

CLASSIC DRIVER

[10 affordable classic cars to buy before it's too late](#)

Lead

They say you get what you pay for, but these undervalued classics tend to disagree. While the prices of these choices vary, due to a few design classics, each can be yours for less than 50,000 euros...

As the classic car world is continuously surrounded by headlines of record prices, astonishing investment returns, and multi-million euro collections encased in glass garages beneath 20-bedroom mansions, it's hard to believe there is anything still affordable left out there. Setting out to dispel this belief, we have followed our hearts, along with our heads, to select 10 currently affordable classics, most of which are unlikely to remain this way for much longer.

TVR Chimaera



There is a reason [the Chimaera](#) was the best-selling TVR - not only was it a more spacious, civilised, long-distance cruiser that weighed next to nothing, it also retained TVR's trademark 'I just might kill you' attitude. An excellent, well-sorted example will give you far less headaches than the jealous naysayers will have you believe and, arguably, the most smiles per mile of any car on this list.

Peugeot 205 GTI



Despite what contemporary publications have written over the years, there were those who ranked [the 205 GTI](#) above the Volkswagen Golf GTI when launched. Unlike the Golf, even the most exemplary 205s can be acquired reasonably and are a welcome reminder of the heyday of the hot hatch, before they became bloated, automatic, and sensible. The torquey 1.9 engine is favoured, but whichever you choose, be wary of terminal oversteer.

Mercedes-Benz SL R129



While the Pagoda has been on collectors' radars for years, and now the later R107 is gaining a following for its en vogue boxy 1970s aesthetic, [the R129](#) still remains thoroughly affordable. Produced from 1989 to 2001, there are myriad specifications to choose from, and you needn't own the infamous Zonda-engined SL73 AMG model to enjoy one of these rock-solid cruisers. As with all 1980s and 1990s Mercedes, the real killer is rust, so make sure to always check the wings before making any quick decisions.

Audi TT



Arguably at the lowest level of the devilish depreciation curve, [first series TTs](#) are currently outrageously cheap. While the design has aged gracefully, expect bodywork and mechanics to have not, with previous owners likely to have used them somewhat enthusiastically (especially 3.2 V6 Quattro models). If you value service history and worry less about mileage, you're sure to enjoy this future design classic for mere pocket change.

Maserati 3200



Complete with the must-have 'boomerang' taillights, manual gearbox option, and bi-turbo V8, [the 3200 GT](#) is from an era that manufacturers are trying hard to replicate now, when digital and analogue were in perfect harmony. As with any Italian sports car of the late 1990s, don't expect the finest interior ergonomics or highest-quality equipment, but also don't expect to care after hearing the exhaust note.

Jaguar XJ-S



Ageing impressively, the Big Cat renaissance is in full force, with demand consistently rising for [these capable grand tourers](#) — their opulent interior, capacious boot, and rakish style is no longer going unnoticed. Of course, the V12 is the engine to go for, preferably a pre-HE (high efficiency) model, with the smooth power delivery and effortless torque more than making up for the time spent in the petrol station...

Volvo P1800



The gorgeous Frua body of [the P1800](#) looks far too elegant to be included in a list of affordable classics, but at the moment, it is just that. While the solid Swedish mechanicals have a long life span if well maintained, the Italian bodywork is not quite as solid, with rust being the key issue for these svelte Swedes.

Saab 900 Turbo



Turning just as many heads now as it did when new, [the 900 Turbo](#) is a truly usable 1980s icon. Engines will run to 200,000 miles, and their aviation-grade build quality has gained a small cult following. The T16 Aero model is most sought after, but any of these boxy beasts will give you your fix of turbo boost.

BMW 850



As a grand tourer, [the sleek shark-nosed 8 Series](#) was a technological tour de force when launched, and with prices rising over recent years, one should think fast about picking up an example. The 850 CSI offers the most compelling package, with its larger 5.6-litre V12 and a manual gearbox... unless, of course, you can find the holy grail Alpina version.

Alfa Romeo GTV/ GT Junior



Following a steep rise in interest, prices are starting to increase for [these Italian coupes](#). There are a multitude of models available, all offering captivating driving characteristics, usability, and true Italian flair. Collector favourites include early 'step-front' models and larger engined [GTV](#) versions, but with an exceptional ease of upgrading and plenty of specialists worldwide, owners also often choose to build their ideal Giulia. Finding a solid base is key, and it's even harder to find an unmolested example.

Gallery

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