

MARCUS PYE
HUMBLE PYE

The voice of club motor racing



The new 911 GT3 R impressed Pye

Now at AUTOSPORT International time is nothing new. Cutting my way through 'the White Country' towards Birmingham's NEC for the third or fourth time in 20 years was a familiar story. Fortunately the halls were warm, and there was much to enjoy for motorsport enthusiasts.

Porsche's stunning 911 GT3 R, making its global bow, was the car of the show for me. Unbelievably sleek and purposeful, it's little wonder that Stuttgart's GT weapon is selling almost as fast at hot cross buns at Sainsburys. Just across the way, Drayson Racing's magnificent Lola-Judd B09/60 sports-prototype looked sensational on our stand.

National racing is my principal focus, however, and three new cars caught my eye. March Racing Academy's O9R Sports 2000 car looked the part, while Chevron Racing Cars' GR8 Challenge prototype resembled a 21st-century version of the hallowed B8 under its (invisible) skin. But Ginetta's G40 will be on the radar in greater numbers by the start of the season.

March nut Alan Hudd's venture has no connection with March Engineering of yore, beyond him owning several of its S2000 cars from the '80s and a 75S sports racer. The cachet and fever of the Group 6 car (after which the O9R is styled) remain, however.

Priced at £47,500+VAT, Kieron Salter's design has to be up to speed quickly - the series kicks off

at Snetterton on April 24-25 - but S2000 Duratec champion Mike Jenvey's signing as 'works driver' should shorten this process. Both Mike (also a double Formula Vee champ) and his racer father Richard are accomplished engineers.

The Chevron GR8, for which dedicated races are due to start at Silverstone on May 8-9, is also Duratec-powered, which promises as close as it gets to 'fit and forget' racing. While its styling is more Lotus-cross-Ferrari than classic B8, the stout-framed machine looks exciting. Several were sold at the show and, at £49,500+VAT complete, will also be welcomed in multi-make GT events.

Ginetta boss Lawrence Tomlinson has another winner on his hands in the G40, a bang-up-to-date design that will give the excellent BTCC-supporting Junior championship a real lift. "Where else can you get a new car with a built-in FIA cage for twenty-five grand, and run it on threepence," beamed the Yorkshireman, who has turned the marque's fortunes around since he took the helm.

Prettier and better proportioned than the successful Ford V6-powered G50, expect to see the G40 in other series too. Indeed, Tomlinson is minded to enter one in the Britcar 24 Hours. Without doubt another case of racing continuing to improve the breed...

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