

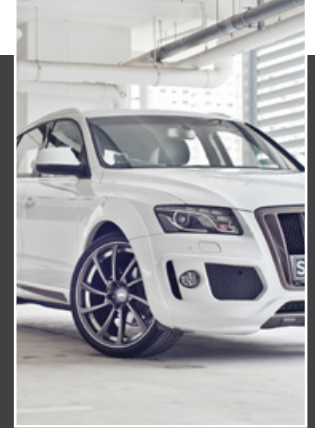


**TWIN
FEATURE**

ABT R8 <
ABT Q5 <

CASIO FTW!

2 CASIO EDIFICE WATCHES UP
FOR GRABS! DETAILS INSIDE



WHERE CARS ARE MORE THAN A TO B

N. ENGINE

FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF BURNSPAVEMENT.COM

ISSUE ONE



DRIVEN

BMW 640I COUPE <
ASTON MARTIN VANTAGE S <
PORSCHE 911 CARRERA S <

PERFORMANCE CAR OF THE YEAR

1M • CAYMAN R • COOPER S COUPE • GTI E35 • MEGANE RS MONACO • RS3



01 // Joel Tam



02 // Azfar Hashim



03 // Dr Kevin Co



04 // Low Fai Ming

Managing Editor & Photographer

Joel started sister publication Burnpavement.com, and in 2 years, garnered 150,000 unique readers the world over with 5 million overall hits. He is an art director, active commercial photographer and father of three boys. Although he drives an STI now, he claims the EVO 9 GSR to be the best car money can buy.

Associate Editor

With almost 10 years of automotive journalism under his belt, Azfar has been in the industry long enough to have his 'COE' renewed. A hard-core driver, he is our default travel and drive-trip guru, and is looking to purchase himself something that can cover long distances faster.

Contributing Writer

As an avid car enthusiast, Kevin is the perfect person to review cars for his consortium of fellow dentists - now his stories will be read by their customers as well. He may look meek, but our doc's ride packs a whopping 600 Nm. Don't play play.

Photographer

He doesn't look it, but Fai is truly one of the industry's best photographers. With a keen eye that stems from a passion for cars, he is able to see things us normal folk can't. He hopes to be able to pack his equipment into a Suzuki Swift Sport one day.

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

Well, the answers are on the left page. But if you would allow me, I'd like to share a bit more about the people behind N.GINE.

Needless to say, we're all enthusiasts. Driven by a passion for fast cars above all else. It didn't just happen, this love for cars, it's been there since we were kids. We all lead very different lives, but the cars unite us.

We also have one common objective. To drive the nuts off every car we get our hands on - borrowed or bought. No compromise. We test them like we own them.

That's not all.

We are sticklers for quality. Our stories. Our presentation. Our photos. Oh, the photos, I dare say we're the best in the business, no one else comes close when it comes to shooting cars.

N.GINE, like our affiliated website Burnpavement.com, is a team effort. We are thankful for those - past and present - who have contributed to the work. We don't take our jobs lightly, and so a special mention goes out to our families and other halves too, who have to put up with the stuff we do.

The most important ingredient of any publication though, is its readers. Without you, our product would merely be an essay with pictures. But no, 150,000 avid readers around the world cannot be wrong. You love us, and we love you.

So stick around and drive safe, because it is the sum of all its parts that keeps the N.GINE running!

Managing Editor
Joel Tam

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THESE CARS ARE COMING YOUR WAY **FAST!**

Photos | Press photos



LAUNCHED!

WHAT IS IT?

SUBARU BRZ

- 2.0-litre Boxer
- 200 bhp
- Rear-wheel drive

WHY SHOULD I WANT ONE?

Are you kidding me? But we suggest waiting for the Toyota version due next month before you decide which one suits you best.

PRICE?

S\$180,000 (est.)

OFFICIAL LAUNCH DATE?

Launched on 4th April

ORDER BOOKS OPEN?

Yes.



LAUNCHING SOON!

WHAT IS IT?

LEXUS GS 250/350

- 2.5 / 3.5-litre V6
- 205 / 306 bhp
- Rear-wheel drive

WHY SHOULD I WANT ONE?

Brings the luxury executive sedan game up a notch. The first Lexus to wear that handsome spindle grille. You know it will be reliable.

PRICE?

S\$225,000 to S\$250,000 (est.)

OFFICIAL LAUNCH DATE?

12th April

ORDER BOOKS OPEN?

Yes.



LAUNCHING SOON!

WHAT IS IT?

SUZUKI SWIFT SPORT

- 1.6-litre
- 134 bhp
- Front-wheel drive

WHY SHOULD I WANT ONE?

Bang-for-buck, plain and simple. At that price, you're not going to find anything that will match its performance and package.

PRICE?

S\$105,000 (est.)

OFFICIAL LAUNCH DATE?

End April

ORDER BOOKS OPEN?

Yes.



LAUNCHING SOON!

WHAT IS IT?

HYUNDAI VELOSTER

- 1.6-litre
- 140 bhp
- Front-wheel drive

WHY SHOULD I WANT ONE?

Cool 3-dr configuration with two doors on the correct side. Head-turning looks and a well-equipped package seal the deal.

PRICE?

S\$115,000 (est.)

OFFICIAL LAUNCH DATE?

20th April

ORDER BOOKS OPEN?

Yes.



MCLAREN SINGAPORE SHOWROOM OFFICIALLY OPENS

Photography | Low Fai Ming

The next time you drive past Leng Kee Road, take a glance towards the Wearnes Automotive premises, for there lies history in the making. McLaren Singapore has officially opened a showroom here in sunny Singapore. It is the retail front of the company that has also set up its Asia Pacific operations here in the form of McLaren Automotive Asia Pte Ltd, which will manage other retailers in Australia, Hong Kong and Japan.

Ron Dennis, Executive Chairman, McLaren Automotive and McLaren Group, was there to grace the event and declare the showroom officially open in front of local automotive media. He also presented a carbon fibre plaque to Andre Roy, Group Managing Director, Wearnes Automotive to commemorate the opening.

The first thing you will notice as you enter the showroom, is the actual F1 car that Lewis Hamilton drove past the chequered flag to

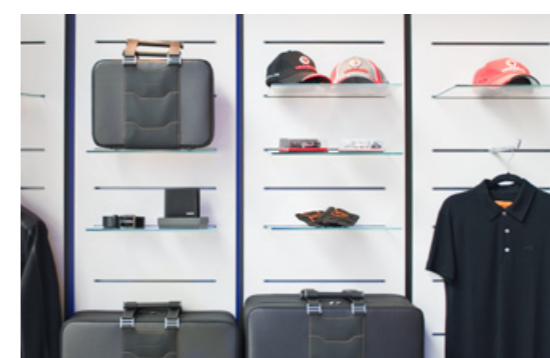
claim his victory at the very first Singapore Grand Prix.

Proceed further and you'll notice displays that will allow customers to select from a range of exterior and interior finishes. Here, customers can customise their McLaren supercar as well. A range of McLaren lifestyle merchandise is also made available to customers.

The showroom also houses a fully equipped official service centre that is staffed by technicians who have received full technical training at McLaren's headquarters in Woking.

Typically McLaren, the service bay is clinically clean, and like a Formula One™ pit-stop garage, all parts are ready and waiting for customers to ensure minimal or no waiting time.

The McLaren Showroom is located at 45 Leng Kee Road, Singapore 159103. **N.**



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FIRST DRIVES

Aston Martin V8 Vantage S

ADVANTAGE ASTON.

