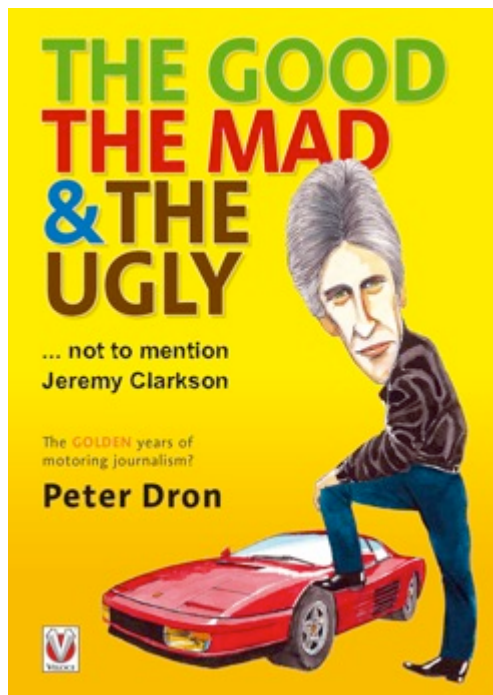


Book Review – The Good, the Mad and the Ugly

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Book Review – The Good, the Mad and the Ugly.

Reviewed by Kieron Fennelly.

Title: The Good, the Mad and the Ugly

Author: Peter Dron

Published by: Veloce Publishing Ltd; www.veloce.co.uk

256 pages; hardback



Price: £14.99 UK; \$24.95 USA.

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The author looks back over 40 years' motoring journalism and reflects, hardly surprisingly that that fings ain't what they used to be: No more the epic drives in Lamborghinis across a traffic and speed camera-free continent, no more the indulgent car manufacturer who barely blinked when a journalist destroyed his press cars and still entertained the hooligan hack to five-star hotel and gastronomy. These observations have all been made before, but Dron is a natural writer.

Dron's many anecdotes are mostly informative and entertaining - the launch of the (much delayed and equally anticipated) Porsche Turbo in the south of France in 1990 was almost completely derailed when thieves stole all six press Turbos yet Porsche, then run on a shoestring, managed magnificently to scramble six more cars straight off the production line in time for the unveiling.

The account of his slightly surreal interview together with Mika Hakkinen of Prince Albert of Monaco is also worth the detour.

Good Mad and Ugly is though an uneven book: When the author is able to forget about himself, there is some fine writing, such as his penetrating analysis of the front wheel drive Lotus M100, but then this is offset by an encounter with the Duke of Edinburgh which seems written to show how clever the author is. As well as recalling his own mishaps (destroying a Renault Fuego, dismissed as a "hairstylist's car," at the MIRA) Dron also likes to cite the misfortune of others, for example a hapless "proto-nerd" tester called Stuart who inadvertently drove a Singer Gazelle into the 4ft water splash at the same MIRA. The proto-nerd tester was in fact Stuart Bladon, author, ex-*Autocar* man and also a former Guild chairman: He has already told this story in his own book, 'No Speed Limits.' Covering similar ground to Peter Dron, Bladon seems to have encountered far fewer examples of incompetence along the way and he if he did, he does not find it necessary to shower such



individuals with short coarse words to show his disdain. Indeed Dron spends much of the first chapter of *Good, Mad and Ugly* explaining how the publisher dissuaded him from lampooning Jeremy Clarkson for fear of expensive legal retribution. With smaller fry however, the author evidently felt he could take the risk. Perhaps the publisher should also have suggested that a little less profane vituperation might have improved an otherwise very readable book.

VERDICT

Overall, entertaining and readable, but could have been better.