

CLASSIC DRIVER

Looking ahead to Le Mans Classic with the Ascott Collection

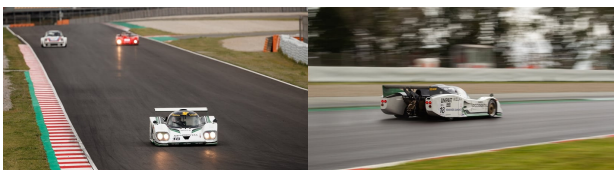
Lead
Le Mans has always been a breeding ground for innovation. With this in mind, at this weekend's Le Mans Classic, Xavier Micheron of Classic Driver dealer the Ascott Collection will race two intriguing and historically significant experimental prototypes: the turbine-engined Howmet TX and a Lola T600...

Back where they belong



Founded by Xavier Micheron, the [Ascott Collection](#) is a French competition car specialist with a very clear philosophy - to bring historical and technologically innovative racing cars back to the circuits on which they forged their reputations. With this in mind, Micheron will race two very special prototypes at this weekend's Le Mans Classic - a Howmet TX, the only helicopter turbine-powered car to win a race in the period, and a Lola T600, which was among the very first 'ground effect' cars to race at Le Mans. "Le Mans has always encouraged technical innovation and, in my opinion, these two cars embody two experimental avenues that designers pursued," he comments. "The turbine cars never took off, but the ground effect Lola provided a new and formidable model for sports car racing."

Intimidating much?



Having resided in the Ascott Collection for some time, Micheron is familiar with the driving traits of each. "The Howmet is an intimidating car, though it's surprisingly intuitive to drive as there is no gearbox - it's actually a bit like driving an electric car. On the other hand, the Lola is a fantastic tool with which to attack the curves of Le Mans." For Micheron, racing at Le Mans is as much about meeting friends, old and new, as it is racing on the mythical circuit. And, in fact, it's thanks to these people who share 'our' passion that these special cars could be preserved in running condition and raced at such events. "In some respects, these cars should belong in museums," he concludes, "but I guess it's even more striking to see them perform as they did all those years ago." We'd like to wish Xavier the very best of luck for this weekend - if you're going to be at the Circuit de la Sarthe, you can see him in action in Plateaus five (Howmet) and six (Lola).

Photos: The Ascott Collection

Gallery

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