62mph** 4.6sec  
**Top speed** 145mph **Basic price** £42,000

+ **evo** by name, **evo** by nature

- A pain to get into and out of, fiddly hood

**evo rating** ★★★★★





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## Bug-bear

Is Bugatti single-handedly making the hypercar market go mad? Its new and already sold-out Divo [above] commands a €2.5million premium over the Chiron that it is based on. Bugatti's claim that the Divo has a new appetite for corners could lead you to expect it to be a more track-focused kind of hypercar, and given the luxury levels of the Chiron you'd think there's weight to be lost by stripping back some things. Yet on its diet the Divo has lost just 30kg!

Really? How can Bugatti charge double the price for something that weighs just 30kg less? Sure, the Divo may create more downforce, but I can't imagine the average owner taking this two-ton car to a racetrack, especially when they will no doubt already have an arsenal of far-more-suitable track weaponry in their garage.

I think I'd rather have a regular Chiron and spend the money saved on a new Brabham BT62 as my serious hypercar track hack!

**Brad Johnson, Leeds**

## Simple pleasures

You've hit the nail on the head with your article 'Pick and Mix' (evo 253). I first experienced driving modes with my old E60 BMW M5, but I could never understand why anyone would want the option to have less power. After all, the whole reason I bought the car was for its 500bhp V10 engine, so who's the 400bhp option for? My nan?

I found a similar issue in my BMW M135i, with its pointless Eco mode. Who buys a performance car to run it in Eco mode?



(Although I suppose running a Porsche 918 in complete silence for 12 miles is not a bad way to improve its fuel economy.)

Maybe I'm just getting old and lusting after the simple days when it was me, my Peugeot 106 GTi, a manual gearbox and no damn driving modes. Just pure fun driving at every level.

**Duncan Emms, Somerset**

## Softly, softly

Thanks for the Mégane v Civic v Golf Supertest in evo 252. Rather than wait for the release of the Mégane Trophy for a rematch, as suggested at the end of your article, I would like evo to perform a similar Supertest using a Mégane RS equipped with the standard (non-Cup) chassis, a manual transmission and – if it were possible – a limited-slip differential. And include an i30 N amongst the rivals, too.

Roads in our Adelaide Hills are like some British B-roads: cars with greater suspension compliance go quicker and handle more predictably on the uneven, broken and off-camber surfaces. So a Mégane RS with standard-spec suspension and an LSD might have fewer of the Cup's wayward steering and chassis characteristics you mention.

Unfortunately it seems the standard chassis and LSD combination won't be available, initially at least.

**Tim Nicholls, Australia**

## Balance of power

Super Supertest in evo 252. It summed up the three participating hatches perfectly.



## LETTER OF THE MONTH

# WRXcellence

### THERE WAS A TIME... A TIME 15 YEARS AGO

when, inspired by evo's reviews, I visited my local Subaru dealership. Following a test drive I immediately signed on the dotted line for my own slice of rally legend in the form of a stealthy silver Impreza WRX.

A time when I used to get out of bed early on a Sunday morning to tear around my local B-roads at speeds that now make me cringe and slightly embarrassed by my youthful self.

A time before I became all grown up with a wife, kids and a sensible Volvo.

A time that now comes flooding back to me with a tear in my eye after reading 'The Last Dance' in issue 253.

So, thank you evo for this wonderful tribute and sign-off on a true motoring legend. It made me reminisce once more about the time I enjoyed in my own Subaru WRX all those years ago.

**Rich Jones, Staffordshire**

## The Letter of the Month wins an MHD watch

The writer of this month's star letter receives an MHD CR1 chronograph worth £300. Designed by British car designer Matthew Humphries, the CR1 captures the style of '60s and '70s motoring watches in a modern timepiece and is limited to an edition of just 500 examples.

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## INBOX



I own a Civic Type R and I admire Honda's brave decision to not chase horsepower and stick with (just!) 316bhp – not much more than the previous generation Type R had and clearly short of the 345bhp Focus RS.

The new Type R, however, drives fabulously, and you can almost sense that any more power would upset the amazing balance and agility that the car has. I wouldn't even modify the air filter on mine!

Thankfully many people are now seeing through the race for bhp (and 0-60 bragging rights) and are instead seeking out the most rewarding driving experience. I have several friends who no longer concern themselves with these stats – they just buy the car if it feels amazing to drive.

Manufacturers need to be aware of the changing goalposts and focus on the overall driving experience. I hear the next Mercedes-AMG A45 is chasing 400bhp, and the RS3 is almost at 400 already. Is all this extra power really factored in for the benefit of the driver or simply there for the manufacturers' horsepower pride? Less can be more...

**Brian Thompson,**  
**St Leonards, Sussex**

### Rubber bullet

It was a timely reminder in Ian Eveleigh's monthly update on the Honda Civic Type R (evo 253) that the increasingly larger wheels and lower-profile tyres on modern hot hatchbacks have a major downside when it comes to day-to-day use in Britain.

Most if not all car magazines are guilty of extolling the virtues

of these tyres when conducting a road test, but it needs long-term exposure to discover that they are a liability on our potholed roads.

There is some irony in the thought that the younger generation of drivers should be generally unaware of the problems of being left stranded at the side of the road as cars have become more reliable, but can now be left at the roadside by a problem that their parents and grandparents could never have envisaged – namely a puncture and no spare.

**Ian Davies**

### Heart beats head

I read the Nissan GT-R v Audi S5 article ('Heart v Head', evo 252) with interest, as I've had my S5 since March 2017 and, while it's a great car, it has never stirred my soul. I think it is just too capable and dependable. It doesn't deliver the thrill of driving because, as you say, 'you'll tire of its undemanding character and anytime, anywhere performance'.

The problem is it's too good – the driver doesn't have to do much to access the performance. I've had a number of Caterhams and am currently on my third S1 Elise. Now that is an evo car. It has character, feels alive and involves me, the driver. It requires the bit between the seat and the steering wheel to be alert and have a degree of competence. And because it's a bog standard 118bhp version, I get to enjoy the thrill of driving without feeling an ever-present threat to my licence.

I fear these sorts of cars are becoming fewer and further between so I'm relying on those





at **evo** Towers to root them out on my behalf. Keep up the good work!

**Ian Northen**

### Cream of the crop

If you're still accepting submissions for 'one car, one road' combinations (Ed Speak, **evo** 252), I would like to nominate a Caterham R500 (K-series) on the A4086/A498 from Capel Curig to Beddgelert in north Wales. Followed by an ice cream at Glaslyn Ices. Best in the UK. The road and the ice cream...

I've done this drive on a beautiful summer's day, late at night and in pouring rain – and I always end up at Beddgelert grinning like an idiot!

**Chris Lee, Canterbury, Kent**

### Red route

Being fortunate enough to run a B&B next door to the Le Mans 24 Hours racetrack, I would say my dream combination is driving my BMW Z4 M Roadster, top down, at rude mph, at 3am on the street circuit, then restarting again at the Tertre Rouge. And I'm not the only one: it's hilarious watching our clients throw out the family holiday suitcases from their cars whilst they prepare for a high-speed pass when the kids are tucked up in bed...

**Mark Green**

### Every letter ever

I'm writing in response to your group test in issue 2XX where you wrote that [ridiculously hyped and expensive new performance car that has consistently been given poor reviews by the entire motoring press] was a step or

two behind its rivals. I own this car and because I had already bought it before I read your article and have to justify my purchase and my judgment, I'm going to tell you that you are, in fact, wrong. Not only is my new car not a step behind its rivals, it is far superior to them in every way, despite the fact that I didn't even bother to test drive the other cars before I got mine.

To establish my enthusiast credentials and reinforce that my opinion should be taken seriously, I'm going to try (but fail) to subtly work-in a list of all of the other expensive performance cars that I own/have owned, then knowingly say how sensational one of them was 'except for the snap oversteer'. Maybe I will even send you a picture of one of them or a casual 'family photograph' of a few that actually took me the whole day to set up.

Next I will make a comment about how I don't need the things that you said my new fancy car doesn't do well (choose from: comfortable seats, communicative steering, fuel economy, supple ride over rough roads) when I'm barrelling into [obscure corner] at the Nürburgring.

Finally, I will awkwardly attempt to give myself 'man of the people' credibility by saying that, despite the list of jealousy-inducing cars I have owned, the most **evo** of them all was [some rusty POS hatchback] because of how much fun it was on roundabouts when it rained, then I'll close by saying something like 'those were the days' even though they really weren't.

**Ben Berentson**

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### Lotus Evora GT410 £95,500

The stunning new GT410 Sport is here, finished in Dark Metallic Grey and Carbon Fibre with Black Alcantara and leather interior with contrasting yellow stitching. This next evolution of Evora takes the Evora's unique attributes to spectacular new heights. Small car agility, precision and response meets big car refinement and comfort like never before. Masterfully sculpted composite body panels from the flagship GT430 bring major advances in aerodynamic efficiency. Generating over three times the Evora 400's maximum downforce without any increase in drag, the GT410 Sport is now the most aerodynamically efficient Lotus of all. As a pure driver's car it remains unchallenged in its class. Optional extras: Metallic Grey paint, alcantara steering wheel, cruise control, sub woofer and amplifier, air conditioning, sound insulation, 7-inch premium infotainment and sat nav, Sparco seats with yellow stitching, mud flaps.

**Transmission: Manual • Colour: Dark Metallic Grey • Engine: 3456cc V6**



### Lotus Elise Sprint 220 £49,950

The new Sprint edition captures the spirit of Lotus by offering the latest in efficient engineering to deliver a car that sets the standard at under 800kg. Featuring a host of weight-saving Carbon Fibre items as standard, the new Lotus remains true to the company's founding principles.

Benefitting the range as a whole, all new Elise editions receive the car's new look and new interior options, and every single one of the Sprint's lightweight components can be specified on the standard Elise Sport 220 variants. This example is presented in the iconic Gold Leaf colour scheme.

**Transmission: Manual • Colour: Gold Leaf • Engine: 1798cc Inline 4**



### Lotus Exige Sport 350 70th Anniversary £66,950

Castle Lotus is offering this 70th Anniversary Exige in Metallic Grey, with gloss Phantom Black front panel and red cat strips on both the front panel and colour coded roof. It boasts the following options at a reduced cost: alcantara trim pack, floor mats, alcantara steering wheel, alcantara trimmed fascia vents, double stitching (red and white), interior colour pack in red, air conditioning, stereo plus two front speakers, sound insulation, cruise control, lightweight silver forged wheels, two-piece performance brake discs.

**Transmission: Manual • Colour: Metallic Grey • Engine: 3456cc V6**





# RICHARD PORTER

*An electric E-type beats the shocking Goldfinger DB5 Continuation any day*

**H**AVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE ASTON MARTIN Goldfinger DB5 Continuation Edition? It's a brand new, from scratch, official factory replica of the Silver Birch-coloured car first seen in the third Bond film, complete with actual working gadgets such as the revolving number plates. What an incredibly detailed recreation. What an iconic melding of two eternally linked names. What a sodding awful load of old cock.

Seriously, who thought this was a good idea? Aston is flying high, following the DB11 with the new V8 Vantage and then the DBS in a run of impressive cars that speak volumes about the competence and confidence of the firm under its current management. It doesn't need this retro nonsense, and certainly not when it's so horribly tacky. Aston is bigger and better than a character who consistently proves himself to be the worst secret agent in the world, not least because he habitually drives around in an Aston bloody Martin.

The DB5 recreation doesn't harness 007 chic. It feels more like Aston's captured the essence of some fat, flatulent bore who goes to 'gala Bond nights' at his local golf club, orders a vodka martini even though he doesn't like them, says that sodding tedious catchphrase to the barman, then makes an embarrassing Pussy Galore joke to a woman he doesn't know in the belief he's 'charming'. But he's not. He's a twat, and if he had £2.75million (plus taxes) he'd buy this car even though it's an awful idea and patently doesn't have a full suite of 'working' gadgets because no one can sell you a car with built-in machine guns, not even in Russia.

Enjoying a Bond movie is fine, who doesn't, but people who like Bond too much are the same as people who are a bit too into *Star Wars* and put 'Jedi' on their last census form because they thought it was funny. Worse yet, in its quest to make an 'authentic' replica version of a car driven by a fictional man in a made-up film, Aston has hamstrung itself to building these new DB5s to the exact spec of the 1960s original, which means they'll be cack-awful to drive on the road, if you could do that, which you can't, because, here's the kicker, they won't be road legal. So, in a nutshell, the Aston Martin Goldfinger DB5 Continuation

Edition is an extremely expensive, largely unusable and deeply naff car for dullards.

Strangely, I don't have the same reaction to the new, electrically powered E-types (see page 20) that Jaguar announced in the same week as the Bond-bore Aston. On paper, this might seem like even more of an affront to history, especially since they aren't being made from scratch and require the butchering of existing E-types. But let's not forget, the E-type is not a particularly rare car. Moreover, the electrical conversion has been designed to be reversible. If you want to put back the old straight-six, you can.

But I'm not sure you would because, let's be honest, most people buy high-end classic cars for the looks and not for the

way they drive, which is, let's continue to be honest, awful. I've tried E-types, and though they aren't horrific, nor are they the most fun you can have without breaking a chair. In fact, through modern eyes an E-type is at its most pleasant going gently and, while the sound of the engine might be part of that pleasure, I can also imagine cruising gently through urban areas of a summer's evening in a drop-top E-lectric, smiling and waving at people and feeling good about the world while knowing that my motive power made little difference to the overall sensation. In fact, you'll be more relaxed knowing that the lump up front isn't about to slip out of tune or boil itself to death. That's why the electro E is a brilliant idea. If you knew your old Jag was going to work, you'd take it out more often, which would

give more people the pleasure of seeing it.

If you're a purist there's no need to gnaw at your stringbacks because there'll still be plenty of these cars in the state they left the factory, but it's fantastic that a few can be modernised in an intelligent way that more honestly reflects the manner in which classic cars are used and enjoyed. As such, the battery-pack E-type is a clever bridge between heritage and modernity, wrapped in authenticity because it comes from Jaguar itself.

For all these reasons, I find myself wanting a £350,000 electric E-type almost as much as I very much don't want to prance about in a dinner suit and three million quid's worth of Innovations catalogue nonsense pretending to be James bloody Bond.

**'In a nutshell,  
the Aston Martin  
Goldfinger DB5  
Continuation Edition  
is an extremely  
expensive, largely  
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naff car for dullards'**

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# RICHARD MEADEN

*Reborn classics are a hark back to simpler times – if only they were more affordable*

**T**HESE ARE STRANGE TIMES TO BE A CAR enthusiast. While the government, big tech and automotive players persist in telling us that autonomous cars mean not driving is the future of personal mobility, a host of specialists and a handful of iconic sports car companies are busy bending the space-time continuum with a raft of restored, reimagined and continued classics. It's surely no coincidence that as technology tightens its grip on our cars, some of us yearn for simpler and more carefree times. That's why the resto-mod movement has been growing for years, but this rather clumsy term is an unflattering and inadequate catch-all for what has become one of the most exciting and dynamic areas of the market.

Thanks to the long-established efforts of firms such as Eagle and Alfaholics we've grown used to the notion of enhanced E-types and amplified old Alfas, but it took Singer to sell us on the notion of a perfected Porsche that was simultaneously updated and backdated. Of course, the big manufacturers are no strangers to the idea of plundering the past, either. Ford did it to brilliant effect with the last-generation GT, and Lamborghini teased us with a Miura Concept that sadly never saw production. However, these are the exceptions, with the main players in this collective nostalgia trip coming from independently funded projects.

Back in 2005, billionaire car parts magnate Michael Stoschek and car designer Chris Hrabalek created a one-off modern Lancia Stratos. It used Ferrari F430 underpinnings and looked fantastic. Talk was of plans to build as many as 40, but predictably Ferrari put the kybosh on it. Now it's back, apparently still relying heavily on the F430 for all the major parts, and built in a run of 25 cars by Manifattura Automobili Torino (MAT) – the same Italian specialist responsible for the development and build of Jim Glickenhaus's SCG 003 and the Apollo Intensa Emozione. Price? Around £500k, plus £100k or so for the Fezza donor car. Value of an original Stratos Stradale? Similar money, minus the donor car.

It's a mark of how deep the affection is for Lancia, and the tragic plight this once noble Italian marque finds itself in, that another wealthy enthusiast – Eugenio Amos – has taken it upon himself to 'do a Singer' with the £270,000 Automobili Amos Delta Futurista (see page 15). This comprehensively reworked Integrale has

carbon body panels, a 330bhp development of the original engine, suitably uprated brakes and suspension, and a beautifully appointed interior. Given the 'Grave's once legendary performance pales in 2018 this recipe looks and sounds just about perfect. Shame I'm about £265,000 short. Crowdfunding, anyone?

Two of the stranger offshoots of this rehashing of history are Aston Martin's Goldfinger DB5 Continuation Edition and Jaguar's E-type Zero. With its gadgets developed and installed by the special effects experts from Pinewood Studios, and its £2.75million plus taxes price tag, the former has copped a lot of flak – not least from our own Richard Porter (page 51). Aside from the thought of the kind of person the car might appeal to, much of the rancour stems from Aston's official line that it will not be road

legal. However, if you know your onions (and Astons) you'll be aware that RML will be able to get the car through the IVA process, just as it has some of the Works-built 'track-only' DB4 GT Continuations.

As for the Zero, the more I think about it the more it upsets me, for so much of any classic car's identity and emotion is rooted in its engine. From in-line four to V12, they define a car's personality. In an E-type that XK straight-six is its heart and soul – a direct descendent of engines that powered C- and D-types to numerous

victories at Le Mans. Remove this living, breathing engine and you're left to focus on the fact that like every 50-year-old-plus car, the E doesn't steer, stop or ride especially well and has the crash protection of a wet paper bag. Ultimately, I just don't see the appeal of whirring around in the soulless carapace of a once-glorious car, just as I wouldn't want my Sonos speakers styled like a '50s Bakelite wireless.

But the wider appreciation for classic cars and now this burgeoning breed of high-end reimagined icons send a common message. Namely, there's a powerful craving for cars that are compact, characterful and beautiful, but sidestep the mainstream industry obsession with ever-increasing performance and ever-decreasing lap times. It's surely no coincidence that the products of Singer, Eagle, Automobili Amos et al are not only priced like supercars, but the projects themselves are often funded by the same enthusiasts who are disenchanted with the manufacturers' merry-go-round. Sadly I can't afford to buy any of them, but if I could, I would. Stop the world, I want to get off.

**'There's a powerful craving for cars that are compact, characterful and beautiful'**

 @DickieMeaden



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# TED KRAVITZ

*Mega-budgets have given F1's engineers free rein – and not for the better*

**I** LOVE ENGINEERING, DON'T GET ME WRONG – Large Hadron Collider, folding wing tips on the new Boeing 777, the Millau Viaduct – but engineers are making a right mess of Formula 1. I see evidence of it every weekend, from over-complicated cars that can't start a race because a single sensor failed, or finish a race because some other over-complicated part of the 'power unit' (engineer-speak for engine) wouldn't charge the 'energy store' (battery) resulting in an irritating 'issue' (problem) involving a 'loss of drive' (breakdown). Engineer-speak itself is equally annoying, infiltrating every ordinary conversation between otherwise ordinary people. 'Ooh, it's raining – must deploy my umbrella.'

But back to engineers. Since Toyota set the trend for £250million-plus annual budgets, F1 teams have had to find more intricate ways to spend money in search of performance. That's how engineers have been left unrestrained these past ten years, creating a world of unnecessary complexity. Take the humble racing driver. Engineers see drivers not as brave sportspeople prepared to put their life on the line for glory, but more as light bulbs. Screw them into the car, switch them on and watch them do their job. Pre-programmed race strategies are concocted on a laptop and it's the driver's job to execute that plan to the thousandth of a second, every lap.

Of course, this hardly ever works out. The weather intervenes, the driver spins, or something breaks and the whole plan goes out the window. Engineers hate it when that happens. I like to imagine them slamming shut their laptops, crossing their arms and shouting over the radio, 'Oh, just do it yourself, then!'

Engineers also hate it when the driver has to think for themselves, because that renders them dispensable. For instance, when something breaks, the bods on the pit wall usually order the driver to retire the car as he can't possibly deliver their carefully calculated lap times. But at this year's Monaco Grand Prix, Daniel Ricciardo had other ideas. His Renault MGU-K (sorry: the motor/generator unit that runs off the engine) short-circuited and burned out, leaving the Australian 160bhp down with overheating rear brakes. Initially he was given a very gloomy

prognosis and a space was cleared for his car in the garage. But Ricciardo was able to drive around the power loss, managing the rear brakes, and helped by Monaco's narrow track positioned his Red Bull so that the chasing Sebastian Vettel couldn't overtake.

At the end of the race his engineers did indeed throw their arms up, but it was to salute their driver, who in winning had achieved something computer simulations had predicted was impossible. Not that securing an unlikely Monaco Grand Prix victory against the odds did Ricciardo any favours: he hasn't been on the podium since and has fallen out of love with Red Bull Racing, perhaps concerned about the reliability of next year's Honda engines and the subtle favouritism being shown to his young teammate Max Verstappen. So instead Daniel takes his reputation as best

overtaker in the business (not to mention good-humoured, low-maintenance, all-round good bloke) off with him to the works Renault team.

The ramifications of Ricciardo's move are still being felt. The latest sees Kimi Räikkönen moving back to Sauber for a couple more carefree years in the sun before retirement, with Charles Leclerc taking his pressure-cooker seat at Ferrari. Meanwhile at McLaren they're saying goodbye to both Fernando Alonso (his choice) and Stoffel Vandoorne (not his choice) and replacing them with Carlos Sainz and Somerset's Lando Norris, whose name alone practically guarantees him a drive in F1. Norris insists he isn't named

after Lando Calrissian, rather his mum came up with the name. A shame, really, as the task Norris has ahead of him with McLaren makes the final raid on the Death Star look like a kids' tea party.

Lando's being compared to Lewis Hamilton, which is unfair, as he won't have anywhere near the testing and preparation Hamilton had when he entered F1 in 2007. Much less the expectation of a race-winning car: at the moment, the McLaren is very poor, nowhere near challenging for podiums or race wins, never mind making the Kessel Run in less than 12 parsecs.

Still, at least Norris has patience on his side – by the time he's got all those rookie mistakes out of his system, McLaren should be back to winning ways. Meanwhile, young Lando, go about your business, do exactly as you're told and keep any funny ideas of your own to yourself. The engineers will love that.

**'Race strategies are concocted on a laptop and it's the driver's job to execute that plan to the thousandth of a second, every lap'**

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T H E P O R S C H





# E A S S A S S I N

**Toyota is reviving the long-dormant  
Supra badge in a joint project with BMW  
- and the resulting focused sports coupe  
has big names in its sights**

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*by* STUART GALLAGHER

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**‘THE SPEC  
IS TAKEN  
UNEDITED  
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SPORTS CAR  
RULEBOOK’**



**A**LPINE A110. BMW M2. PORSCHE Cayman GTS. Audi TT RS. Ford Mustang GT V8. Sounds like an **evo** Supertest in the planning (with fewer mugs of tea and packets of Hobnobs). But it is also the list of rivals that Gazoo Racing assembled for its engineers and development teams to test, experience, pull apart and benchmark when it was instructed by Toyota to develop the company's first volume performance model since the GT86 arrived in 2012 – and its first Supra since 2002. There is as much anticipation within Toyota for this car as there is amongst the enthusiasts who have been waiting 16 years for a replacement to the iconic A80 and the three generations of Supra that came before that.

Those hardcore enthusiasts who worship all things Supra – and those of us who can't believe their luck that the world's biggest car manufacturer has deviated from its hybrid-heavy product plan to focus on a sports coupe – have a little while longer to wait for the production A90 to arrive. The covers won't slide off and reveal the Supra's curves until January 2019 at the Detroit motor show, but here in the late summer heat of Madrid, Toyota has assembled four pre-production prototypes for us to try on road and around the recently refurbished Jarama circuit. In all we'll have 90 minutes on road and a third of that time again on track. Before this, however, we'll have an evening with Tetsuya Tada, chief engineer for the Supra project.

You'd like Tada-san. Despite his diminutive stature his personality fills every room he enters, including tonight's, which is an open-air terrace. His measured responses to every question couldn't be further from the corporate speak so many in this industry train night and day to perfect; you can tell that Tada-san doesn't enjoy the sickly taste of sugar-coated answers. Respectful and nothing but professional, you let your baked cod go cold to talk – and listen – to Tada-san.

On tonight's evidence the Toyota Supra project has been not so much a challenge as a learning curve for a company that confidently goes toe-to-toe with Volkswagen and Ford for global sales domination. The Supra project is a joint venture with BMW, but rather than co-develop a single car that both companies can apply their own badges to – as per the Subaru BRZ/Toyota GT86 tie-up – with this venture both sets of engineers first discussed the kind of cars they each wanted to build. Then instead of trying to create a Frankenstein mix of multiple ideas and requirements, they worked together to see which parts could be shared that would allow each team to create the individual cars they desired. It resulted in two cars with just six shared components: engine, gearbox and diff, door mirrors and a few interior pieces.

'We started by asking what we wanted to make – without compromise but with a relationship BMW and Toyota can both benefit from,' explains Tada-san. 'We both wanted to make a sports car, but not the same car.'

'We [Toyota] have always wanted to make a pure sports car from the project. I said, "Let's make a



Porsche." BMW laughed in my face! "If you like Porsche that much, buy one for yourself."

You get a sense this only spurred on Tada-san and his Gazoo team to actually build a Porsche rival. 'Initially BMW told us the Z4's balance would be between performance and luxury, but a year ago BMW started to say, "We're going to make a Boxster-killer, too." I hope they do.' Toyota and BMW have developed their cars in isolation from each other.

What Tada-san and his team have built is a car that should strike a chord with every **evo** reader and appeal to the Supra die-hard fan base. Its specification, from what Toyota will divulge at this time, is taken unedited from the sports car rulebook. Front-mid-engined, rear-wheel drive, 50:50 weight distribution and the driver at the heart of everything the car does.

'The nature of a sports car is that every owner is different,' says Tada-san. 'Ask 100 sports car owners what they want from their next sports car and you will get 100 different answers.'

'And you can't make a sports car if you listen to the criticism from directors when they hear what you are doing! I got told off a few times with this car... But if you listen to owners you will also get a mediocre car. So I came to the conclusion that I will make the Supra that I want.'

This bullishness is backed up, on paper at least, with a car that has been fastidiously developed. Along with the perfect distribution of the anticipated sub-1500kg kerb weight and the positioning of the B58 BMW straight-six (as found in the 340/440i) as far back in the engine bay as possible, Gazoo's focus also honed in on reaching a perfect wheelbase-length to track-width ratio. Not only to provide the car with a foursquare stance on the road, but also to maximise chassis stiffness and optimise the weight distribution.

On the subject of stiffness, the Supra is more rigid than the Lexus LFA supercar, a model that's a carbon and composite masterpiece where the Supra is a steel

**Bottom left:** the 'A90' in the prototype's camo pattern refers to the model's internal designation at Toyota; car's centre of gravity is lower than a GT86's



and aluminium miracle. 'For the Supra, composites would make the car very expensive for the customer who will buy it. And to have achieved the same level of stiffness as the LFA with a car made from a steel and aluminium structure is a big achievement,' explains Tada-san. That the Supra will be a fully-fledged GTE race car also played a factor in the car's material make-up, with one eye on running and repair costs for privateer teams who will contest the car.

Motorsport has played a role in how the Supra looks, too. Beneath the light disguises wrapped over the prototypes' bodies are flowing surfaces, faux air intakes, aero flicks and a rear diffuser and high-intensity rain light set-up straight off a WEC grid. The double-domed roof will be worth the entry fee alone for some – around £50,000 is the expected price point when the Supra goes on sale summer 2019.

Beneath that body are a set of adaptive dampers (final specs have yet to be confirmed, but passive dampers are expected to be standard), an electronically controlled limited-slip differential and Brembo brakes. The 19-inch wheels of the prototypes wear Michelin Super Sport tyres – 255/35 on the front, 275/35 at the rear. There are also three driver modes to switch between: Normal, Sport and Sport+, each altering the throttle map, steering weight and damper firmness.

Sheets of black material cover the interior, but a BMW gear selector pokes out from the transmission tunnel, which itself also features BMW switches for the driver modes, stop/start system and the electronic handbrake, and a rotary dial for the multimedia system. The steering wheel, its stalks and the seats are BMW-sourced too, but the instrumentation is Toyota's own TFT design.

Personally I can't set the seat low enough (I'm 5ft 9in), although the rising prow of the Supra's bonnet-line, a high waistline, shallow windows and the tall transmission tunnel do help 'lower' you within the cockpit. Even so, a further 10mm drop in seat height would be welcome.

Legs out straight, steering wheel pulled in to your chest, backside over the rear axle; ergonomically this is pure sports car. Glance to your left: there's less space in the passenger's area because Gazoo didn't want to compromise the driving environment.

If you're expecting Jaguar F-type theatrics from the Supra's straight-six on start-up you'll be disappointed. It has a cultured tone that gently vibrates your eardrums at idle, with an accompanying woofle from the exhaust an octave or two higher than an M2 and the same measurement again lower than a 240i. Toyota hasn't touched the hardware of the B58; instead it has spent an incredible amount of time and miles nailing the electronics and mapping the ECU to suit its needs. Expect around 330bhp.

A similar amount of time has been spent on the chassis and it shows within 20 seconds of selecting Drive and rolling out into Madrid's rush hour. The control weights, how every reaction from the car feels so natural that you don't give it a second thought – nothing fights for your attention or distracts you. Get



in, start the engine and drive. Enjoy.

And you will. The Supra cruises with a GT-like finesse. It's smooth, refined and quiet; instantly it's clear that it can fulfil the role of one-car-for-all-occasions for drivers who don't have the means or room for a fleet of toys.

Knocking the dampers up to Sport when we're off the motorway, these prototype Supras show no signs of harshness. There's enough roll in the chassis for you to lean against, the nose pitches a degree or two under braking and the steering is beautifully linear. The Supra doesn't feel as light on its tyres as a GT86, but its chassis is more sophisticated. You apply the lock in a single movement, and what's lacking in feel is made up for in accuracy and rate of response. And no matter how ambitious you are with your entry speed, the front tyres pick up the line with no need for constant steering corrections to encourage those Michelins to stick.

The Supra delivers on track, too. Along Jarama's long straight it gathers speed with Cayman GTS athleticism – expect a 4.0sec 0-62mph time and 165mph flat-out. Under braking it resists squirm and the brakes can be modulated with consistency deep into the apex. Then there is the balance, the way it inspires so much confidence through directional changes at speed and feels as planted through the long, fourth-gear right-hander onto the start/finish straight as it does through the tighter, second-gear stuff. For this we can thank the Supra's low centre of gravity (lower than a GT86) and anti-roll bars designed specifically to reduce high-speed understeer. It feels as agile as Alpine's A110 and as precise as Porsche's Cayman. It looks like Toyota has hit the bullseye. ☒

### Toyota Supra

**Engine** In-line 6-cyl, 2979cc, twin-turbo **Power** 330bhp (estimated)  
**Torque** 369lb ft (estimated) **Weight** <1500kg (estimated)  
**0-62mph** 4.0sec (estimated) **Top speed** 165mph (estimated)  
**Basic price** c£50,000 **On sale** Summer 2019















# TRACK CAR OF THE YEAR 2018

*Twelve contenders. Two days.  
One simple mission: to find out  
which car deserves to be crowned  
evo's 2018 Track Car of the Year*

PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT





**W**E'VE GONE BACK TO OUR ROOTS FOR this year's TCoty, shifting our focus away from the kind of extreme race cars we've sometimes featured in the past to concentrate on road-legal models. Why? Simply because there are now so many 'mainstream' (to use the term loosely) performance cars that have been designed to attack a track from the outset. This is good news for people like us, because these cars deliver a duality of purpose that means you can roll up to a trackday, enjoy as many laps as you desire, then slip off your helmet and drive home again. Sounds good, doesn't it?

For 2018's test we're at Rockingham for two days with 12 tempting contenders, covering every class of car and every price bracket. To make things even more interesting our desirable dozen will be split into pairs, creating a series of head-to-heads between superminis, hot hatches, roadsters, lightweights, coupes and supercars respectively. Our criteria for judging is fairly straightforward, with each car subjected to a number of stints in the hands of each judge before we download our opinions, discuss, and declare an overall winner.

**THE DRIVERS**



**RICHARD MEADEN**

A successful racer of a variety of modern and historic machinery, *evo* co-founder Dickie certainly knows his way around a circuit. Turned the 911 GT3 front-engined at this year's TCoty by exiting Gracelands backwards.



**JOHN BARKER**

Our other co-founder is also no stranger to circuits, having raced everything from Caterhams to TVRs in his time. And there's been the odd TCoty too. This year sampled the Caterham when the track was at its wettest. His socks are still drying.



**STEVE SUTCLIFFE**

Contributing editor Sutters once lapped Jenson Button's F1 car within an ace of the 2009 champ's time. There have been BTCC outings too, but not even that CV could prepare him for a cold-tyred M4 CS and a wet Rockingham.



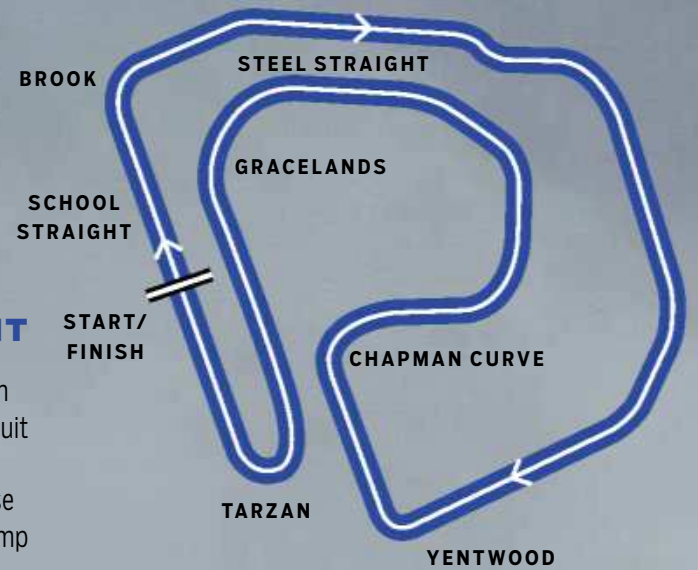
**ADAM TOWLER**

Our deputy editor is an encyclopaedic geek of motorsport history and has also raced in the closely contested Puma Cup. May have been responsible for driving through the puddle that covered the Caterham and truly did for John's socks...



**JAMES DISDALE**

Having spent circuit time in almost every performance car of the last decade, our road test editor has a firm handle on what makes a great track car. Misunderstood what 'TCoty' stands for and turned up with a kettle and a box of PG Tips.



**THE CIRCUIT**

**Venue** Rockingham  
**Layout** National Circuit  
**Length** 1.7 miles  
**Direction** Clockwise  
**Conditions** Wet/damp

Outright performance is important, of course, but inconsistent weather during our test days will make comparing lap times a little pointless. But this could also be considered pertinent, because timing is forbidden on most trackdays, so absolute pace is to some degree irrelevant. What's more important is how these cars *feel*, how they reward and challenge, and how they stand up to numerous sessions on a circuit. Ultimately, we want to find the cars that leave you itching to get back out on track the moment the green light at the end of the pitlane glows.







### Peugeot 208 GTi by PS v Toyota Yaris GRMN

It would be easy to assume that the tiddlers in our pack would be a weak link in this test, but the Peugeot and Toyota aren't your average superminis. In fact, even by the ever-rising standards of the hot hatch firmament this pair are a little special, each packing a specification that wouldn't look out of place on a junior rally car.

Both cars fight for your attention, the Yaris with its garish decals that are just the right side of aftermarket, the Peugeot with its optional two-tone Coupe Franche finish that isn't exactly for the shy and retiring, either. Inside, you sit high in the Toyota, with the wheel at an awkward angle, but the pedals are well placed and the instruments easier to read than the 208's (John calls the i-Cockpit 'annoying', Dickie reckons its designer 'needs a poke in the eye').

Heading onto the track, the GTi (which has just gone off-sale) feels like a serious bit of kit from the outset. There's a tautness to its ride and the 205bhp 1.6 delivers its urge in an intoxicating rush of turbocharged energy. In damp conditions the 208's front wheels find turn-in grip more effectively than the Yaris's, particularly in tighter sections. The roles are reversed on the exit of corners, though, where the Peugeot's tendency to dump all its torque in one go as the turbo spools up means traction is easily broken and the nose can slide wide. That said, in the dry the Torsen limited-slip diff does a staggering job of keeping you locked onto your chosen line even when the throttle is being squeezed into the carpet.

As you'd expect from a hot Peugeot, the 208 is fairly throttle-adjustable, allowing you to fine-tune your approach mid-corner – although you need to be wary that you don't get too committed with your trail-braking, as with the stability control switched off

the GTi can whip its tail around rather quickly. Yet the Peugeot's biggest problem is its transformation in character from dry to wet conditions. In the former there are huge reserves of grip from its Michelin Pilot Super Sport tyres, allowing you to load up the chassis and feel the levels ebbing and flowing, egging you on to try harder. However, when the heavens open, the 208 turns mute as its firm suspension struggles to generate grip, which means the chassis can't communicate, leading car and driver to spiral into mutual distrust.

'The balance can be played with by lifting-off, but the transition from grip to slip and back to grip again is abrupt,' notes Meaden. 'It just feels like different people have signed-off different elements of the car.'

Barker is more damning in his verdict, saying: 'If these were the conditions and this was the car I had, I'd go to the canteen, get a cuppa, and stand trackside watching other people have more fun.'

It's a shame, because while this dual character still afflicts the Peugeot on the road, the differences aren't as amplified as they are on track. It's still a cracking hatch, but you'd be advised to check the weather forecast before setting off for a trackday.

Arguably the Yaris isn't as technically accomplished in the dry as the 208, but what it lacks in outright grip and composure it makes up for with a more free and easy dialogue with the driver and a greater appetite for fun. Much of this free-spiritedness can be traced to its 209bhp supercharged engine, which feels like it wants to rev forever, and the quick, precise six-speed gearbox. With a linear power delivery and 7000rpm red line, the 1.8-litre four-pot has an insatiable appetite for hard work, backed up by a hard-edged yet sweet soundtrack. It's a real riot and almost worth the hefty price of entry alone – if they weren't already sold out.

In damp and drying conditions the Yaris's Bridgestones can't match the 208's Michelins for grip, sliding wider on entry to slower corners and struggling for traction at the exit, even with the mechanical LSD up front. Yet the slightly softer Toyota's more playful handling balance offsets this. Through the fast right-hander following the Steel Straight, the GRMN transitions from neutrality into gloriously controllable oversteer with just a small lift of the throttle, while through slower stuff a dab of the brakes

**Above:** the Yaris has a huge appetite for fun, but the firm-riding 208 feels edgy in wet conditions

	PEUGEOT 208 GTI BY PS	TOYOTA YARIS GRMN
<b>Engine</b>	In-line 4-cyl, 1598cc, turbocharger	In-line 4-cyl, 1798cc, supercharger
<b>Power</b>	205bhp @ 6000rpm	209bhp @ 6800rpm
<b>Torque</b>	221lb ft @ 3000rpm	184lb ft @ 5000rpm
<b>Weight</b>	1160kg (1192kg as tested)	1135kg (1147kg as tested)
<b>Power-to-weight</b>	180bhp/ton (claimed)	187bhp/ton (claimed)
<b>0-62mph</b>	6.5sec	6.3sec
<b>Top speed</b>	143mph	143mph (limited)
<b>Basic price</b>	£23,550 (from £13k used)	£26,295 (sold out)





is all you need to kill understeer and rotate the nose into the apex.

As the track dries, the Yaris's more compliant suspension robs it of the ultimate control and lap time of the 208, while those tyres lose their bite quicker (it would be interesting to see how the Toyota performed with more focused rubber), but it still remains more involving than the Peugeot. 'It's a proper little bundle of fun,' is how Dickie sums it up. 'Very little grip in wet conditions, but an absolute hoot to chuck around. For genuine old-school fun the Yaris is a cracker. But then so it should be for £26k!' **JD**

### Honda Civic Type R v Hyundai i30 N

Time was when a hot hatch would be a relative also-ran in a group test about track cars, a real-world alternative for those forced to combine the type's trademark practicality with performance. No longer: while the practical element still has relevance, the large-scale 300bhp-ish hatchback no longer feels like the immediate underdog.

I won't pretend our two contenders are on a perfectly horizontal playing field. You probably know plenty about both by now: the Civic bristling with purpose at the forefront of the hot hatch class, the i30 nuzzled just below it, offering a little less power for a fair chunk less change, in the process defiantly establishing the N brand as a convincing enthusiast-appealing entity. And yet a racing circuit in changeable weather can sometimes be a great leveller, and while the i30 is nothing like as aggressive as the proudly over-the-top Honda in terms of its visuals, its sleek, sporty styling exudes its own blend of confidence.

Rockingham allows use of the Hyundai's far-too-stiff-for-the-road N suspension mode, and lunging towards the first corner the 271bhp i30 feels plenty fast enough, the gearshift confidence-inspiring, too. But already I'm thinking of the same few seconds in the Civic earlier, and how it sprang from the pit exit with frenzied alacrity, the next gear slotting home in a blur of mechanical precision. The i30 is fast, but it's not that fast, it's gearshift good, but not that great. And so the laps pile on, and the limited-slip diff works tirelessly, shifting the torque across the axle, the front-end grip good as long as the tyres aren't overworked for too long,

the brakes hanging on in there under sustained punishment. The onset of rain makes the stiffest suspension setting a hindrance again, but there's adjustability here, and entertainment, too.

But let's be frank, now. The i30 N is a very good road car and a decent car on track, but there's only one ruthless monster of a hatchback in this pairing; only one five-door that genuinely makes 911 GT3 drivers perspire, especially so when there's a sustained downpour.

The Type R is an incredibly serious bit of performance car engineering, and it shows. Over to Mr Sutcliffe: 'Probably the most impressive car here for me in the wet, McLaren and Cayman GTS included. The way you can commit the Civic to a wet corner is unique in this company. It almost feels like it isn't wet at all, so much purchase has the Honda under braking, on turn-in, under power on the way out, just everywhere, really. Lovely gearchange, lovely gear ratios for this particular circuit, nice touchy-feely steering, great power delivery. Just brilliant, basically.'

John is no less impressed, either: 'What a revelation. Where did all this grip come from? Even in these conditions this is a deadly apex hunter; you can drive it like the track's dry. And it's fast, and punchy and full of feel and feedback and you know exactly how far you are pushing it. Great traction and stability control, too.'

