

CLASSIC DRIVER

Renault drop the hottest electric restomod of 2024 with the R17 x Ora ĭto

Lead

We've seen restomodded 911s, Land Rovers, Lancia, and now, Renault have given us their spin on a classic-gone-modern. Unveiled at the Maison5 in Paris, the R17 electric restomod x Ora ĭto is a real head-turner...



While we all look to brands like Porsche, Land Rover and BMW to bring us the perfect blend of modern technology with a sprinkle of heritage gold dust, giving these often bulky, over-powered machines a mere hint of the character their predecessors once had, there is one brand that is often overlooked, and arguably does it better than anyone right now. Renault have been on a roll with reviving their icons, turning their loveable city car the R5 into a slick EV for the everyday driver looking for bags of charm and character, and with their sportier arm, Alpine, and the much-loved A110 series.



Now, they have done it again with the freshly launched R17 electric restomod x Ora ĭto, a sculptural retake on the original model launched in 1971, and we are a little bit in love. Based on the monocoque structure of the original, the R17 electric has the same cabin, doors, windows, glazing, seals and underbody, all of which given a modern touch,

with its body now 17cm wider to enhance roadholding, with boxy wheels arches for an almost Group B rally specification look.



Using the ‘same but different’ mentality, the original 17 had a plucky engine that had enough performance in the streets and on the open road, which has now been swapped for an all-electric 270 hp powertrain, nestled into the rear. The carbon fibre chassis features flush lines, designed to keep the weight down to just 1.4 tonnes and retain the car’s sleek stature.

The key ingredient here, and one that Renault has nailed with their modern interpretations of their icons, is the retention of distinctive design features of the Renault brand, but modernised for the everyday driver to enjoy. The R17’s interior is a fine example of this, keeping its wide, figure-hugging seats, but modernised with various textures like merino wool and lightweight wool bouclé. As a contemporary vehicle, R17 electric restomod x Ora Ito features a central screen with the current Renault graphic environment and four small geometric screens behind the steering wheel, inspired by the dials of the original model.



The result is a striking, yet somehow charming and familiar looking coupé that can be used to navigate tricky city back streets, as well as comfortably conquer long motorway journeys. Of all the impressive interpretations and remodels we’ve seen this year; Renault have once again knocked it out of the park with this one! If you’re desperate to see it in person, you’re in luck. The prototype will be presented at the Chantilly Arts & Elegant Richard Mille competition from 12 to 15 September, before being exhibited on the Renault stand at the Paris Motor Show from 14 to 20 October.

Gallery

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