

BUYER'S FILE

Expert buying advice to help you choose your perfect car

COST NEW
£50,000
VALUE NOW
£80,000



2004-2006 TVR SAGARIS

The last TVR launched before the company's collapse in 2007 is also its most exciting model to date. We take a look at the pros and cons.

TVR is back with a bang, with first deliveries of the eagerly awaited new Griffith due to start next year – more than a decade on from the last car being built. This has put the spotlight back on the brand's modern classic line-up, especially models like the 2004-2006 Sagaris.

Derived from the T350 and sharing an uprated version of TVR's Speed Six powerplant, the Sagaris was essentially a track car for the road. With exactly 400bhp (and 349lb-ft of

torque) at its disposal, this latest model weighed in at little more than a tonne – and offered blistering performance as a result.

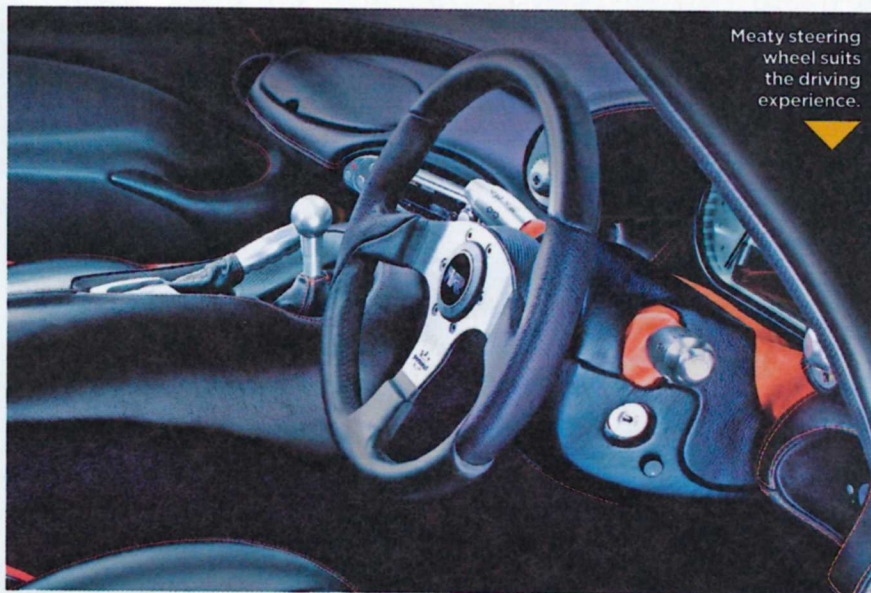
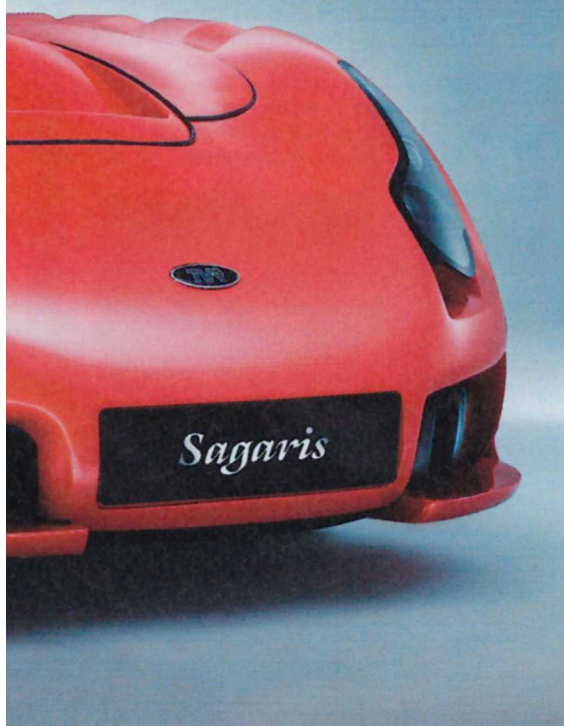
The Sagaris lacked traction control, electronic stability control, ABS and air bags. But what you did get was one of the rawest driving experiences around, 0-60mph in 3.6 seconds and a top speed of 190mph – that's a conservative estimate and still impressive compared to what £70,000 (a typical current Sagaris asking price) will buy you today.

