

AUTOCAR

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20-PAGE SPECIAL

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and they're starting with this...



NEW VS USED

8 Amazing shootouts



STARRING

Porsche **vs** Lamborghini
Fiesta ST **vs** Focus RS
Aston **vs** McLaren
Nissan **vs** Range Rover



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LONG-TERM TEST

30k miles in a Range Rover

NEW VS USED

VS

Showroom-fresh Aston or previously owned McLaren? We reveal the answer to this and other car buying conundrums over the next 20 pages

PHOTOGRAPHY STAN PAPIOR



We pragmatists know that there's no shame in secondhand. Chances are that your home, your partner and your best jokes are pre-loved, so why not your car? Sure, progress is unstoppable, but if a car built in the last decade was great when it came out, then it's probably still pretty darned great now. So we're not talking baggy, flea-bitten clunkers here, but well-maintained, low-mileage minters of the recent past whose values have been trimmed and, in some cases, decimated, by depreciation.

But can yesterday's heroes really cut it against the latest greats? Covering a range of budgets, we've lined up four tantalising new versus used comparisons to find out. →

PORSCHE CAYMANS VS LAMBORGHINI GALLARDO

The second-generation Porsche Cayman is a five-star motor and today's benchmark junior sports car. The 271bhp 2.7 version costs £39,694, and the 321bhp 3.4-litre Cayman S is £48,783. That you can debate their merits against the £73,509 911 Carrera with an entirely straight face illustrates their outstanding value.

But the cost of options is the elephant in the room. Take this Racing Yellow Cayman S. For extra dynamic focus, it features carbon-ceramic brakes (£4977), PASM adaptive dampers (£1700), a Sport Chrono Plus pack (£1084), torque vectoring with a limited-slip

differential (£890) and lightweight, leather-finished sports bucket seats with integrated airbags (£2226). A bi-modal sports exhaust, 20-inch alloy wheels, parking sensors and sat-nav swell the final bill to £65,573.

It's worth seeing what else that buys before signing up. Jaguar F-type V6 S? BMW M4? Lotus Evora S? All tempting. But none comes near the firepower and presence of our used contender: the 492bhp, V10-powered Lamborghini Gallardo. Yep, Sant'Agata's Audi-financed saviour can now be had from just £55,000. Owned by Gareth Hardiman and for sale through independent Lamborghini specialist

Buckinghamshire High Performance (bhpmsport.com), this gorgeous, 24,500-mile example – lurking low, wide and dark in our hangar like a prowling stingray to the Cayman's yellowfin tuna – is priced at £67,500.

The sting in its tail is BHP's own cat bypass and a Tubi exhaust, which fill this cavernous space with an extremely rude, extremely loud bark and burble that has us all sharing guilty smirks.

The Lambo's dated, slow-witted E-gear automated manual gearbox would have been floored by the technical brilliance of Porsche's slingshot PDK dual-clutch automatic, so manual it is for our mid-engined



Traction is aided by all-wheel drive and two limited-slip diffs



The Porsche has great grip as you exit

Mid-mounted six leaves some boot space



You can put power down early in bends



Lambo's mighty V10 sounds magnificent



The Cayman S is truly rapid but power is dispatched with incredible composure

two-seaters. The Cayman sends drive to the rear wheels only whereas our 2004 Gallardo drives all four with the help of a limited-slip differential at each axle.

Climbing in, you immediately notice how much more luxury the Gallardo offers. There's Alcantara on the ceiling and stitched leather not only on the seats but also on the door cards and the dashboard. Adding extra hide to the otherwise plastic-heavy Cayman would cost an additional £1428.

The Gallardo's cabin is unmarked, save for some thinning of the helm's Alcantara, but the Porsche's slick instrumentation and stylish yet robust switchgear have a clear edge over the Lambo's chunkier fare, which features interesting toggle switches alongside more mundane Audi-sourced buttons and outdated

red LEDs. Unsurprisingly, the Porsche's modern sat-nav wins, too.

Hitting the road first is the Cayman S. Were this a track exercise, I'd have been glad of the bucket seats' security, but their limited adjustment and thin padding do little for comfort. That aside, the driving position is ergonomically sound.

Within moments, you're treated to what could be the sweetest manual gearbox on sale. It's light yet mechanical feeling, with a joyous lubricity that seems to suck the shifter into each nook. With the hard-biting carbon-ceramics making in-roads near the top of the brake pedal, you need to be pressing on to make heel-and-toeing tenable, but a rev-matching function (part of Sport Chrono's Sport Plus mode) lets you enjoy rasping, seamless downshifts even during dull commutes.

I could leave the £1530 sports exhaust, though. The contrived fun of the grumbles that it emits on the overrun in Sport mode is outweighed by its overbearing constant-throttle volume, even in Normal mode, and the flat six – from its tractable bottom end, 4500rpm pickup and free-revving, howling upper reaches – already offers plenty of entertainment.

