

CLASSIC DRIVER

[This was Mille Miglia 2015 - relive it in 135 breathtaking images](#)

Lead

At the annual tribute to the legendary Mille Miglia, nothing, it seems, is impossible. The police escort renders red lights irrelevant, and half of Italy turns out to cheer on gorgeous classics. Classic Driver experienced the magnificent 1,000-mile road race first-hand...



Despite its somewhat tamer (and more commercial) modern form, the Mille Miglia remains legendary in the classic car scene. Car enthusiasts from around the world dream about it, whether for the quality of the cars, or for the incredible pace maintained along the route. When you do it for the first time, it's a real eye-opener - especially during the few first kilometers.



At first, you're surprised by the manner in which the Italians conduct the event: firstly, the police are everywhere to close the road on the convoy's behalf, so it can briskly pass through the landscape - whether that be a cityscape, countryside, through tunnels or across mountains. So, while you must respect every single road rule in France during the [Tour Auto](#), you can pretty much ignore them in Italy for the Mille Miglia. The police almost encourage you to blast through the red lights, and to drive through small villages at triple-digit speeds. It's simply incredible.





You could describe the modern Mille Miglia as a cross between the Le Mans Classic – for the diversity and quality of the cars, from the 1920s until 1957 – and the Tour Auto, for the wonderful roads taken by the participants. You start the morning on the coastline in Rimini, spend the afternoon weaving through mountain passes at an altitude of 1,400m, and are speeding towards the centre of Rome at night. It only lasts three and a half days – however, due to the brisk pace, days pass very (very) quickly, and no sooner have you left Brescia on Thursday afternoon, you’re already back in the city on Sunday. You really feel like you were only gone for a few hours. Racing days are very long, the nights very short – but lack of sleep is part of the Mille Miglia magic. Night racing on small Italian roads is inimitable, an experience no man or woman could ever forget.



The Mille Miglia is something of a mecca for the rarest, most valuable historic racing cars; the crème de la crème. From the petite, very Italian ‘Etceterinis’ that only the Italians recognise, to the well-known heavyweights of historic racing, it’s difficult to know where to look. High-profile entries include [Jaguar C-types](#) and [D-types](#), [Mercedes-Benz 300 SLs](#) (20 of them!), SSKs and a 300 SLR, Arnolt-Bristols, [Bugattis](#), a [Bentley 4.5 Litre](#), numerous [Ferraris](#) (including [250 TRs](#) and 500 TRs), [Siatas](#), [Aston Martins](#) and more... that’s the marvel of the Mille Miglia.



Before you know it, you’re back in Brescia to observe the cars crossing the finish line, and it’s all over. But you’ll only have to wait one more week to enjoy this type of Italian extravagance again, albeit at a slightly more sedate pace. See you at Villa d’Este.

Photos by Rémi Dargegen for Classic Driver © 2015

Gallery

Source URL: <https://www.classicdriver.com/en/article/cars/was-mille-miglia-2015-relive-it-135-breathtaking-images>
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