

Daytona Spider... better than gold

£1M.. LOOT OF ALL EVEL

EVEL Knievel must have made a good few quid, because in the 70s he owned an ultra-rare '73 Ferrari Daytona Spider, which back then cost the price of a large house. It's estimated to make close to £1million when it goes under the hammer at RM Auctions in Arizona next January. Bet he wished he'd kept that one.



Amphicar can walk on water

Just in-Seine

SNAPPED this in Paris the other day. What's cooler than having a houseboat on the River Seine? Having an Amphicar parked on the deck, that's what. Amphicars were a slice of 60s weirdness that could tackle the road and water thanks to a rudder and propeller. Good ones fetch £20k these days. How chic is that?

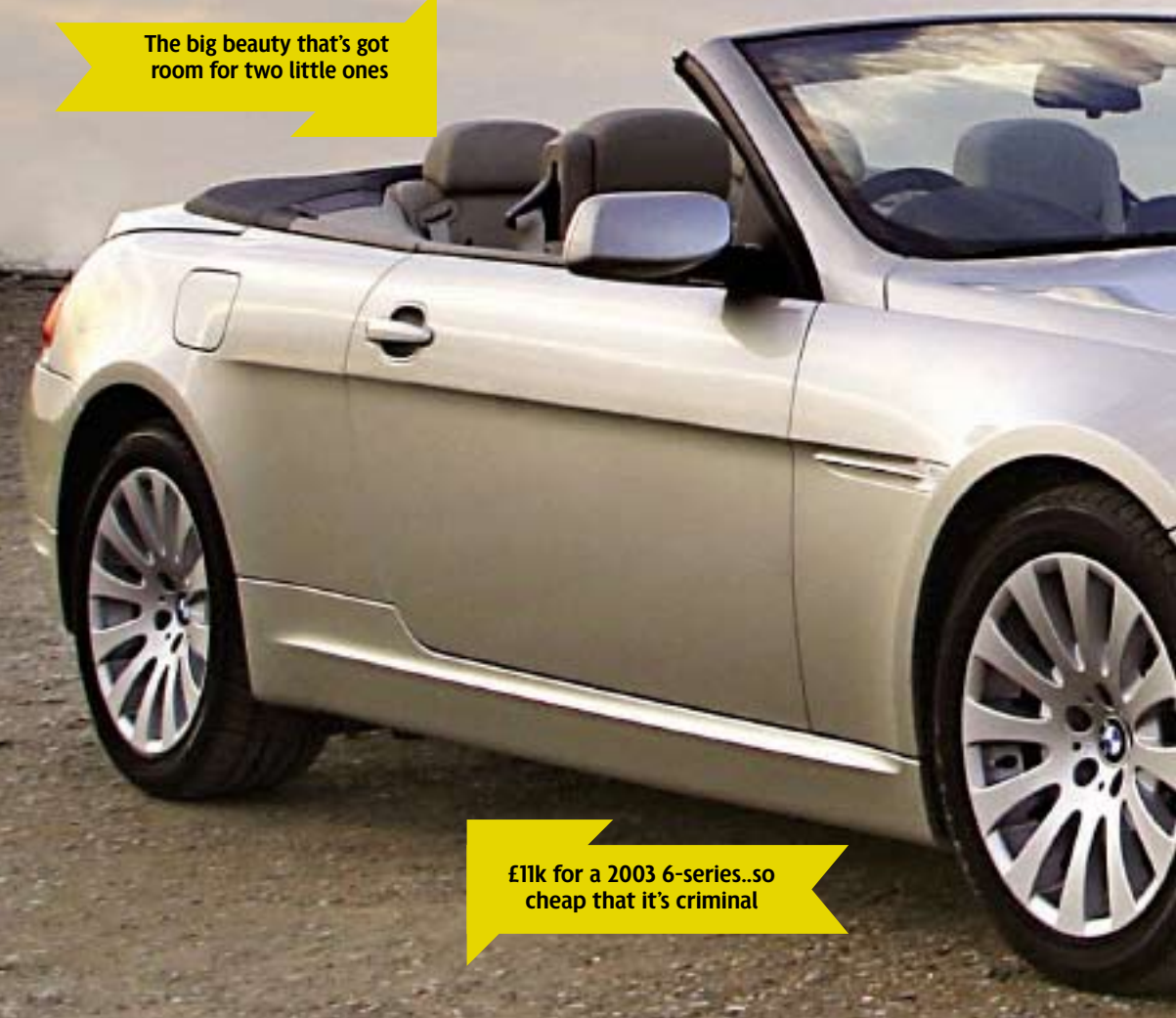
Quentin

At your service

DAVID Latham, from Bedfordshire, has a 56-plate Renault Scenic. He received a letter from Renault saying he should replace the cambelt. David isn't sure about this, as the car has only done 25,000 miles, and it will cost £500. Some of his friends who own other makes have been advised to change at 70,000 or 80,000. Are Renault pulling a stunt just to get his business?
QUENTIN SAYS: Cambelts degrade with age and mileage. Given that your Scenic is four years old, Renault are in the right. You can get it done for less at an independent and the cost will save you having to buy a new engine if the belt breaks while you are out on the road.

GRAB A

The big beauty that's got room for two little ones



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THERE'S an old wives' tale that claims convertibles are cheaper in winter. It's been largely discredited in today's market, but this year your old mum is right.

Values of drop-tops are sliding significantly right now, helped by the general economic malaise and talk of a bleak midwinter.

Look hard and you'll see some chin-dropping convertible bargains out there, with hot Germanic icons at their cheapest ever. Bet you didn't know you can buy a 2003 version of BMW's sexy

6-Series convertible for a paltry £11k. By any standards that's daft money.

And it's the same deal with the Mercedes SL500. An 03-plate example of this £70k technological tour de force can be bought for as little as £12k, complete with balletic folding metal roof and adamant build quality.

Even Porsche Boxsters aren't immune from the gloom. A 2003 70k-miler could be sitting in your garage for as little as eight grand. That's a classy ride that drives perfectly and lasts forever for less than the price of a new Fiesta.

BMW Z4s have fallen too. A mid-mileage 53-plate

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Motor Show is an endangered species

