

The big **INTERVIEW**

# Tom is staying in top gear among the elite of the luxury supercar traders

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**T**HE villages of South Derbyshire sit in an idyllic setting of typical English countryside. The area is also right in the middle of the National Forest.

But, every once in a while, those varying shades of green are displaced by a blur of all manner of colours from blue and red to yellow and even orange.

The injection of brightness stems from one of a long list of luxury cars which call a gated community in Overseal home.

Alongside the Volkswagen Golfs and Ford Fiestas seen cruising the streets in the likes of Castle Gresley and Linton, people in the area now see the sight of a Ferrari – or any other supercar – as not being out of place. This is because of one man – Tom Hartley.

The successful businessman's name is known across the globe and he remains on first name terms with the rich and famous all thanks to the luxury car firm which has operated from Moira Road for the past 30 years.

Not only does he use the area to entertain millionaires, he also calls it home and sleeps soundly in bed next to £20 million worth of luxury supercars every single night.

In an exclusive interview with the Mail, he offered up a never-before-seen glimpse of the successful firm and why it is based in the middle of South Derbyshire.

The 53-year-old, who works alongside his son and co-owner Carl, 26, said: "I moved here after visiting Measham Car Auctions one day."

"I used all the car auctions throughout the country and to be based in the Midlands made sense to me as you can reach any part of the UK within a few hours, which was important what with being a national supercar – as not being out of place. This is because of one man – Tom Hartley."

Despite his success, Tom was not brought up in the car industry and actually has family links to the carpet trade.



MAIL reporter Helen Kraft in a Lamborghini owned by Tom Hartley; inset, cars in the collection below left, Tom with another supercar; and below, a Porsche Carrera GT.



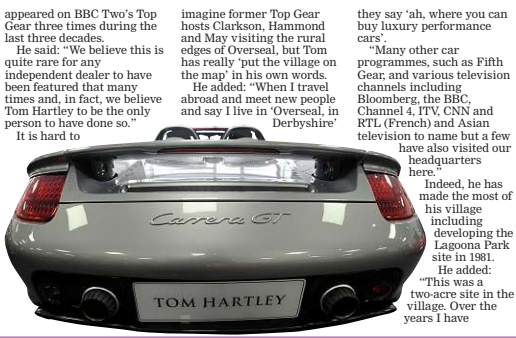
carpet business in Glasgow. I started buying and selling them. I believe this was a great foundation for me learning confidence and dealing with people and understanding what people want.

"When I was as young as 12 I was able to put a deal together with my father's friends and I bought a new 1971 Range Rover which was my first car and earned £200 from the deal."

Sitting in his office, the walls are covered with the articles he has appeared in – and there have been plenty over the years.

Although it is not just the newspapers who have wanted to get in on the supercar action.

The 53-year-old has



appeared on BBC Two's Top Gear three times during the last three decades.

He said: "We believe this is quite rare for any independent dealer to have been featured that many times and, in fact, we believe Tom Hartley to be the only person to have done so."

It is hard to imagine former Top Gear hosts Clarkson, Hammond and May visiting the rural edges of Overseal, but Tom has really 'put the village on the map' in his own words.

He added: "When I travel abroad and meet new people and say I live in 'Overseal, Derbyshire'."

Indeed, he has made the most of his village including developing the Lagoona Park site in 1981.

He added: "This was a two-acre site in the village. Over the years I have

they say 'ah, where you can buy luxury performance cars'."

"Many other car programmes, such as Fifth Gear, and various television channels including Bloomberg, the BBC, Channel 4, ITV, CNN and RTL (French) and Asian television to name but a few have also visited our headquarters here."

The latter will be more popularly known as the former Navigation pub, in Spring Cottage Road, which was bought by Tom after it closed and was recently bulldozed to make way for his ambitious plans.

Despite his success, he shows no signs of slowing down and has even acquired permission to build a second showroom on his site.

acquired ownership of land in the village exceeding more than 100 acres.

"I was recently reminded that I possibly own most of a nearby village called Spring Cottage where we have a completed development called Ashby Woods Luxury Lodges and are about to start a development that will be known as Ashby Woods Residential Park Homes."

It will be a three-storey building, complete with a glass floor, with a glass lift

and a glass floor. But why a glass floor? He said: "The glass floor is because I wanted to create a specification for a showroom that has never been done before. This will be the showroom that will define Tom Hartley's standards."

"People can go to the basement, see the car from below and get a 3D image of it."

Tom's confidence shines through for all to see and he offered some words of wisdom for anyone looking to emulate his luxury lifestyle.

He said: "I am a firm believer that if you have a dream, go and get it. If you want it bad enough you will get it eventually."

"Where there is a will there is a way."



A ROLLS-ROYCE in Tom Hartley's collection.

It will be a three-storey building, complete with a glass floor, with a glass lift



## Those knights in shining armour are often found in unexpected places

**A**NYONE who has ever moved house will tell you how awful it is – the packing, the removal men, the organisation involved.

However, such horrors are cast into the shadows by the horrors of buying a house for the first time – with no furniture, no removal men and no clue what to do.

I had the joys of this experience just a couple of weeks ago. And, of course, despite my meticulous planning, things went wrong and I had to deal with them by myself.

But it is in times of great stress and frustration where we feel completely alone that complete strangers can surprise us the most.

I was privileged to experience one example of this on moving day. I had ordered a bed as part of 'The Plan'. The bed arrived on time. But the bed did not fit up the stairs. The bed was taken away. The company said another bed would take three weeks to arrive. I was left with no bed for my first night in my new house with no carpets. This was not in 'The Plan'.

It wasn't even in 'The Back-Up Plan'. So I did the mature and adult thing – I made a cup of tea and cried.

Once I had finished feeling sorry for myself, I started making 'Plan Number Three'. I would call the people delivering the table. I would call the internet man who would be arriving later that day and then I would dash out to Argos and buy an inflatable mattress. I told myself it would be like a bouncy castle – another exciting adventure.

Everything was fine until I made the phone call to the table people. A lovely lady called Tanya answered the phone and she was able to tell me what time it would be arriving.

But then she made the error of asking me if I was OK as I sounded choked on the phone, and then the floodgates opened.

I explained the situation – the lack of a bed at the end of moving day. Tanya was sweet and polite, she made understanding noises and patiently listened.

What if we all took those extra minutes out of our day to go a little bit further for someone? What could we achieve with those additional seconds? It won't be every day, it might not even be once a week, but keep your eyes peeled for that opportunity and we could make a difference to someone's day with a little extra effort.

And then she did something amazing – she joined me in tackling the problem.

A complete stranger, who probably had a long 'to do' list, plenty of other customers to see to, and a thirst for a cup of tea, took the time to help me find a solution.

Fortunately, Betel also made beds so one phone call from Tanya to her team and there was a brand new bed frame in the van with my table and chairs.

The volunteers from the charity arrived, and soon I had a bed, complete with a mattress in the bedroom upstairs. So I had a bed for my first night.

Tanya did not have to go to that effort to help me. But equally, it was something so simple that she did to transform my day and probably my week.

She took an extra 10 minutes to understand my situation, and another five minutes to find a solution.

What if we all took those extra minutes out of our day to go a little bit further for someone? What could we achieve with those additional seconds? It won't be every day, it might not even be once a week, but keep your eyes peeled for that opportunity and we could make a difference to someone's day with a little extra effort.



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