PERFORMANCE CAR OF THE YEAR

BBC TopGear



Starring
McLaren P1
Porsche 918
BMW M4
Audi S1
Caterham 160R
Corvette C7
Porsche Cayman GTS
Jaguar F-Type R
VW Golf R and many, many more...

THE STIG PRESENTS SPEED WEEK 2014

16 INCREDIBLE PERFORMANCE CARS, SEVEN DAYS, ONLY ONE SMALL FIRE

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SWEDEN
HEAD
NORTH
UNITED
KINGDOM
POLAND
GERMANY
FRANCE
ITALY



Sharan. The seven seater one.
There's a Volkswagen for all of us.

Official fuel consumption in mpg (litre/100km) for the Volkswagen Sharan range: urban 24.4 (11.6) – 42.2 (6.7); extra urban 42.2 (6.7) – 57.6 (4.9); combined 33.2 (8.5) – 50.4 (5.6). CO_2 emissions 198 – 146g/km.



up! The surprisingly spacious one.
There's a Volkswagen for all of us.

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Das Auto.

Official fuel consumption in mpg (litre/100km) for the Volkswagen up! range: urban 47.9 (5.9) – 56.5 (5.0); extra urban 70.6 (4.0) – 78.5 (3.6); combined 60.1 (4.7) – 68.9 (4.1). CO_2 emissions 108 – 95g/km.



Scirocco. The sporty one.
There's a Volkswagen for all of us.

Official fuel consumption in mpg (litre/100km) for the Volkswagen Scirocco range: urban 28.0 (10.1) – 51.4 (5.5); extra urban 47.1 (6.0) – 70.6 (4.0); combined 37.7 (7.5) – 62.8 (4.5). CO_2 emissions 174 – 118g/km.



Touareg. The 4x4 one.
There's a Volkswagen for all of us.

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Das Auto.

Official fuel consumption in mpg (litre/100km) for the Volkswagen Touareg range: urban 23.7 (11.9) – 34.4 (8.2); extra urban 35.8 (7.9) – 44.8 (6.3); combined 31.0 (9.1) – 40.4 (7.0). CO_2 emissions 239 – 184g/km.



Golf Cabriolet. The sunny one.
There's a Volkswagen for all of us.

Official fuel consumption in mpg (litre/100km) for the Volkswagen Golf Cabriolet range: urban 25.7 (11.0) – 54.3 (5.2); extra urban 43.5 (6.5) – 68.9 (4.1); combined 34.4 (8.2) – 64.2 (4.4). CO_2 emissions 190 – 117g/km.



CC. The luxurious one.
There's a Volkswagen for all of us.

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Das Auto.

Official fuel consumption in mpg (litre/100km) for the Volkswagen CC range: urban 26.2 (10.8) – 49.6 (5.7); extra urban 47.9 (5.9) – 72.4 (3.9); combined 36.7 (7.7) – 61.4 (4.6). CO_2 emissions 179 – 120g/km.



Tiguan. The multi-talented one.
There's a Volkswagen for all of us.

Official fuel consumption in mpg (litre/100km) for the Volkswagen Tiguan range: urban 23.9 (11.8) – 45.6 (6.2); extra urban 42.2 (6.7) – 60.1 (4.7); combined 32.8 (8.6) – 53.3 (5.3). CO_2 emissions 199 – 138g/km.



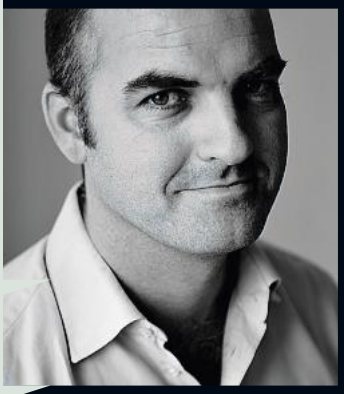
Beetle. The original one.
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Das Auto.

Official fuel consumption in mpg (litre/100km) for the Volkswagen Beetle range: urban 28.0 (10.1) – 58.9 (4.8); extra urban 46.3 (6.1) – 72.4 (3.9); combined 37.2 (7.6) – 65.7 (4.3). CO_2 emissions 176 – 113g/km.



The automotive industry likes to bombard us with a triple threat of facts, figures and data, with which they hope to prove statistically – by one subtly interpreted metric, at least – that their creation is the best. Makers of fast cars especially love a good set of stats. But this year has seen pretty much every single performance benchmark swept aside by the LaFerrari, McLaren P1 and Porsche 918 Spyder, as their three-way battle for supremacy has rewritten the rule book.

In this issue, we've gathered the greatest performance cars of 2014 at the fabulous Castellolí circuit to the west of Barcelona. A gathering that not only brings the P1 and 918 face to face for the first time anywhere in the world, but also creates an eye-watering set of figures: a combined value of £2,795,430, with 99 cylinders and 53,140cc developing a total of 7,221bhp and 6,388lb ft of torque. Basically a stat-driven and complicated way of saying this was clearly the greatest set of cars we've ever assembled for *TopGear* Speed Week.

But figures can be misleading, and open to creative interpretation. They're also cold, lacking in emotion and, while they continue to become increasingly fantastical, they're only part of the story. No set of statistics can ever put a smile on your face (unless in bar room Top Trumps), or deliver that infectious mixture of speed, emotion and feedback that transforms a set of figures from pure maths to pure emotion. It's that stuff that puts a car into a different league.

It's that elusive quality, that visceral response to a car – The Fizz, as James would call it – that all of us who work on (and who read) *TopGear* magazine are looking for, especially in performance cars. Which is why, while we love to play the numbers game, no car will ever rate highly in *TopGear*'s Speed Week based on pure data alone.

As the week's exhaustive – and occasionally mildly fiery – testing continued, and The Stig vaporised another set of tyres in the name of research, the mathematics and statistics took a back seat. And that's when The Fizz side of the equation began to dominate, in what has proved to be the greatest performance car battle in *TopGear* history.

Enjoy the issue,

Charlie
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



THIS MONTH'S iPAD EXCLUSIVES

Prepare the timing equipment...
Watch as The Stig obliterates tyres and track times ragging our Performance Car of the Year specimens on hot laps around Castellolí

Ignition

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Slo-mo sideways
Drifting, *TopGear* style, with the BMW M4, Honda BTCC Civic and McLaren P1

P1 vs 160. Really
McLaren takes on Caterham in a drag race. Bets on which wins, please

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Fourteen astonishing road cars, a couple of banzai racers and a white-suited automaton. Welcome

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MOTION & EMOTION

PEUGEOT

INBOX

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FROM TOPGEAR.COM

MERCEDES BENT

RM AUCTIONS UNEARTHED THIS 300SL, RETRO-MODDED BY AMG. WHICH CLASSIC WOULD YOU REIMAGINE WITH MODERN UNDERPINNINGS?

I'd upgrade a 288 GTO with the underpinnings of a 458 but with no stability control. Might keep the ABS, though...
Duncan Cuningham

The rims and gearbox have ruined it for me. Still want an Eagle E-type or Singer 911
Osn2112

It would be interesting to do the BMW M1 with modern underpinnings, or a 635CSi (I've seen one with a modern M5 engine, though)
FL450

I'd remake the BMW 507, one of the best-looking roadsters ever built in my opinion
Lucas

An X5. But before you put a price on my head, hear me out. Imagine an X5 built for off-roading. Put the M5/M6/X6 V8 in it, and build special body parts. Make it more utilitarian on the inside, and voilà
Sideways_1M

BMW did that already and came out with the awesome-looking Z8... too bad it didn't drive like a BMW
imageWIS

I'D DRIVE A G-WIZ INSTEAD OF THAT MERC

SCOTT BURGE

TWEETS & STUFF

We've entered the Turner Prize. It's an installation with repeats of *TG* on loop
@JOIN_DAVE

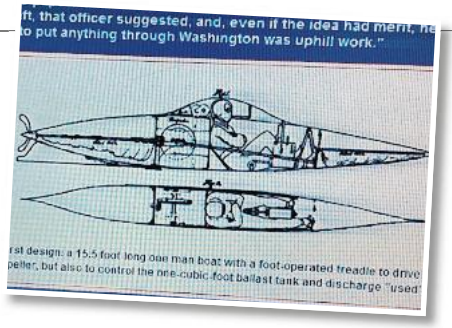
I dare you, as a human, to dislike *TopGear*
@CARLSON987

I'm single because I have *TopGear* phone wallpaper
@NICOLEMENAM

We should start a petition to treble *TopGear*'s budget. I need more
CHRIS HALL

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DEAR *TG*,
While perusing the historical timeline of submarines, I found Victorian Stig. He peddled it. Please give me a new car.
Barnaby Toye, via email

Coincidentally, the only prizes left this month are Victorian submarines, so no car for you...



DEAR *TG*,
The tag says it all. Spotted on a Nissan Leaf in Florida, USA.
Gary Mone, via email

Wonderful. Can we interest you in a Victorian submarine?



DEAR *TG*,
Is this the fastest bin lorry... in the world?
Jon Lejcar, via email

That looks rubbish...



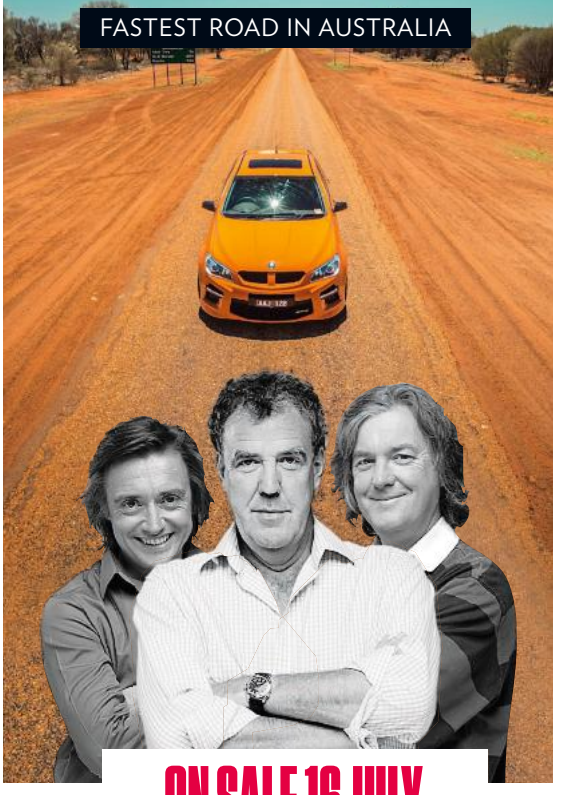
DEAR *TG*,
This is a Nissan Leaf Hearse. Thank you.
Shloime Well, via email

Some say its battery died. Sadface



NEXT MONTH

ADVENTURES ISSUE



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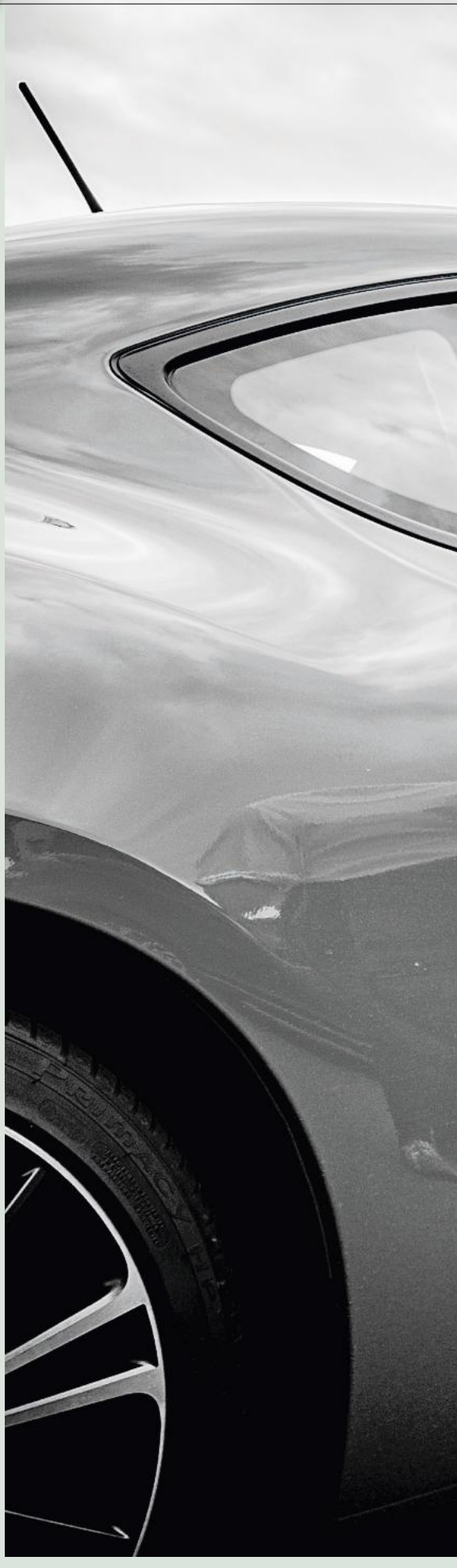
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Model shown is a Civic Type R concept car only. New Civic Type R available summer 2015

JEREMY CLARKSON

Just because you like something doesn't mean you like *everything* else like it. As Jeremy has found out, to his cost...



When I was 11, I had a record collection which included albums such as *Who's Next*, *Led Zep IV*, *Fragile*, *Hunky Dory*, *Meddle* and, yes (he said proudly), something by the Carpenters. So, a wide and varied selection I'm sure you'll agree.

Not to my grandfather, it wasn't. As far as he could tell, it all sounded exactly the same. 'Rainy Days and Mondays' was completely indistinguishable from 'Won't Get Fooled Again'. 'South Side of the Sky' was, note for note, identical to 'Black Dog'. It was all just "modern music".

So, as my twelfth birthday approached, he bought me an album of West Country folksy banjo music. I can see his thought process clearly. Jeremy likes modern music. This is modern. He will, therefore, like it.

Well I didn't. And getting my face to say I was pleased with my birthday present was the hardest thing I've ever had to do. Outwardly, I was making mmm noises and saying I'd listen to it later. Inwardly, however, I was screaming. "You could have bought me *The Yes Album*. I would have liked that. But you've spent your money instead on a bunch of wannabe Wurzels."

It's strange, isn't it? In the whole of 1971, fewer than 700 rock albums were released, so it would surely be safe to assume that as I had an interest in rock, I'd like all of them. But I didn't.

It's much the same story with those who like literature. It's no good saying "Ah. Great aunt Susan is very interested in reading, so I shall buy her this new spy thriller by Dean Koontz."

We certainly see it with religion. People invent imaginary friends and then have actual shooting wars with those whose imaginary friends are slightly different.

You'd imagine that there can't possibly be differences between those who operate in the narrow band of fishing. That when it comes to pulling a bream out of a river and then throwing it back again, there can't possibly be factions. Go on, then. I dare you. Buy a trout tickler a fly and see how far you get.

Or if you really want to see the face I had to present to my grandfather in 1971, buy someone who's interested in the theatre a couple of tickets to see a schmaltzy musical.

We see exactly the same problem in the world of motoring. When someone says they like cars, it doesn't mean they like all cars and everything associated with them. So no. You may not go out and buy them a nice pair of MG driving gloves.

Last weekend while filming an item for the next series of *TopGear*, I dropped in at Castle Combe racetrack which was playing host to an event called Japfest. It was enormous. Fifteen thousand people had descended on this quiet corner of Hammond County in their Evos and their Subarus and their hunkered-down Supras.

As an event, it was tremendous. I saw more crashes on the track in one day than I've seen in all my life. I had a lovely burger. And I'll be honest: the quality of the drifting was top notch. If this is your kind of thing, well, good luck to ya, fella; help yourself, and have a slap on the back from me. But modified Japanese cars with flames up the side aren't really my thing. I dunno. Maybe it's because I don't have enough tattoos.

The next day, I went to another classic car event which was a bit different. Held in a field just up the road from Castle Combe, it was also for people who like cars but it was a bit more Pimm's and tweed. Hosted by veteran car collector Nick Mason and his flying chum Vic Norman, guests could wander about in the sunshine looking at a collection of Sixties Ferraris, some old Bentleys and the odd XK120.

> "It was tremendous. I saw more crashes in one day than I've seen in all my life"



It was all too lovely for words, and I had the loveliest time talking to Nick's guests, who were lovely and interesting. But the cars? Again. Not really my bag. I wish those who like this kind of stuff all the very best. You get priapic over a 250 GTO's pedigree. I... er... what do I get priapic over? It's a good question.

On the very same weekend that I was at Japfest and Nick Mason's right crowd without the crowding, the whole Formula One circus had arrived in Europe for the first time this year and set up shop in Spain. So was I wandering about with an ear glued to the radio, desperate to see who was on pole and how Lewis was getting on? I'm afraid not. I'll happily watch a grand prix if I'm at home on a lazy Sunday afternoon. But I'm not going to go out of my way to see how far Pastor Maldonado got this time without crashing into someone.

Other cars I'm not interested in are mid-range hatchbacks or any so-called crossovers. I'm not that bothered about big saloons either, or anything made by Hyundai or Seat. Or Peugeot.

I quite like looking at cars that were around in my youth. I'm partial to a BMW 3.0 CSL and would pause awhile to look at an NSU Ro80. I'm always happy to see a Lancia as well, especially a Fulvia or an Integrale. But I wouldn't want to own any of them. Because there'd be no iPod connectivity or aircon. And, more importantly, no guarantee that I'd get to where I was going.

Supercars? Nope. Been there. Done that. Convertibles? Yes, but I'm too old. I'm bored with the AMG thing now they've gone all quiet. And while I still admire a Ferrari, I can't actually put my hand up and say I'd have one. Not since May did.

I like small sports cars. I like small hatches. I like the V8 Bentley Continental and at this point you are almost certainly sitting there wondering how on earth I can say I like cars when the only cars I actually like are the Mazda MX-5, the VW Up and the Bentley Continental. But only if it's a V8.

Well, I'll tell you. My love of cars has become narrowed over the years to the feeling I get when the sun is shining and I'm driving quickly in something that has about 500 horsepower and suspension that's been set up by a company that knows what it's doing. I like the feel of the cornering. And the buzz of the acceleration. And I like to be air-conditioned when all this is happening. And it's impossible to get these sensations from anything or anywhere else.

In short, I like cars but only if they are brilliant and new and reliable and comfortable and I can plug my iPod into the sound system and listen to *Who's Next*. There are very, very few which meet all of my requirements but... well, let me put it this way, for my next birthday, I think I'd be very happy with a BMW M4.

BBC TWO
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Official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the Ford Fiesta ST 1.6 EcoBoost (182PS): urban 35.8 (7.9), extra urban 58.9 (4.8), combined 47.9 (5.9). Official CO_2 emissions 138g/km.

Vehicle shown is the Ford Fiesta ST2 in Molten Orange with ST Style Pack (colour and Pack available at additional cost). The mpg figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results (EU Directive and Regulation 692/2008), are provided for comparability purposes and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

Ford

Go Further

RICHARD HAMMOND

Cars communicating to create a database which tells drivers where there are jams or clear motorways? Sounds good to us...



Some Americans at a university in Virginia are working on cars and bikes that will talk to each other. Not shoot the breeze about the weather, obviously, but share information about who is where, doing what and how fast they're doing it. No doubt there are other boffins about the world working on similar systems. The theory being that a motorcycle, say, will be able to pull up at a junction and it will automatically know that a car is coming along the road it's about to cross.

V clever. And about time too. It's not as though this technology isn't already around. I can navigate by satellite on my bike, there are cars you can switch on to preheat while you're still in bed and people can use their mobiles to see if there are other people in the area who fancy hooking up for a meal and chat.

I simply cannot see how it has taken so long for us to equip our cars and motorcycles with the exact same kinds of technology that might save lives, time and fuel and make our lives better. And while I'm on the subject, why can't the same people turn their attention to motorway information boards? They're rubbish. I've never believed anything any of them has told me. Which means on the one occasion they tell me that there is a massive delay ahead or a rampaging Godzilla is coming the other way, and there actually *is* a massive delay ahead or a rampaging Godzilla *is* coming the other way I shall ignore it as I always do and barrel headlong into the jam or Godzilla's evil clutches. It's the information age, for pity's sake, so let's share it.

If cars and bikes can warn one another that they are coming round the corner, then they can tell one another how fast, how good the brakes are and surely, how lively or dopey the codger or bright young thing at the wheel manages to be as a rule... and whether said car or bike reckons there's a cat's chance in hell of them pulling up before a crash. Driving could be monitored by the car; events analysed and the information stored and cached ready for broadcast to others in the vicinity.

Information about traffic delays, jams or, better still, empty stretches of motorway could be shared in nanoseconds and distributed to vehicles heading for that area. So why the bloody hell isn't it happening? An app for your phone costs what, 49p? So don't tell me the software is expensive. And we regularly set off on the school run in a car with a hundred times the computing power of a lunar landing mission of a few decades ago, so the software can be absorbed as easily as an M&M can be by a 10-year-old.

There will, inevitably, be objectors. I believe they will divide into two schools. There will be those who claim it is an infringement of their human rights to have their driving, journeys and locations monitored by the car and the resulting data made available to others on the network, wherever and whoever they are.

So what? Unless you are a spy – and if you were, you wouldn't tell anyone, obviously – then who gives a damn about where you're going or when? If it's useful for another driver to know that my car is in a massive jam on the A40 at Gloucester and it might be better diverting round the M50, what skin is it off my nose?

They might be rushing to deliver a baby or put out a fire. Yes, I might be more sensitive about it if I were regularly making runs to dispose of nuclear waste in a top-secret plant, but I suspect these things are taken care of separately under special conditions. Your school run, office commute, supermarket dash or Sunday run in the country are, I'm afraid, of naff all interest or use to me or anyone else.

And the same goes for all of us, but the prevailing traffic conditions, precise positioning of your car on the road I'm about to join and a rough estimate of your ability to spot me on my bike and avoid or brake in time are, naturally, of immense interest, so why not share them?

The second school of objectors will mither on about how they resent the interference, the suggestion that a machine knows better than them: that their decades of hard-earned experience won in the real, organic world is somehow of less value than a massive, nationally linked network of live, comprehensive, real-time data distributed and shared among every car on the road and updated constantly in nanoseconds to become a vast, shared intellect.

> "Your school run or office commute are of naff interest to anyone else"

Yeah, well it is better, so just suck it up and stop moaning. I, for one, will not be able to contain myself. I can't wait to set out in my ageing Mustang or on my old Norton, both without a brain of any semblance, let alone access to a global, digital brain of advanced interconnectivity.

I shall arrive at junctions, and my soul will vibrate with the thrill of timing for myself the exact moment I should pull out. I shall make my own decisions about routes, and stand by those decisions when I sink into a mire of traffic. Unless I *need* to get anywhere: in which case, I shall hook up, press GO and join in with the rest. What's wrong with that?

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Defectors willkommen

The Volvo V40 R-Design

For years we've been indoctrinated to believe that German cars are the only choice; the only option. But an alternative is out there, and it's closer than you think. Just look north to Sweden, and come see what's on the other side:

- Adaptive Digital Display
- R-Design Sports Upholstery with perforated leather
- 5 spoke diamond cut 17" Ixion alloy wheels
- Up to 83.1 MPG (Combined figure)

PERSONAL CONTRACT PURCHASE
REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLE: V40 D2 R-DESIGN

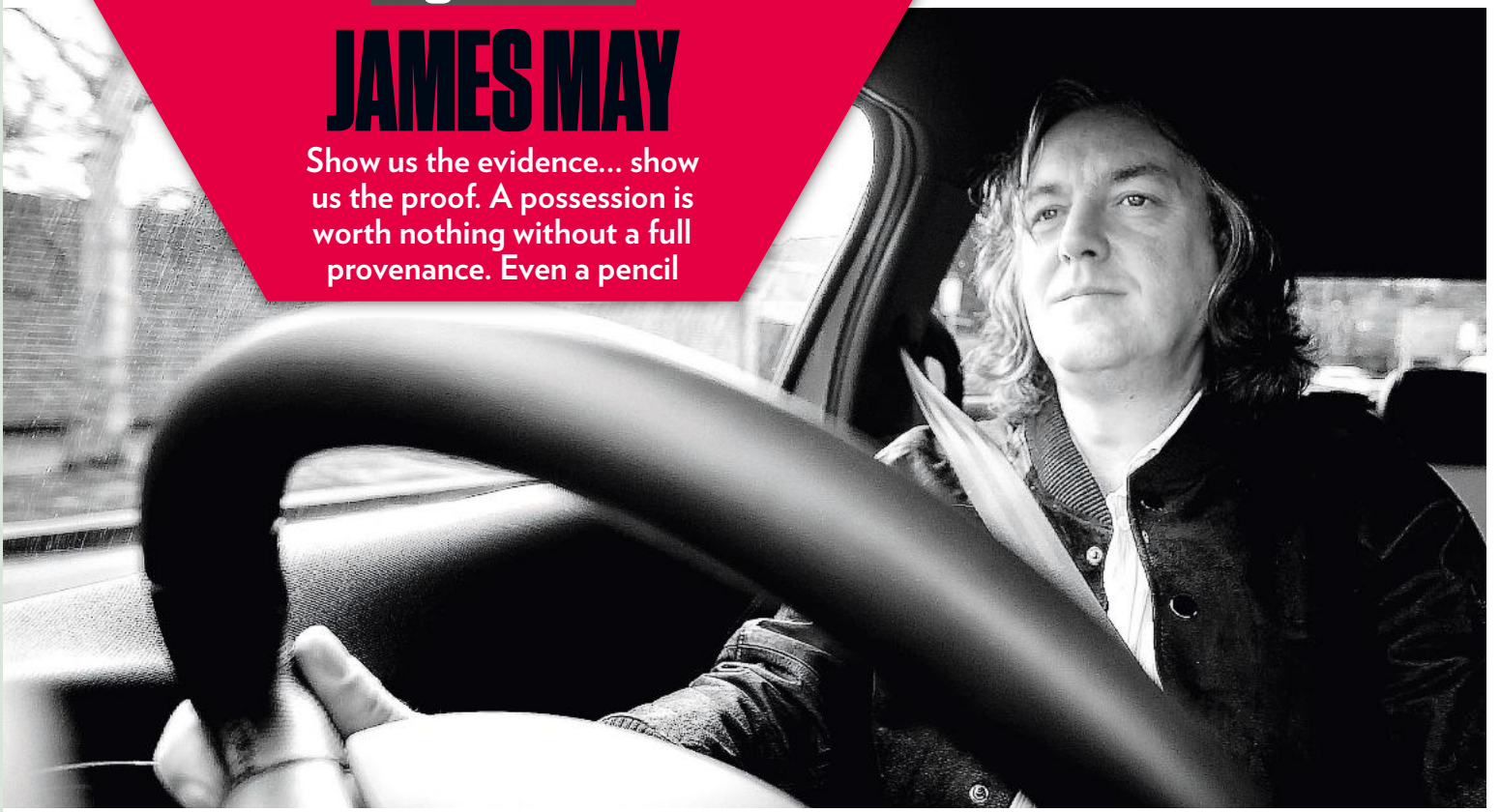
36 monthly payments	£249
Customer deposit	£1,999
On the road price*	£21,080
Total amount of credit	£18,581
Interest charges	£2,752
Total amount payable	£23,832
Final Payment	£12,369
Finance Deposit Contribution	£500
Duration of agreement (months)	37
Fixed Rate of interest p.a	3.04%
Representative APR	5.9% APR

SEARCH VOLVO V40

Official fuel consumption for the Volvo V40 D2 R-Design (manual) in MPG (l/100km): Urban 74.3 (3.8), Extra Urban 91.1 (3.1), Combined 83.1 (3.4). CO_2 Emissions 88g/km. MPG figures are obtained from laboratory testing intended for comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect real driving results. Finance subject to status. 5.9% finance available on all V40 models registered by 31st July 2014. *At participating dealers. Example based on mileage of 8000 per annum, excess mileage charge 14.9p per mile. At the end of the Personal Contract Purchase there are three options: (i) pay the Final Payment/GFV (Guaranteed Future Value) to own the vehicle; (ii) part exchange the vehicle, where equity is available; or (iii) return the vehicle. Further charges may be made subject to the condition of the vehicle. Terms and conditions apply. 18s or over. Guarantee/Indemnity may be required. Volvo Car Credit RH1 1SR.

JAMES MAY

Show us the evidence... show us the proof. A possession is worth nothing without a full provenance. Even a pencil



My Ferrari pencil is currently my favourite possession. I'm lucky enough to own several pencils, including some coloured ones, but this is the pencil I love best.

Anyone who visits the Ferrari factory will probably come away with a pencil. I was given mine when I went there recently to drive the hybrid LaFerrari. But never mind that. This is one hell of a pencil.

It's bright red (also available in yellow) and has 'Ferrari' embossed along the blunt end of its circular cross section, in gold. Apart from that, it's just like any other pencil, and shares the shortcomings of them. It's too thin for my sturdy peasant-bred fingers, and the rubber on the end is far too short for the number of mistakes I make in my exquisitely tooled, Morocco leather-bound notebook, with marbled frontispiece and backispiece*.

There is a full 130mm of lead, but only 8mm of eraser. A calculation suggests that I can only afford to be wrong with my Ferrari pencil for six per cent of its use, otherwise I'll have worn its rubber out.

These figures are now wrong, however, because I worked them out with the pencil without making any mistakes, so the experiment has slightly skewed the results. This is exactly why science is difficult.

"Yes, but..." I hear you cry, from the collective lavatory of the nation, and I know. This pencil was certainly not made by Ferrari, because Ferrari do not have any woodworking facilities. It was made by a pencil-making company and branded by them too. It is no more a Ferrari Pencil than the tissue in Amedeo Felisa's executive khazi is Ferrari Bogroll.

But it is a Ferrari pencil, the one officially sanctioned by them, and of which pale 4B imitations will not be tolerated. If you have a ballpoint pen as well, you can write 'Ferrari' on one end of your pencil. But you will not have a Ferrari pencil. You will have a pencil with 'Ferrari' written on it. See?

You might think I'm going on about this a bit, but be honest. Do you have a Ferrari pencil? No? Bet you wish you did, in the same way I wish I had a 400 Superamerica in the garage. It's only a pencil, but it's a start, and 100 per cent more Ferrari than your pencil that isn't a Ferrari pencil. Ha!

What this pencil has – and it's very important in the world of posh cars – is provenance. It was placed in my hand by the hand of someone at Ferrari, with the words, "Here, have a Ferrari pencil." And this is just the start of what will probably turn out to be a long and fascinating history involving theft, disappearance, rediscovery in a desk drawer, resharpening and eventual sale at a Bonhams auction for an enormous sum when I'm dead.

> "What my Ferrari pencil has – and it's important in this world – is provenance"

The catalogue entry, with photos, will point all this out to entice wealthy pencil collectors. The adventures that my Ferrari pencil have might easily befall another pencil, but the difference is, *this one started life at Ferrari as a Ferrari pencil*. It makes a difference.

If you doubt this, have a look at what's happened to Steve McQueen's 275 GTB/4, soon to be auctioned at an estimated price of many millions of pounds.

I'll say it again: it is merely a pencil, made by someone else, for Ferrari. Where is *La Passione* in that? It's there, because there are many millions of pencils that *could* have been elevated to this mystical role of being the official Ferrari pencil, but this is the one that was. Ferrari chose this one, just as it chooses its paint and leather suppliers. Ferrari choose things carefully.

To be honest, I have some other carmakers' officially endorsed pencil products. I have a Porsche pencil, and a propelling pencil from Mazda, I think. Haven't seen that one for a bit.

The Porsche pencil is pretty good, and nicely balanced, but I find the lead slightly on the hard side compared with the Ferrari's. Something about the Ferrari pencil (its colour, maybe; the perfect weight distribution established by the rubber and its securing ferrule; perhaps simply the knowledge of its origins) makes it more dashing between my fingers. It's full of crude drawings as yet undrawn, but I know they will be better, and will thrill me more, for coming from this pencil.

How to explain it? It's the fizz, I suppose. When I pluck the Ferrari pencil from my tragic plastic desk tidy, I feel as I might if I presented myself at the Hertz car-hire desk to be told I've been upgraded from an Up to a 458 Speciale. It's going to be a more memorable journey. Oh yes, I almost forgot. The LaFerrari. It's fantastic.

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*JUST KIDDING. IT'S FROM WH SMITH.



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News

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT NEW



Chopping arcade

Conceived for a virtual world, VW's 500bhp GTI Roadster gets real



Quattro goes loco

Audi stuffs 525bhp five-pot into A3 saloon. German teenagers raise sausages in delight P34



Mini Superleggera

Italian coachbuilder behind lovely Alfa Disco Volante turns focus to new Mini. Oddness prevails P37



The Almera's back!

Well, Pulsar actually. Nissan is back in the family hatch fray with Focus/Astra rival, but why? P38

EDITED BY **SAM PHILIP**

GTInsane

Take VW Golf GTI. Remove roof. Add four-wheel drive and 500bhp V6. Stand well back

WORDS: SAM PHILIP



It started with a challenge. A challenge from Kazunori Yamauchi – creator and spiritual denizen of Sony's legendary *Gran Turismo* racing-game series – to the world's biggest, brightest carmakers, asking them to cook up their ultimate two-door sports cars for inclusion in a special pack celebrating the game's 15th anniversary. A challenge to discover what designers could create, given the freedom of the virtual world, to really let their kempt hair down.

And didn't they just. Mercedes returned a stretched, Tim Burton-esque interpretation of its SLS, BMW cooked up a glorious DTM-style 2-Series. But Volkswagen went just a little further.

Maybe it's because Kazunori is an avowed hot VW fan, once owning a Golf GTI. Maybe the Wolfsburg designers have simply got a bit bored of churning out dozens of solid, sensible Golf variants and SUVs.

Whatever the reason, VW went big. This is its *Gran Turismo* offering: the GTI Roadster, effectively a little brother to sister firm Lamborghini's loopy Aventador J. Based around an Alfa 4C-style carbon monocoque, the GTI Roadster sits on a wheelbase some 14cm shorter than that of the production Golf GTI, but stands just a metre tall and 189cm wide.

Beneath that slatted bonnet, you'll find a 3.0-litre twin-turbo V6 churning 500bhp into a Golf R-style 4Motion drivetrain through a seven-speed DSG. That would mean, according to Volkswagen, a 0–62mph time of 3.6 seconds and a top speed of 192mph. Fast, then. Ceramic brakes lurk beneath those 20-inch alloys, with the rear wheels sporting 275-section rubber. Behind that stubby windscreen, there are 'race shell' seats glued to the carbon tub, and an F1-style steering wheel tucked below a race-grade TFT-screen.

All very nice, but you can claim anything in the virtual world, can't you? It's one thing to posit a five-wheeled titanium pod running on nuclear fission, quite another to build the thing.

VW did. So pleased was it with its GTI Roadster, that it actually built its it'll-never-be-built concept,



1. DEEP SEATS

Racing buckets seats are incorporated within tub, with five-point race harnesses keeping your bits from making a bid for freedom. Snug

2. LITTLE WHEEL

'Figure of eight' race wheel with shift paddles for seven-speed DSG gearbox sits at end of extended, exposed steering column

"Beneath that slatted bonnet, you'll find a 3.0-litre twin-turbo 500bhp V6"

3. BRAKE FORCE

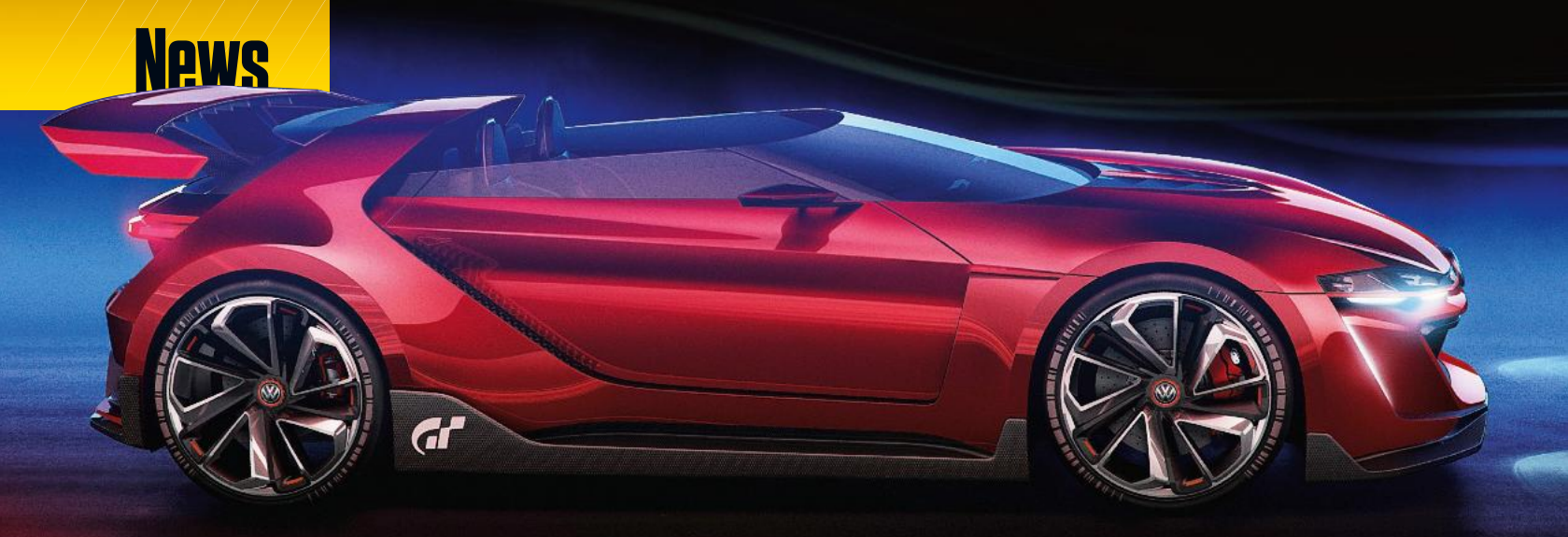
Ceramic discs measure 380mm up front and 356mm at rear, hidden behind 20-inch all-aluminium alloys

4. TURBO SIX

3.0-litre twin-turbo V6 generates 500bhp and a pummelling 413lb ft of torque, of which 369lb ft is available from just 2000rpm. Punchy

5. CARBON CHASSIS

Like McLaren's 12C, GTI Roadster has a one-piece, two-seater carbon-fibre tub. Even so, this is no flyweight: kerbweight stands at 1,422kg



"VW built the GTI as a special treat for its bemulleted fans"

as a special treat for the bemulleted, stein-swigging fans flocking to the annual Wörthersee tuner festival in the Austrian Alps. Yes, a car designed to only exist in the gaming universe has crossed the divide into physical existence. Question is, could Volkswagen go one step further, and upgrade the GTI Roadster from real-world concept (as it were) to real-world reality?

Unlikely. Not because the hardware is any less than production-viable – BMW has just squeezed 425bhp from a 3.0-litre twin-turbo six for its M4, remember, so 500bhp is well within VW's grasp – but because the cost of developing a carbon-fibre monocoque would be impossibly prohibitive. Basing the Roadster on the Golf's more humble architecture isn't likely, either: VW insiders tell us such an extreme chunk of design is beyond even the huge flexibility of the group's MQB platform.

Even if the sums added up, the politics may not. With VW Group's brands all ordered to play nicely in the sandpit, such a car would risk cannibalising from Audi and indeed sales. Such toe-treading is one of the reason's 2009's Bluesport mid-engined roadster concept failed to reach the road.

But the GTI Roadster does show VW's intention to stoke the Golf into yet-hotter territories than even the 296bhp, four-wheel-drive R you'll see on page 116. Next to the GTI roadster on its Wörthersee showstand, Volkswagen also displayed the 395bhp Golf R400 concept we showed you a couple of months back, essentially a Golf R stuffed with a third more power again. And yes, the R400 remains a concept for now, but – as one VW insider noted – a concept that looks "very, very real-world" beside the GTI Roadster. And having just bashed it around Spain, we'd say the Golf R wouldn't struggle to handle some extra power. Expect a yet-faster Golf to land next year.

In the meantime, you'll be able to download the Vision GT cars for *Gran Turismo 6* this summer. Oh, and there's a Lambo Vision effort on the way soon. How beserk is that going to be?

And a few more Vision GT racers...





MITSUBISHI
Proof that Mitsu still has rally blood: a turbo hybrid with 4WD and, of course, much wing



BMW
If the 2-Series tackled a no-limits touring car series. 550bhp from a turbo six, RWD, good



MERCEDES
585bhp gullwinged V8: shows what happens if an SLS goes overboard on the protein shakes

Wörthersee originals
More offerings from the VW Group's annual tunerfest



AUDI A3 CLUBSPORT

In the TT RS, Audi's 2.5-litre turbo five makes a measly 335bhp. In this Clubsport quattro concept, the same unit has been bumped up to a more palatable 525bhp and 443lb ft of torque. Which means you're looking at an A3 saloon that'll do 0-62mph in 3.6 seconds and run all the way to 193mph. Of course it's packing four-wheel drive, with launch control to embarrass BMW 118d drivers at the traffic lights. Traffic lights from FictionWorld, naturally.



SKODA CITIJET

At most firms, interns make tea. At Skoda, they make cars. The Citijet – a speedsterised version of the tiny Citigo – was devised and built by 16 Skoda apprentices in just six months. Looking like nothing so much as a pram that's suffered a terrible accident in Halford's auto accessories department, the CitiJet is more mouth than two-tone trousers: power comes courtesy of a 1.0-litre, three-cylinder petrol making just 75bhp. Aww.



SEAT IBIZA CUPSTER

All about beheading at Wörthersee this year. To celebrate 30 years of Ibiza production, Seat decapitated its Polo-rivalling city car to create the oddly named (and oddly shaped) Cupster, replacing roof and windows with a wraparound strip of glass. Up front, VW's turbo 1.4 bungs 174bhp to the front wheels. "The Ibiza has a good head for the practical things in life," Seat's president cryptically tells us. Unless you chop it clean off, that is.

– **Dick Fosbury** 1968 Olympic High Jump Champion –



"When someone says it can't be done, prove them wrong."



THE ALL-NEW MAZDA3.

When Dick Fosbury started jumping backwards instead of forwards, he turned around decades of convention and changed the high jump forever. At Mazda, we know that challenging conventional thinking can lead to incredible results – SKYACTIV Technology is our proof of that. And it's this kind of conviction that meant we could create big engine performance with small engine economy. A 120ps petrol engine that manages to return an incredible 55.4mpg? We're pretty sure it will take off.

mazda

zoom-zoom

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The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the Mazda3 range: Urban 37.7 (7.5) – 60.1 (4.7), Extra Urban 58.9 (4.8) – 80.7 (3.5), Combined 48.7 (5.8) – 72.4 (3.9). CO_2 emissions (g/km) 135 – 104.

The mpg figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results obtained through laboratory testing. These are provided for comparability purposes only and may not reflect your actual driving results. The model shown is the all-new Mazda3 120ps Sport Nav featuring optional Soul Red metallic paint (£660). OTR £19,895. OTR price includes 20% VAT, number plates and 3 years' European Roadside Assistance. Prices correct at time of going to print.

There are lots of little reasons to buy an Octavia

We've been making cars for ages. 109 years to be exact. In fact, we're the 3rd oldest car manufacturer in the world. So we know our cars. Like our brand new Octavia. It's even more full of extras than the previous model – and that was pretty full of extras. Which is why it kept winning accolades like the Auto Express Car Of The Year and Auto Express Best Estate Car. We also won Which? Magazine's Best Manufacturer for 2013 and have been in the top ten of the JD Power Customer Satisfaction Survey for the last 20 years. That's as long as the combined age of most boy bands. In fact people are always giving us loads of nice awards. Twenty five in 2010. Eighteen in 2011. Nineteen in 2012. Twenty four in 2013. We were Which? Magazine's Best Manufacturer for 2013. Oh, and we topped the Auto Express Driver Power Survey in both 2013 and 2014. You see, everybody loves a ŠKODA. Maybe it's because we spend ages thinking of loads of clever little ideas that will really make you fall head over heels for your Octavia. Like a little hook in the boot. Yeah we know, that one doesn't sound like much, but you'll never spill your Friday take away again. A handy drawer under the front seats to keep stuff in. Nice big cup holders for your supersized beverage. Some models have an air-conditioned glove box so your chocolate stash won't melt. You can get cornering front fog lights, and because we all like a snack there are waste bins in the door panels for your rubbish. Passenger and driver airbags come as standard. Our estate models feature rubber 'grab hooks' to make it easier to close the boot. If like us, you're partial to a sneeze when the sun is shining, there's a pollen filter fitted. Life saver. You can have the parcel shelf in two different positions. Well, everybody loves a parcel don't they? You can get an internal bike rack if you're adventurous, surf board racks if you're really adventurous and ski and snowboard racks if you're really, really adventurous. All of that and we haven't even started on the technology yet. Every Octavia comes with AUX and USB ports, so you can listen to your mp3 player as well as parking sensors on some models to warn you if you're about to have a bump. You can choose keyless entry, proximity sensors on the touch screen sat nav, and lane assist. You can even get fatigue sensors that let you know when it might be time for a power nap. And then there are the tyre pressure monitors in some Octavias, you know, to check your tyre pressure, and Hill Assist to help...you...up....hills. We've got a 'build your own ŠKODA' section on our website, to get those creative juices flowing you can customise your ŠKODA to suit your taste, from the alloys to the interior. 'But what about the environment?' we hear you ask. Well for those concerned about leafy stuff, you might like to know we plant a tree in the Czech Republic for every ŠKODA sold. Oh, and we should also mention our CO2 and fuel efficient Octavia GreenLine III. The hatch has a combined fuel economy of 88.3mpg, partly because it saves you fuel by suggesting which gear you should be in. It also has an energy recovery system, so less is wasted. It's the cleanest, most fuel efficient Octavia we've ever made. We're official car supplier to the Tour de France and have been a sponsor for over ten years. We also sponsor the Tour of Britain, which is roughly the same thing, but with worse weather. ŠKODA has the world's longest running sports sponsorship (21 years with IHL – it's even in the Guinness Book of World Records). Not to blow our own trumpet but we've had a distinguished history in motorsport for over 110 years. We've competed in the WRC and IRC and to prove we just don't get bored of being fast, our Octavia vRS set a land speed record in the G-PS Category at Bonneville Salt Flats – reaching a speed of 227.080MPH. We can now claim the world's fastest 2.0 litre supercharged production car... NEEEEEAAAAAOOOOOW-WWWWW! The vRS that you can buy has a TSI engine, which is turbocharged. It can do 0-62mph in just 6.8 seconds and can reach a top speed of 154mph. You can do a sight-seeing tour of our factory in Mlada Boleslav to see where shiny new ŠKODAs come from. Then you can visit our museum, to see where shiny old ŠKODAs came from. All of our cars come with a three year warranty, with unlimited mileage for the first two years. You'll also have the option to extend your warranty to four or five years. As well as a 12-year bodywork guarantee. And the three year ŠKODA Assist breakdown cover. That's regardless of how many miles you cover. And it's Europe wide. So that you get to enjoy your new Octavia straight away, we give you seven days complimentary ŠKODA insurance. You also get three years free ŠKODA Ensurance, which basically means that it takes one call to deal with any insurance claims rather than lots. There are over 158 ŠKODA authorised repairers and over 134 ŠKODA showrooms around the country. The latest Octavia is even more spacious than the last spacious Octavia, with an extra 27mm of headroom - handy if you're in a basketball team. It's also got a massive 1,740 litres of boot space in the estate model. When you buy one of our cars, you automatically benefit from the ŠKODA customer promise. It's a bit like a grown up Cub Scouts pledge. We promise to show care and consideration for you and your car. We promise to work competently and in your best interests. We promise to provide a flexible and convenient service. Which includes free collection and delivery within a 10 mile radius (20 minute drive time) for pre-bookings. There's our expertise and attention to detail. We'll give your car a complimentary visual health check, which is like your doctor giving you a once over. We'll always give you a clear explanation of our work. And because we never carry out work that hasn't been agreed with you, your invoice will always match the booking price. We'll provide you with a clear explanation as to why anything needs doing and provide a courtesy car or arrange to get you home if your car needs to be kept overnight. All of that comes guaranteed. Scouts Honour. There's a whole brochure full of clever accessories, so you can really make your ŠKODA your own. Why not pop in to our showroom and have a look? Hint, hint. We love the Octavia. You can probably tell from this advert. To date, we've produced nearly 14 million cars globally. Just say the word and we'll happily make another.

And three big ones:

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Model shown is Octavia hatch Elegance 1.4TSI 140PS, with metallic paint for £525. Price including options is £21,085 OTR. 0% APR representative Solutions Personal Contract Plan offer available on selected new ŠKODA models with deposits from 0-30% subject to underwriting. *£145 monthly rate applies to Octavia Hatch S 1.2 TSI 105PS only OTR cash price £16,310. £4,689 deposit required to achieve advertised monthly payment based on 3 years and 10,000 miles per annum optional final payment £6,516. Deposit shown may be higher than the minimum; a lower deposit will result in increased monthly payments. Indemnities may be required, subject to status. **3 years or 30,000 miles (whichever comes sooner) when purchased with ŠKODA Solutions Personal Contract Plan, terms and conditions apply. Over 18s in mainland UK only. Excludes Channel Islands. ŠKODA Finance, Freepost ŠKODA Finance. Terms and Conditions apply. Prices and specifications are accurate at time of print. Offers may be varied or withdrawn at any time and are not available in conjunction with any other offer. Retail sales only. Participating retailers only. Subject to availability on orders placed before 30th September 2014.

Official fuel consumption in mpg (litres/100km) for the ŠKODA Octavia Range: Urban 34.9 (8.1) – 74.3 (3.8), Extra Urban 52.3 (5.4) – 94.2 (3.0), Combined 44.1 (6.4) – 88.3 (3.2). CO_2 emissions for the ŠKODA Octavia Range: 149 – 85g/km. Standard EU Test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

The Knowledge

This month's big news, condensed into easily digestible chunks



1 THE FIVE-DOOR MINI LOOKS JUST AS ODD AS YOU EXPECTED

Two more doors, 7cm more in the wheelbase, 67 litres more bootspace, definitely won't cannibalise sales from the Clubman. Ahem



2 COSWORTH IS READYING A 380BHP TOYOTA GT86

Legendary British enginemeisters to offer range of upgrades for GT86/Subaru BRZ, culminating in silly-power 'race-track' configuration. Can't wait



3 THE NEW VOLVO XC90 HAS A VERY PRETTY CABIN INDEED

Seven-seat SUV lands later this year, promising a shiny new design era for everyone's favourite Swedish firm. And a crystal glass gearlever. Bling!



4 TOYOTA'S FACELIFTED YARIS HAS STOLEN THE NEW AYGO'S FACE

Revised Fiesta rival gets little brother's 'X-rated' front end, promises sharper handling and as little as 75g/km of CO_2. Possibly not at the same time



5 NISSAN WANTS VICTORY IN NEXT YEAR'S LE MANS 24-HOUR RACE

Japanese firm will enter LMP1 category in 2015, to compete with Audi, Porsche and Toyota. Not with this, but with a 'GT-R LM Nismo'. Game on!



It's a Mini avventura

British engineering, Italian design: meet the strange Superleggera

Did Britain invent irony? We're certainly very good at it. BMW's 14-year New Mini campaign has been successful beyond its wildest dreams, despite the odd lapse into gauche faux Britishness and some overly chunky spin-offs. Now here comes the Superleggera Vision concept, a gorgeous, minimalist roadster that, says BMW, "perpetuates what the Classic Mini started 55 years ago: reduction to the essentials." Now that *is* ironic.

Unveiled at the Villa d'Este concours, this Mini is the fruit of a creative partnership with Italian coachbuilder Touring Superleggera, purveyor of memorably rebodied cars since 1926, and whose most recent hit is the Alfa Disco Volante.

Superleggera means 'superlight', an idea with considerable modern currency. With its long bonnet, raked windscreen and – sorry – wheel-at-each-corner stance, the Vision concept finesses away all the fiddly stuff that has steadily polluted the Mini design ethos this past decade to leave a far simpler essence. "All unnecessary equipment or decoration is sacrificed, as performance is gained through lightness and efficiency," says Touring designer Louis de Fabribeckers.

Including, it seems, a traditional engine. Yes, perhaps the most exciting element of all on the Superleggera is that its pretty aluminium and carbon-fibre structure is underpinned by an all-electric powertrain. In other words, what we have here is a fun-sized two-seat roadster version of BMW's brilliant little i3, hand-crafted by some Italian blokes to create a car that could fall through a 50-year hole in the space-time continuum quite happily in either direction.

Inside, there's a swathe of aluminium on the dash, black chrome and saddle leather, while an analogue clock is framed by a simplified version of Mini's central touchscreen and there's a camera to record "worthwhile moments on the road". The liquid paint finish is Como blue. The Union Jack rear lights could be sponsored by UKIP.

On an Italian version of a German iteration of a British icon, it's just another little irony...



Superleggera cabin: where 1964 meets 2064 and buttons are taboo

Q&A

Why is Nissan tackling the Focus?

This autumn, Japan's crossover specialist will release a hatch rival to the Astra, Golf and Focus. Brave or daft?

What's this, then?
It's the Pulsar, Nissan's imminent C-segment five-door hatchback.

Wow. Nissan hasn't had a Golf-sized hatch since, um...
The Almera, which exited production in 2006 and engenders all the warm memories of a damp-ridden student bedsit.

Hatches are big business. How has Nissan survived without?
Thank the Qashqai. Instead of trying to compete head-on with VW, Ford and the rest, in 2007 Nissan went its own way with a hatch/SUV amalgam. Turned out to be a smart move: the QQ achieved success then unprecedented for a crossover, and has featured among the UK's 10 bestselling cars just about every month since its introduction, often outselling the Golf and Astra.

So why bother jumping back into that market?
A few reasons. First, according to Nissan VP Andy Palmer, because the firm needs a car for Qashqai owners to graduate to once the sprogs have left home. "People go from a Golf to a Qashqai," Palmer told us. "Now they can come back."



Above: the Almera fan club, yesterday

A car pitched at empty-nesters. Sounds thrilling...
It might not be so bad. See, there's another reason for the Pulsar: to allow Nissan to back up its motorsport forays – it'll compete in the top tier of Le Mans next year – with some juicy road-going stuff. A fast Qashqai won't find many buyers, but a hot hatch to rival the Focus ST – or even Golf R? – would be rather more tempting. That said, Palmer reckons even the standard Pulsar won't be a dreary blancmange to drive. "No car is launched unless it has the [Nissan] DNA to its handling feel," he says. "It [the Pulsar] has to feel secure on the road like a VW, but have some spice on top. There's no terminal understeer." Sounds promising.

