

CLASSIC DRIVER

Palm-find: Lost Mercedes Gullwing found under banana tree in Cuba

Lead

Piotr Degler was so intrigued by the rumour of a Mercedes-Benz 300SL 'Gullwing' abandoned in Cuba that he set about finding it himself. After weeks of unsuccessful searching, he was ready to accept it was a mere myth – until he caught a glimpse of something silver under a tree...

Automotive photographer Degler roamed the Caribbean island to find the subjects for his [2015 calendar Carros de Cuba](#), reasoning that there was nowhere else on earth with a streetscape unchanged since the 1950s, the result of a decades-long ban on importing new cars. With the government recently relaxing this rule, it seemed the ideal time for Degler to capture the island's beautiful automotive timewarp – especially once he'd heard rumours that a [Mercedes 300SL 'Gullwing'](#) was lying abandoned somewhere on the 42,000-square-mile island.

Hidden treasure en route



For a solid month, Degler roved from east to west, travelling 3,000km by car and taking 300,000 footsteps. He asked every inhabitant he came across whether they knew where the silver car was, or even if they'd heard the same rumour. No luck. With his hopes fading by the day, Piotr had all but given up – but then there it was, with a banana tree making a futile attempt to shelter its carcass. "I found many hidden treasures on my travels across Cuba – a Hispano-Suiza being one – but the Gullwing eluded me until a few days before my planned departure," Piotr told Classic Driver. "When I first found it, I spent the whole day taking pictures, but then I realised a night shoot might be more appropriate. Finding the car was an indescribable experience." Well, they always say you find love when you give up looking.

The 12 best from 25,000

Degler's Cuban treasure is now being showcased in his 2015 calendar, along with 11 others he found along the way; the 12 chosen images were selected from no fewer than 25,000 taken during the trip. It's available in three versions, with the Special Edition housed in a rusty metal frame. Further information can be found at deglerstudio.com.



Photos: Piotr Degler (www.facebook.com/deglercalendar)

Gallery

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