

HOT 30
27-PAGE BUYING SPECIAL

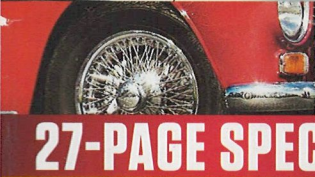
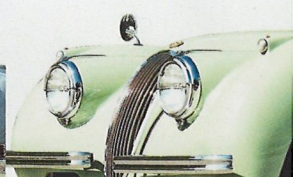


6 owners recall this **911 2.4S**

'Healey family heirloom restored

Renault 5 Turbo reader test

CLASSIC **Cars**



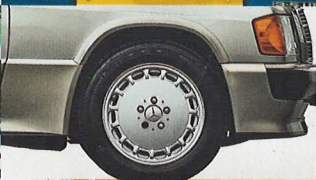
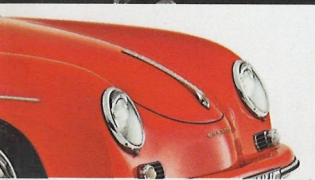
27-PAGE SPECIAL

JG 237K

HOT 30 BUYS OF THE YEAR

Six industry insiders reveal how to beat the market

Plus 4 BAD BUYS TO AVOID



PLUS 7 steps to a **Triumph Dolomite** bargain / Ask Quentin what to buy, sell or keep / John Fitzpatrick on racing exotic **Ferraris** / We test a **Jag XK150**, **Mini Cooper**, **Escort XR3i** and **Aston Virage** for sale

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THE HOT 30

A year like no other? March saw the most alarming developments in living memory, yet a couple of weeks later the classic car market was busier than ever with a surprising bounce in prices.

What follows next is harder to gauge, but our six market experts find reasons to be cheerful. People are spending real money, not investing with credit. Many buyers are financially secure so will have no need to sell again at a panicked discount. While interest rates stay low, investing in the pleasure that is classic cars remains attractive, especially as we return to a full events calendar in 2021. Finally, the pandemic has created a now-or-never mood amongst those pining for their dream machine. These are their top 30 tips for the cars to buy now. We only live once, after all.

Words NIGEL BOOTHMAN
Photography CLASSIC CARS ARCHIVE/OTHER



Our six market experts



Felix Archer
Car specialist,
RM Sotheby's
auction house

Felix grew up around cars, with a father (Stephen Archer) who raced Porsches and wrote books about Aston Martins. Felix eventually took to the track himself and has raced a variety of Porsches and GT4 Astons. He joined RM Sotheby's European Division as a Car Specialist in August 2017.



Justin Banks
Independent classic
car dealer at Justin
Banks Ltd

In his 16 years as an independent classic car dealer, Justin has developed a speciality in offering rare and exotic cars at realistic prices. He has a fondness for Facel Vegas but doesn't stick to four wheels – you might find Riva boats or Patek Philippe watches are welcome in part-exchange.



Merlin McCormack
CEO at Duke
of London,
independent classic
car dealer and hub

Duke of London is a family-run classic and supercar hub in West London, a mini-empire comprising sales, restoration, storage, servicing and even its own pub and pizzeria. The monthly classic and supercar meets have become extremely popular. Merlin's eclectic taste covers British and European classics of all eras.



Brian Page
CEO of Classic
Assessments

Brian has run his classic car inspection company, Classic Assessments, for more than 25 years and has inspected a staggering number of cars – he's done 300 MGs and over 500 Jaguar E-type inspections, for instance. Over the years he has run a fleet of sporting classics and admits to a fondness for fastback Sixties GTs.



James Szkiller
CEO at the Classic &
Sportscar Centre in
Malton

As CEO of the Classic & Sportscar Centre in Malton, North Yorkshire, James usually has around 70 classics in stock of all ages, from AC to Wolseley, and has bought and sold cars covering ten decades of motoring. He's found the trade to be busier than even during lockdown, with interest in classics greater than ever.



Nick Whale
Managing director,
Silverstone Auctions
auction house

Nick was known first as a racing driver and successful main dealer for various prestige marques, but since its formation in 2011 he's headed Silverstone Auctions and conducted numerous sales of both traditional and modern classics, including an ever-expanding roster of single-marque sales including Ferrari, Jaguar and Porsche.





£25,000

>Rover P5 and P5B

TIPPED BY: JAMES SZKILER

If you thought the big old prime ministerial Rovers had had their moment, think again. James Szkiler brings news from the dealer's forecourt, 'Good ones had a bit of a jump from £10k to £15k a few years ago, but since then I've only seen them creep higher. It's more obvious with P5B Coupés, because they seem to sell immediately, with top-class examples pushing past £25k. You can see why when you drive one. They're so solid with a real sense of heritage, but they're also roomy, comfy and quite capable of keeping up with modern traffic. The fame as a government car doesn't hurt either.'

There are two different bodies and two different engines and it's worth being clear about which is which. The Rover 3-litre, now often called the P5, ran

in three series from 1958 to 1967, each series using the 3.0-litre version of Rover's inlet-over-exhaust straight six. In 1962, when the MkII arrived, a new coupé body joined the range as a slightly upmarket choice, still with four doors but a lower roofline and standard power steering. In 1967, the six-cylinder engine bowed out and the P5 became the P5B as Rover's Buick-sourced V8 replaced it, with both saloon and coupé bodies lasting until 1973.

'The 3-litre cars are interesting,' says James. 'They used to be a poor relation but it's such a sweet, smooth engine and I think people appreciate the quality. I sold a 34,000 mile example at £25,000 recently and I could have sold it three times over.'

Tempted? Bag a good car in the mid-teens, look after it, and it could look after you.



'They're so solid with a real sense of heritage about them; the fame as a government car doesn't hurt either

The market favours the P5B, but don't discount the six-cylinder cars

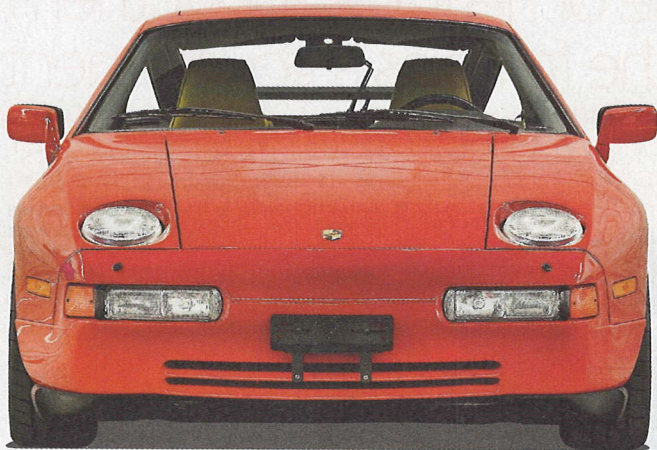


Trad-meets-modern interior is key to P5 appeal, and is expensive to restore

After years of being dubbed 'the poor man's Rolls' prices are overtaking them



£25,000



> Mercedes 190E 2.3-16 Cosworth

TIPPED BY: MERLIN MCCORMACK

Merlin McCormack says, 'Right now, £25k is the mark for a good Mercedes 190E Cosworth. Yes, you can pay more but you can pay a lot less too - the edgy ones start about £12k.' Merlin should know, he's just restored one.

That doesn't seem much for one of the original Eighties super-saloons. It was homologated for DTM saloon-car racing in Germany, with a bespoke dohc 16-valve cylinder head from Cosworth allowing 185bhp from 2.3 litres. That went up to 2.5-litres and another 15bhp or so in 1988. All versions wore an aerodynamically useful body kit and came with the same dog-leg five-speed Getrag gearbox as the BMW E30 M3.

Merlin says, 'The 2.5 costs slightly more but there's nothing much between the 2.3 and the 2.5 on the road. They're not

^ Porsche 928 S4

TIPPED BY: BRIAN PAGE

'All Porsche 928s can make interesting buys at the moment, but I'd go for the last major development - the S4 from late 1986 onwards,' says Brian. 'They have a 5.0-litre 32-valve V8 and with 316bhp they really feel properly fast; they have a lot more grunt than the earlier cars. They're also smoother, they feel that bit more modern and the exterior styling changes really freshened up the looks - I think they still look great.'

It's interesting that despite Porsche's forays into the large and small SUV market, while also building four-door super-saloons and halo-model hypercars, it's never again built a big front-engined, two-door GT. Which is puzzling, because it did it very well - the 928 lasted for 18 years, won the European Car of the Year title and sold 61,000 units - less than hoped, but still respectable.

'They're a bit forgotten, especially when you think of the craze that's affected most other Porsches,' says Brian. 'Everyone talks about 911s but the 928 was Porsche trying to do something different and it was a brave, advanced design. Pay £25k for a nice S4 with a low-ish mileage - say well under 100,000 - and there's room for it to go up.'

'Spotting a neo-classic is about being prompt. Don't wait until they've been cheap for five years'

All 928s were relatively complex cars for their time and rough examples can be money-pits, so avoid smoking engines (though the S4 is near bulletproof), electrical faults or clunks and rattles that suggest a suspension rebuild is in order.

'The last models produced, the GT and GTS, are out of our budget bracket so if you want a more sporting drive, find a manual S4,' says Brian. 'The Mercedes autobox suits the 928 but the manual turns it into a muscle car.'



hugely fast by modern standards but they're all great to drive. A lot of them have done high mileages, so find a nerdy owner who's really cared for their car.

'Expect the wheelarch trims to be hiding a bit of rust and make sure the self-levelling unit works. Listen for rattling engines - the valves are shimmed. If you do need a top-end rebuild, it's about £2000 with the whole engine done for £7000, but everything's available, most of it from Mercedes.

'The 190E is understated compared to a Ford Sierra Cosworth or a BMW E30 M3, almost a bit of a sleeper,' he continues. 'For me, a manual right-hand-drive 2.3-16 is a great place to put your money.'

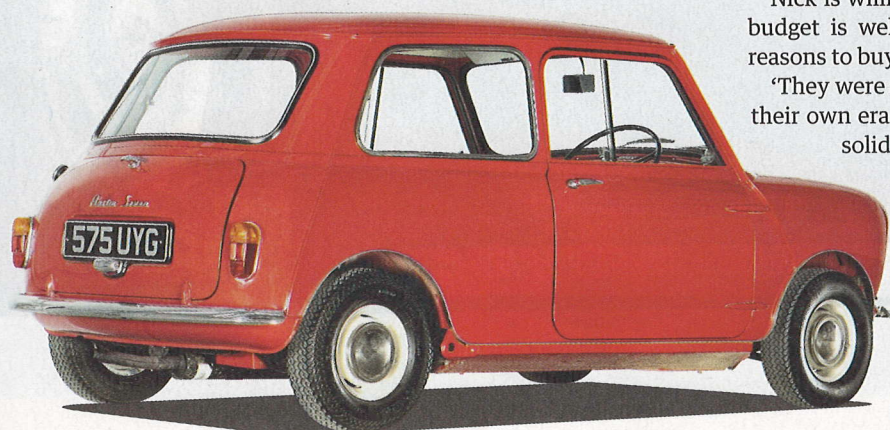


Look where the E30 M3 is in this year's Hot 30 - not one bracket above, but two. And it could go further still. Surely the impressive 190 Cosworth deserves to catch up a little?

✓ Austin / Morris Mini Mk1

TIPPED BY: NICK WHALE

The Mini has been acknowledged as a design classic for decades. Yet for many of those decades, most Minis bar the most exciting Coopers were regarded as just another second-hand runabout. In recent years, though, the earliest Minis have had something of a watershed moment and values have determinedly climbed



right out of banger-money territory. Since the new BMW Mini has largely replaced original Minis on our streets, the true original stands out more than ever, says Nick Whale.

'I don't think you can go wrong with a Mini Mk1. They have so much to offer - they're British, so innovative and influential, and they're the first of the breed. For our budget you'd be able to find a perfect, basic 848cc version - even a sought-after 1959 model if you're lucky - or a less-perfect Cooper.'

Nick is willing to throw the net wider than just the Mk1 if your budget is well under our £25k figure, because he believes the reasons to buy a Mini remain pretty similar whatever the age.

'They were around for so long that different demographics have their own era of Mini to appreciate. I'd expect to see a gentle but solid increase for all of them, but with the biggest rises for the earliest and purest cars.'

Something else Minis have in common over the decades is their known weak spots - rust in the little unitary bubble of a body and in the subframes, but there are few classics so well-supplied with spare parts.