Promising enough to tempt Brits from their Qashqais?
Maybe not, but Nissan's looking bigger. While the UK's gone SUV-wild in recent years, other nations are wedded to their trad hatches. The Pulsar – to be built in Spain, not Nissan's Sunderland facility – is firmly targeting central and eastern Europe. All hail the old-school new world order...



Conservative styling masks 'spicy' handling, promises Nissan. Korma or phaal?

Zagato does Lambo

Zagato Lambo Gallardo: has a car ever been more satisfying to pronounce in a Scouse accent? Lurking at the opposite end of the sensibility spectrum to the Pulsar, this one-off, 202mph oddity was concocted by the Italian design house to celebrate its 95th birthday: 95 years of refusing to adhere to any traditional notion of 'pretty'. Based on the Gallardo, the 5-95 keeps that car's 570bhp, 5.2-litre V10, but wraps it in a skin as unapologetically eye-assaulting as anything Zagato has done before. Elegant? Not for a second. Striking? But of course. Here's to another 95 years of Zagato weirdness...





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Question for Horrell



WHICH WORKS BETTER: DAVID OR GOLIATH?

MEGACORPORATIONS GET HUGE COST SAVINGS. BUT THEY'RE UNWIELDY. SO WHAT'S THE BEST RECIPE FOR CARMAKERS?

I've harped on about this before, but developing a new car is an immense task. Those hopeful small-time men who appear at motor shows telling us they'll shortly start manufacture of a supercar with their name on the bonnet almost always meet their end in debt and no little ignominy. Here's what it costs to develop supercars: Ferrari invests on average £1m every day except Sundays.

Yet Ferrari's just a tiny concern against BMW, which employs 10,000-odd engineers. But guess what? When BMW wanted to do its most radical cars ever, the main R&D department with all its power and facilities was deliberately blocked out. BMW's head of R&D, Herbert Diess, the man responsible for that very organisation, told me this about the i8: "This car could never have been done inside the organisation. Never. The people in the main organisation do what they did before and make it 10 per cent better."

So BMW i, while it was laying down the basics for the i3 and i8, was configured as a separate atelier. The i project also developed the surrounding 'mobility solutions' (ugly phrase). They joined the main R&D body only at the big-manpower stages of battery, carbon fibre and production development.

You'll have heard too that Alfa wants to revive itself by developing an all-new range of cars. To do that, an Alfa-specific team has been employed, deliberately outside the main engineering centres of either Fiat or Chrysler.

Sure, eventually Alfa will share technology and spread elements of their engineering through the group. In the same way the expertise in batteries and electric-drive and carbon fibre gathered at such intense effort for the i3 and i8 will be cascaded through the whole of BMW. But it started small.

These skunkworks operations are strikingly countercultural for a car industry where the general direction of travel is to crave consolidation and scale, forcing mergers on departments and entire enterprises. We're told time after time that size means efficiency because it erases duplication and enables bigger and more productive investments across more projects.

But size slows things up. Every decision takes more layers of people, more meetings, more signing-off. All this 'process' is the opposite of a lubricant.

Worse, big organisations are risk-averse because their logic is that any mistake would be correspondingly and catastrophically ginormous. As Diess says, they evolve what they've always done, rather than risk being bold. By the same token, says Alfa's boss, Harald Wester: "We needed a radical solution that would resist the conformist pressure that a mass car producer would exert." He knows he needs to get away from doing platform-shared developments of its American cousins' cars.

So when BMW and Fiat Chrysler determined the i division and Alfa had to produce rapid, creative results, they appointed strong leaders and small teams of engineers in isolated bunkers. The Alfa team, 200 engineers now, will be no more than 600 by the time the new car is going into production.

Road-car projects work to quarterly milestones. But race teams have to pull the car off the finish line after Sunday's race, decide why it didn't win, propose and verify a solution, then enact it, all in the five days before Saturday's practice session. Carsten Breitfeld, project director of the i8, remembers whenever they got to a sticky issue on the car, he'd tell his team to crack on and think themselves into "motorsport mode".

It's not at all a coincidence that BMW pulled out of Formula One after 2009, right when i was really getting under way. Several F1 engineers took their quick-acting rigorous approach and settled straight into the super-agile i team. Size matters, but it's not always big that's better.

"BMW i, while it was doing the i3 and i8, was configured as a separate atelier..."





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Model shown is an Auris Hybrid Icon 1.8. Auris Hybrid Icon 1.8 official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 80.7 (3.5), Extra Urban 78.5 (3.6), Combined 78.5 (3.6). CO_2 Emissions 84g/km. The mpg figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results obtained through laboratory testing, are provided for comparability purposes and may not



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Planet TopGear

STORIES FROM OUR WEIRD WORLD, WITH ADDED BITS FROM THE TELLY BOYS



P62 Driving test

Meet Tom Karen



The greatest designer you've never heard of



Twin test P52 | Options list P59 | May's almanac P66

EDITED BY DAN READ

THE MAN WHO DESIGNED THE SEVENTIES

MEET TOM KAREN, THE MAN WHO GAVE US THE SCIMITAR GTE AND RALEIGH CHOPPER...

Who'd have thought the makers of the Robin three-wheeler could come up with something as good-looking as the Scimitar GTE? In 1968, it was early proof that estate cars could look a bit sexy, it established the idea of a modern shooting brake and it gave the car world its first rising waistline – now much-copied on everything from runabouts to crossovers. It was also the car in which Princess Anne was caught speeding at 90mph on the M1. One obviously approved...

But in fact the GTE, though a Reliant, was actually the vision of industrial designer Tom Karen. Asked to turn the Scimitar coupe into something more practical yet still pretty, the GTE was his answer. It was, he says, some of his best work. And yet as boss of Ogle Design, his roster of clients went way beyond carmakers.

Throughout the Sixties and Seventies, Karen's sketchbooks bulged with future classics: the Raleigh Chopper bicycle, the Bush TR130 radio, the Marble Run children's game, Luke Skywalker's Landspeeder in *Star Wars* (based on another of his creations, the orange Bond Bug), and even a Popemobile.

In 2014, Ogle Design turns 60, and Tom turns 88. But unlike some grandads who talk wistfully about the way things used to be, Tom is still reeling in the future.

WORDS: DAN READ /
PICTURES: ALEX LAKE



ABOVE: the future of cities, as designed by Tom Karen. Floating structures unaffected by floods and earthquakes. Worth a punt? Probably


NEWGATE
FOR THEO
WARNING
ROCKET
CHOPPER

A walk around his mind is educational, fantastical and – as you'll see – slightly exhausting...

You've designed an awful lot of stuff. But let's start with the GTE – it was probably the most important...

In 1968, an estate car was for travelling salesmen and people with dogs. A respectable carmaker – BMW, Jaguar, Mercedes – wouldn't dream of doing such a thing. But people discovered that, aerodynamically, the GTE worked terribly well. It had lower drag than a coupe, and you had headroom in the back. It also had a rising waistline. Now, almost every car has a rising waistline. It took a few years to percolate through...

How did you end up at Ogle?

I misspent 10 years in the aircraft industry. Being a lousy mathematician, I wasn't suited to it. Then I managed to get into the Central School of Art and Design, and through that I got a job at Ford in the Styling Centre. After that, I worked for Hotpoint and for Philips. But then one day, poor old David Ogle was killed in a car crash, and I had a phone call asking if I would go for a talk with the directors of his company. A week later, I had the job of MD and chief designer.

What was Ogle all about?

It was an amazing place. Around the same time as designing the GTE, we were doing work for Electrolux, Bush radio and Philips. At one time, you could partly furnish a house with things we designed. You could have a cooker, a washing machine, a fridge, a vacuum cleaner, a radio, a bath and a motorcar. All designed at Ogle. We provided quite a big service for mankind.

Car design has changed a lot since then...

A long time ago, at the Geneva motor show – when it was in wooden buildings – I would walk around and look for cars that were well-designed. There weren't that many. Nowadays, most cars hit a pretty high standard. Design has come on in quite a good way.

But don't you miss the old days?

When I was at Ford, I was doing advanced styling, and you could do any kind of crazy car you wanted. Then Chrysler came out with the cars with the big fins, and in my youthful enthusiasm I thought they were great. I think, at the moment, designers are flailing about trying to make interesting shapes in the side of the body and seeing what clever tricks they can do with headlamps, and tail-lights that wrap around in all kinds of ways. I'm not sure that's the kind of gimmick that enhances a car.

So what's the key to good car design?

The art is to make virtues out of necessities. Success and satisfaction come from making something out of the limitations. I worship good form. Form is form is form. Whether it's a radio, a bath or a motorcar.

Over the years, what would you have changed about car design?

When I was at Ford and they wanted to present a new model to management, they would put a full-size model on a turntable, and management would look at it from all angles and decide if they liked it or not. What they never did was put a person inside to show how the driver would be framed. So you'd see cars where the head of the driver is only just above the waistline or hidden by the B-post, and I think that's terribly unflattering.

So you'd rather show off the driver?

Yes, to make sure the driver is framed in a really





THE TOM KAREN POPEMOBILE. MINIATURE POPE NOT INCLUDED





ABOVE: the future of aeroplanes, as designed by Tom Karen. Flatter fuselage = more lift = better economy and more range. Interesting



attractive way – so they can see well, and be seen well. People love some old cars where the waistline is down to elbow level, because they're sitting on top and feel in command, like the Queen of Sheba. I explored that thinking when we did the Leyland trucks, with the focus and emphasis around the driver. When I worked for Renault, I did the same kind of thing on the Trafic van. I recognise that some people like to be cocooned inside the car, but it's never been my kind of approach.

So what are your inspirations?

You can see the language of Henry Moore's sculptures reflected in good car design. The forms have to be soft, but there always has to be some tightness. And you can't have lines that don't have a logical beginning and end. The same applies to designing a vehicle body as it did for one of Henry Moore's sculptures, except, of course, that doing a vehicle body is more difficult.

How so?

Moore never had to worry about legal requirements and the choice of materials. He just had bronze. In a car, you have steel, glass, rubber, plastic... and shutlines. Bad shutlines can destroy a nice shape. And because cars are shiny and reflect everything around them, that has to be taken into account. And Henry Moore didn't have to worry about aerodynamics...

So you can apply universal rules, no matter what you're designing?

Yes. Even a washing machine – and I've done those – must be tactile. So that people want to touch them in the same way as a good sculpture. Not only to look at them, but to touch... to fondle them, if you like. If it's a radio, you want to think, "Yes, I'll handle and operate it."

> "Henry Moore never had to worry about legal requirements and aerodynamics"

There's a youthful, fantastical quality to your designs. Why's that?

It may be because I was deprived of my toys before I was quite ready, when we left Czechoslovakia. We left one night when the Germans came in March 1939, and I could take only a few small models with me. I left everything else behind, including my little electric Bugatti, a replica of the Type 35. So I think there's a certain childish enthusiasm about the way I approach design, which is why I wanted to design toys.

You did crash-test dummies, too...

We made gorgeous dummies! They were really nice. And very sophisticated. On our dummy, every part of the body had to have the right weight and centre of gravity. The movements and the articulation of the joints had to be right. They even used corpses to weigh the limbs. And inside the chest, the ribcage was reproduced, and the tummy below was soft. The limbs had bone and flesh structures and skin. They were amazing pieces of work. We did some child dummies, and even a little baby dummy. I took him home, and my two daughters nursed him like a little baby and made a cot to put him in.

Is there anything you won't design?

I have about 90 sketchbooks that I doodled in over four decades. In successive pages, I go from motorcars to bits of furniture to toys. Then, when a challenge came along, I could draw on some of that thinking and apply it from one product to another. I was semi-prepared for almost any product that came along. They add up to about 4,500 pages of sketches, and about probably a third are motorcars.

What's in there?

Have you seen my floating city? There are countries that are short on land but have plenty of sheltered water. Many are at risk of flooding as sea levels rise, and in some places there's the risk of earthquakes. If you have something floating in the water, you don't have to worry about any of those things. What I'm planning is a great big circular ring with accommodation, shops, medical centres and so on. In the middle of this doughnut would be a green space for sport and entertainment. It could be built using ship-building techniques. There would be some sort of flexible bridge to the mainland, or you could lower a boat into the water and toddle along.

Anything else?

I'm certain that the next generation of aircraft – for 200-plus passengers – will have a flat fuselage, which can produce lift, so you have less dependence on heavy, expensive wings. I'm not alone in thinking about that. So I've designed an elegant aircraft with three horizontal bubbles to make up the fuselage. I'm sure you'll see it in 20 years from now, instead of the cigar shapes we have today... TG


"THE CHAIR? THAT'S THE ONE THING I DIDN'T DESIGN HERE..."







GO, OGLE

HERE'S SOME STUFF KAREN MADE EARLIER...



RALEIGH CHOPPER



RELIANT SCIMITAR GTE



BUSH TR130



ELECTROLUX TWIN TURBO



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DEAR UNCLE TOP GEAR,
Do you think there will ever be a car that's even faster than the new McLaren P1 or LaFerrari?
Ani, by email

Well, I had a quick look on the internet, and it turns out there already is. It's a modified 1996 Vauxhall Calibra Turbo owned by a man call Del, and, from reading his syntactically unconventional musings, it is clear to me that Del has well and truly bested the efforts of those fools from Woking and Maranello. I would imagine they feel pretty stupid, especially since their cars, unlike Del's, do not have a 'well massiv sub' in the boot.

DEAR UNCLE TOP GEAR,
Am I alone in wishing Jag would go back to making nice old-fashioned saloon cars with four round headlights, a chrome grille and a wood dash?
William, Wokingham

You are not alone, William. Many people in their late eighties also think this.

DEAR UNCLE TOP GEAR,
My dad always navigates using a map even though his car has satnav. He says he'll have the last laugh when the satellites are destroyed and the computers don't work any more. Is he mad?
Claire, Cheltenham

In one sense, your father is absolutely correct. It would take just one enormous asteroid shower to destroy a fair chunk of our GPS network, and let's not forget about the possibility of a nuclear blast in the upper atmosphere that would render all electronic devices utterly useless. Although in either situation, I suspect you would have more important things to worry about than successfully driving to an address on the outskirts of Ipswich.

DEAR UNCLE TOP GEAR,
One of my neighbours has a Fiat 500L. It's terrible. Now I've just read that Fiat is making an SUV called the 500X. What the hell are they playing at?
Rob, by email

I believe they are working on the basis that a joke actually gets better if you tell it again.

> "It turns out there is a faster car than the P1 – a modded 1996 Calibra"

DEAR UNCLE TOP GEAR,
I'm looking at a second-hand car on eBay, and the seller says that the aircon is broken but that it "just needs a re-gas". What does this mean?
RJ, London

In my experience "just needs a re-gas" is car-sales shorthand for "I know nothing about air-conditioning systems, and I am making a vague attempt to suggest that the conspicuously broken part of this car can be mended quickly and cheaply and hoping that by admitting to one fault, you will not dig too deeply to find the 17 others."

DEAR UNCLE TOP GEAR,
I have an unusual question for you! Can you recommend a large car or perhaps a small van with seats which would comfortably transport me and my string quartet?
Sue, Windsor

Rather excessive, don't you think, Sue? You can get a wide range of chamber music on CD these days.

DEAR UNCLE TOP GEAR,
Vauxhall Signum?
Pete, by email

Punch yourself in the face?

ILLUSTRATION: BILL McCONKEY



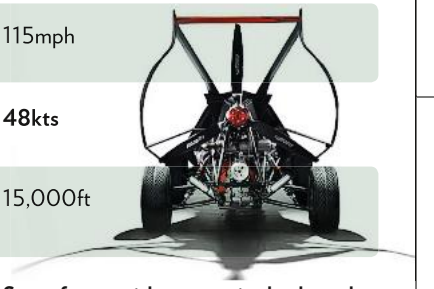
TOPGEAR TWIN TEST #3

AT BLACK NIGHT TRANSFORMER VS PARAJET SKYRUNNER

THEY'RE BOTH FLYING OFF-ROADERS, BUT WHICH ONE SHOULD YOU BUY?

Unlike a regular chopper, the Black Knight – once landed – can drive or float right to where it's needed. So rather than being stretchered through streets or jungles to the nearest landing zone, an injured soldier can stay put until the autonomous robocopter arrives by his side with life-saving medical kit	**WHAT IS IT?**	Traditionally, a paramotor is worn like a backpack by a human being. The human, now with propulsion, hangs under a parachute and is able to fly. Here, the motor is worn by a buggy. So in one configuration it's pushed along the ground by the propeller, but attach a parachute and it becomes an aircraft
8 x modular propulsion subsystems, electric or turbodiesel	**ENGINE**	**999cc turbocharged petrol, 125bhp, 4spd auto**
70mph	**MAX GROUND SPEED**	115mph
130kts	**MAX AIR SPEED**	**48kts**
10,000ft	**MAX ALTITUDE**	15,000ft
Wheels, helicopter skids or boat hull	**CHASSIS**	**Spaceframe with composite bodywork**
Flies, floats, drives, saves lives	**FOR**	Fast, light, class-leading fuel economy
Looks like the *TG* production office	**AGAINST**	**Your life depends on a backup 'chute**





VERDICT

Should you need rescuing from an urban gunfight, the Black Knight is the sensible choice. Although you might want to borrow the SkyRunner's parachute, just in case you're shot down.

TopGear Dictionary

Giving life meaning since 2013

Shamtique noun.

A new car with old styling [see: Singer, Icon & Eagle]



QUOTES OF THE MONTH



"I'm allowed to give discretion. That's my boss's car..."

A TRAFFIC WARDEN reveals his reluctance to ticket a badly parked Saab



"To win the world championship, you need to be the hungriest"

LEWIS HAMILTON reckons you'll need an empty stomach to win in F1. Whatever happened to the breakfast of champions?

"We have long-term relationships with both our drivers"

A MERCEDES F1 SPOKESMAN says there'll be no quick flings down his end of the pitlane



"We can't get away with things the Italians can do. I can't call a car the Ron or the Woking"

McLAREN CEO MIKE FLEWITT explains the problems of being British...

PHOTOS: MANUFACTURERS

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WHAT AMERICA DID FOR US

EVER THOUGHT THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WAS A ONE-WAY STREET? ALLOW OUR MAN PAT DEVEREUX TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT...

PART 15: DRAG RACING



As with a lot of history, you can pretty much pick whichever explanation you like for why something occurred the way it did, as there's rarely only one version of events. How the US sport or habit of drag racing got its name is no different – it's lost in the tyre smoke of time, too.

According to the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA), the home of drag racing: "The theories are almost as many and as varied as the machines that have populated its ranks for five decades." Explanations range from a simple challenge ("Drag your car out of the garage and race me!") to geographical locale (the 'main drag' was a city's main street, often the only one wide enough to accommodate two vehicles) to the mechanical (to 'drag' the gears meant to hold the transmission in gear longer than normal).

So go ahead and pick whichever one you prefer. While you are doing that, we can look at how the whole drag-racing world grew from some suitably humble beginnings into the Top Fuel monsters that can eat through a quarter-mile of tarmac in less than 4.4 seconds at speeds of over 330mph and do 0–100mph in less than a – *one* – second.

Started as a logical extension of the proto hot rod movement just after the end of World War II in 1947 by ex-tank test driver Wally Parks, the Southern California Timing Association hosted the first Speed Week in Bonneville in 1949. Even though the main focus of the event on the shimmering salt was the cars' top speeds, it was possibly the first time the drivers ran against the clock over a measured distance rather than just each other.

With no shortage of takers to this new sport, the first-ever official dragstrip, the Santa Ana Drags, 50 miles south of Los Angeles on the auxiliary runway of the Orange County Airport, opened on 19 June 1950. Compared with British hill-climbing venues, the first of which ran in 1905 at Shelsley Walsh, which were – and still are – very rudimentary, the Santa Ana Drags was state of the art, with full-timing clocks, pit area, grandstands, concession stands and, for the pre-race ritual cleansing, bathrooms.

The cars being sent down the quarter-mile at that time were not that different from the road cars of the day, mostly 1932 Fords with V8s and virtually no bodywork.

> "Some cars ran two engines, each driving a set of rear wheels"

But it didn't take long for the ever-creative Californian minds to start experimenting in the search for more speed. The first slingshot-style cars, where the driver sits at the very back of the car to get weight over the driving wheels, lined up alongside all manner of other Frankencars.

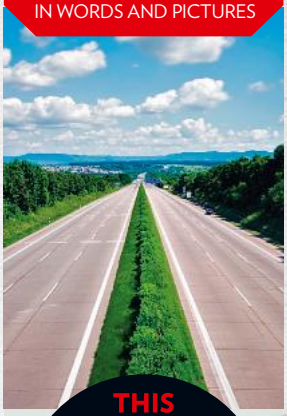
Some ran two engines each driving a set of rear wheels, which generally didn't end well. Others just shuffled the pack of pieces in different ways with varying results. All was fair in the early days, when the only thing that really mattered was how fast you could get through the lights at the far end of the quarter-mile.

But one of the key ingredients common to all the really fast cars was nitromethane fuel. This angry and unstable mixture of dry-cleaning fluid and methanol was able to give the proto dragsters a huge increase in power (two-and-half to three times the power compared with regular petrol) with few outwardly obvious changes to the engine other than the tell-tale bright yellow exhaust flames.

Inside the engine, it was a different matter. Everything had to be beefed up to cope with the extra energy. But try as they might, their efforts were often not enough to contain the beast with hundreds of cars grenading before they even left the line. Of the 15 classes of drag racing today, Top Fuel is still the fastest and most viscerally exciting. There are lots of reasons why, but if you are in any doubt, visit a race and see for yourself. Seven thousand horsepower cars can be mightily convincing.

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THIS MONTH:
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GERMANY



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The final, 12-mile southbound stretch (especially the downhill section near Murnau)

I still can't find it...
Bash this into your satnav
47.654866, 11.231775

When should I go?
It's derestricted, so choose a quiet day

What car should I take?
A 911 Turbo S will do 197mph...



I appear to have crashed
Find your phone – it'll be in nearby woodland – and call 112



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Extra Urban 34.0-42.2 (8.3-6.7); Combined 25.5-32.1 (11.1-8.8). CO_2 Emissions 259-205 g/km. The figures provided may differ from that achieved in such tests and these figures are for comparative purposes only.

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Options list

Our choice of this month's top-spec stuff

Motorsport murals

You could decorate your wall with a nice Italian fresco. But this is *TopGear*, so we suggest you don't. Instead, how about a motorsport mural? Some of the most iconic scenes from world rallies and F1 have been turned into wallpaper, so you can paste life-size scenes inside your house. Fancy having a Group B car jump right into your living room? It can be done... **£27 per square metre; wallsauce.com**



Car vac

Y'know the feeling when your token runs out and the car vac stops too soon? If only it were plugged into the mains in your very own garage... like this little AEG AG71A. It's designed especially for cars, so it has a stretchy hose and a 'crevice' nozzle to reach down the side of seats. **£59.99; aeg.co.uk**



Turbolamps

When a turbocharger is done being a turbocharger, it could – if you wish – become a toilet roll holder. Or a lamp. Den of Uniquity will do such things, with all sorts of car parts. Their Turbolamp collection features many designs, some of which double as desk tidies. **From £45; www.facebook.com/denofuniquity**



Tyre tread wallets

Leather wallets, credit card holders and iPad sleeves, all featuring strips of rubber inspired by the tread on old Dunlop racing tyres. If rubber ain't your thing, there's another range featuring bright but tasteful racing stripes, and another with detailing inspired by wheel bearings. **From £40; gtolondon.com**

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The Watchlist

New things worthy of your wrist



Tudor watches

Tudor was created in the Forties by Rolex, as a more affordable arm of the company. Over the years, it has become somewhat forgotten but is making a comeback with a range of watches designed with cars and bikes in mind. There's the Grand Tour Flyback, with a Seventies-style hole-punched strap. And the Heritage chrono, which we'd take with a black-and-orange fabric strap. Then there's the Fastrider Black Shield, a showpiece for the company's Ducati partnership. Its case is injected with ceramic. It's also waterproof to 150 metres, which will be handy if you misjudge that clifftop hairpin... **From £2,500; tudorwatch.com**



Bremont Boeing Model 1

Bremont is best known for its pilots' watches, many of which use real bits of Spitfires or other warbirds. But its new Boeing models are made with more futuristic stuff, such as 'Custom 465' stainless steel – an alloy developed for the aerospace industry – or aviation-grade Ti-64 titanium. **£TBC; bremont.com**



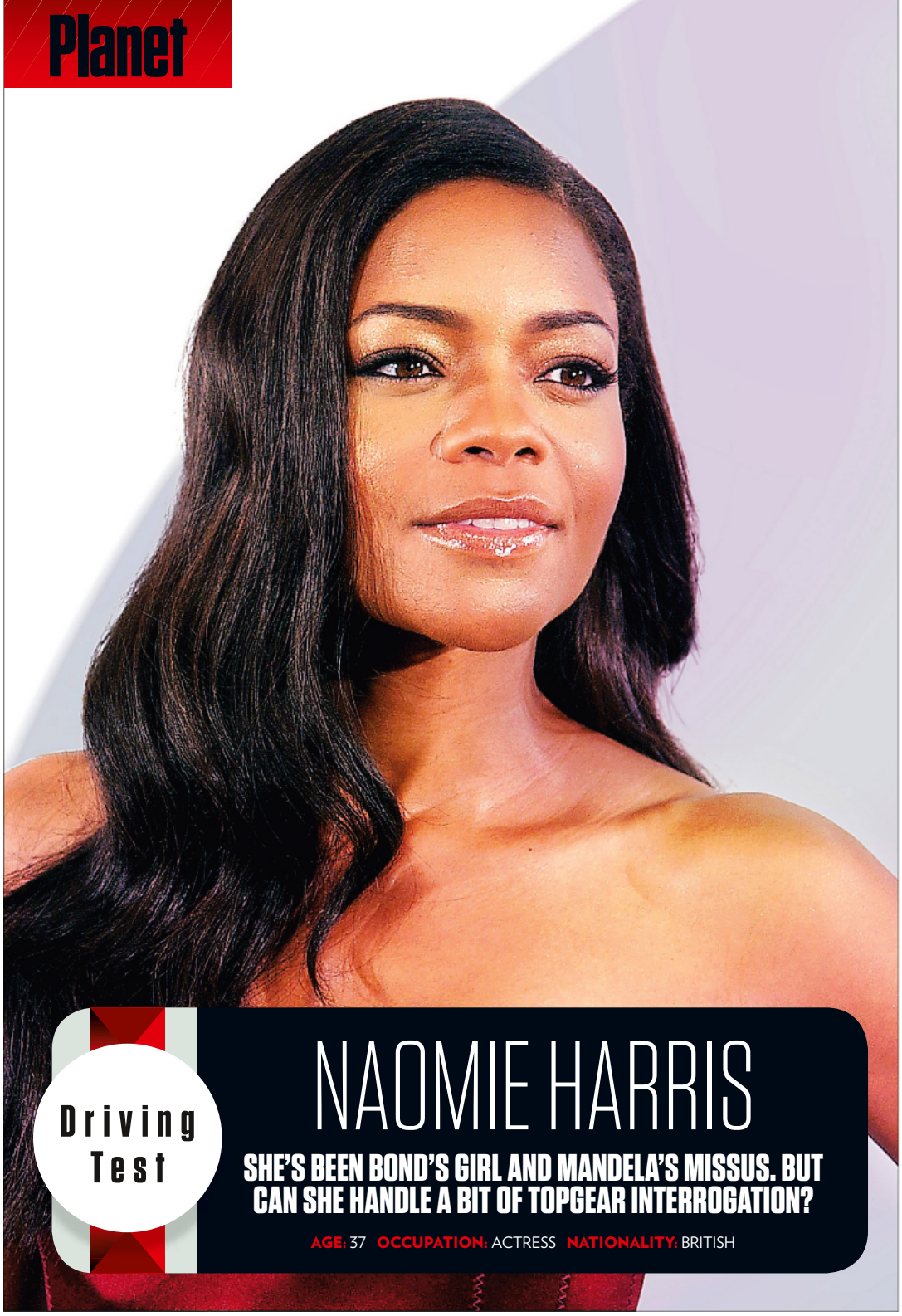
Tissot T-Touch Expert Solar

Show the Expert Solar an hour of daylight, and it will operate in complete darkness for an entire year without a top-up. And if you do plan to live in a cave, it has plenty to keep you busy, including two alarms, weather forecasts, a compass, a chronograph and various other toys. **£TBC; tissot.ch**



REC Cooper C2

Danish watchmaker REC turns bits of old Minis into shiny new watches. So within a stainless steel case sits a dial created from metal salvaged from an old Cooper. To prove it, the donor car's VIN number is stamped into the caseback. Various straps and styles available. **From £270; recwatches.com**



Driving Test

NAOMIE HARRIS

SHE'S BEEN BOND'S GIRL AND MANDELA'S MISSUS. BUT CAN SHE HANDLE A BIT OF TOPGEAR INTERROGATION?

AGE: 37 **OCCUPATION:** ACTRESS **NATIONALITY:** BRITISH

You drove James Bond in *Skyfall*...
Well, I had Stig on the roof.

The old Stig? We hear he's doing a bit of movie work these days...
Exactly. He was in a rig on top of the Land Rover. He did all the braking, steering, everything. I just had to look like I was driving. There were a few points where I was allowed to drive, but he did the dangerous bits...

How do you act like you're driving?
It's very difficult to make it look realistic. You have to anticipate when he's going to brake or turn, and make it look like your decision. So although I wasn't driving, I was trained a great deal and taught how to do these amazing stunts.

Did it make you a better driver?
I'd like to think so. I wasn't a particularly good driver before, and I'm very bad at parking. I wish they'd given me a few parking lessons when I was doing Bond. Parallel parking mystifies me.

What was your first car?
I've never had aspirations to drive a Porsche or anything like that, so when I passed my test at 17, I bought a Nissan Micra. I loved the sense of independence, and I don't drink, so I was always the designated driver. I still love the freedom now.

Ever had a crash?
I was once in traffic when a bus took out two cars before sideswiping me. That was the end of the Micra. But I was completely fine, so I bought another one. I drove that for years – before making a massive upgrade, to an Audi TT.

You must get driven in some nice cars...
I was once driven to an event in a Maybach – the most luxurious thing I've ever been in. It's like a moving house. I can't even remember the event, but I'll always remember the car.

So it's good to arrive in style?
I don't think people are looking at your car – they're more concerned with your dress. But it'd look odd if you arrived in a Micra, so it has to be a little bit glamorous.

How do you exit a car with dignity?
Definitely keep your legs together. The paparazzi have a nasty habit of trying to get shots up your dress, which isn't very pleasant.

What's the fastest you've driven?
When I was training for Bond, at a deserted track in the middle of nowhere, I did about 180mph before I got absolutely terrified.

How clean is your licence?
I've never been caught by a speed camera. I'm very well behaved behind the wheel.

You'll be appearing in the next Bond film. Maybe you can upgrade to an Aston Martin...
I don't know what might happen in the next Bond. But things did get blown up in *Skyfall*, so it might be the end of the Aston...

NAOMIE'S CARS



PHOTOGRAPHS: MANUFACTURERS, REX

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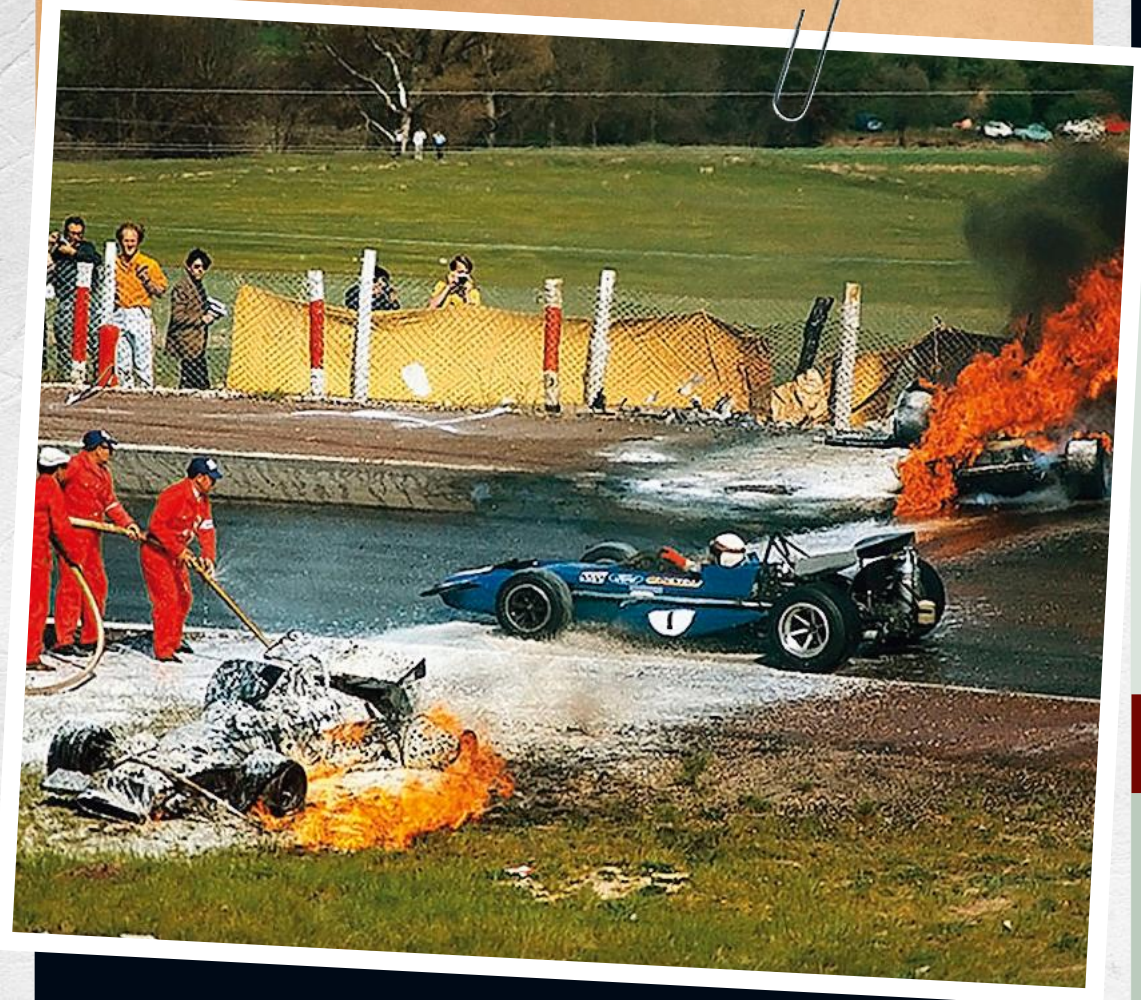
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FROM THE ARCHIVES #3

HISTORY'S FINEST PICS, RESCUED FROM THE DUSTY CORNERS OF OUR VAULT

WHO
Jackie Stewart

WHAT
Definitely not crashing

WHERE
Spanish Grand Prix

WHEN
April 1970

It was a race of Jackies. On lap one of the 1970 Spanish GP, the brakes failed on Jackie Oliver's BRM. To lose speed, he cut across the grass, but speared into the side of Jacky Ickx's Ferrari when rejoining the track. The drivers escaped, but both fuel tanks burst into flames, and Ickx's bottom caught fire. While it was patted out by a bystander's hat, the marshals began hosing the flaming cars both sides of the track.

Meanwhile, the leaders continued. So when they arrived at the scene on lap two – barely slowing down – they drove through the water jets and slid around on a river of extinguisher foam. This is why Jackie Stewart (we're out of Jackies now) looks a bit slithery in the picture above, as the other Jackies' cars burn on either side. Despite this mishap, Stewart, the reigning champ, would go on to win the race – his only victory of the season.

And what a season. Over the winter, Max Mosley had co-founded March Engineering, which – aside from having its own factory team – also supplied winning chassis to several big teams, including Stewart's Tyrrell. It really shook up the sport. And as teams mixed 'n' matched engines and chassis, F1's most macho era began, with beefy wedges replacing the flimsy, tall-winged contraptions of the Sixties. Later that year, perhaps the most eventful in F1 history, Bruce McLaren and Piers Courage would lose their lives at the wheel. Jochen Rindt would become champion... although sadly he was awarded the title posthumously, after his fatal crash four races before the end of the season. And Jackie Stewart, perhaps motivated by this fiery escape, would begin his crusade to make the sport less dangerous.

HEROES AND ZEROS

This month's winners and losers

ON THE PODIUM



FERNANDO ALONSO
Says he's "too busy" to meet Justin Bieber



SHAUN WALKER
Rides a 71mph toilet. Let's hope it has decent wipers



CHINESE MAN
Drives while still attached to a drip, which pokes out of the sunroof

IN THE POINTS



MICRA DRIVER
Finds 20,000 bees in his bonnet



TAXI PASSENGER
Leaves baby in the back of black cab. No child fare, then



SECURITY GUARD
Stops Kimi accessing Monaco GP paddock

IN THE PITS



NOTTS COP
Locks keys in cop car. Gets lift to station from suspect's mum



CAR THIEF
Taunts police with 'S2OLUN' numberplate. Ends up in prison



JUSTIN BIEBER
Takes selfie with Bernie Ecclestone. Or should we call it a 'shortie'?

PHOTOS: GETTY

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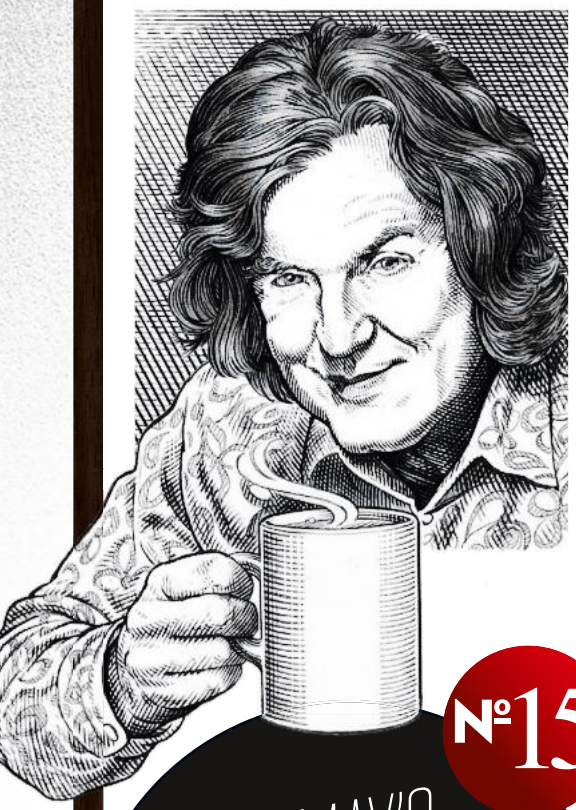


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№15

JAMES MAY'S ALMANAC

A collection of tips, trivia and wisdom from the marvellous mind of May

WORDS: **JAMES MAY**
ILLUSTRATIONS: **DAVID LAWRENCE**



GOD SPEED

In 1925, evangelist and former barkeeper Herman Frics converted his truck into a mobile church. He would drive from Brooklyn to New York's slums, load his congregation and conduct a full church service. Praise be.

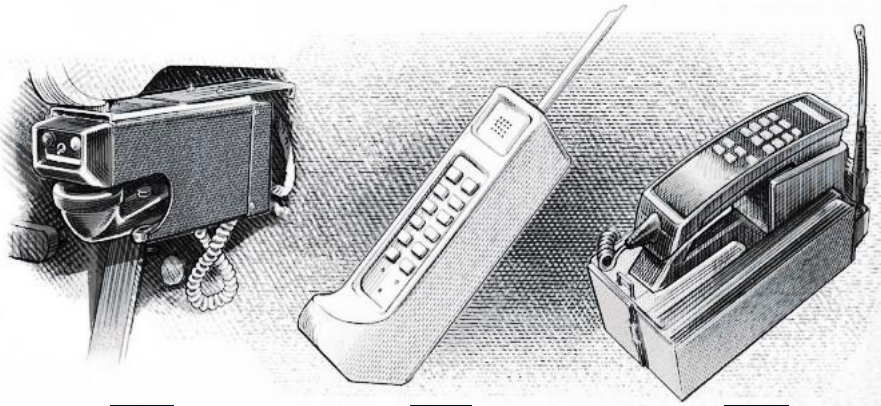


HOUSE OF CHAMPIONS

In the early Eighties, Ayrton Senna rented a house in Chelsea Close, Reading. When Senna moved out, the following tenant received a call from a pub landlord in Yorkshire, who offered to buy the F1 champ's old bog seat. After Senna's death in 1994, Reading council named a local road after him. It is littered with speed bumps.

TRUNK CALLS

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CAR PHONES



1946

The world's first car phone is invented. Essentially, it's a Western Electric Type 38 VHF radio fitted with a telephone handset and a 'selective calling decoder', which rings a bell when it detects a pattern of radio waves – its 'phone number' – being transmitted by the caller's device

1973

Motorola executive Martin Cooper makes the world's first handheld mobile call to arch-rival Joel Engel at Bell Labs*. Cooper's brick-like DynaTAC later becomes an Eighties classic, often clamped to the ears of pinstriped bankers. It weighs a kilo and costs $3,995

1986

Despite the invention of wireless handhelds, most early car phones have cords and cradles in the cabin, and a floppy oft-nicked aerial on the roof. The Motorola 4500X is one of the first and most famous, although it weighs more than four kilograms and to get a proper signal, you have to drive to London

*TECHNICALLY, IT WAS THE SECOND CALL. THE FIRST WAS A WRONG NUMBER

QUOTE ME FURIOUS

£531

Average cost of comprehensive insurance policy

£105

How much lower that is than last year's average

£1,158

Average cost of policy for drivers aged 17–22

£299.81

Average cost of policy for drivers aged 60–69

£3,600

Price quoted to James 'crasher' May for insuring a 911 C2S

"Will you be taking anyone famous in the car?"

Question often asked by insurers of anyone who works in TV, radio, theatre, etc

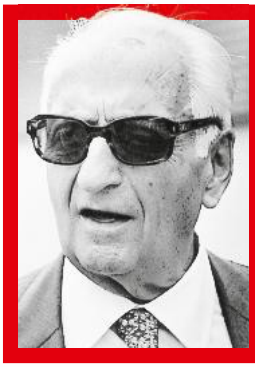
"How the bloody hell do I know?"

My usual response. If I see Rowan Atkinson and his Aston's broken down, I'd offer him a lift. Be a bit rude not to



FUNNY TURNS

In America, UPS delivery trucks collectively save 10 million gallons of fuel each year by avoiding left turns. The idea is to reduce the amount of time drivers spend idling, and therefore wasting fuel, at traffic lights. By turning right – which can be done on a red signal in America – the company claims it avoids 98 million minutes of idling time annually. Ten million gallons of fuel in America cost approximately $25.



"I have regretted often, but repented never"

Enzo Ferrari



SICK, INNIT

A Norfolk farmer has invented a pair of sunglasses to prevent travel sickness, which is caused by the disconnect between what the body feels – i.e. movement – and the visual signals sent to the brain. When there's an imbalance, your brain thinks it's being poisoned and encourages you to vomit. With one clear lens and one opaque, Tim Flaxman's TravelShades cut vision from 3D to 2D, disrupting the visual signals and therefore preventing a conflict.

TOPGEAR TOP TIP



HOW TO... ADJUST CARBURETTORS

1. If you own a simple bike or very basic Seventies car, it will probably have just a single slide carb. There are only three basic adjustments you can make – throttle cable play, the air mixture screw and the throttle stop screw. Cable play gives you a little bit of slack at the start of its travel, the air mixture screw adjusts the volume of air added to the mixture during slow running and the throttle stop screw controls the idle speed.
2. Mind you, you might also have to consider float height, needle position and jet sizes, if you're unlucky.
3. Also, if you have a constant velocity (CV) carburettor, things become a little more tricky. Now the position of the throttle slide is controlled by the depression in the venturi, and you'll need to check the diaphragms in the caps for signs of splitting before you do anything else. Throttle slide cutaway also becomes critical, especially at low speed under load.
4. If you have a bank of several CV carbs, you're in for a long night. Not only must all the butterflies open simultaneously, the vacuums in the venturis must be equal and 'in balance'. To achieve this you will need an expensive multiple vacuum gauge and adaptors to plug it into the carbs. There are more adjusting screws and lock nuts for this job.
5. Honestly, it's a nightmare. The tiniest air leak will ruin everything, and what's wrong with one carb may not be wrong with another. There are people who devote their lives to carburettors and setting them up. Find these people.
6. And always remember an old mechanics' maxim: 80 per cent of carburettor problems are actually in the ignition.



HAS JAMES EARNED A PINT FOR THIS TOP TIP?



YES

NO

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY, REX



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1. Official EU MPG test figure shown as a guide for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. 2. 5% BIK compared to average rate of 25%. 3. 32 mile EV range achieved with full battery charge. 510 miles achieved with combined full battery and petrol tank. Actual range may vary depending on driving style and road conditions. 4. Domestic plug charge: 5 hours, 16 Amp home charge point: 3.5 hours, 80% rapid charge: 30mins. 5. Free British Gas plug-in vehicle charging package available – ask your dealer for more information. Offer ends 31st March 2015. 6. Prices shown include VAT (at 20%), exclude VED and First Registration Fee. Metallic paint extra. Model shown is an Outlander PHEV GX4h at £33,399 including metallic paint. Prices correct at time of going to print. For more information about the Government Plug-in Car Grant please visit www.gov.uk/plug-in-car-van-grants.

Outlander PHEV range fuel consumption in mpg (ltrs/100km): Full Battery Charge: infinite, Depleted Battery Charge: 48mpg (5.9), Weighted Average: 148mpg (1.9), CO_2 Emissions: 44 g/km.



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Drives

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THIS MONTH


BMW 4-SERIES GRAN COUPE P76


PORSCHE PANAMERA DIESEL P76


MERCEDES-BENZ E400 P81


VOLVO V70 P81


FORD FIESTA AUTO P81


NISSAN X-TRAIL P82


AUDI A6 ULTRA P83


MAZDA3 FASTBACK P84



Ferrari California T

The most user-friendly Ferrari ever?



BMW X4

Think BMW X6, but shrunk in the wash. Still big, tall and divisively ugly P79



VW Golf SV

All-new Golf Plus with a shiny new name. And still less appealing than a Golf Estate P81



Mercedes-Benz GLA

The SUV that isn't an SUV. Which, paradoxically, makes it the best Merc hatchback P84

EDITED BY **PIERS WARD**



Ferrari California T

An object lesson in making a turbocharged V8 seem naturally aspirated...

3855cc twin-turbo V8, RWD, 552bhp, 557lb ft | 26.9mpg, 250g/km CO_2 | 0–62mph in 3.6secs, 196mph | 1730kg | £154,490

Self-appointed guardians of Ferrari's soul gave the company a right kicking when it launched the California five years ago. Apparently, to build a relatively usable convertible was none of Ferrari's business. Even though some of its past greats, like the 330 GTS and 250 GT California, were exactly that format. And, actually, the California has been one of the best-selling Ferraris ever. Now there's another storm brewing because the new California, the T, has a turbocharged engine. Again, the voices are raised that it's not what we want from Ferrari, thank you very much. Even though some of the past greats, such as the 288 GTO and F40, also had just that sort of engine.

Hey, be happy people... it's not like it's a diesel SUV or anything. But the decision to go turbo always carried a risk, openly acknowledged by Ferrari engineers, that the result would emerge bereft of the blazing-fast throttle response, primal scream and dizzying revs that make the current generation of Ferrari engines so life-enhancing.

If Ferrari knew it was risky, why do it? Fuel consumption. Contrary to myth, Ferrari can't just lose its thirst and CO_2 numbers in the giant bulk of Fiat's average. For this purpose, it stands independently. But neither is it bound to the same 90g/km target as the mass manufacturers. Ferrari, along with McLaren, Aston and others, gets an exemption as a small manufacturer, but only so long as it shows willing and gets its CO_2 onto a clear downward trend. The Cali T has dropped to 250g/km from the old V8's 299, and they say the real-world consumption will fall in similar ratio.

The hybrid KERS system on the LaFerrari is one way to boost efficiency – indeed, it's more effective than turbos, says Ferrari boss Amedeo Felisa. But it's also expensive and complicated and heavy, and Ferrari didn't realise how expensive and complicated until it actually came to do it. Felisa wears an expression that says they won't be going down that road again any time soon. Turbos, on the other hand, are known technology, and because they allow a smaller engine, they didn't add to the weight of the California at all.

But doing a puffer job that feels like a modern Ferrari engine wasn't so simple, either. It took a

LOOK CLOSER



1 Sitting pretty

Seats were an option over a luggage bench – 99 per cent of buyers chose them, so now standard



2 Luggage vroom

Because the bootlid opens down to the bumper, it's easy to get stuff in, even roof-down



3 Size matters

Carbon brakes are standard. Wheels here are 20s – it looks over-bodied on the standard 19s













couple of years' head-scratching and then four years' development. Which ended up with this all-new 3,855cc V8 of a stonking 552bhp, power that's enough to see off that pesky SL63 AMG. The engine is nothing to do with the Maserati Quattroporte's unit, by the way. Why 3,855? Well, says Felisa, some countries charge huge tax if it's not under 4.0 litres. But it's quite a way under 4.0 litres? He smiles and says they can do a bigger one soon. That's code for "Next year's reworked turbo 458 replacement will be about 3,999cc."

It's extremely compact, fitting entirely behind the California's front wheels' centre lines, and tucks its turbos low down on the outboard side of each bank. The anti-lag techniques are industry standard: the blowers are small, and their turbines have twin inlet scrolls from paired cylinder exhausts for smooth gas flow. Also helping cut lag and emissions, the engine itself has direct injection and variable cam timing.

To make sure the thing sounds right, it has a pair of insanely complex (read expensive) multi-casting exhaust manifolds that look like a nest of vipers. This keeps each tract the same length, and from that issues sweet harmonics.

And as for the torque business, well, the engine is capable of 557lb ft in seventh gear, over a range of 2,500–5,500rpm. But in first, second and third, the torque is limited at low revs to about 410lb ft, and then rises towards a peak at 6,000

"It all sounded silly to me. Whatever possessed them to deliberately limit the performance?"

– like a naturally aspirated engine. The curves for fourth, fifth and sixth are progressively more like the one for seventh. (Some cars do this to save twisting the driveshafts like a barber's pole, but not here, say the engineers.)

Well, it all sounded a bit silly to me at first – whatever possessed them, in an engine with a prancing horse cast onto its red-painted cylinder heads, to deliberately limit the performance? Is this not like chiselling an inch from the manhood of Michelangelo's David?

Yet it does make sense. In the upper gears, the car surges forward on an immense wave of low-rev torque. And as they claim, once you're above 2,500rpm, lag really is inconsequential. That sort of easeful muscle is good for a GT on the motorway. But, by the same token, delivery is why turbodiesels never quite excite us, because their torque is always there at low revs, so you're discouraged from holding a gear and going higher

PHOTOGRAPHS: ROWAN HORNCASTLE







up the dial. In this Cali, things are different. In the low gears, the acceleration rises as revs climb around the big yellow dial. This means it's worth keeping your foot in, and worth shifting down to get the full beans. Plus, it's easier to predict how much effort goes to the tyres: you're only going to break traction if you've properly prepared for it and got the gears and revs just-so.

It is, in other words, a properly involving engine. And, if you use the revs properly, a blisteringly fast one. Ferrari says it'll do 0–62mph in 3.6 seconds, and 0–125 in 11.2. Which is both entirely believable and very much not hanging about.

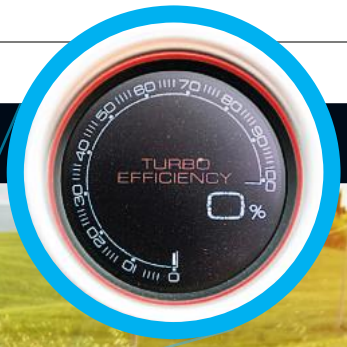
Going to nibble the 7,500rpm red line gets a pretty stimulating sound too. Not the blare of the 458, no, but this is a different sort of car. It's quieter, and a less aggressive harmonic. To be honest, I'd prefer the V12 orchestra of an Aston DB9 at high revs, but I do like the Ferrari turbo's compromise when dawdling: it sounds fruity, but there's none of the antisocial and false loudness that comes with the Sport button on too many fast cars nowadays.

While it was adding this extra power to the California, Ferrari tweaked the chassis, with slightly firmer springs to aid the handling, plus lower-friction and more adaptable dampers to help the ride. It's got amazing traction: I had a job shifting the back end outward for photos, even when going repeatedly round a hairpin. In the rest of a day's driving, it simply never felt likely to happen. And anyway, the traction control in Sport mode is adaptive and fabulously effective.

"It's got amazing traction: I had a job shifting the back end outward for photos"

In all, then, a very composed cornering machine, even on bumpy roads. You feel at every swerve that the weight figure isn't at all bad for a big GT with a folding hardtop, and the rigidity is mighty impressive, too. That'll be the aluminium structure. But compared with the original Cali, the engineers also quickened up the steering rack. I wish they hadn't. It's so urgent, which doesn't quite match the weighting, and the issue is compounded by a lack of feel. I found myself rounding too many corners

LIFE ON THE INSIDE





1 **FORM/FUNCTION** Steering-wheel rim thick and strongly contoured. It's a bit overdone, frankly

2 **EASY CHAIR** New seats comfy on a lengthy run but support well in hang-on cornering

3 **MANETTINO** Three-position Manettino – Comfort, Sport, ESC off. Other Ferraris have Race

4 **WHICH WAY?** When locked over in a roundabout, indicator buttons are reversed, doh!

5 **TOPLESS** Roof button does the job in 14 seconds. That's PDQ, given all that goes on

6 **WATER HOLDER** Useful storage under here, and in centre armrest and various other pockets

7 **SCREEN TEST** Ferrari's fresh screen unit still needs polishing, but will get Apple CarPlay

8 **TURBO GAUGE** Turbo indicator shows boost or lag or efficiency, but is invisible in sunlight

in bites, like I was circumnavigating a 50p. That sort of nerviness isn't ideal for an 'everyday' tourer.

The ride, though, is close to ideal. Despite all that control, the way the car absorbs both big road-turbulence and little pineapple-textured roughness is a revelation.

So it really does act like a great and glamorous touring sports car. But I feel like I'm driving a Ferrari wearing very thick gloves and earplugs. By Ferrari's customary sky-high level of sensory involvement, this one feels rather remote, even if it's more engaging than an SL. Maranello's marketers would no doubt argue this muted character is appropriate for their everyday car. But the FF is for everyday, and that's a wonderful sensory experience.

After my drive, Felisa asked me what I thought, and I advanced that argument. He said the FF is supposed to be more sporty. It's also more expensive. He added that the FF isn't getting as many new customers into Ferrari as they wanted, whereas the Cali abundantly is.