Less weight. More poke.
More brakes. More money.
Dr. Kevin Co finds out if the
Vantage S is worth the extra
dip in your bank account.

Photography | Low Fai Ming



"...the Vantage has the looks of a champion. It is charming and bold, yet delicate and refine at the same time, a very different styling concept from the flamboyant Italians."



Waking up to the sweet sound of a 4.7 liters V8 engine is a definitely great way to start the day. Throw in the British heritage of Aston Martin into the equation and you know you are in for a good time.

Despite the company's multiple problems with ownership and bankruptcy throughout their 98-year history, the one thing most people will remember about Aston Martin is that the British spy, James Bond drives one. I almost had the urge to turn up in a black bow tie and suit on this Sunday morning.

Like all Aston Martins, the Vantage has the looks of a champion. It is charming and bold yet delicate and refine at the same time, a very different styling concept from the flamboyant Italians.

Dressed in the brilliant cobalt blue, it is a subject of beauty and envy.

Although the Vantage is the 'entry level' Aston Martin that is meant to lure buyers away from the Porsche 911, all I can tell you is that the two cars could not be more different in characters.

It begins when you slot in the Crystal ignition key to fire the Aston up (how much more luxurious can you get?), it is impossible to wipe the grin off your face when you hear the initial exhaust note from the V8.

The interior of the car shows exquisite quality and detailing with a piano black centre console and blue-stitched leather. The seats we had on our car are the optional lightweight carbon fiber and Kevlar bucket seats that are surprising comfortable. But unfortunately getting in and out of the low cabin is not exactly a graceful affair.

There is no gear shifter lever; a few buttons on the centre console area are all that replace it. Call me old school but I still prefer having a shiftknob on the side. The hand brake is directly beside the driver's door so that will need some orientation as well.

Being an Aston Martin, you'd expect the Vantage S to be fast, and it is. The 4.7-liter V8 pushes out 430 hp at a high revving 7300 rpm, and 490 Nm of torque from 5000 rpm. The S will launch from 0-100km/h in less than 5 seconds and on to a license busting 305 km/h top speed.

FIRST DRIVES

Aston Martin V8 Vantage S

"...the drive is absolutely fantastic! The moment you floor the accelerator pedal, it's just between you, the car and the tarmac.."

The Vantage S has a new transmission that is the 7-speed sportshift II (Basically still a single clutch automated manual gearbox). It can operate automatically in Drive mode or manually with the shift paddles at the steering wheel. Do not expect buttery gear changes from this gearbox though; it wants you to know it is a still manual gearbox, so you can feel every single gear change as if you are stick shifting yourself. Aston engineers purposely designed it this way for the experience; I guess it is not for everyone, but the Vantage is not exactly your everyday car either. The car is definitely better driven in sport mode as the gears shift faster and the exhaust sounds more aggressive.

The brakes are also upgraded from the standard Vantage, so it now has a 15-inch six-piston front and 13-inch four-piston rear. 19-inch cast aluminum alloy wheels also comes as standard fitment for the S.

The Vantage S aluminum body is shorter and lighter than the other bigger siblings in the family, so it translates to much improved handling. The car tackles corners with great conviction, but with the stiff suspension you do sacrifice comfort. >





Don't let the suspension and the quirky gearbox bother you though, because the drive is absolutely fantastic! The moment you floor the accelerator pedal, it's just between you, the car and the tarmac. With the V8 growling under the bonnet and the gorgeous sounding exhaust, I attacked each following corner with growing confidence.

The Vantage S may not be the fastest or smoothest sports car on the road, but it's just superb to drive and handle. Moreover, the visual appeal and the brand prestige make this Aston one of the most stylish cars available.

Would I get it? In the context of Singapore, it may be more prudent to get the standard base Vantage instead of the S version, unless you are seriously thinking of tracking the car often. Also, while the boot space of the Vantage is of a reasonable size for a sports car, that golf bag is *not* going to fit. In addition, I feel that a proper manual transmission will make the car better to drive.

That said, if you did have the Vantage S in your garage, I am sure you'll spent a lot of time just looking at it. **N.**

OMG! ONE MINUTE GLANCE

Max Power:	430 hp @ 7300 rpm
Max Torque:	470 Nm @ 5000 rpm
Max speed:	305 km/h
0-100 km/h:	4.6 seconds
Transmission:	7-speed automated manual
Kerb Weight:	1,610 kg
CO ₂ :	299 g/km



ONE OF THESE ASTONS IS NOT LIKE THE OTHER

How the V8 Vantage S differs from its standard brother

- 430bhp, 10 hp up from standard and 470 Nm of torque, 20 Nm increase.
- 30kg lighter
- Quicker steering rack (steering ratio to 15:1)
- New hardened springs and dampers
- Free-flowing exhaust silencer which maximises the V8 noise
- 19" wheels with wider tyres
- Larger brakes at 15" diameter with new 6 piston front calipers
- 7-speed gearbox which shifts 20% faster, with a lower final drive ratio of 4.182:1
- More aggressive styling with carbon fiber on the front and rear bumpers

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FIRST DRIVES

Porsche 911 Carrera S



WILL THE WIFE APPROVE?

It is known to be the perfect everyday sports car. With his family in tow, *Azfar Hashim* decides if the new 911 still fits the bill.

Photography | Low Fai Ming

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FIRST DRIVES

Porsche 911 Carrera S



"...the new Porsche 911 is the ultimate expression of Porsche's ethic; it is the highest point, if you like, on a graph which measures driver involvement next to performance."

Ask any layman on the street to differentiate the previous 997-generation 911 to the new 991 and they'll probably give you a loud sigh (of the 'you-are-wasting-my-time' sort, that is). You cannot blame them. You will be hard pressed - unless you're a Porsche aficionado - to really identify the key differences between the two.

That is until you view it from the side; the first give away. After all, the 991 was stretched by a further 100mm.

Porsche was wise enough though, they knew better than to do something radical (think F430 to 458 Italia, Murcielago to Aventador), or they would lose the plot. Anything too wild, and the car will fail to attract its target audience: those who enjoy driving and feel connected with the car BUT at the same time, one that's not too flashy nor too loud. The sort who has already past the BMW or Mercedes-Benz phase and are looking for something one step up in their (motoring) life.



“Aesthetically speaking, the 911 is a handsome piece of work. A new face, nicer alloys, longer side profiles and a reworked rear. If Porsche was vain before, they surely did a good job with their scalpels to give you this.”

Kind of predictable, really, but now that I’ve driven it, the new Porsche 911 (in Carrera S guise here) definitely reminds me of the ultimate expression of Porsche’s ethic; it is the highest point, if you like, on a graph which measures driver involvement next to performance.

There are quite a number of tourers out there that you can place next to this particular Porsche: BMW’s 640i Coupe (we cover that in this issue too), Mercedes-Benz’s SL350, the Maserati GranTurismo, and even to a certain extent, Audi’s S5 Coupe. But please understand this; all of those cars are brilliantly engineered, some of the best money can buy. However they are so crushingly competent to the point where you’ll find yourself getting a little bored too quickly. Ultimately, leaving you cold. The Maserati did that to me.

