

CLASSIC DRIVER

McLaren Automotive: First Deliveries of MP4-12Cs in Early 2011



With a recently announced UK dealer network now actively handling customer enquiries, and the car debuted at the Goodwood Festival, it's all go at McLaren.

The Woking-based company invited journalists to the **McLaren Technology Centre ('MTC'**, home to the GP team and where the **SLR McLarens** were built) this week, for an update on the £40m manufacturing project and an insight into how prospective **MP4-12C** clients can expect to be handled by the newly appointed dealers.

"Extremely well," I think you'd have to say, having listened to presentations from **Ron Dennis, Antony Sheriff** and **Christian Marti** (ex-Porsche, **McLaren Automotive's Regional Director for Europe**). The exhaustive testing programme for the all-new car continues apace, some 100+ carbonfibre **MonoCell** moulded chassis have already been produced, and the 'production line' is currently trialling all possible combinations of interior/exterior colour and optional equipment.



Early customers will receive cars built at the **MTC**, before full production starts at the **McLaren Production Centre ('MPC')** next year. Already, major concreting and piling work is under way, with an ambitious, environmentally responsible programme of soil distribution (180,000 cubic metres) and landscaping to ensure minimum impact to the surrounding area. Over 200 people are now employed on the new site.



The company is treating the introduction of the new car and company (which will employ an additional 300 people, and have a 4000-cars-per-year potential) as it would a new **Grand Prix** season, with nothing left to chance. Its speeches ringing with “incredibly high standards”, “highly innovative” and “extraordinary customer service”, the management team brims with confidence.

Now that the car has been launched to the public in the UK at **Goodwood**, where it was driven up the hill by F1 stars **Jenson Button** and **Lewis Hamilton**, it's possible to register your interest in a car via www.mclarenautomotive.com from where the new dealers will follow up your enquiry. You can also configure a car online.



The response, so far, has been very positive with one German retailer selling half his annual allocation after a single evening's presentation. With all dealers carrying every spare part in stock, and only selected after the most rigorous examination, the sales network is expected to be as 'high-performance' as the 600bhp, 600Nm supercar.

Although pricing is yet to be announced (“£125,000 – 175,000 pre-tax” according to **McLaren**, a ‘core sports car segment car’), the retailers are confident that they can welcome traditional, ‘old money’ buyers as well as newer arrivals to a segment that has exploded in the last 10 years.



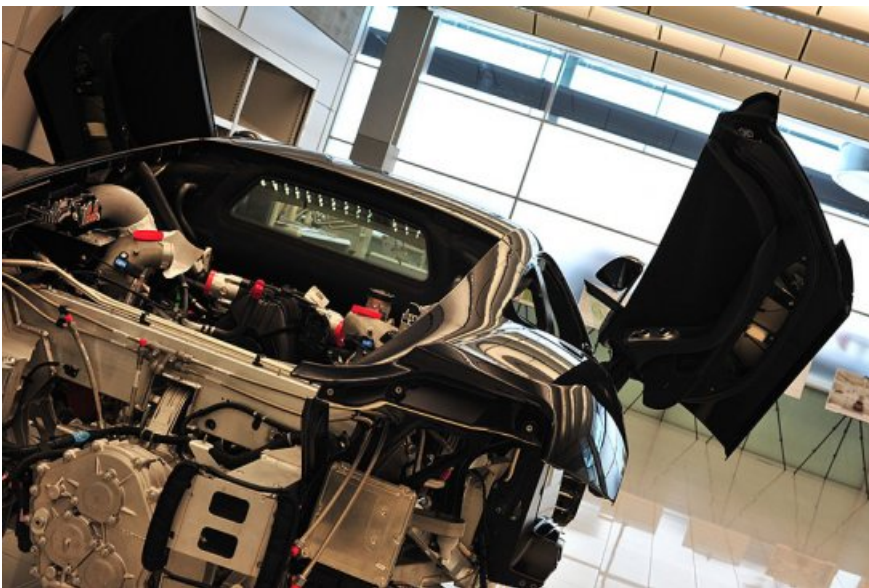
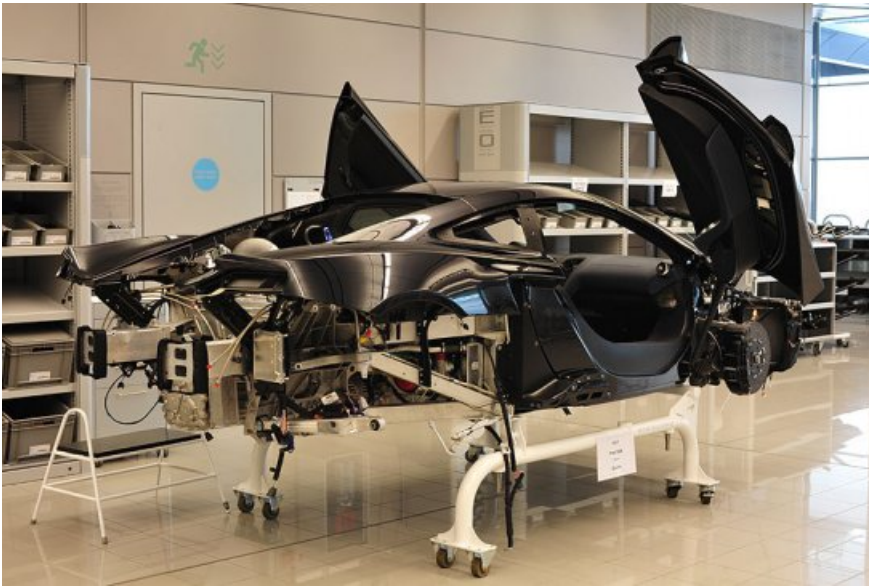




As far as the new car is concerned, press road tests are unlikely before the New Year. Having another chance to examine the **MP4-12C** at close hand, you have to say that it's very compact, beautifully finished and, if the pre-launch promises are to be believed, a 'usable' 200mph coupé that can be driven with equal enjoyment on the track or through a Parisian rush hour. Levels of comfort (aural exhilaration as well as ride) and outright performance can be selected via the **Active Dynamics Panel**.

Finally, it's not all orange at **McLaren**, by the way. In addition to the 'special' colour, non-metallic '**McLaren Orange**' paint, there's also three-stage pearl Elite '**Volcano Orange**' but, these apart, the colour palette extends to another 15 shades (with nine complementing Nappa leathers), many of which were on show this week. For me, '**Sapphire Black**' please, with '**Natural Tan**' hide.

The **McLaren MP4-12C** will be on display at this year's **Pebble Beach** event.



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