

MOTORING

BY RAY MASSEY



CAR fans with lots of cash — including new Top Gear presenter Chris Evans — have made a killing over the past seven years buying supercars whose values have soared.

But take heed. The roller-coaster could soon turn into a big dipper, according to one of Britain's canniest independent luxury car dealers, Tom Hartley, who thinks values are set to plummet by up to a fifth.

And while supercars bucked the downward economic trend after stock markets around the world crashed and consumers were hit by the recession and credit crunch, he's convinced the boom has now reached its peak.

He says: 'I think next year interest rates will rise and people's desire to put money into classic cars will diminish; they will put money into other projects.

'When people start selling, demand won't outstrip supply and prices could fall by as much as 20 per cent. It's been an amazing seven-year boom. But whatever happens to prices in the future, there'll always be a deal to be done.'

Tom runs his luxury and supercar dealership with his co-owner,



Like father, like son: Tom (right) and Carl Hartley with one of their supercars, LaFerrari

son Carl, 28, from Overseal, near Swadlincote, Derbyshire. He has even built a special £200,000 bridge beneath a lake — to make his cars appear to float on water — in 40 acres of grounds next to his showroom.

The dapper, grey-haired father-of-four, 54, made his first car sale

at the age of 12, selling a Range Rover to a friend of his father for £200 profit. After four decades and three recessions, his business will this year turn over more than £250 million.

Hartley says: 'Pound for pound, certain supercars and classic cars have been the best

investment of the past seven years.' He sold one 1967 Ferrari 275 GTB/4 four times during those seven boom years — rising from £600,000 to £1.4 million: 'Every time it came back into our hands, it cost £200,000 more.'

Tom says he respects Chris Evans's eye for a supercar

bargain. Yet even he was amazed when Evans paid £12 million for a Sixties Ferrari GTO, believing him 'crazy' at the time. Four years later, Evans sold it for £18 million.

MOTORISTS are taking a £6 billion-a-year gamble on the hidden history of the used car they buy, says the RAC.

Only 10 per cent of used car buyers check a car's history. Some 2.8 million used cars are sold privately every year, meaning more than 2.5 million are being bought without history checks.

The average cost of a private sale is about £2,465, so buyers are spending more than £6.1 billion each year on used cars 'that may have nasty secrets', says the RAC Car Passport service.

In a sample of 21,000 checks, almost one quarter highlighted 'serious issues'.

THE spirit of Genevieve lives on as more than 400 veteran cars — some built while Queen Victoria was still on the throne — set off from dawn tomorrow for the annual 60-mile London to Brighton Veteran Car Run, sponsored by auctioneers Bonhams.

The event commemorates the original Emancipation Run of November 14, 1896. This celebrated the new law that raised the speed limit for 'light locomotives' from 4mph to 14mph, and abolished the need for vehicles to be preceded by a man on foot waving a red flag. Details at veterancarrun.com

JAMES BOND'S new Aston Martin DB10 can be seen at the free Regent Street Motor Show today. Also on show will be Aston Martin's current range, including a four-door Rapide S.

GARDENING: PAGES 80 & 82



Dreamy: Ray's MG Midget and his wife, Elizabeth, in the Eighties

CALLING all MG-loving miracle workers. I'm in a state of mourning.

The first car I ever bought was a 1,500cc MG Midget in Goodwood Green. It was back in the mid-Eighties when I was a trainee journalist in need of a set of wheels that were fun, but wouldn't break the bank. And I've owned it until this week!

My then colleague Jeremy Vine — he of Strictly Come Dancing, election swingometer and Radio 2 — still waxes lyrical about my MG to this day.

Sadly, as the years advanced and the family grew, I neglected my much-loved Midget — badly. Really badly. For years, I could not bear to part with her. But this week, the lorry came to transport her to

the great scrapyards in the sky. However, all is not lost. In desperation, I contacted a brilliant fundraising group called Giveacar. Essentially, rather than scrap your car, you give it to them for charity. They will either crush or auction it, with the proceeds going to the charity of your choice.

So, dear MG lovers of Britain, contact Giveacar (020 7736 4242, giveacar.co.uk) or its chosen auctioneer RAW2K (Recycled Automobiles) at raw2k.co.uk, and make a bid for it before it reaches the crusher.

Based in Fulham, South-West London, Giveacar takes about 100 cars a week and has raised nearly £2 million for 1,500 charities.

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The Perfect Gift. BOOKS. CUFFLINKS. VOUCHERS. MODEL CARS. Image of a woman in a Santa hat.

Image showing various registration plates like GHO 57IY, 130 NES, G12 AVE, S724 NGE, FAN 770M, SKU IIL, WEII RDO.

A Perfect Pair. LPW I I LPW. LPW I was originally issued in Norfolk in 1950 and is available - together with its partner, I LPW - from Regtransfers.