

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## [Tour Auto Optic 2000, 16-21 April 2012: Review](#)

### Lead

It was another AC Cobra benefit on this year's Tour Auto as the British Driver Shaun Lynn was declared provisional winner after five days of close racing and meticulous timekeeping between stages.

As ever, though, the emphasis of the event is about beautiful cars driven on a carefully selected route through stunning French countryside.

This year's Tour Auto Optic 2000, after scrutineering at the Grand Palais in Paris on Monday 16 April, set off early the following day with the next overnight stop being Beaune. Wednesday was *Etape 2* (Beaune to Aix-Les-Bains), while Thursday's travelling finished in Clermont-Ferrand and Friday's in Nîmes.

On Saturday 21 April, the final *Etape* saw the remaining competitors tired, battered and bruised after many 100s of kilometres of hard driving cross the finishing line at the Place Masséna in Nice.







Along the way, the Competition category took in the racing circuits of Dijon Prenois, Frontenaud, Charade and Paul Ricard, with a closed-road time trial at Alès Cévennes. Lynn's red/white, ex-John Wilment Racing Cobra, number 201, can be seen below heading the pack at one of these locations.

The Tour Auto, organised by Peter Auto, is open to cars of the type that competed in the original event from 1951 to 1973. During that period it was often one of the most important sporting events on the motor racing calendar. A mixture of rallying and racing, all run to a very tight schedule, the original Tour de France Automobile almost matched its two-wheeled namesake as a trial of stamina and endurance.









The epithet 'Tour de France' - given to a series of 250 GT Ferraris - comes from the model's near-invincibility on the Tour from the late-50s to the early 60s. Later runnings of the event saw more extreme machinery entered: cars such as the Porsche 906s, the Ligier Cosworth you see here and even a Ferrari 512M.

Nowadays, the organisers select from an always over-subscribed entry list, choosing themes and trying to honour a particular marque or model. In this, its 50th year, the Ferrari 250 GTO was so honoured. Three examples were entered, including the famous silver/yellow ex-Francorchamps car that won the original event in 1964. In 2012 it was driven by the all-female pairing of Daniela Ellerbrock/Zaklina Rohwer (above).



In addition to famous cars, many former top race and rally drivers enjoy the modern event. This year, it was the return of ex-Renault Le Mans and rally drivers Jean Ragnotti and Alain Serpaggi both, unsurprisingly, behind the wheels of Alpine-Renault A110s.

Serpaggi won the G/H/I Competition category (Lynn was competing in VHC), while overall honours in Regularity went to Jean-François Nicoules and Patrice Gauthier in their 1966 Ford Mustang. The Franco-British pairing of Yves Junne and Classic Driver dealer Lee Maxted-Page, driving a 1953 Porsche 356 in 'Competition', won the Index of Performance.

You can see a full photo gallery of cars and atmospheric scenes from this year's Tour Auto Optic 2000 [elsewhere on Classic Driver](#).

Photos: Cathy Dubuisson, Strictly Copyright

---

## Gallery











