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W1

First Fang: HSV's \$170K/474kW GTSR



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GT3 – before Ingall binned it...



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MARCH 2017

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MANAGING EDITOR Ged Bulmer
EDITOR Dylan Campbell
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Scott Newman
STAFF JOURNALIST Louis Cordony
SUB-EDITOR Trent Giunco
ART DIRECTOR Damien Pelletier
GRAPHIC DESIGNERS
 Sean Farley, Andrew Marsic
GUN DRIVER Warren Luff
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS
 Ellen Dewar, Nathan Jacobs
DIGITAL DREAM TEAM
 Bonnie Jacks, Brendan Watts

WRITERS

Andrew Chesterton, Paul Cockburn, Daniel DeGasperi, Mark Fogarty, Tim Keen, Jonathan Hawley, Jim Holder, Matt Joy, David Morley, Matt Prior, Christian Seabaugh, Dan Trent

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Cristian Brunelli, Mark Riccioni, William Walker

EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENTS

Georg Kacher, Michael Taylor

Andrew Chesterton

Likes: selecting top gear, airports, yeasty spreads, real estate
 Dislikes: sub-editors, auctions, Frank Sinatra's house, cars

**ADVERTISING MANAGERS**

GROUP SALES MANAGER Matt Rice (02) 9263 9706
 BRAND SALES MANAGER – MOTOR
 Liam Quirk (02) 9282 8348
 QUEENSLAND Todd Anderson (07) 3245 5049
 SOUTH AUSTRALIA Nick Lenthall (08) 8212 6256
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 NSW AGENCY SALES Aaron Whiteman 02 9288 9123
 VIC AGENCY SALES Stephen Hughes 03 9567 4320
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PRODUCTION CONTROLLER Shaun Johnson
ADVERTISING PRODUCTION Sanela Heeraman
CIRCULATION MANAGER Stuart Jones
MARKETING MANAGER Charlotte Brunton
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MANAGER BAUER DIGITAL Nigel Dearing
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Ed's note

Dylan Campbell

We are awestruck by the GTSR W1. Respect to HSV for having the balls to build it

THE HSV GTSR W1 is an even bigger monster than we could have imagined just 18 months ago. Back then, if you asked us, we would have told you HSV might power up the GTS's LSA (although all the trouble HSV has gone to fit the LS9, with only 39 extra kilowatts, suggests the LSA could not have taken a big hike easily), they might fit new wheels, drench the interior in Alcantara, embroider the new name on some headrests and fit new exterior badges. Maybe even some choice black exterior stickers if we were lucky (or unlucky). If you caught us in a particularly cynical mood we may have also suggested a cheeky price hike and a 'limited' build run to go with what could have been called the Final Edition.

But in building the W1 and even just the 'base' GTSR, HSV has done so much more and for that they deserve maximum respect. The audacity, the derring-do, the balls and bravery to build the W1 – from a relatively small Aussie mob, in a factory in an otherwise quiet and unremarkable Melbourne industrial estate – is worth the utmost commendation.

Just think about it: a completely new engine; bespoke modified gearbox; completely new front and rear bars; widebody front guards (!) housing all-new, nine-inch wide front wheels; gargantuan new AP Racing brakes; new SupaShock suspension and hardcore Pirelli P-Zero Trofeo tyres. Any one of these things would have been huge news, let alone all of them at once. And from our all-too-brief track review on p54, it sounds like it all combines to make a car that not only works but is eye-poppingly quick. (HSV plans to commence W1 production in April and we'll be campaigning for a vehicle for a proper review and performance testing, don't worry.)

For now, though, a public congratulations is in order to Holden Special Vehicles. As local manufacturing winds up, HSV is producing the best cars it ever has which fills us with pride and sorrow. They've produced a world-beating performance car with the W1, their magnum opus ('a piece of work regarded as its creator's greatest'), nothing short of a masterpiece of Aussie ingenuity and engineering – one that's bested even MOTOR's imagination.



MARCH 2017

The New

Hot stuff coming soon



Mustang Hits Mach 2

Next Mustang scores power, handling, and safety updates

A LOUDER active exhaust, adaptive suspension, 10-speed automatic, digital LCD instruments plus a smattering of active safety technology have all been tossed into the stable of the Ford Mustang – and all appear to address issues we've had with the sporty US staple.

The addition of driver aids to the 2018 Mustang will help address safety concerns the Australian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) brought to light following its two-star performance (see sidebar), but the updated model won't arrive here until mid-next year.

Little needed to change outside the hugely popular coupe, but a number of revisions were made: a lower bonnet, narrower headlights (which look more like squinted eyes and debut all-LED globes) and a tweaked rear fascia with quad

exhaust pipes for the V8 are it.

New aluminium finishes, stitched-leather lower trim and a 12.0-inch LCD driver display improve the Michigan-made model's cabin.

Under the new bonnet, the 2.3-litre turbo four EcoBoost adds a transient-overboost mode (like the 1.6-litre EcoBoost in the Fiesta ST) to briefly boost outputs beyond the current 233kW/432Nm; while the 5.0-litre V8 scores dual-injection tech to liberate more than the current 306kW/530Nm. Disappointingly, though, Ford is hush on the new numbers.

Automatic models will sprint quicker to 100km/h thanks to the addition of a new 10-speed automatic unit, but the six-cog manual (tweaked with a dual-mass flywheel on V8 to cope with

Mustang brings more power, sound, and safety when it lands late 2018





extra torque and improve clutch response) thankfully remains the standard pick.

"Compared to the previous six-speed, the new 10-speed transmission has quicker shift times, better low-speed tip-in response and significantly reduced friction losses," Ford said in a released statement.

"The all-new electronic control system includes unique tunes for different drive modes and features real-time adaptive shift scheduling to ensure the right gear at the right time," it continued.

Steering wheel-mounted paddleshifters are a first, while the already sweet-sounding V8 will debut a throatier tone when equipped with an "active valve" sports exhaust. It allows drivers to adjust it on the run to deliver "an audible experience like never before, with a fully variable soundtrack to match the entire acceleration range."

The standard suspension has copied revised damping "for better ride control", a new cross-axis joint at the rear for added lateral stiffness, and new stabilisers.

However, a Mustang Performance Package option will add MagneRide multi-mode adaptive suspension tech to the chassis – another Mustang first – similar to the dampers found in a Holden Commodore Motorsport Edition/Director and VE/VF HSVs. Although Comfort and Sport modes are expected, Ford has not specified how many modes it will offer.

Prices are tipped to remain on par with the current \$44,990-to-\$66,205 coupe and convertible range when the 2018 Mustang arrives within 18 months. The Yank two-door has been a runaway success in Australia, notching up 6208 sales in 2016 and outselling by a factor of three the Toyota 86 (2068 units) to become the top selling sports car nationwide. – DD

'STANG'S SHOCK 2-STAR RATING



AUSTRALIAN media fell into hysterics this month when ANCAP awarded the Ford Mustang just two stars out of a maximum five. The 'Stang was slammed for slow-deploying airbags that allowed dummies' heads to impact the dashboard, and some body deformation – but it still scored four stars in the frontal crash. Its score tanked primarily because it lacked autonomous emergency braking (AEB) and lane-keep assistance, both of which are added to the 2018 model. "This rating is not intended to shock or surprise – it simply presents the safety of this car against that of its contemporary competitors," ANCAP chief executive officer James Goodwin said. But Ford believes it was treated unfairly given no other four-seat coupe has been critiqued in the same way. "Mustang delivered a four-star result for the front occupants [but] the two-star result in the Active Safety Assist pillar determined the overall result of a two-star rating," the company said.



The Last Hurrah

Holden sharpens Commodore VF II range ahead of October end date

OCTOBER 20, 2017, is the day car manufacturing dies in Australia. Holden confirmed the date for its Elizabeth, South Australia, plant closure, leaving it as the last maker standing just 17 days after Toyota will shut its local factories in Altona, Victoria.

With Holden's special editions to be built mid-year and now sold out (see sidebar), the newly released MY17 Commodore is the final update for the VF Series II – headlined by the best-equipped SS ever – and will bring 69 years of manufacturing to a close.

Although Holden hasn't confirmed what variant will be last down the line, it has started trimming the complexity of its

sedan, Sportwagon, ute and long-wheelbase Caprice range, while also insisting all will be produced until the curtain draws.

Prices for the Commodore SS rise by \$2500 – now \$47,490 plus on-road costs – which scores extras (except leather) from the SS-V that has been deleted from the range. It also poaches the SS-V's 19-inch alloy-wheel design (up from 18s) but not its clear tail-lights, while inside a head-up display and sat-nav are new additions.

The most popular Commodore in the range, the SV6, scores the same interior equipment and steals the black 18-inch alloys from the ceased SV6 Black limited edition. The SV6 now costs \$1000 more at

\$40,490 and with the last manual six rolling down the production line last November, the V6 is now an auto-only proposition.

Meanwhile the SS-V Redline adds previously optional black grille and daytime running light (DRL) surrounds and mirror caps – while the ute scores a black rear sports bar. Under the skin there are no mechanical changes, with the SS-V Redline retaining its fixed FE3 suspension and leaving tri-mode magnetic dampers for the Motorsport and Director.

A favourite of fleet companies, the Evoke continues with the 3.0-litre version of Holden's V6 stockpiled since the Port Melbourne engine plant closure last November,

SS-V bites the dust, but extra equipment and higher price for SS fills the void





MY17 Commodore tweaks are slight, but the models are guaranteed to be sought after

while the Calais Sportwagon has been ditched from the range.

The Calais sedan is now \$1250 pricier at \$42,490 but scores standard nav, while the \$48,750 (V6) and \$56,750 (V8) Calais V gets an electro-chromatic rear-view mirror and SS-V Redline steering wheel. As with the Commodore, punters will need to keep a keen eye out for the MY17 tweaks like Calais badges on the back doors and a new alloy finish for Calais V.

Colour-wise Spitfire Green replaces Jungle Green, Light My Fire (orange) swaps out Some Like It Red Hot and Son Of A Gun Grey succeeds Prussian Steel, all as \$550

premium paint options.

Holden confirms it will build 30,000 vehicles this year and has banned employee discounts on V8 models, instructing dealerships to sell at RRP. A final build schedule will be locked down by the second quarter of the year, leaving buyers to pick off dealer shelves thereafter.

Better act quick. "With high demand expected, customers are encouraged to order any personally configured MY17 Commodore vehicles via their local Holden dealer before April 2017, with all vehicles ordered after that being subject to availability," the company said in a statement. – DD



FINAL VFs 'SOLD OUT'

ALL 1200 Motorsport Editions, 360 Directors and 240 Magnums sold out less than one week after Holden unveiled the trio of limited editions based on the VF Series II Commodore SS-V Redline sedan, Calais V sedan and SS-V Redline ute respectively.

A few dealers are holding on to their allocated share of the stickered-up specials – the sedans of which feature tri-mode magnetic suspension previously reserved for HSV and the export-only Chevrolet SS – and as we went to press some could be seen commanding up to \$90,000 on-road for the Motorsport Edition, well above its \$61,790 plus on-roads pricetag.

Holden said it was aware that many buyers were willing to spend large on the in-demand trio of models, but reminded dealers to play fair and honour previously negotiated pricetags with buyers. Let us know your experience with buying the final locally-produced Commodore by shooting an email to MOTOR@bauer-media.com.au





BACK 'ER UP

Power packs are backed by a driveline warranty that lasts for the balance of new car warranty. Happen to be in the last 12 months of cover? Tickford will cover you for a year, even if you only have one month left

Tickford's 'Stang

Tickford injects extra firepower into the popular Mustang range

TICKFORD has tinkered with fast Fords for years, but things are a bit different these days. Without the Falcon and the possibility of, say, a modern day TE50, the recently-revived company has moved with the times and developed a pair of performance packages for the Blue Oval hero of the day, the Mustang.

The company is also very different to the one that evolved from 1991's Tickford Vehicle Engineering in partnership with Ford Australia, through to 2002's Ford Performance Vehicles rebranding and acquisition.

However, the Brit-based brand's brief Prodrive ownership has also come full circle. In Australia, the reborn Tickford Performance Parts is run by Ford Supercar team owners – yep, you guessed it –

Prodrive Racing Australia, and just to muddy the waters, the outfit's boss is former Walkinshaw head honcho Tony Harris.

The company (re)made its debut with a Tickford-fettled Ranger (see p140), which has been comfortably Ford Australia's top-selling vehicle, but it has clearly tracked the success of the Michigan-made coupe that has become the nation's top-selling sports car.

"Mustang owners are real enthusiasts so we wanted to ensure Tickford's first release of personalisation options captured their enjoyment of driving and enhanced it," director Harris said.

Tickford charges \$6990 each to power up either the EcoBoost or GT, which shifts the 2.3-litre turbo four-banger from 233kW/432Nm to

a V8-beating 270kW/540Nm. Well, it would beat the standard 5.0-litre V8's 306kW/530Nm for torque, but Tickford's pack can tickle the bent-eight up to a fuller 360kW/585Nm.

MOTOR Bang For Your Bucks-inspired mathematics delivers some intriguing results. The Mustang EcoBoost with Tickford's 270 Power Pack asks for \$51,980 plus on-roads all up, saving \$3010 over a Ford dealer's standard GT with less twist.

The Mustang GT with Tickford's 360 Power Pack needs \$61,980 all inclusive, and for that sum, Blue Oval fans can clobber down the owner of a 340kW/570Nm Clubsport R8 SV Black for less than the \$65,990 outlay you pay for the four-door Aussie sedan.

Tickford puts the hike in outputs



Both the 2.3-litre EcoBoost four and naturally-aspirated bent-eight can be fettled – the latter with a supercharger for the power hungry



DRAIN PIPES

Tickford's exhaust system replaces the singular tip at each side with dual-tips. V8 variants use three-inch piping from the catback while EcoBoost cars use a smaller 2.5-inch piping

SPLITTING AIRS

The new diffuser unit might carry over the general structure and construction of the original equipment, but slips in another fin between the central light and exhaust tips on each side

down to a new cold-air intake and catback exhaust for both EcoBoost and GT, with a recalibrated ECU the only difference between them – and no doubt some standard electronic restrictions have been lifted in the process.

“Our aim was to not only deliver generous increases in power and torque, but to also create a unique exhaust note which was strong and deep, yet was suitable to daily driving as well,” claims Harris.

The big boss adds that although the V8 “really unleashes the performance of the GT” he expects the four-cylinder package “will also attract customers to the EcoBoost variant who like the idea of a smaller capacity and more efficient engine, but have been waiting for a performance boost.”

The company also includes individual build plates, Tickford badging and a new rear diffuser as part of the total cost, which includes fitment at a Tickford Modification Centre currently open in Sydney or Melbourne.

For buyers who just want sound and show, \$3990 can buy the exhaust – a Tickford-developed stainless-steel, mandrel-bent catback (2.5-inch EcoBoost/3.0-inch GT) unit with carbon-wrapped tips – and rear diffuser without the engine and ECU tweaks.

Tickford's next step is to develop ride and handling packages for the 'Stang lineup, while it has already become licensed to import the official Ford Performance Mustang GT Supercharger Kit if tuned atmo V8 grunt isn't enough. – DD





Demon Inbound

More details surface on Dodge's 550kW-plus drag-focused special

SOME CARS are made for the racetrack and others, like the Dodge Challenger SRT Demon, are born for setting drag times faster than you can say its name. The US brand has created a drip-feed teaser campaign for its weight shedding, tyre-shredding version of the already mental Hellcat old-school brute coupe.

Dodge is in the process of teasing the public its 15 mysterious Demon videos in the lead-up to the car's New York motor show debut on April 14 – with clips dubbed 'cage', 'reduction', 'body' and 'crate' hinting at what's in store.

But the limited edition was inadvertently leaked by actor Vin Diesel while thanking the cast of



Fast and Furious 8 on video, where a duo of wide-body and bonnet-scooped Challengers wearing drag tyres and Demon badging were positioned in the background.

We now also know the Challenger will be 90mm wider to fit 315mm-wide (up from piddly

275mm) drag-spec 18-inch Nitto NT05R tyres under its pumped front and rear guards – complete with the face of its evil spirit namesake printed on the sidewall.

This probably foretells the wet-weather performance of this rear-wheel drive coupe, which is 90kg lighter than the Hellcat on which it's based, partially because there will be the option to ditch the rear seat and even front passenger seat. Call it the Trump era of greenification.

No word yet whether the 6.2-litre supercharged Hemi V8 will score a boost, but 527kW (707hp) and 881Nm is probably enough. Or not. Rumour has it that a '00757' build plaque shown in a teaser video represents 757hp – or 565kW.



Demon will star in upcoming *Fast and Furious* film and star Vin Diesel unwittingly leaked the cars



TOYOTA TAKES ON THE TUNERS

SOME WILL always call the Toyota's 86 a snail's pace sports car, but at least changes have arrived for buyers who aren't keen on the softer suspension tune of the latest model. For \$414 plus dealer fitting, a TRD Lowering Spring Set claims to "offer a more aggressive stance as well as lower centre of gravity" while delivering a "more raw" driving experience and improved steering response. Toyota recommends splashing another \$740 (plus fitting) for a TRD Sway Bar that "will help reduce bodyroll during hard cornering" because "by transferring the force from the outer to inner spring it ensures an equal compression during cornering." Larger, black TRD 18-inch wheels complete the package, and are priciest by far coming in at \$1760 for the four, plus tyres and fitting. Fear not if you own an older 86, the parts are compatible with all models. We hope to drive the package soon.

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IN BRIEF



OH, INTERNET

THE internet, as always, has taken things a step further for the somewhat unloved AU Falcon, retrofitting front ends onto everything from a Ferrari F40 to a Nissan Stagea to a Nissan S15 Silvia (200SX in Australia) to the Bathurst-winning Gibson Motorsport Nissan R32 GT-R. If you were a fan of terrible AU Falcon puns, you could even say this kind of photoshop work is the internet's Forte. The car's rugged, can-do attitude is typified by the excellent FB page 'AU Falcons doing incredible things', which is well worth signing up to if you're a fan of all things Ford (or even if you're not).



HOTTED-UP YARIS

AFTER years in the performance wilderness, Toyota is intent on recovering its fast-car mojo, leveraging its return to the World Rally Championship by turning the wick up on its Yaris and taking the fight to the likes of the Ford Fiesta ST and VW Polo GTI. Dubbed the Yaris Sport, unfortunately details on the new challenger are extremely scarce, with Toyota only confirming the car will have "more than 155kW". Sadly, it's for Japan and Europe only, with Toyota's local arm confirming the Yaris Sport won't be making it Down Under.



Subaru's new **WRX STI**

New look disguises minor changes underneath

THE FACELIFTED Subaru WRX and WRX STI might now look like their more regular relations, but it'll be a while before the duo join the latest Impreza on the company's new modular platform.

Revised exteriors, tweaked drivetrains, and new suspension packages are the ticket here, while a new grille treatment, LED headlights and larger cabin screens (4.3- to 5.9-inch trip computer monitor and 6.5- to 7.0-inch infotainment unit) attempt to refresh interest in the iconic four-door rally weapons.

Subaru has also revised front and rear suspension settings for both versions, saying steering stability and ride comfort's improved. The WRX also nabs a revised manual transmission and a retuned electric power steering unit, while both boxer donks are unchanged.

The STI's centre diff's mechanically actuated but now electronically controlled, and its (DCCD) settings are new.

Lastly, the model's first-ever 19-inch alloys hide larger six-piston Brembos up front, with slotted discs all-round.



WRX and WRX STI reportedly have to soldier on until 2020 before replacement

MAN WANTS \$50K FOR 'NEW' OLD CR-X

HONDA'S ancient 1.8-litre atmo in the current Civic could be considered a way of doing the time warp, but we would prefer buying this as-new Honda CR-X with just 8634km on the clock. Being a 1992 example that distance averages out to 345km per year, and the much-lauded 1.6-litre manual front-driver cost \$29,990 new and can now be yours for \$49,500. It might not be as quick as the forthcoming Civic Type-R that's expected for the same coin, but according to the owner this red CR-X even comes with a "new car smell" having lived a life under a car cover. Although it often played bridesmaid to the Mazda MX-5 in 1990s comparison

Who wants a new Type-R when you can buy this gem for the same coin?



tests, the Honda was a three-door hard-top with a back seat. Clearly old-but-new Hondas is a thing in recent times, however, with one dealership recording a new sale of an S2000 in November some eight years after the roadster was canned.





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VALVOLINE PRIZE PACK

Letter of the Month winner Brad will be the envy of his classmates going back to school with this multi-pocket Valvoline backpack. Valued at \$39.95, it includes goodies like a stubbie holder, Bluetooth portable speaker and Man Like Horsepower figurine.



LETTER OF THE MONTH

ANALOGUE FEEL

I'M A grumpy bugger when it comes to the ruination of the automobile. I work for a Sydney Mazda dealer. I have worked here for almost two decades and genuinely love the product. I am onto my third MX-5, including an ND GT and my track-ready NA6. We also own a 2004 Mazda 2 and a current CX-5.

However, is it my imagination or are modern cars becoming less driver-friendly? My wife loves driving manual but the CX-5 doesn't offer one in anything but the bottom grade. Why does a manufacturer feel they can tell the customer (who is spending their hard earned) that they cannot have a manual gearbox if they want one?

What is wrong with a handbrake lever? We now have an electronic one in its place and dear god help me if (or when) it finds its way into the MX-5. Why do we not get temperature gauges any more? I know modern cars are not plagued with overheating issues, but surely a gauge wouldn't break the budget.

On the subject of gimmicks, what the hell is with the starter button trend? Please make it go away, it is a pain in the proverbial for us mechanics. What a stupid thing it is. And when did a steering wheel become the

command centre for the starship enterprise?

Don't get me wrong, in all Mazdas bar the BT-50 the steering wheels are lovely. They look good and feel good to hold but why are there so many buttons on the damn thing? Once upon a time if you purchased a car and didn't like the wheel it came with, you could take it off and buy a nice new Momo or Sparco wheel. You would improve the look and feel of your interior. Not now.

By the way, I just got through re-reading the June 1982 *Modern Motor*, the one with the VH and XE ESP on the cover; you know, back in the day when cars were simple and fun, when you could have a choice of gearbox, where if you didn't like the seat they gave you, you could change it, where if you didn't like your steering wheel, you could change it, if you wanted a better stereo, you guessed it, you could change it. And, if you had half a clue, you could even service it yourself. Modern technology – have we really advanced? Love the magazine guys, keep it up.

Brad Johnson, via email

Sadly, Brad, it's a question of demand, and while your arguments are valid, you're definitely in the minority!

BATHURST BONANZA

Loved the Bathurst 12 Hour. Finally, we're seeing a return to good ol' days of variety – Nissan, Bentley, Audi, Mercedes-AMG, Ferrari, BMW, Lamborghini. The only country that's missing is Australia. What a shame, too, but it'd be hard to think what we could have adapted to GT3 regs. A ute, maybe? Stick those wings on a Maloo.

What I'd like to see at Mount Panorama next year would be the Yanks. Daytona's 24 Hour race might be awfully close to our 12 Hour, but to see those Corvettes, and hear those proper atmo V8s, would be special. And maybe Honda, too, with its Ohio-built NSX. Bring it on.

Pat Tung, via email

The Corvette is certainly something special, Pat, though sadly neither it nor Ford's GT are eligible as they are GTE cars. The NSX definitely is, though!

REALISTIC ROAD TOLL

The zero-fatality campaign is absurd. Even if there were eight million Ian Luffs driving, every car was in perfect mechanical condition, had all the safety features, fences lined all roads to exclude wildlife, nobody crossed roads, we had perfect roads and the Luffs never used smartphones while driving – and never exceeded speed limits, never consumed alcohol and/or drugs – there would still be some fatalities.

Come on governments, police and road safety authorities, stop living in cuckoo land. Most people accept that there is an inherent risk in driving and it's the price we pay for the convenience of moving about in cars; plus the added enjoyment for many of driving in a vigorous manner. The only way of reaching zero road deaths is to stay in bed or to abolish roads and vehicles altogether.

Bob Moore, via email

REACHING THE SUMMIT

In Germany, a past German luxury car manufacturer Borgward has been revived. The original Borgward company ceased production in 1961. The new Borgward car company is a joint venture between the Borgward Family and the Chinese auto company Foton. The new Borgward cars – the BX5, BX6 and BX7 Luxury SUVs will be built in Germany and China.

In Australia, let's revive a past car brand and create a new Aussie luxury car manufacturer – Summit. The original Summit was made in Sydney between 1923 to 1925 and they were a high-quality vehicle for their time. Maybe a new Australian Summit Motor company could be a joint venture as a consortium of Australian investors and Foton?

Given Foton is a joint owner of Borgward,

if they were a joint partner of a new Summit Motor company, maybe a new Summit SUV could be built using the same platform and engines as the Borgward cars. Later on, there could be a Summit sedan, coupe, convertible and maybe a dual-cab with them being made in Australia and China.

As premium cars are extremely popular, a new Summit motor company could enjoy strong sales in Australia and around the world. If Foton were interested in being a joint-owner of a new Australian Summit motor company, the Summit could be in a Foton-Borgward-Summit automotive business coalition which could help its long-term future.

Malcolm Webster, via email

STUNG BY A KIA

The smooth and silky lines of Kia's all-new, rear-drive, all-turbo, four-door sporting flagship coupe, the Kia Stinger GT, have won me over. It looks to have an upmarket interior, strong performance and presence and promising dynamics, including great affordability.

Inside there also seems to be a strong bias for the driver in the cockpit, where the controls look easily accessible and switchgear and surfaces are at near-elbow height with a pair of awesome bolstered bucket seats up front.

Turbochargers help it put up 272kW at 6000rpm and a whopping 510Nm from 1300-4500rpm, matched with an eight-speed auto, which is decent from anything, let alone Kia. The VE Commodore SS made 270kW not too long ago, remember.

Love the look of it. Right from the front to its hips, and 'Cleopatra-eye' tail-lamps, where there is no need for a rear spoiler.

This stylish new interpretation of what a rear drive should be, lifts Kia to new heights. Perhaps even filling a niche performance car market left by the two locals.

John Szabo, via email

You don't work for Kia's PR department, do you, John?

QUESTION TIME

I've been reading *MOTOR* since 1978 (thanks for all those years). But I need your help. I'll be placing an order for a manual Holden VF II SS Redline in early March and would like to pose a few questions.

One, in America the Chevrolet 'SS' version has a 'shark fin' antenna fitted whereas our Aussie 'SS' has a screwed-on CB radio antenna. My question, can you guide me to a shop (in Melbourne) or a website to purchase a genuine receiving antenna fin?

Two, now I'm old school (to my knowledge), but I was wondering if CD players are in the base models and Calais, etc? Because in the Aussie SS you can't get it.

All you get is the USB Bluetooth technology.

I want to put a professionally-fitted stacker under the rear parcel shelf of the car. Or, is there an option for a USB CD drive? Can I do that or am I stuffing around? I can embrace the new technology, but sometimes I want to play my old favourite CDs.

Three, I know that if I order HSV springs (for lowering) I'll be paying a lot of coin. So I've been told to get King Springs yellow coils and have it lowered from 405mm to 370mm. Apparently you have to measure from the centre of the wheel to the bottom of the guard-arch. Is that how it's done?

Basically I want the SS as low as an HSV.

Four, last question. I don't like getting 'tinted windows' when it's done by (for example) 'The Tint Professor' where it's a sheet of 'tinting' done from the inside. Am I better off just getting the darkest tint that is done built into the glass? It's to avoid future peeling or some sort of scratching down the life span of the car.

The W1 could prove just how great the Aussie performance sedan was

My reason for asking all these questions is it'll be my strict weekend car for (dry days) driving, and it'll be with me for at least 10 years, while I'm still young and able to change gears at my latter driving life.

Andrew D, via email

Andrew, to answer your first question, best try Google. Two: no, CD players were removed for VF II. Three: yes, that's a fine method of measuring ride height for comparative terms. Four: the obvious answer is yes, avoid film tints and opt for a window-dye if you don't want the tint eventually bubbling.

RULING THE 'RING

So, HSV's building one final variant to rule them all. It's gone nuts on the thing, too, by the looks of it. Corvette engine, track-ready shocks and super sticky tyres. You guys have published some times online after Luffy belted the GTS-R W1 around Winton and it's had me thinking.

At over three seconds faster than the old GTS with a 1:33.2, and then a second off the pace of a Mercedes-AMG GT, it also makes the GTS-R W1 a massive 4.4 seconds faster than the VF II SS Redline at BFYB's Winton test. Surely this is a record for a factory 'Commodore'.

Speaking of records, Holden punted its VF Redline Ute around the Nuburgring, so I wonder what it'd do there? It'd be cool to see HSV try, as a final salute.

For a rough estimate, you could try calculate it in a very simple way. For

instance, if the W1's Winton lap is 0.7sec slower than the GT's 1:32.5, that's only 0.75 per cent slower than the Mercedes.

Apply that difference to the AMG's Nurburgring laptime, which is a 7:35, and the W1 should be able to crack a 7:38.4 at the famous racetrack.

That'd be super impressive, and prove it faster than a couple supercars. It'd also be a way to prove just how great the Aussie performance sedan was when it clocked off.

Frank Lecki, via email

Sadly, that's very unlikely to happen, as the cost involved is pretty hefty, however your maths is probably about on the money, Frank. Holden set an 8min19.47sec lap in a 260kW VF Redline ute in 2013, but perhaps a better yardstick is the 7min41sec lap set by the previous-generation Camaro ZL1, a car of very similar power and weight to the GTSR W1 and one which uses the same Zeta chassis platform.

BATHURST SHOOTOUT

Online you've written about the Mercedes-AMG GT R claiming to be the fastest production car in the world around Mount Panorama with a 2:16.5. Well, fair enough, it is, but it was also the only car to even try.

Imagine if Bathurst became the Southern Hemisphere's Nurburgring, and marques started flying cars to the track to use their fastest time as a marketing tool? Looks like we're heading that way.

Travis Gooding, via email

We believe a number of manufacturers intended to have a crack, Travis, though it's possible they thought better of it after the AMG's first effort. Hopefully the idea grows in future years.

Need some advice?

Torn over which new performance car to buy? *MOTOR* is now offering individually tailored new car buying advice, for free (really). Send us your question at whichcar.com.au/ask-the-expert



SIX CARS TESTED

First Fang

New. Fast. Driven.



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HUNTER
VALLEY, NSW

Mazda MX-5 RF

Mazda expects the majority of buyers to go for the targa top RF, so it'd better be good



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SYDNEY,
NSW

Alfa Romeo Giulia QV

The super sedan segment has a major new player as Alfa Romeo's stonking Giulia QV lands in Oz



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UNITED
KINGDOM

Aston Vanquish S

Not to be upstaged by the new DB11, the Vanquish scores more power to become a 'super GT'



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ROYAL NATIONAL
PARK, NSW

Tiguan 162TSI

Not quite a Golf GTI on stilts, but a surprisingly able small SUV if that's what you need to buy



PAGE
32

MELBOURNE,
VIC

BMW M140i

New engine only enhances the appeal of the only rear-drive hot hatch you can buy



by DAN TRENT

Lamborghini Aventador S

A big, brash, unapologetic and thrillingly fast supercar

ENGINE 6498cc V12, DOHC, 48v / **POWER** 544kW @ 8400rpm / **TORQUE** 690Nm @ 5500rpm / **WEIGHT** 1575kg / **0-100KM/H** 2.9sec (claimed) / **PRICE** \$789,425

IF THIS new Lamborghini Aventador S has a job to do – over and above the usual one of providing the most attention seeking and dramatic way of getting from A to B – it is to prove to the world that Sant'Agata's 'super sports car' can be as much about substance as it is style.

The original Aventador LP700-4 remains a spectacular looking car, underpinned with a genuinely impressive pushrod-suspended, carbon-fibre chassis and a thumping 515kW naturally aspirated 6.5-litre V12. No mistake, the Aventador is the 'proper' Lamborghini for those who consider the Huracan merely an Audi R8 in Italian designer clothes.

But for all the rebellious, hairy-chested tradition drawn from the Miura, Countach, Diablo and Murcielago, the Aventador has been accused of being somewhat dumbed down in the driving stakes. Sure, it was fast, noisy and bold. But it was

also heavy, blunt and with a handling balance tipped more toward 'safety' understeer than white-knuckle thrills.

The limited-production SV version launched in 2015 proved that with a few dynamic tweaks and a little extra power there was potential in the Aventador to ruffle a few feathers in the supercar establishment, exactly as the brand has done since its founding in 1963. By stripping out 50kg, increasing the power to 552kW, adding the controversial variable-ratio Dynamic Steering and improving the car's aero, Lamborghini was able to get within a whisker of the Porsche 918 Spyder's lap time around the Nurburgring. Not bad for a car relying on good old fashioned V12 grunt over hybrid gimmickry and with a list price about a third that of Porsche's technological tour de force.

For the Aventador S, Lamborghini has carried over some of what it learned from the SV – Dynamic Steering included – while making the

aforementioned power increase and aero upgrades. It has also added that latest supercar must-have, four-wheel steering, and thoroughly reworked the suspension and control systems. It's done all this without adding to the weight, which remains at 1575kg by Lamborghini's preferred 'dry' figure. To put that into context, a Huracan is 1422kg by the same measure.

The Aventador S still feels hefty, but has more aerodynamic grip and increased agility from the four-wheel steering, so Lamborghini clearly hopes to address the criticisms about the Aventador's lack of dynamic sparkle. Just in case you thought it was in danger of taking life a bit too seriously, there's a new configurable driving mode over and above the familiar Strada, Sport and Corsa settings. It's called 'Ego'.

Further evidence that the S upgrades are more about handling than bottom-line stats comes when you browse the spec sheet. The 350km/h top speed



STAR RATING

4.0

Like

Stunning looks;
performance;
noise; upgrades

Dislike

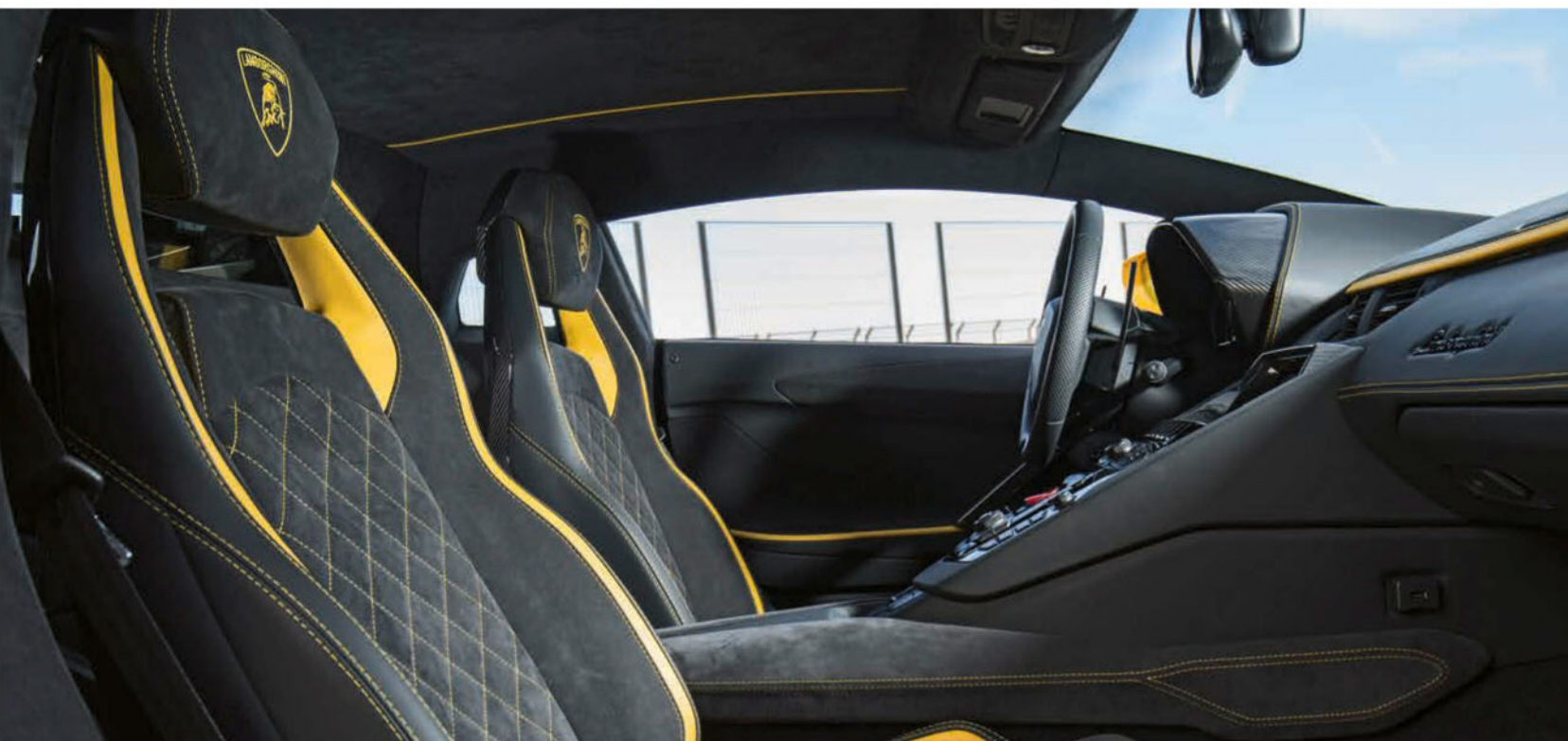
Terrible gearbox;
ride still firm;
massive price

First Fang

New. Fast. Driven.



It is a much more sophisticated car without diluting the raw excitement any V12 Lamborghini should deliver



remains as before and the 0-100km/h time is also identical to the LP700-4's at 2.9sec. It'll push past that to 200km/h in 8.9sec from rest, while 0-300km/h takes just 24.2sec. Be under no illusion, the Aventador S is a ferociously fast car and underlines just how outrageous that V12 remains, even in this age of hybrid assistance. Forget any electrically assisted pretence of saving the planet while travelling at 320km/h, though – updated or not, the V12 still chucks out a suitably unapologetic 394g/km of CO2 while achieving an average of just 16.9L/100km.

Prodigious straight-line speed and profligate fuel consumption are a given in a V12 Lamborghini, of course. What the four-wheel steering and other changes do is attempt to make it as keen to go around corners as it is to make lots of noise about going fast and burning lots of fuel. As in other applications, the four-wheel steering turns the rear wheels in the opposite direction from the fronts for greater agility in low-speed corners. At higher speeds, it turns them the same way as the fronts to give greater stability.

Meanwhile, the variable steering can go from 2.1 turns lock to lock to 2.4, offering scope for front-end bite as well as relaxed cruising and good manners around town. For those who dare to go on track, 130 per cent more downforce at 240km/h from a new front bumper and splitter further emphasises Lamborghini's efforts to improve the front-end grip, suggesting it's listened to the earlier criticisms. Does it all work, though?

Lamborghini's desire to show that it does was somewhat scuppered by freak weather on the Valencia-based launch event – not that you'd know it from the photos accompanying this article. Four-wheel drive or not, a waterlogged track in the midst of the Spanish region's biggest storm in decades is not the best place to be putting a 544kW Lamborghini through its paces. The road route wasn't any better and the mountain roads were closed by snow.

When the track eventually opened, it was strictly controlled ducks and drakes behind cautious instructors. But even at a slow pace, the work that's gone into this new flagship is

The naturally aspirated, 6.5-litre 544kW/690Nm V12 can hold its own against more fancied rivals – even sans electrification

evident. Working through the modes, Strada maintains the surprisingly ponderous feeling you could get from the LP700-4. Unlike most competitors, Lamborghini has stuck with a single-clutch automated manual – dubbed ISR – rather than a faster, smoother dual-clutch automatic. The engineers will tell you it's for reasons of weight and packaging but, in the faster modes, it's also more 'dramatic' in the fearsome way it swaps through the seven ratios available.

In Strada, though, it's hesitant and long-winded in automatic and slow to respond to flicks of the paddle shifters in manual. The conservative front/rear torque split of 40/60 also means you have little choice but to tread carefully into the corner and then bide your time on the way out.

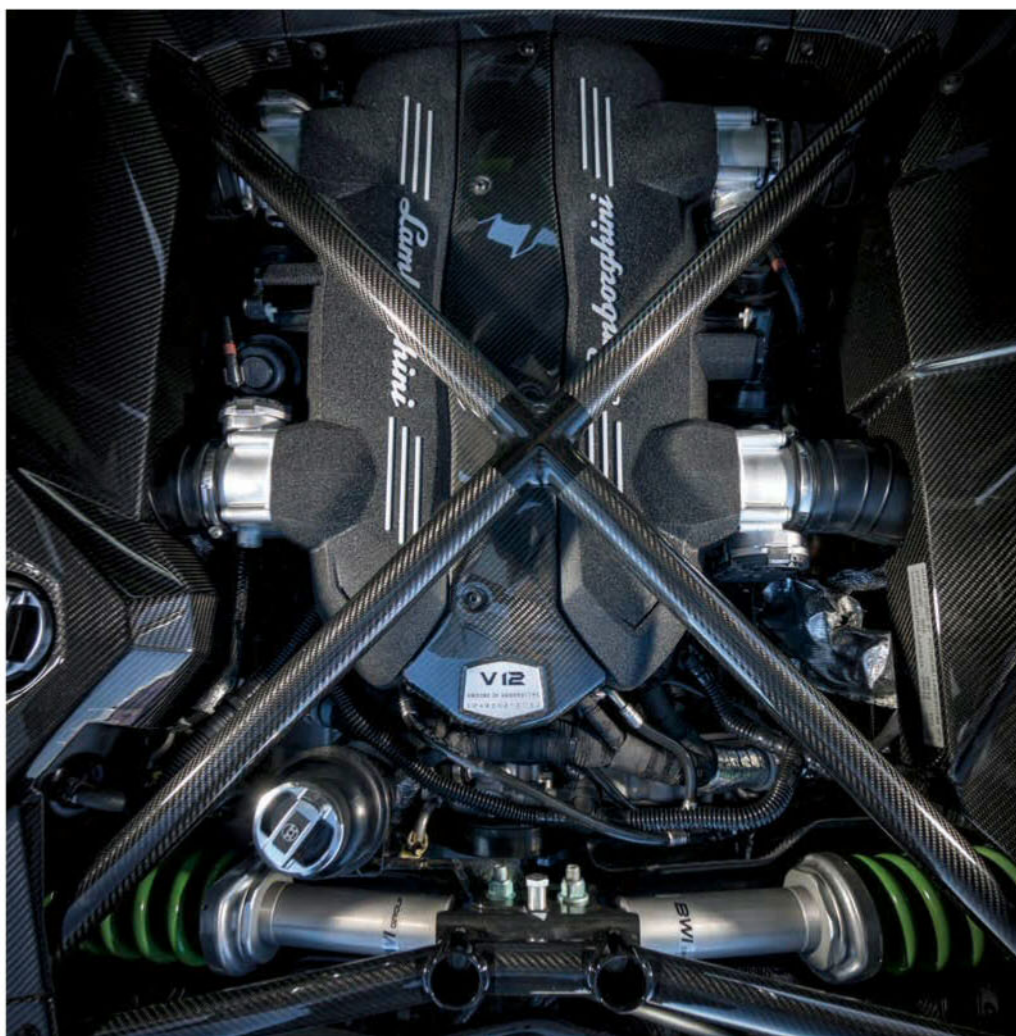
In the wet, Sport is more exciting, sending up to 90 per cent of the drive torque to the rear axle and letting you dial out mid-corner understeer on the throttle; the car rotates with commendable predictability considering the variances in steering lock, effective wheelbase length and rear-wheel steering. The stability control is sufficiently lenient in this mode to demand assertive corrections in slippery conditions.

Corsa throws in brutal gearshifts you really don't want to unleash mid-corner for fear of destabilising the car, as well as a more neutral torque split that'll send up to 80 per cent to the rear axle. It's perhaps more suited to a dry track, because on the day the car understeered stubbornly before eventually sending drive to the front axle to pull it out of the corner.

Ego, for all the novelty value of the name, simply lets you mix and match your preferred settings for steering, powertrain and suspension.

That there's so much to adjust in the way the Aventador S drives is a significant progression from the LP700-4. Rather than a death grip at the wheel and gritted teeth, you now drive the big Lambo with something close to fingertip precision. It's no Lotus Elise in terms of finely balanced nuance and feedback, but it finally has the handling to do justice to that magnificent powertrain, the exotic looks and its sheer force of character.

