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"PROJECTS LIKE THIS ARE ABOUT EXTREME QUALITY DONE EXACTLY YOUR WAY"

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EDITORIAL

Tel +44 (0)20 8267 5630 Email autocar@haymarket.com

Editor Mark Tisshaw

Editorial director, Automotive Jim Holder

Editor-in-chief Steve Cropley

Executive editor Matt Burt

Head of video, features Matt Prior

Managing editor Allan Muir

Reviews editor Will Nightingale

Chief tester Matt Saunders

New cars editor Rory White

Deputy reviews editor Nic Cackett

Senior reviewer John Howell

Reviewers Alan Taylor, Jones, Neil Winn, Doug Revolta

News editor Rachel Burgess

Consumer editor Claire Evans

Used car editor Alex Robbins

Senior staff writer Sam Sheehan

Content editor Darren Moss

SEO manager Jon Cook

SEO executive Oliver Hayman

Senior digital reviews editor Mark Pearson

Digital reviews editor Hemal Mistry

Chief sub-editor Tim Dickson

Sub-editor Alex Moores

Production assistant Kris Culmer

Group art editor Stephen Hopkins

Art editor Sarah Özgü

Deputy art editor Michèle Hall

Junior designer Laura Bajorunaite

Chief photographers John Bradshaw, Stan Papior

Photographers Luc Lacey, Will Williams

Videographers James Holloway, Mitch McCabe

Picture editor Ben Summerell-Youde

Editorial assistants Jimi Beckwith, George Hawkins

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS

European editor Greg Kable

Used car correspondent James Ruppert

Senior contributing writer Andrew Frankel

Senior contributing editor Richard Bremner

Contributing editor Mike Duff

Special correspondents Mauro Calo, Jesse Crosse, Hilton Holloway, Peter Liddiard, Julian Rendell, Richard Webber

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Tel +44 (0)20 8541 3434

Contact Robert Etheridge (robert@performancemag.com)

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Tel 0344 848 8816

Overseas +44 (0)1604 251450

Email help@autocar.themagazineshop.com

SYNDICATION ENQUIRIES

Tel +44 (0)1962 867705

Contact Simon Fox (syndication@autocar.co.uk)

LICENSING ENQUIRIES

Tel +44 (0)20 8267 5024

Contact Isla Friend (isla.friend@haymarket.com)

BACK ISSUES

Tel 0344 848 8816

Email help@autocar.themagazineshop.com

ADVERTISING

Classified +44 (0)20 8267 5733 Display +44 (0)20 8267 5574

Production +44 (0)20 8267 5814 Fax +44 (0)20 8267 5312

Sales director Julia Dear

Key account director Richard Potton

Agency group head Andrew Barclay

Agency account managers Adrianna Haynes,

Lindsey Dobson

Semi-display/retail executive Hannah Mathew

PRODUCTION

Tel +44 (0)20 8267 5219

Production manager Anthony Davis

Senior production controller Roxy Agius

MARKETING

Direct marketing manager Maria Fernandez

Newstrade marketing manager Richard Jeffries

MANAGEMENT

Brand director Rachael Prasher

Business director Darren Pitt

Brand manager Sarona Taylor

Brand executive Charlene Harry

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Editorial director Mark Payton

Strategy & planning director Bob McDowell

Managing director David Prasher

Chief executive Kevin Costello

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COMMENT



WHY BENTLEY SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO BUILD THE EXP 12 SPEED 6E



MANY CONCEPTS ARE too futuristic-looking to make production, or they just answer questions no one ever asked. This week's cover star, the Bentley EXP 12 Speed 6e, to which we've had exclusive access, is not such a concept.

The Speed 6e is a drop-top version of the EXP 10 Speed 6 concept of 2015, heavily updated with an all-electric drivetrain and a sumptuous, high-tech interior. That Bentley has chosen to develop the concept of a smaller sports car to rival the likes of the McLaren 570S and Aston Martin Vantage is no coincidence, and making a convertible version will be a key part of a business plan for any such production car. With the Bentayga, Bentley showed it can successfully expand into new segments. The Speed 6 deserves the same chance to succeed, although it's not certain that it will be signed off for production by the Volkswagen Group. That indecision is a shame, because it would be a welcome boost for UK car manufacturing at a time of great uncertainty.

Yes, the VW Group is running a business and not a charity, but given the sheer desirability of the Speed 6, and with Bentley hardly putting a foot wrong in recent years, the decision to make this car should be one of the easier ones.

Mark Tisshaw Editor

mark.tisshaw@haymarket.com [@mttisshaw](https://twitter.com/mttisshaw)

EDITOR'S PICKS



GENEVA: THE LATEST

Check autocar.co.uk for the latest news from the Geneva motor show



ARE USED DIESELS IN PERIL?

Alex Robbins speaks to used car industry experts to find out, p79



ITALDESIGN REBORN

We visit the design house as it launches its own car, p62



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NEWS

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OFFICIAL PICTURES

Electric Bentley roadster makes bid for production

All-wheel-drive two-seater is tipped for a 2019 launch if this concept is well received

Bentley is reinforcing its growing interest in electric propulsion as a luxury car medium with a new two-seat roadster concept, the EXP12 Speed 6e, unveiled this week at the Geneva motor show.

The new car develops many of the themes first expressed in the EXP10 coupé concept unveiled in Geneva two years ago. It also signals the direction of Bentley's thinking about the shape of the fifth model line to which Bentley CEO Wolfgang Dürheimer has often referred.

A two-seat sports car has not yet been signed off for production, but Dürheimer has previously told Autocar that adding another model would put Bentley "on a very sound footing for the future".

He said: "I can tell you that the new car will be younger and more exciting than anything in our line-up. It will appeal to a completely new kind of customer."

Showing a convertible version in Geneva is a perfect way to gauge industry and public reaction ahead of a likely

sign-off for the car, which is slated for production in 2019 (see sidebar, p10).

The EXP12 has been designed in Bentley's Crewe studios under design director Stefan Sielaff. Its body mixes traditional Bentley design cues – such as the mesh grille and strong rear haunches – with new low-nose proportions for a Bentley that give the car a frontal grace and delicacy not usually possible in cars powered by (at least) a twin-turbo 4.0-litre V8 mounted very far forward in the nose.

Bentley isn't keen to give much away about the powertrain, but evidence from the car's impressive instrument graphics suggests a 300-mile range and a four-wheel drive powertrain, consisting of a pair of motors mounted between the wheels, one at the front, one at the rear.

There's no detail about battery location, but the low seating positions and the high centre console suggest it might be carried in a T-shape, running down the spine of the car and then across it, behind

the occupants. In any case, its EXP10 sister car was proposed with a more conventional petrol-electric powertrain, a system that would doubtless fit this car and is already common in other cars from the Volkswagen Group.

The EXP12 Speed 6e is well-proportioned mid-size two-seater, a little larger in footprint than an Aston Martin V8 Vantage but shorter by perhaps 20cm than a Continental GT.

The familiar Bentley mesh grille has been revised and set

“This is an electric car, but we were passionate that it had to represent the soul of the brand”



EXP12 Speed 6e is a little larger than an Aston V8 Vantage



low at the front of the car, with a wide air scoop below that, running right across. There are suggestions of an aerodynamic splitter, with a chin detail at its edges faintly reminiscent of a battery heat-sink, but the EXP12 is far from governed by aerodynamic gadgetry. It allows a relatively small frontal area and a notably clean shape across the bonnet – which features a familiar ‘sighting’ crease down the centre line – in order to keep aerodynamic drag under control.

“Although this is an electric

car, we were passionate that it had to represent the soul of the brand,” said Sielaff. “We certainly didn’t want it looking like some kind of driving refrigerator. Our job is to transport the advantages of electric drive into luxury cars in a way our customers appreciate, which is why EXP12 still has its modern expression of our traditional grille. In any case, the impression people have that electric cars don’t

need supplies of cooling air is quite wrong. They do need it.”

Close inspection reveals diamond-shaped pieces of copper, no more than 2-3mm across, mounted at every intersection of the grille’s mesh pieces. The detail is an allusion to the car’s electric powertrain, according to John Paul ‘JP’ Gregory, head of exterior design, and it was also used less prominently on Bentley’s Mulsanne hybrid.

“It’s right for an electric Bentley,” said Gregory. “It’s a precious material and an authentic one. We’ve used copper in little details all over the car.”

The EXP12 continues to explore the Bentley design elements of tomorrow, Gregory added. “It’s a way of getting customers and Bentley’s top management used to what’s coming, which is vital because all future Bentleys will be

made in aluminium, a material that can’t always be as easily shaped as steel,” he said.

However, the EXP12’s flanks do not reflect any such difficulties. The car features a familiar but modernised ‘power line’ that starts low at the front, radiuses the front wheels, then flows, past a pair of elegant extractor vents, along the body sides, fading away just before it intersects the typically strong Bentley rear-wheel haunch, ➔

← a feature that gives the car its classic, rear-wheel-drive roadster character.

The rear deck is a flat bootlid whose shutline runs around the perimeter of the body just a couple of centimetres from its well-defined edge. The feature is reminiscent of old-time coachbuilding but is unlikely to survive into production, said Sielaff, because owners might damage the car by lifting luggage over such a high lip.

As well as its traditional grille, the EXP12 retains four round headlights in the Bentley style, with a designed-in 'crystal glass' effect that Bentley's designers also used on the EXP10 and liked so much they adopted it again.

Whereas many designers today struggle to use anything but traditional wood and leather, Bentley's interior design chief, Brett Boydell, has revelled in the opportunity to cover the EXP12's easily accessed cockpit richly in both materials, while concentrating on doing it differently.

The seat patterns feature a style of diamond stitching known as 'kilting', which both echoes the grille shape and sets a theme for door inners, elegantly milled in a similar pattern from solid walnut – with small copper diamonds to define the intersections of the pattern's lines. It may sound over the top but it isn't.

The fascia is a handsome, leathered, wing-shaped sculpture that surrounds the two occupants and gives an authentic cockpit feel. Every surface (apart from switch panels, console screens and two dials that magically move to attain the vertical as part of a commencement procedure) is covered in rich leather, an antique hide that "goes back a little", as Boydell put it, from the perfect hides used in cars today. This stuff is beautiful, he said, but just like the car and its owner, its aging will be evident.

The steering wheel is reminiscent of designs proposed decades ago for



PLACE YOUR BETS ON PRODUCTION

STEVE COPLEY

The new Bentley EXP12 Speed 6e looks almost too good to be a production car, which is fine for now, because nobody at Crewe will confirm that it has a showroom future.

"We want to assess what our customers and the wider world think," say the designers, the familiar litany of every such team that ever put a concept on display. "You'll see elements of the car in our next production model," they say, in this case the all-new Continental GT,

due at the Frankfurt motor show in September.

Yet the EXP12 has better production prospects than most of this week's Geneva concepts. For one thing, this is a developed, convertible version of the EXP10 hybrid coupé the company showed this time two years ago. Take Bentley's proud tradition of translating some of its EXP cars for production, throw in the fact that this one is another expression of a two-seater concept that was

well received in 2015 and you have stronger than usual indications that a production model must surely be under close consideration.

Add Bentley boss Wolfgang Dürheimer's oft-expressed desire to reduce the cyclical nature of his company's sales performance by widening the model line-up and you reveal a strong possibility that this car could be making a stellar production debut in two or three years' time. Is 2019 too soon? Okay, 2020 then...

spaceships: it's a round affair with the top 45deg missing.

"People love it or hate it," said Sielaff. "We are about to discover what our customers think." Buttons atop each wheel stump have a rock symbol, proposing a race-style short-duration boost control.

In the centre console, there's a multi-function rotary switch that selects motion (forward, neutral, reverse) plus a neat

little copper paddle above that determines the driving mode.

Ahead of that, a black background blends into screens that carry anything from map directions to confirmation of a restaurant booking, while on the other side of the wing-shaped structure is a horizontal seam-shaped interface that allows a co-pilot to stay in touch with social media.

The overall effect is of a comfortable, luxurious and surprisingly practical touring car with a decent boot and easy access, and which would very neatly fit the motoring environment of today.

Bentley is remaining tight-lipped on whether the EXP12 will make production, confirming only that customers will help it decide.

STEVE COPLEY



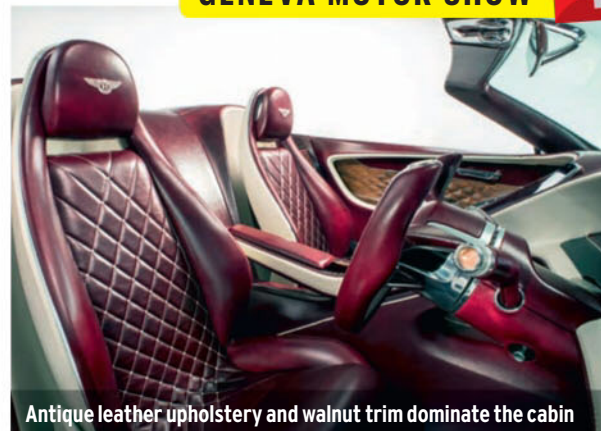
EXP10 from 2015 gave rise to EXP12



Elegant rear deck has a flat bootlid, a show car flourish



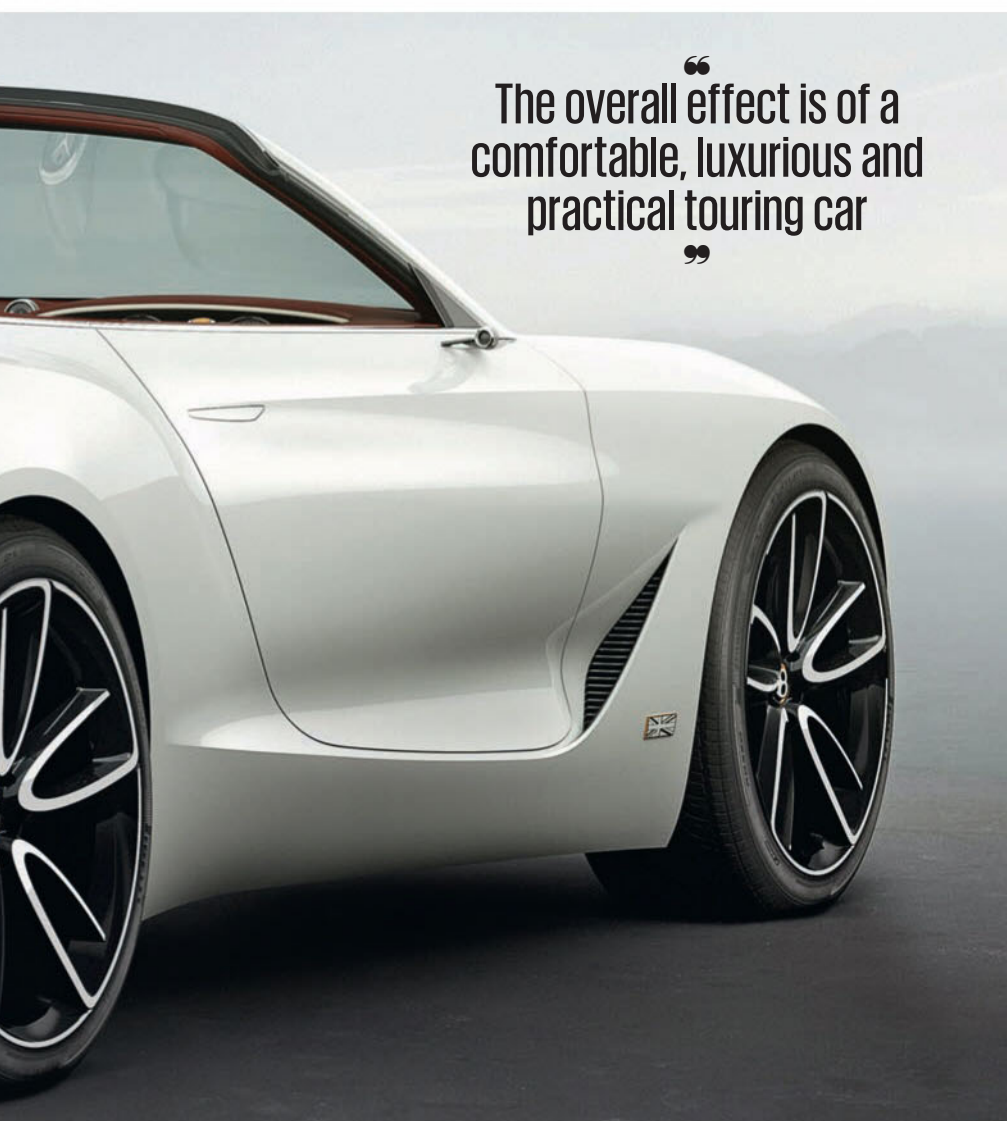
Design creates a real cockpit feel; wheel has a retro sci-fi look



Antique leather upholstery and walnut trim dominate the cabin

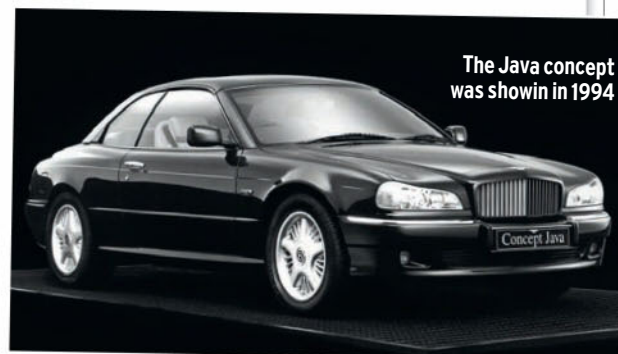


Start/stop button sits within a circular multi-function selector



“The overall effect is of a comfortable, luxurious and practical touring car”

BABY BENTLEYS, BACK IN THE DAY



The Java concept was shown in 1994

When it comes to building mid-sized convertible concepts, Bentley has form. The firm wowed Geneva in 1994 with a great-looking design proposal called Java, created by a co-operation between former Bentley-Rolls-Royce designer Graham Hull and the former Rover design boss, Royden Axe, at a Warwick-based company Axe formed called Design Research Associates.

The car was based on BMW 5 Series underpinnings and received wide acclaim for the way it carried Bentley's prestigious design values on what was then an unprecedentedly small car. But Bentley, which was combined with Rolls-Royce at the time, was a subsidiary of the Vickers aircraft

conglomerate in 1994 and didn't have the finance or the appetite for taking a risk. So the car never made production, even though calls for its emergence continued long after Geneva 1994 and brought Axe back to notice in what was the twilight of his career.

Although it never became a production model, the car found favour with the Sultan of Brunei, then a serial buyer of bespoke and low-volume British cars. He commissioned and took delivery of at least three Java convertibles, and commissioned the building of at least three estate versions as well, although some insiders say he owned more than a dozen Javas of different kinds.

New 720S to lead McLaren's ambitious expansion plans

High-tech, lightweight new Super Series model revealed as 650S replacement; on sale in May

McLaren has revealed a faster, lighter, roomier, more aerodynamic Super Series model, the 212mph 720S, promising it will "redefine expectations of supercar excellence".

The car's debut comes just weeks after the Woking firm, which is increasingly seen as a serious threat to Ferrari's supercar supremacy, announced a doubling of its year-on-year volume and that its sales in five years had passed 10,000 units.

The 720S will replace the 650S as McLaren's new core model and is the first of 15 new-generation McLarens, half of which will be hybrids,

promised by 2022 under CEO Mike Flewitt's ambitious Track 22 development plan. The new model is McLaren Automotive's first replacement for an existing model since opening for business in 2011 and putting its first car, the 12C (which became the 650S), into production in 2012.

The 720S obeys all existing McLaren design rules. It is a two-seat supercar based on an all-carbonfibre tub, with aluminium space frames carrying the front and rear suspension, and it is powered by a twin-turbocharged V8. Within that envelope, however, it has been redesigned and updated



in every detail. The exterior introduces a new 'double skin' door construction that eliminates the need for the prominent side air scoops previously thought essential in supercar design, while the engine grows to 4.0 litres, up from 3.8 litres, and now produces 710bhp.

McLaren has already begun taking orders, with the first cars due to be delivered in May. The entry price in the UK will be £207,900.

BODY AND CHASSIS

McLaren has further developed its carbonfibre chassis tub and upper structure, taking lessons from previous models, including the P1. Now dubbed Monocage II, the structure is cited by McLaren's executive director of product development, Mark Vinnels, as the key to the 720S's 1283kg dry weight, which undercuts all competitors and beats that of its predecessor by 18kg.

Monocage II's stiffness has allowed McLaren's designers to give the 720S remarkably thin A-pillars, a deep windscreen, B-pillars set well back and slim, glazed C-pillars, all of which contribute to first-class all-round visibility for the driver.

Some body panels are made of carbonfibre and the rest of superformed aluminium. The panels' novel shape plays a key role in the 720S's impressive aerodynamic performance. Low down at the front there are anti-lift aero blades reminiscent of those on the P1, while ultra-compact LED headlights fit into frontal 'eye sockets' that allow room for vents to feed the air conditioning and oil cooler.

The body sides incorporate channels, formed by two skins and flowing past the dihedral doors, so cooling air can be directed along the body into the engine bay, uninterrupted by turbulence and resulting in a 15% improvement in cooling airflow. On the outer, lower part of the doors there are F1-inspired blades that direct air away from the front wheel arches,

assisting downforce and cutting drag. A big underbody diffuser at the rear sweeps up from the 720S's flat floor almost to its rear wing, where the two elements frame the ultra-thin LED tail-lights.

Because the top of the 720S's engine is a remarkable 120mm lower than that of the 650S, the car also has a low, teardrop-shaped engine cover that allows an uninterrupted flow of air over the roof to the hydraulically actuated rear wing. The wing has a DRS drag-reduction setting for optimal straight-line performance, an Aero setting for downforce in corners and a Brake setting (which sets the wing at a 56deg angle) to increase drag and improve chassis balance under heavy braking. The result, says McLaren, is that the wing has 30% more downforce and its aero efficiency (the ratio of downforce to drag) is doubled.

POWERTRAIN

McLaren claims "new heights of performance" from its turbo V8, now re-engineered for a capacity of 3994cc thanks to a 3.6mm lengthening of its stroke. The engine has lighter pistons and conrods and a stiffer, lightened crank, plus →

MCLAREN'S ROAD CAR HISTORY



McLaren resolved many of the MP4 12C's early issues

There are three distinct phases of McLaren road car manufacture: Bruce McLaren's racing era that began in 1963 and during which he built an unfinished race-derived road car; the McLaren F1 era that also produced the SLR, which ended its production run in 2009; and the current McLaren Automotive, which began in 2010 and led to the launch a year later of the MP4-12C (soon shortened to just 12C).

The 12C was widely praised for its dynamics and sophisticated design, which included a one-piece carbonfibre tub, but it encountered early teething troubles, mostly with infotainment and

electronic control systems. The problems were rapidly brought to heel by current CEO Mike Flewitt, who won considerable plaudits from early owners by providing many of them with free upgrades. The company's reputation and progress accelerated, especially when it launched the £900,000 P1 flagship that matches or exceeds Ferrari's even more expensive LaFerrari.

Now the firm is raising the stakes with the 720S, its first replacement for a new-era model. Flewitt and his team expect it to take McLaren's production to around 4500 cars a year, a total they claim to have no wish to exceed.



The 720S's carbonfibre tub is lighter and stiffer than that of the 650S

← twin-scroll turbochargers with faster-spooling turbines, capable of spinning at 160,000rpm, and electronically controlled wastegates. In total, 41% of the engine's components are new.

A cast aluminium air intake system, visible through the mesh engine cover, feeds extra air to the more potent engine that now uses two injectors per cylinder. But rather than simply pumping in more fuel, the improved injection system gives more accurate metering, which helps to cut CO₂ emissions by around 10%, to a class-leading 249g/km. Combined fuel economy improves to 26.4mpg.

The 720S's peak output of 710bhp is produced at 7000rpm, while maximum torque of 568lb ft is delivered at 5500rpm. The engine, longitudinally mounted behind the occupants, drives as before through a seven-speed dual-clutch automatic gearbox mounted end-on to the engine, but McLaren says further refinement of its control software brings smoother gearchanges at low speeds and faster,



The 720S's light and spacious cabin has excellent visibility

sharper shifts at higher speeds. The launch control has also been improved, and as before, there are three driving modes – Comfort, Sport and Track – that govern both engine and dynamics.

PERFORMANCE

The chassis weight savings, allied to other reductions in mass, including 2kg from the brakes, 3kg from the electrics and 1.5kg from the airboxes, contribute as much to the

720S's enhanced performance as its 11% power increase. The power-to-weight ratio is now 553bhp per tonne (up 15%) and, according to McLaren, beats the best in the segment.

As a result, McLaren claims a "crushing" 0-60mph time of just 2.8sec, 0-124mph in 7.8sec and a top speed of 212mph. The 720S will also dispatch a standing quarter-mile in 10.3sec, which represents a blistering performance for a pure

road car. To accompany the performance, the 720S has a carefully tuned engine note, which can be further enhanced with an optional, louder, sports exhaust system.

Despite its performance potential, McLaren is adamant that its new car is as easily handled by ordinary drivers as it is by experts, with throttle response calibrated to provide "the optimum blend of immediate reaction and progressive comfort".

SUSPENSION, STEERING AND BRAKES

Although only five years old, McLaren's all-independent system of front and rear double wishbones has been completely re-engineered, both to allow wheel geometry changes and, thanks to a redesign of the uprights and wishbones, to cut unsprung mass by 16kg.

The 720S has an updated version of the Proactive Chassis Control electronics



“
**McLaren claims a 0-60mph
 time of 2.8sec and
 a top speed of 212mph**
 ”

used by the 650S. The system features hydraulically interlinked dampers at each corner that remove the need for anti-roll bars, but the big improvement for the 720S's system, which is dubbed PCC 2, results from new software, developed during a six-year collaboration with the University of Cambridge and using sophisticated information gathered by 12 new sensors and accelerometers. The result is even better contact between the tyres and the road surface.

The system can assess conditions and adjust the suspension every five milliseconds. It also includes a Variable Drift function, which allows you to slide the car without losing control, and McLaren Brake Steer, pioneered in Formula 1, which enhances agility in corners and traction out of them by braking separate wheels. McLaren engineers have retained electro-hydraulic

steering for the 720S, despite rivals' adoption of electric-only systems, because they still believe it gives superior "clarity of feel".

Brakes are large, ventilated carbon-ceramic discs and the tyres are specially developed Pirelli PZeros, 245/35 ZR19s at the front (up from the 650S's 235s) and 305/30 ZR20s at the rear. McLaren claims a 6% increase in mechanical grip, which is about the same advantage as fitting track-focused Pirelli Corsas to a 650S.

INTERIOR

Although the 720S closely follows the outgoing 650S in its major dimensions, there are differences between them. The thin pillars, the depth of the windscreen and the all-round glass give a commanding view to all points that modern supercar drivers will find surprising. The redesigned interior surfaces have been 'pushed away' from

the occupants as much as possible, to further enhance the feeling of space.

Unlock the door and various instrument and courtesy lights go through a welcome sequence as the mirrors unfold. Opening the door also triggers an elaborate sequence on the upright TFT screen, which changes its configuration according to driving mode. The driver can also 'declutter' the instruments, for example when on a track, via a special Slim mode that retracts the driver display. There's a central 8.0in infotainment screen on the centre console, with ventilation settings carried along the bottom. The layout of switches, most of which are machined from aluminium, is simple.

Standard cabin trim and seats are plush but, as with previous models, colour and trim material upgrades are available. Emilio Scervo, chief engineer of the 720S, said: "We've done our utmost to exceed the expectations of supercar owners in every area, but we're especially proud of the driving environment. It's light, comfortable and sophisticated, and we think it beats any rival."

STEVE CROPLEY



Vents channel air through the body to cool the engine



WOKING'S RISE TO POWER

STEVE CROPLEY

If you're looking for a company at the top of its game, Woking is the place to start. It's now five years since McLaren Automotive sold its first 12C supercar – a very short time on most motor industry calendars – but McLaren is this week launching the first comprehensive rethink of its core model. And that's interesting as much for what it doesn't change as for what it does.

Hearteningly, the concept is unaltered. The 720S proves how good the original decisions were and how much development there is in the mid-engined, two-seater, carbonfibre-tubbed concept. The tub has become Monocage II (which now displays such strength and versatility that it now has A-pillars whose thinness shames many superminis). And McLaren's CEO and consummate leader

Mike Flewitt has already signalled that the act of moving chassis manufacture from Austria back to a new, higher-tech plant in the UK provides opportunities for future weight reduction when the company moves – as it will – to electric propulsion.

Porsche and 70-year-old Ferrari used to be seen as the monolithic companies that would lead the supercar world to new performance-building trends and processes. Three or four years ago we marvelled at what McLaren had achieved, but it was really a case of an ant biting the ankle of a giant. Now life is changing. Dare I say it, but the P1 technology demonstrator was a better effort than the LaFerrari equivalent. I'm starting to look to McLaren for global leadership in this complex field. In just five years, what an achievement.



It will house two 1.9m people in the fairly minimalist cabin



New A110 is compact: it's 4.18m long, 1.8m wide and 1.25m tall

OFFICIAL PICTURES



Alpine A110 puts agility first

New Porsche 718 Cayman rival has been honed for athleticism over outright punch

The new Alpine A110 has been engineered to have a better power-to-weight ratio than its most accomplished rival, the Porsche 718 Cayman, as the reborn brand bids seeks to wow buyers by making one of the most agile sports cars in the world.

The A110 – which revives the name of Alpine's most iconic car – is powered by a turbocharged 249bhp 1.8-litre four-cylinder engine producing 236lb ft. The engine is mounted transversely in the back of the rear-drive car and linked to a seven-speed wet clutch paddle-shift transmission.

The compact A110 weighs 1080kg at the kerb, which gives it a power-to-weight ratio of 231bhp per tonne. The

718 Cayman has 296bhp and weighs 1335kg (for 222bhp per tonne) and the 718 Cayman S has 345bhp and weighs 1460kg (for 236bhp per tonne).

To hit the A110's 1080kg target kerb weight, the Alpine development team created a bespoke aluminium chassis after studying the potential for a combined steel and carbonfibre structure.

"We did the maths with aluminium and got the answers we wanted," Alpine's head of engineering, David Twohig, said. "The key decisions lay in the structure's mass, weight and torsional stiffness, and the next consideration was achieving top-notch fit and finish. Carbonfibre or steel structures don't allow the same quality."

The A110 is unusually compact, at 4.18m long, 1.80m wide and 1.25m tall. Weight distribution is 44% front, 56% rear, aided significantly by the decision to locate the fuel tank in the front of the car. However, the A110 has room for two 190cm-tall adults and limited luggage space in the cabin and boot. The car's compact size does bring compromises, though. There is no glovebox, for example.

Other weight-saving initiatives include Sabelt-developed seats, which have a fixed back but slide fore and aft. They weigh 13.1kg each, around half that of a seat in the Renault Sport Mégane. Twohig says Alpine has achieved this without compromising comfort.

The windscreen cleaning system also channels water through the wiper blades, making it significantly more efficient than a traditional system, which in turn allows the use of a washer bottle that's less than half the normal size.

The Brembo-developed electronic parking brake is a world first, too. It uses the main brake set rather than an additional one, saving 5kg.

Although Alpine has withheld some performance figures ahead of the car going on sale, it has confirmed the A110 will cover 0-62mph in 4.5sec. That shades the 718 Cayman's 5.1sec and 718 Cayman S's 4.6sec.

However, Twohig says his team – including many Renault Sport staff – were told to focus

on agility over pace. To that end, they specified double-wishbone suspension front and rear, developed unique gear ratios for the semi-automatic Getrag gearbox, specified deliberately small tyres, developed an e-differential for different driving modes and included an aerodynamic diffuser to create downforce without compromising the rear-end styling. The system steering is power-assisted.

"The all-aluminium forged suspension was a no-compromise decision to get agility and suppleness," Twohig said. "We wanted the best. The decision to develop our own gear sets was harder, or at least more expensive, but we knew it was the only way to get the

“The A110 weighs 1080kg at the kerb, which gives it a power-to-weight ratio of 229bhp per tonne”



car we wanted. Throughout this project, we concentrated on doing it right, so that meant custom pinion sets, a wet clutch, a latest seven-speed gearbox, launch control and three proper driving modes – Normal, Sport and Track – that have a distinct character across the engine and pedal maps and the active exhaust, and the option to switch ESC completely off.

“The electronic solutions

meant we didn’t need a limited-slip diff. It would have added weight and complexity, where the reality is that an e-diff set-up can handle these power levels perfectly well. I’ve tested it and I can promise you that you can get some pretty big angles in Track mode without it feeling like it is about to bite you. This is a car that flatters.”

The Michelin Pilot Sports tyres are 18in in diameter on the launch car, with a

235-section tyre at the rear and a 205 on the front, but 17s (225 rear, 195 front) will be standard on other cars.

Twohig said: “We could have gone bigger, but the tyres look just fine and their performance matches the weight, power and torque we have. We didn’t want loads of mechanical grip. We wanted a car that is mobile and which slides relatively easily under the right circumstances.”

The rear underbody diffuser was developed after designers resisted pressure to put a rear spoiler on the car. Twohig said: “The rear lines are beautiful so we looked at solutions. We could have done a pop-up spoiler but that meant complexity, weight and cost. The diffuser’s eight strakes channel air to cut lift. We think it’s the only car on sale that’ll do 250km/h [155mph] without needing a spoiler.”

The A110 is on sale in Europe priced from £58,000. UK prices will be announced ahead of delivery early next year.

JIM HOLDER

Q&A

**MICHAEL VAN DER SANDE,
MANAGING DIRECTOR, ALPINE**

Is the new A110 a homage to the original?

“You can’t deny the history, but our priority was to pick up elements of the past, not create a pastiche. In essence, that means a lightweight sports car that is fun to drive.”

How have pre-sales of the 1955 launch cars gone?

“Amazingly well. Across Europe, the allocations are sold out. We just have a couple of cars for the UK, and an allocation for Japan, where homologation means sales won’t start until 2018.”

So we should expect derivatives and other model lines?

“A family only makes sense if the DNA of the first family member is good. We have countless ideas and opportunities for the future,



but first we must focus on this car. We have more ideas than we do R&D money at the moment.”

Will you race and rally this car?

“Alpine has history in both, of course, and in recent years we have won our class at Le Mans. We haven’t decided our 2018 plans yet, but the A110 is clearly a car that lends itself to going round a race track. Let’s see. Our story is one of little cars beating more powerful ones. It would be good to continue that.”



This is a lightweight car but perceived quality has been important

Ford

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Official CO₂ emissions 141-112g/km.

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.

Panamera Sport Turismo uses an active rear spoiler



OFFICIAL PICTURES



Estate version is no longer than the regular Panamera



Luggage space extends from 520 litres to 1390 litres

Porsche estate gets 542bhp V8

Practical but potent five-seat Panamera Sport Turismo revealed; on sale in October

Porsche has unveiled the most practical version of the Panamera yet, the Panamera Sport Turismo, which will go on sale in the UK this October.

The new sporting estate joins the second-generation Panamera line-up with a new four-plus-one seating layout, a large, electronically operated tailgate, a significantly lower loading lip and an extra 20 litres of luggage capacity behind the rear seats.

The model was granted the green light by former Porsche chairman Matthias Mueller following a positive reaction to the Sport Turismo concept seen at the 2012 Paris show.

Five years on, the model holds true to the concept, with a uniquely styled rear end that helps to provide greater interior flexibility and load space. Porsche hopes the new model will win over buyers who may have otherwise chosen a more conventional estate.

An active spoiler enhances the estate's aerodynamic properties, deploying in three stages depending on speed and driving mode to generate additional downforce of up to 50kg at the rear axle.

At 5049mm long, 1937mm wide and 1428mm high, the Sport Turismo is the same length and width but 5mm higher than the regular

Panamera liftback. It also rides on the same 2950mm wheelbase as its sibling.

The Sport Turismo is the first Panamera to offer seating for up to three in the rear, rather than just two as in the regular Panamera. The two individual rear outer seats are accompanied by a narrow, raised central rear seat, boosting overall accommodation to five.

Boot capacity is 520 litres, providing all Sport Turismo models except the E-Hybrid version (which has a 425-litre boot) with 20 litres more load space than the liftback. The rear seats split 40/20/40 and automatically fold to extend

boot space to 1390 litres.

At launch, five versions of the Panamera Sport Turismo will be offered: the 4, 4S, 4S Diesel, 4 E-Hybrid and Turbo, all of which are on display at this week's Geneva motor show.

Among the petrol-powered models is the Panamera 4 Sport Turismo, which runs a turbocharged 3.0-litre V6 with 325bhp, while the Panamera 4S Sport Turismo receives a slightly smaller-capacity twin-turbo 2.9-litre V6 with 404bhp.

Crowning the initial line-up is the Panamera Turbo Sport Turismo, which uses a twin-turbocharged 4.0-litre V8 delivering 542bhp.

The sole diesel model

at launch is the Panamera 4S Diesel Sport Turismo, which uses a turbocharged 4.0-litre V8 engine producing 416bhp. It is joined by the Panamera 4 E-Hybrid, whose powertrain combines a 325bhp turbocharged 2.9-litre V6 petrol engine with a 134bhp electric motor mounted within the front section of the gearbox for a claimed combined system output of 456bhp.

Prices for the Sport Turismo will start from £73,071, which is £5173 more than the entry-level standard Panamera. The initial range-topping Panamera Turbo Sport Turismo costs £117,247.

GREG KABLE

Porsche shifts back to manual 'box option for 911 GT3

OFFICIAL PICTURE



The facelifted 911 GT3 uses a 493bhp 4.0-litre flat six engine

PORSCHE IS reintroducing a manual gearbox option to its 911 GT3, following criticism that the current car has only been offered with a seven-speed PDK dual-clutch automatic gearbox since it was launched in 2013.

The revised GT3 uses a 493bhp 4.0-litre flat six, replacing the 469bhp 3.8-litre flat six. It is a development of the engine used in the 911 R and GT3 RS, with an upgraded valve train, a stiffer crank, low-friction cylinder liners, a

new cylinder head design that dispenses with hydraulic valve adjusters and a 9000rpm redline – 750rpm more than the RS. The difference is "a quantum leap", according to Porsche GT boss Andreas Preuninger.

"It is an absolute dream," Preuninger added. "It has the ability to rev explosively. This is a unique selling point."

With the seven-speed PDK gearbox and launch control the new GT3 will hit 62mph from rest in 3.4sec and

reach 199mph. The six-speed manual version is slower off the line, at 3.9sec to 62mph, but can hit 200mph.

Downforce at maximum speed is increased by 20% overall without any increase in drag, according to Preuninger, while the suspension's adjustable dampers now have a wider operating range.

Pricing has not yet been announced, but Porsche expects demand to outstrip supply. The current GT3 RS costs £131,296.

Honda broadens the appeal of Civic Type R

Hot hatch gets a new Comfort mode and more extreme 'R' setting to attract a wider audience



The Type R is now longer and stiffer and has a lower centre of gravity

The new Honda Civic Type R hot hatch will strike the perfect balance between performance and comfort, according to project boss Hideki Kakinuma.

The current Type R has been criticised for being too performance-focused, so this move is an acknowledgement that a broader approach is needed in order to attract a larger audience, not least in the US, where the Civic Type R will be sold for the first time.

Referring to the new Civic hot hatch, Kakinuma said: "Some rivals focus on extreme performance and others go in the direction of comfort. We want to go right in the middle."

The Civic Type R features

a revised version of the turbocharged 2.0-litre VTEC petrol engine used by the outgoing model. Honda's engineers have teased an extra 10bhp out of the unit, meaning peak power is now 316bhp at 6500rpm. Torque remains the same, with 295lb ft from 2500rpm to 4500rpm.

