

10 more affordable collector cars to buy before it's too late

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Classic Driver

They're definitely still out there, those affordable collector cars with growth potential, especially if you follow the market-wide movement and plump for a so-called 'youngtimer'. Search diligently and choose the most coveted variants, and these 10 future classics can be had for below 50,000 euros...

BMW E34 540i



In the early 1990s, BMW fitted its beautifully over-engineered [5 Series](#) with a 4.0-litre V8. Purists will tell you the 'sweet sixes' are the ones to have, but if you can find a good, unmolested 540i with a manual box (no mean feat, let us tell you), you'll never be left wanting more. Plus, for us, the E60 V8 is one of the best sounding BMW engines ever built, transforming the car into a genuine M5 alternative that's a lot easier on the wallet. As mentioned, the difficult thing here is finding one that's not been adopted by a drift king or involved in an accident.

Land Rover Discovery 4



Back at the beginning of the year when we asked various experts from the collector car world which cars they'd be coveting in 2019, several of them actually told us the ultra-practical fourth-generation [Land Rover Discovery](#). Apparently, British dealers, in particular, share an affinity for the SUV, which effortlessly blends Land Rover's old-school ruggedness with modern design and sophistication. Choose the most recent example you can afford, ideally with no gaps in the service history - neglect is the key factor to avoid here if you want a Disco that'll last for years, both on the road and off it.

Porsche 996



If you can get over the googly eyes and the fact purists will forever deem it the runt of the litter, the [Porsche 996](#) is a brisk, brilliant, and bona fide 911. It's an affordable one at the moment, too - solid Carreras can be found for around 25,000 euros, while the more desirable Carrera 4Ss and Turbos are closer to 50,000. Porsche rewrote the formula with the 996 and, God forbid, consigned the iconic air-cooled flat-six to the history books. But it was still a head-turning sports car that would raise the pulse of even the keenest of drivers today. Treading the line between old-school character and modern performance, the 996 is a car that if you do your homework and choose the right one, you could genuinely use every day. We'd plump for a manual, post-facelift Carrera 2 with solid annual service history.

Audi B7 S4/RS4



There are sharper noughties saloons out there, but the B7-generation Audi S4 is a fantastic package - handsome, abundantly powerful, and truly comfortable. Choose a manual Avant and you've got a proper V8 sports car in which you can lug the family *and* the dog around. And they're certainly not going to get any cheaper than they are now. If your budget is a little larger, it's probably safe to say the same of the hotter 420HP [RS4](#) - 20,000 euros will buy you a good one. You'll need deep pockets to keep it in fine fettle, but that's a hell of a lot of car for the money.

Aston Martin DB7 Vantage Volante



Ford, Jaguar, and the legendary British racing driver and privateer Tom Walkinshaw. If it weren't for those three names, the [DB7](#) would certainly have never become the sensational Grand Tourer it proved to be, let alone the modern saviour of Aston Martin. For the price of a generously specified new 'hot hatch', you could be cruising the continent in a brawny and desperately elegant drop-top DB7. Naturally, the six-cylinder cars are cheaper to maintain and were, bizarrely, better rust-proofed than the V12s. But then there's no substitute for the majestic and awe-inspiring pull of the twelve-cylinder engine, particularly while covering larger ground. Perhaps more so than any other car on this list, research is essential.

Mini Cooper S



The original 'new' [Mini](#) was flawed in so many ways - its ride was bone-jarring, its cabin cramped, and its engine prone to go bang. But there's no denying the R53 Cooper S is still the best of the bunch, its supercharged 1.6-litre engine, stiff chassis, and quick, direct steering making for a genuinely fun miniature sports car. Common issues are well documented so do your research and buy the best you can afford. You'll be hard pushed to find an everyday car that offers more smiles-per-mile for the same price.

Alfa Romeo SZ



Now, the [Alfa Romeo SZ](#) is admittedly a car you'll currently struggle to find for much below 50,000 euros. But given that Zagato celebrates its centenary this year and the quirky Italian coupé boasts all the credentials of a sure-fire future classic, we thought we'd bend the rules to include it. Just 1,000 SZs were built, making it a hell of a lot rarer than many of the other cars listed here, and utilised the underpinnings of the 75, motorsport-derived suspension, and Alfa's strong and fabulous-sounding V6. Sure, from an aesthetic point of view you might think it's the monster it was famously nicknamed. But who wants to drive a car that raises no questions? Collectable Zagatos big and small are in the limelight this year, and we wonder how long it will be before *Il Mostro* joins the value leagues of some of its more exotic Milanese brethren.

Jaguar XJR



A regal land-barge that raises only the question of which rung of the Royal family you sit on, the noughties [Jaguar XJR](#) is a supremely powerful and luxurious saloon that 15 years ago, would have cost you north of 80,000 euros. Today, you can pick a good one up for a quarter of that. Unbeknownst to many, who were miffed by the car's traditional styling, the modern-era XJR was actually very advanced, utilising an aluminium monocoque that rendered the car both drastically lighter and stiffer than its predecessor. Fortunately, the XJR was a reliable car, so don't be put off by higher-mileage examples if they've been regularly serviced.

Mercedes-Benz E60 AMG



One of our all-time favourite 'sleeper' sports cars and quite possibly one of the coolest ever automotive wolves in sheep's clothing, the Porsche-built [Mercedes-Benz E500](#) was a B-2 Stealth Bomber for the road. Did you know that towards the end of the car's life, AMG enlarged the W124 super saloon's V8 engine to 6.0 litres, fitted a better gearbox, updated the styling in line with the rest of the model range, and whacked an E60 badge on the boot lid. The result was billed as 'The Drastic Satan of Mercedes-Benz' - a 400bhp E Class that would comfortably show its heels to BMW's M5 or the Lotus Carlton. Similarly to the Alfa Romeo, you're going to be hard-pushed to find one for below 50,000 euros, especially considering fewer than 150 E60s were built. But with the market herding towards these rare 'youngtimers', this could be your last chance to get your hands on this undisputed modern classic before values truly skyrocket.

Volkswagen Corrado VR6



The [Volkswagen](#) Corrado VR6 is a sports car that's definitely more than the sum of its parts. In shoehorning its clever V-Inline six-cylinder engine into the compact Golf-based Corrado (the upmarket Scirocco alternative), VW created an affordable sports car that drove brilliantly and oozed its own distinct character – something that arguably can't be said of its syndicated 'hot hatches' today. Perhaps best of all, it had an active rear spoiler, just like the Ferrari Enzo. The two-owner white example pictured is the best of the small selection of Corrados currently on the market – it's priced at just below 12,000 euros.

Photos: Motorlegenden, The Octane Collection, Mini, Land Rover, RM Sotheby's, Pfaff Reserve, Historics at Brooklands

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