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# SUCK OR BLOW?



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**BATTLE IT  
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TURBOCHARGED  
VS BIG CAPACITY  
SHOOTOUT**

**ICON:** GINETTA G4  
PEUGEOT 406 COUPÉ  
**CLUTCHES:** HOW TO UPGRADE  
RACING HUGE V12 JAGUARS



## BUDGET BLASTER

# PEUGEOT 406 COUPÉ

CUT PRICE FERRARI – BY PEUGEOT. AFFORDABLE BEAUTY, OR AN OVERPRICED GAELIC REPMOBILE IN A PARTY FROCK? TOBY UNNA LOOKS AT THE SMOOTH, SEXY PUG 406 COUPÉ

## BUYING an unfashionable old

→ Ferrari for the price of a new Peugeot is a brave move. If you read our 308 GT4 buying guide a few issues back, you'd know why, too – £15k engine rebuilds for a start. Better, perhaps, to buy a Peugeot that looks like a Ferrari instead? Mass market underpinnings, Italian clothes, room for the kids and at least a hope in hell of it starting on cold mornings. The 406 Coupé.

Of course, the 'cut price Ferrari' tag doesn't exclusively belong to Peugeot. Fiat also built a car named Coupé, which also wore Pininfarina clothes and was affordable. So why not buy one of those instead? Well, look at it this way. Fiat Coupé, cut price 348: Fizzy, unrefined, wayward in the wrong hands. And the Pug? Cut price 456, of course. Cream-smooth engine, svelte body, class oozing from every (admittedly

generous) shut line. No turbo, no body-coloured dash: No need to shout. And who but Pininfarina could have done a better job with the neat but dowdy 406 saloon base?

Family look retained, restrained sex appeal added in spades, Peugeot image suitably boosted. A watertight buying decision, then? Not exactly. Pininfarina didn't just design the Coupé, they built it to too, which means means dubious build quality. Decent examples shouldn't give undue grief, but buy a fault-ridden lemon and you might just wish you'd bought a real Ferrari.

## INTERIOR

Settle into the roomy Coupé. Door shut, sit back, relax. Click. Click. Click click. Even with your eyes shut to blank out the plastic saloon dashboard, it's hard to forget you

couldn't afford that Merc.

Repetitive clicking from behind the glovebox is commonplace, caused by stripped gear teeth in the air recirculation flap motor

Forget the 2-litre Coupé: Style over substance, simple as that. The big four-cam V6 makes the right noises and gives just enough shove to make the 406 genuinely

swift – when it's in the right mood. The basic engine is rock solid, but everything around it was designed in the Peugeot crèche with crayons. Dying coolant temp sensors soon

## ENGINE



## BODYWORK

Colour is crucial: Polaris blue is nice, bright yellow less clever. Looks and image are important here, that's why you're buying the Coupé - if you just want the Peugeot chassis and big PSA V6, get the saloon instead. It's certainly better designed: Those hefty Coupé doors give their saloon-spec retaining straps a bit of a beating and do break them eventually, and also tend to knock the catches out of alignment; if the doors shut with a bang, this is the reason. Treat stiff bonnet releases with care, as the cables will happily snap at either end; subsequent bonnet opening requires a torch, a long screwdriver and a lot of patience. Bumpers are terrifyingly expensive and rare second hand,



(just disconnect it), though similar irritation at the drivers side is probably emanating from the indicator relay - the column stalk's on the way out. Random brake warnings stem from crappy

handbrake switches, while an intermittent speedometer and strange-feeling steering means either the speed sensor or speed-sensitive steering interface is knackered; neither is expensive.

Electric seats that don't work usually need no more than a broken wire re-soldering, and the optional JBL speaker system could be worn out if it's been used hard. Post 2002 cars have more reliable wiring.

**Above: Not quite a Ferrari but not then neither's the price tag.**

dampen the power output down, while rough running and poor cold starting points to sick coil packs.

Upper offside engine mounts frequently give up (listen for a knocking as you come on and

off the throttle), and are an easy DIY proposition - as are leaking radiators, another V6 bugbear.

Do it yourself is a phrase you may want to become familiar with, too. A Peugeot main agent will fleece

you for almost a grand to do a V6 cambelt, and if the head gaskets go - necessitating engine removal to get the rear cylinder head off - they'll want twice that for the labour alone.

**Below: 3-litre V6 is a strong, sweet engine but ancillaries can be prone to problems.**

## SPECIFICATION

### PEUGEOT 406 COUPE V6

**Engine**  
2946cc 24V V6  
**Power**  
194bhp@5500rpm  
**Torque**  
197lb/ft@3750rpm  
**Speed**  
143mph  
**0-60mph**  
6.8 seconds  
**Weight**  
1350kg

### Prices

**Condition 1:**  
£5200  
**Condition 2:**  
£3500  
**Condition 3:**  
£1650



## RUNNING GEAR

Closer inspection of the Coupé's hardware does little to diminish the exotic feel. Four pot Brembo front anchors straight off the Esprit work very effectively, although their persistent squealing may draw unwanted attention.

ABS sensor rings on front driveshafts tend to crack as corrosion takes hold, so listen and feel for the system misfiring at low speed as the control unit tries to make sense of irregular tooth gaps. Being Peugeot, this means

replacing the whole driveshaft. Flashing 'snow' and 'sports' lights on an auto is bad news, especially if it occasionally gets stuck in 3rd gear; it'll give up eventually, and a new box is £4.5k.

Gear selection problems tend to be linkage related and easy to put right. Knocking from the back can mean drop links, anti-roll bar bushes, exhaust mounts or in some cases, that the wrong size washers were used by Peugeot when building the rear strut tops.