Against this superstar material the i30 just sort of fades into the background. 'A good car but not a great one in these circumstances,'

**Below right:** track work doesn't show the i30 N at its best, while the Civic just continues to shine

**'The i30 N is a decent car on track, but there's only one ruthless monster of a hatchback in this pairing'**



notes Steve, adding, 'and completely shown up by the Civic overall'.

'I was losing interest after a couple of laps and had more fun driving it here,' says John of the i30 with damning praise. I know what he means, in the nicest possible way. Only Dickie seems to really gel with the Hyundai's less polished, perhaps slightly more old-fashioned hot hatch recipe, feeling it gives more of itself (of admittedly less overall) sooner than the wickedly fast Honda.

One of the great attractions of the Civic is that it has such depth of ability that it can be so many different things to different people. Want to push it to the limit for a great lap time? 'Game on,' says the Honda. Want to be a bit of a hooligan on the brakes to get the tail moving? 'No problem,' it says, and precise lines become more expressive. New to track driving and want to develop your skills? 'I'll look after you,' pipes up the R, 'make you look great, and still thrill you.' And all of this is achieved with pious abstinence when it comes to tyre and brake wear, a highly desirable quality it shares with the GT3, Elise and Caterham. Earlier I'd done the sandwich run in it, and there was plenty of room for pasties of dubious merit and massed chocolate bars. It did that well, too, you see.

When Dickie says, 'If Porsche did a hot hatch I think it would feel a lot like this,' he's not the only one to utter that thought out loud. It really is that good. **AT**



### Abarth 124 Spider v BBR Mazda MX-5

The track is still glistening dimly under a scowling sky. Even the green light indicating that the circuit is open has a chilly look about it. The weather isn't set to improve any time soon, so we may as well get out there. At least with a small, light, rear-drive car there's not too much power to get you into trouble – and nimble, low-inertia handling to get you out of it if you do.

The Abarth is largely an MX-5 beneath the mock-'60s rally frontage, except with a 1.4-litre turbo four instead of one of Mazda's naturally aspirated motors. It offers 168bhp with 184lb ft of torque, all delivered via a standard-fit limited-slip differential. Before dropping into the 124's bijou/snug/cramped (dependent on your size) cockpit and reclining the driver's seat so my crash helmet isn't wedged into the soft-top, I had been out in the BMW M4 CS, on Cup 2s. A couple of laps confirmed everything I expected of Rockingham's unusually slippery-when-wet surface: the M4 is sideways everywhere possible. Even on the straight.

#### HONDA CIVIC TYPE R    HYUNDAI i30 N

<b>Engine</b>	In-line 4-cyl, 1996cc, turbocharger	In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbocharger
<b>Power</b>	316bhp @ 6500rpm	271bhp @ 6000rpm
<b>Torque</b>	295lb ft @ 2500-4500rpm	279lb ft @ 1450-4500rpm
<b>Weight</b>	1380kg (1408kg as tested)	1429kg (1477kg as tested)
<b>Power-to-weight</b>	233bhp/ton (claimed)	193bhp/ton (claimed)
<b>0-62mph</b>	5.8sec	6.1sec
<b>Top speed</b>	169mph	155mph (limited)
<b>Basic price</b>	£31,525	£28,010





And the Abarth? It's much, much slower but much more sideways. I'm not joking. It takes me a couple of corners to identify the whooshing noise. In my defence I was distracted by the amount of opposite lock I was having to find. The whoosh turns out to be the sound of the Abarth's rear Bridgestones overspeeding on the slick surface. Now, I like a good dollop of oversteer as much as anyone, but this is quite tricky to neatly administer thanks to the amount required and the sharpness of the steering, the latter meaning it's easy to overshoot and further excite the car.

'A right old handful. And a left handful. Sometimes both,' says Meaden. Disdale reckons it is perfect... 'if your goal is to get black-flagged three corners into a trackday at a wet Rockingham'. Sutcliffe is not amused: 'Heroically awful.'

It is as tricky to get the Abarth neatly around a lap as the BMW. Trail-brake into a corner and the softly sprung rear will try to get a look at the apex before the front. And the angles it will get to at such low speeds are remarkable. Even with the stability control on it'll step out in the fast turns, which is no fun.

You could probably substantially improve the Abarth's behaviour simply by replacing those margarine Bridgestones. We say that with some confidence because the more potent BBR MX-5 is an easier car to get around the lap and it is shod with fat Cup 2s dealing with more torque. The twin-scroll turbocharger ups the power of the 1.5-litre four from 129 to 210bhp, and torque from 111 to 197lb ft. Additionally, this car has the optional slippy diff, BBR's handling kit and bigger wheels with those sporty Michelins.

The engine delivery is remarkably linear and the gearing feels longer, while the firmer suspension keeps the car on a more even keel and helps the Cup 2s find much more grip. The upshot is the BBR corrects most of the issues of the Abarth. You have grip and

balance, and although it doesn't feel much more potent (probably due to the longer gearing) it responds in a more measured way to steering inputs and is thus more exploitable and entertaining.

'You still need to be quick but measured with your corrective steering inputs, but it's easier – though not easy – to find an oversteer balance,' says Dickie. James, a big fan of the standard MX-5, reckons it has lost some of that model's benign breakaway that made it such a fun, approachable car on track, but concludes: 'Keep it neat and you can circulate reasonably quickly while still enjoying yourself.' Steve wants more go in the low and mid ranges to exploit more of the chassis' ability, and Adam points out that a) he doesn't fit in it, and b) it is a bit hesitant on part-throttle.

So, in very challenging conditions the Abarth is rather wayward, lacking in poise and grip. It would be different on a warm, dry day, reckons Adam, and he speaks for most when he says the Abarth's natural habitat is a sunny B-road. Like everything else here, the BBR MX-5 will probably feel sweeter on a dry track, though maybe James is right when he says that the turbo kit and a limited-slip on a standard-chassis MX-5 would be the absolute sweet spot. **JB**

**ABARTH 124 SPIDER**

**BBR MAZDA MX-5**

<b>Engine</b>	In-line 4-cyl, 1368cc, turbocharger	In-line 4-cyl, 1496cc, turbocharger
<b>Power</b>	168bhp @ 5500rpm	210bhp @ 6500rpm
<b>Torque</b>	184lb ft @ 2500rpm	197lb ft @ 4150rpm
<b>Weight</b>	1060kg (1128kg as tested)	c980kg (est)
<b>Power-to-weight</b>	161bhp/ton	c218bhp/ton (est)
<b>0-62mph</b>	6.8sec (claimed)	c6.4sec (est)
<b>Top speed</b>	143mph (claimed)	c140mph (est)
<b>Basic price</b>	£29,625	£25,059



**'With the BBR MX-5 you have grip and balance, and it responds in a measured way'**





### Caterham Seven 310R v Lotus Elise Sprint 220

The Lotus and Caterham should be right at home here, their minimal-mass, maximum-fun philosophy tailor-made for frequent track attacks. Each takes a very different approach in its obsessive quest for pared-back performance – the mid-engined Lotus offers some everyday liveability alongside its talents for acing apexes, while the almost twice-as-light Seven demands more compromises – but each aims to leave its driver enriched and rewarded.

Lotus first. It's been a while since I've driven an Elise, and this pared-back Sprint 220 feels heavier than I remember, the steering requiring greater muscle and movement than you anticipate. 'You think it will be ultra-darty, but you need a little more lock than you expect,' concurs Dickie. 'The upside is a beautifully progressive chassis that responds gently but precisely to your inputs.' In drying conditions the Lotus is able to demonstrate its beautiful natural



balance, allowing you to take the car up to and over the limit of grip safe in the knowledge that the car is on your side. The stability control helps here, and in its Sport setting gives you enough wriggle room to get the rear gently rotating into and through the corner, the car's balance adjustable with throttle, brakes and steering. It's friendly and approachable, but with enough of an edge to keep even experienced drivers entertained.

In fact, it's not long before you're jettisoning the electronic safety net altogether, the Lotus's sublime feedback and poise goading you into relying on your judgment to tread the line between hero and zero. In truth there's nothing to fear, because even if the rear does step out of line (possible on both turn-in and under power when it's wet) the steering almost applies the corrective lock for you, while the low weight means there's rarely enough inertia to get the car spinning like a top. Indeed, the Elise is uncommonly benign for a mid-engined machine. 'It's surprising to me that it's sweeter, better balanced and easier to drive to and over its limit than the front-engined, rear-drive Mazda, Abarth and BMW,' notes Dickie.

With 217bhp, the Sprint 220 feels quick, too, but you have to work the supercharged Toyota unit hard for the best results – no hardship given the precise shifts offered via the gorgeous exposed gear linkage. And once a dry line starts to form, you can really attack the corners, the track-biased Yokohama Neova tyres biting hard on turn-in and clinging tenaciously from entry to exit – although you can trim your line at will, the Lotus tucking in here or being edged out there depending on how you tweak the steering

**Opposite page:** BBR MX-5 gets sideways, but the Abarth is the bigger handful in the wet.  
**Left:** low weights of the Caterham and Lotus mean both feel at home on track





**Above right:** weight really matters in a track car, so we used our scales to check manufacturers' claims

and pedals. The only real criticism is the brakes, which deliver tireless stopping power but suffer from a frustratingly dead feel at the top of the pedal's travel.

Even compared with the delicate Lotus the Caterham feels exquisitely light on its feet. Corners that demand an armful of lock in the Elise need no more than a flick of the wrists in the Seven. It's a cliché, I know, but soon it's as if the Caterham is no longer a car: it's a four-wheeled extension of your body, seemingly under direct synaptic control.

It's the Caterham's approachability that's so refreshing, especially in the wet. 'Still one of the easiest cars to power oversteer, catch and correct, hold and exploit,' enthuses John.

You can experiment with your lines through corners more than in any other car here without worrying that you're going to overcook it, because the Seven is always on your side. Our drivers can't agree on whether the 152bhp 1.6-litre would be a bit short on puff on faster circuits, but for most people, most of the time, it feels just right. It spins more sweetly than the larger Duratec unit, plus the rasping exhaust note is more tuneful than the 2-litre's.

It's John that sums up the Caterham best: 'If you want to enjoy trackdays – whatever the weather – and have fun and learn and not have to spend much on tyres and brakes, there's still little to touch a Seven.' Quite. **JD**

### BMW M4 CS v Porsche 718 Cayman GTS

Looking at the M4 CS and 718 Cayman GTS squaring up in the pit garages, both hiding from a rainstorm clattering on the roof, you wonder. About several things.

One: can the BMW really be worth *thirty thousand pounds* more than the Porsche? Two: what on earth is the M4 CS going to be like in these changeable conditions given that it has 442lb ft to deploy via an M Diff and a set of liquorice-spec Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres? Three: goddammit, the Cayman GTS looks knee-tremblingly lovely in that colour, on those wheels, in this light, sitting next to the bigger, clumsier, more musclebound BMW.

But we're not here to look, although you can't help but form a visual opinion on cars as tasty as this; we're here to drive. Before we do that, though, some key stats to discuss, the most significant being their weights: Porsche 1375kg, BMW 1580kg.

That is a massive difference, in light of which it hardly seems to matter that the Cayman's 2.5-litre turbocharged flat-four produces a mere 360bhp versus a thumping 454bhp for the 3-litre twin-turbo six-cylinder BMW. Nor the fact that the Porsche has 'just' 310lb ft compared to 442lb ft for the BMW (although the knowledge that it produces this number as a plateau between 1900 and 5500rpm is likely to be significant). Because it was always going to be their weights that separated these two cars most at TCoty. And their tyres – the Porsche wears conventional Pirelli P Zeros, not P Zero Corsas or Michelin Cup 2s. And, of course, their differing drivetrain layouts.

Yet in the event, nothing prepares you for the chasm that opens up between them when you first drive them around a soaking-wet Rockingham National Circuit – because after just a few exploratory laps in both, you climb out pretty much left speechless by the differences. The Porsche is that much better balanced, that much better damped, that much more forgiving of your mistakes near and beyond the limit, that you can't help but emerge dumbfounded by how much sweeter it feels, how much more traction it generates, and how much more pure fun it is to drive, despite – or perhaps even because of – the atrocious conditions.

The BMW, on the other hand, feels utterly ham-fisted by

	CATERHAM SEVEN 310R	LOTUS ELISE SPRINT 220
<b>Engine</b>	In-line 4-cyl, 1596cc	In-line 4-cyl, 1798cc, supercharger
<b>Power</b>	152bhp @ 7000rpm	217bhp @ 6800rpm
<b>Torque</b>	124lb ft @ 5600rpm	184lb ft @ 4600rpm
<b>Weight</b>	540kg dry (557kg as tested)	878kg (904kg as tested)
<b>Power-to-weight</b>	286bhp/ton (dry, claimed)	251bhp/ton (claimed)
<b>0-62mph</b>	4.8sec (0-60mph)	4.5sec
<b>Top speed</b>	126mph	145mph
<b>Basic price</b>	£28,990	£44,300



comparison initially. Its traction isn't borderline ridiculous, it's ridiculous, end of. Its steering also feels heavy but at the same time strangely inert in the wet, and unless you select the very softest settings for dampers and drivetrain, it feels like it wants to spit you into the litter through most corners, and along some straights, too, if you're brave enough to switch its traction and ESP systems off.

After some wet laps in the CS Dickie says: 'It has a contrived agility and aggression that's not wholly convincing or especially satisfying. The steering is numb and artificial so you never feel especially connected to the car through your hands. Its more by ear and butt cheeks that you sense what the car is doing. Engine and transmission are impressive – responsive and punchy – but the power and torque delivery isn't subtle so it's hard to find a point where steering and throttle are in balance.' Adam agrees: 'Just an astonishing lack of rear-end grip in the wet, even with ambient temperatures not that low. It's almost certainly not worth the premium over the much more rounded regular M4.'

And of the GTS, engine noise aside, nobody has anything but high praise to deliver, more often than not by the tanker-load. 'I don't know how they do it. The grip and connection to the road the Cayman has in these conditions is uncanny,' says John. 'The track feels dry compared with how it feels in the BMW.' Dickie is similarly smitten: 'Bloody hell. How good is this car? So complete, so polished, so utterly transparent in its responses. And it gets better the deeper you dig.'

To be fair, the M4 CS does come into its own, albeit momentarily, when the track finally dries out in the afternoon of day two. I manage one solitary all-but-dry lap each in the Cayman and M4 CS, back to back. Then, and only then, does the BMW begin to feel like the real deal at Rockingham, like a car deserving of its Clubsport moniker.

It has grip and traction, poise and balance, plus a rabid turn of speed down the straights, all of which is 100 per cent absent in the wet. The CS is probably a touch quicker than the Cayman in these

#### BMW M4 CS

#### PORSCHE 718 CAYMAN GTS

<b>Engine</b>	In-line 6-cyl, 2979cc, twin-turbochargers	Flat-four, 2497cc, turbocharger
<b>Power</b>	454bhp @ 6250rpm	360bhp @ 6500rpm
<b>Torque</b>	442lb ft @ 4000-5380rpm	310lb ft @ 1900-5500rpm
<b>Weight</b>	1580kg (1610kg as tested)	1375kg (1386kg as tested)
<b>Power-to-weight</b>	292bhp/ton (claimed)	266bhp/ton (claimed)
<b>0-62mph</b>	3.9sec	4.6sec
<b>Top speed</b>	174mph (limited)	180mph
<b>Basic price</b>	£91,050	£59,866

circumstances, due to its monster acceleration and, at last, the grip available from its now-warm Cup 2 tyres. But the rain returns before we get to confirm this by setting lap times.

Thing is, though, the Cayman feels even more lovely in the dry than it does in the wet. I climb out of it giggling in disbelief as the rain returns in anger. Which means that, in the end, and despite being maybe a whisker slower than the M4 in the dry, the GTS walks this one. Because, on a track, where the anodyne aural qualities of that flat-four engine don't really matter that much, the GTS is just a phenomenally great car, wet or dry. Unlike the rather more fickle M4 CS. **SS**

#### Porsche 911 GT3 v McLaren 570S Track Pack

Much as outright lap times aren't really that important when you're talking about using a car for trackdays, if there's one pair here that we would have liked to have bagged times for, it's the 911 GT3 and 570S Track Pack. Late in the afternoon on the second day, as Sutcliffe circulates in the M4 and Cayman, the track finally looks about perfect for the task, so we attach the VBox timing kit to the McLaren and the sense of anticipation starts to build. Right up until we roll the 570S out of the garage and big fat raindrops start splashing on the windscreen...

**'You can't help but emerge dumbfounded by the Cayman. The M4 feels utterly ham-fisted by comparison'**





I try. I really do, but the rain comes down hard and fast, rendering Rockingham's notoriously slick tarmac almost undrivable before I finish my out lap. A trip across the gravel confirms as much, and I return to the pits cursing Mother Nature. With half an hour's running left there will be no times set today in the 570S or GT3.

Does it matter? Well, we'd all like to know how these very different cars compare against the clock, but while the numbers are a black-and-white benchmark, it's the subjective shades of grey that are just as revealing. All five judges drove the pair (untimed) during the test and our thoughts are all closely aligned.

It's fair to say we're all generally more familiar with GT3s, though the breed has evolved rapidly in recent generations. Still, you approach the Porsche with a sense of what to expect and how to work it. The McLaren is more of a mystery – especially as a track car – and you take a little while longer to dial yourself in. One thing's for sure: in the rain on Pirelli P Zero Corsas the 570S Track Pack finds a lot more bite than the GT3 on its Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2s. John says he'd think twice about taking the Porsche out







**Above:** 570S edges the GT3 for outright punch in the acceleration zones; 911's flat-six feels more special, though

if he found himself in similar conditions, while Steve reckons the Civic Type R would run rings round it. I'm inclined to agree.

Earlier in the day on a patchily dry track, the pair are much more evenly matched wherever they can both find decent grip, though they go about their business in different ways. The McLaren is defined by its torquey, turbocharged engine and hugely grippy and somewhat prescriptive dynamics. It feels gobsmackingly quick out of the corners and carries tremendous speed into and through them. It's ultra-precise and asks for modest steering inputs, thanks to its nailed-down nose and fine balance.

You can sense the electronics keeping it poised, even in Track mode, when you feel the ESC nibbling away. The lack of a limited-slip differential helps keep the nose pointy, but it does mean the Brake Steer and ESC are kept busy. Disabling ESC remains far too fiddly – McLaren, please address this in your next-generation cars.

There's no question the 570S encourages commitment, and its composure is truly breathtaking, but there's something about the way it delivers its best and demands to be driven that leaves all of us feeling like we're still missing out on a fine but vital layer of engagement and excitement. What's missing? The Porsche's miraculous powertrain, for one. The naturally aspirated 4-litre flat-six might lack the low- and mid-range punch of the McLaren's turbocharged V8, but the PDK gearbox is sensational and the searing high-rev fireworks truly unforgettable. You need to work the car hard to extract all the performance, but when you do, it raises its game so completely that the effort is well rewarded.

The handling balance is more neutral than you might expect, but you still have to play with the throttle for the front end to bite. Once you've got the car rotated you hit that unique 911 sweet spot in which the car's rear does most of the work. Once hooked up there's immense traction; more than enough for you to disable the stability control with confidence.

Personally, I am deeply impressed by the McLaren. It offers a pleasing sense of connection, is more nuanced than I expected, and

## 'The completeness of the GT3 package is evidence of Porsche at the top of its game'

heart-poundingly fast through the quickest sections. Steve praises its delicacy, Adam its rocket-ship pace. It's a formidable machine, especially considering its junior status within the McLaren range.

However, the 911 proves wholly seductive. That 9000rpm red line is something truly special – one of the great internal combustion experiences – while the cohesion and completeness of the package is evidence of Porsche at the top of its game. Synaptic gearshifts, epic brakes and expressive dynamics make for a car that can be driven purely for fun near, at or well over the limit, or can nail a clean and 100 per cent committed qualifying-style lap.

Which is quickest? I suspect the McLaren may have nicked it, but only thanks to the number of tight corners followed by hard acceleration zones at Rockingham, which would favour turbocharged torque over high-rev zing. Which would we choose? In the words of Steve Sutcliffe: 'It's not made in Woking.' **RM**

	<b>PORSCHE 911 GT3 (991.2)</b>	<b>McLAREN 570S TRACK PACK</b>
<b>Engine</b>	Flat-six, 3996cc	V8, 3799cc, twin-turbo
<b>Power</b>	493bhp @ 8250rpm	562bhp @ 7500rpm
<b>Torque</b>	339lb ft @ 6000rpm	443lb ft @ 5000-6500rpm
<b>Weight</b>	1413kg (1452kg as tested)	1415kg (1449kg as tested)
<b>Power-to-weight</b>	355bhp/ton (claimed)	404bhp/ton (claimed)
<b>0-62mph</b>	3.9sec (3.4sec with PDK)	3.2sec
<b>Top speed</b>	198mph	204mph
<b>Basic price</b>	£111,802	£159,750



## THE VERDICT

**T**HERE'S NO GETTING AWAY from it – the weather was atrocious for the vast majority of this test. The rain fell on and off for two days, meaning conditions were best described as 'mixed'. There were some periods where the track was dry, but mostly it veered from wet to damp, then back to wet again. Yet it actually turned out to be a blessing in disguise, allowing us to really get under the skin of our contenders – when the surface is slippery there's no hiding a car's vices. And if you can enjoy and trust a car when the weather's at its worst, then you're going to have a riot the rest of the time.

So after all the climatically challenged laps, which car wins? For gut feelings and grins, whether it's the Yaris's screaming engine, the flyweight Caterham's glorious sense of instant connection or the McLaren's seriousness that goads you into pursuing the perfect lap, each car we tested is an experience to be savoured. But none more so than the 911 GT3.

Predictable? Maybe, but not without good reason. The GT3 is a car bred at the track and this shines through every time

you fire up that glorious flat-six and head down the pitlane. Yes, it's fast, and when the Cup 2s are up to temperature it grips hard enough to take your breath away. Yet it melds this outright ability with a sense of total driver immersion that makes it approachable and richly rewarding no matter what your level of experience. Its limits are staggeringly high, but not completely out of reach. And even when you're driving well within its operating bandwidth it is always communicating, making every steering input, every throttle application and every squeeze of the brake pedal an operation to be relished.

So, the GT3 is our TCoty champ? Well,

**'The 911 GT3 is approachable and richly rewarding no matter what your level of experience'**

yes... and no. You see, while the 911 is utterly brilliant, it's also utterly unavailable. It's still on Porsche's price list, but in reality you can't buy one. Which is not something you can say about the Civic Type R. Now bear with us here (it'll give you time to mop up the coffee you just spat all over the page) because of all the cars here, the Honda is the one that dropped our jaws the lowest. Its breadth of ability is simply staggering, as it slips effortlessly from hassle-free commuting machine to all-out track-attack monster with little more than a press of a button. In the wet its pace was incredible (not much here was quicker), its ability to find grip bordering on witchcraft.

Yet this unflappability doesn't come at the expense of fun: the Type R is able to get expressive with a lift of the throttle here and a dab of the brakes there. Then there's the way it operates – beautifully calibrated damping, meaty brake feel and that lovely, wrist-flick gearchange – and its tireless appetite for lapping.

The 911 is the dream choice, but in the real world the Civic wins hands down. It's a staggering achievement and arguably the performance bargain of the decade. **JD**







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**T**HERE'S A FAIRLY SMALL HANGAR close to *evo*'s offices, the type of which you'll find on any number of England's sprawling ex-RAF airfields, themselves now so often cauldrons of engineering endeavour in that uniquely British ad-hoc manner. Nothing unusual so far, but step behind its doors and you'll truly enter a new world: one with a unique blend of advanced technical excellence and engineering pragmatism, where virtually anything in that extreme F1 bubble suddenly seems possible. Spend just five minutes inside here and, for me at least, the million-euro track-only hypercar takes a massive torpedo amidships. After all, why would you buy something like that when you could have one of the fastest four-wheeled circuit cars ever conceived for your exclusive, expensive, trackday fun?

Before I met Matt Faulks and his Tour de Force outfit, the private operation of retired Formula 1 cars dating from the past 35 years seemed a virtual impossibility. Sure, classic Ferraris and Maseratis from the '50s, even Cosworth DFV-powered cars right up until the early '80s are one thing. But who in their right mind would run the motorised firework that is a wild '80s turbo car, or something with an air-valve V10 and a paddleshift 'box, let alone an F1 car from the current decade with its construction of pure unobtainium. Outside of the insular, mega-bucks world of Ferrari's Corse Clienti, it feels like complete fantasy.

'We hear so many times that these cars can't be run,' says Matt. 'When we first started I spoke to a manufacturer of a part on the Minardi we were working on. "What is it you're doing with it?" they asked. When I replied that we were going to run it they said, "Oh no, you can't do that. It's not possible. You'll need the software!" To which I replied, "It's OK. We found an Italian guy who had all that on floppy disks in his loft, and we've got the original code, and compiler, so I've written some new gearbox code and that definitely works, so, er, we just need the diff from you. Any chance?'

'There's always a massive amount of negativity around these cars, but it's simply a matter of budget and time. Even on a modern KERS F1 car – realistically over five years old due to testing restrictions – if someone desperately wanted to run that car we could do it.'

Having started his motorsport career in Formula Ford, and then worked in virtually every discipline including F1, Matt was taking a break from the sport's pinnacle ten years ago when he was asked if he could make an old Minardi F1 car run again. He started that project in the basement of his house, and 14 wailing, roaring, fully working Minardis later, and many other F1 cars besides, he now employs a staff of seven, designs and manufactures

90 per cent of his components in-house, and offers anything from fundamentally re-engineering 30-year-old F1 cars to support for current F1 teams.

It's an average day in the workshop when *evo* visits, with an '80s turbo car, '90s V10s, some early noughties-era chassis, plus some other projects present. They're lined up in two rows, tubes attached and fluids in receptacles, panels off and entrails on show. If you love racing cars, the smell of their dismembered presence, the colours, textures, fascinating engineering and sheer motorsport history is heavenly.

The most affordable option is the oldest – the big, bad, boosty world of 1980s F1. We walk over to a stunning, Benetton-liveried 1985 Toleman, Teo Fabi's no. 19 chassis that he qualified 20th and last for the Monaco Grand Prix that year, retiring on lap 20 with turbo trouble. 'You could buy a car like this for around £320,000, including a 3D scan of the body and suspension [so if you bin it TDF can make repro parts]. Some run with a copy set of panels, keeping their originals safe off the car, which is a lovely way of doing it. You can get turbo-era stuff for £180,000-200,000, but you wouldn't get the spares and CAD back-up with it, or know the life of the components, so you'd have to strip it down and crack test everything first.'

**Left:** Tour de Force workshop is an Aladdin's cave of old Formula 1 cars and their components.

**Below:** TDF MD and electronics engineer Matt Faulks alongside a 1995 Jordan 195





## 'ORIGINALITY IS KEPT WHEREVER POSSIBLE, BUT THERE'S NO COMPROMISE



Ah yes, on to the realities of running a car like this; after all, the Toleman only finished two races in 1985, so isn't it going to be an expensive and frustrating pursuit to try to use it today? Safety of course, is paramount, so TDF call on the aerospace industry to analyse the structural integrity of absolutely every last part. Consumables, valves, washers and so on will always be replaced. Originality is kept wherever possible, but there's no compromise on the running gear because these aren't museum pieces, they're cars to be driven, with modern FIA fuel tanks, and belts to work with HANS devices.

The Toleman may have its original grey Zytex electronics boxes, but inside them are carefully packaged modern ECUs, providing far more accurate control of the engine's activities, and hence better reliability. In terms of raw power, the 1.5-litre in-line four produces anything from 500bhp at 9000rpm on 1.2bar of boost, up to 1000bhp at just under 12,000rpm on 4bar of boost. There's no denying the Hart engine's sustainability drops markedly if you actually run it at 4bar, but I also know I'd have to try it, even just once, if I owned this car.

So say you own the Toleman and want to run it at the Silverstone Classic. You'll need £2000 for engineering support over the weekend, and from there it's an additional £10-30 per kilometre, plus tyres. Call it £5000 for the weekend all-in. Matt explains: 'The way we run cars is to work out a yearly mileage – typically 350km, which is actually a lot when you think about it – and once the car is completed we work back through our spend, putting a life on everything. That gives us a "per kilometre" figure. Occasionally we have to put caveats on there that if you exceed this mileage it'll cost "x", but this effectively allows people to work out their budget for the year. It's the only sensible way to run it because it allows us to do everything properly: a car will need a crack test every 500km at £1000, but that's cheap compared to a rebuild after an accident.

If you're more into screaming revs than bookcase wings and 4bar boost, you'll need to look at a rung up the cost and sophistication ladder: '90s F1. Take the delectable Jordan Peugeot 195 in the corner of the workshop, coming back to life after years lying dormant. The Pug V10 is off at Judd Power being recommissioned and the chassis is being simultaneously restored but sympathetically modified so it can be driven in anger with at least a modicum of practicality.

'We've had to engineer a lot on this car because so much was missing,' says Matt. 'We've made a new steering wheel that's a very close replica of



## ON THE RUNNING GEAR BECAUSE THESE AREN'T MUSEUM PIECES'

the original, a new wiring loom, converted it to have a collapsible steering column, a new fuel cell, modern electronics in the same voids where the originals were, our modern fly-by-wire clutch controller and so on. We've had new dampers built specially for it, with their own adjustment: if you're running the car you don't want to have to keep choosing from eight different sets like they'd have done back in the day.' They've also converted it from hydraulic operation (for the gearshift etc) to pneumatic, because at 10bar instead of 230bar if the system lets go, it won't now potentially cut someone in half, and it's much cheaper and easier to run, with only the tiniest performance deficit. Wishbones are newly machined in steel (the carbon originals retained for display), while TDF designed and manufactured an entirely new gear set to fit inside the original gearbox casing.

Cars such as the Jordan need checking more often than those from the turbo era, with potentially shorter 'lifeing' on components, so while the support costs are the same, it's more like £30-40/km to run, with a slightly higher purchase cost. If you want to go even more extreme, the ex-Jenson Button BAR alongside should suffice, and is one of the fastest F1 cars you could privately own (with a 'modern' KERS car you'd essentially have to lease the powertrain and its minders for your fun). The BAR, chassis 007, is another example of TDF's ingenuity. There are no known Honda V10s left in existence, as Honda destroyed them all to prevent R&D escaping, so while this V10 may be badged Honda, it's actually a Cosworth from the same season, capable of revving to beyond 17,500rpm. More than 2000 hours were spent restoring this car from the static Mercedes display car it had been previously to this working state.

The BAR will be costing over £40/km, which is where TDF's latest project, for Formula 1 car dealer Heritage F1, comes in: the HF1-018 trackday car. Based on a competition-bloodied 2012 Sauber, it takes all of the firm's knowledge on making F1 cars easier and more cost effective, reducing costs to £750 for support, plus £10-12/km. In fact, it's so extraordinary we'll be taking a much closer look at it in the near future. Although Matt advises some caution: 'Once you've driven one of these it ruins fast road cars for you.' Must make those hypercars, at twice the price, seem a little bit toothless... ❌

**Opposite page, top:** adjustable dampers can replace original fixed items; replica steering wheels are possible too. **Opposite page, middle:** a Honda V10, or is it?









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by ADAM TOWLER

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PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT

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# PASS MASTER

*Aston Martin's new DBS Superleggera  
is vying for the title of ultimate modern  
GT supercar. We put its credentials to  
the test on the breathtaking passes of  
the Austrian Alps*





**BET YOU STILL BELIEVE IN THE** concept of the GT car. I know I do. Well, I want to, at any rate. I really, really want to. It's a deeply romantic notion that lies at the very root of our love for performance cars and the driving of them: the freedom, setting your own pace away from the crowd, consuming miles with panache. Wouldn't it be great to consign the entire horribleness that is modern commercial aviation to the skip and replace it with visions of deserted routes nationale, two columns of gently swaying trees stretching to the horizon in their own lethal organic Armco; roads where getting clocked at 150mph isn't a crime but a worthy achievement, and if the gendarmerie do pull you it's just to say complimentary things about your new four-cam 275 GTB Ferrari.

Sadly, hemmed in at a ruthlessly monitored 81mph, with the threat of draconian penalties, and with the cost of crossing the Channel, fuel prices and extortionate road tolls, the flying option is usually cheaper and, although it depends on your final destination,

frustratingly often just plain faster. Yet still the dream refuses to die, and at its epicentre are cars such as the new Aston Martin DBS Superleggera. Its presence is entirely in tune with just such a trans-Europe express lifestyle, blending themes of aggression and luxury: a vast acreage of bonnet pinched tightly over an indulgently profligate 12-cylinder engine, cab set aft and framed by powerful haunches. It's not a track car, and it's wasted on something as humdrum as the daily commute. No, this is a car for the big journey, to cosset across the open plains and thrill on the interesting sections of route before that surreal final destination.

Which brings us to an overcast, slightly damp Berchtesgaden in Germany. Morning mist clings two-thirds up the densely wooded peaks as I thread the DBS eastwards along unmarked roads that the satnav has decreed are the quickest route into Austria, but which threaten to leave the DBS wedged embarrassingly immobile between a crash barrier and a wood cutter's shed. It's a big car, the DBS, and as soon as the road turns narrow you can't help but feel it.

We're heading to the Austrian town of Pruggern, from where we should be able to access the northern



**'THIS IS NOT  
A CAR TO BE  
WASTED ON  
THE HUMDRUM  
OF THE DAILY  
COMMUTE'**







end of the Sölk Pass. Climbing to 5866ft above sea level as it connects the Mur River and Enns River valleys, it may not be the main event compared to tomorrow's peak-laden spectacular, but as we're sort of in the area, and I've never been, well, why not?

Getting there plays to the DBS's strengths. Once our weird and wonderful route to the main road has been completed I settle down a little lower into the Aston's seat, relax knowing that I'm not about to scrape expensive carbon bodywork on oncoming traffic, and start to feel the accelerative potential of the V12. If we must accept that this familiar motor has lost some of its operatic vocal range with the reduction in capacity (731cc down on the 5935cc in the DBS's Vanquish S predecessor) and the addition of twin turbos, then we can also revel in the massive boot up the backside it's been given by the adoption of forced induction. It now generates 664lb ft from 1800rpm, which is more than enough to trivialise the DBS's weight (1770kg with lightweight options). The fact that it also makes an outstanding 715bhp is almost in danger of being overlooked.

Despite the promise of massive torque from just above idle there is a little lag to the engine's delivery at very low rpm – a brief moment where lungs fill with air before exhaling a gale of smooth yet unrelenting power that builds and builds seemingly without end. Overtaking, unsurprisingly and crucially for a real GT, is a core DBS strength.

Still, there's only so much even a car with the performance of the DBS can do, because lesson one about driving in this part of Austria in the middle of summer is that it's very, very busy. In fact, driving along within the almost unnaturally green valleys,



behind long trains of slow-moving holiday traffic, quickly becomes claustrophobic, the DBS trapped; it's an ominous sign of things to come tomorrow when we'll head to the Grossglockner Pass: we've been warned it's all but undrivable by breakfast time.

The DBS is a comfortable place to spend large amounts of time in. The seats could use a little more lateral support as we'll find out much later, but for high-speed cruising they're excellent. I find I'm leaving the car in its most placid driving modes much of the time. The damper switch is on the left spoke of the steering wheel and offers three settings. The harshest, Sport+, is too firm for the road, so I rapidly settle on an approach where I use the base setting about 80 per cent of the time (the DBS rides surprisingly well), but select Sport to get extra support at each corner of the car when the road gets twisty. It's the same with the powertrain settings, because while Sport and Sport+

**Opposite and top:** at 4712mm long and 2146mm wide, the Superleggera makes its considerable presence felt on anything other than fast, wide roads





**Above:** seats excellent for high-speed cruising, but could offer more lateral support; steering quick via four-sided wheel

give you all the drama, exhaust volume and pops and bangs that no doubt thrill on a dealer test drive, and are the stuff of great YouTube videos, the regular GT setting has a nicely progressive throttle response that makes the V12 feel much more like the old naturally aspirated lump. It's not as if you can't hear the engine even in this setting, because one of the really nice things about the DBS is that it never tries to hide completely those inherent sporting credentials like some other cars do. You know the sort of thing: high-end German performance cars that in Comfort mode are almost like driving a nicely specced BMW 3-series. But in the DBS the exhaust note is always there, even at just above walking pace, and there's a directness to all of its controls, a subtle tautness not to be confused with weight, that means you're always aware you're driving something out of the ordinary.

When we finally arrive, having munched our way through a decent chunk of autobahn and a similarly sized portion of McDonald's fayre via the Drive Thru (to the utter bemusement of the staff), the Sölk turns out to be an absolute belter of a driving road, partly because in terms of surface and scenery it constantly

evolves, each strata of altitude bringing new challenges for both car and driver.

The overture to the climb is fast – broad, sweeping curves where the broken-up surface has been patched with fresh bitumen to make a bizarre chequerboard pattern unlike anything I've seen before. So while the repair has made it smooth overall, it undulates across its width and in random directions with waves of gentle amplitude. It's not altogether good news for the big Aston. On the one hand, here is the chance at last for it to really stretch its legs, and it does so in emphatic fashion, linking corner to corner with giant surges of thrust, but it also puts the rear axle to work in a very busy fashion. Despite three suspension settings, the rear of the DBS feels inherently quite soft, presumably to aid traction under the onslaught of so much torque, and the damping and bushing is something of a halfway house between DB11 and Vantage in terms of its stiffness and tuning. While more controlled than the car we drove for our first drive in *evo* 252, it still exhibits a fair amount of vertical and lateral movement at the rear of the car that, to my Mk1 road-testing backside at least, is a little more than would be





desirable. That said, not long after this drive I'll get to sample yet another DBS, one that feels better tied down, suggesting that final tuning was still ongoing at the time of us sampling the car you see here.

After a short while I get used to this car's behaviour, for experience proves that it isn't going to suddenly do anything untoward. I also very quickly knock the ESP into its less restrictive Track setting, because it's incredibly zealous about killing the throttle otherwise, which can make the DBS feel rather clumsy, and the driver too. Again, without that strict safety net nothing alarming happens unless you really provoke the DBS, for it actually generates a significant amount of grip, and our pace over the road is accordingly high. Even out of tight hairpins it prefers to work in the name of traction rather than instantly sliding broadside.

The wide A-road soon morphs into something narrower, with open fields replaced by woodland, until finally a 180-degree hairpin heralds the start of the climb. Now the road rears up skyward, and it's the torque of the V12 I'm relying on, firing us up short straights and out of subsequent tight curves with the kind of punch that seems to pull the road's surface

backwards like a giant grey blanket. The pace begins to bleed off, not due to the car but because the view out is becoming increasingly spectacular, until we crest the rise to the summit – all grassy slopes and carpets of wild flowers – and begin our descent into the Enns Valley. Winding down between a tunnel of overhanging trees, our progress is momentarily halted by a small herd of cattle blocking our path. Given their proximity to the precipice I'm not sure who should be more concerned: they for wandering over the edge, or us with a very large bull casually eyeing the Aston Martin's winged bonnet badge. Is he an Aston Martin fan? I'm not going to wait around to find out...

Once down onto the valley floor the road is little more than a gravel track in places, eventually tailed by a short stretch of perfect tarmac winding its way through forest. The DBS loves this section, quick steering via that oddly quartic wheel making it easy to feed the nose into corners and the rear axle able to concentrate solely on getting the power down.

Pass completed, it's time to hotfoot it across to our hotel close to the start of the mighty Grossglockner Pass, where the possibility of a cheeky little local

**Above:** DBS's 715bhp and 664lb ft of torque thrust the car from corner to corner, but admiring the view sometimes takes precedence



alcoholic beverage and a very early night await. More traffic spoils this journey until the final section, but as we work our way along the valley towards the typically picturesque town of Heiligenblut am Grossglockner, so the other cars vanish and the long straights become mightily enticing. The immaculately presented – and no-doubt expensive – wooden chalet homes and the precisely cut meadows as far as the eye can see give me a feeling that the local constabulary probably doesn't have a great sense of humour when it comes to V12s being extended with gusto, so I temper my enthusiasm to a degree, but still the DBS feels majorly fast, insects out for an evening flight rapidly falling victim to its bluff frontage. As ever, I'm using the paddles to shift gears manually: apart from when maintaining a constant speed on the autobahn I just can't bring myself to not get involved with the process of driving the DBS, even if the torque-converter auto occasionally lacks the sharpness of the best twin-clutch boxes.

#### **THE REASON FOR TEAM EVO CONSUMING**

their bedtime mug of cocoa so early is that the High Alpine Road opens at 5am between the beginning of June and the end of August. Everyone who we have talked to so far about the pass has rolled their eyes before going on about cyclists and traffic, so if we're to achieve any decent photography, let alone if I'm to get a decent drive in the DBS, we'll need to be there when it opens.


After a slight delay due to being locked in at the hotel (we're clearly the only ones mad enough to be up at this hour) we arrive at the toll not long after it's opened, and while dawn hasn't arrived, it's already getting light. Having purchased our 36-euro day pass in advance at the hotel, the man in the booth simply waves us on, and if there's a hint of a knowing smirk on his lips as he looks at the clock and then at our car, he does a decent job of hiding it.

Away from the toll the road immediately begins to climb, but the gradient change is slight until the mountains fully come into view. Then there's that moment, as the eye traces the delicate thread of road that winds up into the distance, where the full gravitas of the situation, the magnificence of the surroundings, really hits home. In direct contradiction to everything I've written so far, the DBS suddenly feels very small, and even 715bhp underfoot doesn't seem like overkill given the terrain to surmount before us.

On and on goes the road, higher and higher, one perfect hairpin after another, and still there's not another car to be seen, not a soul or sound. It's like the finest, smoothest, most outrageously enjoyable road ever created has been laid over this dramatic landscape purely for me, and I'm nearly hysterically grateful that I batted away that duvet at such an





A white sports car is driving on a winding asphalt road that curves through a lush green mountain valley. The road is bordered by a simple wooden post-and-rail fence. In the background, there are steep, rocky mountain slopes and distant, jagged mountain peaks under a cloudy sky. A small wooden building is visible on the left side of the road. The overall scene is a scenic mountain landscape.

**'EVEN 715BHP  
UNDERFOOT  
DOESN'T SEEM  
LIKE OVERKILL  
HERE'**



early hour. The DBS successfully morphs from one end of the GT ability spectrum to the other, but equally I'd love to drive an older, simpler sort of car here. Our Caterham 310R long-termer would be obscene, and I'm already plotting how my Fast Fleet 205 GTI 1.9 can somehow make the trip across.

