



Autoquake is reporting high demand for the BMW 3 series and Audi A4

Less doom, more zoom please

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Working in a new car showroom is not the ideal place to be at the moment. According to one salesman, it is starvation wages, which means basic £6k and no commission. Oh dear. However, if you don't have to fly the corporate flag and can specialise in the used car market, you do have room for profitable manoeuvres. And it isn't all about having 60mpg superminis and giving away free kittens and fudge with each one.

Just the other day I saw a smart lot with a mixture of high-end metal and the odd classic. Turns out in the past few months they've been selling Astons, Maseratis and high-spec German cars like it's, well, 2006. The dealer has the flexibility that a new



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car showroom with a transporter-load of sometimes unsellable products arriving daily just doesn't have.

So I think we are starting to see just who will survive the auto-apocalypse. It's the independent specialised

traders, the used car experts and those doing it different but better. I've mentioned Autoquake before and it seems that in difficult times, buyers appreciate a no-nonsense, no-frills service more than ever. They



will have sold 10,000 cars in 2008 and are set to better that in 2009.

By far the most popular car people search for on the Autoquake website is – surprise, surprise – the BMW 3-series. Not far behind is the Audi A4, then the Volkswagen Golf and the Passat and 5-series. Even so, the body style most in demand at the moment is the estate. Oh yes, and potential buyers are so much lazier these days, searching for an automatic by some 700 per cent over a manual. Obviously the fuel of choice remains diesel.

Yes, the car you need for these tough times is a BMW 3-series Touring. Pretty in E46 shape, modest for a BMW, and economical. Perfect. www.jamesruppert.co.uk

I couldn't help noticing... Ruppert's secondhand obsessions this week



Honda Civic VTEC Type S GT

What? 2007, 6300 miles, £9920
Where? Main dealer with a GT that doesn't look as odd as it used to, plus they are below £10k now.
Call: 0116 2752800

Citroën C2 1.6 VTR GT

What? 2004, 60,000 miles, £2995
Where? Car trader with a hot hatch that's hard to argue against, especially as it looks so cute and purposeful.
Call: 07737 821553



Chrysler PT Cruiser 2.4 GT

What? 2005, 11,800 miles, £4895
Where? Dealer with a different kind of family car that now looks astounding value for money. Black paint looks right.
Call: 01225 851311

Bentley Continental GT

What? 2004, 79,000 miles, £38,995
Where? Dealer with a Continental that has just been serviced, has new tyres all round and is superb value.
Call: 01902 820103

