

CLASSIC DRIVER

Topless! Our top 5 convertibles ready for Spring Break

Lead

The American Spring Break is traditionally a retreat for unwinding teenagers – but how many of them are aware that the idea dates back to the 1930s? Classic Driver has selected five perfect convertibles with which to welcome the warm weather...

#5 Triumph TR6





When the sun comes out, it's hard to beat the charms of a traditional British sports car, especially one with the beefy performance of a TR6. Introduced in 1969, the top speed was close to 120mph but it was the acceleration in the lower speed ranges that really attracted attention – when new, TR6 owners reckoned they could give Jaguar-E-type owners a hard time up to about 70mph! The attractive body, brilliantly restyled front and rear by Karmann from Michelotti's fine TR4 design of the early 1960s, resulted in a new butch look. The straight-six 2½-litre fuel-injected type of TR6 engine of the early cars produced 150bhp and delivered more exciting performance than the later 124bhp cars, which were detuned to please buyers who apparently preferred softer, smoother engines. The 150bhp models like this left-hand drive example are more desirable today and, thanks to the wide availability of new parts and specialists, classic TR6 ownership is a very practical proposition.

#4 Alfa Romeo S4 Spider 2.0





The S4 Spider was the last in a legendary generation of Alfa Romeos, which had first premiered in the mid-60s, and soon afterwards enjoyed a popularity explosion by appearing in *The Graduate*. The 90s saw the introduction of the fourth iteration, which added power steering and the option of 'telephone dial' wheels and an automatic gearbox – all the better for cruising around in during the famous American holiday. This 1992 example with manual gearbox can currently be found at UK dealer Andrew Jackson, and has apparently undergone a restoration costing double its asking price within the last 12 months.

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#3 VW Beetle 1303 LS Injection





So it's not the most exclusive car but, having undergone a recent restoration, this Beetle will certainly be a hit with the ladies – and for that reason, it has rocketed into our top five. The interior has been completely re-trimmed in black leather, while the new roof apparently uses material of the same quality as a contemporary Porsche. It's certainly one of the most appealing Beetles we've come across in recent years, particularly given that it's finished in the original metallic colour of Hummingbird Green.

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#2 Ford Mustang 289 Convertible





It's only right that our top five Spring Break selection includes a 'pony' car, and this Mustang caught the collective eye of the Classic Driver office with its lime green paintwork and contrasting tan roof and leather interior. We're not sure what appeals more – the burble of the American V8, or the ability to transport four (or possibly more...) 'Spring-Breakers' – but there would be few things more pleasurable than extracting it from the garage after winter hibernation, in search of some fun in the sun.

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#1 BMW Z1





We realise that some of our readers might be a *little* less mobile than they were in their Spring Break heydays, which is one of the reasons for the Z1 making it to number 1 position in our list. Why? Because the 'convertible leap' so popular to Spring Breakers is made immeasurably easier by the Z1, thanks to the quirky doors which sink into the sills. Additionally, with only around 8,000 produced (with the vast majority being supplied to the German market), it's one of the rarer BMWs – this 50,000-mile example is currently for sale at Dutch dealer Imparts BV.

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