



FIAT COUPE 20V

To ebay or not to ebay

By Phil Ward

I decided that the faithful Sprint Blue 20V Turbo should be replaced. Currently consigned to local use, a turbocharged 220bhp rocket ship seems to be a bit of a waste on short journeys. For longer runs, which usually involve a photoshoot, we use the Fiat Marea Weekend. There's no room in a Coupe boot for a photographer! So what to replace the Coupe with with? Well, another Coupe actually – a non turbo version.

In 2000 the Coupe range was revised and received an attractive new grille and colour-coded bodywork. The UK received the 20V, 20V Turbo and 20V Turbo Plus. These desirable cars were only available until 2001 when

production ceased, so there are not many around.

Prices for the Turbos, in particular the 6-speed Plus are still quite high with some cars being offered at up to £7.5K. The 20Vs, however, are considerably cheaper with good ones going for around £5K. This is because the non-turbo cars right across the 16V and 20V production are not so appealing as the Turbo with its superior performance. But if you are just looking for a stylish, low-tech runabout with four seats, then Coupe 'normale' is good value.

With 'only' 155bhp, the 20V is still a lively performer. No turbo lag and excellent throttle response means that the 20V is still quick off the mark. Power delivery is smooth

and the engine note more pronounced than the Turbo. As the engine's 5-cylinder 'warble' increases your attention is drawn to the speedometer, whereas you have to be more careful with the whispering 20V Turbo because it is so easy to reach silly speeds. So, the 20V is cheaper to buy, cheaper to maintain, cheaper to insure, uses less fuel and preserves your driving licence. Are you convinced?

Well I was, so I set about finding a suitable example. Ebay is full of Coupes for sale, though many of them are very high mileage Mk2 20V Turbos. As previously mentioned the Mk 3s are expensive, some on ebay were expensive and high mileage which doesn't make much sense. Is it just me, or do our readers bid for a 'no reserve' bargain on ebay well below the market price, only to find it is then mysteriously withdrawn from the sale because it was 'offered



elsewhere'? This is really annoying.

Having given up with ebay I had a look at www.autotrader.co.uk, which has cars with fixed prices for sale by private and trade customers, though I suspect some of the sellers are not as 'private' as they claim. I was attracted by a year 2000 20V that was for sale at the Kar Shop in north London. The advert ran: 'Fiat 20v Coupe 2dr. Now reduced. 79,000 miles. Full dealer service history. Absolute mint condition. £2995.' I will leave you to digest these 'facts' until the next report. **ai**

