



The rebirth of cool

A stodgy brand tries to regain serious street cred with the launch of a new sports car

Becoming Jaguar's director of design was both a dream come true and a formidable challenge for Ian Callum. Few brands have evolved more slowly than the fusty old English marque, coasting across recent decades on disco-era designs. When the 52-year-old Scotsman took over at Jaguar in 1999, the company was content to please its core audience of tweed-jacketed Grey Poupon enthusiasts and not break new ground. Callum's mission was to revitalize the brand and create one of those head-turning convertibles, such as the Mazda Miata or the Porsche Boxster, that brings luster to the entire company. He also had to be respectful of Jag's past while moving the car's look into the future. The company's heritage was personally important to him. "The XK is the first stepping-stone of what I see as the modern era of Jaguar," says Callum. Here we take a look at the disparate influences the designer has used to create Jaguar's first new sports car in a decade. **JOSH DEAN**



INSPIRATION At age 5, Callum glimpsed a sleek, fastback Porsche 356 (top) among the stone cottages and wonky sedans of rural Scotland; the image was burned into his brain. "It looked like a spaceship landed," he says. It was a Jaguar, though, that got him specifically interested in design: the XJ6 (center), introduced in 1968. "The '60s Jags were quite beautiful, sexy sports cars," he says. "They were always visually correct, and that was all about the proportion of the cars, the way they sat." The genesis of Callum's 2007 XK dates to 1945, when Jaguar's founder, William Lyon, introduced the XK120 (bottom). The two-seater topped out at 120 mph—nearly light speed in the postwar era. Its latest incarnation, before Callum's XK, was the XK8, which was introduced in 1996 and won Best in Show at the 1996 Geneva Auto Show but never caught on much beyond the company's core patrons.



REAR The 1932 chop-top Ford hot rod (above) sits low in the front and high in the back, giving the car an aggressive look. It's the American car that has most influenced Callum. "To use the analogy of a cat," he says, "it looks like it's about to pounce." The 1972 Camaro (top), by GM's genius of design, Bill Mitchell, is among the other American cars that had a major influence on Callum.

Italian jobs

The world's finest supercar designers have also churned out some bargains

Few countries turn out more beautiful sports cars than Italy, led by the clay-molding geniuses who work in the firms of Turin: the Giugiaros at Italdesign; Ferrari's favorite house, Pininfarina; and Marcello Gandini, former head designer at Bertone. For every supercar turned out by these designers, dozens of classics—not to mention a few bargains—still haunt the secondhand market.

Italdesign



SUPERCAR
2004 Lamborghini
Gallardo
\$166,000



CLASSIC
1967 De Tomaso
Mangusta
\$21,000 to \$36,000



BARGAIN
1975 Volkswagen
Scrocco
\$1,000 to \$2,600

ROAD TRIPPIN'
Big Auto sobers up
and goes green.



Burn Rubber, Not Oil

Your guide to new eco-friendly cars

You probably know someone who owned a Toyota Prius years ago. You probably considered that person to be an early adopter. If so, this might surprise you: This newfangled thing you know as the “series-parallel hybrid”—that is, a gasoline engine mated to an electric motor—actually dates back more than 100 years. (An Austrian company was selling them as early as 1900.) Then Henry Ford perfected the mass-market combustion engine and conquered the world. Only the oil embargo and Middle East

conflagrations in the intervening century caused anyone to realize that alternative propulsion might someday become necessary.

That time is now. The Toyota Prius (with an assist from skyrocketing gas prices and new, long-awaited government mandates) is at the front of an industry-wide revolution. Every carmaker is scrambling to build more environmentally friendly automobiles, and you, the consumer, are soon to face a glut of choices. Here’s a cheat sheet to help you make a smart purchase. **JOSH DEAN**

DIESEL

AVAILABLE FROM:



THE CASE FOR: If your main concern is better gas mileage, buy diesel. Diesel engines produce more energy on less fuel than gas engines do, so you get more miles per gallon—some 30 to 35 percent more, on average. They also seem to last forever. Of course, anyone over the age of 30 remembers this alternative fuel as dirty, smelly, and of interest only to truckers, the French, and guys who operate farm machinery. But Europe is onto something. Diesel cars account for more than half of all vehicles sold across the pond, and they’re on the rise here too. The hang-up has long been with stricter U.S. emissions standards. Diesel cars are better in terms of greenhouse gases but worse for smog. New versions, which will arrive soon, have built-in systems designed to scrub the

particulate matter from the exhaust. Combined with federally mandated ultra-low-sulfur diesel (and provided the systems work as advertised), these cars will be as clean, if not cleaner, than their gas equivalents.

