

Enter the Sultan's secret garage

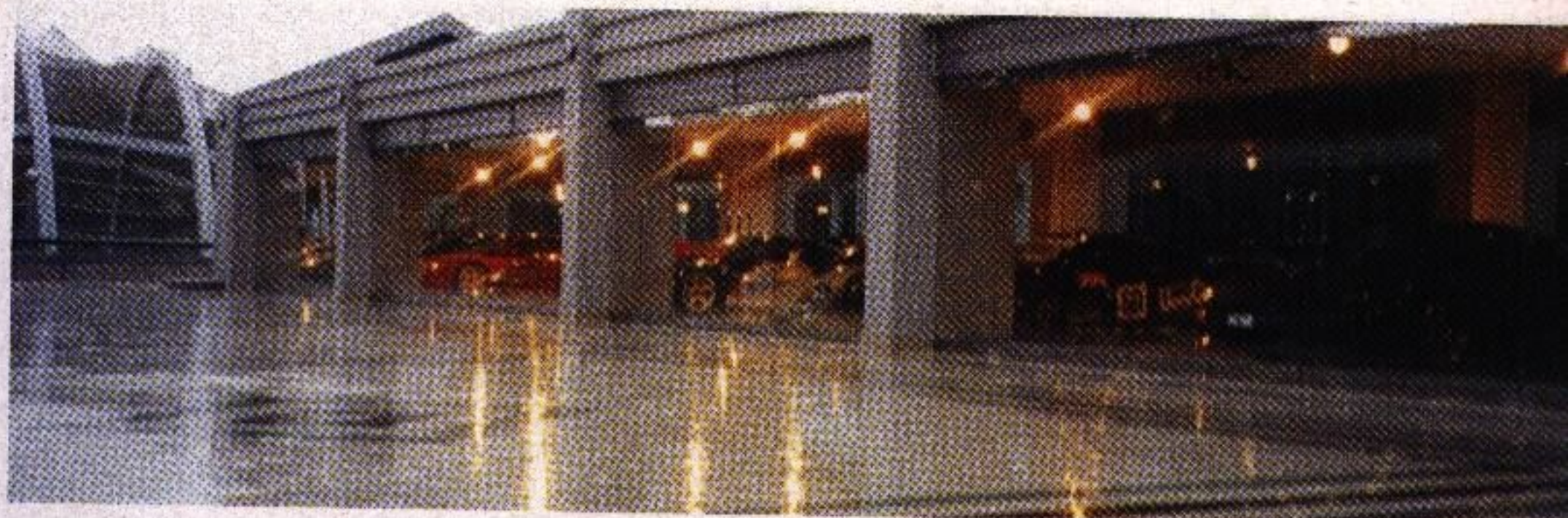


Billions of dollars of the world's most exclusive and expensive cars lie hidden inside the Sultan of Brunei's top security garage.

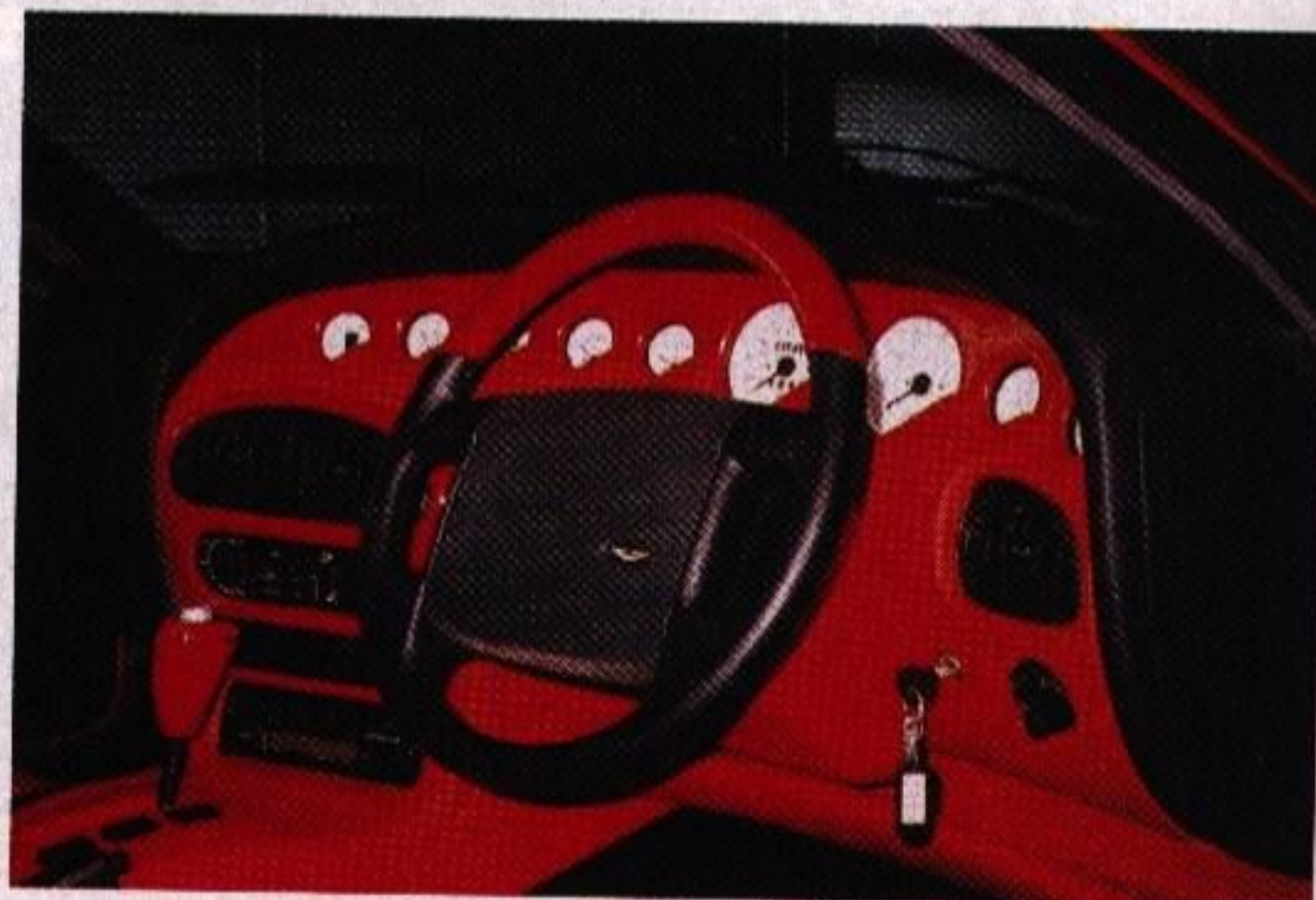
Wheels reveals for the first time the unbelievable magnitude of the legendary fleet accumulated by the world's most cashed-up car nut

