

**DETROIT MOTOR SHOW STARS...**

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**Auto  
EXPRESS**

**BRITAIN'S  
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MAGAZINE**

NEWS WEEK

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**DEBUT FOR BOXSTER-BEATER**



**WORLD  
EXCLUSIVE**  
**INSIDE THE  
£6 MILLION  
BUGATTI**  
p20

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*Flies the flag  
for Britain*



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**+ WORLD'S CHEAPEST HYBRID TESTED + BEST BUDGET 3-SERIES**

**NEW E-CLASS**  
Hi-tech Merc unveiled



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## ALFA'S MIGHTIER MITO

Sensational 220bhp scissor-door version of stylish Italian is here. We feel the heat in M430 Marangoni that points to GTA.

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## FIRST DRIVE

Sam Hardy

IT'S the mightiest MiTo yet! This is the stunning Marangoni M430 – a one-off edition of Alfa Romeo's hatchback that comes with scissor doors and a 233bhp engine. And Auto Express has driven it.

First revealed at the Essen Motor Show last November, the M430 is the hottest incarnation of the MiTo yet, and although Alfa doesn't officially endorse it, the car points the way to the GTA version, which is due to hit showrooms later this year.

The newcomer is a very Italian affair. It has been produced by Roman tyre maker Marangoni and Florence-based tuning firm TRC, and takes its inspiration, its front air intakes and its name from the Ferrari F430. At the rear is a carbon fibre diffuser and quad exhaust tailpipes.

However, when it comes to the M430's doors, it seems that Lamborghini's Countach has provided inspiration – the scissor units open in a similar way to those on the legendary supercar!

But the modifications don't end there. There are 18-inch alloys, special Marangoni Mythos tyres made of red rubber, a tyre pattern print on the bonnet and two-tone red and white paintwork.

### Outrageous

From every angle, it looks outrageous – quite a contrast to the elegant MiTo on which it's based. And it's even more extravagant inside, with the Italian flag on the sports seats and Swarovski crystals inserted into the leather gearshift collar, handbrake and pedals. But the M430 is about go as well as show. The suspension has been lowered by 40mm and the brakes upgraded with 10-piston calipers and 330mm composite front discs.

The range-topping 1.4-litre T-Jet MiTo delivers 155bhp, but the M430 offers 233bhp, thanks to a new turbo, injectors, a reprogrammed ECU and stainless steel exhaust. That's enough for 0-62mph in 6.6 seconds and a top speed of 158mph.

Floor the throttle, and not much happens for a few seconds – then all hell breaks loose. There's a rushing sound as the turbo spins up and an angry rasp from the exhaust as the rev counter races to the 7,000rpm red line.

The savage power delivery leads to lots of torque steer, particularly in second gear, but the wide tyres and lowered suspension produce plenty of grip and minimal body roll, although the pay-off is an extremely stiff ride.

The steering is typically Alfa, being very quick and a little light, and the car changes direction instantly. Factor in composite brakes that only provide strong stopping power when warm, and the M430 takes some time to get used to. However, it's a lot of fun and rewarding to drive.

When Alfa does reveal its MiTo GTA – which will boast 230bhp thanks to a new 1,750cc turbo engine – it's likely to be easier to live with. But the M430 is an intriguing taste of what's to come.

If you fancy one yourself, Marangoni is making the engine upgrades, brakes and bodykit – although not the doors – available at the end of February for an extra £10,000 over the cost of the MiTo.

### Rival: MINI John Cooper Works

IT doesn't have scissor doors or two-tone paint, but the MINI John Cooper Works is about as wild as hot superminis get. There's a 210bhp engine, carbon fibre trim and 18-inch alloys. It's great to drive, too, and comes with the kudos of the John Cooper badge.

# ALFA ROMEO MITO M430

HOT ITALIAN SUPERMINI POINTS  
THE WAY FOR FIRM'S IMMINENT  
RANGE-TOPPING GTA MODEL

### Details

Price: £35,000 (est)

Engine: 1.4-litre 4cyl turbo

Power: 233bhp

Transmission: Six-speed manual, front-wheel drive

0-62mph: 6.6 seconds

Top speed: 158mph

Economy: 30mpg (est)

Equipment: Scissor doors, sports seats, Swarovski crystal-encrusted gearlever and pedals, two-tone paintwork, carbon fibre trim, 18-inch alloys, red tyres

**On sale  
February**



Two-tone paint, huge air intake and scissor doors mark M430 out, while performance matches the look



Tweaks include more powerful 1.4-litre turbo motor, red tyres and new brakes





# New 'GTA' **FIRST DRIVES**

Pictures: Pete Gibson



Cabin gets tricolour trim, and Swarovski crystals set into the handbrake, pedals and gearlever (right)



Marangoni MiTo's name is taken from Ferrari's F430 supercar



## First opinion

WHAT do you get if you cross two Italian supercars with an Alfa Romeo MiTo? The Marangoni M430. The new supermini is set to cause a storm when it goes on sale this month, but this one-off hot hatch creates an even bigger stir. Some of the detailing is over the top, but there's no doubt the standard of work is high. The driving experience is raw, but it puts a smile on your face – the turbo rush is addictive and the grippy handling exploits the MiTo's agile chassis. If this is what a tuning company can do to the MiTo, we can't wait to see what Alfa does with the GTA version.