It is, in other words, a much more sophisticated and rewarding car without diluting the raw excitement any V12 Lamborghini should deliver. It won't win over those who think it a bit much, but for those of us who take a childlike glee in such cars still existing, it's nice to know it delivers on the looks at last. **M**





Mazda MX-5 RF

Roof doesn't put a lid on drop-top's brilliance

ENGINE 1998cc 4cyl, DOHC, 16v / **POWER** 118kW @ 6000rpm / **TORQUE** 200Nm @ 4600rpm / **WEIGHT** 1080kg / **0-100KM/H** 6.6sec (estimated) / **PRICE** \$38,550

MASASHI Nakayama loves a bit of science fiction. The program manager for the MX-5 Retractable Fastback points to the half-hexagonal line where the hard-top's flying buttresses meet each rear quarter panel, explaining that it was inspired by the closing door of a Star Trek spacecraft. But there's more than trivial trickery at play with this tin-topped ND generation.

Stowing two of the three parts for the folding roof mechanism results in the Mazda's boot space falling by just three litres, now 127L. Nakayama-san admits that compared with the larger 2005-era NC there was 70mm less stowage length to work with, so if all three pieces were to drop it would have meant culling the boot or stretching

the wheelbase – and neither were desirable options, so therefore some sorcery was required.

It meant making the bit that stays on top look more appealing than before. The flying buttresses are connected by a header rail that electrically lifts back and above the bootlid. The rear glass acrobats into the same cavity where the manual soft-top is stowed, the final roof piece bunkering just above it. When the buttresses are brought back into place, it means the glass window behind occupants' heads has vanished like magic.

An electric roof mechanism that can operate at up to 10km/h, and lower in 13 seconds, adds back some of the weight ND engineers flushed from the NC. But the increased rigidity of a hard-top meant Mazda could afford to punch

holes in the underfloor bracing without making the RF wobbly. It brings the weight deficit to 47kg, 1033kg Roadster 2.0-litre versus 1080kg RF. The only dimension that changes is height – it's now 10mm taller – while the suspension has been tweaked slightly.

Given there are no changes to the 2.0-litre engine, it's no surprise that the MX-5 RF drives the same as the Roadster. Perhaps on really rough roads there is less steering rack rattle and the tin-top is decently quiet on smooth surfaces, only raising decibels on coarse-chip and with slight wind noise at speed.

With the top up the MX-5 still provides inferior seat comfort and positioning compared with, say, a Toyota 86. The tiller lacks reach adjustability and is a fraction lacking in crispness (again, only by



STAR RATING

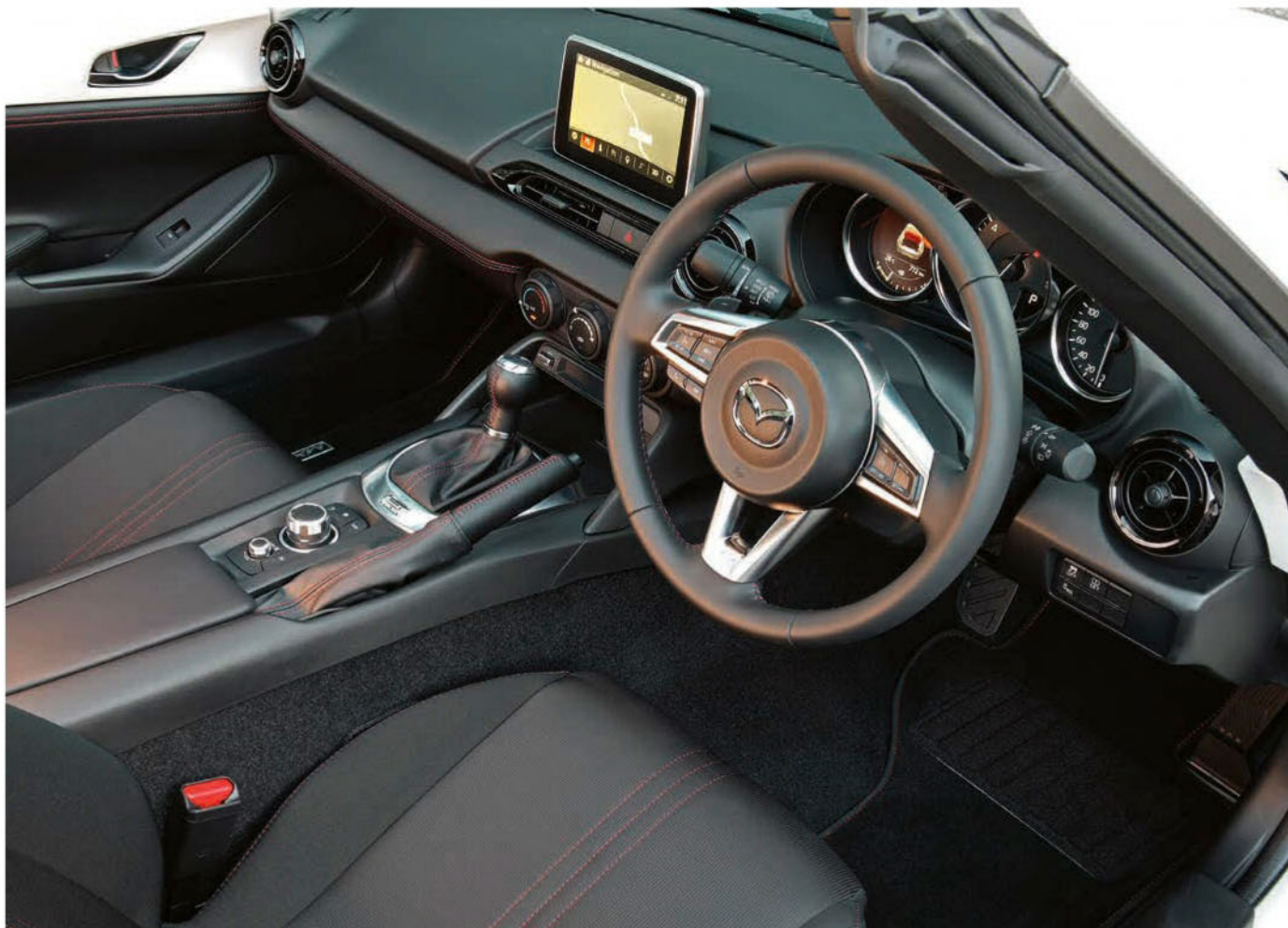
4.0

Like

Brilliant ride & handling; ESC calibration; gearshift

Dislike

Driving position; steering not perfect; dull engine note



The MX-5 remains a hoot behind the wheel in RF guise, but for purists the Roadster is still the one to have



It remains a vehicle that is highly enjoyable to drive and it delivers a supreme feeling of lightness

comparison). The complaints stop with an engine that makes a growly, but uninspiring sound.

Thankfully there is a perfect manual shifter and a surprisingly intuitive auto option. It's the start of what remains a vehicle that is highly enjoyable to drive, delivering a supreme feeling of lightness, a sharp front-end that joins with excellent throttle response to enhance balance, a fabulous single-setting stability control and a resolved ride.

In the latter two areas the Mazda previously had a demonstrable lead over the pre-facelift Hachi-roku, but its coupe competitor has become more 'Mixified' in such areas since its update.

Mazda estimates that 60 per cent of Mixxxer buyers will choose the tin-top despite only being available in pricier 2.0-litre guise and for around

\$4K more than the equivalent soft-top. The \$38,550 MX-5 RF sits some distance above the \$33,340 1.5-litre MX-5 Roadster, yet it will snare 18 per cent of sales (versus 10 per cent), while the \$43,890 RF GT will poach 42 per cent. Around 70 per cent of buyers will pick a manual, too.

But the company also admits that a choice between MX-5 Roadster and RF could simply come down to design preference (and maybe security). To these eyes those flying buttresses seem to create tall and narrow proportions, and from behind they appear like reaching-out gargoyles placed either side of a drawbridge.

For absolutists – and perhaps the Bang For Your Bucks scorecard – it's the cheaper price tag and lightweight purity of the soft-top that still leaves it as the more spellbinding MX-5. **M**



Alfa Romeo Giulia QV

Four-door 'Ferrari' drifts into contention

ENGINE 2891cc V6, DOHC, 24v, twin-turbo / **POWER** 375kW @ 6500rpm / **TORQUE** 600Nm @ 2500-5000rpm / **WEIGHT** 1585kg / **0-100KM/H** 3.9sec / **PRICE** \$143,900

CHOOSE anyone to act as chauffeur for a hot lap of the Eastern Creek circuit in the new Giulia QV and chief Alfa Romeo test driver Armando Bracco would probably be that guy. He might look kind of relaxed and jolly but hell, he developed the car's dynamics so at the very least he'd be able to demonstrate a thing or two and be entertaining at the same time.

"Today we don't drive fast," he says, which is a little bit disappointing. Then there's the kicker line: "Today," he announces with a glint in his eye, "we drive sideways."

And of course he did, picking up the throttle way too early and spinning up both rears well before the apex of the tighter corners, piling on the oppy-lock in a cloud of tyre smoke with the twin-turbo

V6 yammering and grunting at full volume, then setting it up for the next turn and doing it all again.

You've probably heard about the Giulia QV, which has now arrived in Australia to do showroom battle with the likes of BMW's M3 and the AMG C63 S. On paper it's got the hardware. Rear drive, 375kW of twin-turbo V6 power and plenty more stuff – some of which has filtered down from Ferrari instead of up from Fiat, as has been the case in recent years. So it's already sounding very positive.

It is obviously the pinnacle of the Giulia range, which starts at less than 60 grand for the 147kW 2.0-litre turbo model, progresses through to \$72,000 for the tasty-sounding Veloce with a 206kW version of the same engine and peaks at the \$144,000 QV.

Now that's a little bit more than the

cheapest M3 and a lot less than the C63 S, but how does the QV stack up? Until we do the comparo, there's just a few laps of Sydney Motorsport Park (to use its real name) to get a feel for it, but the taste test is enough to make us hungry for more.

First up, despite the prodigious power output and Armando's shenanigans, the QV isn't necessarily an oversteering, tyre-spinning monster. A couple of tricks from the Ferrari 488 have been used, such as the electronic locking diff and torque delivery limited in the lower gears to ensure it can get its power down and launch either from standstill or out of a corner. It'll do a claimed 0-100km/h time of 3.9 seconds on its way to a 307km/h top speed.

It certainly feels that quick, launching hard with the engine

★
STAR RATING
4.5

Like
Use of Ferrari parts; power packed; sorted dynamics

Dislike
Not yet tested on Aussie roads; need more time behind the wheel



Pitted against the M3 and C63 S, the Giulia QV has very big shoes to fill. A mouth-watering comparo awaits

Despite the prodigious outputs, the Giulia QV isn't an oversteering, tyre-spinning monster

emitting that strangely burping V6 rumble, building power and noise levels as it heads for the redline. The dial on the centre console attenuates throttle action, traction control and other parameters, right up to race mode where stability control is virtually absent. But no matter which program is selected there's quick steering (just two turns lock-to-lock), well contained body movement and virtually no understeer. Oversteer, as stated, arrives on tap, but only as ordered.

Because it's based on the all-

new Giulia, previous Alfa foibles have been banished, meaning the driving position behind the three-spoke wheel is perfect, the cabin's electronics and infotainment system are state of the art and the conventional eight-speed auto works like a charm. Diving into the brief options list for the Sparco carbon fibre sports seats with their extra support is a worthwhile idea for any prospective owner.

The QV looks good as well, from the deep front air dam with its pop-out splitter to the side-skirts, rear

diffuser and tiny little boot-lid spoiler. Much of that, plus bits of interior trim, are made from carbon fibre, but crucially, so are the bonnet and roof, so weight has been kept to a competitive sub-1600kg level.

The Giulia QV has the demeanour of a car that's going to be easy to live with on the road as well as being brutally quick on the track and it'll be interesting to see how it goes in the real world. However, the mere fact that Alfa has pulled such a lively rabbit out of its corporate hat can only be applauded. **M**

First Fang

New. Fast. Driven.

by MATT PRIOR



The Vanquish S has the ideal balance of the best recent Astons – it's a gorgeous car to drive



Aston Martin Vanquish S

Gaydon's GT gets more power, chassis updates and styling tweaks

ENGINE 5935cc V12, DOHC, 48v / POWER 444kW @ 7000rpm / TORQUE 630Nm @ 5500rpm / WEIGHT 1739kg / 0-100KM/H 3.5sec / PRICE \$500,000 (est)



Yes, the Vanquish is still down on the F12's power, but I can't imagine the circumstances in which 444kW is insufficient. Unlike the turbocharged V12 of the DB11, you do have to work the motor a bit to get a huge shove in the back, but it rewards the effort.

The eight-speed auto is the same as before, but there's a new, firmer coupling between the engine and the propshaft (the gearbox is at the back), which makes gear shifts feel much more urgent, positive and quicker.

The chassis changes? Subtle, but real. The ride is composed and controlled, a little fidgety on pitted motorways and thumpy across cat's eyes, but not quite to the extent that you'd end up complaining about it excessively. There's a DB11 if you do. The steering is lovely, albeit delivered via a heavily squared 'wheel'. Once you've decided which one of its many sides to hold, the feel is great and it transmits messages about what turns out to be a lovely handling balance.

This time of year is a surprisingly good one to test very fast cars in the UK; a road covered in more muck and grease than my lunch table the other day undoes the efforts to give a car mammoth grip and traction, which you'd never run out of in the dry, and makes a car's handling limits accessible at sensible speeds.

Whereupon you find the Vanquish S has the ideal balance of the best recent Astons: settle the nose, enjoy the steering as you turn and feel the chassis come alive as you squeeze the throttle on the exit. It's a gorgeous thing to drive. If the DB11 teaches you anything, it's that old-school Astons feel less gorgeous to sit in these days, but while the Vanquish is ageing, it's doing so gracefully – and by enough to tide it over for another couple of years, dignity and appeal intact. **M**

ASTON Martin's 'second century plan' has just brought us the DB11, but it still has other cars for sale. You know what we used to say; sometimes they look a bit alike and do alike. Of them all, though, spare the biggest thought for the Vanquish, whose patch the DB11 encroached on most as that car replaced the DB9. The Vanquish was Aston's most powerful series production model and flagship super GT, and it needs to stay on sale – and stay selling – until its replacement arrives in 2019.

Some at Aston feel it wasn't totally on-message for the segment anyway. "It was more GT than super GT," says Aston. One problem is that the Vanquish's non-Aston rivals include the Ferrari F12, which is rather loud, rather urgent and rather 545kW. Basically, big shoes to replicate. So Aston has looked to inject a bit more 'super' into the Vanquish's GT mix.

There's a few tweaks, then – let's have a look. Power is up from 424kW to 444kW, and while peak torque stays the same at 630Nm, it's spread across a wider range. There are new exhausts and more carbonfibre

on the outside, including bits that reduce frontal lift, and there are suspension alterations.

I say tweaks, but even the smallest changes are rather in-depth. Front and rear springs are both 10 per cent stiffer and rear roll stiffness is up by three per cent. Additionally, the dampers have been retuned so that while the primary ride (body control) is much improved, the secondary ride (over small imperfections) doesn't take a hit.

Alterations have also been made to the compression and rebound damping resulting in less understeer and greater agility. The steering – still hydraulic – is said to offer better connection and a more progressive build-up in weight. Oh, and they've added an S to the name.

I haven't driven a Vanquish for a while, but I can tell there's more noise on start-up. More all the time, in fact, from the 5.9-litre V12. The note is a bit more howly and hollow, but it never gets too tiring. I rather like it at a subtle 3000rpm upshift or downshift – actually all the revs you need on the road most of the time.

Aston Martin has injected a bit more 'super' (20kW to be exact) into the Vanquish mix – and it needed to



STAR RATING

4.0

Like

Effortless grunt; handling balance

Dislike

Getting long in the tooth; odd-shaped steering wheel



VW Tiguan 162TSI

Not a Golf GTI on stilts but still a brilliant car

ENGINE 1984cc inline-4, DOHC, 16v, turbo / **POWER** 162kW @ 4500-6200rpm / **TORQUE** 350Nm @ 1500-4400rpm / **WEIGHT** 1637kg / **0-100KM/H** 6.5sec (claimed) / **PRICE** \$48,490

IT HAS the Golf GTI's 162kW EA888 four-pot engine and matches it to 100km/h (6.5sec). It has a lap timer in the infotainment system. And with the popular R-Line option pack it looks half angry with a smart bodykit and those chunky 20-inch wheels. So is the new Tiguan 162TSI – the hottest version of Volkswagen's 'baby' SUV yet – a Golf GTI on stilts?

No, it isn't. And though we have no idea if they were ever tempted, Volkswagen's done the right thing by not fitting GTI badges. Not only would have been confusing – the GTI badge has never gone on an all-wheel drive car, let alone an all-wheel drive SUV – but it would have been wrong. Tiguan 162TSI is what this car is.

What that means is it's an excellent everyday car that's surprisingly fast and competent up a twisty road. It's the kind of car you buy to share with your partner – who couldn't care less about cars – only to be reprimanded for driving too fast and having too much fun on alpine roads returning from the ski holiday.

Around town the Tiguan is brilliant and even people not interested in

performance driving should grab the \$4000 R-Line pack for the ride-transforming adaptive dampers alone. With the R-Line pack and the \$2000 Driver Assistance package – which adds blind-spot monitoring, radar cruise control, full TFT instrument display and 360-degree parking camera – the 162TSI (which starts at \$48,490) becomes an incredibly well-equipped car for \$54,490.

Parked next to the old Tiguan the new one is noticeably larger but still reasonably compact, its respectable 1637kg helping maintain relatively perky performance. Boot it and the 162TSI accelerates rapidly if uneventfully, the 4MOTION ensuring fuss-free traction. The sound is very mild mannered – it won't be attracting attention – with a subdued turbo whistle and muted DSG fart.

The R-Line's adaptive dampers, in their firmest Sport mode, work well on a smooth road but quickly lose compliance and make driving fast unpleasant when the road gets bumpy. Thankfully an Individual mode lets you combine a sporty engine and DSG with softer dampers, making the



162TSI a surprisingly fast, compliant and engaging back-road burner.

Ultimately this is a zippy passenger car that also does sporty – and does it well – with a secure chassis tune. To call it a GTI would require huggier seats, more aggro tyres and brakes, revised Sport mode damping, half-off ESP, perhaps a more lively chassis tune and a growlier engine note. And even then the leap straight to R might make more sense with the all-wheel drive. Until then the 162TSI, though the fastest Tiguan yet, remains a brilliant daily driver – not a car you're likely to drive for driving's sake, but one in which you'll happily take the scenic detour. **M**



STAR RATING

3.5

Like

Pretty zippy; ride; comfort; interior

Dislike

It does sporty well but it's not a performance car



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BMW M140i

New engine transforms M-car in waiting

ENGINE 2998cc in-line 6cyl, DOHC, 24v, turbo / **POWER** 250kW @ 5500rpm / **TORQUE** 500Nm @ 1520-4500rpm / **WEIGHT** 1445kg / **0-100KM/H** 5.1sec (manual) / **PRICE** \$64,990

YES, BMW has released a replacement for the M135i. You may not have noticed. That's because, apart from the M140i badges, visually, the upgrade is a bit of a trade secret.

But don't think non-event, because under that stumpy little lid is not only an all-new engine from an all-new engine family, but also a better unit with more power, more torque and more attitude. And in a vehicle that was hardly lacking the latter in the first place, that's saying something.

Interestingly, BMW has hung on to the existing 3.0-litre six-cylinder turbo with its front-mount intercooler for the M2 model, giving that car its own distinct personality. Which means the new engine, dubbed B58 in BMW-speak, is for the non-M models. But trust us, it has all the spunk you expect from a fully fledged M-car.

The new engine remains three litres, but actually has a slightly larger capacity of 2998cc (versus 2979 for the N55) thanks to a new bore-stroke relationship. In fact, the new motor is actually more undersquare than the N55 at 82mm by 94.6mm (84mm by 89.6mm) probably since longer-



stroke engines tend to achieve better cylinder-fill which is crucial in a turbocharged application. Beyond that, the N55's cast-iron cylinder liners have been flung and the new unit uses a sprayed-on ultra-thin plasma material known as Nikasil.

The B58 continues the use of a twin-scroll turbocharger, but the intercooler is now inside the intake manifold. As well as neater packaging, this move is aimed at reducing turbo lag. And does it? Holy cow, does it ever. The B58 has already won awards around the world; it's a cracker. There's pretty much zip lag in the lower gears and only the slightest delay in the taller ratios in the six-speed manual

version we drove. Go for the eight-speed auto and lag won't exist.

But it's not just instant, the grunt is also prodigious. There are 10kW more than the M135i had, and those 250kW are matched by a full 500Nm of torque (50 up). But it's the torque curve that really makes you sit up straight. While the power peaks at 5500rpm, that max-twist is being produced anywhere from 1520rpm to 4500. That spread means that even in sixth gear at a lazy 100km/h, you're already 600 or 700 revs into the full-fat zone.

On the road, the M140i feels much like the M135i did, including the rubbery steering feedback but otherwise surefooted feel. However, it's now stroprier and even more flexible. The grunt comes on strong and even though power maxes out at 5500rpm, the B58 still has the will to spin all the way to 7000rpm without an appreciable trailing off. It's engine tech like this that must make hybrid and plug-in driveline engineers grit their teeth. Because it proves that the internal-combustion baby has life in it yet and that BMW still knows how to build a great straight-six. **M**

★
STAR RATING
4.0

Like
Stonking new engine

Dislike
Artificial steering feel; unconvincing looks; price hike

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DECLASSIFIED *Kia Stinger GT*

Stinger



Missile

by ANDREW CHESTERTON

It's rear-drive, circa \$50K and boasts a 272kW twin-turbo V6.
But can Kia's new Stinger GT win our fast four-door hearts?





*The Stinger will arrive with the hopes of the company
resting squarely on its **muscular metal shoulders***



W

E'RE EXCITED about the new Kia. Just let that sink in for a moment. We're. Excited. About. A. Kia.

Now ordinarily, the Korean maker of automotive's sensible shoes would be as likely to grace these hallowed performance pages as a ride-on lawnmower. But then, this really isn't an ordinary Kia.

Flashback to an icy January at the Detroit auto show and the excitement

coming off Kia's new performance boss in great shimmering waves is genuine. "For the Kia brand, the Stinger is like a special event," he says. "Because nobody expects it. Not just the way it looks, but also the way it drives. It's a whole different animal."

This is a man who knows what he's talking about. Albert Biermann was a 32-year veteran of BMW's engineering division, most of that heading up the brand's fabled M division. Resumes don't get much stronger than that. He was poached to Seoul in 2015, hired specifically to inject the one elusive ingredient that's been so far missing from the Koreans' ever-expanding line-up – excitement.

Biermann's sizeable brief spans both Hyundai and Kia, and will include the soon-to-be-released Hyundai Genesis G70 and the same brand's much-hyped N range of performance vehicles. That the letter N will follow M in Biermann's alphabet soup is surely more than a coincidence.

But first, the Stinger. It'll be Biermann's first finished project to hit Australian shores when it touches down later this year, and it will arrive with the hopes of the company resting squarely on its muscular metal shoulders. It's a high-stakes game. If this one stinks, excitement for the other new models – including those from Hyundai – will splutter and die along with it.

Kia Australia knows just how harshly its car will be judged here, with ours a country like no other when it comes to accessible performance sedans, and one long dominated by a pair of local heroes that split the loyalties of a nation almost as brutally as that talking orange peel currently living in the White House has done in the USA.

But while rival fans of both Holden and Ford would happily set each other on fire at Supercars' races around the country, there was one thing they could always agree on: a white-hot hatred of outsiders. Had Kia attempted to launch the Stinger five years ago it would have been a very different story. It would have been chased off Mount Panorama by pitchfork-wielding Commodore and Falcon fans united by a common Korean enemy.

In 2017, though, the landscape looks a little different. Ford has shuttered its local factory, ending 88 years of local manufacturing and retiring the Falcon nameplate forever. Holden is months away from doing the same, confirming October 20 this year as its final day of Aussie production. The Commodore name will live on, but only as a badge glued onto imported product.

Of all the car brands to swoop in and save Australia's accessible, rear-wheel drive performance market, Kia was the most unlikely. But its timing is perfect.

"This is a product with the power to surprise. We wanted to create a product that had a lot of emotion, and create a product that would really enhance the brand from where it currently is. It's definitely different from anything we've done," Kia Australia's general manager of product planning, Roland Rivero, said.

"This is definitely another level of performance."

Born of a six-year gestation (it was first shown in concept form in 2011) Kia's two-tier Stinger range is poised for an October debut in Australia, neatly parking in the space that will be vacated by Holden that same month. But the warm and fuzzy feelings mean nothing if the car is rubbish.

And so the Stinger is a swirling sea of firsts for Kia. First adaptive dampers. First car equipped with adjustable drive modes. First car shaped



Will Aussie buyers lust after a Kia? It has all the right ingredients and the company believes Stinger will take the brand's perception "to the next level in Australia"



Bathurst bid? Kia could put a sting in Supercars' tail

IF YOU want to know just how desperate Australia is to find a genuine replacement for the Commodore and Falcon, look no further than the hot-ringing phone of Kia's senior executives.

"We're getting approaches from people that would never have turned their head to look at a Kia," says an understandably smug Kevin Hepworth, the brand's local communication chief.

"It's already been reported that several police departments are interested in the car. We've been approached by a number of motorsport teams, and discussions have taken place in that area, too."

Yup, in the years ahead you could find yourself watching a Stinger belting

around Bathurst. And with Biermann already rumoured to be working on a more hardcore version of the Stinger – and one possibly powered by the group's 5.0-litre V8 engine from the US-only K900 – it's little wonder Australia's racing teams are paying attention.

While Kia is keeping tight-lipped, don't expect a factory team soon, with Kia interested in supporting an existing team instead.

"That's something that the senior executives will make a decision on further down that track. My personal thought is that it wouldn't be a factory team, but a factory-supported team," Hepworth said. —AC



and sharpened at the Nurburgring. First with a mechanical limited-slip differential.

The Stinger will arrive in Australia sporting two engines, the entry-level option being a 2.0-litre turbocharged four cylinder that will produce 190kW at 6200rpm and 353Nm from 1400rpm. The second option, though, is the one causing all the fuss. A 3.3-litre twin-turbo V6 that will generate 272kW at 6000rpm and a meaty 510Nm from 1300rpm and will arrive in the Stinger GT model.

Expect a 0-100km/h time of 5.1secs and a circa-269km/h top speed. Both engines are matched to an in-house eight-speed automatic, complete

with wheel-mounted paddles, and power is sent exclusively to the rear wheels in Oz-spec cars.

Pricing is a tightly held secret, but expect circa-\$40K for the entry-level car, and circa-\$50K for the top-spec Stinger GT.

So far so good, then. Australia's unique appetite for performance has forced the brand's local HQ into some critical spec changes, too. All-paw cars won't be coming here, and even the entry-level model will arrive with a mechanical limited-slip differential, along with a five-stage driving mode selector (Sport, Personal, Eco, Comfort and Smart) that will shift damper settings, accelerator mapping and steering weight. The smaller capacity engine rides on 18-inch alloys, while the GT sits on 19s, with the latter also nabbing Brembo brakes front and rear. Both models get MacPherson struts up front, and a multi-link independent setup at the back.

The chassis (55 per cent ultra high-strength steel) was shaped then sharpened at the Nurburgring, with a camouflaged Kia stoking the fires of Stinger interest by banging out countless well-documented laps of the world's most brutal racetrack. Detailed specifications are yet to be revealed, but engineers were shooting for as close to a 50/50 weight distribution split as possible.

Finally, the electric power steering system was designed with steering feel and feedback in mind over all else.

All of which is delightfully anti-Kia. And on paper, the Stinger ticks a lot of boxes. But the biggest unknown is how Australia's performance faithful will respond to a rear-drive sedan from a company not known for setting pulses racing. And let's be fair, there's a reason Holden and Ford are abandoning their two most well-known nameplates – and it's not because they're selling too many of them. The large sedan market is disappearing faster than you can say "SUV", with 39,392 cars sold in 2016, down 10.4 per cent on 2015's 43,940, which itself was down another 7.7 per cent on 2014's 47,387. And so on.

But Kia Australia is convinced there's a market for what it calls "the traditional Aussie six", and is even more certain its Stinger will be packing the arsenal

The design of the liftback Stinger is almost more menacing from the rear. And with the GT's powertrain, you might have to get used to seeing a Kia with quad tailpipes ahead of you on the road – and maybe the track

With an impressive 272kW of power and 510Nm of torque the 3.3-litre twin-turbo V6 will be no slouch – a 0-100km/h time of 5.1 seconds is testament to that



*Of the brands to swoop in and save Australia's rear-wheel drive performance market, **Kia was the most unlikely***





Quality materials, such as Nappa leather and high-end touchscreens, takes the fight to German rivals. The list of features is extensive given the starting price



5 Stinger Things: South Korea entering new territory

one

EIGHT PACK

Aussies yearning for a V8 could be in luck with a 313kW/510Nm unit within the Kia family

two

BOOSTER DONKS

Both the 190kW four and 272kW V6 are turbocharged with an eight-speed automatic

three

BRAKING POINT

Stinger GT variants will come with Brembo brakes all round and ride on 19-inch alloys

four

AUSSIE TUNE

The KMAu ride and handling team will refine the suspension setup for Australia

five

WAGGING TAIL

All Oz Stingers will be exclusively rear-wheel drive – and fitted with a mechanical LSD



*Will the Stinger **live up to the hype?** Only time, and sales, will answer that question*

Items like adaptive cruise control with automated emergency braking, lane keeping assistance, forward-collision warning and cross traffic alerts combine with Kia's seven-year warranty

to fight its way to the top of that segment.

"The wheelbase does straddle that of a Commodore or Falcon. We believe there's still a market here in that large car segment, and while the formula might change from what Holden and Ford were offering, there's still a market for the traditional Aussie six," Rivero said.

But it's not just the local heroes Kia is targeting. Asked what cars the new Stinger was benchmarked against, Rivero doesn't hesitate – "the BMW 4 Series". And that means an ambitious premium push for a manufacturer famed for its budget offerings.

"We've got to make sure we get the product right, the trim levels right and the specification levels right," he says. "Once you step up into this segment there's an expectation of the kinds of things you should get in a vehicle. And we want to make sure that we deliver that and more."

Our Stingers will be further fine-tuned by the Aussie HQ's suspension consultant Graeme Gambold, who has done some stellar work on Kia's range over the past few years, hammering out the fluffiness usually found in Korean or US-spec vehicles, adding both feel and feedback to the drive experience.

"Our tuning work is a combination of tuning in handling, but also tuning in a variety of road surfaces. It's why a unique spring rate and dampers are required to accommodate our kinds of drivers and our kinds of roads. Basically what we are aiming for is a particular compression and

rebound curve and I think this more advanced technology actually gives us more freedom to get to our targets," Rivero said.

Captain of Kia's crayons, Peter Schreyer (he is of Audi TT fame), is the man responsible for injecting a sense of premium fashion into Kia's once dowdy design philosophy. The Stinger is his baby, from concept form all the way to production.

At 4831mm in length and on a 2906mm wheelbase, it's about odds-on for both the Commodore (4919mm and 2915mm) and the Falcon (4949mm and 2838mm), and actually a longer wheelbase than key premium competition like the Audi A4, Lexus IS and BMW 4 Series Gran Coupe.

It looks the business, too. Not as premium or as potent as its competition, maybe, but not without its own charm. Kia's new-look 'Tiger' grille (it's now thinner and wider) dominates the front, separating two swept-back headlights that point to the puffed-up wheel arches. The bonnet is punctuated by two high-mounted (and purely ornamental) vents, while the fastback roofline gently drops away as it meets a muscular shoulder line above the rear wheels. Four exhaust tips complete the picture, housed below the fastback-style boot.

So, will it live up to the hype? Only time will tell. But in the words of one senior Kia executive: "The Kia you knew five or even 10 years ago is gone."

That much is indisputable. But what exactly will replace it? We'll find out later this year. **M**

HSV GTSR W1 *First Look, First Drive*





01 *Exclusive
images*
FIRST LOOK

02 *FIRST DRIVE*

HSV GTSR W1

HSV farewells local production with the fastest, most powerful and most expensive Aussie car ever, the 474kW/815Nm GTSR W1

by DAVID MORLEY *pics* CRISTIAN BRUNELLI

01 **FIRST LOOK**

O

KAY, you've heard the rumours – stories about a last-of-the-breed big-hitter to mark the end of HSV's locally produced hot-rods. Tales of near-on 500kW, V8 Supercar suspension and semi-slick tyres. And whispers of a price north of \$150,000. In other words, the most powerful, most expensive Australian-made car. Ever. Well,

just for once, the rumours turn out to be true.

Mind you, it's not that simple and while there is a headline act, HSV has put together a three-car range of big-bangers to farewell the local Commodore platform, just so there's something for everyone. Everyone with fairly deep pockets, anyway.

The farewell line-up has been dubbed the GTSR family and more or less amounts to a GTS sedan and Maloo with plenty of mods and tweaks as well as the big-daddy W1 with pretty much all those rumours bolted to it. Tweaks you say?

Actually, tweaks is selling the changes and additions short, because we're talking some major (and not-so-major) advances in braking hardware, engine tech, wheel size and even bodywork to give the GTSR stuff its mojo. Starting at the start, the GTSR and GTSR Maloo's blown 6.2 (LSA) gets a small power hike from the GTS's 430kW. The new number is 435kW and comes courtesy of a new air filter. Torque remains at 740Nm. A brake upgrade is part of the deal with new-gen six-piston AP Monobloc calipers now grabbing 410mm floating rotors at the front. Four-piston calipers decorate the rear axle. Wheels are now forged 20-inchers in the same sizes as the GTS.

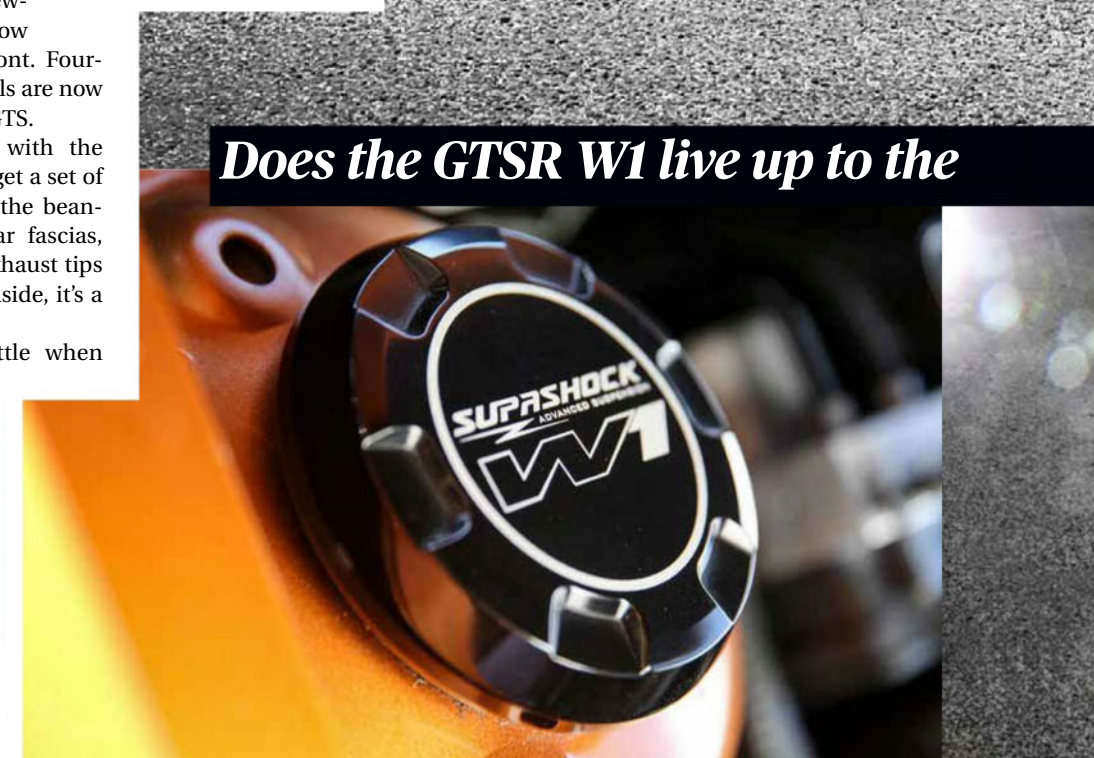
HSV has really gone for the doctor with the bodywork, too, and somehow managed to get a set of widened polypropylene front guards past the bean-counters. There's also new front and rear fascias, fender vents, a rear diffuser, rear spoiler, exhaust tips and, of course, the appropriate badging. Inside, it's a mix of Alcantara and leather.

However, even those mods pale a little when

Magnetic Ride Control – and therefore selectable damper settings – have been bypassed in the W1 for fixed-rate SupaShock dampers. You can still tailor other dynamic parameters such as throttle sensitivity, the bi-modal exhaust and steering weight

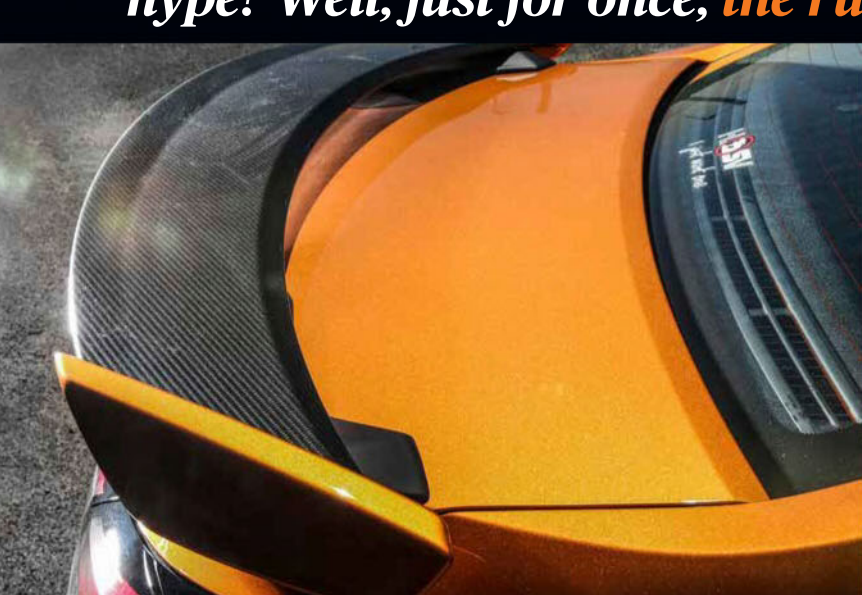
The W1 (and the GTSR range) is far more than just a few badges, hence it receives heavily revised bodywork front to rear. Wider front guards, fender vents, carbon accents, diffuser, rear spoiler and exhaust tips feature

Does the GTSR W1 live up to the





*hype? Well, just for once, **the rumours turn out to be true***



01 **FIRST LOOK**

The race on Sunday, sell on Monday concept is dead? Not so fast. SupaShock, shock supplier to Walkinshaw Racing, came on board to engineer the GTSR W1's suspension setup

it comes to the main stage and the main event, the GTSR-based W1. Don't be fooled into thinking this is just a GTSR with a few more plastic bits. No, no, this is, as they say in the classics, throwing the kitchen sink at her. Let's start under the lid, shall we? Are we looking at a further modified LSA? No, we

are not. Instead, you'll find an LS9 a la the Corvette ZR1. It remains a 6.2-litre engine but with a bigger pump and a range of internal goodness, it kicks out 474kW and 815Nm. Some of the extra power is liberated by being able to rev the thing to 6600rpm, and to achieve that, the LS9 gets forged titanium con-rods, forged alloy pistons, titanium inlet

valves, hollow-stem exhaust valves, under-piston oil jets for cooling, a specific camshaft and a 2.3-litre belt-fed blower. Underlining all that race-tech is a dry-sump system that holds almost 10 litres of oil and incorporates a water-to-oil cooler. That list wouldn't look out of place on the spec sheet of a high-end racer.

Air enters the equation via a carbon-fibre, over the radiator (OTR) snout while at the other end of the combined chemistry and physics experiment, the gasses leave via a two-and-a-half-inch stainless system with integrated cats (for a quicker light-off time) a four-into-two-into one layout on each bank, ceramic coating and a recalibration of the bi-modal valve with the sole intention of making more racket.

The other piece of the puzzle is the intercooler, which has 47 per cent more capacity than the LSA's unit, features a twin brick design (one matrix per bank) a front-mount heat exchanger and a stand-alone, sealed cooling system (it doesn't use the engine's coolant).

You can forget about an auto tranny option for

The component list wouldn't

the W1; there's just no auto that is compatible with the LS9 AND capable of harnessing 800 Newtons. So HSV has cobbled together its own take on the Tremec TR6060, combining the Corvette's gearset (known within GM as MH3). The high ratios are shorter, the

The LSA has been scrapped for the W1. In its place is the rather scarce LS9 with power bumped to 474kW and torque peaking at 815Nm. Capacity stays at 6.2 litres, but it's now able to rev to 6600rpm and the blower has been increased to 2.3 litres



look out of place on the **spec sheet of a high-end racer**

Search Engine

Finding 300 LS9s wasn't easy

ACCORDING to HSV's engineering boss, Joel Stoddart, the move to an LS9 presented challenges. Not the least of which was actually finding the engines, since the LS9 is now out of production.

"We had to head to the US and start going through warehouses trying to find enough engines," he says. "And then we had to kind of beg for them. At the start, we could only find a handful, but we kept at it and found enough to complete the program." The challenges didn't stop

there. "We had to come up with a new accessory drive, too," Stoddart says. "The Corvette has hydraulic power steering so the accessory drive included that. We didn't need that (the Commodore has electric-assist) so the pulleys are our own."

"But an even bigger problem was finding a transmission to handle 800Nm. We knew the Tremec TR6060 from the Corvette could, but that car has a transaxle, not a conventional layout. So we had to somehow

put that gearset into our gearbox casing. Then we couldn't find an input shaft anywhere in the GM world that was the right length, so we had our own made."

Stoddart admits that's a lot of development work for a car that will be built just 300 times. While nobody is saying for sure how much gold has been used, HSV brass reckon the number is close to \$10 million. Yet, HSV claims the car will still be profitable, saying "it's not a price gouge on our part. Not by any means." — **DM**



Under the skin

Where things get serious

01

Noise

A two-and-a-half inch stainless exhaust system and recalibrated bi-modal valve ups the volume

02

Tyres

The track-focused R-Spec Pirelli Trofeos will stick like glue around a track – but risky in the wet

03

Dry sump

The V8 is dry-sumped with an oil capacity of almost 10 litres and a water-to-air oil-cooler

04

Suspension

With the addition of SupaShock items the W1 has suspension akin to (V8) Supercars. Impressive



01 FIRST LOOK

low ratios are taller. That'd be a close-ratio 'box, then. A twin-plate clutch has been snavelled from the Sachs catalogue and there's a solid (single-mass) flywheel.

Brakes start with six-piston Monoblocs up front and four-piston jobs out back. The single-piece design of the calipers allows for a unit with a shallower profile, meaning they can be positioned within the existing 20-inch wheel and still cop a bigger (410mm) front rotor. So they do. The rotors are fully floating with sliding pins and anti-rattle clips to keep them civilised. All up, we're talking 25 per cent more pad area and a 10 per cent reduction in unsprung weight. Really, it's a win-win.

To match the epic stonk, the GTSR range will have the stoppers to harness it all. Up front are 410mm floating rotors with six-piston AP Monobloc calipers while four-pistons are at the rear

Throw in the R-spec Pirelli P Zero Trofeos and it's all starting to look and sound a bit racy, no? Well, it gets better. See, the wider front guards have allowed not just for the 265/35 R20 hoops, but also a change to wheel offset and scrub radius. It sounds Nth-degree, but it's all tried and true race-car stuff.

And, now, so is the suspension. While nobody ever complained too much about HSV's Magnetic Ride Control adjustable damping, for the W1, they've gone for the doctor. SupaShock – Walkinshaw's shock supplier for its Supercar team – has come on board for the W1, supplying a set of shocks with upside-down front struts and what started as a coil-over for the rear. All four corners feature monotube construction, and the rears have ditched the actual, physical coil-over layout so that HSV could mount the rear spring in the original upper spring mount (and the rubber pad) in the interests of keeping transmitted noise down.

