

CLASSIC DRIVER

Would you choose this French F40 over the real deal?

Lead
This road-converted Venturi 400 Trophy was famously known as the French F40, but would you choose this rare supercar over a genuine prancing horse?



Boutique sportscar manufacturers from the 1980s and 1990s typically evoke memories of fibreglass bodies, huge panel gaps, and slightly distressing handling characteristics, but there was one firm that successfully competed on the world stage. Of course, we're talking about [Venturi](#), founded in Monaco in 1984 by Claude Poiraud and Gérard Godfroy. Their goal was to build a sports car that could take on the likes of Ferrari, Porsche, and Aston Martin, and after a few less than successful attempts, they debuted the 400 Trophy, a sports car destined to star in their own single-make championship.





Eventually, the 400 Trophy would be succeeded by the 400 GT — a car that successfully competed in the GT class against Porsche's 3.8-litre RSRs, winning several BPR International endurance races. However, the example we'll be examining today is one of the 72 400 Trophies ever made, and as you'll discover it is certainly deserving of its 'French F40' nickname.

Rather than fibreglass, the 400 Trophy's body is made of carbon composite, resulting in a curb weight of just 1,200 kilos. Mounted behind the cockpit, you'll find a brutish 3.0-litre twin-turbocharged V6 capable of sending 407 horsepower to rear wheels via a 5-speed Sadev straight-cut gearbox. Impressively for a car built in 1993, it even featured carbon ceramic brakes, further adding to its hard-as-nails racing credentials.



This example competed in two seasons of Venturi's single make series before returning to the factory for a road conversion along with just nine other cars. Again, the attention to detail was impressive for such a small company, with this 400 Trophy receiving road-spec pop-up headlights along with the 400 GT's bonnet and bumper. The doors were replaced and fitted with electric windows, while a slightly different road-spec rear clamshell was also added alongside magnificent five-spoke OZ Magnesio wheels. The interior was upgraded with luxuries including air conditioning and Recaro SPG bucket seats, but notably this is one of just two cars to retain its rollcage. Now freshly serviced and ready to turn heads, would you pick this Venturi over a real Ferrari F40?

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