The flow rate of the exhaust gases has been increased and the ECU's mapping has been updated, which Honda claims improves throttle response and driveability.

Kakinuma said the car's kerb weight is "just about the same" as the existing Type R's 1382kg, without revealing the exact figure. Given a similar weight and the small increase in power,

the new model's 0-62mph time is set to slightly undercut the current car's time of 5.7secs.

The Type R also retains the six-speed manual gearbox of the current car. Kakinuma said: "We want to offer customers the joy of shifting [gears] for themselves." However, the transmission features a new rev-match control system, which promises to provide smoother gearshifts and negates the need for heel-and-toe shifting.

The outgoing Type R required the standard Civic's platform to be significantly re-engineered, so the model was launched a long time after the regular hatchback. However, for this generation, the Civic



Driving modes have been revised; six-speed manual 'box remains

platform was designed for the Type R from the beginning.

The new model is longer, lower and wider than before, with a centre of gravity that is 34mm lower and a driver's hip point that is 50mm

lower. Honda claims that the bodyshell is 39% stiffer than that of the standard Civic.

The MacPherson strut suspension of the standard model has also been revised, with new geometry intended

A new wing and a smoother underbody aid aerodynamics



“Torque remains at 295lb ft, but peak power is up by 10bhp to 316bhp at 6500rpm”

to minimise torque steer and improve handling. The hot hatch uses the same multi-link rear axle as the standard Civic, but adds high-rigidity suspension arms.

Aerodynamics are also improved thanks to a smoother underbody, a front air curtain, a lightweight rear wing and vortex generators along the roofline to smooth the airflow.

The outgoing Civic Type R only offers a choice of standard and extreme 'R' driving modes, but the new version will have three settings: Comfort, Sport (which is the default) and R, which is intended for use on a track. Kakinuma explained that Honda had “extended the spectrum of the modes”, with

Comfort mode offering driving characteristics that are “in line with the standard Civic” and R mode being “a bit harder” than before.

The addition of Comfort mode, he said, was “in order to appeal to a broader range of customers, such as the US”.

Work has also been done to improve the exhaust note. “A key weakness [on the outgoing model] was a booming sound,” said Kakinuma. “We’ve paid attention to that aspect and improved it, especially in the low and mid-speed ranges. We have tuned the sound and it’s all natural.”

The Civic Type R, which will be built at Honda’s plant in Swindon and exported around

the world, will go on sale in the UK in the autumn, with prices expected to rise slightly over the £30,000 entry point for the current model.

Kakinuma confirmed that the new Civic Type R will make an attempt on the lap record for front-wheel-drive cars at the Nürburgring Nordschleife.

A pre-production version of the previous-generation Civic Type R held the Nürburgring record of 7min 49.21sec until last May, when Volkswagen’s Golf GTI Clubsport S went 1.4sec faster. Honda subsequently set new lap records for front-wheel-drive road cars at five European racing circuits.

RACHEL BURGESS

Q&A HIDEKI KAKINUMA, TYPE R BOSS



better driving performance off-road and on snow, but [our] competitors have different purposes for their vehicles. The Type R has traditional DNA: lightweight construction and pure dynamic performance. With four-wheel drive, the price and weight increase. We didn’t want to go in that direction.”

What’s changed compared with the outgoing Type R?

“There is a new platform and a new suspension system, but what we’ve paid the most attention to is the direct driving feel, so that a driver can feel in control at the wheel.”

Why haven’t you switched to four-wheel drive, like some of your hot hatch rivals?

“Having four-wheel drive has benefits, such as slightly

Why should a customer choose the Type R over the Mercedes-AMG A45 or VW Golf GTI Clubsport S?

“The Mercedes-AMG is an excellent and stable car, but instead of the driver driving the vehicle, the vehicle is driving the driver. The Clubsport S is specifically designed to beat the ‘Ring record. The Type R is sporty but offers comfort and allows the driver to drive the vehicle as he wants to.”



WILL IT BE GOOD TO DRIVE?

NIC CACKETT

Honda’s big challenge with the new Type R is ensuring that the driver feels as intrinsically involved in the experience as the car’s 316bhp output suggests they ought to be. It’s a challenge that is tacitly acknowledged by Kakinuma.

The previous Type R was monstrously capable, but a preoccupation with ‘Ring-based high-speed stability meant it didn’t truly come alive until way beyond the national speed limit. With

the new platform delivering a significantly longer, wider footprint, the hurdle is now set even higher. Honda will need to have expended quite some effort to preserve accessible liveliness in the steering and suspension.

Successfully overcoming the obstacle ought to pay off handsomely, though: there hasn’t been a giant-killing front-drive hot hatch since the Renault Mégane 275 Trophy, and we’ve hardly stopped raving about it.

THE HEAD SAYS
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*THE HEART SAYS
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Official fuel consumption figures for Maserati Ghibli MY17 range in mpg (l/100km): Urban 20.5 (13.8) – 36.7 (7.7), Extra Urban 39.8 (7.1) – 57.6 (4.9), Combined 29.4 (9.6) – 47.9 (5.9). CO₂ emissions 223 – 158 g/km. Fuel consumption and CO₂ figures are based on standard EU tests for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. Model shown is a Maserati Ghibli Diesel MY17 at £52,725 On The Road including optional mica paint at £660 and 20 inch machine polished Urano alloy wheels at £2,205.

The new XC60 sits on the same platform as the larger XC90

OFFICIAL PICTURES

New XC60 targets F-Pace, Q5

Swedish manufacturer evolves big-selling mid-size SUV to battle premium rivals

The launch of the second-generation Volvo XC60 is set to further accelerate the firm's dramatic sales growth, with the all-new car set to be pitched against the Audi Q5, BMW X3, Jaguar F-Pace and Mercedes-Benz GLC in the booming mid-size SUV sector.

Volvo sales have risen for the past three years, with the growth led by the popularity of the XC90, S90 and V90. Combined sales of the 90-series models grew 125% last year compared with 2015.

However, the outgoing XC60, which was launched in 2008, hinted at the potential appeal of the new model by setting a new sales record in 2016, accounting for 161,092 units of Volvo's 534,332 total annual sales.

Volvo's design boss, Thomas Ingenlath, said: "The XC60 is the only car we have planned

over the five-year launch cycle started by XC90 that doesn't need to make a dramatic leap. The customer base we have for XC60 is one we want to keep; we looked to make everything better, not different."

The new XC60 sits on Volvo's SPA large car platform, which will underpin all of the firm's 60 and 90 models, including the all-new S60 saloon and V60 estate that are expected early next year. The move to the new platform has allowed Volvo to make the new SUV longer, lower and wider than its predecessor, without adding weight. At the same time, practicality has been increased and the design retains a more dynamic, 'cab-back' look.

The XC60 will go on sale following this week's Geneva show reveal, with deliveries expected from September. At launch it will be offered with the

familiar 187bhp D4 and 232bhp D5 2.0 diesels, plus the 251bhp T5 2.0 petrol and 401bhp T8 petrol-electric hybrid unit. Few performance figures have been revealed, beyond the T8's 0-62mph time of 5.3sec.

All launch models will be four-wheel drive and linked to an eight-speed automatic gearbox. Manual and front-wheel-drive models will arrive later, as well as new diesel and petrol engines and possibly an economy-focused three-cylinder petrol-electric hybrid.

In an effort to enhance both the dynamic set-up and noise

and vibration isolation, the XC60 has double-wishbone front suspension and a rear multi-link arrangement. Height-adjustable air suspension will be offered as an option.

Inside, the XC60 is heavily inspired by the XC90's award-winning cabin, with all versions getting the same central digital control screen and all but entry-level Momentum models having a 12.3in digital instrument display.

The cabin also has a large, sculpted central dash cowl, which will be offered in several

designs of metal or wood finish, and several clever storage solutions, including laptop storage under the rear seats.

Prices for the XC60 are expected to rise to be comparable with those of its premium rivals, starting at around £30,000, but Volvo hopes to gain an edge by offering a greater amount of standard kit, including a raft of active safety equipment.

Sportier R-Design models are expected to dominate UK sales ahead of the Momentum and Inscription trims.

JIM HOLDER

HOW DOES THE XC60 DIFFER FROM THE XC90?

JIM HOLDER

Don't call the new XC60 a scaled-down XC90 in front of Volvo's design chief Thomas Ingenlath, unless you want to cause great offence.

He's honest enough to acknowledge that, with the current car selling at greater volumes each and every year for the past nine years, "there was no call for a revolution", but he is also proud of the new car's more dynamic, driver-focused appeal.

That appeal is best expressed by a look at the side profile, where you can really see the changes from the XC90: the more sharply

angled windscreen line, the wheels pushed as close to the ends as they'll go and the side profile curving in around the driver. The sculpting at the foot of the wraparound doors has the effect of absorbing mass and pulling the body into the centre of the car to give it a sportier, more dynamic presence than the more laid-back design of the XC90.

If you want a Volvo SUV with greater design differentiation, though, you won't have long to wait: the XC40, the SUV

family's smallest, sportiest and cheekiest sibling, is likely to launch this autumn on Volvo's new CMA platform.



Plush cabin has a large central touchscreen and lots of storage



XC60 (top) is sporty; XC90 relaxed

OFFICIAL PICTURES

Road-biased Velar billed as 'a new kind of Range Rover'

Porsche Macan rival is the brand's sportiest model yet in a bid to lure new buyers



New Velar shares underpinnings with the Jaguar F-Pace

The new Range Rover Velar, the fourth member of an expanded family of Range Rover vehicles, is the most “car-like” model the brand has yet produced, according to Land Rover’s design director, Gerry McGovern.

The Velar is underpinned by the same technology as the similarly sized F-Pace made by sister brand Jaguar. The new model will slot in between the Evoque and Range Rover Sport in the range.

The Velar – which was revealed at a special event

in London ahead of its public debut at this week’s Geneva motor show – will be priced from £44,830 when it goes on sale this summer.

Land Rover’s new Porsche Macan rival was called “the most car-like Range Rover we’ve done so far, but just as capable” by McGovern, who added: “It’s a new type of Range Rover for a new type of customer.”

The car also introduces a new, more high-tech Land Rover interior design that is expected to be rolled out

across the rest of the range as existing models are replaced.

The Velar shares its 2874mm wheelbase and aluminium architecture with the F-Pace, alongside which it will be built at Jaguar Land Rover’s Solihull plant.

Unlike the F-Pace, the Velar is all-wheel drive only and comes with Land Rover’s full suite of off-road technology, including Terrain Response 2, which offers adjustable driving modes to suit different terrain. The Velar is also slightly longer than the F-Pace, at 4.8m.

Buyers will be able to choose from six engines, each hooked up to an eight-speed automatic gearbox. There’s a base 2.0-litre four-cylinder Ingenium diesel in 178bhp and 237bhp guises. The former is the most efficient engine in the Velar range and emits 142g/km of CO₂.

The entry-level petrol engine is a new 2.0-litre Ingenium unit with 247bhp. A more potent 296bhp version of this engine will follow by the end of this year.

The range-topping V6 units

are a 296bhp diesel and a 375bhp petrol. The petrol V6 is supercharged, making it the only non-turbo engine in the range, and can power the Velar from 0-60mph in 5.3sec.

In time, JLR’s Special Vehicle Operations (SVO) arm is expected to produce its own versions of the Velar. McGovern said SVO would typically create one special variant per model, as seen with the potent SVR version of the Range Rover Sport and the more luxurious SVAutobiography version of →

“
The Range Rover Velar will be priced from £44,830 and go on sale this summer
”

Velar is claimed to be as capable as any other Range Rover



Q&A GERRY MCGOVERN, LAND ROVER DESIGN DIRECTOR

Why haven't you previewed the Velar with a public showing of a concept car?

“Since the success of the Evoque, we have far greater control of our destiny. We’ve proved our masterplan can work and we’re in a hurry to prove that point.”

When did you start work on the Velar?

“The concept was created three years ago and has changed very little since. When a car is right, you know it, and you just have to wait for the right time.”

Why is now the right time?

“We are on a roll and this is the next step in our journey of transformation. We’re making a transition from a specialist brand to a bigger brand, but that doesn’t mean we’ll ever be generalist. Whatever we do must have great design and engineering [at its core]. Our vehicles must be compelling. Velar has a glamour, modernity and elegance that is unrivalled.”

Who will buy the Velar?

“It’s a new type of Range Rover for a new type of



customer. The Evoque put us into a white space that was new for us and our rivals. The Velar is the same – perhaps not in terms of size and price, but it is unique in other ways. We are stretching our brand.”

The Velar is another ‘lifestyle’-focused vehicle. Why haven’t you shown a new Defender yet?

“You can’t run an industrial powerhouse for the traditionalist. We need to establish a viable industrial and financial footprint before we can create a viable Defender for the future. Once we’re making money, we can afford to invest in a whole new Defender family. We don’t have to be supported by heritage. Our job should always be about looking forward and being relevant in a changing world.”

← the Range Rover. However, he added that the Velar's broad remit and character potentially allowed for both more luxurious and sporting versions.

McGovern called the Velar's appearance a "masterclass in design and engineering reduction. If something is on the car, you take it off, and if it makes no difference, it shouldn't be there anyway."

McGovern said the Velar is the most aerodynamic Land Rover yet and its design has changed little in the three years since it was first

presented as a secret concept within Land Rover.

Despite the Velar's more stripped-back look, McGovern doesn't consider it to have a new design language but instead regards it as an evolution of the existing Range Rover look. "The newest [car] will always look the most modern. It's just progression," he said.

Among the Velar's various trims, two distinct flavours stand out: a sportier-looking R Dynamic model and a plusher, more luxurious HSE. In the first year of production, Land

Rover will offer an £85,450 First Edition that's even more luxurious than the HSE. The cost of that model is almost double the price of the entry-level version and shows how broad the Velar's position in the market is. The typical purchase price is expected to be about £61,000.

The key feature of the Velar's interior is a new Touch Pro Duo infotainment system with two 10.0in touchscreens. Between them, these configurable screens reduce switchgear to an absolute minimum. Their

displays are described as "secret until lit", which means the buttons and switches displayed on them are invisible until in use. The lower part of the centre console ahead of the gear selector and Terrain Response dial has been turned into a screen itself.

The Velar's chief engineer, Kevin Stride, said the interior had been designed around these screens. The brief was to get rid of as much switchgear as possible while still making it usable and engaging. Stride said the more conventional

upper touchscreen housed information that changed less frequently, which is the opposite of the lower screen. However, the system is fully configurable, with the lower screen having what Stride referred to as "lightning-fast responses" to ensure there is no lag in functions traditionally controlled by a button.

Land Rover also claims the Velar is the most practical car in its class, with a set of key rivals across the range's price band identified as BMW's X4 and X6, the Macan and Mercedes-



THIS COCKPIT RAISES THE BAR

STEVE CROPLEY

Land Rover's interior designers have been winning plaudits for seminal interior designs since the early 1990s and the Range Rover before last, but even in the light of these, the new Velar cabin design looks like something very special.

Set aside for a moment the fact that Jaguar Land Rover's florid descriptions of its own achievements are becoming something of a self-parody: these designers are undoubtedly better at deeds than words.

The simplicity and elegance of the Velar's fascia treatment seems certain to go straight to the top of the class, and to apply urgent pressure in two directions – on brands that see themselves as Land Rover rivals (BMW's, in particular, are drab by comparison) and on every other Land Rover product, which must surely adopt the same interior philosophies as soon as production schedules allow.

What's special? It's the simplicity, really. Design chief Gerry McGovern is fond of the word 'reductionism',

by which he means a move to keep the number of cabin switches to "an absolute minimum" and use two panoramic 10.0in TFT screens – one ahead of the driver, one in the centre console – to control most functions. The central console functions are handled through a pair of expensive-looking black knobs that light up magically as soon as you move them.

McGovern's other achievement is to convey an impression of build quality and materials quality that are better than anyone else.

You do this, he says, via relentless attention to detail, a technique he says has been applied to the whole of the cockpit design, including seats and trim. Bear in mind that we've seen only a couple of Velars so far, so what follows is quite a mouthful, but I'm tempted to say the Velar's unique mix of elegance, simplicity, quality and functionality has lessons for literally anyone who puts a dashboard in a luxury car, from Rolls-Royce and Bentley to the rest.



Reduction in switchgear results in cleaner-looking surfaces

1 The entire instrument panel can now be configured to the driver's preferences, similar to Audi's Virtual Cockpit.

2 Haptic touchpads on the steering wheel enable certain functions, such as cruise control and audio volume, to be controlled via driver's thumbs.

Benz's GLE. The boot capacity is a claimed 673 litres and the rear seats split 40/20/40.

A wide range of trims and colour schemes is offered, including one that removes all leather from the cabin in response to a growing demand from customers for a non-animal-based alternative.

Other highlights include laser spotlights, touchpads on the steering wheel to control certain interior and driving functions and an active rear locking e-differential.

A torque vectoring system

is standard on all Velar derivatives. The car has double-wishbone front and integral-link rear suspension, and air springs are standard on the V6-powered variants.

Key to the Velar's dynamic capability is a system called Configurable Dynamics, which allows for stiffer suspension, improved throttle response and reduced assistance from the power steering. The system is standard on the First Edition and offered as an option across the rest of the range.

MARK TISSHAW



The Velar has door handles that sit flush with the body



3 Top screen tilts forward when you turn the engine on, making it an easier reach for the driver and passenger. It controls stereo, phone and sat-nav.

4 Lower screen is supported by two rotary dials that change function depending on which menu is being displayed, for example temperature control or driving mode choice.



Concept's design is "very close" to the production car's



OFFICIAL PICTURES

AMG previews hybrid coupé

New petrol-electric concept produces 800bhp; production version to come in 2019

Mercedes-AMG has revealed a sleek fastback concept at the Geneva motor show. The car previews an 800bhp-plus petrol-electric hybrid production model that is planned for UK sale in 2019.

Called the Mercedes-AMG GT Concept, the four-seater has been conceived to complement the firm's existing two-seat GT sportscar in what Tobias Moers, chairman of AMG, said will be an expanded range of dedicated AMG models to be offered alongside traditional performance variants of standard Mercedes models in future years.

"With the GT Concept we are

giving a preview of our third completely autonomously developed sportscar, extending the AMG family to include a four-door variant," said Moers.

The low-slung GT Concept, which forms part of AMG's 50th anniversary celebrations, draws styling cues from AMG's two-year-old GT sportscar, most notably its so-called Panamericana grille and thin wraparound LED tail lamps.

Whereas the GT sportscar sits on a unique aluminium platform, the production version of the GT Concept has been conceived around a specially modified version of Mercedes-Benz's MRA platform, as found beneath the

latest C and E-Class and set to be adopted by the next CLS and a new S-Class due in 2020.

At the heart of the fastback concept is a new petrol-electric hybrid drivetrain developed in partnership with Mercedes-AMG's High Performance Powertrains division, located in Northants. The drivetrain bears the name of its newly created electric car division, EQ Power.

The hybrid unit combines AMG's twin-turbocharged 4.0-litre V8 petrol engine with an electric motor to deliver a combined system output Moers puts at "up to 805bhp". This tops the output of the most powerful of AMG's existing models, the GT R, by 228bhp.

AMG says the GT Concept's electric motor is harnessed to a combination of extremely light batteries that enable it, in Moers' words, to deliver "an impressive electric range" together with a claimed 0-62mph time of "under 3.0sec". The operating strategy of the new petrol-electric powerplant has been derived from the hybrid unit used by the Mercedes-Benz F1 team, with the battery charged while the car is being driven, both through brake energy recuperation and the aid of the combustion engine.

The production version of the GT Concept is also expected to be offered

exclusively with a further developed version of AMG's 4Matic+ four-wheel drive system. It will provide torque vectoring on each wheel, together with an integrated drift mode function.

The electric motor directly drives the rear wheels. In addition to providing primary power in electric mode, it acts as a booster to complement the combustion engine's power.

The new model, which is codenamed X290 but referred to by AMG insiders as the GT4, will indirectly replace the CLS Shooting Brake, which will be discontinued when the third-generation CLS is revealed later this year.

“It’s due to indirectly replace the CLS Shooting Brake, which will be discontinued later this year”



Q&A GORDEN WAGENER, DESIGN BOSS

What is the message behind the GT Concept?

“Our latest concept car acts as a preview to a new fastback model that we are presently developing and plan to place on sale through our AMG performance car division in the not too distant future. It takes the design of our production cars to a whole new level and establishes cues that will be reflected on future models from Mercedes-Benz.”

When did you start to develop the design?

“We’ve been considering a car along the lines of the GT Concept for some time now. The project really came together when AMG decided it wanted to create a more practical alternative to the GT sports car.”

“We have taken the stylistic spirit of that car as the basis for what I consider to be one of the most spectacular concepts we’ve ever done. It encapsulates the design idiom of the GT



sports car but in a more practical form that will accommodate four adults in comfort. It has more head room than an E-Class and a very large boot.”

How much of the concept car’s design will be reflected in the production model?

“The GT Concept has been created to act as a foretaste of what’s to come. There are no false promises. Proportionally, it will remain the same. The dimensions also reflect what we are working on with the production model. They’ll be some minor productionising measures but it is very close.”

Among the key rivals for this new Mercedes-AMG model will be the new Audi A7, BMW 6-series GranCoupe and Porsche Panamera.

The Panamericana grille is set to be retained on the production version. The trapezoidal headlamps reflect a new design theme that will appear on the next generation of models from Mercedes that design boss Gordon Wagener calls the “predator face”.

The GT Concept, which is more than five metres in length, features four frameless doors, a fixed B-pillar and a panoramic glass roof.

Some of the engineering solutions developed for the production version of the GT Concept are expected to also feature on the successor to the Mercedes SL roadster. Development of the next SL has been entrusted to AMG in a move aimed at giving the car heightened dynamic appeal.

GREG KABLE

Revamp includes new-look front end and semi-autonomous tech



OFFICIAL PICTURE

Fettled Qashqai: new tech, premium trim

NISSAN HAS REVEALED a revised Qashqai, which gets a new range-topping trim, more aggressive front-end design and semi-autonomous technology to refresh it in the face of new competition.

The Qashqai has been a global sales sensation for Nissan since its launch in 2006, kick-starting a crossover boom that continues to sweep across the market. However, in recent years, the Qashqai has faced growing competition from cars such as the Kia Sportage, Seat Ateca and Volkswagen Tiguan.

The upgraded model will be one of the first mainstream crossovers to feature semi-autonomous technology. It will be able to steer, accelerate and brake in a single lane on the motorway. The system can be updated and next year it will be able to change lanes by itself.

Nissan claims it will be able to navigate junctions by 2020.

There is a new range-topping Tekna+ trim aimed at premium buyers. Tekna+ gets new alloy wheels, nappa leather seats and more luxurious materials around the centre controls. The new trim is intended to push the Qashqai into rivalry with premium crossovers, such as the Audi Q3 and BMW X1.

Engines will be carried over from the current model, including 1.2-litre and 1.6-litre petrol units, as well as 1.5-litre and 1.6-litre diesels.

Qashqai prices currently start at £18,795 but these upgrades will mean a rise. It won’t be a steep increase, though, because Nissan will want to remain competitive. At its current price, the Qashqai is already slightly more expensive than the Ateca and Sportage.

OFFICIAL PICTURE

Swift gets a hybrid

THE NEW SUZUKI Swift will have a range-topping mild-hybrid model that uses a Boosterjet 1.0-litre three-cylinder engine and an integrated starter motor. It is the first time the supermini has had a hybrid option. The petrol-electric model has CO₂ emissions of 97g/km.

Three trim levels are available – SZ3, SZ-T and

SZ5 – and two petrol options sit alongside the hybrid.

The new five-door-only car is 10mm shorter than today’s but is wider and has a 20mm-longer wheelbase. Cabin space has grown by 25%, says Suzuki, and boot space rises 54 litres to 254.

It’s on sale in June. Today’s starting price of £8999 is expected to rise slightly.

New Suzuki Swift goes on sale in the UK in June



Hot Astons herald new performance sub-brand

Limited-edition models set to crown each of Aston's model lines



EXCLUSIVE PICTURES

The Aston Martin Rapide AMR and Vantage AMR Pro have been revealed at Geneva, launching a new, limited-edition performance sub-brand for the British marque that will be applied to all future model ranges.

AMR models will offer enhanced performance, sharper dynamics and more extreme styling. Aston chief creative officer Marek Reichman describes the new line of cars as the "cherry on the cake" of every model in Aston's range. AMR cars will be road-legal, while AMR Pro models will be track-only and developed separately by the Q by Aston Martin division.

The Rapide AMR is described by its makers as "the world's most thrilling four-door". It is powered by the 592bhp V12 from the Vantage GT12, running through a new quad exhaust system. It has a top speed of 210mph.

It is finished in Stirling Green with lime green accents, has 21in wheels and a revised grille, front splitter, side sills, rear diffuser and rear spoiler. Inside there's extensive use of carbonfibre, including lightweight seats and trims. Just 210 cars will be made.

The Vantage AMR Pro uses a 500bhp version of the championship-winning GT4's V8 race engine. It has race-spec

adjustable suspension, engine and transmissions mounts and centre-lock wheels, and offers "inspirational handling precision and exceptional grip and traction".

The Vantage AMR Pro uses the bonnet and rear wing of the firm's World Endurance Championship-winning racers and is also painted Stirling Green with lime green accents. Other details include a new front bumper, grille, splitter and diffuser, and it has a roll cage. Just seven will be sold.

Owners of AMR cars will be offered driving tuition, but Reichmann said the cars had not been designed to be intimidating. "We can

help people experience the full potential of these cars," he said. "Our heritage is in endurance racing, where the cars are driven on the edge for a 24-hour race, rather than wrung out over a single lap."

JIM HOLDER

ASTON NAMES ITS HYPERCAR



Aston has announced that its hotly anticipated 2019 hypercar will be called Valkyrie, a word that stems from Norse mythology and translates to 'chooser of the slain'.

Until now the car had been referred to by its internal codename, AM-RB 001. Aston said it chose the name Valkyrie to signify the car's role as being its most potent product yet.

"The Valkyrie is an incredibly special car that demands an equally remarkable name; an uncompromising car that leaves nothing in reserve," said chief creative officer Marek Reichman.

The car is co-developed by Red Bull Advanced Technologies and will use a naturally aspirated 6.5-litre Cosworth V12 that is expected to produce 900bhp. It comes mated to a seven-speed Ricardo gearbox.

Just 210 Rapide AMRs will be produced



CC replacement targets 4 Series Gran Coupé and A5

Arteon shares much with the Passat



OFFICIAL PICTURES

THE NEW VOLKSWAGEN Arteon, the manufacturer's replacement for the CC, has been revealed.

First previewed by the Sport Coupé Concept in 2015, the five-door fastback slots into the VW line-up above the eighth-generation Passat, with which it shares its platform, engines and chassis.

The styling of the Arteon is credited to Volkswagen brand design boss Klaus Bischoff, who describes it as "the start of a new design era".

Set to challenge the new Vauxhall Insignia Grand Sport when UK sales get under way

later this year, the Arteon will be offered in standard, Elegance and R-line trims.

The Arteon is longer, wider and taller than the CC, with a longer wheelbase than both the CC and the Passat, and VW says the rear seat room is class-leading. The 563-litre boot expands to 1557 litres with the seats down.

The new car uses an updated version of the Passat's dashboard and interior appointments. Included is VW's digital Active Info Display in place of conventional analogue instruments, while a centrally

mounted 9.2in infotainment monitor responds to both touch and gesture control.

It will be sold with a choice of three turbocharged four-cylinder petrol and three turbocharged four-cylinder diesel engines from the start of UK sales later this year. Further powertrain options, including a petrol-electric hybrid unit, will be added later.

The Arteon will rival the BMW 4 Series Gran Coupé and Audi A5. It is expected to be priced from above £30,000, which is a considerable rise over the outgoing CC's entry price of £25,475.

Active aero tech and new 'Ring record for hardcore Huracán

LAMBORGHINI HAS revealed the Huracán Performante at the Geneva show, a week after a camouflaged version smashed the Nürburgring production car lap record, beating the Porsche 918 Spyder's time by 5.0sec.

Driven by Lamborghini test driver Marco Mapelli, the Performante recorded a lap time of a 6min 52.01sec.

The Huracán Performante uses a mid-mounted 631bhp, 443lb ft 5.2-litre V10 and can hit 62mph from rest in 2.9sec, 0.3sec faster than the regular Huracán. Top speed is 202mph. With a dry weight of 1382kg, it has a power-to-weight ratio of 464bhp per tonne.

The Performante features a new, ultra-lightweight forged carbonfibre composite material, which has been patented by Lamborghini and allows complex moulded shapes to be made in one piece.

Use of the new material is focused on active aerodynamic elements. The Performante's fixed rear wing, including its air ducts and

flaps, is made of a single piece of forged carbonfibre. The flaps close for maximum downforce and open for maximum air flow using an electro-actuator system, which gives an 80% reduction in weight compared with a hydraulic system, the supercar brand claims.

The rear wing also features an inner air channel, which splits to the left and the right to allow aero vectoring for high-speed cornering. The duct can be closed on the right or left, depending on which way the car is cornering, to generate low drag on the exterior wheel and high downforce on the inner wheel, all of which improves the cornering performance.

According to Lamborghini, the wing gives the Performante 750% more downforce than a standard Huracán with no wing.

At the front of the car, flaps inside the spoiler close

when the active aerodynamic system is off and then open when it is on, reducing frontal air pressure and directing it through a channel under the car in order to reduce drag for optimum acceleration and top speed.

The design of the model heavily reflects that of Lamborghini's Super Trofeo racer. The redesigned front end is "much more aggressive and aligned to a race car", according to Lamborghini.

Other bespoke touches include a bronze engine manifold cover, which has been used on past Lamborghini special editions such as the Diablo 30th Anniversary.

The car goes on sale in the summer. It will cost £213,000 and there will be no limits on production volume.



Active rear wing can direct air left or right to optimise cornering



The naturally aspirated 5.2-litre V10 makes 631bhp and 443lb ft



Huracán Performante can hit 62mph from rest in just 2.9sec

EXCLUSIVE PICTURES

RS5 gets 444bhp 2.9-litre V6 and 0-62mph in 3.9sec

RS5's top speed can be extended to 174mph



OFFICIAL PICTURE

THE NEWLY RENAMED Audi Sport division has unveiled the second-generation RS5. It is powered by a new twin-turbo 2.9-litre V6 petrol engine developing the same 444bhp, but 442lb ft, which is a considerable 126lb ft more than its predecessor's naturally aspirated 4.2 V8.

Set for UK sales in June, the performance coupé has a new platform and grows in size over the model it replaces. Further developments include a new chassis with five-link front and rear suspension and

Audi Sport's Dynamic Ride Control system with variable damping control.

An eight-speed torque converter automatic gearbox is allied to a quattro four-wheel drive system that apportions drive in a rear-biased 40/60 split. A sport differential offering a torque vectoring effect for the rear wheels is optional.

Audi claims a 0-62mph time of 3.9sec, which is 0.6sec faster than the old RS5. Top speed is limited to 155mph, but that can be extended

to 174mph with an optional dynamic package.

RS styling upgrades include a wider single-frame grille with a black honeycomb insert, a new front bumper with larger air ducts and headlights with tinted graphics for the standard LED projectors.

Inside is a unique RS display for the digital instrument graphics, a flat-bottomed multi-function steering wheel, heavily contoured sports seats and stainless steel pedals.

The RS5 is expected to be priced from around £63,000.



Dendrobium will command a seven-figure price tag; 0-62mph in 2.7sec is a target



Williams tech creates 200mph EV

Vanda hopes to be Singapore's first car maker with its British-built electric supercar



There is still development work to be done on the car's interior

A new Singapore-based company has given a 200mph British-built electric supercar concept its world debut at Geneva. Called the Vanda Dendrobium, it is billed as a preview of a new line of electric road cars and will command a seven-figure price tag.

The two-seat 'petal-roofed' Dendrobium is the product of Grove-based Williams Advanced Engineering (WAE), whose engineers spent 2016 turning design sketches into the neatly finished concept.

According to Larissa Tan, the boss of Vanda Electrics, the company which is behind the project, the next step is to engineer the Dendrobium for limited production "in the tens, rather than the hundreds". But before ploughing in investment, Vanda will gauge reaction to the car at Geneva. "If we go into production, it will be [in] about two years," said Tan.

WAE head of programmes Ian Cluett is leading the project and has built the show car to running standard. Full details of the electric powertrain have

not been revealed, but to hit 200mph, the Dendrobium will need more than 700bhp, four-wheel drive, a two-speed gearbox and most likely three electric motors – one at the front and two at the rear.

However, to turn the concept car into a 'dynamic demonstrator', it features a single motor and a lithium ion battery pack derived from the Formula E set-up that WAE designed for the race series.

WAE has been set a number of tough challenges by the Dendrobium's design, which

F1 LEGEND FITTIPALDI FETTLES NEW TRACK CAR

Design house Pininfarina and Formula 1 champion Emerson Fittipaldi have teamed up to create the EF7 Gran Turismo Vision, a limited-edition track car. It uses a naturally aspirated V8 that delivers more than 592bhp. The engine and gearbox are said to be "single manufacturer-made" and the car is claimed to weigh about 1000kg.

Pininfarina has also revealed a new hybrid saloon concept, called H600, as part of a new technical collaboration with a Hong Kong-based electric vehicle firm called Hybrid Kinetic Group.



Limited-edition 592bhp car will also appear in PlayStation's Gran Turismo game

ECLIPSE CROSS TARGETS QASHQAI

The Mitsubishi Eclipse Cross, revealed at this week's Geneva motor show, sits between the ASX and Outlander in the car maker's line-up. The all-wheel drive model will compete against the Nissan Qashqai when it goes on sale early next year.



GENEVA BOW FOR Q8 SPORT CONCEPT

Audi's new Q8 Sport concept is powered by a 3.0 V6 augmented by a mild-hybrid system and an electric compressor. Audi claims the use of the technology is a world first; company boss Rupert Stadler said it will feature in many future Audis.



features a teardrop-shaped centre section, exposed rear suspension components and unique roof/door opening.

The rear-hinging doors and roof lend the supercar its name, their 'petal-like' shape mimicking the Vanda orchid, Singapore's national flower. Dendrobium is an orchid genus.

Locking the doors and lightweight roof shut at 200mph will be a considerable engineering challenge for WAE.

The Dendrobium hasn't been in the wind tunnel yet, but Cluett said its behaviour has been computer modelled.

The tapering rear bodywork also leaves little volume for a battery pack. WAE can't package the battery between the wheels, Tesla-style, because that would push the centre of gravity too high. As a result, it is likely to feature a relatively small battery pack of 30-50kWh, rather than the 80-100kWh of the Tesla Model S.

The powertrain will be tuned to deliver the project's two main targets: 200mph and 0-60mph in 2.7sec.

There is also work to be done on the interior packaging, which places the occupants too far outboard and pinned against an intrusive door trim.

Remarkably, the Dendrobium's design dates to 1996 and was created by an unnamed designer. According to Tan, it was revised "in the mid-2000s", but the designer wishes to remain anonymous.

Vanda Electrics is a privately funded engineering company with investors in the United States and China.

JULIAN RENDELL

Renault Zoe turns electric mega-hatch

RENAULT HAS CREATED a hot two-seat version of its Zoe electric hatch which draws on technology developed from the firm's involvement in the Formula E racing series.

A faster Zoe has long been the subject of speculation but increasing performance while preserving a credible driving range has been the issue. The concept, called the Zoe e-sport, won't make production but instead shows "what's possible for a performance electric car," said a Renault spokesman.

The Zoe e-sport concept has two electric motors developing 460bhp and 472lb ft in total. The car can sprint

from 0-62mph in 3.2sec and 130mph can be reached in under 10sec, claimed Renault.

The concept's two motors are identical, with one sited at the front and the other at the rear, each driving an axle. As in Formula E, the motors use high-capacity permanent magnet technology to maximise energy efficiency. The car is fitted with a 40kWh battery, which is the same as that used in the standard Zoe.

The Zoe e-sport uses the same air and water cooling systems as Renault's Formula E racing car to ensure the battery and control systems work at an ideal temperature.



Zoe e-sport covers 0-130mph in under 10sec, says Renault



Cabin has two Recaro bucket seats and Formula E-style controls

The Zoe e-sport has four driving modes, giving the driver the choice of more performance or a longer driving range.

The concept uses a tubular steel chassis and is clad in carbonfibre bodywork. It weighs 1400kg. It has a lowered ride height and wider tracks, with the aim of improving cornering ability compared with the standard Zoe road car.

The car is fitted with double-

wishbone suspension, 20in wheels, bigger brakes and four-way adjustable dampers that are the same as those fitted to the Mégane RS 275 Trophy-R hot hatch.

The exterior styling has been enhanced to provide better aerodynamics, with a new front air dam, flat undercarriage, Formula E-inspired diffuser and a large carbonfibre spoiler.

The Zoe e-sport has been built to the FIA's safety standards and is slated to appear at track events during the racing season.

Infiniti uses F1 wizardry to give Q60 a 500bhp punch

INFINITI HAS UNVEILED a high-performance hybrid coupé concept, the Q60 Black S. The car has been created to mark Infiniti's new technical partnership with Renault's grand prix team.

The Q60 Black S is based on the top-spec, four-wheel-drive version of Infiniti's two-door Q60 coupé. That car's 3.0-litre twin-turbo V6 produces 400bhp and enables a 0-62mph time of 5.0sec, but

the concept's performance is supplemented by a Formula 1-style Kinetic Energy Recovery System (KERS), which stores recovered braking energy and deploys it when a power boost is needed.

The KERS-equipped Q60 Black S will offer "instant, lag-free acceleration", according to Infiniti, although specific performance figures haven't been revealed.

The concept's powertrain

is being developed by Renault and Infiniti engineers working in partnership at Renault's F1 engine headquarters at Viry-Châtillon, south of Paris.

There's no word on whether the Q60 Black S will make production, but equipping a road car with KERS would be a complex and costly exercise. With the top-spec Q60 costing £46,700, a production version of the Q60 Black S would likely cost more than £60,000.



Q60 Black S has KERS and a 3.0 twin-turbo V6

THREE-SEAT TOYOTA BREAKS COVER

The new Toyota i-TRIL electric city car concept features a 1+2 seating layout as well as an 'Active Lean' body tilting function and autonomous technology. The rear-wheel-drive vehicle has a maximum driving range of about 185 miles.



SSANGYONG PREVIEWS NEW SUV

Ssangyong has revealed the XAVL concept, which previews a seven-seat mid-sized SUV similar in size to the Nissan X-Trail. A production version is due in 2020. The concept is two-wheel drive and powered by either a 1.5 petrol or a 1.6 diesel.





