

# 10 GREATEST SPORTS CARS

## THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN

By Eric J. Leach

**H**OW DO YOU DEFINE THE MOST AMAZING SPORTS CAR EVER KNOWN? THE CAR WITH THE MOST HORSEPOWER? THE CAR WITH THE QUICKEST ACCELERATION AND MOST IMPRESSIVE TOP SPEED? THE MOST EXPENSIVE? THE BEST HANDLING? THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE. IT'S ALL OF THESE.



10

## 1968 CHEVROLET CORVETTE L88

**COST FACTOR: \$100,000+ FOR A SHOW QUALITY MODEL.**

>> 1968 was the first year of the infamous 'mako shark' body style, which would remain the iconic shape of the Corvette for the next forty years. The L88 was basically a street-legal race car, featuring a 427 cubic inch big block worth easily 500 horsepower (although GM claimed it at only 435), 485 lb-ft torque, and a top speed of 170 mph. Reaching close to 600 horsepower was as easy as yanking the exhaust pipes and running a few gallons of race fuel through its Holly 850 CFM double-pump or optional tri-power set-up (3 carburetors). The L88 could snap a speed of 0 to 60 in around 4.2 seconds.

You would think these would have flown off the showroom floor, but they were actually discouraged by most dealers. The L88 was not meant for the road. It shed a load of unnecessary bells and whistles to gain track poise, such as air-conditioning, power steering, radio, heat, choke, fan shroud. But it didn't go away empty handed. It exchanged its whistles for a few sirens in the form of a 12.5:1 compression ratio, high-performance camshaft, M20 rock-crusher transmission, heavy-duty brakes, and cowl induction hood.



09

## 1967 FORD MUSTANG SHELBY GT-500 FASTBACK

**COST FACTOR: \$100,000+ FOR A SHOW QUALITY MODEL.**

>> While the iconic symbolism of the Mustang itself is almost worthy enough of this list, the 1967 Shelby Mustang GT-500 has done much for the image of the Mustang. The 1967 Mustang was a much more stylized and heavy version than its previous introduction, which necessitated one thing... more horsepower! In addition to the larger engine, Shelby also fitted its front end with a fiberglass nose and hood to shed a few more pounds off the bloated pony.

The GT-500 was a muscle car that the typical working man didn't just have to dream about, they could actually own it. Some of its most notable features were its functional fiberglass hood, rear brake, and interior vent scoops, rear spoiler, integral roll bar with shoulder harness, and center-set high-beam road lights.





08

## CITROËN DS

**COST FACTOR: \$25,000+ FOR A GOOD MODEL.**

>> The French-made Citroën DS has been named the most beautiful car time and again. Even the name itself is suggestive to its beauty and style. The French pronunciation of DS, is day-ess, which means goddess. The D-Series was first introduced to the public in 1955 and held the limelight through 1976 when it was discontinued. Italian sculptor, Flaminio Bertoni, was responsible for its ultra-modern design.

By the end of the D-Series' twenty-year run, it featured more technological advancements than most any other vehicle, such as electronic fuel injection, disc brakes, power steering, directional headlights (turned with front wheels to see around corners), automatic transmission, front and rear crumple/collision zones, and a hydropneumatic suspension. The hydropneumatic system had a couple of neat benefits, such as an ultra smooth ride, height adjustability, and the means to change a tire without a jack. Citroën claimed the DS was so balanced you could drive it on only three of its wheels.



07

## AC SHELBY COBRA 427

**COST FACTOR: \$25,000 FOR A REPLICA; REALLY BIG BUCKS FOR THE REAL THING!**

>> The AC Cobra is basically the combination of the light frame British-built roadster with an American big block 427 squeezed between its fenders. The AC Cobra was born through an airmailed letter by Carrol Shelby after learning the British car company, AC Cars, had lost their engine source for their two-seat roadster. Shelby offered up a reliable and stout American V-8 as a worthy replacement, and AC accepted his proposal without hesitation.

Shelby wanted to build a staunch competitor for the Chevrolet Corvette, which at the time was practically an unbeatable car. The Cobra AC came in 500 lbs lighter than the fiberglass Corvette, enabling it to haul down a straight away in less than 4.2 seconds, just fast enough to stuff it to any L88. Like its reptilian cohort, the Cobra nameplate soon became feared for its lightning fast strike off the line.



06

## 1960'S LOTUS ELAN

**COST FACTOR: \$25,000 FOR A GOOD MODEL.**

>> Probably one of the most affordable and enjoyable sports cars would have to be the Lotus Elan. "It's fun to go out with super models," says ex-Tonight Show host, Jay Leno, in reference to the Lamborghini. "But sometimes the cashier from mini mart (Lotus) is more fun!" This 1,500 pound British sports car with a high-winding 126 horsepower, 113 lb-ft torque motor, could probably leave just about any high-powered sports car in the wake of its dust on a twisty road. It is considered the inspiration behind the McLaren F1, Rocket, and even the largely successful Mazda Miata.

There will never conceivably be another production vehicle this small, light, affordable, and maneuverable as the Lotus Elan. While the Lotus is primarily known for its handling, its lightweight frame is also conducive to a surprisingly quick 0 to 60 in less than 7 seconds.



05

## 1937 DUESENBERG SJ

**COST FACTOR: CAR COST \$13,000 TO \$25,000 BACK IN 1932, SO YOU CAN IMAGINE THE COST OF ONE NOW.**

>> If you have ever heard the phrase, "It's a duesey" that saying came from this very vehicle which could almost be classified as the world's first supercar. The Duesenbergs are designated by either a J, SJ, or SSJ. The base J featured a 420 cubic inch, 8-cylinder, twin overhead cam, producing an impressive 265 horsepower. The SJ had the addition of a supercharger, boosting the power to 320 horsepower.