Travellers have been crossing these peaks for 3500 years, but constructing this awe-inspiring helter-skelter didn't begin until 1930, with completion, miraculously, only four years later. It took 4000 men to do the job, and appropriately enough a car race was held here the day after it opened. There's a sizeable visitors' centre at the top, and fast, flat sections across the middle that really focus the mind. At one point I glance momentarily out of the side window and spot a lake of such still purity that the surroundings are perfectly replicated in its surface like a mirror. It is utterly breathtaking.

Our morning, those next precious few hours, is taken up by driving up one side of the pass, down the other, and then back again: exploring every angle, still being wowed by the view. Slowly, other traffic

## 'I CAN'T THINK OF ANOTHER CAR THAT COVERS SO MANY GT BASES'

appears, and by 8.30am it's too busy to really drive with much commitment. Pausing to soak up the sun and stare wistfully at the mountains we meet engineering student and *evo* fan Phillip, who's driven down from Vienna in his lightly modded E46 M3 just to experience the pass for the first time. The sound from his replica CSL airbox cuts across the mountain from at least a mile away, and with it a reassuring sense of camaraderie that there are still fellow car enthusiasts out there enjoying driving just for the hell of it, wherever you may be.

By midday everything has changed. Harsh sunlight removes the sense of depth from the surrounding vistas, and when I

look down from our lofty perch a motley collection of cars, vans and buses, plus the constant stream of bicycles, rolls painfully slowly in agitated close-company convoy along the zig-zag roads, instantly recalling those wonderfully illustrated Richard Scarry books I'd read as a child. There's probably a pickle truck and a Swiss Air support van in there somewhere, I just know it...

Instead I think I'll just contemplate the appealing vehicle that has got me here. A car far more cossetting and undemanding than an 812 Superfast, much faster and more driver-focused than a Bentley Continental GT, more exciting and attention-garnering than a Mercedes-AMG S-class coupe – no one would crowd around the big Merc when you park, but they do with a DBS. Everywhere. I just can't think of another car that covers so many GT bases. Yes, Aston Martin's pricing is punchy, and the DBS isn't perfect, but right now I don't think there's a better car in which to live out those grand touring fantasies, defiant in the face of the ubiquitous Airbus, for the love of every passing mile. ✕

### Aston Martin DBS Superleggera

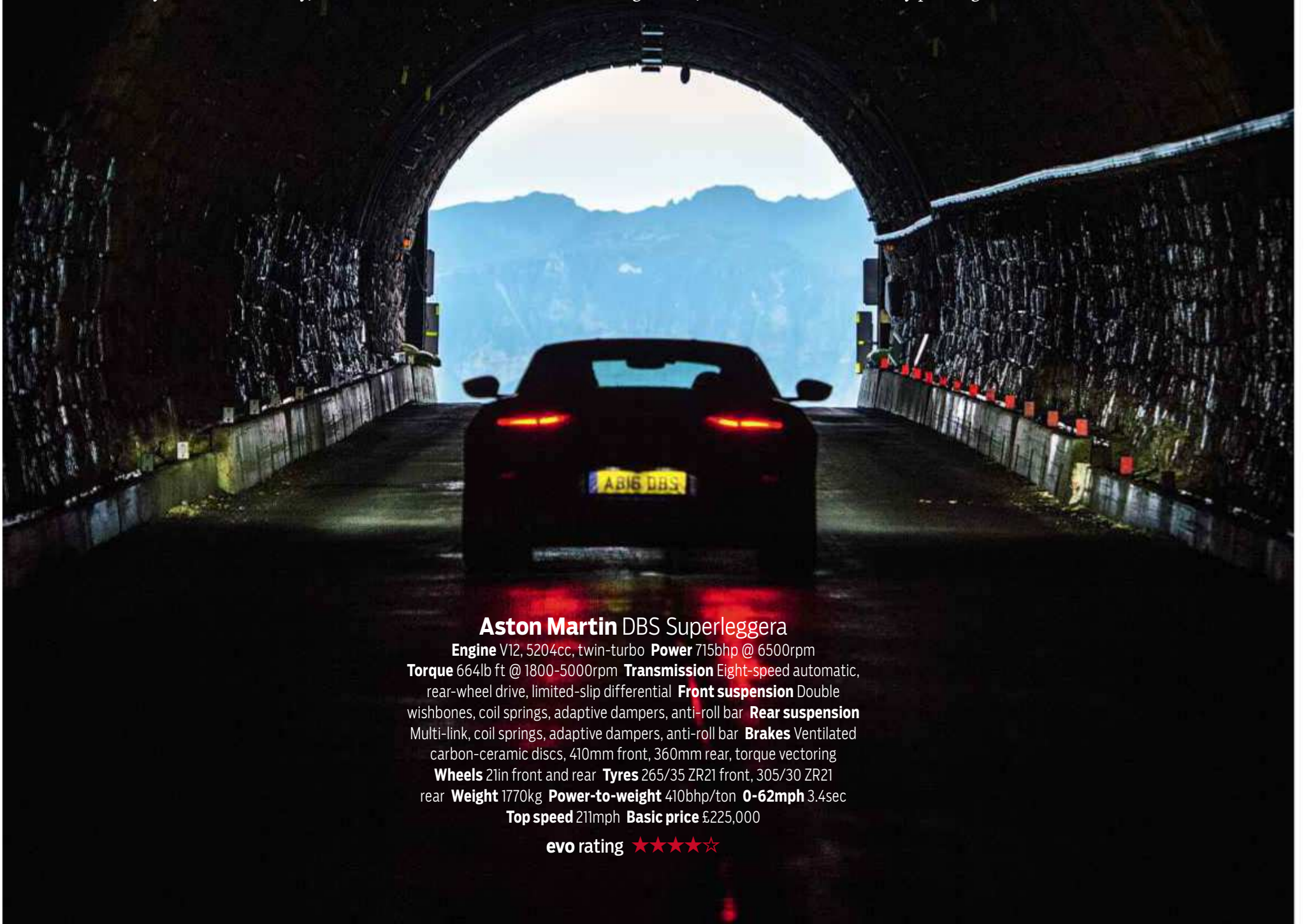
**Engine** V12, 5204cc, twin-turbo **Power** 715bhp @ 6500rpm

**Torque** 664lb ft @ 1800-5000rpm **Transmission** Eight-speed automatic, rear-wheel drive, limited-slip differential **Front suspension** Double wishbones, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar **Rear suspension** Multi-link, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar **Brakes** Ventilated carbon-ceramic discs, 410mm front, 360mm rear, torque vectoring

**Wheels** 21in front and rear **Tyres** 265/35 ZR21 front, 305/30 ZR21 rear **Weight** 1770kg **Power-to-weight** 410bhp/ton **0-62mph** 3.4sec

**Top speed** 211mph **Basic price** £225,000

**evo rating** ★★★★★







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# LAP DAY





# ANGLESEY

**Ferrari's 812 Superfast is epic on the road,  
but just how fast is it around a track?  
We head to Anglesey to find out**

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*by* RICHARD MEADEN

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PHOTOGRAPHY *by* ANDY MORGAN





**YOU KNOW THE SCORE BY NOW.** Covered truck arrives at circuit, disgorges brand new Ferrari along with a set or three of tyres, a test driver and an engineer. This time it's the turn of the 812 Superfast, which has been shipped from Maranello to north Wales for fast laps and filming at Anglesey's Coastal Circuit.

This is my first time in the Superfast: quite an introduction to the most powerful front-engined Ferrari ever made. I've driven its predecessor, the F12, on a number of occasions – none of which led me to feel at any point that it could do with a bit more performance. Fortunately Ferrari isn't as easily pleased, which is why it built a new V12 engine (stroked from 6.3 to 6.5 litres), sharpened up the transmission and shortened its ratios, geeked-out over the electronics and chased additional downforce with no drag penalty. The result is an obscenely (some might say absurdly) potent flagship. In case you need reminding, peak power is 789bhp, delivered at 8500rpm.

Ferrari is offering Pirelli P Zero Corsas as a high-performance tyre option on the 812. They won't be available until November 2018 – handily just in time for winter – but it's no great surprise to find that our test car is running them ahead of schedule. Sadly we don't have a set of regular Pirellis to compare them with.

Having Ferrari staff on hand may fuel the conspiracy theorists, but they are undeniably useful at divulging valuable snippets of info. For example, with limited time (and tyres) to get the job done, it's good to know CT Off (traction control off, stability control active) is what the factory regards as the optimum dynamic setting, though on particular tracks Race (which offers some traction control) can confer a small advantage. When I mention ESC Off they just smile, shake their heads and say 'smoke machine'. We'll save that for the video, then...

As with all these Big Beasts you have to manage the tyres when going for a lap time. With the 812 this means doing a steady lap to scrub the release agent from the rubber and bring the temperatures up gently. After a quick pit stop for the pressures to be dropped, it's back out for a five-lap run: that's to say an out-lap, three fliers and a slow in-lap. We can repeat the process twice on each set of tyres, beyond which point they've more than given their best in outright lap time terms.

We've grown used to Ferrari's incredible application of technology to aero, engine, gearbox, brakes and chassis. Everything about its cars is cutting edge, and yet the 812 driving experience is so intense, requires serious concentration and demands the kind of time-honoured car control any handy driver from the last 50 or 60 years would recognise. In short, you need to be comfortable with more grunt than grip and a committed practitioner of career-critical oversteer.

With Ferrari's digitalisation of driving dynamics there was a fear it would increasingly remove the driver from the equation. But the last few generations of its cars have become so potent, fast and agile that the technology has actually enriched the experience. For instance, much as I like a stick shift, I can't imagine the Superfast with a manual gearbox, such is the rate at which it devours gears and romps through the revs. Likewise, CT Off



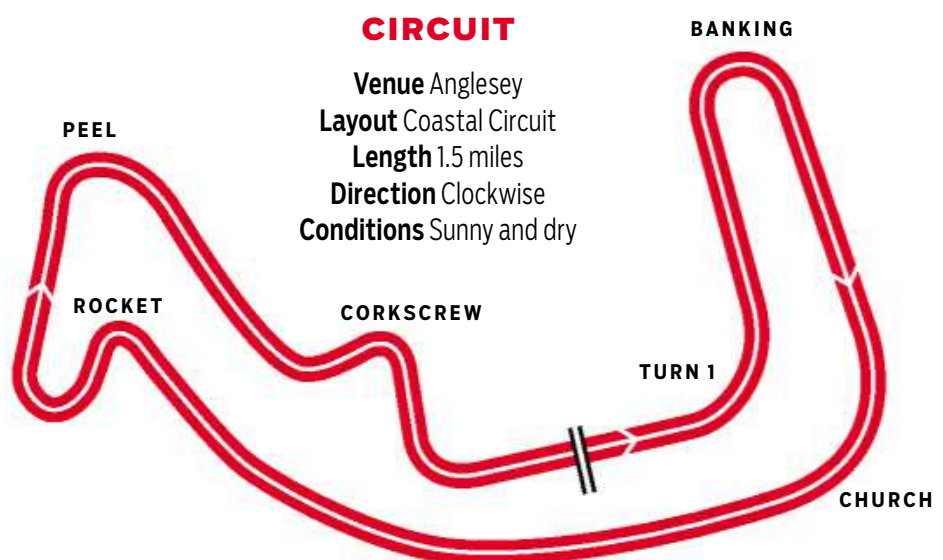
gives you more than enough rope, but also offers very subtle interventions that not only assist you in getting the most from the car, but help you feel the optimum window within which the car wants to operate.

Don't get me wrong, you can still light the rear tyres up and you really need to bring your A-game, but once you've felt some intervention you know that the car actually finds better drive if you squeeze into the throttle, balance the slide early and let the rear tyres just over-rotate rather than if you fizz and smoke 'em up like Catherine wheels.

The first flying lap of each batch is the quickest, when the tyres have that bit more bite and traction. It's hard to know what we're aiming for time-wise, because funnily enough we've never benchmarked a near-800bhp, front-engined, rear-drive GT before, but at the beginning of the day the Ferrari crew (who one would suspect have run some kind of simulation) suggest 0.8sec shy of a 488 GTB would be a good effort. It proves to be a remarkably prescient target, for my best time is a 1:13.6 – you guessed it, precisely 0.8sec off the time I set in the 488 in very similar conditions last year (evo 228).

With the 812 it's very much the case that to go faster you have to drive slower. Not that it is at all ponderous (quite the opposite), but the biggest rewards come from

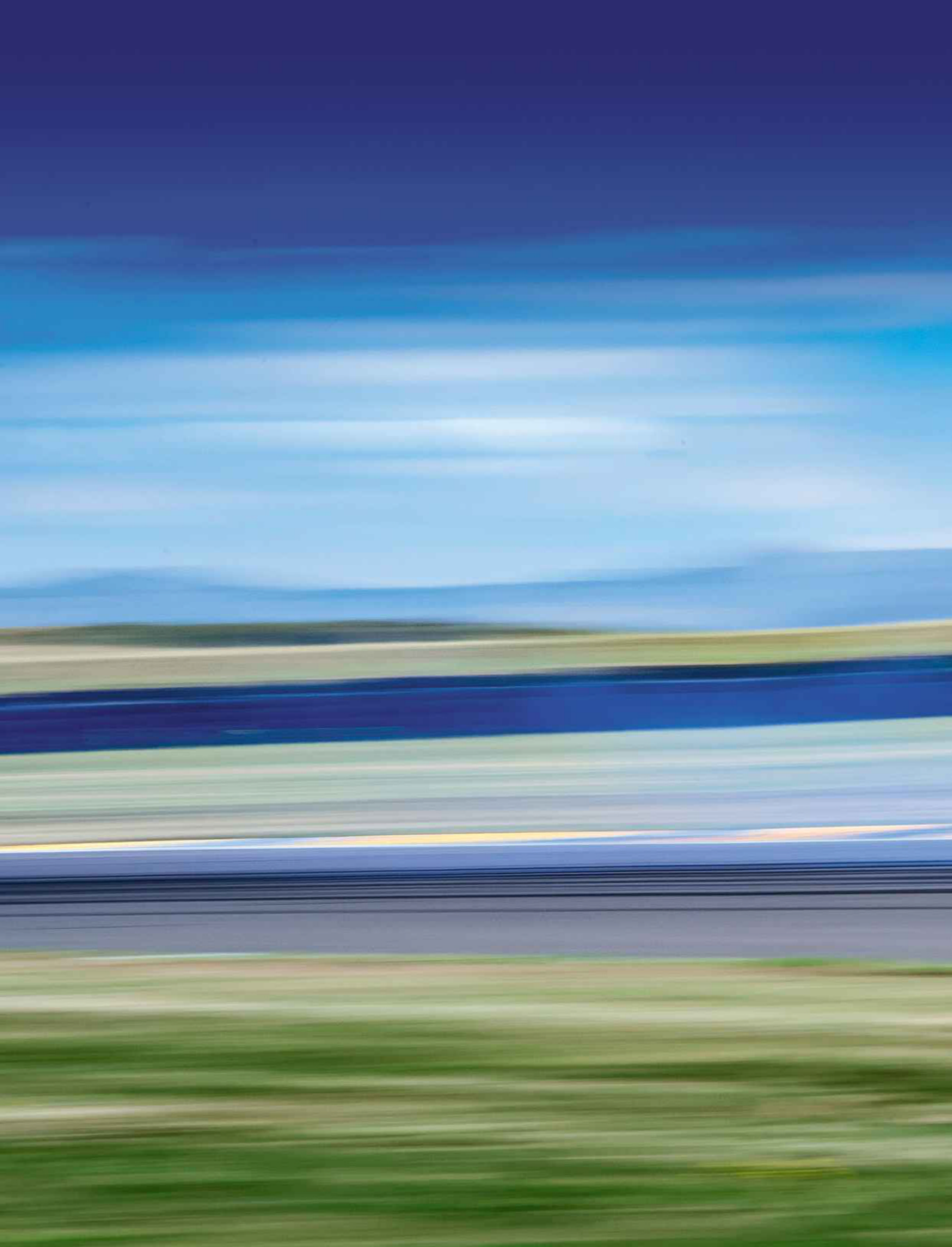
**Clockwise from right:** rear tyres are easily lit-up; V12 betters older F12's by 59bhp; carbon-ceramic brakes prove fade-free; Meaden at the wheel; Pirelli P Zero Corsas good for three flying laps

















being calm and controlled with your inputs, not trying to be the last of the late brakers or impatiently chasing the throttle. Hustle it, by all means, but bully it? No.

Consequently you fight your urges as much as the Superfast itself. The trick is to allow the car time to work, making forceful yet measured braking that then lets you pick a clean, decisive line and apply the power in one measured squeeze of the throttle. Get scruffy on the way in and you'll be tempted to get busy with the throttle to make up for lost tenths, which most likely unsettles the car and inevitably leads to a big bite of oversteer and a subsequent loss of traction.

Anglesey's quicker corners – Turn 1 and the fourth-gear right-hander, Church – require a calm approach as it's easy to agitate the 812 into oversteer if you have a greedy right foot. Tighter corners such as the Banking hairpin, Rocket or Peel need a split-second's patience to let the front end bite, followed by more smooth but incisive throttle from apex to exit. Amazingly, there's enough torque to use third gear through the former two, though second gear gives the ultimate punch.

The brakes are immensely powerful and entirely resistant to fade during our runs. The hardest braking zone is where you slow from 140mph-plus on the approach to Rocket, as the line between getting the car stopped and running wide as the track plateaus is fine. Even on my best lap I don't quite nail it, so there's an easy tenth or two lost there.

Initially you notice the individual effects of the agility-enhancing Virtual Short Wheelbase rear-wheel steering, Ferrari Peak Performance (which adjusts the steering wheel torque to indicate the approaching limit of grip) and Ferrari Power Oversteer (which also adjusts steering torque to suggest to the driver the correct inputs required to realign the car), but it doesn't take long for everything to meld into one intense and immersive experience. One in which the 812 does a brilliant job of masking its size and weight.



It's hard not to focus on the 812's rampant power and its ability to overwhelm the rear tyres, but to do so trivialises a genuinely nuanced car. The way you can work with it to build a lap time proves it has feel and finesse. That said, be under no illusion: the powertrain and chassis technology here is nothing less than genuine hypercar hardware that just happens to be packed into a 1630kg front-engined supercar.

Despite the electricrery, it's the 812's mass and layout that ultimately dictates how much of that performance can be deployed and how much is converted into smoke, sweat and smiles. In an era increasingly defined by race-car levels of downforce and an obsession with lap times, cutting loose in the 812 Superfast is a celebration of excess and a lesson in good old-fashioned car control. It's a monster, but my god it's a magnificent one.

**Below right:** comparing the Superfast's lap trace with that of a Mercedes-AMG GT R is particularly revealing; to find out how a more 'everyday' supercar compares, turn the page



# THE DATA

IF YOU WANT TO SUBJECT YOUR 812 Superfast to the ultimate emergency start, then like an F1 driver trying to 'switch on' the tyres during the out lap before a banzai qualifier, you'll need to build up to a full-bore launch.

First you need to be in second gear with around 2000rpm dialled in, at which point you floor the throttle. If there's wheelspin – and there will be – you repeat the process until the traction is total, at which point you do the same again in first gear. With the tyres now warm and sticky, it's time for launch control.

Tap the button on the transmission tunnel, hold the car on the brakes with your left foot (not too much pressure), then bury the throttle pedal with your right. Our first practice runs are dynamite, the 812 firing off the line with not even a hint of wheelspin before smashing through 60mph in 3.0sec (Ferrari claims 2.9sec to 62mph) and 100mph in 5.9sec. However, by the time we come to record the full

0-150mph test the already heady ambient temperature has risen significantly, which is never a good thing for extracting the maximum from any internal combustion engine. Still, the resulting 0-60mph time is only a tenth behind our earlier effort, while 150mph comes and goes in just 13.1sec.

Yet it's arguably the Ferrari's in-gear figures that really ram home the fantastic naturally aspirated V12's flexibility and linear delivery. Pick a gear, any gear, and look at the times for each acceleration increment. What you'll notice is that for every 20mph sprint the Superfast needs more or less exactly the same short span of time, give or take a tenth here and there.

The carbon-ceramic brakes also deserve special mention, stopping the 812 ten times from 100mph without fade or fuss and always with a firm pedal. In fact, they got better the more we used them, consistently stopping in the 81-metre range from the sixth run onwards.

**James Disdale**

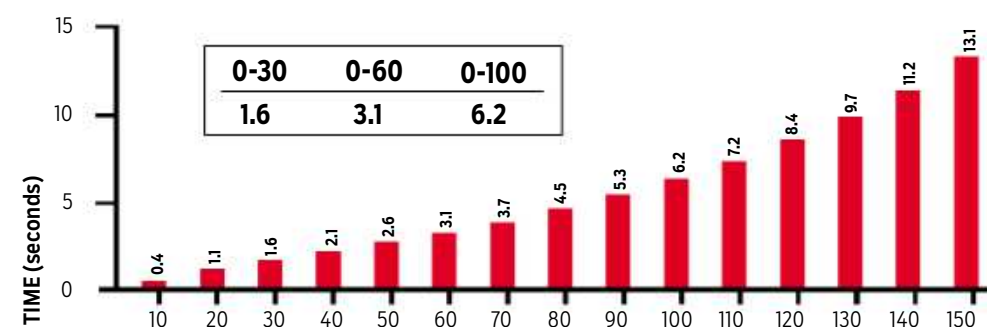
## Specification

<b>Engine</b>	V12, 6496cc
<b>Power</b>	789bhp @ 8500rpm
<b>Torque</b>	529lb ft @ 7000rpm
<b>Transmission</b>	Seven-speed dual-clutch, rear-wheel drive, E-Diff 3
<b>Front suspension</b>	Double wishbones, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar
<b>Rear suspension</b>	Multi-link, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar
<b>Brakes</b>	Carbon-ceramic discs, 398mm front, 360mm rear
<b>Tyres</b>	275/35 ZR20 front, 315/35 ZR20 rear
<b>Wheels</b>	10 x 20in front, 11.5 x 20in rear
<b>Weight</b>	1630kg
<b>Power-to-weight</b>	492bhp/ton
<b>0-62mph</b>	2.9sec (claimed)
<b>Top speed</b>	211mph
<b>Basic price</b>	£262,963
<b>evo rating</b>	★★★★★

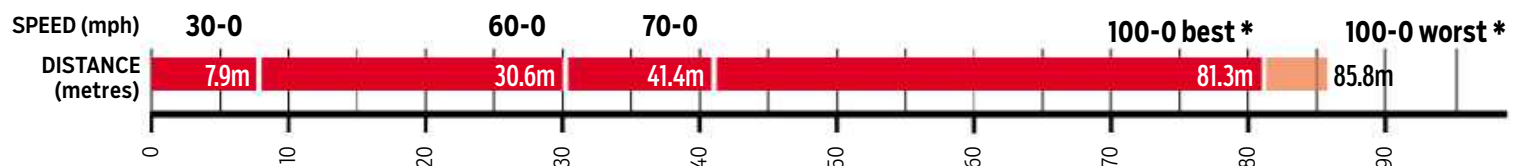
## In-gear acceleration

	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th
20-40	1.4	1.9	3.2			
30-50	1.3	1.8	2.3	3.0		
40-60		1.7	2.3	2.9	3.6	
50-70		1.6	2.2	2.8	3.5	4.9
60-80		1.6	2.1	2.8	3.6	4.9
70-90			2.1	2.6	3.5	5.0
80-100			2.1	2.7	3.4	5.2

## Acceleration from standing start

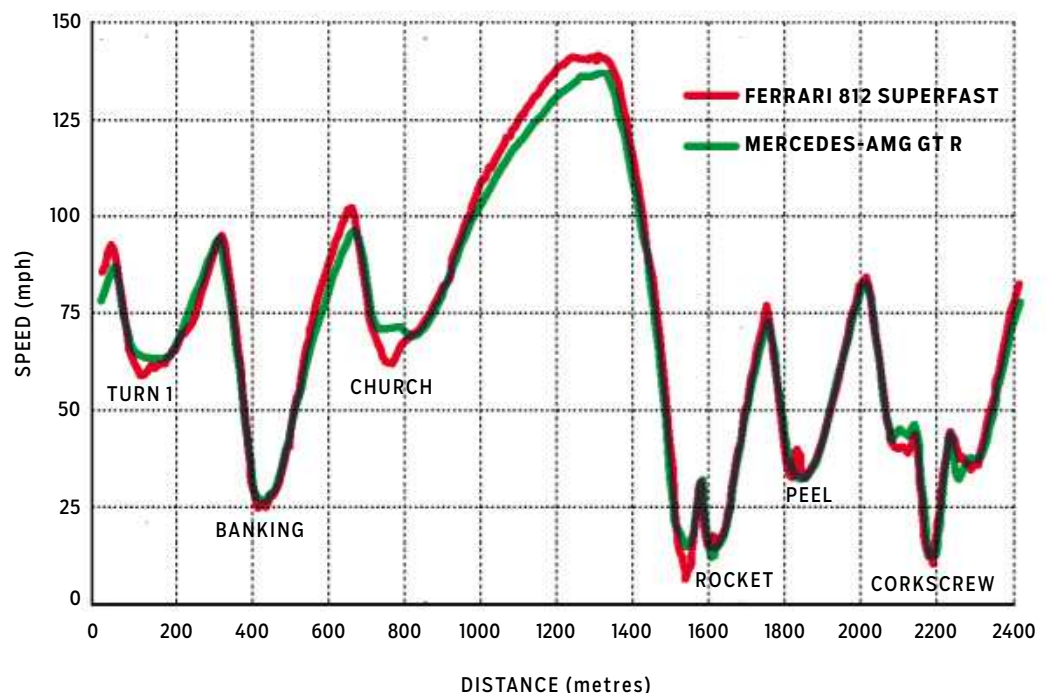


## Braking



## Lap traces

THE TRACES SHOW TWO VERY DIFFERENT ways of achieving a 1:13.6 lap. In red we have the 812 Superfast, in green the Mercedes-AMG GT R that we timed last month. The steepness of the Ferrari's upward traces bears testament to its extraordinary pace between the turns. Where the 577bhp GT R tails off visibly above 100mph, the 789bhp Superfast is still going like a rocket. Even though the AMG's minimum corner speeds are higher, the 812 claws back all the lost ground then powers on by. Just as impressive are its downward traces, which show it braking later from higher speeds despite being 75kg heavier. You can also see the moments of patience required in the turning phases, the AMG able to get on the power sooner and more decisively out of the slower turns, where the Ferrari needs to lose more speed and have a split-second to settle.





# THE 'REAL WORLD' BENCHMARK

**T**AKE A LOOK AT THE BASIC spec of the Audi R8 V10 RWS and you wonder what sort of lap time it might be capable of at Anglesey. For although it doesn't blow the rule book to smithereens in any specific area, it still looks quite tidy on paper.

Naturally aspirated V10 engine behind the seats with 533bhp at 7800rpm and 398lb ft at 6500rpm. Tick. Seven-speed dual-clutch gearbox that, in its fruitiest mode, can swap cogs faster than you can blink. Tick. A 50kg weight reduction compared with the regular and itself not-especially-boring R8 V10. Tick. £114k cheaper than an 812 Superfast? Tick.

And best of all, perhaps, certainly as far as setting decent lap times is concerned and having a right laugh in the process, it is rear-wheel drive. (The 'S' in its name stands for Series, not Steer, remember.) In theory this should mean less understeer, more agility via the throttle, and just more of what you need from a mid-engined car everywhere on a track.

Oh, and in the case of this particular example, the tyres are by Michelin and wear that most magic of markers; the one that reads 'Pilot Sport Cup 2' and means

more grip on a dry circuit than is available from pretty much any other road tyre.

So just how close can this combination bring the R8 to the spectacular 1:13.6 lap set by the 789bhp Ferrari 812 Superfast? Time to find out...

Drizzle that starts literally just as I'm rumbling along the pitlane isn't a welcome sight, but despite this the track still seems to possess some grip; the ambient temperature remains hot, so unless it hoses it down I reckon the surface should be OK for a good few laps if I can get some temperature into those Cup 2s.

With everything electronic switched off and the transmission in its most aggressive setting, the RWS feels surprisingly edgy for the first lap, understeering to begin with into slower corners, then snapping into quite wild oversteer the first time I turn into Church with some commitment. It feels pretty wild full stop to be honest, and I begin to think it might be quicker to re-engage the ESP. Anything to allow me to keep the car pointing straight for long enough to get some heat into those tyres...

However, after another lap of taking it easyish and just being patient, the good stuff finally starts to happen down below.

The front tyres at last start to bite properly when I aim the nose towards the apex of Turn 1, and finally I can get on the throttle hard at the apex without having to bung in a dose of corrective lock towards the exit kerb. Instead the R8 just sticks, and its V10 suddenly sounds magnificent.

It's still pretty lively through Church on my last and quickest lap – by which time the track is pretty much bone dry – but maybe that's just me being clumsy with the throttle, giving it too much, too soon.

Yet the way the tail goes light again through the 'is it/isn't it flat' right kink before Rocket confirms otherwise: right on the edge the RWS has a nasty little habit of trying to roll into oversteer – with all its electronics disabled, anyway.

But while the electronics will keep you out of the undergrowth in extremis, the negative effect of their nannying is that they slow you down overall around the lap because they take the throttle away too soon in the tighter corners.

In the end the R8 V10 RWS managed a best lap of 1:15.4 – 1.8sec slower than the 812 Superfast. It also felt a fair bit more edgy in the process than I was expecting.

**Steve Sutcliffe**





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# EXTREME





# AKEOVERS

*McLaren has its most hardcore Sports Series model yet in the 592bhp 600LT, while Lamborghini has launched its hottest Aventador to date with the 759bhp SVJ. Time to find out what they're made of...*

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by ADAM TOWLER







**IT'S BEEN A SUMMER TOUR OF HIRED RACING** circuits for **evo**. First came the McLaren Senna, launched with track driving at Silverstone and then at Estoril in Portugal (we had to wait a while before getting the Senna on the road, in the Scottish Highlands, for **evo** 252), and now it's the turn of the 600LT at the thrilling Hungaroring, again with track driving only for this first encounter. Then, in short order, it's back to Estoril for another track event to drive the new Lamborghini Aventador SVJ, which, you guessed it, also precludes any road driving.

I won't lie, that's frustrating in some senses for us, because given these cars wear number plates it's inconclusive to only consider them from purely a circuit-driving perspective, even if their performance means that, realistically, this is the only environment where you can experience them to the full. But what a pair they are – McLaren's first hardcore Sports Series model, and what just might turn out to be the ultimate naturally aspirated V12 Lamborghini ever made.

To Hungary first, then, where the McLaren new-product colossus continues its relentless output. The 600LT follows in the substantial tyre tracks of the fabulous Super Series 675LT, as McLaren pushes hard to establish the Longtail sub-brand as its own 'RS' department.

We first saw the ultimate Sports Series model in a static reveal earlier this year, and if its stats were unequivocally enticing, then

so was there just the fleeting thought in my mind that it could be a derivative too far. Don't get me wrong, given its core ingredients it was bound to be a really good car, but McLaren's commonality of fundamental parts and an already burgeoning range of supercars had me worried that the 600LT might struggle to find the clear air where it could wear the LT moniker comfortably, even if the blue flame from its top-mounted exhaust was an instant social media hit.

Yet from the moment I begin to listen to the LT's senior engineering team talk about the car, their passion for creating a machine for those who really care about driving, and their obsessive attention to every last detail, mean any misgivings are replaced by an itch in my palms to grasp its Alcantara wheel immediately and go for it out on the circuit.

To recap, the 600LT isn't about raw power, although that does sound absurd when you consider that it boasts 592bhp from the usual 3.8-litre twin-turbo V8, up from 562bhp in the 570-series models. The power increase is down to a remap and that rather special exhaust, but perhaps more noteworthy is the 84kg reduction in kerb weight, to 1356kg, compared with a 570S (or 88kg if you spec the optional carbon front wings and roof). Weight has been saved throughout the car, whether that's substantially in the form of 21kg from ditching the standard 570 seats, or a single kilo from deleting the glovebox and door pockets.

In fact, 23 per cent of the parts make-up has changed from





**'THE 600LT TAKES THE 570S'S CORE ATTRIBUTES AND POURS OVER A TIN OF INDUSTRIAL PAINT STRIPPER'**



the 570S, the Longtail moniker justified to the letter by a 47mm extension to the car's rear, which is complemented by a 27mm longer splitter at the front. The increased manipulation of air means there's now 100kg of downforce at 155mph, compared to the neutral figure of the regular car, but with no penalty in terms of drag, while under the carbonfibre skin you'll discover new forged alloy wishbones, stiffer and hollow anti-roll bars, recalibrated dampers and the carbon-ceramic braking set-up from a 720S along with a Senna-inspired brake booster. Furthermore, the steering rack has a four per cent quicker ratio, there are stiffer mounts for the engine and transmission, and the 19-inch front and 20-inch rear wheels are wrapped in a new, bespoke Pirelli Trofeo R tyre.

From the very first moment I turn the 600's wheel in the pitlane, it just feels so right. That might sound puerile, but the additional weight, the response immediately off-centre and the progressiveness of it overshadow what in the 570S was already a fine example of a hydraulically assisted set-up.

In fact, earlier I'd grabbed a few laps in a 570 to try to learn the circuit, and fast and fun it was too (the car and the track). But as impressive as a car like the 570S is, there's still a thin, glossy layer of varnish on top of everything that it does, a buffer, if you like, to make it undemanding for the broad customer base it's aimed at. The 600LT takes those core attributes and pours over a tin of industrial paint stripper, burning through the surface until





**'IT ASKS LESS MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY THAN A CAR SUCH AS THE SENNA'**

the real car is revealed underneath. Where the 570 when hard pressed introduces just the merest hint of vagueness, of squidge and imprecision, everything the 600LT does is ruthlessly, but delightfully, transparent and true.

There is immense speed here on offer – 0-62mph takes 2.9sec; 0-124mph just 8.2. For reference the 675LT takes an identical 2.9sec and a barely distinguishable 7.9sec for the same benchmarks. But somehow that pace seems a given. In Track mode the 'inertia push' gearchange is so quick that it's hard to even register mentally, but it's when you come off the power that the 600LT gets truly engrossing.

The braking ability is formidable, but it's the resistance of the pedal that I really admire, and it's this carefully controlled weightiness – not to be confused with stodginess – to the response that's replicated throughout all the main controls; a polished uniformity, so often associated with the best Porsches, that means within half a lap I have to refocus my mind on specific elements of the car's behaviour so as to be able to write this story, otherwise I'd simply be having a ball and thinking about how I could make the thing go quicker, completely accepting of how the 600LT goes about its work.

### McLaren 600LT

**Engine** V8, 3799cc, twin-turbo **Power** 592bhp @ 7500rpm **Torque** 457lb ft @ 5500-6500rpm **Transmission** Seven-speed dual-clutch, rear-wheel drive, open differential  
**Front suspension** Double wishbones, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar  
**Rear suspension** Double wishbones, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar  
**Brakes** Carbon-ceramic discs, 390mm front, 380mm rear **Wheels** 8 x 19in front, 11 x 20in rear **Tyres** 225/35 R19 front, 285/35 R20 rear **Weight** 1356kg **Power-to-weight** 444bhp/ton **0-62mph** 2.9sec **Top speed** 204mph **Basic price** £185,500

evo rating ★★★★★

The 600LT, on track at least, is that sort of car. The Hungaroring serves up a particularly tasty menu of corners, gradients and straights, and the car's stability under braking, even when the ABS is triggered over a kerb, is exemplary, it's adjustability on the throttle mid-corner as deft as you can manipulate with your right foot. All of which makes this car somehow unthreatening – up to a point, at least – and because it asks less mentally and physically than a car such as the Senna, while the lap times might be slower, there's a strong case to say it's more enjoyable. It is a bind, to say the least, when my laps are used up, for I'd happily lap around here until the fuel tank ran dry.

Priced somewhere between 911s GT3 RS and GT2 RS, the 600LT commands a new middleweight niche, but even against cars from the class above, on this first acquaintance, it should fear none of them. Oh, and did I mention it spits blue flames out of the high-mounted exhausts?





Circuito Estoril



**A**CROSS TO PORTUGAL AND THE CIRCUITO do Estoril, where a fortnight ago the circuit was, at no doubt frightening expense, completely resurfaced with flawless virginal black asphalt. ‘Perfect’, you might think, but the Lamborghini people are aghast when we arrive, for the track now offers all the adhesion of a freshly mopped supermarket floor, the situation compounded by Lambo’s decision to leave the Trofeo tyres at home due to fears over their wear rate on the old surface. The result, when you try to lean on the SVJ in the corners, is comedic howls of protest from rubber that shows no sign of wear even after multiple stints on the track. Mamma mia.

Our 4WD megatest last winter (evo 246) proved beyond doubt that the Aventador is a car that likes to get its bodywork dirty and have a good time. There’s a proper driver’s car beneath all that inner-city supercar-spotting nonsense, and the fact that the SVJ has got one over on the formidable GT2 RS at the Ring suggests something rather special must be going on to make a venerable Aventador travel that quickly through the Eifel Forest.

The answer lies with a group of initialisms tied into a larger, central initialism, but first, something that’s easier to understand: power. The actual output of the SVJ’s V12 seems increasingly unimportant beyond knowing that it has ‘enough’. What really does matter is that it’s a flipping great big 6.5-litre, naturally aspirated V12, with a deliciously crisp response to the throttle and

a soundtrack that intrinsically elevates one’s soul. ‘A V12 ees the best singer,’ says engineering chief Maurizio Reggiani, at which point it’s physically impossible not to smile.

Still, 759bhp at 8500rpm are still very much numbers worthy of study, and while 531lb ft at 6750rpm suggests a classically peaky delivery, the torque graph illustrates there’s a meatier deployment of mid-range pull over the old Aventador SV (740bhp, 509lb ft). This is because the SVJ V12’s induction system and cylinder heads are new, with titanium intake valves for the first time, while there’s also a new, shorter exhaust and a lighter flywheel. The V12 wasn’t exactly lethargic before, but it now promises to be utterly feral.

Gearbox? Naturally that’s still the old single-clutch automated unit with, yes, it’s boisterous shifts in Corsa mode and its low-speed clumsiness. Brakes? Massive 400mm front, 380mm rear carbon-ceramic discs, so they should be fine, despite the SVJ not being an especially light car. Incidentally, the kerb weight – 1525kg dry – is the same as quoted for the old SV; the additional use of carbonfibre inside and out, along with new lightweight centrelock wheels, has offset the weight gain from incorporating a lot of new tech.

The highlight of this new technology is the incorporation of Aerodinamica Lamborghini Attiva (ALA), the active aerodynamics set-up first seen on the Huracán Performante, and now in 2.0 form. The brief version is that, with the system’s intakes closed, the front splitter and rear wing work as normal, and they’re much





more effective than the SV's, offering 40 per cent more downforce. However, when the car is running at speed in a straight line, ALA operates like a form of DRS, opening flaps to reduce the pressure on the front splitter and 'stall' the rear wing, greatly reducing aerodynamic drag. Moreover, both left and right sides of the wing can be 'on' or 'off' independently, applying downforce to the inside of the car when turning into a corner.

This is the clever bit; the SVJ's secret. All of the hard work has been in exploiting ALA 2.0 along with other systems via the central LDVA 'brain' (that's Lamborghini Dinamica Veicolo Attiva – active vehicle dynamics). The S model's rear-wheel steering is retained but recalibrated, along with a little more rear bias for the four-wheel drive, while the Dynamic Steering system, with as little as 2.1 turns lock-to-lock, now has its ratio frozen in the Corsa and Ego modes. There are stiffer anti-roll bars and recalibrated, more resilient dampers, although the spring rates are the same. Crucially, there are bespoke Pirellis too: P Zero Corsas and, for the first time on the big car, a Trofeo R. Everything about the SVJ has been carefully honed to get you in, through and out of a corner as fast as possible.

As I approach 'my' SVJ in the pitlane the combined decibels of the idling V12 and the fans heroically struggling to keep it cool in 30deg C heat make me chuckle. Even at a standstill this great slab of old-school supercar is hugely intimidating. Up goes the scissor door, and as I sink into the hard bucket seat I'm reminded of how it really belongs in the Tower of London as an example of medieval

brutality, how there's precious little headroom if you sit normally, how for such a big car it's fairly claustrophobic in here. And while forward vision is massively obscured by those girders for A-pillars, it's now almost non-existent aft with the ALA ducting.

Over the start line at full pelt, SVJ in the angriest Corsa setting, and my inner ear feels as though it's being pummelled to destruction by the sonic waves emanating from behind the bulkhead. Braking from over 160mph the middle pedal feels softer than a 600LT's, but the speed is wiped off convincingly and actual feel underfoot is good, helped by the centre clutch disengaging under braking for the first time. I can sense a slight yaw movement under such force, a delicate reminder that a very, very large V12 engine resides over my shoulder, but it's not frightening, just nicely informative.

The moment I turn the wheel the agility of the SVJ is obvious. Yes, it has nothing like the turn-in I suspect it possesses on grippy tarmac with Trofeos, but still, the nose turns quickly enough that I make a mental note to keep my inputs as small and accurate as possible. There's real feel through the steering too, and a keen sense that the car is being pulled straight at the exit. A blast of revs in second, then protest from the outer front and understeer into Turn 2 (blame the surface) before a big stop into the uphill hairpin of Turn 3. I try upshifting mid-corner a few corners on, but the pause and clonk of a part-throttle shift has the SVJ's nose shifting the trajectory by a couple of feet, so I won't be doing that again.

Thundering down the back straight the SVJ feels properly quick,





‘THE SVJ HAS BEEN CAREFULLY HONED TO GET YOU IN, THROUGH AND OUT OF A CORNER AS FAST AS POSSIBLE’



but it's easy enough to pick a braking point then guide the chiselled nose into the apex as you bleed the pressure off, and playing with the throttle reveals a keenly adjustable response. The more – and harder – I drive the SVJ, the more accommodating it feels. Yes, there's still a layer of ESP left in place, but then it was for its 6:44.97 Ring time too, and unless you're clumsy you're not aware of any intervention. I've no doubt that a loss of adhesion at high speed will still be a very senior moment indeed in an SVJ, but its behaviour in slow- and medium-speed corners makes it very exploitable.