The Porsche is genuinely rapid when pushed, but power is dispatched with incredible composure thanks to the Sport Chrono pack's vibration-quashing active transmission mounts and the assured deftness of the chassis. PASM's Sport mode gets knobably on rippled B-roads, but even in Normal mode, the Cayman retains excellent body control and you can feed it through corners with huge →

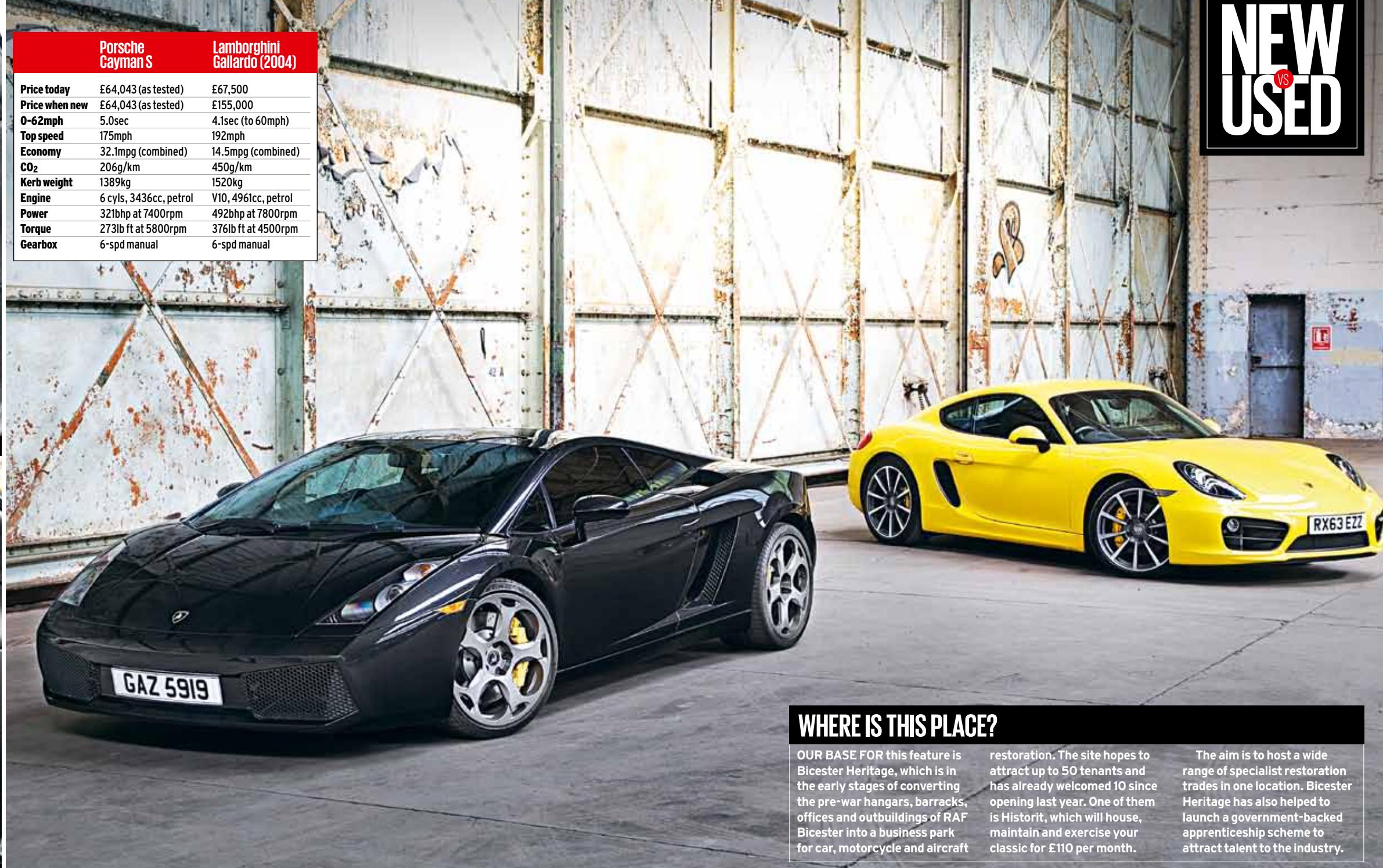


There are ergonomic foibles inside the Lamborghini but it's very classy; note the open-gate 'box, too



The Cayman gives a smart, well executed driving environment but feels plasticky next to the Gallardo

Porsche Cayman S	Lamborghini Gallardo (2004)
Price today	£64,043 (as tested)
Price when new	£64,043 (as tested)
0-62mph	5.0sec
Top speed	175mph
Economy	32.1mpg (combined)
CO ₂	206g/km
Kerb weight	1389kg
Engine	6 cyls, 3436cc, petrol
Power	321bhp at 7400rpm
Torque	273lb ft at 5800rpm
Gearbox	6-spd manual
	4.1sec (to 60mph)
	192mph
	14.5mpg (combined)
	450g/km
	1520kg
	V10, 4961cc, petrol
	492bhp at 7800rpm
	376lb ft at 4500rpm
	6-spd manual



WHERE IS THIS PLACE?

