

# Our Celebratio

Gallardo Invidia - GT Mirage 720 - 9FF - 599



[www.supercardriver.com](http://www.supercardriver.com)

# n of Motoring

GTO - R8 V10 Spyder - 458 Italia - Diablo 6.0



[www.supercardriver.com](http://www.supercardriver.com)

words: Paul Owen,  
Adam Thorby, Kevin Giblin  
photos: Adam Thorby

It's a glorious spring morning. As we arrive on location for our video-shoot, the cars for today's feature are already lined up. The impressive driveway sets the scene and the arc presented to us, featuring eight of today's most fabulous Supercars is simply jaw dropping.

Club GT Events are doing a professional video promo in collaboration with Supercar Driver. So whilst we are all here, we thought it would be most journalistic of us to max out on experience-points and enjoy some of these cars to the full!

### LAMBORGHINI GALLARDO INVIDIA (PAUL)

The Gallardo needs no introduction. It has been around since 2004 and still looks both modern and mental with performance that is expected of a raging Italian Bull. This particular Gallardo has its dial turned up to eleven, with Amari Design having breathed new life into the performance and styling of this already quick car. John Greatorex (Service Amari's chief technician) has brought the car to the party today and gives me the low-down on some of the finer points.

Known as the Invidia, the Gallardo features a number of styling modifications which look both balanced and well-proportioned and give the car a more aggressive, purposeful stance. Inside, the carbon-fibre racing seats have been re-trimmed in Alcantara. It's a neat styling package and the bright orange/red paint-work sets the whole thing off beautifully.

For the mechanicals, the Lamborghini has received a power hike to 540bhp and a new custom exhaust means we can enjoy the tunefulness of that power in all its glory. Time for some driving.

Climbing in to the sports-seat in the small Gallardo cabin, I am reminded that Italians didn't cater for those of us of a loftier disposition. The seats don't move very much, which leaves me sat with my head wedged against the roof, along with a contortionist position in the lumbar of my back, which has my internals screaming at me to get out. Not bloody likely – this is a special Lambo, and I'm going to enjoy this specialness even if it kills me. My spine informs me that I will be reminded of this defiance for the next two days. But for now, it's on with the show. John fires up the car and blips the throttle. It sounds good. Very good.

Out on the road, John gives me a demonstration of the power. It quickly starts to feel like the throttle is attached to my face because, with every press of the right foot, the noise gets louder and my smile gets bigger. It's very fast, and under load it is very loud – and in this car that can only be a good thing. It's an Italian screamer. As the manual gearbox is worked through the h-gate, the noise is intense and sounds exactly what you'd want in an extreme Supercar. It feels very quick, with my torso welded in the seat as the acceleration fires us through the gears at a merry old rate, but at the same time the power feels progressive and smooth.

It's a great thing, this Gallardo. I like the look, the noise, the power, the badge. It's fantastic. The suspension on this particular car however is more hardcore and after already being wedged into the seat is too uncomfortable for me on these roads. "The suspension is set up on this car with track days in mind. That's why it's so stiff", John tells me. Comfort aside, I really enjoyed my time in this car. It's very rapid, sounds spectacular and looks superb.

### FERRARI 458 (PAUL)

At the next stop, I get the chance to passenger in the Ferrari 458. A car in receipt of many accolades already and it easy to see why. The 458 looks wonderful and (on launch at least) like nothing else out there. It is blisteringly fast too and with the flappy-paddle gearbox the power is easily accessible.

First point to note – there is space in this new Ferrari. It's roomy and, compared with the Gallardo, rather comfortable. It's also a bit mad in interior design, with the air-vents sticking out in all directions and angles. The fit-and-finish of this car appears great too. I mention this to Rob, the owner, and he agrees. "They have got the build quality correct now. Inside, it is almost like a German car with the way it feels put together". He isn't wrong. Ambling at the low speeds for a while whilst the camera men get that "perfect shot", it is a relaxing car to be in. It could even be a daily driver (perhaps) – albeit an expensive one. Ferrari has thought about this too it seems as this 458 came with a four year warranty and a mighty seven year service package. That's no servicing to pay for seven years on a Ferrari! Very impressive.

