

CLASSIC DRIVER

Fuelled by passion, a refreshing approach to selling collector cars and bikes

Lead

While Car-iconics and Bike-iconics may be based on the site of an old prison, their eclectic stock of fine cars and rare motorbikes thankfully does not suffer a life behind bars.

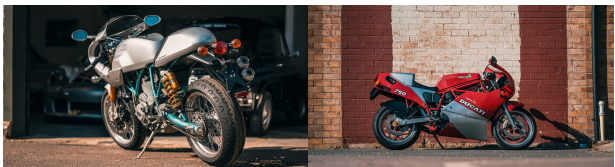


Daniel Gannon and his father, Stephen, incorporated the business in 2014. Originally from a building background, their passion for cars and bikes was simply too strong to ignore any more.

“Like all good ideas, it was born in the pub; we came up with the name Car-iconics over a pint,” says Daniel. “From there we said, okay, we’ve got two real points of difference. We’re not a dealer that’ll just specialise in Porsche, Ferrari and Lamborghini. We’re into cars that are truly iconic, and that could be a classic Fiat 500, a Ford Capri Brooklands, a Ferrari Testarossa, or a McLaren F1. That’s how wide-ranging we are, because we’re petrolheads.”



Walking around the showroom, it’s hard to disagree with that statement. There’s a Jaguar XK 120 Lightweight sat next to a menacing-looking BMW M4 GTS; behind them there’s a fun-looking, low-mileage Honda Integra Type-R. The stock moves fast – since we shot the images you see here, many of the cars and bikes have already been sold. Recent additions include a stunning low-mileage Porsche 911 Turbo 2.3 in Rubystone Red and a 1975 ‘Suffix D’ Range Rover. But what about the bikes?



Oliver Wood joined forces with Daniel and Stephen in 2019. A deep passion for motorbikes and a longstanding friendship with Daniel led them to get talking while Oliver was at the showroom showing a friend some of Car-Iconics' great stock. "I brought the two-wheeled toys to the mix," explains Oliver. Back in 2019, I was coming out of a business. I got chatting with Daniel, who's been a friend for many, many years and was talking about my next move. I wanted to do something and follow my passion like Daniel and Stephen had in 2016.



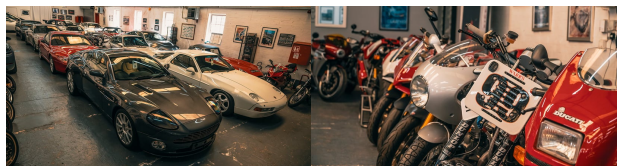
"I had a passion for two wheels from a very early age - particularly Italian marques. In terms of the business, the speed, the evolution, the direction that we're taking and the opportunities that we've been presented represent a very complementary fit with our collectors and the clients."



In the bikes section, I'm drawn straight to a Honda Africa Twin, and then to a Ducati 750 F1 Laguna Seca. Chatting with Oliver, he's clearly smitten over the stunning MV Agusta Superveloce Serie Oro, and who can argue with him? It's a work of art.



This is not simply a business - it's a lifestyle. Daniel has owned everything from Nürburgring-prepped BMW M3s, to Jaguar XK150s and all eras in between. "The latest acquisition is a Lotus Exige 410 Sport, which I've yet to really get to grips with on circuit, because there hasn't been the opportunity with lockdowns," he says. "But I'm thoroughly looking forward to what that offers in terms of a combination of track ability and roof-off road touring."



Oliver agrees with Daniel: "I have exactly the same problem as Daniel, which is that one day something comes in and you think 'yeah, I need that!'. And you've got to just sample it. So the garage at home is just like the showroom, full of some rarities and some beautiful bits of art that I've been privileged to take out and enjoy."



Tucked away in a few corners are some racy-looking Porsches: a 996 GT3 American Le Mans Series car and a 964 Cup help to broaden the stock mix even further and I wholeheartedly agree with this. Who doesn't love a race-prepped Porsche?



I ask Oliver what has been the standout sale on the two-wheeled side of the business. "The one for me really is what I nicknamed the Superleggera twins. These were, and still are, the pinnacle of Ducati's evolution of the current Panigale. Superleggera 1 was a mixture of carbon-fibre and magnesium. Superleggera 2 was carbon-fibre throughout: the wheels, the frame, the bodywork, the swing arm -everything. We found a collector who'd just ordered Superleggera number 3; he bought both of them from us, which at the time was our largest sale for a pair of bikes. Today, they're just under £100,000 for the pair."



Sadly, I can't tell you everything right now, but there's talk of bigger premises in the coming 12 months, and also a new side of the business to assist with restoring British classics such as Jaguars. "Recently we've agreed some quite different strategic relationships with a couple of key people in the industry, which will come to market over the next few months," says Daniel. "And from that we've been getting more and more into classic British cars: Jaguars, Jensens, that sort of thing."



"We feel that by breaking down the supply chain into its various components and intelligence areas, we can provide probably a 50% saving to a lot of the end users, while still making a small project management fee for ourselves. So I think organically we're going to grow into project management of restoration, helping collectors to manage their cars more efficiently and more cost-effectively." Stephen has recently finished an epic restoration of a MkII Jaguar that has been a huge learning curve and voyage of discovery for the guys.



And so ended a great day chatting cars and bikes and delving deeper into some of the hidden gems stored around the premises. I've been invited to return with my helmet next time, but that sounds like it could be an expensive day out – unless I can convince Classic Driver to let me take the company card with me! When buying something like a car or motorbike, who I buy from is hugely important. And when it comes to Car-antics and Bike-antics, it's clear I'd be dealing with passionate people who love their job.

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