OUR BASE FOR this feature is Bicester Heritage, which is in the early stages of converting the pre-war hangars, barracks, offices and outbuildings of RAF Bicester into a business park for car, motorcycle and aircraft

restoration. The site hopes to attract up to 50 tenants and has already welcomed 10 since opening last year. One of them is Historit, which will house, maintain and exercise your classic for £110 per month.

The aim is to host a wide range of specialist restoration trades in one location. Bicester Heritage has also helped to launch a government-backed apprenticeship scheme to attract talent to the industry.

confidence. Get over-exuberant with the throttle mid-corner and the torque vectoring brakes the inside rear wheel to keep the car turning, while the limited-slip diff produces very strong grip on the exit. But the Porsche isn't just at home on twisty roads – it's pliant in town and calm on motorways, too. This is an extremely usable sports car.

The Gallardo's gearbox is a delight for different reasons. Its open gate lets you gaze inside at the greased linkage and rings with every strike of the lever. It's a delightful point of interaction with the charismatic 5.0-litre V10, which needs fewer revs to come on song than the Cayman's six-pot and lets out a race-worthy scream towards its 7750rpm red line. The approach of a corner initiates

an indulgent sequence: lean on the powerful, ventilated discs, blip the skinny throttle pedal between downshift 'clacks' and a single 'pop' of sniper fire follows from the exhaust. Roll is marginal and the four-wheel drive system lends a totally planted cornering stance. You can feed power in early, but the pace it produces is in a different league from the Cayman's, so full throttle can't be laid on with anything like the same abandon without triggering the traction control.

The firmness of the ride – which, on a bumpy road, affects comfort more than it does confidence – only highlights how well tuned the Cayman's set-up is. But although we once reckoned that the Gallardo was short on steering feel, its



The Gallardo is the faster accelerating and, to most eyes, looks more dramatic



The Cayman S is properly quick, if not Gallardo quick, but has a wider range of ability



Despite its low-profile tyres, the Porsche rides well; Lambo offers less compliance



hydraulically assisted helm is a veritable flibbertigibbet compared with the Cayman's slick yet relatively monotonous electric set-up.

The Lamborghini is never quiet, but it's no louder than the Porsche when cruising. And usability isn't compromised: all-round visibility is surprisingly good, the turning circle usefully compact and the steering light when manoeuvring, although the boot is far too small to cope with extended trips.

Because of its age, the CO₂-heavy Gallardo nevertheless costs the same in VED as the Cayman, at £285, but that's where parity on running costs ends. Services are due annually or every 7500 miles for the Lambo, with one major for every two minors. BHP charges £1680 for the former, £600

for the latter. The Porsche operates on two-year/20,000-mile intervals, which alternate between £480 and £610 at Porsche Centre Reading, and it uses less than half as much fuel.

So which wins? The Cayman S is easily the more multi-talented and rounded proposition. But you could arguably retain the bulk of its most endearing skills by spending less than £40,000 on the entry-level model. If you're buying for weekend thrills more than daily duties, though, it has to be the Gallardo. It's an absolute showman, and Audi-hewn robustness has let it age gracefully. And if the running costs worry you, know that early Gallardos are currently appreciating. Now there's food for thought...

RICHARD WEBBER

FORD FIESTA ST FORD FOCUS RS

VS



When it comes to hot hatches, it's a big Blue Oval love-in. Odd, when you consider the inordinate amount of time and encouragement

apparently required to gain Dearborn's consent for building one. But when Ford finally pushes the button, something memorable does tend to appear 18 months later.

Increasingly nut-bar versions of the outgoing Renault Mégane aside, the Ford Fiesta ST has enjoyed our preferential treatment almost exclusively since it was launched in 2012. We've practically dared people to buy one and, thanks to its pleasingly modest price, many have obliged. Against practically every other similarly spiced opponent – new or used – we consider that advice to be rock solid. Until, that is, you drive a Mk2 Ford Focus RS. Then the sticky question of what to buy becomes a veritable peat bog, certain to suck you down to your kneecaps in aspect-weighting ruminations.

The reason for that – so self-evident

as to hardly be worth mentioning – is that the last RS, in all its black-spoiler-bottomed glory, is a special car and its depreciation to the sunny side of £20k makes it a compelling option, even with the usual

secondhand hurdles to overcome. Unlike the ST, there aren't many of them around – and, clearly, there aren't going to be any more. Low volume and a stellar reputation have kept the residuals predictably firm, and their exclusivity tends to mean that they are taken care of. The car gathered here, via the owners' club forum, is a case in point.

