

## Number is up now for the big guys

LOOKS like the monopoly of the big number-plate dealers could soon be broken, with a new online site for sellers and buyers of cherished numbers. Smashing-plates.com is the first posh plate classified website, where sellers can advertise at £20, or place a wanted ad for a tenner. There's also a valuation service, plus lots of stuff on completing DVLA paperwork.



Travolta's T-Bird

## BIG BIRD'S FLIGHT OF FANCY

WE like John Travolta. But 30 grand for his old Thunderbird is a bit strong, especially since it's not even an old 'un.

This 2002 retro T-Bird was bought new by the actor, has done just 9,800 miles and comes

with a signed dashboard, paperwork and pics of Travolta and the car.

Pulp Fiction may have been a great film, but a 10 grand price premium seems all the money to me.

# Quentin

At your service

DON from Huddersfield is looking for a reliable family hatch, but can only raise £1,250. It needs to be a five-door, easy to fix, cheap to mend and insure, be OK on motorways and do at least 35mpg. What do you recommend?

QUENTIN SAYS: You can now buy a Ford Focus for your budget. They're ubiquitous, simple and good to drive. Go for a 1.8 Zetec with fewer than 70k miles, insist on service history and recent cambelt change. Ghia models are worth seeking out. Your money should buy you a 99T with 60k from a private owner.



## A KIA 7 YEAR WARRANTY.

## IT'S LIKE HAVING A BEST FRIEND WHO'S A MECHANIC.

Step inside a new Kia Venga and you'll experience an overwhelming sense of reassurance. That's because every new Kia now comes with a 7 year full manufacturer's warranty. So whatever car you choose from the Kia range you'll be guaranteed 7 years of enjoyable, worry-free motoring. For more information on the 7 year warranty talk to your local dealer or visit [www.kia.co.uk](http://www.kia.co.uk).



Because a longer warranty is a better warranty

The KIA 7 year warranty



[www.kia.co.uk](http://www.kia.co.uk)

FUEL CONSUMPTION FIGURES IN MPG (L/100KM) FOR THE KIA VENGA ARE: URBAN: 31.4 (9.0) - 54.3 (5.2) EXTRA URBAN: 48.7 (5.8) - 70.6 (4.0) COMBINED: 40.4 (7.0) - 62.8 (4.5). CO<sub>2</sub> EMISSIONS ARE 164 - 117g/km. 7 Year/100,000 mile warranty. Visit [www.kia.co.uk](http://www.kia.co.uk) or see your local dealer for full warranty terms and conditions.

# S-CLA

WHO'D DRIVE IT  
Clued-up connoisseurs

CAN'T believe how cheap the S-Class Merc has become. An eight-year-old S320 with 60k could be yours for an astonishing £5k. Still cool and imposing, there are plenty of mint one-owner cars around with full dealer history and huge spec.

I looked at one last week on an 02-plate with keyless go, sat nav, Tiptronic, rear electric seats, TV and parking sensors for a risible £5,300. Unmarked and driving like new, I was flabbergasted at the enormous value on offer. Get a diesel and it'll do 35mpg, the S500 is super-smooth, and the bad boy S55 will rocket you all the way to 160.

A good independent Merc specialist will charge £250 for a 320 petrol service, and there are lots of places to get discount parts from. Above all, the W220 Benz still radiates a halo of elegance.

Trust me, these cars are among the best luxury motors ever built. And all for the price of a three-year-old Vectra. I know which one I'd rather drive.

TECH FILE

Engine 3199cc six-cylinder  
Power 217bhp  
0-60 7.9 secs  
Max 149mph  
In a word Bomb-proof bargain



## There really is trouble in paradise...

A TWENTY-five grand premium to jump the three-year waiting-list for the new Ferrari 458 Italia might seem a touch extravagant in these straitened times, but I can remember when the first 360 Spiders were changing hands in the late 90s for £70k over list. All of which means even the top-drawer supercar market is hurting too.



458 premiums feeling the pinch

# Willson

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



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

**HELP!**  
You ask  
me



C1, love one

**Q** WE need a car that will do 60mpg with £35 road tax, for £3,000. Is there anything for us? - *Peter & Mary, by email*

**A** YOU'RE in luck. At 108g/km CO2, the Citroën C1 1.0 Vibe qualifies for £35 VED and should return high 50s mpg. And if you look hard, you might find a reasonable mileage

55-plater within your price range. Nice little driver, too.