ENGINE Essential CHECKS

▶ TVR's famous Speed Six engine had well-documented problems with wear to the valve

gear – but they were sorted prior to the Sagaris' arrival. Just bear in mind that the tappets need adjustment every couple of years, which is something you need to be looking out for in the service history. And if you hear any knocks or rattles, these are likely to be due to wrecked engine mountings on the left-hand side, which often suffer from the extreme heat of the exhaust manifold. Any work on the Speed Six engine should have been carried out by an expert with specialist knowledge – so again, check that history.

'WITH 400BHP AND WEIGHING A LITTLE MORE THAN A TONNE, IT OFFERED BLISTERING PERFORMANCE'

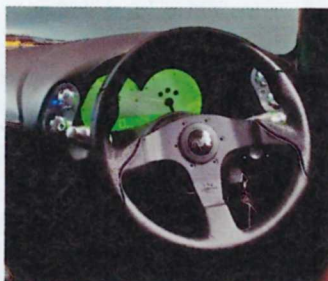


Meaty steering wheel suits the driving experience.

Typically TVR interior is a crazy cocoon.



Clockwise from top left: furious 'eyes'; rear spoiler is good for visibility; dials need to work - wiring behind dash is often damaged; wild, wild wings.



TRANSMISSION

► The Borg-Warner T5 gearbox has a tough and reliable reputation, but the same cannot be said of the clutch, which can last just 10,000-15,000 miles when driven hard. If it feels heavy or there are signs of 'crunching' in first or second gear, you may soon need a new clutch.

It's not unknown for the fingers in the pressure plate's diaphragm spring to fracture, resulting in a hefty bill. The slave cylinder is prone to leaking, but replacements seem to last better thanks to improved seals; check the service record for any proof that the slave has already been changed.

SUSPENSION

► Double-wishbone all-independent suspension does an excellent job of keeping the car stable even under

extreme cornering, the obvious downside being the effect such stiffness has on ride quality. When test driving any Sagaris, listen out for knocks and rattles from the suspension and make sure it doesn't feel 'sloppier' than it should. Replacement dampers aren't prohibitively expensive, with TVR Parts charging less than £1190 for a full set of AST adjustable dampers developed specifically for late-model TVRs.

BODY & STRUCTURE

► The Sagaris' entire chassis is powder coated for rust-resistance, but this can suffer from chipping with age and use, so localised rust could take hold in the future. The largely glassfibre bodywork is durable, although the styling brings its own issues - with scuffs and

other damage to that ultra-low front splitter being annoyingly common. It's also known for its bespoke paint options, with some polychromatic or two-colour 'flip' finishes being a nightmare to match when necessary. Check for grazes, scratches and other minor damage. Also look out for misaligned door seals and rear side windows that become detached.

BRAKES & STEERING

► While earlier TVRs often suffer leaks from its power-steering rack, the Sagaris' uprated system tends to be more reliable. It's still worth checking for such problems, however, as well as any unwelcome noises when turning lock to lock. The braking system doesn't have any inherent faults, but carry out the usual checks for worn pads and

scored or warped discs - does the pedal judder when braking? Vented 322mm front discs for a Sagaris start from just over £275 per pair via TVR Parts Ltd, with pads from less than £43 per set. Check that the tyres are speed-compatible for a 190mph car.

INTERIOR & TRIM

► The interior condition of a Sagaris is equally as important as the bodywork if a car is to attract a top-end asking price. Check the dashboard top is unscuffed and hasn't faded. And make sure that all the dials and controls work as they should. Make sure that the leather-clad seats, centre console etc are in good order - re-trims are expensive. The painted finish on the backs of the seats is prone to damage and wear.

This car is pure theatre from every single angle.