The move means the W1 no longer has adjustable damping (although the selectable drive modes still control throttle sensitivity, the bi-modal exhaust and

Throw in *R-spec Pirelli P Zero Trofeos* and it's all sounding racy

Sadly, most of the 300 W1s to be built will never see the light of day, let alone hit the track in anger. After the Falcon GT-HO Phase III, this is surely one of Australia's most collectable cars and a landmark in HSV's history



01 FIRST LOOK

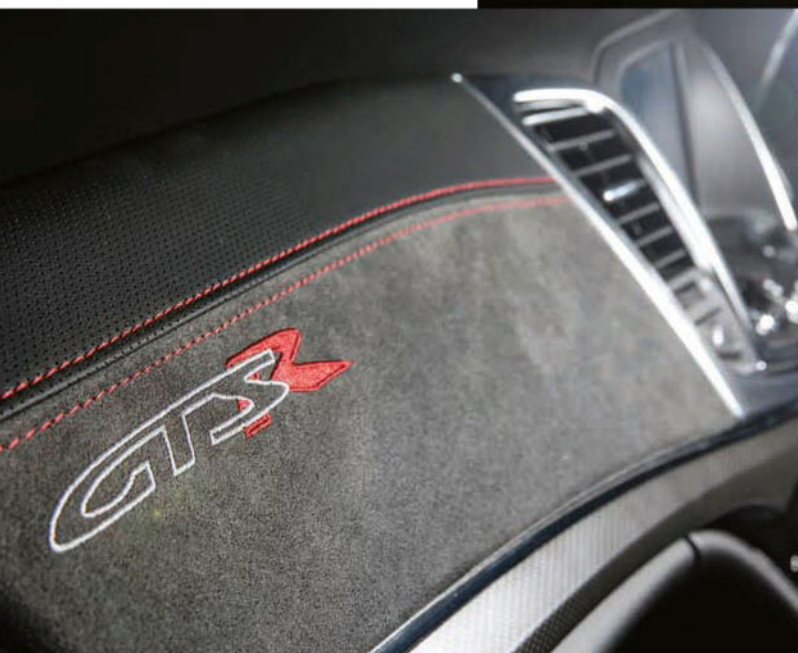
the steering weight) but it does mean that the new spring rate is about 2.2 times heavier than a Clubsport R8. That's a big change, for sure, and it means the W1's spring rates are now getting up towards the rates that you'd see in a Supercar set-up for something like a street circuit. Hardcore, or what? And what's that going to do to ride comfort?

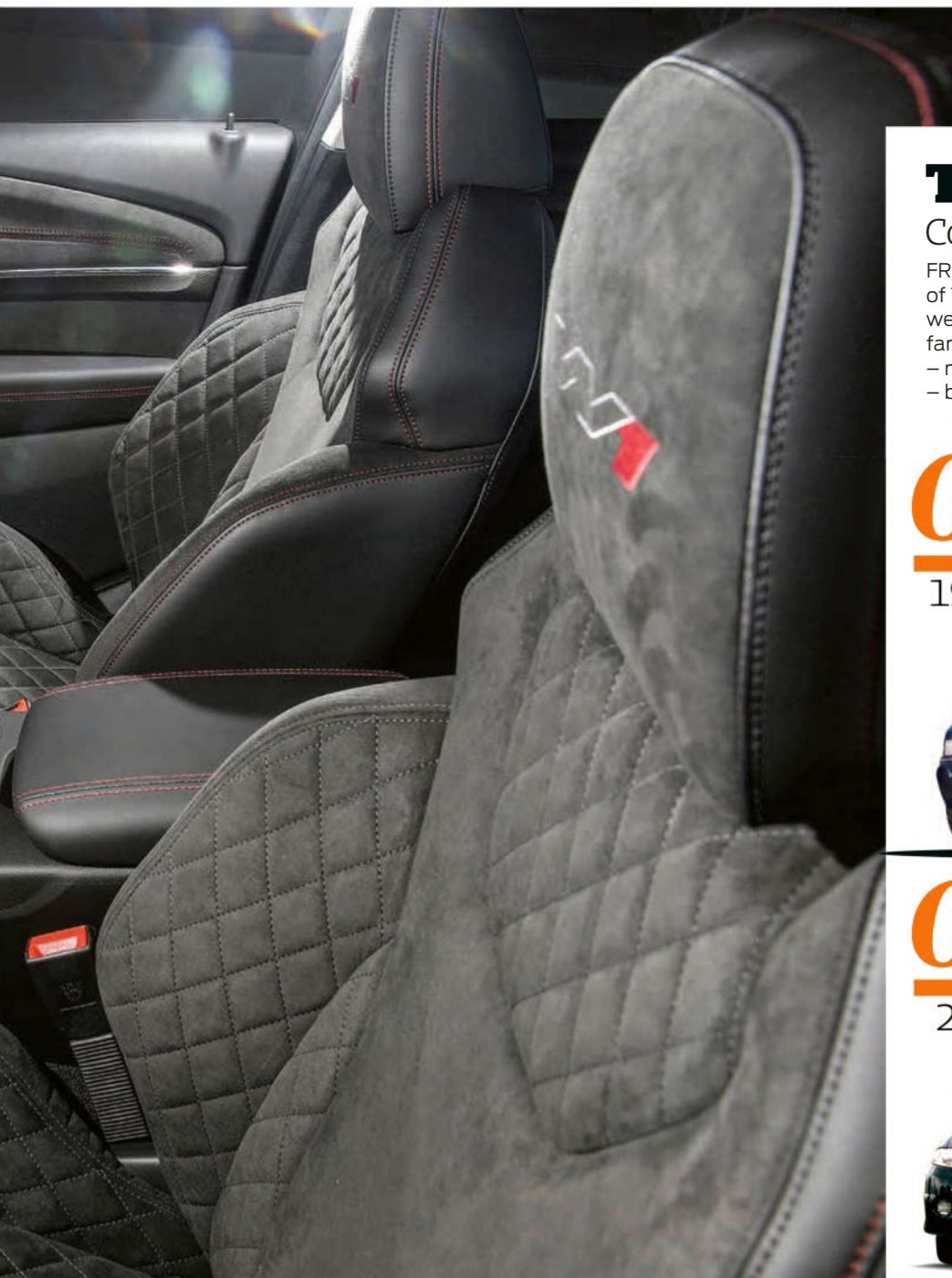
Inside, the W1 gets full Alcantara seating and a tiller and gear-knob trimmed in the same stuff. The diamond-pattern stitching sounds kind of twee, but when you see it in the flesh, it's just lovely. Outside, you'll pick the W1 by its specific 20-inchers, and a heap of carbon-fibre extending from the fender vents to the skirts and the upper part of the rear wing. Then there are the trapezoidal exhaust tips and bold GTSR rear diffuser just to make sure. Nah, you ain't gonna miss it.

Except you probably will. Miss it, that is. See, HSV only has enough engines for a production run of 300 cars (including the handful the Kiwis will get) so W1s won't be lying around like empties after a barbie. There's also the fact that this car is a gold-plated, 24-carat collectible. Few of them will see the road on a regular basis, some of them will possibly never see the road at all. Throw in the \$169,990 ask and you can see why an actual W1 sighting will be a bit of a rarity. **M**

W1s won't be lying around like empties after a barbie

What do you get inside for \$170K? Lots of Alcantara and leather is what. The former adorns the seats, steering wheel and gear-knob, while the diamond stitch looks the goods





The Top Three

Cooler HSVs (if you ask us)

FROM THE original Group A-inspired VL 'Walky' of 1988 to the current GTSR W1 swansong, we list three HSV Commodores that take our fancy. They might not be the collector's choice – most HSVs will be sought after from now on – but all three offer a walk down memory lane.

01 HSV SV88

Toned down after the original HSV, 'The Plastic Pig', the Calais-based SV88 was limited to just 150 units and powered by a 136kW/355Nm 5.0-litre V8.

1988



02 HSV VT II GTS

A landmark Aussie car. Imported Callaway C4B produced 300kW/510Nm, unheard-of stonk for a big domestic at the time. Battled E39 M5.

2000



03 HSV GTS COUPE

'Unsophisticated' Monaro badge was dropped for this \$100K two-door Euro-fighter. Manual-only, potent 300kW V8, specific suspension tune – lovely.

2002







01 FIRST LOOK

02 FIRST DRIVE

...and then we drove it

Our first, and maybe last, fast blast in the ultimate HSV is a bittersweet moment. Add in an empty Phillip Island and it's something special

by DAVID MORLEY *pics* CRISTIAN BRUNELLI



DEALLY, we'd have driven the W1 on the road. But, given production doesn't start until April and HSV isn't even sure there will be a press car (though there's certainly a desire for a car to be made available) a handful of

laps around Philip Island might be the best we'll ever manage. But hey, that's a pretty good second prize, innit? Exactly. Thing is, in any other car, a few hot laps might be less than relevant, but the W1 is so damn track-focused that any assessment without a track component would be incomplete. So, yeah, we'll cop it sweet.

Just jumping inside the W1 is enough to let you know this is special. That diamond-stitched Alcantara is plush and while the same stuff on a steering wheel and gear-shift knob is often asking for trouble, we don't reckon too many greasy paws will be allowed inside a W1. Then you give the starter button a stab and listen as that LS9 blapps into life and, again, you know you're sitting in something tasty. It's definitely raspier than the LSA and way more urgent sounding and feeling. And that's at idle. And, man, it's loud! Yeah, you can shut it up by about 80 per cent by selecting Tour on the drive-mode dial, but why would you? Because it's not just decibels, it's brilliant.

There seems to be a bit of camminess at idle, too, although at other times you're inclined to think that it sounds more like a fattened-up LS3 rather than an LSA with more. Either way, for a blower motor, there seems to be evidence of a fair bit of overlap and, clearly, that cam is a big part of how this thing manages to shovel out those 474kW.

So you'd be forgiven for thinking that it might be a tad soft off the bottom. Bzzt. Okay, the taller first gear is going to make matching HSV's 4.2sec 0-100km/h time difficult to say the least, but the 12.1sec second quarter-mile claim seems vastly less fanciful.

Trundling down pit-lane to hit the circuit proper, there's no hint that first gear is taller than a stocker, really. Then again, 815 Newtons should do a pretty good job of disguising a tall first cog. But what strikes you even more is how docile the clutch is. Okay, so the twin-plate design should make it lighter, but this thing is the complete opposite to the light-switch stuff you often wind up with in really big-power applications. And the gearshift via that stumpy little lever is way, way smoother and slicker than a gearbox capable of this sort of punishment has any right to be. If ever a driveline belied its industrial-strength capacity, this is it.

The VF Commodore base-car has

always been a good steerer with an intuitive feel to the way it tips in, and that hasn't altered here. If anything, it's even sharper and that altered offset geometry must be playing a part there. Then again, the R-spec Pirellis would be having an effect and HSV admits that the tyres are probably the bulk of that difference, helping to justify such a radical fitment for what is ostensibly a road-going car.

Which bring us to the subject of what the Pirellis will be like in the wet. Joel Stoddart admits that they'll likely be "not as capable as a normal road tyre in the wet", but in the dry, they're a bleedin' revelation. Combined with the monster anchors, you can go rushing deep into corners only to find you should have waited another 50 metres before bailing. You really need to recalibrate your brain to account for the fact that the grip is now a match for the braking hardware and the middle pedal is now controlling a beautiful relationship.

Same goes for cornering. The amount of mid-corner speed of which the W1 is capable is going to leave you speechless. As you get some heat into the Trofeos, you can actually start to feel a tiny teensy bit of oversteer as you get into the apex. And it's not just the absolute grip they provide; the feel and feedback is phenomenal, too.

Like all R-specs, these ones need a bit of heat in them to really start working, but with a big heavy car like this one, that won't take long. And that's when you'll go from slipping a bit wide of the apex if you're not patient enough, to sometimes being too tight when you've underestimated the grip. And that's when you'll hit the ripple-strips and discover that even though the W1 is firm beyond road cars as we know them, it's not harsh in the way it rides. That's surely down to those race-car-spec dampers, but the way they've been installed in the HSV means I couldn't get them to contribute any bump-thump into the cabin. Impressive.

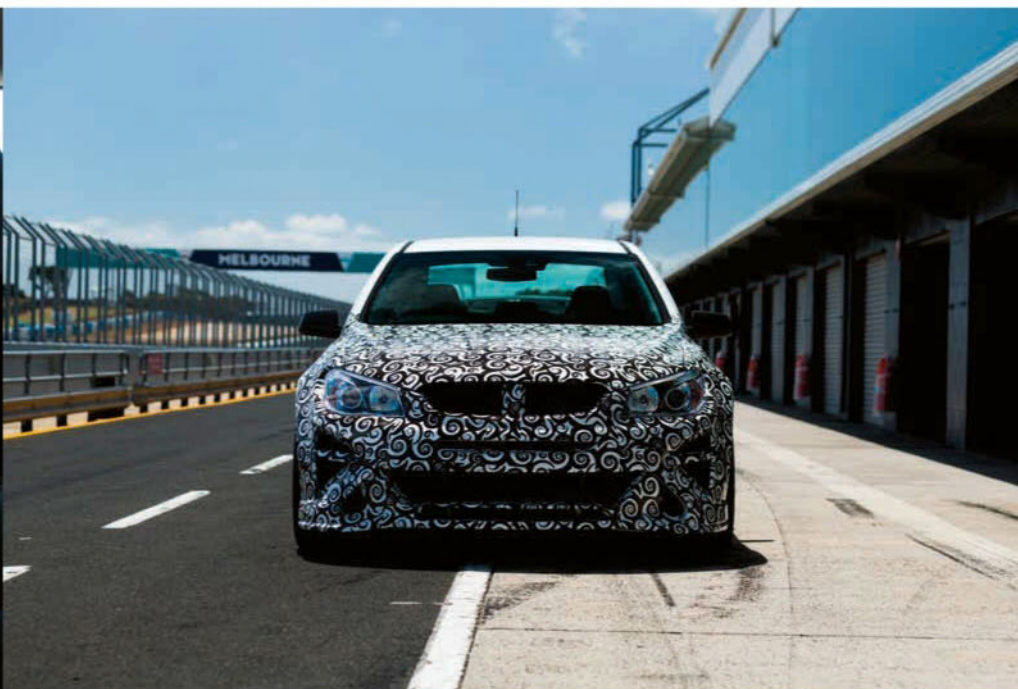
Then there's that engine. There's enormous flexibility here, partly because of the raw numbers, but also because the shorter fifth and sixth gears (100km/h in top is now a 1900rpm proposition) keep her on the boil. And once it's up and making boost in first, changing gears is like tossing T-bones one after another at a Great White. Give it second. Gone. Into third. Gone. Into fourth... You get the picture.

Exactly what the W1 will be like on the actual road is anybody's guess. But awesome is our suspicion. Oh yeah, it'll be super-firm and the tyres will be crapola in the wet and it'll drink ULP like crazy if you drive it properly. But you will be the absolute king of the road. And you will almost certainly be driving the best thing with four wheels this country ever produced. A-hundred-and-seventy-grand is starting to sound cheap.

You can go deep into corners



02 FIRST DRIVE



only to find you should have waited another 50 metres



Camouflaged prototype has had a caning in the name of development but still monstered Phillip Island. With the sticky Pirelli Trofeo Rs up to temperature cornering and braking grip is phenomenal



02 FIRST DRIVE



Luffy Says HSV hires our man

OFF the back of his sterling work with HRT, *MOTOR*'s very own Wazza Luff has taken on the role of HSV's development driver. And he seems to be enjoying the work, too, managing to get a W1 prototype around Winton back in December last year in a time of 1.33:2, more than four full seconds faster than the previous best set by a GTS during HSV's own testing.

So what gives, Luffy? "Right from the outset, I was so impressed with this thing. By turns three and four I'm thinking this is something really special. And it's not like they've just bunged a set of R-Specs on it or a set of high-end shocks; the tyres and SupaShocks really complement each other. For a car as heavy as this, the mid-corner speed and turn-in is phenomenal. You really wouldn't expect an 1800 or 1900kg front-engined car to feel as nimble as it does around a tight track. It makes

you realise how much work has gone into it, and I'm so pleased that HSV has decided to give the big girl a proper send-off.

"And the lap-time everybody is talking about wasn't done with that specifically in mind. We didn't tip 20 litres in, strap on a brand-new set of rubber and go for a lap time. The lap was done at about 1pm on a stinking hot day and the car was weighted to check for guard clearance and all sorts of things. So if you wanted to just go for a time, I reckon it'd go a heap faster." — **DM**



"GTSR gets a bunch of the W1's good bits"



Also driven: the 435kW GTSR

OKAY, so everybody's talking about the W1, but with just 300 examples to be built, it's the GTSR, on which the W1 is based, that will be the HSV we mortals will aspire to. Is that a tragedy? No, not at all. And, in fact, the GTSR gets a bunch of the W1's good bits including the bold new look, headlined by those fattened front fenders and the new front bar that goes with it. And inside, while you don't get the full Alcantara business, you do get some of

it, crucially with that gorgeous diamond-stitch thing going on. It's also a seriously good thing to drive whether you're in the sedan or the Maloo version. The dyno might notice the extra 5kW, but I'm tipping you won't (I didn't). But that doesn't mean it isn't still a riot, because the LSA remains a force of nature.

By far, the biggest improvement is, of course, the new braking hardware. While the GTSR stuff doesn't get the W1's R-Spec rubber, it does get

fairly snotty ContiSportContact 5Ps which will wear better and actually work on a wet road. No cause for sookin', then. And man, the whole package really ties the big guy down. The pedal feel is excellent and if you can make these mothers fade, you're a better butcher than I.

The other big selling point for the GTSR as opposed to the W1 is the fact that you can option the automatic transmission, which is going to broaden its appeal no end. In fact, with the

paddle shifters the two-pedal HSV stuff gets as standard, there's even one less reason to opt for the manual. And with the seamless urge that the auto provides we'd be very tempted.

The other massive advantage held by the GTSR is the dollar thing. While the W1 will get you two beers' worth of change from \$170,000, the GTSR and GTSR Maloo come in at \$109,490 and \$96,990 respectively. Enough left over to build a shed to keep it in. — **DM**

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Driven: GTS & Clubsport

Celebratory update for 2017 HSV range

ALL THIS talk of LS9s and bulked out guards risks overshadowing HSV's bread-and-butter (if that's an appropriate term) range. But tucked in below the W1 and the rest of the GTSR gang lies the volume-selling HSV stuff which, as well as celebrating the 30th year of HSV, will also stand as markers of the end of the Zeta platform and the end of locally made HSVs.

The point is that the HSV range we've come to know still represents the high-water mark in volume-selling local hot-ros

and even though they don't bear the GTSR badge, they still stand to be considered pretty damn collectible.

For this last hurrah, the range has been given a HSV 30 badge, some interior stuff like sill plates, floor mats, an underbody build plate, and some exterior bling including a new wheel design, decals and badges. But don't be thinking this is a sticker-kit upgrade.

Nope, there's a new tune for the Clubsport, Maloo and Senator LSA models that hikes power by 10kW (to 410

and boosts torque by 20Nm (now 691). The bi-modal exhaust valve has also been recalibrated to open earlier than before, purely in the interests of returning more bark.

The biggest news is that torque-vectoring is now standard on all HSV 30 models. When the computer detects a yaw moment, the ESP brakes the inside rear wheel and sends more torque to the outside wheel. And if the stock stoppers aren't enough for you, you can option up the AP six-piston front calipers and 390mm

rotors from the GTS.

A tricky little slalom exercise proves the worth of torque vectoring, although it pays to remember that it doesn't do squat if you aren't inputting some percentage of throttle application at the time. Back out of it and you're on your own, and she'll lay down some pretty lairy sideways stripes.

Beyond that, the experience remains the same as before, so it's still ridiculously good fun. I mean, you don't supercharge a 6.2-litre engine to do the school run, do you? — DM



Price update

What HSVs now cost

More power for all models bar the GTS and price hikes across the range

MALOO R8	CLUBSPORT R8	CLUBSPORT R8 TOURER	SENATOR SIGNATURE	GTS
\$79,990	\$82,990	\$88,990	\$95,990	\$98,990

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Mad Bull

by GEORG KACHER

The new, still-secret Huracan Performante could be the fastest Lamborghini ever. We divulge its wild active aero – and drive it







T'S EARLY on a chilly December morning in Northern Italy. In theory, the Imola circuit should already be in hibernation for the winter, but instead it is a hive of activity. A new Lamborghini, the prototype Huracán Performante to be exact, has that kind of effect. No caffeine is required to fire up the brain cells today.

The Huracán and Aventador are doing well in terms of sales, but money is tight in Sant'Agata. Lamborghini's charismatic and knowledgeable R&D chief, Maurizio Reggiani, whose main mission is to reinvent the famous marque, is tasked with milking every last drop of potential from the supercar pairing by launching two profitable special editions per life cycle. The Huracán Performante forms part of this plan and is slated for an official reveal at the Geneva motor show.

The Performante is the latest in a long line of track-focused limited editions, but with some illustrious forbears, it has big shoes to fill. This time around, though, the Performante label, previously used on the convertible version of the Gallardo Superleggera, stands for much more than fancy wheels, loud decals and a slight power increase. Despite the tight budget, Reggiani and his team have managed to introduce cutting-edge active aerodynamics to Lamborghini and the supercar segment.

"The new Performante is in essence a Super Trofeo for the road," states the senior vehicle development manager Dennis Schmitz, beaming with pride. "What makes all the difference is the patented ALA concept, short for Active Lamborghini Aerodynamics. It transforms the car by enhancing cornering grip, handling prowess and high-speed stability."

Encouraging words, but the proof will be in the driving. For that, three dormant bulls sit in pit lane waiting for a good prodding. The first and last in line are standard Huracans, the former for Lamborghini's chief test driver Pierluigi Veronesi to play pace car, the latter to provide a dynamic



benchmark. The middle steed is an altogether different kettle of fish, with the swirly camouflage signifying the Performante's prototype status. The psychedelic disguise obfuscates the design changes, but you can still decipher the redesigned nose cone, revised air intakes, new wheels and an imposing rear wing sitting atop wide mounts. Does this alone make the Huracan a dynamic hero and worthy of the Performante designation? No, there's much more at play here.

ALA incorporates three small electric motors which operate a quartet of flaps, two hidden in the front bumper operated by a single electric motor with two more, each with its own motor, under the rear wing. Depending on the drive mode selected, these flaps have the ability to operate simultaneously or independently, manipulating airflow to either reduce drag or increase downforce.

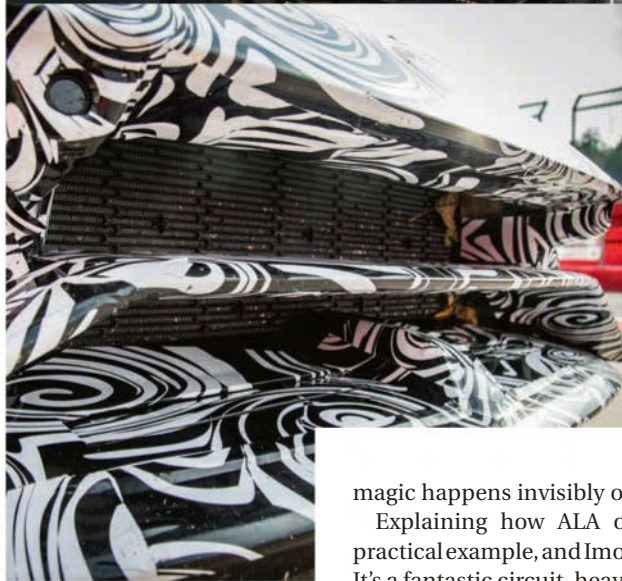
Three dormant bulls sit in Imola's pit lane waiting for a good prodding

In the Huracan's everyday Strada (Street) mode, all four flaps open at 70km/h, remaining that way until 310km/h, at which point the fronts close to suck the front end to the ground. In Sport, all four flaps again open at 70km/h, however, they all close again at 180km/h to boost downforce for high-speed cornering. At 310km/h, this time the rear flaps open to reduce drag – just like the DRS system on a Formula One car – and allow the Performante to chase its rumoured 340km/h top speed, though the final figure will not be revealed until the car's unveiling at the Geneva show.

But it's in Corsa mode where ALA really flexes its muscles; all flaps are able to operate independently depending on the Performante's lateral and longitudinal grip requirements. It's similar in principle to the system seen on the Pagani Huayra, though the Huracan's hidden flaps mean all the

Air enters these small vents before electrically-operated flaps direct it to increase downforce or reduce drag, depending on the drive mode selected





Space is at a premium in the Huracan, though at over two metres tall it's more of an issue for Georg than most

magic happens invisibly on the Lamborghini.

Explaining how ALA operates is easiest with a practical example, and Imola is the perfect playground. It's a fantastic circuit, heavy with history, some of it tragic, and tremendously challenging with plenty of high-speed sections. Before we leave pit lane there's a quick discussion about the appropriate ESP setting: "Sport is dedicated to making the car feel a little loose and tail-happy," explains Lorenzo Rinaldi, who is in charge of vehicle dynamics. "For the fastest lap times, however, you're better off in Corsa. It is more focused and sharper overall. Alternatively, you can of course switch off stability control altogether." We'll stick with Corsa for now.

Accelerating down Imola's long, slightly curved front straight, all the flaps are open to reduce drag and increase straight-line acceleration. Braking for the Tamburello chicane, installed after

the death of Ayrton Senna in 1994, all four flaps snap shut to maximise downforce and press the tyres hard into the tarmac. With a turn of the steering wheel into the first left-hander, the rear-right aero flap opens, releasing the aero load on the heavily stressed outer tyre while the rear-left flap remains closed, pressing the inner rear wheel down to increase grip and traction. As the wheel turns right for the second part of the chicane, the reverse occurs.

Lamborghini describes it as 'aero vectoring', using the air to manipulate the dynamic balance rather than braking individual wheels like traditional torque vectoring systems, and estimates it generates an extra 0.2-0.4g of lateral load within fractions of a second, while also suppressing understeer by permitting smaller steering angles. From behind the wheel the Performante effect is immediate; even with an

**From
behind
the wheel of
the Huracan the
Performante
effect is
immediate**



amateur at the limit, thanks to all this trickery, confidence at the limit is staggering.

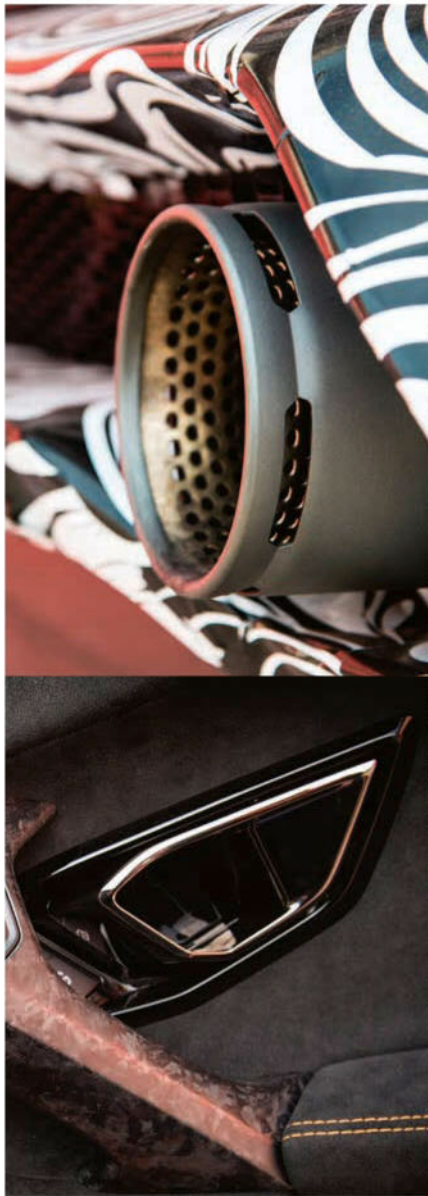
The extra downforce, combined with 40kg less weight and stickier Pirelli P Zero Corsa tyres, makes the Performante feel almost invincible and a remarkably different animal to a run-of-the-mill Huracan. This is proven when following hotshoe Veronesi, who is piloting the standard car. Thanks to ALA, holding your right foot flat where he must lift is easy and to be honest, the Performante is verging on Aventador pace around this track. Of course, this extra pace is not all down to the wild wings; there's the more aggressively calibrated all-wheel drive and ESP systems, faster-shifting seven-speed dual-clutch transmission and firmer suspension.

The substantially stiffer chassis is a tangible asset when fighting the paling red, white and green kerbs of Imola. Despite this calibration, the ride quality on public roads barely suffers, claims project leader Antonio Grandi. "Especially in Strada, springs and dampers are sufficiently pliable. Maximum downforce does of course have an effect on the compliance." But who cares about comfort when you're on a racetrack?

However, it is the perfect place to test the buffer zone between the physical and newfound aerodynamic grip. Perhaps the other significant dynamic alteration is the reprogrammed steering. The effort is now slightly higher in Strada, the ratio quickens in Sport, and there is no longer any variation at all in Corsa, exactly the way Porsche does it.

With the new aerodynamic tech it would be easy to overlook the Huracan's uprated engine, but it's impossible to ignore the vicious bark generated by the 5.2-litre naturally aspirated V10. It sounds rawer and meaner thanks to the lightweight, free-flow exhaust, the high-set tips now exiting directly out the rear of the Performante. Final figures won't be available before March, but thanks to the new exhaust and Super Trofeo-derived intake system, bet on around 480kW/630Nm. According to overheard gossip, this will shave two-tenths from the regular Huracan's 0-100km/h time, leaving it at just three seconds dead.

By 1pm we've completed two full Grands Prix distances and the evidence is clear to see. The fuel tank is nearly empty, the air is full of brake dust and the tyres are spent, rubber marbles splattering the



*In more ways than one, the Performante is kind of a poor man's **Bugatti Chiron***

Raging Bull

Baby Lambo grows horns

LAMBORGHINI HURACAN PERFORMANTE

BODY	2-door, 2-seat coupe
DRIVE	all-wheel
ENGINE	5204cc V10, DOHC, 40v
BORE/STROKE	84.5 x 92.8mm
COMPRESSION	TBC
POWER	480kW @ 6500rpm
TORQUE	630Nm @ 1700-5000rpm
POWER/WEIGHT	347kW/tonne
TRANSMISSION	7-speed dual-clutch
WEIGHT	1382kg
SUSPENSION (F)	A-arms, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar
SUSPENSION (R)	A-arms, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar
L/W/H	4459/1924/1165mm (tbc)
WHEELBASE	2620mm
TRACKS	1668/1620mm (f/r)
STEERING	electrically-assisted rack-and-pinion
BRAKES (F)	380mm ventilated discs, 6-piston calipers
BRAKES (R)	290mm ventilated discs, 4-piston calipers
WHEELS	20.0 x 8.5-inch (f); 20 x 11.0-inch (r)
TYRE SIZES	245/30 ZR20 (f); 305/30 ZR20 (r)
TYRE	Pirelli P Zero Corsa
PRICE AS TESTED	\$500,000 (estimated)
PROS	Formidable pace; handling; aero tech
CONS	Hard to get in and out of; race-car ride
STAR RATING	★★★★★

front and windscreen. But there is still time for one more session before the track closes for lunch and the Performante is like a drug – you're unable to say no to one more hit.

The final 20 minutes on track are intoxication, stimulation and exhilaration combined. This car is so good it could easily cope with an extra 30 or 40 kilowatts, and why not add rear-wheel steering similar to the system which debuts in the Aventador S? Then again, word is the Performante is already faster around the Nurburgring than the Aventador SV, which set a remarkable 6min59sec time. In fact, this new Huracan is said to be the fastest production car around the famous German racetrack... ever.

In more ways than one, the Performante is kind of a poor man's Bugatti Chiron. It is amazingly stable under hard braking, it controls its body movements and it sticks to a line like glue. It's a remarkable sports car which pushes the envelope much further than its nondescript model designation suggests. It's a pain to get in and an embarrassment to get out of, but what happens between these two procedures is dazzling, physical and addictive.

The Performante may have to give best to the likes of the upcoming Ferrari 488 Speciale and Porsche 911 GT2 RS in terms of raw figures, but it is bound to hound its rivals in reality thanks to the game-changing adaptive aerodynamics. This truly is a Huracan on steroids. **M**

The camouflage won't come off the Huracan Performante until the Geneva motor show, where the final power and performance figures will also be announced



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BRUTE



by LOUIS CORDONY *pics* CRISTIAN BRUNELLI

BMW went back to the drawing board with its newest GT3 weapon for a shot at Bathurst glory



FORCE



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THE PROBLEM with the Z4 GT3, BMW will tell you, was grunt – not enough of it. While it could keep the competition honest in corners, the little Bimmer struggled to keep up on straights. And when you're trying to flog brand new racecars to rich gentleman racers, they're not going to buy a car that doesn't flatter. Neither is the pro going to want a car that can't keep up when they've got a trophy room to fill.

It was in 2013 these problems started to reach a head as BMW pondered the Z4 GT3's replacement. It wanted a car with the potency on straights to match mid-corner menace. And not only that, but one with a closer connection to a road-going version (BMW never built a V8 Z4, the powers that be instead looking the other way to accommodate BMW into its sport). Reducing racecar running costs was also a goal.

From the outset the obvious replacement from a marketing perspective was the M4 – its relatively compact dimensions and lighter weight making it ideal, on paper, for the GT3 treatment. But still spooked by the ghosts of grunt from the Z4 days, BMW was not confident it could get its 3.0-litre turbocharged straight six up to GT3 speed. And so the M4 idea was shelved.

If only it had a twin-turbo V8 coupe in its road car arsenal, BMW thought. And before it knew it, its motorsport boffins were walking laps around an M6 exchanging dangerous looks. They'd found their car.

Powered by a 4.4-litre twin-turbo V8 making 423kW and 680Nm in road car guise – conservative figures, some will tell you – the M6's S63 engine was crying out to be unleashed against the V12s, V10s and other V8s then dominating the GT3 championships of the world.

There was a problem, though. The M6 weighed in at 1850kg. If BMW wanted to GT3-ise its storming luxury coupe, it needed a personal trainer, and stat.

Sooner than that, though, another problem presented itself. While the M6's V8 had no issue keeping its cool on the road, it would get a little flustered in racing trim – not acceptable for a racecar that needed to be belted at full noise for sometimes 24 hours at a time.

And so BMW Motorsport's engineers began hardcore testing – on an island. In Sweden.

You've probably never heard of Gotland but, 40 minutes from Stockholm in the Baltic Sea, and never getting warmer than 20 degrees even in summer, with a racetrack it's the perfect place to develop a race engine that's still learning how to keep its cool.

Initially this meant some fairly routine racecar treatment: a dry sump system and some air-to-air intercoolers, while those kidney grilles were put to work feeding air to the turbos and a gaping front bar letting as much air as possible into the radiator.

But still, it wasn't enough, and some lateral thinking was required. BMW moved the intercoolers up behind



When the entire grid is often separated by tenths of seconds, it's the small things that can be the difference between winning and losing, hence the level of detail on a top-level GT3 car is simply staggering



If BMW wanted to GT3-ise its storming 1850kg luxury coupe, it needed a personal trainer – and stat





ELECTRIC FEEL

The rear-mounted gearbox is electronically controlled, independent of the engine, cutting risk of damage in front-end crashes

The M6 can easily hit 300km/h, but the tuning of its engine and aerodynamics limit it somewhat. The engine's boost is also restricted by rules and monitored by race organisers

the kidney grilles and squeezed in an even bigger radiator. With heat exchangers contorted around the front of the engine bay fighting for space, the bonnet scored a bunch of vents to help all that hot air escape.

You'd think with all this plumbing, looking into the M6 GT3's engine bay would be about as exciting as putting your head in the cupboard under the kitchen sink, but you'd be wrong. Unclip the pins and, with two people, gently lift off the surprisingly light and utterly gorgeous one-piece carbonfibre bonnet and you're treated to a purposeful and menacing engine tucked back in the firewall and not sullied by a single dodgy plastic cover. It's all business.

But though the cooling requirements of the M6 GT3's engine have shaped a lot of its exterior, with even more heat to extract the vents don't stop at the bonnet. Ducts on the rear haunches and front bumper channel cool air to the brakes while the bonnet also sends fresh air to the ECU and driver.

The result, as you can plainly see, is a car sculpted by the demands of heat management – and aerodynamic efficiency. And for that it's a thing of absolute beauty.

Things are just as interesting under all that gorgeous carbonfibre bodywork, too. Beginning with the air-conditioning – yeah, mate, she's got AC – but not any AC. With cabin temperatures reaching as high as 60 degrees Celsius, BMW Motorsport recognised the need

to keep not only the car cool, but also the fleshy sack hanging on to the steering wheel, and so the AC is bolted to the Ricardo six-speed transaxle mounted in the rear, the condenser sitting fore of the oil cooler just above the rear diffuser.

Having figured out how to keep everyone and everything cool, BMW returned to the initial challenge: getting the weight down. Unfortunately turfing out the rear seats and stereo wasn't going to cut it.

There is carbonfibre... everywhere. Of course the interior bears almost no resemblance to the road car, stripped of all unnecessary luxuries. And as much metal was taken out of the chassis as BMW could replace with the FIA-approved roll cage.

Meanwhile BMW had to get clever, including bolting the entire front structure – engine, radiators, front brakes, front suspension and front bumper – to the chassis as one piece. With no original chassis from the firewall forward, it's all been replaced with spaceframe, permitting BMW Motorsport to also extend the wheelbase by 50mm to a lengthy 2901mm – all the while tucking the engine as far behind the front axle as possible for optimised weight distribution.

Without suspension towers this means the V-mounted turbos are free to vent their spent gases in as short a journey as possible, maximising response. Hence the exhausts exiting behind the front wheels.



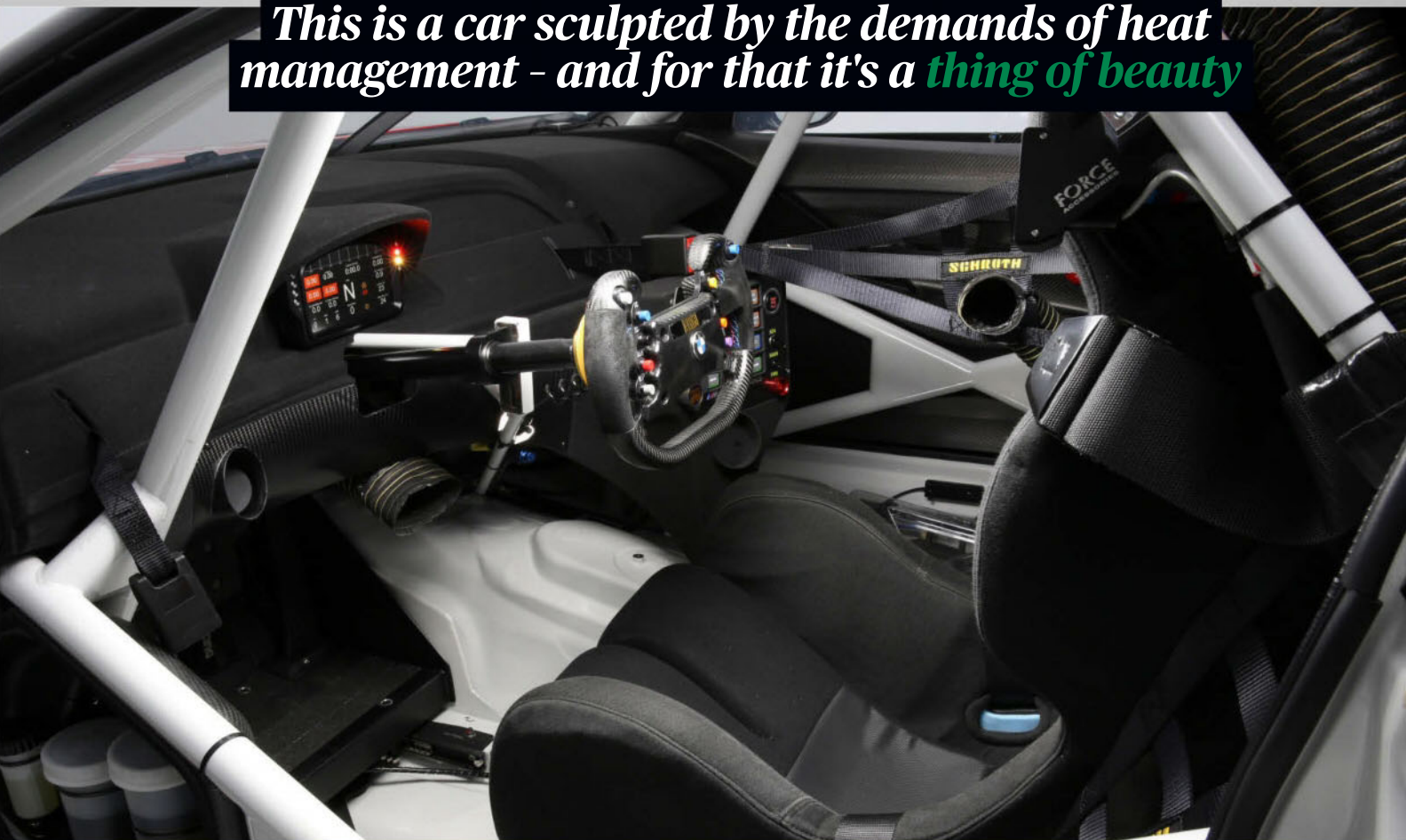
POWER POINT

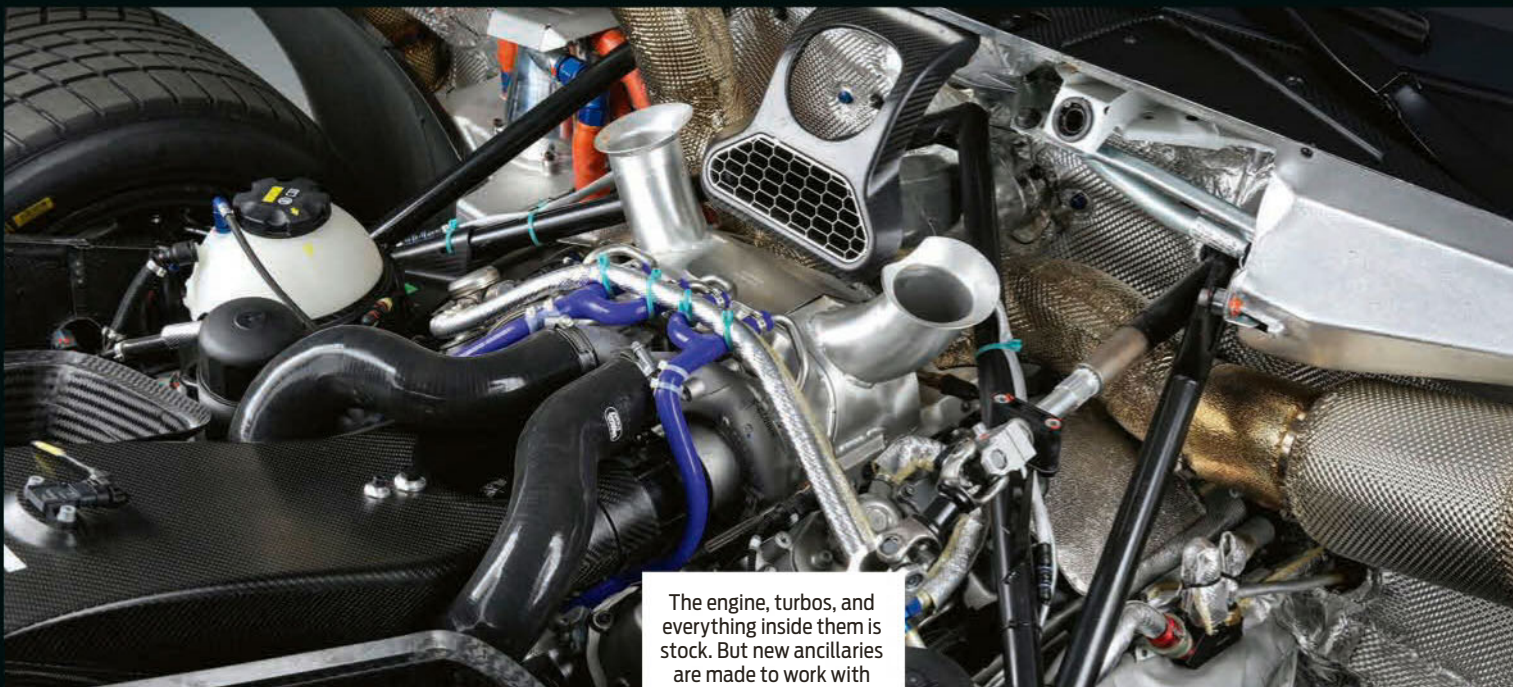
Outputs are governed in GT3 and the M6's are adjusted via boost levels according to what power it needs to meet a regulated benchmark. It can, however, make up to 436kW and rev to 7200rpm

ROAD GOING

Along with the headlights, another item shared with the road car is the power steering rack's base. With the loads this car will see at The Mountain's top, it'd be hard to drive without the hydraulic unit.

