

Poetry in motion..  
the 250 GTO



## HIGH-END HORSE TRADING

AN upcoming Ferrari sale could become the world's most valuable car deal ever, when RM Auctions offer a 1963 Ferrari 250 GTO by private treaty.

One of only 36 made - with a properly documented racing history - bids for it could

go ballistic, given the current strong market for antique autos.

The last GTO sold reputedly changed hands for \$30million.

This one could make more. Timing, as they say, is everything.

Meanwhile, back in the world of normal auctions...



LOOKS like the used market's picked up, with some very firm prices at British Car Auctions in the last week. Unsurprisingly, 4x4s have risen nearly 6%, while sub-1.6 hatches are also up, and even values of workaday Mondeos and Vectras are looking better than they have for a while. Mind you, the prices below pale into insignificance compared to what you'd get from scrappage.

- 04 Daewoo Matiz 1.0 SE+ 29,000..... £1,200
- 03 Ford Ka 1.3 59,000..... £1,100
- 03 MG TF 1.6 50,000..... £1,800
- 04 Renault Clio 1.2 Authentique 61,000.. £1,675
- 05 Vauxhall Agila 1.0 Expression 37,000.. £1,250
- 03 Vauxhall Astra 1.6 LS 50,000..... £1,775

## Why enchanting EV is the envy of everyone..

AFTER two months with my electric Mitsubishi i MiEV, I'm smitten. Surprisingly quick, utterly silent and a hoot to drive, I'm getting around 60 miles per charge even in cold weather. It's made a massive difference to my petrol bills and everybody who sees it wants a ride.

But I'm amazed that people don't realise that you just plug an EV into a normal wall socket - you don't need a special charger.

The only downside is that I use too much charge racing Mini Coopers (yes it is that brisk), and I haven't had my electric bill yet...



Just plug 'n' play

# Quentin



JOHN Burgess' son-in-law, who lives in Coventry, recently bought an 02 Ford Galaxy with 99,000 miles from a garage in Chesterfield. The car was covered by a one-month warranty, but after a week the turbo stopped working. The garage has agreed to fix it - should they reimburse travelling costs? What about a courtesy car? Will the warranty cover the whole repair?

QUENTIN SAYS: LOTS of morals here. Don't buy a

used car from a dealer 100 miles away. Don't pay retail money for a car that's done 100,000 - you might as well go to an auction. Don't accept less than a 12-month warranty, and be sure to read all the small print. In this case it's unlikely you'll

be covered for travelling expenses, and you'll probably only get car hire after 7 days, and then at £50 a day. Warranties are a very complicated area - sadly you don't always get what you pay for.



# A MENTAL

WHO'D DRIVE IT  
Restrained rebels

ONLY one word describes Merc's E63 AMG ubersaloon - sublime.

More engaging than a BMW M5 or Jag XFR, it's hysterically fast, can even return 22mpg and is one of the best-handling cars I know.

The slightest prod on the accelerator summons up unfeasible heave and if you really mash the pedal, it delivers supercar-smashing shove. The switchable gearbox and air suspension provide amazing finesse and pliancy and getting the rear end to break away requires the fear threshold of a fool.

The interior detailing is beautiful, with switches that wouldn't look out of place in a jeweller's window and even the

radio has a gorgeous rotary tuning facility like a 60s Radiomobile.

The 6.2-litre 525bhp V8 is good for 60 in 4.5 seconds and delimited will thunder all the way to 175. There's also been a heroic return to adamantine build quality.

MB have had their quality issues in the past, but Merc's mental muscle car is one of the best-built Benzes to come out of Stuttgart.

At £70k it's a big shout, but the E63 is categorically the finest performance saloon money can buy. A hooligan in cashmere.

# BIG BENZ RIN

TECH FILE

ENGINE: 6208CC V8  
POWER: 525BHP  
0-60: 4.5 SEC  
MAX: 155MPH (LIMITED)  
PRICE: £71,355



Elegant exterior belies the Benz's dark side

# Willson

**BRITAIN'S  
NO.1 MOTORING  
WRITER**



Got a problem?  
Email me at  
willson@sunday  
mirror.co.uk



**Q** COULD you tell me the name of the gadget you mentioned that improves fuel economy? I have a Vectra 1.9 Diesel. - *Anthony Chapman, Luton*

**A** YOU need a Diesel Power Tuning module (right). This changes your engine management settings to give you more torque and higher mpg.

