

## HEAVEN FROM DEVON?

### First drive

Owen Mildenhall

YES, this really is a brand new car. Devon-based Marlin has been hand-building sportscars for more than 24 years. Its latest offering - the Toi - is claimed to be in the style of a pre-war grand prix car, yet from the front it looks like a classic American hot-rod! The side view displays the familiar retro Marlin styling, although a course of steroids has made the swooping curves a lot more muscular.



The Sportster can be bought as a kit or a finished model with Ford or Rover engines, although the car we drove was fitted with the 3.0-litre straight-six unit from the previous-generation BMW M3. While the ride is relaxing, the downside of the soft suspension is plenty of body roll through the corners. Yet with more than 300bhp on tap, the tail can be provoked into a slide with ease.

The smooth five-speed BMW gearbox feels as good as it did in the M3, while the non-anti-lock brakes provide adequate stopping power - should you ever want to stop, that is.



### First Opinion

IT'S great to see hand-built British sports cars still being made. The Marlin may not be to everyone's tastes, but it's still a well built and unique machine.

### Marlin Sportster TOi

- **Engine:** 321bhp, 3.0-litre 6cyl.
- **0-60mph:** 4 seconds (claimed)
- **Price:** £24,000