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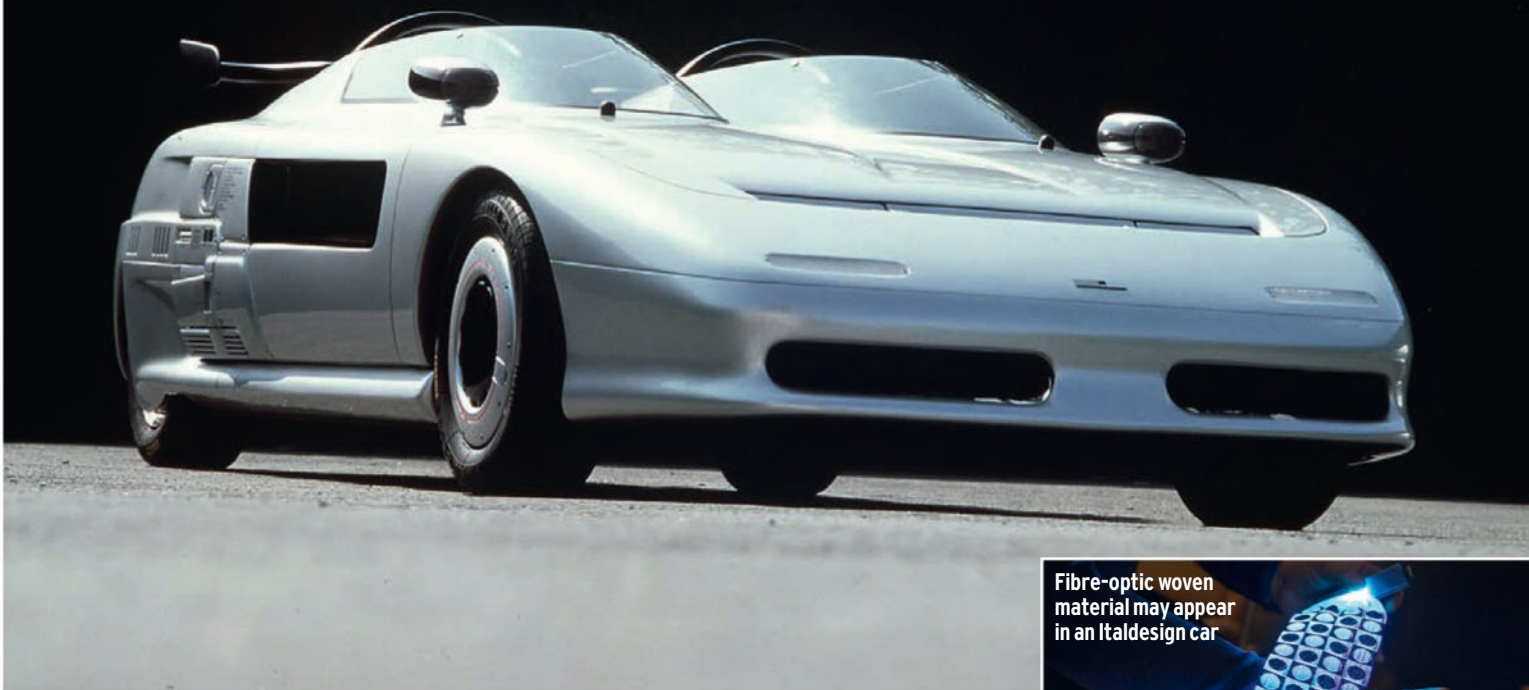
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Steve Cropley

MY WEEK IN CARS

Steve drove the Aztec, a 1988 concept car, and saw what it was made of



MONDAY

Bad news: one of my friends, who needs his venerable Land Rover Defender every day to drive through the Gloucestershire estate he manages, had the machine swiped from his house at 1am the other morning while he was asleep a few yards away. Seems the villains who do this stuff know exactly which models to target and how to move them noiselessly. Even the family's three dogs, in kennels outside, weren't disturbed.

Here's the point: my friend now needs another vehicle and has been considering all the usual non-Landies suspects, particularly those with transponder keys and modern door locking. You'd have thought a four-wheel-drive Japanese pick-up might fill the bill, but nothing is right. When it comes to towing a trailer through dense, muddy woods, my friend's stock in trade, a Defender, rules. Which is why he's probably going to have to dive back into an overheated market in search of a replacement, and then shell out for an ignition immobiliser. I'm finding it ironic that a natural Defender customer urgently needs a decent replacement while Jaguar Land Rover, having killed the icon, has nothing to offer.

WEDNESDAY

They grow on you, cars. I've just driven 1000 miles on UK motorways in our Infiniti Q30 long-term test car, a task I began without much relish. My low expectation came about from nothing more substantial than hearing the car idle: its 2.2-litre diesel sounded like a Fergie tractor. Taking the wheel, I found it was indeed agricultural, but torquey with it. And something odd in my head likes the comforting (and reasonably distant) rattle if it delivers progress. When you get going, it's fine, even if road noise isn't exactly

“
I hit a large pothole and a piece of the Aztec's clay dashboard landed in my lap
”

class-leading. On one stretch, I returned 60mpg and my trip average topped 47mpg. Now, when colleagues cite better rivals, I know they're right but I still defend the Q30. How weird is that?

THURSDAY

Quick trip to the new hydrogen filling station at Cobham on London's orbital M25, just for the heck of it. As usual, it was a pleasure. Filling a hydrogen car is even more convenient than a conventional petrol model because you can bet your mortgage there'll be no one at the pump, it's quick, and card-based payment takes seconds.

AND ANOTHER THING...

This month, auctioneer H&H will sell the only RHD 1964 Ferrari 330GT Nembo Spider, hoping to raise £500k. The car is a bequest to the East Anglian Air Ambulance from the late Richard Allen, former Ferrari Owners' Club chairman. What a wonderful way to put the fruits of your lifetime's enthusiasm to use when you no longer need them.



Fibre-optic woven material may appear in an Italdesign car



Compared with an electric refueller (where a meaningful 'tickle' takes 30mins) or a petrol or diesel pump (where queues are common), an H₂ car is a breeze. There are obvious disadvantages, but for my urban usage, they're no hurdle at all.

FRIDAY

A trip to Italdesign in Turin (see p62) brought back memories. I used to go there a lot when founder Giorgetto Giugiaro was still in charge. But Audi took the reins in 2010 and the place became a hotbed of secret Volkswagen Group projects. Hacks were about as welcome as sugar in a fuel tank. Now they're changing back to an outward-looking business model. It was funny how little seemed to have changed. In the street outside, there was even a familiarly large pothole that I once disastrously hit while driving a concept car called the Aztec 30 years ago. A piece of clay dashboard landed in my lap.

There's no doubting it's a go-ahead place now, though. Chief designer Filippo Perini showed us an amazing new trim material under consideration for a concept car. The trim is woven in fibre-optic thread, so when you light one end, the whole expanse of material glows. Someone's going to want car seats like that, very soon.

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FIRST DRIVES

NEW CARS TESTED AND RATED



TESTED LISBON, PORTUGAL ON SALE 2020 PRICE £22,000 (EST)

VOLKSWAGEN ID

VW's vision of an electric-powered future will become a production car in 2020. Is it a future we can look forward to?

It was only there for a fleeting moment, but I saw it. It was a shy, somewhat coy, slightly surreptitious move. It was even preceded by a quick look to the left and right to make sure the coast was clear. But then, and unmistakably, the little white Volkswagen winked at me.

And silly slice of concept car theatre though it was, in that blink-of-an-eye gesture (pun entirely intended), a whole new world opened up to me. A world where cars were no longer passive machines, there to be operated only by those within, but quasi-sentient beings capable also of interacting with those without. Capable of mild flirtation, even.

If VW has its way, by 2025 this ID concept will have spawned an entire family of autonomous-capable cars amounting to one in every six cars it sells, which means a million per year in total, just from the VW brand.

There will, of course, be Audis, Seats and Skodas, too. Up to 30 models across all the Volkswagen Group portfolio, in fact. And they won't just be able to drive you home from the pub. They'll make

people like you, too, by slowing to let pedestrians cross the road and indicating to them (using multi-function headlights) that it is safe to do so. Pursue this to a not illogical conclusion and, one day, if it spots someone it knows you'll fancy and is registered to the same dating website as you, it might even swipe right on your behalf.

But however diverting the idea of getting your car to make the first move, there are currently more pressing issues for VW, such as digging its reputation out of the Mariana Trench-sized hole it has dug for itself of late.

Perhaps this is why when VW talks about the ID, it is not afraid to talk big. Big enough to compare the car's prospects with those of the Beetle and Golf, the former being the best-selling single car design there has been, the latter more successful still, albeit over seven generations. Indeed, VW is so keen to focus on the future that it is happy to let loose a hack like me in the world's one and only example, even though, compared with the production version due in three years' time, it barely functions.

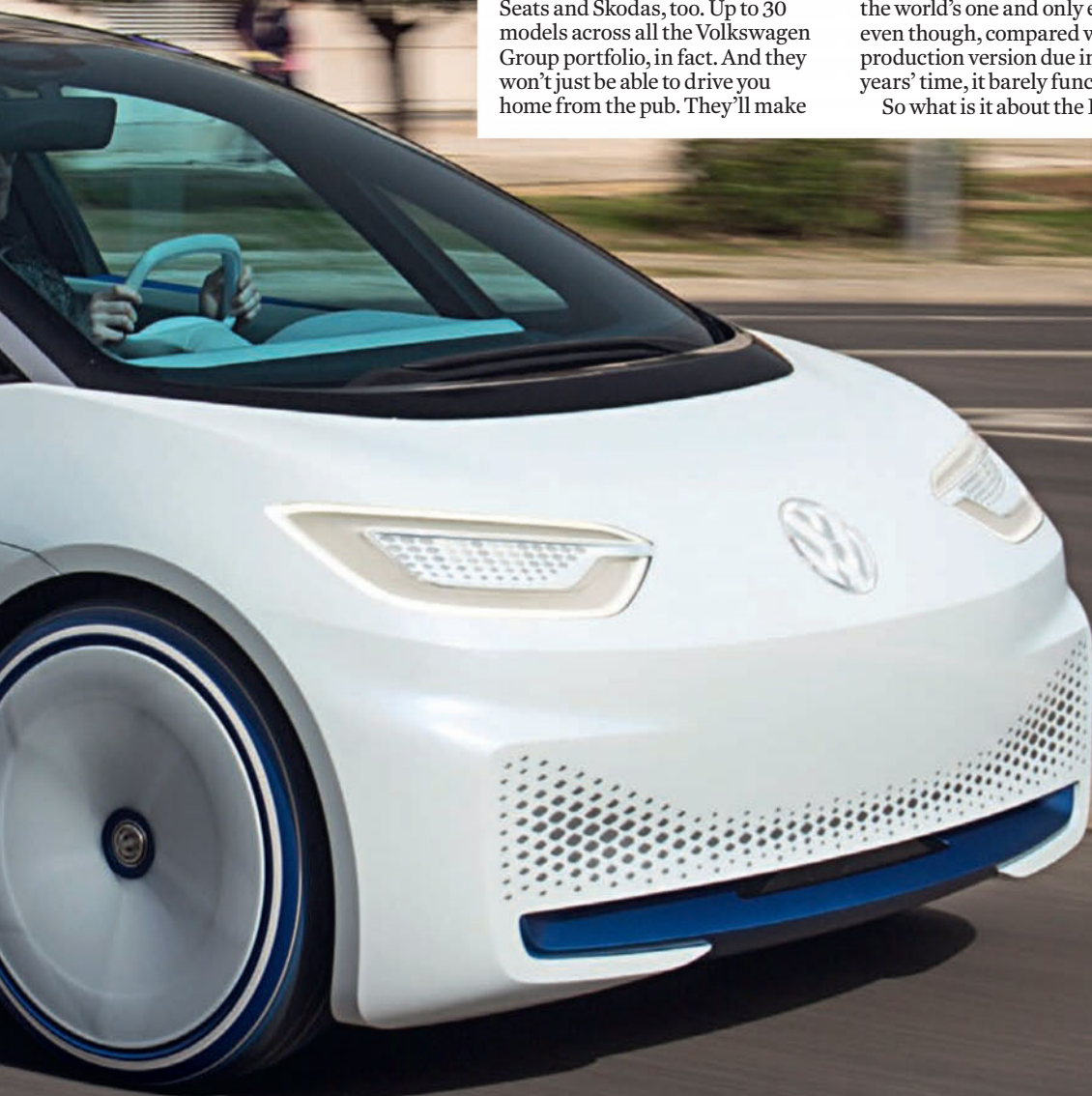
So what is it about the ID – which

can stand for Identity, Individual Design, IDea or anything else you want – that makes VW so sure it can succeed where every other manufacturer who has tried so far has failed? What wizardry has VW alighted upon that is going to turn the ID into a literal million-seller?

Volkswagen is surprisingly opaque on the subject. Christine Leuderalbert is a VW e-mobility product specialist who says only that the car will contain "the latest, most energy-dense battery technology". But it will still have lithium ion batteries like every pure EV since the Nissan Leaf broke cover in 2010 and, it appears, will not be built around a super-light, strong but expensive carbonfibre shell like the BMW i3.

Using VW's new dedicated electrical MEB architecture, it will follow conventional thinking in laying out its batteries flat and thin along the floor and pushing the wheels out to each corner so the powertrain resembles a skateboard, albeit with an electric motor at the back driving the rear wheels.

So it seems that VW's approach is the one that almost always results in the greatest success: wait for →



TESTER'S NOTE

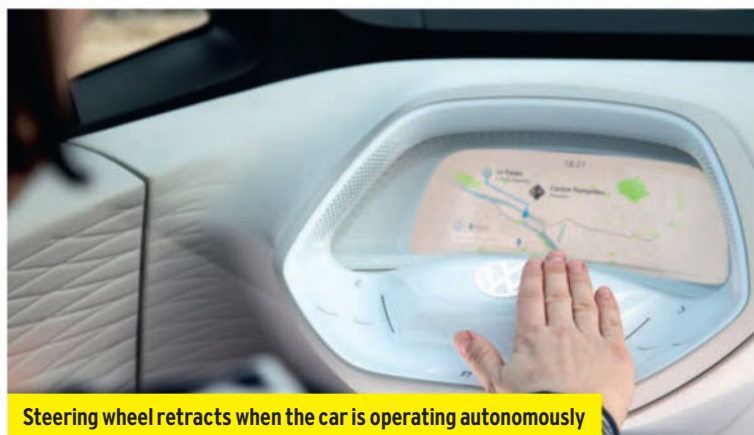
The wheels look enormous but they're 'only' 20in, with covers that extend beyond the rim to make them look bigger. The standard production car is likely to be sold with 18in wheels. **AF**



“
It will bring a level of
sophistication, range
and dynamism hitherto
unknown at this price
”



Notably airy feel may be dialled back for production by the need for thicker pillars



Steering wheel retracts when the car is operating autonomously

← everyone else to do the pioneering stuff, make all the cock-ups and sort them out, then commit when the hard work has been done and direct all your resources to doing what has already been done, but better than anyone else.

The ID concept illustrates the point nicely. At fractionally more than 4.1m long, it is closer in length to a Polo than a Golf but it sits on a wheelbase only fractionally shorter than that of a Passat. And, because the motor is at the back, the front wheels can turn far more than those of a conventional car, resulting in a tiny, sub-10m turning circle.

Inside, it feels almost impossibly airy. The metal roof supports are so thin and the glazing so expansive that the view out is as if from within a giant and only minutely structured bubble. Come production, the roof will be raised further still, although I strongly suspect its pillars will need to be more heavily bolstered to provide sufficient roll-over protection. Whether a pillar appears between the two rows of seats remains to be seen, but Leuderalt says the production car will have “conventional” doors rather than the electric, sliding rear items on the concept, and it’s hard to see how standard doors could be engineered without a B-pillar.

Predictably, the ID is terrible to drive. I’m restricted to a short strip of pedestrian space alongside a marina in Lisbon and VW has thoughtfully limited the car’s top speed to just a little less than 20mph. It accelerates slowly and haphazardly, even at these speeds showing no sign of the sub-8.0sec 0-62mph potential claimed for the production version. We should not allow this to delay us, much less to dismay us: most concept cars won’t even move under their own power, so no profit lies in trying to infer some sense of what the real thing will be like, based on a few minutes in a contraption that would render a Unigate milk float as a Porsche 918.

It’s the ideas this concept contains, not its necessarily clumsy execution, that should interest us here.

The first is platform versatility: the MEB platform has the elasticity of vigorously masticated bubblegum. It can create cars like this that are as small as a Polo, or as large as a campervan, as the MEB-based ID Buzz Microbus concept shown in Detroit at the start of the year made clear. Frustratingly, some 16 years after VW first showed a 21st century interpretation of its iconic campervan design, the company still won’t say when or even if it will make it into production. But the existence

TWO PROBLEMS VW MUST OVERCOME TO MAKE AUTONOMOUS CARS A REALITY

Getting a car to drive itself is child's play, even today. Many cars will happily steer along a motorway all by themselves, save for an occasional regulatory tap on the wheel to show the driver is still awake. The new Mercedes-Benz E-Class will overtake autonomously and the next S-Class will manoeuvre into and out of the tightest parking spaces with no need for anyone to be on board.

But for Volkswagen, two problems present themselves,

neither of them technological. First, there are laws all over the world that need changing and legislators are not

known for their lightning reactions in this regard. Second, there is the price. VW estimates the price of adding

autonomous drive to an ID will be about the cost of an entire other ID. Which means VW may soon be adding its name to the long list of companies already aware that however hard perfecting a new technology may be, it is a complete doddle compared with bringing that technology to market at a price the customer is prepared to pay.



ID's technical layout bodes well for keen drivers: low centre of gravity, rear weight bias and rear-wheel drive

and versatility of MEB makes it a clearly far more practical proposition.

Then there is VW's answer to range anxiety, which is simply to provide as much or as little of it as you're willing to pay for. When the ID goes on sale for around £22,000 in 2020, the base car will have a quoted range of about 250 miles – usefully better than the 186 miles that the latest e-Golf will do but still some distance short of the ID's true capability. If you pay for an extra battery pack, the range can be expanded to 372 miles. The plan is for the extra range to be retro-fittable and for all batteries to be replaceable when technological advances make it sensible to do so.

Actually, the concept is better at showing us what the fully autonomous ID will be like in 2025 than the still driver-dependent car will be in 2020. You can see the four roof-mounted lidar sensors that will be the car's primary source of real-time local information, and you can watch as the approximately hexagonal steering wheel retreats into the dashboard to become a shroud for the display screen when autonomous mode is engaged. You can also watch what VW calls 'Augmented Reality' in a head-up display that shows not merely your next direction but also the contours of the road ahead as it

twists and turns into the distance. I hope VW has considered that frustrated rally drivers will use Augmented Reality as virtual pace notes. And, lest we forget, the ID can wink and blink, too, although, I was disappointed to discover, not squint.

So how real is what you're looking at? Although the ID show car on this page will not share a single component with the ID production car in your dealer three years hence, VW insists the essential concept will survive. Indeed, it has been quoted as saying it is 80% there. The look will be the same, apart from details such as wing mirrors and door operation.

The incredibly clean, almost spare interior design will survive and be polluted by as few switches and buttons as legal regulation allows. Crucially, the packaging will be preserved and bring perhaps unprecedented levels of space efficiency to the class.

Then there is the cost: if VW really can get it to market for under £22,000, as is claimed, it will bring a level of sophistication, range and dynamism hitherto unknown at this price point. Of course, it remains to be seen what challenge rivals like the Mercedes EQ will bring in the meantime and it may be that what

seems like an incredible confection of performance, packaging and efficiency today will be rather less out of this world in 2020. Nor do we know what effect, if any, the quite violent ongoing round of belt tightening at VW will have. But we can judge only as we find at the time of discovery and, right now, the ID seems fresh, relevant, innovative and, most important of all, timely. And with a belly-crawling centre of gravity, a rear-biased weight distribution and correct-wheel drive, there'll be no excuse for it not being great to drive.

ANDREW FRANKEL

[@Andrew_Frankel](#)



Useful-sized boot sits on top of the sole electric motor

VOLKSWAGEN ID

Impossible to award a star rating to this concept but it marks a promising start to VW's electric car ambitions

Price	£22,000 (est)
Engine	Electric motor
Power	167bhp
Torque	Not specified
0-62mph	Sub-8.0sec
Top speed	99mph
Gearbox	Single-spd, direct drive
Kerb weight	Not specified
Economy	Not specified
CO₂	0g/km

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Combined 57.7 (4.9) Co2 129g/km



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1.4 TFSI 150 Sport 5dr

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Combined 61.4 (4.6) Co2 107g/km



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Fuel consumption in mpg (l/100km)
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Combined 51.4 (5.5) Co2 126g/km



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BMW 1 Series Hatch

M140i 3dr

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Fuel consumption in mpg (l/100km)
Urban 26.6 (10.6) Extra Urban 45.6 (6.2)
Combined 36.2 (7.8) Co2 179g/km



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Combined 64.2 (4.4) Co2 116g/km



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**TESTER'S NOTE**

The raised front wing tops are noticeable from the driver's seat, giving the impression that you're sitting in something suitably sporty. They're a nice touch. **ATJ**



TESTED 27.2.17, SWITZERLAND ON SALE AUTUMN PRICE £38,000 (EST)

ALFA ROMEO STELVIO 2.2 210 SUPER

Italian marque prepares to join the cut-throat premium diesel SUV fray

Given the popularity of SUVs, we'd say it's a wise move for Alfa Romeo to offer a fast diesel version of its new Stelvio, certainly if the Italian manufacturer wants to appeal to the modern premium car buyer. That this 207bhp 2.2-litre diesel model emits less CO₂ than the equivalent Jaguar F-Pace or Audi Q5, but is also quicker than both, won't hurt its chances.

But speed and frugality aren't enough to make a true Alfa Romeo. When the road twists and turns like a strand of wet spaghetti, an Alfa also needs to engage and entertain its driver. Following our guardedly positive test of a Stelvio on a race circuit last week, we've now had the opportunity to try an oil-burning version on the road to see if it can fulfil the promise hinted at by its petrol-powered sibling on the track.

Within a few hundred yards of setting off, there's plenty of cause for optimism. Like Alfa's Giulia saloon,

the Stelvio's steering rack is far quicker than those of its rivals and it darts into corners with enthusiasm. There's decent weight to the steering, so it never feels too hyperactive, and there's even a smidgeon of feel as you approach the limit.

The aluminium-intensive suspension has wider tracks than the Giulia's, and those, combined with fairly stiff springs, provide flat cornering without any need for trick dampers or clever anti-roll bars.

Four-wheel drive is standard on all variants apart from the entry-level 178bhp diesel. The system doesn't apportion drive to the Stelvio's front axle unless a degree of slip is detected. Even then, only half of the engine's torque gets sent to the front axle. At the exit of a corner this translates into a neutral balance, with the traction control system (which can't be fully switched off) cutting in to quell any oversteer.

So what about the diesel engine at

the heart of this new Alfa? Well, the 2.2 fires up with a noticeable shimmy and then never seems to settle down. The vibrations dissipate, but there's always a gritty undertone regardless of your speed or revs.

The eight-speed ZF automatic gearbox is more refined. In manual mode, using the best steering wheel-mounted paddle shifters this side of a Ferrari 488, it shifts impressively smoothly and quickly.

Then there's the Stelvio's ride. Although it doesn't crash or bang over broken roads, there's more vertical movement than you might expect. We suspect that the combination of 19in wheels and winter tyres fitted to our test car did it no favours, although even Switzerland's worst roads aren't as poor as those that you might experience in Britain.

Inside, Alfa has tried to compete with the best the Germans have to offer, with supple leather, metal

detailing and the option of real wood. But while there's squishy plastic on the dashboard and the tops of the doors, there's lots of scratchy stuff on the centre console and unattractive finishes around the gearlever and other places you'll see regularly.

The boot is competitive in size and you can fold the rear seats from back there. An electric tailgate is standard, as are 40/20/40 split folding seats. Passenger space in the rear cabin isn't quite as generous, though. Kids will be fine, but six-foot-plus adults will struggle for leg room if similarly tall individuals are sitting up front.

All in all, the Stelvio will certainly appeal to those who enjoy driving and fancy something different.

ALAN TAYLOR-JONES

[@alantaylorjones](#)

ALFA ROMEO STELVIO 2.2 210 SUPER

Sharp handling and strong engine will tempt keen drivers, but the cabin and refinement lag behind the class best



Price	£38,000 (est)
Engine	4 cyls, 2143cc, diesel
Power	207bhp at 3750rpm
Torque	347lb ft at 1750rpm
Gearbox	8-spd automatic
Kerb weight	1659kg
0-62mph	6.6sec
Top speed	134mph
Economy	58.8mpg (combined)
CO₂/tax band	127g/km, 27%
RIVALS	Jaguar F-Pace 2.0d 240 Prestige AWD, Audi Q5 2.0 TDI 190 quattro Sport



Some trim materials let the Stelvio's cabin down; it's agile and the steering offers some feel



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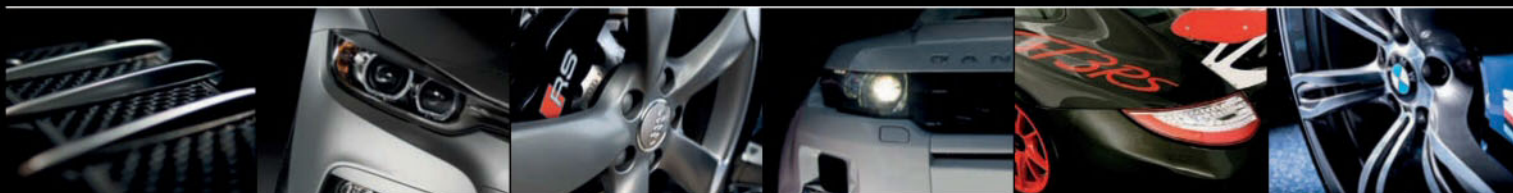
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AUDI 3.0TDi (ALL MODELS) » 315+ BHP
AUDI 3.0 Bi-TDi (ALL MODELS) » 380+ BHP
AUDI Q7/A8 4.2 TDi » 400+ BHP

BMW

M5 V10 » 548+ BHP (205 MPH)
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1M » 411+ BHP
M3 E90/92 » 445 BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
M135i/ M235i » 402 BHP
M4/M3 3.0T » 520+ BHP
M5 F10/M6 (STAGE 1) » 680 BHP
M5 F10/M6 (STAGE 2) » 730 BHP
F10 520D » 240 BHP
F10 530D » 305 BHP
335i/135i/X6 » 370+ BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
123D » 252 BHP

316D/216D/116D » 160 BHP
318D/218D/118D » 225 BHP
330D E90 » 296+ BHP
320D E90 » 215 BHP
420i/320i/220i/120i » 275+ BHP
435i/ F30 335i » 390 BHP
428i/328i » 295 BHP
535D / 335D / X5 SD » 355+ BHP
640D/335D/535D/435D » 390 BHP
730D » 305+ BHP
X5 4.0D / 740D » 370 BHP
X5 3.0D » 305 BHP
X6 X5.0i 4.4 » 500+BHP
X6 M50D/X5M50D/550D » 450 BHP

MERCEDES-BENZ

A200CDi/C200CDi/E200CDi » 175 BHP
A250/C250 » 260 BHP
A45/CLA45 » 420 BHP
C300 HYBRID » 285 BHP
A220CDi/C220CDi/E220CDi » 215 BHP
C350/CLS350/E350/S350 » 315 BHP
E400 /C450 » 420+ BHP
C400 » 400 BHP
'63' 5.5 Bi-TURBO ALL MODELS » 690+BHP
'500' 4.7 Bi-TURBO ALL MODELS » 498+BHP
S65 (W222) » 780 BHP
SL65 BLACK » 720+ BHP (+DELIMIT)
SL65 AMG » 690 BHP (+DE-LIMIT)
'55' AMG KOMPRESSOR » 580+BHP
C63 AMG 6.3 » 530+BHP (+DE-LIMIT)

C63 AMG 4.0T » CALL FOR DETAILS
SL63 AMG 6.3 » 560+BHP (+DE-LIMIT,
RE-MAP & LOWER ABC SUSPENSION)
CL600 Bi-TURBO » 580+ BHP
SLK55 AMG » 420+ BHP (+DELIMIT)
320 CDi V6 » 274 BHP
350 CDi V6 » 312 BHP
420 /450 CDi V8 » 358 BHP

ALL 2015 RANGE ROVERS AVAILABLE

R ROVER SC 5.0 » 580+ BHP
R ROVER 4.4 SDV8 » 395+ BHP
R ROVER 3.0 TDV6 » 315+ BHP
R ROVER 3.0 SDV6 » 345+ BHP
EVOQUE/DISCO SPORT 2.2 DIESEL
» 240+ BHP

PORSCHE

997 TURBO/S 3.8 INC PDK » 611 BHP
997 TURBO 3.6 » 625+ BHP
997 GT2 RS » 670+ BHP
996 TURBO/GT2 » 600+ BHP
997 CARRERA S PDK » 400+ BHP
997 CARRERA S » 376+ BHP
997 CARRERA PDK » 368 BHP
997 CARRERA GTS » 435 BHP
997 GT3 UP » 436 BHP
BOXSTER 3.4S » 336+ BHP
CAYMAN S » 342 BHP
MACAN 3.0D » 315 BHP
CAYENNE GTS » 440 BHP

CAYENNE TURBO 4.8 » 578+ BHP
CAYENNE TURBO S 4.8 » 600+ BHP
CAYENNE 4.2 DIESEL » 450+ BHP
CAYENNE DIESEL » 315+ BHP
PANAMERA TURBO » 600+ BHP
PANAMERA DIESEL » 315+ BHP

EXOTIC / MISC

FERRARI CALIFORNIA » 487 BHP
FERRARI 599 » 647 BHP
FERRARI 430 » 525 BHP
GALLARDO » 546 BHP
LP560 » 608+BHP
LP640 » 707 BHP
HURACAN » 640+ BHP
AVENTADOR » CALL FOR DETAILS
MCLAREN MP4-12C » 700 BHP
MCLAREN 650S » 720 BHP
MURCIELAGO LP640 » 707 BHP
MASERATI Ghibli 3.0S PETROL » 470 BHP
MASERATI Ghibli 3.0 PETROL » 400 BHP
MASERATI Ghibli 3.0 DIESEL » 312 BHP
MASERATI GT/QPORT » 438 BHP
MASERATI GT S / MC » 479+ BHP
BENTLEY 4.0 T V8 » 690 BHP
BENTLEY CGT / F-SPUR (INC 2013) » 680+ BHP
BENTLEY GT SPEED (INC 2013 ON) » 695 BHP
BENTLEY SUPERSPORT » 720+ BHP

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MERCEDES-AMG GLC43 COUPE

Twin-turbo V6 SUV turns fastback with sportier suspension



Put the word 'coupé' into the world's favourite online search engine and you'll find that it means a car with a solid roof, two doors and a sloping rear. Over the past few years, that definition has changed beyond recognition. Stick a fastback on anything these days and it seems you can call it a coupé.

That brings us to the GLC43 Coupé, which is based on the existing hot version of Mercedes' mid-sized SUV, the GLC43. It has that car's twin-turbo V6 and is good for an identical 4.9sec 0-62mph time. In fact, the only thing that's reduced is boot capacity: there's around 50 litres less when the rear seats are up.

The suspension has been changed, though. The air springs have been retuned to make the GLC43 Coupé

feel sportier than its sibling. Our first drive of the car in the UK suggests this isn't entirely successful; with the driving mode selector in Comfort, there's float and wallow over crests and compressions, but potholes still send a thump through the car.

Switching to Sport mode sorts out the body control, but you'll feel poor surfaces even more. Body roll is at least well contained, although the firmer settings mean you get jostled by mid-corner bumps. Switch up to Sport Plus mode and things get very bumpy indeed on the public road.

That might be acceptable if the GLC43 Coupé offered some engagement, but the lifeless steering and nose-led balance leave you feeling impressed by the speed it carries but not particularly entertained.

The motor certainly has plenty of grunt. There's decent torque and it is also happy to rev out if you want to enjoy its six-cylinder rasp. In Sport Plus mode you even get some pops and crackles from the exhaust.

The interior looks great and all the controls fall easily to hand. The infotainment system isn't as intuitive to use as Audi's MMI or BMW's iDrive. Space for rear passengers is compromised by the sloping roof.

The GLC43 Coupé isn't found wanting for pace, but you'd have to be smitten with the way it looks to consider one. Those looking for an engaging and powerful £50k-ish SUV would probably be better off with a Porsche Macan GTS.

ALAN TAYLOR-JONES

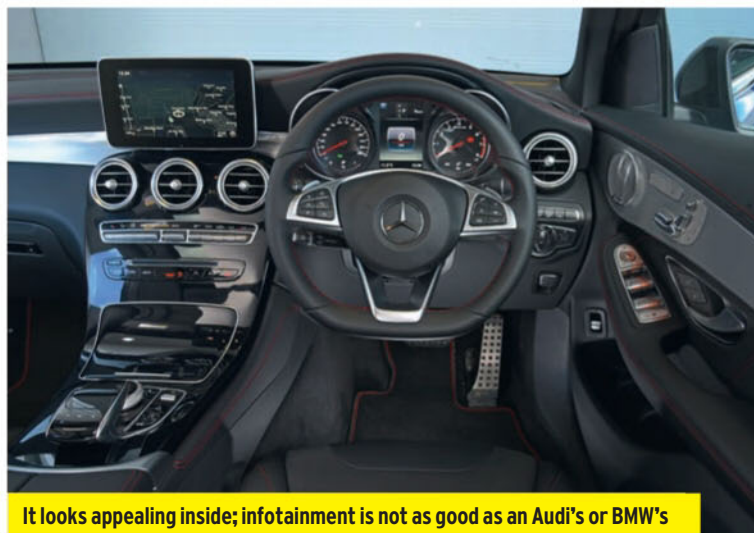
[@alantaylorjones](#)

MERCEDES-AMG GLC43 COUPE 4MATIC

V6 has plenty of punch, but handling doesn't excite. If you want a GLC, go for the cheaper, comfier SUV

★★★★★☆☆

Price	£51,850
Engine	V6, 2996cc, twin-turbo, petrol
Power	362bhp at 5500-6000rpm
Torque	384lb ft at 2500-4500rpm
Gearbox	9-spd automatic
Kerb weight	1855kg
0-62mph	4.9sec
Top speed	155mph
Economy	33.6mpg (combined)
CO ₂ /tax band	192g/km/37%
RIVALS	Audi SQ5, Jag F-Pace 3.0 S



It looks appealing inside; infotainment is not as good as an Audi's or BMW's



SUBARU BRZ SE LUX

Price £26,050 On sale Now

What's new? Fractionally sharper dynamics, mild cosmetic changes and extra kit

INSTEAD OF OFFERING two separate trim levels, as Toyota does with the similar GT86, Subaru offers only one, the £26,050 SE Lux, on its facelifted BRZ.

The SE Lux features heated Alcantara seats, a leather-covered dashboard and a new rear spoiler. Its GT86 twin in a similar specification would be an extra £1500 or so.

There are mechanical tweaks too. The front springs have been stiffened and the rears softened, while the opposite has been done to the anti-roll bars. The BRZ now feels noticeably more progressive up to, and over, the limit. The steering has been retuned so that it builds weight more smoothly off-centre. It feels stable at speed.

The decision to put a BRZ on your drive has never been easier. **NW**

★★★★★☆☆



SUBARU LEVORG 1.6i GT

Price £29,680 On sale Now

What's new? Left-field estate receives measures aimed at boosting cabin refinement and new driver assistance systems

FOR 2017, THIS mid-sized estate has been treated to better soundproofing for the cabin, including thicker window glazing, in an effort to improve refinement. Unfortunately, there is still noticeably more wind and road noise than you'd experience in, say, a Skoda Superb.

However, the biggest update is the addition of Subaru's driver assistance system, Eyesight, as standard kit. Using a pair of stereoscopic cameras, the system scans the road ahead and initiates a series of avoidance measures if it determines a collision is imminent. Thankfully we didn't have cause to test the system, but it's a useful extra safety net. **NW**

★★★★★☆☆

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ROAD TEST No 5310

AUDI A5 SPORTBACK

Ingolstadt's dome-roofed hatchback returns to the executive fray

MODEL TESTED 2.0 TFSI 252 QUATTRO S LINE S TRONIC

Price £41,240 • Power 249bhp • Torque 273lb ft • 0-60mph 5.7sec • 30-70mph in fourth 8.3sec
• Fuel economy 30.6mpg • CO₂ emissions 144g/km • 70-0mph 45.0



In a universe of infinite possibilities, there must be a reality in which Audi's 2009 marketing wheeze of retrofitting the A5 coupé with rear doors and a hatchback boot (and charging significantly more for it than the mechanically identical A4) was met with buyer contempt.

Here, though, and despite the aftershock of recession, the frameless doors and more shapely body were a moderate hit, and the car was easily successful enough for Audi to deliver much the same overhaul that has already been visited on the A4 and the A5 coupé at the end of last year.

The look has changed, but not substantially. The Sportback's core theme is its retention of an eye-pleasing profile, meaning there's nowhere for that distinctive rear roofline to go but quickly down to meet up with the jaunty back end. At the front, the Sportback receives much the same single-frame grille revision and wraparound bonnet front as previewed on the coupé.

Equally important (perhaps more so if you're underwhelmed by the exterior) is the cabin revamp, which upgrades the fixtures and fittings and swells the interior gently in size. The latter is thanks to the Sportback adopting the same MLB Evo architecture used for the A4. The engines are carried over, too, although not all of them; to maintain its more exclusive status, the A5 can't be bought with Audi's smaller petrol units or even its omnipresent 148bhp 2.0 TDI. Instead, the three TDI and one TFSI options are made up of headier choices, even if the trim levels – SE, Sport and S Line – remain.

The focus on a higher tempo urged us to look at the 249bhp 2.0 TFSI, Audi's idea of a spiritual successor to the bigger six-cylinder petrol engine now only offered with the S5. The 2.0-litre four-pot comes with quattro as standard (most Sportbacks will be front-wheel drive) and a seven-speed S tronic dual-clutch automatic gearbox, so it ought to be the version best suited to convincing us that Audi's five-door coupé can deliver performance to complement its style.

DESIGN AND ENGINEERING



The MLB-underpinned Sportback enjoys the same advantages already showcased by the current A4, in that it is marginally longer and wider than the car it replaces and significantly lighter. Without the full range of downsized engines, the A5 can't quite claim to have shed the same 120kg its saloon sibling managed, but the "as much as" 85kg quoted by Audi helps the model tested to achieve a respectable 1535kg kerb weight.

The weight loss can be attributed not only to the platform's mix of aluminium and high-strength steel, but also the kind of far-reaching effort that results in the through-load seat frame being made of magnesium and the carpets being 'weight-optimised'. Such attention to detail is admirable and of benefit to both efficiency and performance.

The performance-orientated 249bhp 2.0 TFSI doesn't share the clever Miller cycle timing of the 188bhp version that is currently →



The A5 Sportback was launched in 2009

WE LIKE

Silky performance • Technologically pleasing
• Not unpleasant to look at

WE DON'T LIKE

Single-minded handling • Interior compromise
• Not spellbinding to look at



• As standard, SE and Sport trims get 17in forged alloys; S line gets upgraded 18in flow-forming cast aluminium rims. These 19in multi-spoke items, as fitted to our test car, are a £1050 upgrade.



• The headlights' positioning, slightly above the top edge of the grille, is a first for the A5. Audi suggests the four-eyed signature of the optional Matrix LED lights is reminiscent of the Ur-quattro.



• The dome-like roofline remains the A5 Sportback's key differentiation from the standard three-box profile of the A4 saloon. Frameless doors again feature.



• Audi says the chrome trim element in the transition from wheel arch to front door is a highlight of the A5 Sportback's sporty ambitions. Or, alternatively, it is a handy location for another badge.



• LED tail-lights are standard. S Line trim gets a dynamic turn signal reminiscent of the front scanner on KITT in Knight Rider. Additional brake light moves to top edge of rear screen.



• An emphasis on the wave-pattern shoulderline was present on the old Sportback but not as pronounced. It helps to gloss over how conservative the rest of the new car's rear styling is.



• One pair of tailpipes is standard across the range unless you opt for the S5, which earns a quad system to go with a revamped bumper and diffuser.



• A power-operated tailgate is now standard across the range, as are rear parking sensors. The rear-view camera, though, is an additional £450.



