

CLASSIC DRIVER

What makes a future classic - and is grey the new black?

Lead

What makes a car a ‘future classic’? One sunny weekend in Warsaw, Błażej Żuławski joined two of his friends, both of whom own cars from the 2000s with great potential, to try and find out...



As of late, I've been privileged enough to run a Porsche 911 Carrera as my daily driver. The pre-facelift rear-wheel-drive 996 might not seem particularly special from an outsider's perspective, but it's a pretty big deal for me as I bought it with my own hard-earned cash.



My relationship with the 18-year-old car is more of a love affair than a calculated marriage of convenience, but as I continue to pour money into fixing the myriad things that seem to go wrong with it on a daily basis (despite the full Porsche service history), I've quietly started counting on getting some of my cash back should I ever decide to sell it. In the words of *Sex and the City's* Carrie Bradshaw, I can't help but wonder... is my car going to be a future classic?

In an attempt to find out, I've enlisted the support of two very good friends: the Australian musician and author Michael Moran and Marcello Sora, an Italo-Swedish film director turned successful estate agent. Both are serious petrolheads and, between them, own a weird and wonderful selection of cars.



Moran's garage, for example, includes a 1949 MG TC, a silver 1975 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow he bought from the Sultan of Oman 40 years ago and a modest Peugeot 306 CC which, as he puts it, "is brilliant because people can open doors into it and I couldn't care less". The car in which he arrives, however, is a stunning 2009 Jaguar XKR finished in Pearl Grey Metallic with an ivory-charcoal interior and poplar wood veneer. The car's low, aristocratic V8 rumble, reminiscent of a jungle cat, dominates my Porsche's flat-six.

That is until the Italian arrives...



We hear the melodic V12 howl of Sora's Grigio Silverstone Ferrari 612 Scaglietti long before we see it – the 250 GTO-inspired exhaust tips that are part of the HGT-S pack are near deafening up close. Aside from the Ferrari, Sora owns a Smart Brabus and an E46-generation BMW M3 in Phoenix Yellow that he affectionately calls his 'kebab car' because he can get it sideways around every corner. Come to think of it, he drives the 612 in a similarly flamboyant manner. Italians.

After briefly shooting the cars together, we sit down to discuss our prospective 'youngtimers'. Firstly, just what is it that makes a car a 'classic'? Its maker undoubtedly plays a big role and it's easier to stick your bet on an established player such as Ferrari, Porsche and Jaguar.



Sure, some Ferraris have never found favour (the Mondial, anyone?), certain Jaguars such as the woeful X-type definitively won't attain classic status and Porsche has diluted its image somewhat with the profit-friendly Cayenne and Macan SUVs. But fortunately, the indelible legend of Enzo Ferrari and Ferdinand Porsche and the aristocratic image of Jaguar – a company that's been through more turmoil than Job from the bible – are stronger than any past misalliances.

The XKR has cheap Ford switchgear, the 996 those unloved 'fried-egg' headlights and the Ferrari... well, let's just say quality control wasn't of paramount importance in Maranello back in the early 2000s. But so what? You don't buy cars such as these with your head – you buy them with your heart. Or at least you should.



We all had our respective reasons for buying these cars, but what made us fall in love with them in the first place? For me, it was the realisation that the 996's quirky styling is actually maturing nicely. It's a weird tingling I get – intuition maybe. I felt the same about driving gloves some 15 years ago when I watched Tony Curtis wearing them in reruns of The Persuaders. Sure enough, a couple of years later they were everywhere, from fashion magazines to the breast pockets of dandies at Pitti Uomo.



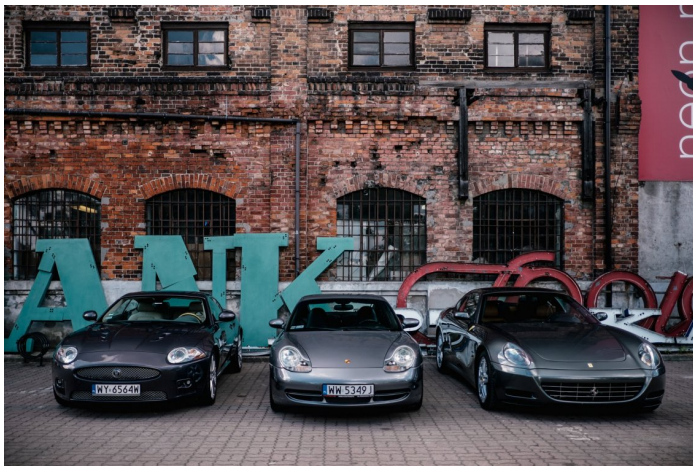
Sora points out that the way his car looks has a lot to do with why he fell for it. His Grigio Ferrari was inspired by the 375 MM that was coachbuilt for Roberto Rossellini and Ingrid Bergman. The ‘Scag’ draws heavily on the unique masterpiece from 1954. It’s a beautiful, powerful and practical machine that will happily transport Sora’s two children not only through the streets of Warsaw but also through time, back to the era of the Jet Set – a world of high-revving V12s and Cuoio leather.



Moran agrees. Ian Callum designed the XKR and took many of the best aesthetic features of the E-type, only modernised and turned up to 11. As a result, the car is muscular yet restrained. Unlike the enormous Ferrari, with its long bonnet and small rear cabin, the Jaguar is perfectly proportioned. Yes, rear headroom is sacrificed but the huge boot more than makes up for that. Moran also points out that while all three are great looking cars, they’re also currently not very popular at the moment, which is why they offer such good value.



The reason Moran thinks they’ll be future classics, however, is the way they make people feel. Their owners, on the one hand, take great pleasure in their powerful engines, authentic and not electronically engineered engine notes and the way they smell when they step inside. They’re modern enough to be used every day and to raise adrenaline without being tiresome. On the other hand, they turn heads and cause children to point. They can be parked outside a stately home or a posh hotel and look entirely in place. In my opinion, all these points are a clear indication of their future classic status.



There's one last thing to consider. In a world obsessed with largely meaningless technology, these cars have, for many, become inadequate machines from a dim and distant past. Certainly performance-wise, none could hold a candle to an Audi RS3 or Mercedes-Benz A45 AMG on a twisty road and they won't automatically keep you in lane on the motorway. But somehow that makes us all very happy. I guess we're just hopeless romantics.

Photos: Błażej Żułowski for Classic Driver © 2019

Gallery

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