THE CASE AGAINST: The cars are at least a few thousand dollars more than their gasoline-burning twins, while diesel fuel itself is roughly the same price as gas. What’s more, if you live in California, Connecticut, Vermont, Massachusetts, Maine, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, or New York, you’re screwed. None of these states has yet approved even the new “clean” diesels.

THE OPTIONS: A year ago, you had none, unless you were in the market for a monster-truck-size pickup. Now there’s an E-Class Mercedes-Benz (no bargain at \$53,000), as well as brand-new turbo-diesel versions of the Volkswagen Jetta, Jetta SportWagen, and Touareg 2. BMW plans to have a 3-Series and an X6 ready for next year, both of which will be 50-state compliant, and

Honda is rumored to be readying an Acura for the U.S. market.

HYBRID

AVAILABLE FROM:



THE CASE FOR: How about variety? Nearly every automaker on the planet has a hybrid either for sale or in the works. One of the latest (and most surprising) to announce an entry is Porsche, which is planning to use hybrid power trains in its upcoming Panamera Gran Turismo and the next-generation Cayenne hybrid. General Motors—the company that famously “killed the electric car”—now plans to have eight different hybrids on sale by the end of 2008, including perhaps (it’s rumored) the last vehicle anyone thinks of when

IT'S ELECTRIC!
Skip the gas line with Fisker's zero-emissions Karma.



considering the environment, a Hummer H2. The draws are obvious: better gas mileage and federal tax credits.

THE CASE AGAINST: A hybrid will cost you more money on the lot and, even with rising gas prices, you'd have to drive it for years to make up for that in fuel savings. Federal tax credits help. The other knock has long been styling (see the Prius), but changes are afoot.

THE OPTIONS: Your choices are legion: Mazda, Ford, Chevy, Lexus, Saturn, Honda, and Nissan are all in the game. But Toyota's Prius, the car that begat the whole craze, remains the gold standard. It may look like a handheld vacuum, but it gets 50 miles per gallon around town.

COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS

AVAILABLE FROM:



THE CASE FOR: The fuel is cheap (half the price of gas, in most cases), abundant, domestically produced, and very eco-friendly. The majority of American homes are already on natural gas, and one company even offers a home-based natural-

gas machine that hooks up to your lines. The Phill, from FuelMaker, costs about \$4,000 and can refill a car overnight.

THE CASE AGAINST: There are precious few gas stations that offer natural gas. We're talking about 1,500 nationwide, and only half sell to the public. Also problematic is a limited range of 200 miles and an unwieldy tank that eats up most of your trunk space.

THE OPTIONS: Slim pickings. Each year, Honda sells about 1,000 of its GX natural-gas Civics—the only option—and you have to live in California or New York to own one. That said, the Civic is the greenest car, according to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy.

ELECTRIC

AVAILABLE FROM:



THE CASE FOR: Until now, the problem with plug-in electric cars has been battery capacity. The technology is advancing quickly though (thanks largely to the PC and cell-phone business), and three of the most anticipated cars in years are

electric. First is the Fisker Karma—a bug-eyed supermodel of a sport sedan that was shown at the Detroit auto show—which is said to be preparing for a late-2009 launch with a price under \$100,000. Second is the Tesla Roadster. The Silicon Valley PR-magnet has celebrities and tech geeks drooling (George Clooney was among the first to put down a deposit). Third would be the Chevrolet Volt, a plug-in electric car that GM is readying for mass production. It will have an electric driving range of 40 miles on its batteries alone, plus a small gas engine that kicks on to recharge the batteries, extending the range indefinitely under normal driving conditions. Skeptics say the car is far from imminent, but Bob Lutz, GM's most public executive, has told his company to be ready with a car by November 2010.

THE CASE AGAINST: Primarily, range. The batteries drain, so you'd need to have a place where you could plug in and recharge—plus the wherewithal to wait—in order to use an electric car for road trips.

THE OPTIONS: The Tesla is the latest and greatest, but it's not exactly practical. It has two seats, costs \$98,000, and is sold out for at least a year. Until the Volt arrives, the selection is pretty anemic.

HYDROGEN FUEL CELL

AVAILABLE FROM:



THE CASE FOR: It is a true zero-emissions vehicle. A fuel-cell car emits only water vapor.

THE CASE AGAINST: It's nearly impossible to get one, and once you have one, obtaining the power is even more difficult. Only New York, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles have public fuel-cell stations, which is why GM chose those markets for real-world testing of its Equinox Fuel Cell. A hundred vehicles are now in the hands of American families.

