

CLASSIC DRIVER



This pearl-white Peugeot 205 T16 is a street-legal rally icon

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The pearl-white Peugeot 205 Turbo 16 'Serie 200' homologation cars are desired by rally-car collectors worldwide. Now, Aguttes is selling the most desirable one - an early example kept by Automobiles Peugeot for three years under the supervision of Jean Todt.



The Peugeot 205 Turbo 16 has truly become a star of the most prestigious car auctions lately. This is fully justified thanks to its legendary status in World Rally Championship history, its iconic shape and

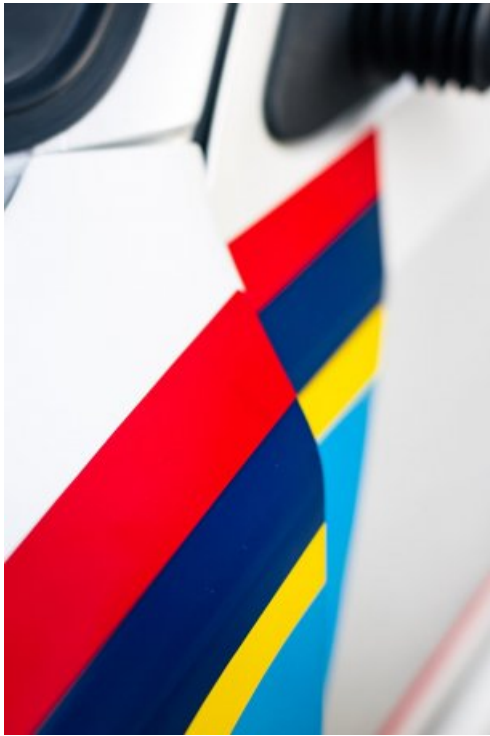
the limited number of cars produced at the time. The car presented here is not only one of the 'Serie 200' cars launched by Peugeot to gain homologation of the racing version, it's also one of just four that were painted in pearl white – the same shade as the Group B cars, at the request of Jean Todt himself. Todt, who was then the director of Peugeot Talbot Sport, wanted these four examples to be reserved for four key people in the Peugeot organisation.

This very special car, the 33rd 205 Turbo 16 Serie 200 produced, will be offered for sale by Aguttes On Wheels on 21 March next. Registered new in 1985 by Peugeot in Paris, it seems to be the example that was earmarked for Todt's personal use. So, let's take a closer look at this very special vehicle...



The Group B competition version of the 205 T16 won 16 rallies and dominated the 1985 and 1986 seasons by taking the drivers' and constructors' championships. But before this, at the 1984 Geneva Motor Show, Peugeot had unveiled the road-going customer version of the T16, commonly called the 'Serie 200' cars.

These lightweight cars shared the architecture of the competition version, with a mid-engined layout. The 1.8-litre 16-valve, four-cylinder XU-type engine was fitted with a turbocharger that increased the power to 200bhp – half of the 400bhp of the competition version, but more than enough for owners to enjoy driving it. This all-wheel-drive car was also known for being fun and relatively forgiving to drive.



The 205 Turbo 16 'Serie 200' was manufactured by Heuliez, with final assembly near Paris and was strictly available in Winchester Grey with red edging. Inside, the T16 is fitted with a special dashboard displaying a multitude of gauges, a two-spoke steering wheel bearing the inscription 'Turbo 16' and a perforated aluminium crankset. The two-tone leather and fabric bucket seats feature an imposing lion, like a warrior's coat of arms, on their backs. A total of 219 units would be produced.

It's well known among 205 T16 owners that there's an even more exclusive car than the standard 'Serie 200': the ultra-rare pearl-white cars, painted in the same colour as the rally cars. The story says Jean Todt specifically ordered these four white cars for the following four key people in Peugeot organisation: Todt himself, Jean Boillot (then president of Peugeot and considered the 'father' of the 205, which literally saved the brand), Didier Pironi (the legendary Peugeot driver) and André de Cortanze (then technical director of Peugeot Sport).





This car, which will be offered for sale by Aguttes on 21 March in Paris, is one of these four examples. As Gautier Rossignol, Head of Department at Aguttes On Wheels, explains to us: "This car bears the number 33, so it's one of the first of the 'Serie 200' and one of the four painted pearl white. The car was first registered under the name of Automobiles Peugeot, Avenue de la Grande Armée, Paris, in 1985, with the registration 510 FNF 75. Our research into the history of this Turbo 16 enables us to certify it belonged to Peugeot, for use by key management. Previous owners believe Peugeot registered the car for Jean Todt's use, but we are not able to confirm this. Three years later, in 1988, it became the property of a Peugeot engineer and was then registered 7106 TA 25, in the Doubs region where the brand is from. This number is still visible on all the car's windows."

The car still has all its original documents, the most interesting one being the details of the composition of the pearl-white paint with the mention "painted in Poissy" (the Peugeot factory near Versailles) with reference "5123098 white and pearl 5123099", before the first registration in September 1985!



Rossignol adds: "It also seems that the engine was finely tuned by Peugeot and develops 230hp instead of the original 200hp. In addition to its exceptional history, this 205 has only 9,900 original kilometres. The engine and gearbox are also original, so it's a full matching-numbers car". On inspection, it appears the paintwork is also original. Only the 'Peugeot Talbot Sport' stripes on both sides of the car aren't original; these can easily be removed. The same applies for some of the labels on the bonnet.

Rossignol is also very enthusiastic about the interior condition. "It's like a time capsule," he says. "It's in absolutely new condition, confirming how little this car has been used". The car is ready to go thanks to a recent service. On top of a mechanical overhaul, this included a set of four new Michelin TRX tyres, a new petrol pump and a new timing belt.



Aguttes On Wheels car specialist Raphael de Serres has literally fallen in love with the car: “I was born in 1984, the same year as the Geneva Motor Show where the car was presented,” he says. “This car is a childhood dream and being able to drive one of the four white ‘Serie 200’ 205s is even bigger than my dreams.” He adds: “Our test drive at the wheel of this monster confirms this Turbo 16 is like new and in absolutely perfect condition. What a thrill to sit behind the wheel and feel the turbocharging behind! The acceleration is incredible! I dream I could have been a professional driver 35 years ago during the golden era of the Group B monsters.”

With less than 10,000 kilometres from new, all its original documentation, a well known history and a recent full service, this very rare matching-numbers French-registered 205 Turbo 16 is perhaps the ultimate car for enjoying French countryside roads.



Rossignol concludes: “As with most road-going Group B cars, the 205 Turbo 16 is clearly on the rise in the market, the best example being the ‘Serie 200’ car used by Peugeot to open rallies, which we sold last December for €291,760. With this one, the number 33 combines unique provenance, history and wonderful condition. It’s clearly one to collect.”

Photos: Kevin van Campenhout

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