Belonging to Peter Galbraith, this 2009-plater is mint. It has done about 38k miles, but you wouldn't know it given its concentrated gleam and plastic seat covers redolent of heartfelt care. It's in better nick than Ford's press car, and if you'd been told that it had come off the line three months ago, only the dashboard plastic and aged graphic displays would give the game away. That, and the five-cylinder buzz that thrums through you when it fires up. It's a ➤



This car's condition belies its 38,000 miles; Focus RSs are often very well cared for



Given that a new Fiesta ST starts at £17,250, there's little to complain about in here

Ford Fiesta ST-2	Ford Focus RS (2009)
Price today	£18,250
Price when new	£18,250
0-62mph	6.9sec
Top speed	139mph
Economy	47.9mpg (combined)
CO ₂	138g/km
Kerb weight	1163kg
Engine	4 cyls, 1596cc, turbo, petrol
Power	180bhp at 5700rpm
Torque	177lb ft at 1600rpm
Gearbox	6-spd manual
	5 cyls, 2522cc, turbo, petrol
	300bhp at 6500rpm
	324lb ft at 2300-4500rpm
	6-spd manual



big-chested kind of heartbeat; not evocative at idle, but interior-filling in a way that the Fiesta's four-pot could never be.

That noise, and its latent brawniness, encapsulates much of the objective distance between the two Fords. The RS, famously, is powered by a heavily tweaked 2.5-litre Volvo engine. It is thirsty and now, just four years out, rather unforgivably dirty, emitting 225g/km of CO₂. Yet it produces 301bhp and 324lb ft – 121bhp and 110lb ft more than its younger cousin.

On the road, that difference feels even greater than the second between them to 62mph suggests. In the Fiesta, in the best tradition of souped-up superminis, the 1.6-litre EcoBoost unit wants to be revved to death at every opportunity, papering over a faint suspicion of weediness at low crank speeds with a devil-may-care clout of its red line.

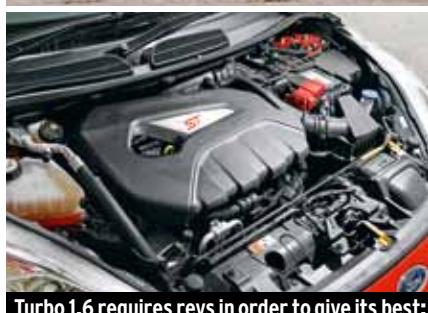
The RS, all burble and glowering heft, requires less theatrics. Well away from full throttle, it feels obligingly meaty and longer geared. Unlike the Fiesta, the Focus's Borg Warner turbocharger isn't quite

as seamlessly integrated into the action. It comes on stream a mite later and much more obviously – an affirmation of its age and size, but also making its spasming boost gauge a much grander part in the show. The gusty wallop makes the car brisk when you aren't trying, but when you are, it feels fast in a different league from the Fiesta.

Of course, as diverting as the in-line five is, it's the process by which Ford has the RS transmit its power to the ground that confirms its reputation. When the latest generation of STs appeared, we were among the first to hail the firm's cunning incorporation of cheaper, electronic solutions to the familiar problems of pumping big power through the front axle. But it only takes around a nanosecond in the Focus to revel in its oily, coolly controlled and emphatically more expensive way of doing things.

It isn't necessary to understand how the RS's RevoKnuckle counteracts torque to appreciate the sureness and uncontaminated steering that results, nor do you need to know that the limited-slip →

The ST lets you enjoy fooling around even at slower speeds



Turbo 1.6 requires revs in order to give its best; bodykit looks measured but purposeful



The Focus RS feels thoroughly well tuned for fast fun



← differential beavering away at every turn-in and power-on exit is supplied by Quaife. The simple fact is that each component here works in impeccable union, resulting in one of the last hot hatches to feel fast not simply because an unseen microchip permits it but because it was designed, engineered and finely tuned for the job.

In turn, the Fiesta suddenly feels messy and a wee bit rudimentary. Launch with gusto and you'll need to weave away a bit to keep it straight. There's significantly more pitch and dive, and when you come to a corner, a good deal more roll to moderate. The grip, through dinkier tyres and obviously slimmer track, is made to feel unfairly insufficient. Everything about the comparison, in fact, feels unfair on the little Ford.

Until, that is, you concede set and match to the Focus, stop trying so hard and – inevitably – start mucking about. Then, at speeds that the RS would solemnly dismiss as utterly inconsequential to its hold on the road, the ST begins to remind you what all the fuss is about. Its built-in adjustability and impudent sense of fun is so outrageously accessible that it often seems like something one should only seek out under the cover

of darkness is being sold to you over the counter. At rush hour. The merest whiff of let-off will have the rear end tuck slyly in, while an altogether harder, faster entry followed by an abandoned throttle pedal will have the weight transferring with arcade-game levels of excess.