*This is a car sculpted by the demands of heat management - and for that it's a **thing of beauty***





The engine, turbos, and everything inside them is stock. But new ancillaries are made to work with the engine's new location lower and further back in the engine bay; (right) iDrive gone, but the starter button remains

The Big Test

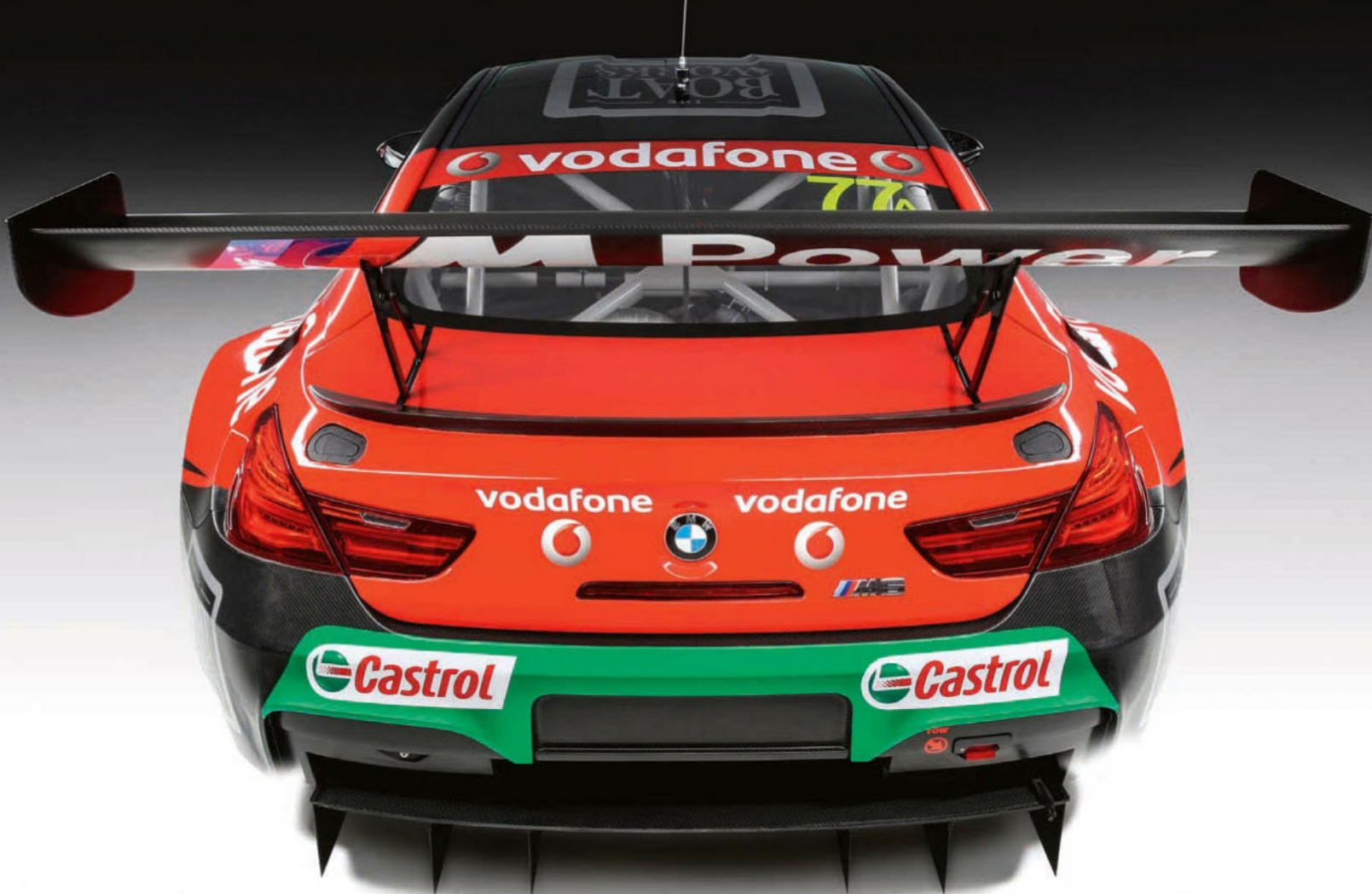
Straight from the factory

BMW SEES Bathurst as one of the biggest customer racing events in the world. So when we tagged along to its private test day at the circuit we learned from Aussie Adam Baker, BMW Motorsport's head of race operations, that booking the track and flying in a crack team of engineers was a given. "We did a similar thing at Daytona [in 2016], it was the first time the car had run anywhere in the world," he said. "So that's how it works, structurally, to identify key events where it makes sense to have a bit of factory support. I can perhaps imagine the following year we'll have less involvement because the teams will have experience." The 2017 Bathurst 12 Hour ended up being a first for almost everybody. It was Mark Winterbottom's, Russell Ingall's, Tony Longhurst's, and Mark Skaife's first race in a GT3 car. Meanwhile it was Marco Wittman's and Timo Glock's first race at Bathurst. Both BMW's factory cars found misfortune, though, with the #7 Castrol Vodafone M6 crashing out at the six-hour mark and power steering woes pushing BMW Team SRM's M6 to 14th at the final hour. Unfortunately Mostert's pace in the M6 didn't see the race's end. — LC



The extraction vent for the radiators and intercoolers (left). This one in particular flanks a central intake box, which directs air to the IHI turbochargers in the engine's vee





The disappointment of the 2017 Bathurst 12 Hour came with valuable lessons – and engineering data

All up, BMW managed to pull 550kg out of the M6 for its GT3, hitting its weight target as stipulated by the category's Balance of Performance rules and putting the bulky Bimmer on par with other front-engine rivals like the Nissan GT-R and Bentley Continental for a weight of 1300kg. Pretty impressive, really.

Of course, it's still Big with a capital B, a brooding 2046mm wide – 34mm more than the Z4 GT3 and 147mm wider than an M6 road car, permitting BMW to fit huge 13-inch-wide BBS wheels (18 inches diameter).

Yet for all that, the M6 GT3 was still not yet ready to race. It was now time for BMW to add the wings. At 1.8 metres wide, the rear wing is plainly enormous and teams up with an aggressive rear diffuser – longer and wider than a pallet – to produce an undisclosed amount of downforce. But across the car – including the fearsomely sculpted front splitter with canards – you can count on it being a lot.

A lot of drag, too, to the point that a road-going M6 would very likely be quicker down Conrod Straight than the GT3 car, which tops out at 'just' 275km/h – almost 20km/h slower than a (V8) Supercar, too. But across the top of the Mountain, the M6 road car and Supercar could only dream of the amount of speed (200km/h) and throttle commitment (flat, often) the M6 GT3 can permit. All thanks to downforce.

As you'd expect the cockpit is very business focused with no frills, including the piece-of-art carbonfibre F1-style steering wheel with paddles easily within a finger's reach. You sit almost more in the middle of the

Despite serious pace at Bathurst's 2017 enduro – Chaz Mostert produced a 2:02.9 lap in the Marc Cars private entry, the second fastest of the race – it didn't turn out to be BMW's day

M6 GT3 than you do the conventional driver's position, your arse on the deck and visibility very restricted in every direction, looking through roll cage and other things to get to the mirrors, which would be your best friend in a car with such limited rearward visibility.

Not that you'll be focused too much on what's behind, such is the animal this car is – talented, too, enough to claim the 24 Hours of Spa in its debut season – one of the jewels of international GT3 racing.

But another must-have GT3 trophy is the Bathurst 12 Hour and unfortunately it wasn't to be for BMW in 2017. The Bavarian outfit threw unprecedented resources at its 2017 campaign, booking the track for a private test session last November prior to the race and flying to Australia some of its best motorsport engineers – something no other manufacturer has done.

BMW's driver line-up was formidable, too. Double DTM champion Marco Wittman joined four-time Bathurst 1000 winner Steven Richards and Supercars champion Mark Winterbottom in one car; while former F1 driver Timo Glock bolted into the car on these pages with Australian touring car royalty Mark Skaife, Tony Longhurst and Russell Ingall the other. Unfortunately for BMW, the Richards car suffered a power steering failure while Ingall had a close encounter of the wall kind. Both cars failed to finish.

But the disappointment came with valuable lessons – and engineering data – that will no doubt be useful in the future. And with the Bathurst 12 Hour seemingly in rude health, there's always 2018. **M**

FIRST FANG 2017 Toyota 86

by SCOTT NEWMAN pics NATHAN JACOBS

Second Round

Toyota's boxer-powered coupe re-ignited the affordable sports car market, but can it still punch above its weight?







*It's a lightweight, naturally aspirated, **rear-wheel drive coupe** that doesn't require a second mortgage to own*



F

IVE years ago, the affordable end of the performance-car market was a bleak and desolate place. If your budget topped out at \$35,000 and you wanted a set of wheels that was fast and/or fun, really your only option was the Volkswagen Polo GTI. If you wanted driven rear wheels, you'd need to keep saving for a \$45K Mazda MX-5 or Holden SS ute.

Then came a bombshell, a lightweight, naturally aspirated, rear-wheel drive coupe that wouldn't require a second mortgage to own, but few would've

put money on Toyota being the company to re-ignite the sector. While its back catalogue was packed with performance heroes, even the most recent was approaching high-school age; it took a petrolhead CEO (Akio Toyoda) to ignore established company protocols and give a talented engineer (Tetsuya Tada) free rein for the conservative Japanese maker to produce its first proper sports car in a decade.

Even so, few were prepared for just how big an impact the 86 would have. I remember the air of dismay from assembled hacks at the 86 launch when Toyota's then-PR boss announced the starting price wouldn't start with a 'three'. I'm sure I wasn't alone at this point in thinking that this new coupe was going to struggle with a \$40K price tag, no matter how talented it turned out to be. However, this dismay quickly turned to stunned disbelief when it was revealed that the starting price would actually start with a 'two'.

Thankfully, Toyoda's bravery and Tada's talent was rewarded, Toyota Australia selling more than 18,000 86s since its June 2012 introduction, with Subaru Australia chipping in almost 4000 BRZs. It makes Australia the third-biggest 86 market globally behind Japan and the US.

But the budget end of the fast-car market is a very different place to that entered by the 86 four and a half years ago. Ford redefined affordable performance with the superb Fiesta ST, Renault slashed the price and broadened the appeal of its Clio RS, VW's Polo GTI has gone from strength to strength and Mazda went back to the drawing board with the latest iteration of its iconic MX-5. In short, consumers are now spoiled for choice, and with 86 sales slowing the facelift has



arrived at an opportune time.

You'll need a keen eye to spot the changes, though. The styling is subtly sharper, with new headlights and a larger grille adding some aggression to the front end and there's a redesigned rear bumper. In addition, the GTS scores a new alloy wheel design and an F-Type SVR-style rear spoiler, which both look quite neat.

However, the 86 has primarily focused on substance over style, letting the driving experience create the biggest impression. On paper the facelift tweaks seem relatively minor, with a stiffer body structure courtesy of extra spot welding at the rear, revised suspension and a new stability control system. The Toybaru's dynamics were definitely a case of "not broken, doesn't need fixing", however 86 chief engineer Tetsuya Tada told *MOTOR* at the 2016 Festival of 86 that the tweaks added up to an "enormous change".

It's important to put these comments in context. No doubt to Tada and his team the differences are glaringly obvious, but we're talking very subtle changes here and even long-time owners are going to need a long and varied drive to feel the effects. Thankfully, as mentioned, there wasn't a lot wrong with the 86 to begin with, so we're still talking about one of the more enjoyable driver's cars around.

The steering is borderline perfect in terms of its weighting and rate of response and offers the sort of feel that thoroughly disproves the theory that electrical assistance is inferior to hydraulic. Even at

Styling tweaks are subtle, but new 17-inch wheel design for the GTS looks good, as does the rear spoiler





Three pedals, a gear stick and a conventional handbrake. They might seem like easy requests, but they are hard to come by these days – and the 86 is all the better for it



straight ahead there's snippets of textural feedback, with none of the on-centre dead zone that so often afflicts electrically-assisted systems.

There's also terrific balance, and the combination of these two traits breeds plenty of confidence. You quickly feel 'at one' with the car on a spirited drive; if that sounds a bit too metaphysical, essentially it means that the 86 does exactly what you want, when you want. If the previous 86 had a dynamic flaw, it's that it could 'fall' into oversteer quite abruptly, followed either by a clumsy graunch from the ESP system or a rapidly elevated heart rate if you were driving unaided.

The new car retains this oversteer bias – it's easier to unstick the rear than the front – but feels more progressive in the way it loses grip. We're not talking wild, smoking slides here – the 86 needs commitment, momentum and a racetrack to do those – rather a few degrees of oversteer from apex to corner exit. Exploiting this with a safety net in place is now possible thanks to the new ESP's 'Track mode', at a stroke transforming the 86's electronics from awful to excellent. The old car's ESP was restrictive and intrusive, however, the new system allows the car to move around and lightly raps you on the knuckles if you overcook it, rather than chopping off your hands. This is handy in slippery conditions or if you're on an unfamiliar road.

We're still not completely sold on the eco tyre concept. Low outright grip levels are fine, but the tyres are simply unsuited to high-performance driving, particularly under heavy braking, making it all too easy to trigger the ABS. Unusually, the two cars driven, a GT and a GTS, displayed quite different braking characteristics. Both cars had a firm, easily modulated brake pedal, however, the GT had a reasonably large dead zone at the top of the pedal and felt quite numb, whereas the GTS, which uses larger rotors, had more feel with next-to-no pedal travel required to activate the stoppers. The GT was extremely new, however, with less than 400km on the clock, so perhaps the brakes weren't quite bedded in yet. What both cars



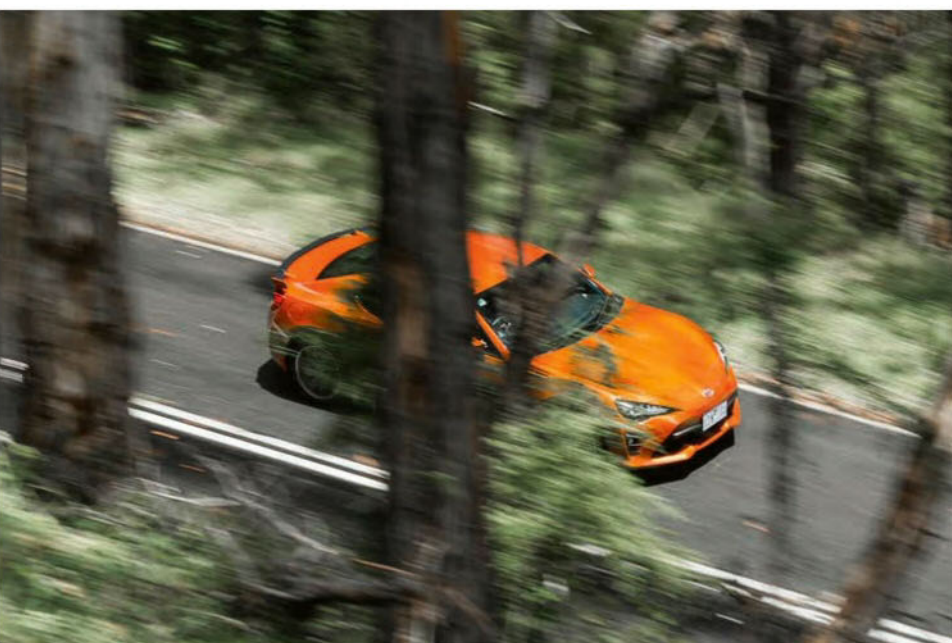
shared was a firm but controlled ride. Disciplined is probably the best way to describe it.

This focus extends to the cabin, with a perfect driving position and great seats, though the interior has little else to recommend it. The base model GT, now \$800 more expensive as a manual (\$30,790) and \$600 more as an auto (\$33,090), is a bare-bones affair, almost refreshing in its simplicity. It's a novelty these days to need to twist a key to start the engine, but the infotainment system is simply out of date, though it's simple enough to use, partly because it doesn't do very much.

The higher-spec GTS, now offered at \$36,490 as a manual and \$38,790 as an auto, increases of \$500 and \$300 respectively, will be of more interest to most (two-thirds of 86 sales have been the GTS), but while it offers more equipment, including sat-nav, heated seats and the welcome addition of steering-wheel controls, the interior is starting to feel left behind. There's a nifty new digital readout in the instrument cluster, which can display information such as power and torque graphs, g-force, lap times and the like, but to be honest it's of little use bar novelty value, and we'd gladly trade it for a more upmarket infotainment system.

Another area where the 86 is being left behind – quite literally – is in the engine department. While it's easily outgunned by the modern boosted four-pots in its hot-hatch rivals, particularly for in-gear acceleration, the 86's lack of pace isn't its problem per se. After all, it'll still clock 0-100km/h in a tick over seven seconds, which is fast enough for most road situations in anyone's book.

No, the issue is that the 86 feels so much slower than it is. Toyota has revised the intake and exhaust systems on manual cars to liberate an extra 5kW/7Nm, which apparently necessitated a reinforced block and





*You quickly feel 'at one' with the car on a spirited drive.
The 86 does exactly what you want, when you want*





Its chassis and steering are utterly brilliant ... it offers an experience very few rivals can match at any price

The Specs Raw figures don't do it justice



modified pistons, while also shortening the final drive from 4.1 to 4.3:1, but the changes have had little impact on the seat-of-the-pants experience. In fact, the car is likely to actually be slower to 100km/h, as shortening the final drive means third gear is now required at 95km/h rather than 99km/h.

Regardless of the actual numbers though, the core problem remains. There's enough low-end torque to make daily urban progress painless, but then there's a trough in the mid-range where the car feels to hesitate before it picks up again from around 5500rpm to the 7200rpm redline. Amusingly, the new power/torque readout in the digital display graphically illustrates the scale of the problem. To make serious progress on a twisty road you have to row the gearbox – good fun to use, though still very notchy when cold – to stay in this narrow 5500-7200rpm power band, but even then the 2.0-litre flat-four never feels particularly energetic.

Boxer four receives a fettle for a power boost to 152kW/212Nm, but it still lacks mid-range torque and needs to be driven like you stole it to find the sweet spot



TOYOTA 86 GTS

BODY	2-door, 2+2-seat coupe
DRIVE	rear-wheel
ENGINE	1998cc flat-four, DOHC, 16v
BORE/STROKE	86.0 x 86.0mm
COMPRESSION	12.5:1
POWER	152kW @ 7000rpm
TORQUE	212Nm @ 2400rpm
POWER/WEIGHT	121kW/tonne
TRANSMISSION	6-speed manual
WEIGHT	1258kg
FRONT SUSPENSION	struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar
REAR SUSPENSION	multi-links, coil springs, anti-roll bar
L/W/H	4240/1775/1320mm
WHEELBASE	2570mm
TRACKS	1520/1540mm (f/r)
STEERING	electrically assisted rack-and-pinion
FRONT BRAKES	294mm ventilated discs, single-piston calipers
REAR BRAKES	290mm solid discs, single-piston calipers
WHEELS	170 x 7.0-inch (f/r)
TYRES	215/45 R17 (f/r) Michelin Primacy
PRICE AS TESTED	\$36,490
PROS	Benchmark dynamics; fun factor
CONS	Lacklustre engine; dated infotainment
STAR RATING	★★★★☆

The similarly sized engine in the new MX-5 feels both more muscular and more enthusiastic.

But it wouldn't be appropriate to end this review on a bad note, as the revised 86 remains one of the very best driver's cars around. Its chassis and steering are utterly brilliant and when you're totally dialled in and driving the wheels off it, it offers an experience very few rivals can match at any price. The pace of performance-car development is relentless though, and the chinks in the new Toybaru's armour, most notably its sub-standard interior and lacklustre engine, will quickly become cracks if not addressed.

The budget performance car landscape might now be rich and thriving rather than bleak and desolate, but in such an environment it's those that can adapt quickest that will reign. In next month's issue the Subaru BRZ takes on the MX-5 2.0 and Abarth 124 Spider to see which affordable rear-driver is top dog. **M**

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FIRST ENCOUNTER *Ford GT*

by CHRISTIAN SEABAUGH *pics* WILLIAM WALKER

WHITE NOISE

Once upon a time Ford confronted Ferrari with a low-slung supercar. In 2017, they're doing it again – and how







M

ID-ENGINE supercars seem to get churned out by the baker's dozen in Europe, but until Chevrolet gets around to producing a mid-engine Corvette, America has just one, the Ford GT. Before the first production-spec 2017 Ford GT rolled off the assembly line, as the Blue Oval made the final tweaks to its reborn supercar, Ford invited us out to Las Vegas Motor Speedway to snag shotgun and go for a ride.

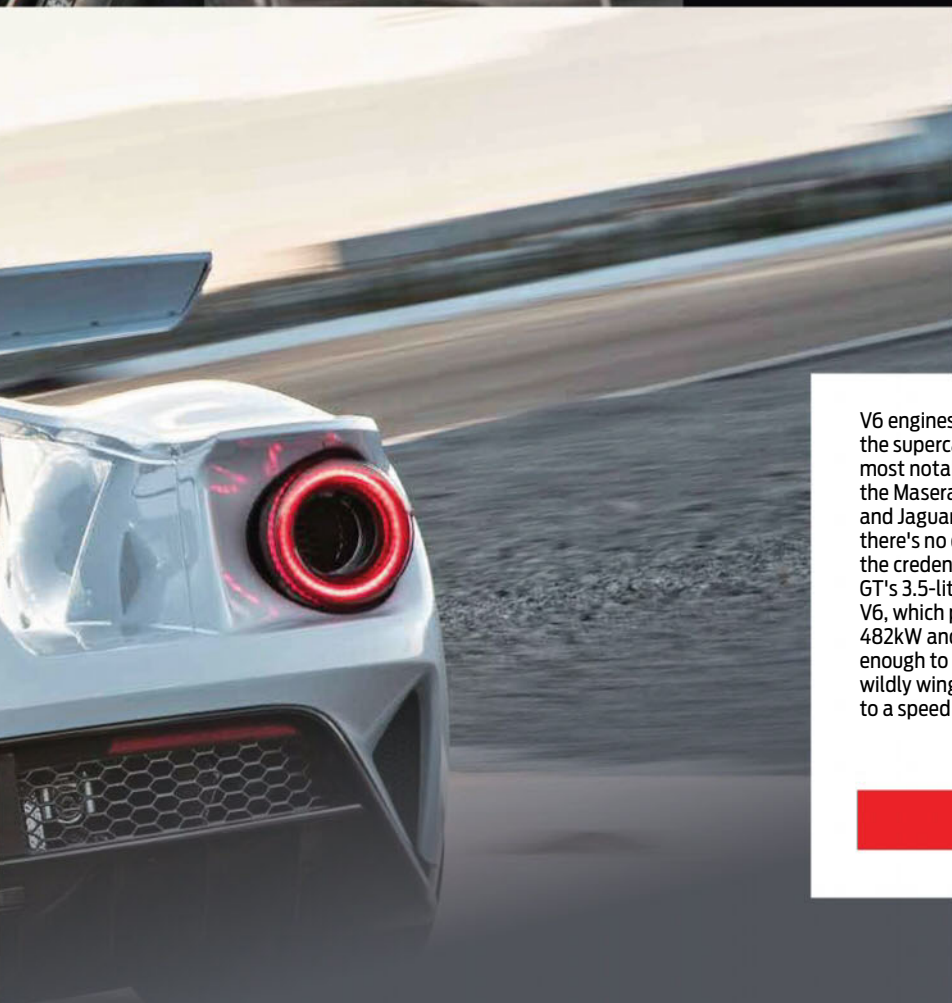
Parked in a sea of black asphalt with B-1 bombers and other military hardware roaring out of Nellis Air Force Base passing overhead, the Frozen White and Black pre-production GT – fittingly nicknamed ‘Stormtrooper’ by Ford engineers – makes quite the visual impression outside the harsh glow of auto show lighting. Raj Nair, Ford executive vice president of global product development and the man many on the team credit as the father of the GT, and Dave Pericak, the head of Ford Performance, weren't willing to let us get behind the wheel of the GT. But they did offer a guided tour of the 2017 GT's

bodywork, suspension, and cabin before letting us loose with Le Mans-winning racer Joey Hand on the track.

After talking with Nair and Pericak, it becomes clear that the new GT is a product of lessons learned in the wind tunnel and at the racetrack. The obvious aero tricks include the cabin's teardrop shape and the GT's flying buttresses, which hide the piping for the 3.5-litre V6, the intercoolers, and the twin turbochargers mounted in the rear sponsons. The Ford GT's Formula One-style keel is less obvious, but it's apparent when you look at it from a rear three-quarter angle and notice the asphalt visible through the channel behind the front wheels.

The Ford features active aerodynamics, too. Up front, the GT's air intake hides active grille shutters used to manage air pressure at the front wheels. The car initially made too much front downforce, which any engineer will tell you is a pretty good problem to have. An active rear spoiler balances downforce in the rear. Hydraulically

V6 engines are rare in the supercar world, the most notable being the Maserati Merak and Jaguar XJ220, but there's no doubting the credentials of the GT's 3.5-litre Ecoboost V6, which pumps out 482kW and 746Nm, enough to push the wildly winged wedge to a speed of 346km/h



The new GT is a product of lessons learned in the wind tunnel and at the racetrack

actuated like the suspension, the rear spoiler shoots up like a bottle rocket and has a couple of neat tricks. It functions as an air brake under heavy braking, and it actively changes shape while at speed. You read that right. The rear wing has a small cam inside it that

changes the air foil and adjusts a small gurney flap up and down at speed as conditions demand to maximise grip and downforce.

The Ford GT's active aero works hand in hand with the GT's five drive modes (Normal, Wet, Sport, Track, and V-Max), which are accessed via a control knob on

*The lack of cylinders hasn't come at the cost of grunt, with Ford **backing up its proclamations***

the upper left side of the Ford's F1-inspired steering. There are visual clues you're in Normal mode, which include a unique instrument cluster display, the GT's suspension sitting at 119mm of ground clearance, and the rear spoiler deploying at 145km/h and coming back down at 130km/h. Normal mode has an additional Comfort suspension setting, which is activated by a button on the centre console, plus a nose-lift function, which is operated in the same manner. Wet mode is based on Normal mode, and it works as you think it would – by softening throttle and transmission mapping for inclement weather.

The really cool stuff happens when you twist the dial further.

Sport mode builds upon Normal mode. It sharpens up throttle response, loosens up traction control restrictions, engages an anti-lag system, and puts the rear spoiler up at 113km/h and down at 72km/h. Track is more intense still; it deploys the rear spoiler, drops the ride height down to 69mm of clearance (startlingly quickly at that), and stiffens the GT's racing-derived suspension, which features inboard-mounted torsion beams and pushrods mated to Multimatic's trick Dynamic Suspension Spool Valve (DSSV) shock absorbers. They have an otherworldly ability of providing a stiff ride for track work with a compliance that takes kerbing and bumps without upsetting the car. V-Max cleans up the GT's aero profile by dropping the rear wing, which allows the Ford to hit its 346km/h-plus claimed top speed.

When Hand fires up a Liquid Blue GT in the road course's pit lane, it's time for a ride. Nair says Ford briefly considered fitting a V8 or even a twin-turbo V8 into the GT. Instead it opted for the EcoBoost 3.5-litre V6 paired with a seven-speed dual-clutch transmission because its smaller package and increased fuel efficiency would make it a more competitive race car – a gamble that paid off when the GT won its class at Le Mans in 2016. The lack of cylinders also hasn't come at the cost of outright grunt, either, with Ford backing up its proclamations. The GT produces 482kW at 6250rpm and a mighty 746Nm torque peak at 5900rpm.

Open the scissor door, duck, and slip into the cabin. It's a pretty welcoming place, even if the cockpit is rather snug with Hand and I nearly touching shoulders. The seats are fixed into the carbonfibre tub, so legroom is a bit precious for this tall scribe, but at least the seat backs recline a bit to up the

The GT project was intended to take Ford back to Le Mans to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the original GT40's famous 1-2-3 finish. It did so in fine style, scoring a 1-3-4 finish in the GTE Pro class after a furious battle with a Ferrari 488 – five decades on, the old rivalry still rages







FORD GT

BODY	2-door, 2-seat coupe
DRIVE	rear-wheel
ENGINE	3497cc V6, DOHC, 24v, twin-turbo
BORE/STROKE	92.5 x 86.7mm
COMPRESSION	10.0:1
POWER	482kW @ 6250rpm
TORQUE	746Nm @ 5900rpm
POWER/WEIGHT	354kW/tonne
TRANSMISSION	7-speed dual-clutch
WEIGHT	1363kg (dry)
SUSPENSION (F)	multi-links, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar
SUSPENSION (R)	multi-links, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar
L/W/H	4763/2004/1109mm
WHEELBASE	2710mm
TRACKS	1694/1661mm (f/r)
STEERING	electrically assisted rack-and-pinion
BRAKES (F)	394mm ventilated carbon-ceramic discs, six-piston fixed aluminium calipers
BRAKES (R)	360mm ventilated carbon-ceramic discs, four-piston fixed aluminium calipers
WHEELS	20.0 x 8.5-inch (f); 20 x 11.5-inch (r)



comfort. (The driver's seat is fixed, too; the pedals and steering wheel adjust to fit the driver, like a LaFerrari.) The cabin has a very McLaren-like vibe to it with high-quality materials, few buttons, and a driver-focused, business-first layout. Shared parts with other Ford products seem to be few and far between. A couple of buttons on the steering wheel, the headlight switch, transmission gear selector, and SYNC 3 software are the only obvious exceptions.

A twist of the dial into Track mode makes the GT hunker down like an Olympic sprinter, and with a stab of the throttle, we're off. The EcoBoost V6 emits a guttural growl unlike any V6 I've ever heard. It pins me back in my seat as we rocket out of pit lane. Those moaning about the lack of a V8 option ought to zip it for the time being. From the passenger seat, its thrust level feels off the charts. There's no turbo lag that I can pick up and the engine pulls strongly through its rev range. Gear changes feel seamless, too. The seven-speed dual-clutch 'box responds instantly to Hand's pulls of the paddles. The Ford GT appears to be

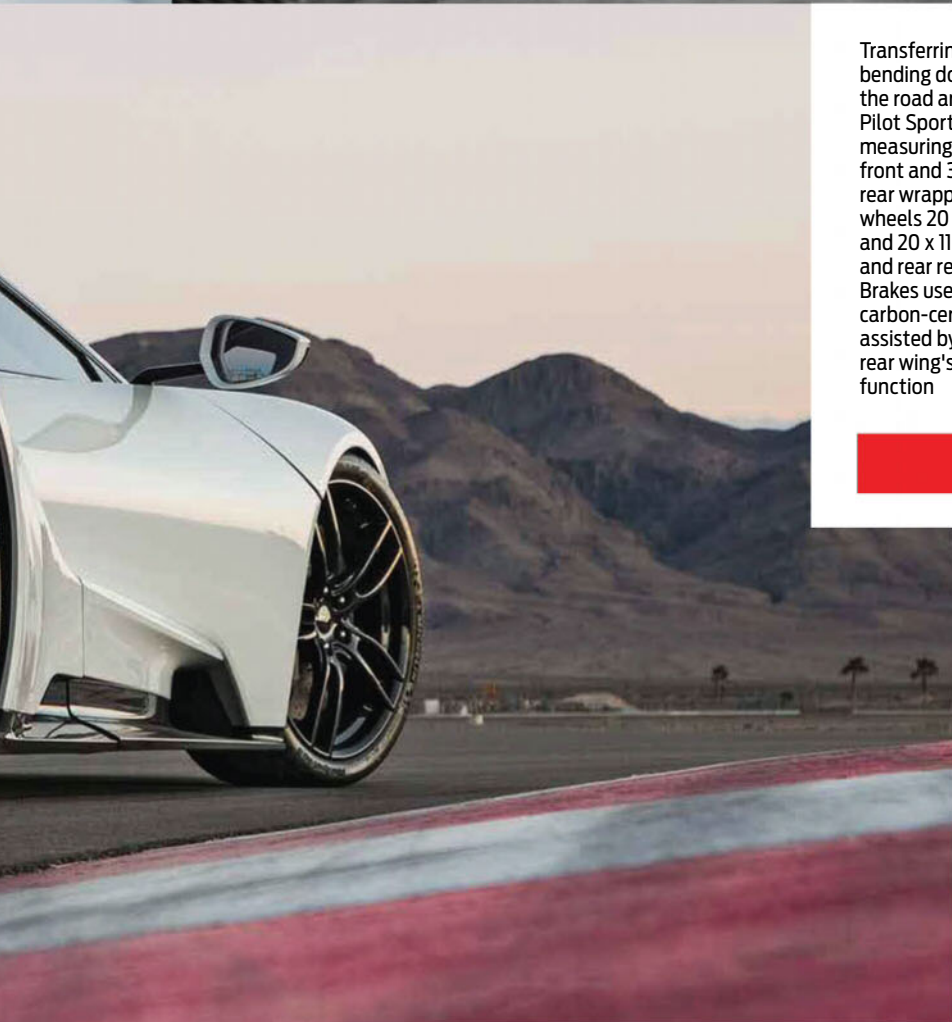
incredibly well balanced, too. Just a hint of steering angle has the GT instantaneously pointing toward the next apex. As Hand works the GT through corners, it seemingly rotates flat on its axis. The GT feels firm and planted at all times during our stint in the passenger seat, with the traction control system (in its sportiest setting) appearing to be unobtrusive and with the DSSV shocks happily taking a beating from the track's kerbing without upsetting the car in the least.

Transferring the mind-bending downforce to the road are Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres measuring 245/35 front and 325/30 rear wrapped around wheels 20 x 8.5-inch and 20 x 11.5-inch front and rear respectively. Brakes use enormous carbon-ceramic rotors, assisted by the active rear wing's airbrake function



Just as quickly as our lap began, Hand pulls the GT back into the pits to wrap up our session. Although it's nearly impossible to verify without getting behind the wheel ourselves, the 2017 Ford GT seems like it could be every bit as capable as the McLaren 675LT, as engaging as the Ferrari 488 GTB, and as accessible as the Porsche 911 GT3 (all of which Ford benchmarked the new GT against).

Even as deliveries were about to start at the end of 2016, Ford was still tinkering away. Nair said the company spent the final few weeks tweaking the transmission calibration, making the instrument cluster software snappier, lowering NVH on the rear bulkhead, and improving fit and finish. This work was required for the GT to be EPA-certified and for the first \$600,000-ish GT to roll off its Markham, Ontario, assembly line and into the driveway of Bill Ford Jr. before December 31. Ford received the first GT, but the Blue Oval has committed to a four-year production run with 250 cars built per year. The first year's run has already



The EcoBoost V6 emits a guttural growl unlike any V6 I've heard and it pins you back in the seat

been spoken for by a host of celebrities and CEOs. Those not in the first allotment can get their crack at owning America's mid-engine supercar in the 2018 batch. We just can't wait to go for a drive. **M**



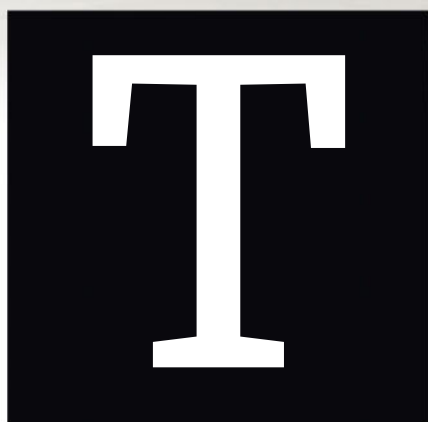
EXIT THE DUEL *Subaru Levorg GT-S vs Skoda Octavia RS230*

War Wagons

by SCOTT NEWMAN *pics* NATHAN JACOBS

Two tempting estates for people with stuff to lug
in a hurry – one brilliant, one disappointing





HE performance wagon is an endangered species. Despite being the perfect car for many needs, it's under significant pressure from a fast SUV onslaught that threatens to overwhelm the marketplace. Thankfully, small pockets of resistance remain, for buyers who prioritise performance, dynamics, value and efficiency over a lofty driving position and adherence to the latest trend.

A mainstay in this segment is the Skoda Octavia RS, its combination of proven German mechanicals and Eastern European modesty, not to mention value for money, making it a surprise hit. It appears Aussies prefer their Skodas on the spicy side, too, with the RS accounting for 40 per cent of Octavia sales, more than any other variant.

In an effort to reward this loyal and enthusiastic customer base, Skoda Australia has secured a small allocation of the limited edition RS230, which essentially packs the mechanicals from the Golf GTI Performance into the larger, more practical Octavia bodyshell. The result is 169kW/350Nm from the 2.0-litre turbocharged four-cylinder, fed to the front wheels through a six-speed manual and mechanical limited-slip differential. No XDL electronic trickery here, and no lurchy dual-clutch 'box, either.

There's also a fairly staggering amount of standard equipment. For \$43,190 in wagon form

(the sedan is \$2000 cheaper) the RS230 offers active cruise control, heated front and rear seats, dual-zone climate control, panoramic sunroof, sat-nav and support for Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, a feature Ferrari charges \$6790 for in a 488. An extra \$1700 buys the Tech Pack, which adds a 10-speaker sound system, keyless entry and start, park assist and lane assist.

You can see where dollars have been saved in the interior as there's a lot of hard, scratchy plastic, however everything you interact with feels quality and the seats look very cool in a retro '80s supercar kind of way, though they could use more lateral support. The boot is a spacious 588 litres with the rear seats up and roomy 1718L with them down, though unfortunately the rear seats don't fold flat.

Nonetheless, it's a more practical load space than that of the new Subaru Levorg, which offers 522L with the seats up and 1446L with them down, though the rear seats do fold almost flat. Three grades of Levorg are offered, from the \$42,990 GT to the \$52,890 GT-S Spec B. The latter can be seen in our photos, chosen thanks to its array of STI parts, including body kit, black 18s, front strut brace and interior bits.

For the purposes of our comparison, however, we've used the mid-spec \$48,890 GT-S as it's the best match for the Skoda equipment-wise, including features such as a sunroof, auto wipers and headlights, electric heated front leather seats, sat-nav and Subaru's Vision Assist active safety system, all of which are missing in the more price-competitive base GT.

Material quality is superior in the Subaru, with blue-stitched leather where you'd find hard plastic



*The performance wagon is under threat from a fast SUV onslaught, despite being **the perfect car for the needs of many***

in the Skoda, and the latest infotainment system is a big improvement over the old unit that still serves in various Toyotas. Like the Octavia, the Levorg has a full suite of active safety systems including pre-collision warning, lane departure warning, blind-spot monitoring and more, though the systems in both cars are irritatingly intrusive and usually switched off, albeit for different reasons.

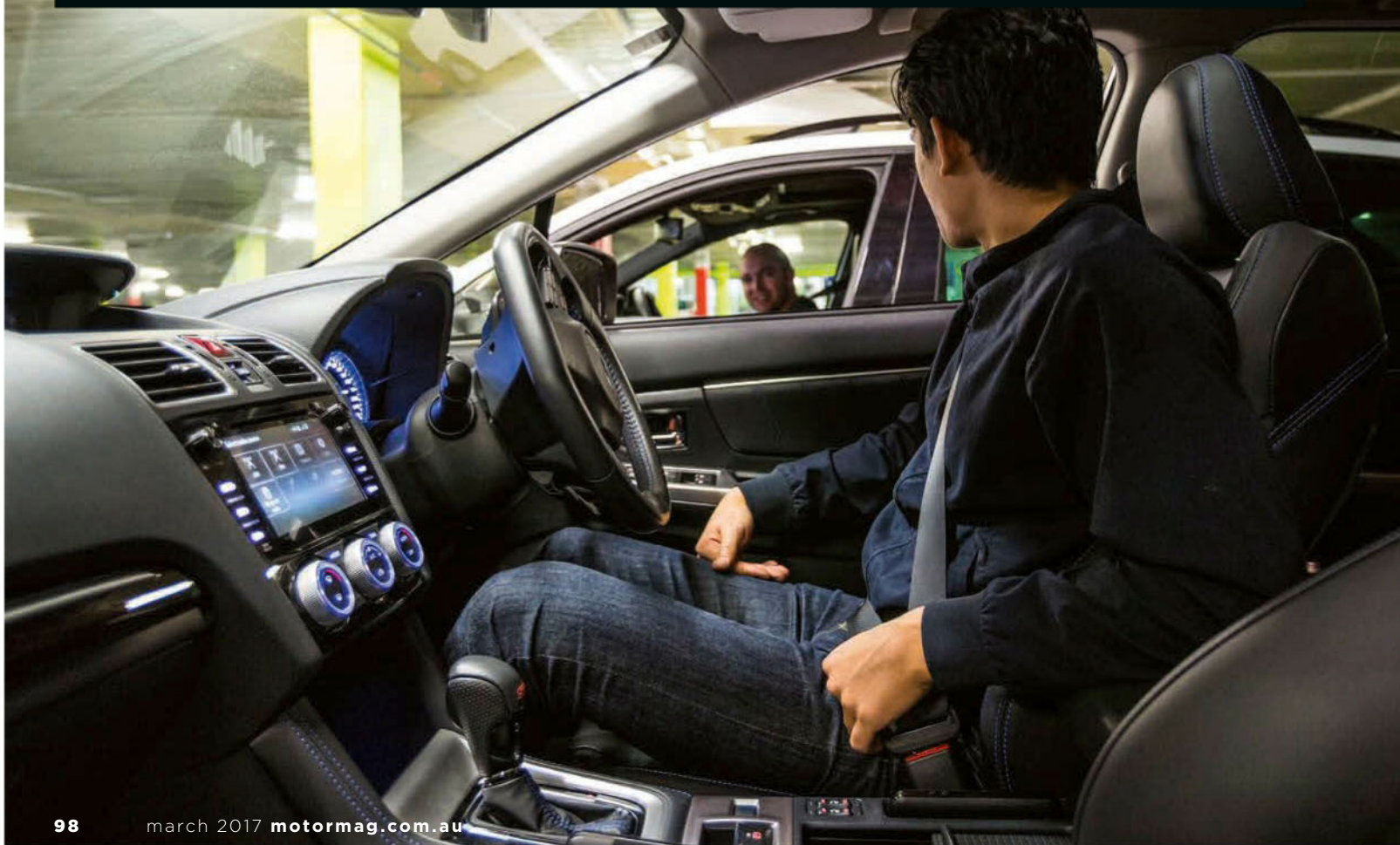
The Subaru's pre-collision alert is hyperactively sensitive, constantly triggering at objects that pose no threat, immediate or otherwise. Likewise, the Skoda's lane-keep assist constantly nudges the steering; the adjustments are subtle, but eventually you'll notice the steering feels weird and given the system won't actually complete a corner for you, what's the point? Thankfully for those who actually pay attention while driving, both systems can be deactivated.


Sadly, one electronic aid that can't be completely turned off is the Skoda's traction control and ESP system. Even with ESP Sport engaged, the system will still grab at spinning wheels, which costs it precious tenths on the drag strip. The best the RS230 can manage is 0-100km/h in 6.96sec and a 15.03sec quarter mile at 160.68km/h; this more or less matches Skoda's 6.9sec 0-100km/h claim, however it's miles off our best of 6.30sec and 14.60sec in a regular manual RS sedan. From memory, that car allowed the





*The CVT ensures there's zero drama, simply plant the foot and wait ... traction gives it a **crucial advantage against the clock***





traction control to be deactivated completely, so a new software update could be to blame.

Being all-wheel drive, the Levorg has none of these issues and its 197kW/350Nm 2.0-litre turbocharged boxer four fires it to 100km/h in 6.25sec and through the quarter mile in 14.48sec at 158.06km/h. The CVT ensures there's zero fuss or drama, simply plant the foot and wait. In reality, the two are almost identical in pace, recording very similar trap speeds and separated by just 0.03sec to 160km/h, but the Subaru's traction gives it a crucial advantage against the clock.

Most enthusiasts instinctively, and rightly, recoil in horror at any mention of the word CVT, but the Levorg's transmission isn't the impediment to enjoyment you might expect. There's a substantial hesitation from rest, however, unless you're really trying to fire off the line it's not a huge problem and the take-up is at least smooth. Around town it's well behaved and unobtrusive, while locked in manual mode the CVT offers eight 'ratios' that can be selected reasonably promptly via paddles on the steering wheel.

