

STEALTH CARS

Unit 1c, Wessex Industrial Estate,
Portsmouth Road, Horndean, Hants, PO8 9LP
Tel: 023 9259 7444



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AUTOCAR

STEALTH HAZARD

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By Colin Goodwin



If you don't want to be stared at and answer a multitude of questions, this isn't your car; if you want to understand the meaning of speed, it definitely is

Inside it's a different matter. You can hear the V8 hammering in a loping idle behind you and feel it shaking the car. Then there's the gearbox. It's bizarre: one moment you can only hear the engine, then suddenly there's a gnashing of straight cut teeth like Cerberus woken from his sleep. Then the noise disappears as abruptly as it arrives. To get first gear you move the lever to the left and then hard back. Every movement of the gear lever has to be made like you mean it, and then there's no argument. The clutch action is very short and its bite quite harsh, though the engine's torque makes pulling away easy.

First gear is short, so almost straight away you punch the lever forwards to get second. The engine bellows as the car is thrust forward by the wall of torque. Then you realise that you're only using the Holley's two primary throats. Push the throttle harder and the secondaries open wide. The resulting acceleration is staggering. It all happens so quickly. The V8 hammers behind you as you repeatedly bang forward and snap back the Hewland's lever.

The Silk Cut Jaguar XJR-9 that I drove recently felt no faster, and nor did a McLaren F1 that I went in several years before that. The Stealth is geared for only 170mph but I have no doubt that if you put a longer fifth gear inside it would easily pass 200mph. A Lamborghini Diablo will crack 200mph and that car is surely less slippery and has only a few more bhp. Whatever, the B6 would demolish a Diablo where it counts. Overtaking thrust is very nearly in superbike territory. And before bikers get on the blower, here are some figures that we managed to attain at Millbrook: the Stealth hit 60mph in 3.6sec, 100mph in 6.3sec and did the quarter mile in 11.0sec dead. The latter two figures compare almost exactly to those achieved for the McLaren F1. The engine isn't at all cammy, but if you really want to dispose of the cars ahead drop down a couple of gears so that the engine is turning over at about 4000rpm. When you then give it full throttle the acceleration is savage. You wouldn't want to do this if the roads were damp, and you'd want to be a little more conservative with your gearchanging, too. On these dry roads you can take the engine close to its 6500rpm red line, momentarily lift from the throttle and bang the next gear home without going near the clutch. The changes are much quicker

and smoother without the clutch, in fact.

The challenge in driving the B6 is not to see how fast you can drive it but how slowly you can. The acceleration is so addictive that if you don't exert a lot of self control you'll soon be without the paperwork necessary to drive it on the public road. Which would be a pity, as the Stealth B6's ride quality shames a few production cars - the current Nissan Skyline for one.

Suspension is by double wishbones at each end with in-board gas dampers at the front, operated by pushrods, and by the same arrangement at the back with the suspension mounted directly onto the transaxle.



Rear (above) and front suspension is fully adjustable and gives B6 cat-like poise. Bubble below mirror is for ventilation. Speedlines are cool but costly

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