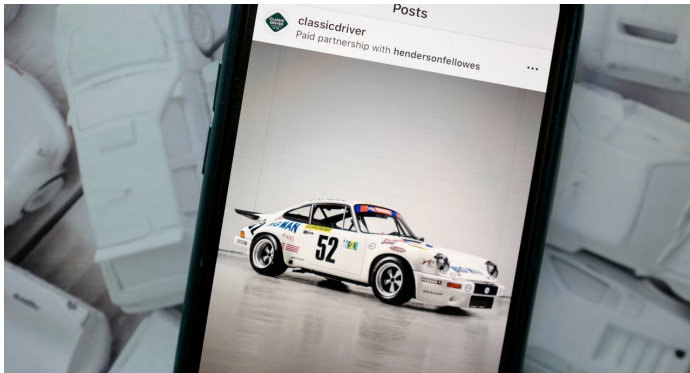


# CLASSIC DRIVER

## [Can you sell a million-dollar collector car on Instagram?](#)

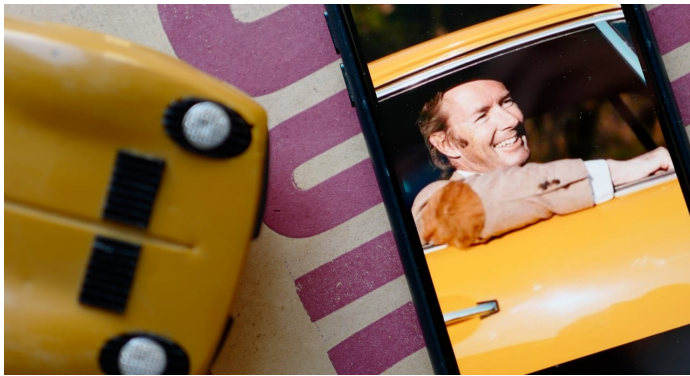
### Lead

With millions of petrolhead photographers and enthusiasts constantly snapping and scrolling, Instagram has become one of the automotive world's most influential media channels. But is the window to the collector car world also a relevant business channel? We asked the experts...



Over the past 10 years, Instagram has evolved from an artists' plaything to an essential communication platform for brands. Classic Driver's own channel has grown by 50 per cent in the last 12 months, reaching more than 320,000 car enthusiasts and collectors worldwide. But what specific role does Instagram play in today's collector car industry? Is it simply a stage on which to show off, or rather a crucial tool to educate customers about - and perhaps even sell - blue-chip cars? We consulted a number of experts, all of whom are especially prominent on Instagram, to find out.

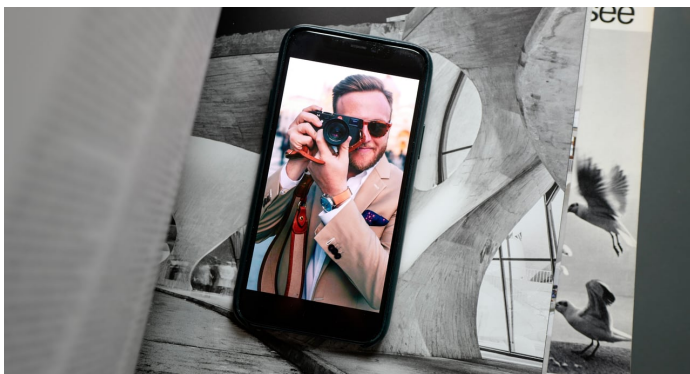
### Simon Kidston, Kidston SA



"Instagram started out as a bit of fun for us to share assorted photographs, but it has grown into a powerful and potentially useful business tool," comments industry leader Simon Kidston of the Geneva-based consultancy [Kidston SA](#). "On the plus side, it's quick, spontaneous and democratic, but it's difficult to say whether we've ever sold a car from an Instagram lead. You might get awareness, but if you're dealing at this level, you need more than social media to earn the trust required to push somebody to send a large amount of money to someone they've never met."

Kidston also references the difficulty in vetting potential clients on Instagram. A good case in point was a recent post he published not advertising to sell but instead looking to *acquire* two cars: a Fiat Dino 2400 Spider and a Mercedes-Benz 300SL 'Gullwing'. "We *did* get offered a very nice Dino as a result of that - it belonged to an elderly man and I suspect it was his son who saw our post," he continues. "But, on the other hand, we got all kinds of wild goose chases and endless broker chains offering us 'Gullwings', from people who couldn't spell the name or even manage to use the same font in an email. You do get an awful lot of leads that go nowhere, and your BS filter needs to be set very high."

