



**>> AUDI PROFITS SOAR**  
Audi profits increased by 25 percent in 2007 with a record €1.7bn from 964,151 sales. That's up 6 percent – more than BMW – but Munich totalled 1,276,793 sales last year. Need more Q models, Ingolstadt? A small car?



**>> TAX GUZZLER**  
For the good of the planet (allegedly), chancellor Alistair Darling heaped more taxes on the British motorist introducing taxes as high as £950 on anything over 255g/km and fleecing an extra £735m a year from motorists.

**>> JLR SALE RUMBLES ON**  
As we go to press, Tata's Jaguar/Land Rover buyout is imminent. Still, Experts have had to unpick Ford from its premium brands, in everything from IT to who owns Terrain Response. See page 36.

# Reality bites: the horsepower war hits the rev limiter

## Where now for the German power brokers?

WORDS: CHRIS CHILTON & BEN BARRY

**F**AST, STUPIDLY powerful cars as we know them will be dead within five years. That's the stark message from the men in charge of the German marques locked in a 20-year-long power war. Legislation to make cars greener means that war is over.

'We're almost at the top in terms of power now,' says Wolf Zimmerman, R&D boss of Mercedes' AMG division. 'There's something in the pipeline, but we're nearly at the top. Then cars will become *less* powerful.'

So we're not only about to witness a halt in the power race but a struggle to maintain existing benchmarks in the face of tightening emissions and fuel economy rules. AMG isn't alone. Jens Koch, the Audi RS6's project manager, told *CAR* that Ingolstadt was unlikely to unleash a car more powerful than the 572bhp estate.

That's as painful for blokes like Zimmerman to hear as it is for the rest of us. Looking more like a rock star than an AMG board member,

he's a true car nut with a passion for Porsches, has a race-prepared 914-6 in the garage and commutes to

work in a CLK Black with 600bhp. 'As an engineer I'm excited by the challenge of meeting the ecological targets, but as an enthusiast I'm also sad,' he said. The company has promised a fleet average of 200g/km by 2012, which seems unlikely to happen if the status quo remains with cars like the twin-turbo V12 S65 limousine (604bhp and 355g/km).

'In the future there won't be any cars like the S65,' Zimmerman predicts. 'How can there be? If we fit direct injection and stop/start and every eco device, we could maybe cut emissions to 240g/km. But how are we going to then halve them again? We need to cut weight but customers are not willing to sacrifice any of the luxury and safety equipment.'

So how will it happen? With lighter platforms certainly, and with hybrid drivetrains, despite many engineers' beliefs that such technology is nothing more than a white elephant.

'AMG will offer a hybrid,' confirms another AMG insider. 'But 80 percent of that is because of public perception, not because it is a good solution. The battery weighs 150-200kg, and it only maintains peak performance for two years.' Mercedes is also looking at the 'flybrid' system which sits between engine and gearbox and stores kinetic energy, then releases it to boost power. Engines will be made as efficient as possible by fitting dry sumps and full roller rockers to minimise friction.

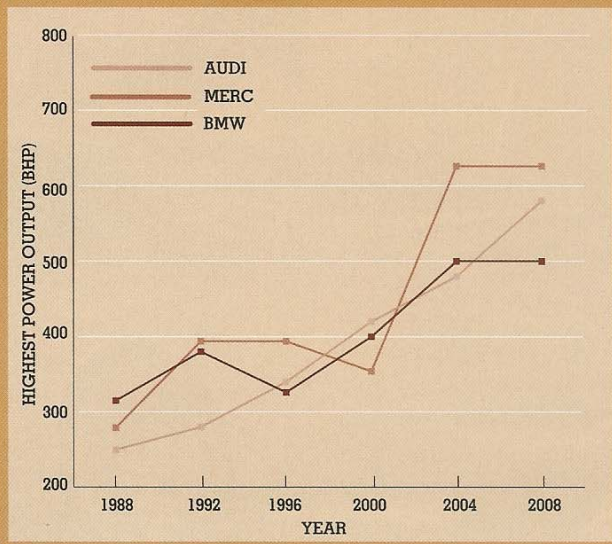
Zimmerman firmly believes that Porsche's decision to take a controlling stake in Volkswagen has everything to do with reducing the company's CO2 average and nothing to do with safeguarding German ownership of the VW brand. 'AMG is lucky to be linked with Mercedes with 2012 coming,' he says, referring to the date beyond which the EU is proposing to fine car makers for every car breaching 130g/km.

So what can we expect in the next five years before bhp levels drop? Mercedes will introduce a twin turbo version of the SL63 producing around 680bhp, and BMW is working on a mid-engined supercar with a 5.0 V10 quad turbo. Beyond that, as this month's cover proves, performance cars *will* exist in the green-conscious future. But they'll be very different to the ones we currently know.

• **BMW's Vision Z**, page 76

### ANALYSIS

## Power curve: a history of bhp



**NOWHERE FAST**  
Cars that spend more time spinning wheels than moving forwards will be replaced by leaner, more agile models. No bad thing