Aesthetically speaking, the 911 is a handsome piece of work. A new face (although still recognisably 911), nicer alloys (those are 20-inch wrapped in 245/35 R-20 front and rear 295/30 R-20 Pirellis), longer side profiles (apparent particularly from the B-pillar onwards) and a reworked rear (the slit tail lamps just made the rear sexaaay). If Porsche was vain before, they surely did a good job with their scalpels to give you this (FYI, half of the 911 consists of aluminium). It doesn’t end there though – the front track has been widened by 52mm, giving an imposing stance, good to keep those pesky Hyundai Sonatas off the fastest lane.



FIRST DRIVES

Porsche 911 Carrera S

Take a look inside and you'll be surprised how familiar it is. The centre console, adopted from the Panamera/Cayenne, doesn't look out of place here. In fact, every control button is much easier to reach with this configuration; surprisingly though, those mentioned controls feel no different than the 997's. Also deserving praise are the tightly screwed fittings. Every gap is properly shut, the extensively leathered interior together with soft plastics for the dashboard ensuring potential owners do not feel short-changed.

The 18-way seats are downright comfy and supportive, a form of art in Porsche's case. However if there's one thing you can nitpick on, it's how they lack shoulder support especially when you're driving it hard down a set of twisties. The 911 was never built as a four-seater, more as a 2+2, but the extended wheelbase did ensure extra legroom for rear passengers; although my 7-year old critic (a.k.a daughter) enjoyed the free space between her knee and the front seat, she complained of the rather stiff backrest. That aside, you can rest assure your child's booster seat or golf club can fit in. It's boot remains up ahead, and it's just big enough to fit Seletar in there.

Engineered for driver's satisfaction, the perfectly sized steering wheel gets a flat-bottom. On it, you do get the usual audio control, paddle-shifter and whatnot, but the coolest bit here is of course the classy strip that displays what mode you're currently on - Sport or Sport Plus. Toggle around a little bit more, and you find yourself the g-force meter. And unlike other cars, the 911 doesn't get a traditional glass sunroof - instead, the aluminium roof will open wide to welcome extra sunlight. Good attention to details, Porsche.

The Carrera S retains the 3.8-liter flat-six, but gets a power hike from 385bhp to 400bhp. That's not all: previously, all 420Nm of torque presented itself at 4,400rpm. Now, an extra 20Nm will kick in at 5,600rpm - meaning you get more punch in the higher rev range. It also translates to a shorter century sprint timing of 4.1 seconds. Figures aside, the car actually feels lazy initially. But push it close to 4,000rpm and suddenly the action builds up and tadaa, you're way beyond the legal speed limits. Also, Porsche hasn't forgotten about Mother Earth. This 991 is 16% more efficient than the 997 - thanks largely to the engine auto start/stop function and the significant weight difference.

Purists might not like this, but the 7-speed PDK box' is a gem. It responds quickly and effectively, downshifting when you need it to without a huff. The engine even blips itself when you manually bring a gear down - so yes, you can appear as a real hero while driving this car. If you love hearing the engine singing away in all its glory, push it all the way to the 7,600rpm redline. Ahh... sheer aural pleasure.

Throttle inputs start even as you're just thinking of pressing your right foot. The nose goes where you point it; quick direction changes are easy. This might be the first 911 to get for itself an electric power steering ('electro-mechanical' in Porsche's words), but by golly, it doesn't feel that way. Instead, it acts not much different than the hydraulic set-up in the 997's (weight wise), the key difference only apparent at three-figure speeds where you can feel the weight and the steering wheel staying straight.

Credit for knowing how much grip you have goes to the Porsche Torque Vectoring Plus and active PASM dampers. If you've always had the impression that rear-wheel driven Porsches allow you to be a hooligan (actually they do), in the case of the 991, it provides more balance and front-end bite. You can provoke it, but all you'll get is some understeer and then followed by a tinge of oversteer, but the rear will not kick-out. Never. These technological nannies allow you to take bends faster and with more surefootedness...

So far, the 991 seems to have ticked all the right boxes. If you're still not convinced and think the Porsche 911 is just a toy for the weekend, remember this: overall quality is a notch higher, the speed is there when you want it and the brakes are utterly dependable. Practically speaking, it's got the capacity and the capability. So, if you want an everyday sports car, the Porsche 911 Carrera S will suffice. The wife should wilfully approve. **N.**



OMG! ONE MINUTE GLANCE

Max Power:	400 hp @ 7400 rpm
Max Torque:	440 Nm @ 5600 rpm
Max speed:	304 km/h
0-100 km/h:	4.1 seconds
Transmission:	7-speed PDK Dual-clutch
Kerb Weight:	1,395 kg
CO ² :	210 g/km

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FIRST DRIVES

BMW 640i Coupé

INCREASE YOUR 6 DRIVE.

911 too showy for you? Munich's grand tourer has undergone a new model change, *Joel Tam* drives the new base BMW 6 Series.

Photography | Joel Tam





"BMW's competitors may know how to make quality interiors, but the Munich boys are still champs at designing cabins that center around the driver."

Get comfortable in the well bolstered seats and everything is within reach, chunky gear lever, iDrive, and a center-mounted 10.2 inch central screen that will display everything you need to know about the car. You immediately feel like you're in command of a jet of some sort.

To some extent, it feels like one too. Powered by a 3.0-liter, TwinPower (BMW-speak for twin-scroll) turbo 6-cylinder engine with 315 bhp, the car will propel to 100 km/h from standstill in 4.8 seconds.

BMW engines are really superb. Gone are the days of their revvy naturally-aspirated 6 cylinders though, the company now employs the help of force induction to help keep emission levels low. That's perfectly fine by me - the unit found in the 640i is smooth, torquey, and still has a bit of soul left. What it probably needs is a louder exhaust system to amplify its vocal chords.

We spent a good deal of time with the 650i convertible (turbocharged 4.4-litre V8). Having driven both engines, I'd have to say that the 640i strikes the best balance between power and weight, being 90kg lighter than the V8.

We're not sure if BMW's plan to launch the convertible 6 Series before the Coupé really worked. Personally, I've noticed far more convertibles on the road. It's not like the Coupé is that new either, it has been a few months since it was launched.

Whatever the reasons for the slow take-up rate of the 6 Series Coupé are, they're unfounded. Because this car is great. It's not perfect. But it is great.

I'll be frank. I never liked the former 6 Series (E63) very much. It was oh-kay to look at, but I'd never part money to own one. The new one (F13), is a whole different story. They got the proportions right with this one. The lights, both upfront and down at the back, are sleek and elegant. The overall body shape cuts a handsome yet foxy silhouette. The frontend has an appearance of a shark's nose, giving it a rather intimidating countenance. Like all good designs, it looks like nothing else on the road.

Step inside and things get better. We're familiar with this interior from previous trysts with the 6 Series convertible. BMW's competitors may know how to make quality interiors, but the Munich boys are still champs at making cabins that center around the driver.





Having 8 gear ratios may sound like too many, but once you're used to it, the gearbox is a peach to use. It not only helps to keep you in the right rev range, it promotes better economy too. As does the new mode found in the 640i Coupé - Eco Pro. So let's say you're feeling guilty for redlining the car the past couple of trips, switch it to Eco Pro mode, and what it does is turn your tiger into a pussy. Sort of. As the name suggests, this mode can save up to 20% of fuel by optimising the air-con system and pairing down the throttle response and gearbox shift patterns.

But please, if you want to save the earth, buy a Prius.

The 640i Coupé should be left in Sport mode at the very least. Where all 450 Nm of torque can be called upon for some road burning antics in an instant.

