

CLASSIC DRIVER

McLaren Automotive and the MP4-12C



18 March 2010. Today, at the McLaren Technology Centre, Ron Dennis launched both the new company, 'McLaren Automotive', and its first car: the eagerly awaited MP4-12C.

This was the first time the international press had had sight of a completed two-seater, revealed to the world by the company's current **Grand Prix** drivers. **Lewis Hamilton** and **Jenson Button** both gave **Ron Dennis** a considerable ribbing over when, and if, they would receive early deliveries of the **MP4-12C**. Not known for his sense of humour, **Dennis (McLaren Automotive Chairman)** entered into the spirit of things, replying: "Yes, but only after you've won some Grands Prix and the World Championship..."

Ah, he's a one. A demanding man that gets things done like no other – so, when cars arrive with dealers next year, the new **McLaren** will be one of the safest, fastest, most reliable and comfortable two-seater supercars ever delivered.





The new company's **Managing Director, Antony Sheriff**, explained further: "The overriding principle that has driven us to where we are today is that every car will be 'pure' **McLaren**... being 'as good' as everyone else is not good enough; we need to be the best."

'The best' extends to performance figures released today that anticipate a top speed in excess of 200mph, 0-200km/h in under 10 seconds and 200km/h-0 in under 5 seconds – all from a twin-turbo V8 producing 'around 600PS' – with 500Nm torque available from 2000rpm - 8500rpm – and either forged aluminium bell/cast-iron discs, or **CCM** brakes.

The **SSG Seamless Shift** dual-clutch gearbox (bespoke to the **12C**, as are all components) is actuated by a 'rocker' paddle on the steering wheel. Using **Formula One** practice, this means drivers can either 'push' or 'pull' the left- or right-hand paddle to go up and down the 'box. In other words, 'down' may be a 'pull' on the left side of the rocker that means the right side is 'pushed' forward as the rocker rotates on the central axis of the steering wheel.

