

The Way To The Stars - The Ford GT 600RE

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You know how it is when you let a young child - or aged aunt - have a go with your slot-car set and they just can't get the hang of pulling the lever, so the car disappears up the track at a scale acceleration of 0 - 300 mph in 2 seconds?

That's what flooring the throttle of the Roush-modified Ford GT feels like - a space shuttle modified for tractor-pulling with the addition of a couple of ex-NASA Saturn Vs bolted to its back for good measure.

It's a fiendishly quick machine.

Andy McGrath of Avro Motor Cars, as an independent dealer, has probably sold more Ford GTs than anyone. Visiting Andy's offices the other day, he had four in stock, two 'Gulf' cars, one black regular GT and another black car, bearing the '600RE' legend on its flanks. They are good-looking cars, blending the so-right styling borne of 1960s' racing theory with modern considerations of space, safety and emissions.



Only available in left hand drive, the Ford Motor Company released just over 100 vehicles as specially-designated European cars, with the American company Roush Europe (based in Brentwood, Essex, UK) handling the EU type-approval and acting as a service and warranty centre. Now a diverse engineering company, the name is best known for its successes in NASCAR, as well as providing tuned US V8s for cars like the [Shelby Daytona Cobra](#), a car we tested last year. They know what they are doing.

With production of the 21st century Ford GT coming to an end, Roush Europe - with Avro handling the sales - is bringing over 10 more cars, but this time modifying the supercharger and exhaust (subbing the standard for a bespoke TUBI set-up) to increase the normal car's already generous - and genuine - 550 BHP to an extremely impressive 600+ BHP.

Never one to take such things for granted, Andy McGrath took the black demonstrator to a rolling road in the heart of tuned-Ford country (Rainham in Essex) to have this figure verified. The figures jump from the neatly printed page; 612.6 BHP at 6,176 rpm, with 552 lb/ft available at 3,824 rpm, and a theoretical maximum speed (not allowing for aerodynamic factors) of 206 mph when running at full chat.



Too often paper figures fail to materialise when transferred to metal, rubber and plastic. Not so with the 600RE - when you get behind the wheel, the twin graph lines swiftly transmogrify into two long black stripes of rubber on the tarmac in any gear up to (and probably above) 100 mph. This is not to say it's a fire-breathing dragster with a lumpy tickover and then *blaaaammmm!* - you're in the next county.

Quite the reverse, the power delivery is as smooth as the [regular car we drove recently](#), and as refined, roomy and comfortable. It's just that without any electronic help apart from ABS braking, the 600RE's a totally bare driver's car that McGrath describes as "the nearest thing to an F40". The chassis is well up to the task and you have to remember the Ford test drivers put equivalent Porsches and Ferraris in the shade when originally developing the car. The brakes are good too, in fact the whole package is a well-rounded one that must have cost FOMOCO a mint to bring to market.



There are a few new cosmetic touches to the 600RE cars, although like all GTs it can be personalised even further. I really liked the solid black paint with matching wheels and lack of stripes on the demonstrator, while the big exhaust pipes give following cars just the right message - 612 BHP, me.

The negatives? You must be joking! The only criticism you can make of the Ford GT also applies to the 600RE: 'miniscule' would be generous to describe the luggage space, and the car is prodigiously thirsty (with a small tank). So you can't go very far, and if you could, you couldn't take anything with you.

Which is a pity, because these Ford GTs make excellent cars, and perfect for an intimate weekend away or a trip to Le Mans.

Roush Europe will be bringing in just 10 600REs, at a starting price of £141,000, all available exclusively from Avro Motor Cars, so get your skates on as these really will be the very last Ford GTs delivered new to European specifications. Just don't let Auntie Marge get behind the wheel.

Please click [HERE](#) to see all **Avro Motor Cars'** cars for sale in the **Classic Driver** car database. *Classic Driver* recently produced a *Dealer Profile of Andy McGrath and Avro* that you can read [HERE](#)

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