I've used them on several motors and they increase economy by around five miles to every



gallon. Cost is around £200, which can take a fair time to recoup. More at [dieselpowertuning.co.uk](http://dieselpowertuning.co.uk)

**Q** I AM a plumber and have been looking at a Mitsubishi L200 or Toyota Hilux to carry all my kit, with a budget of around £5,000.

The ones I have looked at on eBay or in the classifieds are overpriced, galactic-mile rust-buckets. What about an online auction of

Japanese imports? - *Keith Duncan, South London*

**A** PERSONALLY I'd stay away from Japanese imports, and I'd never use an online Japanese auction. It's really hard to verify the mileage or service history, and almost impossible to talk to previous owners.

Paying a bit more for a UK-supplied car with history and a clear ownership chain is worth it in the long run.



Always go for a UK-supplied L200

# MERC INGS IN REAL QUALITY



The electric seats massage, heat, cool and squeeze



212 MBC



Runaway.. it's out of control

## THEIR THROTTLE'S GONE

**CAN'T** help thinking the Toyota Throttlegate hysteria is out of control. I don't know of any cases of runaway cars in the UK. And if your throttle pedal is slow to return (the sign that there's a problem), you'd notice it in normal driving. Americans don't

seem to understand that if you simply put your car in neutral, it won't run away with you. So whatever you do, don't panic. Recall notices are being sent out, parts will be in the UK by Wednesday and Toyota reckon they'll have all 180,000 UK cars fixed in

eight weeks. If you get a recall notice, get your car modified - you won't be covered by your insurance if you don't. Toyota are very good at making the world's most reliable cars, but when it comes to PR, this palaver proves they've got an awful lot to learn.



Lovely it isn't..

## A little bit of insanity

THE world's cheapest car just got absurdly expensive. An Indian firm has given the Tata Nano a makeover for Bolly billionaires. The Nano DG490 gets gullwing doors, fat rubber, 7-speed Tiptronic and carbon fibre panels, and is claimed to be good for 140.

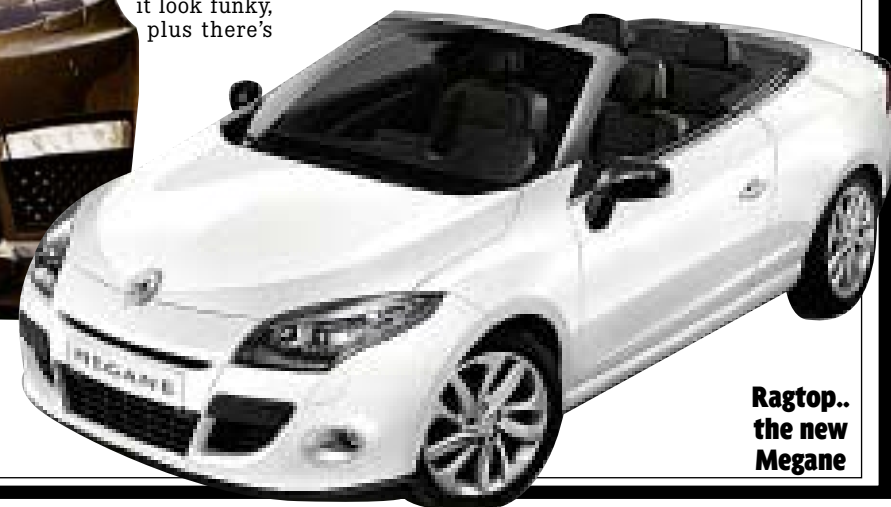
It's a serious production reality, but the price is insane - £133,000, or the same money as a Lamborghini Gallardo or 10 Ford Focuses. Yowch.

## ONE FOR THE SUMMER

RENAULT'S new Megane Coupe Cabriolet surfaced this week. A huge folding dark glass roof makes it look funky, plus there's

six-speed dual-clutch transmission, three diesel and two petrol engines, decent back seats and a price tag of around £20k when it goes on sale in June. Aimed

squarely at the massively successful Peugeot 308CC, it's a vast improvement on the old model and should sell well, when (if) the yellow orb re-appears.



Ragtop.. the new Megane