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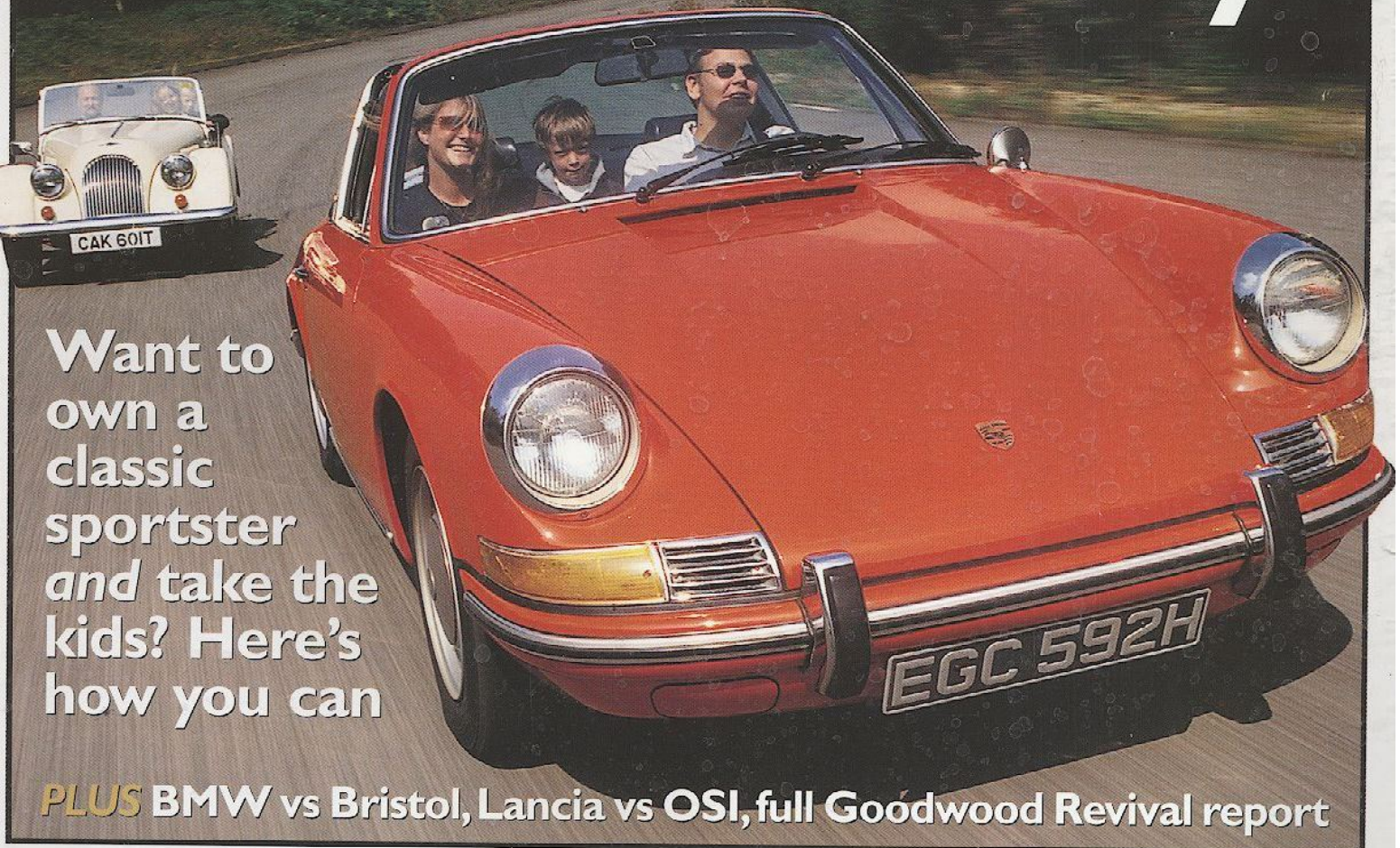
peugeot504.info

