

october 2005

# residence



*Wild at heart*  
Deer stalking in the Scottish

rule

*Britannia*

Queen Victoria  
holds court

# Bond ambition

*Flooring it in an Aston Martin*





# Something for the weekend?

You don't have to own a supercar to drive one, as **Nina Cuthbert** discovered when she got behind the wheel of an Aston Martin

**T**hat Bond chap has got nothing on me...' So said the well-dressed man next to me as he eased the car into gear and the Aston Martin DB9 surged forward with a throaty roar... Ok, so the man was my dad and the car wasn't ours, but heli, you can dream.

Made famous by 007, the Aston Martin is the coolest car on the planet. Whilst James Bond opted for the Vanquish, the DB9 is the newest model on the market and there is currently a waiting list for the manual version that's as long as my arm. So how did I get my hands on one? Well, I didn't, my dad did. Sadly, being under the age of 30 and not having had the experience of driving performance vehicles, I was not permitted behind the wheel. So who better to choose as co-driver than my father. A Jaguar fan at heart, he leapt like a child after sweets at the prospect of having an Aston Martin for a weekend in the country.

All this came about after discovering a car club called P1. Created by Formula One champion Damon Hill, it provides members with performance vehicles for between 50 and 70 days of the year, for an annual fee, with membership limited to a select 250.

The club runs an impressive fleet of cars including the Ferrari F430, Lamborghini Murciélago, the Bentley Arnage T and the Ford GT. P1 offers the best in luxury driving and the added bonus of not having to worry about insurance costs and maintenance speaks for itself. There's another perk for members who live in the Royal Borough; P1 has a connection with the Bluebird Club so cars can be ordered and delivered to the club's King's Road premises.

So, with my father at the helm, ready to put the car through its paces, we took to the coun-

try roads of Kent on a sunny Saturday afternoon. The car drives like a dream; we went round corners, up hills and over bridges, feeling nothing but the smooth suspension and hearing only the gentle purr of the engine. Until a gear change was necessary at ample speed and then the roar made itself heard.

The interior is as sleek as the exterior and with a button above the central console to turn the engine on and a well-camouflaged sat-nav system, you really feel like you're in a movie. There is ample space for two people, and even though back seats have been designed with comfort in mind, once the kids grow over the age of four, you might need to invest in something a little more practical. The sound system is crisp and clear and if, like my father, you enjoy the dulcet tones of John Humphreys in the morning, or the rocking guitar of a Stones

track with the open road ahead of you, then there really isn't a better way to soothe your ears. Ok, it comes a close second to that animal engine.

So if you are envious of Jeremy Clarkson, perhaps P1 is an investment worth making. The service is efficient and delivery to the Bluebird is massively convenient (and free). From there you can go anywhere in London with relative ease. And if it's the whole look that you are after, what better way to be a babe magnet than in a silver Aston Martin? All you need is the dinner jacket and depending on your preference, you can be Roger or Sean for a day or two weeks, at regular intervals throughout the year. Whether your wife or girlfriend will take you seriously is another matter, but we can all dream can't we? □

For P1 membership enquiries, call 01372 374 400 or visit [www.p1international.com](http://www.p1international.com)