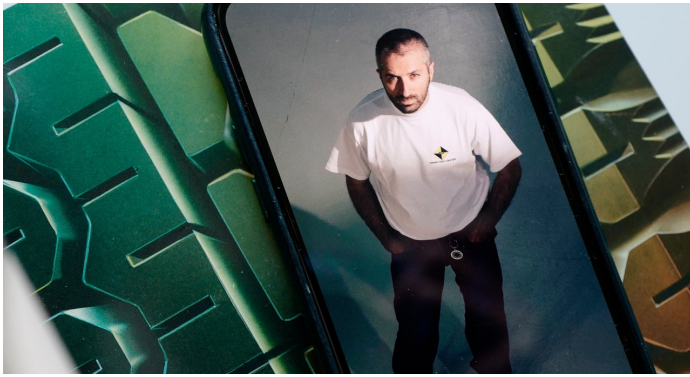
### Ted Gushue, ERG Media



The American photographer, journalist and influencer extraordinaire Ted Gushue has forged a career documenting the awe-inspiring places he tirelessly travels and the fascinating people he meets along the way on Instagram. And it's now more than a personal endeavour - his digital strategy consulting firm is responsible for Type 7, a burgeoning Instagram-only magazine funded directly by Porsche and showcasing the vast and nuanced world of the Stuttgart brand. "We create content aimed at inviting the next generation of enthusiasts into the Porsche universe," explains Gushue, "and while we work with dealers from the Porsche network around the world, we're enthusiast-oriented and not sales-oriented."

Another of Gushue's clients is the British Porsche specialist (and Classic Driver dealer) [Maxted-Page](#), for whom he handles its social media activity. "Museum-quality work will always have museum-quality customers," he continues. "To tell the story of Mark Donohue's IROC Carrera RSR or the Skoal Bandit 956 to people at home isn't a marketing strategy, it's more like paying tribute to an incredibly special piece of history that the company has gone out of its way to represent." He suggests that such meticulously curated accounts from reputable professionals have allowed us all to benefit from the ramp up of knowledge afforded by the Internet and digital platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. "It doesn't matter if you're a big show-off on Instagram - it matters that you respect the history of a car. It's the same as Christie's telling the story of a Picasso. Tell the story properly and people will want to learn about it."

### Arthur Kar, L'Art de L'Automobile



An avant-gardist who shreds the boundaries between the worlds of cars, fashion, music and design, Arthur Kar of the collector car dealership and streetwear label [L'Art de L'Automobile](#) acknowledges that leads received as a result of his Instagram activity have resulted in quick and straightforward sales including, most recently, a Ferrari 458 Speciale. But for the Paris-based automotive influencer, the platform serves two greater purposes: image and evangelism. "I'm using Instagram to present the multi-faceted image of my company," he comments, comparing it to a beautiful magazine that he gets to lovingly self-publish every day.

"I want to educate my customers and make people curious," he continues, "and with my L'Art brand, I want to bring cars into the lives of people who don't understand that they're not *just* for car people or those who simply want to show off." He claims that so many friends and followers from his fashion and music circles ask insightful questions about the cars he posts on Instagram, cars that might be encyclopaedically known by even the gentlest of automotive enthusiasts, but that these people don't know anything about beyond that they're beautiful or weird. "I'd say 80 per cent of people who see a Ferrari Enzo know nothing about it beyond that it's expensive and has unusual doors. The way I'm promoting my cars on Instagram makes people want to learn more about them, whether it's an Enzo, a Renault Clio Williams or a Ferves Ranger. When I get this response, it's more rewarding than selling a car."

### Ricardo Pessoa, Cool & Vintage



Sun-drenched landscapes, beautiful surfing girls and the most immaculate old Land Rovers you've ever seen – Lisbon-based [Cool & Vintage](#) was one of the first automotive companies to adopt Instagram as a tool, using the platform to forge its image of fantasy and garner something of a cult following among Land Rover buffs and hipsters alike. But founder and creative director Ricardo Pessoa has seen a marked shift and is now using Instagram to instead showcase his company's portfolio. "Initially we used Instagram to inspire people about how you might use our vehicles and provide a glimpse of the ownership experience," he explains, "but that imagery has lost its power as everyone else has replicated it, and not just with Land Rovers, to the point where it's become contrived. So, we've now turned our Instagram focus from lifestyle to representing our product – our feed is now almost a copy of our homepage."

Nonetheless, Instagram is still Cool & Vintage's number one communication tool and its account's engagement levels are exceptionally high, telling of how much its colourful Land Rovers resonate with enthusiasts all over the world and how effective its earlier social media campaigning really was. For example, each of its posts receives over 100 comments on average, and we're told this engagement absolutely does result in sales. "When we post an Instagram story on a Saturday, we get around 3,500 hits on our website, sell on average 4,000 euros' worth of merchandise from our online store, and receive around 200 direct messages," continues Pessoa. "Of those 200 messages, typically around 50-60 are enquiries on cars and from those I'd say there's one buyer."