Unfortunately, the engine it's attached to is quite uninspiring. We're not fond of the FA20 engine in the WRX and its installation in the Levorg does nothing to change that view. The CVT disguises the somewhat lumpy power curve found in the manual WRX well and there's plenty of power available, but while the engine will rev past its 6500rpm redline the strong focus on mid-range torque makes doing so largely redundant.

There's also precious little in the way of aural character. The raucous boxer burble of old might not be appropriate in the more sensible Levorg, but the baleful whine emitted by the FA20 under heavy load discourages enthusiastic driving, suggesting it would rather you calmed down and stopped accelerating so hard. Effective, but not especially exciting, sums up the Levorg's drivetrain.

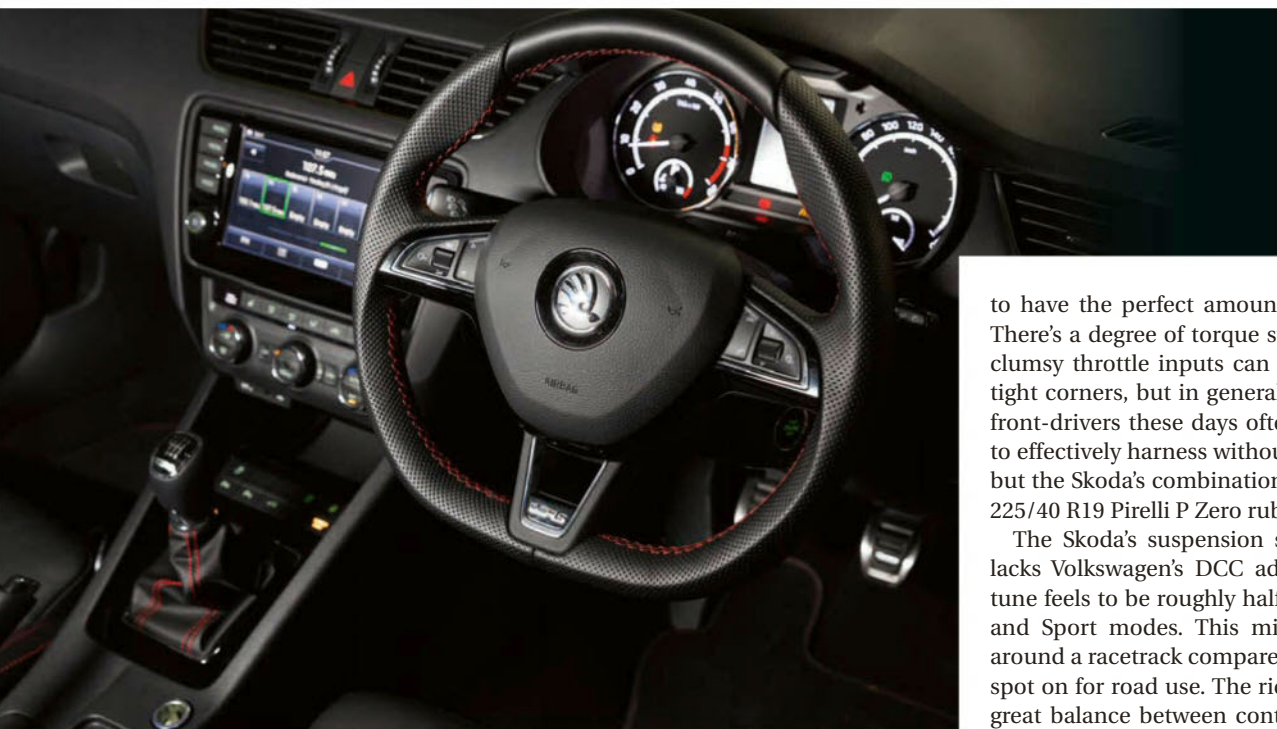
Like the Subaru, the Skoda will rev past its 6500rpm redline but there's little point in doing so; it feels more effective to grab the next gear at around 5000rpm and let those 350Nm do the work. The gearshift doesn't feel quite as accurate as the equivalent Golf GTI 'box – though this was a very fresh car – but the shift is light, accurate and easy to use.

There is a small degree of turbo lag but the mid-range is very strong; however, slightly frustratingly, this then fails to materialise into anything worthwhile at the top end. It's a shame Skoda didn't manage to secure the Golf GTI 40 Years engine for the limited-edition RS230, as in 195kW tune the EA888 is much more aggressive in character with a hunger for revs, and any fears the extra power would overwhelm the Skoda's chassis are dispelled by the fact the two variants produce an identical 350Nm of torque – the Golf's extra urge is all at the top end. For Skoda to score the gun Golf's tune would upset VW's carefully orchestrated model hierarchy, but if you're going to make an enthusiasts' special, go the whole hog.

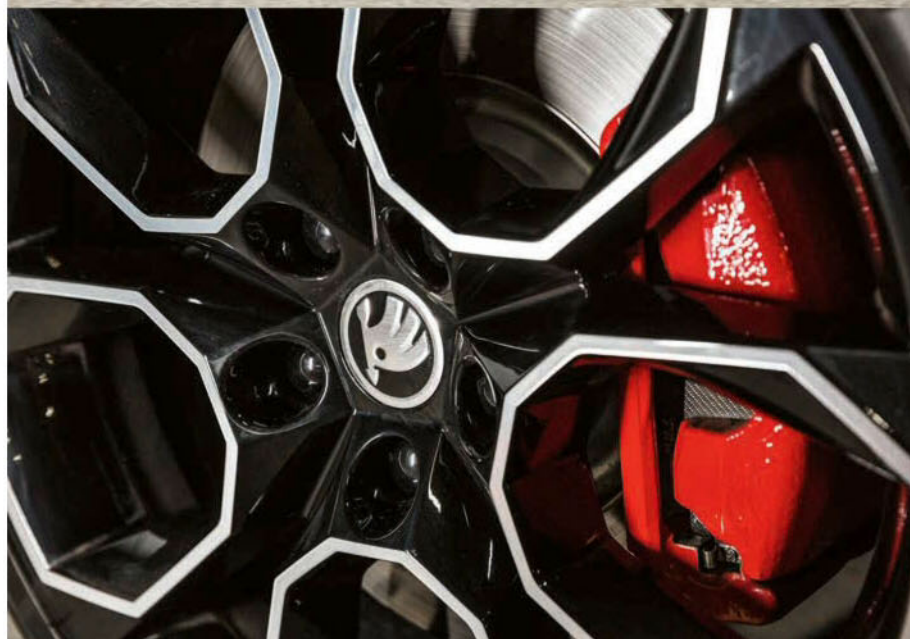
It's a small complaint, however, as the RS230 feels

Levorg scores plenty of kit in GT-S guise and material quality beats the Skoda; leather wheel with large, contrasting stitching redolent of a baseball mitt





Hard plastic surfaces in the Skoda expose where dollars have been saved, but the amount of equipment is immense



to have the perfect amount of grunt for its chassis. There's a degree of torque steer on bumpy roads and clumsy throttle inputs can induce wheelspin exiting tight corners, but in general traction is strong. Turbo front-drivers these days often have too much torque to effectively harness without electronic intervention, but the Skoda's combination of a limited-slip diff and 225/40 R19 Pirelli P Zero rubber proves formidable.

The Skoda's suspension setup is relatively soft; it lacks Volkswagen's DCC adaptive dampers, but the tune feels to be roughly halfway between the Normal and Sport modes. This might cost it a few tenths around a racetrack compared to a stiffer setup, but it's spot on for road use. The ride is beautifully judged, a great balance between control and compliance. It is firm and a little jittery over small imperfections, but the vast majority of road irritations are filtered out before reaching the occupants.

This slight softness occasionally becomes apparent at the limit, most notably through large compressions taken at speed or during quick changes of direction where the RS230 can feel a little ponderous. In general, though, it works in the Skoda's favour, the suspension soaking up bumps rather than allowing them to deflect the car's trajectory and the increased body movement makes it more involving. The rear can be bought into play slightly, but ESP Sport isn't lenient enough to let it wander too far.

The brakes are slightly over-assisted around town, but when you dig into them on a twisty road they provide great feel and plenty of staying power. It's easy to heel-and-toe as well. About the only real dynamic criticism of the RS230 involves the steering. It uses the variable-rate rack from the Golf GTI, which feels slightly at odds with the Skoda's larger steering wheel. It exacerbates the dullness around the straight ahead and applying the correct amount of lock for a given corner can take a bit of guesswork. It's a small blemish on an otherwise impressive report card.

In contrast, the Levorg needs to be sent straight to the principal's office. It's difficult to know where to begin with a chassis that feels so ill-resolved and under-developed. How a team of engineers could spend what was presumably a lot of time, effort and money and have the end result be so compromised is hard to comprehend, especially for a brand like Subaru that trades on its sporting heritage.

The conservative calibration of the ESP system raises the suspicion that Subaru knows the Levorg's suspension isn't up to par. Even when switched 'off' it's constantly intervening in an effort to keep everything shipshape, probably because on a bumpy road the wheels feel to spend as much time in the air as on the road. To its credit, the ESP intervenes quite unobtrusively, however it needs to work overtime as on a bumpy road at speed the Levorg offers a ride akin to a bouncy castle. The vaunted Bilstein dampers installed in the GT-S feel like they've already done 300,000km; body control is virtually non-existent, the dampers crashing into the bump stops on even



The RS230 feels like it has the **perfect amount of grunt for its chassis...** its diff and rubber prove formidable



Levorg's 2.0-litre boxer four outputs an impressive 197kW/350Nm, but this is no WRX wagon



Lifted from the Golf GTI Performance, Octavia RS230 scores another 7kW

Numbers game

Load haulers hit the strip

SKODA OCTAVIA RS230		SUBARU LEVORG GT-S	
0-10km/h	0.64	0-10km/h	0.43
0-20km/h	1.21	0-20km/h	1.01
0-30km/h	1.8	0-30km/h	1.53
0-40km/h	2.36	0-40km/h	2.02
0-50km/h	3.07	0-50km/h	2.63
0-60km/h	4.01	0-60km/h	3.21
0-70km/h	4.72	0-70km/h	3.84
0-80km/h	5.42	0-80km/h	4.53
0-90km/h	6.13	0-90km/h	5.34
0-100km/h	6.96	0-100km/h	6.25
0-110km/h	7.92	0-110km/h	7.29
0-120km/h	9.45	0-120km/h	8.45
0-130km/h	10.51	0-130km/h	9.75
0-140km/h	11.77	0-140km/h	11.21
0-150km/h	13.23	0-150km/h	12.91
0-160km/h	14.88	0-160km/h	14.85
0-400m		0-400m	
15.03sec @ 160.58km/h		14.48sec @ 158.06km/h	
80-120km/h (3rd)		80-120km/h (Drive)	
4.0sec		4.0sec	
100-0km/h		100-0km/h	
39.2m		39.5m	
SPEED IN GEARS		SPEED IN GEARS	
1st 61km/h @ 6500rpm		N/A	
2nd 110km/h @ 6500rpm		N/A	
3rd 157km/h @ 6500rpm		N/A	
4th 212km/h @ 6500rpm		N/A	
5th 250km/h @ 6240rpm*		N/A	
6th 250km/h @ 5250rpm*		N/A	
* Manufacturer's claim			

As tested by MOTOR: Heathcote Dragway, 1.35pm, 31 degrees, dry, driver Louis Cordony

The Specs

Czech Republic vs Japan



If you have to have a CVT, which you do in the Levorg, it isn't so bad. Skoda uses a slick manual

SKODA OCTAVIA RS230

BODY	5-door, 5-seat wagon
DRIVE	front-wheel
ENGINE	1984cc inline-4cyl, DOHC, 16v turbocharger
BORE/STROKE	82.5 x 92.8mm
COMPRESSION	9.6:1
POWER	169kW @ 4700-6200rpm
TORQUE	350Nm @ 1500-4600rpm
POWER/WEIGHT	119kW/tonne
TRANSMISSION	6-speed manual
WEIGHT	1425kg
SUSPENSION (F)	struts, A-arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar
SUSPENSION (R)	multi-links, anti-roll bar
L/W/H	4685/1814/1452mm
WHEELBASE	2680mm
TRACKS	1535/1506mm (f/r)
STEERING	electrically assisted rack-and-pinion
BRAKES (F)	340mm ventilated discs, single-piston caliper
BRAKES (R)	272mm solid discs, single-piston caliper
WHEELS	19.0 x 7.5-inch (f/r)
TYRE SIZES	225/35 R19 (f/r)
TYRE	Pirelli P Zero
PRICE AS TESTED	\$43,190
PROS	Great chassis; brilliant value; manual 'box
CONS	Non-killable ESP; steering a little off
STAR RATING	★★★★★

SUBARU LEVORG GT-S

BODY	5-door, 5-seat wagon
DRIVE	all-wheel
ENGINE	1998cc boxer-4cyl, DOHC, 16v, turbocharger
BORE/STROKE	86.0 x 86.0mm
COMPRESSION	10.6:1
POWER	197kW @ 5600rpm
TORQUE	350Nm @ 2400-5200rpm
POWER/WEIGHT	122kW/tonne
TRANSMISSION	CVT
WEIGHT	1622kg
SUSPENSION (F)	struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar
SUSPENSION (R)	multi-links, coil springs, anti-roll bar
L/W/H	4690/1780/1490mm
WHEELBASE	2650mm
TRACKS	1530/1540mm (f/r)
STEERING	electrically assisted rack-and-pinion
BRAKES (F)	316mm ventilated discs, 2-piston caliper
BRAKES (R)	300mm ventilated discs, single-piston caliper
WHEELS	18.0 x 7.5-inch (f/r)
TYRE SIZES	225/45 R18 91W (f/r)
TYRE	Dunlop SP Sport Maxx 050
PRICE AS TESTED	\$48,890
PROS	Well equipped; AWD security; looks good
CONS	Dreadful dynamics; characterless drivetrain
STAR RATING	★★★☆☆

moderately sized hits and then pogo-ing on rebound, the body often taking a few oscillations to settle.

Thanks to Subaru's symmetrical all-wheel drive system the Levorg feels quite secure on the road, but it pitches and rolls and wallows under lateral or longitudinal load which can make placing it accurately difficult, particularly when the horribly light arcade-game steering offers next to no connection to the front end. At least it's not blighted by the persistent rack rattle that afflicts the STI.

To be honest the difference in outright pace between the two cars probably isn't much, but the experience each offers is worlds apart. The Skoda rewards the keen driver, whereas the Subaru feels so at sea approaching its limits that the driver is effectively discouraged from trying. Perhaps in the sea is where it would feel more at home, as there's definitely a nautical flavour to its dynamic behaviour. Nor does it ride properly, constantly fidgeting over poor surfaces

RS230 an easy winner, however very few will ever see Aussie roads, with only around 100 in total (sedan and wagon) expected to be imported

and bobbing and heaving over speed humps.

This is the most one-sided comparison in recent memory. It's almost impossible to think of a scenario in which to recommend a Levorg. If you really want a Subaru and you're not concerned with outright performance, save yourself \$20,000 and buy the new Impreza hatch, and if you are, buy a WRX. And if you need more practicality, the Forester XT is superior to the Levorg in every aspect bar outright performance.

Which leaves the Skoda as the clear winner, but it's not a position it occupies by default. The Octavia RS230 is a truly excellent car; engaging to drive, immensely practical and brilliant value. In outright ability it probably sits between four and four-and-a-half stars, however, we're inclined to round up on this occasion to reward Skoda's bravery in importing this manual-only niche model. The performance wagon may be an endangered species, but it's the strong who survive. **M**

The Octavia RS230 is a truly excellent car; engaging to drive, immensely practical and brilliant value





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AVAILABLE IN

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- » Gloss Black w/ Mirror Cut Lip

SPRINT (ONE-PIECE MONOBLOCK)



AVAILABLE IN

- » Gloss Gunmetal
- » Gloss Black w/ Mirror Cut Face

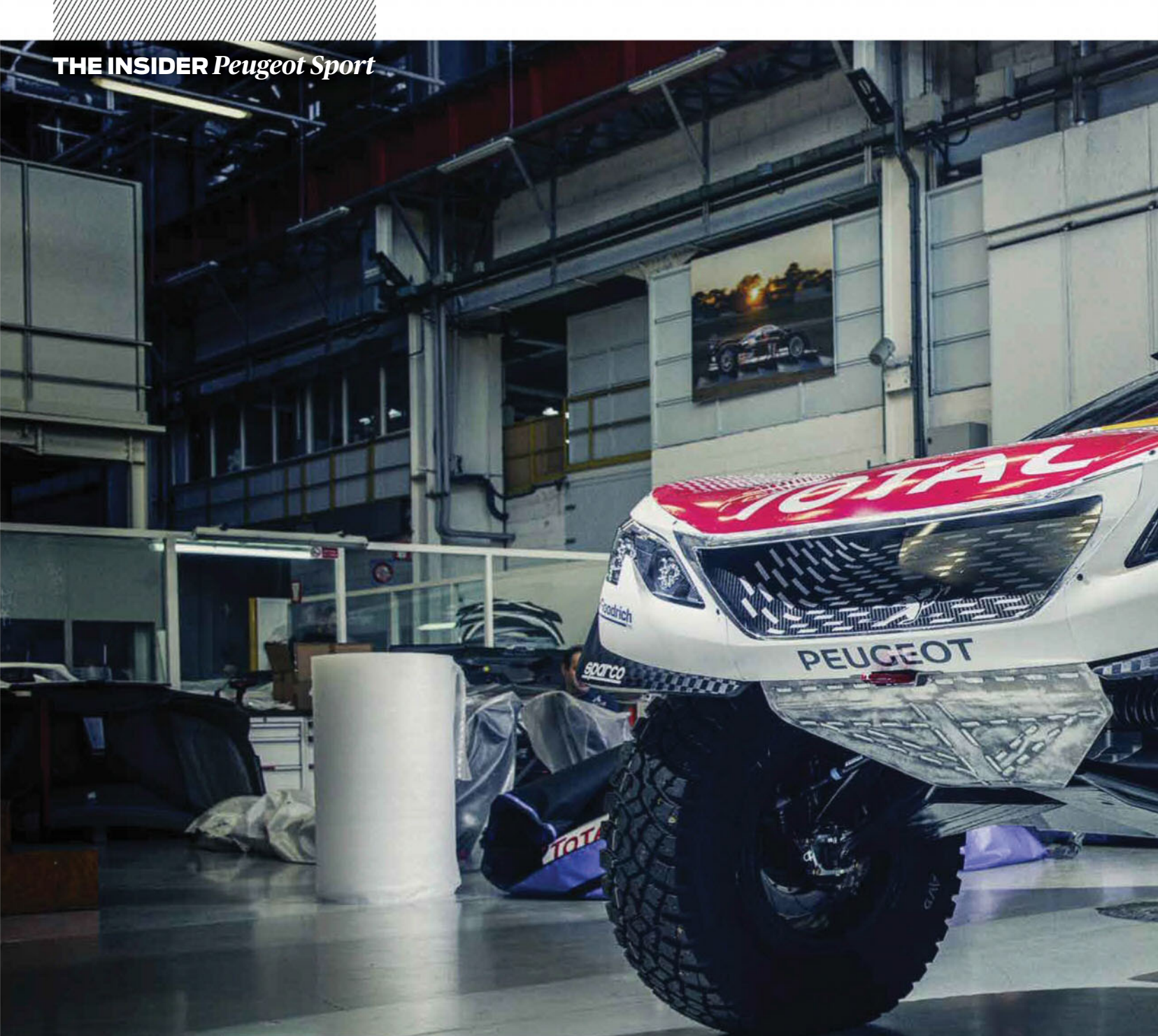
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THE INSIDER *Peugeot Sport*



by MATT JOY *pics* MARK RICCIONI/GETTY IMAGES

Foreign Legion

Peugeot Sport reveals to *MOTOR* what it takes to win the world's toughest race



I

F YOU fail to plan, you plan to fail – an adage that's incredibly true in motorsport. And of all the motorsport disciplines, you won't see heads nodding along to the maxim quite like on the Dakar rally raid, one of the world's most gruelling motorsport events.

Having recently won the 2017 Dakar – backing up its 2016 victory – Peugeot Sport knows the importance

of planning. Prior to this year's event, we find ourselves sitting just 200 yards from the Arc de Triomphe in a restaurant as comfortably Parisian as it is possible to be. Our companion for lunch is Bruno Famin, director of Peugeot Sport. Tomorrow, his 3008 DKR racers will be shipped to Paraguay, ahead of the 2017 Dakar rally raid. Once there, the cars and drivers will face a fortnight of abject misery, as Famin well knows. On the 565km second stage of day two on Dakar 2016, he recalls, in the middle of Argentina, the temperature was 55 degrees Celsius. Inside the car it was a mere 70 degrees.

"The drivers were destroyed; Stephane Peterhansel was very slow at the end of the stage. I asked him what was wrong and he just didn't remember the last 30 miles; he was dead. We didn't believe it was important but now we're fully convinced it's very important – air-conditioning."

That might seem like a straightforward decision but this is motorsport. An air-conditioning unit costs 10kg in weight and robs precious horsepower, but Famin is wholly convinced that the drop in driver performance without it is far more costly. These are the challenges that come with the job.

Relocated to a nondescript office block across Paris at Velizy-Villacoublay, we walk through plain '80s decor that could just as easily be the home of a finance house or paper merchants. It's not until you wander into Famin's office that the small differences become apparent. Rather than ISO9001 awards, behind his desk sit his most prized trophies; a trio of statues from Le Mans, two second places and overall victory in 2009. On the wall opposite are winners' trophies from the 2016 Dakar and

Silk Way events, and presumably soon to be joined by the 2017 Dakar gong. "Sebastien Loeb has both trophies from Pikes Peak," says Famin. "One for first place, and one for fastest rookie." You'd think he'd have run out of space.

Peugeot might not be the first name that springs to mind if you're drawing up a mental list of manufacturers with glorious motorsport histories, but that's only because you're not giving it enough thought. Peugeot has significant victories on its CV, most notably being the first non-American manufacturer to win the Indy 500 in 1913, '16 and '19 as well as significant history with the Safari Rally in the 1960s and '70s.

But it was the formation of Peugeot Talbot Sport in 1981 with Jean Todt at the helm that marked a turning point. Todt had just won the World Rally Championship constructor's title and finished runner-up in the driver's standings as co-pilot to Guy Frequelin; PSA CEO Jean Boillot recognised how his tactical and organisational nous could be applied to running a motorsport arm. Within three years Peugeot's first in-house WRC program was ready to go, and it ignited the sport in an instant.

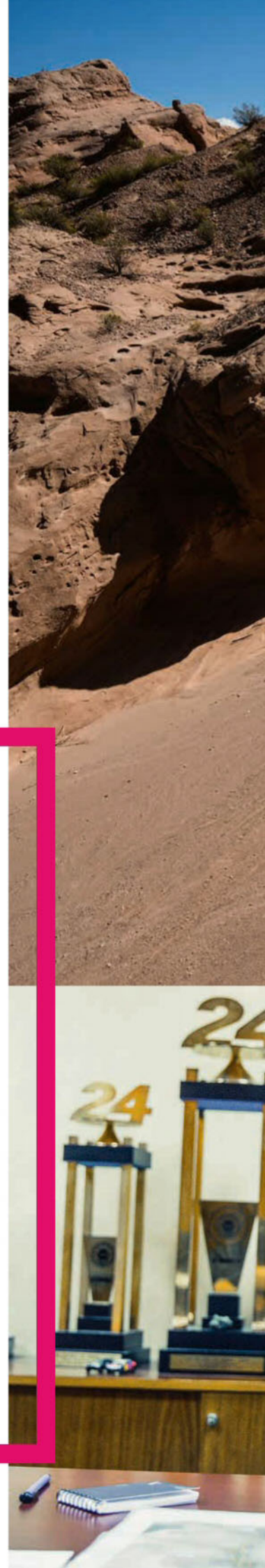
Thirty-five years on and there's been plenty of wins across several disciplines, but Peugeot Sport has a



Rally Master Kings of the forest

PEUGEOT Sport first entered rallying in 1984, during the white-heat of Group B, the sport's most exciting period. The 205 T16 had two key advantages over the nose-heavy Audi Quattro, it was significantly lighter and, being mid-engined, more manoeuvrable. It lacked the firepower of its German rival, but more than made up for it on the twisty, narrow tracks that make up the WRC. The 205 T16 took three victories in '84, seven the following year and with it the drivers' and constructors' titles with Timo Salonen at the wheel. The E2 T16 repeated the twin titles in 1986 with Juha Kankkunen taking the spoils. There were yet more trophies in the WRC era, with the Peugeot 206 taking the drivers' title in 2000 and 2002 with a hat-trick of manufacturers' cups over the same period. If you want a fast rally car, you know where to come.

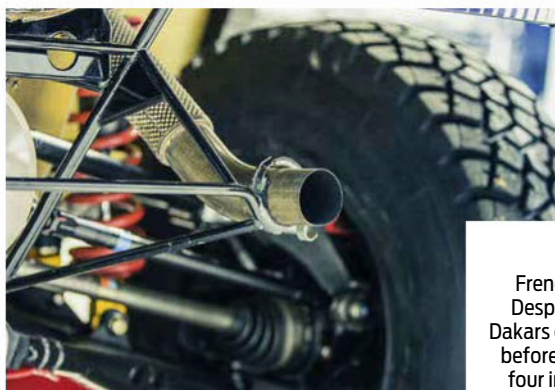
**Peugeot might not
be the first name that
springs to mind for
motorsport histories**





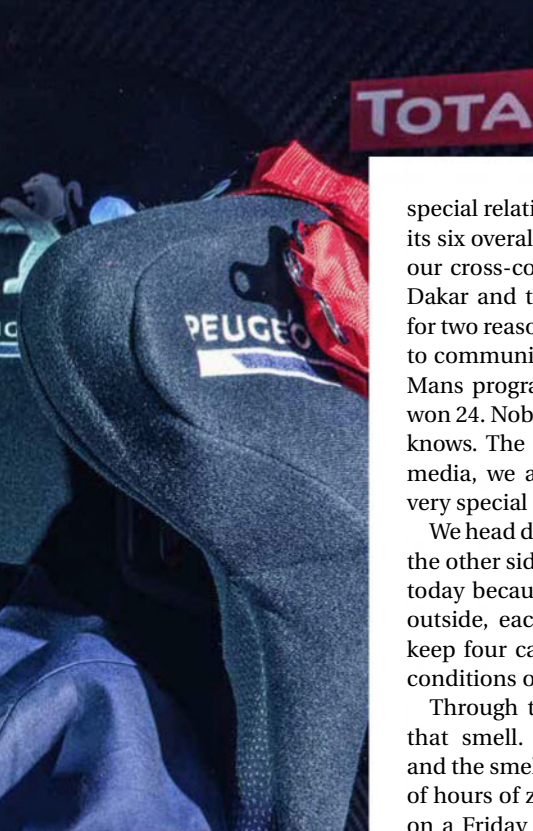
Director of Peugeot Sport, Bruno Famin, showcases an impressive trophy mantelpiece. The company's role in motorsport hasn't been solely on dirt, with the French marque supplying engines to several FI teams (notably McLaren) in the past





Frenchman Cyril Despres won five Dakars on two wheels before switching to four in 2015. From 34th in his first year, Despres improved to seventh in 2016 before capturing his first podium in a car in 2017





special relationship with the Dakar, taking the sixth of its six overall victories in January 2017. "We are doing our cross-country program with two main races, the Dakar and the Silk Road Rally," explains Famin. "It's for two reasons; to communicate about our brand and to communicate about our products. With the 908 Le Mans program we raced 32 times against Audi – we won 24. Nobody knows. Even inside the group nobody knows. The aim is to communicate. Motorsport is a media, we are competing against other media – it's very special media of course."

We head downstairs and cross a narrow courtyard to the other side of the building. It's narrower than usual today because there are three support trucks parked outside, each one being loaded with enough kit to keep four cars on the move in the most challenging conditions on Earth.

Through the workshop door and you're struck by that smell. The smell of motorsport. Warmed oil and the smell of hand-cut tyres mixed with thousands of hours of zealous effort. It's busy like a rail terminal on a Friday evening here, as three of the unfinished 3008 DKR rally cars are being worked on while other team members are bubble-wrapping and packing away enough carbonfibre body panels to reclothe an armada of them.

There's also a palpable sense of history within these anonymous walls. It was the birthplace of some of the most spectacular and successful competition cars ever conceived, their achievements immortalised in the giant chrome trophies scattered among tools and personnel.

The 3008 DKR is the car created to defend Peugeot's Dakar crown, and it is not a machine without purpose. It's all meat and no pastry, staring you squarely in the eye as you go nose-to-nose with it, the Peugeot grille squeezed and stretched into a sinister grin. Famin explains how the looks aren't designed just for intimidation. "We worked on the body to give

Through the workshop door and you're struck by that smell; the smell of motorsport

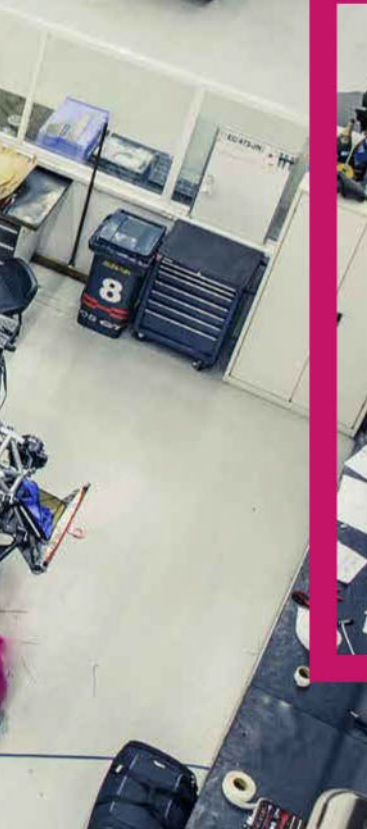
it the new shape of the 3008 SUV and to improve the aerodynamics. We believe this is very important because the average speed is not so slow and because adequate cooling is a big problem. We need very good cooling without having drag."

As well as the aero changes, the 3008 has revised suspension over 2016's Dakar winner, the 2008 DKR, and an engine tuned for dune-slaying low-end torque.

Dakar 2017 threw a curveball into the already challenging mix with a dramatic increase in altitude. Half the race took place at around 4000m (13,000ft) as it skirted the Andes. Every 100m of altitude cost one per cent of engine performance while the stipulated air restrictor meant you couldn't just ramp up the boost; at times competitors were running on 60 per cent power. The reduced density of the air also had an aerodynamic impact, reducing downforce.

"But the main point [was] the brakes," Famin said. (Less dense air at altitude is less effective at cooling the brakes, while the fluid's boiling point is also lowered). "The drivers [had] to be careful because you have to brake earlier, but the brain also has less air so the time of reaction is not the same. They have to allow for these things. This is why experience is so important on the Dakar."

Scan down Peugeot's driver list and you can see what he means. Stephane Peterhansel has missed only one Dakar since 1988, taking six wins on motorcycles. This year he added his seventh victory in a car, making him the most successful Dakar competitor in history.



Pug Pedigree Famous rally bloodline

PEUGEOT Sport's first tilt at the legendary Pikes Peak hillclimb was with a heavily modified 205 T16 featuring a longer wheelbase and loads more aero, packing 410kW into just 850kg. Mechanical maladies meant Walter Rohrl and Audi pipped Ari Vatanen to first place in '87, but second, third and fourth showed the potential. Peugeot Sport returned the following year with a bigger weapon; the 405 T16 allowed an

even longer wheelbase for more stability and a bigger engine with variable valve-timing now nudging 522kW. Vatanen was not to be denied, shaving 0.6sec off Rohrl's time to set a course record that stood for five years, his run was immortalised in the film *Climb Dance*. Robby Unser won it again in 1989. As with most of the motorsport disciplines it's entered, Peugeot Sport came back for a second crack, this time



rocking up with the 208 T16. Weighing a paltry 875kg but sporting a 3.2-litre twin-turbo V6 with 652kW – or notably, that's 1000bhp per tonne – as well as the wing, transmission and

carbon brakes from its 908 LMP1 car. They also brought along Sebastien Loeb, presumably bored of winning all the WRC titles, who promptly took 1min 33sec off the course record.

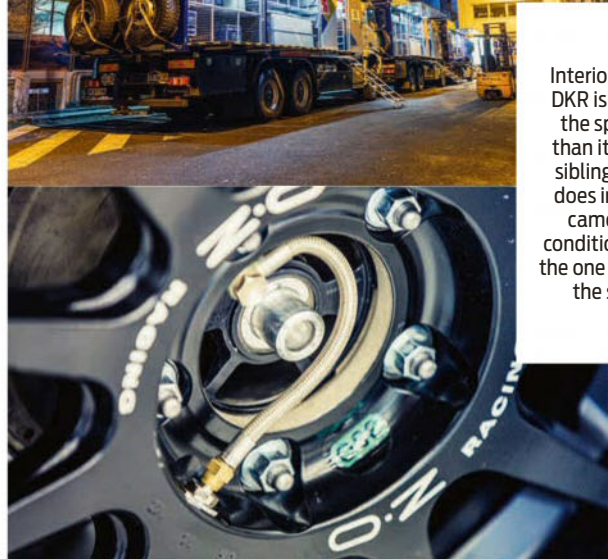
Cyril Despres has 11 Dakar podium finishes including five wins to his name, plus the Silk Way victory in 2016. Carlos Sainz you may have heard of, and then there's Mr Loeb, who enjoyed his best Dakar placing in 2017 finishing second outright.

"It's quite a long time since Sebastien has surprised me anymore; he is amazing, incredible," Famin said. "The fact that he was fast was everything but a surprise (Loeb's first Dakar was the 2016 event, with Peugeot). As a newcomer he made a couple of mistakes, which is normal. But his capabilities and adaptation are incredible."

Peterhansel may have passed his 51st birthday, but his enthusiasm for the event is borderline undignified for a man of his age and success. "It's never the same!" he says. "In the beginning it was in Africa, but also in Africa every year was different conditions, now we are in South America and it's also different every year. You never know what will happen! It's still an adventure, it's still my passion and a big part of my life."

Teammate Cyril Despres knows all about this, having been through his fair share of adventures during his motorcycle years. His first Dakar in a car with Peugeot saw him finish 34th, but last year he came in a highly creditable seventh. He explains it's harder to navigate in the car, less comfortable with the heat and has lost 2kg of muscle from each leg, but his record of finishing 13 Dakars from 14 starts on a bike speaks for itself. "In 2002 I broke a little part of the handlebar and crashed, dislocating my hip. I was lying on the floor thinking, 'Oh, I'm lucky, everything is okay!' I tried to stand up but couldn't." Despres mimes one leg pointing one way and the other facing in an entirely different direction...

Prior to the 2017 Dakar event there were doubts about the rear-wheel drive concept, which flies in the face of conventional logic, it was ultimately proved right. "There is a saying that it is the race that chooses the winning driver," says Famin. "It's not true but there is some truth in it." It's about being in the right place at the right time, which takes some planning. **M**

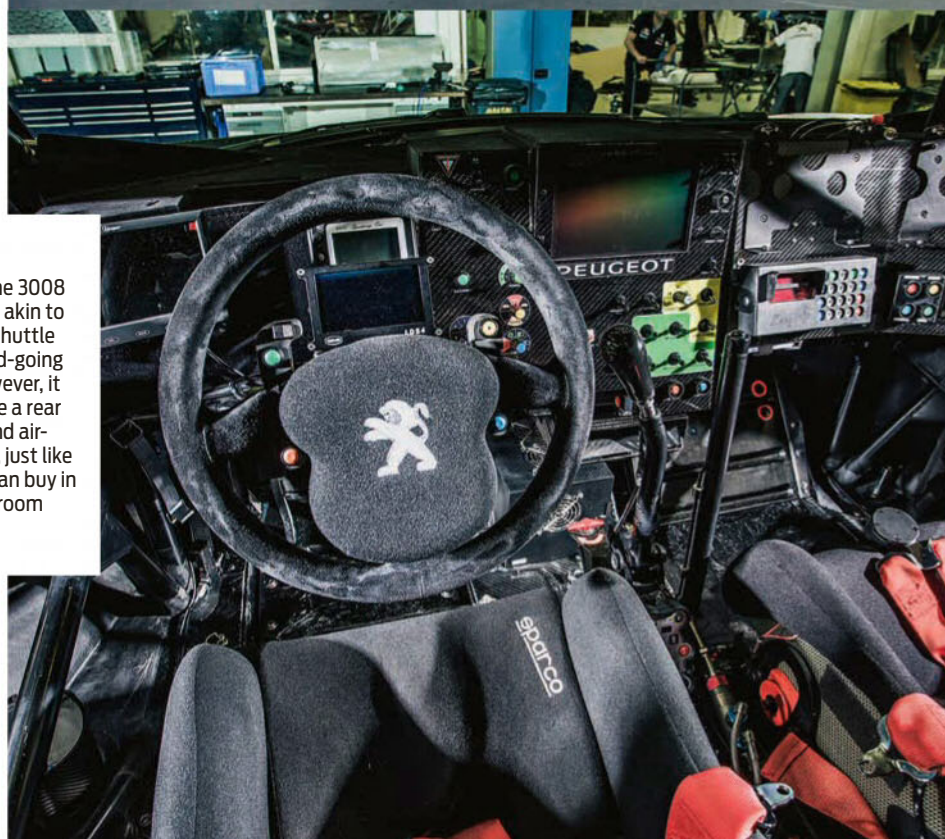


Interior of the 3008 DKR is more akin to the space shuttle than its road-going sibling; however, it does include a rear camera and air-conditioning, just like the one you can buy in the showroom



Rear-wheel drive allows lower weight, bigger wheels and more ground clearance for Dakar

The 3.0-litre V6 twin-turbo diesel offers a modest 256kW, but a substantial 800Nm





Unstressed body panels are thin for lightness and spares are kept out of the way of airflow

Twin springs and dampers at each corner give absurd levels of travel – 460mm to be exact

2017 Dakar Loeb loses desert fight

SEBASTIEN LOEB nearly won the 2017 Dakar Rally Raid and the competition between Peugeot teammates was so fierce, there were whispers of team orders during the event.

But ultimately an engine issue on Day Four cruelled Loeb and teammate Daniel Elena's hopes of victory – only their second Dakar – setting them back 26 minutes and proving decisive in the final reckoning. Despite winning more stages than anyone else – five of 10 – Loeb and Elena settled for second outright, learning the hard way that the Dakar can be cruel.

Instead it was defending champion Stephane Peterhansel who took the win, a record seventh on four wheels and his 13th overall if you include his victories on two wheels.

Peugeot driver Carlos Sainz was also

shaping up as a contender early on before crashing on Stage Four, the car entering a series of rolls and becoming damaged beyond repair.

"Everybody feared this year's Dakar – justifiably in my opinion," Peugeot Sport boss Bruno Famin said after the event. "This tension led the members of the team to work even more closely together and the reward is a fantastic overall team result. As far as the car is concerned, the biggest step forward was its reliability. We didn't have any mechanical issues, with the exception of a small problem which, it can be said, deprived Loeb and Elena of the win. All our work upstream of the event paid off in the form of enhanced performance. I know it can bring added stress but, for me, the thought of issuing team orders was inconceivable. As a

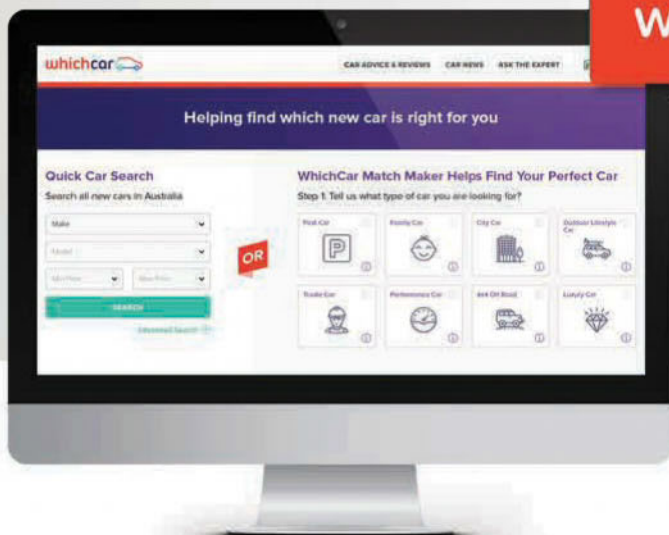


result, everyone was able to savour the intensity of the fight to the end, including with the crews themselves."

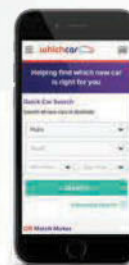
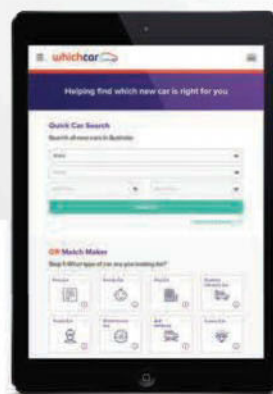
The 2017 Dakar Rally Raid covered 8823km over 12 legs, including 4093km of competition across 10 stages. The rear-drive Peugeot 3008DKR won nine of 10 stages. Its top speed was 203km/h in Stage Two and the maximum temperature of the event was 45 degrees Celsius.

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At WhichCar our team of motoring experts know that buying a new car can be daunting, so we've made it easy. From finding a car that suits your lifestyle, to comparing different models and booking a test drive, we'll help you at every step.



whichcar.com.au



2016 Holden Ute SS-V Redline Automatic 6.2L Utility



COMPARE THIS CAR

SAVE THIS CAR

\$53,190

- Utility
- 6.2L, 8cyl Petrol
- 6SP Automatic
- Fuel Cost from \$47 p/w

Safety Features Excellent

No. of Doors 2 Door

Fuel Efficiency (12.4 L / 100 km)

Green Rating

Warranty 3 Years / unlimited km

Boot Space

CONTACT A DEALER

BOOK A TEST DRIVE

FIND A

by SCOTT NEWMAN

Carbon Ceramics

Why these serious stoppers are something else

CARBON-CERAMIC brakes used to be the preserve of only the most exotic of cars. The technology was originally developed for the high-speed rail industry, but the first auto application was unveiled at the 1999 Frankfurt motor show. Its production debut came in 2001 as an option on the Porsche 911 GT2, before being adopted by the early-2000s supercar trio of the Ferrari Enzo, Porsche Carrera GT and Mercedes-McLaren SLR.

There's a reason that until recently carbon-ceramic discs have only been available at the upper end of the market, and that's because the production process is extremely time-consuming. In fact, it can take up to 20 days to produce a composite disc. Despite this, like

all technology, it has slowly filtered down to the point where the lightweight stoppers are an option on the likes of the Audi RS3.

Early attempts at carbon-ceramic brakes had some pretty serious flaws. Gordon Murray investigated using them on the F1 but couldn't

the Merc SLR in particular requiring an 'all or nothing' approach to braking. Porsche and Ferrari got on top of this quickly, however, despite assurances that carbon-ceramic brakes would last the life of the vehicle, owners quickly found themselves with five-figure

"It can take up to 20 days to produce a carbon-ceramic brake disc"

get the brakes to work effectively at the wide range of temperatures experienced by a road car. Composite brakes work best when hot, so braking performance at low temperatures wasn't great.

Low-speed pedal feel was also poor, with early Lamborghinis and

replacement bills when their cars were driven hard on circuits.

Nonetheless, like every technology, things improved and the latest carbon-ceramic braking systems from Porsche, Audi, Ferrari and AMG are stunning in their power and resistance to fade.

Light weight, heavy bills

Top-notch braking doesn't come cheap

FOR THE vast majority of drivers, carbon-ceramic brakes are unnecessary. Unless you're a regular track-goer, the only difference you'll feel is a slight improvement in ride quality, as composite brakes are lighter and therefore reduce unsprung weight.

However, if you do decide to take the

plunge, you'll need fairly deep pockets. At the supercar end of town, carbon-ceramic brakes are increasingly common standard equipment – all Ferraris, for instance, come so equipped, as do Porsche's Turbo S models.

AMG offers front carbon-ceramics for \$9990 on the C63, which are signified by gold calipers. BMW's M Division also uses gold calipers

to identify cars so equipped, but charges \$15,000 for the privilege on the M3/M4, though it does throw in composite rears as well.

Porsche, the company that started it all, uses yellow calipers for PCCB-optional cars, and you'll need \$19,990 to add these to your 911 or \$17,990 for your Boxster or Cayman. Bentley likewise charges \$20,000 for the ultimate in braking while Audi asks for \$20,940 on the RS6/RS7 but helpfully writes 'ceramic' on the grey calipers to remind everyone that you are as brave with your financial decisions as you are with the middle pedal.