Taking the car through a series of corners, the agility surprises me. Despite being a large car (larger than the model it replaces too!), the car does not feel cumbersome. Fling it into a corner, and the Coupé will hold the line tight. I must say though, the steering feel is artificial. But it is well-weighted, and there is just enough feedback to tell you what's going on, without being intrusive.

In other words, it's the perfect grand tourer. Comfortable, fast and luxurious enough for you to look swanky in. Throw in the sexy big wheels and new Coupé-only LED angel-eyes, there's nothing that looks quite so alluring.

If you're the practical type, you'd do better in an Audi S5, but if you want something different, something that is more driver-oriented, the BMW 640i is it. **N.**

"...if you want to save the earth, buy a Prius. The 640i Coupé should be left in Sport mode at the very least. Where all 450 Nm of torque can be called upon for some road burning antics in an instant."

OMG! ONE MINUTE GLANCE

Max Power:	315 hp @ 5800 rpm
Max Torque:	450 Nm @ 1400 rpm
Max speed:	304 km/h
0-100 km/h:	4.8 seconds
Transmission:	8-speed Automatic
Kerb Weight:	1,785 kg
CO ² :	181 g/km



PERFORMANCE CAR OF THE YEAR

Enough about the latest cars. These are the ones that enthusiasts are raving about. But which one is best?

Azfar Hashim leads the N.GINE team to find out.

Photography | Low Fai Ming

MINI Cooper S Coupé

Power: 184 bhp @ 5,500 rpm
Torque: 260 Nm @ 1,600 rpm
0-100 km/h: 7.1 seconds
Top speed: 224 km/h
CO₂: 155 g/km

Golf GTI Edition 35

Power: 235 bhp @ 6,300 rpm
Torque: 300 Nm @ 2,200 rpm
0-100 km/h: 6.6 seconds
Top speed: 246 km/h
CO₂: 185 g/km

Audi RS3

Power: 340 bhp @ 5,400 rpm
Torque: 450 Nm @ 1,600 rpm
0-100 km/h: 4.6 seconds
Top speed: 250 km/h
CO₂: 212 g/km

BMW 1 M Coupé

Power: 340 bhp @ 5,900 rpm
Torque: 450 Nm @ 4,500 rpm
0-100 km/h: 4.9 seconds
Top speed: 250 km/h
CO₂: 224 g/km

SJZ909Z

Porsche Cayman R

Power: 330 bhp @ 7,400 rpm
Torque: 370 Nm @ 4,750 rpm
0-100 km/h: 4.9 seconds
Top Speed: 280 km/h
CO₂: 218 g/km

Renault Megane RS Monaco

Power: 250 bhp @ 5,500 rpm
Torque: 340 Nm @ 3,000 rpm
0-100 km/h: 6.1 seconds
Top Speed: 245 km/h
CO₂: 191 g/km



If you're fortunate, you can afford all three for your garage. But if you could only choose one, which one deserves your money?

ABOVE \$250K CATEGORY

As you already knew, the Cayman R is the only N.A one among the trio. It gets a tuned 3.4-liter Direct Fuel Injection (DFI) flat-six powerplant, and mated to the by-now staple 7-speed PDK 'box, churns out some 330bhp and 370Nm of torque. The RS3 is the smallest in this group, but that doesn't mean it can

be messed around with: pop the bonnet and you get a turbocharged 5-cylinder 2.5-liter engine. Paired up to a 7-speed dual-clutch S-tronic transmission, and you see 340bhp and 450Nm – suddenly it doesn't sound so slow anymore. Let's not forget BMW's 1 M coupe too. Like the bluntly overused saying 'don't judge a book by its cover', this wildly-styled 'baby M' does have a lot going on; a 3.0-liter six-cylinder and twin turbo'd, no-frills 6-speed manual transmission, 340bhp and 450Nm of torque.

Basking in the open, these three cars are definitely more dramatic than the cars they're based on. They all featured additional bodywork, bigger wheels and spoilers that definitely benefits; not a case of slap-on-for-the-heck-of-it. Then again, all three should answer to different groups.

The 1 M would definitely be favoured by those of you who love scaring the nuts off lesser boy racers, the somewhat compact RS3 more for the sort who enjoys surprising unsuspecting road-hogs and the Cayman R appropriate for drivers that want a svelte sports coupe that offers more than what's expected, without being too loud or garish.

In terms of interior, the RS3 - hands down - proved to be the most practical. With five doors, a decent boot, a properly sized cabin (you can comfortably include three other adults in here) and idiot-proof control layout, you know it will be the less distracting to drive. Simply put, it offers a no-frills interior with good build quality. But here's one big problem: at this price point and in local context, you cannot present yourself as 'no-frills'. GPS isn't standard, no sunroof and the entire dashboard is

really showing its age. Thankfully, the pair of supportive front sports seats provide good amount of bodily grip when you're having fun...

The 1 M on the other hand, is a really pleasant place to be in. It has all the sporty vibes in there – the supportive seats and perfectly sized steering wheel, including interior bits wrapped in Alcantara are lovely. Makes you want to just drive the entire day, till the tank runs dry. If that's not enough for you, BMW will even happily sell you a sports steering wheel (as seen in this test car) and a pair of sports seats. What's surprising though, is how practical the 1 M is despite being a sports car: boot is commodious for a weekend trip up North, and if need be, the rear backrest fold down (similarly for the RS3) as well. However, you can only bring three other friends along at one time.



And then there's the Cayman R, touted as the real sports car in this group. It can only sit two, with some bits already removed (e.g. no proper door handle and a roofless instrument cowl) to shed weight and the only one here offering a mid-engine configuration - definitely different than the other two contenders.

TEST DAY

Besides the grey clouds, the morning was clear and weather good - perfect timing for a thorough test, plus it makes life far much easier for our photographer, Fai. We have six cars, collectively worth close to a very cool \$1.5 million, and we have only one full day with the three 'Above \$250k' contenders; every minute counts today. By sunset, we need to have all the cars returned.

We picked up the cars in the following order: Krado in the 1 M, Joel in the RS3 and finally myself in the Cayman R. After a briefing at our rendezvous point somewhere in central Singapore (and how can we forget breakfast?), we hit the ECP for a quick highway blast.

At this point, it's very apparent: the 1 M and RS3 are head-to-head all thanks to their force-fed lumps. The Cayman R, although not catapulting as rapidly, is delivering thrills in a league of its own: you can let it play second fiddle, trailing just behind the two, but when it's 'time to show them who's boss', it just goes. For added drama, simply switch to 'Sport Plus', and listen to both the engine and exhaust growl like a Mozart piece. Next thing you know, you're (a) head-to-tail with the other two, and then (b) smiling sinisterly and doing the dreaded 'L' gesture with hand on forehead at both. A little childish, I know, and very unbecoming of a Porsche driver. But heck, you just proved the point that 'there's no replacement for displacement, baby'. Handling wise, it's a very sharp tool on the twisties and there's very little need to step on the brake, you can dap the accelerator mid way, keep it controlled and just floor it as you exit the tight corner - the rear will kick out lightly, enough to give the driver behind you some exciting visual. A smooth counter-steer, and you're back in control.

We stopped for a quick swap. Now it's yours truly in the 1 M, Krado in the RS3 and Joel in the Cayman R. Funny



"At this point, it's very apparent: the 1 M and RS3 are head-to-head all thanks to their force-fed lumps. The Cayman R, although not catapulting as rapidly, is delivering thrills in a league of its own."

thing is we weren't terrorizing the roads, just merely driving as close as possible to each other - but the god of the roads was on our side, and the roads were impossibly clear with every road user on the fastest lane making clearance for us. Probably they assumed the white 1 M (and Cayman R even) test cars are the TP's latest unmarked toys.