Embarrassing track-related lack of grip aside, the SVJ feels a significant step on from the SV. It's a car I want to go faster in, to learn more about its habits and to use to work on my own weaknesses. That enthralling interactivity is something it shares with the 600LT. Clearly, there's life left in the old bull yet. ✕

### Lamborghini Aventador SVJ

**Engine** V12, 6498cc **Power** 759bhp @ 8500rpm **Torque** 531lb ft @ 6750rpm  
**Transmission** Seven-speed single-clutch automated manual, four-wheel drive, limited-slip differential **Front suspension** Double wishbones, coil springs, magnetic dampers, anti-roll bar **Rear suspension** Double wishbones, coil springs, magnetic dampers, anti-roll bar **Brakes** Carbon-ceramic discs, 400mm front, 380mm rear **Wheels** 9 x 20in front, 13 x 21in rear **Tyres** 255/30 ZR20 front, 355/25 ZR21 rear **Weight (dry)** 1525kg **Power-to-weight (dry)** 506bhp/ton **0-62mph** 2.8sec **Top speed** 218mph **Basic price** £350,000

evo rating ★★★★★



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# HALF-PRICE SUPERCARS

*Dwindling second-hand values mean that some of  
evo's mid-engined supercar heroes have now moved  
into the realm of 'dare to dream'. Here's why you  
should and what to look out for*







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**‘IT PLAYS THE  
FULL INTERNAL-  
COMBUSTION  
ORCHESTRA’**

**F**OR AS LONG AS THERE ARE INTERNAL-combustion-engined cars, debate will rage over where is the most advantageous place to put the engine. But park the prejudices and examine the physics and, for people like us at least, you're left with only one logical conclusion – mid-engined is best. With all the masses bundled into the centre of the car you're far more likely to achieve the perfect 50:50 weight distribution, plus (here comes the sciencey stuff) the lower polar moment of inertia delivers quicker responses. And then there's the motorsport connection. Ever since Cooper revolutionised Formula 1 in the 1950s, the fastest racers have all had their engines behind the driver. Hell, when outright pace is the goal, even Porsche has abandoned its rear-engined dogma – its quickest 911 racer, the RSR, is a middy.

The desirability of the mid-engined format means that you can get these machines in all shapes and sizes, and at all sorts of budgets. But if you're going to do it, you might as well do it properly – and that means going large with a genuine supercar. These are the models where the layout makes most sense, as it places the bulk of a big powerplant centrally rather than leaving it hanging out at either end and upsetting the balance. It's also the sector with the richest mid-engined heritage, with a lineage that can be traced all the way back to the Lamborghini Miura. We won't pretend this is the cheapest way into mid-engined motoring, but neither is it as ruinously expensive as you might think. Crucially, these machines are tougher than you'd ever imagine, free of many of the highly strung frailties that traditionally forced this type of car into the role



of pampered garage queen rather than serious driving tool.

To prove our theory, we've gathered together a trio of second-hand examples – one from a maker better known for its mainstream saloons, one from a relative newcomer to road cars (albeit with a stellar motorsport CV) and one from a marque with an impeccable and lengthy mid-engined pedigree.

Today, more than a decade after its debut, the original Audi R8 looks catwalk good. Even when parked alongside the McLaren MP4 12C and Ferrari F430, we all agree it's the tautly -styled German car that gets the nod for kerb appeal. It's a cliché, yes, but the beautifully proportioned Audi really does look like it has been milled from a solid block of aluminium (it is constructed almost entirely of the stuff, after all). Of course, you could go for the V8





(and with prices starting at little more than £30,000 the temptation is huge), but when there's also a 518bhp V10 on offer it'd be rude not to, especially when it looks as good as Martin Spain's Phantom Black Metallic example. Prices start at around £50k (Martin's mint 24,000-mile 2009 car is currently up for £51,250, if you're interested), which looks a lot but is actually less than the price of a new TT RS. Just think about that for a moment...

Like the exterior, the inside of the Audi is beautifully crafted, and while it feels a little too closely related to the brand's sedate saloons, you get the impression it'll still look and feel fresh in 100,000 miles' time. Same goes for the mechanicals. For starters, the V10 is robust, the only caveat being that any potential purchase should have been serviced annually (Audi ran a 'long-life' two-year-interval option), while clutches on manual cars can expire after as little as 20,000 miles. And if you must have an auto, then steer clear of the clunky R-tronic single-clutch automated manual and seek out a later (2012-onwards) S-tronic twin-clutch. It's also worth noting that a lack of aftermarket specialists means you'll pay Audi prices for consumables such as brake discs, which are around £300 each. Suspension components can also get baggy on higher-mileage cars, and the Magnetic Ride dampers cost around £800 a corner to replace if they go haywire.

There are no such problems with Martin's car, which feels as fresh as the day it was hand-assembled at Audi's Neckarsulm plant. It's a sign of how quickly the sector has developed that the R8 is a surprisingly analogue supercar. From the lovely exposed gate for the manual gearshift to the lack of driver modes – you can select from two damping settings and two ESP options, but that's it – the

Audi is a car that puts the emphasis on the driver.

Of course, it's the engine and transmission that form the core of the Audi's appeal, getting your heart pumping faster the moment you twist the key in the ignition. Based on the same unit as in the Lamborghini Gallardo, it plays the full internal-combustion orchestra, from gravelly growl low down to full-on, multi-layered war cry at the red line. The other noise that gets you grinning is the 'click-clack' backbeat to gearchanges, with each shift giving you the chance to fully exploit the explosive energy of that torque-rich, naturally aspirated motor, which pulls from idle all the way to 8000rpm with the elastic, linear urge of an electric motor.

So good is the drivetrain that it's easy to overlook the Audi's chassis. There's some genuine feedback through the meatily





weighted hydraulic steering, while the grip, body control and quattro four-wheel-drive traction are deeply impressive, allowing you to pick apart flowing roads with minimal effort. If anything, the Audi is a little too good. So high are its limits that you really have to push hard to wake up the chassis, at which point you're travelling very quickly indeed. This polished approach is also a mixed blessing when you're taking it steady, because so slick, refined and easy to use is the R8 that sometimes you forget you're behind the wheel of something so special.

There are no such problems with the McLaren MP4-12C, which grabs you by the lapels and shakes you vigorously every time you drive it. We've moved up a bit in price now, with at least £85,000 needed to get the Macca's smooth, pebble-shaped key fob in your hand, but the extra outlay is amply repaid in both performance and drama. McLaren is a pillar of the supercar firmament these days, so it's shocking to recall that it was only seven years ago that the MP4-12C (later renamed simply 12C) represented the brand's first foray into road cars since the hallowed F1.

Despite a design that's only a few years newer than the R8, the McLaren's approach couldn't be more different, its hi-tech, highly configurable pursuit of high performance marking it out as a progenitor of today's breed of bleeding-edge supercars. It's not a classically handsome car, the 12C, but it demands your attention, particularly in the shimmering silver of this example, which is actually McLaren's own – the first one off the line, in fact. Under the skin is the now ubiquitous MonoCell carbonfibre monocoque, hanging from which is the trick double-wishbone suspension that couples coil springs with hydraulically interconnected dampers that allow the McLaren to do away with traditional anti-roll bars. And there's no limited-slip differential: instead it gets a Brake Steer set-up that brakes individual inside rear wheels for better turn-in.


Power comes from the twin-turbocharged 3.8-litre V8 M838T, which was developed in collaboration with British engineering firm Ricardo. Like the MonoCell, this unit has been a constant



throughout the McLaren line-up, albeit in increasingly modified forms. In the early cars it developed 592bhp and 442lb ft of torque, while from 2012 onwards power was raised to 616bhp, with torque unchanged. Regardless of output, you get the same 'seamless shift' seven-speed twin-clutch gearbox. There are also separate Normal, Sport and Track settings for the chassis and drivetrain, allowing you to pick and mix your favourite combination.

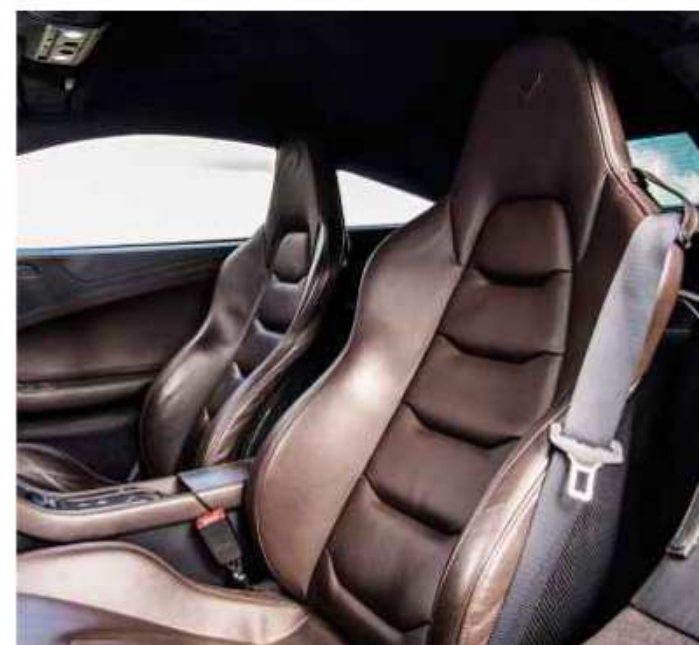
Given the incredible complexity of the McLaren, it'll come as a bit of a surprise to find that it's actually relatively hassle-free to own. Early cars suffered niggles, but reliability quickly improved. Electrical glitches are the most common issue, with the biggest bugbear being the IRIS infotainment system, which is prone to hissy-fits that even numerous software updates can't cure. Still, we'd recommend a McLaren warranty, which when combined with an annual service will see you shell out around £4500 a year. Not cheap, but then nobody ever said supercars were the value option.

Lift open the dihedral driver's door (not as easy as you'd think given this early car's frustratingly erratic swipe-sensitive handle; later 2012 cars got a proper button) and you'll instantly

A photograph of a red McLaren MP4-12C driving on a winding road through a green landscape. The car is seen from the rear, moving away from the viewer. The road is paved and has white dashed lines. The background shows rolling hills and trees under a blue sky with some clouds. The car's license plate is RX06 WZC.

**'IT'S SO  
ENGAGING AND  
SO ADJUSTABLE  
YOU'LL NEVER  
TIRE OF IT'**





forget the expense. Like all McLarens, you sit well forward in a straight-legged recumbent driving position that's enhanced by the gloriously panoramic view over the low dashboard. Thumb the starter and the V8 erupts into life before settling to a bassy idle. It sounds agricultural in this company, but there's still something addictive about its hard-edged blare under full throttle and the sigh and chatter of the turbos as you come off the gas. By gum it's quick, too. There's noticeable lag low down, but once the compressors are pumping properly at 3000rpm, the 12C explodes down the road, rifling through its ratios with jaw-dropping speed and smoothness.

Compared with the Audi's and Ferrari's, the McLaren's steering feels freakishly quick, the MP4 responding instantly to the smallest input. Other-worldly front-end grip and a virtually no-roll cornering stance allow you to slice through corners at speeds the other two simply couldn't countenance. It's just soooo fast across the ground, its clever suspension filtering out bumps and keeping the chassis level. Brake hard and your rear view is obliterated by the air brake rising to help slow the car. Very cool. Yet there's real old-fashioned feedback here; you can feel the forces building through the seat of your pants, while the wheel constantly writhes in your hands. In truth, the car's limits are almost too high for the road, and you soon realise you're getting your thrills by trying to carry as much speed as possible, which turns out to be a great deal of speed indeed.

The contrast with the Ferrari couldn't be greater. The F430 debuted just seven years before the MP4-12C, but drive the two back-to-back and the gap could be decades. Make no mistake, the F430 marked a major technological step for the Prancing

Horse, giving drivers the first taste of the manettino and the electronically controlled E-Diff, plus there were adaptive dampers and the option of a semi-automatic transmission, but on the road the F430 feels like a car designed when chassis development relied on analogue feel rather than sophisticated algorithms. It's way slower than the McLaren, but the rewards it delivers are way greater.

Alex Read's immaculate Rosso Red coupe looks dainty and delicate alongside our newer pair, but the Pininfarina-penned shape (overseen by American Frank Stephenson, who also had a hand in the McLaren's design) still draws attention like few others. If anything ages the F430 it's the cabin, which looks stark and simple compared with the Audi's and McLaren's. Thin pillars mean excellent visibility, but the plastics feel a bit low-rent and the LCD screen for the fuel gauge wouldn't pass muster in a £10 Casio watch. Yet once you've settled into that deeply supportive seat, gripped the gorgeous three-spoke wheel and clocked that large, yellow-backed rev counter, you're ready to forgive the Ferrari anything.

Loosely based on the 360 Modena, the 430 represented a big leap forward for Ferrari. Not only was it endowed with the latest electronic aids, it also marked the debut of the F136 V8 that was developed in partnership with Maserati. Featuring a 4.3-litre capacity, a flat-plane crank and four valves per cylinder (the old 360 had a five-valve head) it develops 483bhp at a heady, heavenly 8500rpm. It really does emit a lovely noise, snarling and howling

**Above, in pairs from left to right:** engines and cabins of the Ferrari F430, Audi R8 V10 and McLaren MP4-12C: a little bit the same, a little bit different





### Ferrari F430

**Engine** V8, 4308cc  
**Power** 483bhp @ 8500rpm  
**Torque** 343lb ft @ 5250rpm  
**Weight** 1449kg (339bhp/ton)  
**0-62mph** 4.0sec  
**Top speed** 196mph+  
**Price today** £75,000-160,000  
**On sale** 2004-2010  
**evo rating** ★★★★★



### Audi R8 V10

**Engine** V10, 5204cc  
**Power** 518bhp @ 8000rpm  
**Torque** 391lb ft @ 6500rpm  
**Weight** 1620kg (325bhp/ton)  
**0-62mph** 4.1sec  
**Top speed** 194mph  
**Price today** £49,000-80,000  
**On sale** 2009-2015  
**evo rating** ★★★★★



### McLaren MP4-12C

**Engine** V8, 3799cc, twin-turbo  
**Power** 592bhp @ 7000rpm  
**Torque** 442lb ft @ 3000-7000rpm  
**Weight** 1434kg (419bhp/ton)  
**0-62mph** 3.3sec  
**Top speed** 205mph  
**Price today** £85,000-110,000  
**On sale** 2011-2014  
**evo rating** ★★★★★

as you work it harder and harder. No, it's not nearly as fast as the newer cars here, but the combination of that soundtrack, a healthy dollop of low-down torque, reasonably short gearing and near-instant throttle response means it feels more than quick enough.

A six-speed manual was standard (for the last time on a mid-engined Ferrari) but most got the single-clutch F1 paddleshift, as fitted to this car. Treat it like a modern twin-clutcher and, frankly, it's hopeless, the ponderous delay between shifts causing nodding-dog syndrome. Learn to give a small lift off the throttle between changes, however, and you can smooth the process nicely – it's no faster, but it adds a layer of interaction that other autos can't match.

Begin to explore its chassis and the Ferrari feels more blunt than the other two – it responds languidly to steering inputs and the supple ride makes you think it'll be soft and imprecise. Yet pick up the pace, twist the manettino to Sport or Race to wake up the E-Diff and slacken off the traction control, and the F430 turns sublime. The lower-gear steering is beautifully precise and brimming with feedback, while the fact grip levels ultimately aren't high allows you to revel in the chassis' exquisite balance for more of the time – a task that's made more satisfying by the trick diff, which makes the transition to power oversteer so natural that you're able to pick and choose at will how

you exit a corner. It's so engaging and so adjustable that you'll never tire of flinging it down your favourite roads.

You may now be expecting the caveat that this is an old Ferrari so it'll constantly go wrong and cost a fortune to fix. Servicing certainly isn't cheap, but neither is the F430 a diva when it comes to maintenance. Most specialists describe the V8 as 'bulletproof' (it features chain- rather than belt-driven cams), with the most likely failing being a cracked exhaust manifold, which can be welded rather than replaced. The gearboxes are tough as well, although the clutch on the F1 transmission can expire after just 12,000 miles if it does a lot of town work. Other than that it's just clonking suspension bushes and ball joints you have to keep an ear out for. Even the cost of buying the car isn't outrageous (for a decade or so old Italian supercar, that is). Ignore the Scuderia models, which are now well north of £200k, and around £85,000 should buy you a corker.

So there you have it, three mid-engined exotics that are as sensational to drive as they are (relatively) sensible to own. Which would I have? Well, the Audi and McLaren are both gobsmackingly brilliant, but it's the bewitching Ferrari that has me under its spell. ☒



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# Fast Fleet

New arrivals

## Audi RS4 Avant, Abarth 124 Spider & Skoda Octavia vRS

A German estate, an Italian roadster and a Czech hatchback  
join the evo Fast Fleet. Let the fun begin...



**p128 SEAT Ibiza FR**



**p130 Mercedes-AMG C43**



**p133 Volkswagen Up GTI**

**PLUS:** Suzuki Swift Sport ■ Peugeot 106 Rallye ■ Lamborghini Murciélago  
■ BMW M5 ■ Peugeot 308 GTi by Peugeot Sport ■ Kia Stinger GT S



# Audi RS4 Avant

How do you best fill a hole left by a departing fast German estate car? With an even-faster German estate car, perhaps?



**I** KNOW, HERE I AM IN THIS ISSUE (page 130) getting all misty-eyed about the loss of our beloved C43 estate, but it must be said, an even faster wagon can dry those eyes surprisingly quickly. I have a feeling the RS4 Avant will cause more controversy than the C43, though, partly because expectations are higher.

Audi UK offered initial customers of the new RS4 the 'Carbon Edition', and that's what we have here. This adds various bits of carbonfibre trim (front splitter, sill inserts, door mirror housings, etc) and, intriguingly, a set of otherwise unobtainable milled alloy wheels. More on which later.

I'd never normally go crazy with the options list, because adding weight and complexity

rarely does anything for the driving experience. However, the RS4 is a car we reckon needs its optional mechanical enhancements if it's to feel the real deal. Having driven a highly spec'd car in Germany (**evo** 244) I'd come away impressed, even if it was a slow-burner in appeal. But when the first right-hand-drive cars arrived for the UK launch a few weeks later, a standard spec version we sampled left quite a few of us seriously underwhelmed. So when it came to ordering our Fast Fleet example, it was clear boxes needed ticking to ensure it would be an RS4 at its best.

What I hadn't really comprehended was just how expensive this largesse spending was going to turn out. I figured the milled-from-solid wheels, with their 8kg saving (per set,

over the forged 20-inch wheel options), would be good for unsprung mass, so we also went for ceramic brakes to maximise this aspect. That's £6000 on top of the £71,625 for the Carbon Edition car, compared with £62,215 for the standard vehicle. The 2.9-litre biturbo V6 sounds very plain without the sports exhaust, so there's another £1200 gone. Dynamic Steering (a rare occasion where the quicker ratio makes the car feel much more lively) is £950. DRC adaptive dampers? Two grand. But without them the RS4 never settles on the road – a terrible flaw in such an all-rounder. The head-up display is £900 and raising the speed limiter to 174mph (I admit, just because we could) a ludicrous £1450. Even the sunroof is £1250. All of which, and more, means this RS4 cost just shy of £90k. Ouch.

And those wheels? The editor described them in terms best left unprinted, while others were much more complimentary. Me? I like them – most of the time, at least. They appear diamond-cut in most pictures, but they're just plain old silver, thankfully, which I always prefer.

First impressions of our RS4 are very positive right now. At this price, they need to be.

**Adam Towler** (@AdamTowler)



**Date acquired** August 2018 **Total mileage** 3100 **Mileage this month** 3020 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 25.5





## Skoda Octavia vRS

An updated Octavia arrives – and almost immediately acquires an unexpected repair bill

**A** NOTHER DAY AND ANOTHER Octavia vRS joins our Fast Fleet. Skoda's go-faster family car seems to be an almost permanent fixture at **evo**, not least because the model has one of the most varied line-ups on sale. Hatchback or estate, two- or four-wheel drive, manual or automatic, petrol or diesel – there's a vRS for virtually every taste and budget.

In fact it's been over a year since we last had a vRS amongst the ranks, and during that time the Octavia has been refreshed. The car you see here is the new entry point to vRS ownership: a 227bhp petrol hatchback, priced at £25,690 basic. Options-wise we have a DSG gearbox (£1250, and the most common choice), an electric sunroof (because photographers demand it; £860), keyless entry (£405) and a space-saver spare wheel (£110 well spent, as I'll explain shortly), while a Black design package (£685) sets off the no-cost Corrida Red paint and subtly redesigned headlamps, as do the £655 Xtreme 19-inch alloys. And because I plan to haul around a family's worth of pushbikes now and again there's also a removable tow bar (£740 with prep kit) for my bike rack.

OK, that's a fair few additions when you



consider the Octavia already comes loaded with all the kit you really need, and some you don't – although I'll admit to a childish glee at being able to choose from one of ten colours for the ambient cabin lighting...

Initial impressions are that this 227bhp vRS feels little different to the more powerful 242bhp version, no doubt down to both cars sharing the same 258lb ft peak torque figure (delivered from just 1500rpm, meaning you can make rapid progress without ever needing to extend the engine beyond 3500rpm).

The vRS's temporary spare was forced into action early on in our custodianship, after a pothole ambushed snapper Aston Parrott just outside Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground. The

nearside front tyre punctured instantly, but the full after-effects took a little while longer to unravel. A trip to Skoda's Milton Keynes HQ revealed the car needed a new Pirelli P Zero and a replacement alloy. Yet all was still not well with the Skoda, which was emitting a persistent *wah-wah* drone above 60mph.

Back at Skoda it was discovered that the nearside rear wheel had also taken a hit, buckling the inside of the rim and taking a chunk out of the tyre's sidewall. So another new wheel and tyre were bolted on, but no sooner were we back behind the wheel than the resonance returned, meaning another trip back to Skoda where a damaged front wheel bearing was diagnosed as the source. It took two weeks to get the Octavia fully fit (there was a delay getting parts), with the total repair bill over £1200. A sternly worded letter to the council is on its way.

**James Disdale**

**Date acquired** July 2018 **Total mileage** 2537 **Mileage this month** 1958 **Costs this month** £1248 two wheels and tyres, wheel bearing **mpg this month** 29.1





# Abarth 124 Spider

It's Italian, it's red, and its focus is firmly on having fun, but will our new long-term soft-top match its on-paper promise?

**'D**O YOU FANCY SOMETHING WITH two seats?' Words always likely to pique my interest. Having owned three MX-5s down the years, road test editor James Disdale's offer of an Abarth 124 Spider as my new long-termer was an opportunity I wasn't about to ignore. How could I say no to the chance to spend serious time with Abarth's version of Fiat's interpretation of Mazda's take on a small, lightweight and affordable drop-top? I'm genuinely intrigued to find out for myself how this car measures up to its Japanese counterpart.

Two things stand out straight away. First and foremost are the looks. For a car that shares so much of its underpinnings with the aforementioned MX-5 – it's a 'calzone with a chicken teriyaki filling' according to web content editor Jordan Katsianis – it could hardly be more different. While the Japanese car is minimalist in everything it does – the current fourth-generation model especially so – the 124 Spider looks like it's been helping itself to that calzone... and gone back for seconds. It's both longer (by 140mm) and

wider (by 6mm) than the MX-5, and it shows, looking a bit, well, 'bloated'. In trying to reflect past glories with nods to the original Fiat 124 Sport Spider in its styling it's all ended up looking somewhat contrived. Maybe it will be a grower, but it certainly makes the Abarth sufficiently different from the MX-5 that you'll never confuse the two.

The other major difference is under the bonnet. The Abarth gets a four-cylinder, 1.4-litre turbocharged MultiAir engine that pumps out a respectable 168bhp and 184lb ft of torque. That's 13bhp less but 33lb ft more than the just-updated 2-litre naturally aspirated unit you'll find in the Mazda (see page 32) and good enough to whisk the Italian from 0 to 62mph in a claimed 6.8sec – 0.3sec slower than the MX-5. Another definite distinction between the two models, then.

So, what goodies does our Abarth come with? Often our Fast Fleet cars are laden with all manner of extras, but the Abarth doesn't offer much in the way of customisation, the options of red or white paint (black, blue or grey are standard), a Visibility Pack (automatic

**Top:** 17-inch Corsa wheels are standard and look the biz. **Above:** cabin is near-identical to that of Mazda's MX-5, minor trim differences aside

LED headlights, automatic wipers, rear parking sensors) and a nine-speaker Bose stereo system pretty much being your lot.

In the case of RV18 WJK it's just the £400 Costa Brava 1972 Red paint which was ticked on the options list. So-specified, Abarth would relieve you of £30,025 for this example, some £4230 more than for the range-topping MX-5 2.0 GT Sport Nav+. At least the 17-inch dark grey Corsa wheels *are* standard and look spot-on, especially with the red Brembo calipers sitting behind them, and the four tailpipes of that dual-mode Monza exhaust system show the Abarth means business.

It's early days with the 124, but the initial driving impressions are promising, and I'm particularly looking forward to exploring the car's Sport mode to see what it offers, if anything, over the standard set-up, as well as getting that hood down and making the most of what's left of this glorious summer.

**Jonathan Baker**

**Date acquired** July 2018 **Total mileage** 5015 **Mileage this month** 876 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 33.3



# Suzuki Swift Sport

It's proving to be great in a straight line, but rather less so when going round corners

**I**T HAS BEEN SUGGESTED BY MY colleagues that my disappointment with the Suzuki is partly because my last long-termer, a Peugeot 208 GTi by Peugeot Sport, was such a super-focused, finely-developed corker of a hot hatch. It was a car aimed at a relatively small market of dedicated driving enthusiasts and so, I am told, I shouldn't expect the same sort of brilliance from the Swift – a more affordable model that aims to appeal to a broader audience.

There is probably some truth to that, and I have tried to forget about the 208 and focus on what the Swift is really like. But, you know what? I'm still not convinced.

What I *have* come to enjoy is its engine. Rather than feeling like a 1.4-litre turbocharged unit, it has the character of a naturally aspirated 1.8, or maybe even a 2-litre. Its delivery is linear and meaty and it makes an encouraging, honest growl. The soft limiter at 6000rpm – a fraction before the indicated red line – is a shame, but it far from ruins it.

The gearshift is satisfying, too. It's no Honda Civic Type R shift, but it's accurate and tight

enough and there's a *clickety-clack* as you change gear, as if there is a Ferrari-style gate, albeit a plastic one, beneath the leather gaiter.

Things go rapidly downhill when you deviate from a straight line, though. As I mentioned last month, it has some very odd steering. The self-centring effect is so significant it feels like you're fighting the car through the first few degrees of movement. Carving through some sweeping bends is therefore not a pleasurable experience. And if you're unfortunate enough to hit a bump mid-corner you feel a jolt through the steering that's so abrupt and violent it's almost as if the gears in the rack jump a tooth. It's a horrible sensation and makes the car seem so fragile you don't want to drive it at anything over a steady pace.

Find a smooth road with a series of tight bends that require bigger steering inputs and the steering is much more natural. But sharp corners highlight another issue: traction. The soft suspension allows such excessive roll and significant pitch that on the exit of a 90-degree bend, if you've carried momentum through it, a good proportion of the Swift's

weight teeters over the outside rear wheel. The corresponding inside front wheel therefore has very little forcing it into the tarmac and it spins as soon as you touch the throttle. It begs the question: what's the point of a powerful, affable engine if you can't use it properly?

Such egregious weight transfer does mean you can magic-up some quite impressive turn-in grip by loading up the front wheels under braking, but the resulting force from the speed you've carried to the apex makes for unnerving body roll.

The Swift Sport's not all bad, it's just that its better attributes are only ever accompanied by disappointing elements, so you rarely get the opportunity to enjoy what it is good at. It's far from a great replacement for the 208 GTi, but it's also not a great supermini by any measure.

**Will Beaumont** (@WillBeaumont)

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**Date acquired** July 2018 **Total mileage** 5910 **Mileage this month** 2800 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 41.1







## Lamborghini Murciélago

With one Scandinavian trip cut short but another in the offing, the big Lambo is also gearing up for a close-up down under

**W** ITH THE EXCEPTIONALLY HOT weather this summer it's been interesting to see the rear-mounted 'bat wings' on the Murciélago almost permanently in the raised position – something I've seen only very rarely in the UK. On past trips to warmer climes I've clocked that they usually rise up to aid cooling only when the outside temperature reaches about 29deg C. Travelling south during summer on the continent they invariably make an appearance when passing the French city of Lyon, staying raised from there on until reaching Lyon once again on the trip back.

They certainly weren't seen in action in beautiful but bitterly cold Norway, which is where I last reported on the Murciélago from (*evo* 249). I actually called time on that

trip a day prematurely because the heater called it quits. After catching the ferry back to Frederikshavn in northern Denmark I endured a rotten journey south late at night: sea mist hanging thick in the air and no street lighting or catseyes. It wasn't fun and I was glad to cross the German border near Flensburg some 220 miles later, where I bunked up for what remained of the night. I promise I'll never complain about UK motorways again...

That stretch and the horrific roadworks around Hamburg aside, I enjoyed my Scandinavian road-trip experience immensely – so much so that by the time you read this the big Lambo and I will be back there again. This time, however, the plan is to miss out Denmark (nothing personal – the Murcie and I just have a thing for car ferries) by planting the

Lamborghini's rubber on the boat that travels from the German port of Kiel directly to Oslo in Norway, before taking up where I left off last time. I'll let you know how it goes soon.

Talking of travel, another epic trip is looming courtesy of a US film production company. During October the Murciélago will be strapped inside a Maersk shipping container before docking a couple of months later in Nelson. That's not Nelson in Lancashire, you understand, but Nelson, New Zealand. The movie company had been looking for a Murciélago SV to star in the first few minutes of the remake of an early 1980s classic – the original also having a certain V12 Lamborghini in it. I'm not actually privy to which movie it is yet, but I don't think it's that difficult to guess. Let's just say that back then the Lamborghini in question sported a huge rear wing (and a dreadful front-mounted one, too) plus a set of carburettors and had two particularly attractive female occupants.

Apparently no SV owners were willing to have their pride and joy cross the Pacific in a metal box (not surprising really given SVs





**Above:** the Lambo's active air intakes have been called into action a lot this year; bodywork will soon be given an SV-like makeover – with good reason

are now exceptionally serious money), so SG54 LAM will be transformed into an SV lookalike complete with an enormous rear wing, wider side skirts and a glass engine lid. However, rest assured it will be returned to standard afterwards, the wing possibly becoming a useful garden ornament.

Unfortunately, I'm unlikely to be behind the wheel during filming (I look awful in a jumpsuit) but I hopefully won't be far away either, since the plan is then to add another two or three thousand miles of Kiwi roads to the Murciélago's long-suffering V12. It'll soon be ready for clutch number eight at this rate...

**Simon George**

**Date acquired** September 2004  
**Total mileage** 267,838 **Mileage this month** 1331 **Costs this month** £225 oil and filter **mpg this month** 14.5

## BMW M5

Engines like the one shoehorned into the M5 need to be savoured while they are still around – even if your neighbours don't think it's all that cool

**I**T'S TO BE EXPECTED THAT THE 4.4-litre, twin-turbo V8 lurking behind the M5's kidney grille is going to generate levels of heat normally associated with my living room when someone ignites the fire and forgets to turn the central heating down. What I didn't expect was how much cooling it requires post engine shutdown, no matter what the length of journey. Nor how much noise is generated in the process.

In the early hours, after a late-night run back from **evo** HQ, the M5 can get a bit of a pant on and doesn't hold back on the decibels (around 88), and it can be a good five to seven minutes before it's sufficiently cooled. Only Mercedes' new AMG G63 has annoyed the neighbours with more of the same and for longer.

Lift the M5's aluminium bonnet and it's clear why those eight cylinders can get a little hot under the collar. Most modern engines look larger than a Spitfire's Merlin when dressed with the de facto moulded plastic cover, but remove the M-branded hat from the S63 motor and there's barely a millimetre to spare. As a piece of packaging it's quiet remarkable, although I can't imagine the independent specialists who will be working on it in a decade's time thinking the same.

Despite its antics after every run the F90's V8, like those found in AMG's hot-rods, is a mighty piece of engineering to control. It doesn't have the theatrics of the Affalterbach power units in terms of vocal support every time the crank rotates, but its performance is on a par and it's every bit as exciting when you let it off the leash. Yet despite being based on the motor fitted to its F10 predecessor, the considerable changes BMW M has made have turned a potent yet anodyne engine into a characterful and deeply layered V8. And while its downsized and electrified replacement will blow our minds in terms of technology, I'm worried it won't tug at our heartstrings like this one does. Truth be told, I already know it won't.

Which means we should enjoy cars such as the M5 while we can. One day we'll need to dig deep on these memories of driving a car with supercar performance, sports car agility and family practicality as we're transported everywhere in an electric pod.  
**Stuart Gallagher** (@stuartg917)

**Date acquired** March 2018 **Total mileage** 12,418 **Mileage this month** 3246 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 23.9







End of term

## SEAT Ibiza FR

Our time with the nippy hatch is up, but its smart looks and rounded abilities will stay in the memory

**W**OW. WAS THAT REALLY SIX months? It doesn't seem two minutes since I was handed the key to our SEAT Ibiza FR and the prospect of seeing how it compared with the only other warm hatch I've had in the family – my wife's Mk1 Suzuki Swift Sport. An older car, maybe, but would this new arrival be the same hoot to drive (and hopefully with a more compliant ride quality and less tiresome engine note)?

On the surface, summing up a car such as the Ibiza FR should be easy. After all, it's a mildly breathed-on hatch with a few shiny bits and bobs, right? Except a warm hatch often occupies that awkward middle ground in a range – a no man's land between the plain vanilla ice cream everyday models and the full-fat Knickerbocker Glory range-topper that you'd really like – and this can leave a car with something of an identity crisis.

So it was promising when we got off to a good start. The styling looked sharp, helped by the Desire Red paint, 17-inch alloys, twin chrome tailpipes and FR badging, while the positive impression continued inside with a spot-on driving position thanks to the firm but supportive Alcantara-clad seat that adjusted

just low enough plus the ample reach and rake adjustment for the steering wheel. It all felt well screwed together, too, with the various buttons being nicely damped and falling easily to hand, while the whole car exuded that typical VW Group feeling of solidity and restrained ergonomic practicality.

It was a bit dark inside, mind, its mixture of matt and high-gloss black surfaces crying out for a dash of brighter Spanish flair – it was an FR after all, only one step down from a full-blown Cupra. The antiquated info display between the dials (lifted straight from a mid-noughties Audi by the look of it) was also at odds with the excellent to look at but fiddly to use on-trend infotainment screen.

Problems were few and far between, with a squeaky rubber clutch pedal cover being the most annoying offender. Thankfully this diminished to only an occasional irritation. The steering wheel wasn't the nicest to hold on longer journeys, either. More worrying was being notified by SEAT of a design fault with the rear middle seat belt buckle holder, which could press down on the button to its left, releasing the other seat belt. A remedy was supposedly in the offing when the car left us.

**'It could be good fun up to a point, the 148bhp 1.5 offering just enough forced-induction punch'**

How was the FR on the road? It certainly got the chance to stretch its legs whilst on the **evo** Fast Fleet, tackling regular 300-mile weekend round trips from Bedfordshire to Yorkshire and back, and here it proved a great companion – comfortable, refined, and spacious enough, particularly the boot, which swallowed a surprising amount of stuff.

Away from the A1 and it could be good fun, too, up to a point, the 148bhp 1.5-litre turbocharged four managing to feel almost naturally aspirated at times as you worked the engine, but also offering just enough forced-induction punch when needed. There was, however, little discernible difference between any of the driver modes (do we really need





**Above:** FR's performance was enthusiastic enough when called upon. **Top:** driving position was good and the cabin pleasingly refined

them on a warm hatch?), Sport included.

And whilst ultimately it wasn't as much fun to drive – despite a 25bhp power advantage – as the more focused and 154kg lighter Swift Sport, I was thankful for the more forgiving ride, and motorway journeys that were less of a chore than in the low-g geared Suzuki.

Did the FR thrill from bend to bend, and indeed through them? Not really. But it was nippy, fairly quiet and well built. Ultimately it was at its best when grabbed by its scruff and thrown down a road.

**evo's** first Fast Fleet Ibiza may ultimately have been a bit Neapolitan, then, offering a bit of something for everyone, but it still doesn't stop you wanting that Knickerbocker Glory...

**Jonathan Baker**

**Date acquired** January 2018  
**Duration of test** 6 months **Total test mileage** 6474 **Overall mpg** 48.0 **Costs** £0 **Purchase price** £19,535 **Value today** £16,000

# Peugeot 106 Rallye

A hop on the scales reveals the little French hot hatch to be a real lightweight star that even a Mk1 MX-5 isn't able to compete with

**W**ITH OUR SCALES OUT OF THE store cupboard and set up to weigh the Mégane RS, Civic Type R and Golf R for the Supertest in **evo** 253, I took the opportunity to weigh my Rallye too.

Back in issue 240 I weighed my Mazda Eunos (MX-5), which came in at 959kg with three-quarters of a tank but no spare wheel, no radio and no passenger seat; not bad against an official figure of 971kg. But I was really intrigued by the Rallye, a car that Peugeot quoted as being only 865kg back in 1998.

And as the liquid crystals stopped flickering, I had the answer: 889kg, with a full tank of unleaded. That's a remarkable 70kg lighter than the Mazda, despite the Peugeot having a proper roof, all that extra glazing and a rear bench seat. Better still, the corner weighting is pretty even – the front right is carrying only 20kg more than the front left, and at the rear axle there's just a single kilogram difference between the wheels.

The numbers also give the 106 a weight distribution of around 64:36, which is more or less spot-on with Peugeot's 65:35 claim and goes some way to explaining why these older French hatches have a somewhat flighty

reputation when teasing that distribution with the throttle.

When I sent my brother the Pug's numbers I received a text back stating that when he measured his old 205 GTi 1.9, it came up at 884kg with two-thirds of a tank. A moral victory for the Rallye then, but an undisputed victory for tinny old French hot hatchbacks everywhere.

It's fair to say that the miles aren't piling up on the Rallye quite as quickly as they are on other Fast Fleeters – particularly this month – but I'm still loving every minute with it. It's just so gloriously interactive, and while the handling dominates the experience, the drivetrain is a real surprise, too.

Once warm, the gearshift is a delight, and the engine feels very strong indeed – enough that I suspect it'd leave the Eunos for dead in virtually any gear and from any revs, despite losing 12bhp to it on paper. It's a real smoothie for an eight-valve unit, too. Good purchase, this one.

**Antony Ingram** (@evoAntony)

**Date acquired** August 2017 **Total mileage** 112,080 **Mileage this month** 22 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 38.1





End of term

## Mercedes-AMG C43 Estate

Its fiddly driving modes may have frustrated, but in most other respects our departing C43 proved the perfect everyday performance companion



**G** OODBYES. FEW ENJOY THEM, AND I know I certainly haven't gained any satisfaction from handing back the key to our C43 wagon, a true staple of the **evo** Fast Fleet over the past six months.

Naturally, I've been mulling over the Merc's strengths since it left us recently, and I think the key was how it combined a supremely practical, undemanding nature with genuine speed but also, crucially, a sprinkle of naughtiness in its personality. An Audi S4 Avant is a very good car, able to level-peg the C43 in many areas and possibly exceed it in a few, but it simply doesn't have the *character* that elevates the C43 in the desirability stakes. That big, brash personality is the DNA that runs through all the cars that come from Affalterbach, and even though the 43 models

are something of a halfway house between the everyday and the full AMG cars, our C43 was definitely made from the right stuff.

Back to the beginning, though. KW67 NPN arrived in slightly strange circumstances, following on from a doppelgänger we had on temporary loan until our long-termer arrived. This earlier car did without the sports exhaust, which was useful because when the definite article did turn up I was able to say with some authority that spending the extra £1000 on the loud pipes was money well spent. As we said at the time, it wasn't so much the volume, for the 'loud' setting in truth was fairly anti-social. Instead it was the tone: the standard system gave the V6 a bland hum; the sports exhaust provided a much more authentic sound.

I decided to stick with the standard 18-inch

rims, and this, along with the adaptive damping, blessed our C43 with a supple, relaxed ride that worked well on long journeys and also when combating gnarly B-roads at speed. Just occasionally it felt like the car was rolling a little onto the tyres' shoulders, and while firming up the damping seemed to tense up the ride, it still didn't give quite the roll control I was after. As a rule, I'd drive 'normally' in Comfort and use Sport for my individual 'fast road' set-up, leaving Sport+ alone.

That brings me to perhaps the most frustrating aspect of the C43 – the fact it didn't have the full AMG driving mode system of the C63. Yes, there were Eco, Comfort, Sport and Sport+ modes, along with an Individual mode, but the driver wasn't allowed to combine *everything* under one easily accessible





**Above:** four-wheel drive and a 362bhp biturbo V6 made for mighty cross-country pace. **Top right:** Individual mode options didn't go far enough

setting. How I longed for a BMW M-style button to quickly press when the road turned interesting. Instead it was three presses to get to Individual and a further push of the gearbox button to get manual control. Then I'd knock the ESP into its Sport setting. (I never really felt the need to switch the ESP off completely – the C43 wasn't that sort of car – but in its default mode it was too keen to kill the power, preventing the four-wheel-drive system from adjusting the torque split and helping the car to accelerate as potently as possible.) Finally, there was a press of the exhaust button if I really fancied all the noise.

By this point the road in question may have ended, or traffic intervened. Annoying.

As is the case with many a V6, the biturbo unit wasn't the smoothest, or the most easy on the ear, its gravelly note best described as workmanlike. But it was very effective, that 362bhp making light work of every situation and majoring on mid-range thrust. The auto 'box was excellent in normal driving, but a little less impressive when you were pushing on: the main thing was to avoid letting the engine run close to its rev limiter, for then there'd be a yawning wait until the next cog registered, and some ripe language in the cockpit. Also, nine gears are hard to keep track of when you're changing gear yourself, and the actual paddles could have been larger and more tactile.

This is beginning to sound like a long list of

faults, but in truth only the mode issue really irritated. The C43 would do 26mpg driven hard but over 30 on a cruise, easily, and after a quick slurp of oil during the running-in phase it never touched the stuff. The auto main-beam lights were awesome, the seats very comfortable, and most of all the whole package was so balanced, practical, useable. As an everyday performance car it was hard to fault, and I'd recommend it to anyone. I miss it greatly.

**Adam Towler** (@AdamTowler)

**Date acquired** January 2018 **Duration of test** 6 months **Total test mileage** 10,986 **Overall mpg** 26.7 **Costs** £18 oil **Purchase price** £51,875 **Value today** £41,000



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## Volkswagen Up GTI

Our hot Up doesn't just excel as a simple and practical daily driver, it's proving it can be great fun on a B-road too

**T**HE UP GTI IS A CAR THAT PROVOKES conversation. From race paddocks to car parks to filling station forecourts, the boxy little VW always elicits a positive comment or considered question. All of which suggests it has quickly embedded itself in the consciousness of people like us.

