

Getting the Most Out of Your Car

Neel Jaiswal talks skills, thrills and track training

With it getting ever more difficult to safely and legally enjoy your automobile's potential, people are now looking to savour their cars or rent exotica within the safe confines of an organised track event.

Advanced Driver training is a pre-requisite, being able to utilise such performance safely and seeing the advancement of one's driving skills is very satisfying and makes driving much more pleasurable.

If you are looking for such an experience these come in various levels of exposure and quality of experience

1- Gift experience days

These usually cost around £150-£250. Usually, these are held at disused airfields and generally will have some heavily driven cars to trial.

Often, there are no real creature comforts and it's designed for a short burst of driving for people who are either novices or love the brands involved and may not be able to get to drive such a plethora.

After registration and a safety lecture, there's usually a couple of laps of an airfield in a variety of cars, it can be crowded on the track with little scope for overtaking around a coned circuit.

It's usually for people who just want to have the experience of driving a super car but there is little growth or development



to be had here.

<https://www.trackdays.co.uk>

2- Track your own car

Usually, tracks will have open days such as an Evo event where you can bring your own car to track for the day or evening.

Your car should be road worthy and you will need to have or hire a helmet.

A safety briefing again is mandatory and it is worth having track insurance, as generally, your own insurance won't cover you for these occasions.

Your car also has to meet noise limits, which can vary from region to region.

These can be great fun but you may sometimes find yourself on a crowded track with drivers of varying ability.

It is always worth hiring a pro driver for the event and he or she can be shared between two of you. Their expertise will shave seconds off your lap in a safe and

efficient manner and their knowledge of the track is a valuable advantage.

For a seasoned driver this can become a monthly occurrence as addiction sets in, and then you will be looking at suitable vehicles, which are cheap to maintain yet fun on the track and still get you home. (Example: used M3, 911, Lotuses, Alfa 4c).

<https://www.trackdays.co.uk>

3- Jonathon Palmer sport

<http://www.palmersport.com>

Palmer Sport is a full-day driving event created in 1991 by former F1 racer Jonathan Palmer, which has earned a well-established reputation.

Guests drive a collection of high-performance sports cars and open-top racing cars on four purpose-built circuits in an eight-activity programme at Bedford Autodrome.



They actively encourage guests to push right to the limit and the tracks have more run-off areas than other venues, so the track is much safer too.

Driving their new F3000 single seater is surprisingly manageable and the closest you'll get to an experience with an F1 car.

4 - Manufacturer experience days

- Mercedes have Brooklands and are useful for novice drivers looking to learn and participate in such an experience. They also have programmes for young and teenage drivers. It's the closest centre to London, which makes it convenient for some, but their track is not as involving as the others.
- The Amg cars are always good fun though with their sonorous tremulous exhaust notes. The adjacent Mercedes World museum is worth a visit, alongside the Brooklands museum. <https://drivingexperiences.mercedes-benzworld.co.uk/#/>
- Porsche run their experience day at a bespoke facility within Silverstone. If you buy a new car this day is usually

part of your buying experience, but experiences can also be bought separately or as a gift. They will teach you the capabilities and you will explore the modern safety features of these cars. It's worth doing as a novice to a moderate driver and they also have performance driver training programmes. Circa £300-£900. <http://www.porsche.com/silverstone/en/experience/>

- Aston Martin run days at Millbrook, about twice the price of the Porsche experience at £1500 but you will get a full day of dedicated tutelage on a variety of tracks including the famous Alpine pass and the high-speed bowl where you can take your hands off the wheel at 130mph, and steer it with the throttle! There's also a high-speed straight run where you should be able to get up to 180 mph safely, which is exhilarating. <https://www.astonmartinartofliving.com/experience/millbrook-performance/>
- Porsche, Aston and McLaren also arrange driving experiences abroad

such as ice driving and Nurburgring tutelage.

<https://www.astonmartinartofliving.com/experience/nurburgring/>

- And driving holidays too! <http://go.mclaren.com/lifestyle-heritage-canada-drive> <https://www.astonmartinartofliving.com/experience/norway/>

5- Road driving courses

Road driving takes a different skill to be able to safely and efficiently on public highways and still enjoy yourself, it's a skill that everyone should have as we all see such terrible driving on a daily basis, sometimes with disastrous consequences.

Clubs such as the High-Performance Driving Club extol this virtue and lessons can be arranged to help gain entry into this enjoyable club.

<http://www.high-performance-course.com>

Again as always if any of these are of interest please do drop me a line and I will help facilitate as best as I can. ■