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# FAKING IT!



CAN A HUMBLE PEUGEOT 406 COUPE LIKE THIS REALLY BE TRANSFORMED INTO A HEAD-TURNING FERRARI 360? YOU BETCHA – AND HERE'S THE PROOF...



WORDS & PICS: ROB HAWKINS



**T**he Pininfarina designed two-door 406 is undoubtedly a stylish car, but what if you could make it even more of a looker by transforming it into a Ferrari 360? Some may argue that if you want a Ferrari, you should only get the real thing, but most of us couldn't afford to buy one, let alone run it. A look-alike based on a mass production sports car that costs much less to run than the real thing is surely the best answer most of us can find?

The Ferrari replica market has been dominated over recent years by a variety of 308 and 355 copies based on the Pontiac Fiero and MkIIl Toyota MR2, but now Extreme Sports Cars of Hull has created the only French car based kit.

Ashley Martin of Extreme chose the 406 as a base vehicle because he could see the potential of a front-wheel and front-engined supercar that could offer seating for four people.

"I wanted to do it on a four-seater, specifically the 406, because it's a wide car so it doesn't need big wheel spacers and is close to the right

wheelbase – after our alterations it's only one and a half inches longer than the genuine article. It's also got the right size windscreen. The panels line up in the right places, the dashboard is very close to the genuine car and with our interior kit, the door panels can easily be made to look like the 360 door panel."

Ashley also considered the lowering potential of the 406.

"The Peugeot can be lowered to the correct ride height without upsetting the steering geometry, easily achieved by bolting the track ▶▶



Fake Ferrari air boxes sit where the rear seats were fitted on the 406 – you can see them via cutout above



Paul Belk's interior has lots of Ferrari bling



rod end in from the top of the hub, instead of the normal way from the bottom of the hub.

## ENGINES TO MATCH

Like the 360, the 406 is a big car and has all the extras people like to have in a high class sportscar as standard. It's available with 2.0, 2.2-litre and 3.0-litre V6 engines and although the cars cost over £25,000 new, secondhand values are now less than a tenth of this amount.

With power outputs for the V6 ranging from 190 to 210bhp and Brembo brakes as standard, this is probably as close as you'll get to Ferrari performance without having to spend a Ferrari budget.

At the time of visiting Extreme, there was a demonstrator and customer's car to inspect. Whilst the demo had a modest 2.0-litre twin cam petrol engine, the customer's car boasted the range-topping 210bhp V6.

The customer had removed the rear seats in favour of a mock-up Ferrari motor in the rear, meaning that a couple of large Ferrari decaled air intakes can be viewed through the rear glass, courtesy of some DIY parts from B&Q. The interior of this car had been similarly customised using typical Ferrari colours and a pair of Extreme supplied Rage seats.

Extreme's demo car hasn't been so heavily modified inside, with the rear seats remaining, the standard dash and dials and just a few

personal touches including Rage seats, an aftermarket steering wheel with a Ferrari badge and some centre console trim.

On the exterior, the lines and general shape of the car is enough to convince most people that this is a 360. If you want to get as near to a Ferrari as possible, Extreme can supply all the necessary parts including wheels, lights, suspension, fake brakes and even a fake rear engine cover.

You'll have to agree, the end results are pretty damned convincing.

## DRIVE TIME

So the looks, both inside and out are achievable, but what about the performance? Sat inside the V6 was entertaining when the throttle was floored. The ride quality is firm thanks to stiffer



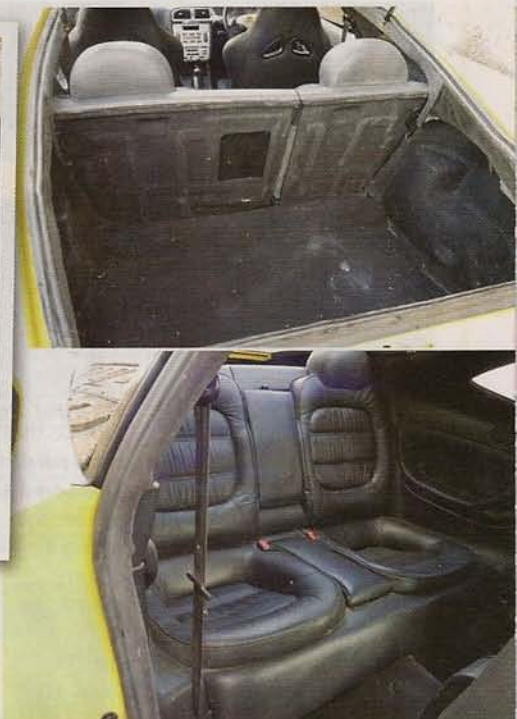
Pace, grace but none of the wallet-busting Ferrari running costs...