● Audi gives you both flatscreen instruments and a head-up display, should you want them. The latter is fully customisable, like the former, and costs £900.



● Audi isn't at Mercedes' level of ambient lighting, but pay extra and the Sportback will illuminate its cupholders, footwells and cubbies in a range of colours.



● Three-zone air-con is ritzy enough to be an option, but all A4s and A5s get it. Buttons are capacitive, revealing their function as your finger alights on them.



MULTIMEDIA SYSTEM



The A5 Sportback gets a slightly more generous level of infotainment kit than the entry-level A4, specifically a bigger trip computer screen and a 10-speaker stereo that costs £275 extra on the latter car.

Move up to mid-level Sport trim and you get SD card-based sat-nav and an Audi Connect trial subscription. Splash out on a top-spec S line car, however, and you'll still need to find an extra £1100 for Audi's Technology Pack to get its widescreen infotainment system, fingertip-input MMI rotary controller,

full online connectivity and wireless smartphone charging. You'll then pay more still if you want Virtual Cockpit (£250) or the Bang & Olufsen premium audio (£750).

Our test car had widescreen MMI Navigation Plus and Virtual Cockpit but not the top-level audio – and its sound system hardly flourished. The systems aren't cheap but they are brilliant once you're familiar with them and know how to put the information you want exactly where you want it. The sat-nav takes free text input and is easy to use.



◀ available in the A5 coupé and A4 estate and saloon here in the UK, but it is nevertheless armed with Audi's valve lift system and all the other bells and whistles required to deliver 273lb ft from 1600rpm while emitting just 144g/km of CO₂.

The 188bhp 2.0 TDI unit trumps that with 295lb ft (equalling the 215bhp 3.0 TDI's peak twist), and is offered with a six-speed manual gearbox and front-wheel drive, if you go for entry-level spec. Most people, though, will opt for the seven-speed S tronic transmission, newly fettled for the job and attachable to any engine save the forthcoming 282bhp 3.0 TDI and the 349bhp 3.0 V6 TFSI in the S5, both of which will use the latest iteration of Audi's eight-speed Tiptronic torque converter automatic.

Whichever drivetrain you opt for, the Sportback's suspension is by way of a revised five-link axle at the front and an entirely new one at the rear, where its predecessor had a heavier trapezoidal-link. Our test car had standard passive sport suspension; adaptive dampers are a £600 option. Audi's Drive Select, though, is featured across the range, as is a revised electromechanical steering rack. The 2.0 TFSI tested gets the quattro-branded self-locking centre differential that defaults to a 40% front, 60% rear torque split, although

70% to the front or 85% to the rear is possible. An additional sport diff for the back axle is limited to the option list of the S5 and top-spec TDI.

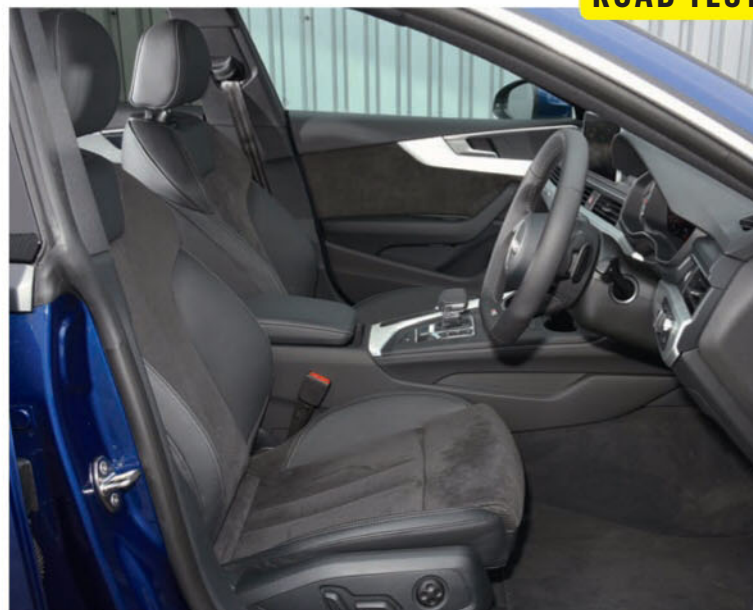
INTERIOR

★★★★☆

Audi says it has made worthwhile improvements to both overall cabin length and width in this second-generation A5 Sportback. So after you've sat in all of its five seats, squeezed in and out through all of its frameless doors and surveyed the added usefulness of its hatchback boot, are you any more likely than you might have been to consider this the ideal fusion of modern coupé and estate bodystyles?

That depends. The frameless driver's door undoubtedly gives the Sportback an inviting initial feel. Larger drivers may notice that a lower roof and smaller door aperture make entry a little tighter than it would be with an A4, but once you're in, there's enough leg, head and shoulder room for almost anyone.

It still can't be said that second-row occupants get quite the space they ought to have, though, even allowing for a little bit of practicality sacrificed on the altar of style. The Sportback's curved roofline makes getting in to the back trickier than it is with an equivalent conventional saloon →

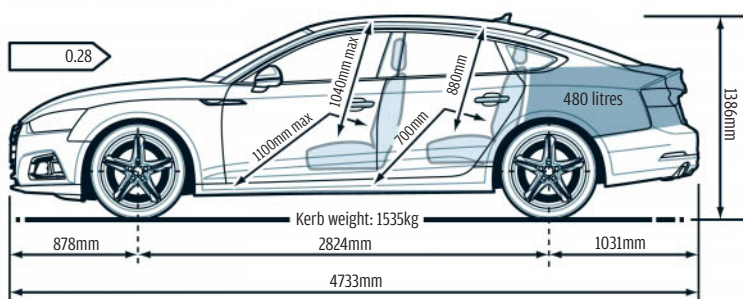


● Front row seats are more of a squeeze to get into than are those in an A4, but they're roomy enough once you're in. Cabin quality is outstanding.



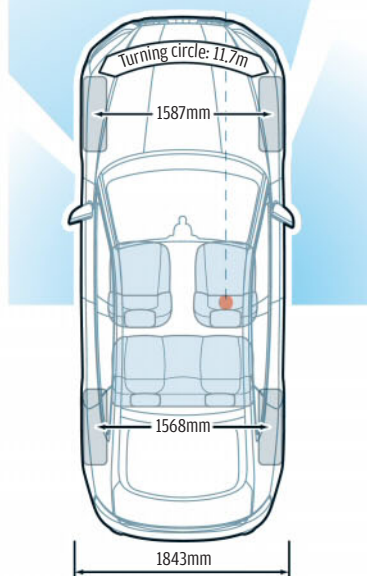
● Second-row seats offer room for medium-sized adult passengers, but nobody any larger than that. Swooping roofline makes access a bit tricky.

HOW BIG IS IT?



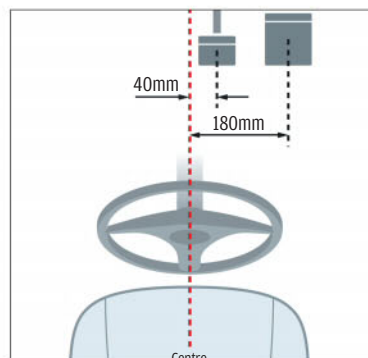
VISIBILITY

View forwards is typical of an executive saloon. Closeness of B-pillar does make for a big blind spot, though.



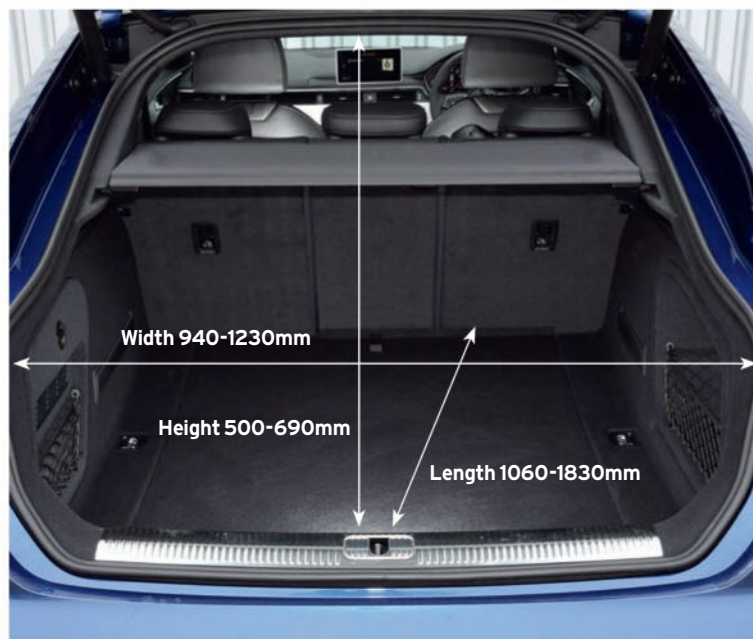
HEADLIGHTS

Optional Matrix LED headlights are very impressive, particularly on full beam, although they don't always seem to avoid dazzling oncoming traffic.



WHEEL AND PEDAL ALIGNMENT

Two-pedal layout's wide brake is usable with either foot; bottom-hinged accelerator is well placed. Steering column has abundant adjustment.



● Boot is almost exactly a metre long with the seats up and about the same on average width. The hatchback grants much easier access than a saloon boot might.

◀ for anyone of above average height. You might think 'so what?'; if you're likely to carry adults in the back, you can buy an A4. But an A4 also makes life much easier when you're lifting bulky child seats in and out of the car, lifting kids in and out, or just leaning in to belt up a youngster. Plenty of people at this end of the executive car market have young families.

Look to the boot, however, and you may find what you consider to be worth the trade over a regular four-door. The Sportback's load bay offers only 480 litres, which is exactly what an A4 saloon provides, but the roof-hinged hatchback grants such good access that it makes the space seem far bigger than it otherwise might. It's certainly a big-enough boot: over a metre of load length is enough to put folded baby buggies in longways, but it's not quite in the estate league.

The material quality of the cabin is high and the Virtual Cockpit's sophistication still hugely impressive despite earlier familiarisation with it in the A4, A5 coupé, TT, Q7 and A3. But none of that need necessarily sell you this car in particular, of course.

PERFORMANCE



This is, for now, the only petrol engine in the A5 Sportback range (ignoring the turbo V6 in the S5), so it has to do a bit of everything. Private buyers and lower-mileage company users will want distinguishing refinement and driveability from it; keener drivers will expect a bit of verve, rev range and pace. Anyone switching from diesel to petrol in the wake of the emissions scandal will likely expect all of that, plus economy comparable with that which they might have got from a like-for-like diesel without feeling like they've made a bad choice.

As unlikely as it may seem, the 2.0 TFSI in the A5 Sportback delivers on almost all of those considerations very well indeed. This is a swift, slick car to drive and it can hit 60mph from rest quickly enough to put a hot hatchback in its place, but its powertrain also has balance, reserve and multi-faceted strength.

Even in chilly conditions the quattro drivetrain found more

traction than it needed during standing-start testing. It recorded sub-six-second 0-60mph acceleration times in both directions, but it did so smoothly and without ever feeling remotely strained. Accelerating from 30-70mph through the gears, it was two seconds faster than the A4 2.0 TDI 190 S tronic that we figured two years ago, but it matched the diesel's 30-70mph sprint in fourth gear to the tenth, at 8.3sec. In a nutshell, that's diesel-level in-gear performance flexibility with extra high-range power thrown in for good measure. Have your cake and eat it territory, in other words.

The engine revs keenly beyond 5000rpm when you want it to and yet feels refined and well isolated at other times. Our noise meter confirmed as much, recording the car to be quieter than the A4 diesel at all times except at maximum revs in third. The seven-speed dual-clutch automatic gearbox, meanwhile, has moments of hesitation but can be manipulated to adopt almost any shift style you like via several drive modes and manual paddle shifters.

Slightly underwhelming cruising economy is the only fly in the ointment: the 2.0 TFSI 252 registered 41.1mpg on our touring test, where wider experience suggests that the almost identically priced 3.0 TDI 218 would have pushed 50mpg. It became obvious during our testing that the petrol engine's economy dipped more markedly during hard driving than a diesel's might have and that you need to use Efficiency mode to get the best cruising range (it's worth at least 10% on the motorway). Even so, the potential for just over 40mpg from a 249bhp petrol executive four-door is pretty commendable, even in 2017.

RIDE AND HANDLING



Mid-sized, mid-level executive Audis don't seem to be built for driver engagement. And this new A5 Sportback doesn't change that.

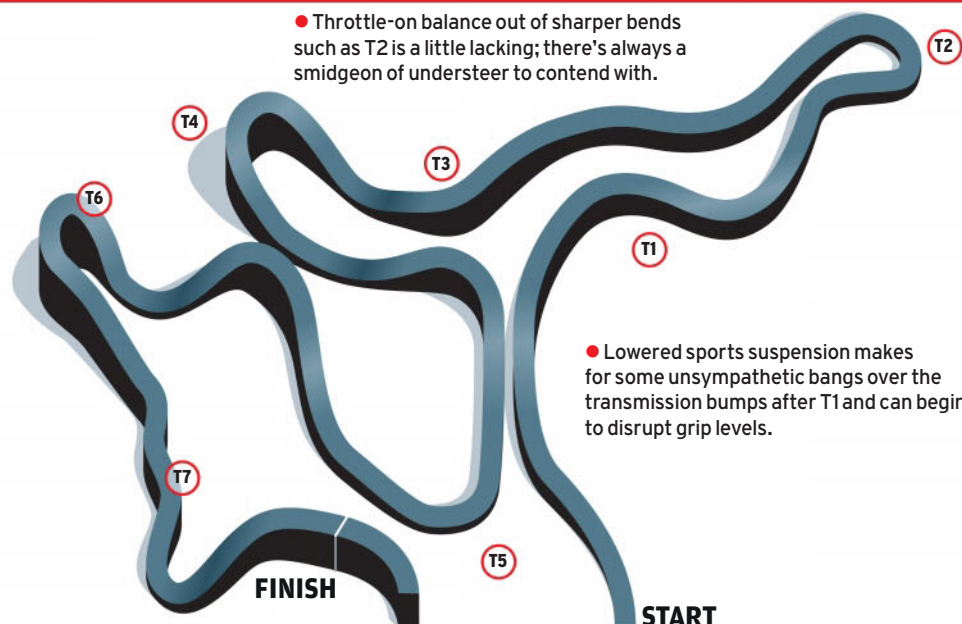
Plenty of more expensive and specialised Audis do it better, of course. And yet, despite the widened axle tracks, the lowered centre of gravity and the firmed-up suspension settings of the Sportback relative

TRACK NOTES

The A5 Sportback makes short work of Millbrook's Hill Route, right until you stray beyond about nine-tenths of its maximum pace. At that point, its remoteness and ebbing handling balance can become a problem if you choose to disable the stability controls.

But the speed you can carry up to that point – braking late for every turn, hitting each apex and finding huge traction on corner exit – is considerable. Even on a cold day, the Audi proved that 19in wheels, low-profile tyres, quattro traction and a torquey, free-revving powertrain can take a relatively humble executive saloon a long way into sports saloon territory on point-to-point pace.

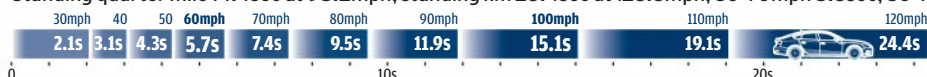
When the grip does give way, it does so quite suddenly. And while understeer will always be the consequence, you can't feel it coming through the steering or do much to mitigate it once it arrives. Leave the electronics on, of course, and the car protects itself consummately.



ACCELERATION

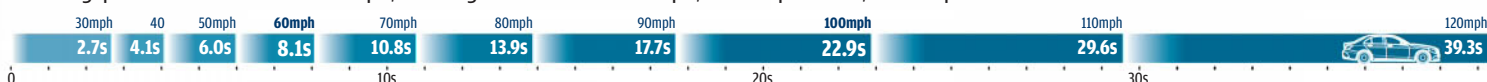
Audi A5 Sportback 2.0 TFSI 252 Quattro S line (-1deg C, icy patches)

Standing quarter mile 14.4sec at 98.2mph, standing km 26.4sec at 123.3mph, 30-70mph 5.3sec, 30-70mph in fourth 8.3sec



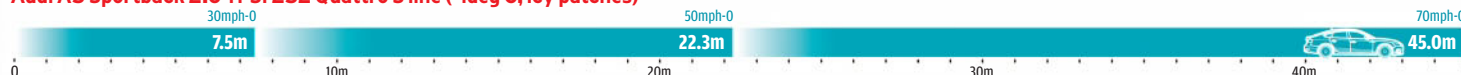
Mercedes-Benz C220d Bluetec (2014) (20deg C, dry)

Standing quarter mile 16.3sec at 86.7mph, standing km 29.7sec at 110.2mph, 30-70mph 8.1sec, 30-70mph in fourth 10.5sec

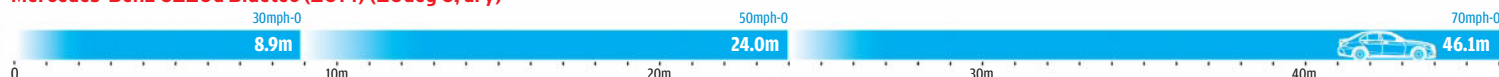


BRAKING

Audi A5 Sportback 2.0 TFSI 252 Quattro S line (-1deg C, icy patches)



Mercedes-Benz C220d Bluetec (2014) (20deg C, dry)





to the standard A4, and despite the lowered passive suspension and 19in alloy wheels of our S line-spec test car to boot, the second-generation A5 Sportback rides, handles, steers and generally seems like a slightly muddled and misguided attempt at dynamism.

The occasionally fidgeting, often short-feeling ride of our test car characterised it most obviously as a pseudo-sports saloon. That's in part because the car's steering, although pacey, precise and variously weighty, lacks dependable feedback – even when Dynamic mode is selected – and fails to give a meaningful sense of connection to the front wheels.

It's also because the A5's chassis doesn't do much to pique your interest, either. It controls the car's body very well indeed and creates a great deal of grip and steering response, but it isn't even remotely adjustable or vaguely communicative, although it is determinedly surefooted and inscrutable – as so many Audis of this ilk have been over so many years. Consistency of control weight, rate of response and stability of handling are everything that it seems to have been configured to provide.

As a result of all that, of course, and ride apart, the A5 Sportback may make a fine executive saloon for those uninterested in the driving experience. It's easy to drive, predictable, supremely tolerant of a hurried pace on the road and forgiving when it comes to it. But it's still not driver's car – and for

something that might have done so much to endear Audi to keener drivers, it has to go down as another opportunity missed.

BUYING AND OWNING



The A5 Sportback starts at £32,365 for a manual, front-drive SE with the 188bhp 2.0 TDI Ultra engine. As it does elsewhere in Audi's line-up, this version, employing different gear ratios, low-resistance tyres and optimised aerodynamics, is intended to wring every last ounce of efficiency from the car, and succeeds in whittling the CO₂ and combined economy down to 108g/km and 64.2mpg respectively. Fit the S tronic gearbox and you'll get 106g/km and 68.9mpg – only marginally less than the same mechanical combination achieves in the A4. Crucially, though, because you can't have the 188bhp Ultra in SE trim in the saloon, you'll only pay a £1k premium to have the entry-level (but not poorly equipped) Sportback. The BMW 420d SE Gran Coupé is virtually the same money and offers much the same efficiency.

Similarly, the 2.0 TFSI tested is comparable to the four-door 430i, with the Audi's 47.9mpg playing the BMW's 48.7mpg – albeit with the Gran Coupé only powering its rear axle. With True MPG testing unavailable, we recorded 30.6mpg as an average and 41.1mpg on a touring run. Buy the middle-of-the-road Sport trim for £39,575 and you'll even avoid the new £40k VED supplementary rate due on 1 April. →



● The A5 Sportback is surefooted and responsive and has good body control and grip, but its steering lacks feedback and the chassis remains resolutely unadjustable

AUDI A5 SPORTBACK 2.0 TFSI 252 QUATTRO S LINE S TRONIC

On-the-road price	£41,240
Price as tested	£48,485
Value after 3yrs/36k miles	£17,650
Contract hire pcm	£557.97
Cost per mile	79p
Insurance/typical quote	40/£1002

EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

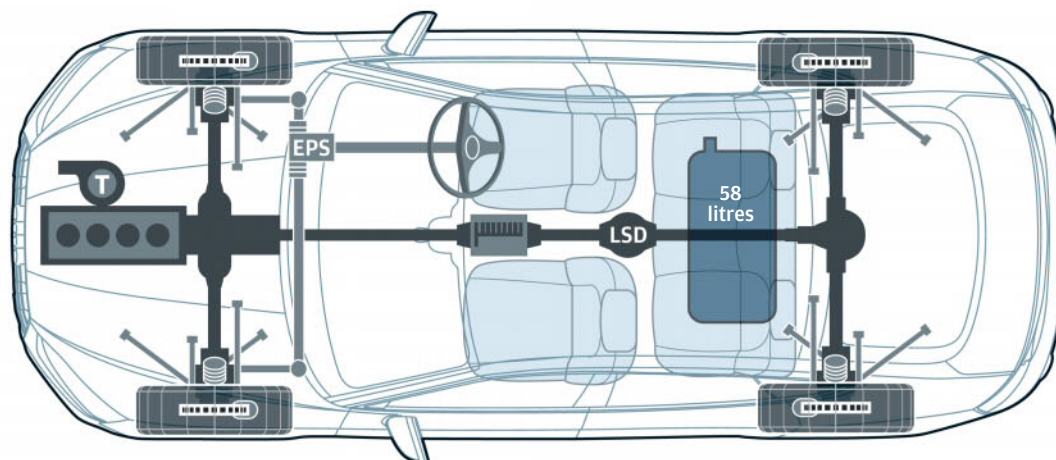
Leather/Alcantara electric, heated and embossed sports seats	■
LED headlights	■
Sport suspension	■
19in 'multi-spoke V' alloys	£1050
Driver assistance pack, Tour (inc. adaptive cruise control, traffic jam assist, predictive efficiency assistant and active lane assist)	£1250
Rear-view camera	£450
Head-up display	£900
Matrix beam headlights	£650
Virtual Cockpit	£250
MMI Navigation Plus	£1100
Extended LED interior lighting	£250
Privacy glass	£375
Flat-bottomed steering wheel	£100
Storage package	£175
Smoking pack	£50
Options in bold fitted to test car	
■ = Standard	
na = not available	

RANGE AT A GLANCE

ENGINES	POWER	FROM
2.0 TDI SE ultra	187bhp	£32,950
2.0 TFSI Sport	249bhp	£39,575
3.0 TDI Sport	215bhp	£39,725
3.0 S5 quattro	349bhp	£47,000

TRANSMISSIONS

7-spd dual-clutch automatic ■



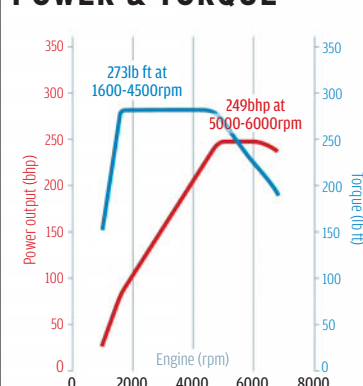
TECHNICAL LAYOUT

Audi's time-honoured mechanical layout positions the engine longways directly over the front axle. In two-pedal, four-wheel-drive models, drive is taken rearwards to a planetary centre differential and then to all four wheels. Lower-spec versions equipped with manual transmissions use a clutch-based four-wheel drive set-up. Suspension is via multi-links both front and rear.

ENGINE

Installation	Front, longitudinal, four-wheel drive
Type	4 cyls in line, 1984cc, turbocharged, petrol
Made of	Aluminium block and head
Bore/stroke	82.5/92.8mm
Compression ratio	9.6:1
Valve gear	4 per cyl
Power	249bhp at 5000-6000rpm
Torque	273lb ft at 1600-4500rpm
Red line	6750rpm
Power to weight	162bhp per tonne
Torque to weight	178lb ft per tonne
Specific output	126bhp per litre

POWER & TORQUE



CHASSIS & BODY

Construction	Aluminium and steel monocoque
Weight/as tested	1535kg/na
Drag coefficient	0.28
Wheels	8.5Jx19in
Tyres	255/35 R19, Continental ContiSportContact 5 P
Spare	Spacesaver

TRANSMISSION

Type 7-spd dual-clutch automatic
 Ratios/1000rpm
 1st 3.19/5.7 2nd 2.19/8.3 3rd 1.52/11.9
 4th 1.06/17.1 5th 0.74/24.5 6th 0.56/32.4
 7th 0.43/42.2 Final drive ratio 4.27:1

ECONOMY

TEST MPG	Track	15.0mpg
	Touring	41.1mpg
	Average	30.6mpg
CLAIMED	Urban	35.8mpg
	Extra-urban	52.3mpg
	Combined	44.8mpg
Tank size		58 litres
Test range		390 miles

SUSPENSION

Front Multi-link, coil springs, anti-roll bar
 Rear Multi-link, coil springs, anti-roll bar

STEERING

Type Electromechanical, rack and pinion
 Turns lock to lock 2.8
 Turning circle 11.7m

BRAKES

Front 338mm ventilated discs
 Rear 330mm ventilated discs
 Anti-lock Standard, with brake assist

CABIN NOISE

Idle 41dB Max rpm in 3rd gear 68dB
 30mph 59dB 50mph 63dB 70mph 66dB

SAFETY

ABS, EBD, EDL, ASR, ESC
 Euro NCAP crash rating 5 stars (A4 2.0 TDI)
 Adult occupant 89%, child occupant 87%, pedestrian 75%, safety assist 75%

EMISSIONS & TAX

CO₂ emissions 144g/km
 Tax at 20/40% pcm £186/371

ACCELERATION

MPH	TIME (sec)
0-30	2.1
0-40	3.1
0-50	4.3
0-60	5.7
0-70	7.4
0-80	9.5
0-90	11.9
0-100	15.1
0-110	19.1
0-120	24.4
0-130	31.6
0-140	-
0-150	-
0-160	-

ACCELERATION IN GEAR

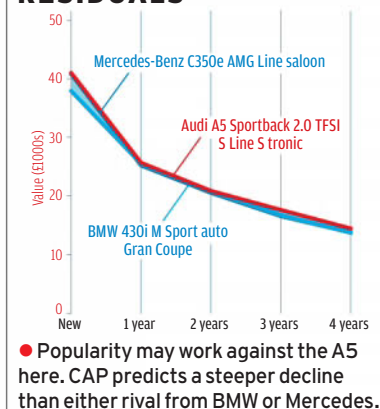
MPH	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th
20-40	2.0	2.9	5.7	-	-	-
30-50	2.2	2.8	4.0	7.0	-	-
40-60	-	2.9	4.2	6.1	10.5	-
50-70	-	3.3	4.3	6.4	9.1	17.2
60-80	-	-	4.4	6.8	10.1	15.1
70-90	-	-	4.6	7.3	11.2	18.3
80-100	-	-	5.4	7.7	12.7	-
90-110	-	-	-	8.4	-	-
100-120	-	-	-	9.2	-	-
110-130	-	-	-	-	-	-
120-140	-	-	-	-	-	-
130-150	-	-	-	-	-	-
140-160	-	-	-	-	-	-

MAX SPEEDS IN GEAR

1	38mph 6750rpm
2	56mph 6750rpm
3	81mph 6750rpm
4	115mph 6750rpm
5	155mph 6327rpm
6	155mph 4788rpm
7	155mph* 3677rpm

RPM in 7th at 70/80mph = 1660/1898

RESIDUALS



● Popularity may work against the A5 here. CAP predicts a steeper decline than either rival from BMW or Mercedes.

THE SMALL PRINT Power-to-weight and torque-to-weight figures are calculated using manufacturer's claimed kerb weight. © 2017, Haymarket Media Group Ltd. Test results may not be reproduced without editor's written permission. For information on the A5 Sportback, contact Audi UK Customer Services, Yeomans Drive, Blakelands, Milton Keynes MK14 5AN (0800 699 888, audi.co.uk). Cost-per-mile figures calculated over three years/36,000 miles, including depreciation and maintenance but not insurance; Lex Autolease (0800 389 3690). Insurance quote covers 35-year-old professional male with clean licence and full no-claims bonus living in Swindon; quote from Liverpool Victoria (0800 066 5161, lv.com). Contract hire figure based on a three-year lease/36,000-mile contract including maintenance; Wessex Fleet Solutions (01722 322888).

AUTOCAR ROAD TEST No 5310

Read all of our road tests autocar.co.uk



VERDICT

AUDI A5 SPORTBACK

Mid-sized sleek exec is still short of a selling point beyond its style



The A5 Sportback was never going to lack technological sophistication or premium refinement, or feel anything less than supremely well engineered. And yet, while Ingolstadt seems to set itself ever-higher standards and lead us to expect ever-greater technical brilliance from every new product, this particular Audi has still taken us by surprise. The multi-talented turbocharged four-cylinder petrol engine makes it perfectly positioned to take advantage of the mood to ditch diesel that's becoming so prevalent. It also makes this A5 genuinely evocative of the silken executive options that forged Germany's reputation for superior car making some 40 years ago.

But for this car, for our money, that's still not quite cutting the mustard. Appealing style undoubtedly played a bigger part in the overall appeal of the last A5 Sportback than either perfected executive-car usability or genuine driver engagement. We were hoping for a better-executed vision of a new-age executive car and for more reasons to consider this the definitive mid-sized Audi. But it seems the stylish A5 still has some maturing to do.

ROAD TEST RIVALS



1
**JAGUAR XE 2.0T 250
AWD R-SPORT AUTO**
£35,645

Improved turbo engine for the fine-handling Jag consolidates its class-leading spot for us.

★★★★★



2
**BMW 430i GRAN COUPÉ
M SPORT AUTO**
£37,275

Gran Coupé treatment adds desirability to the 3 Series's otherwise appealing package.

★★★★★



3
**ALFA ROMEO GIULIA
VELOCE 280**
£37,880

A cracking chassis, svelte looks and a strong petrol motor. An outstanding keen driver's choice.

★★★★★



4
**AUDI A5 SPORTBACK 2.0
TFSI 252 QUATTRO S LINE**
£41,240

Lacks the dynamic sparkle and engagement of its rivals. Short of little else, though.

★★★★★



5
**MERCEDES-BENZ C350E
AMG LINE**
£40,930

Plug-in hybrid C-Class isn't the driver's car it might have been. Cheap on tax (for now).

★★★★★

VERDICTS ON EVERY NEW CAR, P82

TESTERS' NOTES



MATT SAUNDERS

What's better than one cargo net in the boot? Three of 'em, plus a couple of retaining straps. You can tuck smaller items under the main net on the boot floor as well as securing bigger things beneath it.



NIC CACKETT

I like that the Audi lets you use your phone's sat-nav, connected by Apple CarPlay, on the central screen while having the fitted sat-nav displayed on the Virtual Cockpit. The phone is fine most of the time; the fitted system is better if you need to divert.

SPEC ADVICE

S line trim is mightily well equipped, but we'd be tempted by the 19in wheels (they look good), the Virtual Cockpit (it looks good) and the Matrix LED headlights (you look good).

JOBS FOR THE FACELIFT

- Smooth out the ride of the sport-suspended car.
- Make the chassis and steering more communicative.
- Carve out some extra space for passengers in the second row.



ANDORRA EXPLORER





The 5 Series is perhaps the most important car BMW makes, so the new model needs to be good. **Matt Prior** drives one 2000 miles back from Spain, via Andorra, to find out if it hits the spot



PHOTOGRAPHY STAN PAPIOR

If you suffer from severe range anxiety, may I recommend Andorra? This small principality, nestled in the Pyrenees between Spain and France, has such generous tax laws that booze, fags and, most obviously, fuel – at around €1, which is currently 85 pence, per litre – are extremely cheap. Which means filling stations are everywhere.

“You should go to Andorra,” I was told when we were lining up the longest test yet of the new BMW 5 Series. Our mission was a drive of at least 2000 miles, from southernmost Spain to Britain in three days, with the second of those spent somewhere pretty for photographs.

Andorra is extremely beautiful, apparently. But, 10 minutes in, entering the capital, Andorra la Vella, all I’ve seen is the exquisite beauty of two-dozen filling stations, populated partly by Andorrans but mostly by Spaniards, who have made the short trip across the border for fuel and/or drink and smokes. It’s easily the most flammable country I’ve ever been to, then, if not the most picturesque – at least not yet.

But I’m confident it will be. I’ve seen the website and raised the alarm. If Andorra is famous for anything (outside of the north of Spain, where they know it for cheap intoxicant runs), it’s skiing.

Basically its whole 180 square miles is ski runs, isn’t it? Or so I ask photographer Stan Papior while we’re spending an entire day spearing north through Spain on lightly trafficked motorways.

“It’ll be fine,” he says, with the impunity of a man who will only have to watch as I gently slide into an icy ditch. “Anyway, isn’t this car four-wheel drive?”

It is. It’s a BMW G30 (new vehicle codename) 530d xDrive M Sport saloon B57 (engine codename) 3.0d, according to the official bumph. All of that means this should be a 3.0-litre diesel motorway bruiser and all-rounder of the highest order.

Power is 261bhp, torque is 457lb ft, CO₂ emissions are 138g/km and it costs £48,355 before options. This car has a few of those, which take the price on the spec sheet to more than £60,000, but we’ll come back to that. The important options, dynamically, are 20in wheels and adaptive control for the dampers. As usual, this all gets a bit complicated: if you choose



Andorra: summer and winter both at once

an M Sport-spec car, you get lowered suspension, which you can now have with xDrive if you want (you didn’t used to be able to). However, you can delete the lowered suspension at no cost if you choose, so you get an M Sport on regular SE suspension. The 530d can be had with or without xDrive, and in two-wheel drive form it’s rear-driven.

In short, there are a lot of choices, but what bothers me most is that this 5 Series is wearing Pirelli P Zero tyres. So I bypass the cheap cigs and buy some snow socks.

Not that there is any snow, at least at the lower levels (where Andorra’s capital is), bar the odd icy bank where the stuff has been shovelled earlier in the winter. And it’s sunny; due to its elevated height above sea level, Andorra is snowy in winter and, the interweb tells me, cooler than you’d expect of southern France/northern Spain in summer.

That climate is why people love it for skiing, cycling and biking or driving. In the sunshine, at above 10deg C but with snow visible on higher peaks, it feels like you could have both a summer and a winter holiday at the same time.

If you do, a 5 Series is thus far proving to be a pretty tidy way to get there. BMW throws everything at the 5 Series, its longest-serving model, now entering its seventh generation. It rides on the same platform, introduced last year, as the new 7 Series, but just because the 7 Series is bigger and more expensive, don’t think it’s the technology leader. Sure, the 5 Series does without the 7 Series’s composites within the structure, but much of the body is aluminium, part of an eminently sensible mixed-metal solution for a structure that’s claimed to be 100kg lighter than that of its predecessor, despite a marginal increase in dimensions (it’s still 1770kg in this spec, mind). And among the options lies some of the most advanced connectivity you could wish for.

Still, it’s a big car, at 4936mm long and, like all of today’s executive cars, that makes it a potentially unwieldy beast. Over decades, executive cars have grown to what used to be luxury size, so a 3 Series, at about four and a half metres long, is where my own preferred blend of refinement and agility sits. But the additional space and isolation offered by the 5 Series isn’t to be sniffed at. Shoulder →



New 5 Series shares much of its tech with its 7 Series sibling



Fuel in Andorra is both cheap and plentiful



“It's a big car, but the additional space and isolation offered by the new 5 Series isn't to be sniffed at”



Icy hairpins hold no fear in the xDrive-equipped 530d



The 3.0-litre six-cylinder makes 261bhp and 457lb ft



Prior mulls the worth of 20in wheels and M Sport suspension



California Run

Sat 16 - Sat 23 Sept, 2017

£6000 per car (2 people)



The California Run is a 1500 mile, 1 week driving event starting in Los Angeles, travelling to Las Vegas, Death Valley, Mount Whitney, the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the Yosemite National Park, San Francisco then finally down the Pacific Coast Highway back to Los Angeles. All participants get a 2017 Ford Mustang cabriolet for the week and are flown in to and out of Los Angeles.



What's Included

- Return direct flights
- Rental of a new generation Ford Mustang cabriolet with GPS and full coverage insurance
- 7 nights luxury accommodation (return flight overnight)
- Buffet breakfasts
- Mid way point group dinner at Mammoth Lakes
- Reunion track day in the UK
- All for 2 people

Please visit our new website www.circuit-days.co.uk for more information and to book.



UK Track Days



Spa-Francorchamps Track Days



Nürburgring Track Days



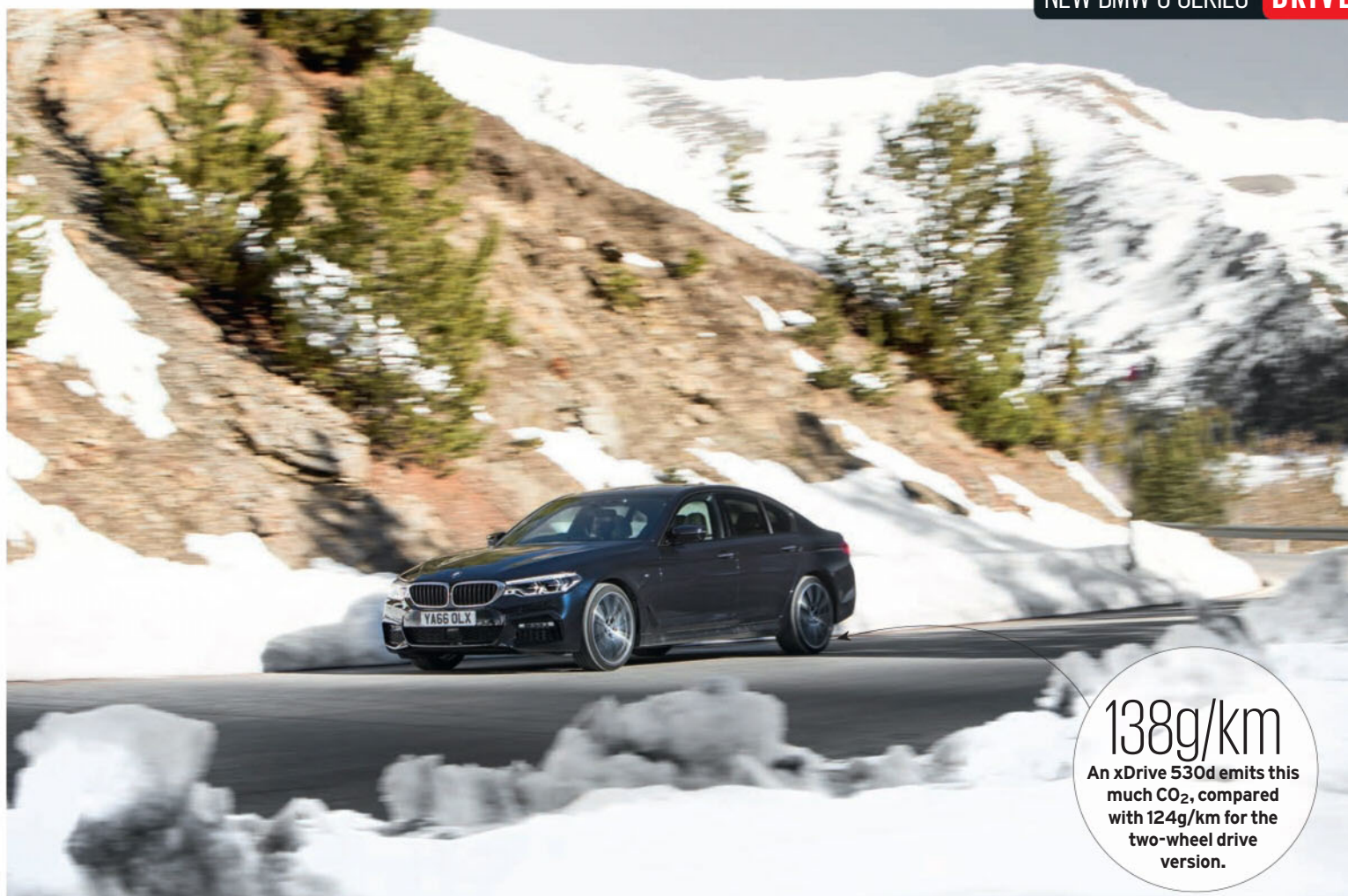
Alpine Adventure



California Run



Western Cape Safari



room is exceptionally broad, rear accommodation and the boot are large, and the 5 Series's slightly descaled 7 Series platform is imperious on smooth Spanish motorways. Want to drive 730 miles in a day? We do, and the 530d engine's extraordinary isolation and effortless oomph – and its easy 40mpg economy – make it one of the most appealing ways to do it.

