

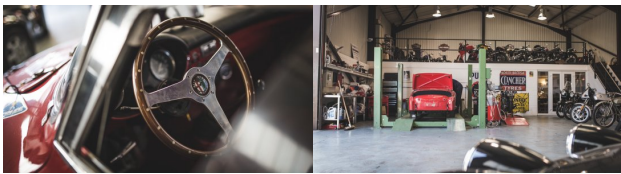
CLASSIC DRIVER

From E-types to desert racers - Anthony Godin relishes the challenge

Lead

Anthony Godin Sporting Cars & Motorcycles is a relatively rare breed of classic motoring specialist. Offering expertise in both cars and motorcycles, the knowledge of both modes of transport is strongly rooted in first-hand experience and a healthy dose of passion...

Bikes and cars



Located in the Kent countryside a short distance from Maidstone in the UK, we spent a morning with the company founder, Anthony Godin. "I have been interested in both cars and bikes from a very young age; I learnt to ride a motorbike at just seven years old and raced motocross in my teens." Godin also has a very close affinity with E-types. "During the 1980s, I started a classic Jaguar spare parts company, dealing mostly with E-types. Business was very simple in those days, lending was strongly encouraged and the phone rang like crazy," he says.

An E-type to keep



"This is my own car," he says, standing beside a white V12 convertible example of Jaguar's iconic sports car. "I have lots of history with it and would probably never sell it. I drove it to Le Mans 16 times in a row and even slept in it on several occasions!"

Relishing the challenge





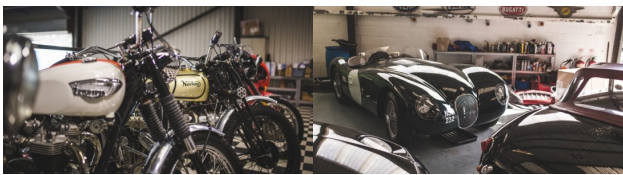
As the period of economic boom “came to a close” (according to Godin) in the early ‘90s, he spent a period of time in the US, before becoming a dealer principal for Harley-Davidson UK. This was a move that would eventually see Godin relocate to the Middle East for a time – the American motorcycle manufacturer was keen to expand into new markets, the Middle East being one of them. “I relished the challenge, successfully establishing the first motorcycle dealership in the Sultanate of Oman,” he adds. “I was also able to take up bike racing once again, competing on a KTM in the Dubai Off Road Challenge Series. My first race was punishing and I quickly realised that I needed to up my fitness regime considerably. I stuck at it, though, and began to really enjoy desert racing. Riding in loose sand feels a lot like aquaplaning and you have to constantly wrestle the bike to remain in control.”

The perfect balance



Returning to the UK once more, Godin secured a role at the Coys auction house, heading up the car auction department. “We saw lots of cars; I built up a very broad knowledge of cars from the ‘50s and ‘60s.” Nowadays, Godin is trading under his own name in both cars and bikes. “It’s a nice balance,” he says. “When I meet a classic car collector, more often than not they had bikes in the past, too. Attitudes towards classic bikes have changed, the two now go hand-in-hand.”

The best-kept secret in classic cars



Other vehicles that Godin calls his own include a road-legal Harley-Davidson XR750 dirt-track racer that sits menacingly in reception, and a bright-red Renault Alpine GTA V6 Turbo: “The best kept secret in classic cars,” he says. Perusing the rest of Godin’s intriguing stock, we ask what inspires him to buy any one particular vehicle. He replies, “In my honest opinion, I like the stock to reflect my wide knowledge base. If you’re going to be a Porsche or Jaguar dealer, for example, you need to know everything about that one particular marque. I like to offer something a little bit different, something unusual, fun or outside the box – where else would you find a Kougat MKII 3.8 alongside an [ex-Ron Haslam Honda F3 400/4 race bike](#)?” He has a point.

Photos: Tom Shaxson for Classic Driver

Gallery

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