

CLASSIC DRIVER

5 collector cars to put into your garage this week

Lead

We're back for a brand-new year, so here's a hand-picked selection of the cars that caught our eye while we dust off the final mince pies and drops of brandy. Like always, there's something for every driver in this lineup!



599-Piece Orchestra

Sure, we're all fans of the 360 CS, and some of us are warming to its replacement, the 430 Scuderia, but with Ferrari's 599, and in particular the savage GTO variant, it was love at first sight for just about anyone who was lucky enough to lay eyes on it in 2010.

Gran Turismo Omologato was far more than just a cool sounding name, as this hopped-up 599 took many components from the track-only 599XX, including its gearbox and ear-splitting exhaust system, which allowed the naturally aspirated V12 to sing louder than ever before. A mere 599 examples of the GTO exist, many of which headed straight into the clutches of collectors as certified future classics, but this Argento Nürburgring example has been enjoyed during its 15 years on the road, racking up 23,300 kilometres on the clock. So if you're looking for perhaps the ultimate modern-day interpretation of what it means to drive a Ferrari, look no further!

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Dakar Defender

With the Dakar rally now in full swing, with hundreds of drivers, navigators and teams all battling the harshest terrain, relentless weather and some of the best competition on both two and four wheels, it's easy to get swept up in the excitement of this iconic adventure. This excitement, coupled with the recent news that Land Rover will enter the 2026 event as an official team with three Defenders, has us truly head-over-heels for this unique machine.

If you're itching for an expedition of your own, we've discovered the ideal vehicle, and one that even competed in the 2018 edition of the Dakar Rally. A total of 85,000 euros worth of modifications have been added to this Landy, including LED lights, a winch, reinforced roll cage, GPS systems for driver and co-driver, onboard water tanks and much, much more!

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The Unknown Homologation Hero

Sure, we're all familiar with Japan's love for homologation specials, especially those from the 1990s. Whether you were in camp Subaru or Mitsubishi, you could be sure the homologated variations of the Impreza and Lancer Evolution would be some of the best road cars the brands had on sale, being equally at home when they tackled the dirt, too. Before those, though, Mazda showed the world they could take their plucky 323 Hatchback and crank it up to 11, creating the GTX Turbo 4WD.

This rarer-than-rare hot hatch takes on a new level of scarcity when you delve into its history file, which reveals its first owner was the women's World Rally Champion, Minna Sillankorva. She was a member of the rally team of Mazda importer Haka-Auto Oy, and her rally car at that time was a Mazda RX-7 Gr.B and later a 323 4wd Turbo. This very example, therefore, was her daily driver, and a car she used as both a rally recce car and a fast rally service vehicle, how cool is that? Now fully restored to better-than-new condition, this unique piece of homologation history is worthy of being parked alongside other titans of the homologation special world!

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Drop-top Delight

If you hadn't noticed, here at Classic Driver we're rather large fans of the cars that rolled out of Newport Pagnell during the 1980s. While many stayed in Britain, others ventured further afield and were created specifically for the US-market, just like this V8 Volante finished in a stunning shade known as Jubilee Silver.

This Series 4 example is a true rarity, being one of the only 192 ever produced for the US-market, and was treated to a full cosmetic restoration completed in 2019 in Italy, allowing the next lucky owner to enjoy this elegant drop-top to the fullest for years to come!

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The UFO

We once saw a navy blue Isdera Imperator elegantly gliding into a mostly empty car park high up in the Swiss mountains, firmly leaving our jaws dropped to the floor, and we're not certain we've ever recovered from such an impromptu spot. This illusive sports car was originally built to pay homage to Mercedes-Benz 300SL Gullwing and is believed to be one of just 13 examples ever produced, of which a mere five were Series 2 variants like this. Originally delivered new to Japan in unique left-hand-drive configuration, later in its life the car was re-registered in the UK, before arriving in Germany where it received a partial restoration.

Built by former Porsche designer Eberhard Schulz, the Isdera Imperator 108i Series 2 is powered by Mercedes-Benz's mighty M 117 5.0L 32-valve V8 engine, sent to a 5-speed manual gearbox. Low production, coach built vehicles such as this always represent a unique opportunity to acquire something that the world has seen so rarely. Starting from a humble concept car that later received a seal of approval from Mercedes-Benz, the Isdera is a true motoring unicorn!

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