

CLASSIC DRIVER

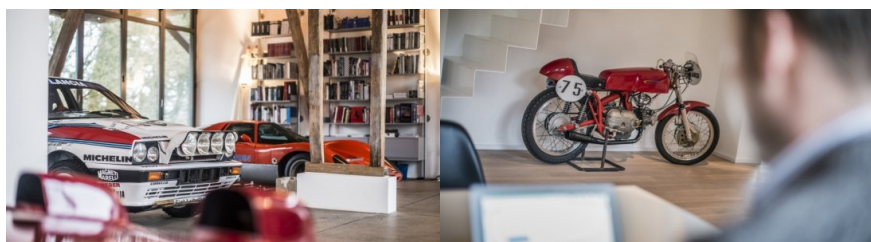
These new-generation collector car dealers are changing the game

Lead

No longer shackled to the out-dated perception of the collector car dealer and their clients, new waves of forward-thinking, modern dealers are throwing out the rulebook and applying some new-school philosophies to the most old-school of industries — and customers are responding...

As has been very well documented recently, a shift in the age of the collector car consumer has seen certain sectors grow massively. From millennial supercars to eighties icons, the record prices and hysteria surrounding these cars comes from the changing interests and appetites of the buyers. The car fans who dreamed of a Jaguar XK120 as a child aren't filling the auction tents anymore, but those who spent their youth staring at the Ferrari Testarossa on their bedroom wall certainly are. These changes also apply to dealers, comments Dietrich Hatlapa of the HAGI Index: "There are a number of generational changes occurring with dealers. We are starting to see the influence of a new generation, or second generation, of dealers taking the reins of established firms, and the modern practices of these younger dealers are drawing in new buyers." As the industry currently sits at this tipping point, certain dealers are thinking to the future and operating in fresh, modern ways to captivate the new buyer and keep the existing collectors happy. We spoke with a selection of dealers who represent this new movement, and while they all have their own methods and philosophies, there are some common ties.

Art meets cars



It's no secret that there are parallels between the art world and the car world, but for [Jan B. Lühn](#), the art world is a direct source of inspiration for his blue-chip collector car business. "The art market is so much more modern and advanced than the car market", he says, "and nowadays, buyers react well to these new approaches." One of Lühn's art-inspired strategies is the pop-up showroom, just as with an art gallery or exhibition, where temporary sites are set up with a selection of cars, which allows him to meet with new clients face-to-face. His fresh presentation style translates to events also, with an Apple store approach to show stands. "Not only are the stands crisp and white, but as with the Apple store model, the goal is not always to sell cars but to give people an opportunity to get a feel of the business." The combination of these practices and the stock of cars that Lühn is personally passionate about speaks to the younger buyer, with many of his clients being around the age of 40, and this has its advantages. "I only offer the kinds of cars that I would like in my own collection and that I can truly represent. In the last couple of years, I've started to get approached more and more by pre-War or classic dealers who are rethinking their strategies and looking to stock some of my more modern choices. It can be hard for these established dealers to adapt, as it's often easier to deal with your own generation, for both the buyer and seller."

More than just a car



They say content is king, and for [Cool & Vintage](#), their trademark style of video and photo content showcasing a relaxed, surfer-inspired hipster lifestyle is not only what separates them from other dealers but also what attracts their clients. “The new generation doesn’t want to buy from big, mainstream companies — they’re selective and look for small businesses who really care about their product and have a brand they can connect with”, comments Founder Ricardo Pessoa. “We create our own content to showcase what the cars can do and the experiences you could have, and this content spreads organically online.” With a solely online presence — absolutely no print advertising— this lifestyle-orientated presentation sees Cool & Vintage videos and photography featured on countless blogs and websites, being shared online and seen by a new audience that would not typically look at classic cars. “People get interested in the brand through the content and then look at the cars. People see a video, connect with the brand, then come back to the website every month, and it goes from there.” By creating their own content, Ricardo and his team give an insight into their company ethos and clearly show how they feel about these cars and the lifestyle surrounding them, which, amongst the sea of faceless, passionless companies that bombard us on a daily basis, is a refreshing and attractive prospect.

Breaking down barriers



For Arthur Kar of [L’Art de l’Automobile](#), a key goal is to include newcomers in the car world and get rid of some stigmas surrounding collectable cars. “You wouldn’t expect a dealer to deal with you a certain way based on how old you are, what you’re wearing, or what you’re driving, but this still happens. Cars are not all about money — the dream is not only for rich people.” L’Art de l’Automobile’s ties with fashion speak clearly to the new generation, and through their Instagram account, viewers worldwide can dive into the Parisian petrolhead lifestyle. “I use Instagram to show what I love and express myself, and people get an insight into what L’Art de l’Automobile is all about in an instant. The new generation has everything in their hand and isn’t interested in searching and looking through a website all the time.” What’s more, this open, forward-thinking approach resonates with older customers, too, who appreciate the unpretentious, honest, passion-focused service offered by Arthur and his young team, comprised not just of car fanatics but people with other interests who share a common love for the car lifestyle.

The new generation of car enthusiasts is here now, and although this natural cycle of certain demographics arriving and leaving has happened for years, now more than ever, the age is dropping and demands are changing. For some, it may be hard to adapt, but these dealers are firmly in the driving seat...

Gallery

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