



How To Drive: The Ultimate Guide, from the Man Who Was the Stig

Ben Collins

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Driving is the most dangerous thing each of us does on a daily basis - and yet the average learner receives just eighteen hours' training - less than a Starbucks barista. In this inspirational, instructive, highly entertaining book, Ben Collins uses his super-charged experience of racing, stunt-work and cutting-edge scientific knowledge to tell you all of the things you didn't learn on your test - and in the process will make your driving safer, more economical and a lot more enjoyable. The skills described here, from skid control to gear changes that are as smooth as a cashmere codpiece, have been honed on racing tracks by the greatest drivers in the world. This is the stuff your instructor missed, your dad forgot and your mates pretend to know ...but don't. Packed with illustrations, gobsmacking driving anecdotes, humour and wisdom, this is the ultimate book for anyone who wants to be better at something they do every day of their life. The world population of motor vehicles exceeded a billion a couple of years ago. Let's make sure their owners understand how to use them.

How To Drive: The Ultimate Guide, from the Man Who Was the Stig Details

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Dmytro Krasun says

Ben Collins drives in "Fast and Furious 6", he opens "Quantum of Solace" as James Bond. Even those things are sound interesting for me. How is it to be so cool driver?

I totally recommend reading this book for these ones who touches steering wheel every day. And not because, you'll drive better or you'll learn new tricks, just to get the feeling of how Ben Collins loves driving and to understand logic is guided by the racer.

I do not recommend this book for drivers, who improves their driving skills every day because probably you know most tricks and techniques described by Ben.

Christine Kenney says

Agree with another reviewer who felt that this book has an identity crisis in trying to serve too many audiences. After getting over my initial disappointment the Stig was not Schumacher, I enjoyed hearing Benjy's perspective on Top Gear antics... even if his quips were somewhat incomprehensible due to the transatlantic argot divide and my lack of a clutch. However, I mostly picked this book because I'm in the pronounced minority of drivers who believe they are worse drivers than average and are looking to remedy this or at least mitigate the potential damage. There was some content here for me but not enough to justify the time spent reading-- largely I need to recalibrate foul weather affordances tuned from learning in Minnesota to not seem like a turtle on the grippy congested freeways of fair weather SoCal. It seems like this was written more for driving enthusiasts looking to pick up finesse to impress their dates. Ironically, given my interests, I found the content on stunt and race driving the most boring and irrelevant to slog through, but they might have made some fascinating YouTube videos.

Raphael Schneider says

Interesting, absorbing and valuable for anyone ever sitting in front of the wheel.

Julian Watt says

Easy to read and informative. Excellent for anyone interested in driving better, racing or even watching racing.

Chakrit Yau says

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Jan says

Po mnoha a mnoha letech jsem si ?ekl, že by se mi ?idi?ák p?eci jen mohl hodit. A tak jsem nyní, kdy mám t?sn? p?ed zkouškama v autoškole, bratrovi zabavil tuhle knížku, kterou jsem mu kdysi dal k Vánoc?m.

A musím říct, že je to skvěle napsaná kniha.

I když je jejím autorem závodní jezdec a kaskadér, efektním trik?m se v?nuje jen na konci. Zbytek knihy tvo?í praktické tipy... jak ?ídit. Lépe a bezpe?n?. A pár historek z natá?ení, kterým chybí jen dov?tek: Doma to nezkoušejte.

Kdyby britský nakladatel knihu připravil k vydání i ve zbytku svého (= nechal vytvořit dvě sady ilustrací pro volant vlevo/vpravo) a kdyby český nakladatel nepřehlédl páru drobností (kurzíva končící v příliš slova, obrazovky pěkleep), byla by to parádní kniha. Takhle se ale bojím, že když se knížka dostane do rukou 18letému nemyslícímu teleti s čerstvými papíry, dostane obrazovky drsnější lekci v kritickém myšlení.