The Sultan often ordered cars in bulk, mainly because he wanted them in different colours – yellow, red, black etc. This is part of the **Yellow Room**, where all the cars are painted exactly the same shade of yellow, and all have bright red leather interiors. Look closely and you'll see an Aston Martin Vantage and DB7, a Shelby Cobra (probably a replica) Lamborghini Diablo, Mercedes SL, S600C and S-Class with 'formal' rear window, Ferrari 550 Maranello and F355 and Bentley Continental R. Have we missed any?

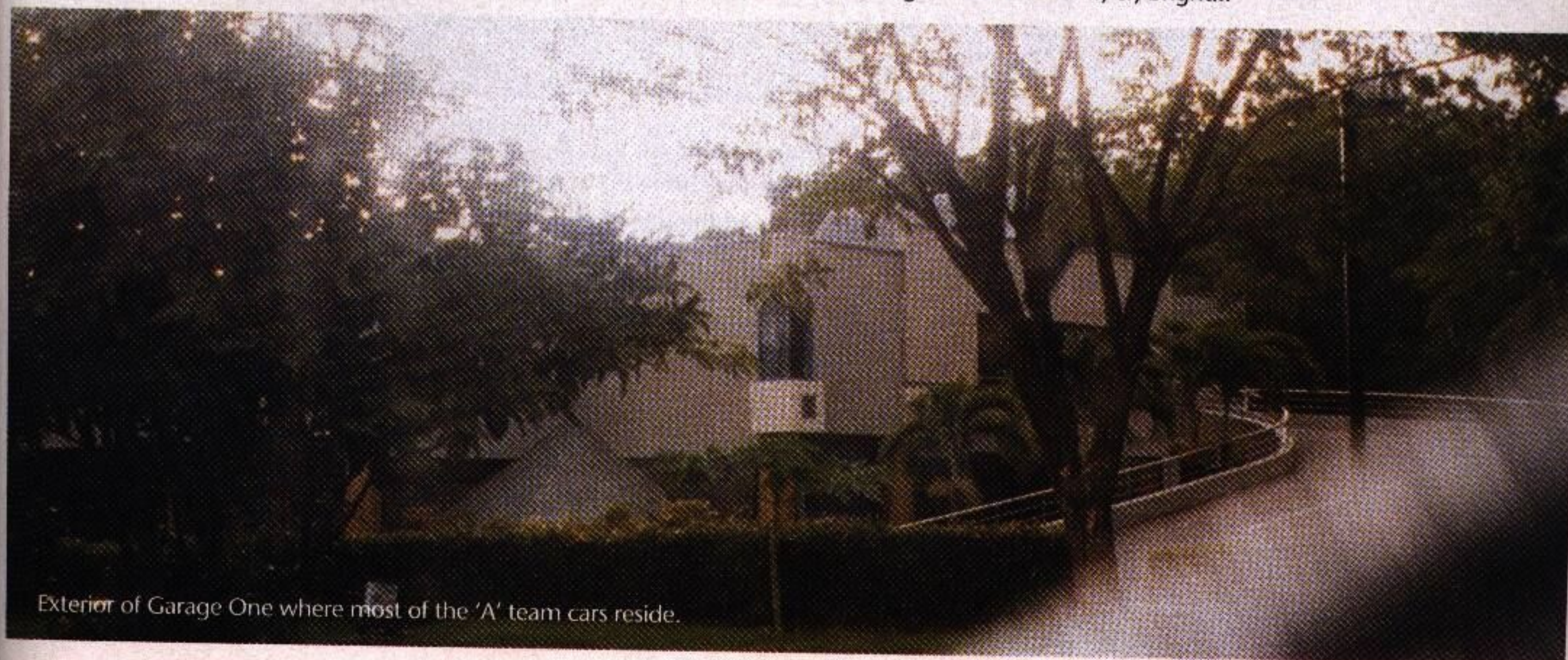




Britain's *Autocar* ran photos of the **Bentley Pegasus wagon (left)** and sedan – both heavily based on the Continental R coupe – a few years back. Both are handsome cars, and arguably a better concept as to what a Bentley should be than merely a Rolls-Royce with a different grille.