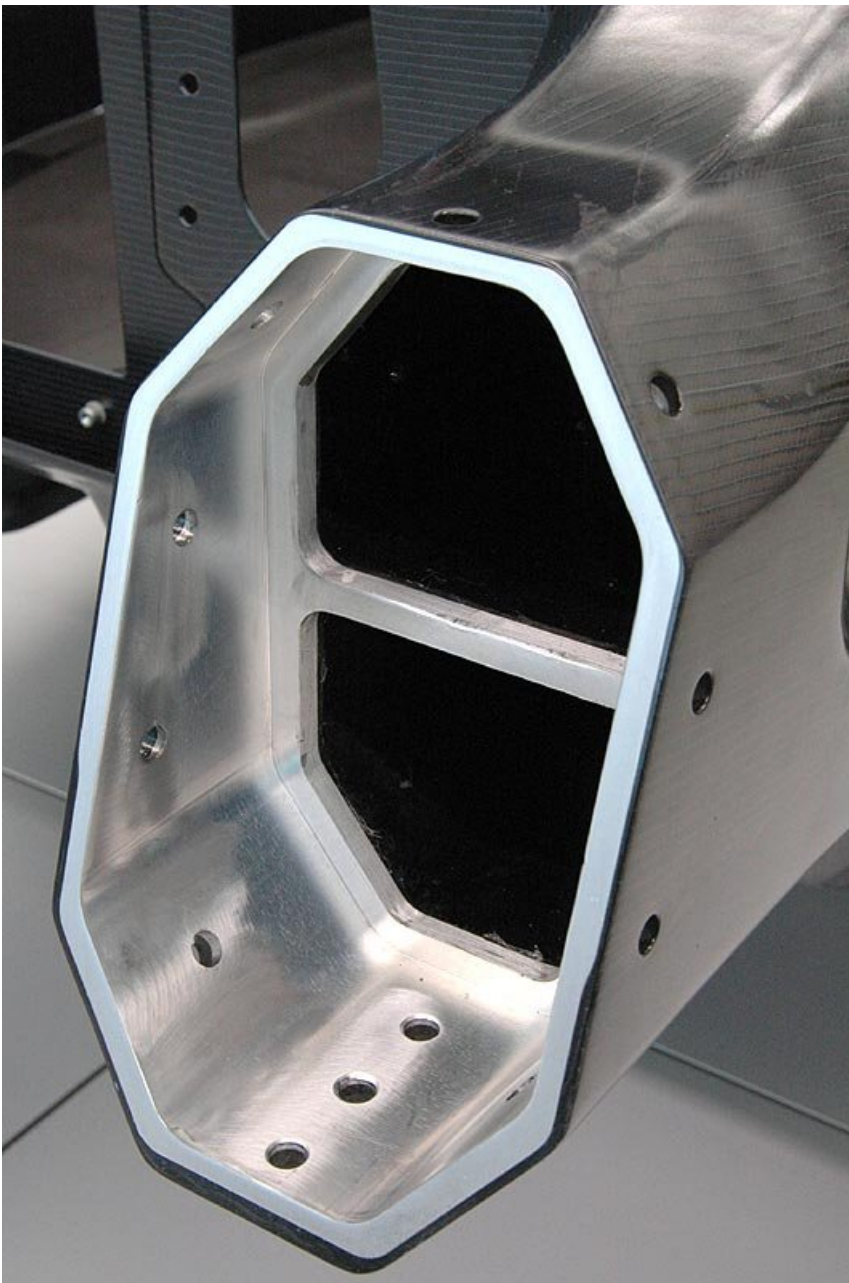


A multiplicity of active-suspension settings can be chosen via the **Active Dynamics Panel**, and one of the key characteristics of the new car (verified by **Lewis Hamilton**, no less) is its phenomenal grip and control in corners, yet super-smooth, straight-line ride.

This, coupled with the broad spread of torque, is one of the factors that will make the **MP4-12C** as easy a touring/commuting car as it is a track-day special of the most extraordinary performance. **Dennis** was at pains to stress that it will “appeal to car buyers not usually tempted into this segment.” For this reason, a total of 600 would-be dealers was filtered down to 70, from which 35 will be chosen to represent the brand worldwide.

Before a car is even delivered, the newly appointed ‘retail partner’ will stock every component, with replacement parts automatically re-ordered from **Woking**.





Any fault messages will be sent direct from the car via SMS to both dealer and **McLaren Automotive**. The extensive proving programme continues, and later this year will complete over one million miles of testing. One chassis has been frontally crash-tested at 56km/h, the deformable structures replaced, and the test then repeated TWICE more, with the windscreen remaining intact.



The list goes on. Put it this way, if you are the sort of fussy person who would not consider a – supposedly – ‘temperamental’ supercar, supplied and serviced by a dealer who thinks he is doing you a favour by relieving you of £175k, think again: the **MP4-12C** will be the car for you when the dealer network is finalised this summer.

And, once production is underway, other models will be added to the range, both variations of the **MP4-12C**, such as a convertible, as well as all-new cars. **Dennis** does not rule out a motorsport programme either, stating that “if customers wish to go racing, we will open a specific department for them.”

Production is unlikely to exceed 1000 cars per year in the new, 32,000-square-metre **McLaren Production Centre**, located to the south-east of the existing **McLaren Technology Centre**.

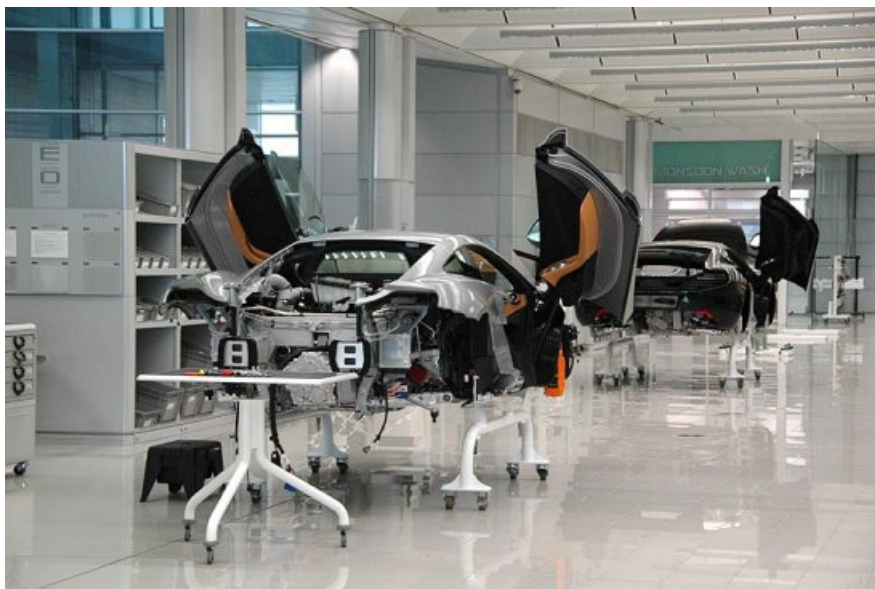


It is anticipated that delivery will normally take 12 months from time of order although, understandably, the company already has many (some 1600) confirmed letters of intent, so new buyers will have to wait until 2012 for delivery of what may well be the car of the decade.

And the price? Likely to be in the region of £175,000 in the UK, but not, as yet, announced.







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