

**A SLICE OF THE HIGH LIFE** Supercars

# Supercars

Fantasy garages. All car enthusiasts have them—five, ten maybe even 20 cars that, in an ideal world, would be residing in a purpose built hermetically sealed garage, a mental selection of classics and supercars linked by their desirability and high cost.

The problem is that for, most of us, these fantasy garages remain just that—a fantasy. Even with the funds at your disposal, it is unjustifiable on economic grounds to tax, insure and maintain more than a few cars at a time. Also, when you think about it, how many truly memorable journeys do you really make? Of course, it would be great to take a Ferrari to the local supermarket, but when you finish your weekly shop, you have very little boot space in which to store your purchases and someone will have left an expensive dent in both your door and your wallet. It is around this point of contemplation that one realises that there is not necessarily a want to own such a fleet but merely to experience the thrill of driving them.

Which brings us neatly to car clubs, the next best thing to owning your very own slice of classic or supercar motoring. For a relatively nominal sum, a club will give you the keys to a whole fleet of some of the most coveted metal, without having to spend months on a waiting list or wasting hours trawling the classifieds for that perfect classic motor.

As costly assets to maintain, car clubs tend to adopt the asset sharing model—the shelf life of individual cars

is relatively short in order to keep fleets fresh, resale values are as high as possible (the market for high-mileage Lamborghinis is near non-existent!) and maintenance and consumable costs are kept to a minimum. Also, it allows for a greater range of models to be purchased by the club.

Chris Burbidge of Club GT explains further: “Asset-sharing is a great way to experience some of the finer things in life that you may not get a chance to if you had to buy them all outright, but it’s not just for those that can’t afford to buy, it’s also much more convenient and cost-effective if you don’t need the asset all year round.”

Erik Fairbairn, managing director of ecurie25, talks about the philosophy behind his own supercar club, ecurie25: “ecurie is French for stable and we aim to be like your own personal groom. At the end of your driving experience, you can simply drop off your car and we’ll clean it and take care of it and make sure it’s ready for the next member’s outing.”

The standard format is one of membership costs covering points and mileage values that can then be ‘spent’ throughout the year across the fleet, with the points of each hire being de-

pendent on the grade of car, time of year and weekday or weekend use. How your points are used is down to you, but generally between 35 to 50 days use per year is the norm, obviously less if you want the top-ranked vehicles only for weekend use during the summer and more if you opt for off-peak weekdays in lower band cars.

But not all car clubs are created equal and each offers something slightly different from the next. There are the obvious differences such as different cars, with the likes of the Classic Car Club and Parc Ferme offering a different range of models to their supercar sisters, with Parc Ferme also offering a wide range of classic motorcycles alongside their classic car collection.

## Template

P1 International are the template for many new car clubs, having pioneered the concept of shared access to supercars when launched in October 2000. They offer not only a London branch but just over a year ago opened the doors to P1 North in Cheshire so offer an alternative to their often London centric competitors. Michael Breen who founded the club with Damon Hill, spoke to us about what makes P1 a continuing success “We offer the largest choice of cars with over 45 of the greatest drives on the planet available to the largest membership base of any of the car clubs. Our longevity and experience in this sector should make potential members feel secure in their choices both in terms of financial and enjoyment potential. In the near future we are looking to expand overseas—thus lending an extra dimension to the P1 experience.”

One company bucking the usual membership ‘points for cars’ trend is Group20, who base their members’ time with the cars on a ‘fair-play’ policy as marketing director Harry Mclennan explains: “The proposition is unique; a fair-play policy gives members unrestricted access to the cars, providing that the access is fair and doesn’t impede on the provision of service to other members. Through this policy, Group20 can offer a service which boasts no cancellation charges, no annual mileage limits, and no excess mileage charges.”

Different clubs also look to position themselves differently, The Segrave Club are a new enterprise who are who are pitching themselves at those who only crave the top flight supercars. Segrave chief executive Nick Hancock let us in on the company outlook: “The new club has been created to answer the fundamental problem with existing shared access car clubs—that 80 per cent of their members only want to drive the top 20 per cent of the cars. As such our lowest group of vehicles



Courtesy of P1 International

is equivalent of the top tier of the other clubs.”

But there can be even greater differences such as those demonstrated by RevoWorld a car club founded by

sive networking events for our members and potential members, which is often quoted as the reason our members joined up.”

Although it is fair to say that club representatives are inclined to represent the concept in glowing terms, there is also a whole host of satisfied car club members ready to offer testimonials, so we will leave the last word to a club member, Richard Fischer. It was the cost of running his Porsche 911 Carrera 4 that prompted Richard to join a supercar club. The City executive spent £55,000 on a one year old 911. He sold it after less than two years of ownership for £38,000, having spent annually about £1,600 on insurance, £1,000 for replacement tyres and between £250 and £1,000 on servicing. “I only did 5,000 miles a year,” says Richard. “The novelty was beginning to wear off. A club is the ideal solution, you can get the latest models so you never get bored.”

“Asset-sharing is a great way to experience some of the finer things in life”

one of the pioneers of the section John Llewellyn. The difference being that it’s not so much a car club as a lifestyle one who allow their members to spread their points across not only supercars but well, pretty much anything! Chief executive Carl Thomas guides us through their story “We came to realise that car clubs are great if you just love cars but often those that appreciate fine cars also want other luxuries available to them. Accordingly, we offer what can be neatly summarised as the ‘ultimate concierge service’- our members can access supercars, helicopters, yachts, private jets, hotel reservations and many other goods and services all through our team who know all our members personally. In practise that means that a member on a Revoworld yacht for example will have the catering and drinks available that we know they like. We also organise very exclu-

### How much would it cost to do 4,500 miles in your own Ferrari F430 Spider F1?

- Cost of finance (£138,500 at 7 per cent APR): £9,695
  - Insurance (35-year-old, clean license): £4,200
  - Yearly service: £2500
  - Set of tyres: £970
  - Depreciation: £19,920
- Total: £34,384 or £6.88 per mile.

Figures courtesy of ecurie25

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