

**BATMOBILE** SCOTT SNOWDEN LOOKS AT THE LATEST INCARNATION OF THE CRIME-FIGHTER'S CAR DE CHOIX

# Holy roller, Batman!

**'A'**tomic batteries to power... turbines to speed.' These words and the thunderous noise of a jet engine meant one thing back in the 1960s - Batman and Robin were seconds away from rocketing up in the Batmobile and dishing out a serious can of kerr-pow! Now, with the dark vigilante returning to the big screen this year in *Batman Begins*, another version of his vehicle has been conceived.

The Dynamic Duo's motor first appeared in 1941 in DC comics. The car evolved through the 1960s with Adam West playing the Caped Crusader, resurfaced in the 1989 Tim Burton flick starring Michael Keaton, and evolved throughout the 1990s franchise...

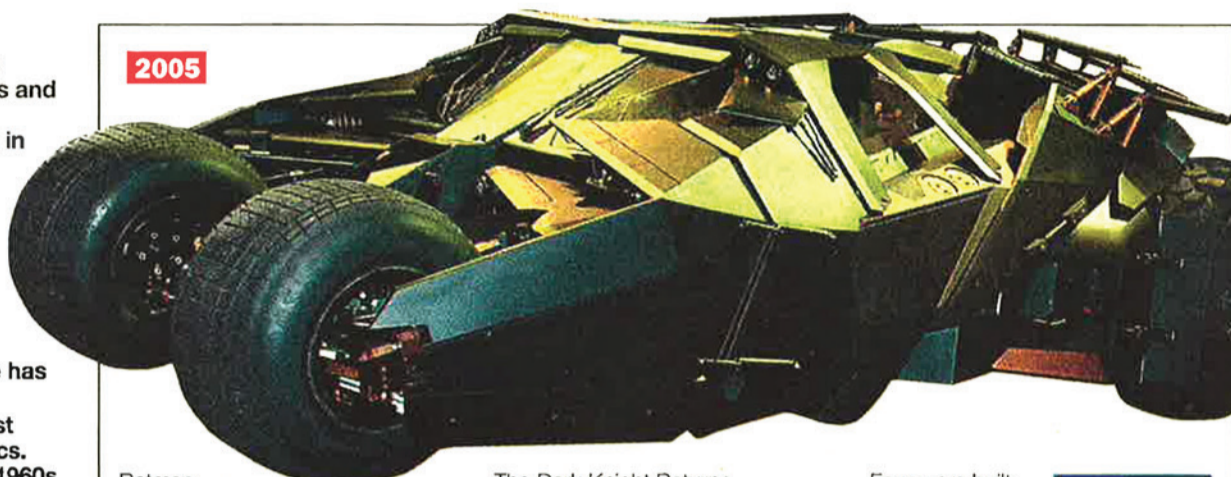
## 1940s DC Comics' Batmobile



**1960s** The now iconic '66 Batmobile is a testament to style and design from that era, created by designer George Barris. The final vehicle was constructed on the frame of a Ford Lincoln Futura, weighed three tonnes and had a nitro-injector fuel system.



## 2005



*Batman Begins*, starring Brit actor Christian Bale (pictured), opens in June. The movie is set during Bruce Wayne's first year as the Bat and the genesis of the Batmobile - and that means back to basics. The plot has it that it started as a Wayne Industries military prototype called The Tumbler, which appears to have taken its inspiration from the tank-like transportation used in Frank Miller's 1986 graphic novel



The Dark Knight Returns. This high-speed, fully functional, armour-plated urban assault vehicle measures 3m wide, 4.5m long, and weighs 2.5 tonnes. It has four 112cm Humvee tyres at the back, a jet-fuel burner and rear-mounted airbrakes. It also sports a 500bhp engine and tops out at around 300kph. The Bat-behemoth is also capable of quite spectacular stunt jumps and is equally at home driving off-road.

Four were built, at £1million each. In August last year, fans videoed the new car, during shooting, as it was being pursued by police cars through Chicago, which is doubling for Gotham City. Eyewitnesses described the sound of the Batmobile as like 'two V8 Ford Mustangs roaring with their engines side by side'. Holy horsepower high-jinks, readers! *Batman Begins* opens in the UK on June 24. [www.batmanbegins.com](http://www.batmanbegins.com)



## 1980s

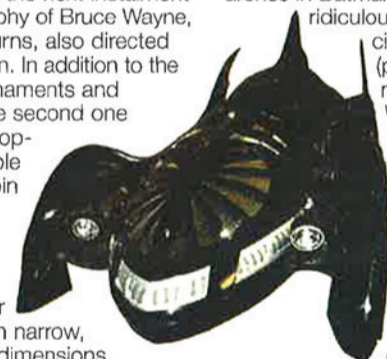
Perhaps the most spectacular interpretation of the Batmobile was in Tim Burton's 1989 film *Batman*. It was voted the No.1 coolest movie car ever in a UCI Cinemas poll last year. Designed by the late Anton Furst, the car was built by a team of 12 technicians in three months, all for a miserly £6,000. It was constructed around a lengthened Chevy Impala, with the engine lowered by 30cm to



allow for the low hoodline and had 70 coats of black pearl acrylic lacquers. Furst said: 'I wanted the Batmobile to look timeless. I didn't want a futuristic vehicle based on a pastiche 1950s car. 'We ended up with something that has brute force and forbidding power coupled with form, shape and sculpture. Something that is, frankly, quite rude.' Parts of the vehicle, including the jet intake, were culled from actual planes.

## 1990s

The design was kept to maintain conformity in the next instalment of the biography of Bruce Wayne, *Batman Returns*, also directed by Tim Burton. In addition to the standard armaments and defences, the second one featured a drop-down turntable that could spin the car 180 degrees and detachable sections that meant the car could take on narrow, torpedo-like dimensions. In the films that followed, the Batmobile's looks became more



sensational. Neon-blue sections of fuselage and over-sized wheel arches in *Batman Forever*; a ridiculous single-seat, circus-type affair (pictured) in high-on official Worst Film Ever Made *Batman & Robin*. Both were a far cry from the brutal Gothic overtones of Burton's two movies. But fear not, citizens, a return to form is imminent. A new interpretation is nearly upon us...

## COMIC BOOK TRANSPORT

### Wonder Woman's Invisible Plane:

Among the more ludicrous comic book vehicles, the Invisible Plane's thing was that it could turn, well, invisible. Just what a lady needs to deploy her magic lasso and bullet-repelling gold bracelets.



### Silver Surfer's Surfboard:

Made of unknown materials created by cosmic energy, the board is psionically linked with the Surfer's mind. It can reach 99 per cent of the speed of light - handy for getting home quick after a dodgy kebab.

### Fantastic Four's Flying Bathtub:

The original Fantasticar looked rather ridiculous but could separate into four different modules. Fansite ffpalza.com says the machine could carry '1,200lb at up to 60mph for 200 miles'. And that's fantastic how?

**Judge Dredd's Motorbike:** 'I am the law,' screams Mega City One's chief criminal catcher from the seat of his Lawmaster. Powered by a 4,000cc V8 and featuring plenty of weaponry and auto pilot, there's still inadequate storage unless you buy some panniers.

### Buster Gonad's Wheelbarrow:

So unfeasibly large are Viz character Mr Gonad's testicles that only an industrial wheelbarrow is up to the job of carting them around so he can attempt to live a normal life. Oddly, it never really seems to help Buster protect his poor plums.

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