

VOLVO'S NEW GTI v THE REAL THING

AUTOCAR

8 November 2006 EVERY WEDNESDAY £2

The 250mph test

The world's fastest cars on the world's fastest track

STARRING

Bugatti Veyron
Lamborghini Murcielago
Ferrari 599 GTB
Mercedes SLR McLaren
Porsche 911 Turbo
Aston Vanquish S
Corvette Z06
Dodge Viper
Ford GT



'This was a day when 200mph felt slow'



'The GT's credentials are further confirmed by the near-hysterical reaction from our fellow M40 travellers'

The world's luckiest delivery driver

Jamie Corstorphine wasn't about to say no when offered the job of delivering a Ford GT to Cheshire

I don't like to think of myself as superstitious, but even I couldn't help but feel slightly nervous at the combination of someone else's brand new £120,000 Ford GT and Friday the 13th.

Six years after P1 International (www.p1international.com) opened its doors in Leatherhead, the prestige car club is expanding, with a second fleet of exotica based in Cheshire. With the toy box almost complete, it fell to *Autocar* to get the late-arriving GT north before the first members arrived at the door. Not a bad job, despite the unfortunate date.

No matter how many times you've driven the GT before, every mile in one demands respect, due to its relentless torque, massive width and the knowledge that, ABS aside, there's nothing to shield you from any over-exuberance. The GT's supercar credentials are further confirmed by the near-hysterical reaction from our fellow travellers on the M40. We get waves, smiles and shouts of encouragement, and not one ounce of envy, the only sense of disapproval being that we weren't going faster.

Some 200 miles later and with a small diversion along the A51 giving the GT somewhere to bare its teeth, we arrive at P1's innocuous northern base. Waiting patiently for their ringleader are three Astons (Vanquish, DB9 Volante and Vantage), two Ferraris (F430 coupé and spider) and three Porsches (911 Turbo, C4S and Cayman S) – a garage worth a cool million pounds.



Ford GT is just one of P1 North's 'toys'

The man responsible for spending all that cash is Nick Hancock, P1's MD and an avid car fan. With six years' experience rotating P1 South's fleet, Nick knows exactly which cars will interest his members most, and which will remain the most reliable. To maintain members' interest and minimise depreciation, P1 cars remain on the fleet for just a couple of months, giving Nick a full-time job buying replacements; he's just ordered 43 Porsches for delivery over the next 12 months. The northern fleet will expand in line with membership growth (P1 aims for a ratio of one car for every six members), until all 250 places are filled.

This journey demonstrates why the P1 model makes such obvious sense. It gives the opportunity to squeeze brilliant driving experiences around busy lives. Despite Friday rush-hour traffic and despite the date, this was a trip to remember. Thirteen: unlucky for some, but not if you're driving a Ford GT. **B**



Impossibly exotic Ford GT brings a welcome splash of drama to the rush-hour commute

PHOTOGRAPHY MITCH PESHAVERIA