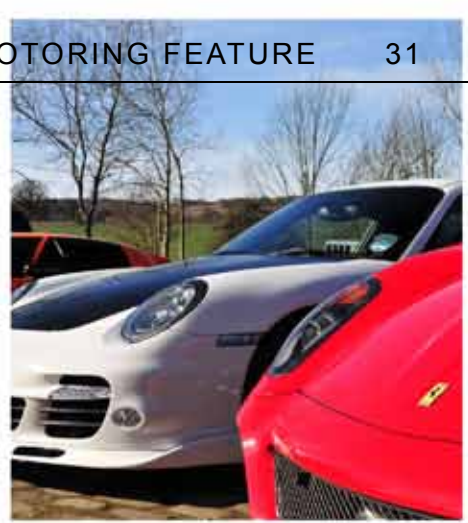
Rob is a serial car buyer, but the 458 has clearly struck a chord. "I'll keep this for a year at least I reckon", he says. "I really like this car". He has even put a Capristo exhaust on it. Great news, because we like noise. So does Rob. Putting the boot down and the power is instantaneous and huge. The Capristo is the icing on the cake and sounds delightful! I love this car!

The only downside? On full acceleration the car changes gear with absolute precision but as a pedestrian you can't get away from the obvious auto-gear change sound. But that's a small price to pay for what is otherwise absolute perfection.

### PORSCHE 9FF (PAUL)

I'm a Porsche fanboy. It was never the poster on my wall as a teenager (that was the Ferrari F40), but after being introduced to the brand originally via the Boxster, I've been hugely impressed with the way that Porsches can offer serious power and prestige, yet are useable as every day cars. Over the years I've grown rather attached to the brand so this, the first 9ff I have seen, generates a natural curiosity.

Based on the 997 Turbo S (Mk 2), the original car develops 530bhp. The 9ff modifications move the power up to whopping 650bhp for this PDK edition. A manual 9ff car would hit a mind-boggling 700bhp!



*Supercar Rears!*



*Diablo still has that  
definitive supercar  
shape*



*An awesome sight on  
the roads!*







Inside, the car is business as usual for the 997 Porsche. No extreme modifications in here, all is kept pretty standard. Most of the work for 9ff is done under the bonnet – barring the bonkers paintwork, but that was owner Ade’s choice! The 9ff modification list is pretty extensive and included bigger turbos, upgraded intercoolers, ECUs and suspension.

This car is the first Gen2 Turbo that 9ff completed and Ade is very happy with it. Today Ade is driving the Ford, so I’m out in the car with his brother, Steve. “It’s a mad car” he says “I always laugh in disbelief whenever I drive it. The power delivery is insane”. I ask for a demonstration and the loud pedal is pressed. The turbo’s spool up, the car hunkers down and off we go like a rocket. All of the cars here are, obviously, very fast but nothing can match the 9ff for its out and out speed. The custom exhaust extracts every last decibel from the flat-6 Porsche engine and the striking paintwork helps to keep the car as noticeable as its peers out on the roads today.

What I particularly like about the 9ff is the accessibility of its power. There is no drama, no manual gate or high-concentration required. You can amble through town as an every-day car, but when you want to really move – either in the twisties (Turbo’s are 4WD) or on the track, with a hard right foot you can turn this into one of the fastest cars in the world. Exhilarating!

### **FORD GT MIRAGE 720 (ADAM)**

One of only three cars in existence this is one very rare Ford, it even makes a standard Ford GT feel a little tame. The lary pearlescent orange paint job with black detailing, 740 RWHP (200bhp over a standard GT), no traction control and left hand drive, it is a combination

which stands this car apart from all the others present today. The rest are your typical modern day supercars, boasting a whole host of complex electronics keeping them on the road, compare them to the Mirage, and you are more focused on keeping the car in a straight line, rather than defying physics. The Mirage is one of the very few cars today that you have to drive with utmost respect, as it could kill you at a throw of a hat.