'Just be sure you know what you're buying - they're easy to re-shell and authenticity matters in a scene with so many replicas and modified cars.'

◀ Aston Martin Vantage V8 (4.3-litre)

TIPPED BY: FELIX ARCHER

The baby Aston of 2005 lasted all the way until 2017, when a new version arrived to fill the same niche. But a 2020 model is at least £125,000, which seems a lot to Felix Archer. 'A 4.3-litre Vantage made between 2005 and 2008 starts at less than £25,000. The shape has aged so well... it looks better than a DB9 these days. But the best thing is the noise.' Ah yes. That'll be the 380bhp quad-cam V8. Aston set out to build a proper two-seat sports car with the Vantage; with six fewer inches in the wheelbase than a DB9 and reduced mass, it offers a more feral thrill than the larger grand tourer.

Felix says, 'People shout about the 4.7-litre version that arrived in 2008, but there's nothing wrong with a sorted 4.3. Doing 0-60mph in 4.8 seconds and topping out at 175mph is enough for most people, especially through the manual gearbox, which is the one you want.'

Felix suggests that spotting a neo-classic performance bargain is about being prompt. Don't wait until they've been cheap for five or ten years, bag a pampered one with comprehensive history as soon as it hits the bottom of its curve.

'The gearbox can be notchy - make sure this goes away when it's warm - and watch out for failing clutches, because they last about 40,000 miles and cost £3000 to replace,' he says. 'The Vantage won't get cheaper, because of the badge and because of the already vast saving over a new one. They're such a good entry-level buy.'



£50,000

> Citroën SM

TIPPED BY: MERLIN MCCORMACK

Merlin says, 'SMs are adored but still affordable. They've risen a bit but there's still a fair way to go. Look at how much Maserati Boras and Meraks have gone up - I think the SM can follow.'

Citroën took a controlling interest in Maserati in 1968. Two years later, it launched this remarkable grand tourer with a Maserati dohc V6 (a 90-degree V8 with two cylinders missing) and Citroën oleo-pneumatic brakes, suspension and speed-sensitive power steering. This apparent complexity was often blamed for keeping prices low and probably still has a bearing.

Merlin continues, 'Considering you're buying a Maserati wrapped in a beautiful French GT body, it's not hard to look after. The hydraulic stuff just needs regular use and servicing, but the bits are so cheap to replace it's mainly labour costs you pay for.'

The engine needs more care because you should change the original sodium-filled exhaust valves and renew the timing chains. You'll find some cars with bills to prove this has already been done.'

Merlin says good cars start around £35,000, from private sales, but go well past our £50k budget. Nonetheless, you can afford to be picky about some things.

'Get a Euro-spec car with the prettier front end featuring the swivelling lamps, not the ugly American-spec treatment. Manuals are better than automatics but don't worry about a 2.7-litre versus a later 3.0-litre car - you wouldn't know the difference on the road. About half of them were fuel-injected originally and if it drives really nicely, it's nothing to be afraid of. Some were converted to carburetors which is fine if the rest of the car is good. They're all - apart from three - left-hand drive. They are like nothing else in the world to drive and once you get it, you'll be hooked.'



'Don't worry about a 2.7-litre versus a later 3.0-litre car - you' wouldn't know the difference on the road'

Merlin McCormack reckons this unmistakable 'Maserati in Gallic get-up' has some more growing to do



The mushroom brake is all part of a distinctive driving experience

A well looked-after SM needn't be troublesome or costly to run



£50,000

> Audi RS2 Avant

TIPPED BY: FELIX ARCHER

'Have you got a Maritime Blue Porsche 964? Then you need a Maritime Blue Audi RS2 to use on skiing trips!'

Felix Archer isn't entirely serious, but rare cars have been bought for sillier reasons. The point he's making is the connection between Porsche and Audi for this car, the grandfather of all the hot RS Audis, and it was a significant one. The joint venture saw the Audi 80 estate equipped with a 20v, five-cylinder turbo engine modified by Porsche to give 311bhp, before Porsche assembled the cars at Zuffenhausen. All came with Audi's permanent four-wheel drive and a six-speed manual gearbox. The performance remains

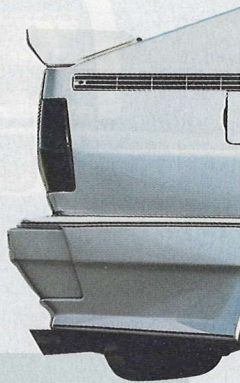


remarkable even today: 0-60mph in 4.8 seconds and a (limited) top speed of 163mph. Quicker than any roadgoing ur-Quattro...

Felix says, 'The wheels, side mirrors and brakes were shared with the 964 Turbo. You can still find a mint one for less than £50k, which isn't bad considering they cost £45k new in 1995. They were only built for nine or ten months and just 180 were made in right-hand drive, out of 2891 in total. That wouldn't bother me - I'd be happy to source a left-hand-drive car from Germany with a perfect service history. The mileage shouldn't concern you either, because most of these cars played family estate at some point and high mileages are common. They're so well built they can take it, especially with spot-on servicing? Just resist the temptation offered by less expensive examples, perhaps bearing styling modifications or under-bonnet enhancements.'

Felix cautions, 'Don't forget what complicated cars they are. As well as all the brakes and suspension being Brembo or Porsche, the Quattro system needs proper servicing. Inside, the headlining and the Alcantara bits of interior trim get scruffy, and the LCD clocks fade and die. None of it is cheap to sort out.'

We found two tip-top privately owned examples around the £45k mark, but what's the future for the RS2 market? 'A one-owner, 10,000km, investor-grade car is beyond our £50k limit, but the rest will stay solid. They're in vogue at the moment and while they have the best engineering pedigree you could imagine, I don't see them going crazy - just a steady appreciation as a connoisseur's choice.'

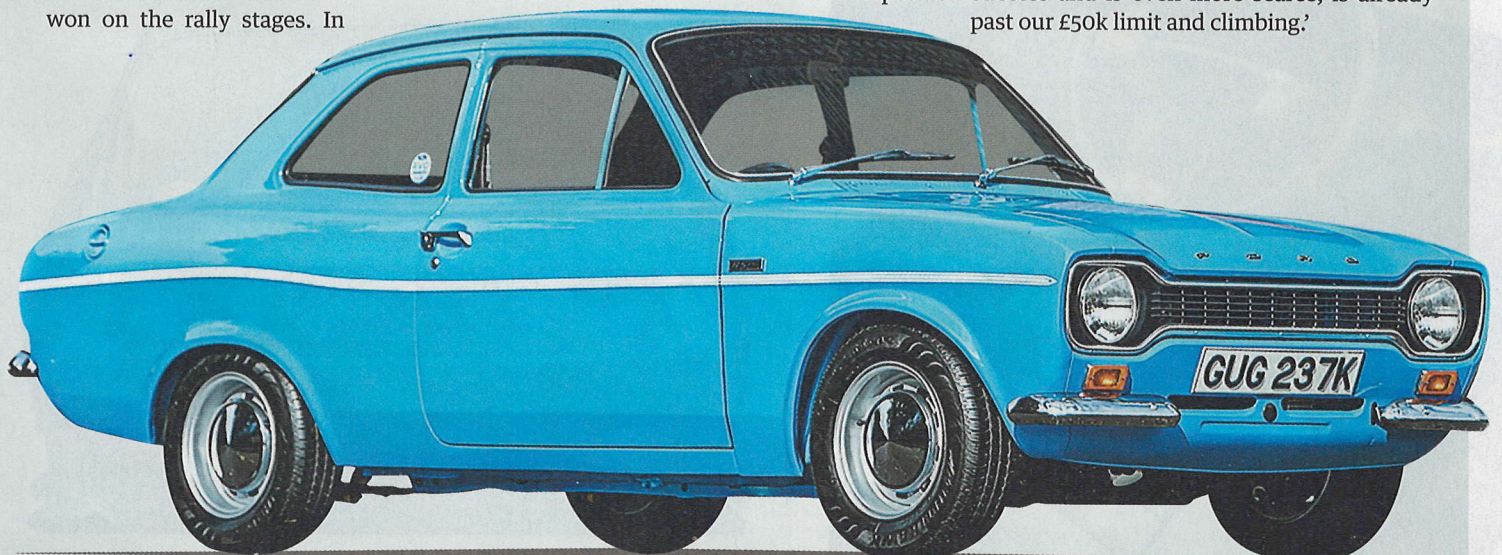


> Ford Escort MkI RS1600

TIPPED BY: NICK WHALE

Nick Whale says, 'Anyone who stood in a forest in the Seventies or Eighties, wrapped in an anorak and waiting for rally cars to go by will know the sound of a BDA engine. It's that exhaust bark that inspired so many people's desire to own the cars. When you add on the exploits of Roger Clark, Russell Brookes and all the Finnish drivers you have a compelling set of reasons for the popularity of these BDA-engined Escorts.'

The RS1600 and RS1800 are the real deal of the MkI and MkII Escort RS family. While the pushrod Mexico and ohc Pinto-engined RS2000 might have looked the part, and indeed had enough 'go' to excite most bell-bottomed boy racers, it was the cars with the twin-cam Cosworth BDA that won on the rally stages. In



road trim, the RS1600 could get to 60mph in 8.9 seconds, just a few tenths behind a 3.0-litre Capri, and you know which would be more fun down a twisty road. Only around 1000 were made, of which a small fraction survive in anything like original condition, something Nick says is a key consideration.

'Pedigree is everything. If it's an ex-competition car then provenance can have a huge effect on its value, but even if it isn't, you need evidence that it's a proper, genuine RS1600 and that the Cosworth engine has been cared for. A decent one could be £45k but the best go to £60k. I'd say 80% of the car's followers are still blue-collar Ford guys but now there are major collectors involved too. With the way all fast Fords seem to be gaining, this makes a rare early Escort RS a great buy. The RS1800, which had more competition success and is even more scarce, is already past our £50k limit and climbing.'

Audi Quattro RR

TIPPED BY: JUSTIN BANKS

For those who don't speak VW-Audi Group engine codes, the RR denotes the final version of the original Quattro with a dohc 20-valve turbocharged five-cylinder engine, made between 1989 and 1991. The manual central differential became an automatically responsive Torsen unit, which allowed the RR to make even more effective use of its 220bhp through all four wheels. As the last evolution of the roadgoing ur-Quattro models, themselves the cause of the all-wheel drive revolution in rallying and road cars, its credentials are cast iron. But that hasn't stopped them sliding back from a peak in prices around 2017, says Justin Banks.

'Today is a different world from a few years ago, when the Quattro was touted as the next big thing,' he says. 'The best ones were perhaps £75k to £80k at their peak, and now they've come

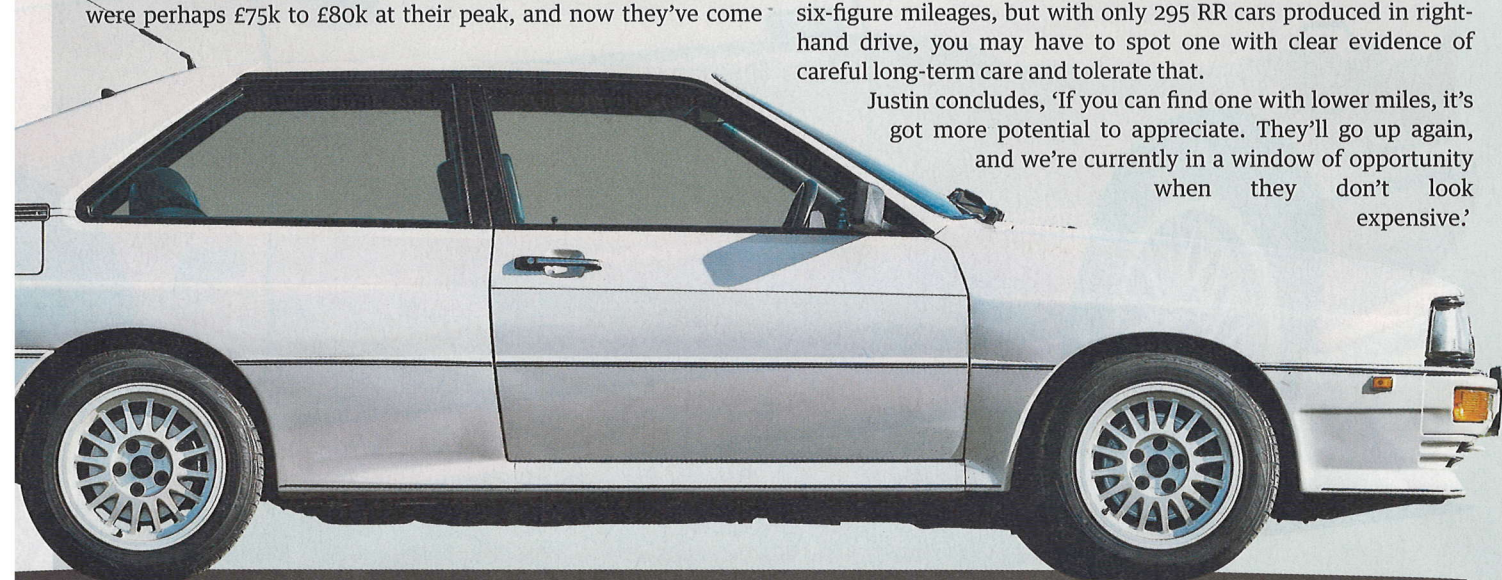
off that, so most examples are back within a sub-£50k budget. They've lost the cachet of being the next car to shoot up in value but the reasons to buy one remain the same.'