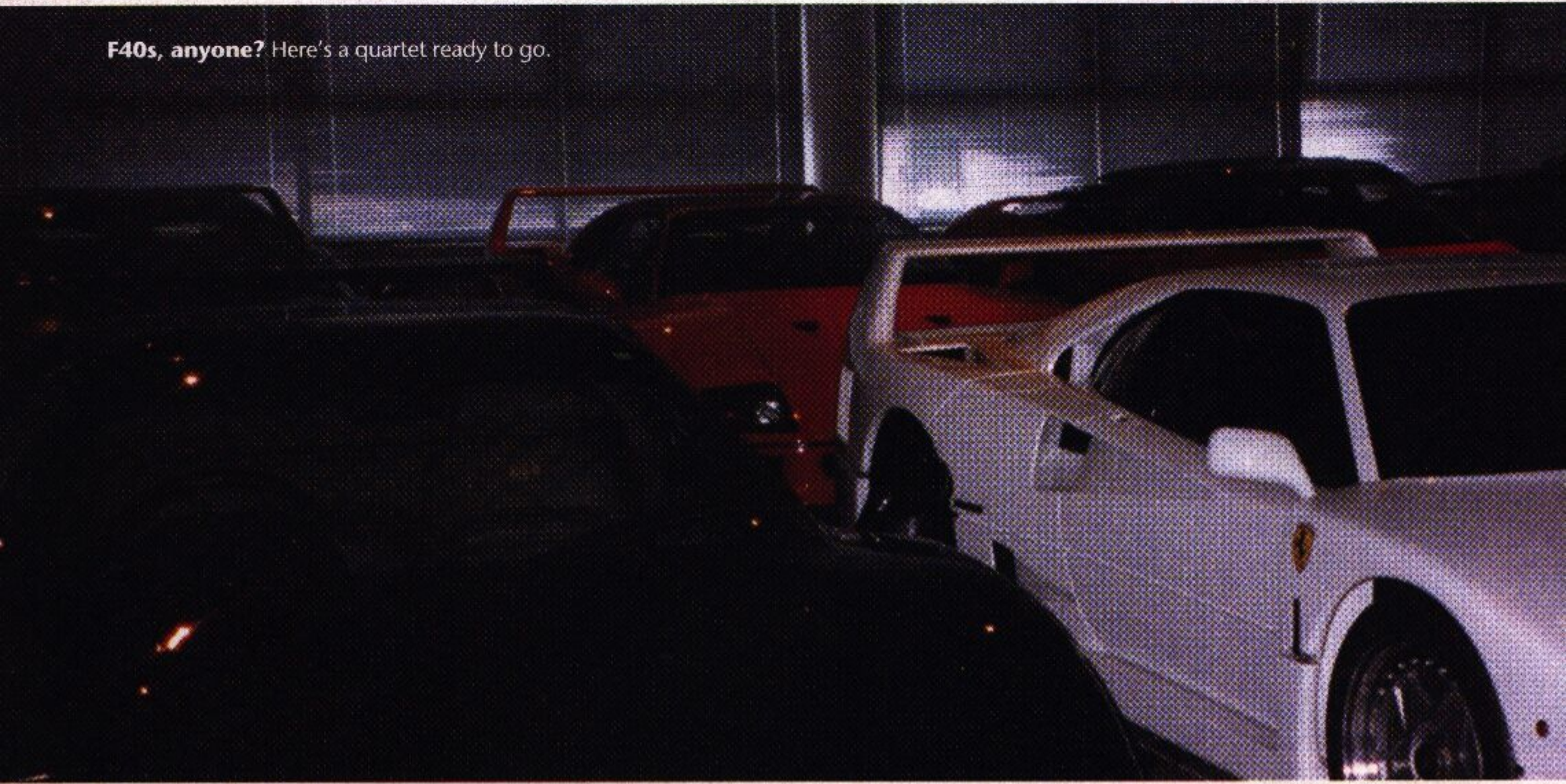


Reportedly a Pinninfarina-styled and built V8 Aston, the **AM2** (above left, right) – as it is known – harks back to the svelte Zagato-styled versions of the DB-4GT and looks remarkably similar to the Ian Callum-styled Vantage on page 76. This appears to be built on a modified Aston Martin V8 Coupe platform and powered by a twin supercharged version of the 5.3 litre quad cam V8 engine. The interior is, er, bright...

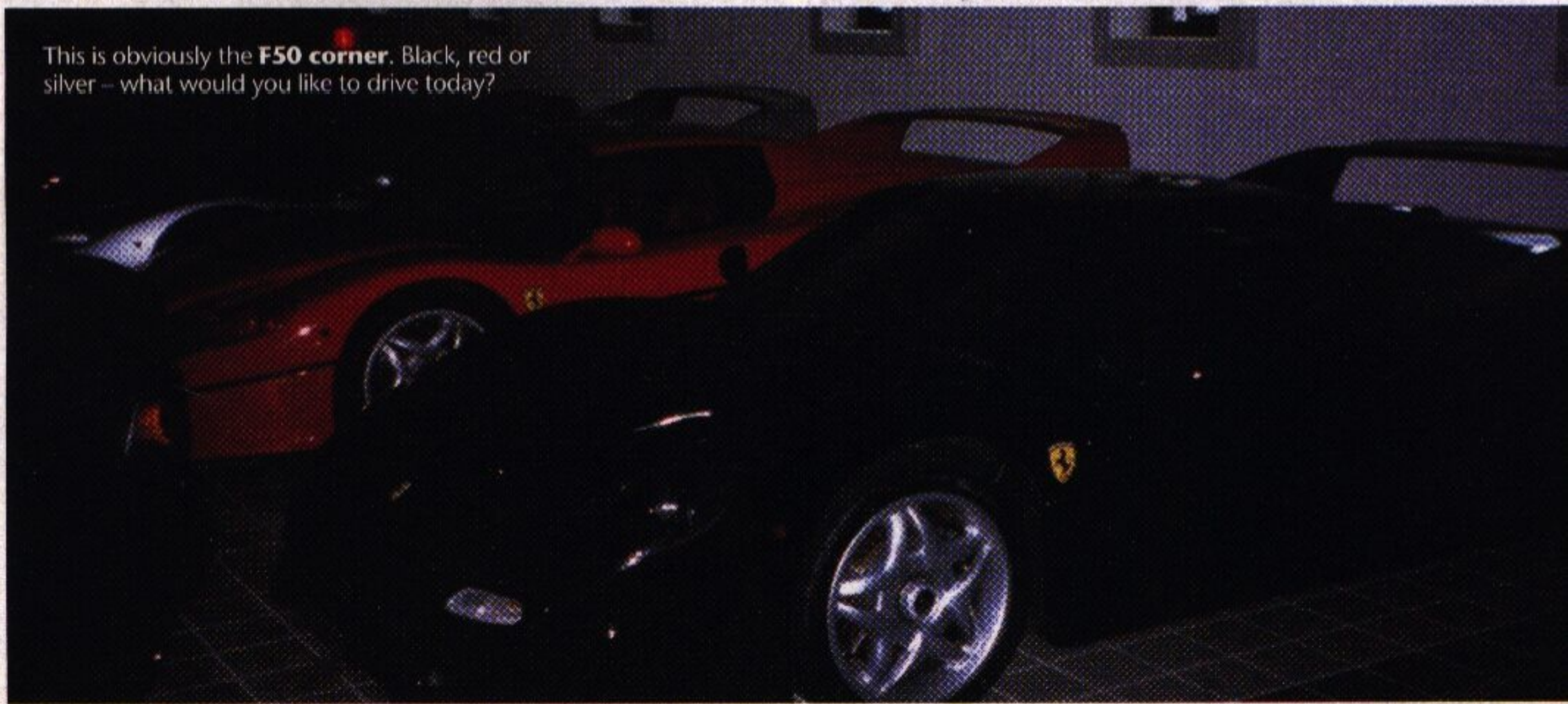


Exterior of Garage One where most of the 'A' team cars reside.