Although that kind of playfulness isn't everyone's cup of tea, one suspects that it suits the mindset of a younger audience – a thrifty market of which the Fiesta's low, £17,250, asking price is very much primed to take advantage. In the white-soled shoes of such a buyer, the £155 saving in annual road duty, a 17mpg improvement in economy, much lower insurance and the comfort of a three-year manufacturer's warranty make the ST something of a no-brainer. But we're older, wiser and more often shod in loafers. The RS isn't an über-talented runaround. Instead, it's a modern classic made attainable. It's one to keep in the garage and pamper, one to tick off the ownership list and one to some day boast about. Ford says that there'll be a follow-up next year, but that'll have too few cylinders and two too many doors. The Mk2 is the keeper, and worth every extra penny.

NIC CACKETT



The sound of that five-pot and look of the black rear wing are part of the RS's appeal



ASTON MARTIN V12 VANTAGE S VS MCLAREN MP4-12C

NEW
VS
USED



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There are worse dilemmas to have, but of all of the cars that you see on these pages, this comparison feels – to me, anyway – like the one with the toughest choices.

Spending money on a supercar is not about practicality or running costs or lengths of warranty. A supercar is a pure luxury good. A supercar has to fill you with want, purely and simply. If multiple-cylinder donkeys and smoking tyres and noise and drama fail to float your boat, all is lost. You don't need a supercar. There's a decent chance

that you'll buy a boat instead.

Both of these cars have given our boats buoyancy in the past. McLaren's MP4-12C is the used car here although, in many respects, it is actually the newer design. It made its debut with its carbonfibre tub and 3.8-litre twin-turbocharged V8 engine – both of which form the basic underpinnings of McLaren's P1 and its 12C GT3 car – in 2011. And things didn't finish there.

This is an early car, hence the 'MP4-12C' written on its floor mats rather than just '12C', and why it has fallen from its £168,000 original

asking price into the same bracket as this new Aston Martin V12 Vantage S. But the MP4-12C bears upgrades from the point in 2012 when the 'MP4-' part of the name was dropped and the car became simply the 12C, so it benefits from an increase in power from 592bhp to 616bhp, recalibrated engine management and other software upgrades.

That's not all. This year, when McLaren launched the 650S and opted to drop the 12C, the 3000 cars that it had built to that point were eligible for another round of upgrades, giving them the latest

version of the Android-based multimedia and navigation system, and making adjustments to the way that the active aerodynamics work – the airbrake pops up over crests to improve stability, and drops further again in a straight line to cut drag, for example. McLaren has moved at the speed of a racing team with some of its upgrades and product roll-outs, but it has clearly learnt quite a lot about good old-fashioned customer service at the same time. It looks after buyers of cars who might otherwise have thought they had been forgotten and neglected. →

The McLaren masks bumps in a way that no other current supercar can approach



← We've become accustomed to software and app upgrades. Why not automotive ones?

The Aston, although the new car here, feels older of school by comparison. Its design appeared in 2005 and, although it has been heavily revised since (early cars and this one are leagues apart from each other), the basics feel the same. Its engine sits in its nose and is, in this case, a brawny 6.0-litre V12 making 565bhp. It drives the rear wheels via what we've come to know as a rather awkward-shifting automated manual gearbox. However, the Aston does have a limited-slip differential, whereas we know that the McLaren gets a dual-clutch automatic 'box but no LSD. We'll come back to that.

Inside, the Aston feels as quaint as ever by most industry standards. You get the very obvious impression that it is handbuilt, albeit assembled from fine materials which clothe an aluminium structure that places clear demands on the interior architecture. The transmission tunnel is high so that the sills need not be, for example. Fit and finish are good but you're reminded of Aston's tight budgets when you try to fiddle with the stereo or navigation systems, both of which could do with



The MP4-12C requires precise trail-braking to extract the best from it in bends



The Aston is less suited to daily use but its chassis is a delightful thing to exploit

more than a mere software update.

So it's the three-year-old McLaren, which can be had with a factory-backed, unlimited-mileage warranty, that actually feels more modern inside. Fit, finish and material choices were things that McLaren nailed from the very start, and this one has aged well.

Less convincing at its launch, and still so in this MP4-12C today, are the shape of its seats, which lack support under thigh and laterally. They're also electrically controlled by some switches located bafflingly on the front of the seat base, out of view and bearing no resemblance to the seat itself. You get used to it, I suppose.

Having flat seats is not a criticism that you'd level at the Aston, particularly in this V12 Vantage S form, which gets extremely heavily sculpted buckets. McLaren might argue that its chairs are more comfortable on longer journeys and more suited to daily use. It's plausible. Certainly, the McLaren's ride is still a thing of wonder that makes a 12C a genuinely usable everyday car, its linked hydraulic suspension masking bumps and ruts in a way that no current supercar – nor most family cars, to be honest – can approach. Its engine and gearbox excel in daily

driving, too. The gearbox's auto mode is intelligent enough, and although the shift paddles are stiff, it shifts sweetly in manual mode. You don't notice the turbo lag so much at easier efforts, either.

