

**WE MEET UK'S**

**MOTOR MIDAS**



# The super supercar salesman

By **KEN GIBSON**

**TOM HARTLEY** sold his first car when he was just 12 and today controls a family empire that turns over a whopping £150million a year.

He's a self-made multi-millionaire who left school with no qualifications and has become the biggest name in buying and selling used luxury motors and supercars. Tom, 51, is the man with the motoring Midas touch and the reputation for always being able to deliver the supercar his customers want.

**Successful**

It's an amazing story that started when he swapped the classroom for the car auction halls – and quickly learned how to wheel and deal with the hard-nosed pros of the car trade.

He had made his first million by the age of 18, and he was driven to auctions by family and friends until he passed his driving test.

Tom now sells cars for an average £100,000 – but he regularly sells supercars with a price tag of £1million.

He believes the secret of his success is dedication, know-

ledge and being able to deliver the cars people want instantly. He says: "It's not unusual for us to do a deal at midnight or as early as 7am."

"We work around our customer's schedule. Most of them are hugely successful business people working on tight schedules."

Tom admits that it's still "the thrill of the deal" that gives him a buzz. He says: "I never get emotional about the cars. They are purely business. You can't afford to get emotional."

As if to prove his point, our interview is interrupted by a phone call that lasts just a couple of minutes. But at the end of the bargaining with a customer, a £150,000 deal has been agreed.

Today, his business empire is truly a family affair, with sons Tom, 28, and Carl, 24, both partners in the firm – and they've

earned and paid for their partnerships. They were educated about cars by their father when they were growing up.

Tom adds: "They literally used to come in to the showrooms as babies and have been surrounded by supercars all their lives. Supercars are in their blood and they have a real passion for cars."

"They both wanted to come in to the business – but most young men would love to work with supercars every day."

The Hartley dynasty now has an unrivalled knowledge of the luxury supercar world. Most of their clients are millionaires and many are billionaires. And they come from all over the world.

The business also has famous clients, including foreign royalty, sports stars and film stars – but the Hartleys have an agreement to keep their

identities secret. Many fly in by helicopter to Tom's 40-acre estate in Derbyshire with his luxury home and showroom.

Exclusive Ferraris, Porsches, Lamborghinis and Bugattis are as common as Ford Fiestas and Vauxhall Astras in an Aladdin's Cave of supercars. He likens his showroom to a gallery of fine art.

The collection also includes classic cars that are becoming collectors' items and a growing part of the business.

**Unrivalled**

Alongside the showroom, he offers a VIP service and experience no other dealership offers, from a private cinema, dining room, and spa treatments for customers to a guest house for clients who have travelled from overseas.

A viewing of the supercars is strictly by appointment only, with security gates making sure only invited guests get in.

Perhaps the best way to sum up the strength of the Hartley business is the fact that they have continued to grow through the recession. Now, they are on course for a record year.

Tom says: "We have a gut feeling about what cars the market wants and what people are willing to pay. But it's a feeling based on knowledge and contacts built up over 40 years."

He and his sons may not have any educational qualifications but they have a masters degree in selling supercars that is unrivalled in the world of motoring.

**HONDA** have added the Idle Stop engine technology to their 1.2litre Jazz SE supermini. The technology boosts fuel economy to 54.3mpg and cuts CO2 emissions to 120g/km. That puts the car into band C for road tax, reducing it to £30 a year.

**inbrief**



**FORD'S** amazing new 1litre Ecoboost petrol engine in the Focus, above, has been voted the International Engine Of The Year.

The UK-designed unit beat hybrids and supercar engines to win the top award.

We have already raved about the dinky petrol engine, which has the performance of a 1.6litre but the fuel economy of a supermini at 58mpg.

It only went on sale in April but Ford have already sold 10,000 Ecoboost Focuses across Europe, including 2,600 in the UK.

The engine will be fitted to Ford's C-Max and new B-Max later this year.

**ARE YOU A PIMPING WINNER OR LOSER?**

**PIMPING** your car with the wrong extras could **COST** you money when you sell it, says a new study.

But get your optional extras right and they could pay for themselves in the long run, according to valuation experts from Glass's Guide.

For example, installing a satnav entertainment system in a new Audi A3 might set you back £500 but if you sell

the car two years later it would be worth £500 more than those with no satnav.

But adding extras such as 21in wheels and a rear entertainment system in an Audi A3 will reduce the value by £3,500 and £3,800 respectively.

Glass's Richard Crosthwaite said: "You need to do some research and find the extras that pay for themselves."



**THE** Jaguar XF, above, has been named overall winner in the Towcar Awards.

It's been a good couple of weeks for the XF – it was also voted the best car for customer satisfaction in a What Car? survey of more than 20,000 drivers.

Other winners in the caravan-tugging awards were the VW Golf (up to 1,424kg), VW Passat Estate (1,425-1,574kg), VW Tiguan (1,575-1,724kg) and Land Rover Discovery (1,900kg+).

**BUY-UP PAVES WAY FOR SAAB RETURN**

**SAAB** could be back soon with a hybrid version of their 9-3 model. National Electric Vehicle Sweden – formed by a Chinese/Japanese consortium – have bought the main

assets of Saab from the administrators.

It is unclear whether the electric Saabs will be built in the firm's factory in Trollhattan, Sweden. We'll keep you informed.