Erik Dewey says

Entertaining book about how to drive, which sounds difficult. What surprised me while reading it was that I paid more attention to my driving in the car and overall it improved, mostly without intention.

There are some fun anecdotes sprinkled in throughout and, yes, some stunt driving training. Fun book.

Will Once says

This book is mostly fun, but with a bit of an identity crisis. That may not be surprising for a man who makes his name by being invisible, whether it's as the helmeted Stig or a stunt driver pretending to be Daniel Craig.

Or perhaps that should be Daniel Craig pretending to be a stunt driver?

There's some good stuff here. There is some interesting advice on car control, although it's a bit basic. There are some funny anecdotes about his time on Top Gear and other driving adventures. But then there's a weird bit at the end about stunt driving.

It all adds up to something that is a little bit confused. The book talks about safe driving - for people who will never do stunts. And then it talks about stunt driving - for people who will skip over the bits about safe driving.

As a book it isn't quite sure whether it is an autobiography, a safe driving manual, a racing manual or a stunt manual. Ben Collins is an agreeable enough author, although there are times when the writing gets rather overblown. Someone - Ben or a ghostwriter - is trying too hard to be Clarkson. But to be fair it mostly works.

With the full hardback priced at £20, I got it reduced at WH Smiths for £5. And that feels about right.

4 stars and recommended (ish).

Tom says

It's really good as a guide to driving. Plenty of things to try or think about for experienced drivers as well as newer ones. It acknowledges what established instructions and manuals say, and explains why it may be easier/quicker/safer to think differently. Great clear illustrations and it's more likely to be read coming from a race driver, or stunt driver for 007 or Top Gear, than some crusty figure of authority.

Tone and style is a bit uneven - sometimes it catches you out jumping from serious advice to sillier instructions (how to do J-turns, burnouts etc) to tall tales. Some of these make a point about the driving, but mostly they're anecdotes that will appeal to race fans or car nuts; and if you're into stories of what Jeremy Clarkson said, or what a production assistant did to a car while filming Top Gear you'll love this book.

Suzie says

Mostly about how to drive, plus some other parts interspersed about Top Gear and stunt driving. The best parts are the basic driving advice. It's more or less similar to the book I had when I learned to drive in high school, minus the parts about American insurance (it's an English book), and most of the parts about car fluids, plus a bit of personality and Scandinavian flick. Most useful to me were the parts on ABS braking (which I never learned in school) and spraying my screen to avoid fogging. Probably don't read this if you don't want to read about brakes vs. acceleration.

OxoNewbie says

Ben Collins previously known as The Stig loves to drive. I wanted to pick up a few tips and also to see what driving is like from someone who finds it a pleasure. Overall, I did find this book useful. For racing fans, there are some interesting tales about competing in famous races but it was reassuring to know that even for somebody who thrives on speed, his approach to driving on the open road is measured: anticipation, engine braking, thinking several moves ahead. The advice on observation was helpful and I did give the exercise of 'looking at my thumb first and then the background without moving my head' a go. I missed out the chapter on stunt driving as it's not something I would ever do.

3 stars.

Xander says

Great read, plenty of actual driving advice tied in with some stories of his previous job. definitely worth a read for all the driving enthusiasts out there

Exapno Mapcase says

Usually when I finish a book I donate to the local library, I'm considering donating it to the DMV or a local dealership, maybe people could pick up a few things while they wait. Ben uses his vast experience as a race and stunt driver to show what to do and when to do it, and more importantly what NOT to do, and living in an Air Force town with a bunch of flyboys zooming around I have seen a lot of the not to do side.

Free review copy.

Nick says

Terrific book, should be required reading, especially here in the States where it seems if you can fog a mirror you get a licence.

Get it, read it, apply the lessons within.

Frank says

Very fun read, and pretty informative about regular driving. Ben Collins uses anecdotes about his time with Top Gear to illustrate his points, but you definitely don't have to be a fan to enjoy this book.

Recommended for anyone who has his or her driver's license and wants to learn the stuff parents and instructors can't tell you.
