



BEST TO INVEST

LAST week I told you that values of antique Porsche 911s have hit the roof.

Well, here's the proof. A 1974 911 Carrera RS, once owned and driven by race ace James Hunt, is up for sale at a staggering £365,000.

One of only six right-hookers, it was given to Hunt as part of his pay package while he was driving for Lord Hesketh's F1 team. More at www.nickwhale.sportscarsdirect.co.uk



Quentin

KAREN Brookwell bought a new Renault Clio in July 2005. She was recently driving along a dual carriageway when the bonnet flew open, breaking the windscreen.

Her insurance company, Swift, insist that she has to pay two excesses, one for the windscreen (£65) and one for the damage to the bonnet (£250).

Karen thinks this is very unfair. What should she do?

QUENTIN SAYS: This is naughty. Swift



manufacturing fault, with over 1,000 cases documented. Renault wouldn't take responsibility, but instead wrote to owners asking them to have the bonnet catch checked.

BBC Watchdog ran the story in 2007, and one of Renault's PR people even resigned over the way customers were being treated.

Getting redress from Renault will be hard, but I would ask Swift to reconsider.

If they don't, change your insurer and have the bonnet catch checked.

Here's the Polo that can outrag a Bugatti Veyron



A VW Polo that's faster than a Bugatti Veyron? Surely not.

Demented East German tuner AME Racing has squeezed 1,032bhp from a turbocharged Mk I Polo 1.9 diesel, giving a completely crackers sixty sprint of 2.3 secs.

Redline is a screaming 9,000rpm, there's Audi TT all-wheel drive and, if you've got the nerves, it'll scamper all the way to 185.

Don't call us, we'll call you.

So the truth is finally out..my other car is a Juke



Daihatsu's naked ambition

THERE'S some brown stuff flying around over Nissan's naming of its new crossover, the Juke.

But it could be worse. Much worse. We all remember the Daihatsu Naked and the Nissan Cedric.

But there was also an Isuzu Bighorn, a Suzuki Every Joy Pop Turbo, a Subaru Brat, the Isuzu GIGA 20 Light Dump and, best of all, the Yamaha Pantryboy Supreme.

Think I'll stick with Juke.

The key to how to warm me up before you go-go

DON'T drive off with your car half defrosted and risk killing yourself.

If you've got two sets of keys, you can run it with one set in the ignition defrosting, and lock the door manually with the other key. Come back in ten minutes and it'll still be there, ice-free. Beats ending up in a ditch.

SUCH AN OLD

RANGE ROVER HAS MADE ME A HERO

WHO'D DRIVE IT
Believers in the best

WHILE others spin their wheels impotently, my Range Rover conquers all.

The Siberian cold snap has proved that the RR is indeed the King Kong of 4x4s.

No road or snowdrift has thwarted me, and for the past few days I've been playing Good Samaritan to friends, neighbours and broken-down drivers.

I've lost count of the cars I've pulled out of ditches, the frozen mums and kids struggling to school I've helped, the loads of firewood, bags of coal and Calor Gas canisters I've ferried and the innumerable trips to Tesco.

In fact over the past few days I've been in full-on philanthropist mode, but

only because of this car's incredibly safe and sure-footed abilities.

No surprise, then, that it's been voted Car of the Decade by Autocar magazine, gaining more votes than either the Bugatti Veyron, Nissan GT-R or Lotus Evora.

A titan of sophistication that's as refined as a Bentley but as rugged as a Land Rover, the RR's incredible omni-competence makes it very probably the best car in the world.

I'm on my fifth and can't imagine life without this prodigious workhorse that was designed and built in Britain.

But what you really need to know is that an 03-plate example of this most remarkable Car of the Decade could be yours for the very unremarkable price of £9,000.



Defender and Range Rover are the world's best 4x4s by far



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Florid fins...

Q I HAVE been left a DeSoto Firesweep in my cousin's will. It's still in a garage in California and I'm due to go out there at the end of the month to collect it. I have a partial photo and can see that it's not a soft top. Do they have a following? Is it valuable?

DONNA JONES, email

A WHAT a fabulous legacy, and it's worth a few quid. Designed by the legendary Virgil Exner and only made from '57 to '59, the

phenomenally finny Firesweep is rare and collectable, with its push-button auto transmission and swivelling driver's seat. Last year a restored minter sold for \$43,000, so I'd sell it in the US, where there's a bigger market. If yours is a genuine, unmolested low-mileage example, it could make upwards of \$25,000.

Q I'VE had some heart-stopping moments in the snow, but need to drive my car to get to work. What do you think of snow chains or studded tyres? If the winter weather we've been

having continues, I've got to do something.

GARY, Worcestershire

A YOU need Avon Ice Touring tyres. The Finns, Swedes and Germans swear by them. They give better traction on snow, ice and mud, and are pretty good on wet roads too. The only downside is their lower-than-normal speed-rating, so you can't really use them all year round, unless you're just pootling round town. At £50 a corner, they'll keep you safe without breaking the bank.

ICE GUY



SR1 showcases Peugeot's new direction

THE FRENCH LION KING

PEUGEOT fancy a bit of world domination. They want to be in the top tier of car-makers, so the Gallic lion is reinventing itself with the launch of 40 new models between now and 2012.

What's more, they're planning to make their BB1 electric urban quad, and intend to capitalise on their

scooter and bicycle business by offering a special credit card that lets you rent Peugeot products like topping up your phone.

In a brassy market assault, they've also unveiled special EHDi diesel engines that will be 15 per cent more economical in town, a 200 horsepower diesel that's 35

per cent better on fuel and a range of ultra-thrifty three-pot engines, not forgetting the 2,000 confirmed orders for their new iOn electric toddler. To prove they're serious, they showed off their SR1 concept roadster in Paris for the first time. It was there, and trust me, it looks good enough to eat.



Don't believe council twaddle

Gritload of lies

THERE'S been a shocking cover-up with road gritting and salt. Don't believe council twaddle about the extremity of our recent weather. The Local Government Association and the Department for Transport were warned by the AA as early as November that they didn't have enough stockpiles of salt and grit.

POWER OF GREEN-LAND

ANOTHER electric car joins the ranks of eco hopefuls.

Built in partnership with Danish electric supercar-maker Lynx, the Geely Nanoq (which means polar bear in

Greenland-speak) has five seats, a claimed 125-mile range and a top speed of 81mph, making it a serious rival to Mitsubishi's i MiEV.

European sales kick off this spring, but there's no

word on the all-important price yet.

One thing's for sure - the more EVs there are, the more likely it is that prices of this new kind of motor will come down to much more sensible levels.



Touchy Geely