Whatever it was, it offered the opportunity to really see how the 1 M's acceleration, pick-up, power delivery, gearbox and most importantly, brakes, perform in the real world. Let's face it: this car is built as a daily sports



cars, but in its lifetime here, will probably spend only one-quarter of its time on tracks up North. Most of the time, in the dry at least, there's nothing much that tells you you're in a rear-wheel drive car, apart from the constantly flashing Dynamic Stability Control warning light. You can turn that off; even then it requires a bit of provocation to induce anything but oversteer. That said, the 1 M is tenaciously enjoyable - count yourself fortunate if you're able to spend time with one every single day.

Then it's the last swap of the day - my turn with the RS3. It's not my first time in the RS3, but I needed a

refresher. I do remember how sticky it was on tarmac though. With such an engine packed into that compact body, it might look and sound wrong at first. In fact, some might think if not for quattro, the RS3 will be the new king of torque-steer and under-steer. But by golly, this car is no laughing matter - floor it when the light turns green and it catapults blindingly fast, way ahead of the Cayman R and 1 M. You can feel power being delivered to all four corners cohesively with no slight indication of torque-steer. From the helm, it does have a sort of neutral and flowing feel, but frequent high-speed changes of direction will catch the RS3 out eventually.

"...it isn't just quick in an ultra competent clinical fashion;
it really involves the driver!"



You have to work the wheel harder and faster to keep it all together. Fun, but after some time, also boring. Why? Simply because you know it's not entirely you: Think of it as half car, half you - one whole clinical experience.

CRUNCH TIME

So after a long day of driving and deliberating, we set off to return all three cars in the same order we first picked them up. It's not easy picking a Performance Car of the Year 2011 for this category. All three cars presented themselves as worthy contenders, with a very good balance of both pros and cons. Strengths and weaknesses. Which caused us all to even scrutinize the cars further than before.

The result relied on the following factors: Engine performance, ride & handling, exterior aesthetics, interior aesthetics & build quality and packaging as a whole.

Hence this is our final order: The winner of the Performance Car of the Year 2011 in the Above \$250k

Category title goes to the Porsche Cayman R. Behind it in second place is the BMW 1 M Coupe. Very closely after in third place is the Audi RS3.

In the crawl of the AYE, the BMW and Audi do make sense. They are after all two very nice cars with a great deal of prestige. Given the choice of all three, it would be tempting to tick the box for either 1 M or RS3. But our roads and proving ground (sorry readers, we can't disclose this!) have proven (no pun intended) it this way. Fun was what we were also seeking, and while both these two truly delivers it, it just doesn't satisfy as much as how the Cayman R did.

It is very, very good, the stripped-down interior gives a really authentic feel and the way the steering kicks back will give you some added manliness. If you want to have lots of fun, it has to be the Cayman R. More importantly, it isn't just quick in an ultra competent clinical fashion; it really involves the driver. **N.**

N.GINE
MAGAZINE

WINNER

PERFORMANCE CAR OF THE YEAR
ABOVE \$250K CATEGORY

PORSCHE CAYMAN R

We have a good mix of competitors in this category, each one with their own strengths and weaknesses - but who made the best driver's car for less than \$250k? Let's find out.

BELOW \$250K CATEGORY

Day 2 of our Performance Car of the Year 2011 evaluation and photo-shoot: we started the day early once again, just like the day before.

With a rumble, the 250bhp Renault Megane RS Monaco GP Limited Edition's (which I shall refer to RS-M as my fingers might get tired of typing the full model name in its entirety repeatedly) four-cylinder breathes life. I slot the RS-M's six-speed gearbox into first and the front-wheel drive car shuffles its way, out onto the road and away.

The plan today is to put the RS-M, Mini Cooper S Coupe and VW Golf GTI E35 into perspective: which one has the best of everything for drivers like you and I.

The E35 should pop into the picture automatically when you mention the Renault - like the French hot-hatch, it is a limited-edition model that arrived towards the end of 2011. Shove the three-door versus five-door, manual

versus DSG arguments aside and they both present the same case, if you want a splendidly fast hatchback, either one should be high up on your list.

The E35 has undergone a power upgrade and now has 235 bhp as opposed to the 'lesser' GTI, which only has 210bhp. It has a 6-speed DSG, and a very cool interior too. It is also the most expensive in this category at \$209,300, a lot pricier than Mini's \$182,800 Cooper S Coupe.

In truth, this Mini wasn't on our original shortlist, but then we realized what we were missing: a 184bhp four-cylinder turbocharged, sweet handling front-driver with an oh-so-sweet steering feel, all in a funky and unique coupe package. So in it came.

TEST DAY 1

The Renault in my hands has been a favourite among the burnpavement.com team, highly regarded for its poise and fun factor. But the same can be said of the E35 too - it seems like VW finally has it sorted in giving us the most fulfilling and complete GTI, ever. The overall package is a lot to love - fact is, there's nothing you can fault here. Then there's the Coupe - in all honesty, I was a tad lukewarm with this car. Probably I'm too used to the hatch version, and always had the impression that a Mini should just remain in that body shape. However it did leave a deep impression and dished out alot in the fun department. After awhile, that love-it-or-hate-shape did begin to grow on us too.



With a power output of 250bhp, 340Nm of torque and a century sprint timing of 6.1 seconds, the RS-M is the most powerful in the lot. But power alone just doesn't cut it today – its delivery, ride & handling play a crucial part too.

The next and also powerful car is the E35. There's 235bhp and 300Nm to play around with, and it goes from zero to hero in 6.6 seconds – just a little short of the RS-M. There's a lot going on for the E35, since it's touted as 'the best GTI ever' by VW.

It seems like a mismatch, this Mini, to be the only coupe placed amongst the hot-hatches. In fact, look at what it has on offer: 184bhp and 240Nm, getting to 100km/h in 7.1 seconds. Not as much as the said two contenders, but here's one secret weapon: at only 1,190kg, the Coupe is significantly the lightest when compared to the RS-M's 1,387kg and E35's 1,420kg.

PERFORMANCE

During a highway blast, there's little to pull all three apart from each other. In all honesty though, it's the Coupe that amuses us most – it catapults you forward very quickly, and it did catch both the RS-M and E35 off guard.

When the road opens up though, it's a whole different story. The E35 will zoom past the Coupe, followed by the RS-M. And it's not because the VW is the more punchier car though – it's merely because the E35's DSG 'box is responsive and as quick as lightning compared to the self-cogging RS-M. Think about it: by the time the driver in the RS-M clutches in and starts downshifting from sixth to third, the E35's driver, who's driving in Sport mode and just needs to floor the accelerator, is already in third gear and accelerating forward. Ahh... the wonders of dual-clutch autos.

Off the line, the E35 and Coupe lunges forward like a bull, while the RS-M in a slightly muted manner. But the moment it catches up in second then third gear (E35 and Coupe's gearshifts were done manually via '+/-' to make it as fair as possible), it just blows the other two away; a real surprise considering how quietly it does it. In the E35, you hear both the engine and exhaust roaring away. Then in the Coupe, you also get the engine and exhaust notes, but look in the rear view mirror and you also see the boot spoiler standing at attention.