CLASSIC & SPORTS CAR

NOVEMBER 2002

£3.60

Sports car thrills for all the family



Want to own a classic sportster and take the kids? Here's how you can

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FORD GT70
A legend reborn



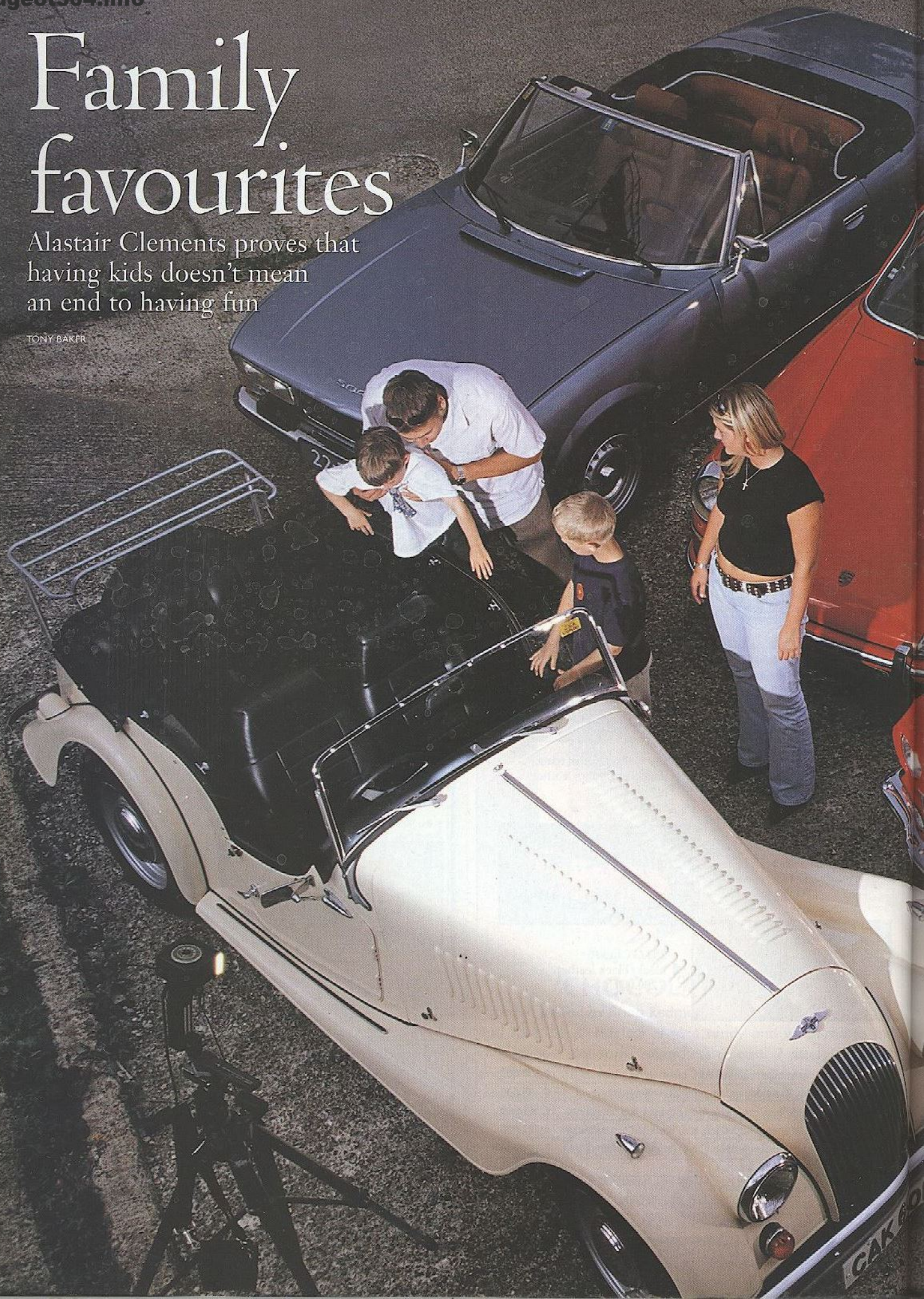
ALFA ROMEO GTV6
Buying the best



Family favourites

Alastair Clements proves that
having kids doesn't mean
an end to having fun

TONY BAKER





'A scan through the classifieds reveals a selection of classics that are fast, fun and provide enough room for a spouse and two sprogs'



1970 PORSCHE 911T TARGA

Produced/No built 1969-'71, 15,082 2.2Ts

Engine rear-mounted alloy block and heads, cast-iron cylinder aircooled single overhead cam per bank 2195cc flat-six with two triple-choke Zenith carburettors

