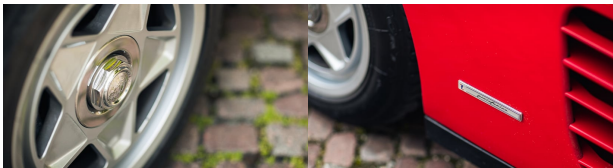


CLASSIC DRIVER

[YouTube's TGE on supercars, classics - and why modern cars have lost the plot](#)

Lead

Unlike many of his peers, YouTube star TGE has all but abandoned the latest 1,000hp hypercars in favour of classics with a fifth of the power, but infinitely more character. We sat down for a chat to find out what inspired the change...

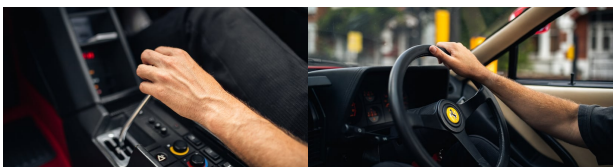


Bucking the social-media trend of chasing the latest and greatest exotic metal, Tom Exton, better known by his YouTube alias TGE TV, has turned to classic cars in search of the driver involvement that's becoming so scarce in new models. He recently became the proud owner of a stunning Ferrari Testarossa Monospecchio, so we sat down with the charmingly frank internet star to discuss why he's traded paint protection for patina.



How would you describe yourself without using the term 'YouTuber'?

"I'd probably say 'car collector' - which is a lot more pleasant than what I get called in my comments section on YouTube!"



What was your first car, first supercar and first classic car?

"My first car was an H-reg Renault Clio we bought for £450 that I shared with my brother, because it was all we could afford. My first supercar was a Lamborghini Huracan RWD 580-2, and my first classic was my Porsche 996 Carrera 4S. I don't know if you could call that a classic, actually, but my first 'proper' classic would be my 1966 Porsche 912."



Are there any cars that you regret selling or buying?

"I bought a Ferrari GTC4Lusso in order to get allocated a 488 Pista, which I should have never done - I regret buying that. It's the first time I ever tried 'playing the game' and I'm not doing it again. In terms of cars I regret selling, potentially the Aston Martin Vantage AMR. It was a bit Marmite, but they've held their money really well, which always takes the edge off any pain from holding onto something, and it was just a cool Aston, which is becoming increasingly rare these days. Fundamentally, it was just a V8 Vantage S in a nice outfit, but very rare."



Have you owned any cars you absolutely hated?

"I bought a McLaren 720S brand new and it was appalling. The dash lit up like a Christmas tree every time I drove it; the car shuddered in traffic; the panel gaps were horrendous and everything squeaked. That was back during McLaren's rough patch around 2017, which I think they may have emerged from, but I wouldn't risk it again. In comparison, the 488 Pista was unbelievable. I kind of do regret selling that, but it had to go. I'm not interested in the 296 GTB, though - these hyper-hoovers don't really do it for me. I'm not spending 300 grand on something that'll easily put me at 140mph in a 30mph zone."



Do you think modern cars have lost the plot in the pursuit of power and speed?

"Yes, I do! I think it has just become a numbers race, and due to regulations, modern cars have just become more and more sterile - the legalities of building a car have just gotten in the way of driver involvement. I also suspect manual gearboxes are being phased out because of emissions, and you can't really put a manual in something with 1,000bhp. Apart from using them as daily drivers, I'm not interested; modern cars are basically white goods."



How long ago did your interests turn from the latest and greatest to the classics, and was there a moment that made you switch?

"I think when I started experimenting with the 720S and Pista, I started becoming less and less interested. I cancelled the Lamborghini Aventador SVJ and Ferrari 812 I had on order, because in London the journey to 30mph is basically all you have. I thought there must be something else."



So what drew you to your Testarossa?