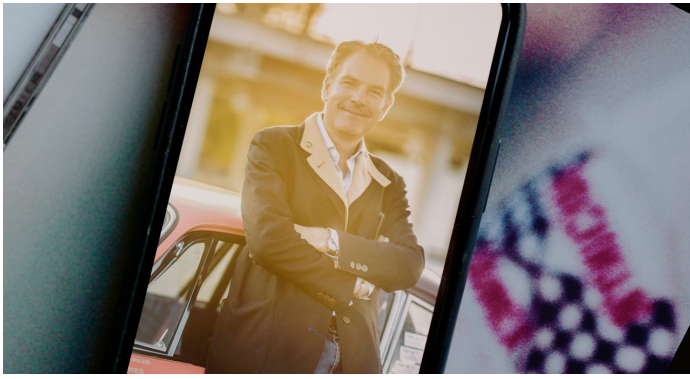
### James Cottingham, DK Engineering



There's seldom a day when you open the Instagram app on your phone and are not greeted by an exquisitely photographed blue-chip car, typically wearing a prancing horse on its bonnet and finished in an extraordinary 'paint-to-sample' colour, presented for sale by [DK Engineering](#). But while the respected Chorleywood-based Ferrari specialist is among the most prominent collector car dealers on the platform (it currently has 71,000 organic followers) and it *has* sold cars sight-unseen as a result of Instagram leads in the past, acquisition consultant James Cottingham believes it is only a launchpad, from which other trust-building means of communication, be it an email inquiry via the company website, a telephone call or a face-to-face meeting, should follow.

"If someone sends us an inquiry on Instagram, unless we know who a specific person is, it's often too anonymous and lacking enough information to be taken seriously," he explains. "The platform is great for showing people what you've got, what you're up and what you're great at, but should only be used as a launchpad and not as a proprietary tool – you need a good website to back it up, to be on the end of the phone, to be on top of your emails and to have physical premises to prove you're more than just a face on the Internet. The interpersonal relationship is where a sale comes from. Instagram is just another string to our bow – it's expected of us today in the same way that attending Pebble Beach is expected of us or having a Classic Driver account or going historic racing." He also suggests that as email inboxes become increasingly filled with newsletters and magazine adverts become increasingly repetitive, so alternative marketing mediums such as Instagram, which are typically viewed when people are most comfortable, have become markedly more effective.

### James Turner, Sports Purpose



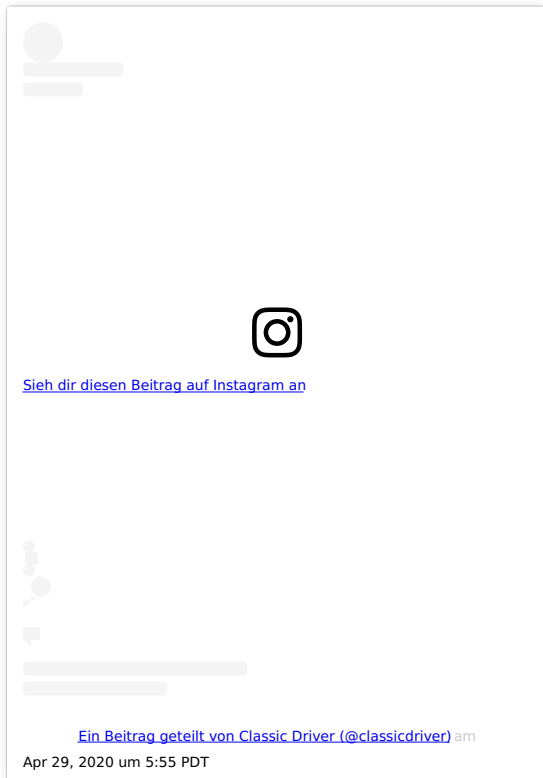
"We get a lot of leads through Instagram," proclaims James Turner, founder of the Bicester-based Porsche specialist [Sports Purpose](#). But from a business point of view, it is first and foremost a part of the marketing mix and just one of the communication tools that are available to us, whether we're advertising a car for sale or sharing behind-the-scenes snaps from an event we're attending." When it comes to Instagram, the onus for Turner is instead on interaction with old and new enthusiasts alike. In fact, he likens the demographic and easy-access nature of Instagram to the Porsche brand itself.

"I've always felt that Porsche is an everyman's brand and a realistic ownership proposition for anyone and so perhaps unlike a Ferrari or a Bugatti, for example," he continues. "And Instagram is a broad church as well - the kind of place for unabashed Porsche enthusiasts like us who get just as frothy about a wonderful standard 993 as a Werks Le Mans racer. Sure, it can be too salesy and there are certain accounts that we don't follow, but it's such a positive and great-value platform for storytelling and sharing our passion with individuals and companies from other walks of life. I'm a firm believer that the best businesses have a personality and hopefully the best Instagram accounts reflect that." That Turner's [Paul Smith Porsche 911 art car](#) became the most liked image on the British fashion designer's own Instagram account is telling of the automotive power of the platform. And it's this power that major manufacturers including Porsche itself are now sitting up and harnessing.



It's clear that for businesses operating in today's collector car world, an active and aesthetically pleasing presence on Instagram is an invaluable cog in the marketing wheel. But a cog is all it is - a stepping-stone to other, more personal and transparent means of communication that lead to concrete sales. Above all, it is a platform on which our passion is shared and our knowledge increased, a thriving and beautiful place that allows us to keep a thumb on the beating heart of the collector car world. How this role will change in our post-Covid, socially distanced future, with the rise of digital auctions and events, remains to be seen.

## Want to see your car on Classic Driver's Instagram channel?



If you are selling a collector car and you'd like for it to be admired by Classic Driver's 320,000 enthusiastic and engaging Instagram followers, or you would like support with boosting your own account, please [contact us](#) for a tailored package quote.

## Gallery

