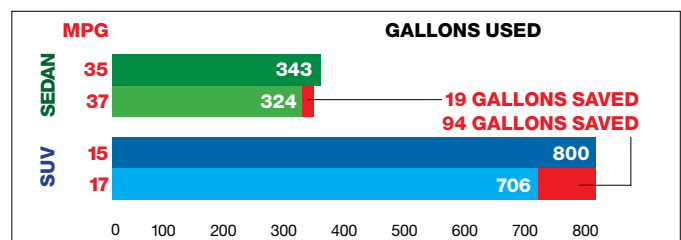
THE OPTIONS: Three cars are currently in "production"—the Honda FCX, the Chevrolet Equinox Fuel Cell, and the BMW Hydrogen 7—but none are actually "for sale" in the traditional sense. Customers apply to be test marketers and are loaned the car for a short time, typically less than a year. In the case of the BMW, you have to be a celebrity.

THE INTELLIGENT DRIVER

"Green SUV" may be an oxymoron of Detroit-size proportions, but some simple math proves the idea may not be so far-fetched...

When I mentioned to Therese Langer, transportation program director at the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, that GM is rumored to be prepping a hybrid Hummer, she actually laughed. I believe her exact words were "You're not serious, are you?" But a few minutes later, she told me the idea actually isn't as ludicrous as it seems. Small increases in gas-guzzler fuel economy, it turns out, have greater impact than larger increases on more fuel-friendly cars. She sent me the math to prove it:

"A vehicle that gets 15 miles per gallon and is driven 12,000 miles a year uses 800 gallons of gasoline annually. Raise the fuel economy by two miles per gallon, and your 17-miles-per-gallon vehicle burns only 706 gallons per year, saving 94 gallons, or about \$300. Now raise the fuel economy of your 35-miles-per-gallon vehicle by two, to 37 miles per gallon. You save 19 gallons, or about \$60. To save as much gas at the low end of the spectrum, you'd have to raise the 35-miles-per-gallon vehicle to 48 miles per gallon." J. D. D.



Diesel Cleans Up Its Act

Once dismissed as dirty, this old-school fuel is poised to become a lean, green alternative

Diesel is the pork of fuels, which is to say it's a good thing with a bad reputation. Last we saw the Other White Gas was during the Arab oil embargo of the early '70s when a number of European automakers marketed it Stateside as an escape from Detroit's gas-guzzling ways.

The problem with those VWs and Mercedes was that they rumbled like quarter-operated hotel beds and belched black soot. Thus Americans dismissed diesel as bad. But starting in September with the Mercedes E320, that will change.

What has made diesel poised for a Howie Mandel-worthy comeback is a new engine technology called BlueTec and a new approach to emissions. Though diesel engines have always been better than standard motors in terms of greenhouse gases—they emit almost no carbon—they've continually been over U.S. limits when it comes to particulates (mainly sulfur) and nitrogen oxide, which contribute to smog.

Starting this fall, however, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will require that 80 percent of diesel fuel intended for use on America's highways be low in sulfur. Reducing the sulfur—by nearly 97 percent—will usher in a paradigm shift in cleanliness, says Allen Schaeffer, executive director of the

Diesel Technology Forum. "The analogy is easy—it's like taking lead out of gasoline," he says, referring to the government's lead-removal mandate to protect the environment.

This cleaner diesel dovetails with an innovative engine technology from Mercedes called BlueTec. The Mercedes E320 has the same base engine as its existing clean diesel motor (known as CDI and sold since 2004), but thanks to new management software and a more sophisticated exhaust filtration system, it is even cleaner. It still doesn't quite meet the standards of five states (New York and California included), but it's close and the company hopes to soon offer versions that do. What's more, the car goes 0-to-60 in half a second less time than the comparable gas-engine E-class, and it gets up to 780 miles from a tank; compare that to 400 or so from a gas-engine model (diesel is nearly identical in price to unleaded).

Mercedes, however, isn't the only brand launching new diesel technology. In May, Honda announced it would sell a four-cylinder diesel in the United States by 2009. Next year, DaimlerChrysler will roll out a diesel version of its Grand Cherokee and VW is bringing over a diesel Touareg, in addition to Jettas, Golfs, and Beetles. Mercedes says it will add BlueTec diesel to the R-class, M-class, and GL-class. (Diesels are

typically about \$1,000 more.)

There are plans bubbling up at BMW. And Audi, which has sold diesel cars abroad for years, is working to market more of the cars here. At Detroit's North American International Auto Show last January, even Ford stepped up to the plate: It showed a concept diesel sports car.