Aston Martin has a fine history of making grand tourers, too, but the V12 Vantage S isn't one of them. It is loud, its engine asks to be revved, its gearbox is hesitant at low speeds and the ride is firm. It'll have you know that it is a supercar, and it would like to be driven accordingly. So I do.

And then the V12 Vantage S reminds you what a brilliant chassis it has; what a great-handling car the Vantage has become. Yes, there's considerable weight over the nose, but plant it by braking towards an apex and it goes diligently where you aim it. At that point, there is enough power to let you play with the chassis entirely as you choose. The differential hooks up, the rear tyres become mobile and it can be steered beautifully on the throttle. Even the gearbox is less irritating when it's punching through shifts brutally.

Here the McLaren's shortcomings – its turbo lag and its flat seats – are highlighted. Its balance errs to understeer unless you absolutely nail your trail-braking perfectly, deliberately to unsettle the rear. Get



The Aston's handbuilt charm is offset by outdated stereo and navigation systems



The older McLaren feels the newer car inside, because of its layout and sheer quality

that right and it is extraordinarily fast on corner exit; get it wrong and you'll be waiting for the front to come back to you, and both while propping yourself up in the seat. I know that outright handling balance isn't everything, particularly on the road, where the pace of both makes it almost, but not quite, an irrelevance.

But what happens at the limit is hinted at at lower speeds, as you exit roundabouts or cleave a line onto a slip road. The Aston feels mobile and alert; the MP4-12C clean and capable. The Vantage offers a superior noise, too. A sense of drama. Theatre.

Ultimately, given that most owners will sit in a Range Rover from day to day and get the supercar out when the weather is good and there are no clients to visit, drama is good. From that perspective, the Aston gives you more love and, ultimately, that tells in the verdict.

The McLaren is fast and relatively satisfying but leaves our outright desire holed below the waterline. The Aston Martin is less satisfactory as mere transport but it never forgets what it is supposed to do. It's supposed to grab you and make you want to drive it for no other reason than you desperately want to. That it does. And that's why it gets our nod.

MATT PRIOR

	Aston Martin V12 Vantage S	McLaren MP4-12C (2011)
Price today	£138,000	£168,000
Price when new	£138,000	£130,000
0-62mph	3.9sec	3.3sec
Top speed	205mph	207mph
Economy	19.2mpg (combined)	24.2mpg (combined)
CO ₂	343g/km	279g/km
Kerb weight	1665kg	1434kg
Engine	V12, 5935cc, petrol	V8, 3799cc, twin-turbo, petrol
Power	565bhp at 6750rpm	616bhp at 7000rpm
Torque	457lb ft at 5750rpm	443lb ft at 3000-7000rpm
Gearbox	7-spd robotised manual	7-spd dual-clutch auto



NISSAN QASHQAI RANGE ROVER EVOQUE

VS

NEW
vs
USED



This pairing occupies a very specific space. It's that almond-shaped sliver in the Venn diagram where Nissan's plaudit-winning family crossover meets Land Rover's plush, hot-cake-selling compact 4x4. From new, even the most expensive Qashqai costs less than the cheapest five-door Range Rover Evoque, but delve into the Evoque's back catalogue and there's pricing parity: our long-term Qashqai 1.6 dCi Acenta Premium with pearlescent paint lists at £25,155 new, while 2012 Evoque eD4s in entry-level Pure

spec can now be had from £25,750 with fewer than 20,000 miles on the clock. Both have five doors and five seats and drive their front wheels only via a four-cylinder diesel engine and six-speed manual gearbox. This second-gen Qashqai is sharper-looking, more upmarket and more refined than the first. It is an impressive piece of kit – engineered for purpose with a good helping of quality to boot. But can it really hope to mix it for style and comfort with something wearing a Range Rover badge? And can the Rangie offer the practicality and parsimony to take it

to the Nissan when it comes to daily chores and household finances? Our thoughts on how these cars look shouldn't carry much weight, but the ways in which they fill what is essentially a common footprint – the Evoque's extra 159mm of width is the only notable exterior discrepancy – could barely be more different. And in such an image-conscious market, it's hard to argue that the Evoque's arresting aesthetic isn't a major reason why it's the fastest-selling used car in the UK. Sure, this new Qashqai looks bolder than the über-conservative original, but →



Qashqai's cabin is full of useful tech, ergonomically sound and well constructed but its design has the look of ubiquity about it



The Evoque handles tidily and grips well



The Nissan's firmer set-up suits corners



It's used but still a current model so you get quality materials and stylish design; not as much kit as the Nissan, though

beside the Evoque, it seems more than a little plain.