Just remember, they cost just as much at replacement time. — SN





Cooking Class

Baking brakes

1 RAW INGREDIENTS

The raw materials of a carbon-ceramic brake disc are a heat-mouldable silicone resin and chopped bits of carbonfibre, which are combined in an aluminium mould to create the shape of a brake rotor. Aluminium inserts are hammered into the side of the mould to create the ventilation slots.

2 PRESSING MATTER

A press then applies 20,000kg of pressure to this mixture and heats it to 200 degrees Celsius, which compresses the carbonfibre and transforms the resin into plastic. The disc is then dunked in water to cool.

3 FEELING THE HEAT

The disc is gradually heated to 1000 degrees Celsius over two days, which transforms the plastic into carbon. More silicone powder is added and it's back into the oven, this time heated to 1700 degrees over 24 hours under vacuum, melting the silicone and sucking it into the disc ring which creates silicone carbide.

4 FEEL THE BURN

Oxygen burns carbon at high temperatures. You may have seen this occur during F1 races, with clouds of black dust emerging from wheels under heavy braking as the discs disappear. To prevent this each disc is painted to prevent oxidation, which extends the life of the brakes under extreme temperatures.

5 WHAT A GRIND

The paint leaves a white residue when cured, so the final step is to remove this, polish the disc and inspect it at a micron level to ensure there are no flaws. Then it's time to fit the hats and attach to the car.

Cool Kit

Stuff We Want

VW brake upgrade

\$4895
hp.net.au

Being stiffer, lighter, and bigger than your Golf's factory stoppers, Racingline's kit is the full stop on VW braking upgrades.



Puma kart boots

\$130
revolutionracegear.com.au

Puma's kart boots sport a rounded heel, ankle cover and a non-skid outsole. And yes, the other one says 'brake'.



Race brake fluid

\$115

autosphere.com.au

If you spent big on brakes, they deserve decent fluid. It's the system's lifeblood. Castrol's SRF racing stuff should do the trick.



Nissan GT-R turbocharger kit

\$13,500

hi-torqueperformance.com.au

Three-second 0-100km/h sprints shouldn't bore you, but if they do, turn up your GT-R with a HKS GT800 kit – good for 600kW.

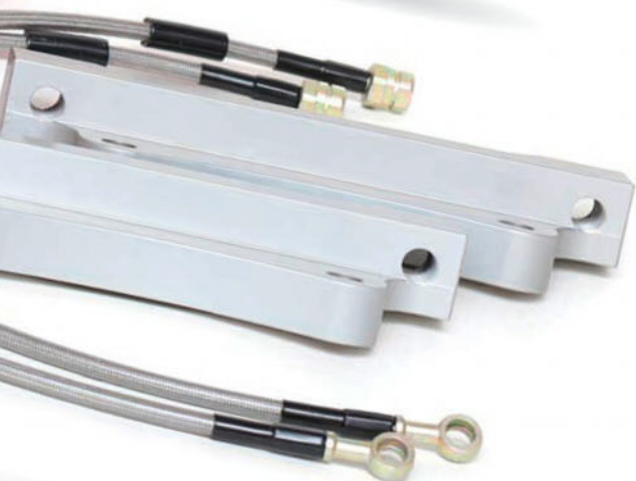


E30 M3 tee

\$42

curecollection.com

Every tee sold funds research for a breast cancer cure. So these cotton artworks make you not only look good, but feel good.



F1 GTR print

\$40

scheningcreative.com

Seven McLaren F1 GTs descended upon Le Mans in 1995. Number 24 finished fourth, and you can admire it on this 13 by 19-inch print.

FUEL THIS MONTH **7.68L/100KM** | AVERAGE **8.6L/100KM** | DISTANCE THIS MONTH **642KM** | TOTAL **4826KM**

Skid Row

Taking our little rear-driver for a spin – literally

DESPITE what this magazine's amazing photography might tell you, not every journalist can drift the tyres off a Ferrari. I know because I'm one of the sods who can't handbrake turn to save his life.

Before joining chez *MOTOR*, my days at the track were spent keeping the car straight as possible, wary of any behaviour that saw otherwise. In fact, they still are.

The reason behind this is my first 'performance' car was a bum-dragger. Now, even though it was fine as front-drivers come, not even an early generation Honda Integra Type R, with its willingness to rotate under brakes, could teach you the dark art of controlled, willing drifts. That can only really be achieved with one thing, a propshaft.

This is something the MX-5 has. But it doesn't instantly make it, or you, a hero. I learnt this when tagging along to compare the MX-5, Abarth 124 Spider, and Subaru BRZ at DECA, in Shepparton. With its skidpan ours for half a day I seized the chance to have a few bites of sideways action.

With editor Dylan Campbell playing tutor, the instructions were to build speed, turn in, lift or brake to shift weight forward, feel the front load up, then floor the throttle to initiate the slide. Easy enough. The MX-5 didn't need much provocation.

After initiating the slide it's about balancing the throttle, power and steering to hold the slide. Which I found a little harder.

The front-end didn't seem to have as much bite as I thought it would. And while it makes up for it with superb chassis balance, I found it hard to keep up with how quick

everything happens and would heap on too much opposite lock, or throttle, to keep things straight. Transitions? Forget it.

The MX-5's no Australian Drifting Grand Prix regular, for a few reasons. Its wheelbase measures just 2310mm. About 260mm shorter than an 86's wheelbase, and a whopping 600mm less than a Commodore's.

Then there's its power. It's a decent but not stonking 118kW and 200Nm, both delivered quite high in the rev range. Add to the list its significant bodyroll and relatively slow steering and you have a recipe for difficulty.

If you think I'm making excuses you'd be right – sorta. Because I can't help feeling like a V8 Commodore would have made my day very different. A longer wheelbase would create a wider window in which to add opposite lock, and a LS3 would make more use of the right pedal's travel. In the hope of maintaining a slide, I usually overdid the throttle and sent the MX-5 into a spin.

In spite of these frustrations, the MX-5 still stacks up as a brilliant device for slides, if only for the fact it needs to be mastered.

That's probably why Japan's discontinued but outrageously popular show, *Best Motoring International*, used the Roadster (as it's known there) as a stepping stone for transforming a Super GT driver into a drift king.

Because in contrast to principles of 'grip' driving, being able to drift a low-powered car like the MX-5 indicates a developed level of skill. You're forced to use momentum, timing, and judgement to greater effect. Which left me with the final thought that if you can drift the MX-5, you can probably can drift anything. – **LC**

MONTH
three

Liked

Hanging out the MX-5's little bum

Disliked

Spinning it. Many times



**favourite
MOMENT**
Almost linking a transition

After watching the author embarrass himself, DC was on hand to quickly show all how it's done (top right)





If you think I'm making excuses you'd be right – sorta. I can't help feeling like a V8 Commodore would have made my day very different



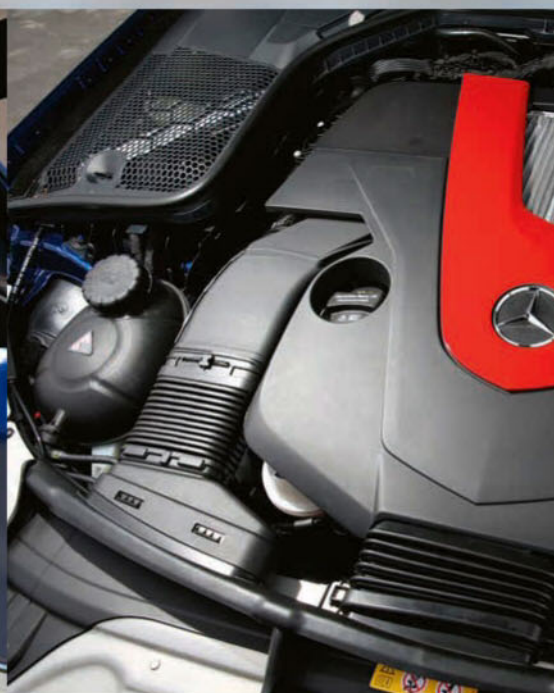
The Garage

Long term diaries

pics CRISTIAN BRUNELLI



It's properly loud, with an aggressive and addictive crack on its swift upshifts and a V6 howl not unlike a Jaguar F-Type



FUEL THIS MONTH **8.04L/100KM** | AVERAGE **8.04L/100KM**
DISTANCE THIS MONTH **1155KM** | TOTAL **2160KM**

The Real Deal

The C43 is fast, loud, and deserves its AMG badge

MONTH
two

Liked

It's seriously fast
for what it is

Disliked

Body control over
long bumps



favourite MOMENT

Hearing the crack as
you go up gears under
full throttle

The C43 V6's 270kW
and 520Nm match
the C55's V8 from
over a decade ago
and make this thing
properly fast

THIS MONTH we've been getting to know our new Mercedes-AMG C43 long-term and there's one question we're very eager to answer: is this thing a 'real' AMG or should Mercedes have stuck to calling it a C450 AMG Sport?

For readers not familiar, not too long ago this car was called exactly that – a C450 AMG Sport, suggesting that from the get-go the company thought it might be just a little bit too soft for the exclusive three-character AMG nomenclature. But in a recent update – where the only change was the fitment of a new, nine-speed auto – Mercedes also upgraded the badges. Which made us suspicious.

And now, having spent a few thousand kilometres in AMG's new baby, we can confirm they got the name wrong – in calling it a C450 to begin with. Yep, we are relieved to say, the 270kW twin-turbo 3.0-litre V6 C43 deserves to sit below the C63 as an AMG product. Although anybody thinking this is a C63 Junior would be mistaken. Though obviously based on the same chassis and platform, from a performance perspective, these are two very different cars.

The C43 has fundamentally an entirely unique personality to the C63. Whereas its \$155,615 V8 big brother has a burbly, menacing hot-rod exhaust note; and in trying to put 375kW through two rear wheels is just an unhinged kind of car; the C43 almost channels some A45 AMG in the way it goes about its business.

With four-wheel drive the C43 is a much more secure-handling car than the C63 without any of the latter's wheel-spinning histrionics. You plant it in the C43 and it just converts your command to forward momentum without fuss or blinking ESP lights.

We will get a C63 and compare them at some point but the C43

also feels to have a much more conservative chassis tune. This is a car whose front tyres let go much sooner than the rears. And unlike the C63, in which you can neutralise understeer in obvious ways, it takes more technique to get the best out of the C43. (There'll be a track update at some point in which we'll drill down into the C43's handling personality.)

The C43's ride is also very interesting. It's sporty, cat's eyes thumping into the cabin like the car is full of rose-joints, even in Comfort mode. But fundamentally the C43's suspension errs on the softer side, almost too much so, to the point it's wanting for some body control over big, long bumps. The result is a sometimes springy, bouncy ride at highway speeds where the body takes more than one movement to settle. Interestingly the ride is almost better in Sport Plus where the firmed-up dampers keep the C43's body movements more in check.

But there are two things that hit home to us that the C43 is a deserving AMG and that's its speed and noise. Our car has the optional \$4990 Performance Package which gets you the 'Dinamica' microsuade steering wheel as seen in the C63; the C63's snug Performance front seats and the Performance exhaust. This \$5K, we suspect, really puts the AMG into the C43. It's properly loud, with an aggressive and addictive crack on its swift upshifts and a V6 howl not unlike a Jaguar F-Type. The noise alone is causing the C43 to win hearts in the MOTOR office.

And the speed. This car is FAST, surprisingly so. Merc claims 0-100km/h in 4.9 fuss-free all-wheel drive seconds, and we don't doubt it. So it's so far, so good with the C43. It might be more straight-laced than the C63 but there's no denying they're blood relatives. What a relief. – DC

V8 Power Houses

Need some Teutonic grunt in your life for circa \$150K? Step this way

2013 BMW M6

4395cc V8, DOHC, 32v, twin-turbo
412kW @ 7000rpm
680Nm @ 1500rpm
1850kg
4.2sec (claimed)
\$292,145 (new)

● **USED \$139,980**



VS

ENGINE
POWER
TORQUE
WEIGHT
0-100KM/H
PRICE

Mercedes-Benz C63 S coupe

3982cc V8, DOHC, 32v, twin-turbo
375kW @ 6250rpm
700Nm @ 1750rpm
1800kg
4.2sec (claimed)
\$162,400

● **NEW \$162,400**



POWER IS addictive. And a budget of \$150K yields a wide selection of ways to feed the habit.

You can score a HSV GTS with 430kW and \$50K worth of change. Or, for less of a discount, Lexus's RC F offers 351kW of high-tech atmo grunt.

However, if you prefer power in a more sophisticated package you should turn to Germany. Your mates at the pub might scoff at the smaller, turbocharged engines the big three are bolting together, but they won't be so smug after hearing the sort of numbers these engines make.

Mercedes-AMG's C63 S manages to extract 375kW and 700Nm from a measly 4.0-litre V8. And if you needed any indication there's some headroom left, the similar engine in the incoming GT R makes 430kW.

By all accounts, the new twin-turbo unit matches the old 6.2-litre atmo V8 in all facets. You'll need to creep above our

“
By all accounts, too, the new twin-turbo unit matches the old 6.2-litre atmo V8
”

\$150K budget to have one in the sleek coupe, which isn't the prettiest body style around. Although as with most things, there's an alternative to that in the classifieds.

BMW's M6 is a looker and limbos under \$150K thanks to the depreciation devil. We've found a 2013 example for \$139,980, which is on the spectrum's cheaper end, but shows how far it's come from the original \$300K price tag. For that, though, you're up 37kW on the C63 S and given an extra 400cc. Sure, it has 20Nm less, but we wouldn't be surprised if BMW's been conservative with the M6's outputs, as its rolling acceleration is phenomenal.

The chassis isn't as agile as the Merc's, and with older M6s exiting their warranty periods about now, make sure you ask for a full and detailed logbook. However, the upside is that modifications are now kosher. We'd opt for a proper exhaust, too, because like we said, power's addictive. **M**



PRICE \$139,980

Here's one we found on Trade Unique Cars

2013 BMW M6

31,991km, Competition Pack

THERE'S a BMW M6 in Singapore Grey at Lorbek Luxury Cars in Melbourne. Said to be fully optioned, it's also been factory upgraded to 423kW and fitted with sports suspension and an exhaust system.

The unique car you want is now easier to find



Ford Mustang sales soar

Pony car's debut year overshadows Falcon exit

THE Ford Mustang's debut year on the Australian market has been a massive hit with punters. It seems the Blue Oval faithful have found a new, two-door American hero to latch on to with the demise of the venerable Falcon.

Ford Ranger aside, the 'Stang was the brand's highest-selling model with an impressive 6208 units sold for its first year on sale. Not bad for a car the company expected to shift just 1000 units of in that time. By comparison, only 4434 of the final, iconic Aussie sedans limped off the production line and into the driveways of the Falcon faithful.

Not only was the Mustang a standout within the Ford fold, it also eclipsed established rivals within the under-\$80K Sports category. The likes of the Hyundai Veloster (2232), Toyota 86 (2068), Mazda MX-5 (1577) couldn't come close to toppling the popular Pony.

Demand has a downside, though, and that comes via a seven-to-

nine month wait for delivery of V8 GTs. Supply issues will hopefully be aided somewhat throughout 2017 with Ford Australia securing additional volume. It will also be interesting to see if the much publicised two-star ANCAP crash rating will have buyers galloping away in droves – we suspect probably not.

A significantly updated range for the 2018 model has already been previewed and should help sales continue on an upward curve. Revised styling, all-LED headlights, increased power, quad exhaust tips (V8), revised six-speed manual and a new 10-speed automatic, MagneRide dampers, upgraded interior as well as safety kit including lane-keep assist and pre-collision warning features.

Tickford-fettled Mustangs are now also available, with a significant increase in power outputs of both the EcoBoost and 5.0-litre V8 versions. Watch this space.

Will Mustang continue its success heading into its second year on sale?

-54
PER CENT



the
HEAT
WINNERS AND
LOSERS OF
NOV/DEC 2016



999
PER CENT

Top ten losers

CAR	NOV	DEC	YTD	YTD +/-
Morgan	0	0	5	-76%
Lotus Elise	1	0	8	-64%
Alfa Romeo 4C	2	2	68	-54%
Bentley sedan	2	4	26	-54%
Citroen DS3	1	0	33	-54%
BMW 2 Series	45	28	896	-49%
Chrysler 300	34	27	460	-48%
BMW i8	1	2	32	-48%
BMW 5 Series	43	31	545	-48%
Subaru BRZ	3	82	331	-46%

Top ten movers

CAR	NOV	DEC	YTD	YTD +/-
Ford Mustang	389	614	6208	>999%
BMW 7 Series	9	49	293	215%
Caterham	0	0	3	200%
BMW Z4	21	6	194	199%
Jaguar XE	14	129	1524	163%
McLaren	4	30	93	158%
Mercedes-AMG GT S	16	5	144	148%
Audi R8	9	15	94	124%
Merc C-Class coupe/con.	323	374	2524	79%
Mazda MX-5	103	187	1577	72%

Coming Soon 2017

March

BMW 5 Series

To be lighter, faster, more comfortable.

BMW M4 DTM Champion Edition

Reborn GTS; new paint and in limited numbers.

Mercedes-Benz E-Class Coupe

No longer based on the C-Class platform.

Range Rover Autobiography

Land Rover slips SVR engine into its flagship.

Porsche Macan Turbo Performance Pack

More power and dynamic upgrades.



Porsche Panamera

All-new stretch sedan debuts for Stuttgart.

Later this year

Audi RS3 Sedan

New alloy five-pot

drops into four-door RS.

Audi TT RS

Flagship coupe arrives with hot alloy five-pot.

Audi RS4

Drops V8 grunt for Porsche's twin-turbo V6.

Audi R8 Spyder

Rag-top V10 rocket.

BMW M760Li xDrive

Firm's quasi-M7 arrives with twin-turbo V12.

Ferrari GTC4Lusso

The bread van returns

Porsche 911 GT2 RS

Combines GT3 RS

chassis with Turbo S-beating power.

HSV GTSR W1

We're hearing production commences April.



Honda Civic Type R

Manic turbo front-driver arrives on Aussie shores.

Hyundai i30 N

Hyundai's first proper attempt at a hot hatch.

Kia Stinger GT

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Mark Fogarty

“Holden is the only manufacturer to commit to Gen2 engine rules, which allow configurations other than V8s”

A NEW-LOOK racing Commodore is a rare event. It only happens about every 10 years. The next one is well on the way and it will be the most radical yet.

The Supercars version of next year's 'NG' Commodore is unique. It will be the first not based on the shape of a locally made, rear-wheel drive model and the first without a V8. In appearance, Holden's 2018 racer is an aggressive version of the imported front- and all-wheel drive next-gen Commodore. Just add aerodynamic accoutrements and war paint. Under the bonnet will be a twin-turbocharged 3.6-litre V6 from Cadillac's ATS-V.R GT3 weapon in the States, retuned by GM Racing to meet the Gen2 Supercars engine rules to maintain parity with the existing 5.0-litre normally aspirated V8s.

Of course, the new Commodore body will sit on the existing Supercars control chassis, which remains rear-wheel drive. The engine bay will be adapted to fit the all-aluminium twin-turbo V6, which may need to be ballasted to match the weight of the iron-block V8s. Holden is the only manufacturer so far to commit to the Gen2 engine rules, which allow configurations other than V8s. Development of the 'NG' Commodore race package is well advanced on both sides of the Pacific.

The program represents a major departure in the way Holden goes racing. First off, it switched the Holden Racing Team title to Triple Eight Race Engineering as the sole factory-backed team. As well as its lead two-car entries of VF Commodores for Shane van Gisbergen and Jamie Whincup becoming the Red Bull Holden Racing Team, Triple Eight is co-ordinating the design and development of the Supercars version of the 'NG' Commodore.

Roland Dane's benchmark group is working with Holden Design boss Peter Hughes to adapt the shape of the five-door 'fastback' new Commodore and optimise the aero body kit to the Supercars rules. Triple Eight is also liaising with GM Racing in the States on development of the twin-turbo V6, the first non-V8 in Australian touring car championship racing since 1994. What's more, having replaced the Clayton enclave in Melbourne – which ran HRT for 26 years – the Banyo band in Brisbane will be the sole supplier of major racing components to all Lion legion teams.

Holden's move to centralise supply and cut costs to all teams running the 'NG' Commodore – Triple Eight among them – includes leasing them standard-spec engines at a fixed price. The motors will be supplied by GM Racing and, initially at least, will be monitored and maintained by visiting American technicians. Triple Eight's long-time engine guru Ken McNamara – known in the industry as 'Kenny Mac' – has a limited local role that should eventually see him servicing the motors.

The Aussie-spec version of the LF4.R GT3 motor, based on the production Cadillac ATS-V's twin-turbo 3.6-litre V6 (a high-end, blown derivative of the VF Commodore's base sixes) has been

developed at the GM Powertrain Performance and Racing Center in Pontiac, outside Detroit in Michigan. GM Racing ran the first Holden Supercars iteration on the dyno in the second week of January. A running engine was due at Holden by early February for initial local testing, while Triple Eight was expecting a mock-up motor in early March to begin fitment work with the chassis.

Interestingly, although Dane says the 'NG' Commodore body shape fits "like a glove" on the Supercars control chassis, it actually needs to be chopped to retain the proportions of the road car. The VE/VF racers' roof and rear door panels need 93mm taken out to meet the mandated wheelbase length, which was based on the shorter VY/VZ dimension. Although the road-going 'NG' Commodore has a similar wheelbase to the pre-VE generation, its front-wheel drive layout means the race version requires close to 100 mm removed from the middle because the engine is mounted much further back.

Computer renderings revealing the look of the next Supercars Commodore should be shown around mid-year, while it is hoped a first track test of the prototype race car will happen sometime in the third quarter (July-September). **M**



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Tim Keen



Those USBs aren't the sign of a deranged mind that won't throw anything away, they're the mark of a collector

I READ A STORY in the paper recently about some bloke in New York who has collected car brochures since he was a kid – now he has more than 13,000 of them. Steve Hayes has spent more than seven decades accumulating marketing brochures on everything from Oldsmobiles to Soviet Volgas (why did the Soviets need to market cars? Didn't they just assign you one, and if you complained that it was terrible, they shot you?). Hayes' collection takes up a whole room of his flat – even though he's only ever owned one car, for just three months, back in 1960.

And the more I read, the more I thought, this guy's a genius. Not for collecting the brochures themselves, per se – even Steve Hayes admits that he started on a whim when he was a kid and then he just sort of never stopped because, well, the human brain is a mysterious lump of skull-fat that occasionally catches itself in a loop. It's for re-branding himself, not as a crazy old hoarder, but as a Collector. What some people would call a massive pile of old tat, suddenly becomes a Collection.

For example, the cardboard boxes in our spare room at home filled with old press kits – no longer will I let my darling wife demand to know when I'm going to recycle them. Because, by god, they're a collection. A potentially priceless library of motoring information from... well, I dunno, I can't be arsed to actually sort them into order. Don't judge me: I'm not a curator, but I am a collector!

And the shoe boxes filled with USBs – and my lord, does the auto industry love themselves a good novelty USB stick; I've got ones shaped like spanners and Chevrolet logos and tyres and glowing crystals; they stopped shaping them like the cars themselves when they discovered that some cheeky Chinese manufacturers were 3D-scanning them to make full-size knock-offs, which is why the Lifan 320 looks like a faintly munted Mini Cooper, but if you pull off the front grille

you can plug it into a MacBook the size of the MCG.

But those USBs, they're not the sign of a deranged mind that won't throw anything away, they're the mark of... a collector.

It's a get-out-of-jail-free card for anything you can't be arsed to carry up to the bins. Old ice cream containers filled with odd-sized washers you haven't touched in years? You're a collector. Valve stem caps forgotten by the air-pumpers of yore, and saved in the ashtray because "you never know when it'll come in handy"? Collector. Jam jars filled with Allen keys from... well, god knows what they're from now, because long after the item has disappeared into obscurity, the Allen key remains, the cockroach of the hardware world. Except, no – collection!

And the good news is, there's almost surely someone out there who's a passionate collector too. It's the same principle as internet porn. With seven billion people on the planet, if you can think of it, someone is into it. And if you're lucky, that someone is willing to pay for it. The Steve Hayes brochure collection is being auctioned off for – wait for it – \$100,000. Now your mind is suddenly wondering if you have a stash of old car brochures too, isn't it? Mine too. In fact, I'm wondering if there's a lonely billionaire out there with a penchant for novelty USB sticks and spec sheets with dicks drawn on them. Maybe Steve Hayes. He's got money to throw away now. And he needs something new to collect. **M**



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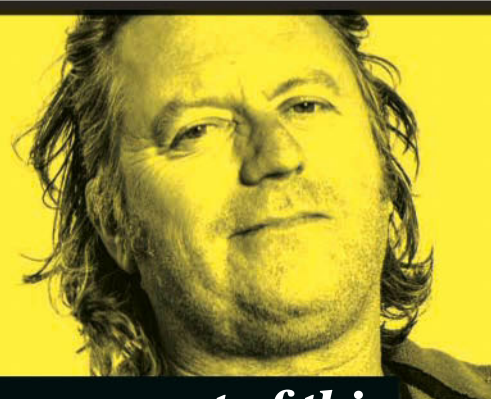


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David Morley



I'm a huge fan of farce, but every other aspect of this commercial made me want to climb through the screen

I DON'T usually travel into NSW during Christmas or Easter, or any other time when double demerit points apply. The thought of losing half my licence points at the hands of a predatory highway patrol just doesn't do it for me. If you're a NSW-based business that might be missing out on my vacation dollars because of this, feel free to mention it to your local Member.

However, I was recently in New South and managed to catch the latest road-safety-message TV advert. Now, I'm a huge fan of farce, but every other aspect of this ridiculous TV commercial made me want to climb through the screen, throttle the actors and then hunt down and hurt the creative team who generated this rubbish. What's wrong with it? Glad you asked. Everything.

Unbelievably, this loathsome pile of crap throws the blame for the side-impact crash depicted right back on the guy in the right. Pardon? Yep, that's what I said. See, the take-home from the advert is that it's less anti-social to drive negligently than it is to be a handful of kays over the limit.

Allow me to explain: Dude A has reached a T-intersection where he is faced with a Stop sign. At the risk of telling you lot how to suck eggs, this means he must stop his vehicle and give way to any other vehicle on the road, particularly one he would be in danger of clobbering. Meanwhile, Dude B is trundling down the road from Dude A's right, figuring that, since he has right of way, he can safely continue on his way. A not-unreasonable assumption and one we make every day on the road. You can probably guess what happens next: dude A fails to stop at the Stop sign and enters the intersection as Dude B approaches, and suddenly the two cars are on a collision course.

And here's where it goes wrong for me philosophically. Thanks to the magic of TV, the cars stop in a suspended-reality moment and each driver steps from his car to chat about what's going to happen next. Dude A (who has driven illegally through a Stop sign, remember) makes the statement that "it was a simple mistake". Dude B seems to think this is fair enough and suggests that the whole ugly mess could have been avoided if he'd been driving a bit slower. W. T. F!

So here's how, if I'm stupid enough to take this tripe at face value, I interpret what I've just seen: running a Stop sign is just a mistake we all make. But allowing my speedo to creep over the posted limit by a handful of kays is far more dangerous. More disturbing is the inference that the crash depicted was caused not by a driver ignoring a Stop sign, but by the other driver being six or seven km/h over an arbitrary speed limit. Wonder what a magistrate would make of that.

I could go on. Okay, I will. Dude B's speedo was showing

between 106 and 107km/h which, when corrected for the usual error, means he probably wasn't speeding at all. But that's kind of beside the point. See, the moment we take the responsibility off drivers to obey crucial road signals like Stop signs by describing such transgressions as "simple mistakes" then we open the floodgates to idiotic behaviour. Makes me wonder who the cops would have booked when they attended this potential fatal crash. I hope it was the Stop-sign runner. And I hope it was during the school holidays so the twat scored double demerit points.

Feel a need to comment? Search YouTube for 'Other people make mistakes. Slow down' and click the video with 600,000-plus views. I'd be very interested to hear what you think. **M**



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Hot Source explained

- All performance figures are manufacturer claims, those in *italics* are as-tested by MOTOR. Figures for an automatic variant have an asterisk.
- Prices listed are manufacturer RRP, exclusive of on-roads. "DA" denotes driveaway price.
- Italicised fuel consumption figures are those collected on test.
- Engines are listed by configuration, capacity and means of induction. For example, I4/1.6T= turbocharged 1.6-litre inline four. Power figures made by an engine's over-boost function are contained in parentheses.
- **Red** denotes new addition. **Green** denotes a model update.

MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
 Abarth www.fiat.com.au/abarth												
595 ★★★★★	Oct 16	\$27,500 (5m) \$29,500 (5s)	I4/1.4T	104/5500	206/2000	front	1035	101	7.9	–	5.4	⚠ Abarth entry point now much cheaper; funky looks; rorty engine ⚠ Drop in power gives it questionable fast-car credentials
595C ★★★★★		\$31,500 (5m) \$33,500 (5s)	I4/1.4T	104/5500	206/2000	front	1076	97	7.9	–	5.4	⚠ Cheap way to have the wind in your hair ⚠ Tough to take it seriously as a performance car
595 Turismo ★★★★★	Nov 14	\$34,000 (5m) \$36,000 (5s)	I4/1.4T	118/5500	230/3000	front	1035	114	8.99	16.55	5.4	⚠ Great drivetrain; looks good; cheaper than before ⚠ Still way too expensive; major handling and ride issues
595 Competizione ★★★★★	Oct 14	\$40,000 (5m) \$42,000 (5s)	I4/1.4T	118/5500	230/3000	front	1035	110	7.4	–	5.4	⚠ Monza exhaust is fantastic; reasonably fun to drive ⚠ Avoid the MTA gearbox like the plague; it costs how much?
695 Biposto ★★★★★	May 16	\$65,000 (5m)	I4/1.4T	140/5500	250/3000	front	997	140	5.9	–	6.5	⚠ Lighter and more powerful; it has an optional dog 'box! ⚠ The price is hilarious; you can option it to more than \$100K!
124 Spider ★★★★★	Jan 17	\$41,990 (6m) \$43,990 (6a)	I4/1.4T	125/5500	250/2500	rear	1060	118	6.8	–	–	⚠ More grunt never hurts; sharper handling; small price penalty ⚠ Purity vs pace – choose your roadster
 Alfa Romeo www.alfaromeo.com.au												
Giulietta Veloce ★★★★★		\$42,000 (6dc)	I4/1.7T	177/5750*	340/2000	front	1299	133	6.02*	14.29*	6.8	⚠ Newly updated with 4C drivetrain; stylish looks ⚠ Ride issues; intrusive ESP; driving position
4C ★★★★★	May 15	\$89,000 (6dc)	I4/1.7T	177/6000	350/2200	rear	1025	173	4.5	–	6.8	⚠ Clever construction; a proper driving event ⚠ Intrusive engine note; suspicions about its ride on Oz roads
4C Spider ★★★★★		\$99,000 (6dc)	I4/1.7T	177/6000	350/2200	rear	1035	171	4.5	–	–	⚠ Carbon construction means little dynamic penalty ⚠ Inconvenient DIY roof stowage
 Alpina www.alpinautomobiles.com.au												
B3 Biturbo ★★★★★		\$155,900 (8a)	I6/3.0TT	301/6250	600/3000	rear	1705	133	4.3	–	7.6	⚠ The M3 for those who want to blend in ⚠ Hefty price tag; haven't driven them yet
B3 Biturbo Estate ★★★★★		\$160,900 (8a)	I6/3.0TT	301/6250	600/3000	rear	1780	169	4.4	–	7.7	⚠ Want an M3 wagon? This is as close as you can get ⚠ Built to order status means a reasonable wait
B4 Biturbo ★★★★★		\$160,900 (8a)	I6/3.0TT	301/6250	600/3000	rear	1690	178	4.2	–	7.6	⚠ Looks great; very fast; exclusivity ⚠ Having to explain what it is to everybody
B4 Biturbo Cabriolet ★★★★★		\$170,900 (8a)	I6/3.0TT	301/6250	600/3000	rear	1915	157	4.5	–	8.0	⚠ Arguably a more sensible choice than an M4 Cabriolet ⚠ Huge weight penalty dulls performance and dynamics
 Aston Martin www.astonmartin.com												
V8 Vantage GT ★★★★★		\$219,895 (6m) \$235,795 (7s)	V8/4.7	321/7300	490/5000	rear	1610	200	4.5	–	13.9	⚠ New entry-level Vantage cheaper with more grunt ⚠ Ageing platform; strong rivals; Sportshift semi-auto flawed
V8 Vantage GT Roadster ★★★★★		\$248,895 (6m) \$264,795 (7s)	V8/4.7	321/7300	490/5000	rear	1690	190	4.8	–	–	⚠ More or less a budget Vantage S Roadster; epic noise ⚠ Rigidity issues mean it's not as sharp as the hardtop

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MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
V8 Vantage S Roadster ★★★★☆		\$283,200 (6m) \$299,100 (7s)	V8/47	321/7300	490/5000	rear	1690	190	-	-	12.9	Great compromise between show and go Robotised manual is a pain; getting expensive
V12 Vantage S ★★★★☆		\$354,300 (7s)	V12/59	421/6750	620/5750	rear	1665	253	3.9	-	16.3	Psychotic performance, with dynamics and looks to match Lacks the V8's styling purity; frighteningly thirsty
V12 Vantage S Roadster ★★★★☆		\$385,800 (7s)	V12/59	421/6750	620/5750	rear	1745	241	3.9	-	16.3	Magic engine noise; sweet dynamics for a drop-top Lot of power for an open-top body; gearbox frustrates
DB11 ★★★★☆		\$428,032 (8a)	V12/52TT	447/6500	700/1500	rear	1770	253	3.9	-	11.3	Delicious twin-turbo V12; beautifully resolved chassis Looks are divisive; spot the Mercedes bits inside
Vanquish ★★★★☆	Sep 14	\$484,995 (8a)	V12/59	424/6650	630/5500	rear	1739	244	3.8	-	-	More power and eight-speed auto for MY15 Ride is now not very GT-like; thirsty
Vanquish Volante ★★★★☆		\$521,995 (8a)	V12/59	424/6650	630/5500	rear	1844	230	4.0	-	-	Carbonfibre construction should mean no loss of rigidity Scary pricetag; no Aston press cars in Oz
Rapide S ★★★★☆		\$382,500 (8a)	V12/59	411/6650	630/5500	rear	1990	207	4.9	-	-	Now has the power to match its jaw-dropping looks Rear seats really just for kids; small boot



Audi

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A1 1.8 TFSI Sport ★★★★☆	Aug 15	\$40,400 (7dc)	I4/18T	141/5400	250/2500	front	1205	117	6.9	-	5.9	Baby hot hatch with sharp looks and quality interior Hard to justify extra \$12K over excellent VW Polo GTI base
S1 Sportback ★★★★☆	May 16	\$49,900 (6m)	I4/20T	170/6000	370/1600	all	1340	127	5.68	13.89	7.1	Cracking pace; involving dynamics; looks quite cool With options it costs the same as S3, which makes no sense
A3 2.0 TFSI quattro ★★★★☆		\$49,500 (7dc)	I4/20T	140/6200	320/1250	all	1380	96	6.8	-	6.6	Quattro adds all-weather security and pace Extra 100kg hurts performance and economy
S3 Sportback ★★★★☆	Jan 17	\$62,900 (6m/6dc)	I4/20T	213/6500	380/1800	all	1465	145	4.8	-	6.6	More power and less weight makes S3 faster than ever Feels a bit 'safe'; we still don't get the Euro-spec 221kW
S3 Sedan ★★★★☆	Jan 17	\$64,500 (6m/6dc)	I4/20T	213/6500	380/1800	all	1470	145	4.8	-	6.5	Sleek looks; compact size; poky performance; value We'd still have the lighter hatch
S3 Cabriolet ★★★★☆		\$72,000 (6dc)	I4/20T	213/6200	380/1800	all	1635	130	5.3	-	6.8	Finally, a good-looking small convertible Inevitable compromises, but not as many as you'd think
RS3 Sportback ★★★★☆	Sep 16	\$78,616 (6dc)	I5/25T	270/6800	465/1625	all	1520	178	4.23	12.42	8.1	Searing pace; warbly five-pot; improved dynamics Looks a bit sensible; could be more involving
A4 2.0 TFSI quattro Sport ★★★★☆	May 16	\$69,900 (7dc)	I4/20T	185/6000	370/1600	all	1510	122	5.8	-	6.3	Beautiful inside and surprisingly capable Dynamic driving not really its priority
A4 Avant 2.0TFSI quattro Sport ★★★★☆	Aug 16	\$72,900 (7dc)	I4/20T	185/6000	370/1600	all	1540	120	6.0	-	6.6	Just as capable as sedan but can swallow more stuff Not as sweet to drive as the 3-Series Touring
A5 2.0 TFSI ★★★★☆		\$75,395 (6m) \$77,255 (7dc)	I4/20T	155/6000	350/1500	all	1510	103	6.4	-	6.8	Sweet spot of the 'non-S/RS' A5 range; manual option Bang for your buck factor isn't too flash
S5 ★★★★☆		\$122,616 (7dc)	V6/30S	245/7000	440/2900	all	1675	142	4.9	-	8.1	Looks great, sounds great and drives nicely We miss the old V8 and its six-speed manual 'box
S5 Sportback ★★★★☆		\$122,616 (7dc)	V6/30S	245/7000	440/2900	all	1745	140	5.1	-	8.1	Offers plenty of pace in an inconspicuous body Umm... does that really sound appealing?
S5 Cabriolet ★★★★☆		\$129,226 (7dc)	V6/30S	245/7000	440/2900	all	1880	130	5.4	-	8.5	Brilliant V6 sounds mega with the roof down Body flex means it suffers in the bends
A6 3.0 TDI Biturbo ★★★★☆		\$124,855 (8a)	V6/30TTD	235/3900	650/1400	all	1835	123	5.0	-	6.1	Incredible power and torque make this A6 haul Diesel still lacks performance cred; heavy front end
S6 ★★★★☆	Jun 15	\$170,716 (7dc)	V8/40TT	331/6400	550/1400	all	1895	175	4.4	-	9.4	Classy, comfortable and bloody quick; huge grunt Lacks dynamic sparkle; sports exhaust is an option
RS6 Performance ★★★★☆	Jul 16	\$245,116 (8a)	V8/40TT	445/6800	700(750)/1750	all	1950	228	3.7	-	9.7	A proper looking, fearsomely powerful wagon Weighs a bit; thirsty when pushed
A7 Sportback 3.0 TDI Biturbo ★★★★☆		\$144,855 (8a)	V6/30TTD	235/4600	650/1450	all	1895	124	5.2	-	6.1	Brilliant cabin; one of the world's best diesels Lacks the excitement of the blown V6
S7 Sportback ★★★★☆	Jun 15	\$180,716 (7dc)	V8/40TT	331/6400	550/2900	all	1955	171	4.57	12.69	9.3	Just like the S6 but with added style, inside and out Huge weight; not the most elegant of dancers
RS7 Performance ★★★★☆		\$257,716 (8a)	V8/40TT	445/6800	700(750)/1750	all	1930	231	3.7	-	9.7	Svelte wind-cheating shape; plush air suspension Feels a bit boaty without optional DRC
A8 4.2 TDI ★★★★☆	May 11	\$252,616 (8a)	V8/42TD	258/4000	800/1750	all	1995	148	5.5	-	7.6	Thunderous twin-turbo V8 diesel; first-class cabin Ride can't match its rivals; you feel like a chauffeur
S8 ★★★★☆	Jan 17	\$282,616 (8a)	V8/40TT	382/5800	650/1700	all	1915	199	4.1	-	9.6	Hilarious performance for a two-tonne limo Performance advantage irrelevant in Australia
S8 Plus ★★★★☆		\$330,216 (8a)	V8/40TT	445/6800	700(750)/1700	all	1915	232	3.8	-	10.2	Feels like a rocket-powered designer showroom Needs an autobahn to stretch its legs
TT 2.0 TFSI Sport ★★★★☆	May 15	\$73,950 (6m) \$77,355 (6dc)	I4/20T	169/6200	370/1600	front	1230	137	6.0	-	5.9	Great chassis; rorty exhaust note; great interior Evolutionary styling; pricey with options
TT 2.0 TFSI Sport Quattro ★★★★☆	Nov 15	\$80,355 (6dc)	I4/20T	169/6200	370/1600	all	1335	127	5.32	13.64	6.4	Quattro adds traction and security; improves pace Adds more than 100kg and is not really needed
TT 2.0 TFSI Roadster ★★★★☆	Sep 15	\$83,905 (6dc)	I4/20T	169/6200	370/1600	all	1410	120	5.6	-	6.4	Loses its roof, but retains that crucial sports car feel Feels less potent than rivals; quattro only

MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
TT S ★★★★☆	Sep 16	\$100,855 (6dc)	I4/20T	210/6200	380/1800	all	1385	152	4.67	12.95	6.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ New TTS continues the tradition as a sweet steer ➤ Styled a little softly; spine-killing ride
TT S Roadster ★★★★☆	Jan 16	\$104,616 (6dc)	I4/20T	210/6200	380/1800	all	1470	143	5.0	-	6.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A high-tech, well-sorted convertible ➤ Costs the same as Porsche's Boxster
R8 V10 ★★★★☆	Oct 15	\$354,616 (7dc)	V10/52	397/8250	540/6500	all	1670	238	3.5	-	11.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ One of the cheapest tickets to supercar town; amazing engine ➤ No manual anymore; you're buying second best
R8 V10 Plus ★★★★☆	Feb 17	\$389,616 (7dc)	V10/52	449/8250	560/6500	all	1630	275	3.18	10.93	12.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Epic engine with epic noise; supercar looks; cheaper than rivals ➤ Bone-jarring ride; standard seats a problem; not as fun as it could be
RS Q3 Performance ★★★★☆		\$84,216 (7dc)	I5/25T	270/6700	465/1625	all	1655	151	4.8	-	8.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Updated model faster than ever; surprisingly fun in corners ➤ The ultimate oxymoron: performance off-road mini SUV?
SQ5 TDI ★★★★☆	Jul 13	\$92,955 (8a)	V6/30TD	230/3900	650/1450	all	1995	115	5.1	-	6.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cracks its segment wide open; diesel sounds fantastic ➤ Tyre roar; punishing ride; jury's out on the steering
SQ5 TDI Plus ★★★★☆	Jan 17	\$108,855 (8a)	V6/30TD	250/4300	700/1500	all	2000	125	5.1	-	6.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Big-game grip with standard active sports diff ➤ Decent price jump over base SQ5; ageing interior
SQ7 TDI ★★★★☆	Feb 17	\$153,616 (8a)	V8/40TD	320/5000	900/1000	all	2270	141	4.8	-	7.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It's a Bentley for a third the price; world's best diesel? ➤ Still heavy; verging on tech overload



Bentley

www.bentleymotors.com

Flying Spur V8 ★★★★☆		\$378,197 (8a)	V8/40TT	373/6000	660/2000	all	2342	159	5.2	-	10.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ British alternative to an S63 AMG ➤ Not as fast or as dynamic as the Germans
Flying Spur W12 ★★★★☆	Dec 13	\$423,160 (8a)	W12/60TT	460/6000	800/2000	all	2400	192	4.6	-	14.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Huge pace; unbelievably comfortable ride ➤ Can't hide from its left; low-speed steering is a little heavy
Continental GT V8 ★★★★☆		\$402,600 (8a)	V8/40TT	373/6000	660/1700	all	2220	168	4.8	-	10.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Not much slower than the W12; awesome soundtrack ➤ Still weighs too much; S worth the extra coin
Continental GTC V8 ★★★★☆		\$443,700 (8a)	V8/40TT	373/6000	660/1700	all	2395	155	5.0	-	10.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Superb quality; even better noise than hardtop ➤ Smaller engine occasionally struggles with the weight
Continental GT V8 S ★★★★☆	Jul 15	\$427,900 (8a)	V8/40TT	389/6000	680/1700	all	2220	175	4.3	12.3	10.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A superb luxury grand tourer; outrageously fast ➤ Too heavy; ride a bit jiggly on big wheels
Continental GTC V8 S ★★★★☆		\$471,200 (8a)	V8/40TT	389/6000	680/1700	all	2395	162	4.7	-	11.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Four-seat drop-top motoring par excellence ➤ Suffers a bit dynamically; a bit blustery top-down
Continental GT W12 ★★★★☆		\$431,300 (8a)	W12/60TT	434/6000	720/1700	all	2245	193	4.3	-	14.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Swift, quiet, smooth and opulent ➤ Looks a lot like the old one
Continental GTC W12 ★★★★☆		\$474,600 (8a)	W12/60TT	434/6000	720/1700	all	2350	185	4.5	-	14.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ As excellent as the V8, only faster and quieter ➤ More refined and less sporting in character
Continental GT Speed ★★★★☆		\$485,200 (8a)	W12/60TT	467/6000	820/1700	all	2245	208	4.2	-	14.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More class, more power, more exclusivity ➤ Drinks like a bunch of Pommie soccer fans
Continental GTC Speed ★★★★☆		\$534,400 (8a)	W12/60TT	467/6000	820/2000	all	2350	198	4.4	-	14.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ World's fastest four-seat convertible ➤ Surely the world's most pointless accolade?
Mulsanne ★★★★☆		\$662,858 (8a)	V8/6.75TT	377/4200	1020/1750	rear	2610	150	5.3	-	16.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Opulent old-school Bentley surprisingly dynamic ➤ Looks cross-eyed; fearsomely expensive and thirsty
Mulsanne Speed ★★★★☆		\$733,387 (8a)	V8/6.75TT	395/4200	1100/1750	rear	2610	151	4.8	-	14.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The torquiest car on sale in Australia – 1100Nm! (At 1750rpm!) ➤ 2.6 tonnes can only be so dynamic
Bentayga Diesel ★★★★☆		\$335,000 (8a)	V8/40TTD	320/5000	900/1000	all	2499	128	4.8	-	8.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sensational V8 diesel makes much more sense ➤ It doesn't improve the looks; Audi SQ7 is less than half the price
Bentayga ★★★★☆		\$423,600 (8a)	W12/60TT	447/6000	900/1350	all	2440	183	4.1	-	13.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A new standard in SUV performance and luxury ➤ It's no oil painting; massive money



