

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Bristol Blenheim: A matter of taste?](#)

Lead

Well, over the years, there cannot be many cars that divide opinion more than those made by Bristol. The Blenheim, however, introduced in 1993, is an offering from the company that steps firmly on the right side of that fine line separating acceptable, individual styling from the downright ugly...

We think so, at any rate. A few years ago, [Classic Driver took a Blenheim to Blenheim Palace](#), in Oxfordshire. We collected the silver four-seater from the famous Bristol showrooms in Kensington and drove it to one of England's prettiest areas, the Cotswolds — thus doing all the city townhouse and country retreat stuff typical of a Bristol owner. The big car was as easy to thread through London traffic as it was along narrow Oxfordshire lanes, and the Chrysler V8 offered a surprising turn of speed when given a good prod.

Sit the Blenheim alongside an Aston Martin V8, a Jensen Interceptor, a Maserati Quattroporte or a BMW coupé, though, and there will be few that would rate the Bristol at the top of the tree. That's despite its colossal price when new, and the fact that few will have actually *driven* one. Which is a shame, as they really are a rather satisfactory experience – in this writer's opinion, easily the equal of a non-Vantage Aston Martin V8.

[This car, available from Classic Driver dealer Graeme Hunt](#), was built in 2000 and has covered just 15,000 miles since. As the advert points out, this is a 150mph car, built to the exacting requirements of Bristol's then long-term owner Tony Crook: space for four, a tight turning circle, more-than-adequate performance and the mass of the car's mechanicals within its wheelbase.

As far as its looks are concerned, it's a matter of taste. But given that you are unlikely to see a Bristol on the roads very often, why not enjoy the full visual experience when you do?

Gallery