Using a 3-speed transmission, the SJ saw speeds in excess of 130 mph (94 mph in second gear), and accomplished this with the classic rumble seat body shell that was not very conducive to aerodynamics. 100 mph was achieved in 17 seconds, 0 to 60 in a mere 8 seconds. There were only 481 Duesenbergs built. Out of those, only a couple (literally only two) were designated the coup de grâce, SSJ. The SSJ was built in 1935, towards the end of the Duesenberg J's production run (1929-1937), and was characterized by a shorter wheelbase, supercharger, and a specially designed ram-horn intake. This dynamic trio proved worth an extra 80 horsepower, for a reported grand total of 400 horsepower.

>> The Jaguar E-Type could be said to be the Ferrari 250 GTO for the poor man. A new model cost just \$5,595; back in the day, practically anyone could afford this little piece of heaven. In fact, it was actually the E-Type that was said to have influenced the development of the 250 GTO. Rumour has it that the Ferrari sales manager, Girolamo Gardini, first caught a glance of the new Jaguar at the Geneva Motor show in March of 1961. Gardini returned to the factory running around frantically, screaming, "They are going to beat us with their GT."

The Jaguar introduced a whole new species of sports car in 1961. The E-Series came from a long line of racing D-Series Jaguars. What it offered its customers in terms of performance was a 4.2-liter dual overhead cam I-6 engine, independent rear suspension, and four-wheel disc brakes. (You would have been hard pressed to find four-wheel disc brakes in the '80s, much less the '60s.)



04

## JAGUAR E-TYPE SERIES 1

**COST FACTOR: \$55,000 SHOULD GET YOU IN THE CLUB.**

BELMONT TASTE IN A COMPACT FORMAT

NOTHING  
TASTES QUITE  
LIKE A ...  
BELMONT



PACKAGING AND CIGARETTE SHOWN ARE ACTUAL SIZE

AVAILABLE SOON

**WARNING**

**YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE SMOKING THIS CIGARETTE**

The smoke from a cigarette is not just inhaled by the smoker. It becomes second-hand smoke, which contains more than 50 cancer-causing agents.

Health Canada



03

## 1962 FERRARI 250 GTO

**COST FACTOR: \$2 MILLION WOULD BE CONSIDERED A STEAL FOR AN ORIGINAL.**

>> Back in its day, the Ferrari 250 GTO (Gran Turismo Omologato) dominated the World Car Championships, or should I say, annihilated them. In 1962, nothing could compare to both the form and function of one of the most legendary vehicles of all time. The 250 GTO was the cause of much commotion and whining by both Chevrolet and Aston Martin, who did not think the GTO belonged in the GT-class race circuit. Enzo Ferrari had cleverly slipped it past the FIA as a modified-body 250 GT SWB (Short Wheel Base), even though it was a very purposeful-built, competition coupe, making it a wolf among lambs!

The GTO 250 received a host of new improvements over its 250 GT SWB successor, including a 5-speed transmission, relocated engine (set behind the front axle for better weight distribution), and a sexy, fastback, streamlined body style. The 250 GTO featured six double-barrel Weber carburetors feeding into a 3.0 liter, V-12, aluminum motor, pumping out somewhere around 280 bhp and 220 lb-ft of torque. The chassis was relatively light at just a little over 2,000 lbs, giving the GTO an impressionable launch of 0-60 in 6.1 seconds. But the 250 was never meant for the straight away, it was born and bred for the track.



02

## BUGATTI VEYRON

**COST FACTOR: ANYWHERE FROM \$1.5 MILLION AND UP.**

>> For its speed, horsepower, and price tag, the Bugatti wins hands down as one of the greatest sports cars ever known. Like the McLaren, the Veyron began life as nothing more than a chassis and an engine. Once everything was in place and functioning like clockwork, a cover was merely placed over top to protect the driver from getting too many bugs in his teeth. So in a sense the definition of Bugatti has little to do with the actual design and shape of the car, and everything to do with its 8.0 liter, 1010 horsepower, 64-valve, quad turbo charged W-16 engine.

To reach 1,000 horsepower in a road-worthy production car is no easy task. There are a lot of things to consider such as size, weight, reliability, and heat. The Veyron finds its way around this dilemma by combining two relatively compact V-8 engines (hence the W reference), allowing them to share the same camshaft, and surrounding them with an arrangement of 4 turbo-chargers (18 PSI). This combination allows the 8.0-liter to practically double its horsepower potential.



01

## McLAREN F1

**COST FACTOR: \$2 MILLION.**

>> When Gordon Murray, an ex-Formula One engineer decided to build the ultimate sports car, he gave himself two rules from which to work. Rule number one: There would be no vehicle in the world as fast as the McLaren F1. Rule number two: Speed costs money. In order to reach the status of the fastest car in the world, Murray knew that he would spare no expense.

To make the F1 like no other, it would have to be a bantam weight. To accomplish this, Murray gave each manufacturer involved in the project a set of guidelines. Everything from the engine to the radio had to be feather light. Murray made good on his promise, producing the fastest normally-aspirated vehicle in the world (0 - 60 in 3.2 seconds, 0-100 in 6.3 seconds, and top speeds of 241 mph). It is said that the most difficult part of F1 ownership is not learning how to drive this technological marvel, but rather getting in and out of the center-placed seat, which the owners manual graciously dedicates two pages to.

