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## Enter the Parisian treasure cave of FA Automobile

30 January 2015 | Remi Dargegen Photography

*When you arrive at FA, you have no idea what you're about to discover. From the outside, the entrance is very discreet but – as soon as you get inside – you will be utterly astonished; first by the explosion of colours, and then by the realisation of what these cars are...*

There's a yellow, fully original Porsche 914/6 GT, a pale green Aston Martin DB5, a red Lamborghini Miura, a two-tone green Ferrari 250 GT Boano, a silver 275 GTB, a blood-orange Venturi 600 SLM, and a deep black Mercedes-Benz 560 SEC AMG (ex-Johnny Hallyday). You don't know where to rest your eyes.

And then you see the tables... covered with parts. Look more closely and you realise there are four (four!) Lamborghini V12 engines ready to be assembled, waiting for their 350 GT and Miura bodies to come back from restoration so they can hit the road again.

The atmosphere is a curious mixture of warm, welcoming showroom and cool, clinical operating theatre. In discussion with Laurent Auxière and his father, you soon understand how – and why – they have created this environment. Here are some questions and answers to give you the idea...



**What's your father's oldest automotive memory? And yours?**

For my father, it's the 1000km de Paris, and the incredible battle between the Porsche 908s and the Matra MS650s. For me, it was a trip as a passenger in my father's Miura SVJ with an unsilenced exhaust system.

**Has your father always been passionate about classic and prestige cars?**

Let's say he's always had an interest in speed in general, and in aerodynamics. These two elements brought him into the world of classic cars at the end of the '70s.

**What was his route into this world of classics?**

He began with an Austin Mini 1300S, and then focused on the Citroën Traction in the mid-70s. When he was 28, he bought his first Miura (one of five works SVJs) that he still owns today. Then he had a Daytona, Gullwing 300SL, Porsche 911 2.7 RS, etc. He's enjoyed a long journey through the classic car world since then, but his activities have always focused on sports cars from the '50s to the '70s.

**How did the story of FA Automobile begin?**

It began with his passion. My father is a self-made man, who bought cars when he was still quite young, and whose business really became profitable in the 1980s, mainly in the French market.



### **And how has it evolved since then?**

I helped to expand the business when the internet arrived and classic cars became easier to buy and sell. I remember selling my first Ferrari on the phone while I was in class at high school. It helped that I speak three languages, and we now deal right across the world.

### **What is FA's philosophy?**

It's very simple: we try to put the right car into the hands of the right customer. A happy customer is essential to us. It's about teamwork, working with both the seller and the buyer. Many of them ask us for advice.

### **What's your view of the price escalation we've seen in recent years?**

It's down to speculative buyers, obviously, but it's not something that really worries us. The market is still solid. The sums of money circulating in the world of classic cars is huge but, today, people know exactly what they're buying, and what their precise requirements are. Two very similar-seeming cars can in fact be very different. A rare car, in perfect condition and from a prestigious marque, looking wonderful and with a sound engine - it's not enough. You need something more, something that other cars don't have, such as a history, a provenance, some important literature, manuals, proof of the service history, the original tool kit, Classiche certification when it's a Ferrari, along with matching numbers and colours. All good cars have already risen in value, but there will always be some buyers seeking the very pinnacle.



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**When you find a restoration project, do you sell it as a project or do you want to oversee the restoration yourselves, so that you always sell a finished car, ready to drive?**

If we buy a restoration project, we generally keep it and manage the restoration ourselves. But if we buy an exceptionally original car, with its original paint and a nice preserved patina, we at FA think that it would be sacrilege to restore it, as the market for original cars is exploding and the number of available cars is very limited.

**You're specialists in first-generation V12 Lamborghinis (350 GT, 400 GT and Miura). How did this come about? Is it a strength that is now your flagship?**

My father has owned many Miuras, he knows every detail by heart. So for sure, that's a market he's heavily involved in, but 80% of the cars we sell are Ferraris from the '50s to the '70s. This is a marque I particularly like, and for which I've developed a strong customer network over the years.



**How do you picture the evolution of FA Automobile in the coming years?**

FA Automobile will remain, at least for the next few years, a family business. Our reputation and our network are the key factors in our success. We're not interested in quantity, but in quality, with truly exceptional cars. And I hope the cars we sell reflect this philosophy.

**Is there a single car you've had that fills you with the most pride?**

Yes, a Ferrari 275 GTB/4, chassis #9413, the first aluminum 4-cam built, and the only one with the factory competition engine.

**Is there a car you dream of, and that you would love to offer for sale?**

Without doubt, a Ferrari 250 LM.

*Photos: Rémi Dargegen for Classic Driver © 2015*

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