



Baby you can drive my Merc

ALL YOU NEED IS CASH

THE old car market is still bullish, but this is bonkers. A 1965 Mercedes 230SL first owned by John Lennon has surfaced. A right-hook auto specially ordered in a light blue and grey colour combo, it was bought by the Beatle in 1965 before he'd even got a driving licence. It's mint and lovely with exceptional pedigree, but could it possibly be worth £325,000? That's six times the normal market price for a Pagoda-roof SL. Imagine.



At your service

PAUL Dixon from Humberside confesses that he is torn between buying a brand new car or one which has been previously owned. As it turns out, his neighbour happens to be a car dealer. He apparently says that running used cars these days is actually more expensive than buying new, because of the high cost of servicing and MOT repairs. Is he right or is he just trying to sell Paul a new car?

QUENTIN SAYS: He's right. Running a used car now costs 24% more than a new one, if you factor in tyres, batteries, exhausts, MOT, depreciation and occasional repairs. You would be better to buy a discounted or pre-registered new car with a three-year manufacturer's warranty, which will mean you won't have to shell out for repairs for quite a while. A new motor is also likely to be more economical.



More twists and turns in the Throttlegate troubles



\$1million to make it stop

HARD to keep up with the circumlocutions of Toyota's Throttlegate saga. This week owners of "repaired" Toyotas are claiming they're still suffering unintended acceleration. In a truly bizarre twist, American automag Edmunds is offering a \$1 million prize to anybody who can definitively resolve Toyota's embarrassing malady.

To cap it all, a US senator has less than helpfully suggested banning all Japanese car imports. It ain't over yet.



The real thrill of backpacking

FANCY the ultimate in personal mobility? Well, you can now buy your very own jetpack. You don't even need a pilot's licence.

New Zealand-based Martin Aircraft Company uses a 2.0-litre V4 two-stroke engine to create 600lb of thrust that can carry you 32 miles. Guaranteed to break the ice at parties. Gridlock? From 8,000 feet, who cares....

POCKET R

HAIL BMW'S BESPOKE BRUISER



Light the blue touch paper and retreat. Fast



Rear drive V8 and the King Kong of spoilers

TECH FILE

ENGINE: 3999CC V8
POWER: 480BHP
0-60: 3.2sec
MAX: 195MPH
PRICE: £270,000
IN A WORD: Z IS 4 ZOOM

Willson

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



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

Play naughty numbers game

There are some saucy plates coming up at the DVLA's next sale at the end of the month.

ASK 4IT	reserved at £900
EAS 1Y	£700
7 BED	£1,900
MR10VER	£1,000

More plates available at www.dvla.registrations.direct.gov.uk



Is bling the thing?



Q I AM thinking of buying a Chrysler 300C for around £12,000. There seems to be a lot on the market, some with very low mileages. Is there a reason for this? - *Dom Kuzniar, by email*

A THE 300C looks good, but it doesn't drive that well and the interior is pants. There are too many for sale because

they're big, brassy and brash. Your money would be much safer in a Merc, BMW or Jag XJ Diesel.

Q I'VE been flying to France for the past few years, but I now want to go back to driving. Are sat navs with built-in speed camera detectors still illegal? - *Keith, by email*

A I DO a couple of thousand miles every

year in France and the French cops are now out in force, targeting Brits for speeding.

Technically, sat navs with speed camera detection software are illegal, but most French cops are lazy, uninformed and spend the whole afternoon at lunch. You'd have to be enormously unlucky to get busted.

ROCKET

WHO'D DRIVE IT
Weekend racers

IN A week when the Geneva show was full of daft concepts that'll never be made, BMW made news by offering a straight-off-the-showroom-carpet race car.

This unprecedented consumer motorsport programme is aimed at virtually anybody who fancies their own racing team.

What's more, the track-ready and hyper-competitive Z4 GT3 costs a fraction of the price it would take to build one from scratch to BMW's exacting standards.

£270,000 is all it takes to get behind the

wheel of this 480-horse screamer, complete with high-spinning 4.0-litre V8 managed by a type-408 ECU and Power400 control unit.

There's a six-speed sequential paddle gearbox, racing ABS, centre-peg alloys, monster front and rear air dams, and you can even have optional air conditioning.

Eligible for FIA GT3 European championships and 24-hour endurance races, it's likely to be able to knock on the door of 200mph (with the right gearing) and zoom to 60 in around three seconds flat.

And with a little bit of work, you might even be able to get it street legal, making the Z4 GT3 the coolest ride ever.



That air-gulping front creates a massive downforce



The Lumenco Smera... lean

COMPELLING CONCEPT

GENEVA was buzzing with electrification. Everything from Ferrari's new F599-based hybrid concept to Tata's Nano EV. Most

interesting of all was the lumpily-named Lumenco Smera concept, an in-line two-seater that leans on corners. Powered by a 15kW

electric motor that produces a hulking 737lb/ft of torque, the 539kg poppet has the power-to-weight ratio of a bullet fired from an AK47.



Tailpipe tickets

Ticked-off at the ticking-over rule

NORTH Lincolnshire Council is considering fining drivers £20 for running their engines while stationary. They're seriously asking police to enforce this lunacy (they really do have better things to do), and don't understand that you can actually produce more CO2 and use more petrol by switching your engine off and then restarting it. What next? Policemen at traffic lights with stopwatches? Councils. Don't you just love them?

FORM AN ORDERLY GQ

ALL change at Citroen. In a strange tie-up with GQ men's mag, they've rolled out a very pretty concept that makes you sigh

with admiration. GQ by Citroen is one of the horniest two-door coupes I've seen for years, with a plug-in hybrid powertrain good for 60 in four-and-a-half seconds, unbelievably low CO2 of 80g/km, an interior de-

signed by a Savile Row tailor and a silhouette that Aston Martin or Bentley would die for. I doubt if it will ever get made, but it does prove the French firm finally gets that people choose cars because they're sexy.



As beautiful as a blank cheque

COULD WE NOW BE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN?

BRITISH Car Auctions say the used market's flattened off from last year's peak. Cash-strapped buyers are mopping up sub-£3,000 metal, but a shortage of really nice stock could increase prices when things warm up a bit. Here's a basket of cars sold this week:

04 Ford Focus 1.4CL 78,000	£1,950	04 Jaguar X-Type 109,000	£2,300
03 Ford Ka 59,000	£1,125	03 Mini One 56,000	£3,700
04 Ford Mondeo 1.8LX 89,000	£2,000	03 Saab Aero Estate 70,000	£1,700