Transmission five-speed manual, driving rear wheels

Chassis/body all-steel monocoque

Suspension independent all round, at front by MacPherson struts, lower wishbones, torsion bars, anti-roll bar rear trailing arms, torsion bars, telescopic dampers

Brakes discs all round

Steering unassisted ZF rack and pinion

Length 13ft 8in

Width 5ft 3 1/2in

Height 4ft 4in

Weight 2250lb

Max power 125bhp @ 5800rpm

Max torque 148lb ft @ 4200rpm

0-60mph 9.5 secs

Top speed 127mph **Mpg** 31

Price new Targa not sold in UK

Price now £12,500

VERDICT

Looks 6 **Driving** 9

Costs 8 **Comfort** 7

Practicality 6

Kids' cool rating 7 **Total** 43

Ever since selling the TR6 to buy that engagement ring we've been longing to buy another sports car. But first there was the honeymoon, then the mortgage, the new kitchen, and turning the study into a nursery – there was never enough spare cash.

Now the boys are turning into junior petrol-heads, and a scan through *C&SC* classifieds reveals a selection of classics that are fast, fun and provide enough room for a spouse and two sprogs. For £15,000 – the price of a new Golf GTI – you could have a legend: there's Germany's Porsche 911, or ready the cloth cap and stringbacks for a slice of pure Britishness in a Morgan 4/4. For Gallic comfort we could sample the gorgeous Peugeot 504, or there's the good 'ol boy that won the USA's heart back from MG, the all-American Ford Mustang.

First to come under scrutiny is the Peugeot. Pininfarina-designed 504 coupés and cabrios were offered with 1.8- and 2-litre four-cylinder engines as early as 1969, but we're after a proper driver's car so it has to be the post-'74 V6. The first Peugeot to be powered by the 'Douvrin' engine developed in conjunction with Renault and Volvo, the V6 also received a restyle that lost some of the prettier detailing of the first cars' head- and tail-lights. But it's still fabulous, understated to the point of minimalism with an economy of line that gives it true beauty without the need for glitzy chrome.

It's attractive inside too, with big squashy seats, seatbelts all round and a clear, modern dashboard. The thirsty V6 necessitates a larger fuel tank, but the 504 still has a boot big enough to take the family's holiday luggage. The Peugeot's saloon underpinnings are obvious as you pull away: it feels a big car and the engine



Left: US car's 7in lights have bigger chrome surrounds. Top: roomy but warm for the boys. Right: famous flat-six





Right: single unit in place of early cars' twins. Below: PF styled cabriolet's lovely lines. Left: Douvrin 2.7 V6



labours to propel it with any vigour. The Douvrin unit is a real disappointment, lacking torque and unwilling to rev. Yet the biggest crime is that it sounds so boring: there's none of the howls and snarls that make V6s so satisfying. Get on to a bumpy, sinuous country lane, though, and the big Pug starts to redeem itself. The gearbox is the best here: with a short throw and easy action it slips quickly from cog to cog, though this '77 car desperately needs the fifth ratio that came a year later, with fuel injection, for the coupé. But the brakes belie its age – the all-round discs bite powerfully and really inspire confidence. The power-assisted steering is nicely weighted and there is good feel through the big two-spoke wheel.

Like its little brother 304, the 504 has the Lion brand's trademark excellent ride and handling compromise. There is a lot of body roll, but the 504's cornering attitude is neutral and dry grip is hard to shake. Once the limit is found the front tyres squeal a gentle protest in mild understeer though, when pressing on in the wet, it's worth remembering that there's little weight over the driven rear wheels. It doesn't take long before seven-year-old Ben and 10-year-old Joe start arguing behind. The rolling motion has them skating around on the back seat, and they are not impressed by the lack of legroom or the front seatbelts projecting from their backrest. Onlookers' reactions to the French beauty boost your ego, but the Peugeot can't hide its humble origins and doesn't offer enough satisfaction behind the wheel.