And those reasons, beyond the ones already mentioned, are obvious behind the wheel. But why stick to the RR rather than, say, the very first left-hand drive models?

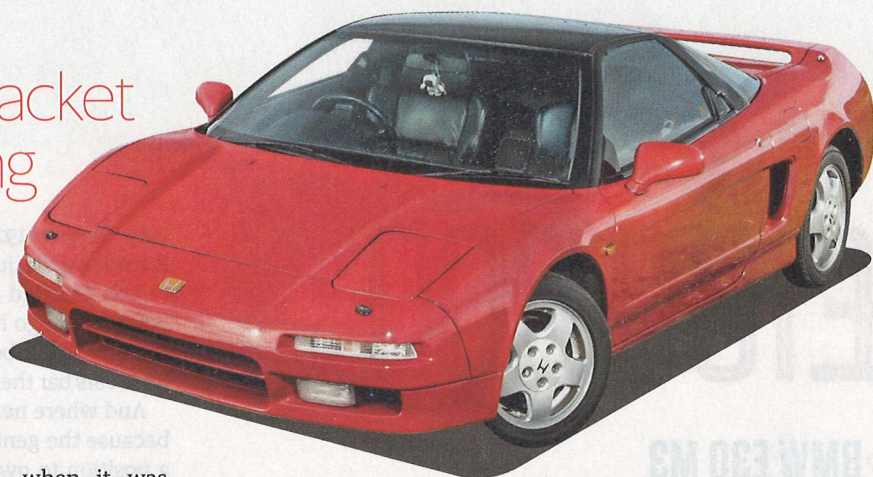
'They have the most power, and in my opinion are the best-developed of the breed,' says Justin. 'But the classic Quattro features are still there - you have the orange-red digital dash, the seats that grip you and the satisfying steering wheel that puts your hands at a quarter to three. The earliest examples have some cachet but they've got ten years more use behind them, they don't handle as well and they have the analogue rather than digital dash - you'd be seeking out a slower, older, less capable car.'

Justin points out that many Quattros on the market will be into six-figure mileages, but with only 295 RR cars produced in right-hand drive, you may have to spot one with clear evidence of careful long-term care and tolerate that.

Justin concludes, 'If you can find one with lower miles, it's got more potential to appreciate. They'll go up again, and we're currently in a window of opportunity when they don't look expensive.'



'It was in the £25k bracket in 2014; it's now taking a breather before moving up again'



Honda NSX

TIPPED BY: BRIAN PAGE

We've featured the Honda NSX once before, when it was languishing in the £25k bracket, back in 2014. If it doubled in the subsequent four or five years, it's currently taking a breather before moving up again, says Brian Page.

He explains, 'A good manual example that was £45k to £48k last summer is probably sneaking past £50k now as we emerge from this pandemic. They're pretty, they're so impressive under the skin and they're amazingly responsive to drive - even the automatics.'

Honda's brief foray into Ferrari territory produced a car that everyone seems to respect - the tale of Ayrton Senna's small role in development and a famous YouTube video of him pedalling one helps - but not everyone found them exciting, at least not until recent years. This is partly down to the lack of drama involved in using one, suggests Brian. 'If you want to take it to the supermarket, then fine - it's as easy to drive as any other Honda.

'But if you want to take it for a more spirited drive, what an amazing tool for the job. Buyers seem to want low mileages - nothing much over 50,000, thanks - which is a shame because they're pretty resilient and with correct servicing should go on and on. The main thing to watch for is evidence of body repairs following a whack, because it's a complex structure with a lot of aluminium, so dig right into the history file with a microscope or have it inspected to make sure it's straight.'

We think of them as early Nineties cars, but they remained in production all the way to 2005, with the pop-up headlights replaced by Xenon HID units in 2002. Engines are all howling quad-cam V6s with variable valve timing; 3.0 litres became 3.2 litres in 1997 and a six-speed gearbox joined the party. Don't forget the uncommon NSX-T with the targa panel, too.



£100,000

> BMW E30 M3

TIPPED BY: NICK WHALE

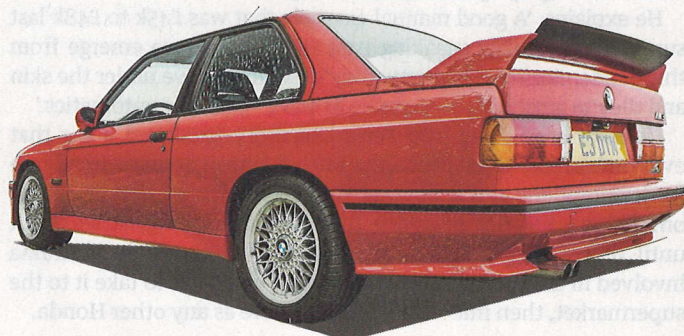
Nick Whale has a history with the E30 M3. He not only won the 1989 Production Saloon Championship in one and competed in the BTCC, he sold more of them in his day job as a BMW dealer than anyone else in the country. He explains, 'I had 36 of them between 1987 and 1991. They stood out immediately because they weren't road cars with a few bits stuck on, they were purpose-built to win the European Touring Car Championship and then chucked back at the BMW staff who had to make it into a saleable road car.'

They certainly send all the right signals: left-hand drive only, a limited colour palette for the standard cars - white, three reds, two silvers and black - and significant wheelarch flares, rear wings and air dams. They have a close-ratio five-speed gearbox in which fifth is a direct 1:1, not overdrive. The twin-cam, four cylinder engines

vary between 192bhp and 235bhp, depending on edition. The rarest is the Ravaglia, just 25 cars from a total for all versions of 17,970.

'You can find nice standard M3s at £60k-£100k, but the special editions can go higher. UK-supplied cars offer a feel-good factor to the buyer, but being left-hand drive, they're barely different from Euro cars bar the mph speedo, so values are similar.'

And where next for those values? 'Everybody wants one. Partly because the generation that admired them when young is now in a position to own them, but also they deserve their reputation... all E30 M3s are great to drive. They have 50-50 weight distribution and they still feel really good more than 30 years on.' How does he know? He's just bought another - this time, to keep.



'Everybody wants an E30 M3. Partly because the generation that admired them when young is now in a position to own them'

BMW E30 M3s are among the most collectable post-war BMWs



E30 M3 has among the best control responses and feel of its era

Later Evo versions brought more power, but all are thrilling to drive



£100,000

✓ Ferrari 575M Maranello F1

TIPPED BY: JUSTIN BANKS

The 550 and its visually very similar successor were the first front-engined, two-seat Ferraris since the Daytona, and as such, gained instant cachet. Nonetheless, the 550 later performed a spectacular swoop down to £40k - or even less - before everyone caught on and drove the prices back up to six figures.

The 575M (for *Modificata*) followed a similar path but finds itself in 2020 considerably behind the curve, at least for the version with the F1 paddle-shift gearbox.

Justin Banks says, 'The F1 gearbox is great in the 575M. It makes even

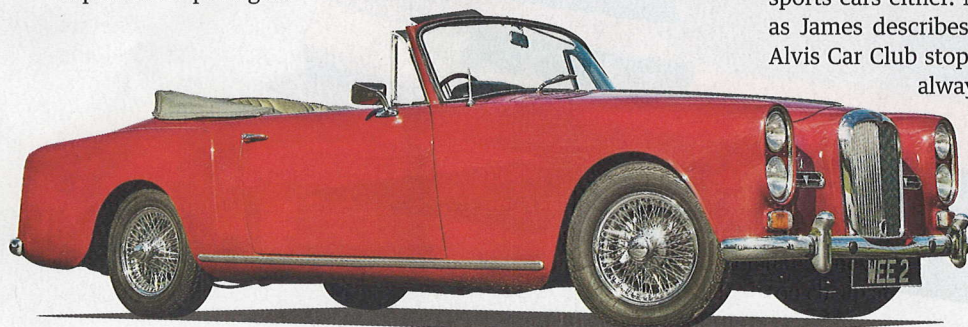


✓ Alvis TD/TE/TF 21 Drophead Coupé

TIPPED BY: JAMES SZKILER

'Pure quality,' says James Szkiller. 'They have heaps of class, a great ride and there's a royal connection with the Duke of Edinburgh owning a TD21 drophead as well as a coupé. I'm a big fan of them.'

Our budget limit should give you a fair bit of headroom, because the three iterations of Alvis's final cars, the 3.0-litre TD, TE and TF21, can be found in useable condition anywhere from £40k to £90k. But 'useable' is the wrong target for this car, because they're expensive to put right.



James explains, 'There's some wood supporting the bodywork and they can be terribly costly to restore if you find some bad news once the work starts. This keeps the prices of good examples high, because it's always more sensible to buy one that's been properly restored than to buy a rough car and have it fixed.'

The TD Series 2 introduced all-wheel disc brakes and the lovely five-speed ZF manual gearbox in 1962, but the car's relaxed style suits an automatic as well. Power steering became optional with the stacked-headlamp TE21 and the TF21 kept the same look but gained a third carburettor. None of them are slow, but they're not sports cars either. Nonetheless, they cope well on modern roads as James describes, 'I've had visiting tours from the Australian Alvis Car Club stop to visit us in Yorkshire several times and I'm always struck by how capable these cars are for long trips. People upgrade them with electric power steering and handling kits which does no harm to values. Mechanically, they're high-quality and durable. You could park one in any company and it wouldn't look out-classed, but they will always be understated, never show-offish. They look too cheap at £80k to £90k for the best.'

> Jaguar XK120 DHC

TIPPED BY: MERLIN MCCORMACK

Merlin McCormack says, 'Classic Jaguar values have cooled off a bit, especially XKs and some of the less desirable E-types. I think that's what would push me towards this model - it's now back at a point where it looks good value.'

There were three XK120 body options - the open two-seater (OTS) that launched in 1948 with a split windscreen and a marginal, clip-on hood; the coupé from 1951 and the 1953-on drophead coupé, with a heavier frame to the vee-windscreen, a more convincing hood and wind-up windows.

Merlin's target is a car to use, hence his choice of the all-weather DHC. 'There's still a lot of rubbish out there so it's worth hunting out the top cars. By that I'd mean a home-market right-hand-drive car, not a converted American one, preferably with its original engine or a nice 3.8-litre upgrade. Modifications are good - up to a point. An XK140 steering rack, bigger brakes and a Broadspeed five-speed gearbox can all add to the appeal and the value, but avoid anything that's starting to look like a hot-rod.'

'British Racing Green with tan leather is the most saleable, silver is good and Fifties shades of pink, grey and pastel green do surprisingly well. I don't think red suits them and white doesn't show off the lines. All of the desirable features are now available at £100k, and if any XKs are going to go back up, it's the 120s with these advantages. They're fast, exciting, eligible and highly regarded.'



more of the car's power and potential. Compared with a 550 you get a better interior, bigger brakes, adaptive suspension, more horsepower, new switchgear and a slight facelift that doesn't ruin the lines. You also have to reckon on the fact that the newest 575s are ten years younger than the first 550s, which is significant because these aren't ancient classics that have been through restorations.' The curious thing is that 575Ms with the conventional manual transmission are even more highly valued than 550s - perhaps £125k versus £70k for an F1-equipped 575. So all the improvements introduced for the 575 are certainly recognised by the market.

