

CLASSIC DRIVER

Classic Driver Dealer: Robert Barrie Limited

Lead

This is a man who, in his own words, has “seen it from the other side”. Running, or perhaps racing, a classic car should be enjoyable and Robert Barrie offers clients that vital ‘insider knowledge’, born of years of buying, selling and racing the best.

We visited Barrie at his new premises, located within an easy drive from Central London or Heathrow.

Clearly an early Porsche 911 man (the Barrie family's blue, short-wheelbase 911s have been a familiar sight on European historic racing circuits in recent years, Goodwood included), the stock nevertheless includes a brace of Alfa Romeos and a 1964 Lotus 23B.

With a background in the financial sector, he's a big believer in research and careful preparation, planning and consultation. Too many people have bought the wrong car – for all sorts of reasons – or entered a race series inappropriate to their level of skill or budget.







As far as racing is concerned, do you need a trailer? If so, where will you store it? And will your everyday car tow it? All simple questions, but a bit of research can save much time and trouble in the long run. (Barrie offers storage, so the 'what to do with the trailer issue' is solved right away, as is the "I've just bought another car, where can I keep it..." scenario.)

And, while most of us are all too happy to fork out for a new engine to catch that rival forever "pulling away from me on the straights!", why not invest a little in driver preparation and coaching? Barrie's a big believer in this, racing, as he does, a Formula Junior where the grid is so evenly matched one needs to utilise every last fraction of horsepower by careful driving, rather than simply 'buying' more power.

Racing is only part of the business, as whole restoration projects can be managed and cars sourced (many of which are from contacts made after many years, such as the '73 911 Carrera RS now residing with a new owner, after being found by Barrie very much 'off the radar' and not on the general market).



You can take the man out of the City but, well, you know the rest. As a senior economics analyst, Barrie has a fine head for figures and, like many in that sector, keeps right up to date with the ebb and flow of international classic car values. He can therefore give shrewd advice on the state of play of today's market.

Marque-wise, the older 911s are a speciality, but he's also a big Lotus fan and has the contacts to handle all but the rarest models. As he says, "I've been around this business for so long, and sometimes learnt things the hard way, so why not use my expertise to make the most of that classic car experience?"

"After all, having fun is what it's all about." We couldn't agree more.

Photos: Classic Driver

Gallery

