LVKE LHE IW ŁOŁ V ÓNICK BECCE. SOWE CBEVL BOVDS' LOO' LIWE LO MILH WOBE CTOBIONS SNNSHINE' **, DVX LHBEE** VND MEBE BLESSED

hold its own with the exotics in terms of road presence, but there's not a lot to get excited about inside. The sears and wheel are both on the plump side and it's all a bit dark, with not so much as a single shiny magpie. There is, however, a gearlever sprouting from between the sears... if's a strange thing when the manual 'box is no longer the norm in a Cat of the Year rest, but just four of the 13 contenders are rest, but just four of the 13 contenders are

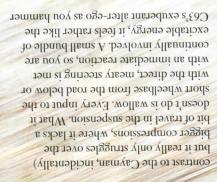
The plan is to use the Aventador. The plan is to use the surrounding roads for driving and photography, while Chris Harris, who has jetted in from Spa to join us, concentrates on video. So, as Harris disappears into make-up (it's all blusher and eyeliner to get that look, you know) Meaden and I take the IM for a recce of the surrounding countryside. With its outrageously pumped arches,

the littler BMW certainly manages to

ednesday dawns as bright and cloudless as you'd hope a Wednesday would in southern Portugal. But as we arrive in the padock at the Portimão circuit there's bad news: the Performante there's bad news: the Performante The handling quirks we noted yesterday Dave been getting worse; seems it suffered damage to its suspension in transit from damage to its suspension in transit from

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the old-fashioned DIY type. The BMW's shift is light and slightly less knuckly than some previous ones but it still possesses that feeling that the internals are made of nylon. It's lovely.

You can tell exactly how far the money for the race circuit spread, because there is a very abrupt deterioration in road quality as soon as you go much beyond the perimeter. The IM feels busy all the time on the bumpier stretches (in stark



IL WYKES ILS ŁOFT 372BHD, 2000KbW YND BEKOND' MHEKE SLINNING YFT LHE MYK LO CYKWYN,S 3'4-FILKE WOLOK ,KON HYNE LO KEEL LHE



Left: Cayman and OII share a number of components, including doors. 'W' button on IW's wheel (far left) simply alters the throttle response



down the road. Mike Duff has the canine analogy nailed: It's terrier-like.' As we climb out of the valley, Meaden arguests we hand a right onto a smoother.

As we crimin out on the value), invention, suggests we hang a right onto a smoother, faster, more moneyed road that runs through the trees. The IM's twin-turbo straight-six is a stonker up here. It's almost utilitarian in the way it delivers its huge punch, yet it still manages to have what note – gritty yet aristocratic'. It's hard to believe just how fast the pint-sized IM is until you experience it, but at times it's almost unsettling.

Drang down on the street speed to wards the circuit, is a road a little better than the first but not quite as smooth as the second, with tighter hairpins tumbling down the hillside. The IM's short wheelbase and lack of roll mean that it can with the throttle set to Sport (the one and only setting you can change) you have the perfect tool to keep the reat wheels spinning just as much as you want: once sideways it seems to stabilise sweetly, ableit with a lot of tread being shed from the tryres. One last bit of Magellan-esque the tryres. One last bit of Magellan-esque

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