That theme continues inside. The Qashqai's cabin is hard to fault for ergonomics, comfort and solidity, but its aesthetic anonymity means you'd struggle to pick it out in a line-up if you stuck gaffer tape over the steering wheel boss. Meanwhile, the Evoque serves up new levels of design and luxury. There's high-quality leather on the seats, dashboard and grab handles, and the cabin's smart, geometric shapes contrast with the Qashqai's faddier, swoopy lines.

Dinginess is a complaint that you could level against both interiors, and that sensation is heightened in the Evoque, with its smaller glass area. However, although the Range Rover's squashed-sandwich profile means that there's not much light in the back, it does allow for a decent amount of space – a six-footer can happily sit behind another with enough room above and in front,

although the Qashqai offers a fair bit more legroom despite its fractionally shorter wheelbase.

The rear seats split and fold in both, boosting load space from 430 to 1585 litres in the Qashqai and from 575 to 1445 litres in the Evoque. The Nissan's space is more uniform and easier to access, and its two movable boot panels add flexibility, including the option to make an entirely flat floor with the seats folded, which the Range Rover can't quite manage.

Litreage at the other end is less closely matched, but the Qashqai's 1.6 makes a respectable 128bhp against the Evoque's 148bhp 2.2, and the Nissan is actually quicker, taking 9.9sec to reach 62mph instead of the Evoque's 11.2sec. In reality, both are nippy around town. It's only on the motorway that the Evoque's extra 90kg and bulkier form start to tell, with the granular but well mannered engine straining when goaded while

the Qashqai's smoother unit springs on. Both exhibit turbo lag but pull comfortably from below 2000rpm and simmer down nicely in sixth.

Shifting gear is far more rewarding in the Range Rover. Its stubby lever's short throw is enjoyably compact and stocky whereas the Nissan's longer action feels looser. So it is with the steering, the Evoque's helm feeling much weightier than the Qashqai's, even when the Nissan is in Sport mode.

Both set-ups are nicely progressive, though. Spirit these cars down a twisty road and the British-built Japanese offering yields the more car-like experience, containing roll and resisting dive better than Gaydon's finest, but the Evoque's greater track and wider tyres lend it higher limits of grip.

The flipside is that the Evoque has the comfier ride in all situations, smothering scars and ridges with a stately lop, and with only a slight

tendency to fidget on the motorway to threaten the peace. The Qashqai's ride niggles that bit more, most obviously in town, and, in sum, it feels tauter but less settled.

The Nissan boasts more gizmos. Items such as sat-nav, traffic sign recognition, auto low-beam, lane departure warning, front and rear parking sensors (the standard Evoque gets rears only), panoramic roof and rear privacy glass are all included here but cost extra on the Range Rover. Typically, the Evoque counters with luxury and style: leather, 18-inch alloy wheels and an 11-speaker audio system are standard fit. Those hungry for kit could defer to a higher-mileage Evoque equipped with the Tech pack and stay in the same price range. The pack cost £1900 from new and

includes sat-nav, front parking sensors and rain-sensing wipers.

Official figures say that the Evoque will cost about 12 per cent more in fuel, and its higher emissions attract £130 in annual road tax to the Qashqai's £30. Nissan London West charges £159 and £249 for the Qashqai's alternating minor and major annual services. Lookers Land Rover in Battersea, London, asks £392 and £515 for the Evoque, but that drops to £325 and £429 for cars more than three years old.

If you can stand those extra running costs, the Evoque is the clear winner. It's a mite less practical and has less safety kit, but you'd never call it impractical or unsafe, and the luxury and comfort that it ladies on put it well beyond the Nissan's reach.

RICHARD WEBBER



Each is a similar size but exudes a very different image

	Nissan Qashqai 1.6 dCi Acenta Premium	Range Rover Evoque eD4 (2012)
Price today	£25,155 (as tested)	£25,750
Price when new	£25,155 (as tested)	£27,955
0-62mph	9.9sec	11.2sec
Top speed	118mph	112mph
Economy	64.2mpg (combined)	56.5mpg (combined)
CO ₂	115g/km	133g/km
Kerb weight	1535kg	1625kg
Engine	4 cyls, 1598cc, turbodiesel	4 cyls, 2179cc, turbodiesel
Power	128bhp at 4000rpm	148bhp at 4000rpm
Torque	236lb ft at 1750rpm	280lb ft at 1750rpm
Gearbox	6-spd manual	6-spd manual



Spirit them down a twisty road and the Nissan yields the more car-like experience

NEW VS USED: THE REST OF THE BEST

We've refereed four of today's best 'new vs used' match-ups but there are myriad others to debate. **Richard Webber** ponders four more tempting twosomes, from £8500 to £85k



£85,000

MERCEDES-BENZ CLS63 AMG S VS 2011 ASTON MARTIN RAPIDE

THE AMG VERSION of the CLS four-door coupé is handsome, luxurious and rapid, and engaging enough to make it one of the best Mercedes on sale. A facelifted version has just arrived and, with it, the CLS63 AMG gains an 'S' suffix and even more power and torque, taking it to 577bhp and 590lb ft. This means that the twin-turbo 5.5-litre V8 is now potent enough to hit 62mph in a barely civil 4.1sec, soundtracked by an evil, Predator-like growl.