THE RIVAL



Aston Martin DB9
Not so powerful, but still sweet all-round

Those buyers will surely love the fresh looks. All external panels except the roof sections are new. The old car's down-in-the-mouth look has given way to a nicely chiselled nose. Well, I think so. Our photographer Rowan says the front end was hostile to shooting on the move because it has a confusion of angles in the bonnet, but I say few people will be looking at your Cali from the boot of the car in front, so that doesn't matter. At the rear, the old over-tall look has turned into something wider, smoother and more road-hugging. An under-bumper diffuser might not seem appropriate to a blithe summer cruiser, but then you remember it can hit 196mph: aero very much matters.

Inside, there's a new nav/media system at long last. On the day we drove, it had glitches, but they say it was still in beta. Apple CarPlay will soon be added. Seats and dash are new too, looking good, working well and clad in characteristically fragrant leather. Some plastics look cheap, and I suspect this is a ploy to nudge you into springing £5,568 for carbon-fibre decor. You don't need the wind blocker, even at roof-down motorway speed, as you can run roof-down with all four side windows up. The roof-down boot isn't a bad size and extends by dropping the rear seat backs. Plus, its lid is deep, so it's easier to get to than in other folding hardtops. We don't as a rule mention the luggage-area aperture in a Ferrari test, but this, remember, is the Ferrari for people who don't normally buy Ferraris. PAUL HORRELL



THE VERDICT

A superb and glamorous sports GT, and a lovely roadster. Just not quite the full Ferrari experience.

8



BMW 428i Gran Coupe

More niche product from BMW. Bring it on...

1997cc 4cyl turbo petrol, RWD, 245bhp, 258lb ft 44.1mpg, 149g/km CO_2
0–62mph in 6.0secs, 155mph 1510kg £37,335

Right, pay attention, you lot. The BMW 4 Gran Coupe is a four-door hatchback twin to the BMW 4 coupe, itself a slightly wider, lower 3-Series. Don't mistake it for the higher, longer-wheelbase hatchbacked 3 Gran Turismo. Or the estate-ier 3 Touring. Or the SUV-ier X4. Confusing, yes, but BMW admits the Audi A5 Sportback caught it with its Bavarian *Lederhosen* down, so the Gran Coupe is a defensive move.

So first, let's open the new doors and peer inside. Behind the hatch is a long boot, and it gets longer because the seats fold. Two back doors admit us to a bench that's shaped for two, but will take three at a pinch. The trouble is headroom. The doors taper inwards towards the centre of the car as they meet the roof, and so grown-ups will bang their heads on the side rails.

Still, that tapered cabin looks good from the outside, as it means the rear wings are sexily flared over the wheels. But, even so, it isn't as lovely a car as the 6-Series Gran Coupe.

The 4 Gran Coupe drives like a 4-Series Coupe. That is, agile, fluent, fun and well-connected. But, like the coupe, the steering sniffs at cambers, and a coarse road will throw up a fair bit of high-frequency vibration and tyre noise, even though the primary big-bump ride is decently supple. You sit lower in the car than in a 3-Series, and the car is lower to the road, which all helps the feeling of agility. But it feels every inch of its width in tight city streets.



The engine range is taken from the upper end of the palette – nothing below 20i or 20d. We drove the 428i with the eight-speed auto, and it makes a decisively swift job of it, even if the engine can't always disguise that it has two cylinders fewer than six.

The price is £3,000 more than a same-engined 3 saloon, but then you get most of that back in equipment – Xenons, 18s, leather, full climate and basic nav are all rolled in.

I'm still baffled. Is the 4GC a testament to BMW's shepherding of its sporty brand, or a case of the emperor's new clothes? In mass-brand-land, a hatchback Mondeo or Insignia costs the same as a saloon, and is the utility option. BMW, by lowering the roof slightly, turns the hatch into a 'premium' choice over the four-door. PAUL HORRELL

THE RIVAL



Audi A5 Sportback
A lumpy and wayward drive, though improved by quattro



THE VERDICT

Fun to drive, handsome, versatile, if cramped in the back. If that suits, don't fret about BMW's confusing range.

7





Porsche Panamera Diesel

2967cc V6 turbodiesel, RWD, 296bhp, 479lb ft
44.1mpg, 169g/km CO_2 0–62mph in 6.0secs, 161mph 1900kg £65,289

THIS IS, BY A COMFORTABLE MARGIN, the best diesel engine in the world. It's quieter and smoother than several petrols, and it's more powerful and refined than the really rather good engine it replaces.

It's roughly the same 3.0-litre V6 in the old Panamera diesel, but power has been upgraded to 296bhp, with torque up 74lb ft to 479 lb ft. That whips the 0–62mph time down from 6.8secs to 6.0, and improves top speed by 11mph to 161.

On the minus side, fuel economy has decreased fractionally from 44.8mpg to 44.1mpg, and emissions are up from 166g/km CO_2 to 169g/km. And it's got a bit more expensive – base price has risen by £2,367 to £65,289.

But what you get – as well as that, er, divisive styling – is an utterly unique driving experience. Bolted to the seamless 8spd auto, it's always in the torque band, so acceleration from slip road to cruising speed is one continuous puff.

This thing weighs 1,900kg but it puts on speed like a lightweight saloon. OK, so it's expensive. And yes, the Aston Rapide is more beautiful and the Maserati QP is more soulful, but for untrammelled diesel perfection, and a genuinely different driving experience, this is your new car. MATT JONES

THE VERDICT

The best diesel engine on sale today and truly unique. It misses top marks for the price rise and compromised mpg and emissions.

8

PHOTOGRAPHS: MANUFACTURERS

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BMW X4

Oh dear, Beemer's built a dud. Best walk away...

2993cc 6cyl turbodiesel, 313bhp, 465lb ft | 47.1mpg, 157g/km CO_2 | 0–62mph in 5.2secs, 153mph | 1860kg | £48,995

Another day, another niche BMW. This one, plainly, is a fastback X3, rocking a dose of the X6's attack-dog visuals. While the X6 has been a success, BMW knows that some people secretly want one but think it's gross. In the German and English meanings of the word. So the X4 aims for a contradiction: milder vulgarity. After all, it's the sheer size of the X6 as much as its shape that gives it such an in-yer-face aspect. By reducing the physical scale, the X4 inevitably waters down the psychological effect.

So it's a coupe, albeit one that's very much bracketed by quotation marks on account of its height. If you want the same thing in lower format, get the new 4-Series Gran Coupe, tested on p74. (The 4GC is also available in four-wheel drive.) And being as how it's a German coupe, its engineers were mandated to make it sporty – in another set of quotation marks.

Sure enough, it'll career round corners at an unfeasible rate. The active rear diff, optional in X3s, is standard in the X4, and the springs and dampers are stiffer, and the steering rack sharper on lock. You'll tick the adaptive damper option too. Switch it into Sport mode, and you kill most understeer, and then the thing pivots round the bend with vein-popping determination as you get on the right-hand pedal.

But that's the thing. It's having to work very hard, and you know it. The chief engineer of the project told me he deliberately made the steering quite heavy, because it's an authentic reflection of what's going on: you're throwing around a big, tall, heavy object. The result (he didn't say this; I am) is that there's no delicacy and little feedback. It's a bit of a cudgel.



And my cudgel vanquished the roads with no little vigour, on account of the test car having the 35i turbo petrol engine. BMW didn't have anything else to test, but the company will be selling only diesels in the UK. The topmost one will be the 35d, an even more stonking engine. The 35i, despite its turbo, was having to work hard against the 1.9-tonne mass, and felt short-winded unless you gave it really big revs. Which is why I had a 20mpg day. The 35d will be better.



Though the X4 shares front wings, front doors and a bonnet with the X3 (and inside, it has the same dashboard), the body is lowered and the seats are dropped within it. But you still have some sense of looking down on the world. Backseat space is reasonable, but the cushion is oddly shaped and throws all your weight onto your bum. Still, if you want room, get the X3. PAUL HORRELL



THE VERDICT

Will sell by the shedload even though we think it's ugly, aggressive and pointless. Dunno why we bother sometimes.

4

BBC TopGear MAGAZINE



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TG magazine now on Android and iPhone



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TG magazine available on iPhone & all Android devices

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VW Golf Sportsvan

Neither fish nor fowl, the Sportsvan falls between two stools

1968cc, 4cyl turbodiesel, FWD, 148bhp, 250lb ft | 60.1mpg, 122g/km CO_2
0–62mph in 9.2secs, 130mph | 1474kg | £25,400

Neither sporty nor a van, but very competent. And very pointless.

The new Golf Sportsvan is a Golf, but a bit bigger. Like the old Golf Plus, but a fraction bigger still. And equipped with a sillier name. We'll shorten it to SV. It's 134mm longer than the old Plus, and 83mm longer than the current Golf, but 224mm shorter than the Golf Estate. It's 1,578mm tall, 126mm higher up than the others.

Inside, it straddles the two. You don't get the length you'd find in the Estate, but the 2,685mm wheelbase is 48mm longer than the normal Golf and 81mm wider, which frees up more room for things like legs. The rear seats, for example, can slide forwards and backwards by up to 180mm, offering up to 500 litres of bootspace (76 more than the old one), and five tall, well-fed types can get comfortable in there.

So far, so dull. Much like the engine lineup. Don't expect anything remotely GTI-ish, as the SV uses the super-efficient (and excellent) range you'll find in the Golf Estate. Your choice is either a 1.4-litre turbo petrol (with 84bhp, 109bhp, 123bhp or 148bhp) or a pair of turbodiesels – a 2.0-litre with 148bhp, or a 1.6 with 89bhp or 109bhp. We'd go for the chunkiest diesel. Mainly because it's got 250 very exploitable torques.

Despite the extra extraness, and the jacked-up centre of gravity, it's pretty much identical to a Golf through corners. There's a fraction more roll, and the steering is not the last word in feelsomeness, but considering its mass, it's stable and composed.



THE RIVAL



VW Golf Estate
Very slightly smaller, but £1,500 less, and just as good in every other way

But there's a fly in the ointment. Unless more than 50 per cent of your family are over six foot, you can't sleep at night knowing you share your eyeline with the proles, or your ageing hips don't flex too well, it's utterly pointless. That's not to say the SV is a bad car, but it's a needless, overpriced one when the Golf Estate does the same sort of thing for £1,500 less (the SV starts at £18,875), and it's not as useful as a dedicated MPV, or as imperious as an SUV.

That said, the swollen hatchback vernacular is growing. BMW announced the faintly sacrilegious front-wheel-drive 2-Series Active Tourer earlier this year. If you're really desperate for a big small car that's neither sporty nor a van, we'd wait to see if that brings anything cleverer to the table. MATT JONES



THE VERDICT

An entirely reasonable car, but marred by the existence of the Golf hatch and estate.

4

PHOTOGRAPHS: MANUFACTURERS

So, what else is new?



Mercedes-Benz E400

WHAT IS IT?
Merc's big, wafty two-door, stuffed with Merc's lovely 328bhp twin-turbo V6

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW?
It ain't slow. The E400 will crack 0–62mph in 5.2secs and batter the limiter at 155mph. But it doesn't feel like a sports nutter, cruising quietly and riding with Bentley-esque ease

SHOULD I CARE?
Though this is the most powerful E Coupe you can buy, this is no sporty two-door. It's an unflustered, deceptively rapid GT, and all the better for it. That said, the saloon or cabrio guise probably makes more sense

7



Volvo V70 D4 SE Lux

WHAT IS IT?
The perennial Swedish estate, now available with a 2.0-litre diesel and 8spd auto. One from top of the four-strong V70 diesel hierarchy, D4 prices start at £27,195

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW?
That the D4 is not only more powerful than the D3 below it, but also cleaner and more economical, too. 109g/km CO_2 and 65.7mpg meet 179bhp and 295lb ft – good stats

SHOULD I CARE?
The V70 is past its sell-by and now feels cramped compared with your average Bavarian wagon, with road manners that are well off the pace. We'd rather spend extra for a BMW 520d Touring

6



Ford Fiesta Automatic

WHAT IS IT?
It's Ford's brilliant Fiesta, now with the brilliant little 1.0-litre, 3cyl EcoBoost engine and the dual-clutch Powershift auto 'box

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW?
That the engine produces 99bhp and gets to 62mph in 11.2secs – apparently identical to the manual car. Economy drops to 57.7mpg (vs 65.7mpg), it pumps out 114g/km CO_2 and it's over £1,000 more to buy, too

SHOULD I CARE?
Around town, the twin-clutch 'box works seamlessly, moderating the engine's power to great effect. Floor the throttle, however, and it desperately hunts around for the right gear. We'd stick to the manual.

4



Nissan X-Trail

No pretensions, plenty of kit as standard, decent price: what's not to like?

1598cc, 4cyl diesel, 2WD, 128bhp, 236lb ft | 57.6mpg, 129g/km CO_2 | 0–62mph in 10.5secs, 117mph | 1550kg | £22,995

Think of the new X-Trail as a beefed-up Qashqai, and you'll be about right. They share the same platform, and the family resemblance is obvious. But park them side by side, and the X-Trail comes up higher and longer, a clue to the optional third row of seats lurking in the boot. So it's a seven-seater, which means it also takes the place of the Qashqai +2. Nissan could, in fact, have branded it as an oversized Qashqai – such are the similarities between the two – but decided the X-Trail brand was still strong enough to carry itself.

The outgoing X-Trail paid no attention to fashion. It was boxy and robust and would happily muddy its boots now and then. But it was the last of Nissan's traditional SUVs, before the inter-breeding that gave rise to the crossover. This time around, then, someone has bothered to style the X-Trail with all sorts of dips and curves that help to disguise its size and give it a more carlike appearance. But underneath all that, it's still essentially a big and useful SUV. And – when fitted with the optional, part-time four-wheel-drive system – it's still a bit off-roady.

Despite the new looks, the emphasis is still on practicality and handiness, rather than feigned sportiness. In a world where manufacturers try desperately to convince us everything is 'sporty', this is very refreshing.

The optional third row of seats will cost you £700, and even grown-ups would manage a short journey back there. Given that the X-Trail's all-new platform is longer than before, it makes even more sense to stick an extra row in the boot. And the newfound length and wheelbase means it gets away with its new curves, which don't eat too much into interior space. The bootfloor flips and folds into nine different positions and underneath it there's a bonus storage area. All seats fold flat. The middle row reclines, splits and slides. And should you need to transport an eight-foot plank, you're in luck.

Like so many crossovers, it's really a road car with a little rough-road talent. The optional All Mode 4x4-i system costs £1,700, but still works mostly in two-wheel drive until the rear axle is called for. But unless the road is particularly greasy, icy, sandy or muddy, that won't happen

LOOK CLOSER



1 Just add passengers

A third row of seats will cost you £700. If you only tick one option, make sure it's this one



2 Interweb satnav

New infotainment system hooks up to Google, which then talks to the satnav. Works well



3 Space station

Seats fold flat – handy. And it'll accommodate a 2.5-metre long plank – good news for carpenters







too often. At big, brave speeds, it might engage 4WD to help you around a corner, but who's going that fast in an X-Trail? Not us. That's why 2WD versions will account for most sales, and that seems about right. Sure, if you live in an area with particularly snowy winters, the 4WD could come in handy. For most, 2WD is fine.

The 1.6-litre diesel – the only engine available until a petrol arrives in 2015 – is adequate and inoffensive. The steering is accurate and light, but otherwise it's pleasingly unsporty. There's multi-link rear suspension and new electronic chassis control systems, one of which dabs the brakes to stop it bobbling around over high-speed bumps. It soaks up the road rather well. It's composed and comfortable and seems more interested in a calm journey than silly cornering speeds, although it doesn't entirely embarrass itself if you're in a brisk mood.

On the inside, it's out with the tacky plastics and uninspired dash of the old X-Trail. In come many new textures and piano-blacks and other things you'll have to polish to keep shiny. There's nothing overly special or inventive in here, but it's a decent place to be. Climb up the spec ladder, and you'll even find a touchscreen with proper Google connectivity that links with the nav and other systems. All models – even the £22,995, entry-level Visia – have aircon, alloys, LEDs, a five-inch screen between the dials, Bluetooth, cruise control and hill-start assist (which seems a touch reluctant to hold you in place for more than a second or so). The marketing department must have been in a fairly generous mood when compiling the spec sheets...

THE RIVAL



Hyundai Santa Fe
It's a useful seven-seater, but £3k pricier than the Nissan

But perhaps the most appealing thing about the X-Trail is its honesty. Alright, maybe the name is a slight misnomer nowadays... but otherwise it's a straight-up effort that looks pretty good, drives well and serves up much practicality. If you don't want the 4WD, it doesn't foist it upon you. If you do, simply tick that box. It's decent value, and – except for dull MPVs – there really isn't much else for this money, or of this size, with that third row of seats. Now all you need is some people to fill 'em. DAN READ



PHOTOGRAPHS: MANUFACTURER

THE VERDICT

The X-Trail has grown up, looks better and serves up good value for money – especially as a seven-seater.

8





Audi A6 Ultra

1968cc, 4cyl diesel, FWD, 187bhp, 295lb ft
64.2mpg, 114g/km CO_2, 0–62mph in 8.2secs, 144mph, 1625kg, £30,985

ULTRA. IGNORE THE FAINT WHIFF OF Italian soccer fanaticism, and it's a good name, isn't it? A name that speaks of much power and little weight, maybe even of sticky tyres and roll cages.

Not so much, not here. The A6 Ultra is, in fact, the very most eco-efficient diesel in the A6 line-up, with a 2.0-litre, 187bhp turbodiesel managing an official 64mpg and 114g/km of CO_2. Oh.

But you know what? Though the A6 Ultra may be far from ultra, it's very nice. It won't have you squealing with deranged glee as you pin the throttle, but this engine doesn't feel hamstrung, spooning out a dollop of power throughout the rev range. Of course, you won't manage 64mpg unless you hack your leg off at the ankle and restrict interaction with the accelerator to the most tentative of prods every 20 minutes or so. But you will get towards 50mpg, which is damned respectable for a big ol' saloon.

Audi has correctly deduced that those who want Much Economy from their big ol' saloon aren't too worried about taste-the-tarmac handling, so the Ultra keeps things lazy and low-maintenance in the handling department. This is, in truth, a welcome relief. Audis with a sporting bent often feel a trifle disjointed, but the A6 Ultra is coherent and honest of purpose. If not name. SAM PHILIP

THE VERDICT

Very green, very smartly built, very relaxing to drive, doesn't throw lit flares at rival football fans. Winner.

7



Mercedes GLA200 CDI

The thin walls between the niches have been breached

2143cc, 4cyl turbodiesel, FWD, 134bhp, 221lb ft 62.8mpg, 119g/km CO_2
0–62mph in 10.0secs, 127mph 1505kg £25,850

It was bound to happen eventually. For the past few years, carmakers have been chipping away at the SUV-hatchback divide, with crossovers turning ever less off-road and ever more, erm, Waitrose.

And now, at last, the inevitable has come to pass. Mercedes, in its desire to make an SUV as hatch-like as possible, has succeeded in creating... a hatchback. The Merc miners have burrowed right through the back wall of the SUV chamber, and straight into the pit containing the VW Golf, Audi A3 and Ford Focus.

Don't be fooled by Merc's attempts to make the GLA look off-roady, with its big arches and its desire to only be photographed from low angles. This is a Golf rival. Yes, it may stand a few millimetres taller than a Golf, but that's really all it is. Millimetres. Yes, you can have it with 4WD, but you can have a 4WD Golf too. This entry GLA – with its 134bhp 2.1-litre diesel – is FWD. If it looks like a hatch and drives like a hatch...

Still, what's the biggie? It may not be the mini-SUV-hatch-crossover Merc believes it to be, but the GLA is a very pleasant hatchback. There's a useful chunk more space in the back and boot than you'll find in the closely related A-Class, which feels claustrophobic in comparison. And on the road, the GLA feels more like a proper Merc than that A-Class, which, especially when optioned with big wheels and AMG sports suspension, often can't seem to decide whether it wants to be a family hatch or thrusting sports-thing. With a welcome squish to its suspension, the GLA is lazy and proud of it. As is the diesel, which, though not the quietest, is effortless and might give you 50mpg if you treat it well.



THE RIVAL



VW Golf
Less loping of ride, surprisingly close in terms of space

If you wish your Merc hatch to perform a more convincing SUV impression, you could always upgrade to the GLA220 CDI, which gets you 4WD, along with a 34bhp more powerful version of the same engine and, usefully, Merc's 7spd dual-clutch 'box. But that car starts at £29k. The GLA200 costs just over £25k, which, while hardly budget, is only a few grand more than the equivalently powered Nissan Qashqai with a few options ticked.

And only a couple of thousand more than the same-engine A-Class. Which makes this arguably the real-world small Mercedes of choice. The A-Class, specced wrongly, feels like Merc's attempt to out-Audi Audi. The GLA is Merc doing what Merc does best. But not an SUV. SAM PHILIP



THE VERDICT

Fun to drive, handsome, versatile, if cramped in the back. If that suits, don't fret about BMW's confusing range.

7





Mazda3 Fastback

2191cc, 4cyl diesel, FWD, 148bhp, 280lb ft 72.4mpg, 104g/km CO_2 0–62mph in 8.0secs, 132mph 1383kg £22,145

THIS IS *A GOOD CAR*. IT'S ESSENTIALLY a Mazda3 saloon – think four-door Audi A3 or Merc CLA – though, in today's world of confusing naming conventions, it's actually called a 'Fastback', merging the hatch and saloon genres into one, fluid shape.

And it does look fluid, Mazda's design language lending this 3 Fastback a svelte, clean silhouette. Underneath, we're treated to a lovely 2.2-litre diesel engine, producing 148bhp, and you know what? It's a cracking unit.

Relatively quiet and punchy enough to make the Mazda3 NotASaloon feel quick point-to-point. And when it comes down to the business of pointiness, it retains all the lovely hallmarks of the 3 hatch. Which means sure-footed handling, competent, capable and predictable chassis balance and great steering, if lacking a little feel.

The important thing to note here is that though the rear bench still isn't as capacious as you'd like, the boot is cavernous: it's 55 litres bigger than the hatch and therefore much more practical.

With good economy, a smooth and supple ride and a decent interior (if a little so-so in places), this is a great alternative to the Ford Focus and VW Golf. And cheaper than those pesky Germans. Make sure it's on your shortlist. VIJAY PATTNI

THE VERDICT

Good looks, an honest drive and practical, too. We're very impressed with how the Mazda3 Fastback compares with its German rivals.

8

PHOTOGRAPHS: MANUFACTURERS

The world's biggest and most glorious car failures

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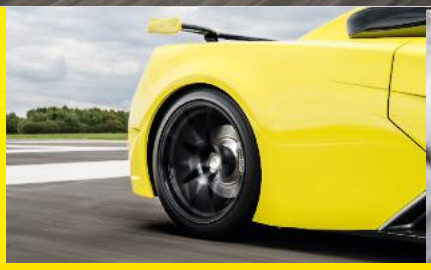


ARASH DECISION

Be careful what you wish for if you're planning a trip to Le Mans. For Arash Farboud, the race was the inspiration to build his own sportscar







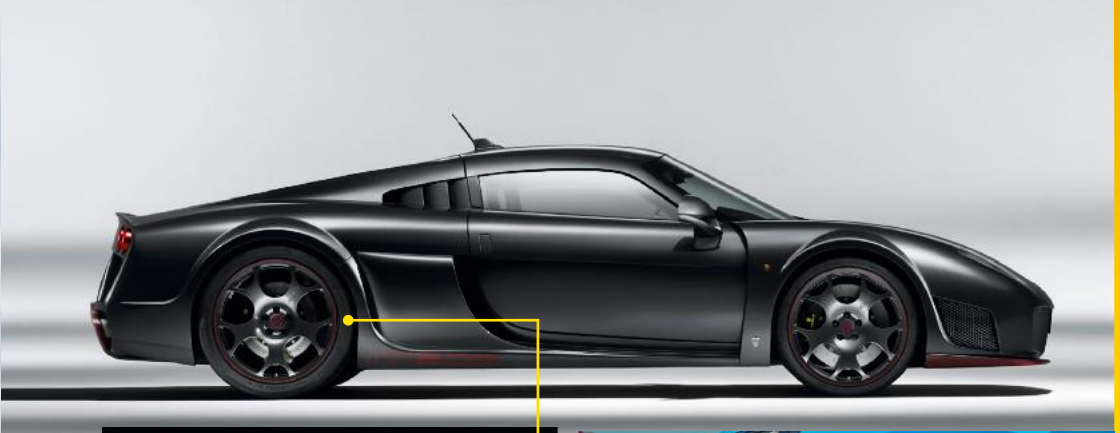


That was back in 1998. In the 16 years since, he has been sedulously pursuing a dream that is now realised in the form of the Cambridgeshire company's latest model: the AF8. With a 7.0 litre, 550bhp V8 engine in a package weighing less than 1,200kg, this latest Arash goes and sounds like a Le Mans race car. It also has race-like grip to match, thanks to Michelin's *Pilot Super Sport* tyres.

"We've been aligned with Michelin since 2000," revealed Arash during a recent test at Dunsfold, home of *Top Gear*. "We simply don't get involved with any other tyre brand." The technical capabilities of the Michelin *Pilot Super Sport* provide the exact characteristics Farboud was looking for during development of the AF8 model.

"For a start, there is the contact patch," he explains, "and those four areas of rubber are all that keep you connected to the road." The innovative Variable Contact Patch 2.0 feature of *Pilot Super Sport* tyres changes shape during cornering – depending on driving conditions –guaranteeing the amount of rubber in contact with the road is optimised. When a car is capable of the sort of cornering speeds the AF8 can achieve, this is critical. The Michelin *Pilot Super Sport's* Bi-Compound technology is another key innovation. The use of different rubber compounds on either side of the tread ensures exceptional endurance during that extreme cornering while also being able to efficiently disperse water and stick to the road in wet conditions.

"The Dunsfold test proved what we already knew about Michelin and the relationship we have with them," concluded Farboud. "In terms of quality, choice of sizes and support, we stick to the best. We've only ever used Michelin."



+ A NOBLE CHOICE

Established British manufacturer, Noble, is another British supercar maker to enjoy a close technical partnership with Michelin. Noble recently replaced Michelin's ***Pilot Sport 2*** tyres with Pilot Super Sport as original equipment on its 225mph M600 model, following a successful evaluation at Michelin's Ladoux Technical facility. It's Michelin's attention to detail that really makes the difference, says Noble's Engineering Manager, Barney Stevenson. "Michelin asked for comprehensive technical data ahead of the test and we then worked together with their technical team to dial-in the *Pilot Super Sports* to the M600. We may only build 12 cars a year, but Michelin clearly cared as much as we do about finding the very best set-up for our car. That's impressive."

It was hugely important to Noble that the new tyres worked without the need for any re-engineering of the car. "The M600 is a road car, not a race car. There is no opportunity to alter camber and castor settings, for example, but Michelin understood this. In the end, we found the sweet spot through a combination of fine tuning the size of the rears and optimising tyre pressures."





+ POLES APART

The new Volvo S60 and V60 Polestar are the fastest production cars Volvo has ever produced. Familiar to millions as a wholesome family saloon / estate, versions fitted with the Polestar badge come complete with a 350bhp, six cylinder, turbocharged engine and an ability to hit 62mph in less than five seconds. By any measure, that's high performance and, as Henrik Fries, Project Manager for S60/V60 Polestar, succinctly puts it, "Michelin *Pilot Super Sport* tyres suit these cars very well."

Despite their significant racing provenance (see panel, right), Michelin *Pilot Super Sport* is very much a road tyre but with racetrack characteristics. It's all part of Michelin's Total Performance strategy, the company's trademark blend of outstanding wet and dry grip together with high levels of safety and longevity. And in the words of Michelin OE Commercial Manager, Anders Svensson, "it was this combination that Volvo was looking for to complement its new cars."

Visit **topgear.com/michelin** to see an **EXCLUSIVE** video of the Arash AF8 in action at Dunsfold



ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE



MICHELIN PILOT SUPER SPORT AN INSIGHT

Development of the Michelin *Pilot Super Sport* began back in 2007. A technical team with direct experience of the Michelin F1 programme combined all that had been learned from winning Grands Prix with the company's unique C3M production technology to create this ultra high performance tyre. "One of the greatest features of Michelin *Pilot Super Sport* is that it is so effective right off the shelf," explains Jamie McWhir, Customer Engineering Support Manager for Michelin in the UK. "While our production techniques make it possible to tune Michelin *Pilot Super Sport* to manufacturer's specific model requirements, it often isn't necessary because the tyre performs so well in the first place." Just one example of why can be found in one of the crucial features of the *Pilot Super Sport*'s construction: the high tension aramid fibre belt. Strong and light at the same time, aramid is also five times more resistant than steel at an equivalent weight. "Basically, this material allows us to make the belt tighter in the middle" continues McWhir, "and as well as being strong and light, it is also less susceptible to heat." Tyres on a high performance car operate at some incredible temperatures and with that heat comes centrifugal growth, altering the profile – and optimum performance – of the tyre. In a nutshell, that doesn't happen with a Michelin *Pilot Super Sport*."

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THE STIG PRESENTS

SPEED WEEK



Welcome to *TopGear* magazine's Speed Week 2014, our annual festival of fast. To start, we've gathered the greatest performance cars of the past 12 months at the fabulous Castellolí circuit, and we have two-and-a-half days, 2.5 miles of sticky Spanish tarmac and one Stig at our disposal.

We begin at the track for the simple reason that it's the only place you can relatively safely explore the limits of a modern sports car without teleporting immediately to prison. After a couple of days of assessment, a selection will then head off on a 1,000-mile road trip.

The figures speak for themselves: £2,795,430, 99 cylinders and 53,140cc developing a total of 7,221bhp and 6,388lb ft of torque. Stats inflated by the McLarenP1 and Porsche 918 – meeting face to face for the first time anywhere in the world at this event.

But this isn't only about figures. Speed Week is about more than just data: we're looking for cars that put a smile on the face and deliver that special, visceral thrill. Envelopes will be pushed, tyres will become an endangered species. There will be tears, tantrums and one small fire.

The time has come. Release The Stig...









THE ODD COUPLE

Speed Week is a broad church. When the P1 and Caterham turned up early, we went to Barcelona to find out how broad...

WORDS: **OLLIE MARRIAGE** /
PICTURES: **ROWAN HORNCASTLE**











SOME CULTURE. AND THE MUSEU NACIONAL D'ART DE CATALUYNA

A lot of clever people will tell you that air is a performance car's biggest enemy. Or was it friend? After all, your engine likes to suck it down, it's handy for cooling and if you stick a wing up in it, it'll push you into the ground. However, you also have to move it out of the way. And I only have 80bhp to do that with. It's not enough. Air comes at me from all angles, a raucous, invisible assault – my right eye is closed and my right ear is numb. Hair? That, at least, is not something I have to worry about. Air is thick, too. At 60mph, it's as viscous as soup; at 80mph, I feel like I'm trapped in jelly. I stick an arm outside the cockpit and waggle it around in the gale, enjoying the sensation, but realising that I'm not exactly using air to its best advantage.

Ahead, I watch as the McLaren P1 slices through the same air, a blade pursued by a brick. Now that's a car that's been designed to use air properly – to bend, shape and mould it, not batter at it feebly and uselessly. It uses air to generate up to 600kg of downforce. The day after tomorrow, at Castellolí racetrack, it'll pull over 2*g* through corners.

Right now, in the company of the wind-battered Caterham Seven 160, the P1 is ambling along the A2 towards Barcelona, and I'm realising that air alone is not the only difference between them. No, what they illustrate is the sheer scope and variety of the performance-car market in 2014. Later, you'll find hatchbacks, coupes and even, ahem, an estate. But these two British two-seaters are the outer limits: the most and least advanced, the most and least powerful, the most and least expensive. For the record, the McLaren has 11.3 times as much power, and you could have 48 Caterhams for the price of a P1...

You might wonder why we're here, too, not starting at a racetrack or high in the stunning Montserrat hills. Well, there's plenty of that sort of thing coming up over the following pages, and right now there's a bike track day occurring on our chosen circuit.

So, as *TG*'s advance party, and with a Caterham and McLaren to play with, we needed an excuse to do some driving. Frankly, where the P1 is concerned, it didn't have to be much of an excuse. It was my first time in one. And you never forget your first time.



P1 INCORPORATES ADVANCED TECH, INCLUDING ELECTRICITY



"THE P1 HAS 11.3 TIMES THE POWER OF THE 160"

"Barcelona's cool," went our thinking, "and Parc de Montjuïc, high above the city used to stage F1 grands prix until 1975 – and besides people would love to see these cars, wouldn't they?" In our book, that was justification enough. The side effect, of course, is that it's always interesting to see just how broad the talents of extreme cars are. "The best driver's car on road and track", is McLaren's claim for the P1. No mention of roadside posing, oddly. Or speed-hump capabilities. In fact, some common ground does exist between these two: of all the cars you'll read about over the next 60 pages, these two are – on paper at least – the worst daily drivers.

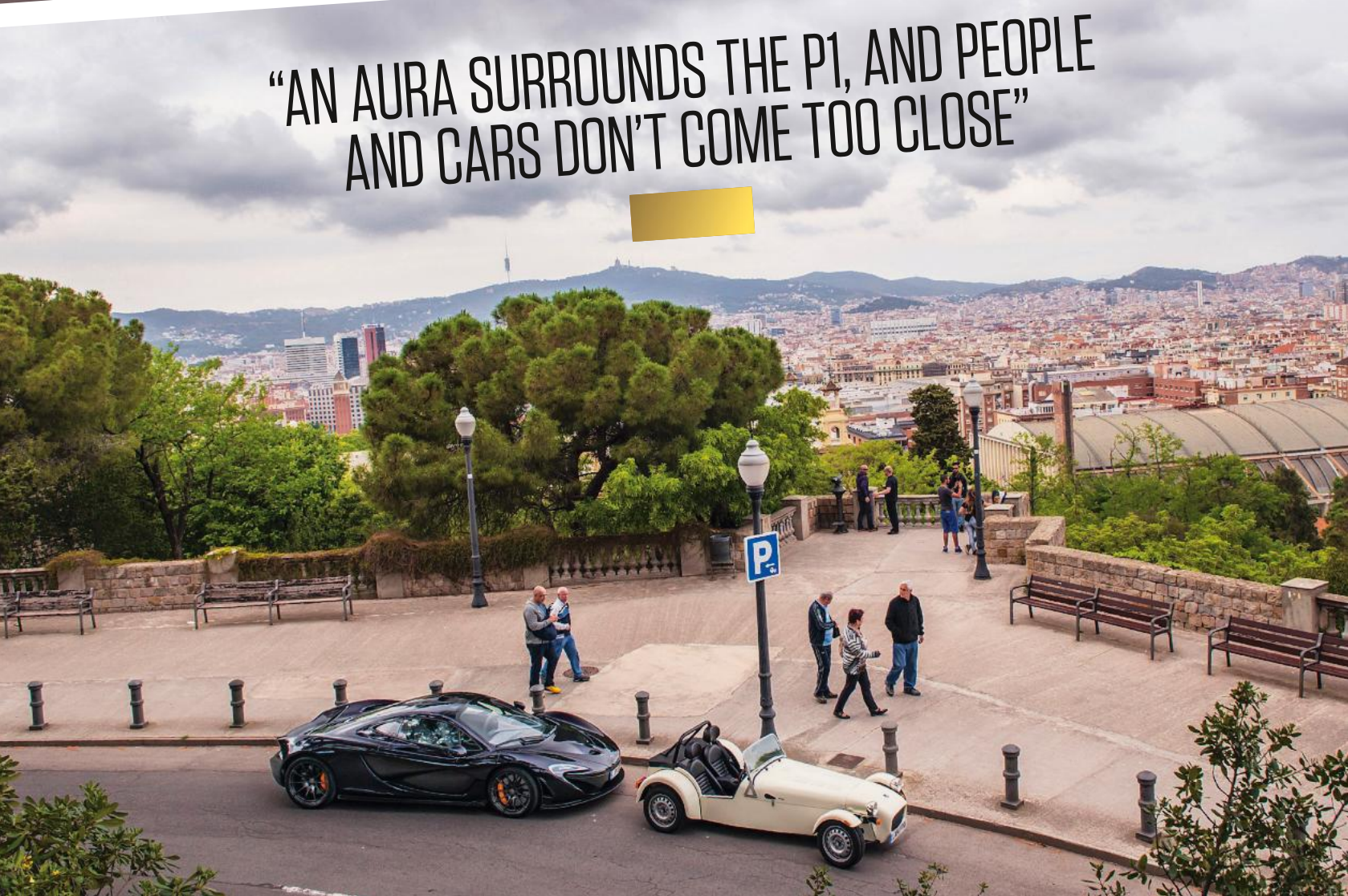
Does this, then, constitute malicious and inappropriate use of an £866,000 supercar? Probably, but right now I'm in the Caterham, the car we built ourselves*, watching as the P1 tentatively, delicately attempts to slot itself up the inside of a bus as we try to negotiate the Plaça d'Espanya roundabout. It's seven lanes wide, has umpteen exits, we don't know where we're going and we're hemmed in on all sides by the aggressive thrust of mobile phones. The P1 seems to be suffocating. The Caterham, however, is proving excellent. Visibility is not a problem

*SEE ISSUE 255. WE WEREN'T VERY PROFICIENT

AIR: SURGICALLY SLICED BY THE P1, HEAD-BUTTED BY THE 160



"AN AURA SURROUNDS THE P1, AND PEOPLE AND CARS DON'T COME TOO CLOSE"

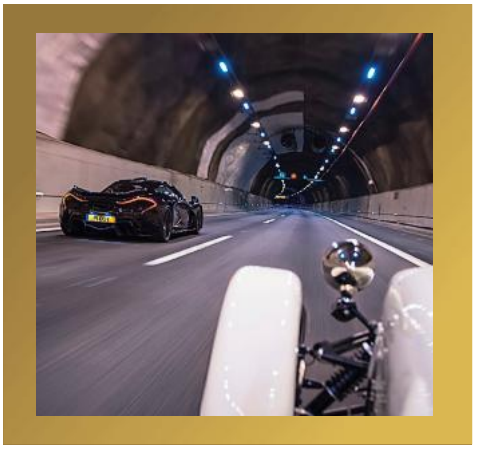




THE P1'S DOORS DRAW A CROWD. THE 160'S DOORS DON'T EXIST







when you have no doors or panelling of any sort above knee level. The teensy turbo gusts about happily with so little weight to work against, and it's small. Really small.

So small, it's almost invisible, in fact. So captivated are the Barcelonians by the P1 that they fail to spot the off-white roadster, and I'm buffeted and barged by the currents. I don't mind – the Caterham slices and dices through them as we make our way up to Parc de Montjuïc, and when people do notice it, they love it – I'm dinky, cute and harmless, more lapdog than performance car. But then an Aston Martin DBS pulls up alongside the P1. The girl inside is even more beautiful than the car. Time to swap.

An aura surrounds the P1, and people and cars don't come too close. This helps my nerves. As does the fact I can trundle around in electric, therefore not giving the crowds advance notice that something wicked this way comes. It's quite a hard, piercing electrical whine, and you can't go that far before the V8 blares back into life, but there's a wonderful sense of satisfaction to be had here.









Does that gel with the idea of a performance car to you? This is performance of a different sort, almost theatrical rather than sporting. The drama of the doors never fails to draw an "ooh" from bystanders, and simply being in the P1 is an event. You nestle in it, bathed in light pouring in from all these windows, marvelling at the light, delicious steering, the superb visibility afforded by the low scuttle and generous side mirrors, wishing you could keep the spoiler at 'silly' height all the time. You can't, because Race mode is illegal on the public road. It has a mode that is illegal. I love that about it, too.

It's been a fun day out, I reflect, as we head for the hills. I haven't used more than a quarter of the P1's throttle travel nor even made the Caterham's skinny tyres squeal, and yet I've had a ball – proving that exciting cars are capable of so much more than just speed. They're defined not just by their numbers (however big or small they might be), but by their attitude. Numbers separate the P1 from the 160, attitude draws them back together. It'll be attitude that counts at Castellolí, too.

EXPRESS



DELIVERY

The past year has produced some incredible performance cars. All of which needed to travel 1,000-miles to Spain. As ever, The Stig delivers

WORDS: TOM FORD / PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK FAGELSON, JOHN WYCHERLEY, ROWAN HORNCASTLE



The *TopGear* magazine Speed Week 2014 begins with a gate. It's a substantial metal gate, currently blocking the narrow entrance bridge to the pit area of the Castellolí circuit. A neatly ironed security guard checks our identities before thumbing a button and allowing 10 feet of corrugated steel to slide slowly and inexorably right, and reveal the path to what promises to be God's own track battle. The most exciting performance cars of the past 12 months, two-and-a-half days, and a tricky, fast and flowing circuit threaded through the undulations of a pretty little valley just outside Barcelona. The sun is shining. The scent of warm tarmac hangs in the air undercut with a faint hint of super-unleaded, and there are empty meanders of tempting racetrack coiled under the bridge. This is going to be utterly magnificent.

Except it isn't, because once we arrive at the baked area behind the pit straight, there are no cars. Just one lonely cargo truck and a Repsol tanker lorry containing enough fuel for *TG* to intensify localised global warming by at least a degree-and-a-half. Which is nice, but a bit redundant when the only thing to hot lap is an ageing Iveco. We stumble about and make phone calls, worry and wonder what it takes to register a truly heroic pole in a Seat Alhambra diesel. But only for a few laps, because the Repsol truck only has a bellyful of Super.

We needn't have bothered. Up by the entrance, we hear a screech, a hiss of airbrakes, and the Bond-villain gate slides back to reveal a huge car transporter. The driver is clothed in a white race suit, impassive mirrored visor reflecting the afternoon sun – and its pretty obvious he's loaded with proper toys. The Stig swings the wagon around to the back of the pit garages in one smooth movement, reverses expertly – without looking in his mirrors – steps out and points to the eight performance cars canted on the back. He waits a beat, and then points to the track. To be fair, you don't have to be an expert in sign language.

Before we can even loosen any straps, the gate swishes open once again, and another small truck appears trailed by a quartet of variously sized car transporters. One wears the Honda Yuasa Touring car logo, the other more Seat livery. More of those on page 123. Yet another bears the Porsche legend, and the last is strangely blank. This is getting interesting. But that's the thing about *TG* Speed Week, it's like Forrest Gump's legendary box of chocolates: you never really know what you're going to get.

Which means we need to take stock. As various cars fire up and are pulled, grumbling and thrumming into the pit garages, it becomes clear that this is quite an eclectic collection. First up is a little grey hatch. But this is a Leon Cupra 280, expensive at nearly £27,000 and packing 276bhp of nicely understated firepower from a 2.0-litre turbo engine. It is the Nürburgring front-wheel-drive lap-recordholder, and it sits low and purposeful on big 19-inch wheels. A fine start. Next, a £25k Audi S1 quietly draws into the pit, brand new and shockingly yellow, opting for 227bhp of turbo power from a four-ringed version of a very similar turbo 2.0-litre, slapped to the road through quattro four-wheel drive. A punchy combination for



WHEN YOU WERE A KID, YOU PROBABLY DREAMED OF THIS

"THE STIG POINTS TO THE CARS ON THE WAGON, AND THEN TO THE TRACK..."







1 Local hero Seat Leon Cupra 280 arrives at Castellolí. Looks hard
2 Some say the Stig can drive anything. All we know is they're right
3 Repsol tanker contained 1,500 litres of super-unleaded. We used nearly all of it
4 We're not sure what this sign means. "No taking a stance near people having a poo"?
5 The McLaren 650S now comes with standard carbon-ceramic brakes – it'll need them here
6 Tyres were also present at Castelloí – a spare set for every car. They take up a huge amount of space...











such a small car. The retina-searing S1 is followed closely by an almost comically understated VW Golf in dark blue. But look closer, and it's obvious that this is the £31,305 R variant, and it means speedy business. Big wheels only partially hide bigger brakes, there are a quartet of purposeful exhausts out back; the relatively sober exterior disguises 296bhp of 4Motion-equipped über-Golf from yet another version of that blown 2.0-litre four-cylinder. Popular engine, that.

Keeping with the real-world theme, and again, almost comically undersubscribed in the looks department, an accountancy-blue BMW M235i whirrs alongside the Golf. A roadcar in rude health, this mini-M car packs a not-insubstantial 322bhp and 332lb ft from a single-turbo 3.0-litre straight-six stuffed under its modest bonnet. More than that, it's rear-wheel drive. For £34,260, it's more like an old M3 than the current version. But, as ever, there's more to come. And the horsepower figures are rising...

There's a flat, industrial noise from the back of the Porsche truck, and a silver Cayman GTS backs out onto the tarmac. Perennial plaudit-accumulator in any performance test, this GTS is apparently faster, better resolved and quicker than any before it. With a mid-mounted 3.4-litre flat-six pushing out 335bhp and costing just over £57k, this is a seriously fast and well-balanced sports car – and probably one to watch. It's also bloody noisy with the optional sports exhaust – a rough boxer tenor. A tune that's rudely undercut in the next couple of heartbeats by the rasp of a very odd-sounding engine. For 1,400 quid more than the Cayman, a BMW M4 hoves into view,



"IF THIS ISN'T FAST ENOUGH, YOU NEED TO BECOME A JET PILOT"

1

1 The *TopGear* toybox. Immediately after this shot was taken, someone drove one of the cars into the garage door **2** The Stig between laps. Bit weird, if we're being honest **3** Porsche truck disgorges the 918, wing up, and ready for serious action **4** Seat Alhambra tries to get in on the track action. Fails **5** 'Open track' elements of Speed Week involved glorious chaos. Track days will never be the same again

resplendent in a burning metallic yellow paint that makes it look as if it's been cast from liquid gold. Now this is an interesting car – *the* response to the one-size-fits-all fast roadcar equation, a two-door, four-seat, semi-practical Answer To Everything. Controversially, there's a similar-capacity turbocharged 3.0-litre engine under the bonnet vaguely related to the one in the M235i, but this time it uses a pair of turbos to produce 425bhp and 405lb ft. It's fast, too. But despite looking fabulous as it approaches, it makes a most uninspiring thrumble.

Not so the next. A blood-red Corvette C7 rumbles ominously past – not sure where that came from – angular features bracketed by the black accents that denote the UK Z51 spec – bigger wheels, stickier tyres, better cooling, better aero, a trickier electronic differential, brilliant magnetic ride control suspension. It looks even better than I remember. And it has 460bhp and 465lb ft of 6.2-litre V8 under that long bonnet. For £61,495 in the UK, there's not a thing to compare it to. Unless, that is, you spend 85 grand and buy a Jaguar F-Type Coupe R like the bronze-orange version that crackles into life just behind it. Noisy, this. And utterly gorgeous. Slick and pert, pretty and proportioned, it's got to be one of the best-looking Jags ever. Mean, too: a 5.0-litre supercharged V8 drops 542bhp through the back wheels. It pulls up way too close to the Vette. I swear there's trouble brewing between those two already.

Then it starts getting silly. A Porsche 911 Turbo S creeps in, subtle but vicious-looking, offering even the most ham-fisted of driver 0–62mph in 3.1 seconds from a bi-turbo 3.8-litre flat-six hung out the back. That's what £141k and 553bhp through sophisticated Porsche AWD will do for you. Then another four-wheel-drive car looms, and the sun is momentarily blocked by the gargantuan bulk of a bright-red Bentley Continental GT Speed. It seems faintly ridiculous here, that this wood-panelled behemoth could be considered as a performance car, but this is the newest and fastest Conti: £156,700, 626bhp, 605lb ft and rest to 62mph in just over four seconds. It does over 200mph. It has a 6.0-litre bi-turbo W12. It is glorious.

The next is smaller, but a more acceptable expression of the fast-car lexicon. At first it appears that the newcomer might be the fabled McLaren P1, but it resolves into an orange McLaren 650S Spider wearing most of a P1's face. Successor to the brilliant-but-flawed 12C, the Woking missile boasts proper supercar figures. For £215k, you get a 3.8-litre bi-turbo V8, 641bhp, 500lb ft and heart-attack performance. If 0–62mph in 3.0secs and 204mph isn't enough, then you need to start thinking about becoming a jet pilot. That's it. A shiny selection of the most explosive cars of the year. There can't possibly be more. And yet there is.

The last two contenders glide out into the sunlight silently, like sharks sliding out from the abyss into shallower hunting


2


3






4



waters. The only noise they make is a faint whine, and the hiss of tyres on tarmac. And yet these two are possessed of a total of 1,778bhp. They are both hybrids. Everything else suddenly looks a bit tame.

The Porsche 918 wears a somewhat over-the-top, flamed livery, but has the go to match the show. A car so dense with technology that it should fall straight through the planet, the £700k nine-eighteen is a plug-in hybrid that produces a total of 875bhp and 943lb ft, delivered through both axles. It hammers to 62mph in 2.5 seconds. The race-derived 4.6-litre V8 stowed in the back is naturally aspirated – when it fires up, it makes you think of the best bits of Le Mans. And fear.

The strange thing is, that's not even the most intimidating of the two. McLaren's P1 pulls into position like an alien craft settling into the pitlane. Some 866 thousand quid. The same 3.8 V8 as the 650S, but re-engineered and supplemented by an electric motor to produce 903bhp and 664lb ft, all driven exclusively through the rear wheels. Again, it's a properly feral plug-in hybrid. It's here. And facing the 918. The tension is palpable. Like sitting on a low-voltage electric fence.

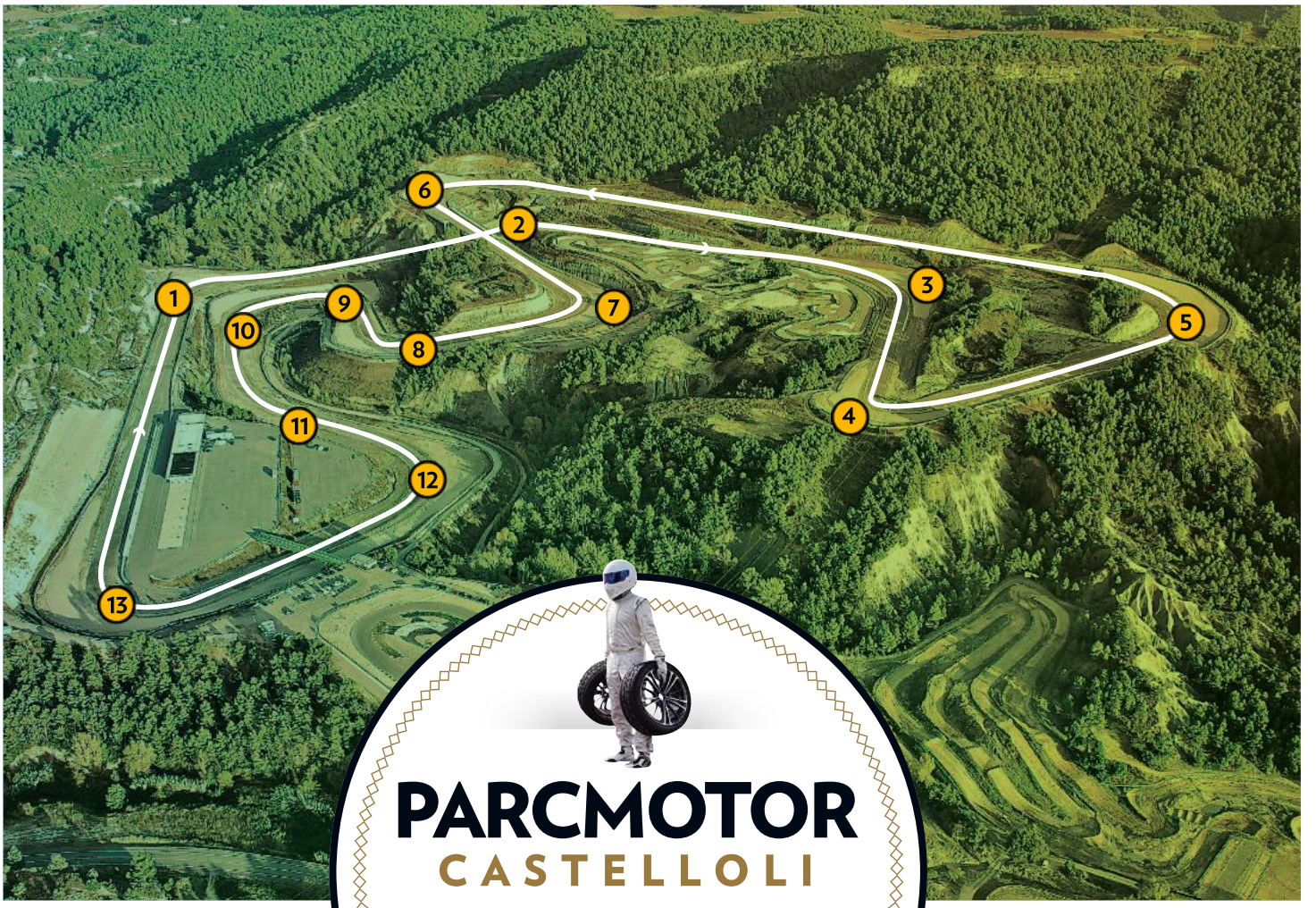
You'd think that would be enough. It probably *is* enough. But just as we've arrayed our delicious selection of the finest performance cars of the past year, there's a farty, fluttering sound from one of the garages, a rattle and a "Frrrrp, tish" of what sounds like a turbocharged 50cc scooter. The cream Caterham appears. Now, I'm not one to decry life's simple pleasures, but this particular 160 has but 80bhp and 79lb ft from a Suzuki-derived 660cc turbo three-cylinder engine. It has a top speed of just 100mph and tyres skinnier than my feet. It's here because it provides a kind of lightning rod for complexity, reminding us of what's really important. But, more likely, because it's the one we built in our office, and our editor-in-chief Charlie Turner has an unhealthy obsession with it. Even though he knows exactly how haphazardly it was built.

A message comes over the radio. The track is open. And as 14 of the best cars of 2014 fire up and rumble to the pit exit, The Stig lifts his head like he's scented blood, and the hairs on the back of my neck stand to attention. Welcome to *TopGear* magazine's Speed Week 2014.

Prepare to fry some tyres. It's going to be incredible.



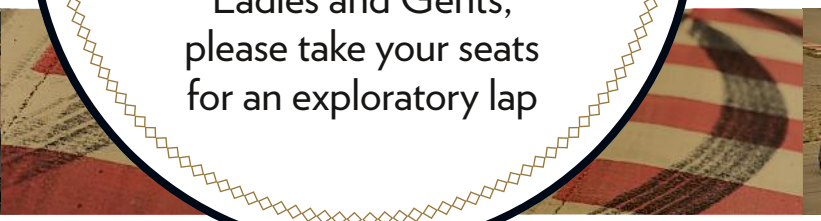
5



PARCMOTOR
CASTELLOLI

Ladies and Gents, please take your seats for an exploratory lap







If this magazine were scratch 'n' sniff, your nostrils would now be full of brake smoke, and possibly the caustic whiff of martyred tyres. This is the fragrance of Parcmotor Castellolí, a hilly circuit 30 miles north west of Barcelona that – we imagine – was designed by someone with many shares in a brake-disc company. Blasted out of the rocky Catalan coastal range in 2009, it's a proper car killer, with two long straights followed by downhill braking zones best handled via the medium of prayer. Get it wrong here and you'll plough into terribly unfriendly inch-cubed gravel. Or worse, into the perimeter wall that will a) stop you exploring the surrounding forest, and b) thoroughly test a car's crumple zone. Allow us to take you on a lap...

