

CLASSIC DRIVER

Arriving in style: 5 racing transporters that could outshine their cargo

Lead

They're a staple of the paddock, a hub of activity and essential to a team's weekend. Nope, we're not talking about the cars, but the great transporters that carried them. Abundant in charm and nostalgia, over the years they've come to epitomise their respective eras. Here are our five favourites...

The Mercedes 0317 'Porsche-Gulf' transporter



Just three of these Mercedes 0317s were built as [Porsche](#) transporters (just two of which still exist today), and the [famous Gulf-Wyer team](#) was the lucky recipient of one, resplendent in its iconic powder blue and marigold livery and seemingly vast enough for a travelling circus. Of course, the team was something of a travelling circus and when your cargo includes a Porsche 917, *the* most dominant car of the moment, only the best will do. The pair has been reunited as part of the [ROFGO Collection](#), and was taken back to La Sarthe earlier this year for the [Le Mans Classic](#), proving to be one of the more enduring images from the weekend.

The Mercedes-Benz 'Blue Wonder'



We have to wonder whether the [Mercedes-Benz](#) prototype department took racing manager Alfred Neubauer's request for a fast racing-car carrier in order to transport urgent loads a little too seriously. The 6.75-metre long, two-metre wide result – based on lengthened 300 S underpinnings, powered by the 300 SL's engine and utilising body parts from the 180 saloon – was, without doubt, the fastest truck in the world. Just imagine seeing this on the road in 1954, complete with Fangio's W196 on its back. Nope, we can't either!

The Ecurie Ecosse transporter



Perhaps the most enduring of all the racing transporters, this coach-built Commer-based contraption was dreamt up following Ecurie Ecosse's second Le Mans victory, as a suitable way of transporting the Scottish team's cars from race to race. A regular focal point at the Goodwood Revival (where many awestruck onlookers probably once owned the famous 1960s Corgi model), we can't help feeling that without its precious Flag Blue Metallic cargo, it looks a little stark. That's nothing a [Jaguar D-type](#) can't fix, though...

The Volkswagen Bulli Porsche transporter



Six of these Volkswagen Bulli pick-ups were ordered by [Porsche](#) in 1964 for its new Formula V cars, which were marketed as the perfect way to start the careers of young racing drivers in Europe. They were adapted with a flatbed to carry the petite single-seaters, and this one's been fitted with a Porsche 914 engine tuned to 200HP in order to deal with the extra weight. This is a rare case whereby the transporter is probably quicker than the racing car it carries, but it's best not to dwell on that. Just take a moment to drink in the details of this terrific twosome.

The Fiat ‘Bartoletti’ transporters



[Shelby](#) and [Ferrari](#) may have been fighting tooth and nail on the track in the early 1960s, but off it they shared something in common: the machines they used to transport their cars around. A popular choice among teams including [Maserati](#) and Lotus, Bartoletti’s Fiat-based haulers are now almost as desirable as the cars they carried, such is the level of craftsmanship and the beautiful, yet exceptionally functional design. Ah, time to take off those rose-tinted glasses.

Gallery

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