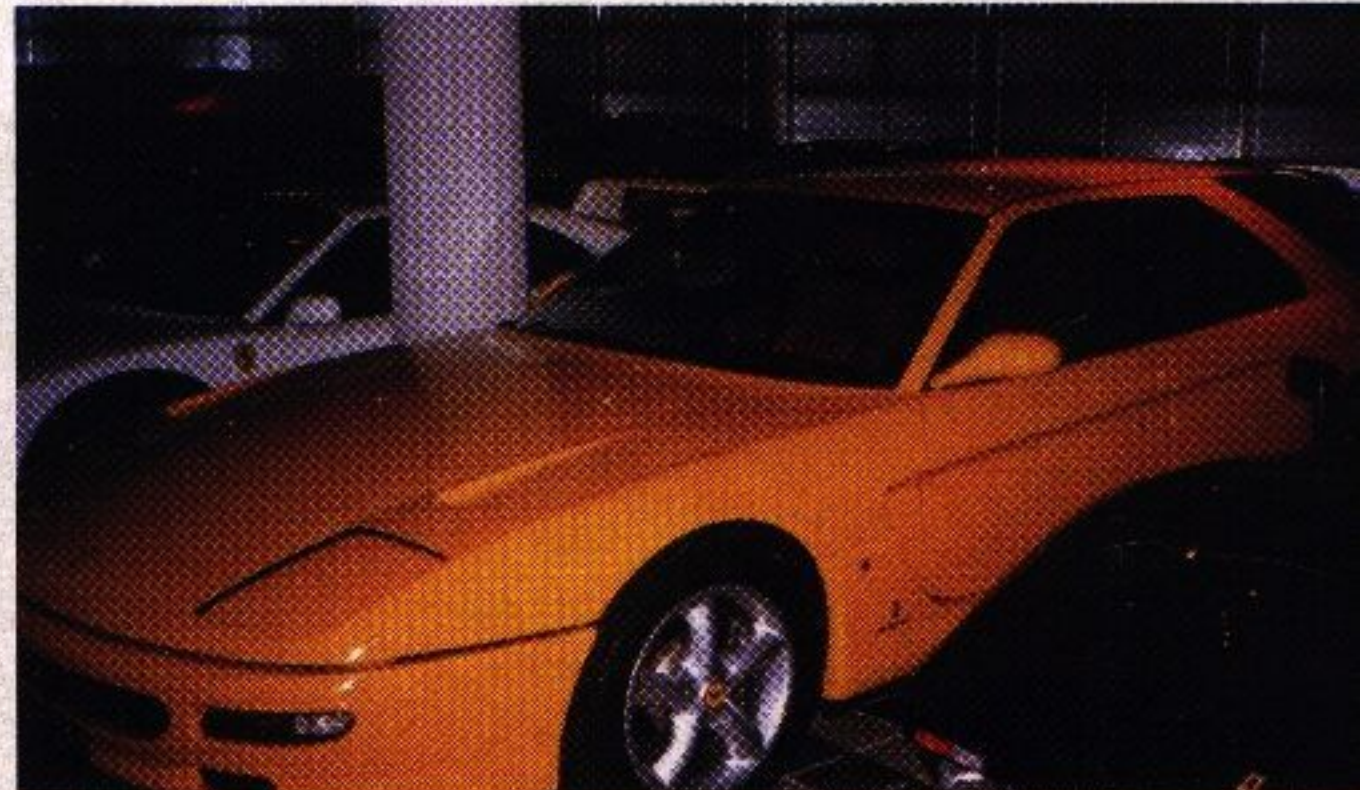
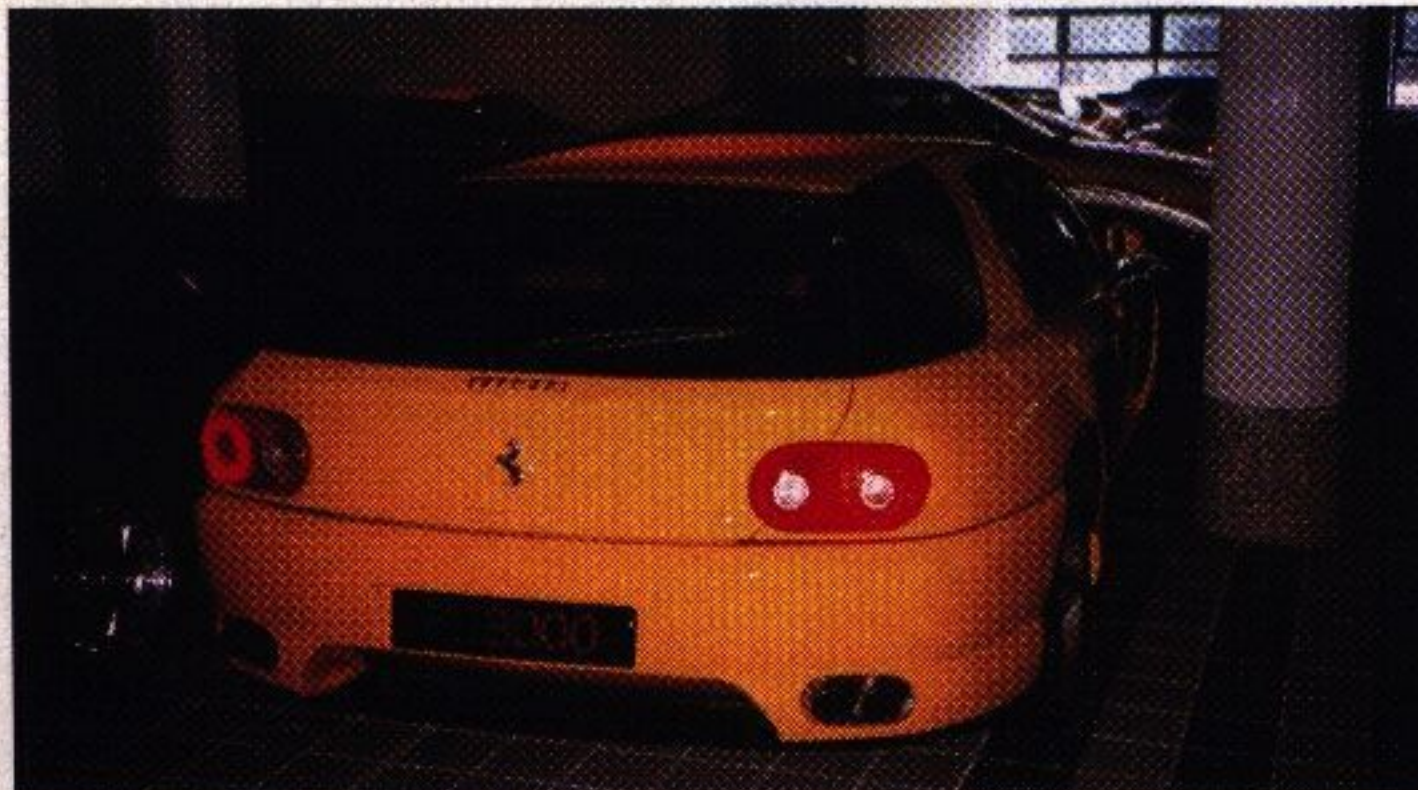
F40s, anyone? Here's a quartet ready to go.

