

CLASSIC DRIVER

Cars We Love: DeLorean DMC-12

Lead

The DeLorean DMC-12 might have captivated teenage cinema-goers and fascinated sci-fi buffs in the mid 1980s, but in reality the striking coupé was poorly finished and technically far behind its rivals. So how is the gull-winged time machine received today? Classic Driver investigates...

A rare encounter



Driving along a French highway this summer, I was approached by what turned out to be a DeLorean DMC-12, its shiny steel body glinting in the midday sun. I had never seen the quirky gullwing in the wild before and I was slightly taken aback. While I was among those who saw the original *Back to the Future* at the cinema, I'd always dreamt of the hoverboard rather than 'Doc' Brown's time machine. But this well-kept example, spotted completely out of the blue, instilled a new sense of longing. After all, nothing ever came of the hoverboard, did it?

An ethical vision



The [DMC-12](#) wasn't 'just' another 1980s sports car. It was an innovative concept dreamt up by John DeLorean, who had given up his managerial job at General Motors in order to go it alone. His idea was for an 'ethical' sports car, with compact dimensions, efficient performance and high levels of safety. To top it off, Giorgetto Giugiaro was entrusted with designing the elaborate coupé, which has now secured a position in the collectors' market.

With its distinctive stainless-steel body, the DMC-12 polarised opinion and, ultimately, the production process failed to correspond with DeLorean's 'ethical' vision. Furthermore, the build quality of the approximately 9,200 examples built at the Northern Ireland plant left a lot to be desired. Following a mammoth financial crash, the whole automotive industry was struggling – sales of the DeLorean were nowhere near as high as expected and, in 1982, Margaret Thatcher (the Prime Minister responsible for the huge co-financing agreement with DeLorean) turned off the money tap. Suffice to say, good examples today are rare.

The model pictured



The [DMC-12 pictured here](#) is from the collection of the Texan Sam Pack, and has covered just 200 miles. It will be offered by [RM Auctions on 15 November](#). If you were going to take the plunge on this quirky Eighties wedge, you'll find few examples finer than this one.

Photos: RM Auctions

Gallery

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