"Once you get the fact that it's largely odorless and has exceptional torque, it's not so much of a leap to have high-performance diesels," says Rob Moran, a Mercedes-Benz spokesman. He points to Audi's Le Mans race car, a diesel-powered monster that dusted the competition in its debut this spring at the 12 Hours of Sebring, and again at its namesake 24-hour race. That's one ferocious piece of pork. **JOSH DEAN**

LONG HAULS

The most fuel-efficient cars in America

1

63 MPG
2006 Honda Insight Hybrid

2

55 MPG
2006 Toyota Prius Hybrid

3

50 MPG
2006 Honda Civic Hybrid

4

40 MPG
2006 VW New Beetle (Diesel); 2006 VW Golf (Diesel)

5

39 MPG
2007 Toyota Camry Hybrid

6

34 MPG
2007 Ford Escape Hybrid

7

33 MPG
2007 Mercedes E320 (BlueTec); 2006 Pontiac Vibe; 2006 Toyota Matrix

8

32 MPG
2006 Mini Cooper; 2006 Scion xB

9

31 MPG
2006 Mazda Tribute Hybrid; 2006 Mercury Mariner Hybrid

10

30 MPG
2006 Lexus RX 400h; 2006 Toyota Highlander Hybrid; 2006 Ford Focus Station Wagon; 2006 Hyundai Elantra

*Estimated





STEALTH SPORTS CARS
Sedans such as this Lexus ISF are engineered to stave off a midlife crisis.

Get Sporty

They've got four doors, trunk space, and formidable zero-to-60 times

With marriage and family comes responsibility, as well as the occasional sense of loss as you find yourself staring at that anodyne sedan in the driveway, wondering, *What happened to my wild side?* The typical answers to the midlife crisis—like buying a sports car or getting elected governor—tend to be frowned upon by sensible wives. But there is a subtler automotive alternative: Namely, carmakers are producing an ever-growing number of family-friendly sports sedans that are essentially

stealth sports cars—the auto equivalent of Superman in the guise of Clark Kent. These vehicles offer big engines, stiff suspensions, cool wheels, and fierce zero-to-60 times, which are basically all the benefits of a sports car, plus four doors, trunk space, and the peace of mind that no one in the neighborhood is making Freudian wisecracks at your expense. What follows is the best of the bunch, each totally redesigned (and in one case, entirely new) for 2008. **JOSH DEAN**



Lexus ISF

The ISF, the first production model to wear the new F badge and the fastest Lexus production car ever built, arrived this spring. Whereas the typical new model at Lexus requires a team of 1,000 to 1,500 developers, the ISF had just 100 to 300 people tinkering at the Japanese headquarters. Their baby is a menacing foe for the BMW M3, nearly dead even in power (416 horses), zero-to-60 time (4.6 seconds), and top speed (170 miles per hour). In true Lexus fashion, it also brings a technological breakthrough: the world's first eight-speed Sport Direct-Shift transmission. From \$56,000.



Mitsubishi Evo

The Evo is to Mitsubishi's Lancer econobox as the STI is to Subaru's Impreza, which is to say that it's the twin with the tattoos. Like the STI, the Evo's heritage is in racing—specifically, the World Rally Championship, where the Evo as we know it was born. This year's car isn't actually faster than the last generation (the two-liter turbocharged four-cylinder has roughly the same horsepower: 291 versus 286), but it handles like a Porsche on pavement or dirt, and the redesigned body solves what has always been the Evo's biggest problem: It's no longer dorky-looking. From \$32,990.



BMW M3

The first M3 came out in 1986, and it was designed for racing, from top to bottom. But to compete in the German Touring Car Championship, a car needed to be stock, so BMW churned out 5,000 M3s for European consumers. A star was born. The fourth and latest M3—known internally as the E92—appeared this spring. The performance is mammoth (how about 414 horses, a 4.7-second zero-to-60 time, and an 8,400 rpm redline?), but the styling is subtle, save for the four exhaust pipes, the telltale hood bulge, and, on the coupe version, the carbon-fiber roof. From \$54,575.



Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG

The mad scientists from Stuttgart specialize in turning ordinary automobiles into tire-shredding monsters, and the C63 AMG is their latest. You'll know it from the regular C class by its hood bulges (which are necessary in order to fit the naturally aspirated 6.3-liter V-8 that shares no parts with any other V-8s in the Mercedes lineup), broad fenders, and 18-inch alloy wheels. Onboard is a jet fighter's worth of technology, including the brand-new dual-clutch Speedshift Plus seven-speed automatic transmission that cuts shift times in half. From \$54,625.