And no wonder, for as well as enjoying the halo effect of being the Golf GTI's smallest sibling, it genuinely qualifies as one of 2018's great new car bargains. Coupled to the characterful three-cylinder turbo motor, slick manual transmission and good old-fashioned handbrake (no infuriating e-brake switches here!) it's an antidote to the modern obsession with complexity and excessive power outputs.

So it's a cool, classy and credible car. But is it any good when you throw it down a great A- or B-road? Fundamentally yes, it's a cracker. You're always aware of how small and light it is, both in the way it summons surprising speed from such modest power and torque and also in the way it can be tipped into corners. It's grippy and well balanced, and though the

steering is light there's enough feel to know that the front end has bitten.

If you hit awkwardly spaced bumps or compressions at speed there's a sense the car is a little under-damped, for it nods its head a little too freely. Considering the chunky 17-inch wheels and 195/40 tyres (Goodyear Efficient Grip) it doesn't ride too badly at all, but properly bumpy roads expose an ultimate lack of wheel control.

One frustration is the inability to switch off the traction/stability control. Given the GTI has plenty of lateral grip and is well balanced, it would be nice to have the option of chucking it into a roundabout. Traction isn't as strong as you might expect, so you feel the XDS differential (a brake-controlled pseudo limited-slip diff) pinching at the outside front wheel to nip wheelspin in the bud. It's actually pretty effective, but thanks to those non-switchable electronics you never feel this GTI is allowed to fully let its hair down.

The brakes are powerful, with nicely judged response and pedal feel, and the gearshift is

**Above:** the Up's energetic delivery can be exploited on most roads, thanks to its light weight, gutsy engine and grippy and well-balanced nature

light and fast, though it could perhaps do with a slightly more connected feel. And the engine? It's a gruff, thrummy little thing. Gutsy too, with a strong low- and mid-range surge. There's not really any top end to speak of – its work is done and dusted by 6000rpm – but it's an engaging partner with an easy-going delivery.

So the Up GTI isn't a latter-day Peugeot 106 Rallye. Or indeed a Mk1 Golf GTI. It's too grippy and tied-down for the kind of sweaty-palmed thrills we had back in the '80s and '90s. Nevertheless, its combination of maturity and an energetic delivery means it'll always bring a smile to your face, and it doesn't rely on a great piece of road to be genuinely entertaining.

In truth, this is the secret of the Up GTI's success. You just jump in knowing you're always going to enjoy the simple pleasure of driving a perky little car. Can't ask for more than that from a daily driver.

**Richard Meaden** (@DickieMeaden)

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**Date acquired** May 2018 **Total mileage** 5198 **Mileage this month** 930 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 45.1





## Peugeot 308 GTi by PS

Taxi! When called upon the Peugeot excels at family duties

**M**Y TIME IN THE 308 HAS BEEN A BIT limited of late. First Antony Ingram nicked it for a comparison test with his Hyundai i30 N, then Stuart Gallagher took the key for a few weeks, leaving me to sample the likes of a Volvo V90 and our new Audi RS4 Avant long-termer.

Now I'm not going to lie, it's been a blast to drive around with some luxury at my disposal. Driving modes, fruity exhausts, automatic boot opening, fancy entertainment systems, plush leather seats and vast sunroofs all have their place. But I missed the Peugeot. I missed it a lot. It may not have these added extras, but it makes up for it with its superb suspension, lightning-quick stopping ability and firecracker of an engine. More importantly, it makes me smile in ways that the other cars just couldn't.

However, as a swim parent I spend 80 per cent of my free time driving my kids and their friends to training sessions and galas, so I was unsure how the Pug would cope with the upcoming season. (Practicality has to come first with family, doesn't it?) Thankfully, the TARDIS-like boot takes a ridiculous amount of luggage/swimming nonsense and the rear seats provide decent comfort for passengers. Plus, it always impresses my son's friends when I engage Sport mode, which plays a silly engine noise through the speakers, turns the instruments red and makes me feel like I'm in Airwolf. So boxes ticked for practicality *and* fun. Who knew?

**Richard Browne** (@washlander)

**Date acquired** June 2018 **Total mileage** 8149 **Mileage this month** 1293 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 37.1

## Kia Stinger GT S

A mystery rear-end clonk has called the otherwise well-built Kia's impeccable reputation into question

**S**O FAR, THE STINGER HAS BEEN fault-free, which is just what you'd hope for from a car that wants to be considered alongside an Audi A7, Jaguar XF or BMW 5-series.

There's been a remarkable level of interest in the Stinger since day one, which suggests Kia's designers have hit the target. And when I tell interested people that there's a 356bhp twin-turbo V6 under the bonnet, give them the highlights of the standard equipment list (cooled seats, head-up display), mention how well it drives and, finally, reveal how much it costs, the admiration only ramps up. Good job, Kia.

I've also been able to tell people that it's well built, so it's a little disappointing that there's now a rattle from the back somewhere. Such noises can be notoriously difficult to pin down because from the driver's seat your perception of where a noise is coming from is often wrong. The clonk happened over bumps and sounded slightly metallic, like a light suspension clonk, but thinking on,

I suspected it might be something to do with the recently fitted tow bar. Maybe the source was the structural metalwork or perhaps the detachable ball and associated parts nestled in the expanded polystyrene moulding beneath the boot carpet.

So I pressed my eldest son into service as an NVH engineer's assistant, and we went and found some bumpy roads. There was no trouble reproducing the sound but I knew it wasn't the additional items under the floor because they were at home. It sounds like it's right at the back of the car, maybe the tailgate or below (the tow bar). I'd like to think it's the latter so that I can keep telling folk that the Stinger is great to drive and built as well as its rivals, too.

**John Barker** (@evoJB)

**Date acquired** April 2018 **Total mileage** 7620 **Mileage this month** 1173 **Costs this month** £0 **mpg this month** 26.2







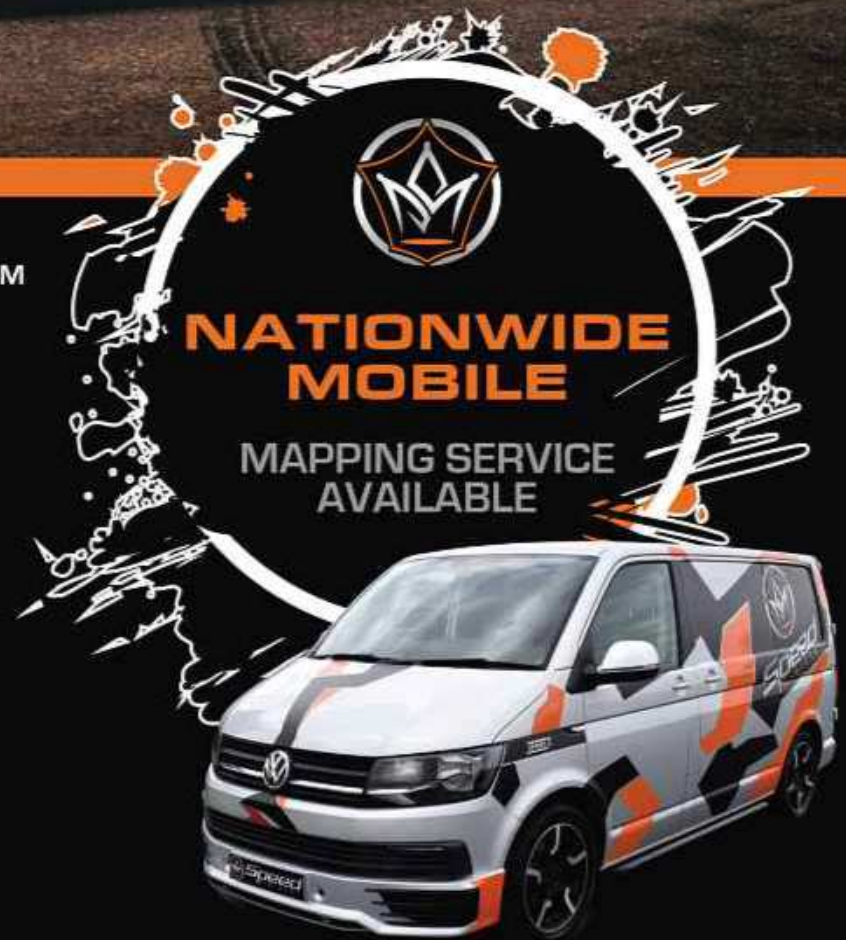
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# Buying Journey

Tim Rosen's luck with turbos isn't the best. Hence his latest ride is a naturally aspirated 6.2-litre V8...



**Austin Metro City X** 'This was my first car and I loved it as much as I hated it. I owned it for three years and used to race from London to university in Sussex in it.' **BMW 320 Auto (E21) (1)** 'I inherited this from my grandfather, and apart from a glassfibre repair in the boot floor it was immaculate and looked incredible on multi-spoke Alpina wheels. Shame about the awful auto 'box, though.' **Renault 5 GT Turbo (2)** 'With some savings and the help of a student loan I was able to buy a GT Turbo. I absolutely loved it until plumes of white smoke started billowing from the exhaust after the turbo blew. I couldn't afford to keep it so I had to sell it immediately after it had been fixed.'

**Vauxhall Cavalier 2.0 (MkIII)** 'I only purchased this because of money issues. It was not a proud car moment.' **VW Scirocco Scala** 'The Vauxhall simply had to go and was replaced by a £1000 Scirocco.

It was a great car, but it needed a new clutch and exhaust when I bought it. The exhaust got strapped up, but fortunately the clutch only came to the end of its life after a mate had bought the car off me for £500.' **Nissan 200SX (S14A)** 'I got the 200SX after I landed my first proper job. I adored this car, but I felt it needed some ballast in the boot as it fish-tailed everywhere as soon as the turbo kicked in. Like the 5 GT, the turbo failed, but this time I could afford to get it fixed.' **Porsche 911 Carrera (3)** 'I saved up and managed to get my dream car: a white 1985 911 Carrera with a whale-tail wing. It was a beautiful car, but after owning it for three years it was time to change. In hindsight, I should have held on to it.'

**BMW M Coupe (4)** 'What an amazing engine, and what a funky-looking car. However, after taking it to just one trackday at Silverstone I had to sell it because it only had two seats and I had a baby on the way. It was another car that had tripled in value a few years after I'd sold it...' **BMW 535d Touring (5)** 'I wanted a rapid family car with room for two kids and a dog and this pretty much fitted the bill. However, I was never quite satisfied by the engine.' **Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Estate** 'This is my current car – 6.2-litres of nuttiness. One moment I'm driving the kids to school or doing the weekend shop, the next I'm giving an RS6 something to play against.'

## What's next?

'I have my eye on an Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio after the depreciation takes hold, but I'm in no rush as I am pretty happy with the AMG and my Yamaha XSR700 that I currently ride on my daily commute.'

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# Mini Cooper

Lightly updated F56 Mini still has the fun factor – if you're prepared to look for it

**I**'VE GOT A BIT OF A SOFT SPOT FOR Minis. At university my introduction to track driving was in one of the early-noughties BMW-era Cooper Challenge cars, and the first classic I ever drove was a rally-prepared 1965 Cooper S. I followed that up a couple of years later when I hired a late '80s Mayfair lightly dressed up as a 1960s Cooper, with a bright-red carpet and some low-backed Cobra buckets.

The talent of these cars wasn't dynamic perfection, but democratised fun. You could spend as much or as little as you liked on a Mini, but even at its most unadorned the compact dimensions, modest weight and kart-like steering squeezed joy from the most mundane trips. Alongside a Caterham, it's the only car that legitimately 'handles like a go-kart' – treat with suspicion any review saying likewise of flabby modern hot hatchbacks.

On the basis that the cheapest Mini should be as much fun as the most expensive, the regular, £17,345 Cooper should be all the modern Mini you need, though there's a Mini One for a shade under £16k if you really want to test the theory. The Cooper gets a 134bhp version of the 1.5-litre turbocharged triple also found in the BMW i8, and which thumps

out 170lb ft of torque at 1250rpm. You'll reach 62mph in 7.9 seconds.

For the base price you also get a slightly underwhelming-looking car, with flat white paint, a body-colour roof and undersized 15-inch five-spoke wheels, but then an original Cooper didn't shout about its abilities, so if you want to pursue honesty you can forgo the lairy paint colours and ubiquitous 17-inch rims.

You don't get a choice with the Union Jack-adorned rear lights, but the rest of the Cooper's basic ingredients are likeable, albeit increasingly twee as Mini crams ever more modern technology into its retro cabin. The central speedo of earlier BMW Minis may have been a bugger to read but on aesthetics alone it sat more comfortably than the square-peg-in-a-round-hole infotainment display.

Initially, the Cooper disappoints. So obsessed is Mini by 'Maximum Go-Kart Feel' you get ultra-quick initial steering response – but with no resistance or feedback to work against, it feels contrived. Over-polished BMW-style controls and an artificially notchy gearshift suggest a veneer of ability rather than anything deeper, and for a car badged Cooper the three-pot's thrum is far too quiet.

Drive a bit harder, though, and there really is

depth beneath the dilettante dynamism. Lean on the tyres and the rubber squeals in protest, just as it always has in this generation of Mini. More promisingly, you also get precision, natural weighting and even a suggestion of feedback through the chunky rim. The chassis is set up on the safe side but there's a hint of adjustability on the throttle, while the ride blends compliance with minimal roll.

Because you have to work for your momentum you're inclined to lean harder on the progressive brakes and work the gearshift more frequently, which turns out to be cleaner and more precise than it felt on first wobble. If you feel inclined to tweak the throttle pedal with the edge of your foot on every downchange, the floor-hinged pedal is in just the right spot. And while the three-pot still lacks aural character, there's *just* enough performance to play with.

The latest Cooper isn't perfect, but then Minis never have been. It's fun, though, and for me that makes it a proper Mini.

**Antony Ingram** (@evoAntony)

- + Driving a slow car fast
- Driving a car with Union Jack tail lights

**evo rating** ★★★★★



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# Audi A6 Avant

## Big load-lugger is best at its most basic (or wait for the RS6)

**H** AS ANYONE EVER GOT ONE OF those foot-waving boot-release sensors to work? Great in theory, allowing you to sling shopping, bags of rubbish, dogs, children and so-on into the back of a wagon or SUV hands-free, but in practice it always looks like you're trying to shoo your neighbour's cat out from under the car.

Or perhaps you're trying to remove the fake exhaust outlets Audi has styled into the rear bumper of its new A6 Avant. The firm is going through a phase of adding frivolous details to

otherwise sound designs, and sure enough, a walk around the car reveals more creases than an un-ironed shirt, with errant lines that look like someone leant on the clay model and nobody caught it before production.

It remains a handsome shape overall, though, and the more raked rear screen hasn't harmed practicality, with an identical luggage capacity to the old car. At the other end of the cabin it's standard A6 – dual touchscreens, Virtual Cockpit, creak-free build quality and a calming if slightly characterless vibe.

The UK will get two mild hybrid-assisted

diesels initially – a 2-litre '40 TDI' four-pot with 201bhp from £40,740, and a 3-litre V6 '50 TDI' with 282bhp from £49,525. The smooth six is the more desirable choice, but the four moves smartly enough and grumbles are minimised.

As we've found in the past, the basic models on adaptive dampers (rather than air) and relatively modest wheels, and with conventional (not four-wheel) steering, feel more natural to drive, smoothing off harsher surfaces and making up in consistency for what they lack in agility. As it stands, the A6 is a fine car, but it'll take an S6 or RS6 to light our fire.

**Antony Ingram** (@evoAntony)

- + Space, pace, comfort and tech
- Uninspiring to drive, fussy styling details

**evo rating** ★★★★★



# Volkswagen Amarok

## Popular pick-up mistakes itself for an SUV

**A** COMMERCIAL VEHICLE CAN OFTEN be surprisingly entertaining to drive. Not fast, not relaxing, not sophisticated, but quite invigorating thanks to real mechanical feel that hasn't been removed in the pursuit of ultimate refinement. A pick-up with some meaningful poke, then, such as this 268bhp Volkswagen Amarok (£42,233), has the potential to be really quite amusing.

That peak power figure is available for ten seconds on overboost at full throttle – after that it drops to 254bhp – but appropriately for a car that's designed to carry heavy loads and tow trailers, it's the engine's torque that's even more impressive, the 3-litre turbodiesel V6 putting out 428lb ft from 1400 to 3000rpm.

The Amarok doesn't really sound like a commercial vehicle when you start it, the motor churning away at a much lower volume and being far less rattly than you'd expect. In traditional diesel style, it's best to keep the revs

down and use the low-end grunt. However, the gearbox – a very modern eight-speed auto – seems unaware of the vast amount of torque on offer and is very eager to kick down. You can select your own gears with the lever (there are no paddles), but you really long for a robust, industrial manual to manhandle instead.

The Amarok is certainly brisk – 0-62mph takes 7.4sec – and despite its rudimentary suspension (it has a live rear axle with leaf springs) it's composed with adequate grip. The steering is slow, but not to the point where your arms get in a tangle around a set of bends. In fact, the Amarok's largely quiet and refined behaviour makes it feel more like an SUV than a pick-up. You'll be grateful of that if you have to drive it frequently over long distances, but it's just a little too grown up for any bouncy, rambunctious pick-up fun, or to offer any real mechanical interaction.

**Will Beaumont** (@WillBeaumont)



- + Refined and sensible
- £42k for a pick-up?

**evo rating** ★★★★★



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# Audi SQ7 Vorsprung Edition

Larger wheels make the SQ7 look better. Shame about the ride

**T**HE POOR AUDI SQ7. IT'S NEVER really looked right, has it? Too long and not tall enough to have those chunky proportions that can make an SUV appear tough and robust; too bulbous and big-nosed next to its attractive Avant siblings.

It turns out that what it needs to give it the correct stance and attitude is absurdly large wheels, such as the 22-inch Audi Sport items fitted to the new £89,905 SQ7 Vorsprung Edition – the top of the Q7 tree. The Vorsprung's £15k premium over a regular SQ7 also adds various bits of black trim and an upgraded interior, but other than the wheels nothing about the SQ7's mechanical make-up has changed. It's still powered by the triple-turbo 4-litre diesel V8 that produces 429bhp and a massive 664lb ft of torque, and there's still the same three-chamber air suspension and adaptive dampers as standard.



The Vorsprung demonstrates remarkable athleticism given its size and 2330kg weight, but it crashes and bangs over every bump in the tarmac. The SQ7 has always been a car that wants to beat a road into submission, and the even bigger wheels deliver far harsher jolts than the regular, 'small' 20-inch alternatives.

Presumably in a bid to make the SQ7 comfortable again, the Vorsprung gets soft leather on its sports seats, arm rests and door cards, plus heated front and rear seats and a black Alcantara roof lining. It's not enough, though. The SQ7 simply feels like it has been engineered to work on smaller wheels. It's a shame it only looks right on bigger ones.

**Will Beaumont** (@WillBeaumont)

- + Looks better than any other SQ7
- You'll pay for it with compromised ride quality

**evo rating** ★★★★★



# Mercedes-AMG GT C

Sleek coupe finally has the driving dynamics to match its looks

**A**MG'S GT HASN'T HAD THE smoothest of rides since it arrived in 2015. If looks were the only factor it would occupy every step of the podium; even three years on it remains aesthetically pleasing, melding modern and retro, and elegance and menace, where so many often fail.

A shame, then, that the GT – in regular or S trim – has fallen short on the driving front. There's not a single area that's fundamentally flawed, rather the parts don't add up to the sum AMG tried to calculate. The steering's too quick and the damper settings struggle

to deliver the serene qualities expected of a GT or the precision of a sports car – although we've never complained about the 4-litre V8's sprinting prowess and soundtrack and the seven-speed auto's thumping shifts.

It was the Ring record-breaking GT R that reopened our eyes to the GT, with its trick aero and revised chassis, and when a number of these revisions filtered down to create the £102,030 GT C, our faith went a long way to being restored.

Further time with it has only improved our feeling towards the GT C. The GT R's rear axle,

electric diff, uniball suspension mounts, four-wheel steering and wider rear track allow the C to deliver on the GT concept's promises. Its chassis feels much calmer, more settled and less wayward when you enjoy the 549bhp on offer, transforming the GT from a point-and-squirt device to a sports coupe you can enjoy grabbing by the scruff and working over. The steering is still hyper-alert when you want a calmer feeling, but the GT C would be hard to ignore alongside Audi's R8, Aston's new Vantage and Porsche's 911.

**Stuart Gallagher** (@stuartg917)

- + The AMG sports coupe we've been expecting
- Steering still lets the side down

**evo rating** ★★★★★





# MMR BMW 1M

Do power and chassis upgrades from newcomer MMR Performance make BMW's already excellent coupe even better?

Photography by Aston Parrott

**B** MW's 1-series M Coupe of 2011-2012 isn't the most obvious car to embark upon a tuning project with. Only 400 of them came to the UK and second-hand values rarely drop below the original asking price of £40,000.

This is not the sort of situation that creates an insatiable appetite for aftermarket tuning and parts. And besides, performance from the 1M's 3-litre straight-six always seemed sufficient, while its chassis and drivetrain – even though they borrowed parts from the contemporary M3 (the V8-powered E92) – imbued the 1M with a tougher, more rowdy character than most other M-cars.

Not bad for a parts-bin special, but also not perfect. Like many M models of the time, its single-piston sliding-caliper brakes were lacklustre on the road and woeful on track. And its non-M division engine – one of the first turbocharged motors to go into an M-car

– didn't have the soundtrack, the red line or the intensity to live up to the glorious naturally aspirated motors that preceded it.

Room for improvement, maybe, but any modifications need to be carried out sympathetically if they are not to ruin the 1M's naughty nature and iconic appeal. Ideally they should also be reversible, too, should a return to the car's original state be desired.

The upgrades carried out by MMR Performance for the 1M come from just such a position of respect. There's a Stage 2 software upgrade (£499), MMR's own intercooler (£549) and charge pipes (price TBC), an Arna carbonfibre intake system with a Pipercross filter (£859), and a titanium Akrapovic exhaust (£6156). Together they take the 1M from its standard 335bhp and 369lb ft of torque to 426bhp and 479lb ft.

The chassis, meanwhile, has been treated to Bilstein B8 dampers and Eibach Pro-Kit

springs (£846) – rather than a more extreme adjustable coilover set-up – as well as Eibach anti-roll bars (£550). And, most importantly, MMR has worked with Alcon to provide a six-pot front and four-pot rear brake arrangement with two-piece discs all-round (£5400), operated through braided brake lines (£109).

You can instantly tell this is a more serious 1M from the sharp bark as you start it. Then, as you rev the engine, there's a howl that's equal parts traditional straight-six and superbike. The exhaust, carbon intake and new engine map feel as though they've removed some mass from the turbo straight-six's internals and it revs with abandon as you blip the throttle for downshifts. The Akrapovic's rasp and the engine's eagerness mask the 1M motor's more humble origins and make it feel far more like a 'proper' M engine. However, it doesn't necessarily feel like you're accelerating much harder or going





significantly faster than in a regular 1M.

The chassis changes have made a greater difference. Although the new suspension has lowered the entire car, the front is now proportionally lower than the back. You don't notice the extra rake when simply sitting in the car, but turn into a bend and this 1M's nose acts like the snout of a beagle after it's caught a scent: low to the ground, following every bump or crest in the tarmac and reacting instantly to your steering inputs.

The front-end is made even more accurate by the new brakes. On the road the potential extra force and resistance to fade is barely tested, but the middle pedal is markedly firmer and its action far more linear. So rather than the instant bite followed by gradual tailing off that comes from the standard brakes, any additional pressure on the pedal generates a commensurate increase in braking force. On the road, there's no sign of fade whatsoever.

The 1M's inherent elbows-out attitude is exaggerated by the new stance, too. With the front hunkered down and stuck to the road,

## 'The nose acts like the snout of a beagle after it's caught a scent'

the back end is even more inclined to help push and pull the car around. There's very little roll, so body movements don't deaden the engine's effect and you can precisely feel the rear wheels forcing the car to rotate. The trade-off for the tight body control is a ride that isn't quite as comfortable as the standard car's: it's harsher over bumps and you do feel rough roads more intensely through the seat.

**Above:** standard 1M's edgy behaviour has been tamed. **Top right:** front calipers now six-pots. **Above right:** outputs up by 91bhp and 110lb ft

The totally locked-down front end and reined-in body has also taken away much of the standard 1M's snappy behaviour. Push the stubby BMW hard and it no longer retaliates with the same hostility, so you can now edge up to the rear tyres' limit of grip with complete confidence. And this is where the engine's extra power and torque start to make real sense, as they bring the car's most enjoyable side – when it's right on the edge of traction – within easy reach.

MMR's 1M may not feel a whole lot quicker than a regular one, but what additional performance has been extracted from its engine is perfectly supported by all the other upgrades fitted. Together they exaggerate the 1M's fun-loving nature, while at the same time making it feel even more exotic.

**Will Beaumont** (@WillBeaumont)

- + What the 1M should have been like from the factory
- Chassis upgrades impress more than engine work

**evo rating** ★★★★★



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# TUNER ESSENTIALS

New ways to enhance your car that have taken our fancy this month



**Forge Motorsport dump valve for Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio**  
**£314.30 [forgemotorsport.co.uk](http://forgemotorsport.co.uk)**

It already makes 503bhp, but if you do try to eke more power from the Giulia's turbocharged V6 the standard diaphragm-type dump valves will soon show themselves as the engine's weak point. Forge's aluminium piston, solenoid-operated valves are designed to be more durable and deal with higher boost pressures.



**AC Schnitzer downpipes for BMW M2**  
**£1641.05 [ac-schnitzer.co.uk](http://ac-schnitzer.co.uk)**

Replacing restrictive factory-spec catalytic converters with free-flowing ones is a simple way to increase an engine's performance and alter its characteristics. AC Schnitzer's new stainless steel downpipes for the BMW M2 include a 300-cell cat (half the number of cells per inch than the standard unit) and lambda sensor connections.



**B-G Racing wide-angle mirror**  
**£47.99 [bg-racing.co.uk](http://bg-racing.co.uk)**

Even if the standard rear-view mirror doesn't clash with the full roll-cage of your race or track car, why wouldn't you want to replace it with one that offers a greater field of vision and can withstand vibrations better? This mirror comes in 15- and 17-inch widths and can be mounted to bars from 1.5- to 2-inch diameter.



**TechArt performance package for Porsche 911 Carrera T**  
**£7257 [techart.de](http://techart.de)**

Many will like the idea of the more focused 911 Carrera T. TechArt's upgrade takes power from 365bhp and 332lb ft of torque to 424bhp and 391lb ft – more than a Carrera S – while a quad-exit exhaust with titanium and carbonfibre tips helps improve the engine's noise, too.



**Milltek exhaust system for Volkswagen Up GTI**  
**£489.78 [millteksport.com](http://millteksport.com)**

If the Up GTI follows in the footsteps of its GTI predecessors then it's destined to become the darling of the aftermarket world. Milltek has jumped on the wave early with its stainless steel exhaust system that not only improves power and torque, it also creates a more distinctive noise.



**Goodridge braided brake hose kit for Ford Escort RS Cosworth**  
**£103.24 [goodridge.co.uk](http://goodridge.co.uk)**

Not many Escort Cosworths have made it to 2018 without being modified. If you do have a standard car, fitting braided brake lines that don't distort under pressure is worthwhile. These brake lines can be finished in a glow-in-the-dark material, too, so they can even be seen at night.



**Brabus 600 Compact SUV**  
**£7908 (engine only) [brabus.com](http://brabus.com)**

The Mercedes-AMG GLC63 S is an absurd car, but that hasn't stopped Brabus making it even more ridiculous by creating the 600 Compact SUV. Brabus's PowerXtra B40 600 performance upgrade takes power from 503bhp to 591bhp and raises the top speed to a limited 186mph. It also features bigger wheels, carbonfibre exterior accessories and a re-trimmed interior.



**Steeda Steve McQueen Edition Bullitt Mustang**  
**From £20,000 [steeda.co.uk](http://steeda.co.uk)**

Ford tuner Steeda has collaborated with McQueen Racing to re-engineer the Bullitt Mustang's chassis and motor. The car can be had with either a 500bhp naturally aspirated engine or a 800bhp supercharged one. Steeda's Bullitt will be limited to just 300 units, each with a print signed by Steve McQueen's son, Chad.



**Öhlins coilovers for BMW 1-series and 2-series**  
**£2310 [mstyle.co.uk](http://mstyle.co.uk)**

The M135i and M140i, and the 2-series coupe equivalents, are fantastic sub-M BMWs. However, they can feel a little wallowy and uncontrolled. Öhlins now makes a set of coilovers to tighten up the small BMW's chassis, allow you to choose the ride height and tweak and adjust the damper rates to tune the car's balance.



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# The Knowledge

## RATINGS

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

⊕ = new entry this month. Cars in italics are no longer on sale. **Issue no.** is for our most recent major test of the car (D = Driven, T = Driven Too, F = feature). Call 0330 333 9491 for back issues. **Engine** is the car's combustion engine only – electric motors aren't shown. **Weight** is as quoted by the manufacturer for the car in basic spec, e.g. with a manual gearbox. In most cases this is to DIN standards (i.e. with fluids but without a driver), but where the manufacturer only quotes a 'dry' weight (i.e. without fluids) this is indicated by \*. Note that a dry weight will make the car's power-to-weight ratio (bhp/ton) appear more favourable. **0-62mph (claimed)** is the manufacturer's 0-62 figure, with a manual gearbox where offered. Our **0-60mph** and **0-100mph (tested)** figures could be with either a manual or automatic/DCT gearbox.

## SUPERMINIS / HOT HATCHES



### OUR CHOICE

**Honda Civic Type R.** Building on the promise shown by the short-lived FK2 version, the FK8 Type R is a more rounded proposition – and is all the better for it. It's outrageously fast on every kind of road, edges ahead of its rivals on track, offers oodles of interaction and is practical to boot.



### BEST OF THE REST

If you can't stomach the Civic's styling, the **Renault Mégane RS** runs it very close for cross-country pace and thrills, while the **Hyundai i30 N Performance** is an intriguing – and impressive – alternative to the usual suspects. If it's a smaller hot hatch you're after, look no further than the new **Ford Fiesta ST** (left).

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	EVO RATING
Abarth 595 Competizione	196 D	£20,890	4/1368	178/5500	184/3000	1035kg	175	6.8	-	-	140	+ Spirited engine, still looks great - Favours fun over finesse ★★★★★
Abarth 695 Biposto	205 F	£33,115	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 Veloce/QV	199 D	£30,205	4/1742	237/5750	251/2000	1320kg	182	6.0	-	-	152	+ Still looks good, and now it's got the 4C's engine - Pricey, and it has more rewarding rivals ★★★★★
Alfa Romeo 147 GTA	187 F	'03-'06	6/3179	247/6200	221/4800	1360kg	185	6.3	6.0	15.5	153	+ Mk1 Focus RS pace without the histrionics - Slightly nose-heavy ★★★★★
Audi S1	246 F	£27,140	4/1984	228/6000	273/1600	1315kg	176	5.8	-	-	155	+ Compliant and engaging chassis; quick, too - Looks dull without options ★★★★★
Audi A1 quattro	181 F	'13	4/1984	253/6000	258/2500	1420kg	181	5.7	-	-	152	+ Polished 253bhp all-wheel-drive A1 - Just 19 for the UK, with a Porsche Cayman price ★★★★★
Audi RS3 Sportback	240 D	£44,755	5/2480	394/5850	354/1700	1510kg	265	4.1	-	-	155	+ Hugely quick point-to-point - Sometimes speed isn't the be-all and end-all ★★★★★
Audi S3	188 F	'13-'16	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1395kg	216	5.2	5.4	12.5	155	+ Lots of grip and one of the best-sounding four-pot turbos - Still a little too clinical ★★★★★
Audi RS3 Sportback	221 F	'15-'16	5/2480	362/5500	343/1625	1520kg	242	4.3	3.6	-	155	+ Addictive five-cylinder noise; monster pace - Chassis not exactly playful ★★★★★
Audi S3	106 F	'06-'12	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1455kg	183	5.7	5.6	13.6	155	+ Very fast, very effective, very... er, quality - A little too clinical ★★★★★
Audi RS3 Sportback	156 F	'10-'12	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1575kg	216	4.6	-	-	155	+ Very fast, very, effective, very... er, quality, with added five-pot character - A little too clinical ★★★★★
BMW 125i M Sport	176 D	£32,310	4/1997	221/5200	229/1400	1400kg	160	6.4	-	-	155	+ Performance, price, running costs - Dull four-pot soundtrack ★★★★★
BMW M140i	-	£33,925	6/2979	335/5500	369/1520	1445kg	236	4.8	-	-	155	+ Pace; compact size suits UK roads well - Lacks the precision of the best performance cars ★★★★★
BMW M135i	212 F	'12-'15	6/2979	321/5800	332/1300	1430kg	228	5.1	5.2	-	155	+ Powertrain, noise, chassis - M235i looks nicer, and has an LSD option ★★★★★
BMW 130i M Sport	106 F	'05-'10	6/2996	261/6650	232/2750	1450kg	183	6.0	6.1	15.3	155	+ Fantastic engine - Suspension can still get a little boingy ★★★★★
Citroën DS3 1.6 THP	142 F	'10-'15	4/1598	154/6000	177/1400	1240kg	126	7.3	-	-	133	+ A proper French hot hatch - Petrolheads might find it too 'designed' ★★★★★
Citroën DS3 Racing	153 D	'11-'12	4/1598	204/6000	203/2000	1240kg	167	6.5	-	-	146	+ A faster, feistier DS3 - Not as hardcore as its 'Racing' tag suggests ★★★★★
Citroën Saxo VTS	020 F	'97-'03	4/1587	120/6600	107/5200	935kg	130	8.7	7.6	22.6	127	+ Chunky, chuckable charger - Can catch out the unwary ★★★★★
Citroën AX GT	195 F	'87-'92	4/1360	85/6400	86/4000	722kg	120	9.2	-	-	110	+ Makes terrific use of 85bhp - Feels like it's made from paper ★★★★★
DS 3 Performance	222 D	£24,030	4/1598	205/6000	221/3000	1175kg	177	6.5	-	-	143	+ All the right ingredients - Undercooked ★★★★★
Fiat Panda 100HP	132 F	'06-'11	4/1368	99/6000	97/4250	975kg	103	9.5	-	-	115	+ About as fun as small cars get - Optional ESP can't be turned off ★★★★★
Ford Fiesta ST-Line 140	251 F	£17,965	3/998	138/6000	133/1500	1144kg	123	9.0	9.2	26.4	125	+ Quality chassis makes for a born entertainer - Tall gearing and dull engine can spoil the fun ★★★★★
Ford Fiesta ST	253 F	£18,995	3/1497	197/6000	214/1600	1187kg	169	6.5	-	-	144	+ Still eager, now with added refinement - Lost a fraction of its predecessor's spirit ★★★★★
Ford Fiesta ST	207 F	'13-'17	4/1596	197/5700	214/2500	1088kg	184	6.9	7.4	18.4	137	+ Chassis, price, punchy performance - Have you heard of Mountune? ★★★★★
Ford Fiesta ST Mountune	213 F	'13-'17	4/1596	212/6000	236/2750	1088kg	198	6.4	-	-	140	+ One of the best mid-sized hatches made even better - Badge snobbery ★★★★★
Ford Fiesta ST200	253 F	'16	4/1596	212/6000	236/2500	1088kg	198	6.7	-	-	143	+ Massive fun - They only made 400 ★★★★★
Ford Fiesta Zetec S	123 D	'08-'13	4/1596	118/6000	112/4050	1045kg	115	9.9	-	-	120	+ Genuinely entertaining supermini - Renault Sport Twingo and Suzuki Swift are even more fun ★★★★★
Ford Fiesta Zetec S Mountune	132 F	'08-'13	4/1596	138/6750	125/4250	1080kg	130	7.9	-	-	120	+ A touch more go, and a fantastically loud exhaust... - ...if you're 12 years old ★★★★★
Ford Fiesta ST	075 D	'05-'08	4/1999	148/6000	140/4500	1137kg	132	7.9	-	-	129	+ Great looks, decent brakes - Disappointing chassis, gutless engine ★★★★★
Ford Focus ST TDCi Estate (Mk3)	219 D	£26,860	4/1997	182/3500	295/2000	1488kg	124	8.3	-	-	135	+ Performance not sacrificed at the altar of economy - Gets ragged when really pushed ★★★★★
Ford Focus ST (Mk3)	207 F	£25,930	4/1999	247/5500	265/2000	1362kg	184	6.5	-	-	154	+ Excellent engine - Scrappy when pushed ★★★★★
Ford Focus ST Mountune (Mk3)	187 D	£26,430	4/1999	271/5500	295/2750	1362kg	202	5.7	-	-	154+	+ Great value upgrade - Steering still not as feelsome as that of some rivals ★★★★★
Ford Focus ST (Mk2)	119 F	'05-'10	5/2522	222/6000	236/1600	1392kg	162	6.8	6.7	16.8	150	+ Value, performance, integrity - Big engine compromises handling ★★★★★
Ford Focus RS (Mk3)	246 F	£32,795	4/2261	345/6000	347/2000	1547kg	227	4.7	4.9	12.6	166	+ Torque-vectoring 4WD brings new sensations to hot hatch sector - Needs to be driven hard ★★★★★
Ford Focus RS Edition (Mk3)	246 D	£36,295	4/2261	345/6000	347/2000	1547kg	227	4.7	-	-	166	+ Front limited-slip differential brings more precise handling - Pricey and still heavy ★★★★★
Ford Focus RS (Mk2)	195 F	'09-'11	5/2522	300/6500	324/2300	1467kg	208	5.9	5.9	14.2	163	+ Huge performance, highly capable FWD chassis - Body control is occasionally clumsy ★★★★★
Ford Focus RS500 (Mk2)	181 F	'10-'11	5/2522	345/6000	339/2500	1467kg	239	5.6	5.6	12.7	165	+ More power and presence than regular Mk2 RS - Pricey ★★★★★
Ford Focus RS (Mk1)	207 F	'02-'03	4/1998	212/5500	229/3500	1278kg	169	6.7	5.9	14.9	143	+ Some are great - Some are awful (so make sure you drive plenty) ★★★★★
Ford Escort RS Cosworth	157 F	'92-'96	4/1993	224/6250	224/3500	1275kg	179	6.2	-	-	137	+ The ultimate Essex hot hatch - Unmodified ones are rare, and pricey ★★★★★
Ford Puma 1.7	095 F	'97-'02	4/1679	123/6300	116/4500	1041kg	120	9.2	8.6	27.6	122	+ Revvy engine, sparkling chassis, bargain used prices - Rusty rear arches ★★★★★
Ford Racing Puma	128 F	'00-'01	4/1679	153/7000	119/4500	1174kg	132	7.9	7.8	23.2	137	+ Exclusivity - The standard Puma does it so well ★★★★★
Honda Civic Type R (FK8)	252 F	£31,525	4/1996	316/6500	295/2500	1380kg	233	5.8	5.9	12.6	169	+ Wildly exciting, with improved refinement - Looks still challenging for some ★★★★★
Honda Civic Type R (FK2)	227 F	'15-'17	4/1996	306/6500	295/2500	1378kg	226	5.7	5.4	12.4	167	+ Great on smooth roads - Turbo engine not as special as old nat-asp units; styling a bit 'busy' ★★★★★
Honda Civic Type R (FN2)	102 F	'07-'11	4/1998	198/7800	142/5600	1267kg	158	6.6	6.8	17.5	146	+ Looks great, VTEC more accessible - Steering lacks feel, inert balance ★★★★★
Honda Civic Type R Championship White (FN2)	126 D	'09-'10	4/1998	198/7800	142/5600	1267kg	158	6.6	-	-	146	+ Limited-slip diff a welcome addition to the FN2 Type R - It should've been on the standard car ★★★★★
Honda Civic Type R Mugen (FN2)	248 F	'09-'11	4/1998	237/8300	157/6250	1233kg	195	5.9	-	-	155	+ Fantastic on road and track - Only 20 were made, and they're a tad pricey... ★★★★★
Honda Civic Type R (EP3)	075 F	'01-'05	4/1998	197/7400	145/5900	1204kg	166	6.8	6.8	16.9	146	+ Potent and great value - 'Breadvan' looks divide opinion; duff steering ★★★★★
Honda Civic Type R (EK9)	210 F	'97-'00	4/1595	182/8200	118/7500	1040kg	178	6.8	-	-	135	+ Sublime early incarnation of the Type R recipe - Good ones are thin on the ground ★★★★★
Hyundai i30 N Performance	245 F	£28,010	4/1998	271/6000	279/1450	1429kg	193	6.1	6.6	14.9	155	+ A brilliant, thoroughly developed hot hatch - Imagine if it was lighter, too... ★★★★★
Kia Proceed GT	217 D	£23,510	4/1591	201/6000	195/1500	1359kg	143	7.3	-	-	150	+ Fun and appealing package - Soft-edged compared to rivals ★★★★★
Lancia Delta HF Integrale Evoluzione	194 F	'91-'92	4/1995	207/5750	220/3500	1300kg	162	6.0	-	-	134	+ One of the finest cars ever built - Demands love, LHD only ★★★★★
Mazda 3 MPS	137 F	'06-'13	4/2261	256/5500	280/3000	1385kg	188	6.1	6.3	14.5	155	+ Quick, eager and very good value - The steering's iffy ★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG A45	221 F	£41,890	4/1991	376/6000	350/2250	1480kg	258	4.2	3.9	-	155	+ Tremendously fast - But not a true great ★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz A45 AMG	194 F	'12-'15	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1480kg	244	4.6	4.3	10.6	155	+ Blisteringly quick everywhere - Not as rewarding as some sector rivals ★★★★★
Mini Cooper (F56)	194 D	£17,345	3/1499	134/4500	162/1250	1085kg	125	7.9	-	-	130	+ Punchy three-cylinder engine, good chassis - Tubby styling ★★★★★



# PAINT) (SHIELD

## Protect yourself from the Asteriod Belt

Generation 2 Self Healing Protection has Arrived.

