

CLASSIC DRIVER

Caine's Cars: Rebel without a Licence

Lead

Sir Michael Caine is definitely no petrolhead. In fact, it wasn't until he was 50 that he passed his driving test, and once he turned 70 he gave up driving altogether.

"I got in the car and the guy looked at me and went, 'I loved you in The Man Who Would Be King. You're going to have to be s*** to not pass this test.'"

He grew up during the Second World War, when there weren't a lot of cars about. And being a Londoner, public transport was good and the need for his own car or motorbike just wasn't there. Success, though, in the 1960s, meant that the first car he ever bought was a Rolls-Royce. And so expensive was the insurance premium that it was cheaper to hire a chauffeur.

From that day onwards, he's been a confirmed fan of the British marque. It was moving to Los Angeles that prompted him to finally take a test, the massive urban sprawl of LA, Beverly Hills and Hollywood making personal transport a necessity.

Speaking in 2011, Caine recounted: "It was weird. Before I took the test, the man said the guy who would be doing the test was sitting outside in the car and that I would only speak to him to say good morning.

"There would be no normal conversation - he would give me instructions, I would listen to him and that was that. There would be no personal remarks whatsoever.

"I got in the car and the guy looked at me and went, 'I loved you in The Man Who Would Be King. You're going to have to be s*** to not pass this test.'" So, at the age of 50, he passed.

Three Minis and an Aston Martin



Caine's onscreen persona 'Charlie Croker' was clearly a man comfortable behind the wheel of a fast getaway car. However, the real life Michel Caine needed the wife of stunt maestro Rémy Julienne to double for him in driving scenes that featured the Aston DB4.

Her blonde hair, apparently, made the deception that much easier.

Get Carter: only from the passenger seat

In Mike Hodges' 1971 gangland thriller 'Get Carter', Caine plays the title role of a tough Londoner on his own in the North East of England. Amongst a kaleidoscope of gritty action scenes, 'Jack' is driven by a seductively lovely Geraldine Moffat (playing 'Glenda') in her white Sunbeam Alpine. Never was a gear knob clutched so hard and so sensuously.

Since then, other notable 'Caine and cars' scenes include playing Alfred the butler in the Batman adventure The Dark Knight Rises, and voicing 'Finn McMissile', an Aston Martin, in Cars 2.

A small victory for the Working Classes

...he walked in, 'Jack Carter style' and told them exactly what he thought of them - in sign language - a big grin spread over his face

Once given the brush-off by one Rolls-Royce dealer for his Bermondsey accent, Maurice Joseph Micklewhite (to give Caine his real name) confidently walked to another and bought a bright yellow example.

Parking his new purchase right outside the first establishment, he walked in, 'Jack Carter style' and told them exactly what he thought of them - in sign language - a big grin spread over his face.

Gallery

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