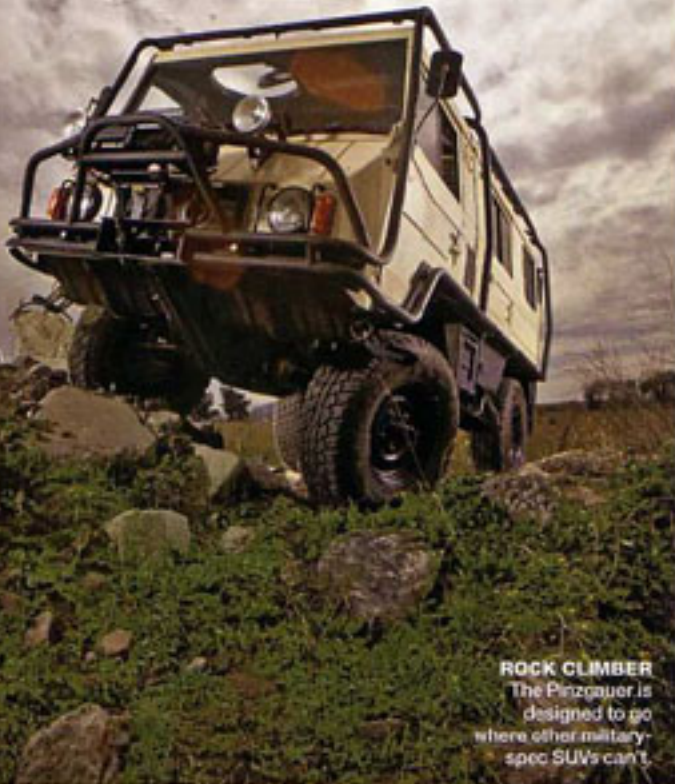


Subaru WRX STI

Okay, so *technically* it's a hatchback, but it was a sedan in previous iterations. The STI isn't exactly subtle about showing off its performance genes. There's the spoiler, the quartet of stainless-steel exhaust pipes, the 18-inch five-spoke aluminum alloy wheels, and the hood scoop that is large enough to suck in low-flying birds. It has 305 horsepower, 290 pound-feet of torque, and the cool SI-Drive performance management system, which allows you to change the car's driving characteristics—from short-shifting race car to fuel-efficient commuter ride—with the twist of a dial. From \$34,995.

Military Action

Austria's brutish Pinzgauer is the ultimate off-road machine



ROCK CLIMBER
The Pinzgauer is designed to go where other military-spec SUVs can't.

Look out your window. Odds are there's an SUV in the driveway. But I'd venture a guess that your 4x4 rarely sees mud that wasn't kicked up in a parking lot after soccer practice. And your truck probably reflects that. As SUVs have replaced minivans as grocery-getters, creature comforts have usurped ruggedness, and today's typical ute is a comfy soccer-mom mobile with a pillowy suspension, expensive-to-fix fiberglass everything, and a drop-down DVD player.

But what if you really want to navigate deep mud, not to mention power through soft sand or ford raging streams? That ain't happening in your Explorer. It is happening in a Pinzgauer, a 2-ton badass of an off-road machine built by Austria's Steyr-Daimler-Puch between 1971 and 1999. Most were built for the Swiss military, which presumably used them to remain neutral even in the most treacherous banking disputes. Today, thanks to entrepreneurs like Stefan Reindl, owner of the California-based Pinzwerks (pinzwerks.com), you can find Pinzgauers stateside. Prices range from \$10,000 for a stock model up to \$80,000 for luxury versions overhauled by the likes of Reindl and others, including Swiss Army Vehicles (swissarmyvehicles.com) and EuroTruck Importers (eurotruck-importers.com).

Recently, I rode shotgun as Reindl put one of his Pinzgauers to the test in a vast, scrubby, rock-strewn wasteland in San Bernardino, California. The vehicle had everything you need to attack the wilderness: shift-on-the-fly high-low gearing, four-wheel drive, four-wheel

independent suspension, and front- and rear-locking differentials. Reindl shifted into low and plunged over a steep hill that would crush your Grand Cherokee's front bumper. He cruised over logs, rocks, and abandoned boat hulls, then pointed the truck toward a huge pile of concrete chunks, which he skillfully summited. The nose of the vehicle pointed skyward, its front left and rear right tires in the air. Backing down, a wheel slipped, and the truck's belly slammed onto a rock. "No problem," Reindl said, smiling. "Maybe we scratched some paint?"

If you ask most people for the gold-standard SUV, they'll name-drop the Hummer H1, a barely civilized GM product that does have a faster engine, a lower center of gravity, and a sharper approach angle than the Pinzgauer. But that's where its advantages peter out. The Pinzgauer can carry nearly the same payload and ford the same 30 inches of water, has a similar ground clearance of 15 inches, and is much slimmer for attacking narrow trails. The vehicle can also sit up to 10 passengers and is half to a 10th the price.

The appeal is obvious: The Pinzgauer is inexpensive and nearly indestructible. It runs on a basic air-cooled, four-cylinder diesel engine that is easily serviced with the hand tools that come with the truck. Reindl usually does a standard upgrade, adding fuel injection, disc brakes, and power steering. These modifications will add at least 10 grand to your purchase price. But, says Reindl, if you're buying the Pinzie only to navigate the far reaches of your ranch, you need to upgrade nothing. **JOSH DEAN**

THE INTELLIGENT DRIVER

Today's glam SUVs are better suited to transporting kids than huckin' mud. Here are three all-terrain vehicles that stick to their off-road roots.