BMW

www.bmw.com.au

125i ★★★★☆	Sep 12	\$48,900 (6m/8a)	I4/20T	165/5000	310/1350	rear	1345	123	6.1	-	5.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Torquey, responsive engine; decent steering ➤ Adaptive dampers a must-have; performance a little soft
M140i ★★★★☆		\$64,900 (6m/8a)	I6/30T	250/5500	500/1520	rear	1445	162	4.6	-	7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ New B58 six brings more power and torque ➤ Needs an LSD badly; still no looker; price has crept up
230i ★★★★☆		\$61,900 (6m/8a)	I4/20T	185/6500	350/1250	rear	1385	134	5.6	-	5.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Possibly the sweetest choice in BMW's line-up under \$75K ➤ Could do with a little aesthetic venom
230i cabrio ★★★★☆		\$71,900 (6m/8a)	I4/20T	185/6000	350/1250	rear	1555	119	5.9	-	6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Removable roof doesn't cost a bomb ➤ An Audi S3 Cabriolet is better looking and much faster
M240i ★★★★☆	Ann 16	\$74,900 (6m/8a)	I6/30T	250/6000	500/1300	rear	1455	172	4.6	-	7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Spec the optional LSD and it's an absolute riot ➤ Struggles a bit without it; looks a bit plain
M240i cabrio ★★★★☆		\$83,900 (6m/8a)	I6/30T	250/6000	500/1300	rear	1620	154	4.7	-	7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rorty six in a compact, good-looking summer package ➤ Huge weight and rigidity penalty over hardtop
M2 Pure ★★★★☆	Sep 16	\$89,615 (6m)	I6/30T	272/6500	465(500)/1400	rear	1495	182	4.55	12.82	8.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A huge return to form for M Division; great value ➤ Firm ride; can bite inexperienced hands
M2 ★★★★☆	Feb 17	\$98,615 (6m/7dc)	I6/30T	272/6500	465(500)/1400	rear	1520	179	4.3	-	7.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ DCT 'box makes M2 faster and more frugal ➤ We don't have a long-term – yet

TOP 3

BABY HATCHES



Ford Fiesta ST
\$27,490
Massive fun, tiny price



VW Polo GTI
\$27,490
Mini hatch with muscle



Audi S1
\$49,900
Big-money pocket rocket

Hot Source

Fast guide to quick cars

TOP 3

SEDANS UNDER \$75K



Holden SS V Redline
\$54,490
LS3 V8 makes it the king



Audi S3 Sedan
\$63,400
Practical performance



Chrysler 300 SRT
\$75,000
Loveable V8 grunt

MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
330i ★★★★☆		\$69,900 (6m/8a)	I4/20T	185/5200	350/1450	rear	1470	126	5.9	-	5.7	● Could be all the car you ever need: fast, frugal and fun ● 330i should be a six-pot; not a whole lot else
330i Touring ★★★★☆		\$73,300 (6m/8a)	I4/20T	185/5200	350/1450	rear	1540	120	6.0	-	6.1	● The above with added practicality; wagon looks better ● Weight penalty costs it, but not a great deal
340i ★★★★☆		\$89,855 (6m/8a)	I6/30T	240/5500	450/1380	rear	1510	158	5.1	-	6.8	● Quick, comfortable, and a great prospect to own ● Optional steering is awful; can struggle with power-down
M3 ★★★★☆	May 15	\$139,615 (6m/7dc)	I6/30TT	317/7300	550/1800	rear	1520	208	4.3	-	8.3	● Looks sensational; brilliant chassis; massive performance ● Engine's lost some M magic; tricky to drive in the wet
M3 Competition ★★★★☆	Sep 16	\$144,615 (6m/7dc)	I6/30TT	331/7300	550/1800	rear	1520	218	4.2	-	8.8	● Sharper tool for fighting Merc-AMG's C63 S ● Meaner exhaust note but still won't have you tunnel-hunting
430i ★★★★☆		\$79,855 (6m/8a)	I4/20T	185/6500	350/1250	rear	1470	126	5.9	-	5.8	● Supreme balance; impressive torque; svelte thirst ● Dull cabin ambience; RIP the 3 Series coupe
430i Cabrio ★★★★☆		\$96,855 (6m/8a)	I4/20T	185/6500	350/1250	rear	1680	110	6.4	-	6.3	● Capable and enjoyable drop-top; engine now sounds rorty ● Will be a top seller in Bondi and Toorak
440i ★★★★☆		\$99,855 (6m/8a)	I6/30T	240/6000	450/1200	rear	1525	157	5.0*	-	6.8	● New name, same awesome all-round ability ● Has lost some character; where's the engine noise?
440i Gran Coupe ★★★★☆	Sep 16	\$99,900 (6m/8a)	I6/30T	240/6000	450/1200	rear	1585	151	5.1*	-	6.8	● Niche filler actually very accomplished and desirable ● A lot of money; coupe roofline compromises vision
440i Cabrio ★★★★☆		\$117,615 (6m/8a)	I6/30T	240/6000	450/1200	rear	1740	138	5.4*	-	7.2	● Arguably more fit for purpose than M4 Convertible ● No roof upsets balance between power/handling
M4 ★★★★☆	Mar 16	\$149,615 (6m/7dc)	I6/30TT	317/7300	550/1800	rear	1497	212	4.62	12.57	11.3	● Incredible grip and speed; simply amazing on a track ● Tricky in the wet; doesn't look as good as the sedan
M4 Competition ★★★★☆	Ann 16	\$154,615 (6m/7dc)	I6/30TT	331/7300	550/1800	rear	1497	221	4.2	-	8.8	● Worthwhile upgrades for not much extra cash ● Ride now very firm; still bitey at the limit
M4 Convertible ★★★★☆	Apr 15	\$161,615 (6m/7dc)	I6/30TT	317/7300	550/1800	rear	1753	181	4.46*	12.61*	8.7	● Hugely fast; looks great; flash interior ● 250kg weight penalty over coupe hurts, well, everything
M4 Convertible Competition ★★★★☆		\$165,615 (6m/7dc)	I6/30TT	331/7300	550/1800	rear	1753	189	-	-	9.1	● M4 exhaust does sound better without a pesky roof ● It's how much heavier than the coupe?!
M4 GTS ★★★★☆	July 16	\$294,715 (7dc)	I6/30TT	368/6250	600/4000	rear	1510	244	3.8	-	-	● The fastest BMW ever; a true 911 GT3 or R8 V10 Plus fighter ● Twice the price of an M4 Competition? Yet 25 coming to Oz all sold
540i ★★★★☆	Feb 17	\$136,900 (8a)	I6/30T	250/6500	450/1380	rear	1595	157	5.1	-	6.7	● Punchy turbo six; brilliant dynamics; superb refinement ● Big price jump; not much else
535i Touring ★★★★☆		\$123,615 (8a)	I6/30T	225/5800	400/1200	rear	1785	126	5.8	-	8.0	● A 535i that can swallow furniture... ● ...but not as much as a Mercedes E-Class Estate
M5 Pure ★★★★☆		\$184,715 (7dc)	V8/44TT	412/6800	680/1500	rear	1870	220	4.3	-	9.9	● De-specced M5 an absolute bargain ● No mechanical tweaks; Competition Package not included
M5 ★★★★☆	Feb 14	\$230,615 (7dc)	V8/44TT	423/6800	680/1500	rear	1870	226	4.95	12.87	18.5	● Incredible performance yet also very comfortable ● Too big, too complicated; tricky to drive at the limit
640i ★★★★☆	Nov 15	\$177,615 (8a)	I6/30T	235/6000	450/1300	rear	1660	142	5.3	-	7.8	● Delicious engine; polished dynamics; looks great ● Lacks the kit and ultimate power of the 650i
640i Gran Coupe ★★★★☆		\$184,615 (8a)	I6/30T	235/6000	450/1300	rear	1750	134	5.4	-	6.2	● Looks so much classier than a 5-Series ● It'd want to for the amount it costs
640i Convertible ★★★★☆	Aug 11	\$193,615 (8a)	I6/30T	235/6000	450/1300	rear	1840	128	5.5	-	7.9	● Stylish land yacht; smooth drivetrain ● Engine struggles a little with the weight; compromised ride on 20s
650i ★★★★☆		\$231,615 (8a)	V8/44TT	330/5500	650/2000	rear	1770	186	4.6	-	8.9	● Properly fast; sounds brilliant; heaps of presence ● Not much space inside for something this big
650i Gran Coupe ★★★★☆	Feb 13	\$238,615 (8a)	V8/44TT	330/5500	650/2000	rear	1865	177	4.6	-	8.9	● Superb grand tourer; interior feels plush; best looking Six? ● You could buy an M5 and have change
650i Convertible ★★★★☆		\$247,615 (8a)	V8/44TT	330/5500	650/2000	rear	1940	170	4.6	-	10.7	● Looks great top up or down; stylish and fast drop-top ● Doesn't handle like a 911; not as sexy as an Aston
M6 ★★★★☆	Dec 15	\$292,315 (7dc)	V8/44TT	441/7000	700/1500	rear	1850	222	4.94	12.82	18.5	● Hyperdrive acceleration; phenomenal grip; phat looks ● Feels big and remote to drive; poorly packaged
M6 Gran Coupe ★★★★☆	Jan 14	\$299,315 (7dc)	V8/44TT	412/7000	680/1500	rear	1875	200	4.71	12.52	17.1	● M styling makes Gran Coupe look even better ● Massive money; built for autobahns not backroads
M6 Convertible ★★★★☆		\$308,315 (7dc)	V8/44TT	412/7000	680/1500	rear	1980	208	4.3	-	10.3	● Will blow your wig clean off in seconds! ● Way too heavy; scuttle shake with the roof down; the price
740i ★★★★☆	May 16	\$224,155 (8a)	I6/30T	240/5500	450/1380	rear	1725	139	5.5	-	7.0	● Comfy ride; high-tech interior; decent power ● Not as ballsy as a Mercedes S-Class
750i ★★★★☆		\$289,315 (8a)	V8/44TT	330/5500	650/1800	rear	1820	181	4.7	-	7.9	● Mega engine; capable in the corners; crushing tech ● New engine has no more power and less torque
750Li ★★★★☆		\$312,415 (8a)	V8/44TT	330/5500	650/1800	rear	1865	177	4.7	-	8.0	● Enough room in the back to have a game of footy ● Limo for those that want to be driven, not drive
M760Li xDrive ★★★★☆		\$419,000 (8a)	V12/66TT	441/5500	800/1500	all	2180	202	3.9	-	12.6	● Pulverising performance; top-dog status ● Diminishing returns; poor people will hate you
Z4 sDrive 28i ★★★★☆	Sep 12	\$90,455 (6m/8a)	I4/20T	180/6500	350/1250	rear	1420	142	6.00	14.20	6.8	● Solid turbo four and lighter drivetrain are a sweet combo ● Doesn't sound very sporty; weird looks

MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
Z4 sDrive 35is ★★★★☆	Aug 13	\$119,415 (8a)	I6/30TT	250/5900	450(500)/1500	rear	1525	142	5.20	13.44	13.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Updated turbo six gives Z4 M-car pace ⚡ Still not a threat to the Porsche Boxster S as the crispest drop-top
i8 ★★★★☆	Feb 16	\$298,955 (6a)	I3/15T(E)	266/5800	570/3700	all	1485	179	4.60	12.7	9.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Proves green tech can be red hot; concept car looks ⚡ Needs a more inspiring petrol engine
X4 xDrive35i ★★★★☆	Sep 14	\$89,015 (8a)	I6/30T	225/6400	400/1200	all	1815	124	5.5	-	8.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Impressive pace and agility for an SUV ⚡ We're still not sold on the whole coupe SUV concept
X5 xDrive50i ★★★★☆	May 15	\$135,615 (8a)	V8/44TT	330/6000	650(700)/2000	all	2175	152	5.0	-	9.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Monster engine; luxurious interior; plenty of space ⚡ Thirsty; dreadful steering; front-end styling
X5 M50d ★★★★☆	Jan 14	\$149,855 (8a)	I6/30TTD	280/4400	740/2000	all	2190	129	5.3	-	6.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Triple-turbo diesel six's performance and economy ⚡ Uninspiring soundtrack; not particularly alluring steering
X5 M ★★★★☆	Jan 16	\$185,225 (8a)	V8/44TT	423/6500	750/2200	all	2275	186	4.2	-	11.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Hysterical performance; cheaper than all its rivals ⚡ Still a big lump to throw around; arcade game steering
X6 xDrive50i ★★★★☆	May 15	\$152,215 (8a)	V8/44TT	330/6000	650(700)/2000	all	2170	152	4.8	-	9.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Almost as quick as the full house X6M for \$30K less ⚡ Why would you pay \$10K more than an X5?
X6 M50d ★★★★☆		\$159,455 (8a)	I6/30TTD	280/4400	740/2000	all	2185	128	5.2	-	6.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Diesel stonk and efficiency wrapped in a unique shell ⚡ Acceleration feels more pragmatic than sporty
X6 M ★★★★☆	Aug 15	\$194,025 (8a)	V8/44TT	423/6500	750/2200	all	2265	186	4.2	-	11.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Frighteningly fast; defies the laws of physics in corners ⚡ \$9K more than X5M, then there's rear passenger chiro bills

TOP 3

SEDANS
\$75K-
\$150K



HSV GTS - \$98,990
World-class performance



BMW M3 - \$139,615
A worthy M car



Lexus GS F - \$153,540
Good fun and a good noise

CATERHAM

Caterham

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(+\$5850) Seven 275 ★★★★☆	\$64,000 (5m)	I4/16	100/6100	160/4100	rear	590	170	5.5	-	6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Entry-level Caterham great fun to steer ⚡ An emotional purchase – for the cash, there's quicker
(+\$13,400) Seven 275 S ★★★★☆	\$69,900 (5m)	I4/16	100/6100	160/4100	rear	590	170	-	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Just like the 275, but with leather, painted body, more grip ⚡ Still no standard limited-slip diff; getting expensive
(+\$10,300) Seven 355 ★★★★☆	\$76,600 (5m)	I4/20	127/7300	177/6000	rear	560	227	5.0	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ The Caterham for those who want more grunt ⚡ Might feel a little Spartan for equipment
(+\$4000) Seven 355 R ★★★★☆	\$94,800 (5m)	I4/20	127/7300	177/6000	rear	560	227	5.0	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ This on a track – driving doesn't come much better ⚡ You'll seriously consider towing it there; don't crash it
(+\$10,700) Seven 485 S ★★★★☆	\$103,700 (6m)	I4/20	177/8500	206/6300	rear	675	262	3.9	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ The proper, full-fruit, no-electronics Caterham experience ⚡ Expensive; soaks will find it very wearing over longer distances
(+\$12,100) Seven 485 R ★★★★☆	\$114,900 (6m)	I4/20	177/8500	206/6300	rear	675	262	3.9	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Very special driving experience; unbeatable fun; giant-slayer ⚡ 718 Boxster money for a car without a proper roof

FastBlast

2017 AUDI S3

FOR THE past few years our answer to “which Audi S3 should I buy” has been “the VW Golf R”. After all, the VW offers all the performance and sharper handling for a substantial price saving, however recent experience in a pair of 2017 Audi S3s suggests we may have been a little hasty in our assessment. It's a terrible cliché to say it's more than the sum of its parts, but that's the thing about clichés, they're often true. The Audi S3 doesn't really stand out in any particular area; the styling is restrained, the performance is impressive without being groundbreaking and the handling is entertaining, but won't leave you buzzing with adrenaline.

Equally, though, this cohesiveness makes it an extremely pleasant car to spend time with. Starting at \$62,900, this is an expensive small car, but the superb materials and peerless build quality inside make it *feel* expensive, too. Crucially, this is the case even if you don't feel like ticking options boxes, as the S3 hatch we tested was virtually bare bones but still had the flashy digital instrument cluster, keyless entry/start and now the ever-present active safety equipment.

The vast majority of buyers will stick with the standard dual-clutch gearbox, which is fine, but the manual is particularly slick and a really good match to the punchy 2.0-litre turbo engine. The standard ride is pretty jiggly, so adaptive dampers are worth considering, however even with them the ride isn't fantastic. Nonetheless, the handling is grippy and agile and if you're an enthusiast with a taste for the finer things in life, the S3 makes quite a strong case for itself. – SN



SPECS 2.0L I4 TURBO, 213KW/380NM, 1465KG, 0-100KM/H 4.8SEC **PRICE** \$62,900

Hot Source

Fast guide to quick cars

TOP 3

SUVs



BMW X5M
\$185,225
Heavyweight athlete



Range Rover Sport SVR
\$233,500
A V8 hot hatch on stilts



Merc-AMG GLE63S
\$189,615
Family-friendly speed

MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
<div> Chrysler www.chrysler.com.au </div>												
(+\$12,100) Seven 485 R ★★★★☆	Sep 16	\$114,900 (6m)	I4/20	177/8500	206/6300	rear	675	262	3.9	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very special driving experience; unbeatable fun; giant-slayer 718 Boxster money for a car without a proper roof
300 SRT Core ★★★★★	Sep 16	\$65,000 (8a)	V8/64	350/6150	637/4250	rear	1946	180	4.68	12.76	13.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incredible pace for the money; street cred Interior feels a little cheap in places; no adaptive dampers
300 SRT ★★★★★	Jan 16	\$75,000 (8a)	V8/64	350/6150	637/4250	rear	1965	178	-	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great value; loaded with kit; rides well; sounds brilliant No ballerina in the bends; frightening thirst
<div> Citroën www.citroen.com.au </div>												
DS3 DSport ★★★★★	Oct 15	\$33,990 (6m)	I4/16T	121/6000	240/1400	front	1140	106	7.51	15.58	5.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trendy styling; playful and pliant chassis In dire need of a proper engine to make the most of it
DS3 DSport Cabriolet ★★★★★	Jul 15	\$36,590 (6m)	I4/16T	121/6000	240/1400	front	1165	104	7.5	-	5.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cute as a button; trendier than a hipster's iPhone Would you really want to be seen driving it?
<div> Ferrari www.ferrari.com.au </div>												
California T ★★★★★	Jun 16	\$409,888 (7dc)	V8/38TT	412/7500	755/4750	rear	1730	238	3.6	-	10.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Massive turbocharged grunt; looks much better Bit soft around the edges; inevitable poseur image
488 GTB ★★★★★	Feb 17	\$469,988 (7dc)	V8/39TT	492/8000	760/3000	rear	1475	334	3.0	-	11.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ridiculously fast; ridiculously good looking Using all the performance is tricky; slight loss of character
488 Spider ★★★★★	Dec 16	\$526,888 (7dc)	V8/39TT	492/8000	760/3000	rear	1525	323	3.0	10.45	11.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identical driving experience with even more involvement Not as stiff as the coupe; crazy wait list
GTC4 Lusso T ★★★★★	Jan 17	\$503,888 (7dc)	V8/39TT	449/7500	760/3000	rear	1840	244	3.5	-	11.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family friendly Ferrari now with added driftability Can't take it to the snow any more; no V12 soundtrack
GTC4 Lusso ★★★★★	Oct 16	\$578,888 (7dc)	V12/63	507/8000	697/6000	all	1920	264	3.4	-	15.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prettier and more powerful than FF predecessor Scary price tag with options; scary fuel thirst too
F12 Berlinetta ★★★★★	Apr 14	\$690,745 (7dc)	V12/63	545/8250	690/6000	rear	1525	357	3.1	-	15.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amazing engine, chassis and technology Not for inexperienced hands
<div> Ford www.ford.com.au </div>												
Fiesta ST ★★★★★	Aug 16	\$27,490 (6m)	I4/16T	134(147)/5700	240(290)/1600	front	1197	112	7.5	15.3	10.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Blue Oval hero; engine and handling top-notch Firm, jiggly ride; interior is a little low-rent
Focus ST ★★★★★	Aug 15	\$38,990 (6m)	I4/20T	184/5500	360/2000	front	1362	135	6.4	14.7	7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cracking engine; superbly adjustable handling; price Interior ergonomics; fake engine note; turning circle
Focus RS ★★★★★	Feb 17	\$50,990 (6m)	I4/20T	257/6000	440 (470)/2000	all	1575	163	5.04	13.08	8.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Huge pace; incredible dynamics; amazing value Ride very firm; weighty beast; supply could be an issue
Mustang EcoBoost ★★★★★	Oct 16	\$45,990 (6m) \$48,490 (6a)	I4/23T	233/5700	432/3000	rear	1666	140	6.08	14.24	8.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't sneer, the four-pot Mustang is a great steer But a Mustang without a V8 just isn't quite right
Mustang EcoBoost Convertible ★★★★★		\$54,990 (6a)	I4/23T	233/5700	432/3000	rear	1725	135	-	-	9.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great value for a head-turning convertible You don't really get the Mustang thing, do you?
Mustang GT ★★★★★	Feb 16	\$57,490 (6m) \$59,990 (6a)	V8/50	306/6500	530/4250	rear	1739	176	5.35	13.40	13.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proper V8 muscle car now with added sophistication Interior lacks a little polish; l-o-n-g wait list
Mustang GT Convertible ★★★★★		\$66,205 (6a)	V8/50	306/6500	530/4250	rear	1811	169	-	-	12.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great looks; better access to the V8 soundtrack Poseur's choice; getting heavy
<div> Holden www.holden.com.au </div>												
Barina RS ★★★★★	Jan 14	\$21,390 (6m) \$23,590 (6a)	I4/14T	103/4900	200/1850	front	1249	82	-	-	6.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Super cheap; reasonable levels of grip Doesn't deserve an RS badge; it's barely a performance car
(+\$250/1450) Astra RS ★★★★★		\$26,240 (6m) \$27,240 (6m)	I4/16T	147/5500	280 (300)/1650	front	1420	111	-	-	5.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Muscular performance; capable dynamics; price Not super sporty, despite the RS badge
Astra VXR ★★★★★	Oct 15	\$39,990 (6m)	I4/20T	206/5300	400/2400	front	1534	130	6.58	14.83	6.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Searing pace from proper diff; muscly inline four; grip Not as playful as some rivals; mid-corner steering kickback
Insignia VXR ★★★★★		\$51,990 (6a)	V6/28T	239/5290	435/5250	all	1809	128	6.3	-	10.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Price cut means relaunched Insignia offers value for money She's a heavy beast; auto limits torque output
SV6 ute ★★★★★		\$33,990 (6m) \$36,190 (6a)	V6/36	210/6400	350/2900	rear	1680	125	-	-	9.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VFI updates give SV6 real performance; that price! Doesn't have the street cred of the V8
SV6 ★★★★★		\$37,290 (6m) \$39,490 (6a)	V6/36	210/6400	350/2900	rear	1688	124	-	-	9.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> V6 now much more refined; quality interior Doesn't have the grunt of eight cylinders, notchy 'box
SV6 Sportwagon ★★★★★		\$41,490 (6a)	V6/36	210/6400	350/2900	rear	1778	118	-	-	9.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A great family car; economical, roomy and a great drive Not many people see it that way
SS ute ★★★★★	Aug 16	\$41,490 (6m) \$43,690 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1726	176	5.10*	13.13*	12.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheaper than ever; the new drift king Six-speed gearbox still not the slickest unit around
SS ★★★★★		\$44,990 (6m) \$47,190 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1749	174	-	-	12.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A world-class sports sedan; looks great in the right colour Bogan tag will still be hard to shake; weak brakes in standard trim

MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
SS-V ute ★★★★☆		\$45,490 (6m) \$47,190 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1744	174	-	-	12.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Few better ways to carry your tools ➤ Payload means it can't actually carry that many tools
SS-V ★★★★☆		\$48,590 (6m) \$50,690 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1765	172	-	-	12.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improved in every area; this is the best SS yet ➤ Buy one while you can, you'll miss it when it's gone
SS-V Sportwagon ★★★★☆		\$52,690 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1867	163	-	-	12.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Family hauler makes even more sense than VF sedan ➤ Getting up there in the kilo stakes – she's 100kg heavier
SS-V Redline ute ★★★★☆	Jun 16	\$50,990 (6m) \$53,190 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1755	173	-	-	12.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A true track star for just over \$50K! ➤ Does anyone actually take a ute on a track?
Magnum ★★★★☆	Feb 17	\$59,290 (6m) \$61,490 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1755	173	-	-	12.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Track weapon par excellence; practical, too ➤ Big price hike; MRC not compatible with ute platform
SS-V Redline ★★★★☆	Sep 16	\$54,490 (6m) \$57,690 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1793	170	4.90	13.08	12.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A Clubsport in Holden clothing ➤ Our best-ever performance Commodore is also the last
Motorsport Edition ★★★★☆	Feb 17	\$61,790 (6m) \$63,990 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1793	170	-	-	12.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The finest, fittest V8 Commodore ever built ➤ It's also the last V8 Commodore ever built
SS-V Redline Sportwagon ★★★★☆		\$58,690 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1867	163	-	-	13.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Who doesn't love a performance wagon? ➤ Now auto-only which is a great shame
Calais V V8 ★★★★☆		\$55,990 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1805	168	-	-	12.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There are few better ways to travel interstate on Aussie roads ➤ Not as sharp as the SS, but that's kinda the point
Director ★★★★☆	Feb 17	\$63,990 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1805	168	-	-	12.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sports-luxury with all the juicy mechanical bits ➤ It's pretty ugly; the right name to use?
Calais V V8 Sportwagon ★★★★☆		\$57,990 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1867	163	-	-	12.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A V8 sports-luxury wagon? Sounds about perfect ➤ Quite heavy and therefore thirsty
Caprice V-Series ★★★★☆		\$60,990 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1849	164	-	-	12.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Superb ride; simply enormous inside; great to drive ➤ Only premium cab drivers will know how good it is

HSV	www.hsv.com.au											
(+ \$2000) Maloo R8 LSA ★★★★☆		\$79,990 (6m) \$82,490 (6a)	V8/62S	410/6150	691/4200	rear	1887	212	-	-	15.8*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maloo GTS performance for \$10K cheaper ➤ Bulky, ugly tonneau ruins the ute's styling
(+ \$2000) Clubsport R8 LSA ★★★★☆		\$82,990 (6m) \$85,490 (6a)	V8/62S	410/6150	691/4200	rear	1907	209	4.48*	12.55*	15.0*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clubsport chassis finally gets the grunt it deserves ➤ Massively thirsty; MRC not offered even as an option
(+ \$3000) Clubsport R8 Tourer LSA ★★★★☆		\$88,990 (6a)	V8/62S	410/6150	691/4200	rear	1974	203	4.54*	12.67*	15.0*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Awesome family hauler; coolest Aussie car there is? ➤ It'll make the kids and dogs sick with this much grunt
(+ \$3000) Senator Signature ★★★★☆		\$95,990 (6m/6a)	V8/62S	410/6150	691/4200	rear	1902	210	-	-	15.0*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An HSV for the introvert; magnetic dampers are fab ➤ Not much, really, though you might as well buy the GTS
(+ \$3000) GTS ★★★★☆	Aug 16	\$98,990 (6m) \$101,490 (6a)	V8/62S	430/6150	740/3850	rear	1903	226	4.31	12.37	18.2*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The best Aussie car ever. A brilliant achievement ➤ Doesn't feel as fast as it should be; scary fuel thirst
GTSR Maloo ★★★★☆	Mar 17	\$96,990 (6m) \$99,490 (6a)	V8/62S	435/6150	740/3850	rear	1887	231	-	-	15.0*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A ute with the lot; cheapest way to score 435kW ➤ ...wait, it costs how much for a Holden ute?
GTSR ★★★★☆	Mar 17	\$109,490 (6m) \$111,990 (6a)	V8/62S	435/6150	740/3850	rear	1886	231	-	-	15.0*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More front grip and even better brakes; aggro new looks ➤ Power increase is academic; some iffy colours
GTSR W1 ★★★★☆	Mar 17	\$169,990 (6m)	V8/62S	474/6500	815/3900	rear	1895	250	4.2	12.1	18.2*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Simply put, the fastest, most potent Aussie muscle car ➤ Limited numbers; last of the line

Hyundai	www.hyundai.com.au											
i30 SR ★★★★☆	Nov 14	\$26,550 (6m) \$28,850 (6a)	I4/20	129/6500	209/4700	front	1258	102	8.50	16.37	8.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A fine attempt at a warm hatch; old-school fun to drive ➤ Scary in the wet; three-mode steering a gimmick
Elantra SR Turbo ★★★★☆	Jan 17	\$28,990 (6m) \$31,290 (7dc)	I4/16T	150/6000	265/1500	front	1360	110	7.7	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Polished chassis; useable grunt; value ➤ Not a true performance car, but getting there
Genesis ★★★★☆		\$60,000 (8a)	V6/38	232/6000	397/5000	rear	1945	119	6.5	14.8	11.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Comfortable, quiet, refined; good value; entertaining handling ➤ Still can't shake its Hyundai-ness
Veloster SR Turbo ★★★★☆		\$30,650 (6m) \$33,150 (7dc)	I4/16T	150/6000	265/1750	front	1290	116	7.81	15.50	7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Punchy engine gives Veloster the go to match its show ➤ Inert handling; struggles for traction

Infiniti	www.infiniticars.com.au											
Q50 Hybrid S ★★★★☆		\$67,900 (7a)	V6/35E	268/6500	546/1470	rear	1775	151	5.1	-	6.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Looks sharp; seriously quick for the cash ➤ Confused interior; powertrain calibration needs work
Q50 Hybrid S Premium ★★★★☆		\$73,400 (7a)	V6/35E	268/6500	546/1470	all	1853	145	5.3	-	7.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Performance is more surprising than Steve Bradbury's ➤ Yet it's slower than the rear-driver to 100km/h
Q70 GT ★★★★☆		\$68,900 (7a)	V6/37	235/7000	360/5200	rear	1702	138	6.2	-	10.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Build quality; unique styling; value proposition ➤ Feels old (because it is); dynamically unresolved
Q70 Hybrid Premium ★★★★☆	Aug 12	\$82,900 (7a)	V6/35E	268/6800	520/5000	rear	1785	150	5.5	-	6.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong petrol-electric performance and economy ➤ Steering feels artificial; lacks cred at the golf club
QX70 S Premium ★★★★☆		\$104,400 (7a)	V8/50	297/6500	500/4400	all	1992	149	5.8	-	13.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cracking V8 means this SUV seriously shifts ➤ Love-or-hate styling; loves a beer or seven

TOP 3

COUPES UNDER \$75K



BRZ/86
From \$29,990
Gen-Y drift legend



Ford Mustang GT
\$57,490
Spot-on muscle car



VW Scirocco
\$45,990
Sexy GTI alternative

UPDATED!



Caterham slashes Seven pricing
VOTING to leave the EU might not have been too popular with a lot of the UK population, but the subsequent devaluation of the UK pound is good news for Australian fans of highly focused British sports cars. Caterham has slashed prices across its Seven range by between \$4000-\$13,400, significantly enhancing the car's sometimes questionable value equation.

Hot Source

Fast guide to quick cars

TOP 3

COUPES
\$75K-
\$150K



BMW M2 Pure
\$89,615
New-age BMW hero



Porsche 718 Cayman
\$110,000
Sublime in every way



Lotus Exige S
\$132,990
Raucous, but rewarding

MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
Jaguar www.jaguar.com.au												
XE 25t Portfolio ★★★★☆		\$70,115 (8a)	I4/20T	177/5500	340/1750	rear	1530	116	6.8	-	7.5	British BMW 3-Series rival nails the fundamentals Interior quality slightly behind ze Germans
XE S ★★★★☆		\$105,065 (8a)	V6/30S	250/6500	450/4500	rear	1665	150	5.1	-	8.1	Snarling V6 wrapped in a competent sedan package More expensive than rivals and not quite as sharp
XF 35t S ★★★★☆	Apr 16	\$129,065 (8a)	V6/30S	280/6500	450/4500	rear	1710	164	5.3	-	8.3	F-Type S engine tune; sharper styling Smaller, lighter XE a more sporting steer
XF 30d S ★★★★☆	Apr 16	\$120,700 (8a)	V6/30TD	221/4000	700/2000	rear	1750	126	6.2	-	5.5	Massive torque makes it real-world fast But diesel blunts its sporting edge
XJ Autobiography LWB ★★★★☆		\$299,995 (8a)	V8/50S	375/6500	625/2500	rear	1880	199	4.9	-	11.6	The barge from Blighty astounds with its ability Try parking it anywhere; some will find the ride firm
XJR ★★★★☆	Jan 17	\$299,995 (8a)	V8/50S	404/6500	680/2500	rear	1870	216	4.6	-	11.6	Superb blown V8; handling poise; looks gorgeous Doesn't feel as solid as German rivals; interior a bit old
F-Type Coupe ★★★★☆		\$119,545 (6m) \$124,595 (8a)	V6/30S	250/6500	450/3500	rear	1577*	159	5.3	-	8.8	Sweet blown V6; nimble and fun; a drug for the eyeballs No LSD; not a fast car; steering almost too sharp
F-Type S Coupe ★★★★☆	Mar 16	\$152,165 (6m) \$157,215 (8a)	V6/30S	280/6500	460/3500	rear	1594*	176	5.42	13.64	9.1	Looks good, goes hard: the F-Type Coupe sweet spot Like the droptop, it's how much more than the base?
F-Type S Coupe AWD ★★★★☆	Nov 15	\$173,065 (8a)	V6/30S	280/6500	460/3500	all	1674	167	5.1	-	8.9	Good chassis harnessed by superb grip Engine struggles a little with the extra weight
F-Type V8 R Coupe ★★★★☆	Apr 16	\$228,905 (8a)	V8/50S	404/6500	680/2500	rear	1665	243	3.99	-	15.0	Comically, stupidly fast; the looks, the noise, the skids A lot of engine for the rear-drive F-Type - if you're a sook
F-Type V8 R Coupe AWD ★★★★☆	Feb 16	\$244,765 (8a)	V8/50S	404/6500	680/2500	all	1730	234	3.75	11.80	11.3	Gives it the traction to go with its incredible power Can't match the rear-driver for entertainment factor
F-Type V8 SUR Coupe ★★★★☆	Sep 16	\$289,305 (8a)	V8/50S	423/6500	700/3500	all	1705	248	3.7	-	11.3	The sound; eff-off factor on the road; mega performance Marginal performance gain for big extra cost
F-Type ★★★★☆		\$138,425 (6m) \$143,475 (8a)	V6/30S	250/6500	450/3500	rear	1597*	156	5.3	-	9.0	Traffic-stopping looks; sweet blown V6; Jag badge No LSD; no luggage space (really, none)
F-Type S ★★★★☆	Apr 15	\$176,105 (8a)	V6/30S	280/6500	460/3500	rear	1614	173	4.98	13.16	9.1	Sweetest of the bunch; a lovely thing to drive Is it \$30K better than the base V6 (then there's options!)?
F-Type V8 R ★★★★☆		\$247,795 (8a)	V8/50S	404/6500	680/2500	rear	1665	242	4.2	-	10.7	Oh-my-god fast; Armageddon-spec exhaust note Severe traction issues; lacks the Coupe's solid feel
F-Type V8 R AWD ★★★★☆	Sep 15	\$263,645 (8a)	V8/50S	404/6500	680/2500	all	1730	232	4.1	-	11.3	So much cooler than a Carrera cabriolet \$260K is a huge amount of cash
F-Type V8 SUR ★★★★☆	Sep 16	\$308,185 (8a)	V8/50S	423/6500	700/3500	all	1720	246	3.7	-	11.3	First-row seats to the meanest-sounding V8 on sale Sans-roof knocks down its top-speed; bulk-buying your toupees
F-Pace 35t S ★★★★☆	Jul 16	\$103,135 (8a)	V6/30S	280/6500	450/4500	all	1861	151	5.5	-	8.9	Snarling V6 wrapped in a competent sedan package Compromised boot space
Jeep www.jeep.com.au												
Grand Cherokee SRT8 ★★★★☆		\$90,000 (8a)	V8/64	344/6250	624/4100	all	2289	150	4.9	-	14.0	Stonking engine; finally gets the eight-speed auto Can't defy physics; unholy thirst for unleaded
Lamborghini www.lamborghini.com.au												
Huracán LP580-2 ★★★★☆	Jan 17	\$378,900 (7dc)	V10/52	427/8000	540/6500	rear	1503	284	3.55	11.25	11.9	More involving and playful than the LP610-4 Feels like it needs to be let off the leash a little
Huracán LP610-4 ★★★★☆	Oct 15	\$428,000 (7dc)	V10/52	449/8250	560/6500	all	1538	291	3.2	-	12.5	Mind-blowingly fast; sharp handling; brilliant gearbox Rivals are all faster; could be more playful
Huracán LP610-4 Spyder ★★★★☆	Sep 16	\$470,800 (7dc)	V10/52	449/8250	560/6500	all	1658	271	3.4	-	12.3	Ultimate extrovert's car; fabulous V10 noise Big weight penalty; not the purist's choice
Aventador LP700-4 ★★★★☆	Mar 15	\$761,500 (7s)	V12/65	515/8250	690/5500	all	1697	303	2.9	-	16.0	Otherworldly styling and performance; true rock star car Intimidating size; harsh ride quality; outdated gearbox
Aventador LP700-4 Roadster ★★★★☆	Apr 13	\$795,000 (7s)	V12/65	515/8250	690/5500	all	1747	295	3.0	-	16.0	Even crazier styling than coupe with no less performance We've got next to no chance of driving one locally
Aventador LP750-4 SV ★★★★☆	Aug 15	\$891,500 (7s)	V12/65	552/8400	690/5500	all	1647	335	2.8	-	16.0	New steering and chassis make SV much more driveable Few places to unleash such performance
Aventador LP750-4 Superveloce roadster ★★★★☆	Aug 15	\$925,300 (7s)	V12/65	552/8400	690/5500	all	1697	329	2.9	-	16.0	Hear one of the world's most powerful V12s first hand
Lexus www.lexus.com.au												
IS350 F Sport ★★★★☆	Dec 14	\$73,540 (8a)	V6/35	233/6400	378/4800	rear	1685	138	6.10	14.10	9.7	Great value; enjoyable dynamics; responsive V6 Nannying ESP; engine tech needs an update

MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
GS350 F Sport ★★★★☆		\$95,600 (6a)	V6/35	232/6400	380/4800	rear	1745	133	6.0	–	9.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surprisingly capable chassis takes the Euros on Hyper-responsive steering takes some getting used to
GS F ★★★★☆	Feb 17	\$153,540 (8a)	V8/50	351/7100	530/4800	rear	1825	192	4.99	13.09	11.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refined muscle sedan from Japan; good value No match for its segment rivals
LS600h F Sport ★★★★☆		\$214,030 (cvt)	V8/50E	327/6400	520/4000	all	2340	140	5.7	13.8	8.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incredible refinement from the ultimate orient express Weights as much as a Tokyo skyscraper; no soul
RC200t ★★★★☆	Feb 16	\$74,180 (8a)	I4/20T	180/5800	350/1650	rear	1620	111	7.0	–	7.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turbo four-pot frugal and more flexible than V6 It's slow and uninspiring; lacks V6's chassis upgrades
RC350 F Sport ★★★★☆		\$77,240 (8a)	V6/35	233/6000	378/4800	rear	1680	139	6.08	14.12	9.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aggro looking coupe ups Lexus' mojo; sweet dynamics Quite thirsty; not super quick; weighs a lot
RC F ★★★★☆	Mar 16	\$138,240 (8a)	V8/50	351/7100	530/4800	rear	1860	189	5.11	13.25	10.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheaper than German rivals; naturally-aspirated V8 It makes a Nissan GT-R look svelte



Lotus

www.lotuscars.com.au

Elise ★★★★☆		\$74,990 (6m)	I4/16	100/6800	160/4400	rear	876	114	6.5	–	6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purest, cheapest Elise still stands out in a crowd One of those cars that would be amazing... if it cost \$45K
Elise S ★★★★☆		\$84,990 (6m)	I4/18S	162/6800	250/4600	rear	880	185	4.6	–	7.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A terrific drive made even better by supercharging Not easy to get in or out of so try before you buy
Elise 220 Cup ★★★★☆		\$119,990 (6m)	I4/18S	162/6800	250/4600	rear	943	171	4.6	–	7.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Elise with serious downforce: what's not to like? It'll only make sense at Phillip Island
Exige 350 ★★★★☆		\$132,990 (6m) \$137,990 (6a)	V6/35S	258/7000	400/4500	rear	1125	229	3.9	–	10.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheapest ticket to supercar power-to-weight ratios Bigger, but still cramped and no daily driver
Exige S Roadster ★★★★☆		\$132,990 (6m) \$137,990 (6a)	V6/35S	258/7000	400/4500	rear	1166	221	4.0	–	10.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pop-top barely compromises the Exige's ferocity Still a hardcore proposition for everyday use
Evora 400 ★★★★☆	Sep 16	\$184,900 (6m) \$194,900 (6a)	V6/35S	258/7000	400/4500	rear	1442	179	4.4	–	9.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looks great; snarly engine; sublime steering Extremely pricey; struggles to match performance claims



Maserati

www.maserati.com.au

Ghibli ★★★★☆		\$143,990 (8a)	V6/30TT	257/5500	500/4500	rear	1810	142	5.6	–	9.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maserati's 5-Series fighter looks the business Not sure how it drives, we still haven't driven it!
Ghibli S ★★★★☆		\$179,990 (8a)	V6/30TT	301/5500	550/4500	rear	1810	166	5.0	–	10.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-tune twin-turbo V6 gives the Ghibli real punch At this price, what do you compare it against?
Quattroporte Diesel ★★★★☆		\$210,000 (8a)	V6/30TD	202/4000	600/2000	rear	1945	104	6.4	–	6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turbo-diesel six punches hard and sips little Limo platform is penalised with more weight
Quattroporte ★★★★☆		\$215,000 (8a)	V6/30TT	257/5500	500/1750	rear	1900	128	5.5	–	9.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A quick, classy and cheaper alternative to a Porsche Panamera Deserves more power
Quattroporte S ★★★★☆		\$240,000 (8a)	V6/30TT	302/5500	550/1750	rear	1900	158	5.1	–	9.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New twin-turbo V6 matches old V8 for grunt Feels its size; V8 is a more appealing proposition
Quattroporte GTS ★★★★☆		\$349,000 (8a)	V8/38TT	395/6800	650(710)/2000	rear	1951	200	4.7	–	10.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New turbo V8 has mega mumbo; classy interior... ... except for the Chrysler bits; ride issues; huge money
GranTurismo MC Sportline ★★★★☆		\$295,000 (6a) \$319,000 (6s)	V8/47	338/7000	520/4750	rear	1880	187	4.7	–	15.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drop-dead gorgeous coupe finally gets more grunt. Still more of a grand tourer than proper sportscar
GranCabrio Sport ★★★★☆		\$338,000 (6a)	V8/47	338/7000	520/4750	rear	1980	171	5.0	–	14.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quicker shifting 'box and extra 10Nm ups the aggression Still more of a grand tourer than a proper sportscar
GranCabrio Sport MC ★★★★☆		\$355,000 (6s)	V8/47	338/7000	520/4750	rear	1973	171	4.9	–	14.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'MC' shifts the trans rearward and cuts shift times again Will any Cabrio drivers feel the difference?
GranTurismo MC Stradale ★★★★☆		\$345,000 (6s)	V8/47	338/7000	520/4750	rear	1800	199	4.5	–	14.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stiffer, faster Stradale is Maserati's 300km/h Trident There are some serious rivals at this price point



Mazda

www.mazda.com.au

3 SP25 ★★★★☆	Nov 14	\$25,690 (6m) \$27,690 (6a)	I4/25	138/5700	250/3250	front	1308	105	8.20	15.87	8.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tremendous value; entertaining handling Controls – brakes, steering, gearshift – all a bit soft
3 XD ★★★★☆	Dec 14	\$39,290 (6m) \$41,290 (6a)	I4/22TD	129/4500	420/2000	front	1398	92	7.7	–	5.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loaded with every feature under the sun; grunty engine No MPS replacement; it's VW Golf GTI money but not a GTI
MX-5 ★★★★☆	Jul 16	\$31,990 (6m) \$33,990 (6a)	I4/15	96/7000	150/4800	rear	1009	95	7.90	15.76	6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Superb dynamics; lightness; keen engine She's no rocketship; looks odd from some angles
MX-5 GT ★★★★☆	Feb 16	\$37,990 (6m) \$39,990 (6a)	I4/15	96/7000	150/4800	rear	1009	95	7.50	15.4	6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More technology and gear for Mazda's thrilling mite Road noise; gets a bit floaty at higher speeds
MX-5 2.0L ★★★★☆	Aug 16	\$34,490 (6m) \$36,490 (6a)	I4/20	118/6000	200/4600	rear	1033	114	6.54	14.68	6.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More grunt never hurts; sharper handling; small price penalty Ride suffers with the new suspension
MX-5 2.0L GT ★★★★☆	Feb 16	\$39,550 (6m) \$41,550 (6a)	I4/20	118/6000	200/4600	rear	1033	114	–	–	6.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plenty of kit makes the GT a more liveable proposition Starting to get pricey, though still much cheaper than previous

TOP 3

COUPES
OVER
\$150K



Porsche 911 Turbo
\$384,600
Virtually flawless



M-B AMG C63 S
\$162,400
Tyre-baking fun



Nissan GT-R
\$189,000
Brutally ignores physics

Hot Source

Fast guide to quick cars

	MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
	McLaren												www.cars.mclaren.com
★★★★★	540C	Aug 16	\$325,000 (7dc)	V8/38TT	397/7500	540/3500	rear	1311 (dry)	303	3.5	–	11.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supercar price leader; still hits 200km/h in 10.5sec 570S likely to be worth the extra
★★★★★	570S	Aug 16	\$379,000 (7dc)	V8/38TT	419/7500	600/5000	rear	1344	312	3.2	–	10.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insane performance; added practicality; involving dynamics Doesn't ride as well as the 650S; hefty options pricing
★★★★★	570GT		\$406,800 (7dc)	V8/38TT	419/7500	600/5000	rear	1381	303	3.4	–	10.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best looking Sport Series; extra luggage space Slightly softer responses than 570S
★★★★★	650S	Jun 14	\$464,000 (7dc)	V8/38TT	478/7250	678/6000	rear	1428	335	3.0	10.5	11.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incredible performance – 0-200km/h in 8.4sec! We'll let you know when we drive it...
★★★★★	650S Spider	Jun 14	\$511,000 (7dc)	V8/38TT	478/7250	678/6000	rear	1468	326	3.0	10.5	11.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon cell means no less rigidity or performance Will it be able to knock off Maranello's finest?
	Mercedes-Benz												www.mercedes-benz.com.au
★★★★★	A250 Sport		\$54,800 (7dc)	I4/20T	160/5500	350/1200	all	1370	113	–	–	6.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great chassis; excellent steering; classy looks Can't turn ESP off; gearbox could be more responsive
★★★★★	CLA 250 Sport	Sep 14	\$67,600 (7dc)	I4/20T	155/5500	350/1200	all	1465	106	6.6	–	6.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All-wheel drive justifies \$15K premium over A250 hatch Rivals at this price point are much faster
★★★★★	CLA 250 Sport S/brake		\$68,600 (7dc)	I4/20T	155/5500	350/1200	all	1490	104	6.8	–	6.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looks, practicality and spritely performance rolled into one Not as agile as its hatch twin
★★★★★	A45 AMG	Dec 16	\$78,315 (7dc)	I4/20T	280/6000	475/2250	all	1480	180	4.15	12.41	12.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much improved ride comfort; even more mental performance It's a bit serious; transmission not the best
★★★★★	CLA45 AMG		\$92,215 (7dc)	I4/20T	280/6000	475/2250	all	1510	176	4.2	–	7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adding a boot just adds to the appeal; rides a little softer Responses dulled a little; styling odd from some angles
★★★★★	CLA45 AMG S/brake		\$92,215 (7dc)	I4/20T	280/6000	475/2250	all	1540	172	4.3	–	7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hardcore performance wrapped in compact utility It's the heaviest MFA-based AMG yet
★★★★★	AMG C43		\$101,900 (9a)	V6/30TT	270/6000	520/2000	all	1615	167	4.7	–	8.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quick, comfortable, entertaining More subdued than most modern AMGs
★★★★★	AMG C43 Estate		\$104,400 (9a)	V6/30TT	270/6000	520/2000	all	1660	163	4.8	–	8.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging chassis wrapped in a wagon package Looks quite subtle, but then that could be a plus
★★★★★	AMG C63 S	Aug 16	\$155,615 (7a)	V8/40TT	375/6250	700/1750	rear	1655	227	4.16	12.23	8.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amazing engine; brilliant chassis; new-found comfort Looks quite subtle; occasional transmission stumble

FastBlast

TICKFORD FORD RANGER

THE ANSWER to the question of what constitutes a performance car is rapidly evolving. Once upon a time hatchbacks were for going to the shops but the VW Golf GTI changed that, while SUVs were limited to the school run until the likes of the Porsche Cayenne Turbo came along.

