

CLASSIC DRIVER

Ronnie Kessel's Prodrive P25 restomod is a tribute to his father's rally-winning Subaru Impreza

Lead

For Ronnie Kessel, the Prodrive P25 isn't just a jaw-dropping restomod, it's a stunning homage to the Subaru Impreza WRC his father Loris Kessel successfully competed in.



In 2025, the automotive landscape is filled with more restomods than ever, but there are still a few standouts, including Prodrive's reborn [Subaru Impreza](#): the P25. Considering Prodrive acted as Subaru's works team back when the likes of Colin McRae was tearing up rally stages, there's no better outfit to produce a modern-day reinterpretation of this rally icon, but The Flying Scotsman wasn't the only man to compete in a Subaru at the time. Loris Kessel, Ronnie Kessel's father and a racing legend in his own right, successfully competed in a Subaru Impreza WRC car himself, so when Prodrive announced a limited run of 25 examples of the P25 would be produced, Ronnie was at the front of the line. We sat down to chat with him about his beauty in World Rally Blue Mica.



Ronnie, thanks so much for sharing your Prodrive P25 with us! Your father Loris Kessel was a supremely talented driver who competed in everything from F1 to Le Mans. Can you explain his connection to Subaru for our readers?

My father was a self-made driver, as was often the case in his era. At the age of 18, his mother gave him an old Alfaetta which he modified for his first hillclimbs. Many people identify him as a track driver because of his F1 background, but his very first discipline was rally, given our mountainous region and the affordable nature of it. From the 1990s onwards, he also completed his racing career by achieving his dream of racing prototypes and finishing 7th overall at the 24 Hours of Le Mans (1st among private teams) with the Porsche 962. From that point forward, the three disciplines — rally, GT, and endurance — continued to intertwine, and in the year 2001, he won the Rally of Ticino in a

Subaru Impreza WRC, which was then one of the most coveted stages of the Swiss championship.



It's amazing what he achieved both on track and the rally stages. You yourself are quite the accomplished racing driver — what appeals to you about rally in particular?

Although my father was a great rally enthusiast, he always tried to keep me focused on track racing since our team, Kessel Racing, was founded in the late 1990s. Unlike my father, I developed my racing career solely in the GT world, needing to balance passion and work. This has certainly left me with a yearning for rally—a discipline that fascinates me deeply. These drivers are truly extraordinary.



Your Prodrive P25 is the spiritual successor to the WRC Subaru your father successfully raced in - how special is it to drive this car on the road and how does it compare to the car your father raced in?

When Prodrive announced this limited series of 25 cars dedicated to the golden years of the Subaru Impreza, my reaction was instantaneous. In a matter of seconds, I saw flashes of my father on the roof of the car with a trophy and champagne, myself as a child doing reconnaissances with him and my sister, reading the notes for him, and the desire to "dance" with a true queen of the snow through our mountain hairpin turns. I picked up the phone, called England, and reserved chassis #11, my lucky number.



Beyond the emotional connection, what drew you to the P25 over the many other amazing restomods on the market?

I want to be completely honest with you. I'm not a huge fan of restomods. I greatly respect those who've succeeded in this field, but I prefer classic cars in their original "juice", as they were conceived as road cars or prepared as rally cars back then. The P25 finds itself in the middle: it's the same manufacturer and multiple-time world champion winner that wanted to pay homage to this exceptional car by bringing it back to shine 25 years after its first victory—with some modern updates, of course, but maintaining all its distinctive traits. In other words, David Richards tried to outdo himself... and succeeded!



You've been using the car to drive around St. Moritz, how does it behave on the road and do you have any adventures planned with the car in the future?

This car has three personalities: road, sport, and race. I am a speed enthusiast on track and always advocate for respecting road regulations. This is a car to enjoy as it glides from one curve to another; among its 6 gears, you mainly use the first three to let yourself be carried from turn to turn. I love it; it's very well-balanced, and the engine sound is better than any playlist. I use it to travel from home to the mountains, to go skiing, and to go out to dinner with friends in the evening. Every time it catches the eye of a fellow car enthusiast on the road, this little blue Japanese beauty never fails to bring a smile to their face!

Photos by Fabrizio d'Aloisio

Gallery

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