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MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	EVO RATING	
Mini Cooper S (F56)	253 T	£20,635	4/1998	189/4700	221/1250	1195kg	161	6.8	-	-	146	+ Capable chassis - Not as lively as some other small hot hatches	★★★★☆
Mini John Cooper Works (F56)	211 F	£24,430	4/1998	228/5200	236/1250	1200kg	193	6.3	-	-	153	+ Fast, agile, nimble - Chassis lacks sparkle found in previous JCWs	★★★★☆
Mini John Cooper Works Challenge (F56)	237 F	'16-'17	4/1998	228/5200	236/1250	1215kg	191	6.3	-	-	152	+ A more hardcore JCW - The ride could be considered a little too hardcore	★★★★★
Mini Cooper (R56)	185 F	'09-'14	4/1598	120/6000	118/4250	1075kg	113	9.1	-	-	126	+ Brilliant ride and composure; could be all the Mini you need - You'll still buy the 'S'	★★★★★
Mini Cooper S (R56)	149 F	'06-'14	4/1598	181/5500	177/1600	1140kg	161	7.0	7.0	-	142	+ Like the Cooper, but with added shove - Google 'Mini death rattle'	★★★★★
Mini John Cooper Works (R56)	184 F	'08-'14	4/1598	208/6000	206/2000	1160kg	182	6.9	7.2	16.7	148	+ A seriously rapid Mini - Occasionally just a little unruly	★★★★★
Mini John Cooper Works GP (R56)	231 F	'13-'14	4/1598	215/6000	206/2000	1160kg	188	6.3	-	-	150	+ Brazenly hyperactive - Too much for some roads and some tastes	★★★★★
Mini John Cooper Works Coupe (R58)	164 F	'11-'15	4/1598	208/6000	206/2000	1175kg	180	6.3	-	-	149	+ The usual raucous Mini JCW experience - But wearing a backwards baseball cap	★★★★☆
Mini Cooper S (R53)	077 F	'02-'06	4/1598	168/6000	155/4000	1140kg	143	7.2	7.8	19.9	135	+ Strong performance, quality feel - Over-long gearing	★★★★★
Mini Cooper S Works GP (R53)	144 F	'06	4/1598	215/7100	184/4600	1090kg	200	6.5	-	-	149	+ Storming engine, agility - Tacky styling 'enhancements'	★★★★★
Nissan Juke Nismo RS	208 D	'15-'17	4/1618	215/6000	206/3600	1315kg	166	7.0	-	-	137	+ Quirky character and bold styling - Not a match for a pukka hot hatch	★★★★☆
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 2)	-	'97-'98	4/1587	103/6200	97/3500	865kg	121	8.8	-	-	121	+ Bargain no-frills thrills - Not as much fizz as original 1.3	★★★★☆
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 1)	095 F	'94-'96	4/1294	100/7200	80/5400	826kg	123	10.6	-	-	118	+ Frantic, thrashy fun - Needs caning to extract full potential	★★★★★
Peugeot 106 GTi 16v	034 F	'97-'04	4/1587	120/6600	107/5200	950kg	128	7.4	-	-	127	+ Fine handling supermini - Looks its age	★★★★★
Peugeot 208 GTi by Peugeot Sport	253 F	'15-'18	4/1598	205/6000	221/3000	1160kg	180	6.5	-	-	143	+ A brilliantly focused small hatch - Obscured dials	★★★★★
Peugeot 208 GTi	184 F	'12-'16	4/1598	197/5800	203/1700	1160kg	173	6.8	6.8	17.9	143	+ Agile chassis works well on tough roads - Could be more involving	★★★★☆
Peugeot 205 GTi 1.9	195 F	'88-'91	4/1905	130/6000	119/4750	910kg	145	7.6	-	-	124	+ Still scintillating after all these years - Brittle build quality	★★★★★
Peugeot 308 GTi by Peugeot Sport	245 F	£28,590	4/1598	266/6000	243/1900	1205kg	224	6.0	6.0	13.8	155	+ A great entertainer with a cracker of an engine - Tiny steering wheel obscures the dials	★★★★★
Peugeot 306 GTi 6	020 F	'93-'01	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1215kg	139	7.9	7.2	20.1	140	+ One of the great GTIs - They don't make them like this any more	★★★★★
Peugeot 306 Rallye	095 F	'98-'99	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1199kg	142	7.8	6.9	19.2	137	+ Essentially a GTi 6 for less dosh - Limited choice of colours	★★★★★
Renault Twingo GT	248 F	£14,255	3/898	109/5750	125/2000	1001kg	111	9.6	-	-	113	+ Nippy performance - Less fun than a rear-engined Renault Sport-fettled car should be	★★★★☆
Renault Sport Twingo 133	175 F	'08-'13	4/1598	131/6750	118/4400	1050kg	127	8.7	-	-	125	+ Renault Sport experience for pocket money - Optional Cup chassis gives bouncy ride	★★★★★
Renault Sport Clio 200 Auto	184 F	£20,300	4/1618	197/6000	177/1750	1204kg	166	6.7	6.9	17.9	143	+ Faster, more refined, easier to drive - We miss the revvy NA engine and manual 'box	★★★★☆
Renault Sport Clio 220 Trophy	229 D	£23,000	4/1618	217/6050	206/2000	1204kg	183	6.6	-	-	146	+ Willing chassis - Awful paddleshift gearbox	★★★★☆
Renault Sport Clio 200 Cup	247 F	'09-'13	4/1998	197/7100	159/5400	1204kg	166	6.9	6.6	16.7	141	+ The hot Clio at its best - They don't make 'em like this anymore	★★★★★
Renault Sport Clio 172 Cup	115 F	'07-'09	4/1998	194/7250	158/5550	1240kg	161	6.9	-	-	134	+ Quick, polished and capable - Not as much sheer fun as 182 Cup	★★★★☆
Renault Sport Clio 182	066 F	'04-'05	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1110kg	165	7.1	6.6	17.5	139	+ Took hot hatches to a new level - Flawed driving position	★★★★★
Renault Sport Clio 182 Cup	187 F	'04-'05	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	168	6.9	-	-	139	+ Full of beans, fantastic value - Sunday-market upholstery	★★★★★
Renault Sport Clio Trophy	253 F	'05-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	168	6.9	6.6	17.3	140	+ The most fun you can have on three (sometimes two) wheels - Only 500 were built	★★★★★
Renault Sport Clio 172 (Phase 2)	034 F	'01-'03	4/1998	170/6250	147/5400	1110kg	156	7.2	7.1	20.0	138	+ Poised, predictable, fast - Lacks aggressive edge	★★★★★
Renault Sport Clio 172 Cup	048 F	'02-'03	4/1998	170/6250	147/5400	1011kg	171	6.9	6.5	17.7	138	+ Bargain old-school hot hatch - Nervous in the wet, no ABS	★★★★☆
Renault Sport Clio 172 (Phase 1)	146 F	'00-'01	4/1998	170/6250	147/5400	1035kg	167	7.2	6.6	18.2	138	+ Brilliantly accomplished - Imperfect driving position	★★★★★
Renault Clio Williams	233 F	'93-'96	4/1988	148/6100	126/4500	981kg	153	7.8	7.6	20.8	134	+ One of the best hot hatches ever - Can be fragile	★★★★★
Renault 5 GT Turbo	195 F	'87-'91	4/1397	118/5750	122/3000	855kg	140	7.3	-	-	120	+ Clio Williams' grand-daddy - Few unmodified ones left	★★★★★
Renault Sport Clio V6 255	231 F	'03-'05	6/2946	251/7150	221/4650	1400kg	182	6.0	-	-	144	+ Supercar drama without the original's edgy handling - Uninspired interior	★★★★★
Renault Sport Clio V6	029 F	'99-'02	6/2946	221/3750	140/3000	1400kg	164	6.6	5.8	17.0	145	+ Pocket supercar - Mid-engined handling can be tricky	★★★★☆
Renault Mégane RS	252 F	£27,495	4/1798	276/6000	288/2400	1407kg	199	5.8	6.3	14.6	155	+ Outrageous grip and agility - Four-wheel steering takes some getting used to	★★★★★
Renault Sport Mégane 275 Cup-S/Nav 275	223 D	'16	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1394kg	198	5.8	-	-	158	+ The same engine as the Trophy-R - They don't make it anymore	★★★★★
Renault Sport Mégane 265 Cup	195 F	'12-'15	4/1998	261/5500	265/3000	1387kg	191	6.0	6.4	14.8	158	+ A hot hatch benchmark - Cupholder could be better positioned	★★★★★
Renault Sport Mégane 275 Trophy	212 F	'14-'15	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1376kg	200	5.8	-	-	159	+ Another cracking Trophy model - Stripped-out Trophy-R is even more thrilling	★★★★★
Renault Sport Mégane 275 Trophy-R	231 F	'14-'15	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1297kg	212	5.8	-	-	158	+ As absorbing as a 911 GT3 RS on the right road - Too uncompromising for some; pricey	★★★★★
Renault Sport Mégane 250 Cup	139 F	'09-'12	4/1998	247/5500	251/3000	1387kg	181	6.1	6.1	14.6	156	+ Fantastic chassis... - ...partially obscured by new-found maturity	★★★★★
Renault Sport Mégane dCi 175 Cup	119 F	'07-'09	4/1995	173/3750	265/2000	1470kg	119	8.3	8.3	23.5	137	+ A diesel with a genuinely sporty chassis - Could take more power	★★★★☆
Renault Sport Mégane 230 F1 Team R26	195 F	'07-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1345kg	171	6.5	6.2	16.0	147	+ The car the R26.R is based on - F1 Team stickers in dubious taste	★★★★★
Renault Sport Mégane R26.R	231 F	'08-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1220kg	189	6.0	5.8	15.1	147	+ One of the true hot hatch heroes - Two seats, plastic rear windows	★★★★★
SEAT Mii	-	£10,560	3/999	59/5000	70/3000	854kg	70	14.4	-	-	99	+ Like Volkswagen's Up but more expensive - Still predictably slow	★★★★☆
SEAT Ibiza Cupra	225 F	'16-'18	4/1798	189/4300	236/1450	1185kg	162	6.7	-	-	146	+ Quick, competent, refined, and manual only - Not exciting enough	★★★★☆
SEAT Ibiza Cupra	183 D	'10-'15	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1259kg	144	6.9	-	-	142	+ Punchy engine, unflappable DSG - Lacks engagement, DSG only	★★★★☆
SEAT Leon Cupra 300	241 F	£30,495	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1300kg	231	5.7	6.2	12.7	155	+ Already potent Cupra gets yet another 10bhp - The Mk7.5 Golf R	★★★★★
SEAT Leon Cupra R	244 D	'18	4/1984	306/5800	280/1800	1378kg	226	5.8	-	-	155	+ Sharper handling and better body control - High price and limited availability	★★★★★
SEAT Leon Cupra 290	227 F	'16-'17	4/1984	286/5900	258/1700	1300kg	224	5.9	6.4	13.4	155	+ Serious pace and agility for Golf GTI money, now with an extra 10bhp - The Mk7 Golf R	★★★★☆
SEAT Leon Cupra 280	220 F	'14-'15	4/1984	276/5600	258/1750	1300kg	216	5.8	-	-	155	+ Serious pace and agility for Golf GTI money - The Mk7 Golf R	★★★★★
SEAT Leon Cupra	105 F	'07-'11	4/1984	237/5700	221/2200	1375kg	175	6.4	-	-	153	+ Great engine, composure - Doesn't have the adjustability of the old Cupra R	★★★★★
SEAT Leon Cupra R	139 F	'10-'12	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1375kg	193	6.2	6.1	14.0	155	+ Bold car, blinding engine - Lacks the character of its rivals; only 24 came to the UK	★★★★☆
SEAT Leon Cupra R 225	067 F	'03-'06	4/1781	222/5900	206/2200	1376kg	164	6.9	-	-	150	+ Cross-country pace, practicality, value - Not as thrilling as some	★★★★★
Skoda Citigo	-	£8860	3/999	59/5000	70/3000	854kg	70	14.4	-	-	101	+ Like Volkswagen's Up, but 2mph faster flat out - 101mph isn't something to boast about	★★★★☆
Skoda Fabia vRS (Mk2)	146 D	'10-'14	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1218kg	148	7.3	-	-	139	+ Clever twincharged engine and DSG 'box - Do you homework on the reliability of the engine	★★★★★
Skoda Fabia vRS (Mk1)	077 F	'03-'07	4/1896	130/4000	229/1900	1315kg	100	9.6	-	-	127	+ Fun and frugal hot hatch - A little short on steering feel	★★★★☆
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk3)	187 D	'13-'17	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1345kg	164	6.8	-	-	154	+ Quick, agile, roomier than a Golf - Ride is harsh for what could be a family car	★★★★☆
Skoda Octavia vRS 230 (Mk3)	215 D	£25,690	4/1984	227/4700	258/1500	1345kg	171	6.7	-	-	155	+ Limited-slip diff makes for a sharper steer - It could handle more than the extra 10bhp	★★★★★
Skoda Octavia vRS 245 (Mk3)	250 F	£28,095	4/1984	242/5000	258/1600	1370kg	179	6.6	-	-	155	+ A credible, entertaining performer - You won't get out of bed at 4am to drive it	★★★★★
Skoda Octavia vRS TDI 4x4 (Mk3)	223 D	£29,015	4/1968	181/3500	206/1750	1475kg	125	7.6	-	-	142	+ Four-wheel drive tightens the vRS chassis - Diesel and DSG only	★★★★★
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk2)	163 F	'05-'13	4/1998	197/5100	206/1700	1395kg	143	7.3	-	-	149	+ Drives like a GTi but costs much less - Green brake calipers?	★★★★★
Subaru Impreza WRXS	125 D	'08-'10	4/2457	251/5400	288/3000	1395kg	180	5.5	-	-	130	+ An improvement over the basic WRX - Still not the WRX we wanted	★★★★☆
Subaru Impreza STI 330S	124 F	'08-'10	4/2457	325/5400	347/3400	1505kg	219	4.4	-	-	155	+ A bit quicker than the regular STI... - ...but not better	★★★★★
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk3)	251 F	£17,999	4/1373	138/5500	170/2500	975kg	144	8.1	7.6	20.1	130	+ Composed and brisk - Adjustability and character have been diluted	★★★★☆
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk2)	175 F	'12-'17	4/1586	134/6900	118/4400	1045kg	130	8.7	-	-	121	+ Still a great pocket rocket - Not quite as adjustable as the original	★★★★★
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk1)	132 F	'05-'11	4/1586	123/6800	109/4800	1030kg	121	8.9	-	-	124	+ Entertaining handling, well built - Lacking in steering feedback	★★★★★
Toyota Yaris GRMN	248 F	£26,295	4/1798	209/6800	184/5000	1135kg	187	6.3	-	-	143	+ Appealingly feisty supercharged supermini - Artificial steering; they're only making 400	★★★★★
Vauxhall Corsa VXR	211 F	'14-'18	4/1598	202/5800	206/1900	1278kg	161	6.8	-	-	143	+ Begs to be wrung out - You'll need the £2400 Performance Pack	★★★★★
Vauxhall Corsa VXR	154 F	'07-'14	4/1598	189/5850	192/1980	1166kg	165	7.2	-	-	140	+ Looks snazzy, punchy engine - Lacks feel, uncouth compared with rivals	★★★★☆
Vauxhall Corsa VXR Nürburgring/Clubsport	164 F	'11-'13/14	4/1598	202/5750	206/2250	1166kg	176	6.8	-	-	143	+ VXR gets more power and a limited-slip diff - But they come at a price	★★★★★
Vauxhall Astra/GTC VXR (Mk2)	207 F	'12-'18	4/1998	276/5500	295/2500	1475kg	190	6.0	-	-	155	+ Loony turbo pace - Lacks the Renault Sport Mégane's precision	★★★★★
Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk1)	102 F	'05-'11	4/1998	237/5600	236/2400	1393kg	173	6.4	6.7</				



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MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	EVO RATING
Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk5)	195 F	'04-'09	4/1984	197/5100	207/1800	1336kg	150	7.3	6.7	17.9	145	+ Character and ability; the GTI's return to form - Lacking firepower? ★★★★★
Volkswagen Golf R32 (Mk5)	087 F	'06-'09	6/3189	246/6300	236/2500	1466kg	170	6.5	5.8	15.2	155	+ The traction's great and you'll love the soundtrack - We'd still have a GTI ★★★★★
Volkswagen Golf R32 (Mk4)	053 F	'02-'04	6/3189	237/6250	236/2800	1477kg	163	6.6	6.4	16.3	154	+ Charismatic - Boomy engine can be tiresome ★★★★★
Volkswagen Golf GTI 16v (Mk2)	195 F	'88-'92	4/1781	139/6100	123/4600	960kg	147	7.9	-	-	129	+ Still feels everyday useable - Too many have been modified ★★★★★
Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk1, 1.8)	224 F	'82-'84	4/1781	112/5800	109/3500	860kg	132	8.2	-	-	114	+ The car that started it all - Tricky to find an unmolested one ★★★★★
Volvo V40 T5 R-Design Polestar	242 D	£36,010	4/1969	250/5500	295/2000	1507kg	169	6.2	-	-	149	+ An intriguing alternative to the norm - Rivals offer more for less ★★★★★

## SALOONS / ESTATES / SUVs



### OUR CHOICE

**Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio.** At last, an Alfa Romeo we can love not just for its badge, for the noise it makes and for being Italian, but because it's a great car. In fact, the Giulia Quadrifoglio is a saloon car that feels like a sports car – and thankfully that sports car isn't a 4C.



### BEST OF THE REST

If you prefer your fast saloons German, consider the **Mercedes-AMG C63 S** or its more focused rival, the **BMW M3**. Moving up a size, the **Mercedes-AMG E63 S 4Matic+** (left) is relentlessly rampant but has finesse too, while the **Porsche Panamera Turbo** runs the E63 close and feels good for its 7min 38sec Ring time.

Alfa Romeo Giulia 2.0 Turbo Super	234 D	£31,580	4/1995	197/5000	243/1750	1429kg	140	6.6	-	-	146	+ Keen engine, enjoyable handling - Firm low-speed ride ★★★★★
Alfa Romeo Giulia Veloce	244 F	£38,265	4/1995	276/5250	295/2250	1429kg	196	5.7	-	-	149	+ Supple and satisfying - Engine reluctant to rev ★★★★★
Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio	244 F	£61,625	6/2891	503/6500	443/2500	1620kg	315	3.9	-	-	191	+ If Ferrari built a saloon (really) - Lacks the final polish of German rivals ★★★★★
Alfa Romeo Stelvio Speciale AWD	234 D	£43,705	4/1995	276/5250	295/1750	1660kg	169	5.7	-	-	143	+ Agile feel, quick steering, attractive cabin - Engine not truly inspiring ★★★★★
Alfa Romeo Stelvio Quadrifoglio	244 D	£69,500	6/2891	503/6500	442/2500	1830kg	279	3.8	-	-	176	+ Rivals the Macan GTS - Needs optional P Zero Corsa tyres to give its very best ★★★★★
Alpina D3 Biturbo (F30)	192 D	£48,000	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1585kg	221	4.6	-	-	173	+ 173mph from a 3-litre diesel! Brilliant chassis, too - Auto only ★★★★★
Alpina B5	249 D	£89,000	8/4395	600/5750	590/3000	1940kg	314	3.5	-	-	205	+ Huge performance under a subtle exterior - Low-speed ride can be poor ★★★★★
Aston Martin Rapide	141 F	'10-'13	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1990kg	240	5.3	-	-	188	+ Better than its DB9 sibling - More of a 2+2 than a proper four-seater ★★★★★
Aston Martin Rapide S	201 D	£149,500	12/5935	552/6650	465/5500	1990kg	282	4.4	-	-	203	+ Oozes star quality; gearbox on 2015MY cars a big improvement - It's cosy in the back ★★★★★
Audi S3 Saloon	192 D	£36,120	4/1984	306/5500	280/1800	1430kg	210	5.3	-	-	155	+ On paper a match for the original S4 - In reality much less interesting ★★★★★
Audi RS3 Saloon	243 F	£45,705	5/2480	394/5850	354/1700	1515kg	264	4.1	3.6	8.8	155	+ Mini RS4 looks; stonking pace - Not the most involving driving experience ★★★★★
Audi S4 (B9)	225 D	£46,080	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1630kg	218	4.7	-	-	155	+ Strong response and delivery from turbo engine - Chassis feels softer than before ★★★★★
Audi S4 (B8)	166 D	'08-'16	6/2995	328/5500	324/2900	1650kg	202	5.0	-	-	155	+ Great supercharged powertrain, secure chassis - The RS4 ★★★★★
Audi RS4 Avant (B9)	246 F	£62,215	6/2894	444/5700	442/1900	1790kg	252	4.1	-	-	155	+ Very 'real world' fast - Some may feel it lacks character and drama ★★★★★
Audi RS4 Avant (B8)	216 F	'12-'15	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1795kg	251	4.7	4.5	10.5	174	+ Looks and sounds the part, thunderously fast - Unnatural steering, dull dynamics ★★★★★
Audi RS4 (B7)	250 F	'05-'08	8/4163	414/7800	317/5500	1650kg	255	4.7	4.5	10.5	155	+ 414bhp at 7800rpm! And there's an estate version too - Busy under braking ★★★★★
Audi RS4 (B5)	192 F	'00-'02	6/2671	375/6100	325/2500	1620kg	236	4.9	4.8	12.1	170	+ Effortless pace - Not the last word in agility; bends wheel rims ★★★★★
Audi RS2	214 F	'94-'95	5/2226	315/6500	302/3000	1595kg	201	4.8	4.8	13.1	162	+ Storming performance (thanks to Porsche) - Try finding one ★★★★★
Audi S5 Sportback	233 D	£48,880	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1660kg	214	4.7	-	-	155	+ More capable than you think; strong V6 engine - Gearbox frustrating in auto mode ★★★★★
Audi RS6 Avant (C7)	203 F	£81,470	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1935kg	290	3.9	3.6	8.2	155	+ Performance, foolproof powertrain, beefy looks - Feels a bit one-dimensional ★★★★★
Audi RS6 Avant Performance (C7)	224 D	£88,385	8/3993	597/6100	553/2500	1950kg	311	3.7	-	-	155	+ The extra power is no hassle for the chassis - But it is a stern test of your self-control ★★★★★
Audi RS6 Avant (C6)	116 F	'08-'10	10/4991	572/6250	479/1500	1985kg	293	4.5	4.3	9.7	155	+ Was the world's most powerful estate - Power isn't everything ★★★★★
Audi RS6 Avant (C5)	052 F	'02-'04	8/4172	444/5700	413/1950	1865kg	242	4.6	4.8	11.6	155	+ The ultimate estate car? - Numb steering ★★★★★
Audi S7 Sportback	171 D	£66,725	8/3993	414/5000	406/1400	1945kg	216	4.6	-	-	155	+ Looks and drives better than the S6 it's based on - Costs several thousands more ★★★★★
Audi RS7 Sportback	208 F	£87,610	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1930kg	291	3.9	-	-	155	+ Stonking performance, great looks - Numb driving experience ★★★★★
Audi S8 Plus	217 D	£100,510	8/3993	597/6100	553/2500	1990kg	305	3.8	-	-	155	+ Fantastic drivetrain, quality and refinement - Dynamic Steering feels artificial ★★★★★
Audi RS Q3	206 D	'13-'16	5/2480	335/5300	332/1600	1655kg	206	4.8	-	-	155	+ Surprisingly characterful; better than many RSs - High centre of gravity ★★★★★
Audi SQ5	237 D	£51,955	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1870kg	190	5.4	-	-	155	+ Fine chassis; deceptive pace - Lacks excitement ★★★★★
Bentley Flying Spur V8	200 D	£132,800	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2342kg	217	5.2	-	-	183	+ Effortless performance with real top-end kick - Determinedly unsporting ★★★★★
Bentley Flying Spur V8 S	230 D	£142,800	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2342kg	226	4.9	-	-	190	+ Old-school approach to comfort and luxury - Old-school tech ★★★★★
Bentley Flying Spur	185 D	£154,900	12/5998	616/6000	590/1600	2400kg	261	4.6	-	-	199	+ For those who still want their Flying Spur with a W12 - Car feels its weight; engine sounds dull ★★★★★
Bentley Bentayga V8	247 D	£136,200	8/3996	542/6000	568/1960	2313kg	238	4.5	-	-	180	+ The pick of the Bentayga range - A top-end Range Rover is still more polished ★★★★★
Bentley Bentayga	217 D	£162,700	12/5950	600/5000	664/1350	2365kg	258	4.1	-	-	187	+ Sublime quality, ridiculous pace - Inert driving experience, SUV stigma ★★★★★
Bentley Mulsanne	178 F	£229,360	8/6752	505/4200	752/1750	2610kg	197	5.3	-	-	184	+ Drives like a modern Bentley should - Shame it doesn't look like one too ★★★★★
Bentley Mulsanne Speed	250 T	£252,000	8/6752	530/4000	811/1750	2610kg	206	4.9	-	-	190	+ Extravagant; effortless performance - Passengers have more fun than you do ★★★★★
BMW 330d M Sport (F30)	180 D	£41,070	6/2993	254/4000	413/2000	1540kg	168	5.6	-	-	155	+ Great engine, fine handling, good value - Steering confuses weight with feel ★★★★★
BMW 340i M Sport Touring (F31)	228 D	£43,930	6/2998	321/5500	332/1380	1615kg	202	5.5	-	-	155	+ Feelsome rear-drive chassis - Easy to drive it beyond its comfort zone ★★★★★
BMW 328i (F30)	165 D	'11-'15	4/1997	242/5000	258/1250	1430kg	172	6.1	-	-	155	+ New-age four-pot 328i is great all-rounder - We miss the six-cylinder soundtrack ★★★★★
BMW 435i Gran Coupe	203 D	'14-'16	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1585kg	194	5.5	-	-	155	+ Superb straight-six, fine ride/handling balance - 335i saloon weighs and costs less ★★★★★
BMW M3 (F80)	211 F	£59,905	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1560kg	277	4.3	4.1	8.6	155	+ Looks, performance, practicality - Body control on rough roads; engine lacks character ★★★★★
BMW M3 Competition Package (F80)	237 F	£62,905	6/2979	444/7000	406/1850	1560kg	289	4.2	-	-	155	+ The car the F80 M3 should have been from the start - Less refined at low speeds ★★★★★
BMW M3 CS (F80)	250 F	£86,380	6/2979	454/6250	442/4000	1585kg	291	3.9	-	-	174	+ Improved chassis and mid-range urge - Costs over £20k more than an M3 Comp Pack ★★★★★
BMW M3 (E90)	123 F	'08-'11	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1605kg	262	4.9	4.9	10.7	165	+ Every bit as good as the E92 M3 coupe - No carbon roof ★★★★★
BMW M3 CRT (E90)	179 F	'11-'12	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1580kg	285	4.4	-	-	180	+ Saloon chassis + weight savings + GTS engine = best E90 M3 - Just 67 were made ★★★★★
BMW M5 (F90)	244 F	£89,705	8/4395	592/5600	553/1800	1855kg	324	3.4	-	-	155	+ Fun in two- or four-wheel drive - Insufficient steering connection and engine character ★★★★★
BMW M5 Competition (F90)	252 D	£96,205	8/4395	616/6000	553/1800	1865kg	336	3.3	-	-	155	+ Incredible performance, sharper handling - It's still a big old bus ★★★★★
BMW M5 (F10)	208 F	'11-'16	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1870kg	300	4.4	-	-	155	+ Twin-turbocharging suits M5 well - Can feel heavy at times ★★★★★
BMW M5 (E60)	129 F	'04-'10	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1755kg	289	4.7	-	-	155	+ Close to being the ultimate supersaloon - SMG gearbox feels old-tech ★★★★★
BMW M5 (E39)	110 F	'99-'03	8/4941	394/6600	369/3800	1795kg	223	5.3	4.9	11.5	155	+ Magnificent V8-engined supersaloon - We'd be nitpicking ★★★★★
BMW M5 (E34)	110 F	'92-'96	6/3795	335/6900	295/4750	1725kg	197	5.8	4.9	13.6	155	+ The Godfather of supersaloons - The family can come too ★★★★★
BMW M5 (E28)	182 F	'86-'88	6/3453	282/6500	251/4500	1431kg	200	6.1	-	-	156	+ The original storming saloon - Understated looks ★★★★★
BMW M6 Gran Coupe	190 D	'13-'18	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1875kg	299	4.2	-	-	155	+ Enormous performance, stylish looks - Looks overpriced next to rivals, M5 included ★★★★★
BMW M760Li xDrive	233 D	£138,335	12/6592	602/5500	590/1550	2180kg	281	3.7	-	-	155	+ More capable than you'd think; strong engine - Too much of a limo to be genuinely exciting ★★★★★
BMW X5 M50d	191 D	£72,705	6/2993	376/4000	546/2000	2190kg	174	5.3	-	-	155	+ Straight-line pace - Driving experience identical to standard X5, despite the M badge ★★★★★
BMW X6 M	212 D	'15-'17	8/4395	567/6000	553/2200	2265kg	254	4.2	-	-	155	+ Big improvement on its predecessor - Coupe roofline still of questionable taste ★★★★★
Cadillac CT6	226 D	£71,770	6/2997	411/5700	409/2500	1950kg	214	5.7	-	-	149	+ Caddy's S-class rival scores on comfort - But not on driver involvement ★★★★★
Honda Accord Type R	012 F	'98-'03	4/2157	209/7200	158/6700	1306kg	163	7.2	6.1	17.4	142	+ One of the finest front-drivers of all time - Convincing your friends of that ★★★★★
Infiniti Q50S Hybrid	195 D	£41,495	6/3498	359/6800	402/5000	1762kg	207	5.4	-	-	155	+ Good powertrain, promising chassis - Lacklustre steering, strong rivals ★★★★★
Jaguar XE 2.0 180PS Diesel AWD	227 D	£35,865	4/1999	178/4000	317/1750	1685kg	107	8.4	-	-	132	+ Talented chassis gets more traction - Shame the engine isn't as polished ★★★★★
Jaguar XE 2.0 240PS Diesel AWD	251 T	£39,180	4/1999	237/4000	368/1500	1718kg	140	6.5	-	-	155	+ Perfect. If you love diesels - A great chassis with a poor engine if you don't ★★★★★
Jaguar XE 300 Sport	252 D	£45,640	6/1997	296/5500	295/1500	1690kg	178	5.7	-	-	155	+ Fine chassis, deceptively quick cross-country pace - Could use a bit more drama ★★★★★
Jaguar XE S	237 D	'17-'18	6/2995	375/6500	332/3500	1655kg	230	5.0	-	-	155	+ Engaging handling, decent pace - Cabin quality and space lags behind rivals' ★★★★★
Jaguar XE SV Project 8	250 F	£149,995	8/5000	592/6500	516/3500	1745kg	345	3.7	-	-	200	+ A GT3 for the family - There will only be 300 of them, and all will be left-hand drive ★★★★★
Jaguar XF S Diesel	219 D	£52,010	6/2993	296/4000	516/2000	1750kg	172	6.2	-	-	155	+ Great chassis, good looks, better engine than V6 petrol - It's still a diesel ★★★★★
Jaguar XF S	214 D	'15-'18	6/2995	375/6500	332/4500	1710kg	223	5.3	-	-	155	+ Outstanding ride and handling balance - Engine lacks appeal ★★★★★
Jaguar XFR	181 D	'09-'15	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1800kg	284	4.7	4.8	10.2	155	+ Brilliant blend of pace and refinement - Doesn't sound as special as it is ★★★★★
Jaguar XFR-S	208 F	'13-'15	8/5000	542/6500	501/2500	1800kg	306	4.6	-	-	186	+ XF turned up to 12 - Tyres aren't cheap ★★★★★
Jaguar XJR	191 D	'14-'17	8/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1875kg	2					



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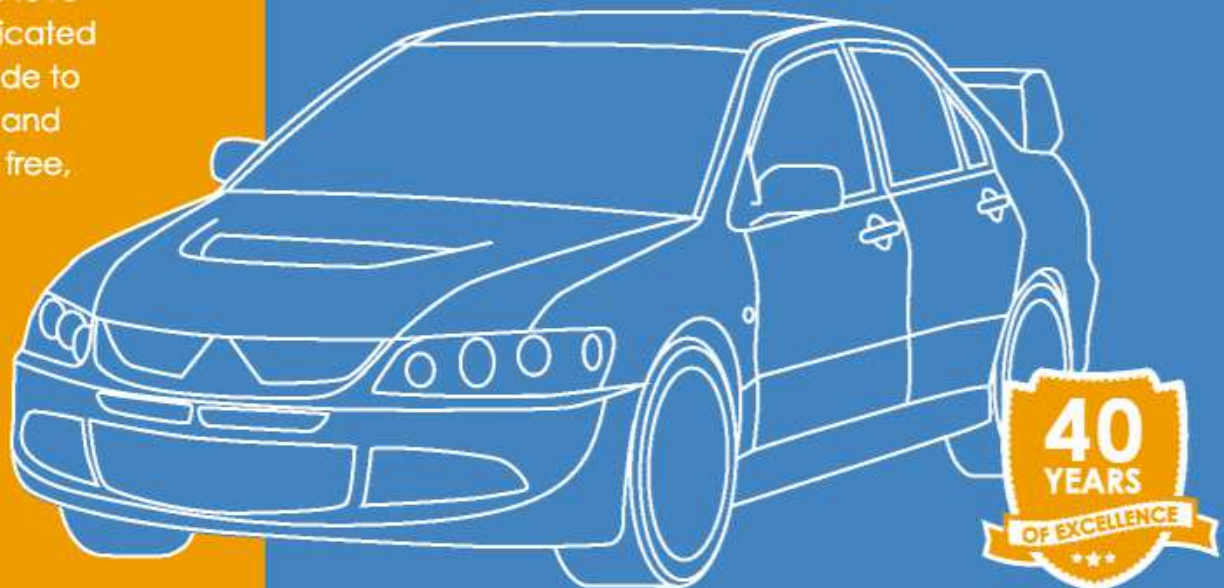
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MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	EVO RATING	
Jaguar E-Pace P300	243 D	£44,510	4/1998	296/5500	295/1200	1894kg	159	6.4	-	-	155	+ Decent grip and balance - Dreary engine; heavier than a V6 F-Pace	★★★★☆
Jaguar F-Pace S	222 D	£54,440	6/2995	375/6500	332/4500	1884kg	202	5.5	-	-	155	+ A match for Porsche's SUVs - Supercharged V6 needs to be worked hard	★★★★☆
Jaguar I-Pace HSE	251 D	£74,445	-	394	513	2208kg	181	4.8	-	-	124	+ Impressive chassis and point-to-point pace - Range anxiety and hefty kerb weight	★★★★☆
Kia Stinger GT-Line 2.0	247 D	£31,995	4/1998	244/6200	260/1400	1642kg	151	5.8	-	-	149	+ Out-Jaguars Jaguar's XE and XF - Except in the looks department	★★★★☆
Kia Stinger GT-Line 2.2 CRDi	251 T	£34,225	4/1999	197/3800	324/1750	1735kg	115	7.3	-	-	143	+ Smooth daily driver with a decent interior - Frustrating auto 'box, heavy kerb weight	★★★★☆
Kia Stinger GT S	242 D	£40,495	6/3342	365/6000	376/1300	1780kg	168	4.7	-	-	168	+ Playful handling, deep-chested performance - Engine lacks soul, steering lacks feel	★★★★☆
Lamborghini Urus	249 F	£185,000	8/3996	641/6000	627/2250	2200kg	296	3.6	-	-	190	+ A freakish manipulator of physics - But also rather one-dimensional	★★★★☆
Lexus GS F	243 D	£73,375	8/4969	471/7100	391/4800	1790kg	267	4.6	-	-	168	+ Glorious engine, balanced handling - Gearbox is off the pace	★★★★☆
Lexus LS 500h	253 T	£72,959	6/3456	354	-	2175kg	165	5.4	-	-	155	+ Stunning cabin - Complex and compromised drivetrain, jarring ride	★★★★☆
Lexus IS F	151 F	'07-'12	8/4969	417/6600	372/5200	1714kg	247	5.2	4.7	10.9	173	+ Shockingly good Lexus - The M3's available as a four-door too	★★★★☆
Lotus Carlton	245 F	'91-'93	6/3615	377/5200	419/4200	1658kg	231	5.4	4.8	10.6	176	+ The Millennium Falcon of saloon cars - Every drive is a work-out	★★★★☆
Maserati Ghibli	186 D	£57,015	6/2979	345/5000	406/1750	1810kg	194	5.5	-	-	166	+ Bursting with character; good value compared to Quattroporte - It's still a big car	★★★★☆
Maserati Ghibli S	198 D	'14-'18	6/2979	404/5500	406/4500	1810kg	227	5.0	-	-	177	+ Stands out from the crowd; sounds good too - Chassis lacks finesse, engine lacks reach	★★★★☆
Maserati Quattroporte S	184 D	'13-'18	6/2979	404/5500	406/1750	1860kg	221	5.1	-	-	177	+ Tempting alternative to V8 - Feel-free steering, ride lacks decorum	★★★★☆
Maserati Quattroporte GTS	226 D	'16-'18	8/3798	523/6800	479/2250	1900kg	280	4.7	-	-	193	+ Still pretty - Off the pace dynamically	★★★★☆
Maserati Quattroporte	085 F	'04-'08	8/4244	394/7000	333/4500	1930kg	207	5.6	-	-	171	+ Redefined big-car dynamics - Don't use auto mode	★★★★☆
Maserati Quattroporte S	137 F	'08-'12	8/4691	425/7000	361/4750	1990kg	216	5.4	5.1	12.1	174	+ A QP with the bhp it deserves - Grille is a bit Hannibal Lecter	★★★★☆
Maserati Quattroporte Sport GTS	141 F	'08-'12	8/4691	433/7000	361/4750	1990kg	221	5.1	-	-	177	+ The most stylish of supersaloons - Slightly wooden brakes, unforgiving ride	★★★★☆
Maserati Levante Diesel	221 D	£58,315	6/2897	271/4000	442/2000	2205kg	125	6.9	-	-	143	+ Impressive blend of ride and handling - Performance is mild for a Maserati	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz CLA45 AMG	186 D	£43,245	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1510kg	239	4.6	-	-	155	+ Strong performance, classy cabin - Pricey compared with A45 AMG hatchback	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG	205 F	£46,875	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1510kg	239	4.8	-	-	155	+ An aggressive and focused sports crossover - Low on driver interaction	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG C43 4Matic Estate	228 D	£46,985	6/2996	362/5500	383/2000	1660kg	222	4.7	-	-	155	+ Incredibly fast and composed - Difficult to engage with	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG C63 (W205)	209 D	£62,180	8/3982	469/5500	479/1750	1640kg	291	4.1	-	-	155	+ Fast and feelsome - Lacks the ultimate finesse and response of the C63 S	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG C63 Estate (S205)	216 F	£63,380	8/3982	469/5500	479/1750	1710kg	279	4.2	-	-	155	+ Much more fun than it looks - Gearbox dim-witted at low speeds	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG C63 S (W205)	211 F	£68,930	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1655kg	309	4.0	-	-	155	+ Tremendous twin-turbo V8 power - Not quite as focused as an M division car	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG C63 S Estate (S205)	252 D	£77,000	8/3982	503/5500	516/2000	1750kg	292	4.1	-	-	174	+ One of the finest all-round compact performance cars - Baffling array of driver settings	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG (W204)	151 F	'08-'14	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	277	4.5	4.4	9.7	155	+ Monstrous pace and extremely engaging - Same-era M3 is just a little better...	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz C55 AMG (W203)	088 F	'04-'08	8/5439	367/5250	376/4000	1635kg	228	5.2	-	-	155	+ Furiously fast, commendably discreet - Overshadowed by M3 and RS4	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.5-16	185 F	'89-'92	4/2498	204/6750	177/5500	1300kg	159	7.5	-	-	146	+ M-B's M3 alternative - Not as nimble as the Beemer	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG E43 4Matic (W213)	236 D	£57,275	6/2996	395/6100	383/2500	1765kg	227	4.6	-	-	155	+ Some of the E63's looks and performance - Not enough of its performance	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG E63 4Matic+ (W213)	242 D	£78,675	8/3982	563/5750	553/2250	1875kg	305	3.5	-	-	155	+ More rounded than the E63 S - Could be a little too discreet for some tastes	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG E63 S 4Matic+ (W213)	246 F	£87,375	8/3982	604/5750	627/2500	1880kg	326	3.4	3.4	7.4	155	+ Fast, refined, effective and fun - At nearly two tons, it's not 911 nimble	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212)	187 D	'13-'16	8/5461	549/5500	531/1750	1770kg	315	4.2	-	-	155	+ Power, response and accuracy in spades - A little lacking in originality	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG S (W212)	208 F	'13-'16	8/5461	577/5500	590/1750	1795kg	327	4.1	-	-	155	+ Effortless power; intuitive and approachable - Sluggish auto 'box	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212)	165 F	'11-'13	8/5461	518/5250	516/1750	1765kg	298	4.4	-	-	155	+ Turbo engine didn't dilute the E63 experience - Sometimes struggles for traction...	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W212)	134 D	'09-'11	8/6208	518/6800	465/5200	1765kg	298	4.5	-	-	155	+ Indulgent chassis, brilliant engine - Steering still vague	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG (W211)	096 D	'06-'09	8/6208	507/6800	465/5200	1765kg	292	4.5	-	-	155	+ Brilliant engine, indulgent chassis - Vague steering, speed limits	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz E55 AMG	052 F	'03-'06	8/5439	469/6100	516/2650	1760kg	271	4.7	4.8	10.2	155	+ M5-humbling grunt, cossetting ride - Speed limits	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz S63 AMG L	246 D	£125,690	8/3982	604/5500	664/2750	1940kg	316	4.3	-	-	155	+ Performance doesn't come at the expense of luxury - But pure driving thrills do	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG CLS53 4Matic+	247 D	£72,095	6/2999	451/6100	567/1800	1905kg	302	4.5	-	-	155	+ Impressive chassis and hybrid powertrain - 4Matic only, and heavy, too	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG S	199 D	'14-'17	8/5461	577/5500	590/1750	1795kg	327	4.1	-	-	155	+ Quick and characterful - Dated gearbox, no four-wheel-drive option in the UK	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG	178 F	'11-'14	8/5461	518/5250	516/1700	1795kg	293	4.4	-	-	155	+ Monster performance, 549bhp an option - Not as desirable as a Bentley or Aston	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz GLC63 AMG S Coupe	253 D	£76,860	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1945kg	263	3.8	-	-	174	+ Unquestionable performance - Lacks adjustability and engagement	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz GLE63 AMG S	218 D	£96,950	8/5461	577/5500	560/1750	2270kg	258	4.2	-	-	155	+ Stonking pace, extreme refinement - Feels remote	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz GLE63 AMG S Coupe	213 D	£96,575	8/5461	577/5500	560/1750	2275kg	258	4.2	-	-	155	+ Subtler than an X6 M - More force than finesse	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG G63	250 D	£143,305	8/3982	577/6000	627/2500	2485kg	236	4.5	-	-	137	+ Vastly improved chassis, fabulous engine - Dynamic ability still limited	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG	172 D	'12-'18	8/5461	537/5500	560/2000	2475kg	220	5.4	-	-	130	+ Epic soundtrack - Ancient chassis	★★★★☆
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-300 SST	118 F	'08-'14	4/1998	290/6500	300/3500	1590kg	185	4.5	5.2	13.9	155	+ First Evo with a twin-clutch transmission - Not as exciting as its predecessors	★★★★☆
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-330 SST	134 F	'08-'14	4/1998	324/6500	322/3500	1590kg	207	4.4	-	-	155	+ Great engine and gearbox combo - It still lives in the shadow of the Evo IX	★★★★☆
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-360	122 D	'08-'14	4/1998	354/6500	363/3500	1560kg	231	4.0	-	-	155	+ Ridiculously rapid Evo - A five-speed gearbox?!	★★★★☆
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-400	181 F	'09-'10	4/1998	403/6500	387/3500	1560kg	262	3.8	-	-	155	+ Most powerful factory Evo ever... - ...about X grand too much when new	★★★★☆
Mitsubishi Evo IX FQ-340	088 F	'05-'08	4/1997	345/6800	321/4600	1400kg	250	4.2	4.3	10.9	157	+ Gives Porsche drivers nightmares - Points. Lots of	★★★★☆
Mitsubishi Evo IX MR FQ-360	181 F	'05-'08	4/1997	366/6887	363/3200	1400kg	266	4.0	-	-	157	+ Well-executed engine upgrades - Prison food	★★★★☆
Mitsubishi Evo VIII	055 F	'03-'05	4/1997	276/6500	289/3500	1410kg	199	5.1	-	-	157	+ The Evo grows up - Brakes need beefing up	★★★★☆
Mitsubishi Evo VIII MR FQ-300	057 F	'03-'05	4/1997	305/6800	289/3500	1400kg	221	4.9	-	-	157	+ Extra pace, extra attitude - Extra money	★★★★☆
Mitsubishi Evo VII	031 F	'02-'03	4/1997	276/6500	282/3500	1360kg	206	5.1	5.0	13.0	140	+ Terrific all-rounder - You tell us	★★★★☆
Mitsubishi Evo VI Tommi Mäkinen Edition	231 F	'00-'01	4/1997	276/6500	275/2750	1365kg	205	4.6	-	-	150	+ Our favourite Evo - Subtle it is not	★★★★☆
Porsche Panamera 4S Diesel	232 D	£91,788	8/3956	416/3500	627/1000	2050kg	206	4.3	-	-	177	+ Sharp chassis, impressive tech - Performance doesn't meet expectations	★★★★☆
Porsche Panamera Turbo	237 F	£115,100	8/3996	542/5750	568/1960	1995kg	276	3.6	3.4	8.3	190	+ Searing pace with body control that's a real step up; superb rear wing, too - Still very heavy	★★★★☆
Porsche Panamera Turbo Sport Turismo	239 D	£118,828	8/3996	542/5750	568/1960	2035kg	271	3.8	-	-	188	+ Looks great; drives better than its weight would suggest - Not exactly a load-lugger	★★★★☆
Porsche Panamera GTS	208 F	'11-'16	8/4806	434/6700	383/3500	1925kg	229	4.4	-	-	178	+ Vivacious V8, entertaining balance - Can feel light on performance next to turbocharged rivals	★★★★☆
Porsche Panamera Turbo	137 F	'10-'16	8/4806	493/6000	516/2250	1970kg	254	4.2	3.6	8.9	188	+ Fast, refined and dynamically sound - It still leaves us cold	★★★★☆
Porsche Panamera Turbo S	159 D	'11-'13	8/4806	542/6000	590/2250	1995kg	276	3.8	-	-	190	+ Pace, excellent ergonomics - Steering feel, ride	★★★★☆
Porsche Macan S	205 F	£48,287	6/2997	335/5500	339/1450	1865kg	183	5.4	-	-	157	+ No less compelling than the Macan Turbo - Although lacks its ultimate speed and agility	★★★★☆
Porsche Macan GTS	244 F	£55,158	6/2997	355/6000	369/1650	1895kg	190	5.2	-	-	159	+ Handles like an SUV shouldn't - Still looks like an SUV	★★★★☆
Porsche Macan Turbo	207 D	£63,981	6/3604	394/6000	406/1350	1925kg	208	4.8	4.5	11.1	165	+ 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	-	-	-	+ Staggeringly quick and hugely capable - Do you really need this much power?	★★★★☆
Porsche Cayenne S (Mk3)	253 T	£68,330	6/2894	434/5700	406/1800	2020kg	218	5.2	-	-	164	+ Impressive surface-coated brake tech - We'd rather have it on a sports car	★★★★☆
Porsche Cayenne Turbo (Mk3)	243 D	£99,291	8/3996	542/5750	568/1960	2175kg	254	4.1	-	-	177	+ Huge performance, surprising agility - It's still a two-ton-plus SUV	★★★★☆
Porsche Cayenne GTS (Mk2, V6)	211 D	'15-'17	6/3604	434/6000	442/1600	2110kg	209	5.2	-	-	163	+ The driver's Cayenne... - ...but why would a driver want an SUV?	★★★★☆
Porsche Cayenne GTS (Mk2, V8)	173 D	'12-'15	8/4806	414/6500	380/3500	2085kg	202	5.7	-	-	162	+ Dynamically the best SUV of its era - At two tons, it's still no sports car	★★★★☆
Porsche Cayenne Turbo (Mk2)	212 D	'10-'17	8/4806	513/6000	533/2250	2185kg	239	4.5	-	-	173	+ Remarkable performance, handling, completeness - Vague steering, dated engine	★★★★☆
Porsche Cayenne Turbo S (Mk2)	184 D	'10-'17	8/4806	562/6000	590/2500	2235kg	255	4.1	-	-	176	+ More power and torque than a Zonda S 7.3 - In an SUV	★★★★☆
Range Rover Velar P380	239 D	£70,210	6/2995	375/6500	332/3500	1884kg	202	5.7	-	-	155	+ A more advanced, opulent alternative to an F-Pace - Its weight ultimately limits its agility	★★★★☆
Range Rover Sport V8 Supercharged	186 D	£87,680	8/5000	503/6000	460/2								