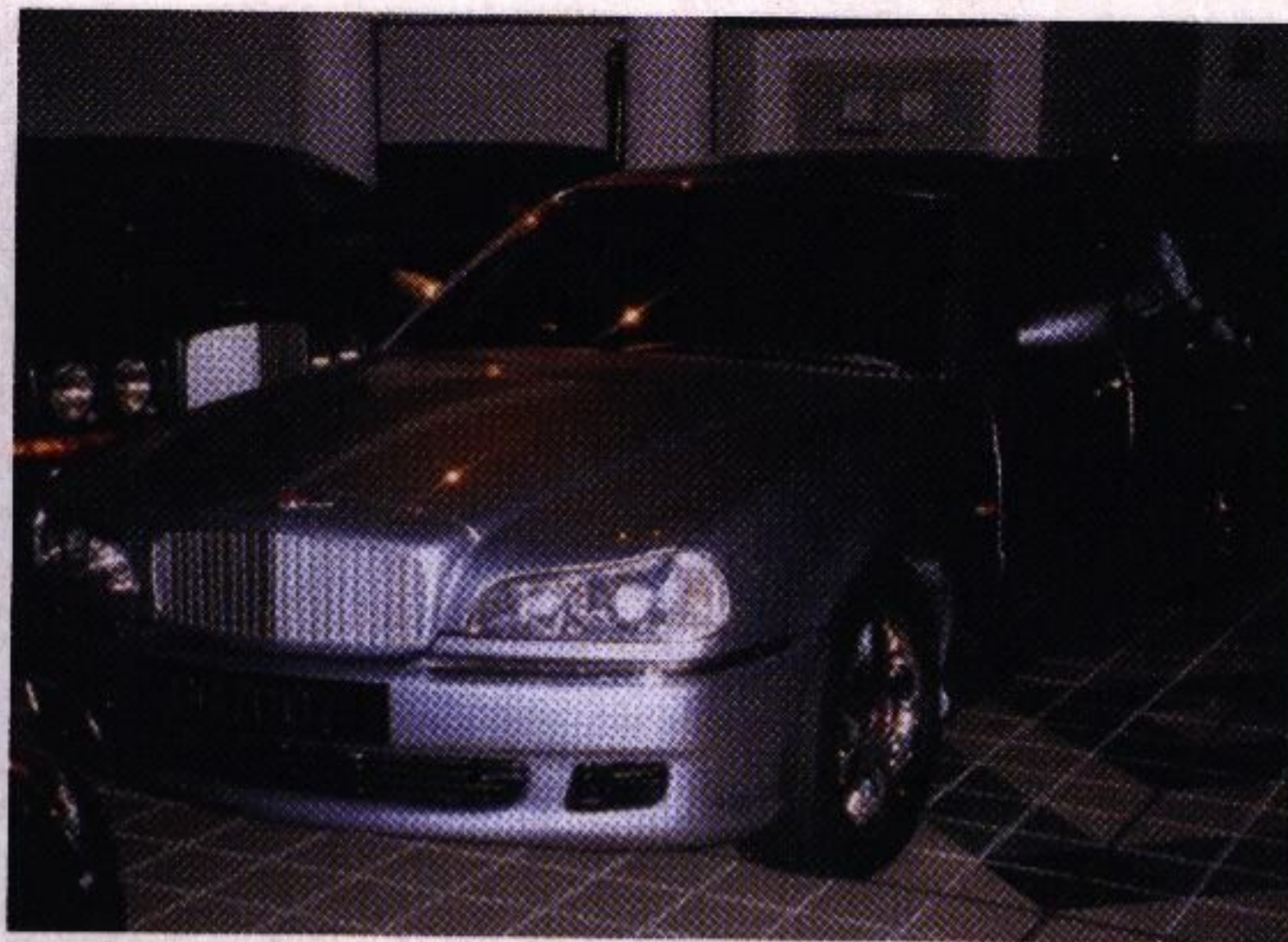


This is obviously the **F50 corner**. Black, red or silver – what would you like to drive today?



Ferrari 456 Venice (below left, right) is one of nine special 456s built by Pinninfarina - three convertibles, three four door sedans, and three wagons. We spotted a silver wagon heading up the motorway from London to Oxford last year and can confirm that in the metal it looks fabulous. Mechanicals are the same as the regular 456, though the sedans and wagons have a stretched wheelbase to provide reasonable rear seat room.





Bentley's Java convertible was a fibreglass concept in Geneva a few years back. Production plans called for a modified BMW 5-series platform and V8, but the fully functional cars shipped to Brunei use a purpose-built platform and the Rolls engine. Crewe even built sedans and this wagon version for its valued client.



Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah

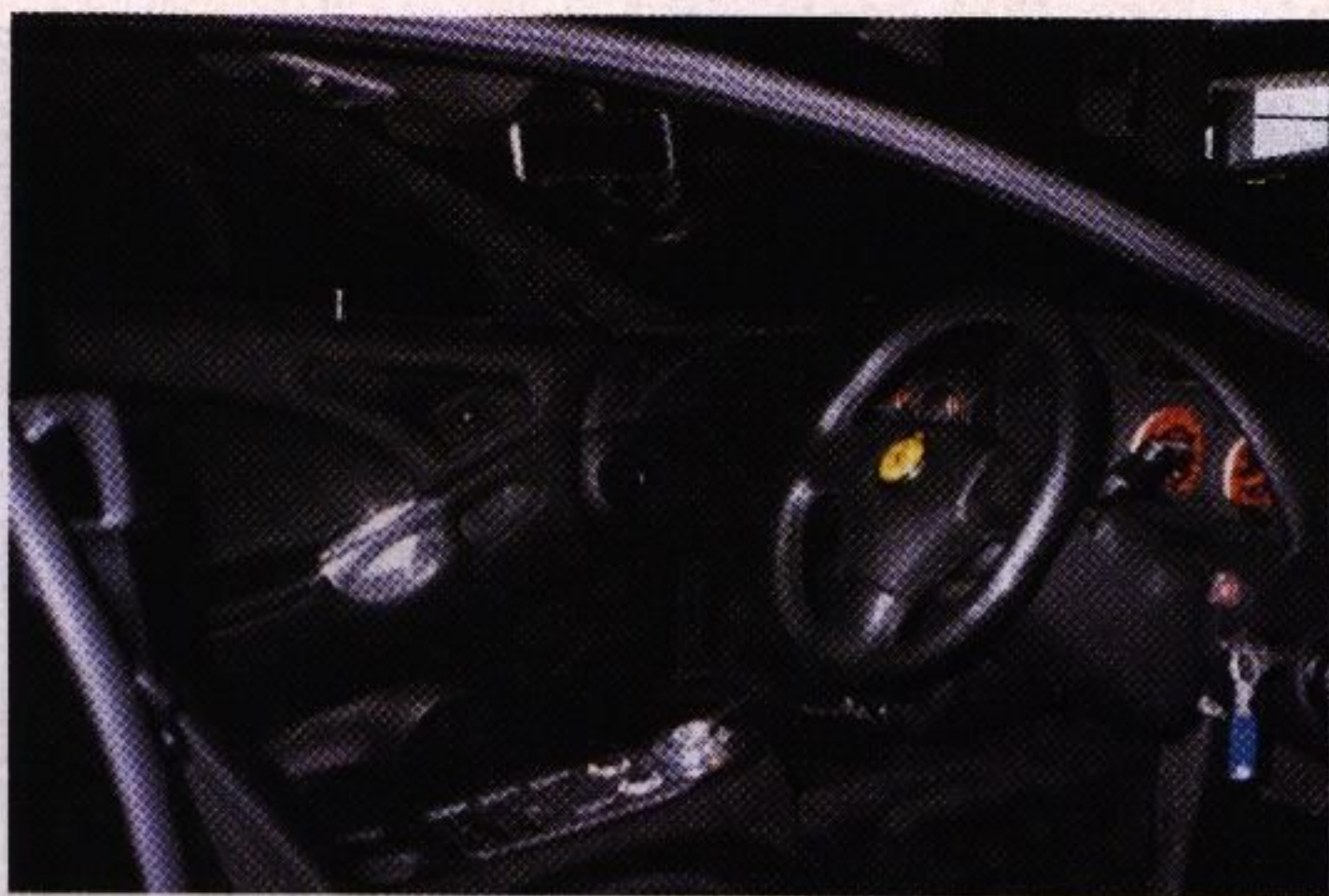


This is it – the automotive Aladdin's Cave. A fabulous \$4 billion treasure trove of nearly 3000 cars, mostly high performance exotica and super luxury limousines. Here the extraordinary is ordinary – would you believe the collection includes no less than eight McLaren F1s? – and the extraordinary is, well, almost beyond belief. There are cars here – special, unique Rolls-Royce, Bentley, Ferrari, Aston Martin, Mercedes-Benz, Porsche models hand-built in secret factory workshops from Crewe to Stuttgart to Turin – that are virtually priceless. And they all belong to one man and his family.

There are a lot of people in the car industry who know a lot about the Sultan of Brunei's astounding car collection. Some have even been inside the massive complex of air-conditioned structures that houses it (just ponder on this for a moment – the Sultan's collection would almost fill the new multi-story parking station at Melbourne's Tullamarine Airport twice over). But all have signed strict

Before the Japanese bubble economy went bust, German tuner **Dauer** was racing Australian Vern Schuppan to get street legal versions of the Le Mans-winning **Porsche 962** on the road. Schuppan's effort collapsed when a Japanese dealer cancelled a major order, but Dauer did reveal its 962 Le Mans at Frankfurt, and, as can be seen here, sold at least two – and possibly as many as six – to the Sultan. The Dauers are reportedly the fastest cars in Brunei – quicker than even the eight McLaren F1s he owns.





The **Ferrari FX (above left, right)** is another Pinninfarina project - and, like the Aston Martin AM2, one that's never been seen publicly. The car is mid-engined, probably TR512M based. Significantly, the car uses Ferrari's F1-style paddle shift, possibly similar to the version originally planned for the F50 but never produced.

