

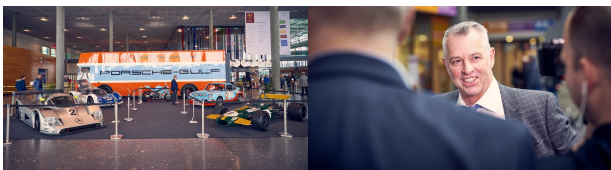
CLASSIC DRIVER

[A night at the museum with the glorious ROFGO Gulf Racing collection](#)

Lead

To spend a night alone with the most evocative assembly of historic racing cars in the world is a dream-like opportunity for any motorsport enthusiast. Imagine the photographer Frederik Dulay's delight, then, when the Gulf-liveried ROFGO Collection made a fleeting visit to Stuttgart...

They say never meet your heroes. But underwhelmed the German photographer Frederik Dulay was most definitely *not* when visitors to the Retro Classics trade fair in Stuttgart departed on Sunday evening and left him alone with virtually the entire fluorescent fleet of Gulf-liveried racing cars that form the ROFGO Collection.



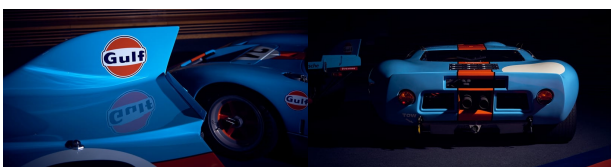
Ever since the late 1960s, blurred flashes of powder blue and orange have captivated racegoers, the distinctive Gulf livery gracing some of motorsport history's most fabled machines - from the Porsche 917 to the Aston Martin DBR9. As an impressionable schoolboy, one particular German entrepreneur treasured a small model of a Gulf-liveried Ford GT40. Decades later, the real-life version of that very GT40 served as the springboard for what would become the world's largest collection of racing cars dedicated to Gulf's longstanding ties to the world of motorsport.

The GT40, and indeed each of the subsequent 40-odd cars that have joined the Gulf stable, were procured with the help of Adrian Hamilton of the [Classic Driver dealer Duncan Hamilton ROFGO](#). During a visit to his treasure-trove showroom in 2018, he explained to us how the ROFGO Collection came to fruition.



"The collection of Gulf cars came about because I was selling one of the four ex-Works Ford GT40s on behalf of a client," he said. "Roald Goethe, a successful businessman in the oil industry, was interested in buying the car, as he had a model of it when he was at school. He told me he was interested in putting a collection of cars together and asked if I had any ideas. Having had a light-bulb moment, I went back to him and suggested the Gulf theme, seeing as no one else had done it. He agreed, so off we went.

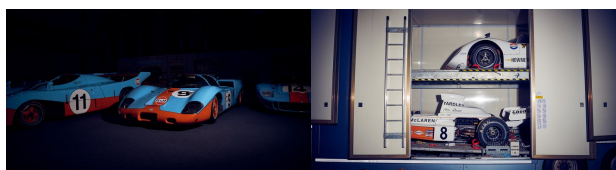
"At first, we targeted the key cars. We were lucky to have bought the Porsche 917K which finished second at Le Mans in 1971 when we did. In fact, we were lucky to have bought everything when we did - I don't think we overpaid for any car, and quite honestly, the value of the entire collection has doubled." The growth and magnitude of the ROFGO Collection necessitated a move from Hamilton's personal residence near Odiham to a magnificent, modern purpose-built facility that adjoins Duncan Hamilton's new showroom.



If you ever get the chance to visit the vast room containing the collection of Gulf cars, seize it – it is honestly one of the most awe-inspiring spectacles we’ve ever seen. Of course, on the rare occasion cars from the ROFGO Collection fly the nest to be displayed and demonstrated at events such as the Goodwood Festival of Speed or the Grand Prix de Monaco Historique. But Retro Classics in Stuttgart marked the first time that virtually the entire collection was shown elsewhere – a real coup for the show’s organisers.



It’s difficult to know where to start when you’re confronted by such an extraordinary assembly, particularly when each car’s magical details are illuminated only by Dulay’s photographic lights. From the prime suspects such as the finned Porsche 917K that was piloted by Richard Attwood and Herbert Müller to second overall at Le Mans in 1971 and the Gulf-Mirage GR8 that actually won the 1975 edition of the French endurance classic in the hands of Jacky Ickx and Derek Bell to lesser-known Gulf heroes such as the big McLaren Can-Am cars and the Audi R8 Le Mans prototype from 2000, there’s something for everyone here.



Our pick of the bunch? It’s got to be the spectacular McLaren F1 GTR ‘Longtail’, which counts victory at the 1998 Monza 1,000km among its accolades. Or would it be the jewel-like Porsche 908/37? Decision decisions. We’ll allow you the time to ogle Frederik Dulay’s wonderful photographs of these special cars and make your own mind up regarding which you’d most like to tuck away in your garage. After all, each has a spectacular story to tell.

Photos: Frederik Dulay for Classic Driver © 2020

Gallery