'The F1 gearbox is being punished, but it shouldn't be. The gap to the manuals is too great, so is the 30% gap to the 550. As the cars age, the distinction between the 550 and the rarer 575 F1 will get forgotten and the gap will close.' We found F1-gearbox 575Ms starting at £65,000 - not a huge sum for a 502bhp, 202mph supercar. 'You can get a perfect 15,000-mile example for £100k,' adds Justin. 'That won't always be the case.'

> Maserati Mistral

TIPPED BY: BRIAN PAGE

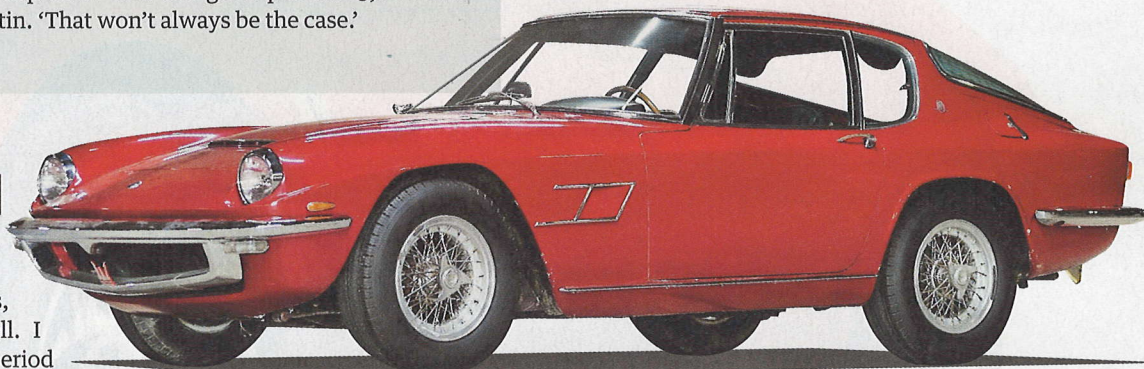
Brian says 'Mistrals sound nice, they look fabulous, they even drive pretty well. I think Maseratis of this period were superior to Ferraris and Lamborghinis, certainly in terms of build quality. But you'd need another £100k to get into any of the Mistral's Italian rivals - even a Dino.'

It's not just the Italian rivals that look expensive compared to the Mistral. If you think of great Sixties GT cars with dohc straight sixes, you soon land on the Jaguar E-type.

'The Mistral you get for £100k would probably be better than the Series 1 E-type fixed-head available at that money,' says Brian. 'But E-types are everywhere and even though I am a big fan of the E-type, when would you see another Mistral?'

Maserati kept the model in production from 1963 to 1970, starting with 3.7-litre engines before rising to 4.0 litres in 1966, though pinning down specific detail differences can be

'A Mistral might sell for a little less here, which could be another reason to settle for left-hand drive'



tricky thanks to Maserati's mixture of bespoke orders and off-the-cuff spec changes. A five-speed ZF manual and four-wheel disc brakes were standard, as was Lucas fuel injection, though cars converted to carburetors are not unknown. Early Mistrals are panelled in aluminium but from 1967, more steel was used. All the coupés have a surprisingly practical opening rear screen.

Brian continues, 'Right-hand drive cars are very scarce but does it matter? Left-hand drive wouldn't worry me, for the kind of use it's likely to get. A Mistral might sell for a little less here than on the Continent or in the USA, which could be another reason to settle for left-hand drive. And they all look cheap compared to the £450k you'd need for a Mistral Spyder. That said, they can be expensive to look after so buy the best you can find and then be prepared to treat it like the glorious car it is.'





£250,000

> Ferrari Dino 246GT

TIPPED BY: FELIX ARCHER

We could hardly believe this model had never before appeared in the Hot 30, but sure enough it's a first-timer. Perhaps because values rose rather early from a low base, and it took a while for a six-cylinder car sold under the Dino brand to seem like a justified buy at several times the price of some V12 Ferraris. But then everything else went up, notably period rivals like the 911S, and the 246GT's targa version, the GTS, shot off even higher. And once we'd seen a peak in the market pass by, temptation struck.

Felix Archer says, 'I'm not a big Ferrari fan, but the one I want to own is a Dino 246, especially now they've come back from around the £300,000 mark. They haven't dipped as much as some Ferraris, perhaps because they appeal to non-Ferrari people too. They have a very broad reach.'

Felix has a long list of reasons to want a 246GT, 'There's the wonderful sound of that V6, the nimble handling, the compact size compared to a huge V12 and even superficial aspects like paint - can you name another Ferrari that suits just about any colour?'

He suggests a focus on what represents best value in the 246 market rather than picking on the variant that will appreciate most. 'All the GTs look better value than the GTS - maybe £220k versus £300k or more - and I'd also wonder why I was paying a premium for a "Flares 'n' Chairs" model,' he says, referring to the wide-arch version of the Dino that was often ordered with Cromadora alloy wheels and fancier seats in the style of the Daytona's. 'Owning a 246 Dino is about enjoying it on the road, so find one that's been with an enthusiast owner rather than locked in a storage facility and it should be a safe place to keep the money. And much easier to use than a big V12 Ferrari.'



'Owning a Dino is about enjoying it on the road, so find one that's been with an enthusiast owner'

Take advantage of the market correction and snare yourself possibly the sweetest-handling Ferrari to (not) wear the badge



A defter buy than many V12 Ferraris, in more ways than one

GT is a better buy than the targa-topped GTs say the experts



£250,000

> Lagonda V12 Drophead Coupé

TIPPED BY: JUSTIN BANKS

Justin says, 'In 1938, this was the Miura and the Daytona Spider rolled into one. Lagonda's amazing ohc V12 engine powered one of the best-looking pre-war bodies of all; Frank Feeley's in-house design for Lagonda. There are examples bodied by other coachbuilders but in this case, I'd choose the factory drophead.'

The engine is the car's USP - there are other large, handsome Thirties drophead-coupés, including a few in this year's Hot 30, but none shared the 4.5-litre V12 designed by W O Bentley. The engine once had a reputation for fragility - and daunting cost to put right should the worst happen - but it was dramatically ahead of its time, spinning to an almost unheard-of 5500rpm and making 180bhp, when the 4¼-litre straight six in a Derby Bentley produced 125bhp. This pushed even the heavier coachwork close to or past 100mph.

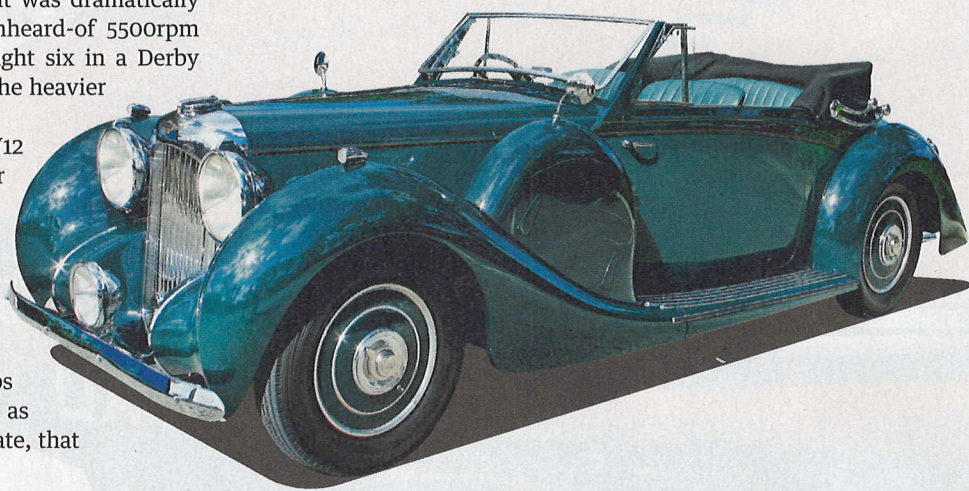
Justin continues, 'The more desirable V12 Lagondas haven't dipped in value. The pre-war market is polarising with buyers for the less exciting mid-priced saloons and limousines disappearing, but that's not the case for dashing cars like this. A 30 year-old guy - or girl - would look good in a V12 drophead.'

A total of 190 V12 chassis were produced over three different wheelbases, with perhaps 30% of them, all short wheelbase, bodied as drophead coupés. Even with a high survival rate, that

leaves only a few dozen cars. However, the right-hand accelerator pedal, central gear change, hydraulic brakes and independent front suspension mean no special skills need be learned.

Justin says, 'The rarest and best pre-war cars are getting more expensive while most of the cheap stuff is getting cheaper. The V12 Rapide, a sleeker drophead body with no running boards, fetches £500k-£1m, so a factory drophead for £250k looks exciting.'

'The rarest and best pre-war cars are actually getting more expensive'



> Porsche 911/964 Carrera RS

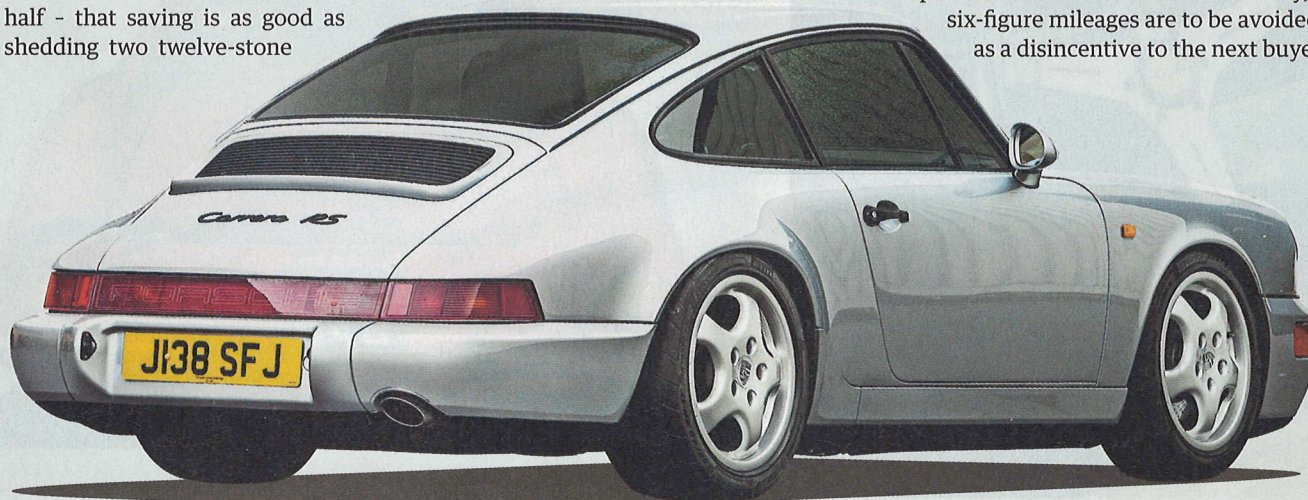
TIPPED BY: NICK WHALE

Porsche made a significant statement when it revived the RS designation in 1992 - not quite as significant as Ferrari conjuring with the letters 'GTO', as detailed on page 61 of this guide - but actually more faithful to the original. That first 2.7-litre RS was a homologation special for Group 4 racing while this second coming did things the other way round: it was a road car based on Porsche's 911 racer from the German Carrera Cup series.

'They're very pure driver's cars,' says Nick, who has won the British Historic Rally Championship in an original Carrera 2.7RS. 'The 964 RS has a lovely close-ratio gearbox, a light flywheel, a limited-slip differential and amazing brakes, and they weigh much less than the standard car.' Not half - that saving is as good as shedding two twelve-stone

passengers. The 964 Carrera's 260bhp might not seem much by the standards of recent special Porsches but it's propelling a car 150kg lighter than the current four-cylinder Boxster. The numbers that look most intriguing are the recent price trends, as Nick describes. 'When the Porsche market was at its peak in 2015 or 2016, these cars went up past £300k. They were only made for a year and just 52 were built in right-hand drive. But they've come back since then, though the good ones rarely fall under about £220k. It seems a more natural level for them. As an investment, I'd say they were safe, but also absolutely outstanding to drive... which isn't necessarily the case with every valuable old car!'

As such, you rarely find them with tiny mileages like some special-edition supercars; they remain very useable and with on-schedule servicing from main dealers and respected specialists can stand it without worry, though six-figure mileages are to be avoided purely as a disincentive to the next buyer.





