

RANDOM HOUSE  BOOKS



Crap Cars

Richard Porter

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Most car books are a festival of shiny sex wedges designed to make you wish you were richer. But not this one. This is a celebration of the shoddy, the inept and the downright ugly. In fact, it's not a celebration at all. Instead, it invites the car industry's losers over for a cup of tea, waits until they're admiring the view through the patio doors and then kicks them stoutly in the back. There are cars that make you laugh, cars that make you cry, cars that induce a powerful sensation of violent nausea. This is proof that, even after 100-odd years of practice, the world's car makers are still capable of making a right old cock of things.

CRAP CARS

RICHARD PORTER

BBC
BOOKS

50 LANCIA MONTE CARLO

Let's start with a car that wasn't really that crap at all. It was quite quick, largely nice to drive and invigorating in that Italian way that immediately makes you want to dress better and wear sunglasses. There was just one problem. Under anything more than light braking the front wheels would lock and the car would slide terrifyingly towards the nearest unyielding roadside object. The problem was serious. So serious that Lancia actually stopped selling the Monte Carlo for more than a year while they sought a solution. The glitch was swiftly traced to that bit of modern cars that amplifies brake effort from the pedal to the wheels - the servo. And after months of head-scratching Lancia had a fix. They unplugged it. Brilliant.





49 PORSCHE 924

A low performance Porsche? Isn't that as pointless as explaining income tax to a horse? Yep. The wet-lettuce 924's life started when Volkswagen asked Porsche to design a coupe for them. Then, having emptied out all their pockets, rifled through their spare jacket and pulled all the cushions off the sofa, VW realised they didn't have the cash to pay for it and beat a red-faced retreat. However, since the car was pretty much ready, Porsche simply slapped their own badge on it and put it on sale without even changing the VW engine for one of their own. Which was an error when you discovered which VW the engine came from - the LT van. Doh! Unsurprisingly, while it might have worked perfectly well in something square and white and filled with ladders, in a pointy-fronted coupe it was utterly pathetic. A while later Porsche pulled up their lederhosen, fitted one of their own engines and turned it into the 944, which was rather good.