Let's begin on the start/finish straight beside the pitlane. It's a good 'un, sloping gradually downwards for a few hundred yards, which helps you to collect as much speed as possible. Then it's onto the stoppers before sweeping right (1) and slightly left, then heading up under a massive bridge into a huge uphill curve (2). Turn into the 45-degree-ish right-hander, nerfing the kerbs and bleeding out to the left-hand side of the track. Over the crest, feel the car go light – and your lunch re-greet your larynx – and pick a braking point before turn (3), another fast right. It's there somewhere.

Round that, downhill again into another tortuous braking zone. This one's bumpy and feeds into a hairpin (4) that scoops around to the left. Clip the kerb and cock a wheel. Hard on the power, sweeping up again and left through turn (5). Fast, blind and squeaky-bum time if you go in too hot and run wide. This is where the 918 and P1 began gathering momentum onto the back straight, which – again – crests and then slopes downhill until you reach the nastily corrugated braking zone at 150mph-or-so.

Then it's hard left (6) and spiral down over the bridge, glancing down to watch cars cross beneath you. On the brakes again: it's also downhill into turns (7) and (8). More braking is required before the long 180-degree left, (9) (10) which appears to have nine apexes and 400 different approaches. If you find the racing line here, pop your answers on a postcard.

Finally, there's a maggoty wiggle through a heavy lift kink (11) before sweeping steeply uphill through the penultimate – and tortuously long – right-hander (12). Finish off with a flourish through second-gear turn (13), smoking your way back onto the start/finish straight. Somehow, it feels like there are more descents than ascents at Castellolí, but you really do end up back here, exactly where you started. Before now, this has only ever occurred in an M C Escher print. Weird.

SLIDE & SEEK

Get the wheelgun ready. These Germans are hungry for fresh rubber

WORDS: PIERS WARD /
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK FAGELSON



These are the ones that everyone thinks they know – the cliched, sideways-everywhere BMW M car, and the equally cliched, universally brilliant Porsche Cayman. But things are different this year. Sort of... we'll get to that later. The big news is that BMW's core M car is no longer an M3 – the coupe M is now called the M4, while the four-door variant retains the iconic moniker. And that's not all – the straight-six engine makes a welcome return, but now it's turbocharged. Twin-turbo'd, to be precise, with 425bhp and 405lb ft, a clever anti-lag system and improved CO_2 and mpg. It's an M car for the modern world, outpacing Ms of old, but with a *slightly* more planet-friendly, efficiency-led and turbo-fed motor under the bonnet.

This isn't any ordinary Cayman, either. It's the brand-new GTS (with a stiff price increase of £6,614 over the S): the first time the legendary Gran Turismo Sport badge has been stuck on the backside of the humblest Porsche coupe. As ever with Porsche, the badge isn't just a cosmetic addition: power is up by 15bhp to 335bhp, torque increases by 7lb ft to 280lb ft, and the GTS comes as standard with the Sport Chrono package – Stuttgart's performance-enhancing bundle that includes a clever system of active engine mounts which help stiffen the car's resolve when you're really on the doorhandles.

Boy, does it feel instantly right when you climb in. There's little surprise in the GTS cabin, but the happy flipside is the subconscious way you can get in and go. Turn the key, drag the PDK gearlever back into Drive, press every Sport button, and then mash the throttle. The GTS is addictively simple to drive, and you're confidently on the pace within two corners. So far, so very much normal service. What's surprising is the dose of humour the GTS's new sports exhaust has added: the Cayman now pops and crackles with the best of them. It's a Cayman with extra character.

The rest is as predictably brilliant as ever. And before you roll your eyes, the truth is that the GTS is superb on the track. There simply aren't any huge flaws. Rapier-sharp throttle response, perfect chassis balance, excellent PDK and point-and-shoot steering, a seat that grips in all the right places – how does Porsche manage to build a car that feels so right for so much of the time? The only half-criticism is that the chassis always feels like it can handle more power. But that's only because it's so damn good. It's all so natural.









Which can't be said about certain aspects of the M4. The BMW literally feels more forced, thanks to the turbos. And while the anti-lag system is seriously clever – effectively, it artificially maintains a minimum of 120,000rpm in the turbos so you've got instant boost whenever you want it – it never feels quite as reactive as the naturally aspirated Porsche. Cunning tech, but you're still aware of it.

Unlike the Cayman, there's no point in revving it all the way to the (admittedly high) 7,600rpm red line. There's all the punch you'll need below that, and there are no hidden sonorous gems waiting for you above five grand. It will happily rev, but better to sit back, relax and let the turbos take the strain in the mid-range. Relax? In an M car? This is *definitely* a brave new direction.

Not that the BMW isn't without other strengths. The brakes, for instance, are superb. This M4 has the optional (£6,250) carbon-ceramics, and, unlike other similar set-ups, there's plenty of bite and feel right from the moment you hit

"RELAX? IN AN M CAR? THIS IS *DEFINITELY* A BRAVE NEW DIRECTION"



ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY: **ROWAN HORNCASTLE**





SIDE ORDER OF TYRE SMOKE FOR THE BMW M4













WARNING: DO NOT HEM IN THE STIG. THERE WILL BE CONSEQUENCES...

PORSCHE CAYMAN GTS
Price: £57,748
Engine: 3436cc naturally aspirated flat-six
335bhp, 280lb ft
Performance:
0–62mph in 4.8secs
175mph top speed
Transmission: 7spd twin-clutch, RWD
Economy: 34.4mpg
190g/km CO_2
Weight: 1450kg

BMW M4
Price: £59,145
Engine: 2979cc twin-turbo straight-six
425bhp, 405lb ft
Performance:
0–62mph in 4.1secs
155mph top speed
Transmission: 7spd twin clutch, RWD
Economy: 32.1mpg
232g/km CO_2
Weight: 1537kg

the pedal. Combined with the M4's prodigious front-end grip, it's eminently easy to get the nose tucked in, sniffing out the apex. A handy trait when a car steps sideways as readily as the M4. Watching The Stig adopt his favoured pose of tyres-a-smokin', the BMW looks absolutely stable, gliding through the corner as smoothly as water flowing over glass. Suddenly we're back in traditional M car territory – and it's easy to get used to the way the M4 scythes around a sweeping curve.

The M4 certainly flatters. But, bluntly, it doesn't reward as much as the Cayman, and certainly not on the track. The steering feels artificial compared with the Porsche's, despite both having similar electro-mechanical set-ups, and you don't get as much feedback from either it or any of the other seat-of-pants metrics. It's comfortable, though – and you can see where BMW is going with it.

Which means the Cayman feels the happier of the two at Castellolí, but there's one massive niggle that I can't shake. The GTS hasn't moved the game on as much as we'd hoped it would – oddly, and perhaps perversely, the stock Cayman is almost too good. It's the default, sensible choice, but somehow no one gets out of the little Porsche with any burning passion for it. It's all thoughtful nods and slightly weary respectability. The BMW, on the other hand, is somewhat more flawed on track but eminently more intriguing. It requires more analysis. And while it's not as epic-feeling pounding a circuit, it feels like it might come into its own on the road. Which is handy, because the next part of *TG*'s Speed Week happens to contain...





GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS IN THE CAYMAN



LEADING THE CHA

The McLaren P1 and the Porsche 918 Spyder face off for the first time anywhere in the world. So which is best: Woking or Stuttgart?

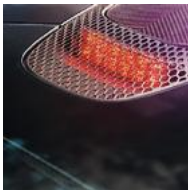
WORDS: TOM FORD / PHOTOGRAPHY: JOHN WYCHERLEY



RGE









FOR BEST RESULTS, INSERT STIG

The McLaren P1 and the Porsche 918 Spyder. Despite the very obvious talents arrayed on this peculiar little strip of Spanish tarmac, these are the two cars that drag the word 'exceptional' into deeper and darker linguistic territory. Hyperbole can be a dangerous thing, but in this case, it's entirely justified. With a combined value of more than 1.5-million quid and possessed of enough horsepower to spin Europe on a pivot around central Germany, they have so much cutting-edge, hybrid technology stuffed into their actively aerodynamic fuselages – feels a bit banal to call them simply 'bodies' – that they leak the future from their Inconel exhausts. What we're looking at is the distillation of the intellectual might of fast-car super boffins. Today, they face off for the first time on the same day, on the same track. To be blunt, I can feel the familiar itchy prickle of nerves.

One reason is that these two draw attention like barracuda in a fishtank, so any screw-ups will be very public and, not incidentally, cripplingly expensive. The second reason for my reticence is that the last time I drove a McLaren P1, it tried to spit me off a wet European motorway at 80mph, in what could have been one of the shortest and most embarrassing road tests in history. In a triumph of survival reflexes over skill, it took two lanes to gather it back up, and then stony silence for 20 minutes as editor-in-chief Turner – who was unfortunately in the passenger seat at the time – stared blankly at the carbon dashboard and monotonously repeated the word "No." Luckily, with the after-effects of post-traumatic stress disorder, he's blanked the episode from his mind. Although he does still flinch if I mention Belgium.

Unfortunately, deciding which to drive first is like choosing a pistol for a light-hearted game of Russian roulette. Concerted staring must be employed, just to get the measure of the two. Equally unfortunately, the 918... looks a bit daft. A white car with giant threes plastered down the sides and bonnet, and vinyl red scallops splashing backwards from the headlights, like mascara applied at 100mph. Porsche's most advanced and psychotically fast production car probably doesn't need the look-at-me warpaint. But ignore the fripperies and with the contrasting carbon roof panels, black spoilers and industrial rear section, the 918 cuts a mean stance. The dwarf exhausts periscope up from the centre of the naturally aspirated 4.6-litre V8's vee to exit through the car's thorax, and there's a table-top of a wing currently berthed flush against the rear body.

This one also features the Weissach performance package – an option which deletes 41kg through the use of magnesium wheels, ceramic bearings, a lack of carpets and trim and other weight-saving measures. A keener edge to an already razor-sharp car. You can't see the pair of electric motors that create the Porsche's four-wheel drive – one wedged between the seven-speed PDK 'box and the petrol engine, and the other just aft of the front boot – but they are definitely there. In the metal, it's a special thing, no doubt, but a friendly-looking hypercar. If such a thing exists.



The P1 is a different story. It just looks plain evil. Painted black-hole purple, it appears physically smaller than the 918, more menacing. There's not a spare ounce of fat. And every strake and swoop has an aero function, from the teardop of the driver's canopy to the bonnet vents that push hot air up and away from the radiators and yet leave a specific channel of cold induction for the engine's roof snorkel. There's only one 26kg electric motor here, this time downstream of a turbocharged 3.8-litre V8 and pushing through a similar SSG seven-speed paddleshift. And, yes, it drives only the rear wheels. Like the 918, the expanded horseshoe of a rear wing is currently in the down position. It won't stay that way for long. Mainly because it's time for me to see whether the fastest McLaren is as much of a handful as I remember from that trip back from Spa.

Slip into the driving seat, and you're surrounded by the matte finish of the carbon MonoCage – essentially a vaulted version of the 650S's MonoCell for even more intense rigidity – and faced with a remarkably even view. You really can see out of the P1, and getting comfortable takes no time at all. A quick press of the starter button, and the turbo V8 fires with a raw bellow, before settling into an even, racecar high idle. Press 'D' on the centre console, and we burble gently out of the pitlane, feeling every single eye.

Here's a thing: at half throttle, the P1 is very easy to drive. You can position it, the steering is light, the delivery smooth. There's a defined kick when the turbos come on song, and, yes, it's incredibly fast, even when you're not really pushing, but there's a sense that it all works, and if you've ever driven a baby-brother 12C/650S, the essential experience is familiar. After a few laps, I pause, and push the requisite buttons to get the P1 into the track-only Race mode, which takes 30 seconds. In Race, the rear wing deploys to full 300mm extension, the ride height drops by 50mm and the spring rates increase by 300 per cent. The hydro-pneumatic RaceActive Chassis Control suspension also starts to more aggressively manage roll-control, heave and damping, and the wing, venturi and active flaps just ahead of the front wheels combine to produce roughly 600kg

"THE P1 LOOKS PURE EVIL IN BLACK-HOLE PURPLE PAINT"

of downforce at 160mph. If you're carrying enough speed, it feels lashed to the floor with steel hawsers.

We do a full-boost acceleration run. It's even more insane than I remember. Left foot on brake, throttle, wait for the boost to reach peak, and then simply lift the left foot and plant the right. Not a complicated dance, but the side effects may include vomiting. The launch causes my ears to make a soft clapping noise as they meet somewhere at the back of my head. It's not just fast, it's extraordinary, a violent rent in the atmosphere that means the P1 is there, and then just... not. And it's worth noting that it's not perfect: there is wheelspin in second, and all of the first three gears leave black, greasy lines along the tarmac. Our

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY: ROWAN HORNCASTLE, MARK FAGELSON





SIDEWAYS WITH £866,000. PUCKERING





WING? YES, THAT CAN BE ARRANGED








875BHP BUT 94.2MPG. THE FUTURE IS HERE

McLAREN P1

Price: £866,000
Engine: 3799cc bi-turbo V8 903bhp, 664lb ft
Performance: 0–62mph in 2.8secs 217mph top speed
Transmission: 7spd SSG twin-clutch, RWD
Economy: 34.0mpg 194g/km CO_2
Weight: 1395kg

PORSCHE 918 SPYDER

Price: £699,240
Engine: 4593cc naturally aspirated V8 875bhp, 943lb ft
Performance: 0–62mph in 2.5secs 214mph top speed
Transmission: 7spd PDK twin-clutch, AWD
Economy: 94.2mpg 70g/km CO_2
Weight: 1634kg





“THE P1 AND 918 DRAW ATTENTION LIKE BARRACUDA IN A FISHTANK”











THE TG OFFICE ON A HARD-WORKING DAY







£1,565,240 OF METAL GETS PERSONAL





CABIN STRIPPED TO THE BONE. WITH HARNESSES



own figures reveal 0–60mph in 2.7secs, 100mph in five dead. Brutally fast. But also wise to remember that the standing-start party trick is only part of the story, and I lean back into the seat and progressively apply more throttle. And then full throttle.

Castellolí suddenly becomes instantly, *terrifyingly* small.

The P1 devours the straights and rips through the corners. It makes a noise like a Harrier jump jet trying to land on the back of your head, and on full-throttle changes, the cymbal crash of the dump valve behind your right ear is enough to make you flinch. It feels light, spiky and nervous, and edits the circuit into a series of places to breathe. Every gear brings a revelation, mainly the one that I'm constantly half a step behind the car: it feels murderously fast, and if you get it even minutely wrong (such as turning in even slightly on the brakes), disconcertingly loose and vehemently rear-wheel drive. For the first couple of laps at proper full-throttle speeds, I'm not sure I even blinked. The back straight is managing somewhere near 150mph, and I'm well into the ABS by the end of it. I haven't dared look down at the speedo on the main straight. Adrenaline? I can feel my heartbeat in my eyes, and I'm surprised I haven't shattered my teeth I'm grinning so hard.

"I APPLY MORE THROTTLE. THEN FULL THROTTLE. CASTELLOLÍ BECOMES *TERRIFYINGLY* SMALL"

The 918 cannot possibly be this fast.

Back to the pits, and half an hour to calm down and familiarise myself with the 918's interior. Now this is a different kettle of carbon fibre. A giant glassy touchscreen of a central spine, familiar Porsche cues, but twisted into new and interesting forms. It's comfy too, with similar ergonomic excellence to the McLaren – these are not particularly compromised machines. The Porsche feels bigger, though, and in the first couple of warm-up laps, noticeably heavier – it is, by more than 200kg – though the weight is carried low. Again, it's very easy to drive, but that naturally aspirated motor sounds pure racecar, and the experience and feel are immediately totally different from those of the P1.

No surprise, really. No turbos, more volts. The 918 has an engine vaguely related to the Le Mans-winning RS Spyder motor with aluminium block and heads, a flat crank and a 90-degree vee, supplemented by those electric motors for each axle to give instant AWD. When you get the motor singing to the 9,150rpm red line, it sounds like it's splitting atoms in your wake. Soon enough, we dispatch Sport and reach for Race mode. The rear wing raises to the attack position from its hideaway, and the 918 prepares for launch.

For a little while, I run out of words. It's quicker than the P1. From a standing start, I've only driven drag cars that feel like this. Pure grip, no wheelspin, ballistic thrust. The way the 'box snatches gears is like a striking snake, quicker than you can think. And the way the 918 puts on speed like a particularly unrealistic computer game. It might be heavier than the McLaren, but at this point, it feels like every ounce of its specific gravity is dedicated to traction. Our timing gear suggests it hit 60mph in a barely credible 2.5secs, a similar five to 100. But it feels faster. More incredible than that, it feels *easy*.

And that's when it all goes a bit weird. The Porsche 918 is different gravy to the P1, because where the McLaren shreds your nerve endings and heightens your impression of speed, the 918 is much, much easier to drive at the kind of pace usually only experienced by far more talented people. The impression of fully lit aerodynamics is less pronounced, but the traction through corners simply cannot be denied. The all-wheel drive fills in the holes in your talent, mops up, lends a helping hand in situations where the P1 feels like it wants to bite everything off.

An example. Manage the long left-hander onto the back straight correctly, patiently, and you can fire down ferrying afterburner speed. The P1 loads like a thing possessed, the aero pushing the car into the floor, even at relatively modest speed. Except that I was carrying a little too much speed at the start of the corner. I felt the already-light steering lose tension and the nose start to slip wide. And, at somewhere north of 80mph, I did the worst possible thing and lifted off the throttle. The P1 yawed, then snapped sideways like a racing car, the downforce generated by the rear wing immediately eliminated by the slight rotation. We barely skimmed the exit kerb, and all I could think about was one wet morning just outside Brussels, and my monotonous boss.

The same corner in the 918, and things couldn't have been more different. I loaded the car up and tried taking it at 70mph. Rock steady. Then 80mph. Then 85 and 90. Then I tried lifting, exactly like the P1. A bare shimmy and a tug from the front, and that's it. I eventually ended up managing the corner at 95-ish, and couldn't face heading in any faster. And yet the 918 is anything but boring. There's glorious feedback through the steering and, though not as hysterical as the P1, the chat is more comforting. There's almost as much power as the McLaren, but it arrives in less of a heady, all-consuming headrush. There's less to manage, but plenty to be getting on with. Its just as fast, but not the same.

The figures suggest that these two are equally as fast around a track. With me driving, and with the Porsche being a more flattering thing to pilot, I'm quicker in the 918. But every time I drive the P1, I understand it a little more, start to be able to manage its furious delivery, and the gap starts closing. Honestly? The speeds are getting to the point where a miniscule misstep is going to leave a gaping hole in the perimeter wall. The truth is that these two cars are occupying a space so far above what we currently accept from a performance car that they are desperately hard to assess in just a couple of days. Which means we need more time. And more miles. Which is rather handy, because, for once, that's exactly what we've got.










IT'S HARD TO READ SATNAV AT 7,542MPH







"GET IT WRONG HERE AND YOU'LL PLOUGH INTO TERRIBLY UNFRIENDLY INCH-CUBED GRAVEL"



"THIS TIME, WHY DON'T WE DO IT BY THE BOOK?"

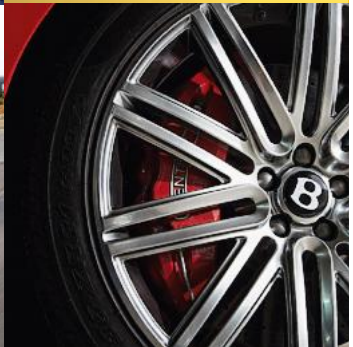












WORDS: SAM PHILIP /
PHOTOGRAPHY: JOHN WYCHERLEY

THE ONE PERCENTERS

Here come the big guns. The jet set. The high rollers...

The Bentley Conti GT Speed and Porsche 911 Turbo have much in common. Both shove daft power through four-wheel-drive transmissions. Both have (just about) four seats. Both will cost you over £150,000 once you start slapping on options. But you shouldn't think of these two as competitors. Instead, consider them partners in crime. Or, rather, partners in crime-fighting. See, you know how, in any self-respecting telly or Hollywood cop duo, there's always the same dynamic? One's always the straight guy, the guy who plays by the rules. And then there's the maverick, the guy who'll do what he damn well needs to do to get the job done, and to hell with The Chief. Well, that's the 911 Turbo and Conti GT Speed, that is.

The 911 Turbo is the former, the one that gets to work at 8.45am on the dot and keeps the paperwork in order. Not boring – not for a second, here – but unflappable, predictable. You can take extraordinary, daft liberties with this thing – mid-corner lift-off, devising a new 'rallycross' line through a quick Castellolí corner with both inside wheels on the gravel – and the 911 plays them all with a dead-straight bat, smothering all your silliness in a fire blanket of grip and balance.

The 911 is also (and here's where the metaphor unravels) monumentally rapid, unleashing a punch of acceleration that never stops feeling shocking. Real-world, with the exception of big brother 918, I'm not sure there's much on the planet that offers such idiot-proof speed. 911 Turbos once had a reputation for being blunt-edged tools, but this is utterly precise and placeable. Unruffleable, if such a word exists.

Unlike the Conti GT. The firebrand, the maverick, the one that turns up to work at lunchtime, reeking faintly of brandy, before trying to start a fight with the photocopier. For all Bentley's assertions that the GT Speed is its most track-focused creation ever, the Conti remains a faintly absurd sight out on circuit, bellowing furiously from corner to corner, listing like a drunk, doing its best impression of a handstand in the heaviest braking zones.

If that makes it sound like the Conti is an unpleasant thing to drive on-track, it isn't. In truth, it's rather glorious, the sort of car you get out of after a couple of hot laps with a grin on your face and a fire extinguisher in your hand to deal with the brakes. You find yourself tilting merrily through corners at a daft lick – all four tyres squealing as they fail to maintain adhesion between 2.3 tonnes of British metal and some very bendy Spanish tarmac – with the Conti's steering wheel pinched lightly between thumb and forefinger, much as I imagine a royal chauffeur might do, had the Queen got off her head on shortbread and decreed she fancied a quick joyride. Hardly precise, but a very, very good lesson in physics, and quite frankly the sort of silliness you really shouldn't be able to perform in a 626bhp, £157,000 mammoth.

So the point is this: you want a £150,000 four-seater for obliterating circuits, you'll have the Porsche. After all, it went round the track some 13 seconds quicker than the more powerful Conti, which in circuit years is several lifetimes. But if you want a £150,000 four-seater for a) dismissing large continents in a single breath or b) generating a spontaneous round of applause from onlookers as you exit a corner at a 30-degree lean, all four tyres harmonising merrily, the Bentley is king. These are the yin and yang of 4WD supercars. The Starsky and Hutch.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY: ROWAN HORNCASTLE



STARSKY AND HUTCH ON ANOTHER JOB

PORSCHE 911 TURBO S

Price: from £140,852
Engine: 3800cc twin-turbo flat-six
553bhp, 553lb ft
Performance: 0–62mph in 3.1 seconds
197mph top speed
Transmission: 7spd PDK, AWD
Economy: 29.1mpg
227g/km CO_2
Weight: 1605kg

BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GT SPEED

Price: from £156,700
Engine: 5998cc twin-turbo W12
626bhp, 605lb ft
Performance: 0–62mph in 4.2 seconds
205mph top speed
Transmission: 8spd auto, AWD
Economy: 19.5mpg
338g/km CO_2
Weight: 2320kg



ONE LARGE, RED CONTI GT FOR SALE. LIGHT USE ONLY...

EVERY ONE'S A WIN



NER



Aspirational, affordable, accessible and with blistering performance. Plus they can do the school run. What more could you possibly want?

WORDS: DAN READ /
PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK FAGELSON

Welcome to the hatchback portion, where almost all contenders have a hatchback. Of course, we could have employed a strict door policy, but then the BMW M235i came along. Clearly, it's a coupe, yet it's based on the M135i – one of our favourite hatches – and therefore qualifies for this group. Besides, with modern platforms and whatnot, the basic hot-hatch layout can be squished or stretched, so what was once a stout five-door could now be a curvy coupe. Being a BMW, it's also rear-wheel drive, which mixes things up a bit more. And why not? After all, it joins a front-wheel-drive Seat Leon Cupra and the four-wheel-drive VW Golf R and Audi S1. The Golf, Audi and Seat use the same – or near as dammit – 2.0-litre, four-cylinder turbo. The BMW has a 3.0-litre, straight-six turbo.

We'll begin in the Beemer. It might have ditched the upright rear for a swoopy roof – and it's notably longer, lower and wider than the 1-Series Coupe it replaces – but that seems to have been lost in the translation from sketchbook to metal. It's just a bit... pudgy, don't you think? Alright, so it's


1024 HVJ






KU14 WKZ










YB63 ZYU



not supposed to be a pumped-up M car, but it could do with turning some of that visual weight into muscle. Maybe a bigger set of wheels might help. Inside, the perceived plumpness is exaggerated by a fat steering wheel, which – like everything else in the cabin – is swaddled in leather. All of this adds up to a kerbweight of 1,530kg, and although that hardly makes it lardy, it's still the heaviest of this foursome.

Good job it has that meaty straight-six up front, because once this thing gets going, you forget the fat talk. The combination of the turbo and six cylinders gives the M235i a thick spread of power, without feeling too boosty in the middle. Rather, you feel as if the turbo is there to lend a hand, not to grab all the attention. Then, where other – typically four-cylinder – turbos run out of puff, this one finds an extra pair of lungs. So you can keep going and going until it's really growling and hungry for another gear from the ever-so-slightly gristly manual 'box.

Nothing to be scared of when it comes to corners, though. With the power coming in such broad strokes, it rarely threatens to overwhelm the rear tyres. And although it's a touch stiffer than the M135i on which it's based – more so with the adaptive dampers set to Sport – it still takes a moment to ease itself into the appropriate posture. There's plenty of grip, and despite the rear-wheel drive and limited-slip diff, it's not a wilful drifter. Sure, it'll go sideways if you want it to, but you'll have to work for it. So, instead









of showing off like you might in its big-brother M4, it's more satisfying to settle into a tidy rhythm.

While you're doing that, look out for the Leon. In the hands of The Stig, it lapped Castellolí 1.2 seconds faster than the BMW... and when you consider it has 46bhp *less* than the 235i, this seems like a rather respectable achievement. Not only is it Seat's fastest-ever road car, it also holds the record for the fastest front-wheel-drive time around the Nürburgring. Alright, so there's a new and often arbitrary 'Ring record every week or two, but from a Seat? We've not seen that before. Looks good, too. Almost as pointy as the Leon touring car parked a bit further down the pitlane.

Once upon a time, the Cupra was forced to make do with the Golf GTI's old underpants. But thanks to the economics of modern carmaking, it now shares all the shiny new stuff with Volkswagen. So it's built on the same MQB architecture as the new Golf and has the same 2.0-litre turbo, in this case turned up to 276bhp. This pulls it away from the GTI and places it much closer to the Golf R with which it competes here. Yet to make sure it doesn't embarrass its corporate superior, it sticks with front-wheel drive, rather than four, though it does get a mechanical limited-slip diff. Good.

Off we go, in Cupra mode for sharper steering, a more alert throttle and a marginally meaner engine note (still a fairly dull sound compared with the other three). Around a few corners, a little squirt of power. Feels neat and balanced, if a touch non-theatrical. So far... so Golfy. But then you turn off the traction control, which lets the front wheels off the leash and gives the diff something to do. And that's when it really earns its keep.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY: **ROWAN HORNCASTLE. JOHN WYCHERLEY**

"IN THE HANDS OF THE STIG, THE LEON CUPRA LAPPED CASTELLOLÍ 1.2SECS FASTER THAN THE BMW"











Because even if you're dead clumsy, giving it lots of lock and too much throttle, it somehow turns this into useful traction. Meanwhile it manages to feed all this information to your hands, so you can feel what's what. The messages are clear enough to decide how much grip you have, which tyre is responsible for it, and therefore how much more power you can add. The throttle is sharp rather than spiky, which helps you to make little adjustments. Judge it just right, and you'll do 0–60mph in 5.7secs. And that's our time, not Seat's claimed.

The little Audi S1 will get there even faster. In 5.5secs, to be precise. As we may have mentioned already, it has the same engine as the Seat – making 227bhp here – though we suspect it took a little longer to cram it into the Audi's cosy engine bay. Perhaps an even bigger headache was the job of swapping the standard A1's torsion beam rear suspension for an independent set-up, which required a whole new bootfloor. So this isn't just a lightly microwaved A1. It's had a proper nuking.

Inside is a handbrake operated by an actual hand, and a gearstick connected to a six-speed 'box. The steering is electrically assisted rather than hydraulic, but there's no speed-sensitive nonsense. In other words, this is about as analogue as Audis get these days, and that's a very good thing indeed. Start the engine, and it settles into a fairly mechanical idle, with its new quad exhausts throbbing away. It's bursting with energy, this thing, and delivers its torque in a big dollop between 1,600 and 3,000rpm. You'll need to work through the 'box fairly briskly to make the most of it, shifting up before it runs softly into the limiter. It might be punchy, but it's not overly revvy.

With such a short wheelbase, you only have to suggest a bit of cornering before it darts towards the apex. That independent rear suspension keeps the back end nice and tidy, and where some cars of this size – most of which have a torsion beam – might skip around or cock a wheel, the Audi behaves itself. It'll even grab an inside brake here and there, helping to tug you into a bend. Of all the cars gathered here at Castellolí – including the really exotic stuff – the S1 feels the most cheeky and chuckable, and maybe even channels a bit of the old Quattro spirit. It's been a while since we've said that about an Audi.

You feel the 4WD pushing and pulling in all the right places, and the quick-witted diffs work hard. It's constantly searching for grip, but it does so with a smile on its face, unlike other Audis that joylessly batter the road. Perhaps that's what makes it so likeable, and a contender for outright victory – not just among the hatchbacks but among all the cars at Speed Week. Which is why it was a slight shame when, after a brisk-ish lap in the hands of editor-in-chief Charlie Turner, it returned to the pits slightly on fire...

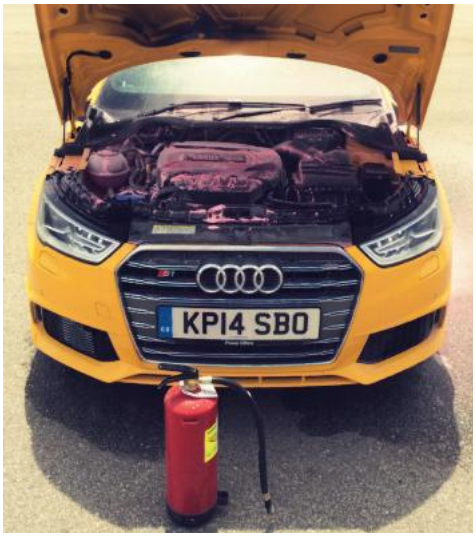
Conspiracy theorists may say this was a ploy to kill off the Audi and make room for his beloved, definitely-not-shonky Caterham in the final five. But he's the boss, so obviously nobody would suggest such a thing. Besides, prime suspects



"OF ALL THE CARS GATHERED FOR SPEED WEEK, THE AUDI S1 FEELS THE MOST CHEEKY AND CHUCKABLE"


KP14 SBO
KU14 WKZ




KP14 SBO








YB63 ZYU













were the tiny brakes, which do a good enough job of stopping you, however, on more than one occasion became smoky. But no... it turns out – after the car was collected and examined by Audi – that an incorrectly installed hose had interfered with a heat shield near the catalyst. Extinguisher duty fell to Fireman Sam Philip. Complete meltdown averted, but still game over for the S1. It was in with a good shout, too. (Audi is currently examining all RHD S1s and replacing the hose and shield where necessary, before deliveries commence).

That leaves us with the Golf R, which – in principle – has much in common with the S1: four-wheel drive, 2.0-litre turbo (yes, that one, albeit with a few mods) and VW Group genes. But obviously it's bigger, and uses the new MQB platform and latest generation of Haldex 4WD system. This year, we've already driven it on a frozen lake, through a wintry German forest and across the breadth of Britain. Each time, we've been rather impressed, not only with its excellent chassis but also with its sheer speed. Officially, it does the 0–62mph sprint in 4.9 seconds, but if you knock off 2mph and go for the good old 0–60mph metric, it'll get there in 4.5 seconds. Or so said our timing kit anyway.

That makes it the fastest Golf ever, and – frankly – a proper bargain at under £30,000 for the basest version. In other words, it's just as fast as a Porsche Cayman GTS, for £25k less. So it's extremely rapid, yet utterly flattering at the same time. It goes where you point it and stays there. Some might say that such unfaltering obedience makes for a dumbed-down driving experience, that its performance is a little too businesslike. But when you're hanging onto the tail of a Porsche 911 Turbo on a greasy country lane, you probably won't feel that way.

Should you feel really adventurous, you could disengage the traction control completely, which is a first for any Golf. Fine. But you'll likely be more interested in the new Hero mode, otherwise known as ESC Sport. If it thinks you're in control, it leaves you alone and allows a bit of slip and slide... then when you misjudge your angles or get too excited with the throttle, it'll brake a wheel or power an appropriate one to coax you back into shape. It works off-throttle too, helping to cure lift-off oversteer.

The Haldex diff makes dependable decisions, sending up to 100 per cent of power to whichever end needs it most. And where some diffs can be aggressive, this one's not. It's happy to let the front tyres do the initial hard work, then if it detects a little understeer, the rear is awakened after the briefest of thoughts. On hot, dry tarmac this is a fairly subtle process.

With 296bhp, it's the healthiest of the 2.0-litre turbos. But the extra shove isn't gained merely from a tweak of boost. The cylinder head, valves, valve springs and pistons have all been beefed up, allowing it to rev higher and harder than the S1 and Leon. Sounds good, too. At low revs, only the inner two exhaust pipes are played. At around 2,500rpm, the outer pair add a little more bass. All the while, an induction amplifier – not an artificial synth – adds a sort of gurgle effect before doing a surprisingly decent V8 impression as the revs pile on. For a four-cylinder engine, it has bags of character.

Perhaps most telling of all is the amount of miles the Golf R did over our time at Castellolí. You can install all the timing gear you like, but ultimately you could rank these cars by the amount of time they spent on track and by the amount of squabbling over the keys. By this deeply unscientific (yet trustworthy) measure, the S1 and Golf are clear winners, with the Leon not far behind. The BMW, despite its charms, spent the most time parked in the pits. If it weren't for the fact that the S1 spontaneously combusted, it might have gone through to the final showdown. But it did, and therefore it can't. So the Golf R it is, then. Time to see what's next on the track...



VOLKSWAGEN GOLF R

Price: £29,900
Engine: 1984cc 4cyl turbo
296bhp, 280lb ft
Performance: 0–62mph in 4.9 seconds
155mph top speed
Transmission: 7spd DSG, 4WD
Economy: 40.9mpg
159g/km CO_2
Weight: 1495kg

AUDI S1

Price: £24,900
Engine: 1984cc 4cyl turbo
227bhp, 273lb ft
Performance: 0–62mph in 5.8 seconds
155mph top speed
Transmission: 6spd manual, 4WD
Economy: 40.4mpg
162g/km CO_2
Weight: 1315kg

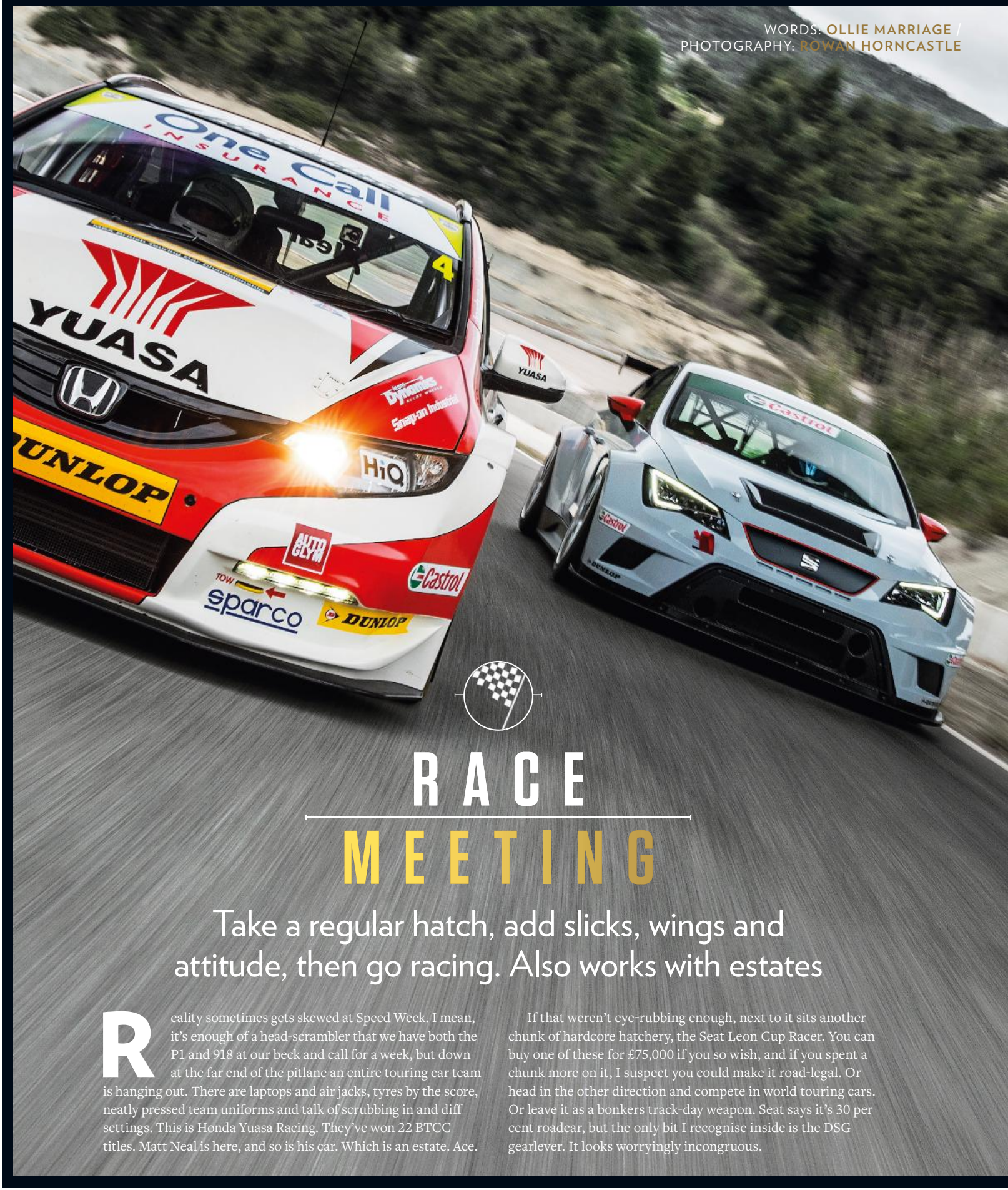
BMW 235i

Price: £34,260
Engine: 2979cc 6cyl turbo
322bhp, 332lb ft
Performance: 0–62mph in 5.0 seconds
155mph top speed
Transmission: 6spd manual, RWD
Economy: 34.9mpg
189g/km CO_2
Weight: 1530kg

SEAT LEON CUPRA SC 280

Price: £26,945
Engine: 1984cc 4cyl turbo
276bhp, 258lb ft
Performance: 0–62mph in 5.8 seconds
155mph top speed
Transmission: 6spd manual, FWD
Economy: 42.8mpg
154g/km CO_2
Weight: 1395kg

WORDS: OLLIE MARRIAGE /
PHOTOGRAPHY: ROWAN HORNCASTLE



RACE MEETING

Take a regular hatch, add slicks, wings and attitude, then go racing. Also works with estates

Reality sometimes gets skewed at Speed Week. I mean, it's enough of a head-scrambler that we have both the P1 and 918 at our beck and call for a week, but down at the far end of the pitlane an entire touring car team is hanging out. There are laptops and air jacks, tyres by the score, neatly pressed team uniforms and talk of scrubbing in and diff settings. This is Honda Yuasa Racing. They've won 22 BTCC titles. Matt Neal is here, and so is his car. Which is an estate. Ace.

If that weren't eye-rubbing enough, next to it sits another chunk of hardcore hatchery, the Seat Leon Cup Racer. You can buy one of these for £75,000 if you so wish, and if you spent a chunk more on it, I suspect you could make it road-legal. Or head in the other direction and compete in world touring cars. Or leave it as a bonkers track-day weapon. Seat says it's 30 per cent roadcar, but the only bit I recognise inside is the DSG gearlever. It looks worryingly incongruous.

TEST 5: HONDA CIVIC BTCC vs SEAT LEON CUP RACER









DRIVING SKILLS

What Ollie is too modest to admit is how well he did in the Civic – which by all accounts is a complete handful to drive. By his third lap he was only three seconds slower than Matt Neal, and Team Dynamics were making noises about getting him some overalls that actually fitted properly...



It seems odd that just about every car in the pitlane produces more power and will later get a chance to prove it by hammering these two in a straight line. Corners, though, are another matter altogether. And not an entirely straightforward one. You see, one of these behaves as you'd imagine a touring car to behave. The other doesn't. The only thing predictable about it is its unpredictability.

I clamber into the Leon. There's a brake bias dial, some toggles for the ignition and many buttons on the steering wheel. The only one I actually need switches the cabin fan on and off. It gets hot in racing cars. It has 330bhp, which ought to be a lot for the front wheels to cope with, but is tamed by a hooky differential, punchy track widths and a broad expanse of slick rubber. Keen and smooth and grippy, it gives you a genuine flavour of racing without any intimidation. Well, a little intimidation – even when the rear tyres are warmed through, they'll give you a gentle nudge into oversteer if you chicken out mid-corner, and the DSG gearbox is a bit... softcore.

But it all holds together, the familiar 2.0-litre turbo gets its point across effectively, the brakes are mighty and there's a cheeky scuff from the front splitter through a couple of the more twisted corners. And just like the best racers, the Leon then breaks down when we drive it slowly for tracking pictures. The next day, a man with a laptop comes. It makes no odds – the engine has had a strop. No laptime. This is a shame, as I'm 100 per cent sure it would've been faster than Matt Neal's racecar. With me driving, at least.

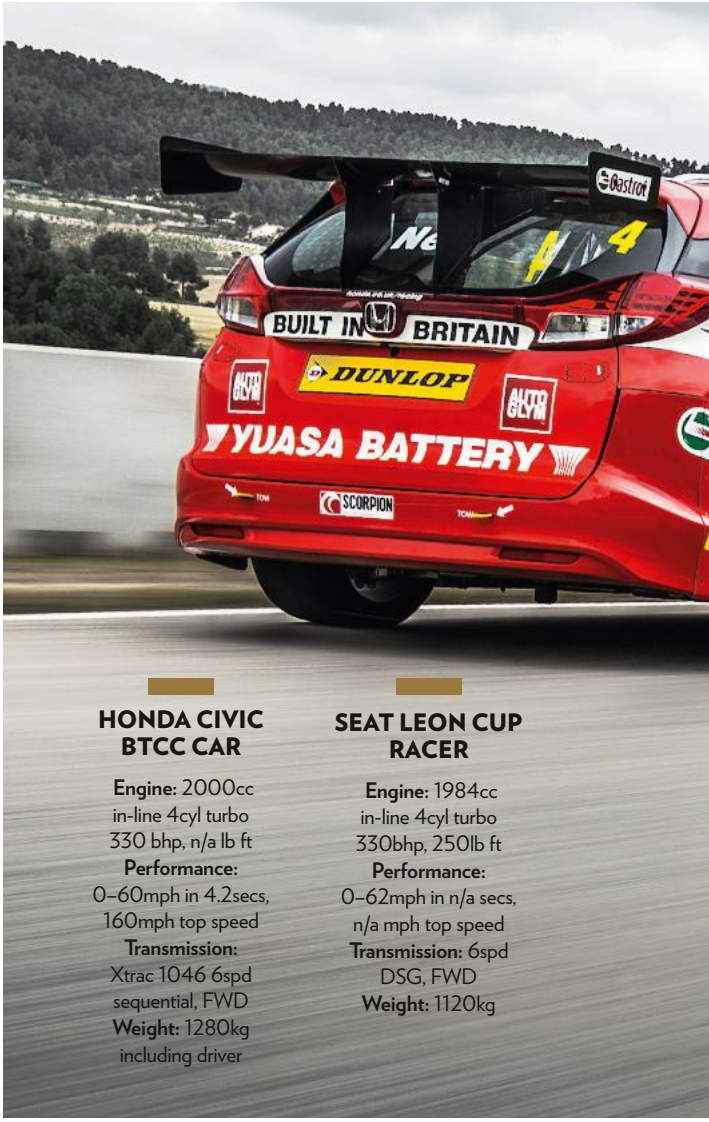
And this is Matt's actual racing car, not a demo or development car, and the process here is more complex. Matt has to warm it up and scrub in a new set of tyres. I have a lesson, during which I learn the Civic has a very active front diff and that I mustn't fiddle with the buttons, plus notice that the engineers and mechanics appear to be even more apprehensive than I am. They demand I wear race overalls, but, short of stripping Stig, the only set available belongs to Matt himself. So I'm not only driving his car but wearing his clothes. Matt is 6ft 6in. I look like an Oompa Loompa. I couldn't care less. I'm about to drive a front-running BTCC car, and if it drives as simply as the Leon, this will be a walk in the park.

Jeepers. Corner one: massive rear-end skid – no heat in the rear tyres. Corner two: I do one thing with the steering, but, when I get back on the power, the car chooses a different direction entirely. Corner three: I turn the steering wheel, and nothing much happens. I panic and throw more lock on, at which point the front end bites abruptly and the rear slides again. Corner four, the hairpin: a repeat of corner one. Corner five is a heart-in-mouth fast left-hander onto the back straight. I'm so cowed, I'd have been faster in the Caterham.

Clearly, there's a lot going on here: the chief culprits being tyre temperature, a hilariously mobile rear end and a front diff that's too clever for its own good. I'm amazed how quickly – and noticeably – heat builds in the tyres, and lap two is a bit calmer. But the harder I go, the more aggressive the rear steering gets and the busier the diff. I have many methods of steering the car, only one of which is the wheel in front of me. That, the diff, the rear end and brakes can be used in any combination you see fit, all at the same time – and I've never been much of a multitasker. Everything affects the car's trajectory; it never seems to take the same corner the same way on any two laps. My brain struggles with the data bombardment. It starts to gel eventually, but if this Civic has taught me anything, it's just how ridiculously tricky it is to set up a touring car to go fast. You could spend days tweaking diff lock-up, damper rebound, rear camber and all the rest. After a few more laps, I decide that this would be a very good way to spend a few days. It's absorbingly tricky to drive fast. Bit like the P1. My reality has been skewed again.







HONDA CIVIC BTCC CAR

Engine: 2000cc in-line 4cyl turbo 330 bhp, n/a lb ft
Performance: 0–60mph in 4.2secs, 160mph top speed
Transmission: Xtrac 1046 6spd sequential, FWD
Weight: 1280kg including driver

SEAT LEON CUP RACER

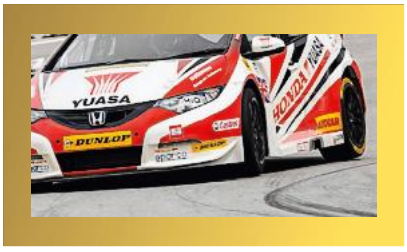
Engine: 1984cc in-line 4cyl turbo 330bhp, 250lb ft
Performance: 0–62mph in n/a secs, n/a mph top speed
Transmission: 6spd DSG, FWD
Weight: 1120kg













1 Sitting on a cushion and with the seat as far forward as possible, Ollie struggles to see out
2 "You know the downhill bit?" Matt tells Ollie, "Well, don't crash there. Or anywhere else"
3 One of these behaves like a proper touring car. The other is much, much scarier than that
4 Stig hate DSG. Stig want full sequential race gearbox. For £20,000 more, he could have it



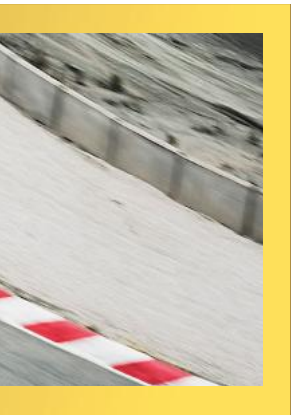
"CORNER ONE: MASSIVE REAR-END SKID. CORNER TWO: THE CAR CHOOSES ITS OWN DIRECTION"















WORDS: TOM FORD /
PHOTOGRAPHY: ROWAN HORNCASTLE

HEIR APPARENT

The 12C is dead, this is the 650S. And it's what its predecessor should have been from the start

Ideally, when learning a new track, you'd spend a quiet few laps memorising the various curves, cambers and quirks in something sedate, so you can figure out where it goes before your brain is suffused with information pertinent to not violently landscaping a gravel trap with your face. Dedicated F1 drivers circulate on pushbikes, or monotonously lap in the virtual, cocooned in a tediously precision-mapped simulator. Being neither a racing driver nor blessed with common sense, I chose the new McLaren 650S Spider in which to discover Castellolí. A car with 641bhp of ego-humbling mid-engined rear-wheel drive. "Go big or go home" as the saying goes. "Upside down and on fire, if necessary" being the less-often-quoted *TopGear* subtext.

It's not as daft as it seems, because the basics of the 650S are largely similar to the previous 12C's: the same 3.8-litre twin-turbo, this time with a modest hike of 35bhp and 57lb ft of torque, the same carbon Monocell, allowing the unique suspension to do its job. In fact, the only thing you'll notice immediately is the fresh, P1-esque nose and a light refocusing of the details. We know this car.

Wrong. As the 650S pulls out of the pitlane, 500lb ft of torque snatches it towards the first corner like it's attached to an aircraft carrier steam pulley. It's noticeably faster than the 12C, especially in the mid range, and it feels *eager*. McLaren reckons stationary to 125mph in 8.6 for the Spider. That feels rather conservative: according to *TG* data, the 650S hit 60mph in just over three seconds and 100 in three after that. Phew.

The first right-hand corner, and the 650S reverses the momentum via – now standard – carbon-ceramics. Hilariously effective, once you've peeled your forehead off the windscreen. In fact, over the course of subsequent laps, it's obvious that the 650S is better than the 12C in every direction. The steering has been reworked and is more sensitive, heavier and more garrulous, even over ridges and cambers that should upset it. The springs are firmer (22 per cent front, 37 at the rear), and the dampers are now modelled on the P1's, but the compression and rebound are so finely judged that the 650S sticks, even over quite severe bumps, without fuss or jiggle. It sounds better, too – hoarse and obviously turbo, but nicely raw-throated – and driven hard in Track, the electronics allow a surprising amount of sideways slip before stepping in. Be aware, though: if you disable the minders – as with the 12C – it'll still step hard.

Truth? If McLaren had launched this instead of the 12C, Ferrari engineers would have cried themselves to sleep for the past two years. And yet the most significant thing isn't the outright velocity or brick-wall braking, but trust. You can rely on the 650S to do exactly what you tell it. It's a more friendly car than ever, but still offers excitement even if you're a Stig-alike. Above all, it's almost distressingly fast: everything you could ever want in a McLaren road car. There's only one problem. It's lurking at the other end of the pitlane, sucking light into its purple paintwork like a malevolent singularity. It's called the McLaren P1. And it will not be denied.



P1-STYLE NOSE PRODUCES MORE DOWNFORCE. GOOD







REAR SPOILER ACTS AS AN ACTIVE AIRBRAKE DURING HEAVY BRAKING









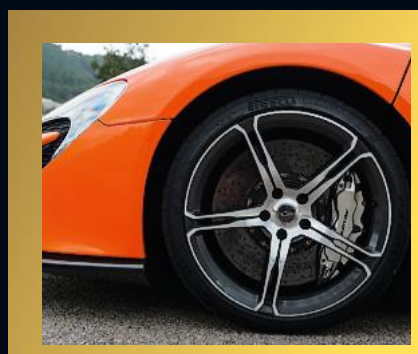
McLAREN 650S SPIDER

Price: £215,250
Engine: 3799cc bi-turbo V8 641bhp, 500lb ft
Performance: 0–62mph in 3.0 seconds 204mph top speed
Transmission: 7spd SSG, RWD
Economy: 24.2mpg 275g/km CO_2
Weight: 1645kg



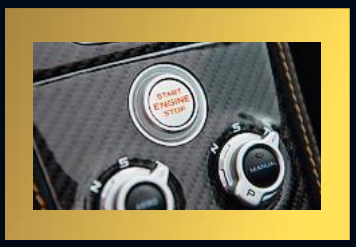


NESTLED UNDER THE REAR IS THAT EPIC 3.8 V8. TURBOS = TORQUE









CONFIGURABLE SETTINGS MAKE FOR SAFE TRACK FUN









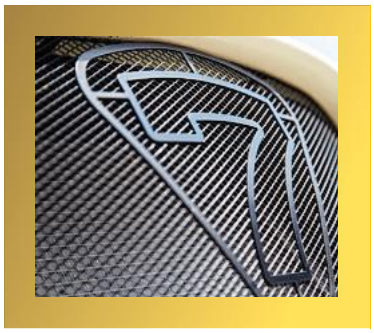


"IT'S OBVIOUS THAT THE 650S IS BETTER THAN THE 12C IN EVERY WAY"

WORDS: **CHARLIE TURNER AND TOM FORD** /
PHOTOGRAPHY: **JOHN WYCHERLEY**



FUN AND FEAR ARE AVAILABLE IN EQUAL MEASURE...






PLENTY OF ROOM FOR YOU AND THE MISSUS. NO LUGGAGE ALLOWED




CHARLIE FINDS THE LIMITATIONS OF THE 160 – IT DOESN'T TAKE LONG

SEND IN THE CLOWN

What happened when the car we built went to PCOTY...

TF Understanding the Caterham 160 isn't hard. Here we have the simplicity of a 'pure' driving experience made real: a bare-bones basic Caterham chassis with short wishbones, drum brakes and an LSD-less live axle. The aluminium bonnet hides a 660cc turbo three-pot the size of a couple of car batteries, and if you were worried about those drum brakes, don't be – it weighs under 500kg, and only produces 80bhp and a similar amount of torque. Rice pudding skin will rest easy. It even has 14in steel wheels – not seen them in a while – wrapped in 155/65 tyres that have a smaller contact patch than most motorcycle tyres do. See? I understand. But having driven the thing, I simply don't get why you'd ever actually *want* it. And if people keep referring to it as 'The Mighty Caterham', I'm going to have a less ironic sense of humour failure.