TOYOTA FJ LAND CRUISER



Cost \$7,000 (good condition)
Profile Inspired by a 1950s model designed to woo the U.S. Army.
Best model year 1979. The fuel tank was moved from below the front passenger seat to beneath the floorboard.
Resource vintageoffroad.com

FORD BRONCO



Cost \$6,000 (good condition)
Profile Straightforward mechanics plus a tough-as-nails V-8 engine and resilient frame mean that these trucks will run forever.
Best model years 1973 to 1977. These SUVs came with power steering.
Resource earlybronco.com

JEEP GRAND WAGONEER



Cost \$2,075 (good condition)
Profile The first vehicle to be marketed as a "sport utility vehicle" for the family.
Best model years 1989 to 1990. Jeep had finally worked out all the kinks; afterward came the Cherokee.
Resource itsja.org

Green-Light District

A different kind of country club—with a different set of drivers

Here's the problem with owning a car like the Audi RS 4, a 420-horsepower rocket ship of a sedan capable of dusting most sports cars on the road: If you push it anywhere close to its potential, you'll be in trouble with the law.

Which is what makes Jack Farr a savior for those who long to test their limits as drivers, but who can't get the kids to day care with a suspended license. Twelve miles south of Fort Worth, Texas, amid the cactus and cow pies of a former cattle ranch, the laconic 49-year-old Texan has brought to life one of the greatest ideas of our time. Imagine your typical fusty old country club, only replace the golf course with a road course. Instead of men in plaid, picture men in fire suits and racing helmets. And instead of caviar and shrimp cocktails, visualize barbecue.

Here, for the extraordinarily reasonable initiation fee of \$3,647 plus \$90 in monthly dues, you can drive down to Motorsport Ranch (motorsportranch.com), obeying all street signs and traffic laws, then open up on 3.1 miles of snaking, undulating race-track any Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. (The rest of the week is reserved for maintenance and private events, which are booked by the hour or day.) There are garages for car storage, race shops selling parts and service, and even track-ready, open-wheel race cars (Formula Mazdas) for rent. Just as with a golf course, on the backstretch is a row of sand-colored homes available for purchase; they sit atop massive six- to eight-car garages, and one of the first went to an Alaskan who flies down on weekends.

It was eight years ago in January that Farr broke ground. "This was the world's first driving country club," he says. "Now it's being copied all over the world." Today, the establishment has 250 garages and 100 members on a waiting list for one to open up. Plans are to add a barbecue joint and a gas station with race fuel. "It's kinda like *Field of Dreams*," says Farr,



TRACK TIME (clockwise from above) A private garage at the Motorsport Ranch in Fort Worth, TX, amateurs at the Autobahn Country Club near Chicago, a Japanese executive, and a model of the coming track in Tamworth, NH.



"only there was no one whispering in my ear. I'm not psychotic.

"This place was strictly built to have as much fun as humanly possible in as safe a way as possible," Farr hollers, pushing my Audi RS 4 up over 80 mph on one of the track's short straightaways. A few minutes later, he unbuckles his belt and steps out of the car. It's my turn. And it's on the blacktop—accelerating fully, braking aggressively, leaving rubber in the turns—that I realize why the Germans make these machines so powerful. It's going to be hard to go back to my world of speed limits. **JOSH DEAN**

THE INTELLIGENT DRIVER

America's Best Country Clubs for Automobile Enthusiasts

Alpine Motorsports Club

Due to open in 2007 in Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains, this facility will offer four miles of European-style road course, a clubhouse, a swimming pool, a fitness center, and tennis courts on 380 acres of stream- and pond-riddled woodlands. **Cost** \$3,000 membership fee, with \$4,000 in annual dues. alpinesignature.com

Autobahn Country Club

Parked an hour outside of Chicago, the year-old Autobahn has a 3.5-mile track with elevation changes and 21 turns. **Cost** \$30,000 initiation, with \$3,000 in annual dues. Memberships will be capped at 300. autobahncountryclub.net

Valley Motorsports Park

Under construction in Tamworth, New Hampshire (about two hours outside of Boston), Club Motorsports' facility will include a 3.3-mile track, a pool, a health club, and restaurants. It will also offer "Garage Mahals" with hotel-style rooms above the two-car garages. **Cost** Preopening rates start at \$5,000, with \$900 in annual dues. clubmotorsports.com



SPEED SESSION Students practice at BMW's M School in South Carolina.

Fast Learner

Get an accelerated education at BMW's high-speed driving school

Not long ago, you needed a Ferrari if you wanted 300 horsepower. Now you can get it from a Subaru. These days, the big boys—Vettes, Porsches, the Mercedes—churn out 500 horses. The latest addition to this high-caliber crew is the BMW M5. The problem is, no one seems to have noticed. Although this hot rod boasts a suspension tighter than a Frenchman's Speedo, the average buyer still drives it like it was made of glass.

