

The day I sold my car

Looking back at my years with Smart Roadster

Willem L. Middelkoop

Feb. 13, 2020



This week I sold my car, I now no longer own one. For me, this is something of a change as over the years I owned various sports cars that were like a hobby to me. My discovery of cycling and the birth of my son changed this. But if you're looking for a reason to buy a sports car, read along!

Smart Roadster

It all began in 2010 when I got my first Smart Roadster. The Smart Roadster (model W452) is a two-door, two-seater sports car that was introduced in 2003 by Smart. It's a fun little car, based on a stretched platform of the [Smart Fortwo city coupe](#).



Smart Roadster - spice red

The Smart Roadster is powered by the Mercedes-Benz turbocharged 3-cylinder Suprex engine (60kW, 80HP), located in the rear of the car. It's a tiny engine, but so is the car, weighing around 800KG. Combined with the rear wheel drive, grippy tires and a F1 flappy pedal gearbox, this is an ideal mix for driving fun!



Mercedes-Benz 3-cylinder Suprex engine

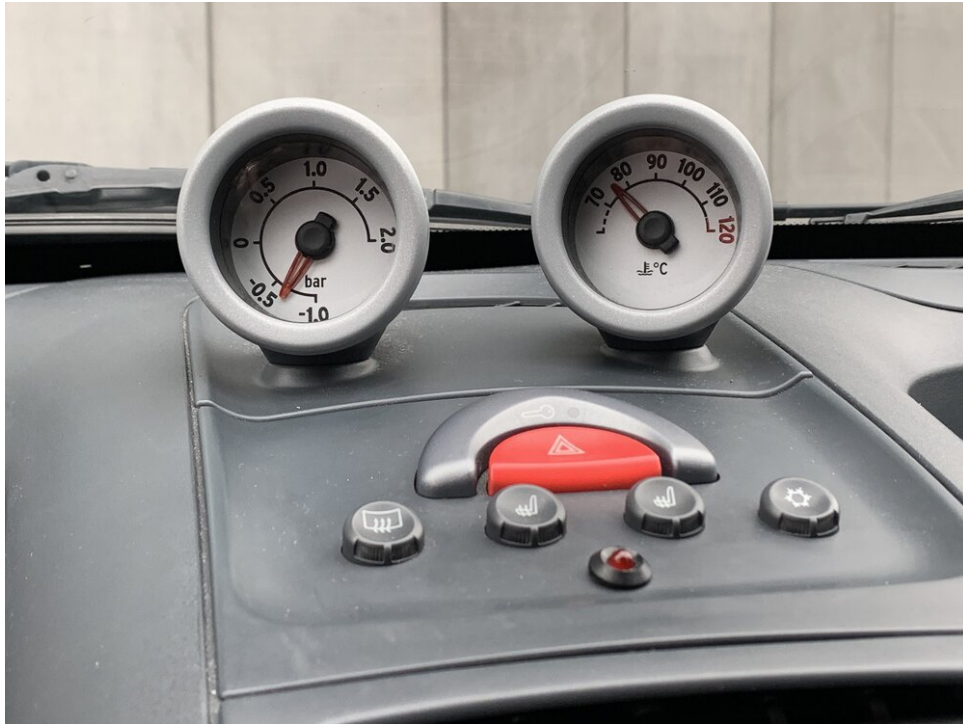


Grippy tires provide plenty of contact with the tarmac



Smart Roadster steer - notice the F1-style gear flaps

Although it's a tiny sports car, the interior is quite alright, even if you're a bit longer (like me $\pm 1,93\text{M}$). On the dashboard there are extra gauges that add to the sports car vibe.



Extra sporty gauges on the dashboard: turbo pressure and engine temperature



The car's interior is quite spacious - even if you're tall

Driving fun

The best thing you can do with a Smart Roadster is to hit the road, drive! Its driving characteristics are similar to that of a cart. You feel very close to the tarmac, this enhances the perception of speed.



Driving my Smart Roadster in the Pyrenees mountains (France)

If you find a twisty road somewhere (in southern) Europe, you'll enjoy the Smart Roadster at its best. Think of a street legal roller coaster that will keep you smiling for hours!



Twisty mountain roads - pure fun in a Roadster! (near the French/Spanish border)



Enjoying a little 'up and down' in the hilly countryside



Make sure to skip the highway, take the country roads (in Spain, near Alicante)



Open the cabrio roof and enjoy the weather, it's like playing outside for grown-ups (admit it: there is a child in all of us!)

Smart Roadsters are very practical

Contrary to popular believe, the Smart Roadster is in fact a very practical car. Over the years I have transported many different items, computers, televisions, paintings, canoes... and I even picked up a wife!



The spacious trunk is big enough for a laptop or two



With three straps and some cardboard, you can easily transport paintings of all sizes



Leave your girlfriend at home when you need to transport larger, more important stuff, like this HP DL380 Gen8 server



Who needs a boat trailer anyway?



If you use the appropriate flowers, you might even find yourself a nice bride!



The open roof doubles as an ergonomic cargo hatch



Parking garage full? Think again!



The Smart Roadster fits in a shoe box, keep it under your bed or next to your lawn mower

Saying goodbye

Times change and so do I. My discovery of cycling provides me with the feeling of freedom that is beyond that of a car. Unlike the open and twisty countryside roads in southern

Europe, the busy streets in The Netherlands are much less fun to drive these days. Traffic, speed bumps, speed limits and distracted drivers demand your constant attention, taking the fun away.



The arrival of the family car...

My wife's family car, a Dacia Duster, is surprisingly practical. I hate to admit it, but it might even be more practical than my beloved Smart Roadster. It has more doors, more seats and more place for things I didn't know one would need (with kids). It can even carry my bike!

No longer owning a car

This brought me to the point where I asked myself, do I really need to own a car? In our Western culture a car serves multiple purposes as it's both a means of transport and a status symbol.

For getting from A-to-B I can use my bike, bus, metro, train or a shared car (either from my wife, a rental car or friends). Especially in a dense urban area like the Amsterdam city region, you really don't need to own a car to get somewhere.

Status symbol

This leaves the [car as a status symbol](#). Having owned different cars over the years, I experienced firsthand what difference it makes if you own a cheap car or an expensive one.

Consider these cars I owned; imagine a person driving it. What would you think of him or her?



Opel Kadett Cabrio 1.6i Bertone



Smart Roadster - all black



Mercedes-Benz SLK55 AMG V8 5.5L

Chances are that you come up with different answers for these different cars. That's the point: the car communicates. Even if you don't care about your car's performance as status symbol, other people will. It's therefore something to consider when you buy one.

Maybe it's me getting older, but I no longer care that much about cars and status. I think it's way more valuable to be [healthy](#) and to be able to spend time in freedom with friends and [family](#).

Conclusion

If you're looking for some real genuine driving pleasure, then the Smart Roadster is an absolute fun car! Take it for a ride out in the open, enjoy the sunshine, smell the trees, hear its little engine work.

Although it's surprisingly practical, you should only get one if you really enjoy driving. There are more ways to get from A to B these days. Challenge yourself to look beyond the common thought that you should own a car!