

# NEED FOR SPEED

Groundbreaking offerings from industry leaders have one thing in common: unprecedented performance

Text by KEITH GORDON



Ever since Christian von Koenigsegg founded his eponymous automotive company back in 1994, the brand has been on the frontier of supercar design and performance. So when the Koenigsegg Agera RS appeared to set a new land-speed record last November at a face-melting 277.87 mph, a full 10 mph faster than the current record holder, one would figure the feat was the boss's idea. Instead, it was an enthusiastic client who proposed the speed test, offering to lend his car for the challenge on a temporarily closed section of highway in Nevada. It didn't take long for von Koenigsegg to agree. The Agera RS's performance has sparked controversy, upended the record books, and provided valuable data and insights for the Koenigsegg team as they develop their next game-changing supercar.

The Agera RS edition is capable of a full megawatt of power (1,360 hp) with the 1MW

package option, which includes a ridiculous 1,370 Nm of torque at 6,000 rpm, and the car can go from zero to 62 mph in under three seconds, thanks to an aluminum, twin-turbo 5.0-liter V-8. It's also incredibly lightweight, with a chassis made of carbon fiber and aluminum honeycomb, itself made possible by the company's development of the futuristic One:1 model, which offered one horsepower for every kilogram of weight.

Guinness World Records hasn't yet validated the Agera RS's speed achievement; one technicality that may stand in its way is that a model needs 29 units identical to the test unit to qualify for a production record. For all intents and purposes, though, it is the fastest car on the road right now. Only 25 Agera RSs are being produced, and all have been sold, so the only way to obtain one is to make an offer to a current owner—and we doubt any would be willing to part with the fastest production car in the world.

For those who prefer two wheels, Hesketh Motorcycles' latest edition, the Valiant Supercharged, is the result of English entrepreneur Paul Sleeman's determination to squeeze as much performance as possible out of one bike. Sleeman, who purchased the company from Lord Alexander Hesketh in 2010, decided to try something unprecedented on a production model: He paired a supercharger with an immensely powerful S&S X-Wedge air/oil-cooled V-twin engine, which boasts a road-shaking 210 horsepower at 5,500 rpm, including some 295 Nm of torque at 3,000 rpm. Featuring a chassis of chromoly steel with an aluminum extruded swingarm that houses its oil tank, this ingenious design creates the space needed for the supercharger inside the steel frame. Available this summer for an estimated \$70,000, it's one of the more expensive motorcycles out there—and worth every penny.