So what's the next vehicle to take the leap? Well, with diesel utes dominating the Aussie sales race and our own V8-powered car-based ute about to shuffle off into the ether, there's a huge gap in the marketplace for a four-wheel drive ute with some real grunt under the bonnet.

Toyota jumped the gun with the awful TRD Hilux back in 2008, but Tickford has joined the club with a modified Ranger. Headlining the list is the \$7995 powertrain upgrade, which lifts outputs from the 3.2-litre five-cylinder turbo diesel from 147kW/470Nm to around 169kW/564Nm, which is reasonably impressive. The other major mechanical upgrades include Bilstein dampers (\$1285) and the 20-inch wheel and tyre package (\$4525), which also includes the bolt-on guard flares.

And the verdict is? Well, with rear-wheel drive and so much torque, there is fun to be had in the Ranger, but you're unlikely ever to want to take it for a sporting drive for the hell of it. To be fair, Tickford was only ever trying to improve the appearance and road manners of the Ranger and has achieved this (though the looks will be an acquired taste), but it's clear that the working ute has a long way to go before it earns its place in the pages of *MOTOR* on its performance ability. – SN



SPECS 3.2L I5, 169KW/564NM, 2200KG, 0-100KM/H N/A **PRICE** \$75,000 (APPROX.)

MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
AMG C63 S Estate ★★★★★	Jan 16	\$158,115 (7a)	V8/4.0TT	375/6250	700/1750	rear	1725	217	4.0	–	8.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ The family man's performance solution ⚡ Practicality comes at a cost – she's getting heavy
C300 Coupe ★★★★★		\$83,400 (7a)	I4/2.0T	180/5500	370/1300	rear	1490	121	6.0	–	6.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Fast, frugal engine; decent dynamics ⚡ Not particularly exciting; rear styling an acquired taste
AMG C43 Coupe ★★★★★		\$105,615 (9a)	V6/3.0TT	270/6000	520/2000	all	1660	163	4.7	–	8.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Quick, comfortable, entertaining ⚡ More subdued than most modern AMGs
AMG C43 Cabriolet ★★★★★		\$119,900 (9a)	V6/3.0TT	270/6000	520/2000	all	1795	150	4.8	–	8.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Solid mix of class, sophistication, and performance ⚡ Twin-turbo six feels a little underdone for this package
AMG C63 S Coupe ★★★★★	Feb 17	\$162,400 (7a)	V8/4.0TT	375/6250	700/1750	rear	1725	217	4.56	12.48	8.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Germany's premier muscle car; awesome engine and handling ⚡ Weight increase over sedan; more expensive than rivals
AMG C63 S Cabriolet ★★★★★		\$179,900 (7a)	V8/4.0TT	375/6250	700/1750	rear	1850	202	4.1	–	9.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Front row seats to hear AMG's thumping new eight ⚡ Not the keenest handler of the C63 bunch
E400 Coupe ★★★★★		\$130,570 (7a)	V6/3.0TT	245/6000	480/1400	rear	1650	148	5.2	–	7.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Replaces E500; just as fast, much cheaper ⚡ Much more a tourer than sportster, but ride isn't great
E400 Cabriolet ★★★★★		\$144,510 (7a)	V6/3.0TT	245/6000	480/1400	rear	1770	138	5.3	–	7.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Perfect for a summer's day cruise ⚡ Keen drivers will definitely look elsewhere, like a Porsche Boxster S
AMG E43 ★★★★★		\$159,900 (7a)	V6/3.0TT	295/6100	520/2500	all	1765	167	4.6	–	10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Super comfy E-Class suspension; V6 tweaked to high output ⚡ Soft looks; crying out a bit more character
AMG E63 S ★★★★★	Feb 14	\$250,540 (7a)	V8/5.5TT	430/5500	800/1750	rear	1795	240	4.91	12.72	10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Breathtakingly fast; rides and handles beautifully ⚡ Doesn't have the response or the charm of the old atmo 6.2
CLS500 ★★★★★		\$171,115 (9a)	V8/4.7TT	300/5750	600/1600	rear	1815	165	4.9	–	8.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Awesome engine; greater comfort than AMG version ⚡ Not everyone loves the looks; E-Class more practical
CLS500 S/brake ★★★★★	Aug 15	\$181,115 (9a)	V8/4.7TT	300/5750	600/1600	rear	1880	160	4.9	–	8.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Lovely blend of style, engine performance and comfort ⚡ Cabin feels dated by much smarter fit-out in C-Class
AMG CLS63 S ★★★★★		\$251,115 (7a)	V8/5.5TT	430/5500	800/1750	rear	1795	239	4.1	–	10.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ S designation adds 20kW; not that it needed it ⚡ It's better looking, but rivals still look better
S500 ★★★★★	Feb 14	\$294,715 (7a)	V8/4.7TT	335/5250	700/1800	rear	1920	174	4.8	–	9.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ The world's best limousine; incredible tech and interior ⚡ You'll probably enjoy it more from the back seat
S500 L ★★★★★		\$319,715 (7a)	V8/4.7TT	335/5250	700/1800	rear	1940	173	4.8	–	9.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Even more rear seat room for ultimate passenger comfort ⚡ Chauffeur doesn't come as standard
AMG S63 ★★★★★		\$392,715 (7a)	V8/5.5TT	430/5500	900/2250	rear	1970	218	4.4	–	10.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ The best tool for crushing autobahns ⚡ There are no autobahns in Australia
S63 AMG L ★★★★★		\$404,715 (7a)	V8/5.5TT	430/5500	900/2250	rear	2095	205	4.5	–	10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ The best tool for crushing autobahns from the back seat ⚡ Not very relaxing doing 250km/h in the back seat
S600 L ★★★★★	Feb 15	\$419,715 (7a)	V12/6.0TT	390/5300	830/1900	rear	2110	185	4.6	–	11.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Big daddy S-class is matched with silken V12 ⚡ There's not much wrong with the S500 V8
S600 Maybach ★★★★★	Jul 16	\$448,610 (7a)	V12/6.0TT	390/5500	830/1900	rear	2408	162	5.0	–	11.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Exclusivity and luxury at a much lower price than previous ⚡ Maybach difference isn't what it once was
S65 AMG L ★★★★★		\$492,715 (7a)	V12/6.0TT	463/5400	1000/2300	rear	2175	213	4.3	–	11.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ V12 Bi-Turbo badge means you're king of the hill ⚡ You could buy a Maybach for the money
S500 Coupe ★★★★★		\$318,610 (7a)	V8/4.7TT	335/5500	700/1800	rear	1955	171	4.6	–	8.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Limousine excellence in a svelte coupe bodysell ⚡ Full fat S63 AMG is a more potent package
S63 AMG Coupe ★★★★★	Jul 15	\$408,610 (7a)	V8/5.5TT	430/5500	900/2250	rear	1995	216	4.2	–	10.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Brutal acceleration; amazing comfort; superb interior ⚡ Needs a better gearbox; munches tyres
S65 AMG Coupe ★★★★★		\$501,715 (7a)	V12/6.0TT	463/5400	1000/2300	rear	2110	219	4.1	–	12.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ S Coupe gets a massive performance injection ⚡ The 63 is the smarter choice
SLC 43 ★★★★★	Dec 16	\$134,615 (9a)	V6/3.0TT	270/6000	520/2000	rear	1520	178	4.7	–	7.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Brilliant drivetrain; strong brakes ⚡ Unforgiving ride; wooden steering
SL500 ★★★★★		\$278,715 (9a)	V8/4.7TT	335/5250	700/1800	rear	1720	187	4.3	–	9.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Upated drivetrain adds a little weight but plenty of spede ⚡ Ride quality isn't exactly plush; there are better front ends
SL63 AMG ★★★★★		\$368,715 (7a)	V8/5.5TT	430/5500	900/2250	rear	1770	243	4.1	–	10.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Perfect combination of performance and luxury ⚡ Some creaks from the bodysell; interior needs a refresh
AMG GT ★★★★★		\$259,000 (7dc)	V8/4.0TT	340/6250	600/1600	rear	1545	211	4.0	–	9.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Porsche 911 crushing grunt; rockstar looks and sound ⚡ Light, darty steering; weird rear styling
AMG GT S ★★★★★	Feb 16	\$299,900 (7dc)	V8/4.0TT	375/6250	650/1750	rear	1570	239	4.00	11.8	9.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Excellent chassis mated to a brilliant engine ⚡ Makes the comparable Jaguar F-Type R seem cheap
GLA45 AMG ★★★★★		\$83,615 (7dc)	I4/2.0T	280/6000	475/2250	all	1510	175	4.4	–	7.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Roomier and more comfortable than the lumpy A45 ⚡ Not particularly attractive; gearbox isn't the best
GLE 63 AMG S ★★★★★	Jan 16	\$190,615 (7a)	V8/5.5TT	430/5750	760/1750	all	2270	189	4.2	–	18.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Insane performance; hilarious noise; huge character ⚡ Bit of a wobbly handler; interior a little off the pace
GLE 63 AMG S Coupe ★★★★★		\$200,615 (7a)	V8/5.5TT	430/5500	760/1750	all	2275	189	4.2	–	11.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Thunderous alternative to the X6M ⚡ Flawed concept, if you ask us; polarising looks
GLS 63 AMG ★★★★★		\$217,615 (7a)	V8/5.5TT	430/5500	760/1750	all	2370	181	4.6	–	12.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Need to move seven people at high speed? Here you go ⚡ Needs to tow a fuel tanker around
G63 AMG ★★★★★	Jul 14	\$233,615 (7a)	V8/5.5TT	400/5500	760/2000	all	2475	161	5.4	–	13.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ There is no reason why this thing should exist ⚡ But we're very glad it does

TOP 3

SUPER CARS


Ferrari 488 GTB
\$469,988
Simply sensational

Ferrari F12
\$690,745
A GT masterpiece

Lambo LP580-2
\$378,900
Rear-drive bliss

INJECTED!


Porsche adds 911 GT3 variants
CARRERA too common? Turbo too much? Porsche has revealed its Goldilocks 911, dubbed the GT3, which extracts an extra 22kW/50Nm out of the 3.0-litre twin-turbo flat-six, bringing totals to 331kW/550Nm, while also scoring black exterior styling bits and the wide-hipped bodysell from the all-wheel drive models. It's available as a Coupe and Cabriolet in two- and four-wheel drive and also as a Targa, which is all-wheel drive only. Pricing starts from \$279,000 and we'll have a review next month.

Hot Source

Fast guide to quick cars

TOP 3

WAGONS



Merc-AMG C63 S
\$158,115
Love it, love it, love it



Audi RS6 Perf.
\$245,116
Supercar-like stonk



HSV Clubsport R8 LSA Tourer
\$88,990
Coolest Aussie car?

	MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
		MINI www.mini.com.au											
	Cooper S ★★★★☆	Dec 14	\$37,750 (6m) \$40,100 (6a)	I4/20T	141/6000	280(300)/1250	front	1160	121	6.70	14.70	5.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Solves all the old model's problems but creates a new one... ⚡ ...it's not as engaging; needs better tyres
	Cooper S 5-door ★★★★☆		\$38,850 (6m) \$41,200 (6a)	I4/20T	141/6000	280(300)/1250	front	1220	116	6.9	-	6.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ A slightly smaller alternative to a VW Golf GTI ⚡ Extra 60kg means it's not mini in any sense
	Cooper S Convertible ★★★★☆		\$45,400 (6a)	I4/20T	141/6000	280(300)/1250	front	1275	111	7.1	-	5.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ More practical and a better drive than the old Cabrio ⚡ But that's not saying an awful lot
	Cooper S Clubman ★★★★☆	Feb 16	\$42,900 (6m/8a)	I4/20T	141/6000	280(300)/1250	front	1360	104	7.1	-	6.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Smart interior and supple chassis. Bring on the JCW! ⚡ New heft burdens the poor 2.0-litre; weird looks
	Cooper JCW ★★★★☆	Aug 16	\$47,400 (6m) \$49,950 (6a)	I4/20T	170/6000	320/1250	front	1205	141	6.56	14.46	6.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ More power than ever before; playful handling ⚡ Iffy steering; hard ride; enormous price hike for manual version
		Morgan www.morgancars.com.au											
	4/4 ★★★★☆		\$89,990 (5m)	I4/16	82/6000	132/5800	rear	795	103	8.0	-	6.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Ye olde charm; definitely a unique driving experience ⚡ You're essentially buying a brand new antique
	3 Wheeler ★★★★☆	Apr 16	\$92,300 (5m)	V2/20	60/5250	140/3250	rear	550	220	6.0	-	9.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ An utterly unique driving experience ⚡ You're either going to love it or hate it
	Plus 4 ★★★★☆		\$103,500 (5m)	I4/20	115/6000	201/4500	rear	877	117	7.3	-	7.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Ye olde charm; definitely a unique driving experience ⚡ Again, you're essentially buying a brand new antique
	Roadster ★★★★☆		\$139,775 (6m)	V6/37	209/6000	370/4700	rear	950	220	5.5	-	9.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Power-to-weight rivals a 911 Carrera S ⚡ You'd really have to love it to live with it
	Plus 8 ★★★★☆		\$230,500 (8a)	V8/48	270/6300	490/3400	rear	1100	246	4.2	-	10.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Fabulous drivetrain package; fun on smooth surfaces ⚡ Quality fails to match the pricetag
	Aero 8 ★★★★☆		\$270,000 (6a)	V8/48	270/6300	490/3400	rear	1175	230	4.5	-	12.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Morgan's ultimate roadster looks good, sounds better with no roof ⚡ Slightly cramped cabin hard to get comfortable in
		Nissan www.nissan.com.au											
	Pulsar SSS ★★★★☆	Jul 14	\$25,990 (6m) \$28,490 (cvt)	I4/16T	140/5600	240/2000	front	1340*	104*	7.80	15.56	8.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ A famous hot hatch nameplate returns ⚡ Shame it's not attached to something that's worthy
	370Z ★★★★☆	Sep 10	\$56,930 (6m) \$59,930 (7a)	V6/37	245/7000	363/5200	rear	1468	162	5.85	14.04	10.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Now old but latest in a long line of Z-cars ⚡ Agricultural engine; snappy handling; gets hot on track
	370Z Roadster ★★★★☆		\$65,930 (6m) \$68,930 (7a)	V6/37	245/7000	363/5200	rear	1478	229	5.8	-	10.9*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Suffers little in the conversion to drop-top ⚡ But it doesn't add anything to the recipe, either
	GT-R ★★★★☆	Feb 17	\$189,000 (6dc)	V6/38TT	419/6800	632/3300	all	1765	237	3.2	11.21	11.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Improved ride; worthwhile interior upgrade ⚡ Big price increase; beginning to feel its age
	GT-R Track Edition ★★★★☆		\$227,000 (6dc)	V6/38TT	419/6800	632/3300	all	1760	238	2.7	-	11.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ In a track environment, simply awesome ⚡ Question marks over road suitability; price premium
		Peugeot www.peugeot.com.au											
	308 GT ★★★★☆	Oct 15	\$41,990 (6m)	I4/16T	151/5000	285/1750	front	1200	126	7.70	15.50	5.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Handsome looks; drives well; loaded with kit ⚡ Not fast enough for the money; ride issues
	308 GTD ★★★★☆	Mar 16	\$42,990 (6a)	I4/20TD	133/3750	400/2000	front	1320	101	8.4	-	4.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Decent engine; 'round-town performance ⚡ Nowhere near a hot hatch with the added heft
	308 GTi 270 ★★★★☆	Jul 16	\$49,990 (6m)	I4/16T	200/6000	330/1900	front	1205	166	6.09	14.16	6.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Unique seats, sport tyres and diff are worth the extra ⚡ Tough rivals; could be more playful
	208 GTi ★★★★☆	Oct 16	\$30,990 (6m)	I4/16T	153/6000	300/3000	front	1160	127	6.8	15.0	5.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Recently updated with more power ⚡ Superb rivals highlight its flaws; odd driving position
		Porsche www.porsche.com.au											
	718 Cayman ★★★★☆	Ann 16	\$110,000 (6m) \$111,572 (7dc)	F4/20T	220/6500	380/1950	rear	1335	165	5.1	-	7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Porsche's entry level sports car sets the bar high; cheap PDK upgrade ⚡ Hardly a cheap deal in anyone's language
	718 Cayman S ★★★★☆		\$140,300 (6m) \$145,290 (7dc)	F4/25T	257/6500	420/1900	rear	1355	190	4.6	-	8.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Finely tuned chassis soaks up turbo new grunt ⚡ You're now going to have to spend a lot for an atmo Porsche
	718 Boxster ★★★★☆	Jun 16	\$112,800 (6m) \$114,372 (7dc)	F4/20T	220/6500	380/1950	rear	1335	165	4.7*	-	6.9*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ New turbo engine gives Boxster the grunt it deserves ⚡ Boosted four lacks the character of the old atmo six
	718 Boxster S ★★★★☆	Jun 16	\$143,100 (6m) \$148,090 (7dc)	F4/25T	257/6500	420/1900	rear	1355	190	4.2*	-	7.3*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Approaching supercar speed; beautiful chassis balance ⚡ Much more expensive than it was, particularly with options
	911 Carrera ★★★★☆	Apr 16	\$217,500 (7m) \$223,450 (7dc)	F6/30TT	272/6500	450/1700	rear	1430	190	4.2	12.3	8.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Now matches old Carrera S pace for less money; PASM standard ⚡ Slight loss of exhaust note aggression; that's about it
	911 Carrera S ★★★★☆	Apr 16	\$252,500 (7m) \$258,450 (7dc)	F6/30TT	309/6500	500/5000	rear	1440	215	3.9*	12.0*	8.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Supercar-scaring fast with PDK and Sport Chrono package ⚡ Getting too fast for the road; expensive with options

MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
911 Carrera GTS ★★★★★		\$279,000 (7m) \$284,950 (7dc)	F6/3.0TT	331/6500	550/2150	rear	1450	228	3.7*	–	8.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ The ultimate two-wheel drive 911 until the new GT3 arrives ⚡ Next to nothing really, though getting pricey
911 Carrera 4 ★★★★★		\$233,600 (7m) \$239,550 (7dc)	F6/3.0TT	272/6500	450/1700	all	1480	184	4.1	–	8.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ All-wheel drive means you can drive your 911 to the snow ⚡ Carreras are meant to be two-wheel driven
911 Carrera 4S ★★★★★	Jan 17	\$269,700 (7m) \$274,650 (7dc)	F6/3.0TT	309/6500	500/5000	all	1490	207	3.8*	–	8.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Big grip fills in the holes of your skill set ⚡ Only real reason you need it over the regular car
911 Carrera 4 GTS ★★★★★		\$295,100 (7m) \$301,050 (7dc)	F6/3.0TT	331/6500	550/2150	all	1495	221	3.6*	–	8.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Extra grunt overcomes all-paw weight penalty ⚡ All-wheel drive not really necessary
911 Carrera Cabriolet ★★★★★		\$239,000 (7m) \$244,950 (7dc)	F6/3.0TT	272/6500	450/1700	rear	1500	181	4.8	–	8.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Almost as good to drive as the coupe ⚡ Suffers from image problems
911 Carrera S Cabriolet ★★★★★	Aug 16	\$274,000 (7m) \$279,950 (7dc)	F6/3.0TT	309/6500	500/5000	rear	1510	205	4.5	–	8.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Better access to exhaust pops and crackles ⚡ Jaguar provides a more theatrical experience
911 Carrera GTS Cabriolet ★★★★★		\$300,500 (7m) \$306,450 (7dc)	F6/3.0TT	331/6500	550/2150	rear	1520	218	3.8	–	8.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ For when you have to have a rarer car than your neighbour ⚡ Regular S offers a very similar drive experience
911 Carrera 4 Cabriolet ★★★★★		\$255,100 (7m) \$261,050 (7dc)	F6/3.0TT	272/6500	450/1700	all	1550	175	4.3	–	8.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Turbo torque makes extra kg almost irrelevant ⚡ Hard to see what it adds over regular Carrera Cabriolet
911 Carrera 4S Cabriolet ★★★★★		\$290,200 (7m) \$296,150 (7dc)	F6/3.0TT	309/6500	500/5000	all	1560	198	4.0	–	9.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ A great car in so many ways ⚡ You could have a GT3 at this price!
911 Carrera 4 GTS Cabriolet ★★★★★		\$316,600 (7m) \$322,550 (7dc)	F6/3.0TT	331/6500	550/2150	all	1565	212	3.7	–	8.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ For those who have to have the best variant ⚡ Cheaper and more satisfying 911s available
911 Targa 4 ★★★★★		\$255,100 (7m) \$261,050 (7dc)	F6/3.0TT	272/6500	450/1700	all	1570	173	4.3	–	8.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Old-school charm, new-school stonk ⚡ Self-folding targa top isn't very retro
911 Targa 4S ★★★★★		\$290,200 (7m) \$296,150 (7dc)	F6/3.0TT	309/6500	500/5000	all	1580	196	4.0	–	9.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Looks fantastic; character; huge pace ⚡ Firm ride; wind buffeting; possible sunburn
911 Targa 4 GTS ★★★★★		\$316,600 (7m) \$322,550 (7dc)	F6/3.0TT	331/6500	550/2150	all	1585	209	3.7	–	8.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Blacked-out styling adds a different vibe ⚡ Tough to spot the dynamic differences over regular Targa
911 Turbo ★★★★★		\$384,600 (7dc)	F6/3.8TT	397/6400	710/2250	all	1595	249	3.0	11.0	9.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Now updated with even more speed, just what it needed ⚡ With Australia's speed limits it's almost a waste
911 Turbo S ★★★★★	Feb 17	\$456,200 (7dc)	F6/3.8TT	427/6750	750/2250	all	1600	259	2.9	10.8	9.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ You'll need a Chiron to beat it off the line; useability ⚡ We're talking diminishing returns here; supercar money
911 Turbo Cabriolet ★★★★★		\$406,100 (7dc)	F6/3.8TT	397/6400	710/2250	all	1665	238	3.1	11.2	9.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ The ultimate hair dryer; still insanely fast ⚡ There are far more characterful cabriolets at this price
911 Turbo S Cabriolet ★★★★★		\$477,700 (7dc)	F6/3.8TT	427/6750	750/2250	all	1670	256	3.0	11.0	9.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ A good way to show off the size of your bank balance ⚡ Struggling to see the point; frightening price tag
Panamera 4S ★★★★★		\$304,200 (8dc)	V6/3.0TT	324/6600	550/1750	all	1795	185	4.4	–	8.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Stuttgart's fresh limo doesn't stick around ⚡ All-wheel drive of questionable relevance in Australia
Panamera 4S Diesel ★★★★★		\$312,100 (8dc)	V8/4.0TTD	310/5000	850/1000	all	1795	173	4.5	–	6.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Slick new PDK handles big-grunt diesel beautifully ⚡ A car you buy more for economy than outright performance
Panamera Turbo ★★★★★		\$376,900 (8dc)	V8/4.8TT	382/6000	700/2250	all	1920	194	3.8	–	10.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Crushing on-paper performance; cossetting luxury for four ⚡ Lighter but still a big bertha; we'll let you know when we drive it
Macan GTS ★★★★★	Jan 17	\$109,200 (7dc)	V6/3.0TT	265/6000	500/1650	all	1895	140	5.0*	–	8.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Looks quite cool as SUVs go; quite a bit cheaper than the Turbo ⚡ Not overly fast; can it match the new F-Pace?
Macan Turbo ★★★★★	Aug 14	\$130,000 (7dc)	V6/3.6TT	294/6000	550/1350	all	1925	153	4.8	–	9.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Drives better than it has any right to ⚡ Lacking engine note; bit of low-down lag
Cayenne S Diesel ★★★★★	Feb 15	\$149,000 (8a)	V8/4.2TD	283/3750	850/2000	all	2215	128	5.7	–	8.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Incredible diesel grunt; reasonably priced against rivals ⚡ We still have problems with the term 'sports diesel SUV'
Cayenne GTS ★★★★★	May 15	\$156,100 (8a)	V6/3.6TT	324/6000	600/1600	all	2110	154	5.2	–	10.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Pace and incredible dynamics for an off-roader ⚡ New blown V6 can't match the acoustics of the old V8
Cayenne Turbo ★★★★★	Feb 15	\$235,300 (8a)	V8/4.8TT	382/6000	750/2250	all	2185	175	4.5	–	11.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Like driving a rocket-powered block of flats ⚡ Cayenne's underpinnings are ageing
Cayenne Turbo S ★★★★★	Ann 16	\$287,200 (8a)	V8/4.8TT	419/6000	800/2500	all	2235	187	4.1	–	11.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Outrageous performance; top-dog status ⚡ It's DOUBLE the price of the already impressive Cayenne S Diesel



TOP 3

DROP
TOPS
UNDER
\$150K



Porsche Boxster
\$113,100
Better than ever



Mazda MX-5
\$31,990
Massive fun for a tiny price



Lotus Exige S
\$132,990
Plenty of character

GONESKI!



Rolls drops two-door models
BAD NEWS, billionaires. Rolls-Royce has announced that production has ended for its two-door Phantom-based models, the Drophead and Drophead Coupe, and that these models will not be replaced when the new-generation Phantom arrives in 2018. If you're still keen on a two-door Roller, you'll have to 'make do' with the \$645K Wraith or \$749K Dawn drop-top.



Range Rover

www.landrover.com.au

Evoque Dynamic S4 ★★★★★	May 14	\$81,125 (9a)	I4/2.0T	177/5500	340/1750	all	1640	107	–	–	13.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Concept-car looks; classy interior; drives well ⚡ Try seeing out of it; terrifying options lists
Sport HSE Dynamic ★★★★★	Jan 14	\$167,905 (8a)	V8/5.0S	375/6500	625/2500	all	2310	162	5.3	–	13.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Great handling; wonderful engine; looks much better ⚡ Some will see it as the poor man's Range Rover
Sport Autbio, Dynamic ★★★★★	Jan 14	\$196,800 (8a)	V8/5.0S	375/6500	625/2500	all	2310	162	5.3	–	13.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Drives like an enormous hot hatch; goes like a scalded cat ⚡ Very little; thirsty, and off-road ability wasted on most
Sport SVR ★★★★★	Oct 16	\$233,500 (8a)	V8/5.0S	405/6500	680/2500	all	2310	175	4.7	–	13.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Ludicrous acceleration; anti-social exhaust noise ⚡ Is this performance 4x4 thing getting a bit silly?
SDV8 Autobiography ★★★★★		\$244,400 (8a)	V8/4.4TTD	250/3500	700/1750	all	2360	108	6.9	–	8.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Diesel V8 perfect fit for the Rangie's calming character ⚡ Huge weight saving, but still incredibly big and heavy
5.0 SC Autobiography ★★★★★	Jan 14	\$257,300 (8a)	V8/5.0S	375/6500	720/3500	all	2330	161	5.4	–	13.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Like an off-road S-Class; incredible ride and feel-good factor ⚡ Fuel tank seems to have a hole in it; poor people hate you

Hot Source

Fast guide to quick cars

TOP 3

DROP
TOPS
OVER
\$150K

1ST



Ferrari California T
\$409,888
A fine Italian cruiser

2ND






Merc-AMG SL63
\$368,715
Roofless thunder

3RD



Jaguar F-Type V8 R
\$247,795
Snarling, intoxicating V8

	MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
		Renault www.renault.com.au											
	Clio RS 200 Sport ★★★★☆	Oct 16	\$30,000 (6dc)	I4/16T	147/6000	240/1750	front	1218	121	7.1	15.1	6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Cult classic returns at a bargain price; five-door practicality ⚡ Lost its hero appeal; sadly no manual option
	Clio RS 200 Cup ★★★★☆	Apr 14	\$33,000 (6dc)	I4/16T	147/6000	240/1750	front	1218	121	6.75	14.91	6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Likes to wag its tail; zesty drivetrain ⚡ Sounds like a vacuum on boost; shift paddles feel arcade-ish
	Clio RS 200 Sport Premium ★★★★☆		\$35,000 (6dc)	I4/16T	147/6000	240/1750	front	1218	121	6.7	-	6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Extra kit (seats, 18s, RS drive) adds extra class ⚡ Price gains a couple of waist sizes
	Clio RS 200 Cup Premium ★★★★☆	Jan 15	\$38,000 (6dc)	I4/16T	147/6000	240/1750	front	1218	121	7.14	15.21	9.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ You won't be disappointed by the range-topper... ⚡ ...until you realise \$37K is not far off an SS, GTi, Megane
	Clio RS 220 Trophy ★★★★★	Aug 16	\$39,990 (6dc)	I4/16T	163/6000	280/1750	front	1218	134	6.49	14.54	5.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ More power, quicker shifts, better chassis – it's hardcore ⚡ While harder and faster, it's still not visceral as you'd like
	Megane GT ★★★★☆	Ann 16	\$38,490 (7dc)	I4/20T	151/6000	280/2400	front	1392	108	7.1	-	6.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Sharpened French hatch promises to be an RS-lite ⚡ Unkillable ESP means it fails to deliver on the promise
		Rolls-Royce www.rolls-roycemotorcars.com											
	Ghost Series II ★★★★★	Feb 15	\$595,000 DA (8a)	V12/66TT	420/5250	780/1500	rear	2360	178	4.9	-	14.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Quicker and sportier than a Phantom, but no less opulent ⚡ What's the point of a sportier, faster Rolls Royce?
	Ghost EWB Series II ★★★★★		\$675,000 DA (8a)	V12/66TT	420/5250	780/1500	rear	2450	171	5.0	-	14.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Even more luxurious with added rear seat space ⚡ For those who prefer someone else to do the driving
	Phantom Series II ★★★★★		\$855,000 DA (8a)	V12/67	338/5350	720/3500	rear	2560	132	5.9	-	14.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ The benchmark luxury car for the last decade ⚡ It's simply enormous; Kyle Sandilands has one...
	Wraith ★★★★★	Dec 14	\$645,000 DA (8a)	V12/66TT	465/5600	800/1500	rear	2360	197	4.6	-	14.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Incredible comfort and luxury; traffic-stopping styling ⚡ Definitely no drivers' car; you'll want the Phantom
	Dawn ★★★★★	Jun 16	\$749,000 DA (8a)	V12/66TT	420/5250	780/1500	rear	2560	164	4.9	-	14.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Jaw-dropping looks; you've-made-it driving experience ⚡ Best suited to wafting; prepare for envy
		Skoda www.skoda.com.au											
	(+\$700/\$2300) Octavia 162TSI RS ★★★★☆	Nov 14	\$36,890 (6m) \$37,890 (6dc)	I4/20T	162/6200	350/1500	front	1350	118	6.30	14.60	6.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Affordable mix of performance, handling and practicality ⚡ Optional six-speed DSG doesn't cut it, get the manual
	(+\$700/\$2300) Octavia RS Wagon ★★★★☆	May 14	\$38,590 (6m) \$39,590 (6dc)	I4/20T	162/6200	350/1500	front	1372	118	6.9	-	6.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ As per sedan, but cranks the practicality factor up to 11 ⚡ Everybody will think you're a soccer mum
	Octavia RS230 ★★★★★	Jan 17	\$41,490 (6m)	I4/20T	169/6200	350/1500	front	1391	121	6.7	-	6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Practical, entertaining, good value ⚡ Manual-only status will put some off
	Octavia RS230 Wagon ★★★★★	Jan 17	\$43,190 (6m)	I4/20T	169/6200	350/1500	front	1425	118	6.8	-	6.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Horn-looking exterior rips up soccer-mum image ⚡ Doesn't have the GTi's street cred
	(+\$2700) Superb 206TSI 4x4 ★★★★☆	Jun 16	\$52,690 (6dc)	I4/20T	206/6500	350/1700	all	1537	134	5.8	-	7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Golf R speed in a more practical package ⚡ Not as agile as its hatch cousin
		Subaru www.subaru.com.au											
	(+\$250) WRX ★★★★☆	Nov 14	\$39,240 (6m) \$41,240 (cvt)	F4/20T	197/5600	350/2400	all	1424	138	6.08	14.15	9.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Has rediscovered its harder edge; entertaining handling ⚡ Lumpy power curve; firm ride; offers little that's new
	(+\$250) WRX Premium ★★★★☆	May 14	\$45,140 (6m) \$47,140 (cvt)	F4/20T	197/5600	350/2400	all	1424	138	6.24	14.27	9.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Extra kit makes the WRX a more habitable place ⚡ Not really what the WRX has traditionally been about
	(+\$250) WRX STI ★★★★☆	May 15	\$49,740 (6m)	F4/25T	221/6000	407/4000	all	1515	146	5.40	13.49	12.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Looks tough; handling prowess; bargain price ⚡ Interior can't match class benchmarks; iffy steering
	(+\$250) WRX STI Premium ★★★★☆	Apr 16	\$55,640 (6m)	F4/25T	221/6000	407/4000	all	1515	146	5.49	13.62	10.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Adds welcome niceties; you can delete the wing ⚡ Not actually any faster than the last STI
	(+\$250) Liberty 3.6R ★★★★☆		\$42,490 (cvt)	F6/36	191/5600	350/4400	all	1605	119	7.2	-	10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Far cheaper than the old one; segment-crushing power ⚡ Feels quite big; has lost a lot of its sporting character
	(+\$250) Levorg GT ★★★★☆	Aug 16	\$42,990 (cvt)	F4/20T	197/5600	350/2400	all	1538	128	6.6	-	8.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Fast wagons are cool; good package ⚡ Not really that fast; CVT-only; terrible suspension tune
	(+\$250) Forester XT ★★★★☆		\$41,240 (cvt)	F4/20T	177/5600	350/2400	all	1589	111	7.5	-	8.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Much improved handling and refinement ⚡ Stripped of all its character; no manual option
	BRZ ★★★★★		\$32,990 (6m) \$34,990 (6a)	F4/20	152/7000	212/6400	rear	1282	119	7.4	-	8.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Looks better than the Toyota; exclusivity; handling balance ⚡ Oversteer junkies will prefer the more wayward 86
		Suzuki www.suzuki.com.au											
	Swift Sport ★★★★☆	Sep 12	\$24,990 (6m) \$26,990 (cvt)	I4/16	100/6900	160/4400	front	1060	94	8.50	16.16	6.1*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Excellent chassis; strong brakes; revvy engine ⚡ Not as cheap as it used to be; un-killable ESP dulls fun
		Tesla www.teslamotors.com											
	Model S P90D ★★★★★	Ann 16	\$203,283 DA (1a)	Dual EM	568	967	all	2300	247	3.36	11.68	0.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Dual electric motors provide head-smashing acceleration ⚡ Needs the infrastructure to support it; a bit odd to drive

MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
 Toyota www.toyota.com.au												
Corolla SX ★★★★★	Oct 16	\$23,490 (6m) \$25,490 (cvt)	1.8	103/6400	173/4000	front	1255	82	9.24	16.87	7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Shock! A Corolla that's half-decent to drive (in manual guise) ⚡ Outclassed and out-gunned by cheaper rivals
86 GT ★★★★★		\$30,790 (6m) \$33,090 (6a)	F4/20	152/7000 147/7000	212/6400 205/6400	rear	1257	117	7.4	–	7.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ About as much fun as you can have in a car, regardless of price ⚡ Interior is basic; road noise; ride can get irritating
86 GTS ★★★★★	Oct 16	\$36,490 (6m) \$38,790 (6a)	F4/20	152/7000 147/7000	212/6400 205/6400	rear	1275	116	7.4	–	7.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Revised 86 scores more power and chassis tweaks ⚡ We'll find out next month
 Volkswagen www.volkswagen.com.au												
Polo GTI ★★★★★	Oct 16	\$27,490 (6m) \$29,990 (7dc)	1.8T	141/6200	320/1450	front	1234	144	6.8	14.9	6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ An even better BFYB proposition in its new form; price ⚡ New electric steering loses out to the old hydraulic system
Golf GTI ★★★★★	Aug 16	\$41,340 (6m) \$43,840 (6dc)	1.4/20T	162/6200	350/1500	front	1324	122	6.37	14.58	11.3*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ More refined and sharper to drive than ever ⚡ Conservative looks; can't disable ESP; traction issues
Golf GTI Performance ★★★★★	Nov 14	\$46,490 (6dc)	1.4/20T	169/6200	350/1500	front	1364	124	6.80	14.90	6.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Tricky diff, bigger brakes and more power prove deadly ⚡ No manual or ESC off douses potential as a true drivers' car
Golf GTI 40 Years ★★★★★	Feb 17	\$46,990 (6m) \$48,990 (6dc)	1.4/20T	195/6600	350/1700	front	1357	144	6.00	14.00	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ With overboost, trick-diff and ESC-off, this GTI rules all others ⚡ Manuals all sold; sacrifice some ride quality
Golf R ★★★★★	May 16	\$52,990 (6m) \$55,490 (6dc)	1.4/20T	206/6200	380/1800	all	1435	144	4.95*	13.24*	10.4*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Faster and easier than ever before; beefy engine note ⚡ Lacks some visual flair; not a lot else
Scirocco R ★★★★★	Sep 12	\$45,990 (6m) \$48,490 (6dc)	1.4/20T	188/6000	330/2500	front	1351	139	6.30	14.19	8.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ More agile and much better looking than a Golf R ⚡ Driving it really hard exposes a few chinks in its armour
Passat 206TSI ★★★★★		\$57,990 (6dc)	1.4/20T	206/6500	380/1700	all	1589	130	5.5	–	7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Spiritual successor to R36 a sharp looker, decent steer ⚡ By no means a performance star
Passat 206TSI wagon ★★★★★		\$59,990 (6dc)	1.4/20T	206/6500	380/1700	all	1639	127	5.7	–	7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Extended hatch lends practical appeal to Q-car package ⚡ Light footed Golf R wagon's far more tantalising
CC V6 FSI ★★★★★		\$67,990 (6dc)	V6/36	220/6600	350/2400	all	1657	133	5.5	–	9.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Six-pot CC pretty much like a Merc CLS for third of the price ⚡ Lack of rear headroom and rear seat access
 Volvo www.volvocars.com.au												
V40 T5 R-Design ★★★★★	Jul 15	\$50,990 (6a)	1.4/20T	180/5400	360/1800	front	1468	127	6.97	15.02	8.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Punchy four pot; pleasing dynamics; looks ⚡ Heavy; firm ride; cramped rear room
S60 Polestar ★★★★★		\$89,990 (8a)	1.4/20TS	270/6000	470/3100	all	1750	127	4.7	–	7.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ New twin-charged four; price cut ⚡ Needs more involving handling; no more six-pot engine note
V60 Polestar ★★★★★		\$92,990 (8a)	1.4/20TS	270/6000	470/3100	all	1770	127	4.7	–	7.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⚡ Looks good; fast Volvo wagon cool factor ⚡ Quite pricey; struggles to match an S4 Avant



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