CT I understand that your reaction to The Mighty Caterham may be somewhat influenced by the fact that I built it. But it's important to remember that when I'd finished lovingly crafting it with a hammer, it was handed over to people who actually knew what they were doing – something to do with the legal requirements for the SVA. You just have to see it for what it is: the antidote to an over-complex, overtly digital, over-tyred generation of cars that have partially divorced themselves from proper driving. Driving the 160 involves management of every aspect of the car. And, in this case, actual fear. It's old-fashioned fun.

TF Fun? You don't have fun in the 160, you have a series of near-death experiences at glacially slow speeds. At one point on Castellolí's hairpin, I experienced understeer, a four-wheel drift and oversteer. Disconcertingly, it felt like it happened *at the same time*. It drives like a home brew. Which, unfortunately, is exactly what it is. What possessed us to bring it?

CT It's here because it's the base control for all the complex stuff, the foil to a generation of cars dominated by technology. I'll admit that its back-to-basics approach isn't to everyone's taste, and that if you drive it like the chimp in *Mario Kart*, it probably won't end well. But take a breath, drive it like a car rather than a computer game, and there's a simplicity that makes you grin. There's a pure joy to it. You can't hate it. It's like being abusive to a wellington boot full of kittens.

TF Yes. But let's look at some facts: no one fits in it, unless they are deformed. The pedals are so close they all-but overlap, and you have to drive it elbows out because Caterham thinks 'ergonomics' are characters from *The Hobbit*. The weatherproofing kit costs extra and barely fits, the switches are from Maplin's bargain bucket and the headlights keep swivelling on their stalks. It's also £17,995. Which buys a lot of secondhand. It's not fast, and it doesn't really handle.

CT You don't fit in it with your 'fashionable' shoes, no. But I do and The Stig didn't complain. It's a cliche, but you wear the Caterham like a straitjacket or a coffin. I'll admit that a couple of times I did consider that if it did end badly, at least I'd be prepacked and ready for the eulogy. But no matter what I did, it never failed to put a smile on my face... and isn't that the point of a performance car? Simple, effective, accessible performance on every journey. Mighty indeed. [*Copy ends – ed*]



CATERHAM SEVEN 160

Price: £17,995
Engine: 660cc 3cyl turbo 80bhp, 79lb ft
Performance: 0–62mph in 6.5secs 100mph top speed
Transmission: 5spd manual, RWD
Economy: 57.6mpg 114g/km CO_2
Weight: 490kg

"YOU DON'T HAVE FUN IN THE CATERHAM, YOU HAVE A SERIES OF NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES"

TYRED EMOTI



Vette C7 vs F-Type R: cheap American thrills vs refined British pleasures. You know which one you want, right?

WORDS: SAM PHILIP / PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK FAGELSON

AND IONAL



Jaguar F-Type R versus Corvette. As conclusions go, this one shouldn't be so much foregone as, well, fivegone or sixgone. Sure, the Corvette may have upped its game somewhat in the latest 'C7' generation, and earned rapturous reviews in America for its ability to negotiate a corner without immediately bursting into flames, but that's America, where frankly if you fit your car with enough XXL cupholders and a Wendy's loyalty card as standard, it'll prove as popular as unlicensed gun ownership.

But this is Europe, and this is the *F-Type R*. The most beautiful British car in years, packing a stately 542bhp of supercharged V8 and an all-aluminium bottom to put Ms Middleton Jr to shame. A European aristocrat against a swamp-dwelling hillbilly armed with a lead pipe. No contest, right?

Wrong. If you'd told me before the start of Speed Week that, of all the amazing metal on show, the car I'd most enjoy driving on track – the car I'd come back to, time after time – would be the Corvette C7 Stingray, I'd have responded with a phrase not fit for a family magazine. Just look at it. You can tell from no more than a cursory glance that this thing is a) very front-engined, b) very rear-drive and c) just waiting for an excuse to flick you, tiddly-wink-style, into a lump of Armco.

JAGUAR F-TYPE R

Price: £85,000
Engine: 5000cc supercharged V8 542bhp, 501lb ft
Performance: 0–62mph in 4.2secs 186mph top speed
Transmission: 8spd auto, RWD
Economy: 26.0mpg 259g/km CO_2
Weight: 1650kg

CORVETTE C7 STINGRAY

Price: £61,495
Engine: 6161cc naturally aspirated V8 460bhp, 465lb ft
Performance: 0–62mph in 4.2secs 190mph top speed
Transmission: 7spd manual, RWD
Economy: 23.0mpg 291g/km CO_2
Weight: 1499kg



"THE CORVETTE TAPS YOU INTO AN HDMI FEED FROM THE INNERMOST WORKINGS OF ITS CHASSIS"

















HIS STIGNESS'S DATA FEED IS DOWNLOADED

But here's the thing. It isn't. The Corvette is as confidence-boosting and accessible a fast car as I've driven in years. And that's not coming from one of those grimacing, pointy-shoe-wearing drivers who steps from a car and says, with an approving nod, "Yeah, feels just like a racecar. Mega." Because to me, "feels like a racecar" means "hideously hot, noisy, twitchy, impossible to see out of, might catch fire at any moment". Feeling like a racecar is not generally a good thing. But the Corvette feels like a racecar in the right way rather than the wrong way, communicating to you from each corner, steering true, tapping you into an HDMI feed from the innermost workings of its chassis.

Maybe that's why, despite a steaming 460bhp and 465lb ft at your disposal, you never seem to be going especially fast in the C7. It's also, I think, down to that vast, unstressed V8, which never so much explodes as simply melts a great sticky river of torque through the wheels throughout the rev range. But the Vette is deceptively rapid. In the hands of The Stig, and despite giving away the best part of 100 horses in the power department, the Chevy lapped Castellolí 3.4 seconds faster than the Jag. In my hands, the gap was somewhat greater.

It isn't perfect, not for a second. Though it's nice to see a proper manual gearbox – the F-Type is auto only – the Corvette's is far from the slickest. To change from third to fourth involves dragging the gearlever a good four feet from windscreen scuttle to rear axle. In truth, seven ratios is approximately six ratios too many: the Corvette's third gear is good for everything from hill starts to autobahn charges. At 70mph in seventh, you're not even touching 1,500rpm, which is a theoretical top speed of 310mph.

Though it sounds glorious from the outside – a great lazy blues riff of bassy V8 – things are surprisingly muted from within the Vette's cabin, even with that two-part roof removed and stowed.

The Corvette boasts some wilful ergonomic weirdness, too. If you look closely, you'll spot a pair of shifters, one either side of its wheel, just as you'll find in the F-Type. Unlike the F, however, these don't man the gears. These are, instead, buttons to activate and deactivate the Corvette's 'rev-match' system, which blips the throttle automatically on downchanges to smooth out your shifts. Even if the rev-match system worked – which it doesn't especially well – do you really need a flicker on each side to turn it off and on? Are you really likely to find yourself halfway through a fast corner, steering wheel at a strange angle, and think "Ooh, I could really do with a quick rev-match here, but I just can't find the switch to turn it on..."? Wouldn't a button on the dash suffice?

The Jag is far more... moisturised within. Where there's a flame-grilled meatiness to every one of the Corvette's controls, the F-Type moves with a lightness of touch. Which makes it very pleasant for cruising gently on the motorway – or, rather, doing your utmost to cruise gently on the motorway and resist the F-Type's natural desire to go bawling into triple-figure speeds and the notebooks of every traffic policeman within a 20-mile radius – but just a little distant on the track. I was never quite confident in what the F-Type's rear was up to, quite how much grip it had left before it'd slew spectacularly yet disconcertingly wide. Traction control on, the F-Type's traction light flashes a constant cabin disco. Traction control off, the F-Type's rear axle shows a fervent desire to explore the outer verge of every corner.

And that's not just because I'm a mallet-footed oik: even His Stigness struggled to exploit the F-Type's ample power. In fact, check the stats on p134, and you'll see that, in his white mitts, the F went round Castellolí a fraction slower than the Cayman GTS, which is almost precisely 200bhp less powerful.

Not that it's a bad car, the F-Type R. This coupe feels more solid, more composed than the F-Type cabrio, and it makes a properly deranged array of noises, even if some are a mite synthetic. Convince the F to put the power to the tarmac rather than frittering its rear tyres to dust, and you'll discover a fearsome-fast straight-line car: we clocked a 0–60mph time of 3.9 seconds. And, probably most importantly for potential buyers, the F-Type looks magnificent inside and out, even in the Strangely Brown paintjob of our test car. (White, honestly. That's the colour you want. Embrace the bling). Out in the real world of traffic jams, dual carriageways and the occasional back-road blast, the F-Type, I suspect, would feel rather wonderful.

But right here, on this fast, hairy track, it's upstaged by the brilliant Corvette, a car that manages to feel mechanical yet sophisticated, brawny yet surprisingly delicate. Surprising, in fact, full stop. We suspected this might be a one-sided contest, and indeed it was. Just not the way we expected.













JAGUAR'S MOISTURISED CABIN. SLIPPERY



THIS VETTE HAS A WONDERFUL STING IN ITS TAIL

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY: JOHN WYCHERLEY, ROWAN HORNCASTLE

THE STIG UNLEASHED

It's not quite Dunsfold but...

There's always a subtext when a racetrack is involved. We can talk all we like about the handling nuances and the sheer feeling of joy and excitement that these cars deliver, but all the while we know exactly what you're thinking... How fast is it? What numbers does it do?

Now, as a rule, at *TopGear* we don't understand numbers. Well, not unless they're small. So we told Stig to try to make these numbers as small as possible. Then we put them into a large table, looked at them and tried some 'analysis'. This made our brains hurt, so we gave up and went off to make childish noises while driving the Caterham.

PS: in all seriousness, there's some good stuff in here...



10 SPEED WEEK FACTS

- 918 accelerates to 60mph faster than all bar itself and the P1 stop from 60mph
- **Corvette has exceptional brakes – better than 650S**
- McLaren battle: 650S is only 0.1sec slower than P1 from 30–70mph
- **Worst brakes: Bentley Conti GT (well, not including The Mighty Caterham)**
- Best brakes: 918 – stopped from 100mph five metres sooner than P1, 15m before 650S, 28m ahead of Bentley
- **Golf R – as quick to 60mph as the Cayman GTS, only 0.1secs slower 30–70mph, too**
- Conti GT: accelerated as fast as Corvette or M4
- **Conti GT lap: slower than all the hatch laps**
- F-Type had less lateral grip than any of the hatches and did a slower lap than the Cayman which had 200bhp less
- **Corvette generated most grip of all cars in its class**

FUNNY STUFF

Caterham 160
Porsche 918 E-mode

HATCH STUFF

Audi S1
Seat Leon Cupra
Volkswagen Golf R
BMW M235i

FAST STUFF

BMW M4
Corvette C7
Jaguar F-Type R
Porsche Cayman GTS

SUPER STUFF

Bentley Conti GT W12 Speed
Porsche 911 Turbo S
McLaren 650S Spider

HYPER STUFF

McLaren P1
Porsche 918 Spyder



0–60 (secs)	0–100 (secs)	0–100–0 (secs)	60–0 (m)	100–0 (m)	30–70 (secs)	LAP TIMES	Lat g	Peak speed (mph)
6.9	NOT ENOUGH ROOM	SEE PREVIOUS	40.9	LITERALLY IMPOSSIBLE	N/A	2.21.4	FEW	GUESS
6.1	N/A	N/A	26.7	N/A	5.1	2.19.7	MANY	91
5.5	13.4	18.6	34.4	96.2	4.8	TOASTED	TOASTED	N/A
5.7	12.6	17.6	33.8	95.0	4.4	2.06.7	1.35	120.1
4.5	11.5	16.8	34.0	97.2	4.0	2.06.8	1.34	120.5
5.1	11.8	16.8	32.2	95.2	4.6	2.07.9	1.28	121.3
4.2	8.9	14.0	34.4	95.7	3.5	2.01.9	1.35	130.4
4.1	9.2	13.9	30.1	82.6	3.1	1.59.1	1.44	127.9
3.9	8.5	13.8	32.7	94.1	3.0	2.02.5	1.26	129.9
4.5	10.4	15.5	32.1	94.1	3.9	2.02.3	1.42	125.7
4.1	8.9	14.5	35.6	99.1	3.4	2.08.4	1.26	126.5
3.0	6.6	11.3	29.6	80.8	2.3	1.55.0	1.62	138.8
3.2	6.2	11.2	32.1	86.0	2.0	1.54.5	1.49	139.4
2.7	5.0	9.5	28.9	76.3	1.9		2.15	151.9
2.5	5.0	9.4	26.7	71.1	1.7		1.87	153.5

MORE THAN FOUR SECONDS FASTER THAN EVERYTHING ELSE... *TGTV* WILL HAVE THE ANSWERS







WORDS: **TOM FORD** / PHOTOGRAPHY: **JOHN WYCHERLEY**

ROAD



SHOW

The five best fast cars of 2014*, 1,000 miles and three days. What could possibly go wrong?

*and a Caterham



opGear magazine's Speed Week has been temporarily inconvenienced by an avalanche. It's not a particularly impressive avalanche, and we're probably being generous to describe what appears to be a relatively modest slump as a natural disaster, but technically the road is blocked because the mountain we're driving on has shrugged a couple of thousand tonnes of last winter's greyish slush all over itself. It is therefore, an avalanche, and we are summarily inconvenienced. There is a path past, but it involves rocks, fathomless mires and a great deal of freezing mud, and nobody fancies trying to force a McLaren P1 to off-road. The Caterham Seven 160 jounces merrily past, and 'fathomless' turns out to be about seven inches. I sigh. I have no idea what the Caterham is doing here. It has a blowing exhaust, we've lost the doors, and it won't idle below 3,000rpm. The engine light blinks a baleful yellow eye almost permanently now, but like an annoying, part-crippled homing pigeon, it keeps appearing. Some time after the rest have arrived, granted, but the ergonomically inept little thing is like a bloody beige boomerang.

We're most of the way up a mountain in Andorra, though our exact location seems somewhat muddled. With typical *TopGear* forthrightness, we decided that we should head for the twistiest, loneliest roads we could find for our little road trip, which meant heading upwards. Luckily, Europe's highest capital city, Andorra la Vella, lay just a few hundred miles above our position in Spain, Andorra itself a tiny principality only a couple of hundred miles square. Tax haven, lightly populated and, judging by the maps, possessed of some of the wiggliest bits of road in the vicinity, so we hooked the C-37 and went hairpin-hunting.

The drive up is largely uneventful, the motorway giving way to sweeping arcs of A-road that hug the curves of the Gran Valira river through the valley floor. Good roads, fast roads. Roads that shepherd themselves towards the entrance of Andorra in the eastern Pyrenees, as the Coma Pedrosa – the biggest mountain in the area – sits sunny and impassive in the near distance. It's all going swimmingly. Less surprisingly, we attract a good deal of attention. Ollie Marriage is propositioned in the P1 by a couple of female 'hitch-hikers' (everyone looks away and coughs when he relates this story), and the sight of some of the world's best fast cars merrily trotting north has a not-inconsiderable effect on the local bandwidth. People are definitely surprised to see a Porsche 918 and McLaren P1 lightly duelling amid their commute.



DESPITE OUR PLEAS TO IMPOUND THE CATERHAM, ANDORRA'S BORDER GUARDS WAVED IT THROUGH

Mind you, bar those couple of obvious exceptions, *I'm* surprised to see this final battalion. If you'd laid bets on the cars that would end up on the road trip a few days ago, you'd have lost money. The McLaren P1 and the Porsche 918 were just too compelling to consider leaving behind, and by default negated the need for any other of their kin to join us in the hills. Which means the McLaren 650S and Porsche's Cayman GTS and Turbo S were left, somewhat begrudgingly, down in Castellolí. We couldn't decide between the VW Golf R and Audi S1 from the vaguely real-world group – both were in the running if only for their flattering 4WD rapidity and chuckable size – until he-who-shall-remain-nameless (it rhymes with Tarlie Churner) took the S1 out for a literal hot lap and set fire to it, handing the spot, somewhat ignominiously, to the Vee-dub.

The Stingray was nothing but purest surprise, but for all the right reasons. We loved the Jaguar F-Type R Coupe, but when pushed properly hard, the Jag became excessively rabid, habitually swatting exit kerbs with its rear. Fun for a while, but we couldn't help feeling the V6S version might be a bit less like trying to domesticate a forest fire. Into the gap left by the F-Type's casual attitude to the racing line stepped the C7. And it kept stepping up. It hasn't quite got the Jag's class or stylish ooze, but to drive hard, it's utterly brilliant, and for the price, simply astonishing. Which means that in a decision taken for more than just wordplay, a Vette ended up putting down a Jaguar. There were other fights, not nearly so clear-cut, too. The Bentley nearly



ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY: ROWAN HORNCASTLE


"THE TOPGEAR MIND IS AS ONE. GO-FASTER DIALS ARE SPUN AND SPORT BUTTONS DEPRESSED"
GG C 7006

TEST 9:
THE ROAD TRIP



903BHP OF REAR-DRIVE, TURBO-HYBRID INSANITY. A SMALL SNOWDRIFT. NO GOOD CAN COME OF THIS

made it for the sheer bemusement factor of having the Hurlingham Club on afterburners bounding around after a Porsche 918, but seeing as we were heading into the mountains, the thought of the W12 Speed on Armco-less cliff roads made everyone a little squeamish. If you'd seen it braking at the end of the straight at the circuit, you'd understand – the energy it poured into its brakes from nearly 130mph could probably light Birmingham for a week.

Which left us with the BMW M4. Surprisingly, the most controversial of the group. The car that divided opinion, the one that caused excessive fuss. It was responsible for several heated 'discussions' and also the fact that Piers Ward had to be taken outside, given a stiff Vimto and told to calm down. Why? Because on the track, it wasn't what we hoped for. But the reason it wasn't what we hoped for is because it wasn't what we were expecting. It's easy to confuse the two. And so, the M car got a place on the road, with everyone hoping that it could impress away the grumbles.

Inevitably, 'The Mighty' Caterham crashed the party. So we've ended up with a pair of hybrid hypercars, an American sports car, a sports coupe and a hatch, with a turbocharged three-cylinder tin coffin tagging along behind in their wake. Like I said, it makes for an interesting little convoy.

We soothe through the Andorran border and head into a series of longish tunnels. The *TopGear* gestalt mind is as one. Go-faster dials are spun and Sport buttons depressed in unison. No hybrid running for us. Not here. Plunge into a throat of darkness, and whichever car is in the lead floors the accelerator. It's like singing in rounds; there's the hissing, subsonic burble turbo note of the Golf R, overlaid a second later by the bassy, almost lazy but climbing tones of the C7's enormous 6.2 V8. The M4 chimes in, with an odd, chainsaw-like rasp, before the P1 winds up and devours the available atmosphere, spurting a great torrent of turbo static and electric motor whine out of its shovel of an exhaust. It sounds like a







AVALANCHE STOPS PLAY WITH TOP OF ANDORRA IN SIGHT. FORD ATTEMPTS TO SHOVE 160 INTO RAVINE

nuclear-fed jet turbine, like someone trying to contain an explosion in a too-small box. And while the P1 handles the low-end, the 918 finally kicks in with its solo, and the walls melt. The 918, it's fair to say, does not sound like a hybrid. It sounds like Eau Rouge at 3am. It sounds like a sleepy F1 car. It sounds like a tiny apocalypse in a tunnel. But, above all, it sounds *fast*. In fact, it's a wonder everyone doesn't pass out through lack of oxygen – with this lot all at full chat in a confined space, I'm surprised we're not suddenly in a vacuum.

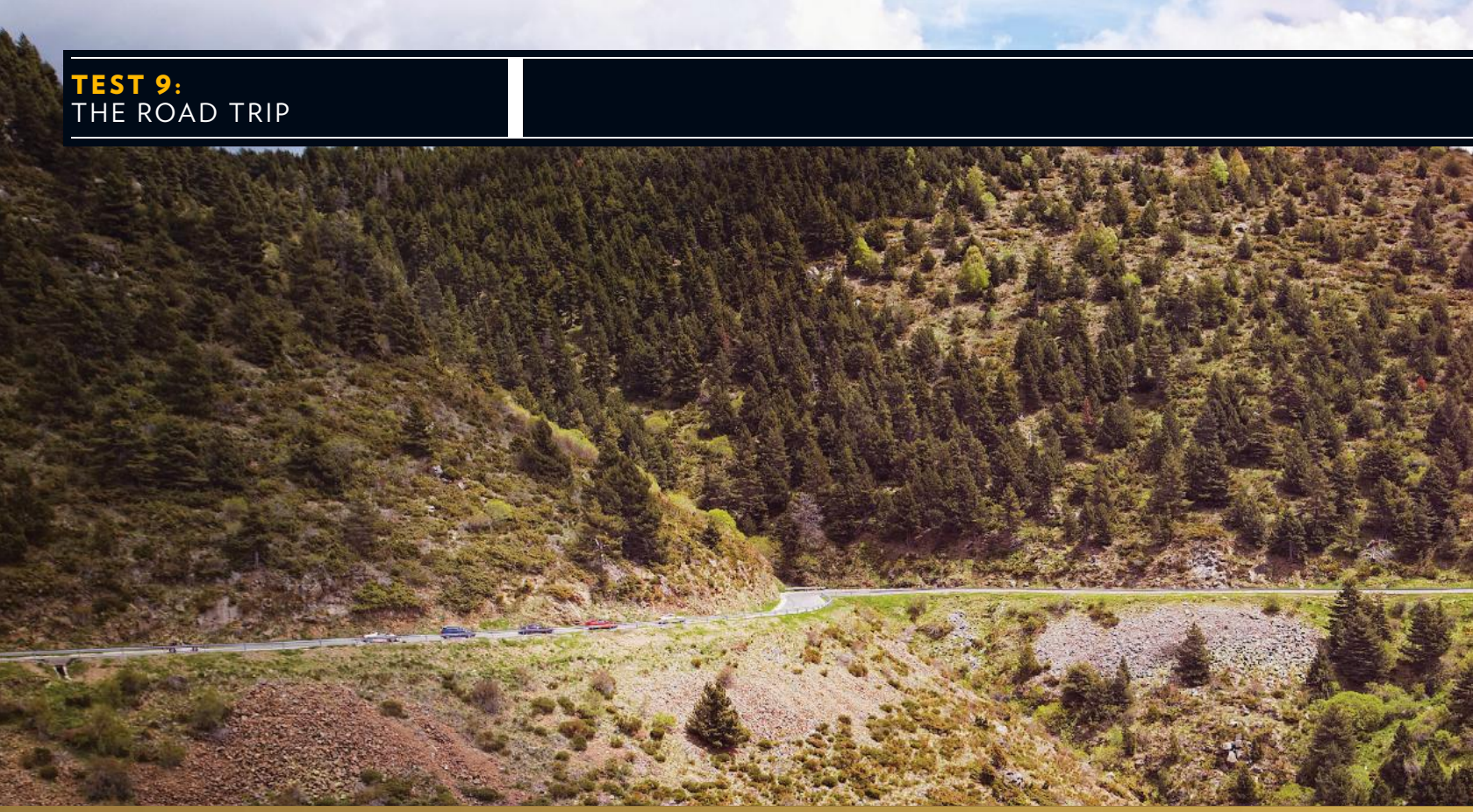
We keep swapping cars, and it becomes obvious that – bar the Caterham, which I have decided is absolute crap – all of these cars are more than capable of carrying miles without extinguishing your sense of wellbeing. The Golf is, well, a Golf. The 918 and P1 intriguingly compliant, given their performance, though both suffer from expanses of bare carbon fibre with the acoustic damping qualities of a tin roof in a hailstorm. And the Corvette and the M4, for whom 'bipolar' is easily the most comfortable word, are sublime boulevardiers. Out here, in a world of dodgy surfaces, unexpected potholes and balky traffic, they shine. Schlepping either down a normal road proves to be one of the most soothing things about the entire trip – seventh gear in both pleasingly soporific, decent stereos, comfy chairs and plenty of kit to keep you amused. The Vette might be manual, but you only really need third and seventh, and the BMW's thumping mid-range means it never feels any less than on point. We wind through the Andorran mountains through the excellently named Xixerella, climbing ever higher through the more prosaic Pal, and just as things start to get properly interesting, the avalanche stops play. Another route must be sought, but it's already getting late, so we retreat back down to Andorra la Vella for the night, and some welcome rest.

Next morning, we wind out of the capital, and start to fling ourselves off in random directions in search of smaller, more intense roads. We flicker through what amounts to rush hour towards a place





TEST 9:
THE ROAD TRIP

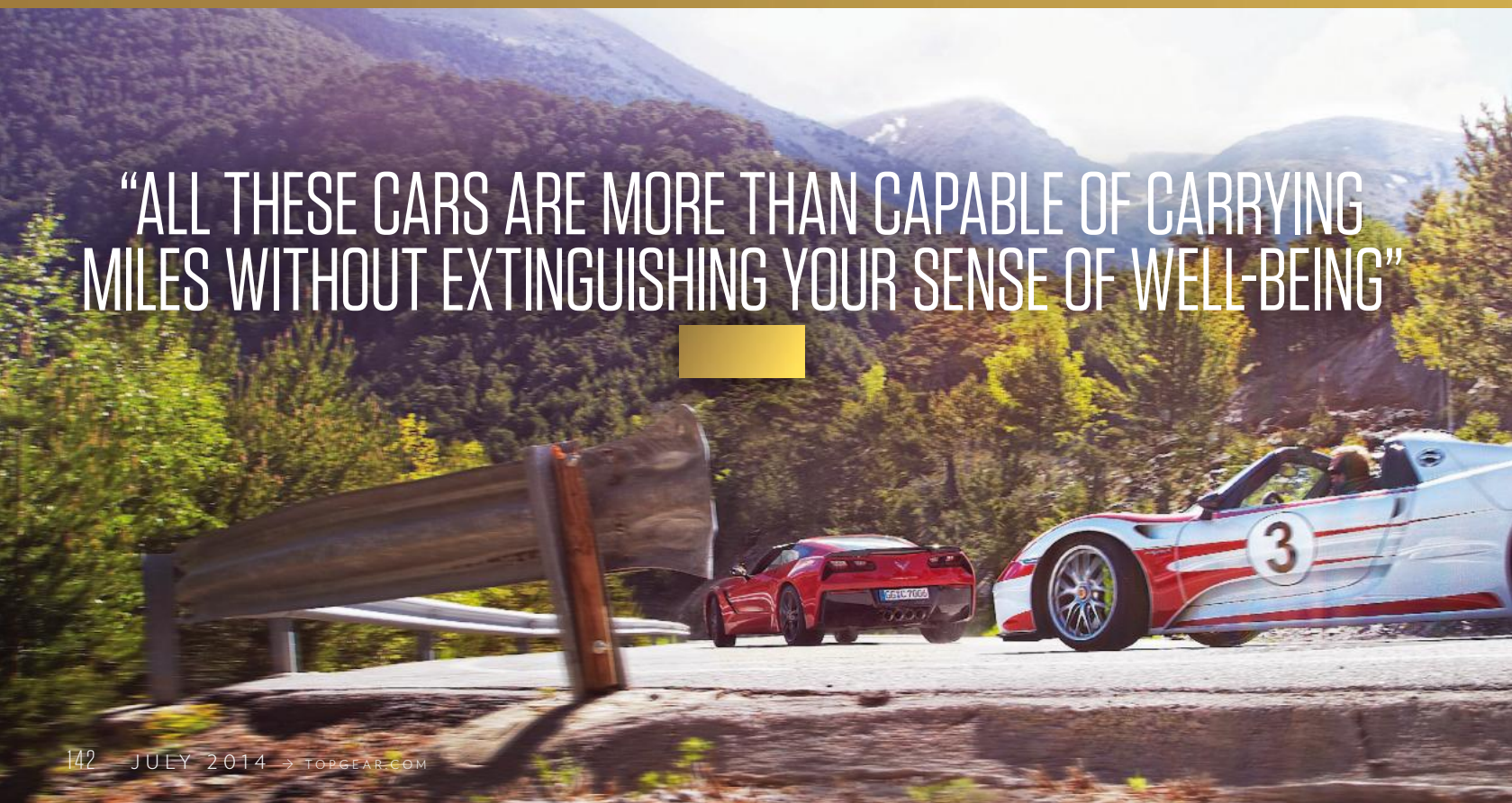




REMEMBER: ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD







"ALL THESE CARS ARE MORE THAN CAPABLE OF CARRYING MILES WITHOUT EXTINGUISHING YOUR SENSE OF WELL-BEING"



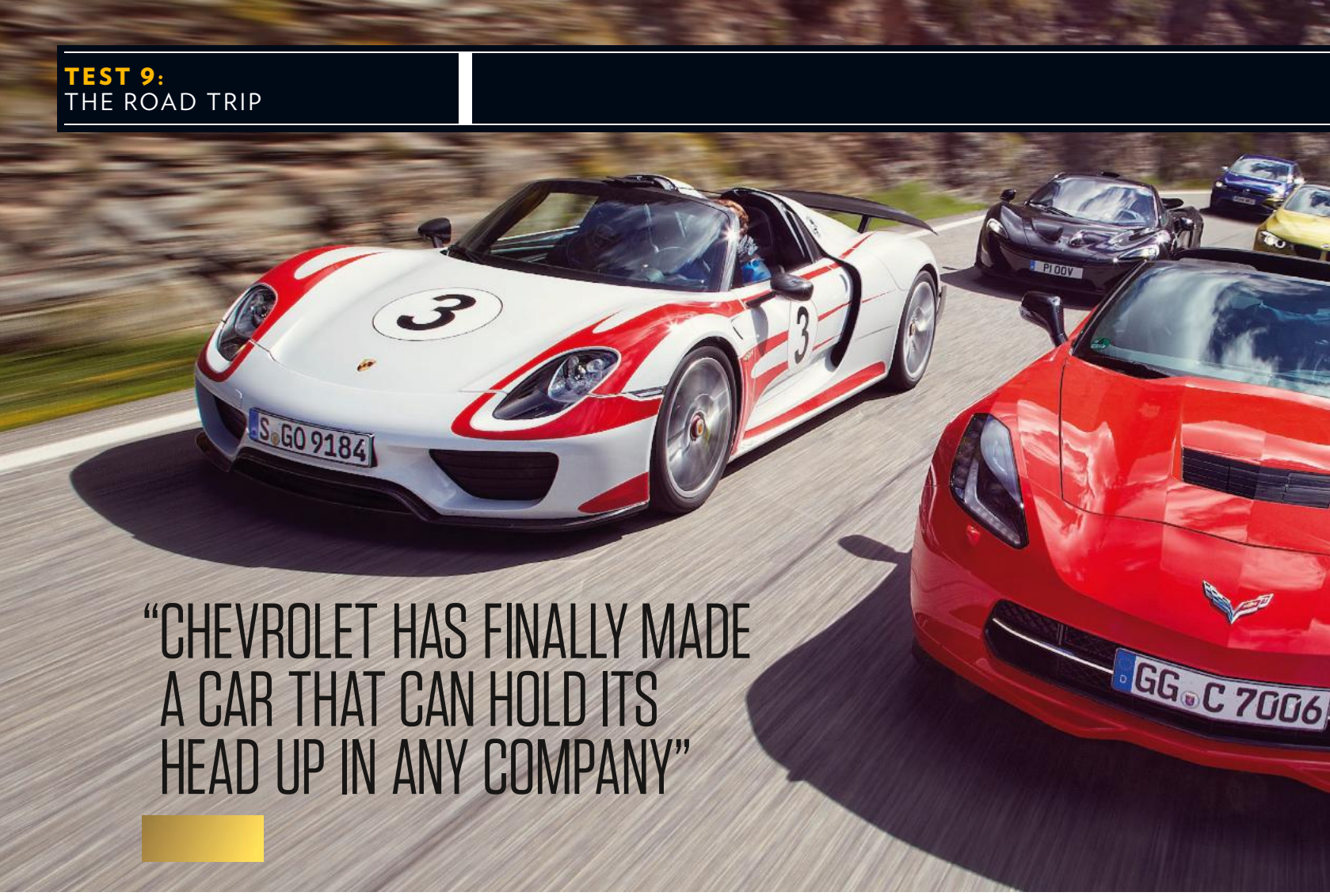




VETTE LOCKS GOLF
IN CROSS HAIRS,
DEPLOYS BELLOWING







"CHEVROLET HAS FINALLY MADE A CAR THAT CAN HOLD ITS HEAD UP IN ANY COMPANY"

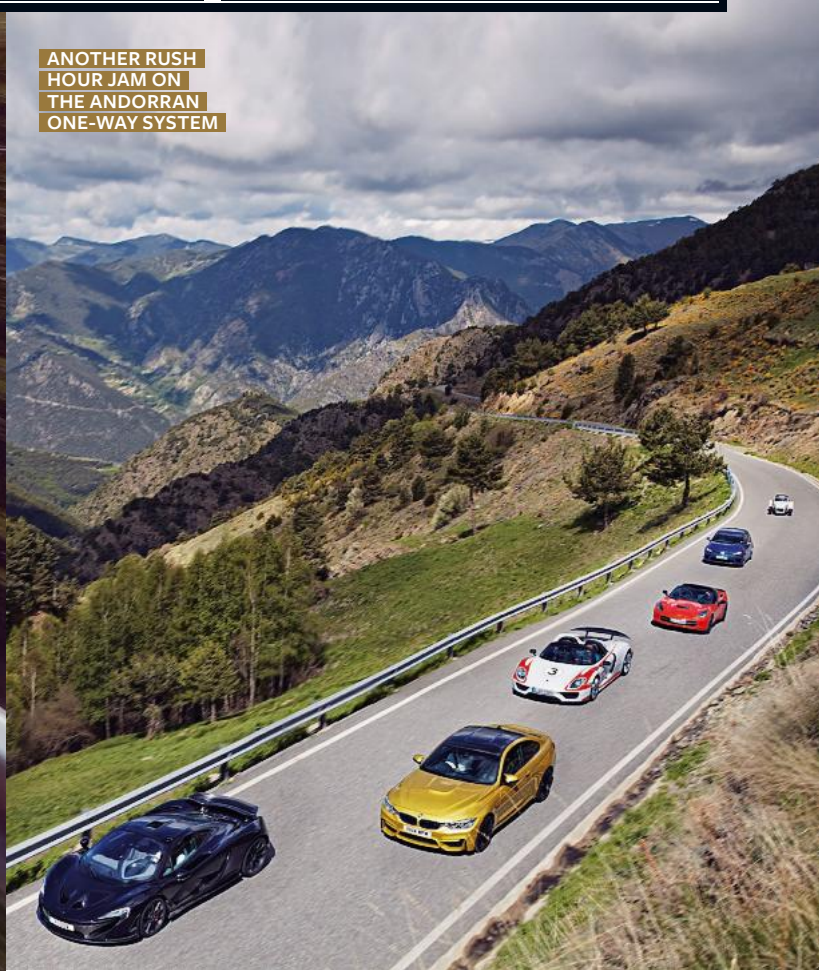
called Sant Julià de Lòria, and then up a series of long-legged hairpins towards Aixirivall and the Coll Jovell. Time to stretch a few legs. Now, you'd think that, given their bare-knuckle performance on the track, the 918 and P1 would be rough-edged nightmares on the road: fidgety, hemmed-in and frustrating. But they aren't. They don't chunter or buck, or feel like they have camshaft profiles modelled on the very Pyrenean mountains we're driving through. They are tractable and gentle if you respect them, easing through the gears with a thick backbone of interstitial electric torque. They do, however, have a habit of innocently hacking along at an indecent pace. The P1 is still the car you have to concentrate in most, and second and third gears bring the kind of acceleration that furrows brows deeply enough to leave permanent lines. My God, this thing just never stops. Engage those turbos, and this is not a car that you can relax in, or take lightly at any point. Even with all the electronic minders fully engaged, you still get plenty of wheelspin in Sport, and the only thing that keeps the P1 from the suspiciously stout trees is the telepathically sharp steering. Around these mountain roads, it feels like a monstrous, properly-put-together Lotus Exige. Which is a massive compliment for a car capable of such extraordinary performance.

The 918 delivers more surprises. Pottering, it feels like a 911 Turbo. Physically, it's lustier, but there's nothing particularly intimidating about the delivery or the way it drives. The engine is frighteningly, excellently loud, and you don't ever quite forget that you're in an über Porsche, but the way it negotiates fast B-roads is exactly like it is at the track: tight, tractable, reliable. Wind on the speed, and it remains staunchly resolute, sticking to whatever line you happen to throw its way through equally prescient steering. And it's blindingly rapid, though slightly less instant than the P1









ANOTHER RUSH HOUR JAM ON THE ANDORRAN ONE-WAY SYSTEM

when it comes to consecutive direction changes. On the way to El Quixol and Arcavell, something becomes obvious: with similarly quick-witted drivers behind the wheel of each car, the P1 can negotiate tighter, harder turns more quickly and leap ahead. The 918 feels more secure on the brakes, allowing you to lean harder into the apex, and if said corner is long and loaded, it gives more confidence in terms of traction to wind on the power far earlier. They effectively negate each other down a varied course. But one fact remains stark: the driver of the P1 will be working harder and sweating more. The 918 is definitely a friendlier thing.

Several hours of intestinal backroads later, we fire out of Andorra and back into Spain, set on a course for the N-260, whipping a quick shortcut through the village of Alp, before settling onto the road towards La Molina. And everything starts to get a bit dangerously frenetic. At least, it does in the M4. The 918 and P1 have already scythed off into the distance, inexorably drawing away with any hint of a straight. The road is well-surfaced, looped around the side of a mountain and infected with the kind of corners you only see in erotic dreams. If you're dangerously obsessed with cars, that is. The clouds are glowering; the valley, emerald green. It all feels faintly epic. And yet, the golden BMW is absolutely all over the place. Literally. I try driving it with the traction control switched on, but the slip fairies seem hyper-alert, and the sideways light never stops twinkling. When I switch it off, the BMW slews about like it was trying to negotiate mid-corner ice with balding tyres. The front axle plants itself neatly, the steering accurate, the brakes exceptional. But as soon as I breathe near the accelerator, the M4 pushes the tail wide in what proves to be one of the most frustrating 20-minute drives of the whole week. It simply cannot make use of its – admittedly excellently brawny – engine. A fact

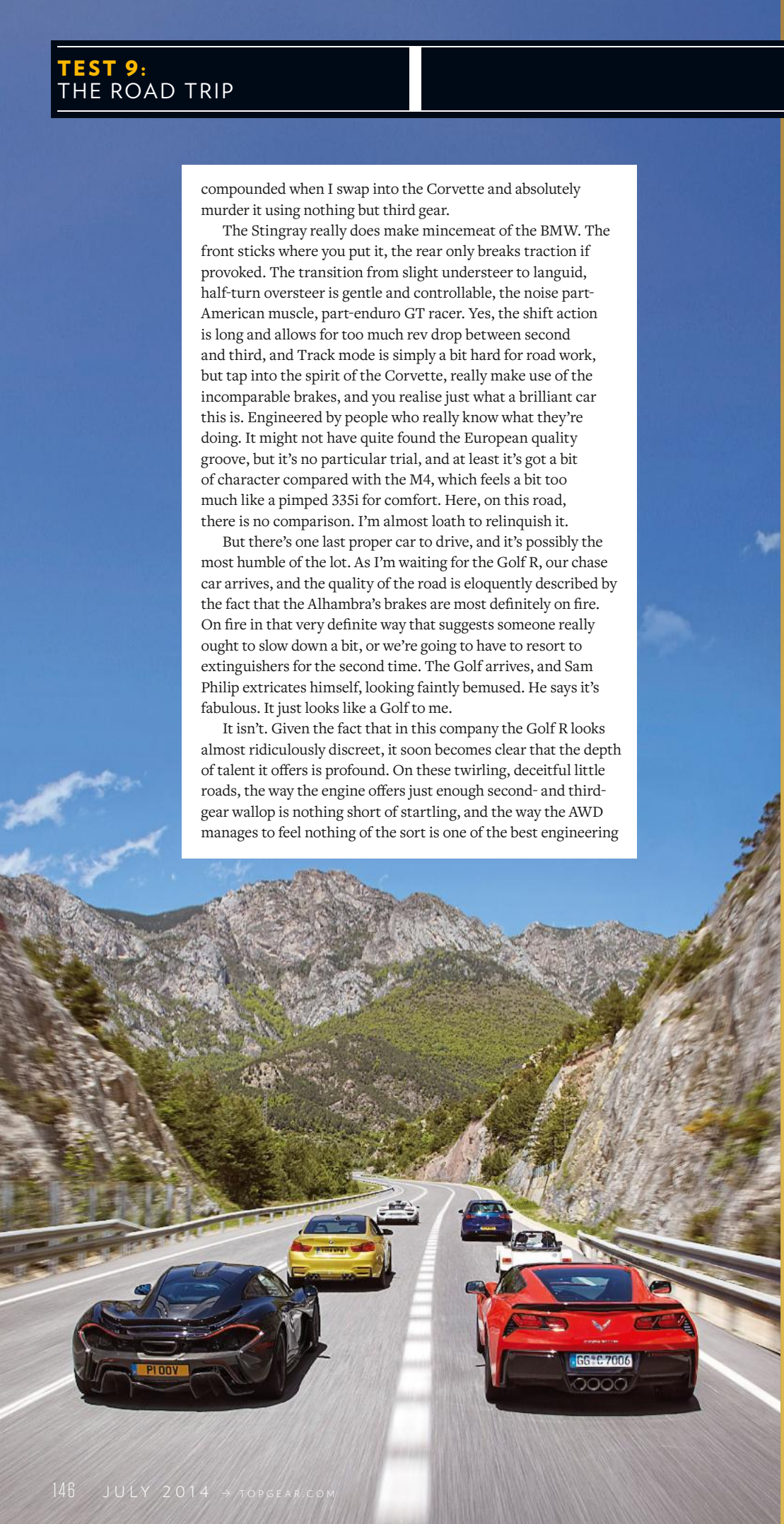


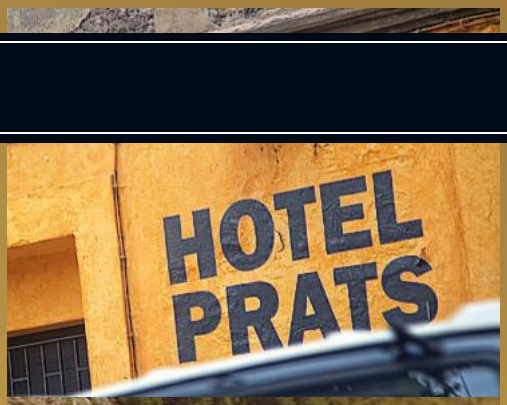
compounded when I swap into the Corvette and absolutely murder it using nothing but third gear.

The Stingray really does make mincemeat of the BMW. The front sticks where you put it, the rear only breaks traction if provoked. The transition from slight understeer to languid, half-turn oversteer is gentle and controllable, the noise part-American muscle, part-enduro GT racer. Yes, the shift action is long and allows for too much rev drop between second and third, and Track mode is simply a bit hard for road work, but tap into the spirit of the Corvette, really make use of the incomparable brakes, and you realise just what a brilliant car this is. Engineered by people who really know what they're doing. It might not have quite found the European quality groove, but it's no particular trial, and at least it's got a bit of character compared with the M4, which feels a bit too much like a pimped 335i for comfort. Here, on this road, there is no comparison. I'm almost loath to relinquish it.

But there's one last proper car to drive, and it's possibly the most humble of the lot. As I'm waiting for the Golf R, our chase car arrives, and the quality of the road is eloquently described by the fact that the Alhambra's brakes are most definitely on fire. On fire in that very definite way that suggests someone really ought to slow down a bit, or we're going to have to resort to extinguishers for the second time. The Golf arrives, and Sam Philip extricates himself, looking faintly bemused. He says it's fabulous. It just looks like a Golf to me.

It isn't. Given the fact that in this company the Golf R looks almost ridiculously discreet, it soon becomes clear that the depth of talent it offers is profound. On these twirling, deceitful little roads, the way the engine offers just enough second- and third-gear wallop is nothing short of startling, and the way the AWD manages to feel nothing of the sort is one of the best engineering













sleight-of-hand tricks I've ever experienced. The DSG 'box is sharp and reactive; the front end, almost unbelievably trustworthy. Like the 918, it's a superbly flattering car and desperately, intensely fun to drive hard. The only criticism is that by the end of another 20 minutes of – ahem – 'spirited' driving, the brake pedal has the texture of a down pillow and the brakes are smoking like a Seventies pub lounge. Seriously, enough with the BBQ braking systems. The Caterham putters up just after, and I idly wonder whether it'll ever die.

We spend another day in the mountains doing pretty much the same thing, except with rather more stops for brake refreshment, and the results are invariably the same. The BMW M4 never comes alive. It has elements of greatness, but when it comes down to it, the newest M car never gives that extra dose of character that makes your brain fuzz with emotion. It's fast, efficient and an excellent daily driver. It will also do quite spectacular skids. But it's lost some of the sense of humour that previous Ms have had in spades. It feels staid and synthetic and, for me, it's a huge disappointment. Not one person came forward in its defence.

The choir sang loud for the Corvette Stingray, mind. Expectations weren't exactly low but they were guarded, and the C7 blew everyone away, on road and track. It's not perfect, and it's not necessarily to everyone's aesthetic taste, but there is no denying that Chevrolet has finally made a car that can hold its head up in any company. It's always had soul, but now it has talent. It's a heady brew. The Golf R, surprisingly, was similar. No one really expected a humble Golf to be quite so much fun, but when it comes to laughing out loud without being in fear of your life, the R is that car. Anything that can thoroughly stick it to a supercar down a twisty road for less than 30 grand is OK by *TopGear*. It's immense.

"WE SPEND ANOTHER DAY IN THE MOUNTAINS WITH RATHER MORE STOPS FOR BRAKE REFRESHMENT"





Which leaves us with the P1 and 918. Without wishing to state the bleeding obvious, these two are right at the outer edge of what's possible with the road-going car in 2014, and both deliver in every possible way you can imagine. They're the reason you're reading this magazine, the reason we all love cars. They're painfully fast, implausibly arresting in real life, simply sodding incredible. But one fact became clear over *TopGear* magazine's Speed Week on road and track: at my level of driving skill, I am faster in the Porsche 918, simply because it's easier to drive on the limit, for more of the time. The McLaren P1 is undoubtedly as brisk, but to access the outer limits of its capabilities, you have to spend way more time in it, and very possibly take some race-driving instruction. You don't get comfortable with downforce in a week. It also means that in a real head-to-head with a pro the winner will be circuit-dependent – they're that close. Jeremy Clarkson said that if the 918 beats the P1 around the *TG* track, he'd change his name to Jennifer. At least he wouldn't have to change his letterhead.

So there you have it. *TopGear* magazine's Speed Week over for another year: judgements made, fires extinguished and tyres destroyed. And, yes, I did finally drive that damn Caterham Seven 160 on the road. And, despite my better judgement, I actually really quite enjoyed it.

Just don't tell anyone, OK?

"ANYTHING THAT CAN THOROUGHLY STICK IT TO A SUPERCAR DOWN A TWISTY ROAD FOR LESS THAN £30K IS OK BY US"



TG THANKS...





Assembling TopGear*'s Speed Week approximately 1,000 miles away from the office isn't exactly the work of a moment, and even though we'd happily take all the credit for ourselves, or more precisely Piers who organised the entire shebang, we can't. We had help.*

- **First up, Volkswagen and DHL Inside Track (www.insidetrackautomotive.co.uk) for getting all the UK cars out to the circuit and not calling the police when The Stig hijacked the transporter just outside a city in the south of France. Some say he's a fan of big cats, all we know is he'd got the wrong kind of Lyon. Sorry.**

- DHL also arranged for a startling quantity of spare tyres – a set for each car to protect the sanctity of the laptime – and even took our enormous box of walkie-talkies down so that we could all pretend to be policemen.

- **We'd also like to thank Fast Parcmotor Castellolí for their hospitality and rental of a lightly epic track (www.fastparcmotor.com), and Seat for providing four mobile-photography studio-cum-minibus Alhambras – and we're really sorry about the brakes on the red one.**

- The Catalan Tourist Board and the Hotel Ciutat Igualada (www.dormicumhotels.com/es/nuestros-hoteles/hotel-ciutat-igualada) also deserve special mention for helping several dog-tired and too-wired journalists get some sleep, and finally the rather brilliant Repsol, for the supply of a fuel truck with 1,500 litres of high-octane unleaded on board – watching it lap the circuit on a rescue mission in the company of The Mighty Caterham is an image that will stay with us for a long time...





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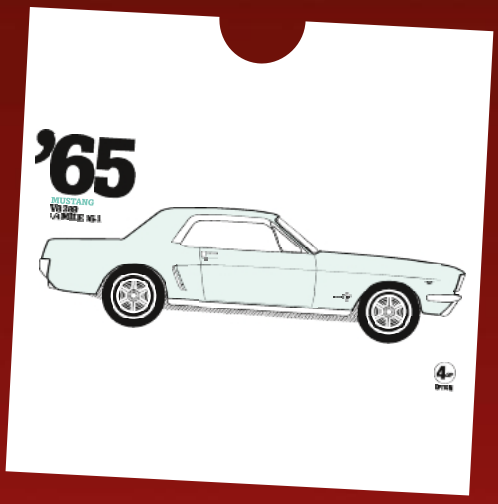
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Garage

TOPGEAR'S LONG-TERM CARS. TESTED AND VERIFIED

INFINITI Q50

P158 Can posh-up Nissan build a better hybrid than posh-up Toyota?





McLAREN 12C
P154 The prequel to the 650S is heading back to Woking



BMW i3
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FORD KUGA
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CITROEN C4
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AUDI RS6
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VW GOLF
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RENAULT CAPTUR
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HYUNDAI i20
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VOLVO V60
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MERCEDES A45 AMG
P161 The screen isn't as bad as some people have decided...

Follow our cars on Twitter **@topgeargarage**



The 12C Spider looks good. But it's now been replaced by the 650S...

GOODBYE: McLAREN 12C SPIDER

ctrl+alt+delete

Spider 3799cc, V8 twin-turbo, RWD, 616bhp, 443lb ft 24.2mpg, 279g/km CO_2 0–62mph in 3.3secs, 204mph 1341kg £ £195,500/ £242,360 → Total mileage **21,456** → MPG this month **18.6** → Why it's here **To see if you can use a convertible supercar in a UK winter** TOM FORD

And so it ends. Six months in a 12C Spider, over winter, the better to decide if it can really be an everyday supercar. The results have been... mixed.

We first picked Y666 MCL up from McLaren's Birmingham outpost as part of the pre-owned Qualified programme, complete with upwards of 9k miles already on the clock. Initial impressions were good – the 12C Spider makes a whole host of sense in terms of a usable daily-driven supercar, mainly thanks to the friendly ergonomics and general demeanour. You can see out of it, position it on the road, and the seats are nicely comfortable, without any of the back-arching hair-shirtedness of ballistic fast cars of old. This is good stuff.

And, yes, it matters. If you're not at ease, you concentrate on the discomfort rather than the experience, an all-too-common supercar toothache. So we were happy. A yellow McLaren, with a brilliant convertible roof and pace that could flay your skin right off.

And to drive, it was sublime. With that 3.8-litre, 616bhp, bi-turbo V8, when pottering, we managed a scarcely believable 31mpg if we were being parsimonious (though this was in full 70mph-only motorway run mode), and when we let the 12C really sing on the *TG* test track, we saw some *really* silly numbers on the speedo. Although the commensurate drop in mpg (3, at one point) was enough to limit excess.

But just describing it as 'fast' doesn't do this car justice, and if you keep the electronic minders in place, it's probably one of the most accessible speed merchants on the planet. There are caveats, mind. Switch everything off, and the 12C is very quick to bite. Think of it like a fast jet, calibrated to work best with the circuitry – stray away from those preset parameters, and you're on your own.

IN DETAIL

The 'open everything' 12C Spider party trick shows off that carbon MonoCell structure a treat



And yet, this hasn't been a happy relationship. Frankly, Y666 MCL felt well used when we got it, and hasn't improved noticeably. The tyre pressure sensors randomly warned of anomalies, the suspension squeaked alarmingly, the brakes sounded like nails down a blackboard. The IRIS infotainment system stalled, crashed and blanked at regular intervals, the engine would stutter and myriad other little niggles meant that essentially I lost faith in the car, even after it had been back to McLaren to be fettled. It never actually stopped. But I kept my phone on charge and a warm coat, just in case.

It seems McLaren itself knows the 12C wasn't right and has subsequently launched the 650S to replace it, after less than three years of production. It's five per cent better in every direction, apparently. I hope so. The 12C had so much potential, it would be a shame to see McLaren fail on such humdrum issues as perceived reliability. Only time will tell.



GOOD STUFF

- ▲ The actual driving experience. This is a proper supercar in terms of pace
- ▲ Peerless ergonomics
- ▲ Relative subtlety (when not in Volcano Yellow, obviously)
- ▲ That useful roof
- ▲ The doors

BAD STUFF

- ▼ General paranoia engendered by the flaky electronics – and yes, it really does bother you after a while
- ▼ Suspension squeakiness
- ▼ It's already been replaced by a better car, so residuals will probably nosedive



With a REX to back you up, charge is less vital...

REPORT 3: BMW i3

Home on the range

Range-extender | Electric + 647cc 2cyl petrol, RWD, 170bhp, 184lb ft | 470.8mpg, 13g/km CO_2
0–62mph in 7.2secs, 93mph | 1315kg | £33,830/£37,155 (incl. govt grant) → Total mileage **2815**
→ MPG this month **2.9mi/kWh** → Why it's here **Does the car of tomorrow make sense today?** CHARLIE TURNER

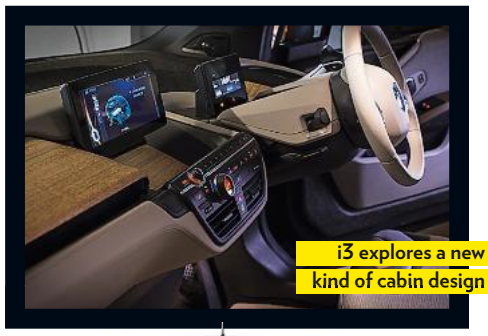
Month three with the i3... and it continues to impress. The queue for the keys has failed to diminish. Even the most rabid of our test drivers (those for whom a minimum of 300bhp is usually required to spike interest) return converted to the i3's charms. Everyone who drives it (and I really do mean *everyone*) comes back singing its praises – they love the instant throttle response, its design and the reaction it gets on the roads.