The driving experience on the whole is far removed from any Supercar I have experienced before. It is a very relaxed drive, it’s not like modern day supercars where all you have to do is plant the throttle and hold on for the ride, try that in the Mirage and you will be in the nearest field. Now this on its own is enough to give you huge admiration for the car, but also you don’t feel the urge to drive it at 10/10ths all the time as the power isn’t as accessible as the modern kit. It is entirely content cruising at a steady speed, a mighty rumble from that fabulous supercharged 5.4 litre V8 lump that is sitting behind your head, turnaround and can even see the supercharger pulley through the glass. Yes, when you open her up the car comes alive and sucks up the tarmac ahead like a steam train and I have no doubt it could reach the 220 mph top speed, but ultimately it depends on how much you dare to squeeze the throttle... This in itself makes the drive far more entertaining and involving than most of the other cars here today.

As we know, modern day supercars sound fantastic, but it is a known fact that it is the car behind you that gets the maximum enjoyment of the noise. Not the Mirage, that mighty V8 echoes all around the cabin. At one point the driver knocked it into neutral squeezed the throttle as we were snaking through a sleepy village in the Peak District, nothing can prepare you for that unsilenced V8 noise, it was like someone had woken Thor!

It is also a fabulous place to be. Open those iconic doors and you can literally walk straight into the passenger seat. Once seated, you are careful not to skim the top off your scalp off when closing them. Once inside, the interior is pretty much unchanged over the standard car. It is very comfortable and the ride is surprisingly smooth, and there is plenty of space inside the cabin. The road presence is similar to that of a Veyron, it attracts enormous attention and positive reactions, and encourages lots of smiles and waves. What was amusing was look on a few people's faces when they noticed the FORD badge on the bonnet!!

In summary it is a very challenging yet rewarding car to drive, and after spending a day with it I can certainly see the attraction. The Mirage is one of only a few old school supercars around today, it is raw and unpredictable, like that of an F40. Swallow a brave pill before you turn the key and pick your full throttle moments carefully.... A bold statement I know, but in my opinion this is the only true Supercar here today and for this reason I think it clinches first place, for me anyway!

#### AUDI R8 V10 SPYDER (KEVIN)

Standing in the driveway whilst we take some pictures and get ready to head out, it is easy to overlook the Audi as it nestles between Maranello's finest, a 458 and a 599 GTO. In fact, anything would struggle to make its presence felt in this company. It also doesn't help that we are joined by one of only three Ford GT Avro Mirages rumoured to have over 740bhp under the hood, a stunning one-off Gallardo, one of the great all-time supercar heroes, the Diablo 6.0l VT as well as the slightly deranged 650bhp 9ff Turbo S.

However, I know what a treat I am in for being at the helm of the R8 V10 Spyder. I was lucky enough to spend a week driving one through The Dolomites last summer and as the sun is high in the sky, I know that with the roof down, today is going to be a good day.

*“As we drive through the villages, everyone stops and stares”*

The Audi R8 has always been a misnomer. Could Audi really make a supercar to take the fight to the established big boys of modern supercar production, Ferrari, Lamborghini and Porsche? All RSs to date have been great cars although the steering has always come in for criticism. Not so the R8. It blew away the doubters and even had Top Gear's longest resident saying in V10 Coupe form, it was the best car produced in the world, period.

For my reckoning there is almost no better seat to be in today. The sun is shining, I have over 500 bhp under my right foot, a glorious V10 behind my ears to bounce of the walls that seem to surround most of the roads in this beautiful part of the country and oh, rather a few loud companions to make the experience even more enjoyable.

It doesn't take long to recall just how rapid this V10 really is. A flex of the right ankle and the rear is squirming under the power as I give chase to Rob in his 458. It really is supercar quick and the Quattro system is a truly welcome partner. It allows the car to deploy all of its power effectively (something which a few of the other cars struggle to do today) and it lets you shake the rear loose when pushed, with a safety net there to reign you in should it be required.

As we drive through the villages, everyone stops and stares at the convoy they are presented with - most of them smiling - and the Audi seems to be equally appreciated as much as the other cars in this group. But it is when we come out of the villages and the hammers go down, that the Audi ups its game even more. The sound of this car above 6000 rpm is glorious and my passenger, who had not experienced one before, could not believe how quick it really is.

I'd like to say a huge thanks to Steve for bringing his car along and letting me spend the day at the helm. Agreed, he had 650bhp to contend with and that looked like a lot of fun, but I was happy as could be piloting his daily driver around The Peaks with a rather satisfied smile on my face. ■

*Decapitation doors, right there.*