It'll need to be, mind, because this

is an extraordinarily tough class at the moment. Earlier this year I wrote a comparison of executive estates: a Mercedes-Benz E-Class, Volvo V90 and Audi A6, and rarely do we test cars that feel so evenly matched and so competitive at what they're doing. There'll be a rematch of some kind on these pages in the coming weeks, but no car in this class steamrollers the competition like once it might have. Each manufacturer's resources

are so great, and everybody has so much riding on it, that the best one company can do is seldom night and day from another's.

Even so, this 5 Series is some car. In isolation it's easy to be impressed by it. It steers accurately and positively, with reassuring weight, the driving position is vast and comfortable, at speed the engine is inaudible and there is much to amuse you, and not just DJ Papior choosing a

Cliff Richard song on Spotify. The connectivity and communications are first-class (although Google Maps still walks all over BMW's own sat-nav, like it does everyone else's), and the autonomy is... coming.

Like its mixed-material architecture and its approach to diesel, petrol and electrification, BMW is sensibly open-minded about autonomous driving: it knows that if it covers everything, it has options in every market. So it figures that most of the time you'll want to drive, but that sometimes you might want a hand with it, and eventually you'll want the car to do its own thing. And you'll want all of that from one car.

The new 5 Series, then, can steer itself in its lane and accelerate and brake itself. It's not autonomous by any means – the steering has a half-moment of hesitation when you pass a slip road on the motorway – but I do find it knocks back driver fatigue; ➔





◀ you can keep your awareness but reduce the functions you'd usually have to carry out, even subconsciously. In the UK, where it's crowded and lane discipline is disastrous, it's less useful, but overseas on broad, quiet roads I'd tick the option box every time.

What it means is that when I start eyeing up the roads as they push higher in Andorra, I'm fresher than I'd otherwise be and, this being a BMW, I can switch off all the driver aids. The roads here are kept clear, even up to ski resorts, which is just as well because, while most people are running winter tyres, certainly not everybody is. But they press on a bit – on the way up to the ski lifts, at least. They're excited, presumably, because they're slower on the way back down later. But these roads, at this time of year, while beautiful, are not built for enjoying on four wheels. We find better ones – quieter ones – lower down, on southern-facing slopes where, if there was any winter snowfall, it has departed with what feels like spring in the air, leaving only the altitude to ensure there's skiing at higher levels.

And here the 5 Series is good, enjoyable, with lots of traction, grip, poise and feedback. No car of this girth is going to be truly, magnificently, tremendously agile, although Jaguar's XF has a crack at it.



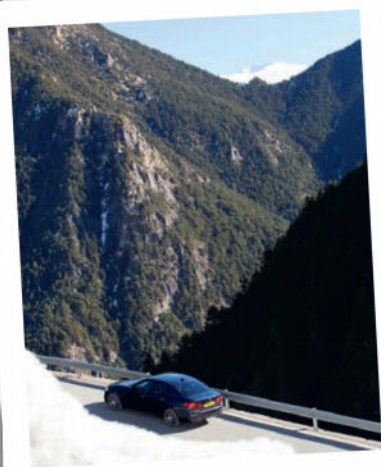
Mountains aren't ideal 5 Series territory

But don't forget this is a multi-tasker; what it tries to do at this end of the scale has to be offset by what it does at the other end, where cars like the Mercedes E-Class excel. Certainly, I'm not convinced the 5 Series, at least on 20s, is as comfortable as an E-Class, and nor does it feel as lithe as an XF, but I don't imagine BMW deliberately pitches it between the two. I rather suspect it thinks the 5 Series defines the segment and that other cars align themselves around it, rather than the other way around. But I think it's the car that BMW will perceive has the broadest array of performance in the sector, intending it as comfortable as an E-Class, as dynamic as an XF, as pleasingly built inside as an A6 and as cool as a V90.

I'll leave it for someone else to decide where on the spider web chart of attributes the 5 Series ultimately sits. Meantime, I'm happy to steer it repeatedly around the same set of hairpin bends for Papior's camera, soaking in the view and enjoying the poise of the car while knowing that, when the sun dips behind the Pyrenees and the lighting is just right, Stan will take his last photo and we'll have another heck of a drive ahead of us. Pity. I could use another day in somewhere as pretty as this. Still, a third non-stop day at the wheel, another 800 miles. With that kind of drive ahead of you, you want a world-class car in which to do it, one that is comfortable, fast, economical, connected and willing to help you out. The new 5 Series, no question, is precisely that kind of car. **A**



A peak experience, and only another 800 miles to go from here



It's poised and communicative for its size

“BMW intends the 5 Series to be as comfortable as an E-Class, as dynamic as an XF and as cool as a V90

”



£985

This is how much the variable damper control costs. It's probably essential on a car with 20in alloys, but we'd like to try a car on non-M Sport suspension and with smaller wheels.

NEW 5 SERIES TECHS IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

If it isn't autonomy, it's connectivity that's defining the advances in this segment, and the 5 Series, perhaps unsurprisingly, is packed with it.



Beats a personalised sun visor strip

The iDrive system's rotary controller is supplemented by buttons, gesture and voice controls (in decreasing order of effectiveness) and the central touchscreen. You can connect up to 10 devices at a time to the car's wi-fi, and BMW is the first car maker to offer cable-free Apple CarPlay, with which iDrive lets you use your phone's apps. Plus, there's a cordless phone charging pad, which can also boost your phone's reception to about four times its strength.

Cruise control isn't just radar assisted. It will gently bring you up or down to speed limits as you ask it to, although there's a knack to getting the best from it so it doesn't accelerate you too harshly. Too much kit? Maybe. But we got stopped by a policeman on a French motorway for speeding (we weren't). Knowing precisely how fast we had been going, we argued the toss and told him he was wrong. He accepted it, and naffed off. That's the kind of autonomy I like.

BMW 530D XDRIVE M SPORT

The new 5 Series is incredibly capable and likely the best all-rounder in the class

RATING	★★★★★
Price	£66,150
Engine	6 cyls in line, 2993cc, diesel
Power	261bhp at 4000rpm
Torque	457lb ft at 1500rpm
Gearbox	8-spd automatic
Kerb weight	1770kg
Top speed	155mph
0-62mph	5.4sec
Economy	53.2mpg
CO₂/tax band	138g/km

Italdesign reboots its business and brand

Italdesign is returning to its traditional business roots and the Zerouno, a £1.3m supercar revealed in Geneva this week, is proof. Steve Cropley visits its Turin HQ

PHOTOGRAPHY STAN PAPIOR

On arrival, you could be forgiven for thinking nothing at Italdesign has changed. True, there are more cars parked in the street, but that just means there are more employees, a given for a thriving company. But the two large studio buildings through which you usually enter Italdesign's estate on the southern outskirts of Turin seem hardly to have altered, even though it's nearly 50 years since the company's famous founder, Giorgetto Giugiaro, decided to launch his own design business.

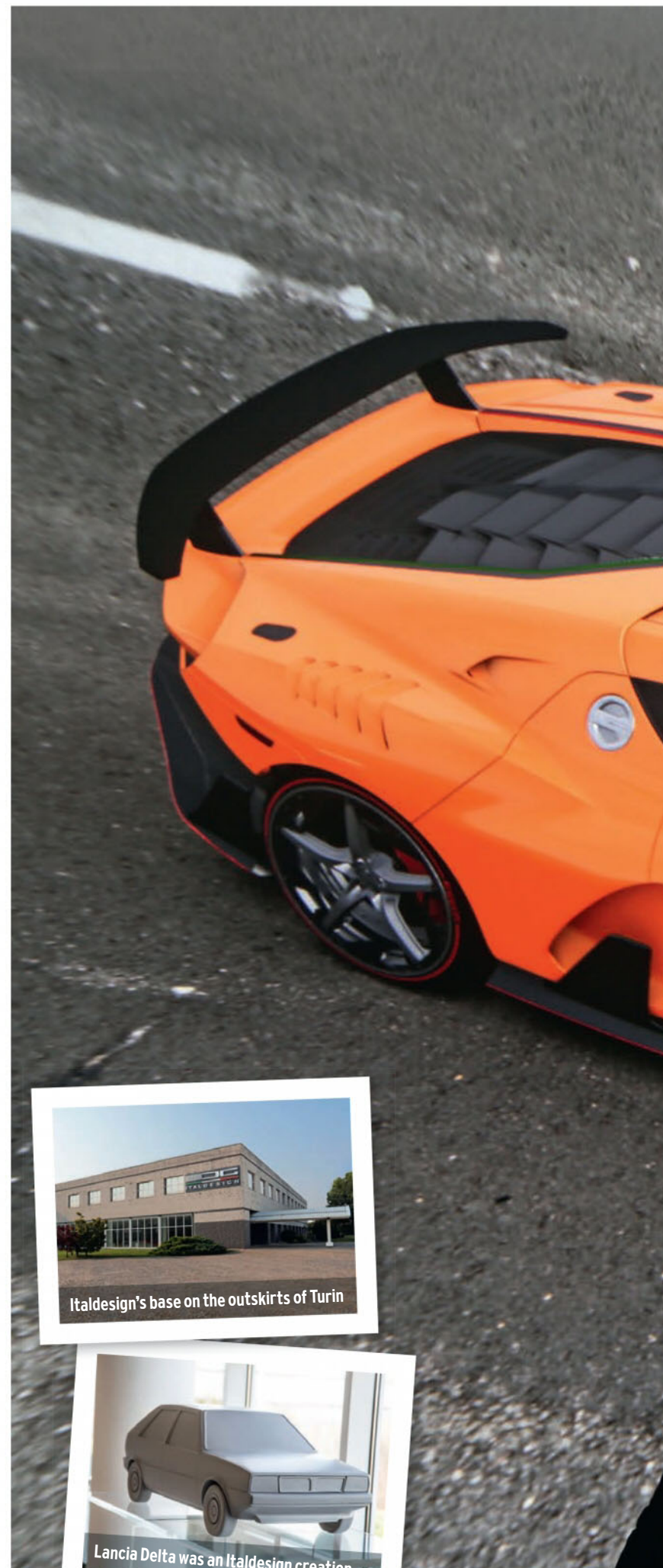
Don't be fooled. Nearly everything at Italdesign is different. Apart, that is, from the sound of Italian voices and the signs that this is still a happy home for the Italian creative spirit. Inside, the name of the biggest, widest corridor in the place hasn't changed, either. They've always called it Via Roma after the grandest street in Italy's ancient capital.

There is no sign of a Lamborghini presence, even though Lamborghini

owns Italdesign nowadays. Nor is there any trace of Lambo's parent, Audi, beyond a few good-looking museum concepts – even though most of the Torinese firm's 400 engineers and 140 designers recently spent a couple of years under the radar creating the new Audi Q2, including building no fewer than 70 running prototypes.

Back in 2010, Giugiaro was happily pictured doing a deal to sell 90% of his company – including his name and patents – to Audi, which put its new acquisition under Lamborghini's control. Five years later, the Germans completed the purchase, Giugiaro departed and Italdesign's talents were deployed on group projects intended to bring it closer to the mothership. It worked so well that industry pundits began referring to Italdesign as 'Audi's design and technology arm', which for many implied too close a relationship.

So now Italdesign is changing again. The arrival in late 2015 of an ambitious new CEO, Jörg Astalosch, →



Italdesign's base on the outskirts of Turin



Lancia Delta was an Italdesign creation

“
The Zerouno's detail and quality
are redolent of the finest
old-style coachbuilders
”



Perini (left) explains
the new Zerouno's
design to Cropley



Sampler shows three aluminium finishes



Cropley has a virtual taste of the Zerouno



Tricolor is masked and painted four times but is smooth



← a finance man for much of his 20-year career at the Volkswagen Group, Audi's parent, has aligned well with an urgent (post-crisis) need for Italdesign to earn its own corn. Astalosch has laid down three priorities for the company: to get back into providing engineering and design for outside clients; to establish an Italdesign academy to train promising young engineers and designers; and to establish an Italdesign brand for ultra-low-volume, top-price supercars. All of which is why I recently visited Italdesign, a decade after I was last there.

Right now, the most obvious push is on the recently revealed V10 supercar, the Zerouno, or '01' in numerals. Just five examples will be made. As you read this, the first car is on display at the Geneva show, with chief designer Filippo Perini as its proud presenter and its anonymous Belgian owner doubtless prominent in the audience. He'll have parted with well over the nominal starting price of £1.3 million for the privilege.

Each Zerouno owner is being offered extensive upgrades and options that could push prices as high as £2m.

Behind the scenes, Italdesign is also working hard on its other missions. The academy is already flushing out as much young talent as it can handle, and the company has again become successful at finding outside clients, especially for engineering projects.

"People know us as a design company because of the reputation

of Mr Giugiaro," says Franco Bay, an Italdesign director helping lead its renaissance. "But pure design projects account for only about 15% of what we do. We do lots of behind-the-scenes engineering, can deliver turn-key cars and can even handle low-volume production. We've done 200-per-year runs in recent years and we have capacity for up to 500 cars."

Perini is a fascinating character. A former client of Italdesign's during his nine years at Lamborghini and 13

years at Alfa Romeo, he was the main man on the Alfa 8C Competizione but describes himself as "an odd kind of designer" because he trained as an engineer first.

When I arrive, there are two weeks to run until Geneva. All attention centres on the first Zerouno. Four cars are sold, but "maybe one" is still available to the squillionaire with slow reactions, says Bay.

Cars like these seem surprisingly easy to sell these days. Bay and Perini confess to having a network of "20 or 30 friends" they know will always be interested in such cars. Talks are already scheduled to discuss concepts for the next Italdesign 'special' and Astalosch has already told the world there will be a new one every 18 to 24 months.

We walk along the Via Roma and turn right into a virtual reality theatre, where images of the new car can be projected in full size on a massive screen. There's also a rig for a driving game that Italdesign has adapted to the characteristics of

“All Zerouno owners are being offered upgrades that could push the price as high as £2m”



Italdesign staff pose with the first of five Zerouno supercars



Perini (on the right) calls himself "an odd kind of designer"

HOW IT STARTED

Italdesign's greatest design may well have been its first, the Alfa Romeo Alfasud. Giorgetto Giugiaro was already a distinguished designer by 1968, when he opened his own place with Aldo Mantovani, who was a specialist in car manufacture. As a result of their combined knowledge, Italdesign not only styled the 'Sud but it also helped to engineer the car, and even built running prototypes.

Back then, supercars were almost beside the point. There were some, for sure. The first Lotus Esprit was a Giugiaro creation. For a while, the BMW M1 was made there, and so was a three-off run of the Nazca C2, which had been proposed as the M1's successor until BMW pulled the plug. But the company's earliest achievement was providing well-designed cars for companies that could afford them: Alfasud, VW Golf, Fiat Panda, Lancia Delta and many more. Supercars came later.



Zerouno so owners can drive before they even see a prototype.

On this trip, I've been a bit concerned about the car's mighty price given that there's an awful lot of Audi R8 V10 beneath it, notwithstanding the facts that the normally aspirated 5.2-litre Audi Sport V10 is one of the finest supercar engines going, that units like it won't be around for much longer (for clean air reasons) and that the MSS platform – also used by Lamborghini – that underpins everything is about the best there is.

Within minutes, it becomes clear why projects like this attract people



311
The range in miles of Italdesign's GTZero, an all-electric 483bhp supercar unveiled at the 2016 Geneva show.

who can afford them, and move out of the realm of conventional value for money. They are about extreme rarity, extreme quality, tiny design refinement done exactly your way and about a car that will perfectly suit your dimensions and colour/trim preferences – all of it realised by some of the best people in the business. Perini explains the car's key advantages: it undercuts competitors by around 150kg, so a performance advantage can be delivered without any engine changes, although he does admit to re-engineering the already magnificent exhaust note just a bit.

The body, love it or hate it, is a masterpiece of detailed design in carbonfibre. Two large clamshells, front and rear, cover most of the car's structure and deliver important weight savings. The roof is lowered by 50mm, but for homologation reasons the essential structure isn't disturbed. Perini's policy is to give the car a sculptural Italian character above the waist, and to shape it below the belt line for best aerodynamic

performance, developed using a specially built, not-for-sale mule.

Using a series of full-sized images, we examine the Zerouno's details: the deep windscreen, the "stretched hexagon" frontal air scoop (that splits airflow over the bonnet into a lift-killing Y-shape) and even a tiny slot, barely visible to the naked eye, that cuts nose lift and smooths airflow over the roof. The chance to discuss such minutiae with the car's creator – and have him react to your comments – is what the owner is paying for.

At the rear, there's a giant diffuser and a beautifully sculpted and finished set of rear louvres – in exposed carbonfibre – that would theoretically keep the car stable at top speed without a separate rear wing. But knowing most owners prefer wings, Perini has designed one with a handsome racing character. The tail-lights 'float' in an open expanse, designed to let heat out.

In fact, every vent has a very specific purpose. Perini is especially proud of a NACA duct behind the

roof that scoops cooling air into the engine bay at speed but also reverses flow when the car is stationary to exhaust hot air. The car rolls on uniquely designed 21in alloy wheels with neat carbonfibre rotors inset to extract high-pressure air from the wheel arches at speed. The tyres are new-design Pirellis distinguished by a red line on their sidewalls.

The Zerouno's detail and quality are redolent of the finest old-style coachbuilders and quite different from cars that sell from showrooms. I find the whole thing mesmerising, but too soon it's time to go.

On my way out of the building, I ask Perini why there isn't more of an air of panic here. Not long ago, these would have been desperation days, with people working all night and the car reaching the show stand with its paint still drying. "It's different now," he says. "The panic comes earlier, when all the surface data is delivered. When that's done, everything about the car is fixed. At this stage, it's all under control." **A**

YOUR VIEWS

WRITE TO
autocar@haymarket.com

Focus group

I strongly agree with Ben Marshall (Your Views, 22 February), who argued that the original Ford Focus should have been included in your list of game-changing cars.

The Focus moved modern motoring for the masses into new territory. Having owned myriad old dross beforehand, I bought a new Focus in 2000 and drove it like I hated it for five years and 115,000 miles and traded it in for another one.

It was a fabulous car and was both a joy to own and drive. It was a 2.0 Zetec and I have regretted trading it in ever since.

In reference to Ben's point about the Escort Mk1, I'd say the Anglia was just as good, given the dross that the opposition was dishing up at the time. I'm still with Fords and currently drive a 2009 Focus RS, which has 120,600 miles on the clock.

Andy Williams
via email

Tax gone mad

I've just caught up with the planned Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) band changes coming in for new cars registered from 1 April onwards.

Has anyone seen an explanation of the logic behind the changes, other than a need to offset the revenue reduction of recent years? There are winners and losers compared with the current VED regime, but the main loser is fuel efficiency. If we assume that lower emissions of CO₂, NO_x and particulates are a good thing for us all, any ongoing incentive to reduce them will largely disappear.

From years two to six after being registered, a small, low-consumption car will cost the same each year as any other car priced below £40,000. After year six, when both are less efficient and less clean, the annual tax will be the same for a Volkswagen Up as for a Bugatti.

This is not logical and not fair.

My alternative scheme would add, say, £30 to each of the current bands (£50 for diesels) and include the zero-emissions band. (Electric cars still need the road infrastructure.)



Philippe dislikes new Disco's visibility



LETTER OF THE WEEK

A touchy subject

I'm with Matt Prior in thinking that eliminating buttons in favour of touchscreens is the wrong way to go (Tester's Notes, 22 February). Touchscreens are not correct for frequently used functions like adjusting the heater temperature, rear screen demister and radio volume.

My 2016 Ford Mustang has largely got the mix correct. I adjust the radio volume with the large knob rather than the touchscreen or wheel buttons. The rear window demister, temperature and fan speed are adjustable via the touchscreen or buttons but I almost invariably use the buttons.

Trying to use the touchscreen to make adjustments takes longer than using a button and it is easy to hit the wrong function on the screen when you are moving. You need to brace your thumb on the screen's lower edge to steady your hand. You will inevitably be on the wrong screen to change the function you want, so have to go hunting through menus.

Tim Grundey
Inverurie

Then I'd make the slope of the increasing tax rates more steep. The Bugatti owner won't care and more people will drive only the size of car they need.

Rodger Williams
via email

Inside looking out

I've had to sell my Land Rover Discovery 4 because I'm moving to the Continent. I've visited a number of dealers and sat in many cars in search of a replacement.

From the new Discovery to the Porsche Macan to the Jaguar F-Pace and more, the same problem exists: poor visibility. Whether it is the A-pillar or the rear-view mirror and accompanying sensors, there's always something in the way.

You'll say safety regs are to blame, but surely the result is the opposite.

Philippe Fabri
via email

Radio ga-ga

My Mercedes S-Class has had a fault on the infotainment system since new in 2014. It's a silly fault but can be very annoying. The adverts that appear along with local traffic announcements are wrong.

A traffic announcement from BBC Radio Leeds, for example, may be identified on the screen as Radio Tees or Radio Sheffield etc. It's confusing because you have no idea if a road closure may affect your journey, and while listening to a traffic message that may not be of interest, you can easily miss one that is.



Mirai running costs will reduce in time

The car went back to the dealer on number of occasions, without getting fixed. When they realised their own demonstrator had the same problem, the fault was referred to Mercedes' technical department in Germany to find a 'fix'. That was a year ago. Each time I asked what was going on, I was told it was "being worked on".

In a few months, the car will be three years old, so I again wrote to Mercedes, demanding some action. The response was that they have now decided this glitch is 'normal'. I responded by asking if my wife's Mercedes GLC, in which the system works fine, is therefore 'abnormal'...

Paul Rouse
York

Numbers up, Steve

Steve Cropley might want to invest in an improved calculator, judging by the maths in his report on the Toyota Mirai (Our Cars, 22 February).

The Mirai's 56.4 litres is 12.4 imperial gallons (not 10.3) and over 270 miles that equates to 21.8mpg. And 270 miles at 40mpg (a typical petrol saloon) equals 6.75 imperial gallons (not 8.1), costing £33.75. That gives 12.5 pence per mile for the petrol saloon compared with 17.4 pence per mile for the Mirai.

This does make the Mirai much

These four, all under £40k, will have the same VED eventually



more expensive at present, but this will, presumably, reduce in time.

It would be interesting to know the energy cost involved in extracting and compressing the hydrogen. We seem to be going through a period of hyping electric cars. However, the electricity industry warns that there is going to be a generation shortfall in the not-too-distant future, so how will a million plug-in cars effect that?

Peter Clothier
via email

Audi had the lead

Your story about the PSA Group's planned takeover of Opel-Vauxhall said: "In the 1980s, Audi and Opel were on a similar level before VW pushed Audi upmarket..." (News, 22 February).

With Audi's stunning Quattro the talk of the 1980 Geneva motor show, the sophisticated 100 model of 1982 a credible rival to middleweight BMWs and Mercedes, and the 80 by then a desirable 'junior executive' car, Vorsprung durch Technik had already rendered Opels a collection of unremarkable 1970s hardware.

David Sutherland
via email

Tyre talk

Regarding Andrew Smyth's letter about spare wheels, (Your Views, 22 February), he should check his tool kit because it should contain a plastic peg that screws into the wheel stud socket. Just turn the hub until the peg reaches 12 o'clock. Slide the spare on and bolt up – easy. That's if you're lucky enough to have a spare...

Peter Lewis
Herts

Xfactor

Regarding your Tesla Model X road test (Autocar, 15 February), by no stretch of the imagination is the Tesla Model S a full-sized limousine. It is an executive-class car, like the Audi A6, BMW 5 Series, Mercedes-Benz E-Class and Porsche Panamera.

Like the Panamera, the Tesla has a full-sized limousine price, but that's as far as it goes.

John T Shea
via email



GREAT REASONS TO BUY

NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

ON SALE 15 MARCH

DRIVEN



Jaguar I-Pace – first drive

We get behind the wheel of the radical I-Pace concept car to sample Jaguar's electric future for the first time

FEATURE



Farewell to the McLaren 650S

Andrew Frankel has one last epic drive in McLaren's first supercar

FEATURE



How to be a test driver

We head to Millbrook for the inside line on professional test drivers

EVERY WEEK



Road test: Audi Q5

It's well built and lovely inside, but is there any fun in how it drives?



News: Geneva motor show

Special report with all the reaction and gossip from the year's biggest show



Used buying guide: BMW M5

Find out how to get a V10-powered super-saloon on your driveway

SUBSCRIBE autocar.co.uk/subscribe or see p36

OUR CARS

FEATURED THIS WEEK



BMW 320D



FORD KA+



FORD MUSTANG



HYUNDAI ix35



JEEP RENEGADE



SKODA SUPERB ESTATE



SUZUKI BALENO



VW PASSAT ESTATE



FIRST REPORT

VW PASSAT GTE ESTATE

A plug-in hybrid load-carrier sounds like it should be a frugal, refined and practical antidote to the hassles of everyday life. Will that be the case here? Let's find out

We're all for diversity around here. Among the current 30-odd cars on the fleet, we have a V-twin three-wheeler, a petrol V8, a tri-turbo diesel V8, a petrol W12, an EV, a parallel hybrid, two hydrogen fuel cell cars, a petrol-electric sports car and now this, the plug-in hybrid Volkswagen Passat GTE Estate. Those last six cars are interesting because they represent a disproportionate 20% of Autocar's long-term line-up – disproportionate because for now the real-world percentage of alternatively fuelled vehicles on our nation's roads is much lower.

Diversity, then, and pioneering the future of motoring – whatever that

may turn out to be. And I suppose it's worth asking if that future is going to be one in which the plug-in hybrid prevails, and it's a question to which I hope to find an answer or, more likely, several answers, depending on your point of view. I already have a feeling, you see, that this car is going to cause some head-scratching.

We're pretty well acquainted with the Passat GTE. We've already road tested it, albeit in saloon guise, and subjected it, as an estate, to a comparison test, and the car has scored a solid four stars on each occasion. This Passat uses the Volkswagen Group's increasingly familiar petrol-electric set-up of a 1.4 TSI petrol engine, here making

154bhp, mated to a 113bhp electric motor and driving through a six-speed dual-clutch automatic gearbox. It's good for 0-62mph in a claimed 7.6sec, which isn't exactly slow.

The electric motor is powered by a 9.9kWh battery, which takes about two and half hours to fully charge via a wall box charger (at the office) or four and a half hours via a three-pin domestic plug (at my house). The battery lives under the rear seats and reduces fuel tank capacity from the 66 litres of a regular Passat to 50 litres.

You can have your Passat GTE in regular form, which comes quite well equipped, or in Advance trim, which is much more generous. We've gone for Advance, which

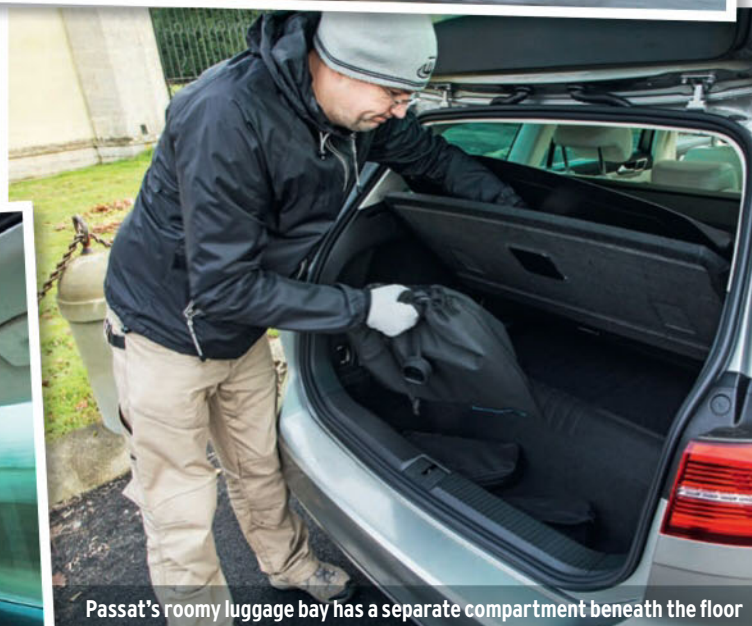
includes VW's Discover Navigation Pro with an 8.0in touchscreen, adaptive cruise control, emergency braking, a panoramic sunroof and a fully configurable 12.3in-wide TFT instrument display. To that, we've added metallic paint, Dynamic Chassis Control (DCC, or switchable suspension settings to you and me) and the tech-tastic Driver's Assistance Pack. We've also got 'St Tropez' leather trim.

All of that means our car costs a hefty £44,860 before the government's £2500 grant for plug-in cars. Even without the extras, an Advance-spec Passat GTE Estate costs in excess of £41k, which potential buyers will have to bear in



Electric motor and 1.4 turbo petrol (left) give brisk performance

“
I already have a feeling that this car is going to cause some head-scratching
”



Passat's roomy luggage bay has a separate compartment beneath the floor

mind given that it puts the car in the firing line of the impending new VED rules for cars costing £40,000 and above, due next month.

That running-cost can of worms aside, the Passat is living up to my earlier suspicions and posing as many questions as it is answering them. Why, for example, does the petrol engine sometimes come on when I don't want it to, even at low speeds, in far from freezing temperatures, with a full battery and no air-con, heated seats or anything else switched on? Is there, meanwhile, a way of finding out the Passat's total mileage on electric power for any given journey if I'm switching between power sources? Among all of the other

information – and there's a lot of it – that nugget isn't in there.

But the thing that's bugging me, and possibly you, the most is this: how economical is it? Specifically, how do I work out an accurate miles per gallon figure for the petrol engine? With any given journey being a mix of petrol and electric power, the traditional brim-to-brim calculation is corrupted by the fact that for some of the distance travelled no petrol was used.

So on my 36-mile each-way commute, with a battery refill at each end, I've already been recording some pretty impressive figures – at least according to the trip meter. But the longer the journey (assuming it's non-stop), the less impressive

the average economy figure for that journey, because the petrol engine does proportionally more of the work as the miles go up.

I could, of course, just drive around with an empty battery and work out the

fuel economy that way, but to do so would utterly miss the point of having a hybrid powertrain in the first place and in no way reflect how I use the car.

In the meantime, I'm relying on the trip meter's claimed overall average figure, which right now is 60.9mpg. That's reasonably impressive, but all of my journeys so far have had some sort of electrical assistance, and I'm trying hard to optimise the free (or at least significantly cheaper) propulsion to best effect, which I've been doing by using electric power to get up to speed and then switching to petrol once I'm maintaining a relatively constant velocity.

If nothing else, I'm going to have a

lot to write about in terms of economy, efficiency and running costs. You'll have to stop me if it gets boring (if you're not there already). Still, this is a big, practical car with a huge boot and lots of kit, so I'll be finding out how useful and usable much or all of that is. Stand by to be riveted.

TIM DICKSON

TEST DATA

VOLKSWAGEN PASSAT GTE ADVANCE DSG ESTATE

Price £39,770 (after £2500 gov't grant)

Price as tested £42,360 (after grant)

Options Driver's Assistance Pack Plus (including emergency assist intervention, dynamic light assist, lane assist, predictive pedestrian protection and traffic jam assist)

£1225, Dynamic Chassis Control £725,

metallic paint £595, rubber boot mat £45

Economy 60.9mpg Faults None

Expenses None

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Cars listed above funded in 2016/17.



MILEAGE 1913

FORD MUSTANG

Should we be worried about its two-star Euro NCAP test result?

Life goes on with the Mustang after the revelation that it scored only two stars in Euro NCAP crash safety tests.

Its Euro NCAP score didn't occur to me when I bought the car. When it comes to safety, I'm not sure what is more significant. Is it the fact that it hasn't got Autonomous Emergency Braking (one of the main reasons it fared so badly in the Euro NCAP tests), or that it is powered by a monstrous engine, is rear-wheel drive and lets you turn the stability system off completely if you wish?

In that sense, safety is relative to a number of things, like other cars in the class. None of them have been



Changing gear is awkward when the cupholder is in use

tested by Euro NCAP under the new testing criteria in force since 2016. Despite the low overall score, the Mustang still achieved four stars for occupant safety, slightly higher in that category than the BMW Z4, tested in 2015 under the old criteria.

Confused? Me, too. However, I do think it was cheeky of Ford to offer the Mustang in Europe without the active safety aids that it comes with in the US and that helped earn it five stars in the equivalent NHTSA NCAP tests. Ford now says any Euro-spec Mustang ordered after May 2017 will have a full suite of active safety equipment, so if you've already got one on order, you may want to reconsider. Bear in mind, though, that the price of the uprated car will almost certainly reflect the additions.

On the subject of price, it crossed my mind that the used value of my car may suffer as a result of it flunking its safety exams but, on reflection, I don't think it will. The irresistible truth is that this Mustang delivers as pure and visceral a driving experience as you'll find in any car today.

I can report only one niggle, which relates to an ergonomic fail. The position of the centre console cupholders appears to be optimised for left-hand drive and, when in use, it becomes awkward to change gear. That's about it. The rest is nirvana.

JESSE CROSSE

TEST DATA

FORD MUSTANG 5.0 GT

Price new £36,790 Price as tested £36,035

Economy 22.4mpg Faults None Expenses

One litre of oil, £13.20 Last seen 8.2.17

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autocar@haymarket.com



To drive, this is a comfortable and easy-going car

MILEAGE 5100

JEEP RENEGADE

It's easy to be charmed by it, despite the engine-induced seat massage function

AS I MOVED from my previous long-term test car, the large and rugged Nissan Navara pick-up, to this smaller SUV, I was looking forward to it being a more comfortable, and easy-going affair. So now its odometer has nudged past 5000 miles, how is the Renegade doing?

The 2.0-litre four-cylinder diesel strikes a good balance between performance and economy. The 138bhp unit feels nippy and fun around town and is happy to cruise on a motorway, although it is less comfortable when pushed hard.

It's clear that this is not a refined motor. It's as noisy as the Navara's and emits an agricultural rumble. At idle, the vibration in the cabin gives you an unwanted seat massage.

For the most part, the nine-speed automatic gearbox is well suited to this engine and the shifts are seamless except in stop-start traffic, when there is a bit of a jolt.

I'm impressed by how comfortable it is to drive, though. The chunky steering wheel feels great and the seating position is ideal. I feel very centred and there's plenty of room

between the driver and the door. It makes the cabin feel spacious and suited to all sizes of occupant.

The dashboard is minimalist and the buttons and switches that remain are well positioned. The 6.5in touchscreen takes pride of place on the dash and I've been impressed by how fluidly the car connects to my smartphone via Bluetooth.

I've been won over by the Renegade's charm. I love all the quirky touches dotted around the cabin, such as outlines of maps carved into the rubber mats in the cubbyholes, and the Willy's Jeep graphics in the corner of the windscreen. Other manufacturers could learn a lot by offering such details on their models.

JAMES HOLLOWAY

TEST DATA

JEEP RENEGADE 2.0 MULTIJET II 140HP 75TH ANNIVERSARY 4WD

Price £28,595 Price as tested £30,460

Economy 37.6mpg Faults None

Expenses None Last seen 15.2.17

Specialist Car Insurance

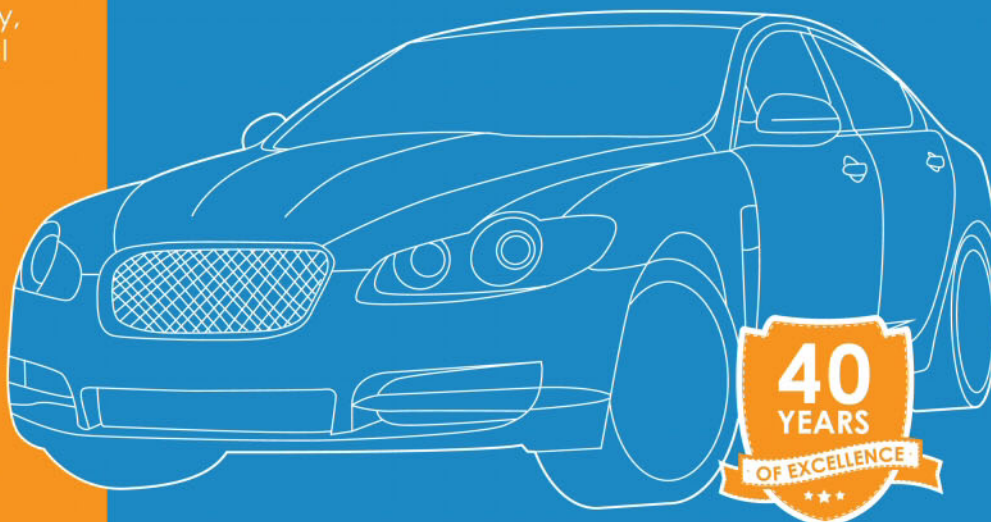
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MILEAGE 7651

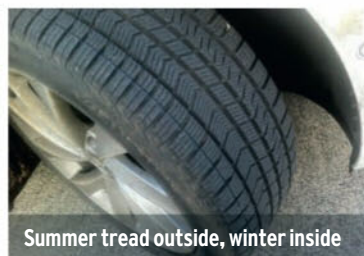
It cost £48 to have our new rubber fitted

SKODA SUPERB

Are all-season tyres worth it or just the worst of both worlds?

Throughout the southern half of England, it has been a pretty moderate winter, so the whole 'should I buy winter tyres?' thing has been less of an issue in this neck of the woods. Usually, a few snowflakes settle, people take five hours to get home once and it's the first question they google when they get there.

The answer is 'it depends where you live and what you drive' but I drive a lot of miles, all over the place, and at the moment in a four-wheel-drive car, so I've opted to test a set of tyres on the Superb – not winters, but all-season tyres. They're not as all-out winter-focused as winter tyres, which have bigger tread blocks, a softer compound and little lines ('sipes', apparently) that deal with snow. But they're meant to work better in the warm than winter tyres. So in theory they get you home if it snows, but introduce less squidge



Summer tread outside, winter inside

into the driving experience and retain better fuel economy.

These ones are Vredestein Quattrac 5s, which tackle the 'all-season' thing by having a winter side and a summer side, with different compounds and tread patterns on each. They sell at around £90 each and cost me £48 to get the whole set fitted, replacing Continental Sport Contacts.

I had them fitted just before a week of freezing temperatures, helpfully, and my first impressions are that they grip better in cold conditions

than the Continentals (albeit they were 6000 miles old), are a touch quieter and don't adversely affect the steering response. More impressions next time but, so far, I like them.

Likewise the rest of the Superb, with the exception of the fact that the glovebox occasionally pops open of its own accord. A good slam sorts it, but there must be a better fix.