But, as with all EVs, the range and refuelling spark the biggest debate. Our car is fitted with a 0.6-litre Range-extender motor (REX) usually seen powering a BMW motorbike. When the batteries have depleted to three miles range, the REX kicks in and charges the battery cells allowing the car to continue running on EV. It all happens seamlessly, with only the dull burble of the 0.6-litre engine and a slight movement in the dashboard configuration making you aware of the change.

With the REX giving the i3 a combined real-world range of 120 miles (60 electric, 60 ICE, depending on driving style and which of the three driving modes you opt for), it pretty much eliminates the range anxiety that is the bane of other EVs. Need greater range but can't recharge? Then simply fill up the petrol tank and continue on your journey.

On my daily 100-mile round trip from home to the office to home again, the REX often remains undisturbed, unless the traffic has been bad or I'm in a hurry. And, in case you were wondering, hurrying in an i3 is a lot of fun, thanks to its low centre of gravity and instant power... but more on that in the coming months.

While initially having to plug the i3 in after every journey was something of a chore, as with much of the i3 experience, it really just requires a different mindset. Once plugged in, I can track the i3's state of charge during the day on the i3 app, and, during a normal working day at *TopGear*, it will reach 100 per cent of its maximum charge from a regular 12v socket. Simple, effective, economic – all very i3.



i3 explores a new kind of cabin design

GOOD STUFF

▲ Having delved deeper into the iDrive, the i3 now tells me the weather forecast for the next three days alongside the usual navigation screen

▲ Three months in, and the i3 continues to convert even the most sceptical in the office

BAD STUFF

▼ The suicide doors look good and give great access to the rear seats for the kids when they're open. But having to open the front doors to release the rears and get into the back of the car is becoming boring







REPORT 4

Ford Kuga

Titanium X → Total mileage **8873** → MPG this month **36.5** →
Why it's here **Is this the ideal mix of off-road and on-road capability?** ESTHER NEVE

After our experiment in towing capability, the Kuga has earned a rest. A break by the seaside. A weekend in sunny Suffolk. Where there happen to be not just pleasantly quiet roads, but also a small cluster of green lanes... like the one you see above. Nothing tricky for the Ford, but certainly more than you'd be keen to tackle in a family hatch or executive saloon.

For many, this is part of the appeal of running an SUV – the ability to increase the adventure of even a simple drive by heading off the tarmac and exploring previously unknown routes. It's certainly part of the appeal for me. As handy as it is to own a four-wheel-drive SUV when the odd emergency occurs (when it snows or floods or during other climatic aberrations), the everyday

> "The everyday opportunity to get off the beaten track is very appealing. If only to escape from other road users..."

opportunity to get off the beaten track is very appealing. If only to escape other road users – I'm looking at you, Audi drivers...

In other Kuga news this month, I am officially requesting that Ford offer an alternative to the turquoise needles on the clocks. They just do not go with the Ginger Ale paintwork. Yes, great with white or blue, but not with the greeny/bronzey colour that I have chosen. It can't be difficult to offer a less blue alternative. Maybe green. Or bronze. Or even grey.



Three across the back and plenty of room meant this was an ideal first family car

GOODBYE: CITROEN C4 PICASSO

Inner space

e-HDi 115 Airdream Exclusive+ | **1560cc 4cyl, FWD, 114bhp, 199lb ft** | **70.6mpg, 105g/km CO_2** | **0–62mph in 11.8secs, 117mph** | **1298kg**
£23,995/£27,540 ⟶ Total mileage **6190** ⟶ MPG this month **45.8** ⟶ Why it's here **What is our Family Car of the Year like to live with?** **OWEN NORRIS**

"What must've happened to force you to buy one of *them*?" I used to think about MPV owners. I now know: children. I can now see the sense in these van-like vehicles. Everything about the C4 Picasso I've been running for the last six months is designed to make family transportation easier. The most useful feature for me was the three-across-the-back sliding seating arrangement. This made life easier on motorway journeys, as it meant Mum could sit in-between the kids and tend to them, meaning we didn't have to stop. It's invaluable. Access to the rear is very easy, thanks to big doors, but that can be a pain in tight car parking spaces when you end up trying to post a child through the opening. It has an amazing turning circle for a car this size, making it very easy to park.

The cynical amongst us will bring up the old question of French car reliability, but I found it very solid, apart from the infotainment system. Every now and again, the whole system would crash for no reason, which would mean it would take a few minutes to restart. No biggie.

One of the things that people said after driving it is the amount of warning sounds there are. There is a different boing or ping for practically everything, and it did get on my nerves after a while. Although the seatbelt-tugging lane departure warning system is very good, the cruise control did scare me once by not detecting a vehicle in front.

In this top spec, there were some nice things to have, massaging front seats being a favourite.



GOOD STUFF

- ▲ Ease of access to rear seats makes manoeuvring small people in and out easy
- ▲ Beats its rivals in the school-gates style contest
- ▲ Excellent amount of equipment as standard
- ▲ More storage bins than you'll ever find use for

BAD STUFF

- ▼ Touchscreen controls soon became annoying
- ▼ More beeps and bongs than a Kraftwerk concert
- ▼ Small diesel engine requires hard working of the notchy gearbox to get about
- ▼ Too much glass turns the C4 into a summer sweatbox



IN DETAIL
Having no controls for essential things such as heating means wild stabbing at the dash is normal

There were things I could have done without, though. The acres of glass do mean it feels airy in here but also make the car very hot, and I found myself leaving the sunroof blind closed most of the time. And the passenger ottoman-style footrest just got in the way.

Depending on how many kids you have, you may decide you need the Grand seven-seater variant of the C4. The only time I needed that extra space was when packing for longer trips away and I had stuff piled up in the passenger footwell and seat, but for two kids the five-seater is fine. It's deceptively roomy inside.

If you value the driving experience, I would say the C4 isn't the car for you. The small 114bhp diesel engine is pretty economical and has decent torque but struggles with the weight – much gear throwing is required to make decent progress. The gearbox is a bit notchy too, and combined with awkward clutch and throttle travel, it can make it hard when you're trying for a swift first-to-second gearshift.

So if you must grow up and get an MPV, I would definitely recommend the C4. As a new father, it was exactly the car I needed at this point: spacious and well designed. Let's hope that I won't need to upgrade to the seven-seater soon...

TopGear RS6 meets
The Law. In a good way



REPORT 4: AUDI RS6 AVANT

Law and order

RS6 Avant 3993cc, V8 twin-turbo petrol, 4WD, 552bhp, 516lb ft 28.8mpg, 229g/km CO_2
0–62mph in 3.9secs, 174mph 1935kg £76,875/£91,205 ⟶ Total mileage **6817** ⟶
MPG this month **19.7** ⟶ Why it's here **Is this the ultimate all-weather family supercar?** OLLIE MARRIAGE

Yes, that is a policeman standing next to the Audi RS6. And no, I'm not on the receiving end of a stern talking to. An office conversation occurred during which someone expressed the opinion that the RS6 would surely be the police's dream pursuit vehicle. Surely it has everything they look for, we mused: power, speed, space, traction. And a round steering wheel to make shuffling all the easier.

So off I went to find out what the Metropolitan Police make of the fastest-booted Audi of all. Sergeant Jim Widdicks is the instructor's instructor at the Met Police's driver training centre at Hendon in North London. He's responsible for such stuff as anti-hijack driving and TPC – Tactical Pursuit and Containment.

We go for a drive. The site is being redeveloped so the skid pad is now a car park and the 'track' is currently no more than an access road running parallel to the Northern tube line. Still, there's enough room to get up to 100mph. "Whoah... wow. Wow" is Sergeant Jim's initial impression. "We've seen a ton here on quick bikes, but nothing with four wheels. Wow."

We romp up and down a few more times. With the gearbox in Sport and the suspension and engine settings maximised, the Audi demonstrates its core talents brilliantly – no hint of traction loss, just instant, almost lag-free force, snappy gearshifts and roaring exhaust. It's what I love best about it. And what Sergeant Jim seems to love best about it as well, but he think it's "too quick to have on the fleet". This surprises me. "We could only let the most highly trained and skilled drivers out in it, and there's an argument that once you're going so fast – say 140 to 150mph – should you be in that pursuit at all?" That, I guess, is when you let a helicopter take over.

"I'm not sure about the brakes, though. The pedal's got a bit long and soft". Ah yes, he has spotted the RS6's Achilles' heel – cars have failed to earn a place on the police's fleet due to weak brakes. "Much as I'd love it, the best role for it would be as a deterrent. It looks so mean."


Sgt Widdicks – not a fan of the Audi's brakes

GOOD STUFF

▲ The RS6 is an excellent sales assistant. Web editor Chris borrowed it for a car boot and said: "People came up to look at it and ended up buying a CD while they were there"

▲ I always give the RS6 a second glance. This might have something to do with the point opposite

BAD STUFF

▼ Been trying it on super unleaded, but it doesn't seem to have made a discernible difference. Now reverting to 95 to save cash

▼ Is the key fob battery running flat? It seems to have a shorter range at the moment and often needs a firm second press




REPORT 3

VW Golf GTI

GTI PP ⟶ Total mileage **1954** ⟶
MPG this month **31.8** ⟶ Why it's here **Is the Golf GTI the car to end all car arguments?**
PIERS WARD

Golf GTI – a hot hatch in the truest sense of the phrase, or a warmed-over family runabout that's a bit too civilised to deserve the title? Discuss.

The more time I spend in the Golf, the more I'm convinced it deserves the hallowed badge, but people need to realise that the GTI comes with a healthy dose of everyday usability that makes it more appealing as an annual 20,000-miler than any of the more manic rivals. For proof, look no further than the adaptive cruise control – the ultimate lazy-boy gadget, a button that allows you to waft along without even touching any of the pedals. And *standard fit* on the GTI.

It shouldn't fit in with a hot-hatch ethos, but it's a tribute to how bipolar the Golf is that it doesn't jar. Plus, it's great for long motorway journeys. Previously, I thought adaptive cruise was a real pain, because the

> "If you relax into the journey, become a bit more Zen, cruise control is a much easier way to negotiate the motorway grind"

system leaves safe gaps to the cars in front that are constantly filled by impatient drivers. You effectively feel like you're going backwards. But if you relax into the journey, become a bit more Zen, it's a much easier way to negotiate the motorway grind.

And to prove that Volkswagen really does think of everything, the GTI not only comes with a clutch foot rest, but also an accelerator foot rest. Honestly, a long motorway journey couldn't be more relaxing. There's not many hot hatches you could say that about.



HELLO: INFINITI Q50

Join the Q

Hybrid AWD 3498cc, V6, AWD, 359bhp, 403lb ft 41.5mpg, 159g/km CO_2 0–62mph in 5.4secs, 155mph 1901kg £41,640/ £47,520 ⟶ Total mileage 1245 ⟶ MPG this month 25.2 ⟶ Why it's here Has Infiniti finally made a posh hybrid to rival Lexus' efforts? ANDY FRANKLIN

The Infiniti Q50S hybrid AWD has arrived in the *TopGear* garage this month, and it's fully loaded. And I do mean fully. So much stuff, in fact, that there's not enough space to tell you all about it without resorting to a terribly tedious and horrifically extensive list.

So we'll go for the highlights: as standard, it comes with active lane control, sports suspension, adaptive steering, regenerative braking, 19-inch triple spoke alloys, electric everything, Scratch Shield paint, dual touchscreens, Infiniti InTouch (which I'll come to later), an 'Infiniti drive mode selector', heated seats... and a noise that warns pedestrians that they're about to be run over when in silent assassin electric mode. In this 'basic' spec, it weighs in at £41,640. Reasonable value.

We opted for the Multimedia pack for £2,760, which includes upgraded satnav, Bose stereo (mega) and DAB radio; the Visibility pack 2 for £1,040, which delivers adaptive headlights, smart beam and Around View Monitor (a 360-degree view around the car when parking); and finally, the Safety Shield pack at £2,080, which includes cruise, lane-departure, blind-spot warning, predictive forward-collision warning, distance control and back-up collision intervention. Which is a lot of warnings that bring our car to a total of £47,520.

That's plenty to get your head around, so I was given a full technical briefing when I picked it up – if you buy a Q50, you should do the same.



GOOD STUFF

- ▲ The amount of tech and gadgets available, especially the on-board app computer
- ▲ Easy to drive, and the ride is exceptionally comfortable
- ▲ It's rapid for a hybrid – great for overtaking - and also good at cruising about in whispery electric mode

BAD STUFF

- ▼ The rear end looks a little squashed and frumpy, and there isn't much space in the boot. We shall see...
- ▼ Some of the myriad safety features might get annoying after a while
- ▼ Interior feels like we may have made a grey mistake

IN DETAIL



InTouch system allows you to browse the web or check your emails while in the car

Now, one of the Q50's best features is the Infiniti InTouch system which is basically like a massive iPhone in your car. Once your phone is connected, you can do all the usual multimedia stuff like browse the internet, use apps, check your emails and even – shock, horror – make calls. So far, it's great – more to come on that in a later report. And, generally, my first impressions of the Q50S are very positive. Yes, it feels a little cramped for a family of four, especially with the batteries taking up a significant chunk of boot, and, yes, it feels a little heavy at 1,900-odd kg, but it's surprisingly rapid: the 3.6-litre V6 and just under 360bhp delivering 62mph in 5.4 seconds and a 155mph top speed. It's also been very comfy so far, and I'm hoping I can get near the officially quoted 41.5mpg figure. In fact, the speed/efficiency trade-off is incredibly attractive, unlike, unfortunately, the rest of it, because I'm not completely convinced by the looks.

While I think the front at least looks characterful, the rear is just a bit so-so. We also opted for the Moonlight White paint matched with the Graphite Shadow interior, which does look a little bit... vanilla. We'll see if it grows on us. Bring on the next six months!



REPORT 3: RENAULT CAPTUR

Get appy

Personnaliser mon aquarium

Dynamique S MediaNav ENERGY TCe 90 898cc, 3cyl petrol, FWD, 90bhp, 99lb ft 56.5mpg, 115g/km CO_2 0–62mph in 13.0secs, 106mph 1089kg £16,495/£18,050 ⟶ Total mileage **1711** ⟶ MPG this month **52.4** ⟶ Why it's here **Can a jacked-up Clio work as a family car?** SIMON CARRINGTON

Our range-topping Captur Dynamique S comes with a whole host of extras which bump up the price of the Renault to more than £18,000.

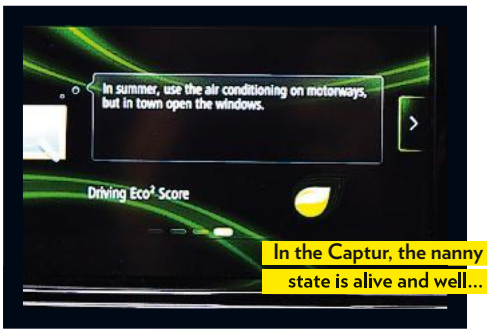
Most of it is very useful stuff (such as parking sensors and Bluetooth), some of it is purely cosmetic (like contrasting roof colours and exterior gloss pack) and then there is the multimedia system or, as Renault calls it, the "Renault MediaNav integrated on-board multimedia system", which incorporates R-Link, a bespoke system that Renault calls a "tactile, integrated, connected tablet".

Lots of cars on the market will now tell you how well you're driving; what I like about the R-Link system is that it also tells you how badly you're driving and what you can do to improve. So, I can check the on-board system and know that my eco driving score is 69 out of 100, and it tells me that I should not leave the engine idling, nor should I use the aircon in town (open the windows instead), and even that I should not leave unnecessary objects in the car as that adds weight, which is bad for my eco score.

I am very good on acceleration, very steady (nine out of 10) according to the computer; I could do better on anticipation (take foot off accelerator 300 yards from a red light, according to the advice); and I'm terrible on gearchanges, just one out of 10. Apparently, I must change gears quicker.

I can check the outside air quality (fascinating reading in London), check the fuel prices of the nearest petrol stations, look for local hotels, sync with my calendar and Google tasks and download a calculator. All very useful stuff.

Renault also has a built-in app store, and one free app really stands out from the pack and demands to be downloaded. The Aquarium app is exactly what is sounds like – you can download some digital fish and seaweed to convert the seven-inch screen into, yes, you guessed it... a mobile aquarium.



In the Captur, the nanny state is alive and well...

GOOD STUFF

▲ Inbuilt speed camera detector stops me getting caught out

▲ Not that I've had to utilise this, but you get a comprehensive ownership package including a four-year warranty, four years' servicing and four years' roadside cover

BAD STUFF

▼ Inbuilt speed camera detector means constant barrage of beeping in London – utterly infuriating

▼ It is impossible to fit three in the back, even kids

▼ I keep forgetting that I'm actually driving a small car with a small fuel tank... I'm constantly filling it up





REPORT 4

Hyundai i20

1.2 Classic 3dr ⟶ Total mileage **1250** ⟶ MPG this month **N/A** ⟶ Why it's here **Can a basic supermini live a double life?** OLLIE MARRIAGE

Reiger dampers. It's not just that they have purple remote reservoirs (although any damper with a remote reservoir is automatically cooler), no, what I particularly like about them is that they're the best.

Almost every WRC team – including, naturally enough, Hyundai – uses them. At the Dakar Rally they underpin everything from 150kg bikes to trucks weighing 60 times more. And now four of them (rough cost: a bit more than half what this entire i20 cost new) are underpinning our car. Which ought to make the suspension indestructible. I'm hoping they'll have a similar effect on the rest of the car, too.

As you can see the car still isn't finished, though it is now on the home straight. It could be quite a long straight, since it's a matter of putting everything back together and making sure it works. If I know

> "At the Dakar Rally, Reiger dampers underpin everything from 150kg bikes to trucks weighing 60 times more"

anything about car preparation, it's that this bit often takes the longest. Oh, and it has to be painted, too. We're getting our designers to cook us up something for that.

But it's coming together, and that means my thoughts are turning to what we're going to do with the i20 when it has become a pukka rally car (albeit with only 83bhp and weighed down by a WRC bodykit). To that end, I have recently joined my local car club. You've got to start somewhere.

There are 16 – count 'em – ways of arranging the bootfloor



HELLO: NISSAN QASHQAI

Cash cow

Acenta Premium 1.6dCi 1598cc, 4cyl diesel, FWD, 128bhp, 236lb ft 64.2mpg, 115g/km CO_2 0–62mph in 9.9secs, 118mph 1535kg £ **£24,430/£24,430** → Total mileage **2550** → MPG this month **42.2** → Why it's here **Can you really get a true 4x4/SUV experience for hatchback money?** ADAM WADDELL

The Qashqai is Nissan's most successful vehicle ever, with over 1m sold since its launch seven years ago. It's also the seventh biggest selling car in the UK, and it's easy to understand why when the only models currently outselling the Nissan are hatches – Focuses, Corsas, Golfs and the like. This country has been obsessed with SUVs for the past couple of decades, but they aren't cheap. An entry-level Ford Kuga will set you back £21k, the Honda CR-V starts at £22k, and if you want a true off-roader, you won't find a Freelander for less than £24k. The Qashqai, on the other hand, starts at just £17,995. That'll only get you a pretty basic spec and a measly 1.2-litre engine, but for many that won't matter – the point is that for not much more than the price of a Focus, you too can enjoy the school-gates credibility of owning an SUV and the lofty driving position that usually only comes with more expensive cars.

Our long-term test car comes in Acenta Premium spec, with an OTR price of £24,430. That's pretty good value, as it includes 17-inch alloys, parking camera and a full-length panoramic glass roof among other treats, although I struggle with any trim level that claims to be 'premium' when leather isn't even an option. I'd be inclined to go for the Tekna-level Qashqai, which for £2k more adds leather and the 19-inch Ibiscus alloys rather than the dreary 17s on our car. Yes, you're pushing the price up, but those wheels transform its looks.

So, that's the spec dealt with – but is the Qashqai any good? *WhatCar?* magazine named it its 2014 Car of the Year, so I was expecting great things, but first impressions are that it's good rather than great. The 1.6-litre diesel engine is just a little on the agricultural side around town, and in this day and age, one expects diesel-powered cars to be more refined than this. It's fine on the open road, though, and the 1.5 unit is apparently much smoother and quieter. That all said, it's proving nicely economical, as I've been getting 42mpg in the real world – not remotely close to the manufacturer's claimed 64 mpg, but still pretty good since a fair few of my miles have been in London.

The cabin is comfortable, light and airy, particularly with that panoramic roof, and the boot has a reasonable 430 litres of capacity. That's 160 litres fewer than the Honda CR-V, but the Nissan has the advantage of clever movable floor panels which the company claims allow you to configure the boot in no fewer than 16 different ways.

The Qashqai is not a car to get revved up about, but I suspect the 17,000 Brits who bought one in the first four months of this year did so because it offers SUV styling and practicality for hatchback money, not to mention a genuine feeling of quality. Makes a lot of sense, really.

IN DETAIL

Panoramic roof really lightens the whole cabin. Just wish you could open the bloody thing...



GOOD STUFF

▲ Great value – all the benefits of an SUV for hatchback money. Must get round to driving a Kia Sportage by way of comparison, though

▲ Clever boot layout with many different configuration options. More on that next month

BAD STUFF

▼ Never skimp when it comes to wheels. This car looks *so* much more purposeful when sat on a nice set of 19s

▼ 1.6-litre diesel is just a tiny bit noisy around town but is fine when you are moving. The 1.5 might be a better bet, though



REPORT 4: VOLVO V60

That's entertainment!

SE Nav 1969cc 4cyl turbodiesel, FWD, 181bhp, 295lb ft 74.3mpg, 99g/km CO_2
0–62mph in 7.6secs, 140mph 1632kg £30,595/£38,555 → Total mileage **4050** →
MPG this month **47.0** → Why it's here **Will Volvo's engine plan reinvigorate the company?** PAUL HORRELL

As hilariously stereotypical liberal intellectual parents, my wife and I resolved from the word go that our kid would have to pass long road trips without any form of screen time. We'd be playing I spy and singing in rounds and scoring a record innings in pub-sign cricket. Or something. Our little darling certainly wasn't going to turn into a square-eyed zombie with a stunted concentration span.

But determining in the abstract your child-rearing principles is a different business from what you end up doing when faced with the screaming mini-human reality. Every motorway trip turned into an argument about when we'd next be stopping at a service station to placate her with the sugary, salty snacks we'd once ordained she'd never be getting.

Then came the V60, and its rear-passenger entertainment system. Each front head restraint has a screen on the back. These tilt to reveal DVD drives, SD slots, USB sockets, iDevice connectors and gaming inputs. There are two sets of quality cordless headphones. Each rear passenger can watch and hear their own entertainment, or one source can feed both. Even though they're touchscreens, there's a remote control for good measure. It's an accessory not an option, but it's beautifully integrated, with no trailing wires, and it starts and stops with the car's ignition.

Resigned that once we'd let the child try it, there'd be no going back, I strapped her in and inserted a DVD of *The Jungle Book*. Working my way through the slow-reacting option screens felt interminable, especially with my back being jabbed by an impatient little finger. But we now travel in bliss. Everyone in the car. At last it's grown-up conversation for the grown-ups, or Radio 4 or my iPod. The nipper meanwhile is King of the Swingers.

To our surprise, her concentration span lasts the whole movie. She's mastered the touchscreen that defeated me, testifying to its stimulation of her non-verbal reasoning and fine motor skills.

Only trouble is, it's £1,495. If it were my money, I'd not have ticked the box. I'd be covering my thrift by claiming it was all for our parental principles.



Entertainment à la Volvo V60

GOOD STUFF

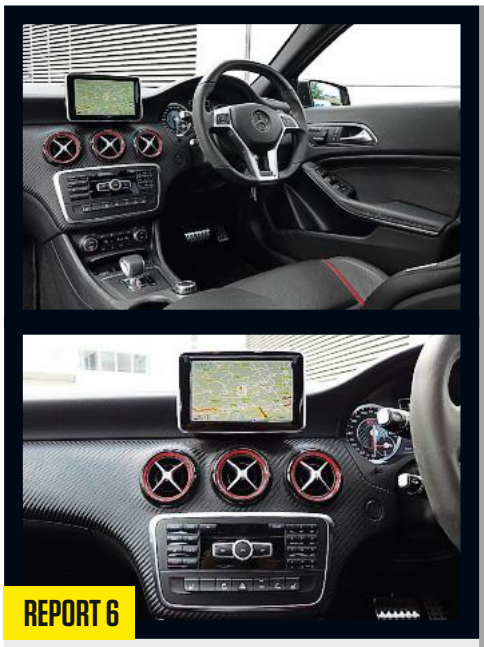
▲ Rear entertainment accessory is beautifully integrated and proper quality

▲ I'm wondering how many Polestars Volvo'll sell. And if it'll have any effect on tizzing up the range – no one in the UK buys 6cyl BMWs, but 320d buyers feel better about their cars because the 335i exists

BAD STUFF

▼ That rear-screen excellence costs, big time. The £1,495 price is an accessory so not included in the with-options price. To be clear: base V60 D4 SE Nav is £30,595, with options it's £38,555, and with options and rear entertainment it's 50 quid beyond £40k





REPORT 6

Mercedes A45 AMG

4MATIC → Total mileage **15,624**
→ MPG this month **29.2** →
Why it's here **Can AMG do 4WD and a four-cylinder turbo?** SAM PHILIP

Of the A45's many points of contention, the one that generates the most heat from TopGear.com's never-tight-lipped online community is, surprisingly, its interior. Specifically that nav/infotainment screen. The word "afterthought" crops up frequently. As does the phrase: "Why doesn't it fold away?"

The floating screen features on all A-Classes, as well as the related B-Class and GLA. There's a similar arrangement on the new C-Class, too. All generate similar online vitriol. This vitriol doesn't come from A, B or GLA owners, but from those who have only sampled Merc's innards through a computer screen. Because I guarantee you, spend a few months in the A45, and you'll be singing its praises, for the A's infowhatsit set-up is excellent. The COMAND wheel, mounted where the handbrake ought to be, is many times more intuitive and precise than the current wave of touchscreens.

> "Spend a few months in the A45, and you'll be singing its praises, for the A's infowhatsit set-up is utterly excellent"

As for the screen itself, no, it might not look quite so elegant as a neatly integrated display, but come on, function over form, people. The A's six-inch display is brilliantly crisp and perfectly placed: easy to glance at, not so intrusive as to distract you from the road ahead.

All of which might sound so simple as not to require stating, but too many modern cars get their info-stuff very wrong indeed. There's much to gripe about with the A45, but trust me, its 'stuck-on' screen isn't one.

James Anderson

England's No.1 wicket taker of all time*

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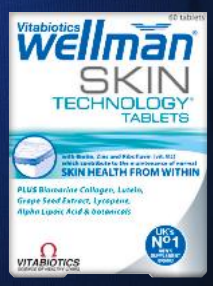
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*England's all time highest international wicket-taker, 343 test wickets correct at 23 May 2014. Source: www.jamesanderson613.com ** UK's No1 men's supplement brand. †(IRI value data. 52 w/e 22nd Feb 2014).

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How it works

VOLKSWAGEN



Clarkson on Volkswagen:
"Duller than James explaining torque, but the Golf is still what you recommend to anyone who asks."

GOLF



The best done better than ever. You need no other hatchback. So don't waste your time looking.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 ACT GT 5d	£23,650	8.4	131	140	184	58.9	112	8/10
2.0 GTI 5d	£26,985	6.5	153	220	258	47.1	139	8/10
2.0 TDI GT 3d	£23,500	8.6	134	150	236	68.9	106	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4260x1800x1450, 50-litre fuel tank, 380/1270-litre boot, 12 engines, 6 trims, 29 models in total.

JC SPEAKS Clarkson's view

SOME WORDS... ...about the car

YELLOW BAR Denotes the TG Favourites

FUEL ECONOMY Less is, um, more

MODEL CHOICE Just the ones that count

CRASH TESTING You want five stars here

BOOT VOLUME Two numbers? Seats up/down

NOT EVERY ENGINE is available with every trim!

NEW IN: Ferrari California

P167



	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
3.8 V8 T	£154,490	3.6	196	560	556	26.9	250	8/10

NEW IN: Nissan X-Trail

P174



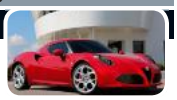
	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 dCi Visia	£22,995	10.5	117	130	236	57.6	129	8/10

ALFA ROMEO



Clarkson on Alfa Romeo:
"You can't be a proper petrolhead until you've owned an Alfa. Other ways of breaking down are available."

4C



Lotus by Alfa, with the odd Alfa foible to boot. But when a car's this pretty, light and engaging, you just want one.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.7T	£45,000	4.5	160	240	258	41.5	157	7/10

Euro NCAP N/A, LxWxH in mm: 3989x1864x1183, 40-litre fuel tank, 110-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

MITO



Alfa's small car is actually quite big, except on the inside. Yes, it's the Mini all over again, but worse to drive.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 170 QV	£19,000	7.5	136	172	185	47.1	139	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4060x1820x1540, 45-litre fuel tank, 270/950-litre boot, 5 engines, 4 trims, 11 models in total.

GIULIETTA



Another pizza slice from Fiat's Taste The Difference range. It's no Golf, which is why you want it, and also why you don't.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 170 D'tive	£20,985	7.6	135	170	170	49.6	131	6/10
2.0 JTDM-2	£21,720	8.8	130	150	280	67.3	110	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4350x1800x1460, 60-litre fuel tank, 450-litre boot, 5 engines, 4 trims, 11 models in total.

ARIEL



Clarkson on Ariel:
"My face still hasn't recovered from the last time I drove an Atom. An F15 fighter is less extreme."

ATOM



The single most insane car on sale. Even the regular version will redefine your sense of what's possible in a car.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 245	£32,255	3.2	141	245	154	N/A	N/A	9/10
2.0 SC 310	£37,470	2.7	155	310	236	N/A	N/A	9/10

Euro NCAP N/A, LxWxH in mm: 3410x1800x1200, 42-litre fuel tank, N/A-litre boot, 2 engines, 1 trim, 2 models in total.

ASTON MARTIN



Clarkson on Aston Martin:
"The last word in icy coolness. Even more so now that awful Cygnet has been scrapped."

VANTAGE



The car that took on the 911. And lost. But it's an Aston, which means brogues to the Porsche's two-a-penny trainers.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
4.7 V8 430 S	£94,995	4.5	189	430	361	21.9	299	8/10
6.0 V12 S	£138,000	3.7	205	573	458	17.2	388	9/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4380x1870x1260, 80-litre fuel tank, 300-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 6 models in total.

DB9



Actually a blend of DB9 and now-defunct Virage. Not without charm, but, really Aston, it's time for some new ideas.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
DB9 6.0 517	£135,527	4.6	183	517	457	19.8	333	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4710x1880x1270, 80-litre fuel tank, 175-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 2 models in total.

VANQUISH



Overhauled DBS is another evolutionary step from Aston and is likely to struggle to broaden the customer base.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
V12 Coupe	£189,995	4.1	183	573	457	19.6	335	8/10
V12 Volante	£201,995	4.1	183	573	457	19.6	335	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4720x1910x1280, 78-litre fuel tank, 368-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 2 models in total.

RAPIDE S



Aston has ensured the latest Rapide is, err, rapid-er by giving it the engine from the latest Vanquish. Better than ever.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
Rapide 6.0 V12	£144,950	4.9	190	558	458	19.9	332	8/10

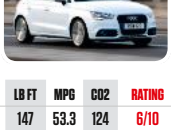
Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 5020x1930x1360, 90-litre fuel tank, 317/886-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

AUDI



Clarkson on Audi:
"Stoutly made, slightly boring cars that are becoming the refuge of the tailgating muppet."

A1

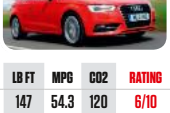


Essentially a posh Fabia, the A1 is prince to Skoda's pauper. Or maybe the emperor's new clothes. Either way, it's not £20k good.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 TFSI Sport	£16,365	8.9	126	122	147	53.3	124	6/10
S1	£24,905	5.8	155	231	272	40.3	162	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3950x1740x1410, 45-litre fuel tank, 270/920-litre boot, 6 engines, 6 trims, 37 models in total.

A3



New A3, old looks. But new bits underneath and a really rather lovely cabin. Slight naffness standard with every model.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 TFSI Sport	£20,805	9.3	126	122	147	54.3	120	6/10
S3	£30,645	5.2	155	300	280	40.4	162	7/10
2.0 TDI Sport	£23,105	8.6	134	150	236	68.9	106	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4230x1770x1420, 45-litre fuel tank, 365/1,100-litre boot, 6 engines, 6 trims, 19 models in total.

DATA IN NUMBERS: AUDI S3 X3

- → **Audi S3 hatch** £30,645, 0-62mph 5.2secs
- → **Audi S3 Sportback** £31,265, 0-62mph 5.3secs
- → **Audi S3 Saloon** £33,245, 0-62mph 5.3secs

A4



Competence is overrated. And here's the proof. Yep, the A4 has all the quality and image you crave, but it's a bit... cold.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.8 TFSI 170 SE	£26,000	8.1	143	170	236	49.6	134	6/10
3.0 TFSI 333 S4	£39,310	5.0	155	333	324	34.9	190	6/10
RS 4 Avant	£56,545	4.7	155	450	317	26.4	249	7/10
2.0 TDI ultra	£29,320	8.3	140	163	293	67.3	109	6/10
3.0 TDI q' Av'	£39,250	6.1	155	245	368	47.9	154	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4700x1830x1420, 65-litre fuel tank, 480/962-litre boot, 11 engines, 4 trims, 56 models in total.

DATA IN NUMBERS: GO ULTRA LOW

- → **A4 2.0 TDI 163 ultra** 0-62mph 8.3secs, 67.3mpg
- → **A4 2.0 TDI 177** 0-62mph 8.2secs, 61.4mpg

A5



An artful lesson in understatement, Audi's A5 does desirable without the flash. Unless you spec it in white with 20s. Fool.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 TFSI q' SE	£33,910	6.4	155	225	258	42.8	152	7/10
3.0 TFSI 333 S5	£43,665	4.9	155	333	324	34.9	190	7/10
3.0 TDI quattro	£41,185	5.8	155	245	358	49.6	149	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4630x1860x1370, 65-litre fuel tank, 455/829-litre boot, 8 engines, 5 trims, 45 models in total.

A6



Audi's photocopier styling department has pulled another one out the bag. Still not up to 5-Series standards.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
RS 6	£77,005	3.9	155	560	516	28.8	229	8/10
2.0 TDI ultra	£30,985	8.4	144	190	280	62.8	117	6/10
3.0 BiTDI SE Av'	£46,675	5.3	155	313	479	44.8	166	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4910x1870x1460, 65-litre fuel tank, 535/1680-litre boot, 8 engines, 6 trims, 23 models in total.

A7



Audi's niche-busting continues. The A7 is basically an A8 hatch, with the added suggestion that you might drive yourself.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
RS 7	£83,515	3.9	155	560	516	28.8	229	7/10
3.0 TDI BiTDI	£52,660	5.3	155	313	479	44.8	166	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4970x1920x1420, 65-litre fuel tank, 535/1390-litre boot, 5 engines, 4 trims, 12 models in total.

A8



Will the A8 ever escape the S-Class's shadow? Probably not, but then on this evidence, it doesn't deserve to.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
S8	£79,915	4.1	155	520	479	29.4	225	6/10
4.2 TDI SE Exec	£72,015	4.7	155	325	626	38.2	194	6/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 5135/5270x1949x1460, 90-litre fuel tank, 520-litre boot, 5 engines, 6 trims, 17 models in total.

TT



Way more of a sports car than before, the latest TT is a fine machine, albeit a ubiquitous one. Secondhand Cayman, anyone?

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 TFSI Sport	£27,700	6.1	152	211	206	42.8	154	7/10
2.5T 360 RS Plus	£49,385	4.3	174	360	342	33.2	209	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4180x1840x1350, 55-litre fuel tank, 290/700-litre boot, 5 engines, 4 trims, 23 models in total.

R8



Recently revised, still effortlessly easy to drive, still better than a 911. Have a V8, it's better than the V10. Promise.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
4.2 V8 Spyder	£102,385	4.8	187	430	317	19.6	337	9/10
5.2 550 V10 Plus	£126,835	3.8	198	550	398	19.0	346	9/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4430x1900x1240, 90-litre fuel tank, 100-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 5 models in total.

DATA IN NUMBERS: CLOCK WATCHING

- → **Audi R8 4.2 V8 Spyder 0-62mph** 4.8secs
- → **BMW Z4 sDrive35iS** 4.8secs
- → **Porsche Macan Turbo** 4.8secs
- → **Rolls-Royce Ghost EWB** 4.8secs

Q5

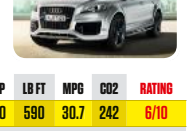


Audi's 'small' SUV is only small because the Q7 is the size of sub-Saharan Africa. It's small inside though, if that helps.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
SQ5	£44,715	5.1	155	313	479	41.5	179	6/10
2.0 TDI q' SE	£32,610	9.0	127	177	258	47.9	154	5/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4630x1880x1650, 75-litre fuel tank, 540/1560-litre boot, 6 engines, 3 trims, 16 models in total.

Q7



A car that addresses all the problems of our socio-economic and environmental malaise by ignoring them outright.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
4.2 TDI q' S line	£56,620	6.4	150	340	590	30.7	242	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 5090x1980x1730, 100-litre fuel tank, 775/2035-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 7 models in total.

BAC



Clarkson on BAC:
"BAC is from Cheshire so I expected an awful onyx car with fake pillars. I was wrong. It's sensational."

MONO



Some say it's too extreme. All we know is that Stig once voted it his car of the year. And that some people are fools.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.3 280	£80,000	2.8	170	280	206	N/A	N/A	9/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 3952x1800x1110, 35-litre fuel tank, NA-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.



Official fuel consumption figures for the Audi A4 ultra SE Technik 2.0 TDI 163PS 6-speed manual in mpg (l/100km): Urban 56.5 (5.0), Extra Urban 74.3 (3.8), Combined 67.3 (4.2). CO_2 manual. Contract hire offer based on 3 years, 10,000 miles per annum. Initial rental of £1,734.00 followed by 35 monthly rentals of £289.00. Excess mileage charge is 6.0p per mile. All figures shown exclude VAT. Further charges to availability). Offer may be varied or withdrawn at any time. Specification correct at time of publication. Prices quoted and examples shown are correct at time of publication (June 2014). Terms and conditions apply. Audi Finance,

TOPGEAR TOP FIVE

HYBRIDS & EVS

1 BMW i3



Price £30,680
Specs 170bhp, 184lb ft, 0-62mph 7.2secs, VMax 93mph, 470mpg (REx), CO2 0g/km (REx 13g/km)

The future has arrived, and we love it. BMW has plainly invested many billions here and the whole car feels exciting and revolutionary

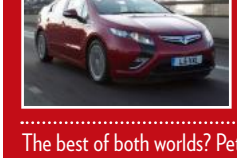
2 BMW i8



Price £99,845
Specs 367bhp, 236lb ft, 0-62mph 4.4secs, VMax 155mph, 113mpg, CO2 59g/km

A hybrid supercar? Yes, please. The tech may not work quite as brilliantly here as in the i3, but BMW has stolen a march on its rivals

3 VAUXHALL AMPERA



Price £33,750
Specs 150bhp, 272lb ft, 0-62mph 8.7secs, VMax 99mph, 235mpg, CO2 27g/km

The best of both worlds? Petrol-electric range extender solves traditional EV limitations and offers emissions-free motoring around town. Pricey, mind

4 CHEVROLET VOLT



Price £35,255
Specs 150bhp, 272lb ft, 0-62mph 8.7secs, VMax 99mph, 235mpg, CO2 27g/km

It's the range-extended Vauxhall Ampera by another name. Costs the same. Looks the same. Goes the same. Erm, which badge do you prefer?

5 NISSAN LEAF



Price £25,990
Specs 109bhp, 206lb ft, 0-62mph 11.9secs, VMax 90mph, n/a mpg, CO2 n/a g/km

All-electric hatch proves the era of battery-only motoring is getting closer, but limited range means this won't be your only family car... yet

BENTLEY

Clarkson on Bentley:
"The entire range seems to be getting more and more Cheshire. No surprise, since they're made there."

CONTINENTAL



Way better than the David Dickinson image would suggest, the Conti GT is a masterclass in modern British style.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
4.0 V8 S	£139,000	4.5	192	521	502	26.8	246	8/10
6.0 W12 GTC	£149,350	4.5	195	575	516	17.1	384	8/10
6.0 W12 Speed	£151,000	4.2	205	625	590	19.5	338	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4800x1920x1400, 90-litre fuel tank, 358-litre boot, 4 engines, 4 trims, 8 models in total.

MULSANNE



The replacement for the Arnage, and every bit as opulent and brilliant. If you can ignore the looks, this is brilliant.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
6.75 V8	£226,955	5.1	184	512	752	16.8	393	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 5570x1930x1530, 96-litre fuel tank, 443-litre boot, 1 engine, 2 trims, 2 models in total.

BMW

Clarkson on BMW:
"BMW is making some good cars at the moment. The cocks are all in Audis so you may get out of junctions."

i3

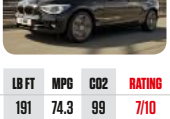


The future is here, its electric and we love it. The rest are now playing catch up. From a long way behind.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
i3 EV	£30,680	7.2	93	170	184	n/a	0	9/10
i3 EV REx	£33,830	7.9	93	170	184	470	13	9/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3999x11775x1578, 9-litre fuel tank(REx), 260-litre boot, 2 engines, 4 trims, 8 models in total.

1-SERIES

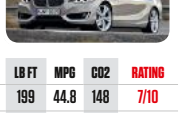


Perhaps the pick of the premium hatches right now, the 1-Series thrashes the opposition for driving. M135i is bargainous gem.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
116d ED 3d	£20,830	10.5	1241	116	191	74.3	99	7/10
120d SE 5d	£23,955	7.2	142	184	280	65.7	114	7/10
M135i M Spt 3d	£30,845	5.1	155	320	332	35.3	188	9/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4320x1770x1420, 50/52-litre fuel tank, 360/1200-litre boot, 11 engines, 6 trims, 54 models in total.

2-SERIES



2-Series follows BMW's new naming strategy, but is very much its own car. And a rather good one at that.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
220i SE	£25,040	7.0	146	184	199	44.8	148	7/10
220d SE	£25,865	7.2	143	184	280	58.9	125	7/10
M235i	£34,250	5.0	155	326	332	34.9	189	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a LxWxH in mm: 4432x1774x1418, 52-litre fuel tank, 390-litre boot, 5 engines, 5 trims, 14 models in total.

3-SERIES



Not only the benchmark small exec, but one of the best saloons of all. More versions are out now, all are excellent.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
328i Luxury	£32,265	5.9	155	245	258	44.1	149	8/10
335i M Sport	£38,250	5.5	155	306	295	35.7	186	8/10
320d ED Busi'	£30,175	8.0	143	163	280	68.9	109	9/10
320d xDrive SE	£30,275	7.5	145	184	280	60.1	124	9/10
330d xDrive M	£38,600	5.3	155	258	413	54.3	137	9/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4620x1810x1430, 57/60-litre fuel tank, 480-litre boot, 9 engines, 6 trims, 65 models in total.

4-SERIES



The name may have changed but the game's still the same. Smooth, genteel, refined and sport-ish.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
428i SE	£32,815	5.9	155	245	258	42.8	154	8/10
435i M Sport	£41,655	5.4	155	306	295	35.8	185	8/10
420d SE	£31,795	7.5	149	184	280	60.1	124	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a LxWxH in mm: 4638x1825x1362, 57/60-litre fuel tank, 445-litre boot, 6 engines, 5 trims, 31 models in total.

5-SERIES



Remains the best exec around thanks to cosseting cabin and ride. Big, smooth and brilliant - why d'you need a 7-Series?

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
528i SE	£35,455	6.2	155	245	258	42.8	154	6/10
535i Luxury	£44,555	5.7	155	306	295	37.7	174	7/10
M5	£73,940	4.3	155	560	501	28.5	232	8/10
520d SE	£31,965	8.1	145	184	280	62.8	119	8/10
530d Tour SE	£43,375	5.9	155	258	413	53.3	139	9/10
535d Lux	£48,515	5.3	155	313	464	52.3	143	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4907x1860x1460, 70-litre fuel tank, 520-litre boot, 13 engines, 6 trims, 62 models in total.

6-SERIES

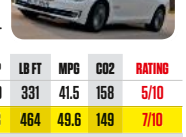


Unusually, BMW launched the 6 as a Cabrio first. Also unusually, the coupe's a bit... rubbish. GC 4dr is much better.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
650i SE Conv'	£75,085	5.0	155	407	442	26.4	249	5/10
M6 Coupe	£94,605	4.2	155	560	501	28.5	232	7/10
640d GC SE	£64,870	5.4	155	313	464	50.4	148	8/10
M6 GC	£98,125	4.2	155	560	501	28.5	232	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4890x1890x1370, 70-litre fuel tank, 460-litre boot, 4 engines, 3 trims, 19 models in total.

7-SERIES



Never as attractive a proposition as the Merc S-Class, the 7 is phenomenally good without anyone really giving a toss.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
ActiveHybrid 7	£71,470	5.7	155	320	331	41.5	158	5/10
740d SE	£65,460	5.5	155	313	464	49.6	149	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 5070/5210x1900x1480, 82-litre fuel tank, 500-litre boot, 6 engines, 4 trims, 20 models in total.

Up to 56.5 mpg
CO2 from 109g/km
From £289 per month*
Audi
Vorsprung durch Technik

The Audi A4 Saloon ultra SE Technik from £289 per month*. Business users only plus VAT at 20%. Precision-engineered value from Audi.

emissions: 109g/km. Standard EU Test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. *Plus VAT and initial rental. Business users only. Based on a new Audi A4 ultra SE Technik 2.0 TDI 163PS 6-speed may be payable when vehicle is returned. Indemnities may be required. Subject to status. Available to over 18s from participating Centres only for vehicles ordered before 30 June 2014 and delivered by 30 September 2014 (subject Freepost Audi Finance. audi.co.uk/offers

Z4



How does BMW get the Z4 wrong? It looks right, but doesn't drive right. The Boxster kicks it in the tenders.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
sDrive18i	£27,735	7.9	137	154	177	41.5	159	6/10
sDrive28i Std	£34,220	5.7	155	245	258	41.5	159	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4240x1790x1290, 61-litre fuel tank, 180/310-litre boot, 6 engines, 2 trims, 9 models in total.

i8

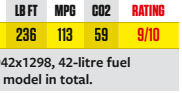


A supercar for spacemen. There's nothing else like it: this is a performance car that makes a Prius look like a gas-guzzler.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
i8	£99,845	4.4	155	367	236	113	59	9/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4689x1942x1298, 42-litre fuel tank, TBA-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

X3

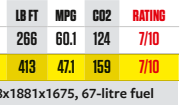


Far superior to the last one. So much so that you question the need for the X5. X3 is more socially acceptable, too.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
sDrive18d SE	£30,990	9.9	121	152	266	60.1	124	7/10
xDrive30d SE	£39,735	5.9	144	262	413	47.1	159	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4648x1881x1675, 67-litre fuel tank, 550/1600-litre boot, 4 engines, 3 trims, 8 models in total.

X4

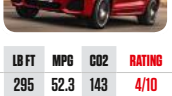


People with the hides of rhinos and a passion for obnoxiousness bought the X6, so we now have to suffer an X4. Joy.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
xDrive20d SE	£36,595	8.0	132	193	295	52.3	143	4/10
xDrive30d SE	£44,895	5.8	145	262	413	47.9	156	4/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4671x1915x1624, 67-litre fuel tank, 500/1400-litre boot, 3 engines, 2 trims, 6 models in total.

X5



Very good on tarmac, assuming you want to pummel it into submission. Just like with those building contracts, yeah?

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
M50d	£63,715	5.3	155	381	545	42.2	177	6/10
xDrive30d SE	£47,895	6.9	142	258	413	45.6	162	8/10

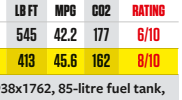
Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4896x1938x1762, 85-litre fuel tank, 650/1870-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 5 models in total.

BUGATTI



Clarkson on Bugatti:
"Bugatti made it possible for Captain Slow to hit 259mph. The Veyron itself is a minor miracle too."

VEYRON



The fastest, most expensive car in the world (until John Hennessey gets his act together). Veyron is the ultimate.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
W16 Grand Sp'	£1,139,985	2.5	252	1001	922	10.9	596	10/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4460x1990x1200, 100-litre fuel tank, n/a boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

TOPGEAR TOP FIVE

LUXURY CARS

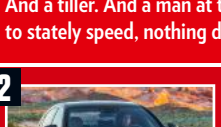
1 ROLLS ROYCE PHANTOM EWB



Price £357,875 **Specs** 453bhp, 531 lb ft, 0-62mph 6.1secs, VMax 149mph, 27.7mpg, CO_2 347g/km

So big and smooth, it should probably have sails. And a tiller. And a man at the helm. When it comes to stately speed, nothing does it better than a Rolls.

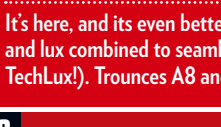
2 MERCEDES S350 BLUEEFFICIENCY



Price £62,905 **Specs** 262bhp, 458 lb ft, 0-62mph 6.8secs, VMax 155mph, 51.4mpg, CO2 146g/km

It's here, and its even better than we expected. Tech and lux combined to seamless effect (to create TechLux!). Trounces A8 and 7-Series rivals.

3 BENTLEY MULSANNE



Price £225,900
Specs 505bhp, 752 lb ft, 0-62mph 5.3secs, VMax 184mph, 16.8mpg, CO_2 393g/km

Like the wonderful old Arnage it replaces, the big ol' Bentley will show those peasants who's boss. And who cares if it has a slightly piggy nose?

4 RANGE ROVER LWB



Price £102,120
Specs 339bhp, 517 lb ft, 0-62mph 6.6secs, VMax 135mph, 32.5mpg, CO_2 229g/km

Another car that, like the Porsche 911 Cabrio, doesn't sound great on paper, and another one that works better than it has any right to.

5 MASERATI QUATTROPORTE GTS V8



Price £108,185 **Specs** 523bhp, 479 lb ft, 0-62mph 4.7secs, VMax 191mph, 23.7mpg, CO_2 274g/km

The old one was probably the prettiest saloon ever. This one is a touch frumpy, but actually feels better to drive. There's even a V6 option.

CATERHAM



Clarkson on Caterham:
"Enormously good fun I'm sure, but they say the same about Chatroulette and I wouldn't fancy that either."

SEVEN



As old as the hills, yet as energetic as a spring lamb. The small, light, flimsy template still serves the 7 well.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
0.8 160	£17,995	6.5	100	80	79	57.6	114	8/10
1.6 Superlight	£35,995	3.8	140	210	148	n/a	n/a	7/10
R620	£49,995	2.8	155	310	219	n/a	n/a	9/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 3530x1690x1140, 36-litre fuel tank, 75-litre boot, 6 engines, 3 trims, 12 models in total.

CHEVROLET



Clarkson on Chevrolet:
"Don't be fooled by the badge. These Chevys are built in Korea, so are as American as bloodhound on toast."

VOLT

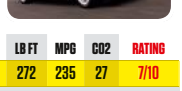


At last, Chevy makes an interesting car that's not a Camaro. Clever range-extender technology that actually works.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 EREV	£35,255	9.0	99	86	272	235	27	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4500x1790x1440, 35-litre fuel tank, 310/1005-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

CAMARO



Brilliant slice of Americana that's somehow not as good on the A34 as cruising down Route 66, but we still would.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
6.2 V8 Coupe	£35,345	5.2	155	432	419	20.0	329	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4840x1920x1380, 72-litre fuel tank, 320-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 2 models in total.

CORVETTE STINGRAY



The Americans have finally got serious about taking on the Porsche 911. Thing is, others have tried before.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
6.2 V8	£61,520	<4.0	186	460	465	TBC	TBC	8/10

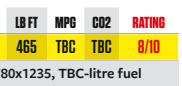
Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4495x1780x1235, TBC-litre fuel tank, TBC-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 2 models in total.

CHRYSLER



Clarkson on Chrysler:
"Hard to think of a reason to buy a Chrysler unless you're a US tax payer keen to protect your capital."

YPSILON



The Ypsilon contains all that's good (and bad) about Lancia. Different to a run-of-the-mill supermini, but not better.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
0.9 TwinAir Gold	£12,195	11.5	109	85	107	67.3	99	6/10
1.3 M-Jet Gold	£13,195	11.0	114	95	148	74.3	99	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3840x1680x1520, 40-litre fuel tank, 245-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 7 models in total.

AT THESE MONTHLY PAYMENTS, MAKE THE BMW Z4 YOUR SUMMER DESTINATION.

The BMW Z4 comes equipped with Xenon headlights, 17" light alloy wheels, and a Hard-Top which fully retracts in just 22 seconds. With BMW Economics, at this monthly payment, the ultimate summer look is more attainable than ever before.

Visit **bmw.co.uk/economics** to find out about other offers available across the BMW range.



Official fuel economy figures for the BMW Z4 sDrive18i Roadster: Urban 31.7 mpg (8.9 l/100 km). Extra Urban 50.4 mpg (5.6 l/100 km). Combined month Contract Hire agreement for a BMW Z4 sDrive18i Roadster with optional metallic paint, with a contract mileage of 40,000 miles and excess mileage charge of 8.25p per mile. Applies for new you must return the vehicle and vehicle condition, excess mileage and other charges may be payable. Hire available subject to status to UK residents aged 18 or over. Guarantees and indemnities may

300C



New nose, same old theme. A halfway decent executive barge that'll end up stretched for hen night service.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
3.0 CRD Exec'	£30,020	7.4	144	236	399	39.2	191	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 5070x1900x1490, 72-litre fuel tank, 481-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

GRAND VOYAGER



An improvement over its crappy predecessor and genuinely enormous inside, but taken to the cleaners by the Ford Galaxy.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.8 CRD Limited	£36,310	12.8	115	178	265	35.8	207	5/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 514x1950x1880, 75-litre fuel tank, 756/3296-litre boot, 1 engine, 3 trims, 3 models in total.

CITROEN



Clarkson on Citroen:
"Citroen makes some of the nicest looking cars you can buy. Now hands out less free money than it did."

C1



The first time Citroen got jiggy with Peugeot and Toyota, they created something quite cool. Now it's round two.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.0 68 Touch 3d	£8,245	14.3	98	69	69	68.9	95	TBA

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 3460x1620x1430, 35-litre fuel tank, 196/780-litre boot, 2 engines, 3 trims, 20 models in total.

DS3

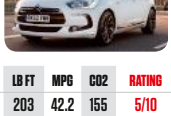


A former Car of the Year and a gigantic, mincing Gallic leap forward for Citroen. Not fast, but a kick up the arse for Mini.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.2 VTi DSign	£12,495	10.6	114	82	87	62.8	104	7/10
1.6 THP Ultra P'	£21,380	7.3	133	115	177	47.1	139	7/10
1.6 e-HDi DSt'	£15,570	12.5	113	90	169	78.5	91	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3950x1720x1480, 48-litre fuel tank, 285/880-litre boot, 5 engines, 4 trims, 12 models in total.