"When I was young, everyone was playing Outrun and watching Miami Vice, so it was just the car to have. I was only ever going to go for a Monospecchio with the centre-lock wheels, because that's exactly how the car looked when it was unveiled at the 1984 Paris Motor Show, before regulations got in the way and they had to add the extra wing mirror. I'd been looking for a while when this particular car came up: it's Classiche-certified and nothing has ever happened to it that wasn't noted down and included in its history booklet. I absolutely love it and it's surprisingly easy to drive. Back in the day it was considered massive, but it's no bigger than a Pista."



Porsche and Ferrari feature heavily in your garage. How do you think their modern cars measure up to their back catalogue, and do you think they're headed in the right direction?

"Peak modern Ferrari for sure was the 458, FF and F12 era, when Pininfarina was doing the design and regulations weren't ridiculous. Numbers-wise, they're also pretty rare, and I think they look better every year. I love the F12; I'm on my second one, because I traded in my first for a 991 GT3 RS on a deal where it was basically free, and I regretted it, so now I have another one. The car I have now is Grigio paint over Bordeaux interior and it's specced up to the nines - it's the only one like it I've ever seen and I absolutely love it. Another bonus is it's one of the few supercars people see and don't immediately hate you."



"Porsche is one of the few manufacturers still bringing out new cars that are exciting and that people care about. I don't know how they keep trotting out GT3s that are fundamentally the same, yet so much more desirable and have queues forming around the block – they don't really get it wrong. And Porsche is one of the few manufacturers supporting classics, the restoration scene and the modding scene. It's just a cult and it's brilliant, no matter what you're into, they have something for you. Even the Taycan is quite cool, and that's really impressive, because it's an electric saloon. If I buy another Porsche, it'll be a 993, or possibly a 964 if I can get one cheap."



How do you feel about the restomod craze. Have any of them caught your eye?

"I love the fact that everything is being restomodded now, even that new Renault 5 Turbo 3 is amazing. I think a lot of people just put out a wicked render and try to get funding, so I have no idea where they are with that, but it's properly cool. I love Automobili Amos and their Futurista, but as far as electric restomods go, I'm not really sure where I stand. In general I think an old, rattly, smelly sports car should remain just that."



Do you think in general combustion-engined cars are going to increase in value as we approach the date that sales of new ones are banned?

"I don't see them going stratospheric, but I do think basic economics will apply. Kids in their early 20s who can't necessarily get into their dream cars now will still want them in 10 years' time when they can afford them. As petrolheads, we'll be fighting over a diminishing pool of resources. I don't see any reason why they'll tank, but I think cars will go two ways. You'll have the white goods daily drivers and then enthusiast weekend cars. Daily drivers don't really need to make noise and produce fumes."



Are there any qualities common among cars that become long-termers in your garage?

“Yeah, anything iconic with timeless design and that’s potentially residually sound. People hate talking about cars’ values and I wish I was at the stage where I didn’t have to worry about values and run them into the ground, but my bank balance is a few zeroes short of what it needs to be to adopt that mentality. Mostly with old cars; if you restore them and add value, your money will still be there. In general, similar to the Porsche Carrera GT, anything limited and iconic that represents a point in history for the brand is good news.”



Finally, what’s in store for you and your channel over the next few years?

“I’m going to keep doing what I’m doing: buying more modern classics and more Porkers, really. I went through a period of just buying loads of modern stuff, which was great for growth, but I didn’t grow up with those cars, so there isn’t any attachment for me. I’m also really looking forward to Modball Classic. As for YouTube, I’ve dreamt up a series where I drive all the hero cars from my childhood, but this is all dependent on lovely people and dealerships allowing me to experience these cars – everything from the Renault Clio Williams to the Lamborghini Countach 25. However, as with all these things, it requires organisation, which I don’t really have, but I’ll hopefully be putting it out soon, so keep your eyes peeled!”

Photos: Tom Shaxson © 2021

Gallery

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