Monteverdi 375L

TIPPED BY: BRIAN PAGE

Here's a real rarity. In fact, establishing exactly how many Monteverdis of any model were made or how many survive is particularly tricky. A dozen 375S models were made between 1967 and 1970; they strongly resembled the Ferrari 365GT 2+2, but then a restyle brought in a squarer four-headlamp nose. This, the renamed 375L, supposedly continued until 1977 with perhaps another 40 cars sold. The ingredients remained the same - Italian styling (Fissore), a sturdy square-tube, Swiss-built chassis and a big-block Chrysler V8 - hence the 375 in the name, from the net horsepower rating.

Brian Page says, 'They're very quirky, very rare, something of an oddball. In fact they're so unusual that even car fans will be puzzled when you pull up in one of these. But that's the point - £250k is a lot of money and if you're spending all of it on one

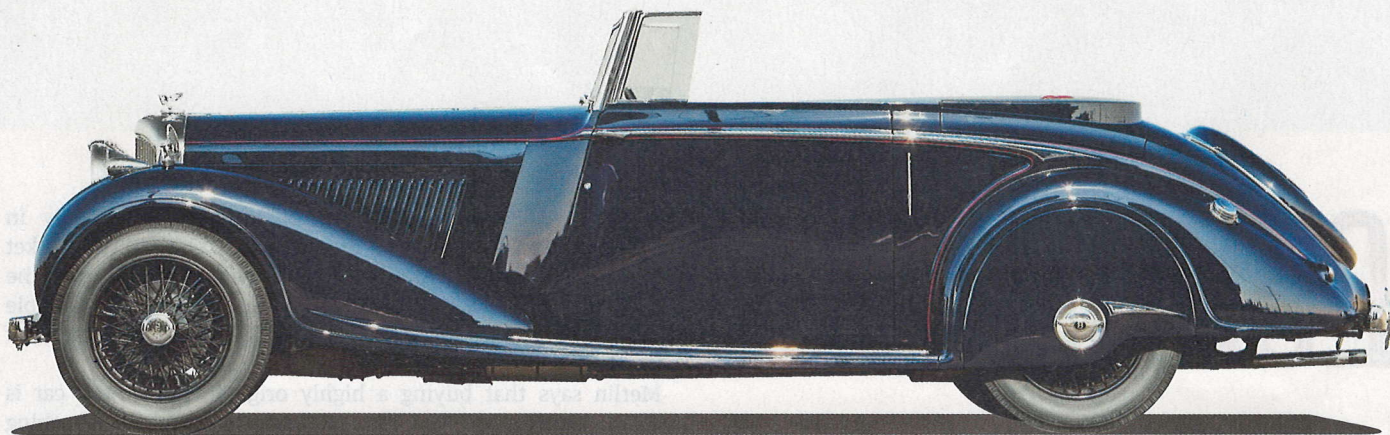
car, then surely it has to be something different and interesting.

With this, you know you'll never see another and it'll be unique wherever it goes.'

That's probably true anywhere but the smartest car shows in Switzerland or Los Angeles. Yet they do come up for sale. There's an immaculate 1971 example on offer at Thiessen in Germany at €295k and another 1971 car, also an automatic, in good original condition in Belgium for €265k, or £240k.

'You'll only get rare chances to buy them, but that makes it equally unusual for other people when you sell it - by then, you'll probably have someone asking for first refusal anyway,' says Brian. 'They have a great deal of style and grace, and plenty of power. For a true bit of rare-breed exotica, they don't look expensive.'

If a Facel Vega is too obvious for you, this could be the answer.



Bentley 4 1/4-litre Drophead Coupé

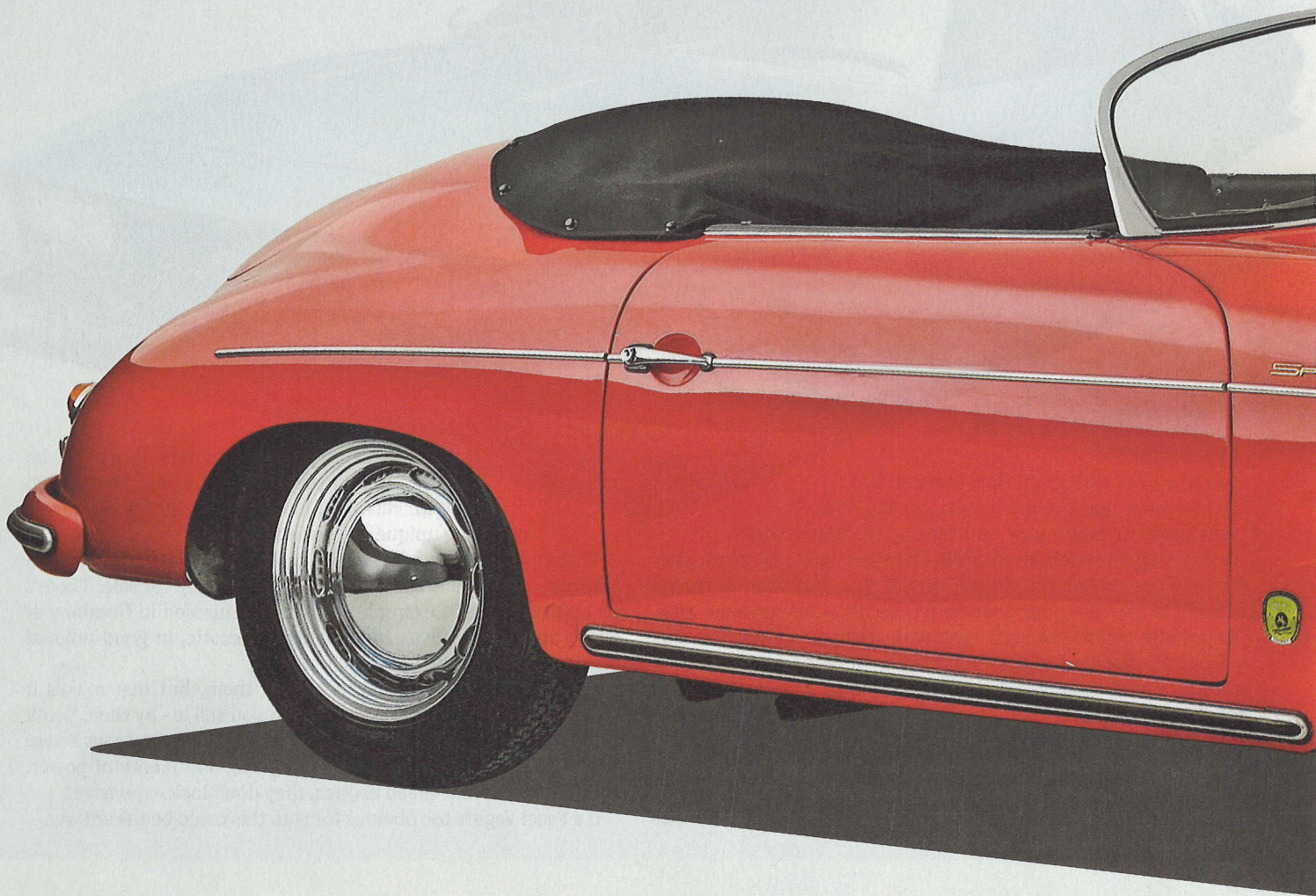
TIPPED BY: JAMES SZKILER

'This is all about the appeal of that coachwork, tied to a superb chassis that allowed a famous mix of sporting character and luxury,' says James Szkiller. 'Some are more beautiful than others and it's partly this that drives their value, but also the potential for expensive repairs. Something with a thorough restoration behind it from one of the recognised specialists is very desirable indeed.'

The first Bentleys created after the Rolls-Royce buyout appeared in 1933, initially in 3.5-litre form. Ever-heavier coachwork saw the development of the 4 1/4-litre cars, introduced in March 1936, with overdrive-equipped versions from 1938. The six-cylinder engines are torquey and the gearboxes have synchromesh on third and top.

Park Ward built about half the bodies with a variety of other coachbuilders offering their services. James says, 'The best quality bodies include Hooper, Barker, Van den Plas and James Young. Around 1800 of the 2411 Derby Bentleys built are still around. That's because they've always been wanted; also the reason why they've never been subject to big peaks and troughs in value. People hold onto them and prices rise slowly but steadily. With good 4 1/4 dropheads at £150k-£250k, that rise should continue.'

What about the much-discussed downturn for the pre-war classic car market? 'The most affordable Vintage cars, like Austin Sevens, are still popular because they get you into the VSCC and some great events; at the upper end Bentley, Lagonda and others remain valued as all-time greats. It's those in the middle without the glamour that seem to be suffering.'



£500,000

> Porsche 356 Speedster

TIPPED BY: MERLIN MCCORMACK

'It's all about seeking out the right car', says Merlin. 'The prices have been questionable recently but the rare variants are still fetching huge money - a Speedster in Carrera GT form sold at auction last September for \$1.38m (just over £1m). Normal 356A Speedsters with the right story could rise again; it's the run-of-the-mill cars with poor histories and a couple of clumsy restorations behind them that you want to avoid.'

Our Price Guide has a concours-standard Speedster at £400k, but that leaves out much detail. The model seems remarkably sensitive not only to specification but also to individual history, so charming barn finds have sold for more than rotisserie-restored examples.

Merlin continues, 'Battered survivors have a lot of appeal. Has it been loved and enjoyed? Does it have any history of celebrity

ownership? A surprising number of them do, especially in California, and this can impact the value significantly. The market is very much driven by America so you need to travel to find the best cars and the best stories. Get on a plane - when that's possible again - and try to see the cars in the metal, because there's a lot of dross floating around out there.'

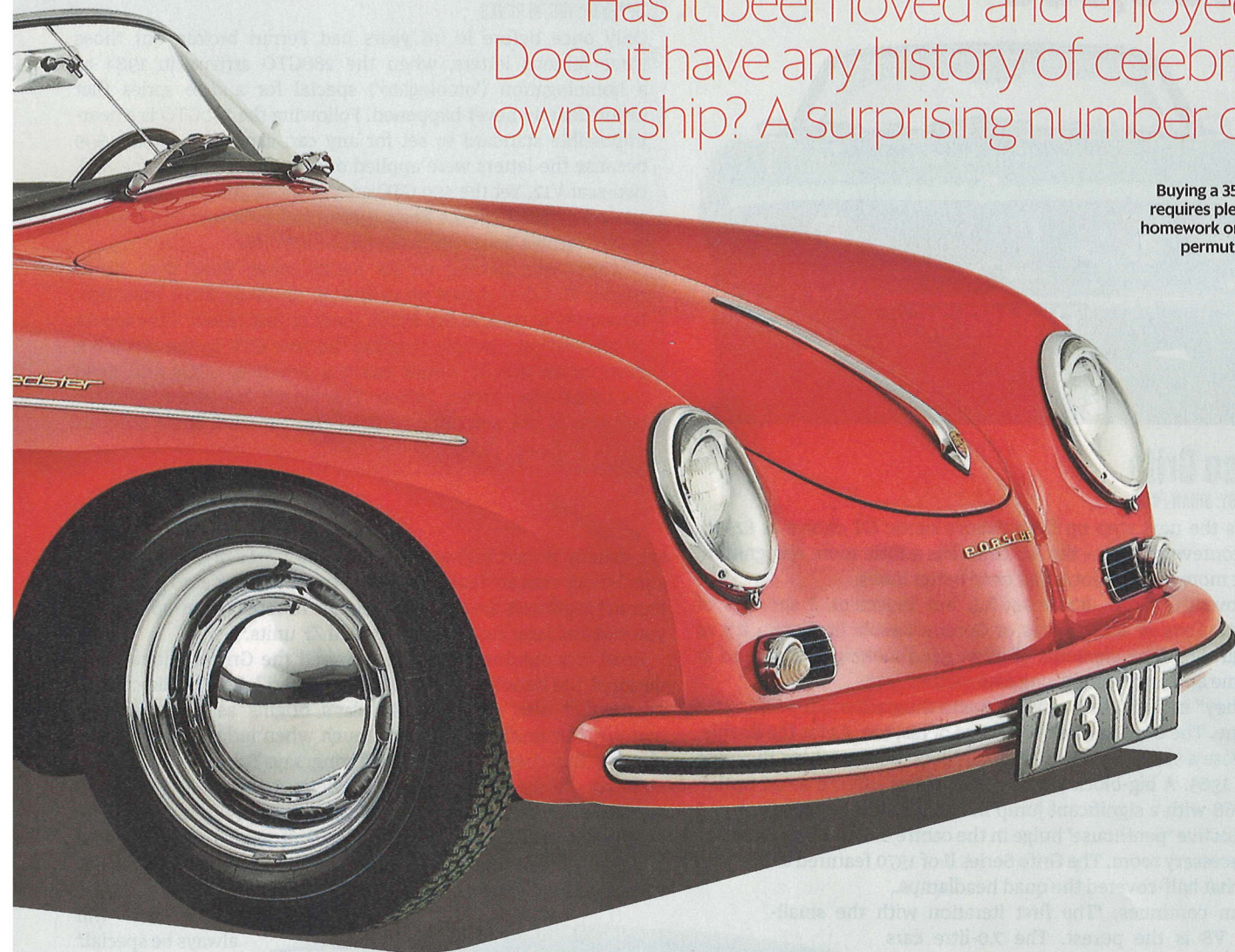
Merlin says that buying a highly original, unrestored car is desirable but can let you in for some renovation, which is nothing to fear on the mechanical side but there's no joy to be found in buying a completely rotten example.