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Vauxhall Insignia VXR SuperSport	189 D	'13-'17	6/2792	321/5250	321/5250	1825kg	179	5.6	-	-	170	+ A 170mph Vauxhall - Should be a more engaging steer	★★★★☆
Vauxhall Vectra VXR	102 D	'06-'09	6/2792	276/5500	262/1800	1580kg	177	6.1	-	-	161	+ Great engine, effortless pace, good value - Numb steering, lumpy ride	★★★★☆
Vauxhall VXR8 GTS	215 D	'15-'17	8/6162	576/6150	546/3850	1834kg	319	4.2	-	-	155	+ Monster engine; engaging driving experience - Woeful interior	★★★★☆
Vauxhall VXR8 GTS-R	245 F	'17	8/6162	587/6150	546/3850	1880kg	317	4.2	-	-	155	+ Blistering performance; bursting with character - The end of an era	★★★★☆
Volvo V60 Polestar	222 D	£49,665	4/1969	362/6000	347/3100	1721kg	214	4.8	-	-	155	+ Subtle, well-executed performance car - Plays a little too safe	★★★★☆

## SPORTS CARS / CONVERTIBLES



### OUR CHOICE

**Lotus Elise Sport 220.** Delivering just the right amount of power from its supercharged 1.8-litre engine to make the most of its low kerb weight, the Sport 220 is gutsy, grippy, accurate and enthusiastic. And, of course, it rides beautifully. It's the sweetest spot in the already-very-sweet Elise range.



### BEST OF THE REST

For even more precision and outright performance, a **Lotus 3-Eleven 430** is hard to beat, while the **Caterham Seven** remains an exemplar of sports car purity in all its guises. More habitable and everyday useable, the **Abarth 124 Spider** (left) is capable of putting a big smile on your face even at sane speeds.

Abarth 124 Spider	238 F	£29,625	4/1368	168/5500	184/2500	1060kg	161	6.8	-	-	143	+ A little car with a big soul - Vague and lifeless front end	★★★★☆
Alfa Romeo 4C Spider	223 F	£59,505	4/1742	237/6000	258/2200	940kg*	256	4.5	-	-	160	+ Stunningly beautiful; better steering than coupe version - Still has the coupe's other foibles	★★★★☆
Alfa Romeo 8C Spider	161 F	'09-'11	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1675kg	273	4.4	-	-	181	+ Beauty meets beast. They hit it off - Boot is useless for touring	★★★★☆
Ariel Atom 3 245	248 F	£30,573	4/1998	245/8600	177/7200	520kg*	479	3.1	-	-	145	+ Even better than its predecessors - Can still be a bit draughty	★★★★☆
Ariel Atom 3.5 Supercharged	180 D	£38,000	4/1998	310/8400	169/7200	550kg*	573	2.7	-	-	155	+ As mad as ever - Rain	★★★★☆
Ariel Atom 3.5R	205 F	£64,800	4/1998	350/8400	243/6100	550kg*	647	2.6	-	-	155	+ Remarkable balance, poise and pace - Pricey	★★★★☆
Ariel Atom 3 Supercharged	138 F	'09-'12	4/1998	300/8200	162/7200	550kg*	554	3.3	-	-	155	+ It's brilliant - It's mental	★★★★☆
Ariel Atom Mugen	165 F	'12-'13	4/1998	270/8300	188/6000	550kg*	499	2.9	-	-	150	+ Perfect engine for the Atom's chassis - Only ten were made	★★★★☆
Ariel Nomad	248 F	£33,000	4/2354	235/7200	221/4300	670kg*	365	3.4	-	-	134	+ Off-road capabilities make for a super plaything - No Bluetooth	★★★★☆
Aston Martin V8 Vantage Roadster (4.7)	130 F	'09-'16	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1710kg	250	4.8	-	-	180	+ Sportiest, coolest drop-top Aston in years - Feels dated compared to contemporaries	★★★★☆
Aston Martin V8 Vantage S Roadster	161 F	'11-'17	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1690kg	258	4.8	-	-	189	+ Sounds amazing, looks even better - Still not the best drop-top in its class	★★★★☆
Aston Martin V12 Vantage Roadster	175 F	'12-'14	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1760kg	294	4.5	-	-	190	+ As good as the coupe, with amplified V12 rumble - Just a smidgen shakier	★★★★☆
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S Roadster	212 F	'14-'17	12/5935	565/6750	457/5750	1745kg	329	4.1	-	-	201	+ A brilliant two-seat roadster... - ...let down by a frustrating automated manual gearbox	★★★★☆
Aston Martin DB9 Volante	150 D	'04-'15	12/5935	510/6500	457/5500	1890kg	274	4.5	-	-	183	+ Consummate cruiser and capable when pushed - Roof-up wind noise	★★★★☆
Aston Martin DB11 Volante	247 F	£161,900	8/3982	503/6000	498/2000	1795kg	285	4.1	-	-	187	+ Impressively wide range of dynamic personalities - Cabin could be better at this price	★★★★☆
Audi TT RS Roadster (Mk3)	207 D	£42,565	4/1984	306/5800	280/1800	1450kg	214	5.2	-	-	155	+ A serious proposition, ranking close behind a Boxster S - Coupe still looks better	★★★★☆
Audi TT RS Roadster (Mk3)	250 T	£54,230	5/2480	394/5850	354/1700	1530kg	262	3.9	-	-	155	+ Terrific engine... - ...is the best thing about it	★★★★☆
Audi R8 V8 Spyder	186 D	'11-'15	8/4163	424/7900	317/6000	1660kg	259	4.8	-	-	187	+ More delicate and subtle than the V10 - The V10 sounds even better	★★★★☆
BAC Mono	189 F	£165,125	4/2261	305/7700	206/6000	580kg*	534	2.8	-	-	170	+ The most single-minded track car available - That means no passengers...	★★★★☆
BMW Z4 sDrive 35i M Sport (Mk2)	186 D	'13-'17	6/2979	302/5800	295/1300	1505kg	204	5.2	-	-	155	+ Looks, hard-top versatility, drivetrain - Clumsy chassis is upset by ragged surfaces	★★★★☆
BMW Z4 3.0si (Mk1)	094 D	'06-'09	6/2996	265/6600	232/2750	1310kg	205	5.7	-	-	155	+ Terrific straight-six - Handling not as playful as we'd like	★★★★☆
BMW Z4 M Roadster	091 F	'06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1410kg	244	5.0	-	-	155	+ Exhilarating and characterful; that engine - Stiff suspension	★★★★☆
BMW M Roadster	002 F	'98-'02	6/3246	325/7400	258/4900	1375kg	240	5.1	-	-	155	+ M3 motor; hunky looks - M Coupe drives better	★★★★☆
BMW i8 Roadster	249 D	£124,735	3/1499	369/5800	420/3700	1595kg	235	4.6	-	-	155	+ Unique and engaging - Still more GT than sports car	★★★★☆
BMW Z8	026 F	'00-'03	8/4941	400/6600	369/3800	1585kg	256	4.7	4.8	11.1	155	+ M5-powered super-sportster - M5's more fun to drive	★★★★☆
Caterham Seven 160	239 F	£19,495	3/660	80/7000	79/3400	490kg*	166	6.9	-	-	100	+ The fabulous Seven formula at its most basic - Gets pricey with options	★★★★☆
Caterham Seven SuperSprint	247 D	£29,995	3/660	95/7000	82/5600	490kg*	197	6.9	-	-	100	+ Accessible limits with proper pace - You need to enjoy being exposed to the elements	★★★★☆
Caterham Seven 270	219 F	£23,995	4/1596	135/6800	122/4100	540kg*	254	5.0	-	-	122	+ Feisty engine, sweetly balanced, manic and exciting - The temptation of more power	★★★★☆
Caterham Seven 310	227 D	£25,495	4/1596	152/7000	124/5600	540kg*	286	4.8	-	-	126	+ Intense and exciting - Sticky tyres limit the amount of throttle adjustability	★★★★☆
Caterham Seven 360	209 F	£27,495	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	560kg*	327	4.8	-	-	130	+ Extra power is welcome - You'll need the six-speed gearbox to make the most of it	★★★★☆
Caterham Seven 420	223 F	£30,495	4/1999	210/7600	150/6300	560kg*	381	3.8	4.0	10.3	136	+ It's the one we built for ourselves - Trickier on the limit than lesser-powered Sevens	★★★★☆
Caterham Seven 420R Donington Edition	240 D	£47,500	4/1999	210/7600	150/6300	560kg*	381	3.8	-	-	136	+ One of the best Sevens we've driven - Only ten are being made	★★★★☆
Caterham Seven CSR	094 F	£46,495	4/2261	256/7500	200/6200	565kg*	460	3.1	3.8	-	155	+ Brilliant for high days, holidays and trackdays - Wet Wednesdays	★★★★☆
Caterham Seven 620S	220 D	£45,495	4/1999	310/7700	219/7350	610kg*	516	3.4	-	-	155	+ Ludicrous, near-620R pace, with added habitability - Well, 'habitable' for a Seven...	★★★★☆
Caterham Seven 620R	239 F	£50,490	4/1999	310/7700	219/7350	572kg*	551	2.8	-	-	155	+ Banzai on track, yet still relevant on the road - £50k for a Seven?	★★★★☆
Caterham Seven Roadsport 125	105 F	'07-'14	4/1596	125/6100	120/5350	539kg*	235	5.9	-	-	112	+ Great debut for Ford-engined model - Bigger drivers need SV model	★★★★☆
Caterham Seven Supersport	165 F	'11-'14	4/1596	140/6900	120/5790	520kg*	273	4.9	-	-	120	+ One of the best Caterhams is also one of the cheapest of its era - It's quite minimalist	★★★★☆
Caterham Seven Supersport R	180 D	'13-'14	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	535kg*	342	4.8	-	-	130	+ One of the best road-and-track Sevens - Impractical, noisy, uncomfortable	★★★★☆
Caterham Seven Superlight R300	150 F	'09-'12	4/1999	175/7000	139/6000	515kg*	345	4.5	-	-	140	+ Possibly all the Caterham you need - They're not cheap	★★★★☆
Caterham Seven Superlight R500	123 F	'08-'14	4/1999	263/8500	177/7200	506kg*	528	2.9	-	-	150	+ Better power-to-weight ratio than a Veyron - Until you add the driver	★★★★☆
Caterham Seven R300	068 F	'02-'06	4/1796	160/7000	130/5000	500kg*	325	4.7	-	-	130	+ Our 2002 Trackday Car of the Year - Not for wimps	★★★★☆
Caterham Seven R500	200 F	'99-'06	4/1796	230/8600	155/7200	460kg*	510	3.4	3.6	8.8	146	+ The K-series Seven at its very best - No cup holders	★★★★☆
Dallara Stradale	250 F	£162,000	4/2300	394/6200	369/3000	855kg*	468	3.3	-	-	174	+ Startling performance - Its limits always feel slightly beyond your reach	★★★★☆
Elemental Rpl	238 D	£98,700	4/1999	320/ n/a	332/2000	630kg	516	2.7	-	-	165	+ Sensational, explosive, captivating, exploitable - Price will test your level of commitment	★★★★☆
Ferrari Portofino	247 F	£166,180	8/3855	591/7500	560/3000	1664kg	361	3.5	-	-	199	+ Better than the California - Not better than a DB11 Volante	★★★★☆
Ferrari California T	229 D	'14-'17	8/3855	553/7500	557/4750	1729kg	324	3.6	-	-	196	+ Turbocharged engine is a triumph - Still places daily useability above outright thrills	★★★★☆
Fiat 124 Spider	228 F	£21,050	4/1368	138/5000	177/2250	1050kg	134	7.5	-	-	134	+ It's an affordable Italian(ish) sports car - Lacks Italian brio	★★★★☆
Honda S2000	243 F	'99-'09	4/1997	237/8300	153/7500	1260kg	191	6.2	-	-	150	+ An alternative and rev-happy roadster - A Boxster's better	★★★★☆
Jaguar F-type Convertible 3.0 V6 340PS	186 F	£59,550	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1587kg	214	5.7	-	-	161	+ Beautiful, enjoyable, responsive - Noticeably the junior F-type	★★★★☆
Jaguar F-type Convertible 3.0 V6 380PS	183 F	£70,300	6/2995	375/6500	339/3500	1604kg	238	5.5	-	-	171	+ A more rounded F-type than the V8s - We like V8s	★★★★☆
Jaguar F-type R Convertible AWD	-	£98,145	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1665kg	331	4.1	-	-	186	+ Pace, characterful engine - Costs nearly £25k more than the hot V6	★★★★☆
Jaguar F-type SVR Convertible	230 D	£118,165	8/5000	567/6500	516/3500	1720kg	335	3.7	-	-	195	+ Huge performance - Unpleasant soundtrack; unsettled on bumpy roads	★★★★☆
Jaguar F-type S Convertible	183 F	'13-'17	6/2995	375/6500	339/3500	1604kg	238	5.5	-	-	171	+ Better-damped and more rounded than the V8 S - A Boxster S is cheaper	★★★★☆
Jaguar F-type Project 7	212 F	'15	8/5000	567/6500	501/2500	1585kg	363	3.9	-	-	186	+ Noise, performance, adjustability - Expensive, and not the GT3 rival we would have liked	★★★★☆
Jaguar XKR Convertible	130 F	'09-'14	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1725kg	296	4.8	-	-	155	+ Fantastic 5-litre V8 - Loses sporting ground to its main foes	★★★★☆
Jaguar XKR-S Convertible	167 F	'11-'14	8/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1725kg	319	4.4	-	-	186	+ Loud and mad; most exciting Jag in years - It was also the most expensive in years	★★★★☆
KTM X-Bow GT	183 D	£95,880	4/1984	281/6400	310/3200	875kg	326	4.1	-	-	144	+ Extraordinary ability, now in a more road-friendly package - Price	★★★★☆
KTM X-Bow R	165 F	£87,480	4/1984	296/6300	295/3300	816kg	369	3.9	-	-	144	+ Sharper handling, more power - Pity it's not even lighter, and cheaper	★★★★☆
KTM X-Bow	138 F	'08-'12	4/1984	237/5500	229/2000	818kg	294	3.8	-	-	137	+ Mad looks; real quality feel - Heavier and pricier than you'd hope	★★★★☆
Lotus Elise Sport	-	'17	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	856kg	159	6.5	-	-	127	+ 1.6-litre Elise is light and fantastic - Smaller engine could put some off	★★★★☆
Lotus Elise Sprint	-	'17	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	830kg	164	6.2	-	-	127	+ Even lighter version of the 1.6 Elise - It'll cost you nearly £200 per kilo saved	★★★★☆
Lotus Elise Sport 220	244 F	£39,300	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	904kg	244	4.6	-	-	145	+ Perfect power-to-weight ratio - A bit short on creature comforts	★★★★☆
Lotus Elise Sprint 220	236 D	£44,300	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	878kg	251	4.5	-	-	145	+ Makes the most of its lightness - Heavyweight price	★★★★☆
Lotus Elise Cup 250	238 D	£47,400	4/1798	243/7200	184/3500	917kg	269	4.3	-	-	154	+ Elise gets quicker again - Prioritises grip over adjustability	★★★★☆
Lotus Elise Cup 260	243 F	£59,500	4/1798	250/7200	195/5500	902kg	282	4.2	-	-	151	+ Quickest Elise yet - Just 30 being built	★★★★☆
Lotus Elise Club Racer	183 F	'11-'15	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	852kg	160	6.5	-	-	127	+ Even lighter, even more focused than a standard 1.6 Elise - Are you prepared to go this basic?	★★★★☆
Lotus Elise S Club Racer	189 D	'13-'15	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	905kg	244	4.6	-	-	145	+ Purist approach intensifies ability - Lightest, option-free spec requires commitment	★★★★☆
Lotus Elise R	068 F												



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MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAMM)	0-60MPH (ESTD)	0-100MPH (ESTD)	MAX MPH	EVO RATING	
Lotus Elise 111S	049 F	'02-'04	4/1796	156/7000	129/4650	860kg	197	5.1	-	-	131	+ A genuinely useable Elise - Air-con? In an Elise?	★★★★★
Lotus Elise Sport 135	040 D	'03	4/1796	135/6200	129/4850	726kg	189	5.4	-	-	129	+ One of our fave S2 Elises - Brakes need more bite and pedal feel	★★★★★
Lotus Elise (S1)	235 F	'96-'01	4/1796	118/5500	122/3000	731kg	164	5.9	6.1	18.5	126	+ A modern classic - A tad impractical?	★★★★★
Lotus Exige Sport 350 Roadster	221 F	£55,900	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1125kg	312	3.9	-	-	145	+ An Exige with added sunny-day appeal - A Boxster would be more practical	★★★★★
Lotus 3-Eleven 430	248 F	£102,000	6/3456	430/7000	325/4500	920kg*	475	3.2	-	-	180	+ A fitting send-off for a brilliant Lotus - Just 20 being made, and they're not cheap	★★★★★
Lotus 3-Eleven	220 F	'16-'17	6/3456	410/7000	302/3000	925kg*	450	3.4	-	-	174	+ A fantastically exciting Lotus - If not exactly a groundbreaking one	★★★★★
Lotus 2-Eleven	126 F	'07-'11	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	720kg	267	4.5	-	-	140	+ Not far off the supercharged 2-Eleven's pace - You want the supercharged one, don't you?	★★★★★
Lotus 2-Eleven Supercharged	123 F	'07-'11	4/1796	252/8000	179/7000	745kg	344	4.0	-	-	150	+ Impressive on road and track - Not hardcore enough for some	★★★★★
Lotus 340R	126 F	'00	4/1796	190/7800	146/5000	701kg	275	4.5	4.5	12.5	126	+ Hardcore road-racer... - ...that looks like a dune buggy from Mars	★★★★★
Maserati GranCabrio MC	185 D	£112,400	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1973kg	234	4.9	-	-	179	+ Most powerful GranCabrio yet - The GranCabrio is starting to show its age	★★★★☆
Mazda MX-5 1.5 (Mk4)	230 F	£18,795	4/1496	129/7000	111/4800	975kg	134	8.3	-	-	127	+ Lightest MX-5 since the Mk1 - Lacks intensity	★★★★☆
Mazda MX-5 2.0 Sport Nav (Mk4)	228 F	£24,195	4/1998	158/6000	147/4600	1000kg	161	7.3	-	-	133	+ Brilliant basic recipe - The desire for stiffer suspension and more power	★★★★☆
Mazda MX-5 RF 2.0 (Mk4)	234 F	£23,395	4/1998	158/6000	147/4600	1045kg	154	7.4	-	-	134	+ Drives just like its soft-top brother - Significant wind noise with the roof down	★★★★☆
Mazda MX-5 2.0i Sport Tech (Mk3.5)	212 F	'09-'15	4/1999	158/7000	139/5000	1098kg	146	7.6	-	-	138	+ Handles brilliantly again; folding hard-top also available - Less-than-macho image	★★★★☆
Mazda MX-5 1.8i (Mk3)	091 F	'05-'09	4/1798	124/6500	123/4500	1080kg	108	9.3	-	-	122	+ Gearchange, interior - Lost some of the charm of old MX-5s; dubious handling	★★★★☆
Mazda MX-5 1.8i (Mk2)	017 F	'98-'05	4/1839	146/7000	124/5000	1065kg	140	8.5	-	-	123	+ Affordable ragtops don't get much better - Cheap cabin	★★★★☆
Mazda MX-5 1.6 (Mk1)	131 F	'89-'97	4/1597	115/6500	100/5500	971kg	120	8.8	-	-	114	+ The original and still (pretty much) the best - Less than rigid	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG SLC43	222 D	£47,600	6/2996	362/5500	383/2000	1520kg	242	4.7	-	-	155	+ Twin-turbo V6 well-suited to baby roadster - But also highlights the chassis' age	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz SLK55 AMG	186 F	'12-'15	8/5461	416/6800	398/4500	1615kg	262	4.6	-	-	155	+ Quicker and more economical than ever - Needs to be sharper, too	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz SLK55 AMG	087 F	'05-'10	8/5439	355/5750	376/4000	1575kg	229	4.9	-	-	155	+ Superb engine, responsive chassis - No manual option, ESP spoils fun	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz SLK55 AMG Black Series	110 F	'07-'08	8/5439	394/5750	383/3750	1495kg	268	4.5	4.9	11.2	174	+ AMG gets serious - Dull-witted auto 'box, uneven dynamics	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG SL63	228 D	£116,430	8/5461	577/5500	664/2250	1770kg	331	4.1	-	-	155	+ Effortless performance - Needs more involvement to go with the pace	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG GT Roadster	239 F	£111,360	8/3982	469/6000	465/1700	1595kg	299	4.0	-	-	188	+ An AMG GT with added fresh air - Ride and handling go slightly to pieces on UK roads	★★★★☆
Mercedes-AMG GT C Roadster	235 D	£140,660	8/3982	549/5750	501/1900	1660kg	336	3.7	-	-	196	+ As above but with more shove - Road noise can get wearing on long journeys	★★★★☆
Mercedes-Benz SL500	169 D	'12-'16	8/4663	429/5250	516/1800	1710kg	255	4.6	-	-	155	+ 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	+ 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	+ 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	+ 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	4.2	-	-	155	+ Gob-smacking performance - Costly to run	★★★★☆
Morgan 3 Wheeler	198 F	£31,140	2/1976	82/5250	103/3250	525kg*	159	6.0	-	-	115	+ Quirky, characterful, brilliant - Can become a two-wheeler if you push too hard	★★★★☆
Morgan Plus 8 50th Anniversary Edition	253 D	£129,000	8/4799	367/6300	370/3600	1100kg*	339	4.5	-	-	155	+ V8 performance and sound, driver involvement - Getting flies in your teeth	★★★★☆
Morgan Aero 8	105 F	£94,665	8/4799	362/6300	361/3400	1180kg*	312	4.5	-	-	170	+ Glorious sound, view over bonnet, dynamics - Awkward-looking rear	★★★★☆
Morgan Aero SuperSports	145 F	'10-'11	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1180kg*	312	4.2	-	-	170	+ It's an Aero 8 with a V8 and targa top - Limited edition, costing proper supercar money	★★★★☆
Nissan 370Z Roadster	143 F	'10-'14	6/3696	326/7000	269/5200	1554kg	213	5.5	-	-	155	+ The Zed's old-school character remains intact - Its purposeful looks don't	★★★★☆
Porsche 718 Boxster	224 D	£44,758	4/1988	296/6500	280/1950	1335kg	225	5.1	-	-	170	+ Chassis as good as ever - Four-cylinder's tuneless din would be hard to live with	★★★★☆
Porsche 718 Boxster S	222 F	£53,714	4/2497	345/6500	310/1900	1355kg	259	4.6	4.4	9.8	177	+ Still sensationally capable - Turbo four-cylinder engine lacks appeal of the old flat-six	★★★★☆
Porsche 718 Boxster GTS	249 T	£61,727	4/2497	360/6500	310/1900	1375kg	266	4.6	-	-	180	+ The best Boxster spec - Doesn't come cheap	★★★★☆
Porsche Boxster (981)	238 F	'12-'16	6/2706	261/6700	206/4500	1310kg	202	5.8	-	-	164	+ Goes and looks better than the 987 Boxster - Shame about the electric steering	★★★★☆
Porsche Boxster S (981)	186 F	'12-'16	6/3436	311/6700	265/4500	1320kg	239	5.1	-	-	173	+ Boxster steps out of 911's shadow - But gets 911's less appealing electric steering	★★★★☆
Porsche Boxster GTS (981)	203 D	'14-'16	6/3436	325/6700	273/4500	1345kg	246	5.0	-	-	174	+ Superb dynamics, fantastic engine, great looks - Sport suspension is very firm	★★★★☆
Porsche Boxster Spyder (981)	223 F	'15-'16	6/3800	370/6700	310/4750	1315kg	286	4.5	-	-	180	+ An even faster, even more rewarding Boxster - Feedback trails the Cayman GT4's	★★★★☆
Porsche Boxster S (987)	161 F	'05-'12	6/3436	306/6400	266/5500	1355kg	229	5.3	-	-	170	+ Second-gen Boxster's as brilliant as ever - It's a typically Porsche redesign	★★★★☆
Porsche Boxster Spyder (987)	188 F	'10-'12	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1275kg	252	4.9	-	-	166	+ Lighter, more driver-centric Boxster - Collapsed-brolly roof not the most practical	★★★★☆
Porsche Boxster S (986)	070 F	'99-'04	6/3179	256/6200	229/4600	1320kg	200	5.7	-	-	164	+ Added power over the non-S Boxster is seductive - Very little	★★★★☆
Renault Sport Spider	231 F	'96-'99	4/1998	148/6000	136/4500	930kg	157	6.5	-	-	131	+ Rarity; unassisted steering - Heavier than you'd hope; disappointing engine	★★★★☆
Rolls-Royce Dawn	222 D	£264,000	12/6592	563/5250	575/1500	2560kg	223	4.9	-	-	155	+ Effortless driving experience - Driver involvement not a priority	★★★★☆
Toyota MR2 (Mk3)	187 F	'00-'06	4/1794	138/6400	125/4400	975kg	141	8.0	7.2	21.2	131	+ Tight lines, taut dynamics - Minimal luggage space	★★★★☆
TVR Tamora	070 F	'01-'07	6/3605	350/7200	290/5500	1060kg	335	4.2	-	-	175	+ Well-sorted soft-top TVR - Awkward styling	★★★★☆
TVR Chimaera 5.0	007 F	'93-'03	8/4997	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.4	-	-	167	+ Gorgeous noise, tarmac-rippling grunt - Details	★★★★☆
TVR Griffith 4.3	068 F	'92-'93	8/4280	280/5500	305/4000	1040kg	274	4.4	4.8	11.2	155	+ The car that made TVR. Cult status - Mere details	★★★★☆
TVR Griffith 500	009 F	'93-'01	8/4997	320/5500	320/4000	1060kg	307	4.1	-	-	167	+ Gruff diamond - A few rough edges	★★★★☆
Vauxhall VX220	023 F	'00-'04	4/2198	145/5800	150/4000	875kg	168	5.9	-	-	136	+ Absurdly good Vauxhall - The badge?	★★★★☆
Vauxhall VX220 Turbo	066 F	'03-'05	4/1998	197/5500	184/1950	930kg	215	4.9	-	-	151	+ Nothing comes close for the money - Marginal everyday usability	★★★★☆
Vuhl 05	220 F	£59,995	4/2000	285/5600	310/3000	725kg	405	3.7	-	-	152	+ Impressive pace and quality - You can get a more thrills from a Caterham at half the price	★★★★☆
Zenos E10 S	214 F	£30,595	4/1999	250/7000	295/2500	725kg*	350	4.0	4.2	-	145	+ Neutral and exploitable - Prescriptive balance	★★★★☆

## COUPES / GTs



### OUR CHOICE

**Porsche 911 Carrera 4 GTS.** Turbocharging has given more muscle to the Carrera flat-six (here with 444bhp), while the GTS chassis brings dexterity and delicacy to the party. Add practicality, usability and the security of four-wheel drive and you have a brilliantly rounded package.



### BEST OF THE REST

The **BMW M4 Competition Package** is the car the M4 should have been from the start; the **Audi RS5** counters with an impressively wide bandwidth of abilities. The **Lotus Exige** continues to go from strength to strength in all its guises, and the **Alpine A110** (left) has finally given the **Porsche 718 Cayman S** a true rival to worry about.

Alfa Romeo 4C	209 F	£51,505	4/1742	237/6000	258/2200	895kg*	269	4.5	-	-	160	+ Carbonfibre tub, mini-supercar looks - Hot hatch engine, clunky gearbox	★★★★☆
Alfa Romeo 8C Competizione	120 F	'07-'09	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1585kg	288	4.2	-	-	181	+ Looks, exclusivity, noise, balance - Cost more now than they did new	★★★★☆
Alpine A110	249 F	£51,805	4/1798	249/6000	236/2000	1103kg	229	4.5	4.6	10.8	155	+ Fast, fun and genuinely different - If only it had a manual gearbox	★★★★☆
Alpina D4 Biturbo	206 F	£50,950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1585kg	221	4.6	-	-	173	+ Fifth-gear oversteer - Sounds like a diesel; fuel economy not as good as you might hope	★★★★☆
Alpina B4 S Biturbo	245 D	£63,000	6/2979	434/5500	487/3000	1615kg	273	4.2	-	-	190	+ Stonking engine, stealthy speed - Steering is slow and lacks feel	★★★★☆
Alpina B4 Biturbo	206 F	'14-'16	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1615kg	254	4.2	-	-	188	+ More fluid than the M4; better traction, too - Not as precise as the M-car over the limit	★★★★☆
Aston Martin Vantage	250 F	£120,900	8/3982	503/6000	505/2000	1530kg*	334	3.6	4.5	9.1	195	+ Performance that's a huge leap forward - Chassis struggles when really pushed	★★★★☆
Aston Martin V8 Vantage (4.3)	251 F	'05-'07	8/4280	380/7000	302/5000	1630kg	237	5.0	5.2	12.0	175	+ Gorgeous; awesome soundtrack - Can't quite match a 911 dynamically	★★★★☆
Aston Martin V8 Vantage (4.7)	169 D	'08-'16	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1630kg	262	4.8	-	-	180	+ Still feels special - But also a little dated	★★★★☆
Aston Martin V8 Vantage S	168 F	'11-'17	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	271	4.8	-	-	190	+ Keener engine, V12 Vantage looks - Slightly sluggish auto only	★★★★☆
Aston Martin V8 Vantage N430	218 F	'14-'16	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	271	4.8	-	-	189	+ Malleable, involving - Never feels rampantly quick	★★★★☆
Aston Martin Vantage GT8	229 F	'16-'17	8/4735	440/7300	361/5000	1530kg	292	4.4	-	-	190	+ Enough drama to fill a Netflix mini-series - Just 150 made	★★★★☆
Aston Martin V12 Vantage	146 F	'09-'13	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1680kg	308	4.2	4.4	9.7	190	+ The car we hoped the V8 Vantage would be - Erm, a tad thirsty?	★★★★☆
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S	238 F	'13-'17	12/5935	563/6650	457/5500	1665kg	344	3.9	-	-	205	+ Amongst the best Astons ever made - Old-school automated 'box (so get the manual)	★★★★☆
Aston Martin Vantage GT12	214 F	'15-'16	12/5935	592/7000	461/5500	1565kg	384	3.5	-	-	185	+ The GT3-style Vantage we waited so long for - Only 100 made	★★★★☆
Aston Martin DB11 V8	253 T	£144,900	8/3982	503/6000	498/2000	1685kg	303	4.0	-	-	187	+ Potent and characterful engine; sharper chassis than V12 - Do we still need the V12?	★★★★☆
Aston Martin DB11	235 F	'17-'18	12/5204	600/6500									