So it's off to Malvern in search of something sporty from the Morgan Motor Company. Talk about time-warp: after the French car's chic modernity we are transported back to the time



1977 PEUGEOT 504 V6 CABRIOLET

- Produced/no built** 1974-'83, 8185 cabrios (all engines)
- Engine** front-mounted all-alloy watercooled 2664cc 'Douvrin' 90 deg V6 with two Solex carburettors
- Transmission** five-speed manual, driving rear wheels
- Chassis/body** all-steel monocoque
- Suspension** independent all round, at front by MacPherson struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar rear semi-trailing arms, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar
- Brakes** Girling discs all round, with servo
- Steering** power-assisted rack and pinion
- Length** 14ft 3 3/4in **Width** 5ft 7in **Height** 4ft 5 1/2in
- Weight** 2867lb
- Max power** 136bhp @ 5750rpm
- Max torque** 153lb ft @ 3500rpm
- 0-60mph** 9.3 secs
- Top speed** 117mph
- Mpg** 28.7
- Price new** not sold in UK
- Price now** £11,000
- VERDICT**
- Looks** 8 **Driving** 6
- Costs** 6 **Comfort** 6
- Practicality** 8
- Kids' cool rating** 6 **Total** 40



'Get on to a bumpy, sinuous country lane, though, and the big Pug starts to redeem itself - the short-throw gearbox is the best here'

'We were transported to a time of cads and bounders, the view ahead dominated by a vintage-style bonnet stretching to the horizon'



1979 MORGAN 4/4 4-SEATER
Produced/no built 1968-'82, 97,521
Engine front-mounted all-iron watercooled 1598cc Ford 'Kent' pushrod 'four' with twin-choke Weber carburettor
Transmission four-speed manual, driving rear wheels
Chassis/body steel Z-section chassis with ash body frame plus steel and aluminium body panels
Suspension: front independent by sliding pillars, coil springs, hydraulic dampers **rear** live axle with semi-elliptic leaf springs, Armstrong lever-arm dampers
Brakes Girling discs front, drums rear
Steering unassisted worm and nut
Height 4ft 3½in
Width 4ft 8in
Length 12ft
Weight 1516lb
Max power 84bhp @ 5500rpm
Max torque 92lb ft @ 4000rpm
0-60mph 10 secs
Top speed 103mph **Mpg** 32.5
Price new £2072 ('75)
Price now £14,500
VERDICT
Looks 7 **Driving** 6
Costs 8 **Comfort** 7
Practicality 4
Kids' cool rating 8 **Total** 40

of cads and bounders, flanked by running boards with the view ahead dominated by a vintage-style bonnet stretching towards the horizon. Those timeless lines are still in production – having run almost unchanged from 1953 – so it's hard to date a Morgan, but this is a 4/4 of 1979 vintage.

Inside, the driving position is upright but the little Morgan is surprisingly roomy, though it's lucky we're man and wife because it's narrow and our shoulders are in constant touch. But the boys seem happy enough in the back once they've mastered the assault-course entry method. Ben is particularly keen. "It's really comfortable," he enthuses, but Joe is taller so suffers from the high seating position, with the squab mounted right over the rear axle, and the lack of protection from the windscreen. On longer journeys goggles or even full-face helmets would be a serious consideration – not that you can go away for long because the addition of rear seats means the loss of a boot.

Find a smooth surface and the Morgan can be hustled along quickly. You pilot that long nose like a barge, yet it turns in sharply and there is almost no body roll, with predictable rear-drive handling. But the light steering loads up quickly once into a corner and the Morgan becomes quite physical. It's mentally tiring too – keeping a constant eye on the road ahead, sensors on full alert for the slightest imperfection in the surface that could have the two in the back catapulted into the verge quicker than you can shout "Seat Belts On!" It's smoother and less nervous than the big, brutish Plus 8, and more fun in many ways. The 1600 Kent engine followed a series of Ford powerplants in 4/4s, starting with the 1172cc sidevalve, then

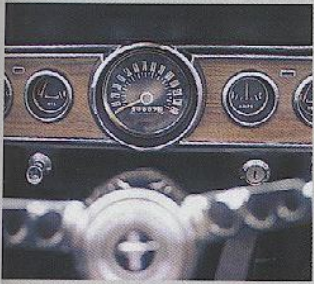


Top: rear seat roomy but is too high. Above and right: dials and dash at odds with image. Right: Ford Kent power





Left: blaring 289cu in V8 provides the thrills. Below left: no rev counter. Bottom: bags of room for the family



1340cc and 1498cc units. Despite the small capacity, the flyweight 1516lb Morgan can box above its weight, but on paper it struggles against the bruisers in this heavyweight, multi-cylinder bout. Performance is lively enough, though the lack of torque means that it deteriorates noticeably when travelling four-up, and you get the feeling that the extra low-down grunt of the Triumph TR-engined Plus 4 would be a welcome boost.

