

CLASSIC DRIVER

The Bertone-styled Innocenti De Tomaso is the Mini's raunchy Italian cousin

Lead

Thought you'd seen every incarnation of the iconic Mini? Think Again! This Innocenti Mini De Tomaso coming up for auction at Oldtimer Galerie Toffen's sale on October 14th is the Anglo-Italian collab you never knew you needed.



Working as an automotive journalist, it's all too easy to fall into the trap of thinking you know all there is to know about cars. That is until a delightful little oddball like this [1978 Innocenti Mini De Tomaso](#) comes along to remind you that the Dunning-Kruger effect doesn't discriminate based on profession. If, like myself, the Innocenti brand doesn't ring a bell for you, here's an extremely condensed history.



Founded in 1947, Innocenti began by producing scooters in Milan, and quickly graduated to building economy cars in 1961. British Motor Corporation (BMC) caught wind, and began handing licenses to Innocenti to produce Italian counterparts to the Mini, Allegro, and Austin-Healey. Business was booming, and by the early 1970s Innocenti was second only to Fiat in domestic sales. BMC was impressed, buying the company outright in 1972, shortly before going bust three years later, followed by a takeover by the British government. Prime Minister Wilson didn't take to the orphaned Italian marque, but luckily for Innocenti, Alejandro De Tomaso was waiting with open arms and an open wallet.



Production of Mini 90 and 120 models resumed in 1974, but Mr. De Tomaso wanted something a little more piccante. The 1976 Turin Motor Show was the stage for the unveiling of their new hot hatch, boasting Bertone styling — including more aggressive black plastic bumpers and even a bonnet scoop — and the 1.3-litre inline four cylinder from the Mini 120 mated to a four speed manual gearbox. 1978 saw a power bump to a volatile 74 rampant horses, and this lovely Innocenti you see here is one such car.



Unbelievably, this Swiss-delivered example has only had two owners. The first cherished his pocket rocket until 1992, when it was parked until February of this year. The second and most recent owner carefully recommissioned the little car, and now equipped with a fresh set of rubber, it's ready to put a massive smile on your face as you blast along your favourite back road. If you're as smitten as we are with this Innocenti, then be sure to mark [Oldtimer Galerie Toffen's Classic Cars & Motorcycles sale on October 14th](#) in your calendar!

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