All three were driven along a set of twisty roads in the western side of our sunny island on the second part of the day. Like a bunch of animals looking for trouble, we drove the RS M, E35 and Coupe hard and fast whenever the roads opened up. While the E35 and Coupe both can be driven in Sport mode, the RS-M was left in its standard set-up: we collectively called this the 'Awesome' mode. Sounding like a bunch of himbos, true, but bear with us.

"...it's the Mini that amuses us most – it catapults you forward very quickly, and it did catch both the RS-M and E35 off guard."

The RS-M's steering does indeed feel initially light and vague as you turn into a corner, then as the power is applied and the mechanical LSD starts working, you feel the wheel kick back in your hands. After driving all the cars, it can feel a bit much and it certainly wouldn't be there if Renault had gone down the four-wheel drive route. But even so, it never gets out of hand. Keep your foot on the throttle and the front-drive RS-M sorts itself out and heads up the road, not the nearest bush. Learn to live with the squirming feel from the steering, indeed learn to enjoy it as we did and you'll realize that the RS-M is putting its power and torque down exceptionally well, without any flashing traction control lights cutting in as in the case of the Coupe.

It loves to be driven hard and fast, and if you're the sort of driver who's technical and particular, the Coupe should potentially impress. As per the Cooper S hatchback, the Coupe's steering feels meaty and weighty, and overall, this is plain fun. Oh, and the responsive brakes does its job spot-on, especially when the idiot ahead decided to cut across without indicating.





It's not everyday that you get to decide which car gets to beat everyone else. So our team started out by taking an oath. An oath to be honest and completely impartial to any brand, and most importantly, to not accept money or advertising revenue in exchange for a favourable result (not that any of the car companies offered anyway). We swore to be truthful in the presentation of the facts and promised to drive the cars very hard (on your behalf of course). So read on and enjoy, nothing is sugar-coated here (if you don't see another issue of N.GINE, at least you'll know why).

But unfortunately Mini still hasn't sorted this out though – torque steer. You have to grip the steering wheel hard when launching off the traffic-lights, failure to do so will see it twitch to the left rudely, and the driver having to fight back just to make it head towards the correct direction. That, plus a fair degree of body roll prevent the Coupe from having the complete package.

The E35 gets for itself the Adaptive Chassis Control; and with that, you get to choose between 'Comfort' and 'Sport', or you can just let it run on its own. Some might opine the addition of this feature is tacky, but

look at it this way - at least you can set it to 'Comfort' when driving with the kids or in-laws in tow, leave it to its own element when you can't be bothered and just want to get home with the missus, or simply set 'Sport' to play street-racer. Of course, it deserves to be driven in 'Sport' - that's how you'll truly appreciate the car's handling prowess.

In the dry, the warning light flashes well before the tyres begin to protest. There's a very, very large amount of mechanical grip from those fat tyres, and you have to seriously misjudge things to find the limit on the road in the dry.

CRUNCH TIME

It was a hard decision, but as the day came to an end, we decided to say farewell to the Mini Cooper S Coupe first. Not because it wasn't good enough; in fact it was very good. Just not good enough to win.

Yes, it could keep up with the RS-M and E35 without a single whiff of inferiority complex, but 'keeping up' isn't going to cut it. We love how it handles thanks to that short wheelbase and chunky steering, but the twitchy front-end (though fun) can be irksome; despite its appreciable power and speed, it just won't fully satisfy the truly enthusiastic driver.

So who came up tops in this category? Well we found it very hard to decide between the last two contenders. Both E35 and RS-M are equally competent and compelling, yet both are not without their flaws.

We needed more time. More space. More speed (without getting caught). We needed a place with long straights, sweeping B-roads, tight hill climbs and deserted twisting highway roads.

Come to think of it, we know just the place...

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FEATURE

PCOTY

ESCAPE TO THE HILLS

Two countries. Six Malaysian states. 2,000 km of pavement to burn. Only one will be crowned.

Photography | Low Fai Ming & Joel Tam

Volkswagen says the new Golf GTI Edition 35 is the ultimate Golf GTI. We agree. You might simplistically refer to this one as a hot-hatch, but to VW, it's more than that. It's a limited edition model, produced to commemorate the 35th anniversary of an icon that has legions of fans worldwide. They even went on to give it more power and package it beautifully – this shade of red is just perfect for the car.

The same case with the Renault Megane RS Monaco GP Limited Edition; as the name suggests, it is also a special version of a hot-hatch that's identified as an icon among fans who are in the know. This model, built to pay homage to Renault's connection to the F1 world, can only be ordered in this shade of white.

Deciding who got top honours was tough. So, to find out, we decided to do things a bit differently – an extended drive across the Causeway, to see how both these cars will outshine the other and handle the demanding roads we have in store.

LONG-DISTANCE TEST - DAY 1

We left immediately after picking both cars up from the respective companies.

Via the Second Link and then finally hitting the North-South highway, both cars were very eager to catapult to their rated top speeds. Among the two, it's a more enjoyable task to be done with the E35 – thanks to both engine and exhaust notes.

The fastest lane was home for the entire journey, occasionally overtaking from the left instead when slower vehicles were too vehement to give the rocket-like Megane and Golf the right of way. It's a revelation too, a sheer display of how 235bhp and 250bhp is more than enough to make you king of the Malaysian

highway. Well there were instances of bigger and more powerful cars on both tails, but nothing can faze these two, which will end up incessantly moving along.

On a rolling highway drag from 80km/h, we noticed that while both cars were head to head in third and fourth gear (the E35 was shifted manually via the gear shifter to mimic the RS-M's manual stick), the Renault will eventually edge forward from the VW come fifth and sixth gear. A tight race between the two in a straight line, but the 15bhp advantage does showcase itself eventually.

Driven at night, we noticed how both car's Xenon headlamps provide good vision ahead – throws are far and wide. Useful to have good vision on pitch-dark roads; so you can still push the cars as you are aware of whatever's up ahead (eg. police road blocks).

The entire journey, from Singapore all the way to the Simpang Pulai exit (before the long climb up to Cameron Highlands) took close to seven hours and along the way, we only stopped twice to refuel both cars and drivers – once in Ayer Keroh, and the other in Tapah. It was a long blast, and we also did several high-speed runs followed by the 110km/h cruises – either way, the RS-M and E35 displayed their everyday usability. The suspension is tuned for sporty and lively driving, but it's nothing hard or overly stiff to break your spine or make you grit your teeth.

The drive up to Cameron Highlands from the Simpang Pulai exit, if you've driven on it, does mimic those touge videos you see online; the roads are twisty with the occasional straights as well, but one wrong move and it's into the mountainside you go. Both cars excel here, but the RS-M displays an extra tinge of surefootedness over the E35 – despite the fact that the Renault is the bigger car, the VW is a tad heavier.





LONG-DISTANCE TEST – DAY 2

While our photographer, Fai, waited for the fog to clear, the drizzle to stop and the cows to fly, us three testers had little else to do but stroll around, gazing thoughtfully at the cars. Sometimes a car's appearance grows on you, sometimes it's the reverse. With the Megane, we just knew that "this is it!", we liked it the first time we took it out and it just got better. Not only does it have a particularly smooth-flowing and well-balanced form, its racy alloys, low-profile tyres and additional bodykit adds to the aggression without attracting too much attention.

The E35 is no different. Although it looks more 'traditional' when placed next to the RS-M, there's a sleek and sophisticated persona about the car. Those wheels, the subtle kit, the sporty face – VW got it all right. Aside from that bright red paintwork, this is the epitome of understated sportiness.