Paul Belk's V6 Peugeot lump boasts 210bhp and front wheel drive. Looks like quite a squeeze up front, but the bonnet does close and panel fit is surprisingly good



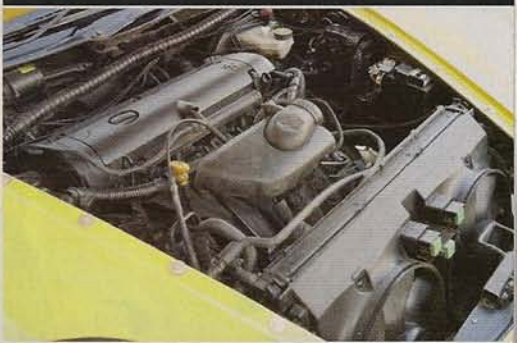
Paul Belk at the wheel of his re-clothed Peugeot 406, which now looks like a Ferrari 360. An average build will cost £11,500 including the donor car



A Ferrari with boot this size? Of course that's one of the benefits of using a front engined donor



Extreme's demo car has a standard 406 interior except for a pair of Rage seats and some additional trim



Two-litre twin cam engine in Extreme's demo slots neatly under the modified front end

couple of viewings you're left feeling confident you could have a go.

Any two-door 406 can be used for this conversion, of which the bumpers, bonnet, wings and tailgate need to be removed. The roof skin needs to be cut out along with the spare wheel well and the rear section of the car. A 30mm square tube framework sits in the rear of the car and is welded to the bodywork. The gap left by the missing spare wheel well is covered with stronger 3mm steel plate.

The 406 is taller than the 360, so in true custom car fashion, the height is chopped down. First, 4cm is removed from the B-pillar, then the roof frame is cut in half and the roof is pushed down to lower it. The build-DVD provides measurements to show how far the roof needs to be lowered before a 30mm box section is fitted to help retain and strengthen it.

The 406 is re-clothed in a variety of GRP panels to transform it into a 360, including front wings, rear quarters, front and rear panels, bumpers, door skins and a roof.

The doors on the 406 are much longer than a 360, so these are modified and re-skinned with a GRP 360-looking exterior cover and door handle. First, the rear section is cut away and replaced with a metal bar and GRP end cap. The new GRP skin needs to be fitted, then a cut out made to fit a new handle that uses the existing Peugeot lock and linkage. The B-pillar is further strengthened and widened using several pre-cut steel plates, which need to be welded into position. This is also used to make the new slam panel for shutting and locking the door.

The rear quarters and door skins are bonded onto the 406. Major panels including the boot, rear panel, bonnet, bumpers and wings are bolted on and do not need any filler to hide any misaligned gaps. According to the build-DVD, everything should line up correctly.

A lot of thought and planning has clearly been put into this conversion and the kit includes all the necessary steelwork to strengthen and adapt the 406 to accept the new GRP panels. Meanwhile, the build-DVD provides clear instructions on finer detail such as modifying the wiper motor, re-positioning the fuse box and fitting a new filler cap.

So is it worth the effort of chopping and ▶▶

springs and a lowered ride height, not that different one would imagine to the Ferrari 360. As Ashley confirms: "A 360 feels every bump, but it's a supercar, so it can't loll around like a settee on the road. You've got to replicate the suspension and make it as firm as the genuine car. If you're trying to duplicate a supercar, you don't do it just by the looks."

Paul's car uses cut down PI springs although Extreme now stocks adjustable coilovers with adjustment for bump and rebound, which don't need modifying. Prices start at £500 for a full set of coilovers with bump adjustment only and £700 for bump and rebound which are suitable for wheel sizes between 18in and 20in.

So the ride quality can also be replicated, but what about the front-wheel drive of the 406 versus the rear-wheel drive of the 360? For the majority of driving, this difference isn't noticeable unless you're planning tail slides – and would you dare to do such a thing in a real Ferrari?

## CONVERTING A 406

The conversion from 406 to 360 promises to take 100 hours according to Extreme's sales literature. There's a build-DVD available, which gives the potential customer a very honest and truthful insight into what he or she will need to do with an angle grinder or air saw. It's clearly been produced by one person with a handheld video camera, so there are not many demonstrations of doing the conversion, but the narration is very easy to follow and after a





changing a 406? If you want the looks of a 360, but not the running costs or initial expense, then this is worth considering. Extreme's kit is priced between £6000 and £10,000. You'll also need a 406 for around £1500 upwards. So an average build will cost around £11,500 (including the cost of the 406 and all the necessary parts supplied by Extreme). Commissioned cars are available from £15,000.

Secondhand prices of the real Ferrari 360 appear to be starting at around £50,000. For

upwards of £12,500 you can build yourself a replica that boasts V6 performance with standard spec luxuries including traction control, electric toys and leather trim.

