

# MOTORING

## The American dream is out there in cyberspace

Plant hire boss Jerry likes his cars big — and they don't come any bigger than a US import, writes **John Evans**



ALL the talk of cheaper new cars on the Continent and the popularity of unofficially imported Japanese performance cars has set plant hire boss Jerry Brewster thinking.

"Now the genie is out of the bottle and everyone is buying on the Continent or from Japan, I have been wondering about going the whole hog and making my next car an American one," he says. "My current car is a Mercedes E320 estate, which cost £40,000. I am looking to spend the same amount again, ideally on something at least as big and with the same high image."

Fortunately for Jerry, the market for American cars in Britain is now sophisticated, with independent and franchised dealers able to supply new and used US cars, as well as providing after-sales care. Exchange & Mart has two pages of dealer and servicing contacts.

The development of the market has been accelerated first by the return of Chrysler with a range of right-hand-drive models, and more recently by the arrival of Cadillac and Chevrolet. Although these last two have been unofficially represented by independent dealers for some time, it was only a couple of years ago that their par-

ent company, General Motors, started official sales through Vauxhall, its British subsidiary.

But there is a third factor at play — the internet. American car dealers understand the internet so well they could almost have invented it. Not content with serving their home market, they are now targeting Europe with highly specified, value-for-money models.

Jerry's budget will buy the biggest, most luxuriously equipped American car he could imagine. But which should he spend his £40,000 on?

The Cadillac Seville 4.6, available from official dealers, looks promising. True to form, this plush cruiser, boasting every luxury from leather to air conditioning, costs £36,000, compared with rivals costing between £45,000 and £50,000. Class-trailing ride and handling qualities will not bother a US convert like Jerry.

Then there is the £34,995 Chrysler Jeep Grand Cherokee 4.7, which handles tidily and has cabin space in abundance. However, merely shopping at his local Chrysler dealer may not appeal to an adventurer like

Jerry in search of something different. To find an American car fit for a British plant hire boss, we should do what most Americans do and surf the internet.

At [www.americancarimports.co.uk](http://www.americancarimports.co.uk) he will find just what he is looking for. ACI has offices in London (0181-889 4545) and Miami, and imports cars to order and for stock. Its prices include shipping and delivery to the dealer's London showroom, the all-important rectification work required to pass the tough new single vehicle approval test for vehicle imports and one year's comprehensive AA Option One warranty.

The company's current stock includes the biggest 4x4 in the world, a Ford Excursion 6.8 V10 eight-seat off-roader, costing £45,000. It also has the world's most luxurious off-roader, the Lincoln Navigator



King of the road: the giant Ford F150 Lightning has the presence of a supertruck and the handling of a sports car

5.4 V8, priced at £42,000. Auto transmission, climate control, power seats and air suspension are just some of its features.

Also on the forecourt is the monster-sized Chevrolet Suburban 4x4, the ultimate people carrier that will put Jerry on nodding terms with National Express drivers. There is a choice of engines — 5.3 V8 and 6.0 V8 petrol, or 6.5 litre turbo-

diesel. Standard equipment includes power seats, windows, locks and mirrors, and prices start at £39,995.

Being in the plant hire business, Jerry will appreciate ACI's amazing Ford F150 4x4 Lariat Flareside pick-up, with its extended five-seater cab. It has a 5.4 litre V8 engine, automatic transmission and air conditioning, and costs £35,244

including VAT. Another crazy pick-up, the Dodge Ram, whetted enthusiasts' hearts when it was first shown here three years ago by Chrysler.

Now Jerry can get the latest version, the 5.9 Quad Cab Sport Laramie SLT 4x4 with extended cab, again for £35,244. For the same price he could have the mad and bad Ford F150 Lightning 5.4 V8, a

350bhp supertruck with all luxuries.

And which should Jerry buy? The Lightning, of course goes and handles like a sports car and has massive presence on the road. Fully comprehensive insurance through the specialist US car insurer Graham Sykes Insurance (01266621) would cost 40-year-old Jerry £1,078.

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