STAN PAPIOR

TEST DATA

**SKODA SUPERB 2.0 TSI
280 LAURIN & KLEMENT
4X4 DSG**

Price £35,165 Price as tested £36,200

Economy 31.0mpg Faults Ghost in the glovebox Expenses All-season tyres, £408 including fitting Last seen 8.2.17

OWN ONE? SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE
stan.papior@haymarket.com

MILEAGE 5168

HYUNDAI IX35 FUEL CELL

CHANCES ARE YOU know that a hydrogen fuel cell car produces only one tailpipe emission – water. And if you didn't know, you soon would if you followed me in the ix35 FCV, with its side graphics and pertinent rear window statement, as well as an occasional but pronounced expulsion of water from the tailpipe.

But the ix35 also purifies the air as it travels along, collecting harmful particulates and trapping them as a byproduct of the process of generating

electricity via the hydrogen fuel stack's inner workings. Keep the filters, humidifier and fuel cell stack properly serviced, and you can have a positive impact on local air quality.

To demonstrate this, Hyundai has produced a video that involves filling a giant polythene ball with air, topping it up with a mixture of particulate pollutants of various sizes



Experiment shows how ix35 cleans up

to match the equivalent of what a typical human would breathe in over 100 years and then sucking them through the ix35 FCV's system.

The expelled air is pumped out of the tailpipe into another polythene ball, which the firm's senior R&D representative then sticks his head in and inhales enthusiastically. Bar water vapour, it's entirely clean – and further proof that environmentally friendly transport needn't be a myth.

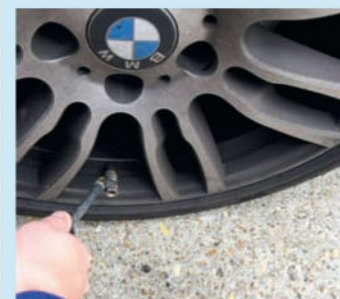
JIM HOLDER

TEST DATA

HYUNDAI IX35 FUEL CELL

Price £53,105 (after £4500 gov't grant)

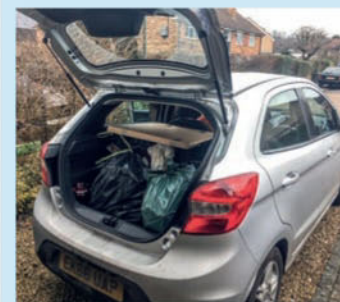
Price as tested £53,105 Economy na Faults None Expenses None Last seen 8.2.17



BMW 320d xDrive

MILEAGE 8611 LAST SEEN 22.2.17

This picture shows a view I've seen twice in the past couple of days. I've had to check the offside rear tyre after a recurring tyre pressure warning. Slow puncture? Dodgy valve? Before heading to Kwik Fit, I inflated the tyre to BMW's suggested higher pressure for carrying heavier loads and the alarm hasn't come on since. I suspect the fault is in the sensor itself. **MT**



Ford Ka+

MILEAGE 4724 LAST SEEN 15.2.17

Having been impressed by the Ford Ka+'s roomy rear, I was intrigued to see how the car would cope with a run to the tip. Ford claims the Ka+ gives you 849 litres to play with when the rear seats are down and it certainly didn't struggle with the rubbish accrued from a pre-spring clean-up. The only snag is that the rear seats don't fold fully flat. **HM**



Suzuki Baleno

MILEAGE 4242 LAST SEEN 8.2.17

Videographer Mitch McCabe used the Baleno recently. He said it easily accommodates his cameras, cases and tripods with the rear seats down. A high load lip makes lifting the cases out more difficult and the bootlid itself is compact. That's practical in a tight car park but less useful for sheltering the boot's contents when unloading in a rain storm. **MH**



USED CARS

WITH JAMES RUPPERT, THE HIGH PRIEST OF BANGERNOMICS



Ford Fiesta offers the used car buyer plenty of choice

THE POPULAR VOTE

The UK's best-selling used cars set **James Ruppert** tyre-kicking on a £5000 budget

It is official, then: Britain's used car market reached record levels in 2016, with 8.2 million vehicles finding new owners, a rise of 7.3% on the previous year, according to figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT).

This is something we have been going on about in Autocar for some time: the complete and utter hugeness of the used car marketplace. Indeed, which other outlet gives you this much used car goodness every single week? We know what you want and, more important, what you want to buy.

The SMMT's findings are packed in with all the flimflam about the most popular colour (still silver) and the busiest region for sales (the south-east). So we won't spend time with all that nonsense when instead we can take a closer look at the best-sellers.

In at number one is the Ford Fiesta, which comes as no surprise. So let's take the standard £5k budget and see what that could bring in the way of a used Fiesta. It doesn't actually put the model with the Aston Martin-esque grille in your drive, but who cares? Instead, you can get a 1.25 Edge from 2011 with less than 30k miles. You have to shop around because there are so many at car supermarkets and main dealers that jump around the price points. We saw a 2010 car with 50k miles at the same price.

The runner-up is another Ford, which is clearly our most favourite used car marque. The Focus is arguably the most practical used motor at any level. You still can't get one with an Aston-like grille for £5k, of course, but a 2010 1.6 Titanium with 60,000 miles seems like a sensible buy. Then again, you might get distracted by a privately

advertised 2006 Focus ST. It seemed slightly scruffy, but it might be regarded as a bargain in 20 years.

After Fords, we as a nation love our Vauxhalls, whatever the future actually holds for the brand. With the £5k ceiling, I was rather pleased to find a 2014 1.0 Ecoflex Corsa up for grabs at a main dealer. It promised 65mpg and £30 road tax, which makes it the ideal city shopper.

Moving up to the Astra, it is possible to still go eco and bag a

1.7 CDTi in estate car format. The one I saw had more than double the mileage of the Corsa, at 75k, but it was a 2013 family hack with £20 tax.

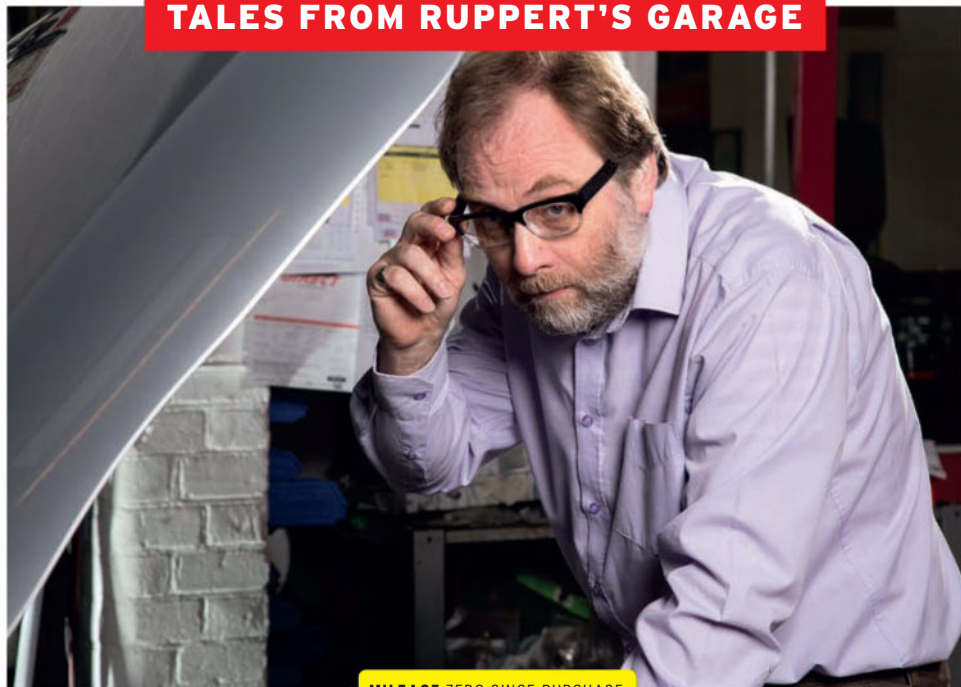
The top ten also included the VW Golf, BMW 3 Series, Renault Clio, Volkswagen Polo, Mini and Peugeot 206. Out of all those, I can wholeheartedly recommend a recent Polo. If that doesn't inspire you, the great thing is that there are more than eight million others from which to choose.

You might get distracted by a privately advertised 2006 Focus ST for £5000



Astra is fourth on the used car best-seller list of 2016

TALES FROM RUPPERT'S GARAGE



MILEAGE ZERO SINCE PURCHASE

MYSTERY NEW ARRIVAL

This update on my newest acquisition comes not so much from the garage as the vehicle admin area of my office.

I think I may have warned readers never to buy a car without a V5. Well, for reasons that will be explained in the future, I did.

So despite the car's MOT certificate and insurance, I now own a vehicle I can't drive. I trusted the seller to sort out the missing V5. It finally led to me to talk to the DVLA after reports that, due to the March taxation changes, it couldn't cope, which is not the case. Stay tuned to find out if I manage to get the V5 sorted.

READER'S RIDE



Citroën ZX

Rules are rules, but sometimes you can break them and get away with it, as Kenny Smith attests. He says: "A sound rule of Bangernomics is: 'Do not go bidding crazy on popular auction websites late at night'."

"By ignoring this intelligent advice, I became the new owner of a 1995 Citroën ZX 1.9 XUD diesel with nearly 155,000 miles and eight previous owners, including a taxi company and a caravan enthusiast.

"However, it gave good service as a second vehicle for another seven years and 31,000 miles until, sadly, the body eventually became too badly corroded to continue further. Not bad for a winning bid of £275."

SEND YOUR USED CAR TALES TO
✉ james@bangernomics.com

WHAT I SPIED IN THE CLASSIFIEDS



Distance no object for stacked S60

If you want a motorway bullet, rather than the obvious executive expresses, the Volvo S60 makes a strong case for itself. Add an R Design package and the car really starts to look the part. So for £6500, with 130k miles, this 2011 S60 D3 is a well-equipped way to go about your business.

With half-leather trim, 18in alloy wheels and colour-coded bumpers, it's a shrewd choice.



LAMBO
SUPERCAR
FOR £70K

Gallardo is orange and no lemon

This is what counts as an old-school supercar these days. Lamborghini Gallardos are still satisfyingly expensive, but still not stupidly overpriced. This 2005 example has a solid 41k mileage. According to the advert, the tyres are new and fitted to 19in alloy wheels, and the car's colour is the proper Arancio Borealis. The seller is also sticking a six-month warranty on it, which is certainly what you want to see.

£1350
SHOGUN
PININ



Unwanted baby 4x4 ripe for the picking

There is an awful lot to be said for a pocket-sized 4x4 and there are few things better than a Mitsubishi Shogun with added Pininfarina design chops. This 77,000-mile Shogun Pinin 1.8 Vivo II Classic from 2003 is an unwanted part-exchange, surprisingly, and it's just waiting for someone with hardly any money at all (£1350, to be precise). There is even some service history and just three former keepers.

WHY YOU NEED A USED
**VOLKSWAGEN
PHAETON**
IN YOUR LIFE



MASTER OF PHAET

The Phaeton, VW's rival to the Mercedes S-Class, can be snapped up for less than £4000, but you must tread carefully, as **John Evans** discovers

Probably the last thing Ferdinand Piech, former boss of the Volkswagen Group, thought his beloved Mercedes-Benz S-Class rival would be is a used car bargain. But it is – although, like all bargains, the Phaeton can bite you, and hard.

How about £1800 hard? That's what one owner had to pay for electrical work to his car (see panel, right). It makes you think, unless you take the 'it'll never happen to me' approach and start imagining yourself wafting around in the enormous Passat lookalike.

In fact, for just £3795 – the price of an 85,000-mile, 2004/04-plate Phaeton that we know of – you could be doing exactly that. The downside? It's the thirsty four-wheel-drive

3.2 V6 petrol. Still, if it isn't your daily driver and you like your toys (including sat-nav, rear-view camera, rear air-con, powered seats), it could be worth a punt. Plus, you won't get the related Bentley Continental GT for anything like the same money.

That's right: the two models share the same platform. The Phaeton was Piech's way of landing a punch on Mercedes for taking a pop at his Golf with the A-Class. He went to town, demanding, among other things, that his limo should be able to cruise at 186mph in an outside temperature of 50deg C while maintaining a cabin temperature of 22deg C.

In the end, the high-tech Phaeton generated 100 patents, including one for draftless air-con. And if Mercedes wanted to see how to do the job

properly, Piech had the car hand-built in a glass factory in Dresden.

The Phaeton was launched in 2002 with a choice of 3.2 V6 and 6.0 W12 petrol engines. Bar a few 3.2s, all were 4Matic all-wheel drive and all had automatic gearboxes: six speeds on the 3.2 and subsequent models except the W12, which had five. The W12 also had two rear seats that could each be electrically reclined.

Both models were soon joined by a 4.2 V8 petrol and 5.0 V10 TDI (the pick of the range, if 553lb ft means anything to you). In 2004 the 3.0 V6 TDI arrived. It would go on to be the best-selling variant. Also in 2004, long-wheelbase versions of all models were added to the line-up.

A facelift in 2007 included an uprated version of the 3.0 V6 diesel

and styling mods that stretched to a reprofiled bonnet, new headlights with daytime running lights and, inside, modified switchgear on the centre console.

A further facelift in 2009 ushered in a 3.6-litre petrol engine in place of the 3.2, the centre console was changed to accept the latest touchscreen and new driver assist systems were introduced. In 2010 it was all change again, with the nose and tail restyled to fit in with the rest of the Volkswagen line-up. At the same time, all engines bar the 3.0 TDI and the W12 were binned, the latter only available via special order.

It was an act reflecting the realities of commercial life. Happily for bargain hunters today, it was the only sensible thing the Phaeton ever did.

Most versions of the Phaeton have four-wheel drive

HOW TO GET ONE IN YOUR GARAGE



An expert's view

DAVID TUDOR, VAG BOLTON

"The Phaeton is expensive to repair. Parts have to be original equipment and they aren't cheap. ECUs are the biggest expense. Water ingress wrecks the electrics, especially behind the glovebox. We've just repaired one that ran up an £1800 bill. Mechanically the Phaeton is reliable. Ignore VW's claims of long-life coolant and transmission oil; those were only ever about keeping the pence-per-mile costs competitive. Instead, change the engine oil each year or 10,000 miles and change the coolant and transmission oil as soon as you get the car."

corrosion where the aluminium panels make contact with the steel frame.

■ INTERIOR

Check for warning lights and that all gadgets work. Check operation of motorised outer dash vent covers.

Also worth knowing

VW quotes £815, with £250 excess, for its extended warranty (volkswagen-extendedwarranty.co.uk). There's a 10,000-mile limit but it includes the electrics. It compares with £857 (£50 excess) from an independent provider without electrical cover.

How much to spend

£3250-£5000

Early 2004 3.2 up to 100k miles, some 2005-8 3.0 TDIs up to 120k miles.

£5250-£6995

2005-08 3.0 TDIs circa 100k miles, plus some early but leggy 5.0 V10 TDIs.

£7000-£9000

2008-10 3.0 TDIs with 75-110k miles plus some early, low-mileage V10 TDIs.

£9250-£10,500

2009-11 3.0 TDIs with up to 100k miles.

£10,750-£13,500

2012 3.0 TDIs, some very low mileages.

£13,750-ON

Low-mileage 2012 3.0 TDIs with last-off-the-line cars peaking at £18,000.



One we found

VW PHAETON 3.0 TDI, 2006/06, 51K MILES, £7450

Dealer-sale car with full history including recent front and rear diff and gearbox services. Unmarked cream leather. Low miles suggest lots of short journeys. Worth around £4k at auction, so wear your haggling boots.

Buyer beware...

■ ENGINE

The 4.2 V8 needs a cambelt at 80k miles; other engines are chain-driven. Failed turbos on V10s can destroy the engine. The swirl flap motors on V6 diesel engines can play up, but it's an easy fix by a specialist.

■ TRANSMISSION

Torque converter needs regular oil changes. V10's oil cooler radiator can clog with dirt, causing the transmission fluid to overheat.

■ STEERING

Power steering pumps fail at around 90k miles. Ancillary belt can stop the engine when the pump breaks.

■ BRAKES

It's heavy on pads and discs.

■ ELECTRICS

The big spot: Phaetons have 63 ECU black boxes. Water ingress via the plenum chamber at the foot of the windscreen wrecks havoc. Clear the drain, or water spills over and drenches the electrics behind the glovebox.

■ BATTERIES

There are two, both in the boot. The left one looks after the electrics; the right turns the engine. If the engine turns but doesn't fire, the left is faulty. The car needs reprogramming to recognise a replacement.

■ BODY

Check the door bottoms for galvanic

0
The number of recalls issued for the Phaeton. Impressive stuff.

The Phaeton is filled fit to bursting with toys and gadgets



You won't get a Bentley Continental GT for anything like the same money as a Phaeton

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THE DANGERS OF DERV

The mounting pressure on diesel cars might soon start to have an effect on what they're worth, warns **Alex Robbins**



The majority of used Audi A4s on sale are diesels



Diesel is fast becoming a dirty word in the UK. Already, six British cities have been given the go-ahead to create clean air zones in which drivers of diesel cars could face congestion charges. Ten more are being proposed.

In London, a £10 daily charge will apply equally to petrol and diesel cars that don't meet a certain emissions standard, but other cities' councillors have mooted diesel-specific charges. At £10 a day, that'd amount to around £200 extra every month for most daily commuters. Even those who don't commute by car would probably avoid buying a diesel-engined car if they knew they couldn't drive into most large British cities without paying a fee, or even get in at all.

What does all this mean for used car buyers? Well, so far, there has been no effect on the price of diesel cars, according to James Dower, the senior editor of Cap HPI's Black Book. "It seems that consumer and fleet appetite for diesel vehicles is holding up," he says. "There is no waning in demand for diesel vehicles in the new or used market. Through 2016, values moved broadly in line with those of petrol-engined

equivalents, with little visible impact from negative headlines through the year. If pressure on values is coming, it's some way off yet."

Nevertheless, the question of whether to choose petrol or diesel is being raised more and more. The Volkswagen scandal of 2015 has consumers feeling uneasy and the prospect of a £200-a-month hike to their commuting costs will almost certainly do more damage.

And were diesels to become the pariahs of the used car world, it could happen quite quickly. Commuters wouldn't be able to get shot of their diesel cars quickly enough and, as buyers shied away, values would fall.



Could diesels become harder to sell?

Owners expecting the stronger residuals of their diesel cars to make up for the higher price they paid when they bought them could instead find themselves taking a hit.

So what's the solution?

Perhaps we should all start to switch back to petrol. That presents its own problems, because as a result of the diesel boom, the relative availability of mainstream, nearly new petrol cars on the used car market has dropped dramatically.

For example, of the 2191 Audi A4s listed in the classified ads on pistonheads.co.uk at the time of writing, just 280 are powered by petrol. Of 1889 Mk7 Volkswagen Golfs, 595 are petrol. Imagine how those proportions would be further skewed were the market to be flooded with diesels. As diesel car prices fell, so prices of petrol models would rise as more and more buyers chased a dwindling supply.

So if it all goes wrong for derv, it won't be quite as simple as dropping your diesel car and changing to a petrol one. If demand truly outstrips supply, the jump in values for petrol cars might actually make it very

difficult for some drivers to make that switch, leaving them footing an extra bill on their commute whether they like it or not.

Buyers, it seems, have been led down a cul-de-sac by past governments, which championed diesel cars for their low CO₂ emissions. Today's governments will have to be sensitive with their application of pollution charging in order to make sure diesel owners can extricate themselves without too much pain.

What can you do? Well, as Cap HPI says, there's no evidence yet that buyers are about to desert diesel in their droves. Nevertheless, if you're considering buying a used car in the near future, it is worth bearing in mind that the outlook is decidedly uncertain for oilburners. You may wish to hedge your bets and opt for a petrol instead, particularly if you regularly drive in urban areas.

ROAD TEST RESULTS

Facts, figures, from the best road tests

No one produces as thorough a judgement on a new car as Autocar. As well as acceleration, braking, fuel economy and noise tests, we carry out benchmark limit-handling tests, setting lap times if appropriate. But we don't just drive at the track, essential as it is for finding the limits of performance; we also drive on a wide range of roads. We aim to produce the most complete, objective verdict in the business, so you can be sure how good a car is. Where we have tested more than one model in a range, the rating is for the range overall; where a model within the range meets our coveted five-star standard, it is highlighted in yellow.

- » **30-70MPH** Indicates overtaking ability through the gears
- » **50-70MPH** Recorded in top gear (*kickdown with an automatic) and demonstrates flexibility
- » **FUEL ECONOMY** Prior to 7.1.15, figures are touring, recorded over a set road route, and test average. From 7.1.15 on, figures are average and extra-urban, to the What Car?/True MPG standard
- » **BRAKING 60-0MPH** Recorded on a high-grip surface at a test track
- » **MPH/1000RPM** Figure is the speed achieved in top gear



Make and Model	Top speed	0-60mph	0-100mph	30-70mph	50-70mph	Braking 60-0mph	Power (bhp)	Torque (lb/ft)	Mph/1000rpm	Mpg test/touring	Weight (kg)	TEST DATE
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ALFA ROMEO

Giulietta 5dr hatch ★★★★★	2.0Jtdm	135	8.4	22.3	7.7	7.9	2.7	168	258	34.8	40/57	1475	13.10.10
4C 2dr coupé/convertible ★★★★★	Spider	160	5.1	12.4	4.0	5.8	2.97	237	258	29.6	32/44	940	27.1.16

ALPINA

B3 Biturbo 4dr saloon ★★★★★	B3 Biturbo	155	4.7	10.3	3.8	6.8	2.9	404	443	41.5	27/35	1610	29.8.13
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ARIEL

Atom Odr open ★★★★★	V8	170	3.0	5.7	1.9	3.7	2.55	475	268	16.4	21/37	650	10.8.11
Nomad Odr open ★★★★★	Nomad	125	4.5	12.7	3.9	7.7	3.10	235	221	26.7	-/-	735	24.6.15

ASTON MARTIN

V8 Vantage 2dr coupé ★★★★★	V8 Roadster	175	5.2	12.0	3.6	7.9	2.7	380	302	26.0	17/22	1713	25.4.07
	Gt8	190	4.6	10.4	3.6	6.1	2.6	440	361	25.3	19/29	1530	12.10.16
DB11 2dr coupé ★★★★★	Launch Edition	200	4.0	8.4	3.0	10.1	2.6	600	516	46.2	24/34	1910	21.9.16
Rapide 4dr saloon ★★★★★	Rapide S	190	5.3	11.3	4.3	8.3	3.03	550	457	33.6	19/23	1990	20.3.13

AUDI

A1 3dr hatch ★★★★★	1.4TFSI Sport	126	8.4	22.4	8.9	12.8	2.2	120	148	30.2	34/43	1165	10.11.10
	S1	155	5.9	14.4	5.2	5.4	2.6	228	273	25.6	30/39	1390	28.5.14
A3 3dr/5dr hatch ★★★★★	2.0TDI Sport	134	8.9	25.9	11.4	10.8	2.7	148	236	30	48/59	1355	26.9.12
	S'backe-tron	138	7.9	20.9	6.6	8.5	3.0	201	258	30.7	45/49	1540	31.12.14
	RS3'S'back	155	4.1	10.3	3.7	7.7	2.8	362	343	34.2	26/37	1595	10.6.15
A4 4dr saloon ★★★★★	2.0TDI S-line	147	8.4	22.2	7.3	11.2	3.1	187	295	37.1	45/50	1940	4.11.15
A5 2dr coupé/convertible ★★★★★	S5	155	4.9	11.7	4.4	9.7	3.0	349	369	40.5	26/33	1615	11.1.17
A5 Sportback 4dr saloon ★★★★★	2.0TFSI S-line	155	5.7	15.1	5.3	17.2	2.5	249	273	42.2	30/41	1535	8.3.17
A6 4dr saloon/5dr estate ★★★★★	3.0TDISE	155	7.2	20.3	6.4	3.9	2.9	201	295	39.9	34/46	1805	19.10.11
	RS6 Avant	155	3.7	8.7	3.1	12.8	2.4	552	516	40.0	20/28	2010	3.7.13
A7 Sportback 4dr saloon ★★★★★	3.0V6TDI	155	6.7	18.7	6.5	*4.0	2.8	241	369	42.9	31/40	1940	9.2.11
TT 2dr coupé/convertible ★★★★★	2.0TFSI S-line	155	6.6	14.5	5.0	6.5	2.5	227	273	30.1	29/35	1305	26.11.14
	RS	155	3.6	8.4	3.0	7.8	2.7	394	354	35.1	27/37	1440	7.12.16
Q2 5dr SUV ★★★★★	1.4TFSI Sport	132	8.1	23.9	8.2	9.8	2.7	148	184	29.4	45/56	1265	9.11.16
Q3 5dr SUV ★★★★★	2.0TDISE	132	8.3	25.5	8.1	*11.5	2.7	175	280	35.8	33/46	1710	16.11.11
	RS	155	5.0	12.6	4.5	8.3	2.8	306	310	32.4	32.4	1655	1.1.14
Q7 5dr SUV ★★★★★	3.0TDI S-line	145	6.2	17.6	6.2	*3.8	-	268	443	47.6	32/36	2245	12.8.15
	SQ7 4.0TDI	155	5.1	12.6	4.4	7.0	2.9	429	664	47.6	24/38	2330	26.10.16
R8 2dr coupé ★★★★★	V10 Plus	205	3.1	6.7	2.6	5.7	2.8	602	413	26.8	15/23	1555	30.12.15

BENTLEY

Continental GT 2dr coupé/convertible ★★★★★	GTC V8	187	4.5	10.8	3.9	*2.7	2.8	500	487	27.4	18/27	2470	4.4.12
	GT	198	4.6	10.9	4.2	*2.4	2.5	567	516	34.9	7/15	2375	1.6.11
Flying Spur 4dr saloon ★★★★★	W12	200	4.5	10.4	3.6	8.4	3.0	616	590	44.5	18/26	2475	7.8.13
Mulsanne 4dr saloon ★★★★★	6.75 V8	184	5.7	13.7	4.8	*2.8	2.6	505	752	44.8	18/21	2745	21.9.11
Bentayga 5dr SUV ★★★★★	W12	187	4.9	11.6	4.4	8.7	3.0	600	664	48.2	20/25	2440	18.5.16

BMW

1 Series 3dr/5dr hatch ★★★★★	116d ED Plus	124	10.2	30.0	10.0	17.3	-	114	199	37.7	54/60	1395	27.5.15
2 Series 3dr coupé/convertible ★★★★★	220dSE	143	7.8	20.9	7.3	8.8	2.9	181	280	39.6	46/62	1450	19.3.14
	220dC'vble	140	8.5	24.7	8.4	9.0	2.1	187	295	34.5	50/53	1610	1.4.15
	M235i	155	6.3	14.7	5.7	5.4	2.7	322	332	28.1	26/35	1530	23.4.14
	M2	155	4.4	10.3	3.6	6.2	2.6	365	343	33.7	31/37	1595	15.6.16
2 Series Active Tourer 5dr MPV ★★★★★	218d Luxury	129	8.9	26.5	8.7	12.1	3.0	148	243	40.4	42/56	1450	24.12.14
3 Series 4dr saloon/5dr estate/5dr hatch ★★★★★	320d Sport	146	7.7	20.9	7.6	9.7	2.6	181	280	36.2	41/57	1535	22.2.12
	330d Touring	155	5.5	14.2	5.1	8.8	2.6	255	413	45.2	43/54	1735	21.11.12
	318d SportGT	130	9.5	28.6	9.5	12.4	2.7	141	236	36.5	50/57	1615	17.7.13
4 Series 2dr coupé ★★★★★	435i M Sport	155	5.5	13.2	5.2	6.3	2.7	302	295	28.2	28/37	1585	18.9.13

Make and Model	Top speed	0-60mph	0-100mph	30-70mph	50-70mph	Braking 60-0mph	Power (bhp)	Torque (lb/ft)	Mph/1000rpm	Mpg test/touring	Weight (kg)	TEST DATE
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M4	155	4.1	8.8	3.2	6.1	2.4	425	406	34.0	29/36	1585	9.7.14
5 Series 4dr saloon/5dr GT/5dr estate ★★★★★												
530d SE	155	6.4	16.1	5.4	*3.3	3.0	241	398	48.1	36/46	1830	31.3.10
ActiveHybrid5	155	5.6	13.5	5.0	10.5	2.6	335	332	40.4	27/33	1925	23.5.12
M5	155	4.3	9.0	3.6	6.4	2.8	552	502	38.2	19/28	1975	29.12.11
6 Series 2dr coupé/convertible ★★★★★												
640d M Sport	155	5.3	13.1	4.6	*2.7	2.6	309	464	42.1	33/45	1840	2.11.11
7 Series 4dr saloon ★★★★★												
730ld	153	6.4	17.1	6.0	8.2	3.1	261	457	50.2	40/49	1795	11.11.15
i3 5dr hatch ★★★★★												
1.3 Range Ext'd	93	8.1	-	7.6	*4.9	3.4	168	184	-	294wh/m	1390	22.1.14
i8 2dr coupé ★★★★★												
x1	155	4.5	10.6	3.7	3.3	2.8	357	420	33.3	50/40	1560	17.9.14
i1 5dr SUV ★★★★★												
xDrive20d xLine	136	8.2	24.2	8.0	11.8	2.8	187	295	35.1	43/49	1625	14.10.15
X3 5dr SUV ★★★★★												
xDrive20d SE	130	8.4	27.4	8.7	10.7	3.15	181	280	33.5	37/43	1825	12.1.11
X4 5dr SUV ★★★★★												
xDrive30d	145	5.9	16.9	5.8	11.1	2.6	255	416	43.7	34/45	1895	27.8.14
X5 5dr SUV ★★★★★												
xDrive M50d	155	5.7	15.3	5.2	9.5	2.9	376	546	40.5	28/34	2265	13.11.13
M	155	4.2	9.8	3.5	10.2	2.8	567	553	42.3	21/26	2350	13.5.15
x6 5dr SUV ★★★★★												
xDrive35d	147	7.3	21.2	7.1	*4.1	2.6	282	428	34.0	26/31	2275	11.6.08

BUGATTI

Veyron 2dr coupé ★★★★★	Super Sport	268	2.6	5.0	1.7	5.9	2.6	1183	1106	40.6	12/18	1995	2.3.11
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CATERHAM

Seven 2dr roadster ★★★★★	CSR 260	143	4.1	9.8	3.1	4.4	3.3	260	200	22.8	24/26	570	11.10.05
	160	100	8.4	-	8.7	7.6	4.8	80	79	16.7	39/45	490	20.11.13
	620S	145	3.8	9.2	3.2	5.7	2.7	310	219	21.2	25/29	610	9.3.16

CHEVROLET

Camaro 2dr coupé ★★★★★	6.2 V8	155	5.6	12.4	4.5	12.2	2.7	426	419	43.3	23/29	1175	20.6.12
Corvette 2dr coupé ★★★★★	Stingray	181	4.4	9.4	3.3	11.7	2.3	460	465	48.4	22/33	1539	8.10.14

CHRYSLER

300C 4dr saloon ★★★★★	3.0 Executive	144	7.3	21.1	7.5	*4.5	2.6	236	399	38.8	30/34	2040	29.8.12
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CITROEN

C3 5dr hatch ★★★★★	P'tech 110 Flair	117	9.6	36.6	9.4	10.5	2.6	108	151	27	47/62	1050	28.12.16
C4 5dr hatch ★★★★★	2.0 HDI Excl.	129	8.5	25.2	7.9	9.2	3.15	148	251	34.2	43/49	1470	5.1.11
C4 Cactus 5dr hatch ★★★★★	1.6 BlueHDi100	114	11.8	41.2	11.7	7.2	2.9	99	187	36.1	47/62	1225	16.7.14
C4 Grand Picasso 5dr MPV ★★★★★	2.0 BlueHdi	130	10.1	30.1	9.6	12.5	2.9	148	273	34.7	44/52	1430	27.11.13

DACIA

Sandero 5dr hatch ★★★★★	1.275 Access	97	15.3	-	17.6	23.0	3.0	74	79	20.3	32/38	941	27.2.13
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DS

3 5dr hatch ★★★★★	BlueHdi120	118	9.9	32.2	9.4	11.1	3.1	118	210	36.4	59/67	1150	23.3.16
4 Crossback 5dr hatch ★★★★★	BlueHdi120	117	12.0	48.8	12.3	18.0	2.9	118	221	36.7	49/50	1290	6.1.16
5 5dr hatch ★★★★★	2.0 HDi160	134	9.1	26.5	8.7	11.0	2.9	161	251	40.1	42/55	1660	18.4.12

FERRARI

488 GTB 2dr coupé ★★★★★	488 GTB	205	3.0	5.9	2.0	3.7	2.43	661	561	28.9	-/-	1525	25.5.16
F12 2dr coupé ★★★★★	F12 Berlinetta	211	3.0	6.5	2.3	5.4	2.2	731	509	29.7	13/18	1630	6.11.13

FIAT

Panda 5dr hatch ★★★★★													
1.2 Easy	102	14.6	-	15.3	19.9	3.0	68	75	22.2	39/49	1020	25.4.12	
4x4 TwinAir	103	14.6	-	15.8	16.0	3.0	84	107	20.8	37/44	1050	17.4.13	
500 3dr hatch ★★★★★													
Abarth 595	130	7.5	20.1	6.4	7.0	2.8	158	170	23.9	34/39	1035	26.2.14	
500 Twinair	108	11.7	-	13	15.3	3.3	84	107	22.9	35/39	1070	24.11.10	
500 T5dr hatch ★★★★★													
1.6MJetLounge	124	9.6	31.6	8.7	2.9	118	126	35.0	49/62	1295	2.11.16		
124 Spider 2dr roadster ★★★★★													
Lusso Plus	134	7.3	20.9	7.1	7.2	2.8	138	177	24.9	34/38	1050	28.9.16	

Make and Model	Top speed	0-60mph	0-100mph	30-70mph	50-70mph	Braking 60-0mph	Power (bhp)	Torque (lb/ft)	Mph/1000rpm	Mpg test/touring	Weight (kg)	TEST DATE
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NX 5dr SUV ★★★★★	300h	112	9.7	30.4	9.1	*5.6	2.7	194	na	-	32/38	1905	1.10.14
RC F 2dr coupé ★★★★★	RCF	168	4.8	10.7	3.9	12.9	2.9	471	391	39	24/28	1765	18.2.15

LOTUS													
Elise 2dr roadster ★★★★★	1.6	127	6.7	21.1	7.1	14.3	2.9	134	118	24.7	39/42	900	26.5.10
	Cup 250	154	4.7	11.9	4.5	7.2	2.5	243	184	24.7	27/32	920	29.6.16
Evora 2dr coupé ★★★★★	Evora S2+0	172	4.5	11.3	4.0	6.8	2.4	345	295	34.8	21/26	1430	30.3.11
Exige S 2dr ★★★★★	Exige S	170	4.1	9.6	3.7	5.5	2.5	345	295	27	21/30	1176	3.4.13

MASERATI													
GranTurismo 2dr coupé ★★★★★	4.2GT	177	5.6	13.0	4.9	*2.8	2.8	400	339	32.1	18/27	1975	2.2.08
GranCabrio 2dr cabriolet ★★★★★	4.7V8	175	5.1	11.9	4.5	11.2	2.4	433	362	32.1	17/22	2085	14.7.10
Ghibli 4dr saloon ★★★★★	Diesel	155	6.5	17.2	6.0	5.1	2.7	271	443	43.3	31/40	1835	12.3.14
Levante 5dr SUV ★★★★★	Diesel	143	6.8	19.9	6.9	4.3	3.4	271	443	46	26/42	2205	30.11.16

MAZDA															
2 5dr hatch	★★★★☆	1.5 Sky-V6 SE	114	10.4	38.0	7.0	20.2	3.1	89	109	27.9	51/55	1050	22.4.15	
3 5dr hatch	★★★★☆	2.2 SE-L	130	9.0	26.6	9.1	9.9	3.0	148	280	29.7	46/60	1470	4.12.13	
5 5dr MPV	★★★★☆	1.6D Sport	111	12.5	—	—	13.4	11.1	2.9	113	199	31.3	35/40	1555	16.2.11
6 4dr saloon/5dr estate	★★★★☆	2.2 Sport Nav	139	7.9	21.2	7.1	7.9	2.7	173	309	35	44/56	1480	23.1.13	
MX-5 2dr roadster	★★★★☆	1.5 SE-L Nav	127	8.4	24.8	7.9	14.7	3.3	129	111	24.5	46/49	1050	2.9.15	
CX-3 5dr SUV	★★★★☆	1.5D SE-L Nav	110	10.3	34.7	10.3	10.3	—	104	199	34.8	59/60	1275	22.7.15	
CX-5 5dr SUV	★★★★☆	2.2 Sport Nav	126	9.4	28.0	9.1	9.7	2.3	148	280	34.9	24/55	1575	13.6.12	

MCLAREN													
570S 2dr coupé ★★★★★	3.8V8	204	3.1	6.4	2.2	10.2	2.6	562	443	36.5	23/37	1440	30.3.16
650S 2dr coupé/roadster ★★★★★	3.8V8 Spider	204	3.2	6.3	2.2	5.9	2.5	641	500	35.4	18/24	1468	30.7.13
P1 2dr coupé ★★★★★	P1	217	2.8	5.2	2.2	6.0	2.3	903	664	36.0	19.6/-	-	7.5.14

MERCEDES-AMG													
C63 4dr saloon ★★★★★	C63	155	4.4	9.7	3.4	7.5	2.7	469	479	38.1	19/25	1715	3.6.15
C63S Vrtble ★★★★★	C63S Vrtble	155	4.6	10.2	3.4	7.1	2.7	503	516	35.6	21/27	1850	8.2.17
GT 2dr coupé ★★★★★	S	193	3.6	7.8	2.8	5.5	2.5	503	479	34.7	20/29	1715	29.7.15
SLC 2dr convertible ★★★★★	SLC 43	155	5.5	12.3	4.2	12.7	3.0	362	384	40.4	27/33	1595	6.7.16

MERCEDES-BENZ													
A-Class 5dr hatch ★★★★★													
A200 CDI Sport	130	8.9	28.3	9.0	10.1	2.5	134	221	37.1	48/58	1475	7.11.12	
A45 AMG	168	4.2	11.5	4.3	4.5	2.8	355	322	38.1	27/37	1555	14.8.13	
B-Class 5dr MPV ★★★★★													
B200 CDI Sport	130	9.4	28.8	9.6	11.9	2.7	134	221	37.8	20/52	1495	29.2.12	
C-Class 4dr saloon/5dr estate ★★★★★													
C220 Bluetec	145	8.1	22.9	8.1	11.7	2.8	168	295	42.4	41/51	1700	23.7.14	
CLA 4dr saloon/5dr estate ★★★★★													
220 CDI Sport	143	8.3	23.1	8.0	4.8	2.9	168	258	37.3	44/54	1525	26.6.13	
200 CDI S1'St's Brk134	10.1	29.7	9.6	11.9	3.4	134	221	33.5	53/59	1555	18.11.15		
E-Class 4dr saloon/5dr estate/2dr convertible ★★★★★													
E250 CDI auto	149	7.7	20.3	7.4	*4.4	2.9	201	367	34.8	36/42	1780	24.6.09	
CLS 4dr saloon/5dr estate ★★★★★													
350 CDI S1'Brake155	7.0	18.5	6.4	*3.8	2.9	261	457	39.6	36/43	1980	9.1.13		
S-Class 4dr saloon/2dr coupé ★★★★★													
S350 Bluetec	155	7.3	19.0	6.8	*3.9	2.7	255	457	45.6	34/44	1975	16.10.13	
S63 AMG coupé	155	4.5	9.6	3.4	6.8	2.7	577	664	42.8	22/25	2070	3.12.14	
GLA 5dr SUV ★★★★★													
220 CDI SE	134	8.1	23.8	7.8	4.7	2.65	168	258	36.4	40/48	1535	14.5.14	
GLC 5dr SUV ★★★★★													
GLC 250d	143	7.8	23.5	7.8	15.7	3.2	201	369	46.9	39/43	1845	10.2.16	
M-Class 5dr SUV ★★★★★													
ML 250	130	8.8	28.4	9.3	11.0	2.9	201	368	36.2	38/41	2310	2.5.12	
GL 5dr SUV ★★★★★													
GL350 AMG Spt	137	8.3	24.8	8.2	5.0*	2.6	255	457	37.7	28/33	2455	24.7.13	
SL 2dr convertible ★★★★★													
SL 500	155	4.3	9.9	3.6	6.5	2.7	429	516	39.6	10/24	1815	8.8.12	

