

CLASSIC DRIVER

Renault's forgotten fast hatchback is now a certified hot commodity

Lead

Arguably one of the rarest hot hatches to discover from the 1990s, this Renault R19 1.8 16S is the true definition of simplicity and cheap thrills. Available from our friends at L'Art de L'Automobile, this pristine example is a certified future classic!



Tucked away in the shadow of Renault's rally-bred legends and fire-breathing turbo terrors, [the Renault 19 16S](#) remains one of the marque's best-kept secrets. It's discreet styling might not turn heads like a Clio Williams or the boxy R5 Turbo, and despite having four doors and enough space for the family, this hot hatch is a purist's delight for those in the know.



Unlike the R19's aforementioned siblings, this sporty hatch has slipped somewhat under the radar and is only now starting to reclaim its rightful place among the French brand's pre-millennium triumphs. Finding one, in any condition is an arduous task, with a reported 10 examples left on UK roads, and likely not many more seen hurtling down French backroads, making this example from L'Art de L'Automobile the one to snap up.

Travelling just under 18,300 kilometres from new in 1991, this example is finished in its original Iceberg Grey Metallic 640 paint, the car was first delivered to Germany, into the excited hands of a woman born in 1929, where the car subsequently entered the private collections of two Renault dealerships after her passing. If there was ever a lady we would have loved to join our [The Classic Drivers series](#), it would have been her!



Powered by the punchy 1.8-litre F7P engine, it adopted a 16-valve cylinder head, marking the abandonment of the turbocharged engine in favour of a more reliable and economical multi-valve naturally aspirated engine. Despite making 137 horsepower, a figure some would laugh at by today's standards, this free-revving engine could be used to its fullest, making for a truly unforgettable driving experience when paired with the suitable road, preferably with plenty of cambered turns! Despite being derived from the simplistic 19, the sportier examples are distinguished by specific aesthetic elements such as sportier bumpers, side skirts, and a rear spoiler, as well as sportier seats and red stitching throughout.



We're big fans of Renaults here at Classic Driver, be it their latest offerings which perfectly blend their icons with innovative technology, or the models that made them special such as hot hatches like this one. While many looking to relive their childhood dreams of owning that Oak Green Volkswagen Golf Mk2 GTI or Peugeot 205 GTI, our money would be put on this truly unique piece of French motoring history!

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