

CLASSIC DRIVER

Top 5 Prototypes: Survivors in the Marketplace

Lead

Prototypes are the crucial link between a design team's initial proposal and the final production car, often displaying interesting variations tested as part of the development process. The Classic Driver Marketplace frequently plays host to some very noteworthy examples.

Panhard PMS





Taking the Panhard Dyna X as a basis, French Citroën dealer and racer Paul Ménissier developed a racing prototype that employed an unusual mid-engined, front-wheel-drive layout. He repeatedly adjusted the 'PMS' (Paul Ménissier Spéciale), trialling Panhard, Alfa Romeo and Ford (as now) powerplants and changing the bodywork numerous times. Although it will require a brave soul to take the car under their wing, a full restoration would rescue a classic prototype racing car with no doubt some *very* unusual dynamic characteristics.

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Lancia Stratos





To allow the Stratos to achieve the legendary status it gained through its rally conquests, 500 homologated road cars were built – and this, according to the seller, is one of the pre-production prototypes. The Bertone-styled coupé's aesthetics are as arresting today as they were in period; it's perhaps one of the few cars that can pull off the orange paint/gold wheels colour scheme, too.

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Range Rover 'Classic' Velar



With the latest Range Rover being rolled out in force across the world, some are looking to [previous generations of the original luxury 4x4](#) as an alternative. They don't come any more 'previous' than this; this is

one of the developmental prototypes of the first generation off-roader, and was so secret at the time that it wore red-herring 'Velar' badging. The reason behind this, along with more about this curious progenitor, can be seen in our [exclusive video](#).

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Porsche 924-005 GTP (1999)





Two prototype Porsches were built in 1981 prior to the launch of the 944 model later that year. An evolution of the three 2-litre, 350HP 924 GTP entries at Le Mans in 1980, the 1981 prototypes had revised bodywork and pure Porsche Type 949 2.5-litre turbocharged engines. Entered by the works team as a 'Porsche 944 LM', the sister car to 924-005 (006) carried race number 1 and was driven by Walter Röhrl and Jürgen Barth to 7th place overall that year. For reliability, the 410HP engine was reduced to 370HP for the race but still approached 190mph on the straight. The works 924 driven by Andy Rouse and Manfred Schurti in 1981 looked similar to the 944 LM but it still had the 2-litre turbo engine – bearing race number 36, it finished 11th and won its class.

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Aston Martin DB7 Vantage 'DP004'





Found here is one of the prototypes used by Aston Martin to develop the V12-engined DB7. As you might have noticed, it's been stripped of its badging, interior and windows (perhaps due to not achieving Aston levels of refinement and quality) as part of an agreement with a dealer which saved this, and six other prototype DB7s, from the crusher. Apparently, the others went on to perform a later-life role as donors for privateer racing cars to be built around, but DP004 (the 'DP' standing for 'Developmental Prototype') has remained true to its original purpose.

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Text: [Joe Breeze](#)

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