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Craig Butcher, Content editor, MSN Him, 16/05/2011 17:49



# How to rent a supercar for less than you'd think

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MSN UK and Craig Butcher

If you think you can't afford a Ferrari or a Lamborghini, you're only partly right. These days you can rent a sports car for the weekend at a fraction of the price of owning one. MSN Him explores the world of premium car rentals and affordable car clubs

Whether you're hoping to impress a new date, celebrate an anniversary weekend or show up to a wedding this year in a bling car to get one over on an old rival, a decent motor is one of life's rare pleasures.

But with the latest Ferrari likely to set you back a six-figure sum (a sum which, let's be honest, you probably won't find in loose change down the back of the sofa), there's a reason most men aspire to owning a sports car, rather than actually owning one. How do you get in on the action, then?

These days even the big boys of high-street car rental can rent you a premium car at an accessible rate. Europcar's 'Prestige' collection includes convertibles like the Audi A3 and 4x4s like the Range Rover Vogue, along with executive cars like the Mercedes E-class and performance cars. Prices vary, but a Porsche Boxster starts at £525 for a three-day weekend, and that's not even the cheapest on offer.



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A decent motor for your weekend away is a real treat

If you're a member of a car club like Streetcar or Zipcar (now the same club after their merger) you can hire something a little more interesting than their standard Volkswagen efforts like a Mini Cooper or BMW 3 Series, the latter will set you back just £89.50 a day. You might not win any races, but it's definitely a step up.

If you want to start playing with the big boys, car clubs like the Classic Car Club and CLUBGT offer an annual membership giving access to a wide range of cars for a fixed fee. CLUBGT offers several, many of which you won't find at any other car hire club in the UK. Ranging from iconic classics such as the NSX and Integrale all the way up

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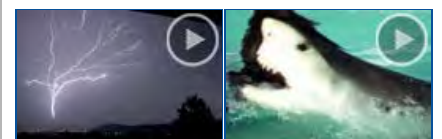
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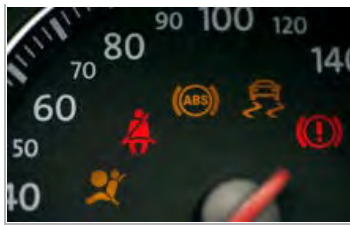
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to cars like the Ferrari F430, Gallardo and the new Nissan GT-R.

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Maintenance, MOT and tax aren't your problem

### How do car clubs work?

How it all works varies by club, but we signed up to CLUBGT to get the lowdown. We complete an online application, which is vetted by their insurers. We're approved and agree a date for a 'performance road driving' day. It's designed to show how to handle these powerful cars properly and is included with membership (£250 joining fee and an annual membership package which starts at £1,250, although monthly payment plans start at £250).

You then book your preferred car, collect it or have it delivered to your preferred spot and away you go. Mechanical problems, garaging, insurance: because it's a rental, none of these are your problem.

### How do the costs compare with owning a decent car?

By renting, you're potentially looking at around a 60% saving compared to owning it. For example, take a second-hand Ferrari bought for £60,000. The average supercar owner will probably only do 3,000 miles a year. If you're under 30, insurance is around £3,500 a year and depreciation is at least £3,000 a year. Factor in a secure garage in your less-than-secure neighbourhood (in central London, this can easily top £3,000) and at least £2,500 for servicing, tyres, MOT, tax (potentially much more if anything major comes up) and assuming the car was bought on finance (because really, who has £60,000 to spare?), around £5,000 for interest. Suddenly that annual £1,250 car club isn't looking quite so steep after all.



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How do the costs compare with owning a decent car?

### Can I join up?

Car clubs offer social occasions and the chance to meet up with other like-minded petrol-heads at their social events. But you're unlikely to meet a driver with a previous driving ban, or those with 'excessive convictions' as interpreted by insurers - membership is usually refused. You also need to be aged between 25 and 70 and, usually, have no more than six points on your licence.

So next time you're thinking of hiring that standard two-door without air conditioning, bear in mind you could be enjoying the 'air conditioning' with the windows down on a sporty drop-top for much less than you'd think.



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You can be on the open road in no time

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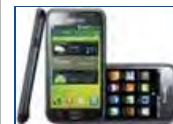
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