



Motoring journalists can be a strange breed. I looked back through a 1991 edition of *Car* where, in a group test, they reckoned a Citroën XM V6 was a better bet than a 24v 525i. Really.

One would have been a warranty disaster from day one, an unsaleable freefall depreciation nightmare from which only the scrapman could wake you, and the other is still worth having after 150,000 miles of fault-free service. But at *Total BMW*, we're down here at ground level and we know what's good for you.

M5s are all very well but that's a pretty expensive engine under that bonnet and what do you do if it goes wrong? You go to BMW or a specialist, cap in hand, and take it like a man. That's why I'd be looking to spend three grand out of the *Auto Trader* on a 540i and enjoy the torque of that 4-litre V8.

The other, even more viable alternative of course is an Alpina. Mention that six letter word and there's a sharp intake of breath. Parts costs. Running costs. Sytners only for the bits. Well, no, not really. Yes, if your Alpina of choice is a Bi Turbo then you've got Ferrari running costs if it goes wrong. But look at this 1988 >

The Great Pretender

Can the Alpina B10 really make more sense than the M5?