A lack of power is not a problem suffered by the attention-grabbing Mustang. Lee Iacocca's baby - styled in Ford's design studios and launched in '64 - took America by storm in the '60s, beginning a bloodline of 'Pony cars' that continues to this day. And the big Yank is a hit with the boys, who have seen *Bullitt* and found out recently that Ewan 'Obi-Wan' McGregor owns a Mustang. "I like the noise and it looks really cool," says Joe, and for the first time the little devils are in agreement, having battled for space in the Peugeot and been battered by the wind in the Morgan. "Yeah, it looks cool," confirms Ben, settling back in the acres of black vinyl covering the rear bench, "and it's really comfy." There's no question that the 'Stang best suits our needs as a family: it'll easily seat four adults and the boot's big enough to camp in, no tent required.

The Falcon-based Mustang was available as a pauper's special straight-six, but the one to have came with the 289 cu in cast iron V8, with 200bhp (SAE) two-barrel carburettor, 225bhp four-barrel carb or 271bhp 'Cobra' tune. This '66 middle-spec car has twin tailpipes and sounds fantastic, with a rumbling tickover that has the throaty beat of a powerboat's diesel, rising to the growl of a grizzly on Red Bull



1966 FORD MUSTANG 289

Produced/no built 1964-'68, 244,248 convertibles (all specs)

Engine front-mounted watercooled all-iron 289 cu in (4727cc) pushrod ohv V8 with four-barrel Holley carburettor

Transmission Ford Cruise-O-Matic three-speed automatic, driving rear wheels

Chassis/body all-steel monocoque

Suspension: front independent by double wishbones, coil springs rear live axle, semi-elliptic leaf springs

Brakes drums all round (front disc conversion on this car)

Steering power-assisted recirculating ball

Height 4ft 3 1/2 in

Width 5ft 8 1/2 in

Length 15ft 1 1/2 in

Weight 3053lb

Max power 225bhp @ 4800rpm

Max torque 305lb ft @ 2400rpm

0-60mph 8.9 secs

Top speed 111 mph

Mpg 17

Price new £2316 (1966)

Price now £14,000

VERDICT

Looks 8 **Driving** 6

Costs 5 **Comfort** 9

Practicality 9

Kids' cool rating 9 **Total** 46



'The big Yank is a bit with the boys, who've seen Bullitt and found out recently that Ewan 'Obi-Wan' McGregor owns a Mustang'

We've found a T in '70s orange, and the missus is pragmatic: "The Mustang would be fun but we could use the Porsche every day"

FOUR-UP RIVALS

ALFA ROMEO GTC

Sold 1964-'66/990 built, 1570cc, 106bhp, 97.5lb ft, 112mph, 0-60mph 10.6 secs, 25mpg
Price new £1937 (1965) **Price now** £12,500

Pretty chopped Bertone coupé has lots of extra strengthening. Most lhd, but reasonably rapid and fine-handling thoroughbred. Proper, if cramped, four-seater, but rot-prone.



AUSTIN-HEALEY 3000

Sold 1959-'68/42,926 3000s built, 2912cc, 148bhp, 165lb ft, 121mph, 0-60mph 9.8 secs, 20.3mpg **Price new** £1106 3s 9d (1964)

Price now £16,500 The classic British sports car, and with a 2+2 you can even squeeze in the odd (small) prog. Lovely 'six' and famous lines, though styling lost its way towards the end with ugly hood and proper windscreen.



BRISTOL 412

Sold 1975-'82/n/a, 6556cc, 264 bhp, n/alb ft, 146mph, 0-60mph 5.9 secs, 14 mpg
Price new £31,161 (1980) **Price now** £10,000

Vast square-rigged beast looks like the offspring of a union between Lancia Beta Spider and a Challenger tank, but a full four-seater and fast thanks to massive V8. Surprisingly capable handler has practical targa with folding hood.



LANCIA BETA SPIDER

Sold 1975-'83/9390 built, 1995cc, 122bhp, 135lb ft, 111mph, 0-60mph 10 secs, 23mpg
Price new £6450 (1981) **Price now** £3500

Semi-convertible version of the fine handling front-drive Beta with conservative but pretty Pininfarina lines. Revvy twin-cams and reasonable amount of room, but spectacularly rust-prone. Our budget should buy three of the best.



