
The Renault 5 Turbo that packs supercar punch

07 March 2015 | Charis Whitcombe

Instantly recognisable as THE small car of the 1980s packing near-supercar punch, the formidable Renault 5 Gordini Turbo (the proper, mid-engined homologation special, mind you, not the conventional front-engined, front-wheel-drive equivalent) is a hot favourite in the Classic Driver office...





Built in small numbers for Group 4 and Group B rallying, the Renault 5's modest little 1.4-litre engine was boosted to a staggering 160bhp (and that's in road-going form) to power this miniature hot-shot. Just as importantly, the engine was taken out from under the bonnet and, once the rear seats had been removed, plonked behind the driver and front passenger. It was, of course, rear-wheel drive and claimed 0-60mph in under seven seconds, with a top speed of something around 125mph. What fun.

The prototype Turbo actually appeared as early as 1978, at the Paris Salon of that year, and from 1980 onwards it proved itself highly effective as a competitive rally car, with victories that included the 1981 Monte Carlo Rally and 1982 Tour de Corse.



The 1983 pictured car, however, is a road car (left-hand drive). It was clearly much-loved by the third of its four owners from new, as he kept the car for a full 26 years, from 1986 to 2012. The car is a 'Turbo 1', and hence has the aluminium doors, roof and tailgate not found on the more widely available, all-steel Turbo 2. We're told it had a full mechanical overhaul in 2014, with the engine upgraded to 210bhp, but still retains its original interior, seats and wheels. It will be offered for sale by Bonhams, at the Goodwood 73rd Members' Meeting on 21 March 2015 at an estimated price of £55,000 to 65,000.

Photos: Bonhams

