

# Beyond

# Words

Some of the world's most exotic cars arrive in Yorkshire for a thorough testing - **Ian Lamming** gets behind the wheel

**M**OUTH wide open but nothing coming forth; sometimes there are no words and since actions speak louder I throw my arms around the press officer in gratitude.

I've just experienced the best car I've ever driven, ever, ever, ever and it's down to a veritable superhero of a PR man Wayne Bruce (we call him Manbat, but not to his face) who ventured North to Yorkshire with his supercars.

Resplendent in fluorescent orange and green they represent the very best of British, handcrafted, hand-painted, hand-finished to exacting standards by this nation's finest.

It's the annual North test day organised by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders at Wetherby Racecourse.

It attracts my kin from as far away as Scotland and the Midlands and allows hacks to test a variety of machinery back to back. Generally, on arrival, you simply don't know what to drive first.

Generally, but not this year as top of the list is the simply glorious McLaren S650 Spider thanks to Wayne's team of Woking wonders.

Where to start? Well it looks like a supercar, inspired and honed by the track, bought by the rich and famous. The doors lift up instead of out allowing easy access to its racecar interior and with a dab of a button the hard roof lifts off and tucks neatly away allowing the full cacophony of the 3.8 litre twin turbo charged V8 to wash over your senses. It's an aural delight.

I could pretend I'm not intimidated just like I'm pretending to be working and not just a child in a sweet shop but the rictus grin on my face gives the game away. OMG this is truly awesome and I am in awe.

The 650 in the title is the PS (power) available at a twitch of your right foot. The speedometer will fly to 60mph in under three seconds – that's as quick as a superbike for goodness sake. Top speed? How about

204mph? And before you ask, no I got nowhere near.

But the biggest surprise? It is easy to drive; you really could use it to pop down the shops for a pint of milk.

And the price tag? This particular McLaren starts at £215,000 – and the order book is full for the next sixth months. If you want them to build you a McLaren P1 for the track; that will be a cool £2m please. Proud to be British? I am.

After the McLaren experience there's only one thing to do, cleanse the automotive palate by jumping in a Hyundai i10. Never drive anything similar as it will never match up. But the little Hyundai feels surprisingly good. The three-cylinder motor has a lovely tone and is willing and able and the new larger bodysell feels much more grown up and stable.

Maserati is also in the line – well it would be rude not to. This is a supercar in a more sophisticated fashion. It is Italian designer clothing in wood, metal and leather and is just plain plush.

The sorbet this time comes in the form of a Kia Soul Mixx. Funky is the name of the game. It is beach buggy cheeky with a cracking interior and excellent diesel motor.

Resisting the Range Rover Sport is never on the cards and very soon I'm relaxing in leather armchairs and opulent surroundings. I can see where they get the Sport notation from as it does fly and feels sharp through the twists and turns.

Finally, there's just time to drive the new Mini Cooper, always a favourite. It now features a smaller three-cylinder engine, which is fabulous and sounds like a turbine. Great handling and amazing interior – you should see the new red starter toggle switch – and Mini has once again successfully reinvented a legendary brand.

What a day and there are words after all – plenty of them and all good.