'They can be like colanders... and you want to avoid that. You want a low-mileage, few-owners car and if you find one it will probably have matching numbers too. But would I be put off a film star's Speedster in lovely condition if it had an engine swap 30 or 40 years ago? Of course not.'



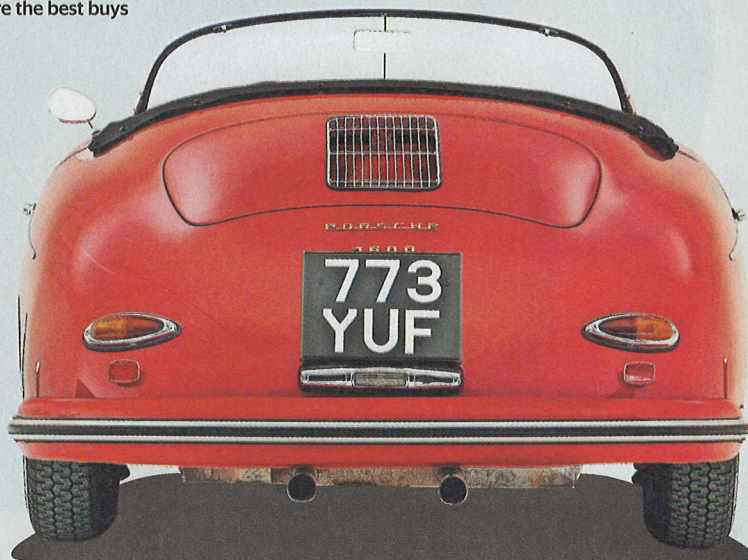
'Has it been loved and enjoyed? Does it have any history of celebrity ownership? A surprising number do'

Buying a 356 well requires plenty of homework on spec permutations



356s boast some of the purest Porsche driving experiences

Properly restored or genuine, un-messed with survivor cars are the best buys



£500,000



^ Iso Grifo

TIPPED BY: BRIAN PAGE

This is the next step up from Brian's exotic GT choice at £250k, the Monteverdi 375L - the Iso Grifo has a little more recognition, rather more performance, and even better looks.

'I love the Grifo. It's beautiful, but muscular. I see bits of Corvette, bits of Jensen, bits of Gordon-Keeble in there... it's as though they took elements of other good-looking cars around at the time and made something even better.'

"They" in this case means Giorgetto Giugiaro when working for Bertone. The Gordon-Keeble was one of his, too. As for the Keeble, Iso chose a 5.4-litre Chevrolet small-block V8, launching the Grifo GL in 1965. A big-block 7.0-litre engine was offered as an option for 1968 with a significant jump in straight-line performance and a distinctive 'penthouse' bulge in the centre of the bonnet to make the necessary room. The Grifo Series II of 1970 featured a drooping nose that half-covered the quad headlamps.

Brian continues, 'The first iteration with the small-block V8 is the purest. The 7.0-litre cars

> Ferrari 599GTO

TIPPED BY: JUSTIN BANKS

Only once before in 46 years had Ferrari broken out those three famous letters, when the 288GTO arrived in 1984 as a homologation ('omologato') special for a race series that unfortunately never happened. Following the 250GTO is a near-impossible standard to set for any car, especially for the 599 because the letters were applied once more to a front-engined, two-seat V12. Yet the 599 GTO arrived more powerful and faster around a track than the Enzo, quite a feat for a well-trimmed GT with a useable boot - and a list price £150k less.

'They were getting on for £400k when new,' says Justin Banks, 'But they'd shot up to around £700k by three years ago. Now, they're back to the £500k mark or just below.' This speaks of speculation - people ordering the new GTO in the confident expectation that it would emulate previous GTOs and head for telephone-number prices. This hasn't happened, perhaps because of the softening of the Ferrari market since 2016, or

are usually priced higher, and there are fewer of them, but the small-block cars are less nose-heavy so they're better to drive. The manual gearboxes are usually truck-like American four-speeds but you can find later cars with five-speed ZF units.'

Road test opinion of the era admired the Grifo's potency but declared the handling a notch below Ferrari levels, while cockpit ergonomics also show up the car's origins as a low-volume marque. But neither matters so much when judging the car as a classic rather than a brand-new offering, says Brian.

'What are the other options between £400k and £500k? DB Astons, a Ferrari Daytona, an AC 428? I honestly think this is the best-looking of the lot. You could park it next to anything and make people go "wow". There were only 413 of them built in the first place and quite a few wound up in America - they'll always turn heads and will always be special.'



Photo: TIM SCOTT

perhaps because of the ever-more spectacular and powerful new front-engined Ferraris that have put its 661bhp in the shade.

Justin adds, 'The 599 GTB on which it's based is languishing between £60k and £120k, which doesn't help. That's because the differences between them are mostly under the skin - they might be small changes, but they had a huge effect.' The GTO's engine is unique thanks to improved gas flow, friction-reducing measures and a different crankshaft. Ultimately, though, it's the limited edition status of just 599 built, the hyper-focused performance and that badge that will give it a long life as a collector's item.

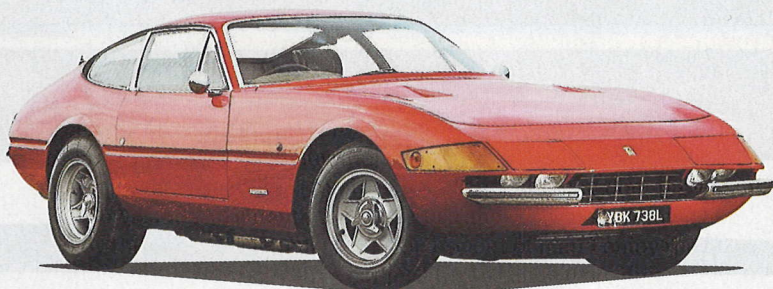
'Ferrari put the GTO badge on it - that means something,' says Justin. 'I think it looks good value in the high four hundred thousands.'



✓ Ferrari 365 GTB/4 Daytona

TIPPED BY: NICK WHALE

Nick Whale asks, 'How often can you look at one of the truly iconic Ferraris and say "that looks like value"?' And he has a point. In what now seem like the heady days of 2015 it was on its way to becoming



the next million-pound classic. It seemed to have the fame and the name to get there. But it missed that bus and instead settled either side of the half-million mark - though not before quite a few owners had committed to witheringly expensive restorations.

'Another reason they look so tempting now is that there are quite a lot of very good cars out there, which wasn't always the case. If you find one between £400k and £450k in the traditionally popular colours - red, black, maybe blue - and you can see that someone else has really spent the money on it, it's a tempting prospect. I doubt we'll see them rise through £500k in the near future but longer term, who knows? There's nothing else you can get for the money that's quite so special.' Nick would encourage suitors to focus on cars with a good provenance and some evidence of regular use and servicing. 'To own and run a Daytona, to actually get some use out of it and enjoy the experience... that's what you're aiming at. You can live the dream.'

< Aston Martin DB4

TIPPED BY: JAMES SZKILER

Four of our six experts mentioned the DB4 in this price category, but the man who got in there first - and the man with the most recent experience of the model - is James Szkiler.

'I had one at the business last year and did around 1000 miles over the course of a few months. I think it's the best to drive of all the DB Astons, if it's been well restored and well set-up. I loved everything about it; the sound, the performance, even the ride quality was good. And it's just as pretty as a DB5... maybe more so?'

The DB5 comparison comes up repeatedly. Felix Archer is also a big fan of the model and pointed out some recent market history.

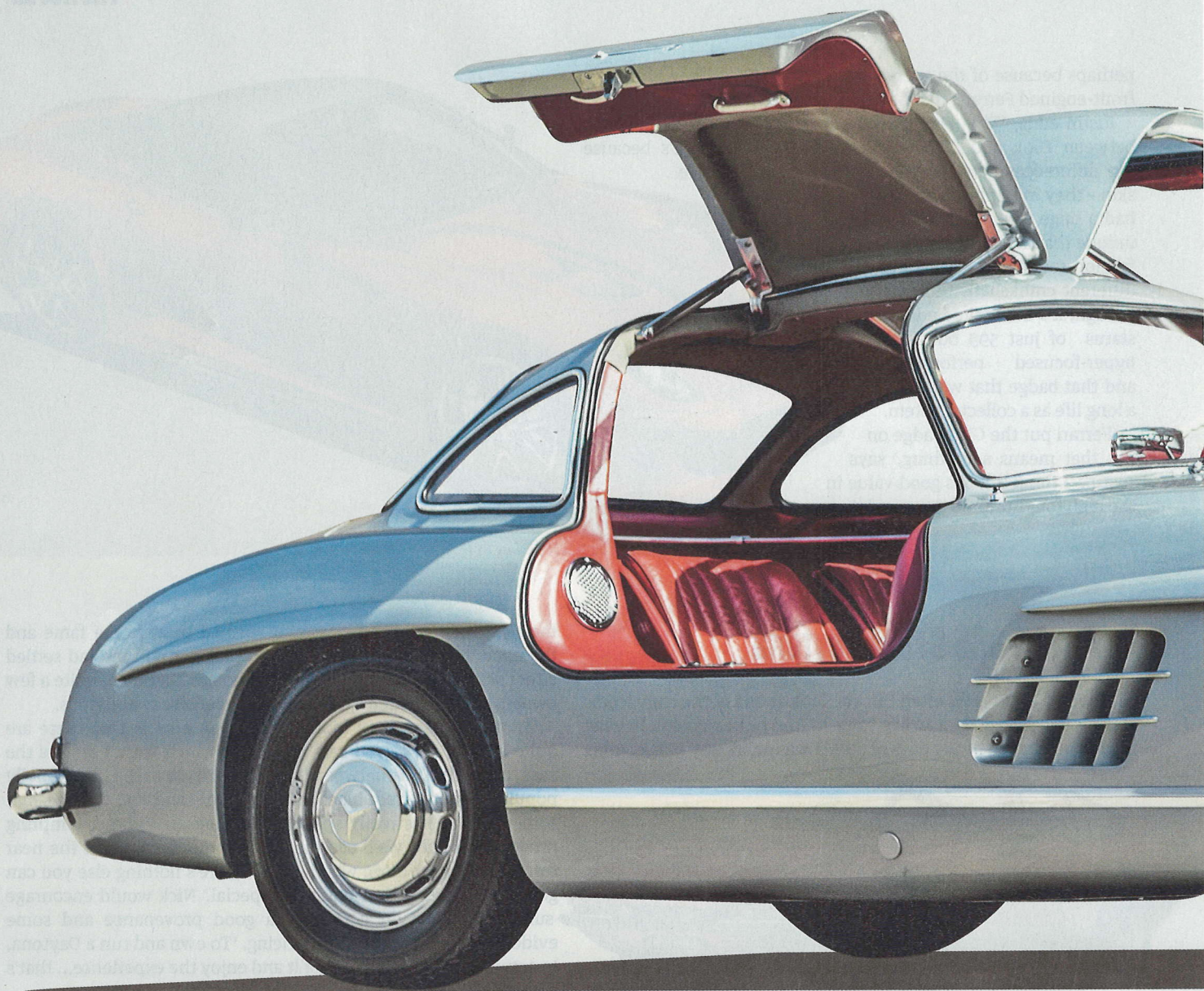
'It hasn't taken a slump like the DB5 and some other high-profile classic cars around the half-million mark. In fact, the values have come much closer together which tells you the appeal of the DB4 is being more widely appreciated, and it means that's the one to buy - especially while you can still find decent cars down at £300k-£350k.'