**Q** IN my 35 years of driving I've never known the roads to be so crap. The bodgit-and-scarper attitude of local councils is unforgivable. Each year we pay £42billion in VED and fuel tax. Where does it go? - *David Baker, by email*

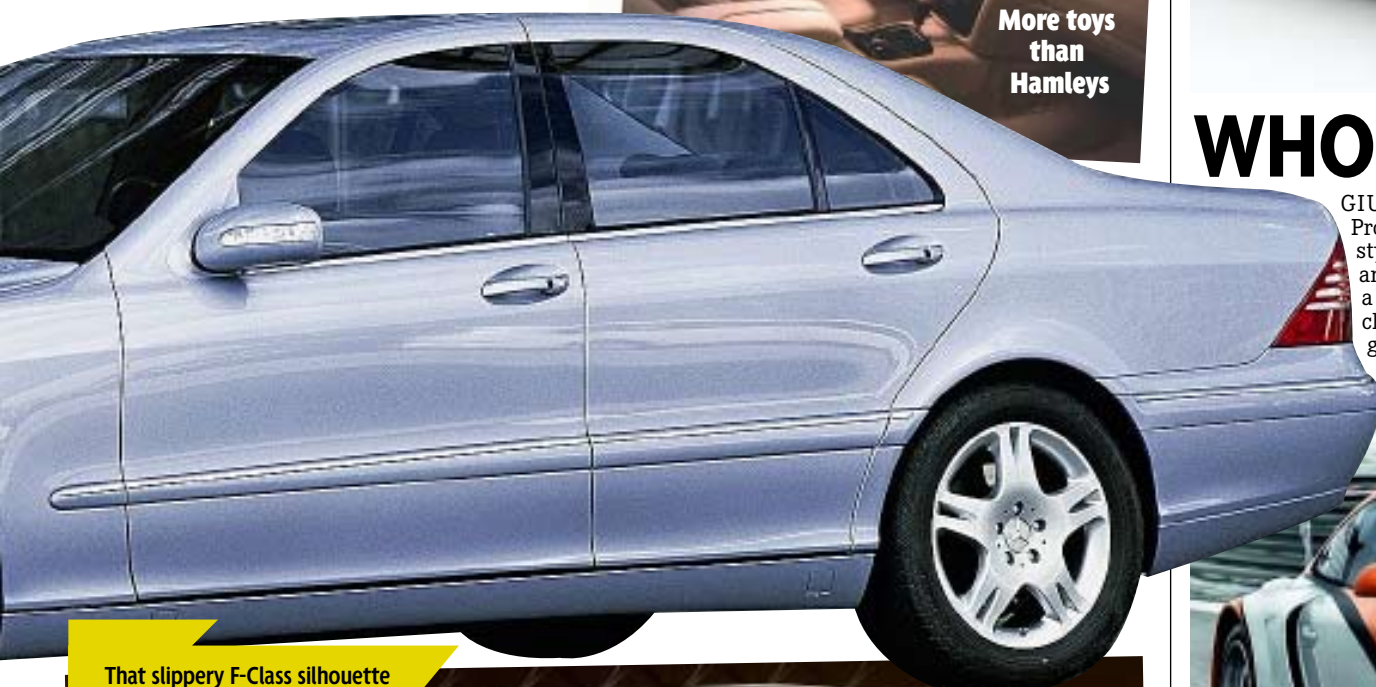
**A** ONE of life's unanswered questions, that. Less than 10 per cent of what we pay to the Treasury goes back into roads. The RAC reckon it would take just £4billion to restore Britain's crumbling road network to rude health. Soon I'll be starting a campaign to demand we get our £4billion back. Highway robbery.

# ASS ACT

**BE PLUTOCRAT  
FOR PENNIES**



More toys  
than  
Hamleys



That slippery F-Class silhouette hasn't dated at all



DS4 could  
become  
Citroën's  
gold  
standard

**Fine French  
filigree is so  
ooh la la..**

CITROËN have pulled the wraps off their new DS4: the High Rider crossover concept, which will be the second model in the new DS range. Meant to compete with the likes of the new Nissan Duke and Mini Countryman, it's based on C4 underpinnings but carries on Citroën's radical design grammar.

One of the new batch of high driving position/downsized SUVs, it'll have a posh uptown interior and (like the Mini) promises a range of customisable options. A full hybrid diesel drive-train with a rear electric motor will deliver more torque and lower emissions.



Price this  
right and  
it'll fly  
away

## WHO'S A PRO-TTY BOY?

GIUGIARO have gone green. Proton's latest concept has been styled by the Italdesign house and uses a hybrid system, with a front-mounted engine which charges lithium ion batteries to give a fully electric drive. Ultra-light materials mean it'll weigh

less than a normal supermini, while a high platform and rear-mounted batteries will give maximum interior space. Proton say that the eventual production model won't be radically different from the concept.

Could this be the prettiest Proton ever?



World's  
horniest  
hybrid

## ECO-POWERED PORKER

ALL that money developing F1's ill-fated Kinetic Energy Recovery System may not have been wasted after all.

Porsche's 911 GT3 R hybrid will compete in endurance racing and be a

competition laboratory for future Porsche hybrids.

KERS uses an electric flywheel spinning at 40,000 rpm to power two electric motors over the front axle, which the Germans claim

gives better handling, economy and acceleration.

When performance stalwarts like Porsche start going down the eco road, it's a sure sign that green motors are here to stay.



Nice  
one  
GAZ

## For your homework...

THIS has to be the best-looking student-designed concept car, and, surprisingly, it comes from Russia. The GAZ 5000 GL looks a real piece, with aluminium body, 300bhp 3.2-litre V6, four-wheel drive and six-speed manual make it more tantalising still. Give these students a job!