Q I CAN'T believe the attitude of the SMMT! Can't they organise a motor show? Won't manufacturers participate? - *Mike and Sarah, Coventry*

A THE complications of running an international motor show are legion. It costs a manufacturer a million quid for a stand, staff and cars, and these days that's a big deal. The SMMT would dearly like to put on a show, but the business

case for manufacturers selling cars from it is questionable. There's the smaller-scale Motor Expo at Canary Wharf next June, where I'm hoping to organise a green car event.

Q WHEN an insurance company writes off your car after an accident, is it obliged to inform you of the top book value? If not, how do you know you're getting a fair price? - *James McDonnell, email*

A INSURERS are supposed to pay out the replacement value. That may not be top book - it depends on age, condition and mileage. The rule is never to accept the first offer. Provide MoTs, service history and describe the car as accurately as you can. If you're in dispute, contact the AA, RAC or an independent engineer. Send the details and I'll happily give a valuation.

CABRIO

..AS DROP-TOP PRICES FLOP



2.2i will cost you less than six grand, or the price of a second-hand Scenic.

Hot cabrios like these are there for the taking on sites like Auto Trader or justgoodcars.com. And with the raft of independent specialists around, running them needn't require friends at the Treasury.

And here's the thing...

These are silly prices, which come spring and sunshine must go up.

So if you fancy some open-top optimism for next year, the next couple of months really are the right time to get stuck in.



A Z4 or a Scenic? Your call



Hyundai's having a Fiesta

HY-CLASS RUNAROUND

HYUNDAI (looking more like a Korean Toyota) has rolled out another stormer. The ix20 mini MPV starts at just £11,595, with a choice of 1.4 diesel or 1.4 and 1.6-litre petrol engines. Plus there's

stop-start, a five-year warranty, 65mpg, Fiesta-like looks and a clever and commodious interior design.

All of which means the ix20 will sell seriously swiftly, believe you me.



Bentley up £70k this year!

Classic cars have the olden touch

NO sign that the classic car market is tailing off. This week a 1963 Bentley Continental Mulliner two-door coupé was battled up to £159,000 at Barons' Sandown Park auction. As a rare car with only 11 made, this one would have fetched more like £90k last year. When will the old car gold rush end?



Fishy Fiat

UNO A NO-NO

NOT so sure about this one. Fiat's 124mph Uno Cabriolet Concept may have chrome rollover bars, twin exhausts and a bodykit that wouldn't look out of place on an Essex RS Turbo, but pretty it ain't. Meant to preview a potential drop-top Uno, I get the feeling that this one may remain a slip of the designer's pen.