CHRISTOPHER NEIL ELAN PLUS 2

Sold n/a, 1558cc, 126bhp, 113lb ft, 121mph, 0-60mph 6.1 secs, 26.1mpg **Price new** n/a
Price now n/a Neil's much-maligned but pretty chopped Lotus Elan Plus 2 is sniffed at by

enthusiasts. Steel backbone chassis means stiffness is retained, grp body means no rust, and you won't often see another.



when you punt the throttle. Betraying its sporting aversion the Mustang has no rev counter, but kick down and the Cruise-O-Matic lets the engine stretch before reluctantly slipping up a gear and the big Ford feels much quicker than the figures suggest. It seems criminal for a sports car to come with an auto 'box, but this machine was built for the wide open spaces of the US of A and it really suits the car's character. You quickly adopt the classic pose of one foot on the gas, two fingers on the wheel and arm on the door - soaking up the envious gazes of other road users and twirling the ridiculously over-assisted chrome-clad tiller to pitch it into a bend. It's not particularly quick on the twisty stuff, rolling into huge understeer slides as soon as a corner appears then squatting down and throwing its tail out of tighter bends with a squeeze of the throttle, though it's huge fun. With standard suspension the body leans to hilarious angles and the funky whitewalls scream as they try to cope with the convertible's 3000lb-plus girth.

For the lucky one behind the wheel, the best

the seats are hard-wearing and firmly sprung, and the switchgear is positive and unbreakable. It's not too bad in the back either. "I'd prefer to be in this for a long journey," says Joe, but little Ben is less sure about Stuttgart's finest, despite being a committed Porsche fan before the ride. "I like the seats, but it's really hot," he explains, so maybe a rare early example with a zip-out plastic rear window is the answer.

But it's hard to sympathise with the kids' complaints when you're having so much fun, revelling in the sublime steering that combines lightness and feel to perfection. The feedback continues through the seat so you can always sense the weight transfer, wary of that heavy tail in the wet. It's not all good news though: the offset floor-hinged pedals are awkward and the ponderous dog-leg 'box a pain, but confidence builds with every minute behind the wheel. The T has more low-down torque than the E or S, so it shrugs off the weight of a family of four.

A sports car is what we're after and a sports car the Peugeot is not, so we take a long, lingering look at the Gallic charmer before turning



is yet to come. A Porsche 911 might not be the obvious open four-seater choice, but until the kids reach secondary-school age it should be plenty big enough. The Targa is not as pretty as a coupé - lacking the latter's elegant roofline tapering seamlessly into the tail - though it's certainly good enough to pose in and provides the desired wind-in-the-hair sensation. It's clever too, the neat three-piece aluminium lid folding into a compact block that stows easily in the roomy front boot.

And you know you're buying into a piece of automotive lore: a definitive driver's car ever since it replaced the beautiful 356 in 1963; the Targa followed three years later. To look the part, it has to be a pre-'73 chrome-bumpered car, with 2-litre, 2.2 or 2.4 aircooled flat-six, as twin-carbed T or fuel-injected E or S. We've found a 2.2T in fabulously '70s Seville Orange sitting on pretty steel wheels, and the missus is being pragmatic: "The Mustang would be fun, but we could use the Porsche every day." She's got a point. It feels practical inside: everything is solid to the point of being over-engineered,

away. The Morgan is tempting, but with four up it's a bit cramped and performance is severely blunted, the rear seats are exposed and there's a complete lack of boot space. As a pure driver's car the Porsche is unbeatable, and it offers a surprising amount of room for Ben and Joe. But, as they get older and taller, their knees will hit the front seatbacks and heads touch the rear window - and we need a car for the whole family. The boys also point out that friends' more successful dads have brand new Porsches, so the ageing 911 doesn't have the desired school-run street-cred.

Which leaves the Mustang: the biggest, loudest and fastest - in a straight line - car here. Four-up it's ideal for family fun: add a handling kit to that fabulous 289 yammering away in front and you'll have a great drive too. ♦

Thanks to Alan Baldwin (Morgan), Neil Dickens (Peugeot, for sale on 01451 844663), Porsche specialist Tower Bridge (020 7357 0911), Club Peugeot UK (01303 894100), and Dream Cars (Mustang, 01737 765050)