We began the day with a cold start, literally. It was a wet and foggy morning, which meant we had to practice some self-restraint. Didn't help that all four of us over-filled our guts with cheap local food.

The mission was simple: From Cameron Highlands, drive it up and down the empty but tricky Gua Musang road, known among some as 'the twisty highway in the sky'. It cuts through mountains, hills and valleys, also consisting of bridges high up above rivers. A splendid piece of road. Throw in two brilliant cars like these – it was a delectable recipe for fun!

Most parts of this road are smooth, certain sections are pothole laden, but generally it is wide and not as off-cambered as some might think. While the RS-M leads the way, the E35 was happily closing in and keeping to its tail – every sweeping corner, every tight left-hander. The roads are wet, but there is still a vast amount of grip on this two.

In the RS-M, you get very good feedback from the steering and every movement can be felt instantly – this car talks, and yet it listens to you like a shrink at the same time. It's very entertaining as you change directions too, the car is always planted onto the road and the seats hug you well. A precise gear shifter helps as well; there's no way you can accidentally engage third when you want fifth.

The E35 is sticky and very responsive too, but it doesn't provide the level of surefootedness the Renault has in abundance. The smaller wheels (18" vs. the RS-M's 19") do make it a more comfortable car to pilot. Body movements are more apparent here too, but the well-weighted helm does make up for it. VW's awesome paddle-shifters are standard – making the drive effortless but far from boring. It's easy to feel like a driving-demigod behind the wheel of the E35, because it really is so easy to drive fast. The seats too, are great, a smart combination of leather and Alcantara, it sticks to your clothes like glue, which is useful down this Gua Musang road.





As the roads started to dry up, we pushed these two cars closer to their limits: hard acceleration, late braking, aggressive cornering lines, you name it. We weren't going home till we found out who had the chops.

More fun can be had in the RS-M. It takes a lot to breach its limitations, but switch the traction control off, and lift-off oversteer is easily delivered on demand. The E35 on the other hand prefers to keep it safe, and there isn't as much hooliganism as the RS-M. You reach the E35's handling limits earlier too, but all is well and predictable when you get there.

In terms of brakes, both cars deliver speed-killing power. VW manages to stay on par with the Renault here despite the French's flashier Brembos. In fact, there is somehow more braking confidence with the E35 compared to the base GTI.

PICKING THE WINNER

After holding on to both the Renault Megane RS Monaco GP Limited Edition and Volkswagen Golf GTI Edition 35 for a (literally) cool 36 hours, it was time to come up with a decision as to who deserves the title of Performance Car of the Year 2011 in the 'Below \$250k' category.

Again, it was an extremely tough decision. Both cars proved to be highly capable in their own right and we swung from car to car as the deliberating went on for days before a verdict was finally reached.

In the end, we went back to the reason we came here; to find out who really delivered the thrills and spills without compromise. That's how we decided that...

"That slick gear shift, punchy engine, how much of a keen and able handler it is over a range of road conditions, the practicality, and the asking price ... it's an unbeatable package."



...the Renault Megane RS Monaco GP Limited Edition is our winner for this category.

Simply because of its stellar performance as a daily sports car. That slick gear shift, punchy engine, how much of a keen and able handler it is over a range of road conditions, the practicality and the asking price, all combine to make it an unbeatable package.

We're sure it can have breakfast at Sepang, lunch in Pasir Gudang, dinner along Orchard Road, and a slow cruise down the ECP before heading back home - all in one day.

VW's GTI E35 came really close here. Really, really close. We love its DSG gearbox, its get-in-and-blast-off nature, plus it is really handy around corners of various angles too. But if it had the handling prowess and a tad bit more shove, it could've shared the top spot together with the Renault.

Let's see what the year holds... **N.**

The final leg of our Performance Car of the Year story was powered by Caltex Techron® - Enjoy The Journey.

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MODIFIED

ABT R8



WAKING ABT THE NEIGHBOURS

TWIN
FEATURE!
ABT

In this first issue of N.GINE, we feature not one but two ABT (say 'UP') cars. *Joel Tam* drives this not-so-subtle R8.

Photography | *Joel Tam*

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MODIFIED

ABT R8

Power-to-weight ratio isn't everything. Imagine driving a 600 bhp Bentley that weighs 2,000 kg, versus a 300 bhp lightened DC2R with 1,000 kg. Both have the same power-to-weight ratio, but we're pretty sure the Integra will be more agile and quite possibly, faster!

Weighing in at 1,565 kg, the R8 is no lightweight sportscar. To feel and drive more nimbly, the donor R8 had to go under a weight loss program.

First things first, a new colour had to be picked. Using Sikkens water-based paint, AutoVox's in-house paint specialists got to work to blend a unique gun-metal hue specially for the car.

The car was stripped down and bumpers were replaced with light-weight ABT aerodynamic parts made from carbon fibre. The rear bumper features diagonal outlets for the stacked Capristo exhaust tips.

Capristo exhausts have a truly orgasmic howl, the one on this R8 is no different. The best part is, you can control the noise via a remote control fob. Press once for 'HELL', press once more for 'HEAVEN' - which noise is for which description is entirely up to you.

A carbon fibre rear wing adds more aggression and kills the clean lines of the stock car's profile. Nice, but we do wish it was wider as it looks a tad small now.

The front bumper was selectively painted to reveal the natural grain of the carbon fibre at appointed areas. To make sure the bumper is protected from high speed bumps, a set of KW coilovers with Hydraulic Lift System was installed. Sweet!

The interior has been fully redone as well. Alcantara with nappa leather were the main choice of materials for the soft areas. A combination of red and black shades was chosen to really bring out the interior. One thing to note is that Alcantara is also lighter than standard leather, which contributes to the weight-shedding program significantly.

Carbon fibre inserts on the steering wheel, gear shift knob, handbrake handle, entrance sills, interior panels, all help to make the exterior and interior more cohesive.

It's a lovely place to be in, comfortable yet sporty without being too loud. The fit and finish is also perfect, considering the whole interior was stripped out and put back together again.



"Gunning down Upp Thomson Road, birds would flee from their peaceful nests, while monkeys scampered away into the trees as this screaming supercar wailed past them."

A name synonymous with quality enhancement parts, ABT is a German tuning house with a strong presence here in Singapore. As sole importer for the brand, AutoVox recently partnered with ABT Sportline GmbH to open a Singapore showroom along Commonwealth.

Moving along the rear of the car, you'll notice a double bladed side intake instead of the usual single vent. This ensures optimum cooling for the V8 that sits behind. Also in carbon fibre are the new side skirts that also gives the car a 2-tone effect.

Pop the rear hatch and you'll see more carbon fibre, which tells you how serious this car is about weight loss. A slight boost in power comes from feeding the 4.2 V8 with a set of PiperCross sports air filter system. Where there's an 'in', there's an 'out' - handmade Capristo stainless steel high-airflow exhaust system with valve control takes care of the exiting air, helping the car to breathe better, while making it sound downright awesome.

Unsprung weight is also key in a car's performance, so ABT superlight forged CR wheels lend a hand in this area. Measuring 9 X 19 in front and 11 X 19 at the rear, with Continental CSC 5 tyres wrapping the wheels at a profile of 235/35/19 in front and 305/30/19 at the rear.

Enough about the specs. So what's it like to drive? The car definitely feels more nimble than a standard R8. Lithe and agile, the ABT R8 turns in with more liveliness and darts around with more fervor. The R-tronic gearbox is still a chore at low speeds, but at full chat, the car is staggering. AutoVox's Xcelerate e-throttle enhancer sharpens the throttle response, and the car pounces like a tiger would on its prey every time you floor the pedal.

