

# CLASSIC DRIVER



## Maserati Merak SS: Baby Bora in the spotlight

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*Playing the 'Bora Junior' role means the Maserati Merak is often overlooked. But evaluated in isolation, this V6-engined 2+2 amounts to an impressive (and surprisingly affordable) package...*

While the Bora boasted a 4.7-litre V8, the Merak possessed a 3.0-litre V6 jointly developed by Maserati and Citroën for the SM. But one shouldn't automatically refer to the 'no replacement for displacement' rule without further consideration.

Much of the running gear and architecture was shared between the junior and senior Maserati coupés; in fact, the only major differences were to be found in and behind the cockpit. The more compact mid-mounted engine left room for the addition of small +2 seats, while the need to reduce weight saw the rear deck end more abruptly, in order to delete the heavy glass window. However, the fastback profile was retained by Giugiaro's ingenious use of 'flying buttress' C-pillars.

### **Mid-engined masterpiece**



Although it was around 250kg lighter than the Bora, the Merak was initially hamstrung by the lack of power provided by the V6 – but an ‘SS’ version launched a few years into the 11-year production window went some way to address this, with 30 additional horses bringing the total to 220bhp. The Merak was always the superior-handling car, but it became even more attractive in its powerful and further-lightened SS guise.

Today, a good Merak SS can still be found for a very reasonable price – take this fetching gold-over-brown example, to be auctioned by Coys on 11 March with an estimate of £25,000 - £30,000. It offers not only a very reasonable alternative to the V8 Maseratis, but also to its peers, both then and now – namely the Lamborghini Urraco and the Ferrari GT4s.

*Photos: Coys*

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