DS5

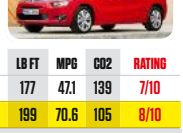


The most avantgarde of all the DS. Not as inspiring as the DS3, and the ride is terrible, but family cars come no cooler.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 THP 200	£26,860	8.5	146	200	203	42.2	155	5/10
2.0 HDi DSport	£28,915	8.5	134	160	250	57.6	128	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4530x1870x1540, 45-litre fuel tank, 465-litre boot (Hybrid 325l), 4 engines, 3 trims, 10 models in total.

C4 GRAND PICASSO



Funky newness from Citroen, helping make the world of MPVs more acceptable. Headlights a particular success.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 THP 155	£22,765	9.2	130	155	177	47.1	139	7/10
1.6 e-HDi 115	£21,955	12.1	117	114	199	70.6	105	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4590x1830x1630, 60-litre fuel tank, 537/1851-litre boot, 5 engines, 4 trims, 11 models in total.

TOPGEAR TOP TEN

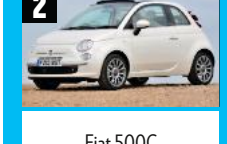
MOST AFFORDABLE 4ST CABRIOS

1



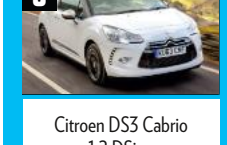
Smart Fortwo 1.0 mhd 71 Grandstyle
£11,830

2



Fiat 500C 1.2 Pop
£13,160

3



Citroen DS3 Cabrio 1.2 DSign
£15,205

4



MINI Cabrio One
£16,420

5



Peugeot 207 CC 1.6 Active
£17,200

6



VW Golf 1.2 TSI 105 S
£21,800

7



Peugeot 308 CC 1.6 Active Nav
£23,105

8



Renault Megane CC 1.2 TCe 130 Dynamique
£23,800

9



Vauxhall Cascada 1.4T 140 SE
£23,995

10



Audi A3 Cabrio 1.4 TSI 140 SE
£25,790

DACIA



Clarkson on Dacia:
"Prices are attractive but May is obsessed with their cars and I fully understand if that puts you off."

SANDERO



The UK's cheapest new car – you can lease one for less than a Sky TV package. Nothing here besides simple transport.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
0.9 TCe 90 Amb	£7,595	11.1	109	90	99	54.3	120	6/10
1.2 75 Access	£5,995	14.5	97	75	78	47.9	137	6/10
1.5 dCi 90 Amb	£8,595	12.1	107	90	162	74.3	99	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4060x1730x1520, 50-litre fuel tank, 320/1200-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 7 models in total.

LOGAN MCV



MCV translates as Maximum Capacity Vehicle. This is cheap real estate, just not in the best part of town.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.2 75 Access	£6,995	14.5	97	75	78	48.7	135	6/10
0.9 TCe Amb	£8,595	11.1	109	90	99	56.5	116	6/10

Euro NCAP n/a LxWxH in mm: 4490x1730x1520, 50-litre fuel tank, 573/1518-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 7 models in total.

DUSTER



Simple, high-riding crossover-style five-seater is a favourite of James May. Good value, surprisingly able, very tough.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 105 Access	£9,495	11.5	102	105	109	39.8	165	7/10
1.5 dCi Amb'	£11,995	11.8	106	110	177	56.5	130	7/10
1.5 dCi 4x4 Lau'	£15,495	12.5	104	110	177	53.3	137	7/10

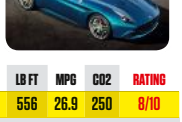
Euro NCAP ★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4320x1820x1700, 50-litre fuel tank, 475/1636-litre boot, 2 engines, 3 trims, 6 models in total.

FERRARI



Clarkson on Ferrari:
"Ferraris used to be art. Now they are science. And the 458 shows they can still be truly wonderful."

CALIFORNIA T

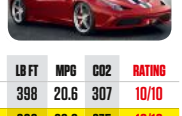


The Ferrari that everyone thought was a Maserati now has a turbo V8. Purists will hate it, but it'll bring in buyers.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
3.8 V8 T	£154,490	3.6	196	560	556	26.9	250	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4570x1910x1322, 78-litre fuel tank, 240/340-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

458



The finest sports car of the past five years. Utterly mind-blowing. You should want one. Everyone should want one.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
4.5 V8 Italia	£178,526	3.4	202	562	398	20.6	307	10/10
4.5 V8 Speciale	£208,065	3.0	202	605	398	23.9	275	10/10
4.5 V8 Spider	£198,971	3.4	198	562	398	21.2	307	10/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4580x1940x1210, 86-litre fuel tank, 230-litre boot, 2 engines, 3 trims, 3 models in total.



41.5 mpg (6.8 l/100 km). CO_2 emissions 159 g/km. Figures may vary depending on driving style and conditions. *Deposit £3,099. Price shown is for a 48 vehicles ordered at participating BMW dealers between 1 April and 30 June 2014 and registered by 30 September 2014 (subject to availability). Retail customers only. At the end of your agreement be required. Terms and conditions apply. Offer may be varied, withdrawn or extended at any time. Hire provided by BMW Financial Services (GB) Limited, Bartley Way, Hook, Hampshire RG27 9UF.

F12



The F12 is bombastic, epic and howlingly fast. The fastest Ferrari road car ever in fact. Emphatically not just a GT.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
6.3 V12	£240,058	3.1	211	740	508	18.8	350	10/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4620x1940x1270, 92-litre fuel tank, 350-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

FF



A 4wd Ferrari estate, making this the most practical 208mph family car around. Buy it for the 6.3-litre V12, not the 450-litre boot.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
6.3 V12	£227,142	3.7	208	660	503	18.3	360	9/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4910x1960x1380, 91-litre fuel tank, 450/800-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

LAFERRARI



Meet the most drivable, engaging and friendly 950bhp hypercar you can imagine. Also has electric, but you wouldn't know it.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
6.3 V12 KERS	£1 million	2.9	218+	950	664	19.8	330	10/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4702x1992x1116, TBC-litre fuel tank, TBC-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

FIAT



Clarkson on Fiat:
"The essence of Italian cars. Stylish, likeable, almost certain to break your heart or wallet."

PANDA



It's back, it's slightly rounder and it's still entirely brilliant. Come 'ere cuddly Panda, we want to give you a hug.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
TwinAir 85 Easy	£10,945	11.2	110	85	106	67.3	99	8/10
1.3 MJet Easy	£11,945	12.8	104	75	140	72.4	104	8/10
TwinAir 85 4x4	£14,145	12.1	103	85	106	57.6	114	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3650x1640x1550, 35-litre fuel tank, 225/870-litre boot, 4 engines, 5 trims, 15 models in total.

500



Not quite the Sixties revival Fiat was angling for, but the 500 is a refreshing alternative to Mini-shaped ubiquity.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.3 MJet Lounge	£13,960	10.7	112	95	150	76.3	97	7/10
0.9 TwinAir S	£13,110	11.0	107	85	106	70.6	92	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3550x1630x1490, 37-litre fuel tank, 185-litre boot, 4 engines, 5 trims, 32 models in total.

500L



Don't be misled by the badge and the headlights. The 500L is more Panda than 500, and bigger than you expect.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 95 Pop	£13,000	12.8	111	95	93	45.6	145	5/10
1.6 MJet Lounge	£18,890	11.3	112	105	236	62.8	117	5/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3550x1630x1490, 37-litre fuel tank, 185-litre boot, 4 engines, 3 trims, 12 models in total.

ABARTH 500



Short on talent, long on appeal, that's the rufty-tufty Abarth. Pogo stick ride but ever so eager with it.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 T-Jet 135	£14,260	7.9	127	135	148	43.5	155	7/10
595 1.4 Comp'	£18,960	7.4	130	162	148	43.5	155	7/10
500C 1.4 C'zione	£20,625	7.4	131	160	169	43.5	155	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3660x1630x1490, 35-litre fuel tank, 185/610-litre boot, 2 engines, 3 trims, 8 models in total.

QUBO



Gawky little thing based on a van, sharing underpinnings with the Citroen Nemo. Which has a cuter name.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.3 MyLife	£14,775	12.2	106	95	148	68.9	107	4/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 3959x1716x1810, 60-litre fuel tank, 330-2500-litre boot, 2 engines, 3 trims, 4 models in total.

CAR CLINIC+

BMW M3



VS



BMW M5

Dear Car Clinic

I'd been reading up about the current BMW M5 as I was thinking of buying one, when I heard about the latest M3 also having a twin turbo. Which is best?
BILLY MASH, HUNGERFORD

This is a great question, Billy. Because, you're right, there are similarities between the two Bee-Emms. One might be bigger than the other, but both have similar driving characteristics. However, we think this is an easy one to sort. We've always found the current M5 a little on the large, heavy side. The M3 isn't much smaller, but sits four in comfort, has a boot that's only 40 litres smaller and is nearly £18k cheaper. It also drives with more verve and precision. We'd have M3 over M5 every day of the week.

SPECS



BMW M3
Price £56,175
Engine 2979cc straight six twin turbo, 431bhp, 406lb ft
Performance 0–62mph in 4.3 seconds, 155mph, 32.1mpg



BMW M5
Price £73,960
Engine 4395cc V8 twin turbo 560bhp, 502lb ft
Performance 0–62mph in 4.4 seconds, 155mph max, 28.5mpg

FORD

Clarkson on Ford:
"Decent, well made cars that do everything you want for a reasonable price. A bit like M&S."

FIESTA



Arguably the best supermini on sale. Pace-setter or pacemaker, there's something for everyone here.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.0T Zetec 3d	£13,945	11.2	112	100	125	65.7	99	8/10
1.6T 182 ST 3d	£17,250	6.9	139	182	213	47.9	139	9/10
1.6 TDCi Ztec 5d	£15,945	12.9	111	95	147	85.6	85	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3950x1720x1480, 42-litre fuel tank, 295/979-litre boot, 9 engines, 7 trims, 47 models in total.

FOCUS



Oh dear. We've always loved the Focus, but this latest version has, ST excepted, lost a little sparkle for keen drivers.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.0T Titanium	£20,095	11.3	120	125	125	56.5	114	7/10
2.0 TDCi Zetec S	£21,445	8.6	135	163	250	56.5	129	7/10
2.0T 250 ST-2	£23,495	6.5	154	250	250	39.2	169	8/10
1.6 TDCi Est	£19,795	11.1	120	115	199	67.3	109	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4360x1820x1480, 53/55/60-litre fuel tank, 363/1148-litre boot, 12 engines, 8 trims, 69 models in total.

MONDEO



The benchmark for grey-faced mediocrity is actually a very fine car. Good chassis, unenviable image.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 T 160 Zetec	£20,000	9.3	134	160	177	44.1	149	7/10
1.6 TDCi Zetec	£21,495	11.9	118	115	199	65.7	112	7/10
2.0 TDCi Est	£23,345	9.1	134	163	250	61.4	120	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4780x1890x1500, 70-litre fuel tank, 540/1460-litre boot, 7 engines, 4 trims, 34 models in total.

B-MAX



Ford's reply to the Vauxhall Meriva. Sliding rear doors and no B-pillars means easy access and brilliant packaging. Fine car.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.0T Zetec	£15,395	13.2	109	100	125	55.4	119	7/10
1.0T Titanium	£17,195	11.2	117	125	147	57.7	114	8/10
1.6 TDCi Tit	£17,895	13.9	108	95	158	70.6	104	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4080x1860x1600, 48-litre fuel tank, 318/1386-litre boot, 6 engines, 4 trims, 14 models in total.

C-MAX



The latest C-Max boasts sliding doors, yet despite that it's somehow not as invigorating as the smaller B-Max.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.0T Titanium	£20,150	11.4	116	125	147	55.4	117	6/10
1.6 TDCi TX Gr	£24,045	12.3	112	115	199	57.7	129	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4380x1860x1620, 53/60-litre fuel tank, 432/1723-litre boot, 8 engines, 3 trims, 26 models in total.

S-MAX



The sporty MPV? well, ish. But the Smacks drives well and is a sharp suit to the Galaxy's cardigan and corduroys.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 Titan'	£31,285	7.9	146	240	250	34.0	194	7/10
2.0 TDCi Titan	£26,445	9.2	127	163	251	49.6	152	8/10
2.2 TDCi Titan	£27,670	8.6	133	200	310	42.8	174	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4820x1880x1760, 70-litre fuel tank, 308/2325-litre boot, 7 engines, 3 trims, 21 models in total.

GALAXY



Ford's flagship seven-seater offers extra headroom, but is otherwise upstaged by the livelier and more desirable S-Max.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 TDCi Tit'	£28,160	13.4	111	115	199	54.3	139	6/10
2.0 TDCi Tit'	£28,945	9.5	126	163	250	49.6	152	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4770x1880x1660, 70-litre fuel tank, 285/2000-litre boot, 5 engines, 3 trims, 13 models in total.

KUGA



The Kuga has grown up and bought some sensible slacks. Sure, it's highly competent, but so are others.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6T 4x4 Titan	£26,810	9.7	124	180	177	36.7	179	6/10
2.0 TDCi Titan	£26,050	9.9	123	163	250	47.9	154	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4520x1840x1700, 57-litre fuel tank, 456/1653-litre boot, 4 engines, 4 trims, 12 models in total.

GINETTA



Clarkson on Ginetta:
"Ginetta are based in Yorkshire. I thus hoped their cars would be no nonsense. They are."

G40



Two-seat sports car that's not hugely powerful but feels quick because it weighs so little. Short on interior luxuries.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 R	£29,950	5.8	140	175	140	29	181	TBA
2.0 R Club	£29,100	5.8	140	175	140	29	181	TBA

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 3750x1640x1050, 45-litre fuel tank, 200-litre boot, 1 engine, 2 trims, 2 models in total.

G60



Ginetta bought the stillborn Farbio and re-engineered it. Carbon-bodied G60 isn't cheap, but looks and sounds great.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
3.7 V6	£68,000	4.9	165	310	288	31	n/a	6/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4220x1940x1050, 80-litre fuel tank, 200-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

HONDA



Clarkson on Honda:
"All that great engineering completely wasted on the average buyer, who is still one hundred and eleventy."

JAZZ



Individual and ingenious, the Jazz deserves to be bought by more people under ninety than it is.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 i-VTEC EX	£15,995	11.8	113	98	94	50.4	129	7/10
1.3 Hybrid HE	£17,150	12.1	109	88	89	62.8	104	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3900x1940x1170, 42-litre fuel tank, 335/1320-litre boot, 3 engines, 8 trims, 15 models in total.

CIVIC



Looks like a facelift, but is actually an all new model that's now quieter, more comfortable and much less bonkers inside.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.8 S-T	£19,800	8.9	127	142	128	48.7	137	6/10
1.6 i-DTEC S-T	£20,920	10.5	129	120	221	78.5	94	7/10
1.6 i-DTEC S Est	£21,375	10.1	121	120	221	74.3	99	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4300x1770x1470, 50-litre fuel tank, 477/1378-litre boot, 3 engines, 5 trims, 23 models in total.

DATA IN NUMBERS: PUT THE BOOT IN

- → **Boot space (seats up) - Civic hatch** 467 litres
- → **Boot space (seats up) - Civic Tourer** 624 litres (+34%)

CR-Z



An award winner at TG back in 2010. Buck Rogers styling, low emissions and a compelling balance of performance and economy.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.5 hybrid Sport	£21,125	9.5	124	137	140	56.5	116	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4080x1740x1400, 40-litre fuel tank, 225/401-litre boot, 1 engine, 2 trims, 2 models in total.

CR-V



A car engineered for accountants. It's a great all-rounder but deeply boring with it. There are few more reliable SUVs.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.2 4WD SE	£27,200	9.7	118	150	258	50.4	149	6/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4570x1820x1690, 58-litre fuel tank, 589/1648-litre boot, 2 engines, 4 trims, 10 models in total.

HYUNDAI



Clarkson on Hyundai:
"Hyundai did rather well out of the scrappage scheme. But then, so did scrap dealers."

I10



Lacks the charisma of the Panda and the sheer polish of the Up! but actually, if you don't care about cars, buy this one.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.0 S	£8,345	14.9	96	66	69	60.1	108	8/10
1.2 SE	£9,795	12.1	106	87	88	57.6	114	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3665x1660x1500, 40-litre fuel tank, 252-litre boot, 2 engines, 3 trims, 7 models in total.

DATA IN NUMBERS: HYUNDAI STATS

- → The i10 is the **second tallest** Hyundai on sale
- → The i40 has a **bigger boot** seats up than a Santa Fe
- → The i20 has a version with **lower CO2** than the i10
- → The Veloster has a **bigger boot** seats up than an i30
- → The i10 1.0 is the only Hyundai that can't reach **100mph**

I20



An interesting foil to the Fiesta and Corsa, the i20 can be had for peanuts and feels surprisingly well glued together.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 CRDi BD	£13,595	13.5	108	90	162	76.3	96	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3940x1710x1490, 45-litre fuel tank, 295/1060-litre boot, 4 engines, 4 trims, 12 models in total.

I30



Coo, Hyundai seems to be catching up with Kia in the design stakes, and catching up with everyone else everywhere else.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 Active	£16,005	13.2	113	98	101	47.1	139	6/10
1.6 CRDi BD	£19,595	10.9	117	128	192	74.3	100	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4300x1780x1470, 53-litre fuel tank, 378/1316-litre boot, 5 engines, 5 trims, 18 models in total.

I40



Not long ago, a Hyundai would be beige and so would its driver. The stylish i40 has changed all that. Estate is the pick.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.7 CRDi Active	£18,865	12.3	119	115	192	65.7	113	5/10
1.7 CRDi Pre' est	£25,415	10.6	124	134	240	55.4	134	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4770x1820x1470, 70-litre fuel tank, 553/1719-litre boot, 2 engines, 4 trims, 16 models in total.

VELOSTER



Curious coupe/hatch with an imbalanced door count that is the most interesting thing about it. Dynamics need polishing.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 GDI	£18,005	9.7	125	138	123	43.5	148	7/10
1.6 Turbo SE	£22,120	8.4	133	186	195	40.9	157	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4220x1790x1400, 50-litre fuel tank, 440-litre boot, 2 engines, 3 trims, 4 models in total.

IX35



A weirdly unattractive compact SUV that follows Hyundai's general trend towards being a lot less crap. You could do worse.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 CRDi 4WD	£22,995	11.3	112	136	224	51.4	145	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4410x1820x1660, 58-litre fuel tank, 591/1436-litre boot, 3 engines, 4 trims, 15 models in total.

SANTA FE



Can't afford a Disco? Then step this way, as savvy Santa Fe shows there is another way. Gymkhana mums might not agree.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.2 CRDi Style	£25,850	9.4	118	197	311	47.9	155	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4660x1890x1760, 70-litre fuel tank, 534-litre boot, 1 engine, 2 trims, 7 models in total.

INFINITI

Clarkson on Infiniti:
"Has anyone ever thought 'what I need is a posh Datsun'? I suspect the answer is no."

Q50



More sharply styled but otherwise anonymous saloon from Nissan's lux wing. This time aimed at the BMW 3-Series.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
Q50 2.2d SE	£27,959	8.5	140	170	295	65.0	114	7/10
Q50 Hybrid	£40,000	5.2	155	364	402	43.0	144	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4790x1820x1450, 74-litre fuel tank, 400/500-litre boot, 2 engines, 4 trims, 8 models in total.

Q60



Infiniti seems to be naming its cars after tax forms. Car isn't bad, but lacking personality.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
Q60 GT P Conv	£45,705	6.4	155	320	265	24.8	264	5/10
Q60 S Coupe	£38,650	5.9	155	320	265	26.9	246	6/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4780x1770x1470, 80-litre fuel tank, 450-litre boot, 1 engine, 3 trims, 4 models in total.

Q70



Refined, classy and quick, but as bland as a Lexus and go carefully with the spec - it's your money you're throwing away.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
Hybrid GT Prem	£47,200	5.5	155	306	258	40.9	159	6/10
3.0d GT	£40,555	6.9	155	238	405	37.7	199	6/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4950x1850x1500, 70/80-litre fuel tank, 350/450/500-litre boot, 2 engines, 4 trims, 7 models in total.

QX50



A crossover SUV thing that'll separate you from the BMW X3 and Freelander herds. Will anyone ever buy it off you?

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
3.0d GT	£38,948	7.9	137	235	406	33.2	224	5/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4650x1800x1500, 80-litre fuel tank, 340/1175-litre boot, 2 engines, 3 trims, 5 models in total.

QX70



Want to avoid a BMW X6 and associated impressions of drug related violence? The QX70 is an option.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
5.0 V8 S Prem'	£54,000	5.8	155	390	368	21.6	307	6/10
3.0d GT	£42,355	8.3	132	238	406	32.8	225	6/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4870x1930x1540, 90-litre fuel tank, 410/1305-litre boot, 3 engines, 4 trims, 9 models in total.

JAGUAR

Clarkson on Jaguar:
"Still cars for the chap who takes his wife to dinner then flirts with the waitress all night. Good."

XF



Start to slip off the pace, but XF is still a judo chop to Jerry's solar plexus. Does luxury, dynamics and dares to be different.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
3.0 S/C Portfolio	£51,395	5.9	150	340	332	30.0	224	7/10
XFR	£65,415	4.9	155	510	461	25.0	268	7/10
XFR-S S'brake	£79,995	4.6	186	550	502	22.2	297	7/10
2.2D 200 Luxury	£33,945	8.5	140	200	332	55.4	135	7/10
3.0D S PL' est	£49,110	6.6	155	275	443	46.0	163	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4960x1880x1460, 70-litre fuel tank, 540/923-litre boot, 6 engines, 7 trims, 29 models in total.

XJ



Zoinks. The XJ is rapid, refined and just plain beautiful. The interior is so special we invented an award for it.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
XJ L 3.0D Port'	£70,975	6.4	155	275	443	47.0	159	8/10
XJ L 3.0 SC Por'	£76,435	5.7	155	340	332	30.0	224	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 5120/5250x1890x1490, 82-litre fuel tank, 520-litre boot, 3 engines, 5 trims, 13 models in total.

HOW TO SPEC A...



PEUGEOT 308

Basic price £20,995
Engine 1199cc, 3cyl turbo, 129bhp, 173lb ft, 58.9mpg, 110g/km
Performance 0–62mph 10.3secs, 125mph
Weight 1,370kg
Colour Bianca White (£200)
Wheels 18-inch Saphir (standard)
Trim Cloth/Alcantara (standard)
Standard equipment Cruise control, climate control, ultrasonic alarm, panoramic roof, Driver Assistance Pack, keyless go, reversing camera, tinted rear glass
Options City Pack (£400), DAB with Peugeot Connect SOS (£240), 18-inch (full-size) spare wheel (£100)

TOTAL PRICE **£21,935**



F-TYPE



Over-priced Boxster rival, or cut-price 911 alternative? Who cares, when the F-Type is this sodding good?

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
3.0 V6 S Coupe	£60,250	4.9	171	380	339	31.8	213	TBA
5.0 V8 R Coupe	£85,025	4.2	186	550	501	25.5	259	9/10
3.0 V6 R'ster	£58,520	5.3	161	340	332	31.4	209	8/10
3.0 V6 S R'ster	£67,520	4.9	171	380	339	31.0	213	8/10
5.0 V8 S R'ster	£79,985	4.3	186	495	460	25.5	259	8/10

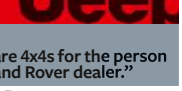
Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4470x1920x1300, 70-litre fuel tank, 196/315-litre boot, 4 engines, 3 trims, 5 models in total.

JEEP



Clarkson on Jeep:
"As far as I can work out these are 4x4s for the person who couldn't find their local Land Rover dealer."

CHEROKEE

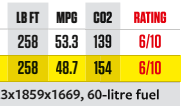


After a leave of absence, the Cherokee is back to do battle with the Freelander. It's priced well and looks... interesting.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 CRD 140	£25,495	TBA	TBA	140	258	53.3	139	6/10
2.0 CRD 170 4x4	£29,995	TBA	TBA	170	258	48.7	154	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4623x1859x1669, 60-litre fuel tank, TBA-litre boot, 2 engines, 3 trims, 6 models in total.

GRAND CHEROKEE



Jeep may be under Fiat's control, but no-one appears to have told the Grand Cherokee. See also Chrysler 300C.

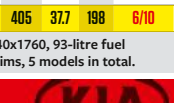
	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
6.4 V8 SRT	£60,695	5.0	160	461	460	20.0	328	6/10
3.0 CRD O'land	£46,395	8.2	126	237	405	37.7	198	6/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4820x1940x1760, 93-litre fuel tank, 782/1554-litre boot, 2 engines, 4 trims, 5 models in total.

KIA

Clarkson on Kia:
"Providers of our Reasonably Priced Car. At least I think they are. It's quite easy to forget."

PICANTO



A Kia cracker. Latest Picanto looks good, drives well, costs little and is warrantied to the max.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.25 VR-7 3d	£11,745	11.0	106	84	89	62.8	106	7/10
1.0 1 5d	£8,245	13.9	95	68	70	67.3	99	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3600x1600x1480, 35-litre fuel tank, 200/870-litre boot, 2 engines, 7 trims, 11 models in total.

CEE'D



Still a white goods car, but now it's white goods by John Lewis. Build quality is a rival for VW now, as is much else.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 2	£16,400	12.4	113	98	101	46.3	143	7/10
1.6 CRDi 4	£21,695	10.5	122	126	192	65.7	112	7/10
1.6T 3d GT	£19,995	7.4	143	201	195	38.2	171	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4310x1780x1470, 53-litre fuel tank, 380/1318-litre boot, 3 engines, 5 trims, 18 models in total.

SOUL



The first generation Soul was a trendy, but empty, cube. Now it's come of age, settled down and got serious about life.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 GDi Connect	£14,800	10.6	115	130	118	41.5	158	7/10
1.6 CRDi Con'ct	£16,400	10.8	112	126	191	56.5	132	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4140x1800x1600, 54-litre fuel tank, 354/1367-litre boot, 2 engines, 5 trims, 9 models in total.

SPORTAGE



One of the best-looking compact SUVs, but weird habits stop it being as good to drive as it is to look at.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.7 CRDi 2WD 2	£20,600	11.9	107	114	188	54.3	135	6/10
2.0 CRDi KX-4	£27,195	9.4	120	181	282	46.3	158	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4440x1860x1650, 58-litre fuel tank, 564/1353-litre boot,4 engines, 6 trims, 9 models in total.

SORENTO



Good, decent SUV that feels tough enough to last. Price has crept up a bit since the refresh, though.

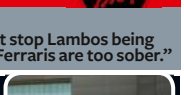
	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.2 CRDi KX-2	£29,095	9.4	118	194	311	47.9	155	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4690x1890x1710, 70-litre fuel tank, 111/1525-litre boot, 1 engine, 3 trims, 3 models in total.

LAMBORGHINI

Clarkson on Lamborghini:
"Even Audi being in charge can't stop Lambos being mad cars for those who think Ferraris are too sober."

HURACAN



In recent years the world has given us the Ferrari 458 and McLaren 650S. The Huracan needs to be a massive step on.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
LP 610-4	£181,865	3.2	202	610	413	22.6	290	9/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4459x1924x1165, 80-litre fuel tank, TBA-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

DATA IN NUMBERS: BRITISH BEEF

→ **Lamborghini Huracan power/torque** 610bhp/413lb ft
→ **McLaren 650S power/torque** 650bhp/500lb ft

AVENTADOR



Murcielago replacement doesn't disappoint. A hint of Audi has crept in, but the Aventador is still bonkers.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
LP 700-4	£265,865	2.9	217	700	509	17.6	370	8/10
LP 700-4 R'ster	£294,665	3.0	217	700	509	17.6	370	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4780x2030x1140, 90-litre fuel tank, n/a-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 2 models in total.

LAND ROVER

Clarkson on Land Rover:
"Have you seen the grille on the latest Range Rover? Good cars ruined by increasing bling."

FREELANDER 2



It's easy to underestimate the Freelander, but it remains a fine SUV. Albeit one that's small inside and rather costly.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.2 TD4 SE	£27,765	10.7	116	150	310	45.6	165	7/10
2.2 SD4 Metro	£35,995	8.7	118	190	310	40.4	185	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4500x1910x1740, 68-litre fuel tank, 405/1607-litre boot, 2 engines, 3 trims, 5 models in total.

DEFENDER



Still going, still a workhorse farmer's cart, where practicality and toughness outweigh, well, everything really.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.2D County 90	£27,305	14.7	90	122	265	28.3	266	8/10
2.2D XS 110	£33,005	14.7	90	122	265	25.5	295	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 3890/4640x1790x2020, 60-litre fuel tank, 1600/2300-litre boot, 1 engine, 3 trims, 6 models in total.

DISCOVERY



The best practical SUV on sale. Massive inside, thoughtful design, astonishing ability. Revised once again for 2014.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
3.0 SDV6 XS	£46,865	8.8	112	256	443	35.3	213	9/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4830x1880x1890, 84-litre fuel tank, 280/2560-litre boot, 1 engine, 4 trims, 4 models in total.

RANGE ROVER EVOQUE



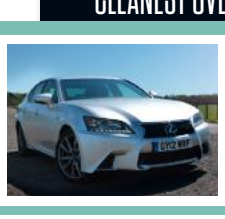
A Range Rover for a younger, more stylish, more urban audience. One for fashionistas, not farmers.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 Si4 Dy L 3d	£46,660	7.1	135	240	250	36.2	181	8/10
2.2 eD4 Pure	£29,205	10.6	112	150	280	56.3	133	8/10
SD4 4WD Dyn	£38,805	9.5	124	190	310	49.6	149	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4360x1960x11610, 60/70-litre fuel tank, 550/1445-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 12 models in total.

TOPGEAR TOP FIVE

CLEANEST OVER 3.0 LITRES



1. Lexus GS 450h — **141g/km CO2**



2. Lexus RX 450h — **145g /km CO2**



3. Mercedes S 400 Hybrid — **147g/km CO2**



4. Infiniti Q50h — **153g/km CO2**



5. Mercedes CLS 350 CDI — **164g/km CO2**

DIRTIEST UNDER 2.0 LITRES



1. VW Tiguan 2.0 TSI 210 — **199g/km CO2**



2. RR Evoque 2.0 Si4 — **199g/km CO2**



3. VW Sharan 2.0 TSI 210 — **198g/km CO2**



4. Citroen Berlingo 1.6 98 — **195g/km CO2**



5. Ford S-Max 2.0 240 — **194g/km CO2**

RANGE ROVER SPORT



A prettier RRS would be a contradiction in terms, but the new one definitely comes with less thuggishness.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
5.0 SC Autobio'	£81,550	5.0	155	510	460	22.1	298	9/10
3.0 SDV6 HSE	£59,995	6.8	130	292	442	37.7	199	9/10
3.0H SDV6 Hyb'	£81,550	6.4	130	345	517	44.1	169	9/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4060x1820x1540, 45-litre fuel tank, 270/950-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 5 models in total.

RANGE ROVER



This is not an SUV. That's too common a badge. Instead, think go-anywhere luxury car. Or GALC. Hmm, catchy.

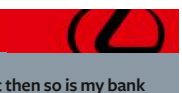
	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
5.0 SC Autobi'	£98,455	5.1	140	510	461	20.5	322	8/10
3.0 TDV6 Vogue	£71,320	7.4	130	258	442	37.7	196	9/10
4.4 SDV8 Vge SE	£84,740	6.5	135	339	516	32.5	229	9/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 5000x2070x1840, 85/105-litre fuel tank, 909/2030-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 7 models in total.

LEXUS

Clarkson on Lexus:
"Well made, quiet, sensible. But then so is my bank manager, and I don't want to drive round in him."

IS



3-Series drive too well for you? Then buy this, it's worse. In other areas, IS gives the Germans a much tougher time.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
IS 250 SE	£26,495	8.1	143	205	185	32.8	199	7/10
IS 300h SE	£29,495	8.3	125	220	163	65.7	99	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4670x1810x1430, 66-litre fuel tank, 450/480-litre boot, 2 engines, 4 trims, 8 models in total.

GS



Latest version of Lexus' 5-Series wannabe that's famous for coming in high-tech hybrid guise. This is expensive.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
GS 300h SE	£31,495	9.2	119	184	163	60.1	109	6/10
GS 450h F Sport	£51,495	5.9	155	349	254	45.6	145	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4850x1840x1460, 65-litre fuel tank, 465/547-litre boot, 2 engines, 4 trims, 7 models in total.

RX



One of the easiest, quietest cars money can buy, but also devoid of any character and most economy. Chuffing pricey, too.

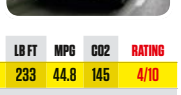
	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
RX 450h Luxury	£48,495	7.8	124	295	233	44.8	145	4/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4770x1890x1760, 65-litre fuel tank, 496-litre boot, 1 engine, 4 trims, 4 models in total.

LOTUS

Clarkson on Lotus:
"What is Lotus? No-one's sure. Perhaps one day it'll build cars again and make its resurrection stick."

ELISE

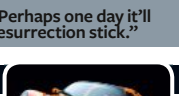


Still a joy, the current Elise offers visceral driving thrills in a relatively usable package. This is steering feel.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 Standard	£28,889	6.0	127	134	118	45.0	149	8/10
1.8 S	£36,965	4.6	145	220	185	37.5	175	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 3790x1850x1120, 44-litre fuel tank, 112-litre boot, 2 engines, 2 trims, 2 models in total.

EVORA



Updated in 2012 with a much improved interior. Brilliant as ever to drive. Downsides? Porsche's latest 911...

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
3.5 Standard	£52,819	4.9	162	276	258	30.3	217	8/10
3.5 S	£62,039	4.6	172	345	295	28.7	229	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4340x1850x1220, 55-litre fuel tank, 160-litre boot, 2 engines, 2 trims, 4 models in total.

EXIGE S



Lotus' track car has grown up and got heavier. But don't worry, this makes it more usable. Deliriously good to drive.

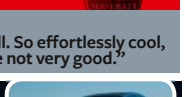
	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
3.5 V6 Standard	£54,389	4.0	170	345	295	28.0	236	9/10
3.5 V6 Roadster	£54,389	3.8	145	345	295	28.0	236	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4050x1800x1150, 40-litre fuel tank, n/a-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 2 models in total.

MASERATI

Clarkson on Maserati:
"A brand made for the Cool Wall. So effortlessly cool, you don't mind the fact they're not very good."

GHIBLI

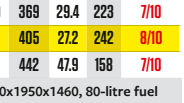


Maserati builds a BMW 5-Series. It's available with a diesel engine. Well, they think it's a good idea.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
3.0 V6	£52,275	5.6	163	330	369	29.4	223	7/10
3.0 V6 TT S	£63,415	5.0	177	410	405	27.2	242	8/10
3.0 V6 Diesel	£48,830	6.3	155	275	442	47.9	158	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4970x1950x1460, 80-litre fuel tank, 500-litre boot, 3 engine, 2 trims, 3 models in total.

QUATTROPORTE

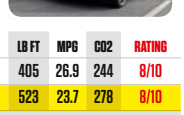


Noooo – what have they done? The old one was soul personified, this looks a bit... meh. Still, at least it drives better.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
3.0 TT V6	£80,095	4.9	177	410	405	26.9	244	8/10
3.8 TT V8	£108,160	4.7	190	530	523	23.7	278	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 5050x1900x1440, 90-litre fuel tank, 450-litre boot, 2 engines, 1 trims, 2 models in total.

GRANTURISMO



Muscular, pretty coupe that's more GT than sports car. Nothing wrong there and the MC Strad has bite if you need it.

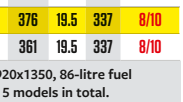
	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
4.7 460 Sport	£90,785	4.8	185	460	383	19.7	331	8/10
4.7 MC Stradale	£110,110	4.5	188	450	376	19.5	337	8/10
4.7 GranCabrio	£98,315	5.2	177	440	361	19.5	337	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4880x1920x1350, 86-litre fuel tank, 260-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 5 models in total.

MAZDA

Clarkson on Mazda:
"Despite brave new looks, Mazda's are still as boring as a tax seminar in Kettering. How do they do that?"

2



Smart, snappy little supermini that's both lightweight and most of a Ford Fiesta. Pity that Mazda hasn't evolved it more.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.3 SE 5d	£11,195	14.9	104	75	87	56.5	115	6/10
1.3 Sport V 5d	£13,495	13.6	106	84	89	56.5	115	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3920x1700x1480, 42-litre fuel tank, 250/787-litre boot, 4 engines, 5 trims, 6 models in total.

3



The 6's design language moves to the 3. So does the handling verve. After that we're less sure why you'd have one over a Golf.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.5 SE	£16,695	10.8	113	100	110	55.4	119	6/10
2.0 Sport Nav	£21,620	8.2	130	165	154	48.7	135	6/10
2.2D SE	£19,245	8.1	130	150	280	68.9	107	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4465x1795x1450, 51-litre fuel tank, 364-litre boot, 4 engines, 3 trims, 17 models in total.

6



Handsome mid-size saloon with some clever engine tech underneath. Drives well, possibly a bit middle management.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 165 Sport	£23,495	9.1	134	165	154	47.8	135	6/10
2.2D Sport	£25,595	7.8	129	175	309	62.7	119	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4870x1840x1450, 62-litre fuel tank, 489-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 13 models in total.

MX-5



Still one of the best two-seat roadsters on the market. Not hugely powerful, but that's not the point. A sweetie.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.8 126 SE s/t	£18,495	9.9	121	126	123	39.8	167	7/10
2.0 Sport Tec RC	£23,095	7.9	136	160	138	36.2	181	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4020x1720x1260, 50-litre fuel tank, 150-litre boot, 2 engines, 3 trims, 5 models in total.

CX-5



Mazda says the design is radical. It isn't. But much else is. Clever engines, good dynamics and lots of space inside.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 2WD SE-L	£21,595	9.2	124	165	155	47.1	139	8/10
2.2D 2WD Sp'	£25,695	9.2	126	150	280	61.4	119	8/10
2.2D 4WD Sport	£27,695	8.8	129	175	309	54.3	136	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4560x1840x1710, 56-litre fuel tank, 503/1620-litre boot, 2 engines, 3 trims, 6 models in total.

McLAREN



Clarkson on McLaren:
"Supercar firms should be founded by men with names like Enzo. Not ones like Ron."

650S

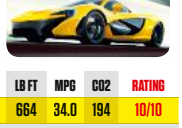


Not a facelifted 12C, says McLaren, but an all new car. With a P1 nose and more speed, should be excellent.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
650S	£195,250	3.0	207	650	500	24.2	275	9/10
650S Spider	£215,250	3.2	207	650	500	24.2	275	9/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4512x1910x1199, 72-litre fuel tank, 145-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 2 models in total.

P1



Same carbon tub as the 12C, same base V8; but five times the price. Yin to the LaFerrari's yang. Well done, Ron.

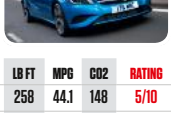
	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
P1	£866,000	2.8	217	916	664	34.0	194	10/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4700x2000x1110, n/a-litre fuel tank, 120-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

MERCEDES-BENZ

Clarkson on Mercedes-Benz:
"Sensible diesels and mentalist AMGs, with so many cars in between they're going to run out of letters."

A-CLASS



Despite the bulbous drunkards nose, this is a conventional hatch. Watch the spec or you'll muck it up.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
A 250 by AMG	£29,355	6.6	149	211	258	44.1	148	5/10
A 180 CDI SE	£21,965	11.3	118	109	191	78.5	92	6/10
A 200 CDI AMG S	£25,110	9.3	130	136	221	64.2	116	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4290x1780x1430, 50-litre fuel tank, 341/1157-litre boot, 5 engines, 5 trims, 12 models in total.

B-CLASS



This Volkswagen Golf SV rival remains oddly proportioned but has plenty of tech inside. Not to mention space.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
B 180 CDI SE 5d	£22,950	10.9	118	109	184	74.3	98	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4360x1790x1560, 50-litre fuel tank, 488-litre boot, 3 engines, 2 trims, 7 models in total.

C-CLASS



What we know about the new C: it has a nice cabin, it has to beat the BMW 3-Series. Not an enviable task.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
C 200 SE	£26,855	7.5	147	184	221	53.3	123	8/10
C 220 BT SE	£29,365	7.7	145	170	295	70.6	103	8/10
C 220 BT AMG L	£32,855	7.7	145	170	295	70.6	106	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4685x1810x1447, 66-litre fuel tank, 480-litre boot, 2 engines, 3 trims, 6 models in total.

E-CLASS



Ooh, fancy nose! Better than the A-Class's. Merc's big exec has got its mojo back. Self-confident, relaxed and refined.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
E 250 CGI SE	£35,470	7.8	145	211	258	45.6	144	7/10
E 63 AMG	£74,155	4.3	155	557	531	28.3	234	9/10
E 220 CDI SE Est	£34,670	8.8	137	170	295	55.4	133	7/10
E 350 BTC AMG	£41,260	6.6	155	252	457	47.1	157	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4870x1850x1470, 59-litre fuel tank, 270/950-litre boot, 7 engines, 3 trims, 22 models in total.

S-CLASS



Meet the car that has single-handedly saved the luxury car class from the SUV incursion. Sublime in most ways.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
S 400 L Hybrid	£69,905	6.8	155	333	272	44.8	147	9/10
S 500 L	£88,395	4.8	155	455	516	31.7	207	9/10
S 350 BlueTEC	£62,6905	6.8	155	258	457	51.4	146	9/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 5110/5250x1900x1490, 70/80-litre fuel tank, 510/530-litre boot, 7 engines, 3 trims, 11 models in total.

DATA IN NUMBERS: PUT THE BOOT IN

→ **New Mercedes C-Class boot space** 480 litres
→ **Mercedes B-Class boot space** 488 litres

CLS-CLASS



One of the most competent cars in Merc's range. It no longer defines cool like the first one, but it's all top drawer.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
CLS 63 AMG	£81,930	4.3	155	557	590	28.5	231	8/10
CLS 350 CDI BE	£54,240	6.2	155	265	457	46.3	160	8/10
CLS 250 CDI SB	£49,395	7.8	146	204	295	53.3	140	8/10
CLS 63 AMG SB	£83,080	4.3	155	557	590	28.0	235	9/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4920x1850x1470, 580-litre fuel tank, 520-litre boot, 4 engines, 3 trims, 11 models in total.

SLK



Third-gen SLK still hasn't got the dynamic talent it needs. Gadgets galore, including a roof which changes opacity.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
SLK 350 BE Sp	£44,600	5.6	155	306	272	39.8	167	6/10
SLK 55 AMG	£55,335	4.6	155	421	398	33.6	195	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4130x1810x1300, 66-litre fuel tank, 225/335-litre boot, 5 engines, 3 trims, 8 models in total.

SL-CLASS



Perhaps the best all-round, usable hard-top convertible on sale today. Practical, fast, excellent quality and dynamics.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
SL 350	£69,960	5.9	155	306	272	37.7	176	8/10
SL 500	£79,970	4.6	155	435	516	30.7	214	8/10
SL 63 V8 AMG	£110,785	4.3	155	537	590	28.5	231	8/10
SL 65 V8 AMG	£168,285	4.0	155	630	737	24.4	270	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4530x1830x1320, 80-litre fuel tank, 235/339-litre boot, 4 engines, 2 trims, 4 models in total.

SLS



AMG-built gullwing supercar. Thunderous pace, snatchy handling, not the tame super GT you might imagine.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
Final Edition Cpe	£91,000	3.7	199	591	479	21.4	308	9/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4640x1940x1260, 85-litre fuel tank, 175-litre boot, 1 engines, 1 trim, 2 models in total.

GLA



On paper little more than a pointless curiosity, but in reality a rather well judged crossover. Better than the CLA at least.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
GLA 200 CDI	£25,850	10.0	127	136	221	62.8	119	8/10
GLA 250 4Matic	£29,915	7.1	143	211	250	42.8	154	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4417x1804x1494, 50/56-litre fuel tank, 481-litre boot, 3 engines, 8 trims, 23 models in total.

M-CLASS

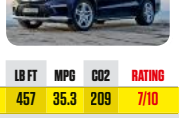


Latest M-Class does nothing to lift it above rivals, except look a bit strange. Which is hardly encouraging for buyers.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
ML 350 AMG Sp'	£49,715	7.4	139	258	457	39.2	189	7/10
ML 63 AMG	£84,150	4.8	155	525	516	23.9	276	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4840x1930x1800, 70-litre fuel tank, 690/2010-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 5 models in total.

GL-CLASS



The GL is basically the even bigger, seven-seat version of the ML. Able to change weather systems as it drives along.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
GL 350 AMG Sp'	£60,100	7.9	137	258	457	35.3	209	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 5100x1920x1840, 45-litre fuel tank, 360/2200-litre boot, 2 engines, 1 trim, 2 models in total.



Official government fuel consumption figures in mpg (litres per 100km) for the E-Class range: urban 20.3 (13.9)–68.9 (4.1), extra urban 36.2 (7.8)–70.6 (4.0), combined 28.3 (10.0)–68.9 (4.1). CO_2 emissions: 234–109 g/km. Official EU-Mercedes-Benz E 220 CDI SE Saloon at £33,395.00 on-the-road with optional metallic paint at £645.00 (on-the-road price includes VAT, delivery, 12 months' Road Fund Licence, number plates, first registration fee and fuel). Some

TOPGEAR TOP FIVE

HATCHBACKS

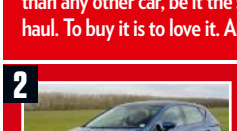
1 VW GOLF 1.6 TDI 105



Price £21,190
Specs 105bhp, 184lb ft, 0-62mph 10.7secs, VMax 119mph, 74.3mpg, CO_2 99g/km

The runaway class leader. It just does what it does better than any other car, be it the school run or the motorway haul. To buy it is to love it. And to keep for a long time.

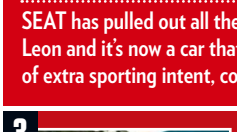
2 SEAT LEON 1.4 TSI SE



Price £18,020
Specs 138bhp, 184lb ft, 0-62mph 8.2secs, VMax 131mph, 54.3mpg, CO_2 119g/km

SEAT has pulled out all the stops with the latest Leon and it's now a car that pushes the Golf hard. Bit of extra sporting intent, covers all the bases well.

3 FORD FOCUS 1.0T 125



Price £18,095
Specs 125bhp, 125lb ft, 0-62mph 11.3secs, VMax 120mph, 56.5mpg, CO_2 114g/km

Britain's best-selling family hatchback and it's easy to see why. Even so, the Focus isn't quite as great as it was: a looming facelift should hopefully fix things.

4 PEUGEOT 308 1.6E-HDI



Price £18,695
Specs 115bhp, 199lb ft, 0-62mph 10.2secs, VMax 121mph, 76.3mpg, CO_2 95g/km

This one caught us a bit by surprise. It's a Peugeot, and it's not awful. At all. Rides well, drives nicely, looks good. A return to the Peugeots of old.

5 HONDA CIVIC 1.6 I-DTEC



Price £20,920
Specs 120bhp, 221lb ft, 0-62mph 10.5secs, VMax 129mph, 78.5mpg, CO_2 94g/km

Yes, it is very cleverly packaged, and yes you do need a degree in advanced electronic engineering to make head or tail of the dash. Belting new 1.6 diesel.

MG

Clarkson on MG:
"Reborn British sports car maker. Now about as British as crispy duck and chiu-chao dumplings."

MG3



After the startling success of the MG6, MG unleashes a supermini on the world. World can hardly believe its luck.

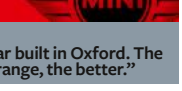
	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.5 VTi-TECH	£8,399	10.9	108	106	101	48.7	136	5/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4018x1729x1507, 45-litre fuel tank, 285-litre boot, 1 engine, 4 trims, 4 models in total.

MINI

Clarkson on Mini:
"The hatch is a cute, cool, fun car built in Oxford. The less said about the rest of the range, the better."

MINI HATCH

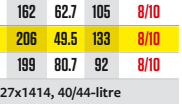


Yes, it's bigger, and no, that isn't necessarily a good thing. Apart from that, the new Mini is predictably excellent.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
Cooper	£15,300	7.9	130	136	162	62.7	105	8/10
Cooper S	£18,650	6.8	146	192	206	49.5	133	8/10
Cooper D	£16,450	9.2	127	116	199	80.7	92	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 3821x1727x1414, 40/44-litre fuel tank, 211-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 3 models in total.

CLUBMAN



The first wilfully different Mini. Small and impractical with silly doors that some people actually found useful.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6T Cooper S	£19,245	7.5	141	184	177	47.9	137	6/10
2.0D Cooper SD	£19,930	8.6	134	143	224	64.2	115	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 3940x1680x143, 40/50-litre fuel tank, 260/930-litre boot, 7 engines, 7 trims, 7 models in total.

COUPE/ROADSTER



You like to be different, don't you? You'll pay more for an inferior product? You like ugly? Why, just step this way.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6T Cooper S	£19,785	6.9	143	184	192	48.7	136	4/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 3730x1680x1380, 50-litre fuel tank, 240/280-litre boot, 4 engines, 4 trims, 8 models in total.

PACEMAN



Another car we didn't ask for, from a firm with seemingly few ideas. What's the Paceman for, Mini?

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6T Cooper S	£22,360	7.5	134	184	177	46.3	143	5/10
2.0D Cooper SD	£23,070	9.2	124	143	224	61.4	122	5/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4110x1790x1520, 47-litre fuel tank, 330/1080-litre boot, 4 engines, 4 trims, 7 models in total.

MITSUBISHI

Clarkson on Mitsubishi:
"The Evo is dead so the entire range is meaningless. Burberry enthusiasts must shop elsewhere."

EVO FQ-440



Clarkson isn't wrong. The Evo is dead. Apart from these 40 special models. Pricey? Yes. Fast? You'd better believe it.

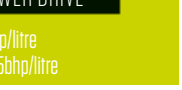
	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
Evo FQ-440 MR	£50,000	TBA	TBA	440	412	TBA	TBA	TBA

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4505x1810x1481, 55-litre fuel tank, TBA-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

DATA IN NUMBERS: POWER DRIVE

→ **BHP per litre, Evo FQ-440** 220bhp/litre
→ **BHP per litre, Bugatti Veyron** 125bhp/litre

ASX

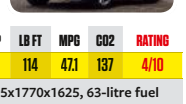


It could be argued that the ASX started the whole crossover ball rolling, were it not so forgettable.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 2	£15,184	11.4	113	117	114	47.1	137	4/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4295x1770x1625, 63-litre fuel tank, 422/1193-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 5 models in total.

OUTLANDER



No-nonsense seven-seat SUV. Fair to middling. Plug-in hybrid version offered too. No one will buy that one either.

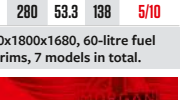
	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 PHEV	£33,304	11.0	106	163	245	148.7	44	6/10
2.2 DI-D GX2 5d	£23,879	10.2	124	150	280	53.3	138	5/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4660x1800x1680, 60-litre fuel tank, 550/1755-litre boot, 2 engines, 4 trims, 7 models in total.

MORGAN

Clarkson on Morgan:
"Hammond has one but don't let that put you off. Actually, do. Who wants a car made of wood?"

3WHEELER



Eccentric and impractical, but for putting a smile on your face, nothing this side of a Tiger Moth competes.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 Bespoke 2d	£30,000	4.5	120	110	100	n/a	n/a	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: n/a, 40-litre fuel tank, n/a-litre boot, 1 engine, 2 trims, 2 models in total.

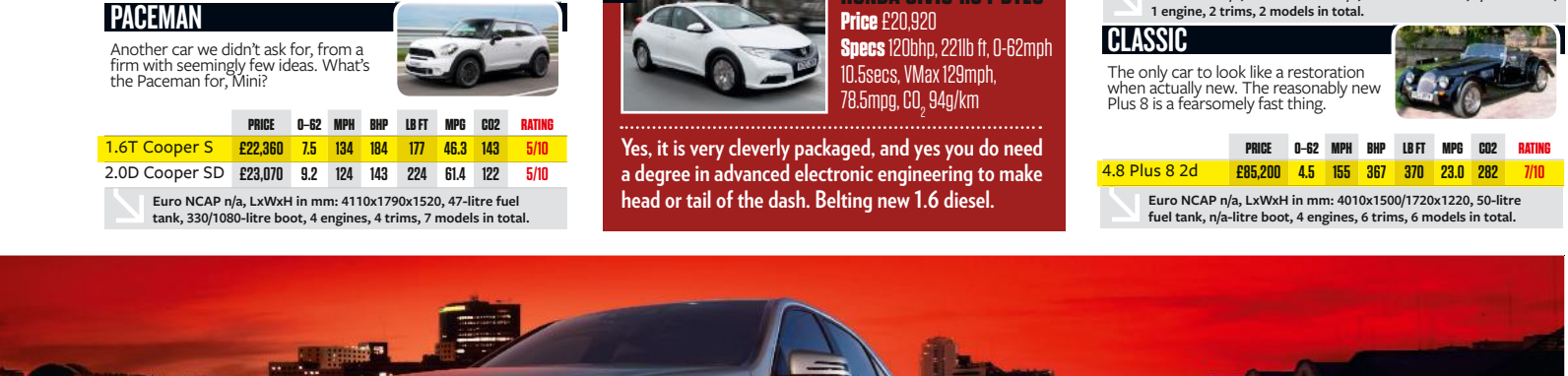
CLASSIC



The only car to look like a restoration when actually new. The reasonably new Plus 8 is a fearsomely fast thing.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
4.8 Plus 8 2d	£85,200	4.5	155	367	370	23.0	282	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4010x1500/1720x1220, 50-litre fuel tank, n/a-litre boot, 4 engines, 6 trims, 6 models in total.



regulated test data are provided for comparison purposes and actual performance will depend on driving style, road conditions and other non-technical factors. The E-Class range starts from £32,750.00 on-the-road. Model featured is a combinations of features/options may not be available. Please contact your local Retailer for availability. Prices correct at time of print 06/14.

TOPGEAR TOP FIVE

UTILITY SUVs

1 LAND ROVER DISCOVERY 3.0 SDV6 XS



Price £46,865 **Specs** 252bhp, 442lb ft, 0-62mph 8.8secs, VMax 112mph, 35.3mpg, CO2 213g/km

Getting better and better with each generation. Seven seats, off-road ability, comfort and just enough luxe make this the thinking man's Range Rover.

2 LAND ROVER DEFENDER 90 STATION WAGON



Price £26,265 **Specs** 120bhp, 266lb ft, 0-62mph 15.8secs, VMax 90mph, 27.7mpg, CO2 269g/km

Aged workhorse of the Land Rover stable, but not quite ready for the knackers yard yet. An icon, and one that will be extremely hard to replace.