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MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL / CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	EVO RATING	
Aston Martin DB9 GT	214 D	'15-'17	12/5935	540/6750	457/5500	1785kg	307	4.5	-	-	183	+ More power; still has bags of character - Needs an eight-speed auto 'box	★★★★★
Aston Martin DB9	178 F	'04-'16	12/5935	510/6500	457/5500	1785kg	290	4.6	-	-	183	+ A great start to Gaydon-era Astons - Automatic gearbox could be quicker	★★★★★
Aston Martin DBS	142 F	'07-'12	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1695kg	306	4.3	-	-	191	+ Stupendous engine, gearbox, brakes - Pricey; can bite the unwary	★★★★★
Audi TT 2.0 TFSI (Mk3)	204 F	£31,685	4/1984	227/4500	273/1650	1230kg	188	6.0	-	-	155	+ Desirable, grippy and effortlessly quick - Still not the last word in interaction	★★★★★
Audi TT 2.0 TFSI quattro (Mk3)	203 D	£34,895	4/1984	227/4500	273/1600	1335kg	173	5.3	-	-	155	+ Looks, interior, decent performance and handling - Lacks ultimate involvement	★★★★★
Audi TTS (Mk3)	252 T	£41,205	4/1984	302/5400	295/2000	1285kg	239	4.5	-	-	155	+ Exceptional grip and traction - Excitement fades after the first few corners	★★★★★
Audi TT RS (Mk3)	249 F	£52,480	5/2480	394/5850	354/1700	1440kg	278	3.7	3.5	8.7	155	+ Soundtrack; tremendous point-to-point pace - A bit one-dimensional in the long run	★★★★★
Audi TTS (Mk2)	193 F	'08-'14	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1395kg	195	5.4	-	-	155	+ A usefully quicker TT, with a great drivetrain - Still steers like a computer game	★★★★★
Audi TT RS (Mk2)	158 F	'09-'14	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1450kg	235	4.7	4.4	11.1	155	+ Sublime five-cylinder turbo engine - Rest of package can't quite match it	★★★★★
Audi TT RS Plus (Mk2)	185 D	'12-'14	5/2480	355/5500	343/1650	1450kg	249	4.3	-	-	174	+ Stonkingly fast cross-country - Shockingly expensive for a TT	★★★★★
Audi TT Sport (Mk1)	081 D	'05-'06	4/1781	237/5700	236/2300	1390kg	173	5.7	-	-	155	+ Deliciously purposeful interior, crisp chassis - Numb steering	★★★★★
Audi S5	252 F	£48,880	6/2995	349/5400	369/1370	1615kg	220	4.7	-	-	155	+ Chassis rewards commitment... but doesn't offer a challenge. Plain engine, too	★★★★★
Audi RS5	240 F	£62,900	6/2894	444/5700	442/1900	1655kg	273	3.9	3.6	9.0	155	+ Lighter, quicker; makes green paint look good - Lacks the character of the old V8	★★★★★
Audi RS5	206 F	'10-'16	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1715kg	263	4.5	4.3	-	155	+ Brilliant engine and improved chassis - Lack of suspension travel; inconsistent steering	★★★★★
Audi R8 V8	201 F	'07-'15	8/4163	424/7900	317/4500	1560kg	276	4.6	4.1	9.9	188	+ A true 911 alternative - Exclusivity comes at a price	★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT	244 F	£156,700	12/5950	626/5000	664/1350	2169kg	293	3.7	-	-	207	+ Astonishing agility for such a big, heavy car - Thirst	★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT V8	178 F	'12-'17	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2220kg	229	4.8	-	-	188	+ A proper driver's Bentley with decent economy - W12 suddenly seems pointless	★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT V8 S	204 F	'13-'17	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2220kg	238	4.5	-	-	192	+ An even better driver's Bentley - Vast weight makes its presence felt in harder driving	★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT	152 D	'03-'17	12/5998	567/6000	516/1700	2245kg	257	4.5	-	-	198	+ Near 200mph in utter comfort - Weight; W12's thirst	★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT Speed	230 D	'12-'17	12/5998	633/5900	620/2000	2245kg	286	4.1	-	-	206	+ Desirability meets exclusivity and performance - We'd still have the V8	★★★★★
Bentley Continental Supersports	234 D	'17	12/5998	700/6000	750/2050	2205kg	323	3.5	-	-	209	+ More progressive chassis balance than the M4 - Styling and soundtrack far from descreet	★★★★★
Bentley Continental GT3-R	203 D	'14-'17	8/3993	572/6000	518/1700	2120kg	274	3.8	-	-	170	+ The best-handling Continental of its generation - Expensive; it still weighs 2120kg	★★★★★
BMW 1-series M Coupe	188 F	'11-'12	6/2979	335/5900	369/1500	1495kg	228	4.9	-	-	155	+ Character, turbo pace and great looks - Came and went too quick	★★★★★
BMW M240i Coupe	229 D	£35,865	6/2998	335/6800	369/1520	1470kg	232	4.8	-	-	155	+ Adjustable and plenty of fun - Lacks finesse and precision	★★★★★
BMW M235i Coupe	225 F	'14-'16	6/2979	321/5800	332/1300	1455kg	224	5.0	5.2	12.7	155	+ Powertrain, chassis, looks, size - Limited-slip diff is an option, not standard	★★★★★
BMW M2	243 F	'16-'18	6/2979	365/6500	369/1450	1495kg	248	4.5	4.9	10.8	155	+ More progressive chassis balance than the M4 - Feels unsettled on rough tarmac	★★★★★
BMW M2 Competition	252 F	£49,805	6/2979	404/5250	406/2350	1550kg	265	4.4	-	-	155	+ A more capable and involving M2 - More expensive and heavier, too	★★★★★
BMW 440i M Sport Coupe	233 F	£43,430	6/2998	321/5500	332/1380	1540kg	212	5.2	-	-	155	+ Almost-too-powerful engine - Doesn't feel special enough to drive	★★★★★
BMW M4	218 F	£60,985	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1560kg	277	4.3	-	-	155	+ Ferociously fast - A handful on less-than-perfect or less-than-bone-dry roads	★★★★★
BMW M4 Competition Package	244 F	£63,985	6/2979	444/7000	406/1850	1560kg	289	4.2	4.4	9.2	155	+ The car the M4 always should have been - Not so good on 20-inch wheels	★★★★★
BMW M4 CS	247 F	£91,615	6/2979	454/6250	442/4000	1580kg	292	3.9	-	-	174	+ A further-honed M4 - It ain't cheap	★★★★★
BMW M4 GTS	237 F	'16	6/2979	493/6250	442/4000	1510kg	332	3.8	3.7	8.0	190	+ Vast improvement on lesser M4s - So it should be, given its price	★★★★★
BMW M3 (E92)	196 F	'07-'13	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1580kg	266	4.8	4.3	10.3	155	+ Fends off all of its rivals... except the cheaper 1-series M Coupe	★★★★★
BMW M3 GTS (E92)	232 F	'10-'11	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1530kg	295	4.4	-	-	190	+ Highly exclusive; one of the most focused M-cars ever - Good luck trying to find one	★★★★★
BMW M3 (E46)	066 F	'00-'07	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230	5.2	5.1	12.3	155	+ One of the best BMWs ever. Runner-up in eCoty 2001 - Slightly artificial steering feel	★★★★★
BMW M3 CS (E46)	219 F	'05-'07	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230	5.2	-	-	155	+ CSL dynamics without CSL price - Looks like the standard car	★★★★★
BMW M3 CSL (E46)	200 F	'03-'04	6/3246	355/7900	273/4900	1385kg	260	4.9	5.3	12.0	155	+ Still superb - Changes from the automated single-clutch 'box are... a... bit... sluggish	★★★★★
BMW M3 Evolution (E36)	148 F	'96-'98	6/3201	317/7400	258/3250	1515kg	215	5.5	5.4	12.8	158	+ Performance, image - Never quite as good as the E30	★★★★★
BMW M3 (E30)	165 F	'89-'90	4/2302	212/6750	170/4600	1165kg	185	6.7	6.7	17.8	147	+ The best M-car ever - Prices have got out of hand	★★★★★
BMW Z4 M Coupe	097 F	'06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1420kg	242	5.0	-	-	155	+ A real driver's car - You've got to be prepared to get stuck in	★★★★★
BMW M Coupe	005 F	'98-'03	6/3246	321/7400	261/4900	1375kg	237	5.3	-	-	155	+ Quick and characterful - Lacks finesse	★★★★★
BMW M6 (F13)	218 F	£95,580	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1850kg	303	4.2	-	-	155	+ Mighty ability, pace, technology - You'll want the Competition Package upgrade, too	★★★★★
BMW M6 (E63)	106 F	'05-'10	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1635kg	311	4.2	4.8	10.0	155	+ Awesome GT, awesome sports car - SMG gearbox now off the pace	★★★★★
BMW i8	210 F	£112,735	3/1499	369/5800	420/3700	1535kg	244	4.4	-	-	155	+ Brilliantly executed concept; sci-fi looks - Safe dynamic set-up	★★★★★
Chevrolet Camaro Z/28	220 F	'14-'16	8/7008	505/6100	481/4800	1732kg	296	4.2	-	-	175	+ Scalpel-sharp engine, great chassis (really) - Feels very stiff on UK roads	★★★★★
Chevrolet Corvette Stingray (C7)	197 F	£63,295	8/6162	460/6000	465/4600	1496kg	312	4.2	4.4	9.4	180	+ Performance, chassis balance, supple ride - Body control could be better	★★★★★
Chevrolet Corvette Z06 (C7)	227 F	£90,445	8/6162	650/6000	650/3600	1598kg	413	3.7	-	-	196	+ Mind-boggling raw speed; surprisingly sophisticated - Edgy when really pushed	★★★★★
Ford Mustang 2.3 EcoBoost	222 D	£33,645	4/2261	313/5500	319/3000	1655kg	192	5.8	-	-	155	+ Ninety per cent as good as the V8 - Missing ten per cent is what makes the Mustang	★★★★★
Ford Mustang 5.0 V8 GT	251 F	£41,745	8/4951	444/7000	390/4600	1668kg	270	4.6	-	-	155	+ 2018MY version gets improved dynamics - Still some way off Europe's finest	★★★★★
Honda Integra Type R (DC2)	200 F	'96-'00	4/1797	187/8000	131/7300	1101kg	173	6.7	6.2	17.9	145	+ Arguably the greatest front-drive car ever - Too raw for some	★★★★★
Infiniti Q60S Sport 3.0T	228 D	£43,535	6/2997	400/6400	350/1600	1799kg	226	5.0	-	-	155	+ Impressive tech - Electronic systems reduce feeling of involvement	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type Coupe 2.0 i4 300PS	239 D	£50,795	4/1997	296/5500	295/1500	1525kg	197	5.7	-	-	155	+ Turbo four-cylinder engine sounds good - But it lacks top-end verve	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type Coupe 3.0 V6 340PS	204 D	£54,065	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1567kg	217	5.7	-	-	161	+ Drop-dead looks, brilliant chassis, desirability - Engine lacks top-end fight	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type Coupe 3.0 V6 380PS	211 D	£64,815	6/2995	375/6500	339/3500	1584kg	241	5.5	-	-	171	+ Exquisite style, more rewarding (and affordable) than roadster - Scrappy on the limit	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type R Coupe AWD	227 D	£92,660	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1730kg	318	4.1	3.5	8.1	186	+ Better than the rear-drive R in the wet - Less involving in the dry	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type SVR Coupe	224 D	£112,680	8/5000	567/6500	516/3500	1705kg	338	3.7	-	-	200	+ A marginally better drive than the AWD R - Not by enough to justify the extra outlay	★★★★★
Jaguar F-type R Coupe (RWD)	218 F	'14-'17	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1650kg	334	4.2	-	-	186	+ Looks, presence, performance, soundtrack - Bumpy and boistrous	★★★★★
Jaguar XKR	168 F	'09-'14	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1753kg	292	4.8	-	-	155	+ Fast and incredibly rewarding Jag - The kids will have to stay at home	★★★★★
Jaguar XKR-S	168 F	'11-'14	8/5000	542/6000	502/2500	1753kg	314	4.4	-	-	186	+ Faster and wilder than regular XKR - The F-type R Coupe	★★★★★
Lexus RCF	226 F	£61,310	8/4969	470/6400	391/4800	1765kg	271	4.5	-	-	168	+ Great looks, noise, sense of occasion - Too heavy to be truly exciting	★★★★★
Lexus LC 500h	241 D	£76,595	6/3456	354	-	1985kg	181	5.0	-	-	168	+ Excellent comfort and refinement; fine chassis - Hybrid system hurts the fun factor	★★★★★
Lexus LC 500	231 D	£76,595	8/4969	470/7100	398/4800	1935kg	247	4.7	-	-	168	+ Glorious engine, rewarding chassis for a GT car - Numb steering, messy ergonomics	★★★★★
Lister Thunder	247 D	£139,950	8/5000	666/6000	720/5940	1650kg	410	3.2	-	-	208	+ Deceptively fast reworked F-type - Never feels as ferocious as the figures suggest	★★★★★
Lotus Exige S (V6)	209 F	'12-'15	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1176kg	298	3.8	-	-	170	+ Breathtaking road-racer; our joint 2012 Car of the Year - Gearshift not the sweetest	★★★★★
Lotus Exige Sport 350	221 F	£55,900	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1125kg	312	3.9	-	-	170	+ Further honed Exige, with vastly improved gearshift - Still not easy to get into and out of	★★★★★
Lotus Exige Sport 380	231 F	'16-'18	6/3456	375/6700	302/5000	1101kg	343	3.7	-	-	178	+ Intense, absorbing and brilliantly capable - Perhaps not an everyday car	★★★★★
Lotus Exige Cup 380	240 D	'17	6/3456	375/6700	302/5000	1105kg	345	3.6	-	-	175	+ An absolute riot; feels worth the £83k (new) price tag - Limited build numbers	★★★★★
Lotus Exige Sport 410	252 F	£85,600	6/3456	410/7000	310/3500	1108kg	376	3.4	-	-	180	+ A first-rate swansong for this generation of Exige - Some may balk at the price	★★★★★
Lotus Exige Cup 430	253 F	£99,800	6/3456	430/7000	325/2600	1093kg	400	3.3	-	-	180	+ The ultimate Exige - Isn't cheap	★★★★★
Lotus Exige S (S2)	253 F	'06-'11	4/1796	218/7800	158/5500	930kg	238	4.3	-	-	148	+ Lightweight with a hefty punch - Uninspiring soundtrack	★★★★★
Lotus Exige (S1)	200 F	'00-'01	4/1796	192/7800	146/5000	780kg	247	4.6	-	-	136	+ Looks and goes like an Elise racer - A tad lacking in refinement	★★★★★
Lotus Evora	138 F	'09-'15	6/3456	276/6400	258/4700	1382kg	203	5.1	5.6	13.6	162	+ Sublime ride and handling. Our 2009 Car of the Year - The Evora S	★★★★★
Lotus Evora S	168 F	'10-'15	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1430kg	245	4.8	-	-	172	+ A faster and better Evora - But one which spars with the Porsche 911	★★★★★
Lotus Evora 400	216 F	£72,000	6/3456	400/7000	302/3500	1395kg	291	4.2	-	-	186	+ Evora excitement levels take a leap - Gearbox still not perfect; punchy pricing	★★★★★
Lotus Evora Sport 410	230 F	'17	6/3456	410/7000	310/350								







MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	EVO RATING	
Mercedes-AMG GT S	216 F	£113,260	8/3982	515/6250	494/1800	1570kg	333	3.8	-	-	193	+ Fantastic chassis, huge grip - Artificial steering feel; downshifts could be quicker	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG GT C	241 D	£129,260	8/3982	549/5750	501/1900	1625kg	343	3.7	-	-	196	+ As good at being a GT as it is a sports coupe - Difficult to drive fast and smoothly	★★★★★
Nissan 370Z	204 F	£29,180	6/3696	323/7000	268/5200	1496kg	219	5.3	-	-	155	+ Quicker, leaner, keener than 350Z - Not quite a Cayman-killer	★★★★☆
Nissan 370Z Nismo	209 F	£39,375	6/3696	339/7400	274/5200	1496kg	230	5.2	-	-	155	+ Sharper looks, improved ride, extra thrills - Engine lacks sparkle	★★★★★
Nissan 350Z	107 F	'03-'09	6/3498	309/6800	264/4800	1532kg	205	5.6	5.5	13.0	155	+ Huge fun, and great value too - Muscle-car vibe not for everyone	★★★★☆
Nissan GT-R (2017MY)	242 F	£82,525	6/3799	562/6800	470/3600	1752kg	326	2.7	-	-	196	+ More refinement, much improved interior, still fast - Feels a touch less alert	★★★★★
Nissan GT-R Track Edition (2017MY)	229 D	£94,525	6/3799	562/6800	470/3600	1745kg	327	2.7	-	-	196	+ GT-R regains its sharpness - Getting pricey these days	★★★★★
Nissan GT-R Nismo (2017MY)	232 F	£151,525	6/3799	592/6800	481/3600	1725kg	349	2.7	-	-	196	+ Incredibly focused - Still too firm to be at its best on UK roads	★★★★★
Nissan GT-R (2012MY-2016MY)	238 F	'12-'16	6/3799	542/6400	466/3200	1740kg	316	2.7	3.2	7.5	196	+ Quicker and better than before - Stopping your Porsche-owning friends calling it a Datsun	★★★★★
Nissan GT-R Track Edition (2017MY)	229 D	£93,875	6/3799	562/6800	470/3600	1745kg	327	2.7	-	-	196	+ GT-R regains its sharpness - Getting pricey these days	★★★★★
Nissan GT-R Nismo (2014MY)	205 F	'14-'16	6/3799	592/6800	481/3200	1720kg	350	2.6	-	-	196	+ Manages to make regular GT-R feel imprecise - Compromised by super-firm suspension	★★★★★
Nissan GT-R (2010MY)	252 F	'10-'12	6/3799	523/6400	451/3200	1740kg	305	3.0	-	-	194	+ More powerful version of the original - But they're not worlds apart to drive	★★★★★
Nissan GT-R (2008MY)	125 F	'08-'10	6/3799	473/6400	434/3200	1740kg	276	3.8	-	-	193	+ Our 2008 Car of the Year - You won't see 20mpg often	★★★★★
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R34)	248 F	'99-'02	6/2568	276/7000	289/4400	1560kg	180	4.8	4.7	12.5	165	+ Big, brutal, and great fun - Needs more than the standard 276bhp	★★★★★
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R33)	196 F	'97-'99	6/2568	276/6800	271/4400	1540kg	182	4.9	5.4	14.3	155	+ Early proof that Japanese high-tech could work (superbly) - Limited supply	★★★★★
Peugeot RCZR	209 F	'14-'15	4/1598	266/6000	243/1900	1280kg	211	5.9	-	-	155	+ Rewarding and highly effective when fully lit - Dated cabin, steering lacks feel	★★★★★
Porsche 718 Cayman	229 D	£42,897	4/1988	296/6500	280/1950	1335kg	225	5.1	-	-	170	+ Chassis remains a dream - Sounds like a Toyota GT86	★★★★☆
Porsche 718 Cayman S	249 F	£51,853	4/2497	345/6500	310/1900	1355kg	259	4.6	3.9	9.3	177	+ Faster and better to drive than ever - Bring earplugs	★★★★★
Porsche 718 Cayman GTS	252 F	£59,866	4/2497	360/6500	310/1900	1375kg	266	4.6	-	-	180	+ Cracking package of upgrades - Flat-four soundtrack still disappoints	★★★★★
Porsche Cayman S (981)	202 F	'13-'16	6/3436	321/7400	273/4500	1320kg	247	5.0	4.5	10.5	175	+ The Cayman comes of age - Erm...	★★★★★
Porsche Cayman GTS (981)	219 F	'14-'16	6/3436	335/7400	280/4750	1345kg	253	4.9	-	-	177	+ Tweaks improve an already sublime package - Slightly 'aftermarket' looks	★★★★★
Porsche Cayman GT4 (981)	221 F	'15-'16	6/3800	380/7400	310/4750	1340kg	288	4.4	-	-	183	+ evo Car of the Year 2015 (even though the 991 GT3 RS was there!) - Second-hand prices	★★★★★
Porsche Cayman S (987)	231 F	'06-'13	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1350kg	237	5.2	-	-	172	+ Still want that 911? - Yeah, us too	★★★★★
Porsche Cayman R (987)	158 F	'11-'13	6/3436	325/7400	273/4750	1295kg	255	5.0	-	-	175	+ Total handling excellence - Styling additions not to all tastes	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera (991.2)	218 F	£77,891	6/2981	365/6500	332/1700	1430kg	259	4.6	-	-	183	+ Forced induction hasn't ruined the Carrera - Purists won't be happy	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera T (991.2)	245 F	£85,576	6/2981	365/6500	332/1700	1425kg	260	4.5	-	-	182	+ Lightweight windows, no rear seats, an LSD... - Only 5kg lighter than a basic Carrera	★★★★☆
Porsche 911 Carrera S (991.2)	217 F	£87,335	6/2981	414/6500	369/1700	1440kg	292	4.3	-	-	191	+ Blindingly fast - You'll want the sports exhaust	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera GTS (991.2)	238 F	£95,795	6/2981	444/6500	406/2150	1450kg	311	4.1	-	-	193	+ Everything a 911 Carrera should be - Costs nearly £20k more than a basic Carrera	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera 4 GTS (991.2)	250 F	£100,781	6/2981	444/6500	406/2150	1495kg	302	4.0	3.1	7.5	192	+ Arguably the most complete sports coupe you can buy - Turbo'd engine lacks character	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera S (991.1)	201 F	'12-'15	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1415kg	283	4.5	4.3	9.5	188	+ A Carrera with supercar pace - Electric steering robs it of some tactility	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera 4S (991.1)	179 F	'13-'15	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1465kg	273	4.5	-	-	185	+ 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	+ The highlight of the 991.1 Carrera line-up - Pricey for a Carrera	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.2)	121 F	'08-'11	6/3800	380/6500	310/4400	1425kg	271	4.7	-	-	188	+ Poise, precision, blinding pace - Feels a bit clinical	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.1)	249 F	'04-'08	6/3824	350/6600	295/4600	1420kg	246	4.6	-	-	182	+ evo Car of the Year 2004 - Do your homework on potential engine issues	★★★★★
Porsche 911 Carrera (996, 3.4)	249 F	'98-'01	6/3387	300/6800	258/4600	1320kg	231	5.2	-	-	174	+ evo Car of the Year 1998; beautifully polished - Some like a bit of rough	★★★★★
Radical RXC Turbo 500R	227 D	'16	6/3496	600/6700	465/4200	1070kg*	561	2.8	-	-	185	+ Immense accessible performance - Fit, finish and detailing lack finesse	★★★★★
Rolls-Royce Wraith	205 D	£240,768	12/6592	624/5600	590/1500	2360kg	260	4.6	-	-	155	+ Refinement, chassis, drivetrain - Shared componentry lets cabin down	★★★★★
Subaru BRZ	248 F	£22,495	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1230kg	163	7.6	-	-	140	+ Fine chassis, great steering - Weak engine, not the slide-happy car they promised	★★★★☆
Toyota GT86	253 F	£26,410	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1240kg	161	7.6	6.9	16.5	140	+ More fun than its Subaru BRZ cousin - Same lack of torque, poor interior quality	★★★★☆
Toyota MR2 (Mk1)	237 F	'84-'89	4/1587	122/6600	105/5000	977kg	127	8.2	-	-	124	+ Mid-engined fun comes no more affordable - Finding a good one will take time	★★★★★
TVR Sagaris	097 F	'05-'07	6/3996	406/7500	349/5000	1078kg	383	3.7	-	-	185	+ Looks outrageous - 406bhp feels a touch optimistic	★★★★★
TVR Tuscan S (Mk2)	076 F	'05-'07	6/3996	400/7000	315/5250	1100kg	369	4.0	-	-	185	+ Possibly TVR's best ever car - Aerodynamic 'enhancements'	★★★★★
TVR Cerbera Speed Six	004 F	'98-'04	6/3996	350/6800	330/5000	1130kg	315	4.4	5.0	11.4	160+	+ Accomplished and desirable - Check chassis for corrosion	★★★★★
Volkswagen Scirocco GT 2.0 TSI / GTS	155 F	£26,050	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1369kg	158	6.5	-	-	153	+ Golf GTI price and performance - Interior lacks flair	★★★★☆
Volkswagen Scirocco R	200 D	£30,690	4/1984	276/6000	258/2500	1426kg	187	5.7	-	-	155	+ Great engine, grown-up dynamics - Perhaps a little too grown-up for some	★★★★★

## SUPERCARS



### OUR CHOICE

**McLaren 720S.** The looks take a little getting used to, but there's no arguing with the driving experience, which blends scalpel-sharp precision with mind-boggling pace and suspension that works with the road to make it all useable. And it's faster than a P1 on track, too. An electrifying experience.



### BEST OF THE REST

The **Ferrari 488 Pista** (left) is an astonishing successor to the hardcore Speciale. The **Lamborghini Huracán Performante** counters with a rip-roaring naturally aspirated V10. The Lambo's relative, the **Audi R8 V10**, is a corking entry-level supercar, and the **Porsche 911 GT3 RS** is simply a superb road and track machine.

Aston Martin DBS Superleggera	252 D	£225,000	12/5204	715/6500	664/1800	1770kg	410	3.4	-	-	211	+ Broad spread of talents - It's not really 'Superlight'	★★★★★
Aston Martin Vanquish S (Mk2)	235 F	'17-18	12/5935	595/7000	465/5500	1739kg	348	3.5	3.9	8.3	201	+ Noise, poise, drama and charm - Not as rounded as the DB11	★★★★★
Aston Martin Vanquish S (Mk1)	110 F	'05-'07	12/5935	520/7000	425/5800	1875kg	282	4.8	4.9	10.1	200	+ Vanquish joins the supercar greats - A tad intimidating at the limit	★★★★★
Aston Martin One-77	179 F	'10-'12	12/7312	750/6000	553/7600	1740kg	438	3.7	-	-	220+	+ The engine, the looks, the drama - Gearbox hates manoeuvring; only 77 were made	★★★★★
Audi R8 V10 RWS	247 F	£112,450	10/5204	533/7800	398/6500	1590kg	341	3.7	-	-	199	+ The first rear-wheel-drive Audi for 40 years - Drives largely like its 4WD counterpart	★★★★★
Audi R8 V10	234 F	£126,200	10/5204	533/7800	398/6500	1640kg	330	3.5	-	-	198	+ All the R8 you really need - Some may hanker after a manual gearbox	★★★★★
Audi R8 Spyder V10	239 F	£132,020	10/5204	533/7800	398/6500	1720kg	315	3.6	3.2	7.2	197	+ Open top even better for enjoying that V10 - Being mistaken for a poser; cramped seating	★★★★★
Audi R8 V10 Plus	250 F	£141,200	10/5204	602/8250	413/6500	1580kg	387	3.2	2.9	6.3	205	+ Timeless drivetrain, huge performance - Some may find it ordinary at steady speeds	★★★★★
Audi R8 V10	181 D	'09-'15	10/5204	518/8000	391/6500	1620kg	325	4.1	3.9	8.4	194	+ Real supercar feel - The V8 is cheaper, and still superb	★★★★★
Audi R8 V10 Plus	190 F	'13-'15	10/5204	542/8000	398/6500	1570kg	351	3.8	-	-	198	+ An R8 fit to take on the 458 and 12C - Firm ride may be too much for some	★★★★★
Audi R8 GT	169 F	'10-'12	10/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1520kg	369	3.6	-	-	199	+ Everything we love about the R8 - Not as hardcore as we wanted	★★★★★
Audi R8 LMX	208 F	'15	10/5204	562/8000	398/6500	1595kg	358	3.4	-	-	198	+ More of everything that makes the R8 great - S-tronic transmission not perfect	★★★★★
BMW M1	110 F	'78-'81	6/3500	277/6500	239/5000	1303kg	216	5.9	-	-	161	+ Early supercar icon - A bit under-endowed these days	★★★★☆
Bugatti Chiron	244 F	c£2.5m	16/7993	1479/6700	1180/2000	1995kg	753	2.5	-	-	261	+ Backs up the numbers with feel and emotion - Limited top speed(!)	★★★★★
Bugatti Veyron 16.4	134 F	'05-'11	16/7993	987/6000	922/2200	1888kg	531	2.5	2.8	5.8	253	+ Superbly engineered four-wheel-drive quad-turbo rocket - Er, lacks luggage space?	★★★★★
Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Super Sport	151 F	'10-'11	16/7993	1183/6400	1160/3000	1838kg	654	2.5	-	-	258	+ Was once the world's fastest supercar - Limited to 258mph for us mere mortals	★★★★★
Bugatti EB110	078 F	'91-'95	12/3500	552/8000	451/3750	1618kg	347	3.6	-	-	213	+ Superbly engineered four-wheel-drive quad-turbo rocket - It just fizzled out	★★★★★
Chevrolet Corvette ZR1	133 F	'09-'13	8/6162	638/6500	604/3800	1528kg	424	3.4	3.8	7.6	205	+ Huge pace and character - Take plenty of brave pills if there's rain	★★★★★
Ferrari 488 GTB	228 F	£183,984	8/3902	661/6500	561/3000	1475kg	455	3.0	-	-	205+	+ Staggeringly capable - Lacks a little of the 458's heart and excitement	★★★★★
Ferrari 488 Pista	251 F	£253,715	8/3902	710/8000	568/3000	1385kg	521	2.9	-	-	211+	+ Ferrari at the very top of its game - Can feel like it's being held prisoner on the road	★★★★★
Ferrari 488 Spider	216 D	£204,411	8/3902	661/6500	561/3000	1525kg	440	3.0	-	-	203+	+ All the usual 488 thrills, but with the wind in your hair - See left	★★★★★
Ferrari 458 Italia	221 F	'09-'15	8/4497	562/9000	398/6000	1485kg	384	3.4	3.2	6.8	202+	+ An astounding achievement - Paddleshift only	★★★★★
Ferrari 458 Speciale	251 F	'13-'15	8/4497	597/9000	398/6000	1395kg	435	3.0	-	-	202+	+ evo Car of the Year 2014 - If you don't own a regular 458, nothing	★★★★★
Ferrari F430	163 F	'04-'10	8/4308	483/8500	343/5250	1449kg	339	4.0	-	-	196+	+ Just brilliant - Didn't you read the plus point?	★★★★★
Ferrari 430 Scuderia	251 F	'07-'10	8/4308	503/8500	347/5250	1350kg	378	3.6	3.5	7.7	198	+ Successful F1 technology transplant - Likes to shout about it	★★★★★



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MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE NO.	PRICE	ENGINE CYL/CC	BHP/RPM	LB FT/RPM	WEIGHT	BHP/TON	0-62MPH (CLAIMED)	0-60MPH (TESTED)	0-100MPH (TESTED)	MAX MPH	EVO RATING	
Ferrari F12 Berlinetta	190 F	'12-'17	12/6262	730/8250	509/6000	1630kg	455	3.1	-	-	211+	+ 730bhp isn't too much power for the road - Super-quick steering is an acquired taste	★★★★★
Ferrari F12tdf	230 F	'17	12/6262	769/8500	520/6250	1520kg	514	2.9	-	-	211+	+ Alarmingly fast - Doesn't flow like a 458 Speciale	★★★★★
Ferrari 599 GTB Fiorano	101 F	'06-'12	12/5999	611/7600	448/5600	1690kg	368	3.7	3.5	7.4	205	+ evo Car of the Year 2006 - Banks are getting harder to rob	★★★★★
Ferrari 599 GTO	161 F	'11-'12	12/5999	661/8250	457/6500	1605kg	418	3.4	-	-	208+	+ One of the truly great Ferraris - Erm, the air con isn't very good	★★★★★
Ferrari 575M Fiorano Handling Pack	200 F	'02-'06	12/5748	508/7250	434/5250	1688kg	298	3.7	4.2	9.6	205+	+ Fiorano pack makes 575 truly great - It should have been standard	★★★★★
Ferrari 550 Maranello	169 F	'96-'02	12/5474	478/7000	420/5000	1690kg	287	4.4	-	-	199	+ Everything - Nothing	★★★★★
Ferrari GTC4 Lusso T	246 D	£200,165	8/3855	602/7500	560/3000	1865kg	328	3.5	-	-	199	+ Effortless, comfortable GT - Misses the richer soundtrack of the V12	★★★★★
Ferrari GTC4 Lusso	225 D	£230,430	12/6262	680/8000	514/5750	1920kg	360	3.4	-	-	208	+ Rear-wheel steering increases agility - Not as engaging as other Ferraris	★★★★★
Ferrari FF	194 F	'11-'15	12/6262	651/8000	504/6000	1880kg	347	3.7	-	-	208	+ Four seats and 4WD, but a proper Ferrari - Looks divide opinion	★★★★★
Ferrari 612 Scaglietti	090 F	'04-'11	12/5748	533/7250	434/5250	1875kg	289	4.0	4.3	9.8	199	+ Awesomely capable grand tourer - See above	★★★★★
Ferrari LaFerrari	203 F	'13-'15	12/6262	950/9000	664/6750	1574kg	613	3.0	-	-	217+	+ Perhaps the greatest Ferrari ever - Brakes lack a touch of precision on track	★★★★★
Ferrari Enzo	203 F	'02-'04	12/5999	651/7800	485/5500	1365kg	485	3.7	3.5	6.7	217+	+ Intoxicating, exploitable - Cabin detailing falls short of a Zonda or F1's	★★★★★
Ferrari F50	186 F	'95-'97	12/4699	513/8500	347/6500	1230kg*	424	3.9	-	-	202	+ A better driver's Ferrari than the 288, F40 or Enzo - Not better looking, though	★★★★★
Ferrari F40	222 F	'87-'92	8/2936	471/7000	426/4000	1100kg*	437	4.1	-	-	201	+ Brutally fast - It's in the dictionary under 'turbo lag'	★★★★★
Ford GT	253 F	\$450,000	6/3497	647/6250	550/5900	1385kg	475	2.8	-	-	216	+ Everything it does on track - Too many of the things it does on the road	★★★★★
Ford GT	200 F	'04-'06	8/5409	550/6500	500/3750	1583kg	353	3.9	-	-	205	+ Our 2005 Car of the Year - Don't scalp yourself getting in	★★★★★
Hennessey Venom GT	180 F	'11-'17	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	246 F	£144,765	6/3493	573	476/2000	1776kg	328	2.9	3.0	6.9	191	+ Blisteringly quick and brilliantly engineered - Limited range on a full tank	★★★★★
Honda NSX (NA2)	188 F	'97-'05	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1410kg	196	5.7	-	-	168	+ The original useable supercar - 276bhp sounds a bit weedy today	★★★★★
Honda NSX-R (NA2)	100 F	'02-'03	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1270kg	221	4.4	-	-	168	+ evo Car of the Year 2002 - Hard to find in the UK	★★★★★
Jaguar XJ220	157 F	'92-'94	6/3498	542/7200	475/4500	1470kg	375	3.7	-	-	213	+ Britain's greatest supercar... - ...until McLaren built the F1	★★★★☆
Koenigsegg One:1	202 F	£2.0m	8/5065	1341/7500	1011/6000	1360kg	1002	2.9	-	-	273	+ One of the most powerful cars we've tested - It's sold out. We couldn't afford one anyway	★★★★★
Koenigsegg Agera R	180 F	'11-'14	8/5032	1124/7100	885/2700	1435kg	796	2.8	-	-	273	+ As fast and exciting as your body can handle - It's Veyron money	★★★★★
Koenigsegg CCR Edition	118 F	'08-'10	8/4800	1004/7000	796/5600	1280kg*	797	2.9	-	-	250+	+ One of the world's fastest cars - Spiky power delivery	★★★★★
Lamborghini Huracán RWD	229 F	£155,400	10/5204	572/8000	397/6500	1389kg*	385	3.4	-	-	199	+ 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	1422kg*	430	3.2	-	-	201+	+ Defies the numbers; incredible point-to-point pace - Takes work to find its sweet-spot	★★★★★
Lamborghini Huracán Performante	242 F	£215,000	10/5204	631/8000	442/6500	1382kg*	464	2.9	-	-	201+	+ The realisation of the Huracán's ever elusive potential - Kitchen-worktop carbonfibre	★★★★★
Lamborghini Huracán Performante Spyder	253 D	£238,000	10/5204	631/8000	442/6500	1507kg*	425	3.1	-	-	201+	+ As above, but even louder for the driver - Not for the shy and retiring	★★★★★
Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4	180 D	'08-'13	10/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1410kg*	398	3.7	-	-	202	+ Still a missile from A to B - Feels a little dated next to some rivals	★★★★☆
Lamborghini Gallardo LP550-2 Balboni	138 F	'09-'10	10/5204	542/8000	398/6500	1380kg*	399	3.9	-	-	199	+ Mad, rear-wheel-drive Lambo - Limited numbers	★★★★☆
Lamborghini LP570-4 Superleggera	152 F	'10-'13	10/5204	562/8000	398/6500	1340kg*	426	3.4	3.5	-	202	+ Less weight and more power than original Superleggera - LP560-4 runs it very close	★★★★★
Lamborghini Gallardo	094 F	'03-'08	10/4961	513/8000	376/4250	1430kg*	364	4.0	4.3	9.4	196	+ On a full-bore start it spins all four wheels. Cool - Slightly clunky e-gear	★★★★★
Lamborghini Gallardo Superleggera	104 F	'07-'08	10/4961	522/8000	376/4250	1420kg*	373	3.8	-	-	196	+ Lighter, more agile - Grabby carbon brakes, clunky e-gear	★★★★☆
Lamborghini Aventador	194 F	'11-'17	12/6498	690/8250	509/5500	1575kg*	445	2.9	-	-	217	+ Most important new Lambo since the Countach - Can feel a little clumsy	★★★★★
Lamborghini Aventador S	246 F	£271,146	12/6498	730/8400	509/5500	1575kg*	471	2.9	-	-	217	+ A more agile, more connected Aventador - Synthetic steering	★★★★★
Lamborghini Aventador S Roadster	251 D	£301,754	12/6498	730/8400	509/5500	1625kg*	456	3.0	-	-	217	+ As dynamic as the coupe - Fiddly and (very) expensive roof	★★★★★
Lamborghini Aventador SV	216 F	'15-'17	12/6498	740/8400	509/5500	1525kg*	493	2.8	-	-	217+	+ More exciting than the standard Aventador - ISR gearbox inconsistent	★★★★★
Lamborghini Murciélago LP640	093 F	'06-'11	12/6496	631/8000	487/6000	1665kg*	385	3.8	-	-	211	+ Compelling old-school supercar - You'd better be on your toes	★★★★★
Lamborghini Murciélago LP670-4 SV	200 F	'09-'11	12/6496	661/8000	487/6500	1565kg*	429	3.3	3.2	7.3	212	+ A supercar in its truest, wildest sense - Be prepared for stares	★★★★★
Lamborghini Murciélago	089 D	'01-'06	12/6192	572/7500	479/5400	1650kg*	351	4.0	-	-	206	+ Gorgeous, capable and incredibly friendly - V12 feels stressed	★★★★★
Lamborghini Diablo VT 6.0	019 F	'00-'02	12/5992	543/7100	457/5500	1625kg*	343	3.9	-	-	208	+ Best-built, best-looking Diablo of all - People's perceptions	★★★★★
Lexus LFA/LFA Nürburgring	200 F	'10-'12	10/4805	552/8700	354/6800	1480kg	379	3.7	-	-	202	+ Absurd and compelling supercar - Badge and price don't quite match	★★★★★
Maserati MC12	079 F	'04-'05	12/5998	621/7500	481/5500	1445kg	437	3.8	-	-	205	+ Rarer than an Enzo - The Ferrari's better	★★★★☆
McLaren 540C	250 F	£127,890	8/3799	533/7500	398/3500	1311kg*	413	3.5	3.2	6.4	199	+ An excellent junior supercar - The 570S is still better to drive	★★★★★
McLaren 570S	229 F	£149,000	8/3799	562/7500	443/5000	1440kg	397	3.2	-	-	204	+ A truly fun and engaging sports car - McLaren doesn't call it a supercar!	★★★★★
McLaren 570S Track Pack	235 D	£159,750	8/3799	562/7500	443/5000	1415kg	404	3.2	-	-	204	+ Feels like a 675LT that's been dialled down a couple of notches - Engine response lacks edge	★★★★★
McLaren 570S Spider	239 F	£164,750	8/3799	562/7500	443/5000	1498kg	381	3.2	-	-	204	+ Even more fun and engagement than hard-top 570S - Industrial engine note	★★★★★
McLaren 570GT	228 F	£157,000	8/3799	562/7500	443/5000	1495kg	382	3.4	-	-	204	+ Blurs the line between grand tourer and supercar brilliantly - 570S is more involving	★★★★★
McLaren 570GT Sport Pack	246 D	£161,900	8/3799	562/7500	443/5000	1486kg	384	3.4	-	-	204	+ 570GT looks with 570S responses - It should be the standard set-up	★★★★★
McLaren 720S	244 F	£218,020	8/3994	710/7250	568/5500	1283kg*	562	2.9	2.9	5.6	212	+ evo Car of the Year 2017 - Favours precision over emotion	★★★★★
McLaren 650S	196 F	'14-'17	8/3799	641/7250	500/6000	1428kg	456	3.0	-	-	207	+ Better brakes, balance and looks than 12C; more power too - Which all comes at a price	★★★★★
McLaren 675LT	248 F	'15-'17	8/3799	666/7100	516/5500	1328kg	510	2.9	-	-	205	+ Runner-up at eCoty 2015; asks questions of the P1 - Aventador price tag	★★★★★
McLaren 12C	228 F	'11-'14	8/3799	616/7500	442/3000	1434kg	435	3.3	-	-	207	+ Staggering performance, refinement - Engine noise can be grating	★★★★☆
McLaren Senna	252 F	£750,000	8/3999	789/7250	590/5500	1198kg*	669	2.8	-	-	211	+ Astounding performance, stellar presence - Only 500 being made	★★★★★
McLaren P1	228 F	'13-'15	8/3799	903/7500	664/4000	1490kg	616	2.8	-	-	217	+ Freakish breadth of ability - At its mind-bending best on track	★★★★★
McLaren F1	228 F	'94-'98	12/6064	627/7500	479/4000	1138kg	560	3.2	-	-	240	+ Still the most single-minded supercar ever - There'll never be another	★★★★★
Mercedes-AMG GT R	253 F	£144,460	8/3982	577/6250	516/1900	1555kg	377	3.6	3.3	7.1	198	+ Fun and blisteringly fast; a true rival for the 911 GT3 - A touch showy, perhaps	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG	159 F	'10-'15	8/6208	563/6800	479/4750	1620kg	335	3.9	4.1	8.4	197	+ Great engine and chassis (gullwing doors too!) - Slightly tardy gearbox	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Black Series	204 F	'13-'15	8/6208	622/7400	468/5500	1550kg	408	3.6	-	-	196	+ Stunning engine, superb body control - Be careful on less-than-smooth roads...	★★★★★
Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren	228 F	'03-'07	8/5439	617/6500	575/3250	1693kg	370	3.8	-	-	208	+ Zonda-pace, 575-style drivability - Dreadful brake feel	★★★★☆
Noble M600	186 F	£200,000	8/4439	650/6800	604/3800	1198kg*	551	3.5	3.8	7.7	225	+ Spiritual successor to the Ferrari F40 - It's a bit pricey	★★★★★
Pagani Huayra	185 F	£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 S 7.3	096 F	'02-'05	12/7291	555/5900	553/4050	1280kg*	441	3.7	-	-	220	+ evo Car of the Year 2001 (in earlier 7.0 form) - Values have gone up a fair bit since then	★★★★★
Pagani Zonda F	186 F	'05-'06	12/7291	602/6150	575/4000	1230kg*	497	3.6	-	-	214+	+ Everything an Italian supercar ought to be - Looks a bit blingy next to a Carrera GT	★★★★★
Pagani Zonda Cinque Roadster	147 D	'09-'10	12/7291	669/6200	575/4000	1210kg*	562	3.4	-	-	217+	+ The best Zonda ever - Doesn't come up in the classifieds often	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 (991.2)	247 F	£111,802	6/3996	493/8250	339/6000	1413kg	355	3.9	-	-	198	+ Almost impossible to criticise - Not the easiest car to place an order for	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991.2)	249 F	£141,346	6/3996	513/8250	347/6000	1430kg	364	3.2	-	-	193	+ Even better than the 991.1 RS - See above	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT2 RS (991.2)	253 F	£207,506	6/3800	690/7000	553/2500	1470kg	477	2.8	-	-	211	+ A proper, angry turbocharged Porsche - 'Limited availability'	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 (991.1)	206 F	'13-'16	6/3799	468/8250	324/6250	1430kg	333	3.5	-	-	196	+ evo Car of the Year 2013 - PDK only	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (991.1)	223 F	'15-'16	6/3996	493/8250	339/6250	1420kg	353	3.3	3.0	7.1	193	+ Sensationally good to drive - The Cayman GT4 is even better	★★★★★
Porsche 911 R (991.1)	229 F	'16	6/3996	493/8250	339/6250	1370kg	366	3.8	-	-	200	+ evo Car of the Year 2016 - Limited availability	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.2)	182 F	'09-'11	6/3797	429/7600	317/6250	1395kg	312	4.1	4.2	9.2	194	+ Even better than the car it replaced - Give us a minute...	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (3.8, 997.2)	248 F	'10-'11	6/3797	444/7900	317/6750	1370kg	329	4.0	-	-	193	+ We named it our favourite car from the first 200 issues of evo - For people like us, nothing	★★★★★
Porsche 911 GT3 RS 4.0 (997.2)	187 F	'11-'12	6/3996	493/8250	339/5750	1360kg	368	3.8	-				





## TOKYO

*A thundering V12 for company makes light work of the dash to a modern motoring Mecca*

MOTORWAY MILES TICK BY, BUT EYES grow heavy. A can of something sweet and caffeinated staves off slumbering, but not for long. Some services. A corner of the car park. Recline the seat and... sleep.

This brings a whole new meaning to 'waiting at the lights'. Everywhere you look there are flashing, static or strobing specks with colours seemingly spanning the known spectrum and beyond. From the muted, mundane glow behind office windows to bold advertisements on screens and the wacky warning lights that mark out roadworks like miniature funfairs, everything is lit up. Exacerbated by the night, it's a fluorescent soup that your eyes struggle to drink in.

Painted on the road are big white zebra stripes to channel human traffic across wide open tarmac spaces. But there are no people. No traffic, either. It is strangely still. It is *lumière* without the *son*.

Reach across with your right hand and select first. Luckily the vision from behind the flat-bottomed wheel is exemplary, the glass surrounding you so that it feels more like the canopy on a fighter jet. More revs than necessary, no finessing the clutch and a perfect V12 soundtrack rises up amongst the twinkling towers as the rear tyres paint two neat black lines across white.

Second, third, fourth and the lights become a vibrant blur in your peripheral vision. A road above you. A ramp to the left. A split-second decision and you're climbing on a curving concrete corridor like a pinball in Tokyo's machine. One lane becomes two as you join the Shuto Expressway. The car breathes with the road beneath you, the damping delicious. Flashing arrows point the way, *Ridge Racer* released from the digital into reality. Although the car is wide, the steering is so precise and the suspension so

communicative that you can thread your way through the tunnels and constant corners with confidence. And all the time that spine-tingling yowl, the sound rising and falling both with the throttle and the ever-changing proximity of the structures around you.

This, you now recognise, is the Bayshore Route. Home of the Mid Night Club. Surely it would approve of these empty roads. Time for a top-speed run. The Zonda feels like it should be good for more than 200mph but, as the lights of the city diminish, 199mph is the most it will manage. Fast enough as you flash across the bridge above Yokohama Bay, a sparkling Italian jewel dashing towards the docks and Daikoku PA. The road circles the famous parking area like some automotive holding pattern and below you see, finally, the lights of other cars.

As you pull up in a corner of the car park, silence the Pagani's theatrical Saturn rocket exhausts and get out to look at the nearest M-spec metal, the cold hits you. Your neck feels stiff. There is a Trueno with one headlight up and cautiously you open an eye to mimic it. The salubrious South Mimms services outside are still dark. Just a dream.

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A CURVING CONCRETE  
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