The price? £86,500. Which also buys the mintiest of first-gen Aston Martin Rapides, such as the 2011

example with just 11,000 miles on the clock that we spotted at £85,843 – saving nearly £55,000 over its original price. Its refined yet sonorous and responsive 5.9-litre V12 makes 470bhp and 443lb ft – still enough to hit 62mph in 5.2sec and reach 184mph.

So the Rapide isn't as, well, rapid as the CLS, but it is arguably more handsome, definitely more luxurious (10 cows were harmed in the making of each one) and almost as engaging. Although the Aston's hydraulic steering beats the Merc's electric set-up for feel, the German car



Rapide excels as a GT; CLS (top) has a more sporting bent

offers more precise dynamics at pace, albeit at the cost of low-speed ride niggles. It's essentially a choice between the CLS's near-sports car skills and the Rapide's traditional performance GT prowess.

Talking practicality, the Rapide's two cosy rear chairs almost make it a 2+2 whereas the CLS is a comfortable four-seater, while the Aston's 317-litre hatchback concedes 203

litres to the Merc's saloon-style boot (although the rear seats are foldable in both cars). A recent hike in kit for the CLS largely levels the spec battle, although the Merc's modernity gives it a win on quality of toys and fuel economy (it uses 50 per cent less fuel than the Aston). All of which helps give the CLS a breadth of talents that the nevertheless magnificent Rapide can't quite match.

£42,500 BMW 435i LUXURY VS 2007 BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GT MULLINER

INCREDIBLY, CONTI GTs can now be bought from just over £20,000. But at that price, you're looking at a hackneyed 100,000-miler that could swiftly cripple you with maintenance costs. Double the budget, though, and you can snag a far worthier 2007 example with fewer than 25,000 miles on the clock and in ultra-plush Mulliner specification, embellishing the GT's stately yet athletic exterior, opulent finish and stack of standard-spec toys with 20-inch wheels, quilted leather, drilled pedals and a chromed gearshifter.

Beneath the pomp is the familiar 6.0-litre W12 engine that produces 552bhp – enough to drag the four-wheel-drive GT's corpulent 2385kg to 60mph in 4.9sec and on to 196mph.

But £42,500 also buys a brand-new BMW 435i auto coupé in Luxury trim. It's to the BMW's credit that its spec isn't far off the Bentley's, yet the 435i's definition of 'luxury' falls well short of the GT's – it's tidy and efficient inside rather than lavish.

Still, the BMW's turbocharged



Conti GT is plusher, 435i more dynamic

302bhp 3.0-litre six and eight-speed auto show a clean pair of heels to the GT's thirsty and relatively lacklustre drivetrain. The 435i's dynamics are more polished, too, combining decent agility with a calmer ride than that of the Bentley. Unless you crave the status of the winged 'B', the BMW is a more rewarding choice.



£14,000

FORD FOCUS 1.6 STUDIO VS 2013 NISSAN LEAF ACENTA

THEORETICALLY, THE ENTRY-LEVEL, £13,995 Focus can manage 580 miles of mixed driving without stopping. The all-electric Leaf cannot – in fact, you're unlikely to get more than 100 miles from a single charge. But if this isn't a problem for you, read on, because a low-mileage 2013-model-year Leaf Acenta (which retails at £23,490 after grants) can be yours for within a fiver of the Ford.

The Leaf is quicker to 62mph (11.5sec to the 84bhp Focus's 14.9sec), less expensive to drive (about 2p per mile against 12p for the Ford), free to tax (versus £130), far more refined



Focus (top) offers range, Leaf real value

and significantly better equipped.

Both are supple and comfortable, and although the Focus has superior handling, this isn't the engine with which to exploit it. Within certain parameters, the Leaf is arguably one of the UK's best used buys.



£8500

HYUNDAI i10 1.0 S VS 2012 FIAT 500 1.3 MULTIJET LOUNGE

A STAR AMONG entry-level city cars, the five-door, five-seat Hyundai i10 comes in at a teeny £8540 and offers good space for four adults, a composed ride, a slick gearbox and a five-year warranty.

But it can't touch a used Fiat 500 for style and kit: £8500 now buys a 2012 MultiJet 1.3 diesel in Lounge spec with air-con, Bluetooth, 15-inch alloy wheels and a glass roof. The Fiat has two fewer doors, one less seat and 67 litres less boot space but boasts



The i10 (top) is roomy; the 500 offers style and kit

the much improved suspension introduced in 2011, while the refined yet tractable 67.3mpg diesel delivers both more pace and more parsimony than the i10's petrol three-pot.