Extreme's 360 replica is certainly a tempting build if you can't afford the real Ferrari or don't want to be stung by the cost of insurance and maintenance. Just look out for the hoards of kids asking how fast your car goes and whether it's a real Ferrari. ■

## CONTACT

### EXTREME SPORTS CARS

WEB: [www.extreme-sportscars.com](http://www.extreme-sportscars.com)

TEL: 01482 222793 or 078431 33731



## DATA FILE

**MODEL:** Extreme 360

**DONOR VEHICLE:** Peugeot 406 two-door

**ENGINE OPTIONS:**

2.0-litre, 2.2-litre, 3.0-litre V6

**GEARBOX:** 5-speed Peugeot with FWD only

**OTHER DONOR PARTS:**

Ford Mondeo fuel filler flap

**WHEEL SIZES:** Front 16-20x7.5/8.5in, rear: 16-20x9.5-10in rim

**ESTIMATED BUILD TIME:** 100 hours

**ESTIMATED TOTAL BUILD COSTS:**

£11,500 (including average cost of 406).

**COMPLETED CONVERSIONS FROM:**

£15,000

**BUILD MANUAL:** DVD



Replica wheels range from 18 to 20in. Fake large diameter discs will soon include calipers as well



Glass reinforced plastic panel moulds are neatly laid out at Extreme's Hull workshops





Steve Hurrell's stunning schhparkly 306 GTI-6 got tongues wagging all day. It's quite a beast

photographers on the day, Jonny V for attending and Jim who towed Nath's XSi behind his Discovery and remembering to bring his frying pan and kettle to keep us fed and watered.

The day was another club outing success and we all had great fun together. The club as a whole has been around for 25 years so there is plenty of information for people on the site, and a whole new network of friends to be made. It doesn't matter what you drive from a 505 to a new 308, get along to the site and join up to this fantastic club and enjoy loads of benefits, club track days, factory visits, monthly area meets and of course our national annual convention Pugfest.

The club now has a healthy calendar with loads of events throughout the year, and we're always looking for people to join in the fun. For more information or to join up go to: [www.psooc.com](http://www.psooc.com). ■



The pit area was a hive of activity...everyone wondered how a Land Rover Discovery got in disguised as a French car



End of playtime and Nath Warden's superb stripped-out 106 XSi gets tucked up behind the Disco. It's running a 1.4-litre TU3 engine (115bhp) and AX diesel gearbox with a custom air intake and oil catch system, uprated gear linkages, custom exhaust system and ported and carefully polished big valve cylinder head

## 406 COUPÉ FRENCH ADVENTURE

GETTING TOGETHER MORE THAN 60 406 COUPÉ OWNERS IN ONE PLACE ON THE CONTINENT IS NO MEAN FEAT. BUT, IT WAS A SMOOTH TRANSACTION AND SOME RARE MODELS MADE AN APPEARANCE TOO. TIM COLLINS REVEALS ALL...

**F**ive members of the UK-based 406 Coupé Club travelled to Douai in northern France on 25th October to be part of the International Meet and join up with other owners from France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxemburg and Germany.

The event was organised by the French owners club and brought together 61 cars at the Mining History Centre at the pithead of the former Delloye Mine.

On the day of the meet one UK owner was already in France on business, lucky devil, however the rest of us got up at silly-o'clock with cars arriving at Dover around 6am for the stint across the channel to Calais. The morning crossing was luckily very smooth (so no green faces) and provided time for a proper hearty breakfast and plenty of caffeine. The sun was just coming up as the ferries arrived at Calais. Although it was still rather cool, thankfully the skies were clear.

We formed the 406 Coupé convoy inside the dock area and headed off down the motorway to the meeting place near Douai.

On arrival a mist had closed in, but this didn't stop the first of the photoshoot opportunities. Cameras were working overtime with nearly all colours and trim combinations plus most build examples on show. Many were LHD models so the sprinkling of RHD cars attracted quite a bit of interest – especially as there was a rare RHD limited edition Settant' anni with white leather trim – one of only a handful made in RHD and 1,200 in total. Other examples were sporting subtle, and not so subtle modifications which were generally well appreciated. My money's on the 406 Coupé being a future iconic classic!

A sit down lunch in the on-site restaurant was followed by a conducted tour of the mining museum, including train rides and experiencing



Meeting up at Calais docks, it was time for a French adventure...



The locals wandered into the international 406 Coupé club meet, thinking it was a bumper turnout at the village boot fair

a mine lift... all with the services of an excellent tour guide.

After this it was back to the restaurant for drinks and an opportunity to have a chat with fellow Coupé owners from across Europe. Then, there was another photoshoot of the collected cars as well as a bit of candid camera action as people began to leave and head back home.

A big thank you from the UK club to the French club officials, Alain and Phillippe, for organising and hosting the event. Having now proven that it can be done there is already talk of a similar event next year, hopefully given time to plan, we can take a larger following abroad in 2009.

For more information and images see the club website at [www.406coupeclub.com](http://www.406coupeclub.com). ■



One of the rare Coupés was this clean Solstice Gold model from Belgium, complete with subtle headlamp eyebrows



Tim Collin's rare RHD Settant' anni special edition attracted plenty of admirers. Made to celebrate the 70th birthday of its designer Pinninfarina, these models come with white leather and the letter 'F' embroidered on the headrests, chrome bars on the grille, wood trim, Nautilus alloys and a limited edition dashboard plaque