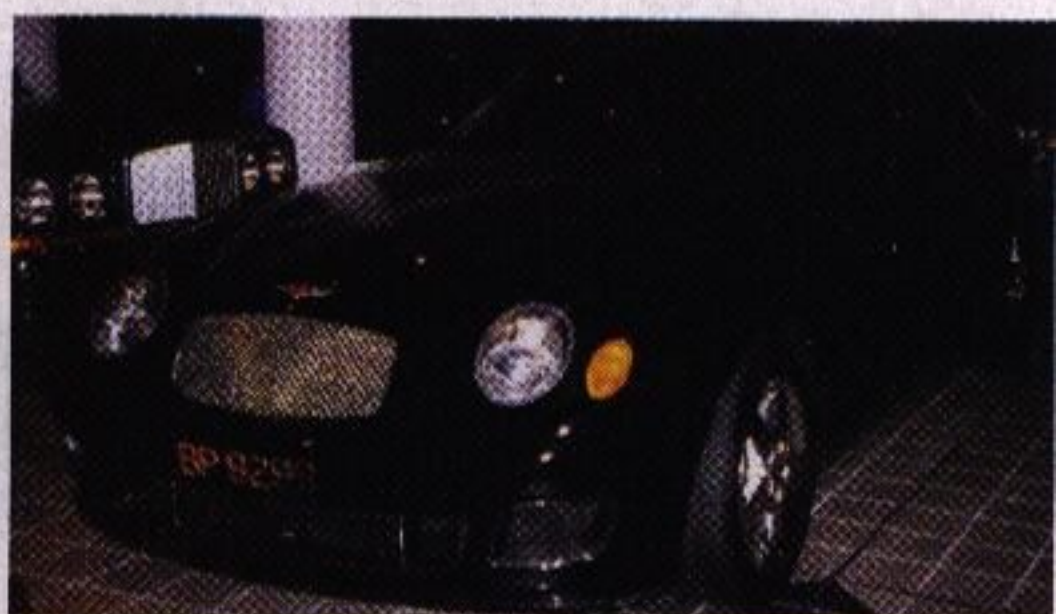
confidentiality agreements, and none has wanted to upset a customer with seemingly bottomless pockets. So, like a story from the Arabian Nights, the Sultan's garage has become the stuff of legend, a glittering tale of untold wealth and jaw-dropping extravagance. Only difference is - it's for real.

Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah has been described as the world's richest man for the best part of two decades. Thanks to a 50 percent share of Brunei's oil revenues and shrewd investments around the world, it's estimated he earns rather more than \$2 billion a year. Once a confirmed, free-spending playboy, the Sultan has taken his role as ruler more seriously in recent years, recently reinforcing conservative Islamic values in Brunei as a means of underpinning his absolute monarchy. And this could spell the end of the collection's more extravagant purchases.

The problem is the Sultan's youngest brother, Prince Jefri, who purchased many of the cars in the collection. Lurid allegations about the prince - who owns a 60-metre yacht tastefully named *Tits* - being involved in sex parties with prostitutes and secret gambling sessions have not been well received in newly conservative Brunei. Prince Jefri resigned as Brunei's finance minister last



And you thought the only **Ferrari Mythos (above left, right)** in existence was the open-topped show car. But, as these pictures show, Pinninfarina subsequently built another two, fully functioning copies for the Sultan, adding a roof and air-conditioning. Both were built with Ferrari's full approval - note the badging front and rear.

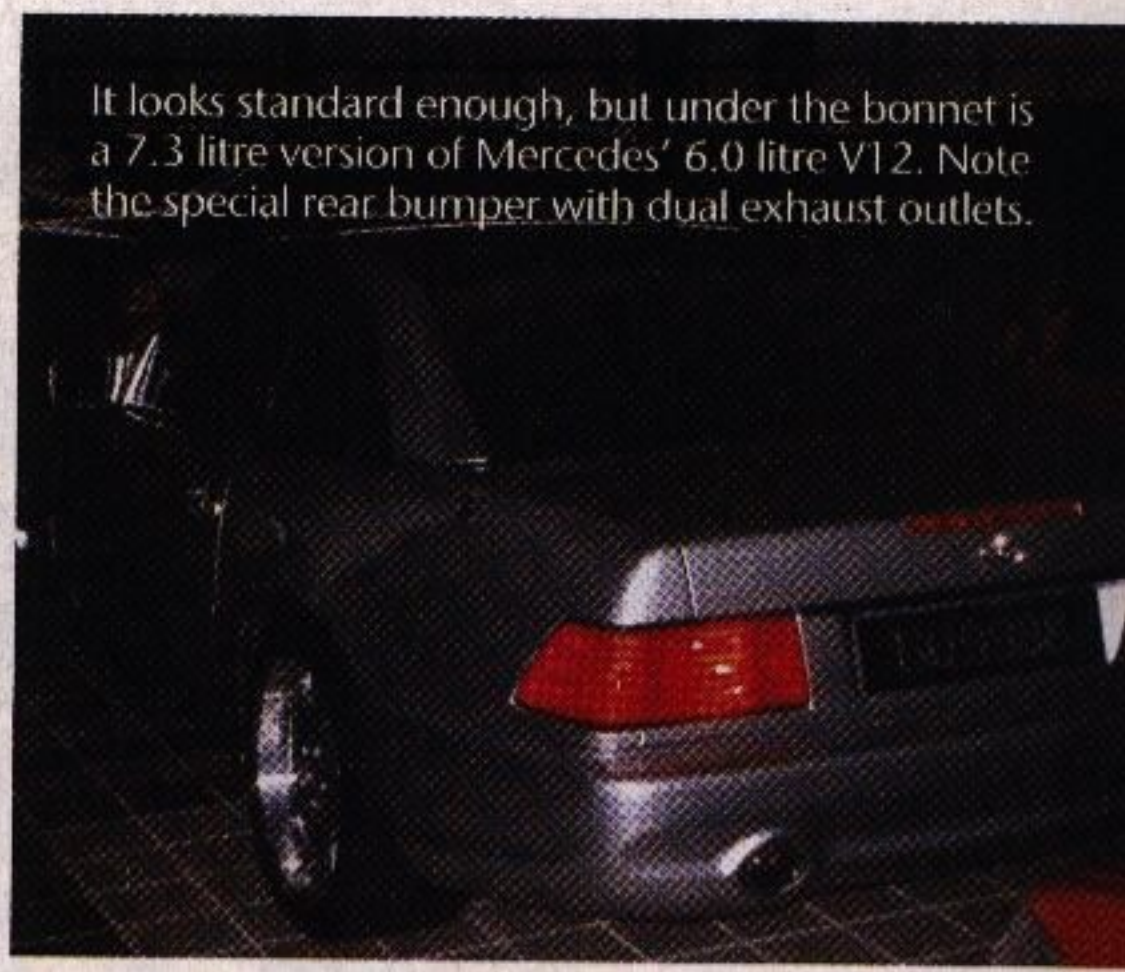


Bentley Grand Prix (right)

