

Noble cars

A modern success story

In 2000, Noble unleashed a shockwave through the supercar market with the launch of the M12. A scorching mix of performance, race-bred dynamics and unparalleled build quality, the M12 could be bought for a fraction of the cost of its rivals yet gave an electrifying yet exploitable driving experience on road or track. Rave Reviews in the motoring press fuelled demand for what journalists and buyers alike saw as more than a credible alternative to established, more expensive brands.

Noble: One Vision

Much of the success of the British-designed M12 is attributed to just one man: designer and chief engineer, Lee Noble.

The M12 supercar and the M10 roadster are the first cars to bear his name. But 15 years before Noble Automotive was formed, Lee made a name for himself as a gifted racing driver, campaigning a Renault-engined Lotus Europa to a series of wins and podium finishes.

This was where Lee's other talent - as a development engineer and designer - began to shine and it was not long before he began creating serious performance road cars of his own. His first, the Ultima, featured a stiff and light steel space frame (a key feature to all his designs to follow), with firepower provided by Renault V6 or Chevrolet V8 engines. Excellent reviews ensured an enthusiastic following and 200 were produced by the time Lee sold the company.

Lee followed the Ultima with two modern replicas of well-known designs. The first, a recreation of the Lotus 23B, was powered by a Lotus Twin Cam engine with a Renault V6 unit as an alternative. Production reached 60 units before Lee introduced a replica of the Ferrari P4, which proved an even greater success with more than 250 produced, all powered by the Chevrolet V8. As with all his creations, build quality was exemplary - most cars survive today and there is a thriving owners' club.

But Lee was keen for us not to forget his racing roots. The next car on his drawing board - the Pro-sport - gave himself and his customers the chance to take part in circuit racing on a small budget. Around 50 cars were built and successfully raced on circuits around the UK.

After that came another road car, the MidTec, an original design with emphasis

on the leisure market. Featuring an open top and a mid-mounted Ford Pinto engine, excellent reviews in the specialist car press ensured that 60 units were produced.

But perhaps Lee's best known car prior to the M12 was the Ascari. This 500bhp (507PS), 200mph (322kph) Chevy-powered projectile stunned enthusiasts and was the Autocar magazine's fastest accelerating car in the UK. But despite interest from overseas markets and an outing at Le Mans, Lee sold his interest in the company to his partner. His vision was a far less expensive car, but with similar performance and drivability.

A Noble is Born

Lee teamed up with a new business partner, Tony Moy, and the car he went on to create was the Noble M10. Autocar was the first magazine to test the car in 1999 and was instantly bowled over.

But while the M10 had a Lotus Elise-beating chassis, Lee knew he could further refine the open-top's styling and performance. So the chassis stayed and the M10 was re-styled to become the fixed head M12.

Performance of a normally aspirated 2.5-litre V6 engine was enhanced with the addition of twin turbochargers, raising power to 310bhp (314PS) and torque to 320lb ft (434Nm).

Again, Autocar had the first steer of the M12 and lavished praise upon the car's handling, styling and performance. Since then, the M12 has won Autocar's annual Grip Challenge and came 2nd in its

Best Driver's car contest. Auto Express - another major national weekly magazine in the UK - awarded Noble its Specialist Manufacturer of the Year Award in 2002 and rated the M12 first in a group test against the Porsche GT3, BMW M3 CSL and TVR T350.

Jeremy Clarkson, the UK's foremost motoring writer and TV broadcaster, also rated the M12 as his Driver's Car of the Year in 2001 and 2002 and, in a December 2003 Top Gear, stated that the Noble was his favourite British car.

The Future

The pre-production prototype of the M15, the next generation Noble, has already been released to critical acclaim by the motoring press and is now in the process of production. This, coupled with new and substantial investment and a healthy pre-order waiting list, ensures an exciting future for Noble Automotive.

Noble will remain dedicated to their premier principles, catering for those who

love and take pride in their driving, producing incredibly fast, nimble and individual sports cars... the world's best affordable supercar is about to get better.

New car

M15 V6-455bhp, 0-60 mph 3.5 seg. Top speed 185 mph - 297.665 km/hr