MG													
3 5dr hatch ★★★★★	1.5 3Form Spt	108	11.4	41.5	11.6	19.6	2.8	105	101	22.2	37/41	1150	25.12.13
GS 5dr SUV ★★★★★	1.5 TGI Excite	118	8.9	25.5	8.3	12.4	2.8	164	184	29.3	29/38	1395	20.7.16

MINI													
Mini 3dr hatch ★★★★★	Cooper S	146	6.9	17.1	5.9	6.7	2.5	189	221	26.4	35/54	1235	2.4.14
Clubman 5dr hatch ★★★★★	Cooper D	132	8.6	25.9	8.2	10.0	2.9	148	243	34.9	51/52	1320	25.11.15
Convertible 2dr convertible ★★★★★	Cooper	129	9.2	25.4	8.8	12.4	2.7	134	162	31.0	46/53	1280	6.4.16
Counrtyman 5dr hatch ★★★★★	Cooper D	129	9.0	26.4	8.4	11.5	2.8	148	243	36.2	42/48	1480	22.2.17

MITSUBISHI													
ASX 5dr SUV ★★★★★	1.8 DID 3	124	10.0	28.8	10.1	8.6	2.8	148	221	29.6	49/57	1490	21.7.10
Outlander 5dr SUV ★★★★★	2.2 DID GX5	118	10.2	32.9	10.1	11.1	3.07	147	265	34.7	38/45	1675	27.3.13
	PHEV GX4hs	106	10.0	30.5	9.5	6.2	3.0	200	245	-	44/38	1810	16.4.14

MORGAN													
Plus 8 2dr roadster ★★★★★	4.8 V8	-	4.9	11.1	4.0	8.3	3.2	390	370	36.0	24/32	1230	22.8.12
3 Wheeler 2dr roadster ★★★★★	3 Wheeler	115	8.0	29.9	7.7	5.1	3.56	80	103	21.3	30/-	520	6.6.12

Make and Model	Top speed	0-60mph	0-100mph	30-70mph	50-70mph	Braking 60-0mph	Power (bhp)	Torque (lb/ft)	Mph/1000rpm	Mpg test/urban	Weight (kg)	TEST DATE
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NOBLE													
M600 2dr coupé ★★★★★	M600	225	3.5	6.8	2.5	4.7	2.45	650	604	29.9	18/25	1305	14.10.09

Leaf 5dr hatch ★★★★★														
Leaf	91	10.9	-	11.4	7.3	2.8	107	207	87.6	320Wh/m	1545	27.4/11		
Qashqai 5dr SUV ★★★★★														
1.5dCi 2WD	113	10.8	39.2	11.1	12.9	2.9	109	192	35.0	49/56	1365	19.2/14		
X-Trail 5dr SUV ★★★★★														
1.6dCi 2WD	117	11.2	39.7	11.7	12.3	3.0	128	236	32.8	42/48	1550	13.8/14		
GT-R 2dr coupé ★★★★★														
Recaro	196	3.4	7.8	2.7	5.3	2.7	562	470	28.0	22/31	1752	16.1/16		

PORSCHE													
Old Cayman 2dr coupé ★★★★★	G14	183	4.6	10.0	3.5	6.0	2.5	380	310	25.5	28/-	1340	23.9.15
718 2dr coupé/roadster ★★★★★	Boxster	171	5.4	12.2	4.3	5.2	2.5	296	280	25.8	26/36	1335	8.6.16
	Cayman S	177	4.8	10.5	3.9	4.8	2.5	345	310	25.8	28/29	1430	10.8.16
911 2dr coupé ★★★★★	GT3 RS	193	3.4	7.8	2.8	6.9	2.4	493	339	24.2	20/28	1495	19.8.15
New 911 2dr coupé ★★★★★	Carrera S	190	4.5	9.4	3.4	7.3	2.9	414	369	36.4	27/31	1535	20.1.16
918 Spyder 2dr coupé ★★★★★	4.6 V8	214	2.6	5.3	1.9	2.2	2.3	874	944	41.2	28/44	1740	22.10.14
Panamera 4dr saloon ★★★★★	4S Diesel	177	4.1	10.3	3.8	-	3.0	416	627	50.7	32/43	2050	1.2.17
Macan 5dr SUV ★★★★★	Turbo	165	4.7	11.8	4.3	7.9	2.4	394	406	35.7	22/31	2000	4.6.14

RADICAL													
SR3 SL 2dr roadster ★★★★★	SR3 SL	161	3.4	8.4	3.7	4.8	2.7	245	265	24.9	14/-	765	30.11.11

5008 5dr MPV ★★★★★													
1.6HDi110	114	13.0	22.0	13.2	9.8	3.1	107	192	28.1	20/48	1547	27.1/10	
PORSCHE													
Old Cayman 2dr coupé ★★★★★													
G14	183	4.6	10.0	3.5	6.0	2.5	380	310	25.5	28/-	1340	23.9/15	
718 2dr coupé/roadster ★★★★★													
Boxster	171	5.4	12.2	4.3	5.2	2.5	296	280	25.8	26/36	1335	8.6/16	

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STAR RATINGS EXPLAINED

- ☆☆☆☆☆ **0-20%** Inherently dangerous/unsafe. Tragically, irredeemably flawed.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ **20-35%** Appalling. Massively significant failings.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ **35-50%** Very poor. Fails to meet any accepted class boundaries.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ **50-60%** Poor. Within acceptable class boundaries in a few areas. Still not recommendable.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ **60-65%** Off the pace. Below average in nearly all areas.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ **75-70%** Acceptable. About average in key areas, but disappoints.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ **70-75%** Competent. Above average in some areas, average in others. Outstanding in none.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ **75-80%** Good. Competitive in key areas.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ **80-85%** Very good. Very competitive in key areas, competitive in secondary respects.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ **85-92%** Excellent. Near class leading in key areas, and in some ways outstanding.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ **>93%** Brilliant, unsurpassed. All but flawless.

ABARTH

595 3dr hatch £15,090-£21,640
Good value hot hatch and great fun to drive ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.4 T-Jet Competizione

595 Convertible 2dr open £17,090-£23,640
Open-top hot hatch has a softer ride than the tin-top car ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.4 T-Jet C Competizione

Biposto 695 3dr hatch £33,055
Fastest Abarth has merit as an entry-level track car, but a firm ride spoils its otherwise convincing dynamic ability on public roads ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.4 T-Jet

124 Spider 2dr open £29,565-£31,605
Only a mildly tuned upgrade of Fiat's standard car but it's a revelation, albeit one that comes with a hefty price tag ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.4T Multijet

ALFA ROMEO

Mito 3dr hatch £12,960-£20,500
Likeable hatch is well-equipped, good looking, cheap to run and practical, but dynamic flaws make it a class also-ran ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 0.9 TB Twinair 105 Progression

Giulietta 5dr hatch £18,700-£26,735
Long in the tooth, but styling and dynamic verve still have the power to seduce. Not rounded enough, nor quite expensive enough to the touch ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.4 TB Multiair 150 Super

Giulia 4dr saloon £29,180-£59,000
Alfa is taking the fight to the Germans with its good-looking saloon. Lacks the finesse of its rivals and is only available as an automatic. However the V6 Quadrifoglio is a compelling car ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.2d Multijet 180 Super

4C 2dr coupé/spider £52,505-£59,505
Flawed, but the best current Alfa by miles. Rewarding to drive, if not the last word in finesse ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.75T Spider

ALPINA

B3 4dr saloon/5dr estate £57,450-£58,950
Has fallen behind on the power stakes. Still a niche proposition ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: B3 Biturbo

B4 2dr saloon/convertible £58,950-£62,950
Less well-mannered than an M4. Better on the road than the track ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: B4 Biturbo

B5 4dr saloon £81,950
Huge pace and better suited to the autobahns than B-roads ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: B5 Biturbo

B6 2dr coupé/convertible £96,950-£113,613
A ballistic coupé and convertible, but more at home on the autobahns ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: B6 Biturbo

B7 4dr saloon £115,000-£123,782
A luxury saloon without a huge amount of power – an S-Class AMG challenger ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: B7 Biturbo LWB AWD

D3 4dr saloon/ 5dr estate £47,950-£49,950
An intoxicating mix of performance and fuel economy ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: D3 Biturbo

D4 2dr coupé/convertible £50,950-£54,950
Precise dynamics with added Alpina kudos and a great engine ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: D4 Biturbo

D5 4dr saloon/5dr estate £56,950-£59,950
A rapid, usable and cheaper alternative to an M5 ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: D5 Biturbo

XD3 5dr SUV £56,450
Hugely fast, capable and desirable. A triumph ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.0 XD3

ARIEL

Atom Odr open £30,572
Superbike-fast lightweight mentalist is as exhilarating as they come. Less usable than some but no less marvellous ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0i-VTEC 310

Nomad Odr open £na
If there were simply a list of our top five favourite cars, the Nomad might just top it. A revelation and a riot ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.4i-VTEC 235

ASTON MARTIN

Vantage 2dr coupé £88,747-£96,244
What the Vantage lacks in agility it makes up for with pomp, presence and grunty V8 power. V12 S version is very special ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 5.9 V12 S

Vantage Roadster 2dr open £97,744-£105,244
Drop-top suits the Vantage's relaxed nature ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 5.9 V12 S

DB9 2dr coupé £140,062-£165,949
As attractive-looking as ever but also showing its age. V12 is disarming; handling is equally so. A bit unrefined ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 5.9 V12 GT

DB9 Volante 2dr open £152,942
Open-top version of the handsome DB9 is just as charming ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 5.9 V12

DB11 2dr coupé £154,955-167,070
The stunning replacement for the attractive, if long in the tooth, DB9 ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 5.2 V12

Vanquish 2dr coupé £196,005-£199,000
Dazzling exterior beauty and a warm, expressive motive character are the big Aston's selling points. Plays the cruiser very well ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 5.9 V12

Vanquish Volante 2dr open £200,050-208,005
A dazzling cruiser at heart with infinite head room ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 5.9 V12

Rapide S 4dr saloon £150,749
There may not be room in the back for top hats, but the Rapide is the most elegant four-door sports car in the world ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 5.9 V12 S

AUDI

A1 3dr hatch £14,530-£25,600
Audi's answer to the Mini. Fun and refined ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.4 TFSI 150 S Line

A1 Sportback 5dr hatch £15,150-£26,335
Rear doors add convenience to an attractive package ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.4 TFSI 150 S Line

A3 3dr hatch £19,365-£33,840
Outstanding cabin quality, peppery engines and low costs of ownership make it eerily good for more disinterested drivers ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICKS: 2.0 TDI 150 Sport, 2.0 TSI 310 S3 quattro

A3 Sportback 5dr hatch £19,985-£35,930
All of the above but with five doors and a usefully larger boot ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICKS: 2.0 TDI 150 Sport, 2.0 TSI 310 S3 quattro

A3 Saloon 4dr saloon £24,235-£36,480
Undercuts the case to own an A4 very effectively indeed. Upmarket interior and unexpectedly good to drive – if a bit shy on space ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TDI 150 Sport

A3 Cabriolet 2dr open £26,875-£40,670
Compact, affordable, usable and refined, with strong performance and composed handling ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TDI 150 Sport

A4 4dr saloon £26,350-£44,000
High quality and competent; leaves dynamic finesse to its rivals ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TFSI 252 Sport quattro

A4 Avant 5dr estate £27,880-£45,400
Classy, demure and very tech savvy Audi estate ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TDI 190 Sport

A4 Allroad 5dr estate £37,725-£39,630
The classy and demure estate gets a rugged makeover making it a capable 4x4 A4 ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TDI 190

New A5 Coupé 2dr coupé £30,700-£4700
Refreshed A5 gets a sharper look and a refreshed interior and carries the fight to the 4 Series and C-Class coupé ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.0 TDI 286 S Line

A5 Coupé 2dr coupé £31,910-£44,870
Good-looking coupé is showing its age now ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TDI 190 S Line

A5 Sportback 5dr hatch £30,035-£44,070
Refined four-door coupé is short on charm and finesse ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TDI 190 S Line

A5 Cabriolet 2dr open £35,690-£47,045
No spring chicken but still appeals for its looks. Little more practical than smaller options. Lower-powered, steel-sprung trim is best ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.8 TFSI 177 S Line

A6 4dr saloon £32,995-£57,215
Perfect choice for anyone looking for a smart office cubicle on wheels. Supremely constructed but a bit soulless to drive ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.0 TDI 218 SE

A6 Avant 5dr estate £35,095-£86,420
A capable stress buster; BITDI engine is a giant-killer ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.0 BITDI 320 SE quattro

A6 Allroad 5dr estate £46,505-£56,480
Rugged 4x4 A6. Even more pricey ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.0 TDI 218 quattro

A7 Sportback 5dr hatch £46,865-£92,060
Curiously droopy looks don't flatter an otherwise impressive machine. Packed with gadgetry. Excellent engines; a bit remote to drive ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 4.0 TFSI 560 RS7 quattro

A8 4dr saloon £63,520-£99,265
Doesn't convince across the board, but there's no denying that the brand's strengths make for a convincing limousine ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 4.2 TDI 385 SE Exec quattro

Q2 5dr SUV £22,380-£32,720
Another small SUV from Audi, with the intention of being the stepping stone between the A3 and the SUV range ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.4 TFSI 150 S Line

Q3 5dr SUV £26,150-£49,185
Typically refined and competent but feels more A3 than SUV ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TDI 150 S Line

Q5 5dr SUV £33,710-£52,300
Appealing combination of Audi brand allure with affordable SUV practicality. Nothing special to drive ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TFSI 230 S Line quattro

Q7 5dr SUV £48,455-£70,970
Biggest Audi is typically remote and unengaging to drive but fast and light on its feet. Cabin is both huge and brilliantly classy ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.0 TDI 218 SE

TT 2dr coupé £27,585-£41,050
TT is still doing what it always did well: serving up plenty of pace, style and usability for the money. Now better to drive, too ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TFSI Sport

TT Roadster 2dr open £29,215-£42,800
Plenty of pace and driver reward, as well as Audi-brand prestige and design-icon style ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TFSI S Line



ALFA ROMEO 4C SPIDER
"Direct, communicative handling makes up for a disappointing paddleshift powertrain"
MORE AT AUTOCAR.CO.UK

R8 2dr coupé /spyder £119,520-£134,520
Usable but no less involving or dramatic for it. V10 is brutal ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 5.2 FSI 540 V10

BAC

Mono 2dr open £111,168
An F-22 Raptor for the road – only better built ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: Mono 2.3

BENTLEY

Continental GT 2dr coupé £140,355-£168,355
Audi-sourced V8 is so good that it completely reinvigorates the Conti. Cabin is as lavish and sumptuous as you'll find ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 4.0 V8 S

Continental GT Convertible 2dr open £154,455-£185,255
Lavish and sumptuous convertible ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 4.0 V8 S

Mulsanne 4dr saloon £229,415-£252,055
If the Phantom is best experienced from the back seat, the Mulsanne is best sampled from the front. Uniquely torquey, laid-back V8 ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 6.75 V8 Speed

Flying Spur 4dr saloon £142,855-£161,580
Undoubtedly luxurious and with a lovely interior, but misses the class mark on rolling refinement and tech sophistication ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 6.0 W12

Bentayga 4dr SUV £160,255-£229,555
Bentley's first attempt to crack the luxury SUV market ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 6.0 W12

BMW

1 Series 3dr hatch £20,875-£31,875
Strong on performance and economy but not as good as it could be ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: M140i

1 Series 5dr hatch £21,460-£32,405
Still looks clumsy from some angles, and not as fine-handling as the feeder BMW ought to be. Strong on performance and economy ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: M140i

2 Series Coupé 2dr coupé £23,040-£44,070
A proper compact coupé now. Could be better equipped ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: M2

2 Series Convertible 2dr open £26,730-£38,535
Better than 1-series forebear, but still lacks truly distinguishing premium-brand qualities ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: M240i

2 Series Active Tourer 5dr MPV £23,010-£34,405
BMW's front-drive hatch is a proper contender ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 220d Sport

2 Series Gran Tourer 5dr MPV £25,010-£34,770
Brings a proper premium brand to the table but appeals for more reasons than that. Third row seats are not adult-sized ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 220d Sport

3 Series 4dr saloon £25,160-£59,605
Beats the rival Jag XE on cabin space and engine range; doesn't quite measure up on handling finesse. Still a talent, mind you ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICKS: 320d M Sport, M3

3 Series Touring 5dr estate £26,590-£42,355
There are more practical estates on the market, but the 3 Series Touring's handling and performance make it one of the most enjoyable options ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 320d M Sport

3 Series GT 5dr hatch £30,405-£43,415
Hatchback practicality meets 3 Series talent. Duller but decent ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 320d M Sport



ARIEL NOMAD
'The distilled essence of what makes
a car fun — with added mud'
MORE AT AUTOCAR.CO.UK

4 Series 2dr coupé

£30,260-£60,065
More of a talented GT than brilliant B-road steer ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICKS: 420d M Sport, M4

4 Series Convertible 2dr open

£35,025-£63,360
Mixes creditable, sporting driving dynamics with fine engines and usable back seats. Balanced and complete ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICKS: 420d M Sport, M4

4 Series Gran Coupé 4dr saloon

£30,260-£45,745
A prettier 3 Series. Very good – but not better ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 420d M Sport

5 Series 4dr saloon

£33,380-£73,985
Performance, efficiency, handling, practicality, desirability and value rolled into one. Excellent ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICKS: 520d M Sport, M5

5 Series Touring 5dr estate

£35,620-£51,270
Excellent car made more practical. 520d is the best ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 520d M Sport

5 Series GT 5dr hatch

£49,475-£60,475
Fine cabin but only seats four. Poor ride and steering ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 520d M Sport

6 Series Coupé 2dr coupé

£59,535-£93,265
Munich's big GT comes in two-door, four-door and drop-top guises. All feel heavy and just a little bit ordinary to spend time in ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 640i SE

6 Series Gran Coupé 4dr saloon

£59,535-£95,665
Back doors prove to be a brilliant visual coup ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 640i SE

6 Series Convertible 2dr open

£65,435-£98,215
Great engines and interior. More GT than sports car ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 640i SE

7 Series 4dr saloon

£63,350-£80,330
Rules on in-car entertainment and diesel powertrain sophistication; otherwise too bland to stand out ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 730d M Sport

X1 5dr SUV

£27,440-£36,720
Pick of the premium brand bunch, but doesn't rule the class as BMWs do elsewhere. A bit unrefined and ordinary-handling ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: xDrive 20d M Sport

X3 5dr SUV

£33,945-£46,050
A close match for the Land Rover Discovery Sport and Jaguar F-Pace on practicality and on-road dynamism, with better engines and better equipment levels ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: xDrive 20d M Sport

X4 5dr SUV

£37,545-£50,645
A downsized X6 is respectable enough, but the cheaper X3 is a better option ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: xDrive 20d M Sport

X5 5dr SUV

£44,575-£90,200
Accomplished and luxurious but no longer the standard-setter on SUV handling. Comfortable and capable; avoid the blingy M50d ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: xDrive 30d SE

X6 5dr SUV

£56,515-£93,100
The world's first off-road coupé, but appearances make it difficult to love ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: X6M

i3 5dr hatch

£32,330-£35,480
Our favourite high-end small car of the moment happens to be an EV. With a generous budget and modest miles in mind, it could revolutionise your motoring ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: i3 94Ah EV Rex

i8 2dr coupé

£104,540-£112,535
If BMW's plug-in hybrid is what the future of the sports car looks like, we welcome it. A visual knock-out; not quite mind-blowing to drive – but close ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.5

CADILLAC

CT6 4dr saloon

£69,990
Sharp-looking big saloon is a replacement for the CTS, but still needs a diesel ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.0T V6 AWD Platinum

CTS-V 4dr saloon

£75,415
Supercharged Chevy V8 serves up 640bhp; eat your heart out, Germany. Handling lacks distinguishing finesse ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 6.2 V8

Escalade 5dr SUV

£81,380-£94,740
Cadillac's luxury SUV, but it remains large and ungainly. ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 6.2 V8 Premium AWD

CATERHAM

Seven 2dr open

£18,995-£49,995
360R is the sweet spot in the revised range, its remapped Duratec giving just the right hit of performance ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICKS: 0.7 160S, 2.0 360

CHEVROLET

Corvette 2dr coupé/convertible

£62,470-£93,240
LHD only and less usable and deft-handling than the class standard, but disarming and inimitable. Serious engine for the money ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 6.2 V8 Z06 3LZ

Camaro 2dr coupé/convertible

£31,755-£46,480
An affordable American muscle car, but LHD only and less usable and deft-handling than the class standard. Charming and fierce nonetheless ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 6.2 V8

CITROËN

C-Zero 5dr hatch

£16,995
Well-engineered electric city car. Too expensive ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 49kW

C1 3dr hatch

£8495-£11,925
Slightly better priced than its Toyota sibling but less visually charming ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 PureTech 82 Feel

C1 5dr hatch

£10,555-£12,775
As above but with rear doors ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 PureTech 82 Feel

C3 5dr hatch

£11,580-£17,565
Comfortable and well priced but not much fun ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 PureTech 82 Edition

C4 5dr hatch

£15,195-£20,850
Good looking but lacks the polish of the latest rivals ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 BlueHdi 100 Flair

C4 Cactus 5dr hatch

£12,990-£20,495
Interesting and novel but flawed to drive ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 PureTech 82 Flair

C3 Picasso 5dr MPV

£16,575-£18,640
Soft-handling, square, quirky. Not up to Citroën's latest standards on cabin finish or handling ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 BlueHdi 100 Edition

C4 Picasso 5dr MPV

£19,635-£27,660
Plushness and an improved dynamic make for a better car ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 BlueHdi 120 Exclusive S&S

Grand C4 Picasso 5dr MPV

£21,935-£29,360
Alternative approach to MPV design produces something fresh and

unusual, as well as comfy, spacious and quietly upmarket ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 BlueHdi 120 Exclusive S&S

Berlingo Multispace 5dr MPV

£13,995-£19,325
Likeable, practical van-based MPV ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 BlueHdi 100 Feel Edition S&S

DACIA

Duster 5dr SUV

£9495-£16,795
The value champion of the crossover world. Basic in entry-level trim, but if cheap family transport is what you need, the Duster provides it ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 16v 115 Ambiance Prime 2WD

Sandero 5dr hatch

£5995-£10095
A clever budget prospect, but its limitations are unavoidable ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 Ambiance Prime

Sandero Stepway 5dr hatch

£8495-£11,395
More expensive – but still limited ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 0.9 TCe Laureate

Logan MCV 5dr estate

£6995-£11,095
Lacks its stablemates' charm but retains their cheapness ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 Ambiance Prime

DS

3 3dr hatch

£14,395-£25,495
Premium-brand philosophy and adventurous aesthetics appeal, as do strong engines, but those more focused on dynamics will prefer the less expensive Mini Cooper ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 BlueHdi 100 Prestige S&S

3 CABRIOLET 2dr open

£18,595-£25,295
A zesty car that remains fun to drive despite removing its roof. Not as composed as some of its rivals ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 BlueHdi 100 Prestige S&S

4 5dr hatch

£20,045-£26,045
Jack of all trades, master of none. Nice styling ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 BlueHdi 120 Prestige

4 Crossback 5dr hatch

£22,295-£27,045
A more rugged form of the DS 4 doesn't make it any better ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 PureTech 130 S&S

5 5dr hatch

£27,950-£35,970
Design marvel. Shame it doesn't function so well ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 BlueHdi 150 Elegance

FERRARI

California 2dr open

£154,360
New turbocharged engine brings entry-level Ferrari heavy to a competitive mark. Heavy but slick and rewarding to drive ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.9 V8 T

488 GTB 2dr coupé

£182,864
Calm ride mixed with explosive performance ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 4.5 V8

488 Spider 2dr open

£204,391
The complete supercar. Minus roof. A world-class head-turner ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 4.5 V8

F12 Berlinetta 2dr coupé

£238,993
Thrilling like only a front-engined V12 Ferrari could be. Crushing performance and unparalleled drama, albeit highly strung ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 6.3 V12 tdf

GTCLusso 2dr coupé

£230,430
V12 Prancing Horse with four-wheel drive and four-wheel steer plus room for extra passengers. What's not to like? ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 6.3 V12

FIAT

500 3dr hatch

£11,050-£15,350
Super-desirable, super-cute city car. Pleasant, if not involving, to drive ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 0.9 Twinair 105 Lounge

500C 2dr open

£13,700-£19,830
Roll-top cabriolet is a better drive than the hatch ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 0.9 Twinair Lounge

500L 5dr MPV

£13,665-£22,465
A costly option but has the style to fill out some of its missing substance ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.3 Multijet Lounge

500L MPV 5dr MPV

£19,205-£21,705
Loses some of its charm as it gets bigger, but has seven-seats ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.3 Multijet Lounge

500X 5dr hatch

£14,295-£26,315
Familiar styling works rather well as a crossover. Drives okay, too ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.4 Multiair 140 Cross

Tipo 5dr hatch/estate

£12,995-£19,995
A 90s reboot, but without the flabby and uninspiring nature. The new Tipo is a decent car to drive and has ample space inside ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 0.9 Twinair Lounge

Panda 5dr hatch

£9510-£18,260
May not have quite kept pace with its rivals on equipment and value but still sells robust, practical charm better than most ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 0.9 Twinair Lounge

Punto 3dr hatch

£11,485-£13,260
Spacious and characterful supermini. Still heavily dated, though ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 Pop+

Qubo 5dr MPV

£11,695-£15,695
Fiat's take on a versatile van-based MPV ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.4 Active

Doblo 5dr MPV

£13,775-£19,940
Outdated MPV kept afloat by new engines ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.4 95 Easy Air

124 Spider 2dr open

£19,545-£23,295
The 124 name revived through a shared platform with Mazda ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.4 Multiair 140

FORD

KA+ 5dr hatch

£8995-£10,295
Besides the plus added to the name, the Ka gets two extra doors and signals a breath of fresh air for the range ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 Zetec

Fiesta 3dr hatch

£13,545-£22,895
No longer a class-beater in every regard, but so far ahead of the curve on ride and handling that it's unassailable ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICKS: 1.0T 100 Ecoboost Zetec, 1.6T Ecoboost ST-3

Fiesta 5dr hatch

£14,145-£18,495
As above, but even more useful with rear doors ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICKS: 1.0T 100 Ecoboost Zetec, 1.5 TDCi 75 Titanium

Focus 5dr hatch

£16,445-£31,250
Still appeals for its ride and handling, though not as much as perhaps it should. Spacious, stylish and well-priced. ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICKS: 1.0T 100 Ecoboost Style, 1.5 TDCi 120 Zetec

Focus Estate 5dr estate

£17,545-£29,245
Well-mannered and comfortable, but a Skoda Octavia carries more ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICKS: 1.0T 100 Ecoboost Style, 1.5 TDCi 120 Zetec

Mondeo 5dr hatch/saloon

£21,795-£32,745
Does what great Fords always have: massively over-delivers on practicality, value and handling. Cabin low-rent in places, but otherwise excellent ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0T Ecoboost 240

Mondeo Estate 5dr estate

£22,945-£30,360
A vast and enjoyable estate. Reasonably priced ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TDCi 180 Titanium

B-Max 5dr MPV

£15,345-£19,795
Liding back doors, responsive handling and keen value give supermini-sized B-Max some convincing selling points ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 105 Titanium X Powershift

AUTOCAR TOP FIVES COMPACT EXECs



1
Jaguar XE

Jaguar has made the XE class-leading the old-fashioned way. A steadfast focus on the driver makes it irresistible. ★★★★★

From £29,775



2
BMW 3 Series

Still one of the finest all-round prospects currently on sale and almost certainly the best 3 Series yet. Splendid. ★★★★★

From £25,160



3
Audi A4

Trails behind its rivals and is still ordinary to drive. But certainly a smarter and better way to travel than before. ★★★★★

From £26,350



4
Mercedes-Benz C-Class

Still doing things its own way. Has an upmarket and stately way of working itself under your skin. A clever car. ★★★★★

From £29,295



5
Audi A3 Saloon

Unexpectedly good to drive and with an upmarket cabin, this is a fine alternative to the A4 – if a bit shy on space. ★★★★★

From £24,235

C-Max 5dr MPV £19,195-£27,395
A fun to drive and easy to live with five-seat MPV ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6T 182 E'boost Titanium X SS

Grand C-Max 5dr MPV £21,295-£28,865
Mid-sized Ford handles well, and can be had in five- or seven-seat versions. Good value, good to drive ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TDCi150 Titanium

S-Max 5dr MPV £25,895-£37,045
Better looking and better to drive than most but not quite the class-leader its predecessor was ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TDCi150 Zetec

Galaxy 5dr MPV £27,845-£38,045
Huge seven-seat MPV. Easy to place on the road. Not cheap ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TDCi180 Titanium

Tourneo Connect 5dr MPV £16,545-£21,245
Ford's van-based MPV is practical and spacious ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.5 TDCi120 Zetec

Grand Tourneo Connect 5dr MPV £19,945-£23,495
Van-based seven-seater offers huge carrying capacity and better dynamic manners than you'd expect ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.5 TDCi120 Zetec

Tourneo Custom 5dr MPV £32,635-£36,950
A Ford Transit developed to haul people about ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TDCi130 Zetec L2

Ecosport 5dr hatch £15,045-£17,995
Pumped up Fiesta is okay, but developing-world origins show through ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.0T Ecoboost 125 Zetec

Edge 5dr SUV £29,995-£40,250
Mid-sized US-developed SUV joins Ford's fleet to take on the crossover market ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TDCi210 Sport AWD

Kuga 5dr SUV £20,845-£34,445
Bigger, bolder and sharper-looking than its predecessor but still in possession of taut, responsive handling. Not brilliant over rougher terrain ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TDCi150 Zetec

Ranger 5dr SUV £17,876-£27,776
Ford's UK pick-up gets a US-style facelift. A rugged beast ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.2 TDCi160 XL Double Cab

Mustang 2dr coupé/convertible £31,745-£40,745
American muscle built for the UK ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 5.0 V8 Fastback

GINETTA

G40 2dr coupé £29,950
A balanced, affordable and fine-looking thing. Closed cockpit is a nice touch; some of the finish not quite up to snuff ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: G40R

HONDA

Jazz 5dr hatch £13,495-£17,705
Not the most compact or vivacious car in the segment, but cleverly packaged. Handling decent; engines could be better ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.3i-VTEC SE Navi

Civic 5dr hatch £16,470-£32,300
Gets expensive if you want a high equipment level, but frugal diesel engine merits attention. Quirky but spacious with it ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICKS: 1.6i-DTEC Sport Navi, 2.0i-VTEC Turbo Type-R

Civic Tourer 5dr estate £18,585-£27,035
Versatile, comfortable and frugal; only its price marks its scorecard ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6i-DTEC SE Plus Navi

HR-V 5dr hatch £18,495-£26,055
Cleverly packaged and comfortable crossover. Bland performance and forgettable, though ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6i-DTEC SE Navi

CR-V 5dr SUV £22,755-£36,210
Tardis-like SUV stalwart has lots of space for five and a big boot. Frugal and easy to drive ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0i-VTEC SE Plus 2WD

HYUNDAI

i10 5dr hatch £8995-£13,045
Prioritises maturity over the liveliness of its forebear, but the resulting car is practical and well-priced ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.0 SE

i20 5dr hatch £10,995-£17,700
Appealing budget supermini combines decent performance and equipment with good practicality and low running costs ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 84 Premium SE

i20 COUPE 3dr hatch £13,025-£16,200
As above, in sleeper coupé form. Lacking dynamically ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 84 Sport

i30 5dr hatch £15,295-£23,105
As good as we've come to expect but not one inch better ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 CRDi110 SE Nav

i30 Tourer 5dr estate £16,995-£24,795
As good as we've come to expect and more practical ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 CRDi110 SE Nav

i40 4dr saloon £19,695-£27,595
Useful, inoffensive and well-priced. No fireworks here ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.7 CRDi141 SE Nav

i40 Tourer 5dr estate £20,945-£28,945
A practical estate but still rather dull and ordinary ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.7 CRDi141 SE Nav

Genesis 4dr saloon £50,705
Only available with a petrol V6 and only at close to £50k. Ambitious but quite a long way out of its depth ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.8 V6 GDi RWD

ix20 5dr hatch £14,145-£16,845
Usable high-roofed hatch is short on flair ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 CRDi115 SE

i800 MPV £24,845-£26,845
Van-based MPV is surprisingly decent and easy to drive. Lots of seats if you need 'em ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.5 CRDi136 SE

Tucson 5dr SUV £18,995-£32,700
Classy, roomy cabin and predictable handling. Very competitive ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 CRDi185 SE Nav 4WD

Santa Fe 5dr SUV £31,850-£38,295
Another big Korean with lots of space on offer for not a lot of cash. Slick, comfy and likeable, if a bit expensive to own ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.2 CRDi Premium 7st

INFINITI

Q30 5dr hatch £20,550-£32,330
Infiniti's first hatch uses a lot of the Mercedes A-Class blueprint ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.2d Premium Tech Auto

Q50 4dr saloon £29,320-£47,625
Credible compact saloon competitor with some novel touches ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.2d Premium Tech Auto

Q70 4dr saloon £33,750-£47,700
Big Infiniti has a spacious cabin but limited practicality in the broader sense. Daimler diesel engine is quite coarse and slow ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.2d Premium Tech

QX30 5dr hatch £29,490-£33,370
Infiniti's first hatchback gets a higher-riding, more rugged look ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.2d 7CT AWD Premium



MERCEDES-AMG A45 4MATIC
'Excellent for an energetic Sunday morning blast'
MORE AT AUTOCAR.CO.UK

QX50 5dr SUV £34,500-£42,600
Focused on-road SUV. Drives well; very little interior space ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.7 V6 QX GT

QX70 5dr SUV £43,770-£55,270
Big, powerful SUV. None of the finesse of the X5 or Land Rovers ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.7 V6 GT Premium

ISUZU

D-Max 4dr pick-up £17,942-£32,342
Impressive towing and payload ability; let down by agricultural engines ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.5d 4x4 Single Cab

JAGUAR

XE 4dr saloon £29,775-£44,995
Baby Jag tops the pile thanks to outstanding driver appeal. Poised and engaging but refined with it. Not as roomy as some ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.0i 340 S

XF 4dr saloon £32,300-£49,995
Outstanding ride and handling and a rich, pleasant cabin. Not as roomy as some; four-cylinder engines disappoint ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.0 V6 380 RWD Auto

XJ 4dr saloon £58,690-99,370
No one else mixes dynamism and refinement like Jaguar. It makes the XJ a rare blend – although not as spacious or cossetting as some ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 5.0 V8 XJR

F-Type 2dr coupé £51,775-£110,000
A full-blooded assault on Porsche's back yard, with noise, power and beauty. As characterful as any Jag, ever ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 5.0 V8 SVR AWD

F-Type Convertible 2dr open £57,260-£115,485
Serious money, but a serious car with a likeable wild side ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 5.0 V8 SVR AWD

F-Pace 5dr SUV £35,020-£52,300
Credible first SUV effort handles like a proper Jaguar. Deserves a better engine; ticks all the boxes for refinement, handling and ease of use ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.0d V6 300 S AWD Auto

JEEP

Renegade 5dr SUV £17,495-£28,595
Middle compact crossover with chunky looks but no obvious charm ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 Multijet II Longitude

Wrangler 3dr SUV £31,840-£36,435
Heavy-duty off-roader lacks on-road manners ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.6 V6 Rubicon

Wrangler 5dr SUV £33,510-£34,910
Heavy-duty and large off-roader is rather cumbersome ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.6 V6 Rubicon

Cherokee 5dr SUV £26,345-£40,150
Hamstrung by poor UK spec. Uninspiring, but roomy and practical ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0d Longitude+

Grand Cherokee 5dr SUV £45,050-£69,865
The best Jeep. Comfortable and well-equipped ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.0 V6 CRD Overland

KIA

Picanto 5dr hatch £8545-£12,595
Nice drive and cabin, but overshadowed now by rivals ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.0 SE
Rio 5dr hatch £10,945-£17,445
Looks great and is well-priced but nowhere near its European rivals ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.4 CRDi 3



BMW i3
'A city car of the future, built for today. Flawed – but inspired, too'
MORE AT AUTOCAR.CO.UK

Cee'd 5dr hatch £15,105-£23,610
Another looker from Schreyer but dynamically forgettable ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 CRDi134 GT-Line ISG

Cee'd Sportwagon 5dr estate £17,595-£23,430
Another looker, this time slightly bigger but also forgettable ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 CRDi134 GT-Line ISG

Procee'd 3dr hatch £17,495-£23,310
Slightly smaller and a more dynamic looker, but still not one to remember ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 CRDi134 GT-Line ISG

Soul 5dr hatch £12,805-£29,995
Looks divide opinion. Better value now, but still hardly the best option ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 CRDi Connect

Optima 4dr saloon £21,495-£33,995
Looks the part but is well off the European saloon pace ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.7 CRDi 21SG

Optima Sportwagon 5dr estate £22,295-£29,595
Looks the part but it's engine and finish are well off the European estate pace ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.7 CRDi 21SG

Venga 5dr MPV £11,995-£18,570
Versatile interior, but firm ride and high price disappoint ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 CRDi114 3 ISG

Carens 5dr MPV £18,195-£27,150
Nicely up to scratch now but no class leader. Good value, without feeling at all cheap or austere ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 CRDi114 3 ISG

Niro 5dr SUV £21,295-£26,995
Kia's first fully hybrid car launched in the UK is a solid attempt, but lacks the refinement of others on the market ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 GDi 2

Sportage 5dr SUV £18,000-£31,650
Good ride, handling and usability. Looks good and is decent value ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 CRDi134 GT-Line AWD

Sorento 5dr SUV £28,795-£40,950
Kia aims to move upmarket with this smart, nicely appointed seven-seater. Plenty of car for the money ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.2 CRDi KX-11SG

KTM

X-Bow Odr £57,345-£70,717
Eccentric looks, sharp handling Expensive ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TFSi RR

LAMBORGHINI

Huracán 2dr coupé/spyder £162,000-205,000
Junior Lambo mixes usability and drama skillfully. Chassis and steering need work, but two-wheel-drive LP 580-2 is the best one yet ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 5.2 V10 LP 580-2

Aventador 2dr coupé/spyder £260,040-£315,078
Big, hairy V12 Lambo has astonishing visuals and performance. Handling could be sweeter; oddly, roadster beats coupé in that respect ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 6.5 V12 LP750-£4

LAND ROVER

Range Rover Evoque Coupé 3dr SUV £33,000-£51,200
Dripping with desirability; poised and capable on road and off it. Not exactly practical, though ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 eD4 SE Tech 2WD

Range Rover Evoque 5dr SUV £35,000-£51,200
As above but slightly more practical ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 eD4 SE Tech 2WD