Which brings us to the BMW Performance Driving School, a new training facility set amid the farmland of Greenville, South Carolina, and one of the few such schools run by a luxury automaker. Here, under the command of Jim Clark, a former motorcycle racer who switched to cars in 1968 after he "got tired of falling over," M series owners—and wannabes like me—learn how to elevate the ultimate driving machine into a full-on race car.

Things move fast here in more ways than one. Even before I turn the ignition, Jim, who's in the passenger seat, is correcting a number of classic errors. For instance: I'm seated too far from the steering wheel (you should be able to break your wrists over the wheel), I'm reclining too much (the seat should be near upright), and my mirrors are off (you should see only lane).

Next stop is the polished-concrete skid pad, where I'll learn to correct the understeer and the oversteer. *Understeering* into a turn causes the car to plow or refuse to turn. The trick to correcting it is simply to let up on the gas, throwing the weight of the car forward. When the weight is in front, the car is easier to turn. *Oversteering*, where you take too much speed into a turn and the back end slides around like a hausfrau without a girdle, is harder to deal with. The secret is to steer into the skid and stare at the spot where you'd like to end up. Call it "creative visualization." Here in driving school, vision is something the instructors never shut up about. It's "a driver's most important asset," they keep telling me. Stare at a spot, and you will go there. On the road, never look at the guardrails or a car stopped to fix a flat. And by no means fixate on the bumper of the car in front of you.

Though we're miles from the big city, what we've learned today will prove useful during the daily commute, even in a beat-up hatchback. But right now, as I test those wild horses under the hood, I'm not thinking about traffic. Actually, I'm fully appreciating why someone would break the bank for this machine. "A nice day like today?" Jim says, pointing to the big blue sky—and the wide-open racetrack. "You look out and think, 'What'd I buy an M5 for if it wasn't this?'" **JOSH DEAN**

THE INTELLIGENT DRIVER

A high-performance car is only as good as the man behind the wheel. These driving schools specialize in turning automotive milquetoasts into NASCAR maniacs.

BMW PERFORMANCE DRIVING SCHOOL

(Greenville, South Carolina, bmwusa.com/bmwexperience/performancecenter/school.htm)
M School (1 day) An introduction to high-performance driving in both manual and SMG BMW M3s, including autocross, skid-pad driving, heel-toe downshifting, and some track driving. \$995
M School (2 days) Advanced car-control techniques, with plenty of track time. \$3,650
Advanced M School (2 days) High-performance track driving at either the Virginia International Raceway, in Alton, Virginia (\$3,950), or Lowe's Speedway, in Charlotte, North Carolina (\$4,650).

PORSCHE DRIVING EXPERIENCE

(Barber Motorsports Park, near Birmingham, Alabama, porschedriving.com)
Precision (1 day) Includes autocross, skid-pad driving, and some track driving. \$1,295
Performance (2 days) More track sessions, plus slalom and lane-change drills and a focus on more advanced skills, like heel-toe downshifting. \$2,995
Masters (2 days, advanced) An advanced course for graduates of the 2-day program, this session takes all the skills and applies them to driving on the 2.38-mile road course. \$3,495

Pickup artists

A new class of work truck gets dressed up

It used to be that if you drove a pickup truck, you wore boots to work and your job was dirty. For the same reason, your truck had rubber floor mats, pleather seats, and Yosemite Sam mud flaps. If the caged poultry being transported in the passenger seat happened to crap, you hosed the seat down and the interior was as good as new.

We now live in different times, and men want their trucks to do more—say, transport the family to the Macaroni Grill without looking like the Beverly Hillbillies. Ford's Harley-Davidson F-150 (\$34,770) can carpool the kids and haul a trailer. It features dual exhausts tuned to the husky voice of an 80-year-old smoker, and its sleek king cab interior looks like your standard VIP lounge. It comes with supple leather seats (including a sprawling bench), a power moonroof, and an optional DVD player. The shifter is chrome and the sound system symphonic. If it weren't for the ride height, you'd think you were cruising in a Bimmer.

The Harley also has a tasseled peacock of a brother, the King Ranch (\$36,305), named for the Texas spread that inspired the 1950s *Western Giant*. Its interior sports

Castaño leather (reminiscent of a show saddle); power-adjustable, heated captain's chairs; the obligatory DVD player; and wood-grain trim.

Ford isn't the only company dressing its trucks in tuxedos. Dodge has launched the 2500 Mega Cab, a \$44,000 behemoth with a turbodiesel engine and a backseat that has more legroom than an E-Class Benz. Lincoln has stepped up to the plate with the Mark LT (\$38,680). Built on an F-150 platform, its innards were gutted to fit Lincoln's "luxury" image—leather-trimmed seats, spoked wheels, and acres of chrome.

