

CLASSIC DRIVER

Welcome to Hendon Way Motors, a London landmark for over 70 years

Lead

Hendon Way Motors has proudly sat on one of the main roads into London for over 70 years, delivering visual treats for the thousands of commuters who pass by every day. We sat down with company CEO, Anthony Pozner to discover where it all started.



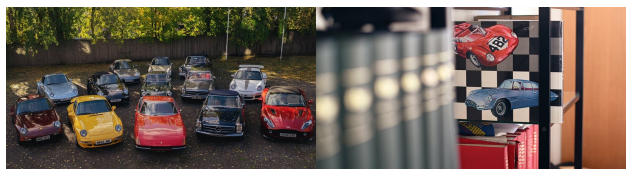
“So, how did you hear about us?” A question so often asked by businesses worldwide to understand what marketing is having the most impact. For Anthony there’s a running theme to the feedback. Answers all vary on the same premise: ‘I’ve driven past the showroom for years and now that I’m able to afford something, you were my first point of call’.



Uniquely positioned for foot traffic and free advertising, the eye-catching showroom is situated across from Hendon Central station, on the busy main road into London from the North West. Some customers stared out of the window on their school run fantasizing about one day racing the Ferrari in the window. Others looked lustfully from behind the wheel of their mundane daily driver at the Porsche they could be enduring traffic in instead, but they all have one thing in common, buying a car from Hendon Way Motors fulfilled a dream.

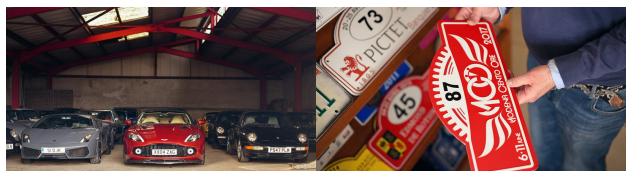
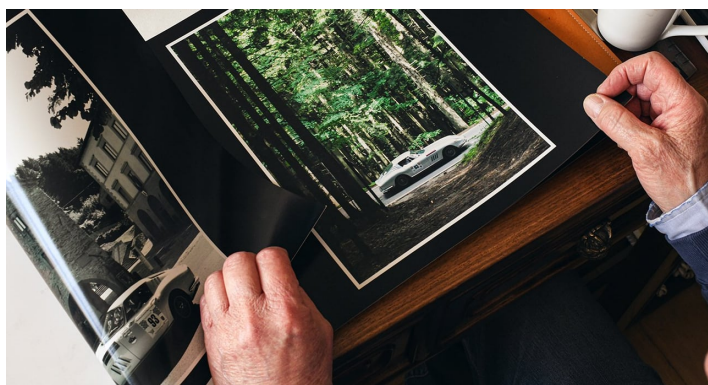


The regular passers-by are kept on their toes, stock rotates through on a near constant basis. One week a Gallardo, 993 Turbo S and a Daytona, the next, an E-Type, AC Cobra and a 230 SL Pagoda. Despite the variety in stock today, this well-known, family-run showroom started its remarkable story in 1952 as a Renault dealership. We sat down with Anthony to discuss his journey.



Anthony, let's start at the very beginning: what's your very first motoring memory?

"That's an easy one - taking the handbrake off a '30s Rolls-Royce and seeing it roll into a dustcart! I think I was about four... My father was in the film business and there were all these old cars lying around. I was fiddling about with the car; it was their fault. Obviously, they weren't keeping an eye on me, and I liked pulling levers and pressing buttons. I had a natural instinct to find out how the handbrake worked!"



How did your father come to be selling cars after being involved in the film business? That's quite a career change...

"After the war, the film business wasn't that great; the '50s was a tough time. So he converted the building to a showroom and we became a Renault dealership, so that's when Hendon Way Motors started. It was a Renault dealership up until about 1971; I joined in the mid-'60s, when I was 20. I wasn't that keen on Renaults!"



When you look at the fantastic stock you have now, it's quite a transition to get there from being a Renault dealer. I'm guessing there's a story to be told?

"It really was purely by accident. You probably don't remember, but in Fitzrovia there was a company called Motortune that sold Porsches. It was run by someone called John Cleese, but not "the" John Cleese. He was ordering brand-new Renaults from us. Around that area of London, ladies would go to Harrods and they found the little Renaults perfect for shopping purposes. They weren't too keen on the new 911, which they'd just started to sell. My mates all wanted to go out and try new cars and 911s were at the top of their list, so we supplied the Renaults and Motortune supplied the Porsches."



That's brilliant - so that was the beginning of performance-car sales for Hendon Way Motors?

"We were doing better with the Porsches than the Renaults, so we gave that side of the business up. We also started selling Jaguars, Morgans and Lotuses. In those days, you could buy a Lotus and avoid what was called purchase tax – now VAT – if you built it yourself. So they used to come pretty much complete with the engine, wheels and gearbox out. We could put them together over two or three days, and that way we were selling quite a lot of them. We also campaigned one in club racing with some success."



It seems like you have quite a strong connection with motorsport?

"Yes, we do. In the '70s, Derrick Brunt and Gerry Marshall competed in the British Saloon Car Championship. We started off in the early part of the decade and continued for most of it with Derrick. Then in the '80s with Robbie Stirling driving, we won three championships with a Group 4 Ferrari 308 in the Maranello Challenge.



Your stock has always been predominantly road cars as opposed to competition cars . Was that a business decision?

"Yes, it was, but also from demand. We wanted to build the business and increase turnover. We were specialising in Porsche and Lotus, and then Ferrari came along. The first Ferrari we bought was a Daytona, the ex-JCB one. That was the road car they used to drive down to Maranello in and then race their Group 4 car. It was Giallo Fly with a brown interior. Gradually, Ferrari began to take a foothold and we were also exporting a lot of cars to Japan. It was very chic and avant-garde, especially in the big cities, to have a right-hand-drive Lotus Europa. We used to sell quite a lot of those.



Looking at your current stock, Porsche seems to be the predominant mark for you these days...

“Yes, we do like the Porsches. The business seems to have gone that way with all the demand and we’ve become well known for selling them. I mean, we’re also selling the odd Ferrari. I just recently sold a 275 GTB/4. We sold a 750 Monza, and then we sell quite a lot of 308s, 355s and 456s. But it seems to be more 911s than anything else.”



So the 275 GTB/4 you recently sold, is that the silver one? The car you entered on many events?

“Yes, we campaigned that car over about 13 years. We did Tour Auto, Tour Espana, Modena Cento Ore, the Targa Florio and many other events. That was a very heavily used rally car, so that did quite well. I’ve done the Tour Auto about 23 times now!”



Do you have cars that you like to keep an eye on in terms of changes of ownership for potential stock one day, or are they cars that just end up coming to you?

“A lot of the cars we have in stock at the moment are ones we’ve sold before. We do tell our clients, ‘whenever you want to sell, please give us first refusal’. I’m pleased to say that most of the cars we have in stock, we know their history and we’ve sold them before over the years. That’s important to us.”





Your biggest regret?

“The 750 Monza. I sold it over 10 years ago. I wish I’d kept hold of it just a bit longer. It had probably doubled in value two years after we sold it!”



Ouch! Well, I think we should end on that bombshell!! Thank you for your time Anthony.

“Thank you very much – I look forward to welcoming your readers into the showroom soon.”

Photos: Rhiannon Hughes-Boatman 2020 ©

Gallery

