

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Stir up your inner 12-year-old with the De Tomaso Mangusta](#)

Lead

Rare, exotic, downright scary - the De Tomaso Mangusta's memory might have been left in the Pantera's smoky wake, but purists and discerning collectors alike will attest that the first true De Tomaso supercar is the pick of the bunch...

If at first you don't succeed...



The Mangusta's roots belong in the humble Vallelunga, a mid-engined, four-cylinder sports car introduced by Alejandro de Tomaso in 1963. Unfortunately it never took off commercially but, undeterred, [De Tomaso](#) had another go, retaining the midship layout and backbone chassis, but instead opting for a brutish Ford V8. Cloaked in a new - and brilliantly proportioned - Italian body, designed by Giorgetto Giugiaro for Ghia (of which De Tomaso had become president), it was christened the Mangusta, or 'mongoose' - supposedly the only animal unafraid of a cobra. High sights, then.

Chassis flex was held as the Mangusta's most serious pitfall and, when combined with a 32:68 weight distribution, it led to its notoriously unwieldy handling. However, find a properly set up, unmolested example and your efforts will be rewarded (though naturally, we wouldn't take any liberties). Rust-prone, impossibly low and rather cramped inside, the Mangusta's not for everyone. But quirks aside, there are few other cars that can stir up your inner 12-year-old quite as much - just look at that split rear clamshell!

Survival rate



Unlike many other performance cars of the day, U.S. legislation spared the Mangusta any compulsory extra impact protection, meaning that the elegant '70s shape remained intact worldwide. Around 400 Mangustas were built between 1967 and 1972, and it's estimated that some 250 remain on the roads today, making them a very rare sight indeed. As is the case with almost all collectable classics, provenance is everything when it comes to these cars. Boasting its original paintwork, stickers, upholstery and engine, [this Mangusta](#) - set to go under the gavel at [RM Auctions' Paris sale on 4 February](#) - could be just the ticket. And trust us, you'll be the talk of whichever event you rock up at, regardless of the number of Panteras present.

Gallery

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