

PRESS RELEASE



Thursday February 4th, 2016

Evans reveals new *Top Gear* Friend

Iconic American actor Matt LeBlanc has today been revealed as one of the new presenters of the upcoming and eagerly awaited return of *Top Gear* - the planet's biggest motoring entertainment show. LeBlanc's appointment marks the first time the show has ever had a non-British host in its 39-year history.

In what promises to be an explosive cocktail of car-obsessed entertainers and cultural clashes - the eagerly anticipated return of the revamped show is expected to noisily announce itself on BBC Two and TV screens everywhere this May. In Australia, *Top Gear* will air on BBC Knowledge.

The Golden Globe-winning star of the popular BBC comedy *Episodes*, LeBlanc's international appeal has never been stronger despite filming the finale of his global hit *Friends* almost 12 years ago. He's already a familiar face to *Top Gear* viewers, having been a two-time guest on the show and the fastest celebrity to date around the *Top Gear* track in its reasonably priced car. LeBlanc also presented the recent standalone spin-off *Top Gear: The Races*, where he led fans through some of the most memorable racing moments from the previous 22 series.

He joins production immediately and additional *Top Gear* cast members will be confirmed shortly.

Chris Evans said of his new *Top Gear* presenter: "*Matt's a lifelong fellow petrolhead and I'm thrilled he's joining Top Gear. Acting out our craziest car notions on screen is a dream job and I know we'll both be debating some epic road trip ideas. We can't wait to share what we've been up to on screen later this year.*"

Matt LeBlanc commented: "*As a car nut and a massive fan of Top Gear, I'm honoured and excited to be a part of this iconic show's new chapter. What a thrill!*"

Alan Tyler, the BBC's Acting Controller for Entertainment Commissioning said: "*Matt is a class act and a brilliant signing for Top Gear. He is a self-confessed car fanatic with a passion for the programme. I'm really looking forward to watching Chris and Matt bring the all new show to our audiences.*"

-ENDS-

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#TopGear

Notes To Editors:

Top Gear is a BBC in-house entertainment production for BBC Television

Top Gear will be airing on BBC Knowledge from May 2016

Biogs

MATT LEBLANC

Matt is an American actor, comedian and producer, best known for his role as Joey Tribbiani on the NBC sitcom, Friends. In 2011, LeBlanc began starring as a fictional version of himself in Episodes, a BBC Two/Showtime television series created by the Friends co-creators. He won a Golden Globe award for his work on Episodes, and was nominated for an Emmy three times for his work on Friends and four times for Episodes.

Matt holds the record for the fastest ever celebrity lap of the famous Top Gear track, having appeared as a guest in Season 18 Episode 2 (TX 5th Feb 2012) setting a still unbeaten 1m42.1sec in the Kia C'eed. Matt also reappeared on the show in S19 E4 (TX 17th Feb 2013) when he was asked to test the new Kia C'eed on the track, against the old one.

Matt's love of all things four and two wheeled will come as no surprise to Top Gear fans. Whilst on set for his guest appearance, Matt also spent as much time as he was allowed driving the McLaren 12C supercar around the Top Gear track, accompanied by The Stig.

CHRIS EVANS

Chris Evans is one of Britain's most high-profile and successful presenters. He was born in 1966, in Warrington, England. His entrepreneurial zeal emerged at an early age, when he ran the local newsagents in his home town of Warrington and set up his own Kiss-o-gram and Private Detective agencies. He started his broadcasting career at Piccadilly Radio then moved to GLR, where his infamous Round at Chris' Saturday morning show attracted a huge cult following and he later took the format to Virgin 1215.

In 1993, Chris formed his own company called Ginger Productions to formulate a brand new variety show for Saturday nights: Don't Forget Your Toothbrush. Devised, written and performed by Chris, the ratings peaked at a combined 6 million viewers. He revitalised BBC



Radio 1 with his Radio 1 Breakfast Show before bowing out to concentrate on his unique end-of-the-week TV show on Channel 4, TFI Friday. TFI ran for 5 years, before finishing on 22 December 2000 with a show hosted by Elton John.

In 2010 he took over BBC Radio 2's Breakfast Show following the retirement of Irish-born broadcasting legend Sir Terry Wogan. His show is currently the UK's most listened to – with over 10 million listeners tuning in each week.