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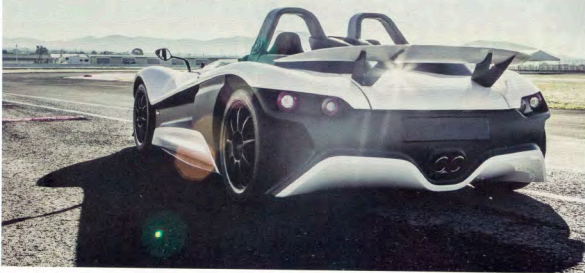
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planned. Details inside...





Here come the Mexicans!

New firm VUHL prepares sports car for 2014 launch. 285bhp, 0-62mph in 3.7sec

Words: Mike Duff

W E'VE HAD MEXICAN sports cars before, of course – you'll probably remember the diplomatic incident caused by the reaction of the *Top Gear* TV presenters to the Mastretta. And now there's another one, with new marque VUHL releasing images and details of its new lightweight roadster, the 05, ahead of its public debut at this year's Goodwood Festival of Speed.

It's clearly taken inspiration from cars like the KTM X-Bow and Ariel Atom, with a minimum of bodywork to

maximise its power-to-weight ratio. And the combination of lightweight construction and a turbocharged four-cylinder engine gives the 05 a claimed power-to-weight ratio of just under 400bhp per ton. VUHL says that's good enough for a 3.7sec 0-62mph time and a top speed of 152mph.

The chassis and tub are made from aluminium extrusions and honeycomb, with a chrome-moly steel subframe housing the mid-mounted engine and transmission. Bodywork is reinforced plastic as standard, with carbonfibre optional. The 05's kerb weight is

claimed to be just 725kg, with a 37.63 front-rear weight distribution.

Power comes from Ford's familiar 2-litre EcoBoost motor, as seen in the Focus ST, but here it's tuned to produce 285bhp. Drive is sent to the rear wheels via a six-speed manual gearbox, and suspension is by double wishbones all round.

Deliveries of the 05 will start next year and the car will be sold in the UK, with prices from 'around £55,000 plus tax and shipping'.

VUHL was founded by Guillermo and Iker Echeverria, both of whom have a background in designing and engineering cars in Mexico and the US. We're told that the company's name is a not-quite acronym for 'Vehicles of Ultra High-performance and Light weight'. Apparently we're meant to pronounce it as 'Vool'.

The company is partially backed by the Mexican government and 'development partners' include Multimatic and Michelin.

On first impressions the 05 is an interesting-looking thing, and although it's fair to say that sports car start-ups have a habit of under-delivering, this one certainly seems to have the backing to get off the ground. As for what the car drives like, we look forward to finding out. 📧

News in brief



Alfa Romeo 4C gets its first tune-up

The Alfa 4C isn't even on sale yet, but it's already fallen under the beady eyes of the tuning fraternity. Pogeia Racing has sharpened up the looks considerably, while a new turbo and exhaust promise a stonking 72 per cent rise in power to 410bhp. Its intricate alloys can also be specced up to 20in in diameter.



Corvette Stingray undercuts 911

The Corvette Stingray has had its official UK price confirmed. From £61,495, it's more than £10k cheaper than a basic Porsche 911, while its 6.2-litre V8 ensures it's over 100bhp healthier, with 454bhp. The Z51 performance pack is standard-fit, including a limited-slip diff, bigger brakes and magnetic ride control.



BMW's 4-series has arrived

RIP the BMW 3-series coupe, long live the 4-series. The 4 is a smart looker and comes with a plethora of petrol and diesel engines, and some four-wheel-drive models. Prices start at £31,575 for a 420d, with the 302bhp 435i top of the range until the M4 arrives. Expect convertible and Gran Coupe versions, too.



Above: VUHL 05 weighs just 725kg. Below: race-bred interior; jet fighter-style switchgear

