

CLASSIC DRIVER

Designed by Gandini, the Qvale Mangusta took inspiration from the unlikeliest rival

Lead

Looking like a mash-up between almost every sports car of the early 2000s, this incredibly rare Green Over Tan Qvale Mangusta had the Classic Driver office staring in amazement. Now Kaeve Cars have it ready for its next owner...



Over the decades, we've seen our fair share of Italian designed masterpieces that feature American muscle under the bonnet. Icons from Bizzarrini and ISO were all synonymous with combining the elegance and passion from Italy with the brute force of American engines, but De Tomaso are perhaps the brand most famous for this trans-Atlantic partnership. And it is De Tomaso we have to thank for this Qvale Mangusta, a car that had all the hallmarks of a great driver's sports car, and one that took inspiration from many of its rivals from Great Britain.

The Mangusta name isn't a new one for De Tomaso, used between 1967 and 1971 on the model that preceded the Pantera. In fact, during the Qvale's early years, it was initially developed from the De Tomaso Biguá concept car, which first made its appearance at the 1996 Geneva Motor Show. By the time orders were trickling in, and the car started production, it was promptly renamed the De Tomaso Mangusta, marking a symbolic return of the name, only for De Tomaso to eventually disassociate themselves from the project, leaving all produced cars to carry the Qvale badging instead.



During its development phase around the years of 1993 and 1994, Maserati's technical director Giordano Casarini frequented the United Kingdom while attending business meetings, and during one of the more memorable visits he happened to stumble upon the latest offering from TVR. The British sports car's smooth lines and popularity amongst the British public impressed Casarini, especially when he considered just how small of an outfit TVR were in comparison to the likes of Maserati and Ferrari.

It was that brief encounter with TVR, as well as Alejandro de Tomaso expressing his desire to expand the De Tomaso brand to Casarini, that helped the idea of an Italian TVR to take shape, and Casarini was swiftly taken from Maserati to work solely on this exciting new project. Just like TVR, this new De Tomaso was to utilise an existing engine, and more importantly, one that was both relatively inexpensive to buy and simple enough to maintain. Ford were the masters of the V8, and after some negotiations, Casarini had secured his gearbox and engine, a mighty 4.6-litre V8. Now all he needed was a designer who could bring his drop-top to life.



Thankfully, the De Tomaso name carried some weight during this time, and Marcello Gandini was soon in Modena to discuss the job of styling the new De Tomaso project. Cementing the idea of an Italian TVR even further, Gandini was not so subtly driven around in a TVR Griffith, allowing him to truly understand the project's inspiration.

After a number of financial issues surrounding the cars launch, the Qvale family, a leading importer of Maserati in the US, agreed to entirely fund the development, only under the agreement that the final product would be sold under the De Tomaso brand, and named the De Tomaso Mangusta. Despite this, the agreement between De Tomaso and Qvale broke down over licensing and distribution issues, and the car was launched as the Qvale Mangusta.

While the story is fascinating, in the end a mere 284 examples were produced, making this Deep Green over Tan leather example a real rarity on the road. Now looking for its next custodian, this Qvale Mangusta is perfect for any collector or enthusiast looking for a wonderful sounding sports car that is certain to turn heads.

[VIEW CAR](#)

Gallery