But which one to choose? There are many differences over the five series, though the most significant is Vantage versus non-Vantage. It seems a lot of fuss (and money) for an extra 26bhp, yet you'd struggle to find any Vantage, and especially a Series 5 with the DB5-style nose, below our £500k mark. James has a solution.

'There are plenty of cars with upgrades, like the 4.2 conversion from RS Williams, that aren't frowned on at all - the market loves them, actually. So find something that's been subtly improved during a quality restoration without paying top whack for an original Vantage.'

Felix Archer agrees, pointing out the huge premium for the scarce left-hand-drive cars - so continental buyers are fresh out of luck on this occasion.





£500,000+

> Mercedes 300SL Gullwing & Roadster

TIPPED BY: JAMES SZKILER

Though praised most by James Szkiler, the 300SL was a popular choice amongst several of our experts. It seems to be a model - or rather, two models - always destined for the top of the tree.

James explains, 'I can't think of anything better around the £1m mark. I wouldn't be too picky between a Gullwing and a Roadster; the Gullwing is the icon, the most famous model thanks to those doors and being more directly related to the racing ancestors, but the Roadster is nicer to drive and easier to enjoy. In other words I think demand for both is going to stay equally strong.'

Unlike most coupé and roadster versions of the same car, the closed and open 300SLs did not co-exist - the roadster replaced the Gullwing in 1957. The coupé owed its spaceframe construction methods to the W194 racing car that won Le Mans and the Carrera

Panamericana, though most of the driveline and running gear was derived from the 300 saloon. Mercedes, probably surprised to shift 1400 of them - most in America - offered the Roadster with winding windows (not possible in the Gullwing's doors), better brakes and less alarming high-speed handling, selling a further 1858.

James adds, 'The top end of the Ferrari market is an unpredictable place to be at the moment, and a Mercedes 300SL keeps you out of that. The market is driven by America and Germany and the fanbase for the model is huge - that's what's got it to £1m and that's what will keep it there.'

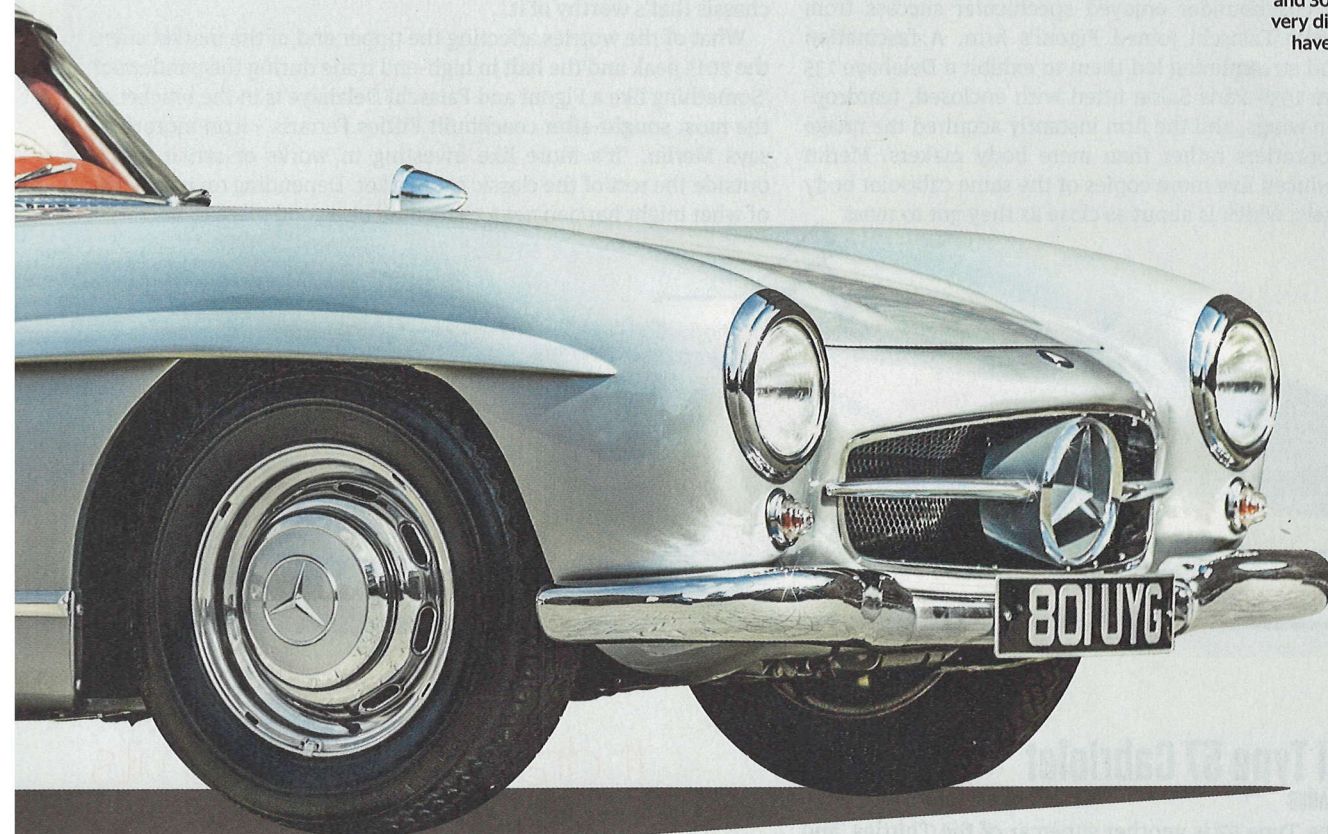
It's hard to disagree; even barn-find examples have hit seven figures, though the restoration challenge posed by a rough Gullwing is immense and should not be underestimated.

James concludes, 'It's a blue-chip, timeless classic and a magnificent car. It's hugely expensive but it's worth it!'



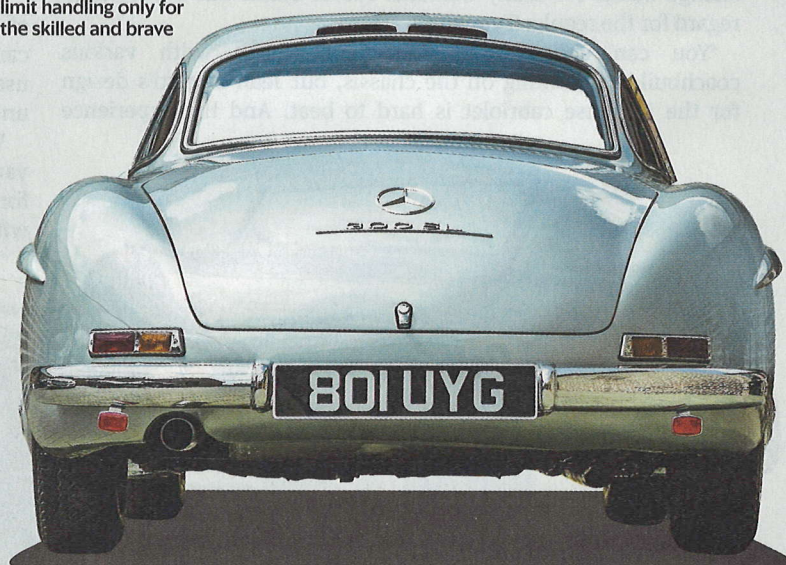
'The fanbase for the model is huge. That's what's got it to £1m and that's what will keep it there'

The Mercedes Gullwing and 300SL Roadster are very different cars; both have their own merits



Flip-down steering wheel aids access to this high-silled Mercedes icon

Swing-axle rear suspension makes on-limit handling only for the skilled and brave



£500,000+

✓ Delahaye 135 Figoni & Falaschi

TIPPED BY: MERLIN MCCORMACK

'I think these are the most beautiful cars ever made,' says Merlin. 'There are hardly any of them - fewer than 20 - and of those, only a handful are in the most desirable Teardrop style.'

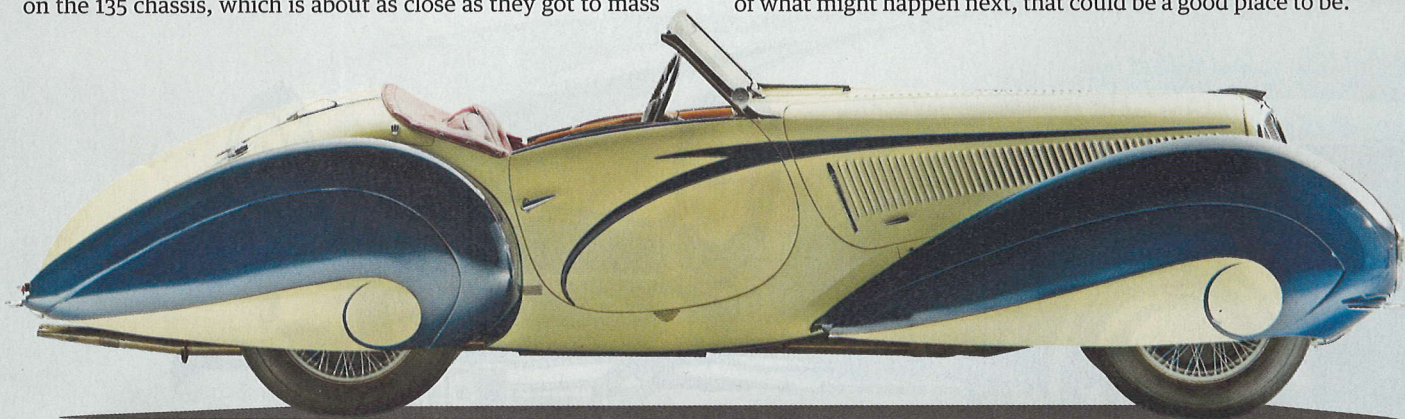
The Parisian coachbuilder enjoyed spectacular success from 1935 when Ovidio Falaschi joined Figoni's firm. A fascination with aircraft and streamlining led them to exhibit a Delahaye 135 drophead at the 1936 Paris Salon fitted with enclosed, teardrop-shaped pontoon wings, and the firm instantly acquired the image of motoring couturiers rather than mere body makers. Merlin says, 'They produced five more copies of the same cabriolet body on the 135 chassis, which is about as close as they got to mass

production, while all the others were one-offs. Placing a value on any of them is hard because they change hands pretty rarely.'

A 1938 135 MS coupé made just less than a \$1m in 2018, but the open cars are much more highly prized: a Court Competition roadster, the fastest 135 variant, sold for \$6.6m back in 2014 and that Paris Salon car is apparently now for sale in California, after a 100-point restoration. The asking price? \$15m.

Merlin adds, 'Part of the 135's credibility is that it was always a fast, capable car with a racing pedigree. No matter how elegant it is, coachwork like this doesn't fetch crazy prices unless it's on a chassis that's worthy of it.'

What of the worries affecting the upper end of the market since the 2015 peak and the halt in high-end trade during the pandemic? 'Something like a Figoni and Falaschi Delahaye is in the bracket of the most sought-after coachbuilt Fifties Ferraris - icon motoring,' says Merlin. 'It's more like investing in works of art; it exists outside the rest of the classic car market. Depending on your view of what might happen next, that could be a good place to be.'



✓ Bugatti Type 57 Cabriolet

TIPPED BY: JUSTIN BANKS

Justin says, 'The Type 57 is another supercar of the Thirties, and one that draws you in with its looks. But it's actually the amazing engineering that gets you in the end.'

A quick guide to the Type 57 - the majority are unsupercharged 3.3-litre dohc straight-eights, but there is also the blown 57C and the low, short-wheelbase 57S and SC (the latter once again supercharged) which all wear glamorous two-seat coachwork and change hands for many millions. Justin Banks has a very high regard for the regular Type 57.

