

ITALIAN MADNESS

LOUGHBOROUGH, ENGLAND: Playing with Lamborghinis and Ferraris on a race track for a day turns out to be quite fun.

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INSIDE in
Loughborough,
England

As fun goes, nothing can really beat a long hard meth trip or something like snorting cocaine of a hookers ass. What about boosting a police car and waft down some main road while having your mate strapped down to the bonnet? Or how about doing something *really* outrageous like riding a rollercoaster.

Rollercoasters come as a diverse package of goodies. The anticipation as the altitude increases and the tranquil silence at the top of the steep slope moments before thunderous g-force drag you down towards the bottom, and the immense momentum hauls you up to the next top.

Imagine, however that you have gained control over the throttle and the ferocity is no longer a function of gravitational force, but totally directed by your right foot and your inclining thirst for a proper thrill. Well, thats a fraction of how mad it feels to unleash the fury of

631 raging Italian stallions bolted down right behind your head in the Lamborghini Murcielago LP 640

The big brute

Wide as a freight train and lower than Danny de Vito (yes, really), the aweinspiring Lambo lurks conspicuously in the corner of the pit-lane with utter disregard for practicality and utility. The mighty Porsche 911 GT3 RS standing next to it looks rather like an articulated lorry in comparison. The busy idle of the big lambo is a thrill of its own and it shall be my first drive of the day. Oh joy.

With a slightly frantic smile I greet Mark, the instructor in the passenger seat. I pull the lever to my right engaging first gear. The big V12 revs in anger, sets the car in motion off the pit-lane heading for the very starting point of todays action: Prestwold Hall Racing Circuit

While a burgundy red Aston Martin DB9, a Ferrari 360 and the crazy Porsche 911 GT3 RS fly by in a thunder of divine sound and might, Mark informs me on where to position the car once on the long straight. I prod the delicious accelerator and off we go. The poise of the Lamborghini is just something entirely else. Forget about daddy's Range Rover Sport and forget about every thing else as well. This is so over the top fast you will forget to think, and the long straight is soon a blur of savage V12 noise and Mark's polite voice suggesting its now time to dab on the brakes anticipating the first bend.

Margin for error

The technique is really rather simple. Keep a smooth pace when applying throttle and ease into the apex. This is what the instructor will tell you to do and if you comply you will be sorted

out. If you dont, however, things can go oh so very wrong very fast. It should be mentioned, though, the event starts with a mandatory safety briefing. This means that the margin for error is comfortably small even if you are a complete pillock behind the wheel

Madness, no less

After the completed four laps in the Lamborghini Murcielago LP 640 its time for car number two: the Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4. As with the Murcielago, the Gallardo also has four wheel drive serving a very controllable and stable progress. The latter is also a great deal lighter so the slight power deficiency is nothing to be addressed, although the share force of the Murcielago is no less than utterly insane.

Along with the lambos, as a part of the experience, I also had a go in two Ferraris. The 360 Spider and the V12



Lamborghini
Gallardo L560-4.
552 BHP should
suffice





monster 575 Maranello (guised with the flappy paddle gearbox). Undoubtedly great cars, but they can't really match the Lamborghinis in share Italian drama. Still, there is something very special about being balls out in a bloody Ferrari.

The arrangement was facilitated by the Norwegian firm vroom.no who also booked the hotel. Prestwold Hall is located just outside the small town of Loughborough, and not surprisingly, so was our hotel. The town is a lovely two hour drive from Stansted airport, and on the way passing Cambridge you can enjoy the quintessential postman-Pat scenery. Vroom.no can set up a package deal and this just might be a good idea. I tried to rent a car myself but the crappy rental car firm had lost the meticulously pre ordered satellite navigation system leaving me in complete darkness. The flight was booked through Ryanair, and that's fine as long as you can stand the rude and unpleasant cabin crew and the long and boring bus trip from Oslo to Torp airport.

While on the subject, there were some unpleasanties on the track as well. Because the event is based on being accessible to all drivers notwithstanding their questionable driving skills, the instructors were quite strict on how hard you could drive. Therefore, the pace was kept well under physical limits, but I guess that's just how it's got to be. In other words, you won't feel the cold hand of death clutching your back, but it

certainly was good fun nonetheless.

You might expect this to be awfully pricy, but actually it wasn't. Four laps in four of the greatest cars on the planet only cost about 4000 NOK and this is a jolly good deal even if you don't really care much for cars. As a trip with your mates, or indeed with your partner, this would be a small price to pay for something very special. Not to mention all the cool pictures you can post on facebook afterwards.

At the end of the day, as part of the vroom-experience, I had a go as a passenger in one of the lesser cars of the day. A tiny Ford Focus RS, but don't be fooled by the shoddy brand. The RS packs a punch of 300 BHP, and with an old and completely mad racing driver behind the wheel it was a total giggle from start to end. It really put a smile to my face, and I can guarantee the experience will put a smile on yours as well.

So, what's next then? A 10000 horsepower rocket car? Next year, definitely!

ABOVE:
Weather looked suspect, but track stayed dry.

BELOW:
Murcielago LP640. Fastest car of the lot with 631 BHP