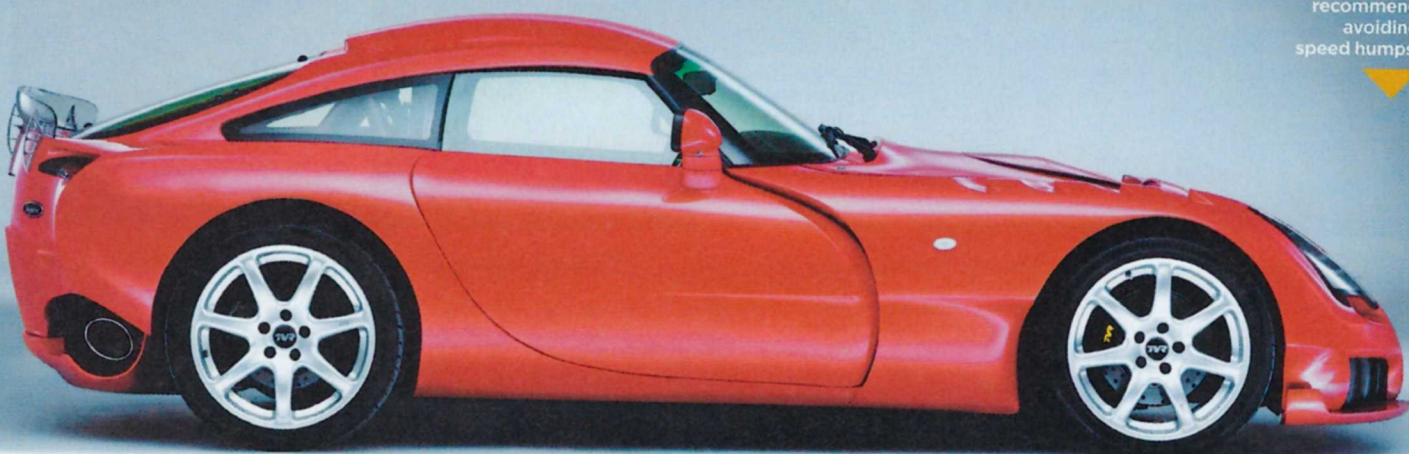
WHAT TO MOD

IMPROVING THE BREED

When a 400bhp lightweight car is capable of 190mph and can hit 60 in well under four seconds, there's an argument for keeping it relatively standard. But not everyone agrees, which is why there are owners who've swapped TVR's Speed Six for an ex-Corvette V8 engine and transmission. Talk to Sportmotive, a firm that converts TVRs to V8 spec from just over £19,000 plus VAT and

labour. Or have a chat with Powers Performance about its Speed Six upgrade to 4.3-litre spec, priced from around £8400.

For Sagaris owners looking for more subtle improvements, TVR Parts Ltd offers a bespoke motorsport-spec replacement clutch (it's harder-wearing than the original) from £1074, while an engine management upgrade kit (claimed to provide even more power, along with a touch more smoothness) will set you back less than £2400.



We strongly recommend avoiding speed humps.

I BOUGHT ONE CRAIG MCATEER

OWNING



'It's got just the right amount of power on tap when you press the loudness pedal to make progress when you need to. The handling is superb and even more so when I changed the ageing and hardened tyres over. We took it for a spirited run through Europe (12 countries in 12 or so days) and it never skipped a beat. Every time I open the garage and see the rear of the Sagaris it's a wow moment and that's after three years of ownership, so I understand when people see it go past and some of them go a little slack jawed. Since I had it de-catted it's got a nice throaty noise to the exhaust and it pops on overrun, which strangely enough only seems to happen near tunnels. It's a 13-year-old car and it had been laid up for three years prior to its purchase so it has issues, but nothing other than the occasional niggle.'



INFO

WHAT TO PAY

Concours	£90,000
Good	£70,000
Usable	£60,000
Project	£40,000

SERVICING COSTS

Annual service	10,000 miles £500
Major service	40,000 miles £800

CLUB

TVR Car Club tvr-car-club.co.uk

SPECIALISTS

Sportmotive	sportmotive.com
Str8six	str8six.co.uk
Powers Performance	powersperformance.co.uk
TVR Parts Ltd	tvr-parts.com
RT Racing	rtracing.co.uk
Leven Technology	leventechnology.co.uk

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	3996cc straight-six
Transmission	RWD, five-speed man
Power	400bhp@7000rpm
Torque	349lb-ft@4500rpm
Weight	1078kg

PERFORMANCE

0-60mph	3.6sec
Max speed	190mph
Economy	18mpg