'You can choose your looks, of course, with various coachbuilders working on the chassis, but Jean Bugatti's design for the in-house cabriolet is hard to beat. And the experience

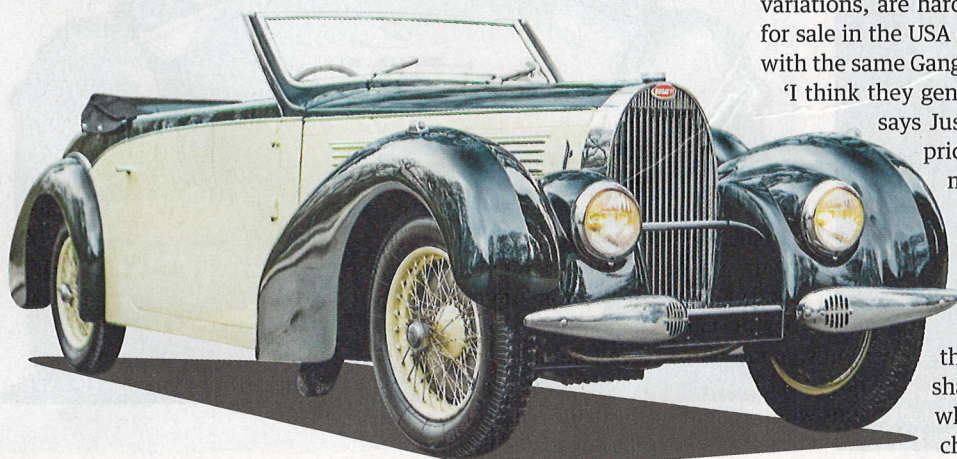
'It draws you in with its looks. But it's actually the amazing engineering that gets you in the end'

of actually driving one is incredible... it's almost a modern car experience. They're not heavy, they're smooth, quiet, useable, capable and welcome absolutely anywhere. It's hard to understand how good they feel until you try one for yourself.'

Values, as with all expensive pre-war cars with numerous body variations, are hard to pick - there's a Gangloff-bodied 57 cabriolet for sale in the USA currently at \$895,000, and a supercharged 57C with the same Gangloff 'Stelvio' body for sale in the UK at £1.4m.

'I think they generally cost less than they did three years ago,' says Justin. 'The Bugatti name may have inflated the prices a little but they still find a value higher than most cars of the era because they are so good to drive, and almost all of them are beautiful too.'

A Type 57 SC Coupé Atlantic changed hands for a reputed \$40m in 2010, though even the more accessible Type 57s are highly celebrated - amongst other Bugattis, only the Type 35, 51 and Royale could put a 57 in the shade. Justin says they're nice cars to sell, too - when you put yours on the market, how much choice will buyers have?



✓ Porsche 911/993 GT2

TIPPED BY: FELIX ARCHER

Felix says, '993 GTs are massively collectible. The performance is ludicrous, there are several different variants but very low numbers all together, there are many special-order cars with interesting specification and they have a key place in Porsche's utter dominance of GT racing in the Nineties, because they were built to meet homologation requirements for the GT2 class. Add to this that they were the first of a very famous line - the 911 GT2 - and the last generation of air-cooled 911s. They are seriously special and I'd rather have one than a Ferrari F40.'

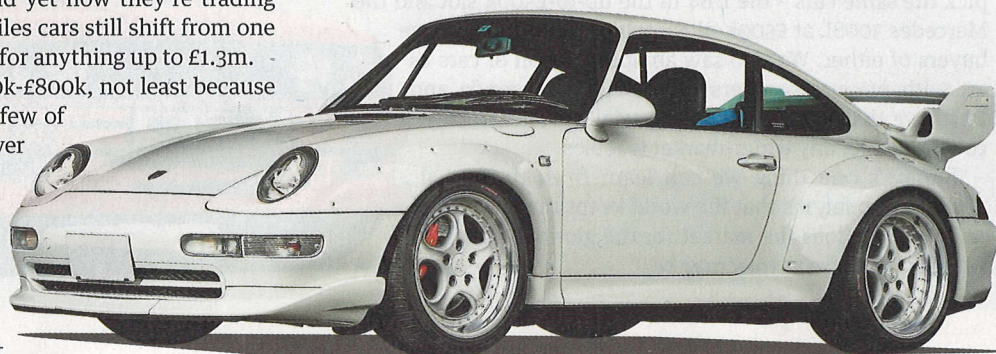
If that's not a sufficiently striking statement, try this one - in 2016, one of them sold for £1.85m, and yet now they're trading from £700k. Mind you, the few zero-miles cars still shift from one air-conditioned storage pod to another for anything up to £1.3m.

Felix says, 'They're rock-solid at £700k-£800k, not least because only 193 road cars were built and very few of those in right-hand drive, so there's never much choice if you're trying to buy one.'

The car looks almost thuggish, with huge flared wheelarches held on with allen-headed screws that are not just visible, but a styling feature. The enormous and doubtless drag-inducing rear wing doesn't prevent

the car reaching the magic 300kmh (186mph), and the 0-100mph sprint comes up in 8.7 seconds, all thanks to a twin-turbo, 3.6-litre version of the 993's flat six, making between 424bhp and 444bhp, depending on which variant you find. Choice may be limited, but what should be on your buyers' checklist?

'Impeccable history,' says Felix. 'Know who owned it from the factory to the present day - ideally it'll be a just a few proper enthusiasts. Don't wait for an unused static exhibit, buy one that's 100% fit and ready to go. And going back to my previous comparison, there were 1315 F40s produced, so when it came time to sell the car on, I'd still rather have the 993 GT2. For committed Porsche fans, it's one of the most sought-after models the company ever made, and will remain so.'



✓ Bentley R-type Continental

TIPPED BY: BRIAN PAGE

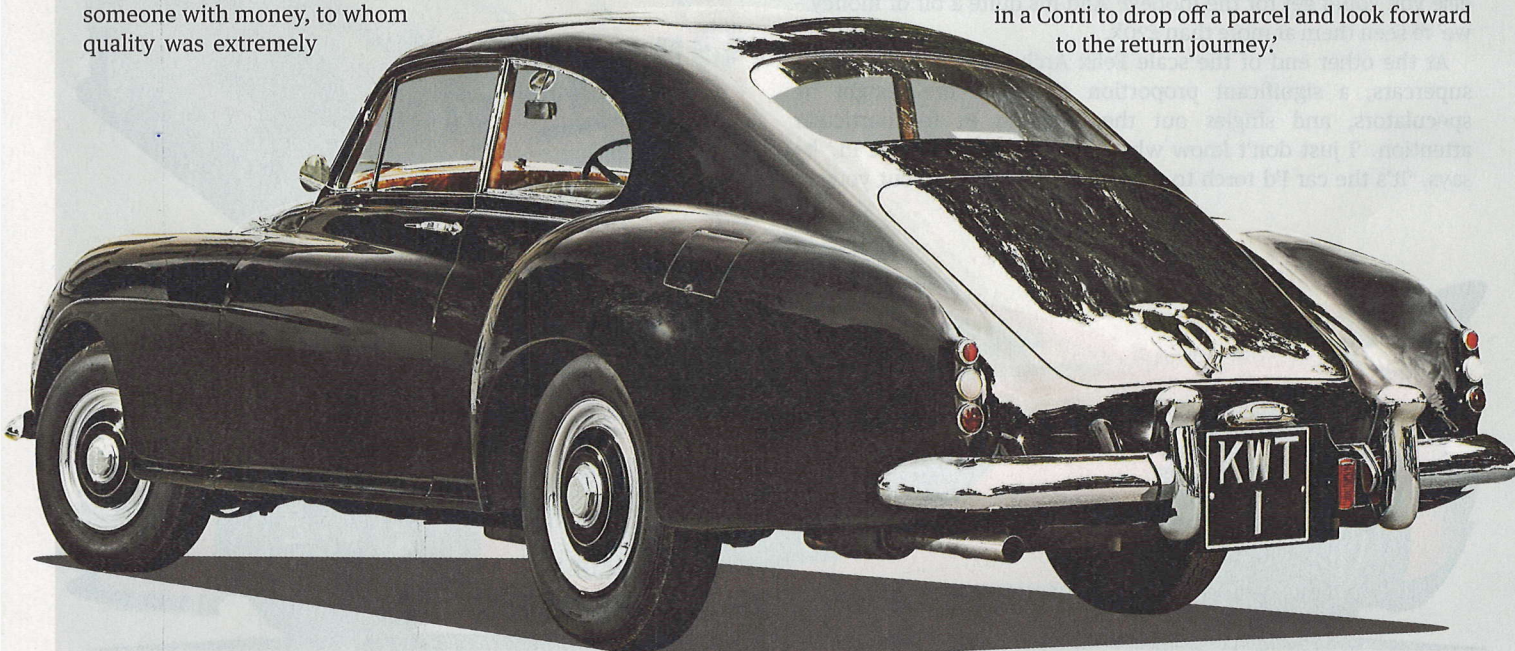
'Bentley R-type Continentals have slipped a little, back from that automatic £1 million that every example seemed to be asking a couple of years back,' says Brian Page. 'It's a readjustment but they won't get much closer to the less-expensive S1 Continental, so I think this is a safe selection right now.'

Brian reckons the spread in values is now roughly £650k to £900k, with the majority around the £800k to £850k mark. He explains, 'It's all about an individual car's story. It's about more than just the condition. Has it got a complete history involving interesting people, with the car forming part of their life and times? They were created by a Britain deep in austerity and they made a huge statement about the owner - someone with money, to whom quality was extremely

important. Someone who was traditional, but with a bit of flair - and 65 years later, it still says all that today.'

Just 207 R-type Continentals were built between 1952 and 1955, all with light-aluminium bodies by HJ Mulliner. They're split between 4.7-litre cars and later 4.9-litre examples that can hit 120mph in manual form. Automatics are available too and though not quite as valued, have their own following for the serene progress they allow. Left-hand-drive cars often had a column-shift for the manual change, which is less fancied.

Brian summarises, 'These cars have been admired for so long they're less affected by any fashions in the market. If you have to put one on sale, you can depend on having ten people who want to buy it. And it's understandable - which of the other real icons of that time can be enjoyed like this? Do 50 miles in a Gullwing and you climb out with lumbago. You could drive to Edinburgh in a Conti to drop off a parcel and look forward to the return journey.'



Several times this year we've heard people say 'prices have softened,' or 'they've dropped back from a peak,' with reference to very well-known marques and models that investors have targeted in the past. These cars - let's name the Daytona, the 246 Dino, a couple of Porsches, the Audi Quattro, the XK120 and the Bentley R-type Continental - will never be short of fans and are sure to delight anyone who drives one, but they're in our selection now because this drop has made them look better value compared with rivals that have held their prices. The market is arguably better balanced and more realistic than it has been for a while.

Our experts have identified a few common themes. At the sub-£100k end of things, Eighties performance icons still have room for growth, be they unloved Porsches, undervalued Mercedes or the much more famous Quattro and BMW E30 M3. At the other end of the market, we had several experts pick the same cars - the DB4 in the up-to-£500k slot and the Mercedes 300SL at £500k-plus - which should encourage buyers of either. We also saw an appreciation of cars as art with pre-war wonders from Bugatti, Lagonda and Delahaye that exist on such a special plane that they could sail over any wider-market wobbles.

If there's one thing we can learn from the global pandemic so far, it's that the world keeps turning - and so, it seems, does the market for the glorious old cars we adore, diverse as they may be.

The market is more realistic than it has been for a while'

Even at several times its price new, the M3 could still appreciate



...and four to avoid

If there's a theme, it's to do with generational change. Both Nick Whale and Justin Banks would rather not have to market many pre-war cars, with Nick making exceptions for 'something special', a description that would cover all four of the glamorous marques with dashing coachwork featured in this year's Hot 30.

Justin is more specific, saying that even with a grand name attached, some of the more pedestrian offerings from the Twenties and Thirties are very hard to shift. 'I'd steer clear of unattractive pre-war saloons, for example boring Rolls-Royce 20/25 D-back limousines that are only wanted for weddings. They're not cheap to look after, they're slow and there are always too many of them on the market at any one time.'

Brian Page is puzzled by the sums asked for small Citroëns, particularly the Mehari. 'It's like a sewing machine motor trapped in a washing machine body... what's it got going for it? Build quality? There is none. Not much performance either. Think what else you could get for the money!' And it's quite a bit of money - we've seen them at more than £20k.

At the other end of the scale Felix Archer is wary of modern supercars, a significant proportion of which are bought by speculators, and singles out the McLaren P1 for particular attention. 'I just don't know where the market is for the P1,' he says. 'It's the car I'd torch to get out of!' He's joking, but you get

the point. With asking prices between £1m and £1.6m, and twice that for a GTR, a miscalculation could have scary results.

It's back down to Earth for James Szkiler who is deeply scarred by childhood memories, and from what he says, he may not be alone. 'In 29 years we've never been asked for an Austin Maxi 1750. And maybe I don't like them because my mother picked me up from school in one in the late Eighties and I struggled to live it down... a beige 1750 HL. I was so relieved when Dad swapped it for a Triumph Dolomite Sprint!'

For what a Mehari costs, you can do so much better says Page



Archer says the McLaren P1 is like Kryptonite to a speculator