Range Rover Evoque Convertible 2dr open SUV £47,500-£52,400
Loses its roof but retains 4WD ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TD4 HSE Dyn Convertible

Discovery Sport 5dr SUV £31,095-£46,510
Seven seats, lots of space, fine on-road handling and Land Rover's usual off-road ability – plus new found desirability ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TD4 SE

Discovery 5dr SUV £47,505-£56,005
Beginning to look and feel like an outmoded hulk, but the Disco still handles well and could be all the car you'll ever need ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.0 SDV6 Landmark

Range Rover Sport 5dr SUV £59,700-96,900
Now bigger and better: a cut-price Range Rover rather than a jumped-up Discovery. Expensive to buy and run, but justifies it ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICKS: 3.0 SDV6 HSE Dynamic, 5.0 V8 SVR

Range Rover 5dr SUV £76,350-£166,400
Whether outside the Dorchester or atop Ben Nevis, the Range envelops you in a lavish, invincible sense of occasion ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 5.0 V8 Autobiography

LEXUS

CT 5dr hatch £21,245-£29,745
Hybrid-only hatchback has a pokey cabin and curiously mismatched motive character traits. Alternative but flawed – and pricey with it ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 200h F Sport

IS 4dr saloon £28,995-£36,750
Sleek junior exec, well made and interesting. Still a left-field choice ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 300h F Sport

GS 4dr saloon £33,495-£69,995
Restrictive engine range limits GS's appeal, but outstanding refinement and cabin quality make amends to a point ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 5.0 V8 F

LS 4dr saloon £99,995
Immutably built Lexus flagship is quiet and gadget-packed but not genuinely talented or special. Hybrid model worth relatively little on CO₂ tax ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 460 F-Sport

NX 5dr hatch £29,995-£42,995
Some good ideas but dramatically off the pace to drive ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 300h F Sport

RX 5dr SUV £39,995-£57,995
Low flexibility, but hybrid option makes a degree of economic sense ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 450h F Sport

RC 2dr coupé £34,995-£67,995
An also-ran in the segment, although the V8 RC-F packs plenty of alternative character and handles well enough ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 5.0 V8

LOTUS

Elise 2dr open £29,900-£45,600
If you want a delicate, vivid and unfettered drive, none does it better; if you want a daily driver, shop elsewhere. More powerful S worth the extra ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.8 250 Cup

Exige 2dr coupé £55,900
Sharp, uncompromising track car. Unforgiving on the road ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.5 V6 Sport 350

Evora 2dr coupé £72,000-£79,900
The ride and handling put nearly everything else in its shade. Shame the interior quality doesn't match the price ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.5 V6 GT4

3-Eleven Odr open £68,750-£97,083
Hardcore track car has a broad

enough talent to be driven on the road ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.5 V6 410 Road

MASERATI

Ghibli 4dr saloon £49,860-£65,325
Bologna's attempt at an exotic saloon has a certain allure – but it's pricey, under-powered and poorly finished in places ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.0 V6 S
GranTurismo 2dr coupé £82,910-£119,485
Not short on richness or desirability, and well capable of stirring the soul. Material quality and fit and finish not what it should be, though ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 4.7 V8 Sport

GranCabrio 2dr open £98,970-£125,675
Fantastic looks and soundtrack, average chassis ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 4.7 V8 Sport

Quattroporte 4dr saloon £70,510-£115,980
Now a full-sized executive limo, with some (but not much) added Maserati-brand flair. Off the pace in several key areas ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.8 V8 GTs

Levante 4dr SUV £54,335
Italian flair and good looks applied to an SUV body ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.0D V6

MAZDA

2 5dr hatch £12,195-£17,395
A very grown-up and well-made supermini. Drives with charm and vigour; engines aren't brilliant ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.5 90 Sport

3 5dr hatch £17,095-£23,995
Uncomplicated handling dynamism teamed with strong practicality and punchy, efficient diesel engines. Too sporty for some tastes ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 165 Sport Nav

3 Fastback 4dr saloon £17,395-£22,795
Refined and dynamically satisfying in saloon body style ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 120 Sport Nav

6 4dr saloon £19,795-£27,995
A compelling mix of size, economy and performance. Interior a let-down ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 165 Sport Nav

6 Tourer 5dr estate £22,425-£28,895
Attractively styled but average to drive ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.2D 150 Sport Nav

CX-3 5dr SUV £17,595-£24,695
Another supermini SUV with a sporting bent. Petrol models much better than diesel. Both quite pricey but nicely appointed ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 120 Sport Nav

CX-5 5dr SUV £23,195-£30,995
Offers powerful diesel engines and strong performance mixed with low emissions. Crisp handling ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.2D 150 Sport Nav

CX-5 2dr open £18,495-£23,695
Brilliantly packaged, brilliantly priced and even more vibrant and perfectly poised to drive than the original. The 2.0 is worth the extra outlay ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0i Sport Nav

MCLAREN

540C 2dr coupé £126,055
The affordable end of McLaren's spectrum ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.8 V8

570S 2dr coupé £143,305
A supercar-slayer for a new age. Blisteringly fast and exciting, with handling appeal far in advance of its price ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.8 V8

570GT 2dr coupé £154,000
A supercar-slayer for a new age with added touring ability. Blisteringly fast and exciting ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.8 V8

650S 2dr coupé £198,055
McLaren's mainstay goes from convincing to utterly compelling. Better day to day than a Ferrari 488 but not as special ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.8 V8

650S SPIDER 2dr open £218,305
More of the same although noisier

—and better for it ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 3.8 V8

MERCEDES-BENZ

A-Class 5dr hatch

£19,990-£40,695

We're warming to it, but the sportier trim levels should be avoided. Desirable and attractive but lacking a distinguishing drive ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICKS: A 200 d SE, A 45 AMG 4MATIC

B-Class 5dr hatch

£22,170-£32,965

A slightly odd prospect, but practical and classy ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: B 200 d SE

CLA 4dr saloon

£25,395-£43,515

Facelifted CLA still suffers from divisive styling ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: CLA 200 d Sport

CLA Shooting Brake 5dr estate

£26,375-£44,365

Facelifted and equally appealing ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: CLA 250 AMG 4Matic

C-Class 4dr saloon

£29,295-£67,450

Merc ramps up the richness with outstanding interior plushness and curvaceous good looks. Engines and dynamics not quite as refined, though ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICKS: C220 d SE, C63 AMG

C-Class Estate 5dr estate

£29,495-£68,650

Decent practicality and fantastic interior. Only okay to drive ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICKS: C220 d SE, C63 AMG

C-Class Coupé 2dr coupé

£31,585-£77,540

Nice balance of style, usability and driver reward ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICKS: C200 d Sport, C63 AMG

C-Class Cabriolet 2dr open

£36,200-£78,295

Nice balance of style, usability and driver reward ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICKS: C220 d Sport, C63 AMG

CLS 4dr saloon

£47,000-£87,025

Original added-desirability four-door. Almost as refined to drive as it is to behold. Shooting Brake is a car of rare elegance ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: CLS 63 AMG S

CLS Shooting Brake 5dr estate

£48,580-£87,525

Handsome and practical estate ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: CLS 63 S AMG

E-Class 4dr saloon/5dr estate

£34,440-£55,695

A wee bit pricey, and less sporting than key rivals. Four-pot diesels a bit sluggish. Estate version supremely practical ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICKS: E350 d SE, E63 S AMG

E-Class Coupé 2dr coupé

£38,635-£46,430

Big, laid-back, genuine four-seat cabrios are rare birds, particularly when they're as refined and sophisticated as this one ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: E400 AMG Line Edition

E-Class Cabriolet 2dr open

£42,045-£49,800

Refined and sophisticated four-seat cabriolet ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: E200 AMG Line Edition

S-Class 4dr saloon

£72,900-£183,560

So long in the legs that continents flash by mid-stride. Has a business-like opulence. Still the best luxury car in the real world. Calm, advanced, rewarding ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: S500 AMG Line L

S-Class Coupé 2dr coupé

£98,050-£185,480

Heavyweight contender. Continent-smothering luxury ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: S63 AMG

S-Class Cabriolet 2dr open

£110,120-£192,805

As above, with the option to open it up to the elements ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: S63 AMG

V-Class 5dr MPV

£45,490-£52,335

Expensively appointed mini bus – with matching price tag ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: V220 d Sport

GLA 5dr SUV

£25,260-£45,555

Not the most practical crossover but good looking and very decent to drive ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: GLA200 AMG Line

GLC 5dr SUV

£35,580-£47,875

Not exactly exciting to drive, but does luxury and refinement better than anything else in the class ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: GLC250d AMG Line

GLC Coupé 5dr SUV

£40,580-£43,245

A SUV with coupé looks. Destined to be outrun by the X4 and only available with a diesel engine ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: GLC250d AMG

GLE 5dr SUV

£50,075-£95,215

The ML replacement isn't inspiring to drive but it has a classy interior ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: GLE250d AMG Line

GLE Coupé 5dr SUV

£61,350-£97,235

A SUV with coupé looks. Destined to be outrun by the X6 ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: GLE450 AMG

G-CLASS 5dr SUV

£88,800-£150,975

Massively expensive and compromised, but with character to spare ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: G63 AMG

GLS 5dr SUV

£69,110-£102,350

The impending replacement for the GL-Class ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: GLS350d AMG Line

SLC 2dr open

£30,495-£46,360

Another small convertible edition with all the Mercedes charm ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: SLC300 AMG Line

SL 2dr open

£73,810-£173,315

Big, luxurious drop-top is classier than a royal stud farm. Few cruisers feel more special for the money ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: SL400 AMG Line

AMG GT 2dr coupé

£98,915-£111,495

Million-dollar looks and a railgun V8, but uncompromisingly firm chassis undermines its every-occasion, any-road usability ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 4.0 V8

MG

3 5dr hatch

£8399-10,499

Neatly tuned and nice sporty style. Breaks the mould of sub-£9000 superminis ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.5 3Form

GS 5dr SUV

£14,995-£19,495

MG's first attempt at a small SUV is an attempt to re-establish the brand ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.5 TGI Explore

MINI

3DR Hatch 3dr hatch

£14,075-£23,155

Three-pot engines and cleverly redesigned interior make the Mini a superb choice. Pricey to buy but worth the money ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICKS: 1.5 Cooper, 2.0 John Cooper Works

5DR Hatch 5dr hatch

£14,675-£22,575

Mini charm in a more usable package, but still not as practical as rivals ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.5 Cooper

Convertible 2dr open

£18,615-£26,635

Open-top fun but compromised on practicality and dynamics ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.5 Cooper

Clubman 5dr hatchback

£21,375-£29,345

Cheery and alternative Mini 'six-door' takes the brand into mainstream territory. Not as rounded as some, but usable and likeable nonetheless ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.5 Cooper



ROLLS-ROYCE WRAITH
 'Most driver-focused Rolls in history
 is a triumph of genteel good fun'
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Countryman 5dr SUV

£17,125-£29,010

Big, but still more funky than useful ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 JCW

Paceman 3dr coupé

£19,125-£29,600

Two-door Countryman is a Mini too far for us. Tough to like ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 Cooper S

MITSUBISHI

Mirage 5dr hatch

£11,499-£13,499

Straightforward hatchback. Not for the likes of us ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 MIVEC Juro

ASX 5dr hatch

£15,249-£28,399

Decent engine, but otherwise an unexceptional crossover ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 MIVEC ZC-M 2WD Leather

Shogun 5DR 4x4

£29,634-£40,299

Has its appeal. Needs more chassis finesse, but still charming ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 3.2 Di-DC SG2 SWB Barbarian

Outlander 5dr SUV

£24,799-£45,499

Creditable effort from Japan's SUV specialists offers a lot for the money. Still feels cheap in places: PHEV a boon for fleet users ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 PHEV GX3h+ £35249

L200 5dr 4x4

£20,998-£30,238

L200 pick-up is a practical, efficient and muscular workhorse ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.5D Series 4 4Life Single

MORGAN

3-Wheeler 0dr open

£31,140-£34,955

The eccentric, characterful and deftly brilliant Morgan is a three-wheeled testament to English creativity ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.9 115 Sport

4-4 2dr open

£29,995

Has its appeal, but not as rewarding to drive as it could be ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.6

Plus 4 2dr open

£38,100-£43,200

Needs more chassis finesse, but the Plus 4 charms nonetheless ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 2 Seater

Roadster 2dr open

£48,000-£55,140

More advanced, but pricey and needs better brakes ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 3.7 V6

Plus 8 2dr open

£73,494

Old V8 charm lives on, but there's no ignoring the high price ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 4.8 V8

NISSAN

Micra 5dr hatch

£7995-£13,455

Running costs are low, but it's below average overall ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 n-tec

Note 5dr hatch

£10,995-£17,895

It lacks a bit of verve, but objectively the Note is entirely fit for purpose ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 DIG-S Acenta

Pulsar 5dr hatch

£13,995-£23,015

Undeniably fit for purpose, but its appeal goes no deeper than that ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 DIG-S Acenta

Leaf 5dr hatch

£26,180-£31,880

Comfortable and still the cheapest way into the EV world ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 24kW Acenta

Juke 5dr hatch

£14,320-£24,610

High-riding, funky hatch is a compelling package. High CO₂ figures ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 DIG-T 190 Tekna

Qashqai 5dr hatch

£18,545-£27,310

The defining crossover. Second-gen model better all round, notably efficiency, space and refinement ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 dCi 130 N-Connecta

X-Trail 5dr SUV

£21,995-£32,110

There aren't many cheaper routes into a seven-seat SUV. Bit of a lightweight on power and 4x4 capability, though ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 dCi n-tec 2WD

NV200 Combi MPV

£20,297-£21,067

Van-based multi-seat vehicle is flexible and economical ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.5 dCi 90 Acenta 7st

E-NV200 Evalia MPV

£28,527-£31,869

Battery-powered people-mover is world's first seven-seat EV MPV ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 80kW Tekna Rapid

Navara NP300 5dr 4x4

£23,635-£31,845

A tough pick-up happy both on the road and off it ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.3 dCi 160 Acenta King Cab

370Z 2dr coupé

£27,860-£38,050

Old-school, profoundly mechanical and quite hairy-chested. An Austin Healey 3000 for our age – but meaner ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 3.7 V6 Nismo

GT-R 2dr coupé

£79,995-£91,995

The monstrously fast Nissan has been tweaked and sharpened to close the gap on charismatic rival in the market ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 3.8 Track Edition

AUTOCAR TOP FIVES SUPERMINIS



Ford Fiesta From £13,545
Not a class-beater in every regard, but its dynamics are so far ahead of the curve that it's currently unassailable. ★★★★★



Mini From £14,075
Three-pot engines and cleverly recycled interior make the Mini a superb choice. Second to Fiesta on value, though. ★★★★★



Mazda 2 From £12,195
A very grown-up and well-made supermini. Drives with real charm, too. Engine not quite so appealing. ★★★★★



Volkswagen Polo From 12,155
Still the sensible choice in a lot of ways: usable, refined, easy-going, desirable and very solidly built. ★★★★★



Renault Clio From £11,815
An attractive and practical proposition and still pleasingly French. Ride and handling great, interior less so. ★★★★★

facelift. Good value ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 BlueHdi 120 Allure

5008 5dr MPV £23,130-£27,030
Another mid-sized five-plus-two-seater. The 5008 feels its age but still offers a slicker and more engaging drive than many ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 BlueHdi 120 Allure

Partner Tepee 5dr MPV £15,645-£20,030
Likeable, practical van-based MPV ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 BlueHdi 100 Active

RCZ 2dr coupé £24,200-£27,500
Classy, interesting, fun coupé. Peugeot has got its mojo back ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 HDi 163 GT

PORSCHE

718 Boxster 2dr open £41,739-£52,617
Our idea of drop-top perfection is also an outstanding sporting two-seater. Exceptional to drive, whether cruising or hurrying ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 718

718 Cayman 2dr coupé £39,878-£50,756
Scalpel-blade incisiveness, supreme balance and outstanding driver involvement. Very practical too – for a two-seater ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 718

911 2dr coupé £76,412-£145,773
Delivered on the eve of a sixth decade, the 911 is as brilliant and distinctive as any before it. Still more than worthy of its iconic status ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: Carrera S

911 Cabriolet 2dr open £85,253-£154,614
The best Porsche doesn't lose any of its charm without its roof ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: Carrera S

Panamera 5dr hatch £79,715-£113,075
Technically brilliant but lacking a bit of soul and visual allure. V6 diesel is an outstanding long-distance car ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 4.8 V8 Turbo PDK

Macan SUV £43,553-£68,073
Spookily good handling. A sports utility vehicle in the purest sense ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.6 V6 Turbo PDK

Cayenne 5dr SUV £52,689-£119,720
Agile, capable, desirable. V8 diesel makes the line-up more varied. Not as practical as some, but a classy cabin and mostly good fun ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 4.2 V8 S Diesel

PROTON

Savvy 5dr hatch £7995
Compromise in quality isn't worth the saving ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 Style

Satria Neo 3dr hatch £8495-£9495
Best Proton yet but still unjustifiable ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 GSX

Gen-2 5dr hatch £19195-£11,195
Hugely disappointing ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.3 GLS

RADICAL

SR3 2dr open £58,200-£66,958
Spectacular on the track; not so good on the way home ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: RSX

RXC 2dr coupé £94,500-£117,500
Designed for pounding around a track. Not for the open road ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 3.7 V6

RENAULT

Twizy 2dr hatch £6895-7795
Zany solution to personal mobility. Suitably irreverent and impractical ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: EV Dynamique

Zoe 5dr hatch £17,795-£20,245
Far more practical zero-emission solution. Attractive price ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: Dynamique Nav

Twingo 5dr hatch £9545-£13,595
Handsome, unusual rear-engined city car – but not the class leader ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 0.9 TCe 90 Dynamique Energy



RANGE ROVER SPORT SVR
'A contentious five-star car. Power and absurd peacock pomp are the kickers'
MORE AT AUTOCAR.CO.UK

Clio 5dr hatch £11,815-£22,425
An attractive, stylish and fairly practical proposition that does the French tradition credit. Fluent handling; cabin cheap in places ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: Renault Sport 220 Trophy

Captur 5dr hatch £14,745-£21,885
Jacked-up Clio is among the better downsized options. Cabin space and value better than the class norm. Stylish and fluent-riding ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.5 dCi 110 Signature Nav

Megane 5dr hatch £16,950-£25,850
Stylish and refined but bland. Nothing exceptional ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 TCe 115 GT Line Nav

Kadjar 5dr SUV £18,795-£28,495
Fine value, good cabin space, decent to drive and fine-looking. Not quite as classy as its Nissan sibling, but not far away ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 dCi 130 Signature Nav 2WD

ROLLS-ROYCE

Wraith 2dr coupé £237,471-£278,223
An intimate, involving Rolls-Royce. Less grand than its rangemates, but often in the measures that make it great in other ways ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 6.6 V12

Dawn 2dr open £264,055
Essentially as above, but de-tuned and in an elegant convertible form. ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 6.6 V12

Ghost 4dr saloon £224,943-£260,823
'Affordable' Rolls is a more modern, driver-focused car than its bigger brother. Still hugely special. Ride just a little bit unsettled at times ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 6.6 V12

Phantom 4dr saloon £320,175-£373,743
BMW built a sublime Rolls-Royce when it took over in 1998. Still the greatest and most aristocratic limo money can buy ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 6.8 V12

Phantom Coupé 2dr coupé £349,311
Luxury in abundance, but in a sportier form ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 6.8 V12

Phantom Drophead Coupé 2dr open £369,687
Extreme luxury with a removable roof ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 6.8 V12

SEAT

Mii 3dr hatch £8440-£11,265
Not as desirable or plush inside as the Up, but damn near as good to drive – and well-priced with it ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.0 60 SE Technology

Mii 5dr hatch £8795-£11,995
As above, but in more usable five-door form ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.0 60 SE Technology

Ibiza SC 3dr hatch £10,000-£18,900
A sharp-looking coupé that handles well. Cupra version is a riot. ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 TSI 110 FR

Ibiza 5dr hatch £12,210-£15,735
Sharp-looking five-door hatch lacks the verve of the Ford Fiesta ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 TSI 110 FR

Ibiza ST 5dr estate £12,910-£18,035
Rivals are more practical, but that doesn't impact on its fun nature ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.4 TDI 105 FR

Leon SC 3dr hatch £17,400-£31,485
As ever, a Golf in cut-price Spanish clothing – except slightly crisper-looking and better-handling. Worth considering ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TSI 290 Cupra

Leon 5dr hatch £18,230-£31,790
Ditto above, but here in five-door form ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TSI 290 Cupra

Leon ST 5dr estate £19,225-£32,785
Good-looking and responsive hatchback-turned-estate ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TSI 290 Cupra

Toledo 5dr hatch £17,195-£19,995
Makes practical sense but leaves no other lasting impression ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 TDI 115 Style

Alhambra 5dr MPV £24,885-£36,130
A cheaper, plainer and less desirable sister for the VW Sharan. Spacious, versatile and decent to drive ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TDI 150 SE Ecomotive

Ateca 5dr SUV £17,990-£29,990
Seat's first attempt to take on the SUV market – and it's good ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 TDI 115 SE Ecomotive

SKODA

Citigo 3dr hatch £8275-£10,770
Czech take on the city car is more plain than some but well finished and strong to drive ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.0 60 SE

Citigo 5dr hatch £8625-£11,120
As above, with added rear-door practicality ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.0 60 SE

Fabia 5dr hatch £10,750-£18,025
A touch derivative design-wise, and no class-leader on handling or cabin space, but strong claims everywhere else ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 TSI 110 SE

Fabia 5dr estate £12,630-£18,910
A touch derivative design-wise, and no class-leader on handling or cabin space, but strong claims everywhere else ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 TSI 110 SE

Rapid 5dr saloon £16,505-£19,110
Essentially a Fabia in saloon form, so likeable if slightly dull ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 TSI 110 SE

Rapid Spaceback 5dr estate £13,675-£18,520
Estate shape makes most sense of Rapid's skinny body ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 TSI 110 SE Sport

Octavia 5dr hatch £16,660-£27,990
Almost too big to qualify as a hatchback, the Octavia does comfort and practicality like no other. Good engines, too ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICKS: 2.0 TDI 150 SE L, 2.0 TSI 230 vRS

Octavia Estate 5dr estate £17,880-£29,410
Class-leading amount of space and practicality. Comfortable, too ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICKS: 2.0 TDI 150 SE L, 2.0 TSI 230 vRS

Superb 4dr saloon £19,060-£34,305
Another commendable Czech value option big on quality and space, small on price ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TSI 220 SE L DSG

Superb Estate 5dr estate £20,260-£35,505
Even more commendable than above thanks to huge estate boot ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TSI 220 SE L DSG

Yeti 5dr SUV £17,210-£27,545
One of the first to successfully miniaturise the crossover formula. Spacious, useful, unpretentious and genuinely cheery ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TDI 110 SE

SMART

Fortwo 3dr hatch £11,125-£13,810
Pricy two-seater has lots of urban appeal but out of town performance and handling isn't as rounded as others ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 0.9 Proxy

Fortwo Convertible 2dr open £13,265-£15,950
A similar story in open-top form as for the hatch ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 0.9 Proxy

Forfour 5dr hatch £11,620-£14,930
Four doors gives the Smart more mainstream practicality. Still expensive, though ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 0.9 Proxy

SSANGYONG

Tivoli 5dr hatch £12,950-£19,500
Trails the Duster as the best-value small crossover – but not by much ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6d EX

Tivoli XLV 5dr hatch £18,250-£20,500
Tivoli on steroids – grown in size for more practicality and is joined by a range of personalisation options ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6d 4x4

Korando 5dr hatch £15,995-£22,495
Good for a Ssangyong, poor by class standards ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.2d EX 2WD

Korando Sports 4dr pick-up £17,337-£22,977
A rugged-looking pick-up, but lacks all of the finesse shown by its nearest rivals ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0d EX 4WD

Rexton W 5dr SUV £22,995-£28,995
Rugged seven-seater makes short work of mud. Asphalt more tricky ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.2d EX

Turismo 5dr MPV £18,995-£24,995
Incredibly ungainly but offers huge real estate for the money ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.2d EX

SUBARU

Impreza 4dr hatchback £17,495
Appealing hatchback, but feels a tad old-fashioned ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6i RC

WRX STI 4dr saloon £28,995
Appealing and behind the times all at once ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.5 STI

XV 5dr SUV £21,995-£26,995
No-nonsense crossover doesn't quite make enough sense ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0D SE

Levorg 5dr estate £27,495
Impressively practical but only available with an auto 'box and one trim ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6i GT Auto AWD

Forester 5dr SUV £25,495-£30,995
Solid, spacious and wilfully unsexy ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0i XE

Outback 5dr estate £27,995-£31,495
Acceptable in isolation but no benchmark ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.5i SE Lineartronic

BRZ 2dr coupé £22,495-£25,495
The GT-86's half brother looks just as good in Subaru blue. Cheaper, too ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 2.0i SE

SUZUKI

Celerio 5dr hatch £6999-9799
Pleasing to drive, cheap to buy and decent to sit in, the Celerio is a no-nonsense option – and very likeable for it ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.0 Dualjet S23

Swift 3dr hatch £8999-£14,149
Cute looks and rewarding handling. Sport is excellent fun ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 Sport

Swift 5dr hatch £9499-£14,649
Cute looks and rewarding handling, even in this more practical form ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 Sport

Baleno 5dr hatch £13,249-£15,599
Suzuki's family-sized hatchback makes use of clever little engines ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.2 Dualjet S25
Jimny 3dr 4x4 £12,499-£15,279
The smallest four-wheel-drive Suzuki is looking dated ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.3 SZ4

Vitara 5dr SUV £14,499-£22,849
Utterly worthy addition to the class; drives better than most ★★★★★
TESTERS' PICK: 1.4 B'jet S Allgrip

SX4 S-Cross 5dr SUV
£14,999-£24,349

Not a class leader, but a very worthy crossover. Refreshed look gives it a new lease of life ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 SZ-T Allrip
TESLA
Model S 5dr hatch
£53,880-£114,580

Genuine 300-mile range doesn't just make the Model S a standout electric car: it feels like the future of luxury motoring ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: P90D AWD
Model X 5dr SUV
£64,480-£117,580

Genuine 300-mile range doesn't just make the Model X a standout electric car: it's a luxury seven-seater with falcon doors ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 90D AWD
TOYOTA
Aygo 3dr hatch £9135-£13,245

Impactful styling does a lot to recommend it. Strong on infotainment but not as refined or practical as some ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.0 x-pression
Aygo 5dr hatch £9535-£14,345

As above, but with rear doors ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.0 x-pression
Yaris 3dr hatch £11,750-£13,920

Good space and value but not a class leader ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.0 VVT-i Icon
Yaris 5dr hatch £12,350-£18,095

Stylish interior but ultimately a scaled-down version of bigger Toyotas ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.33 VVT-i Icon
£14265
Auris 5dr hatch £16,390-£25,140

Disappointingly average. There are many better rivals ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.2T VVT-i Design
Auris Touring Sports 5dr estate
£17,490-£26,240

Nothing wrong, but nothing exceptional ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.2T VVT-i Design
Prius 5dr hatch £23,600-£27,355

Better all-round compared to its predecessors ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.8 VVT-i Business Edition
Prius Plug-In 5dr hatch £33,450

Plug-in hybrid Prius is clever and appealing in its own right ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.8 VVT-i Plug-In
Prius+ 5dr MPV £27,050-£31,300

Expensive and ugly. Bigger though ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.8 VVT-i Excel
Avensis 4dr saloon £19,300-£27,085

Nothing wrong, but nothing exceptional. Good spec ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.8 V-matic Business Edition
Avensis 5dr estate £20,480-£28,890

Good spec but an unexceptional estate otherwise ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.8 V-matic Business Edition
Verso 5dr MPV £18,925-£26,095

One of Toyota's better niche models is unburdened by a hybrid powertrain and offers decent space, a respectable drive and a keen price ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 V-matic Icon 7seats
Proace Verso 5dr MPV
£26,050-£35,400

One of Toyota's niche models is unburdened by a hybrid powertrain and provides decent competition to the Vivaro and Transit equivalents ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0D 180 Family Compact
C-HR 5dr SUV £20,995-£27,995

Coupé-shaped crossover aims to bring the fight to Nissan and the Juke. Thus far it seems to hit the right notes ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.8 Hybrid Excel
RAV4 5dr SUV £23,755-£32,975

A solid option, but ultimately outgunned by Korean competition ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 D-4D Icon
Land Cruiser 5dr 4x4
£36,465-£55,465

A real go-anywhere vehicle. Available with seven-seats ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.8 D-4D Active
Hilux 5dr 4x4 £22,955-£35,265

A real go-anywhere vehicle with the added practicality of being a pick-up ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.5 D-4D Active Double Cab
GT86 2dr coupé £22,705-£28,695

Who knew Toyota had another dynamic masterstroke in it after the Lexus LFA? Almost as much fun as a limited budget can buy. Splendid ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 Aero
VAUXHALL

Viva 5dr hatch £8745-10,145 Plenty of space for the money but lacking equipment and youthful joie de vivre ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.0 75 Ecoflex SE
Adam 3dr hatch £12,110-£19,045

Certainly looks the part, but there are better superminis ahead of it ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.4 150 Rocks S
Corsa 3dr hatch £9745-£18,630

Very refined, stylish and practical, but its engines aren't so good ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.0T 90 Ecoflex SE
Corsa 5dr hatch £13,250-£19,200

A more practical version of the Corsa, which is refined and practical ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.0T 90 Ecoflex SE
Astra 5dr hatch £15,445-£22,965

Good handling and nice engines but its working-class roots still show through ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.0T 105 Ecoflex Tech Line
Astra Sports Tourer 5dr estate £16,735-£24,255

More composed and practical than the hatchback ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 CDTi 160 Biturbo SRI
Insignia 5dr hatch £17,439-£32,404

Nearly as good as a Mondeo. Inert steering ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 CDTi 170 Ecoflex SRI
Insignia Sports Tourer 5dr estate £19,669-£33,704

Hugely spacious but no fun to drive ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 CDTi 170 Ecoflex SRI
Meriva 5dr MPV £13,410-£22,395

Clever Flexdoors make sense for young families. Nice to drive ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.4T 140 Exclusiv
Zafira Tourer 5dr MPV £18,615-£29,580

Looks upmarket but feels less so on the inside. Some clever packaging features make good use of what space there is. Ordinary to drive ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.4T 140 Exclusiv
Vivaro Combi MPV £23,623-£25,216

Vauxhall people-mover based on its popular van ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 CDTi 90 Ecoflex SWB
Mokka X 5dr hatch £19,655-£26,765

Compact and competent but short on persuasive quality just like the Mokka ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.4T 140 Design Nav
VXR8 4dr saloon £55,550-£56,220

Charismatic Vauxhall is more brutish and unsophisticated than some. Unbeatable on horsepower-per-pound, though ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 6.2 V8 Maloo LSA


VOLVO S90
'Plush, roomy and a very pleasant thing in which to spend time'
MORE AT AUTOCAR.CO.UK

VOLKSWAGEN
Up 3dr hatch £8995-£11,350

VW's city car is no revolution – just a trademark effort to beat its rivals on finish, refinement, desirability and economy ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.0 60 Look Up
Up 5dr hatch £9395-£25,280

Ditto above, with added five-door convenience ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.0 60 Look Up
Polo 3dr hatch £11,525-£20,370

Still the sensible choice in a lot of ways: usable, refined, easy-going, desirable and very solidly built ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.0 TSI 110 SE L
Polo 5dr hatch £12,155-£21,000

And even more useful with five doors ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.0 TSI 110 SE L
Golf 3dr hatch £17,625-£33,100

A little expensive it may be, but there's enough quality here to justify the expense. Classiness democratised ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TSI 220 GTI
Golf 5dr hatch £18,280-£35,820

As above but in the five-door form most buyers are likely to opt for ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TSI 220 GTI
Golf Estate 5dr estate
£18,980-£34,455

And even more practical in load-lugging body style ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TSI 300 R 4Motion DSG
Golf SV 5dr MPV £19,255-£27,610

MQB platform gives the Golf proper MPV proportions. Still no C-Max, though ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 DTD 150 SE
Jetta 4dr saloon £19,155-£25,055

Big boot, pleasant dynamics and good pricing. A bit dull ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 DTD 150 SE
Beetle 3dr hatch £16,820-£25,390

Huge improvement, but the Golf hiding underneath is a superior car ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 DTD 150 Sport
Beetle Cabriolet 2dr open
£19,775-£28,545

Huge improvement and quite chic in an open-top form ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 DTD 110
Scirocco 2dr coupé
£21,040-£34,390

A complete coupé. Entertaining, practical and stylish ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TSI 280 R
Passat 4dr saloon
£22,680-£40,180

Lands convincing blows with quality, usability, smart looks and civilised manners. A touch too conservative to be entertaining, though ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 DTD 150 SE
Passat Estate 5dr estate
£24,230-£41,730

Smart-looking and civilised estate ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 DTD 190 SCR GT
CC 4dr saloon £25,475-£33,515

Loses a name and adds some flair but never compels ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 DTD 184 GT
Touran 5dr MPV £22,270-£31,535

The medium-sized people-carrier done conservatively – but done very well. Refined and wieldy, with excellent infotainment options ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 DTD 150 SE
Sharan 5dr MPV £26,680-£36,660

Full-sized seven-seater offers outstanding versatility and space with tidy handling and VW-brand desirability ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 DTD 150 SE
Caddy Life 5dr MPV
£19,759-£26,316

Rugged workhorse built to supplement the Touran and Sharan ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 DTD 150
Caravelle 5dr MPV
£37,686-£55,362

Rugged workhorse built to carry people ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TDI 204 SE
California 5dr MPV
£38,214-£55,790

Rugged workhorse built to carry people and put them up for the night ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TDI 150
Tiguan 5dr SUV
£22,510-£36,375

An improvement on the previous generation, but is it a winner? ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 TDI SCR 150 SE Nav
Touareg 5dr SUV £43,935-£49,895

An unusually straightforward sort: comfy, capable, refined and obedient-handling. Five seats only ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 3.0 V6 TDI 262 SE
Amarok 5dr 4x4 £25,419-£35,931

Volkswagen quality of build and interior matched to a rugged exterior ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 BITDI 180 Trendline
VOLVO
V40 5dr hatch £21,950-33,775

Not perfect, but a handsome, well-packaged, pragmatic and likeable car: rare commodities in the class ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 T3 R-Design
S60 4dr saloon £22,395-31,625

New frugal four-pot diesel has given Volvo's middleweight a new lease of life. Determinedly understated, mature and laid back ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 D4 SE Lux Nav
V60 5dr estate £23,075-£52,270

Mature and appealing cabin, nice looks and smooth drive. Too small ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 D4 Cross Country Lux Nav
S90 4dr saloon £32,555-£42,055

The new mid-size executive car ready to take on the Germans ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: D4 Inscription
V90 5dr estate £34,555-£44,055

The new luxury Swedish saloon in a more practical estate form ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: D4 Inscription
XC60 5dr SUV £32,685-39,890

Refreshing car design from Volvo, more competitive by its engine revolution. Not quite as spacious as some but has useful features ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 D4 R-Design Nav
XC90 5dr SUV £46,850-£64,555

Cleverly packaged, smartly styled, competitively priced and pleasing to drive. As close to a class-leader as Volvo has had in a long time ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.0 D5 Inscription AWD
VUHL
O5 2dr open £59,995-£89,995

Mexican track day special has a pleasingly pragmatic and forgiving chassis. Turbo engine isn't the most characterful ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: RR 2.3 EcoBoost
WESTFIELD
SPORT 2dr open £20,588-£28,745

Entry-level Westfield. Sport Turbo is very quick and fun but no Caterham ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 1.6 Sigma 155 Sport
ZENOS
E10 Odr open £26,995-£39,995

The latest in a long line of English mid-engined marvels. Earns its stripes immediately; expect a dedicated following ★★★★★

TESTERS' PICK: 2.3 R
WHAT'S COMING WHEN

MERCEDES V-CLASS MARCO POLO | APRIL

Mercedes is taking on the Volkswagen California with this camper van version of its V-Class van. The Marco Polo has four berths, a wardrobe, a kitchenette with a fridge and hob, and a sofa. It also has an electrically raising roof. The Marco Polo



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




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VX1676	£395
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JAY2E	(JAY ZE)	£3495
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5NJY	(SANJAY)	£2995

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 4LXX(Alex maybe).....	£2995	 9SFY	£2995
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Matt Prior

TESTER'S NOTES

Prior ponders how to close a deficit of two seconds per lap



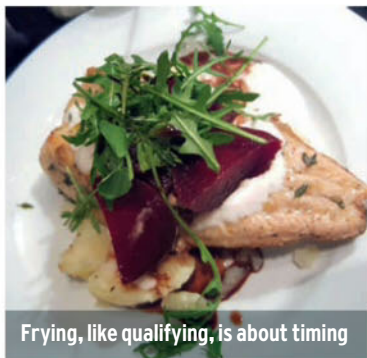
Reader. Dear, sweet, beloved reader. I have finally admitted something to myself and, if you'll forgive the self-indulgence, I'd like to admit it to you.

I can't drive very quickly.

Oh, I've tried to disguise it; the sideways photos, the smoking tyres. You might never suspect. And I doubt you care. But I know, and I do care.

It shouldn't matter really. Driving a car at competitive racing speeds is not an essential part of my job, because giving somebody else's car back un-bent is more important. But occasionally, I get asked to race something for work and the truth is that I'm not very good at it. Certainly not as good as some of my colleagues.

In the first practice session of a race weekend, I will be seconds away from the front. An embarrassing number of seconds. During the course of a weekend, I might get this down to two seconds, perhaps even a second and a half, but it will



Frying, like qualifying, is about timing

“Occasionally, I'm asked to race something and the truth is I'm not very good at it”

still be a greater margin than most newcomers to the same car and circuit. It is too far.

I don't know if it's talent or willpower, but either way my slowness relates to the mind and either way I can't do any better. I was once told that a Mini Challenge car is only quick when “it feels like you're about to have an accident”. Three-time BTCC champ Gordon Shedden told me that, when he's racing, “every corner is an adventure”. I have never been prepared to go there.

It shouldn't matter. It doesn't matter. But I suppose the truth is that I'm not very brave, and that does matter. Perhaps with the 10,000 hours of practice it apparently takes to become truly proficient at something, I could have got there. But I doubt it. It's in my character.

The other day a colleague said you only regret things you didn't do, not the things you did, and I suspect he's right. There are exceptions: I wish driving a Mini into a tree were undoable. But on the whole, philosophically, his point stands, whether it's telling someone you love them, starting your own business, standing up to a bully, climbing a mountain, or turning into the Bombhole at Snetterton flat-out. You should have, you big pussy.

Guilty as charged, but finally I've accepted that this is who I am. Competent, but not competitive. And acceptance is important, isn't it? It's part of the healing process. Like grief, loss or an unresolved injustice, if you don't square it with yourself, it'll eat at you forever.

So I've accepted it. I can do other things. I'm missing 10,000 hours of perfect practice and 8000% of bravery: but I can type well enough to get paid for it; take a photograph; interview people; talk to a camera; understand Bernoulli's equation; do a burnout on a motorcycle; play the Pink Panther theme on the piano; draw; perform a J-turn; weld rudimentarily; know how long to pan-fry a sea bass fillet to impress a lover; pass through an airport security check quickly; remember how to spell 'occasion'; and tie a bow tie. There are loads of people who can't do these things. Mine is not a life wasted. It has come late to me, but I am content with who I am, and what I can do.

I'd swap the whole damned lot for a second and a half a lap, obviously.

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