Did we mention tiger? I think we meant a spine-tingling freakin' banshee! Because that's what the car sounds like at full chat! Gunning down Upper Thomson Road, birds would flee from their peaceful nests, while monkeys scampered away into the trees as this screaming supercar wailed past them.





Once we got on the highway though, a press of the remote valve reverted all things back to normal, lest we captured the wrong attention.

One special mention has to go to the ride quality of this car. As always, KWs impress me once again. Supple, relaxed and well damped, the suspension is both sharp and comfortable - an almost impossible combination in most cases.

All in all, a very extensive and detailed modification process that deserves a two-thumbs up! The ABT R8 will go on sale soon - I will go as far as to guarantee that this is one car you can part your money to get. It's a gem! **N.**

(We understand that the car has since been sold at time of this magazine's launch)

"...KW's (suspension) impress me once again. Supple, relaxed and well damped, the suspension is both sharp and comfortable - an almost impossible combination in most cases.

OMG! ONE MINUTE GLANCE

Max Power:	420 hp @ 7800 rpm
Max Torque:	430 Nm @ 4500 rpm
Max speed:	301 km/h
0-100 km/h:	4.4 seconds
Transmission:	6-speed R-Tronic
Kerb Weight:	1,558 kg
CO ₂ :	315 g/km

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MODIFIED

ABT Q5

BARKING ABT THE RIGHT TREE

TWIN
FEATURE!
ABT

Ok, we promise that we're done with the wordplay. But this wide and wonderful Q5 has received the ABT treatment, and *Joel Tam* can't help but yelp about it!

Photography | Low Fai Ming





"The first thing that hits you is the fact that this baby is wider than usual. Thanks to the ABT fender extensions and huge 22" wheels, the car now has a visual stance of an overgrown white pitbull terrier."

Sometimes you don't realise what you want until you've been given a taste of it. I hate that. Until today, I was perfectly fine with the way a stock Audi Q5 looks and performs. I'll say it again - until today.

What you see here is a result of some bored (but talented) Germans who decided to kill time by tuning an SUV. It's not their first time at it, they've worked on the VW Touareg, VW Tiguan and Audi Q7 (they get bored alot). Now, they've done it with the Audi Q5.

To some, it might seem a bit over-the-top. But trust me, give it time and the ABT Q5 will grow on you.

The first thing that hits you is the fact that this baby is wider than usual. Thanks to the ABT fender extensions, the car now has a visual stance of an overgrown white pitbull terrier.

To add to that aggressive appearance, the ABT front apron, rear apron and side skirts all work cohesively to complete the aerodynamic kit.

Up in the front, a strong front guard with a chunky grille changes the face of the Q5 completely, giving it a look only an ABT car could have.

At the rear, a 4-pipe rear silencer peeps out of the rear apron, hinting at the augmented power that has been added onto the car.

ABT Springs lower the car by about 30 mm. Which is just about right, a 'slammed' SUV would just look plain silly. It's not all just for show though, when we pitched the car into a series of corners, the lower center of gravity and uprated spring rate gave the car sharper handling characteristics too.



70 | 71
MODIFIED
 ABT Q5



But is there pace to match the grace? Indeed there is. Added power comes from an ABT Power tuning program for the 2.0T engine. Developing 275 bhp, it is 64 bhp more than the standard 211 bhp. Torque figures soar up to 390 Nm!

Floor the pedal, and there's no denying the fact that the car has to overcome some initial weight. But after a split second of lag, all 390 Nm of torque will make their presence felt, propelling the car forward in a mini jet-like thrust. This is one fast SUV, NS highway cruising will be a cinch.

Surprisingly, the massive ABT DR 22" sport rims don't seem to compromise much on the ride comfort. The car still feels pliant and the bumpiness from road undulations are kept well at bay. Granted, this could partly be due to a well insulated cabin and overall build quality of the car.

Overall, the ABT Q5 is truly an awesome transformation from the Audi original, offering mean looks and punchy performance all bundled in a relaxed SUV package.

I might just never be able to accept the Q5 in its standard form again. **N.**

"...all 390 Nm of torque will make their presence felt, propelling the car forward in a mini jet-like thrust. This is one fast SUV, NS highway cruising will be a cinch."

OMG! ONE MINUTE GLANCE

Max Power: 275 hp
 Max Torque: 395 Nm
 Max speed: 220 km/h (est.)
 0-100 km/h: 6.5 seconds (est.)
 Transmission: 7-speed S-Tronic
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 CO²: 199 g/km

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CASIO CONTINUES OFFICIAL PARTNERSHIP WITH RED BULL RACING F1 TEAM

Under the concept of 'Speed and Intelligence,' the EDIFICE line of analog metal watches evokes a sense of velocity and motor-sports energy with the movement of the hands and distinctive watchface. Using the electronics technology that Casio has developed over many years, the lineup features a full range of measurement functions and distinctive face designs. EDIFICE watches, including the EQS-A1000DB released last year, are becoming popular with men that prefer a sporty look.

For more information on Casio EDIFICE watches, visit <http://www.casio-intl.com/wat/edifice/special/>

EDIFICE has been designated as the Official Watch Partner for the 2012 and 2013 seasons, and the Casio logo will continue to appear on racing suits worn by Vettel and Webber, as well as on the team wear. The logo will also stay on the nose sections of the team's race cars. In addition to using team images in EDIFICE advertising, Casio plans to work again with Red Bull Racing to release special collaborative watch models. These global marketing activities are expected to further enhance the EDIFICE brand image.

Red Bull Racing's Team Principal, Christian Horner, also commented on the contract renewal: 'It's encouraging that we're able to keep building and extending our relationships with long-term Partners, such as Casio. Formula One is focused on speed and accuracy, which is captured and reflected in Casio's unique range of timing products. We very much look forward to working with them throughout the new season and beyond.' **N.**



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DEAD MAN DRIVING!

What is it about stationwagons that Singaporeans hate? Estate enthusiast *Joel Tam* tells you what you're missing. Photography | Joel Tam

"It looks like a hearse." Heard that one before? Well if it's a hearse then I must be a ghost! Anyway, which part of that sexy estate pictured above, the Hyundai i40, looks like a hearse exactly?

The i40 looks better than most cars on the road, and that's a fact. A car that's painted black has a higher chance of looking like a hearse!

Avant, Break, Combi, Sportswagon, Touring, Variant, call them whatever you want, stationwagons are cool!

First of all, they offer exclusivity. Everyone's got a saloon, Singaporeans love a car with a 'backside', so a wagon will stand out! Have you seen the Alfa 159? It's a handsome car, seen its Sportswagon brother? It's twice as handsome!

Audi RS4? The Avant version is way cooler and it has the goods to shock boyracers out of their pants.

It's not all looks though, unlike an MPV, there's little or no compromise on driving dynamics and weight increase. High fuel prices in Europe and Japan have led to nearly half of all production vehicles to be wagons. A resurgence of wagons is also being seen in the United States, which is currently infatuated with SUVs.

Cool looks and sedan-like driving dynamics not enough to convince you? Wagons are big on space too! I just love it everytime I take the kids to the beach, my Skoda swallows EVERYTHING - bikes, bags, coolers, kites, camping gear and the lot! In fact, it has so much cargo space, I could put a full-sized body in there! Oops. **N.**

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