

CLASSIC DRIVER

Five cars you need from the March Osenat auction

Lead

The Osenat auction at Fontainebleau this March features a number of French fancies and eye-catching bahnstormers. Here's our five auction lots to watch.

1960 Facel Vega Facellia FA Cabriolet



Facel's smallest car, the Facellia was built to compete with the Mercedes 190SL and Alfa Romeo Giulietta Spider, and was similar in its proportions. Almost as luxurious as the Merc, and almost as sporty as the Alfa, it had that uniquely French recipe of comfortable suspension and agile handling. It's a gem, but one that was always compromised by its unreliable Pont-à-Mousson engine. [The car seen here](#) has had just two owners, the first - a Parisian gentleman - up until 2014. That's 54 years! It's all original. The interior is weathered and the bodywork has some patina, but it runs well and has had its troublesome engine overhauled in the past five years. Most interesting for collectors is its extremely rare hard top.

1977 Ferrari 308 GTB Vetoresina



This early 308 is one of 712 fibreglass-bodied GTBs sold worldwide. Except for the aluminium bonnet, it is entirely composite - the first time this had been done with a production Ferrari, manufactured by stalwart coachwork subsidiary Carrozzeria Scaglietti. From June 1977, Ferrari switched to steel. This lighter car (1,100kg - a saving of 150kg), therefore, is perhaps the real successor to the 246 Dino. The paintwork looked a little downmarket on fibreglass, mind you, and steel bodies cost Enzo less to produce. The rarity of Vetoresinas makes them extremely desirable. And not only are they light, they pack the most potent version of the 308's V8, with twin-choke Webers and a dry sump. [The example seen here](#) was kept in Italy for 37 years by its first owner, and then was brought to France where it took its place in a private Ferrari collection. This berlinetta has recorded 116,401km, enjoyed a mechanical overhaul in 2019, and is in very good condition inside and out.

1985 Renault 5 Turbo 2



The rally-bred R5 Turbo is a legendary automobile that's never been more collectable. Built to face off Lancia, Renault switched out the supermini's diddy engine in the front

for a mid-mounted turbocharged 1.4 inline-four, which developed 158bhp. It also swapped from front to rear wheel drive. Meanwhile, Bertone transformed the cute shape into something much more aggressive. Turbo 2s are less valuable than T1s because twice as many were built (3,167) and it uses more stock parts, whereas the T1 had special light-alloy components. Nevertheless, [the car you see here](#) received a major mechanical overhaul and engine upgrades at 84,000km. Power is now at a 220bhp. Mon Dieu.

1989 Mercedes-Benz 190E Evolution 1



One of 502 cars, the 190E was perhaps the ultimate four-door super-saloon of the late ‘80s – and the Evolution version took things to another level. This is a homologation special from the golden era of DTM racing. Power comes courtesy of a 2.5-16 Cosworth engine, providing 202bhp. But it’s the adjustable suspension, which changes the ride height at the flick of a switch, that makes it firm, agile and unique. And those wheel arches and rear spoiler are just mean. [This LHD car](#) is finished in dark grey with black leather, has 130,000km on the clock, and its original Becker Mexico radio which should be tuned to Kraftwerk.

2008 Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren Roadster



The spawn of Mercedes’ fruitful Formula One partnership with McLaren, the SLR is without doubt one of the Naughtyies’ most eye-catching production cars. [This example](#) has had just one owner; an American who kept the car between Paris and London. LHD, it has 9,300km on the odometer. The silver paint and red leather interior are in near-new condition. The black wheel rims were an option taken from the 722 S. This is a chance to own an SLR manufactured in Woking the year Lewis Hamilton took his first F1 world championship, and McLaren celebrated their last drivers’ title to date.

Gallery

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