

STEALTH CARS
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STEALTH CARS
 WHERE SPEED COUNTS

B6 Sport B6 Sport B6 Sport
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THE THRILL OF DRIVING

SETTING THE SCORE

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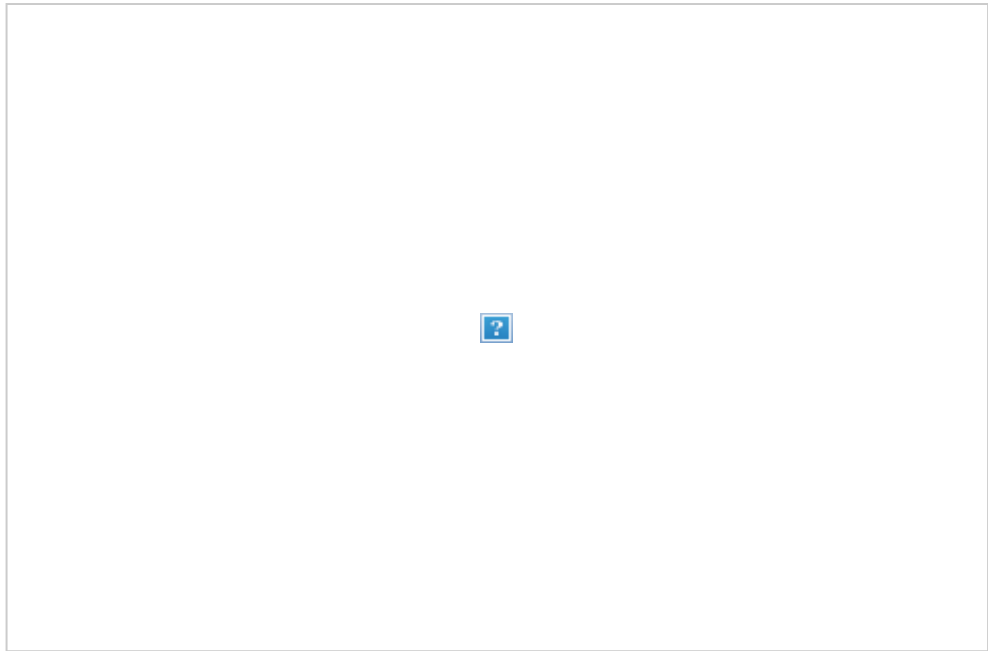


STEALTH B6 Lap time 1.35.37 Fun factor 6/10

You'd think that the Stealth experience would be dominated by the massive V8 lurking beneath its hunched rear bodywork, but no – it's the gearbox. Made by Hewland and packed with straight-cut gears, it was built to withstand gargantuan loads unflinchingly. It works with a brutal, crunching precision and a scream like nails down a blackboard.

Hoik the right-hand gearshift left and back for first – ker-lunk! – wind up the loud but surprisingly smooth 6.3-litre Chevy V8, play the clutch in and you're rolling toward the pit exit, straight-cut cogs already whining (the rev counter doubles as a Hewland noise meter). Going for second, you discover that you can't change gear slowly – teeth grind loudly, the lever buzzes angrily in your hand and finally the cogs mesh fiercely, like an England/Scotland rugby scrum.

Firm and positive is the idea, but you're in an alien environment, slung low, looking through a deep black valley formed by the front wings, trying to change gear forcefully with the wrong hand. You just want to get a gear that will do for the whole lap so that you can experiment with squeezing the throttle and get a feel for the steering and brakes.



Co-ed Meaden tried the B6 on a drying track the day before, and shot me a grimace as he clambered out before explaining to the Stealth people why he hadn't got the hammer down. Now, after three laps attempting to drive the Stealth slowly and smoothly, and not succeeding, I was getting a bit hacked off. Time to up the ante.

Hustling it into the hairpin, the back slipped wide on its fat, treaded tyres so I got back gently on the power and prodded out of the corner sideways – purely in the interests of science, you understand. It was surprisingly easy to hold, and with adrenalin now pumping, the gears came easily along the start straight. Peak speed was on the next lap – more tidily onto the straight and up to 131mph, just 4mph slower than Ronnie on the R1. Through the tighter stuff, the B6's nose wanted to rub wide, but out the back through the Esses the aerodynamic downforce worked against the momentum and the Stealth sliced through spookily well. Data-logging showed it was just a few mph down on the quickest here – the grippy, no-inertia R500. Getting gears was still a bit of a fumble through the final complex but there was one satisfyingly neat lap.

Sweaty-palmed in the pits, it felt good to explain that the brake pedal had gone a bit soft and that there was a bit too much understeer. Can't help thinking that for £90k it should have a sequential 'box like one of the genuine Stealth racers does. It would be easier to use, if no more appropriate for the road, but then this car really isn't a serious road car anyhow. Two days later, there was still a dull ache in the palm of my right hand from the stubby gear lever.

Specification

Engine	V8, 6276cc, 16v Max power 511bhp @ 6500rpm Max torque 479lb ft @ 5000rpm
Weight	920kg Power to weight (with driver) 564bhp/ton (501)
0-60mph	3.9secs
Max speed	180mph+
Price	£90,000

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