We ran photos of this car disguised while being tested at Italy's Nardo circuit in *Wheels* July, 1996 with the impression (obviously false) that it was BMW's 840 coupe follow-up, the Z8. The big coupe is, in fact, a bespoke Bentley, powered by a heavily modified, big boost version of the turbocharged V8.



though the name of this massive long-wheelbase **Rolls-Royce** limo is unknown, it might philosophically be called a **Phantom VII**. It shares no coachwork with any production Rolls-Royce sedan though the headlight and indicator treatment looks like a first draft of the Silver Seraph front end. Like the Phantom VI – the huge, imposing Rolls used by British royals on state occasions – this one stands head and shoulders above the Continental R convertible on its side. Mechanicals are straight from a Silver Spirit, however.

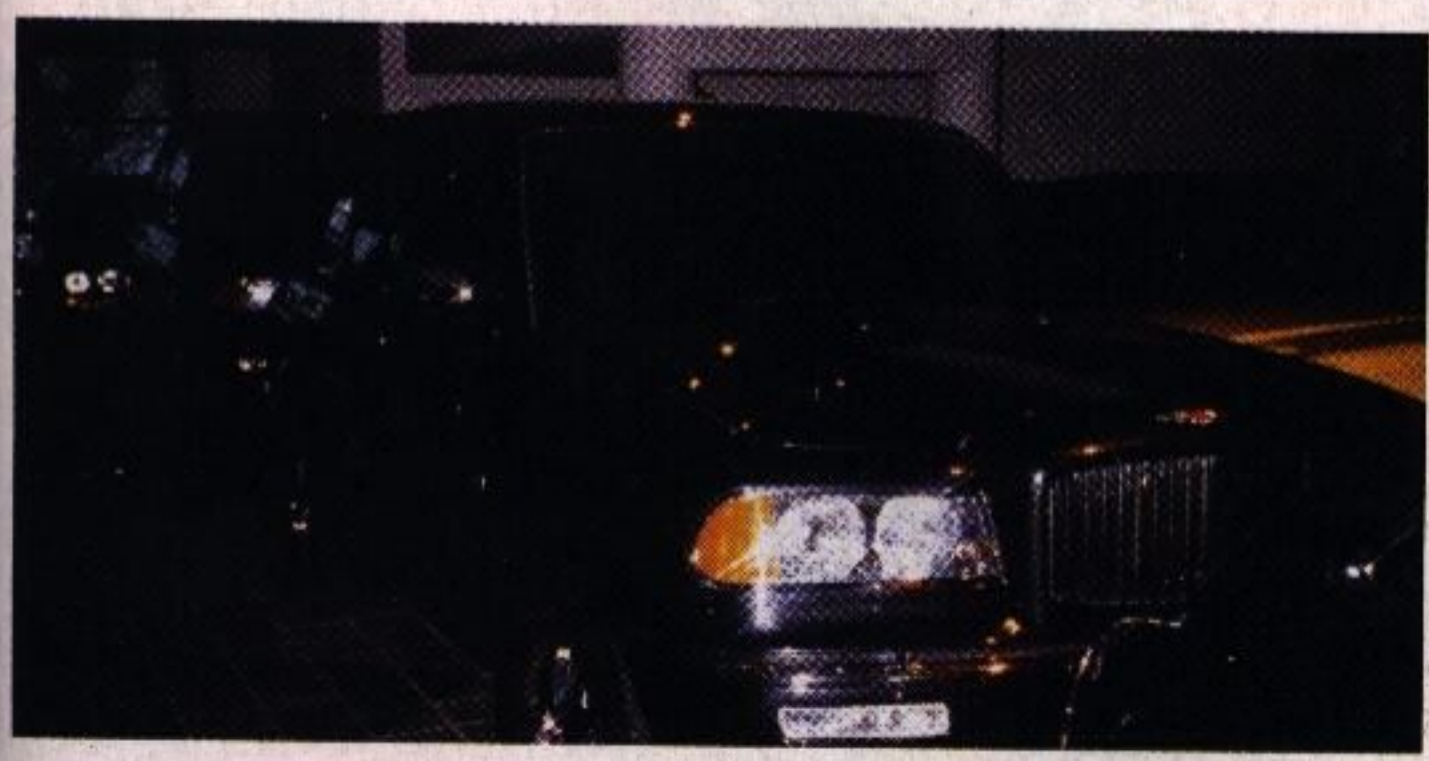


It looks standard enough, but under the bonnet is a 7.3 litre version of Mercedes' 6.0 litre V12. Note the special rear bumper with dual exhaust outlets.

This looks like a '60s **Mercedes-Benz 600 Pullman limo** (below), but in fact it's a brand new car hand-built by AMG, using modern S-class mechanicals.




Once thought to be little more than Range Rovers with Bentley engines and bodywork, the **Bentley Dominator (below)** off-roader in fact rolls on a purpose-built chassis which mates Range Rover driveline components to Bentley V8 power units. Two Dominators can be seen here.



year, and the Sultan has reportedly ordered a stop to the spending on cars.

Staff levels at the garage complex, where an army of specialist mechanics and technicians (some were offered as much as \$210,000 a year, tax-free) was employed, have been slashed. And while none is prepared to comment publicly, firms like Rolls-Royce (which has built dozens of unique Rolls- and Bentley-badged cars, including two high performance coupes said

to have cost a staggering \$17 million each), AMG (where the company had a complete workshop, known to insiders as 'The Sultan's Room', dedicated to building special cars for the collection) and Pininfarina (which reportedly had 15 cars for the Sultan on a transporter which crashed at Turin in 1995) will feel a real impact.

The Sultan of Brunei has enough money to keep this collection locked away forever. This sneak peek may be all the world will ever see. 



These are AMG-built copies of the legendary '50s **Mercedes-Benz 300SL** gullwing coupe and roadster; note AMG-style alloys. Interior fittings appear to be original, yet a closer look reveals details like automatic transmission, air-conditioning and adjustable steering column with airbag.