At the Detroit Auto Show in January, Ford design chief J Mays offered a glimpse of what could be next: the Super Chief concept truck, a gleaming silver monster powered by a V-10 Tri-Flex fuel engine that can run on hydrogen, ethanol, or gasoline, or a combination of the three. Inside, it has a burnished-aluminum dash, walnut floors, a glass roof divided by a wood grid, and backseats with powered ottomans that pop out of the floor. Soon, there may even be a place to store the chicken—like a refrigerator stashed in the console. **JOSH DEAN**

CATTLE DRIVE The F-150 King Ranch struts seats of fine Castaño leather.



LICK THE DIPSTICK AND CALL ME IN THE MORNING



How to diagnose what's ailing your car from the driveway stains

Tan to black Oil. If it's a transparent tan, the stain is fresh—it's likely that Jiffy Lube didn't properly seal your oil filter. If you see dirty oil, there's probably a seal leak somewhere on the engine. The occasional drip or two is normal, but a small puddle is a problem.



Neon green or orange Engine coolant. This is one of the last things you want to see, because if it's leaking, your engine could overheat. Take your car to a shop immediately.



Light amber Brake fluid. Except for rare occasions, by the time brake fluid has stained the driveway, your brake pedal will be noticeably soft or even have sunk to the floor. Time to call for a tow truck.



Clear Water. This is from normal condensation on the air-conditioning system and nothing to worry about.



Light beige or pink Power-steering fluid or automatic-transmission lubricant. It's hard to tell the difference between the two unless you check the dipsticks. Either leak requires an immediate trip to the shop.

STEPHAN WILKINSON



HOT WHEELS These thoroughbreds can be yours for \$7,000 a year.

Garage Mahal

Fractional ownership buys you drive time from a pool of exotic cars

The keys to my parakeet-yellow Ferrari are burning a hole in my pocket. Yesterday, I drove it to Brooklyn from Manhattan for coffee. Today, a Sunday, I'm hungry and it's time for brunch. Normally, I'd take the subway to the Village to eat, but as long as I've got an \$80,000 rocket on my stoop, I'll head to Jersey—just because I can.

I am, for a few days, a member of the Classic Car Club Manhattan (manhattan.classicclub.com), a branch of a London outfit that sells fractional ownership of exotic cars. Opened last July, it is the first of several U.S. franchises planned. A \$1,500 initiation fee and \$7,000 in annual dues gets you access to an ever-growing stable (20 at last count) that includes a 1957 Porsche Speedster, a race-tuned 2005 Lotus Elise, and the 1989 Ferrari 348 GTB that I drove out of the showroom and promptly bottomed out.

Membership dollars buy points, which are put toward individual driving days. At his most frugal, a member will get 50 or so days in one of the lower-end cars (say, a '74 Triumph Spitfire), but if a guy chooses to drive only Ferraris, only on summer weekends—well, he's looking at probably 15 days, which is still 15 more days in a Ferrari than he'd get otherwise. (Insurance is included, and mileage is unlimited.)

The club is adding cars every few weeks, with little method to the madness. Mike Prichinello, co-owner with Zac Moseley and Phil Kavanagh, was recently checking out a black 1936 Ford with whitewalls and a gleaming chrome grille taller than your average gymnast. Soon they'll take custody of Chevrolet's new 505-horsepower Corvette Z06, which ranks among the fastest American production

cars ever made. "We're putting members in cars they would never buy," says Prichinello.

He's right. Ferraris require more coddling than a 5-year-old Vanderbilt heir, and at the club, that's not your problem. If the '67 Chevelle breaks down, leave it on the curb.

I'm sold. Back on New Jersey's Route 9W, a sylvan byway that passes neither a Taco Bell nor a chemical plant, I see a guy who no doubt actually paid for his Ferrari. Just across the New York border, I get a thumbs-up from a man in a Benz. And in Manhattan, where Moseley is about to shut the garage doors for the day, I roll up onto the curb and, um, bottom out again.

"When can I take out the Lotus?" I ask as I shut down the rumbling motor.

"When you actually pay to join," Moseley replies. **JOSH DEAN**

THE BEST OF THE REST

Car-share businesses may soon be as popular as destination clubs



VAN HORSSSEN GROUP

This Arizona club offers luxury sports cars, including the Aston Martin DB9 (above) and the new Porsche Cayman S. vanhorssengroup.com



CLUB SPORTIVA

Highlights of this San Francisco-based club include the 1969 Jaguar E-Type (above) and the 2004 Ferrari 360 Spider. clubsportiva.com



EXOTIC CAR SHARE

This Chicago outfit rents exotics, like the Bentley Continental GT (above), though the owners prefer you buy fractional ownership. exoticcarsshare.com