3 DACIA DUSTER ACCESS 1.6 4X4



Price £10,995 **Specs** 104bhp, 109lb ft, 0-62mph 12.8secs, VMax 99mph, 35.3mpg, CO2 185g/km

Britain's cheapest four-wheel drive, and no less brilliant because of that. Not much in the way of standard kit, but then who cares for £11k?

4 SUBARU FORESTER 2.0D XC



Price £26,995 **Specs** 145bhp, 258lb ft, 0-62mph 10.4secs, VMax 116mph, 47.1mpg, CO2 158g/km

The modern Forester has grown-up since the mock-rally, turbo'd days of the late nineties, but the low centre of gravity still makes it a TG favourite.

5 MERCEDES G-CLASS 350 BLUETEC



Price £83,830 **Specs** 208bhp, 398lb ft, 0-62mph 9.1secs, VMax 108mph, 25.2mpg, CO2 295g/km

Along with cockroaches, probably about the only thing capable of withstanding nuclear fallout. Epic off-road, very suspect on-road.

AERO 8



Some ash still lurks in the frame of this sports car. Creaks a bit, but otherwise not as antiquated as you might think.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
4.8 V8 Coupe	£99,950	4.5	170	367	370	23.0	282	8/10
4.8 V8 S'sports	£126,900	4.5	170	367	370	26.0	256	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4120x1770x1200, 57-litre fuel tank, 227-litre boot, 1 engine, 2 trims, 2 models in total.

NISSAN

Clarkson on Nissan:
"The GT-R is quite exciting. It tries to offset the rest of the range, which isn't."

NOTE



New nose, same commodious cabin. Otherwise precious little to tempt Doris out of her Jazz.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.2 DIG-S	£14,495	11.7	112	98	108	65.7	99	5/10
1.5 dCi	£14,100	11.9	111	90	147	78.4	95	5/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★LxWxH in mm: 4100x1695x1536, 41-litre fuel tank, 325-litre boot, 3 engines, 4 trims, 12 models in total.

JUKE



Clever little SUV crossover that looks like... well, looks like nothing else we can think of. Very nice, if a little odd.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 94 Visia	£13,420	12.0	104	94	103	47.1	138	5/10
1.2 DiG-T 115	£15,320	10.8	111	115	140	51.4	126	6/10
1.6 DiG-T 190	£21,420	8.4	124	190	184	38.2	169	6/10
1.5 dCi Visia	£15,340	11.2	109	110	192	70.6	104	5/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★LxWxH in mm: 4135x1765x1565, 46-litre fuel tank, 350/1181-litre boot, 5 engines, 4 trims, 15 models in total.

LEAF



The first mass-produced leccy car. It's impressive, but our infrastructure needs sorting before it really makes sense.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
EV Visia	£25,990	11.9	90	109	206	n/a	0	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★LxWxH in mm: 4450x1780x1570, no fuel tank, 330/680-litre boot, 1 electric motor, 3 trims, 3 models in total.

DATA IN NUMBERS: RANGE REVIEW

→ **Leaf range, full charge** 123 miles
→ **Micra 1.2 DiG-S range, full tank** 593 miles

QASHQAI



Nissan started the Qashqai craze, so the new one is predictably safe. It's better than ever for, you know, family stuff.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.2 DiG-T Visia	£17,595	11.3	114	115	140	50.4	132	8/10
1.6 dCi Visia	£20,595	10.5	118	130	236	64.2	115	8/10
1.6 dCi 4WD Ac'	£25,695	10.9	118	130	236	57.6	129	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★LxWxH in mm: 4370x1800x1595, 65-litre fuel tank, 430-litre boot, 3 engines, 4 trims, 14 models in total.

X-TRAIL



The X-Trail used to be a rufty-tufty thing. Now it's been emasculated. As a result, we think it's better. Fickle, us?

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 dCi 130 Visia	£22,995	10.5	117	130	236	57.6	129	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4643x1820x1695, 60-litre fuel tank, 135(550)/1982-litre boot, 1 engine, 4 trims, 14 models in total.

370Z



Z still looks great, but where's the fire-breathing manliness of the old one, Nissan? GT86 has highlighted its shortcomings.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
3.7 V6 Standard	£26,995	5.3	155	326	269	26.9	249	7/10
3.7 V6 GT R'ster	£36,495	5.5	155	326	269	25.2	262	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4250x1850x1320, 72-litre fuel tank, 235-litre boot, 1 engine, 2 trims, 4 models in total.

GT-R



Cheap at twice the price, the GT-R is an uber-techy, violently capable, ruthlessly rapid speed machine. Drive one.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
3.8 V6 550	£78,020	2.8	196	550	466	24.0	275	10/10
3.8 V6 Nismo	£125,000	<2.7	TBA	600	466	TBA	TBA	10/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4670x1895x1370, 74-litre fuel tank, 315-litre boot, 2 engines, 2 trims, 2 models in total.

DATA IN NUMBERS: PRICE POINTS

→ **2014 Nissan GT-R** £78,020
→ **2014 Nissan GT-R Nismo** £125,000 (+ 60%)

NOBLE

Clarkson on Noble:
"Designed in Leicestershire by blokes using bits of the industrial revolution. Despite that, brilliant."

M600



Powered by a twin turbo Volvo XC90 V8, the old school M600 is epically fast and amazingly supple. Major want.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
4.4 V8 T 650	£200,000	3.0	225	650	604	n/a	n/a	9/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4360x1910x1120, 68-litre fuel tank, n/a-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

PAGANI

Clarkson on Pagani:
"Paganis are everything a supercar should be: epically fast and madder than a stabbed badger."

HUAYRA



The name is what you exclaim when you nail the throttle in this twin turbo V12'd, active aero'd hypercar.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
6.0 V12	£990,000	n/a	230	730	811	23.5	300	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4610x2040x1170, 85-litre fuel tank, n/a-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.



Official fuel consumption figures for the Audi A6 Saloon S line 2.0 TDI ultra 190PS 7-speed S tronic in mpg (l/100km): Urban 55.4 (5.1), Extra Urban 72.4 (3.9), Combined S line 2.0 TDI ultra 190PS 7-speed S tronic. Contract hire offer based on 3 years, 10,000 miles per annum. Initial rental of £2,154.00 followed by 35 monthly rentals of £359.00. Excess mileage charge is 6.0p per mile. All participating Centres only for vehicles ordered before 30 June 2014 and delivered by 30 September 2014 (subject to availability). Offer may be varied or withdrawn at any time. Specification correct at time of publication.

PEUGEOT



Clarkson on Peugeot:
"208 GTi might be the beginning of a revolution at Peugeot. Time and the eurozone crisis will tell."

108



Small, capable city car. And we haven't driven it yet. But Toyota is involved so expect reliability. And later, recalls.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.0 69 Access 3d	£8,245	14.3	99	69	70	68.9	95	TBA

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 3475x1615x1460, 35-litre fuel tank, 196/780-litre boot, 2 engines, 4 trims, 12 models in total.

DATA IN NUMBERS: PRICE POINTS

- → Price, entry-level Peugeot 107 **£8,220**
- → Price, entry-level Peugeot 108 **£8,245**
- → Price, entry-level Citroen C1 **£8,245**

208



Congratulations Peugeot, it's only taken you 25 years to reimagine the 205. 208 is light, likeable and French. In a good way.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 XY 3d	£17,695	8.1	134	156	191	48.7	135	6/10
1.6 THP GTi	£18,895	6.8	143	200	202	47.9	139	7/10
1.6 e-HDi Allure	£16,445	12.2	115	92	169	74.3	98	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3970x1740x1460, 50-litre fuel tank, 285/1152-litre boot, 9 engines, 7 trims, 43 models in total.

308



Well, knock us down with a feather, out of nowhere, Peugeot gives us a hatch well driving and owning. Gobs smacked.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 THP Allure	£19,750	8.4	132	156	177	48.7	134	8/10
1.6 e-HDi Active	£18,695	10.2	121	115	199	76.3	95	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4253x1804x1457, 53-litre fuel tank, 470/1309-litre boot, 9 engines, 4 trims, 23 models in total.

508



Peugeot's replacement for the 407 is actually quite nice in an average sort of way. Highlight is the low-CO_2 e-HDi.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 HDi Allure	£24,795	9.6	140	163	255	57.6	129	5/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4790x1850x1460, 72-litre fuel tank, 473-litre boot, 8 engines, 4 trims, 22 models in total.

RCZ



Peugeot's stunning coupe marks a renaissance. Good-looking, fun to drive, tolerable value. Now go buy an Audi TT.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 THP 200 GT	£26,900	7.6	146	200	206	42.1	155	7/10
RCZ R	£32,000	5.9	155	270	244	44.8	145	7/10
2.0 HDi 163 GT	£26,350	8.7	137	163	240	53.2	139	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4290x1850x1350, 55-litre fuel tank, 309-litre boot, 4 engines, 3 trims, 6 models in total.

TOPGEAR TOP TEN

10,000-MILE FUEL BILL


Porsche Boxster GTS
£1879

VS


BMW M4
£1838


Porsche 911 Carrera
£1879

VS


BMW i8
£522


VW Golf R
£1482

VS


BMW M235i
£1691


Lamborghini Huracan
£2611

VS


Audi R8 V10
£3105


Caterham Seven 160
£1024

VS


Ford Fiesta ST
£1232

2008



High-rise supermini that's increasingly popular in the wake of the Juke. A little mash-up which just about works.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.2 VTi Access+	£12,995	13.5	105	82	87	57.6	114	5/10
1.6 e-HDi Feline	£19,445	10.4	117	115	199	70.6	106	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4160x1740x1560, 50-litre fuel tank, 360/1172-litre boot, 5 engines, 4 trims, 15 models in total.

5008



Large seven-seat MPV that looks pretty good and does everything a family might want, although it's less brilliant to drive.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 HDi Active	£22,395	10.0	118	150	250	47.9	154	5/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4530x1830x1640, 60-litre fuel tank, 679/2506-litre boot, 6 engines, 4 trims, 16 models in total.

PORSCHE



Clarkson on Porsche:
"Hammond has a Porsche. So does May. Under Cool Wall rules, that makes them as cool as plastic shoes."

BOXSTER



The best sports-roadster on sale, bar none. Don't shop anywhere else if you can afford it. S betters Jaguar F-Type...

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.7 265	£38,810	5.8	164	265	206	34.4	192	9/10
3.4 315 S	£47,035	5.1	173	315	265	32.1	205	9/10
3.4 GTS	£52,879	5.0	174	330	272	31.4	211	9/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4370x1800x1280, 64-litre fuel tank, 130/280-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 3 models in total.

CAYMAN



The 911's poor relation? Only if you're a social climber. The Cayman is the purer, more satisfying driver's car.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.7 275	£39,694	5.7	165	275	213	34.4	192	8/10
3.4 325 S	£48,783	5.0	175	325	273	32.1	206	9/10
3.4 GTS	£55,397	4.9	177	340	280	31.4	211	9/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4380x1800x1300, 64-litre fuel tank, 150/425-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 3 models in total.

911



Styling is evolutionary and cabin shared with Panamera, but this is Porsche proving it's the world's best sports car builder.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
3.4 Carrera 4	£78,365	4.9	177	350	287	30.4	219	8/10
3.4 Carrera Cab'	£82,169	5.0	178	350	287	30.7	217	8/10
3.8 Carrera S	£83,545	4.5	188	400	324	29.7	224	8/10
3.8 GT3	£100,540	3.5	196	475	324	22.7	289	10/10
3.8 Turbo S	£142,120	3.1	197	560	552	29.1	227	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4490x1800x1300, 64-litre fuel tank, 135-litre boot, 5 engines, 9 trims, 15 models in total.

Up to 64.2 mpg
CO_2 from 114g/km
From £359 per month*
Audi
Vorsprung durch Technik

The Audi A6 Saloon ultra S line from £359 per month*. Business users only plus VAT at 20%. Precision-engineered value from Audi.

64.2 (4.4). CO_2 emissions: 114g/km. Standard EU Test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. *Plus VAT and initial rental. Business users only. Based on a new Audi A6 Saloon figures shown exclude VAT. Further charges may be payable when vehicle is returned. Finance example excludes metallic paint at £655.00 RRP as shown. Indemnities may be required. Subject to status. Available to over 18s from Prices quoted and examples shown are correct at time of publication (June 2014). Terms and conditions apply. Audi Finance, Freepost Audi Finance. audi.co.uk/offers

918 SPYDER



Quite possibly the most complex car in the world. If anyone can make it work, Porsche can. Also quite fast.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
918	£659,775	2.8	211	885	801	85	79	10/10
918 Weissach	£720,914	2.8	211	885	801	85	79	10/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4643x1940x1167, 70-litre fuel tank, 110-litre boot, 1 engine, 2 trims, 2 models in total.

PANAMERA



Four-door, four-seat family Porsche. Very fast, quite hard to fall in love with, apart from the rather outrageous GTS model.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
4.8 V8 GTS	£93,391	4.5	179	400	368	25.4	260	7/10
4.8 V8 Turbo S	£131,152	3.8	192	570	552	27.7	239	6/10
3.0 V6 Diesel	£65,289	6.8	150	250	405	43.5	172	6/10
E-Hybrid	£89,327	5.5	167	338	325	91.0	71	6/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4970x1930x1420, 80-litre fuel tank, 445/1263-litre boot, 8 engines, 8 trims, 9 models in total.

MACAN



Porsche's Range Rover Evoque is a tidy looker that has image by the bucket-load. Thus, soon to be everywhere...

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
S	£43,300	5.4	157	340	339	32.5	204	8/10
Turbo	£59,300	4.8	165	400	405	31.7	208	8/10
S Diesel	£43,300	6.3	142	258	427	46.3	159	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4684x1923x1624, 65-litre fuel tank, 500/1500-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 3 models in total.

CAYENNE



Sporting SUV that's very capable and now better to look at. It no longer has a ride that ruins your spine, either.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
4.8 V8 420 GTS	£68,117	5.7	162	420	379	26.4	251	8/10
3.0 V6 Diesel	£47,390	7.6	137	245	405	39.2	189	8/10
4.2 V8 Diesel S	£59,053	5.7	156	382	626	34.0	218	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4840x1940x1710, 100-litre fuel tank, 670/1780-litre boot, 7 engines, 5 trims, 7 models in total.

RADICAL



Clarkson on Radical:
"A skateboard for those with reactions of a coffee-doused mongoose and a concrete spine."

SR3



Few are as extreme, and few cope as badly with British roads. A car for dry, smooth, clear tarmac. Such as a track.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 245 Std	£69,850	3.4	160	245	265	n/a	n/a	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4100x1790x1130, 50-litre fuel tank, n/a-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

RXC



Now here's a trick: Radical's second road car has much more power and a roof, but is far tamer to drive.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
3.7 V6	£94,500	2.8	175	350	320	n/a	n/a	8/10
3.5 V6 EcoBoost	£107,500	2.6	185	454	500	n/a	n/a	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4300x1960x1127, 50-litre fuel tank, n/a-litre boot, 2 engines, 1 trim, 2 models in total.

RENAULT



Clarkson on Renault:
"Renaults are blessed with the sort of jaunty French-ness that helps you forgive the bits that fall off."

TWIZY



God knows what's got into us, but we badly want a Twizy. Mainly to sneak up on other cars in electrical silence.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
13kW EV	£7,595	n/a	50	17	42	n/a	0	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 2340x1240x1460, no fuel tank, 31-litre boot, 1 electric motor, 3 trims, 3 models in total.

TOPGEAR TOP TEN

MOST POWERFUL NA CARS UNDER £75K



1 Mercedes C 63 AMG Edition 507
507bhp



2 Corvette C7 Stingray
466bhp



3 Audi RS 5
450bhp



4 Audi RS 4
450 bhp



5 Grand Cherokee SRT8
441bhp



6 Chevrolet Camaro
432bhp



7 Mercedes SLK 55 AMG
421bhp



8 Porsche Cayenne GTS
420bhp



9 Infiniti QX70
390bhp



10 Lexus LS 460
382bhp

ZOE



This could be the point where electric cars start to prove themselves. The Zoe looks great and costs little.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
EV Expression	£18,443	13.5	84	88	162	n/a	0	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4090x1730x1560, no fuel tank, 328/1225-litre boot, 1 electric motor, 3 trims, 3 models in total.

CLIO



A return to form for Renault. Clio 4 is good-looking and drives well. Just avoid the gutless lower-powered 1.2 petrol.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
0.9 TCe Dyn	£14,195	12.2	113	90	99	62.8	104	7/10
1.2 GT-Line	£17,395	9.9	124	120	140	54.3	120	6/10
1.6T RS 200	£18,995	6.7	142	200	177	44.8	144	7/10
1.5 dCi Exp+	£14,545	12.0	112	90	162	88.3	83	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4060x1730x1450, 45-litre fuel tank, 320/1200-litre boot, 4 engines, 6 trims, 15 models in total.

DATA IN NUMBERS: HOT HATCH HERO

- → **Clio 1.2 75 0-62mph** 15.4 seconds
- → **Renaultsport Clio 200 Turbo 0-62mph** 6.7 seconds
- → **Time difference** 8.7 seconds

CAPTUR



Renault's take on the Juke that's, perhaps unsurprisingly, more style than substance. Clio for us, please.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
0.9 TCe Exp+	£13,995	12.6	106	90	99	56.5	115	7/10
1.5 dCi Exp	£13,895	12.6	106	90	162	76.4	95	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4120x1780x1560, 45-litre fuel tank, 377/1235-litre boot, 3 engines, 4 trims, 10 models in total.

MEGANE



It's lost the fat arse, which is a good thing. Build quality is much improved, driving manners are above average, too.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
Renaultsport 3d	£26,925	6.0	158	265	266	37.7	174	9/10
1.5 dCi Exp'	£18,245	12.1	118	110	192	80.7	90	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4300x1810x1450, 60-litre fuel tank, 372/1162-litre boot, 7 engines, 5 trims, 41 models in total.

SCENIC/XMOD



The XMOD is a Scenic with extra offroad-erishness. They've tried this before with the RX4. It didn't work then, either.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.5 dCi XMOD	£21,095	12.5	112	110	191	68.9	105	6/10
1.6 dCi Dyn' Gr	£23,395	10.3	121	130	236	64.2	114	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4370x1850x1660, 60-litre fuel tank, 470/1870-litre boot, 5 engines, 2 trim, 8 models in total.

ROLLS-ROYCE



Clarkson on Rolls-Royce:
"BMW's clearly understood that a Rolls-Royce should be magnificent and gracious, but slightly vulgar too."

GHOST



A cut-price Rolls? Eh, no. Luxury here by the decanter-load, and calling it small is like saying you own a small estate.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
6.6 V12 EWB	£229,725	4.8	155	563	575	20.6	319	9/10
6.6 V12	£201,475	4.9	155	563	575	20.8	317	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 5400/5570x1950x1550, 82-litre fuel tank, 490-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 2 models in total.

PHANTOM S2



Luxury British land-yacht which manages to drive as well as it soothes. Cars come no more opulent than this.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
6.75 V12 EWB	£357,875	6.1	150	453	531	18.9	349	9/10
6.75 V12 D'head	£352,745	5.8	150	453	531	19.1	347	8/10
6.75 V12 Coupe	£333,155	5.8	155	453	531	19.1	347	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 5830/6090x1990x1640, 100-litre fuel tank, 460-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 4 models in total.

WRAITH



If the Grand Tour still existed, this is how the aristocracy would get to Vienna. A majestic symbol of Britain.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
6.6 V12	£235,000	4.4	155	624	590	20.2	327	9/10

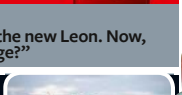
Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 5269x1947x1507, 82-litre fuel tank, 470-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

SEAT



Clarkson on Seat:
"Seat has turned a corner with the new Leon. Now, what about the rest of the range?"

MII

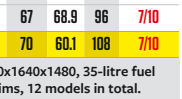


Don't go expecting loads of Spanish flair here. VW doesn't permit that. This is just a very sensible Up-based city car.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.0 Eco 3d	£9,420	14.4	100	60	67	68.9	96	7/10
1.0 75 Sport 3d	£10,240	13.2	106	75	70	60.1	108	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3560x1640x1480, 35-litre fuel tank, 238/951-litre boot, 2 engines, 5 trims, 12 models in total.

IBIZA

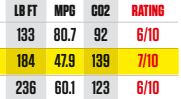


Looks sharp, and pricing is good, but hasn't quite made the leap that the Leon has. Ride could be better.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.2 TDI Eco S 5d	£14,125	13.9	107	75	133	80.7	92	6/10
1.4 Cupra SC	£18,770	6.9	142	180	184	47.9	139	7/10
2.0 TDI FR 3d SC	£16,895	8.2	130	143	236	60.1	123	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4030x1690x1430, 45-litre fuel tank, 284-litre boot, 9 engines, 5 trims, 34 models in total.

LEON

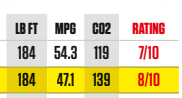


Seat seems to have upped its game with the all-new Leon. Just as well, VW doesn't like a failure.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 TSI SE	£18,020	8.2	131	140	184	54.3	119	7/10
1.8 TSI FR	£20,770	7.5	140	180	184	47.1	139	8/10
2.0 TSI Cupra SC	£26,945	5.8	155	280	258	42.8	154	7/10
2.0 TDI FR	£22,555	7.5	142	184	280	65.7	112	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4260x1780x1460, 50-litre fuel tank, 380-litre boot, 7 engines, 5 trims, 37 models in total.

ALHAMBRA



One of the very best MPVs around. If you don't want an S-Max, this is a worthy alternative. Lots of seats, lots of space.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 TDI Eco' S	£25,345	10.9	120	140	236	50.4	146	7/10

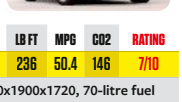
Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4850x1900x1720, 70-litre fuel tank, 267/2297-litre boot, 2 engines, 3 trims, 5 models in total.

SKODA



Clarkson on Skoda:
"Almost without anyone noticing, Skoda has come up with a range of good, honest excellentness."

CITIGO



Of course you recognise it – the Citigo is a lightly altered VW Up. Which makes it a very fine city car indeed.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.0 60 SE 3d	£9,420	14.4	100	60	70	68.9	95	7/10
1.0 75 Eleg 5d	£10,740	13.2	107	75	70	67.3	98	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3560x1640x1480, 35-litre fuel tank, 251/951-litre boot, 2 engines, 4 trims, 12 models in total.

FABIA



Skoda's baby has got all the latest VW engines, build quality is good and it's priced well. You'd have one over a Polo.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.2 TSI Monte	£14,730	10.1	119	105	129	53.3	124	7/10
1.4 TSI 180 vRS	£17,555	7.3	139	180	184	45.6	148	6/10
1.6 TDI SE Est	£14,805	12.7	110	90	169	67.3	109	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4000x1640x1500, 45-litre fuel tank, 300/1163-litre boot, 9 engines, 8 trims, 58 models in total.

HEROES

VOLVO XC90

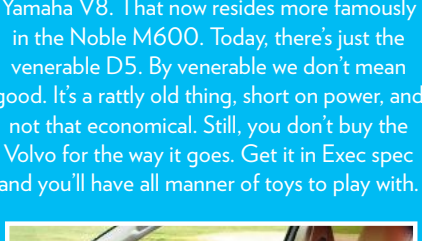


WHY IS IT SPECIAL?

You might imagine we're honouring the XC90 simply on the strength of its sheer staying power – it has, after all, been on sale since 2002. But when the concept is so right in the first place, why bother changing it? Buyers certainly don't care – the XC90 had its biggest sales years in 2010 and 2011, and there's still nothing on the market, that offers a better packaged, more user-friendly seven-seat layout.

WHICH TO HAVE?

It used to be available with several engines, including, somewhat improbably, a 4.4-litre Yamaha V8. That now resides more famously in the Noble M600. Today, there's just the venerable D5. By venerable we don't mean good. It's a rattly old thing, short on power, and not that economical. Still, you don't buy the Volvo for the way it goes. Get it in Exec spec and you'll have all manner of toys to play with.





SPECS

ENGINE/GEARBOX 2400cc, D5, 200bhp, 310lb ft
PERFORMANCE 0–62mph in 9.7seconds, top speed 127mph, 34.4 mpg, 215 g/km
WEIGHT 2129kg **PRICE** £45,730 (Executive)

OCTAVIA



Skoda, VW's practicality-obsessed arm, gives you all the car you'll ever need. Provided you're slightly dull.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.2 TSI SE	£17,660	9.9	122	105	129	57.7	114	7/10
2.0 TSI vRS	£23,755	6.8	154	220	258	45.6	142	7/10
1.6 TDI SE	£19,710	10.4	121	105	184	74.3	99	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4660x1810x1460, 50-litre fuel tank, 590/1740-litre boot, 7 engines, 7 trims, 30 models in total.

SUPERB



The fact the name doesn't sound too ironic tells you all you need to know. Huge cabin, ace quality, bargain pricing.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.8 TSI SE Est	£23,010	8.3	137	160	184	40.9	160	8/10
1.6 TDI S	£20,200	12.2	122	105	184	67.3	109	8/10
2.0 TDI S Est	£21,615	10.1	131	140	236	61.4	121	9/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4833x1817x1462, 60-litre fuel tank, 595/1865-litre boot, 7 engines, 4 trims, 42 models in total.

DATA IN NUMBERS: A LARGE ESTATE?

→ **Skoda Superb estate max boot capacity** 1,865litres
→ **Volvo V70** 1,600 litres
→ **Mercedes E-Class** 1,950 litres

YETI



Skoda's SUV-lite is a favourite of TopGear. It looks chunky, acts chunky and drives chunkily, too. Facelift spoils purity though.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.2 TSI 105 S	£16,715	11.4	110	105	129	46.3	142	7/10
1.6 TDI GreenII	£18,205	12.1	109	105	184	61.4	119	7/10
2.0 TDI Eleg 4x4	£24,640	8.4	125	170	258	49.6	149	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4222x1793x1645, 55-litre fuel tank, 322/1760-litre boot, 6 engines, 4 trims, 31 models in total.

SMART



Clarkson on Smart:
"Smarts are like Hillary Clinton. Clever, but you wouldn't want to."

FORTWO



Tiny city car that you can park horizontally to the kerb. About as dynamic to drive as a pair of worn-out slippers.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.0 mhd 71	£10,330	13.7	90	72	68	65.7	98	6/10
1.0 84 cabrio	£12,150	10.7	90	85	89	57.6	115	6/10

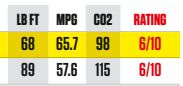
Euro NCAP ★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 2700x1560x1540, 33-litre fuel tank, 220/340-litre boot, 3 engines, 2 trims, 6 models in total.

SSANGYONG



Clarkson on SsangYong:
"SsangYongs are designed by a Brit who clearly lost his glasses when he arrived in Korea."

KORANDO



Launched at the same time as the Range Rover Evoque but not proving quite as popular. Inexplicable, surely?

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0D 2WD SE	£14,995	9.9	116	151	266	47.1	147	4/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4410x1830x1680, 57-litre fuel tank, 486-litre boot, 2 engines, 3 trims, 4 models in total.

SUBARU



Clarkson on Subaru:
"The Outback is as pleasant as walking a Labrador. The XV is the stick it picks up on the way round."

OUTBACK



Outback does everything you could want of a car, but where's the excitement? And the styling for that matter?

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0D SE	£30,070	9.7	120	150	258	44.1	167	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4780x1780x1540, 65-litre fuel tank, 526/1677-litre boot, 1 engines, 1 trims, 1 model in total.

WRX STI



The Scooby turbo is back, minus the Impreza name but with the same huge wing and heinous thirst.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.5T STi	£28,995	5.2	159	300	300	27.2	242	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4595x1795x1475, 77-litre fuel tank, 460-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

BRZ



An entirely excellent small, sharp coupe that's not at all like an Impreza. In a good way. Rather like a Toyota GT86...

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 SE Lux 2d	£23,995	7.6	130	200	151	36.2	181	9/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4240x1780x1430, 55-litre fuel tank, 245-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

DATA IN NUMBERS: BAG A BARGAIN

- → **Subaru BRZ price, pre-April 2014** £26,495
- → **Subaru BRZ price, post-April 2014** £23,995 (-£2,500)

FORESTER



Lacks school run glam, but that's not the point - this is rugged transport. Pity the 240bhp XT Turbo is so ignorable.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0T XT	£26,995	7.5	137	240	258	33.2	197	6/10
2.0D XC	£26,995	10.2	118	147	258	47.9	156	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4560x1780x1700, 64-litre fuel tank, 450/1610-litre boot, 3 engines, 4 trims, 6 models in total.

SUZUKI



Clarkson on Suzuki:
"God knows where their dealers are. But if you do find one, test drive the Swift. It's a great little car."

SWIFT



By not trying too hard, this no-nonsense supermini succeeds in being really rather good. The Sport is back, too. Rejoice!

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 136 Sport 3d	£13,999	8.7	121	136	118	44.1	147	7/10
1.2 SZ3 5d	£12,619	12.3	103	94	87	56.5	116	6/10
1.3 DDiS SZ4 5d	£15,139	12.7	103	75	140	67.3	109	5/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3850x1700x1510, 45-litre fuel tank, 213/562-litre boot, 3 engines, 4 trims, 8 models in total.

DATA IN NUMBERS: PUT THE BOOT IN

- → **Suzuki Swift boot space** 213 litres
- → **Mini Hatch boot space** 211 litres

S-CROSS



Out with the SX4, in with the S-Cross. Same Qashqai-rivalling concept, same slight surprise at how decent it is.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 DDiS SZ3	£16,999	12.0	111	120	236	67.2	110	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4300x1765x1575, 50-litre fuel tank, 430-litre boot, 2 engines, 4 trims,11 models in total.

TOYOTA



Clarkson on Toyota:
"I liked the GT86 so much that I made it my Car of the Year. That was a first for a Toyota."

AYGO



Cheap and cheerful runabout shared with the French. This one got the good genes, so it's the best of the three.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.0 68 Mode 5d	£10,095	14.2	97	68	68	65.7	99	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3420x1620x1470, 35-litre fuel tank, 139/780-litre boot, 1 engine, 3 trims, 6 models in total.

IQ



Dinky three-and-a-half person city car designed to take on the Smart Fortwo. It wins, if you have half a mate.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.33 IQ3 3d	£12,995	11.8	106	98	92	57.6	113	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 2990x1680x1500, 32-litre fuel tank, 32/242-litre boot, 1 engine, 3 trims, 3 models in total.

YARIS



A key car for Toyota in Europe. The engine choice is reasonable, the Hybrid is OK, but it's not as clever as it used to be.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.33 Icon 5d	£13,970	11.7	109	98	92	52.3	123	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3890x1700x1510, 42-litre fuel tank, 347/768-litre boot, 4 engines, 5 trims, 11 models in total.

PRIUS



The iconic hybrid is clever, clean and economical, especially when it comes to tax. Want seven seats? Try a Prius Plus.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.8 Plug-in	£33,245	13.1	111	98	104	134.5	49	6/10
1.8 Prius+	£26,145	11.8	105	138	105	68.9	96	5/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4460x1750x1490 (Prius+: 4635x1805x1775, 45-litre fuel tank, 445/658-litre boot (Prius+: 505/1425), 1 engine, 4 trims, 6 models in total.

AVENSIS



There's little wrong with the Avensis, just like there's little wrong with your dad's M&S jumper. Mmm, woolly.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.2 D-4D Icon	£23,450	8.9	130	150	250	52.3	143	5/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4700x1810x1480, 60-litre fuel tank, 510/1609-litre boot, 4 engines, 4 trims, 26 models in total.

GT86



The best Toyota in donkeys (with a nod of thanks to Subaru). Light 'n' lithe coupe proves that 200bhp is enough.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 GT86	£25,110	7.7	140	200	151	36.2	181	9/10
2.0 TRD	£31,610	7.7	140	200	151	36.2	181	8/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4240x1780x1430, 50-litre fuel tank, 245-litre boot, 1 engine, 2 trims, 2 models in total.

VERSO



Revised last year and does an OK job of moving offspring and their snotty gub-bins, but outclassed by the Ford C-Max.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 D-4D Icon	£19,990	12.7	115	114	199	62.0	119	5/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4440x1790x1620, 60-litre fuel tank, 178/1693-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 8 models in total.

RAV4



New RAV4 is crisper and sharper than before. But it's still not as funky as it used to be. Where did the fun go, Toyota?

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.2 D-4D AWD	£26,495	9.6	118	150	250	49.6	149	5/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4570x1840x1660, 60-litre fuel tank, 550/2080-litre boot, 3 engines, 3 trims, 8 models in total.

LAND CRUISER



Happy in the hands of armed militia and jolly farmers from Lincolnshire. One of the most robust off-roaders ever.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
3.0 D-4D Icon	£47,495	11.7	109	171	302	34.9	213	5/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4760x1885x1890, 87-litre fuel tank, 403/1695-litre boot, 1 engine, 3 trims, 3 models in total.

VAUXHALL



Clarkson on Vauxhall:
"I don't know how this happened, but Vauxhalls have become rather interesting to look at. If not to drive."

ADAM



They called it the Adam. They should have called it the Cheryl. Cute, but short of panache. Blame its upbringing.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 100 S/S Slam	£14,445	11.5	115	100	96	55.4	119	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3740x1680x1590, 45-litre fuel tank, 170/663-litre boot, 3 engines, 5 trims, 17 models in total.

CORSA



Used to be good, but Corsa has fallen off the radar. Facelift alters this, but competitors are still, well, competitive.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.2 SE 5d	£15,035	12.7	107	85	85	51.4	129	5/10
1.6T VXR Club'	£22,400	6.5	143	205	205	37.2	178	9/10
1.3 CDTi 95 SE	£16,965	11.5	107	95	155	64.2	115	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4000x1740x1490, 45-litre fuel tank, 285/1100-litre boot, 8 engines, 8 trims, 52 models in total.

ASTRA



Avoid gimmicks such as FlexRide and keep it simple with a 1.4 turbo. Watch the costs: like Focus, this is no longer cheap.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4T Sport GTC	£19,880	9.0	125	140	147	47.9	139	7/10
2.0T VXR GTC	£27,260	5.9	155	280	295	34.9	189	7/10
2.0 BiTurbo	£24,100	7.8	141	195	295	55.4	134	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4420x1810x1510, 56-litre fuel tank, 351/1216-litre boot, 13 engines, 10 trims, 62 models in total.



Defectors willkommen

The Volvo V40 R-Design

Finance subject to status. 5.9% finance available on all V40 models registered by 31st July 2014. *At participating dealers. Example based on mileage of 8000 per annum, excess mileage charge 14.9p per mile. At the end of the Personal Contract Purchase there are three options: (i) pay the Final Payment/GFV (Guaranteed Future Value) to own the vehicle; (ii) part exchange the vehicle, where equity is available; or (iii) return the vehicle. Further charges may be made subject to the condition of the vehicle. Terms and conditions apply. 18s or over. Guarantee/Indemnity may be required. Volvo Car Credit RH1 1SR.

TOPGEAR TOP FIVE SUPERCARS

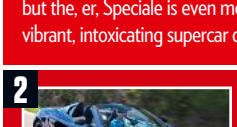
1 FERRARI 458 SPECIALE



Price £208,065 **Specs** 597bhp, 398lb ft, 0-62mph 3.0secs, VMax 202mph, 19.9mpg, CO_2 275g/km

We still think the standard 458 Italia is something special, but the, er, Speciale is even more, er, special. The most vibrant, intoxicating supercar on sale today, in fact.

2 MCLAREN 650S



Price £195,275 **Specs** 650bhp, 500lb ft, 0-62mph 3.0secs, VMax 207mph, 24.2mpg, CO_2 275g/km

The finest British supercar in many, many years. Probably ever, in fact. Newly uprated twin-turbo V8 delivers Maranello-crushing pace. Jolly good

3 FERRARI F12



Price £239,317 **Specs** 730bhp, 508lb ft, 0-62mph 3.1secs, VMax 211mph, 18.8mpg, CO_2 350g/km

The replacement for the awesome 599 is smaller and lighter, but even more powerful and faster. Erk. As good as front-engined, V12 Ferrariness gets. And it gets pretty damn good

4 NOBLE M600



Price £200,000 **Specs** 650bhp, 604lb ft, 0-62mph 3.0secs, VMax 225mph, n/a mpg, CO_2 n/a g/km

Built in a shed in Leicester around the engine from a Volvo XC90. Doesn't sound too promising, but the Noble is as scarily scintillating as nude mako-wrestling, yet friendly, too

5 LAMBORGHINI HURACAN



Price £181,865 **Specs** 610bhp, 413lb ft, 0-62mph 3.2secs, VMax 202mph, 22.6mpg, CO_2 290g/km

Lambo's answer to the 458 and 650S. It's very good but... well, it doesn't deliver the knockout blow we hoped it would. Make it madder please, Lambo

VAUXHALL-VOLKSWAGEN

AMPERA



An electric car that's easy to use and doesn't give you range anxiety (it also contains a 1.4 petrol). Best of breed.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 EREV	£33,750	8.7	100	150	273	235.4	27	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4500x1790x1440, 45-litre fuel tank, 310/1005-litre boot, 1 engine, 2 trims, 2 models in total.

INSIGNIA

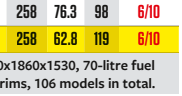


The Vectra replacement that changed its name to avoid incrimination in past crimes. Good to drive, smart design.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.8 T VXR SS	£29,749	5.6	170	325	320	25.7	249	6/10
2.0 CDTi Design	£18,999	10.5	127	140	258	76.3	98	6/10
2.0 CDTi SRi ST	£23,679	9.9	133	163	258	62.8	119	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4830x1860x1530, 70-litre fuel tank, 530/1470-litre boot, 9 engines, 6 trims, 106 models in total.

VXR8

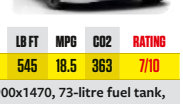


No-nonsense Aussie saloon is back. TG cheers loudly. Particularly as it now has nearly 600bhp... Strewth.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
6.2 V8 GTS	£54,499	4.9	155	584	545	18.5	363	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4940x1900x1470, 73-litre fuel tank, 495-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

MERIVA



Mini-MPV with rear suicide doors to ease child installation and ejection of drunks. Like a Black Cab, minus vomit.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 CDTi 136 S	£19,340	10.4	120	136	236	64.2	116	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4290x1810x1620, 54-litre fuel tank, 400/1500-litre boot, 7 engines, 4 trims, 21 models in total.

ZAFIRA TOURER



Who'd of thunk it? The words 'Zafira' and 'desirable' in the same sentence. Boomerang eyes are locked on S-Max...

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 CDTi SRi	£26,040	9.1	129	165	280	54.3	137	7/10

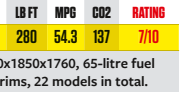
Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4600x1850x1760, 65-litre fuel tank, 420/1420-litre boot, 5 engines, 5 trims, 22 models in total.

VOLKSWAGEN



Clarkson on Volkswagen:
"Duller than James explaining torque, but the Golf is still what you recommend to anyone who asks."

UP



Finally, a VW city car you want to own. Neat styling and packaging to shame Ikea's finest, we like the Up. A lot.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.0 Take Up 3d	£8,635	14.4	99	60	70	62.8	105	8/10
1.0 High Up 3d	£11,245	13.2	106	75	70	60.1	108	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3540x1640x1490, 35-litre fuel tank, 251/951-litre boot, 2 engines, 5 trims, 14 models in total.

XL1



VW has created the world's first eco-spaceship. Beam us up Scotty, we're ready for lift-off at 300mpg.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
0.8 TDI Plug-in	£94,000	11.9	99	75	103	313	24	9/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 3970x1682x1184, 10-litre fuel tank, 120-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 1 model in total.

POLO

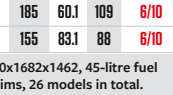


The Golf's mini-me has been facelifted for 2014. It's safe and solid, but now has a (little) bit more soul.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.0 S 3d	£11,100	15.5	100	60	70	60.1	106	6/10
1.2 TSI SE 5d	£19,730	10.8	114	90	118	60.1	107	6/10
1.4 BlueGT 3d	£17,710	7.8	137	150	185	60.1	109	6/10
1.4 TDI SE 5d	£15,275	12.9	108	75	155	83.1	88	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 3970x1682x1462, 45-litre fuel tank, 280/952-litre boot, 7 engines, 6 trims, 26 models in total.

GOLF



The best done better than ever. You need no other hatchback. So don't waste your time looking.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.2 TSI S 5d	£18,640	10.6	118	105	129	57.6	114	8/10
1.4 ACT GT 5d	£23,650	8.4	131	140	184	58.9	112	8/10
2.0 GTI 5d	£26,985	6.5	153	220	258	47.1	139	8/10
1.6 TDI SE 5d	£21,190	10.7	119	105	184	74.3	99	8/10
2.0 TDI GT 3d	£23,500	8.6	134	150	236	68.9	106	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4260x1800x1450, 50-litre fuel tank, 380/1270-litre boot, 12 engines, 6 trims, 29 models in total.

GOLF SV



VW really has called this the Sports Van. It is neither sporty, nor a van. It's a Golf with a bit more. A Golf Plus, if you will.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.2 TSI 85 S	£18,875	13.2	110	85	118	57.6	114	TBA

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4338x1807x1578, 55-litre fuel tank, 500/1520-litre boot, 8 engines, 4 trims, 11 models in total.

BEETLE



A sportier Beetle? Does that make this a cockroach? Never mind, the retro VW now has a smattering of driver appeal.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.2 TSI Design	£18,230	10.9	112	105	129	47.9	137	6/10
1.4 TSI Sport	£22,085	8.3	129	160	177	42.8	153	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4640x1770x1480, 68-litre fuel tank, 510-litre boot, 4 engines, 4 trims, 8 models in total.

PASSAT



The no-nonsense Passat is one of the most crushingly capable cars on sale. Competence incarnate.

	PRICE	0–62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 TSI Exec	£23,040	8.5	137	160	177	45.6	144	6/10
1.6 TDI S	£21,135	12.2	121	105	184	65.7	114	6/10
2.0 TDI Exec est	£25,220	10.0	130	140	236	61.4	120	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4770x1820x1470, 70-litre fuel tank, 565-litre boot, 5 engines, 4 trims, 22 models in total.

- Adaptive Digital Display
- R-Design Sports Upholstery with perforated leather
- 5 spoke diamond cut 17" Ixion alloy wheels
- Up to 83.1 MPG (Combined figure)

SEARCH VOLVO V40

PERSONAL CONTRACT PURCHASE REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLE: V40 D2 R-DESIGN

36 monthly payments	£249
Customer deposit	£1,999
On the road price*	£21,080
Total amount of credit	£18,581
Interest charges	£2,752
Total amount payable	£23,832
Final Payment	£12,369
Finance Deposit Contribution	£500
Duration of agreement (months)	37
Fixed Rate of interest p.a	3.04%
Representative APR	5.9% APR

VOLVO

Official fuel consumption for the Volvo V40 D2 R-Design (manual) in MPG (l/100km): Urban 74.3 (3.8), Extra Urban 91.1 (3.1), Combined 83.1 (3.4). CO_2 Emissions 88g/km. MPG figures are obtained from laboratory testing intended for comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect real driving results.

CC



Facelifted CC has dropped the Passat name, but not the underpinnings. Cheap, able alternative to the Merc CLS.

	PRICE	0-62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 TSI 160	£24,800	8.5	137	160	77	44.8	147	7/10
2.0 TSI 210 GT	£29,020	7.6	150	210	206	38.7	171	7/10
2.0 TDI 177 GT	£29,555	8.6	141	177	258	58.9	125	7/10

Euro NCAP n/a, LxWxH in mm: 4800x1860x1420, 70-litre fuel tank, 532-litre boot, 4 engines, 2 trims, 5 models in total.

DATA IN NUMBERS: WHAT PRICE STYLE?

→ **VW CC 1.4 TSI 160** £24,800
→ **VW Passat 1.4 TSI 160 Exec** £23,040 (-£1,760)

PHAETON

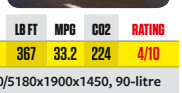


An Audi A8, minus the tosspottery. Makes you feel special, until you sell it for half what you paid six months ago.

	PRICE	0-62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
3.0 TDI V6 LWB	£57,615	8.3	147	240	367	33.2	224	4/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 5060/5180x1900x1450, 90-litre fuel tank, 500-litre boot, 1 engine, 1 trim, 2 models in total.

SCIROCCO

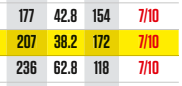


Pretty coupe based on the old-shape Golf. Easy to live with, looks like a supermodel. GT is the one to have.

	PRICE	0-62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 TSI 160	£22,200	8.0	135	160	177	42.8	154	7/10
2.0 TSI 210 GT	£26,760	6.9	149	210	207	38.2	172	7/10
2.0 TDI BMT	£22,970	9.3	129	140	236	62.8	118	7/10
2.0 TDI R Line	£28,355	8.1	138	177	258	55.4	134	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4260x1810x1400, 55-litre fuel tank, 312/1006-litre boot, 6 engines, 4 trims, 10 models in total.

EOS



Meet the goddess of the dawn. Or a folding hard-top Golf, for those not wearing tie-dye and dowsing for water.

	PRICE	0-62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 TSI Sport	£27,310	8.8	134	160	177	41.5	157	6/10
2.0 TSI Sport	£29,310	7.5	147	210	204	39.8	165	5/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4420x1790x1440, 55-litre fuel tank, 205/380-litre boot, 3 engines, 2 trims, 4 models in total.

TOURAN



A dull but capable MPV in a marketplace where that's all you need. Essentially a big, last-gen Golf with seven seats.

	PRICE	0-62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 TSI 140 SE	£23,375	9.5	125	140	162	41.5	159	5/10
1.6 TDI 105 SE	£23,480	12.8	116	105	185	61.4	121	5/10
2.0 TDI 177 DSG	£28,125	8.9	132	177	258	49.6	151	5/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4397x1794x1634, 60-litre fuel tank, 121/1913-litre boot, 6 engines, 3 trims, 14 models in total.

SHARAN



More VW MPV-ery, this time quite good. It's comfortable, practical, seats seven easily and gets decent engines.

	PRICE	0-62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 TSI 150 SE	£27,370	10.7	122	150	177	39.2	167	7/10
2.0 TDI 177 SE	£30,295	9.8	130	177	258	48.7	152	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4850x1900x1720, 70-litre fuel tank, 300/2297-litre boot, 4 engines, 4 trims, 9 models in total.

DATA IN NUMBERS: THE VW MARK-UP

→ **SEAT Alhambra 2.0 TDI 140 S** £25,345
→ **VW Sharan 2.0 TDI 140 S** £26,380 (+ £1,035)

TIGUAN



A baby SUV that's more of a family car than a rough 'n' tough off-roader. Destined for the school run, and why not?

	PRICE	0-62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.4 TSI 4WD S	£23,390	9.2	123	160	177	37.2	178	5/10
2.0 TDI Match	£27,665	8.9	125	177	258	48.7	151	6/10

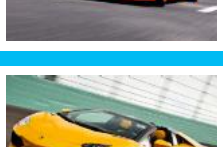
Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4519x1809x1703, 60-litre fuel tank, 470/1510-litre boot, 6 engines, 4 trims, 15 models in total.

TOPGEAR TOP TEN

LEAST ECONOMICAL CARS



1 Bugatti Veyron
10.9mpg



2 Lamborghini Aventador
16.4mpg



3 Bentley Mulsanne
16.8mpg



4 Bentley Flying Spur
17.0mpg



5 Bentley Conti GT
17.1mpg



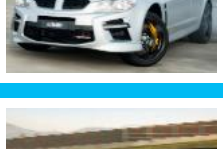
6 Ferrari FF
18.3mpg



7 Vauxhall VXR8 SC
18.5mpg



8 Ferrari F12
18.8mpg



9 Rolls-Royce Phantom II
18.9mpg



10 Audi R8 Plus
19.0mpg

TOUAREG



If a large SUV can be inoffensive, this is it. Shares much with the Cayenne, except the price and cock-wafting image.

	PRICE	0-62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
3.0 TSI Hybrid	£59,875	6.5	149	333	325	34.4	193	5/10
3.0 TDI 245 SE	£43,765	7.8	135	245	406	39.2	189	7/10

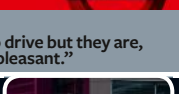
Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4800x1940x1730, 85-litre fuel tank, 493/1555-litre boot, 4 engines, 4 trims, 7 models in total.

VOLVO



Clarkson on Volvo:
"Volvos aren't especially nice to drive but they are, as a general rule, enormously pleasant."

V40

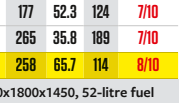


Volvo finally pulls its finger out and gets serious about the premium hatchback. We actually quite like these.

	PRICE	0-62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 T3 150 ES	£20,945	8.4	130	150	177	52.3	124	7/10
2.5 T5 R-Des L	£31,780	6.1	155	254	265	35.8	189	7/10
2.0 D3 150 SE	£23,370	9.1	130	150	258	65.7	114	8/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4370x1800x1450, 52-litre fuel tank, 335/1032-litre boot, 6 engines, 7 trims, 32 models in total.

S60

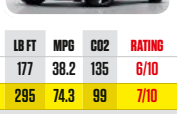


At last, a BMW 3-Series rival that's actually a 3-Series size. Good engines, nice interior, but no 3-Series to drive.

	PRICE	0-62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 T3 Business	£20,550	8.9	127	150	177	38.2	135	6/10
2.0 D4 Business	£23,195	6.9	143	181	295	74.3	99	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4630x1860x1490, 67-litre fuel tank, 339-litre boot, 8 engines, 5 trims, 36 models in total.

V60



Estate version of the S60, only Volvo insists it's not actually an estate, but a 'sportswagon'. It's an estate, Volvo.

	PRICE	0-62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 D4 SE	£29,645	7.2	140	181	295	74.3	99	7/10
Plug-In Hybrid	£49,275	5.8	143	218	325	148.7	48	7/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4628x1865x1484, 67-litre fuel tank, 430/1241-litre boot, 6 engines, 9 trims, 36 models in total.

V70/XC70



Close your eyes and think of a Volvo. And here it is – the 21st century incarnation of the classic estate.

	PRICE	0-62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
1.6 D2 Business	£25,695	12.5	112	115	244	67.3	111	5/10
2.0 D4 Business	£27,195	8.1	137	181	295	65.7	113	5/10
XC70 D5 AWD	£37,995	7.5	130	215	309	53.3	139	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4820x1860x1550, 70-litre fuel tank, 575/1600-litre boot, 5 engines, 4 trims, 28 models in total.

S80



A posh saloon for people who don't want to buy German. It's comfy and well-finished, but zero fun.

	PRICE	0-62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 D4 SE Nav	£32,220	7.9	140	181	295	70.6	104	5/10
2.4 D5 Executive	£39,030	7.6	143	215	309	61.4	159	5/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4850x1860x1490, 70-litre fuel tank, 442-litre boot, 4 engines, 3 trims, 9 models in total.

XC60

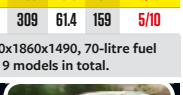


Mid-size SUV stuffed with health and safety kit. It should come in fluoro yellow with a loud hailer as standard.

	PRICE	0-62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.0 D4 SE Lux	£33,810	8.5	130	181	295	62.8	117	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4630x1860x1490, 70-litre fuel tank, 495/1455-litre boot, 3 engines, 4 trims, 14 models in total.

XC90



Perhaps the only SUV that isn't hated by everyone except those inside it. Old, but still brilliantly packaged.

	PRICE	0-62	MPH	BHP	LB FT	MPG	CO2	RATING
2.4 D5 ES	£37,115	9.7	127	200	309	34.4	215	6/10

Euro NCAP ★★★★★ LxWxH in mm: 4810x1900x1780, 68-litre fuel tank, 249/1837-litre boot, 1 engine, 5 trims, 5 models in total.

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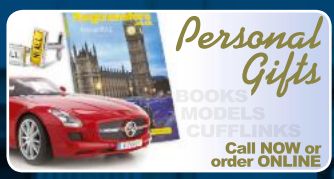
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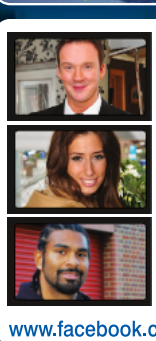
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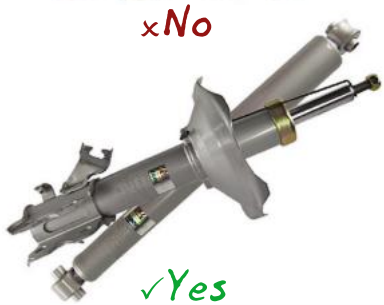

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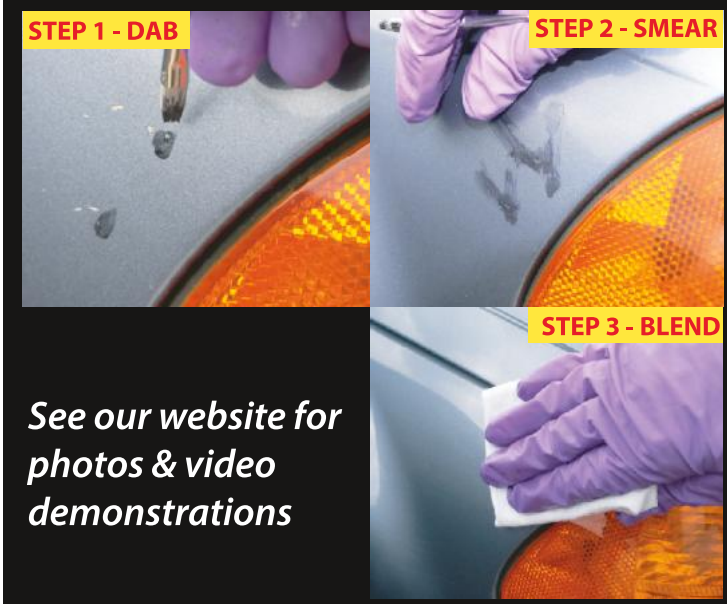
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Indeed, the Piasecki went on to be fitted with ejector seats (imagine being explosively ejected from a helicopter not very far from the ground), lighter, more efficient engines, guns, seating for five and floats for US Navy use (inevitably called the Seageep). It even saw off the rival bids from contemporary projects in the similarly bizarre shapes of the Curtiss-Wright VZ-7 and the Chrysler VZ-6. The Airgeep II VZ-8P – this time powered by a pair of Artouste engines – completed a series of successful tests in the hands of test pilot Tommy Atkins on 15 February 1962. But the hover-Jeep was not to be. Eventually the US Army decided that the "Flying Jeep concept was unsuitable for the modern battlefield", and turned its attention to conventional whirlybirds instead – helicopters flown by proper pilots rather than enthusiastic but lethally untrained infantrymen.



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