

CLASSIC DRIVER

Steeped in history, Duncan Hamilton ROFGO is focused on the future of historic racing

Lead

Much has changed in the three years since we last visited Duncan Hamilton ROFGO down in Hampshire, as Nick Maton and Jack Tetley lead the future growth of this iconic company. We stopped by for a coffee and a catch-up...

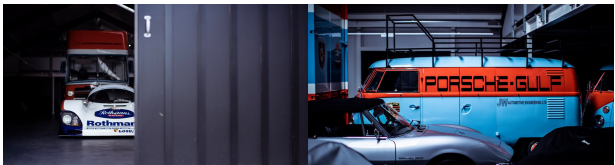


The modern yet unassuming buildings give nothing away when you arrive at [Duncan Hamilton ROFGO](#). However, as soon as I see a 1965 Porsche 911 2.0L Cup, a Ferrari 275 NART and a 2010 Peugeot 908 HDI FAP Le Mans car casually basking in the sun, I know this is going to be a good day.



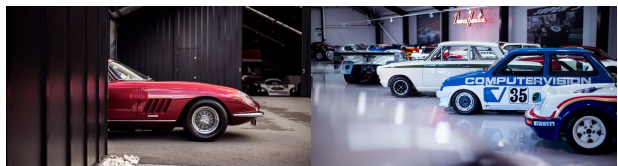
DH ROFGO is split into three buildings: one for storage, one for the legendary ROFGO collection of Gulf racing cars and one for the sales area, housing a stunning selection of race cars and classics. Inside the storage area, among some privately owned cars, is the magnificent John Wyer Gulf transporter that I last saw at the Le Mans Classic. It may not be the most valuable element of the collection, but it is absolutely among the coolest vehicles ever to wear the Gulf livery.

While the cars are drawing my attention, I'm here to chat with Nick Maton and Jack Tetley to catch up on the last few years and see what their plans are as the world gradually gets back to normal...



Thanks for having me over today; to start off, tell us about the current setup...

Jack: Nick and I have run the company day-to-day since 2017, and while there's a lot of crossover in our interests, Nick's stronger on classic road cars and supercars, particularly Jaguar E-Types, which we specialise in. I'm almost exclusively focused on race cars. Historic motorsport has come so far in a short time; in terms of the professionalism, the values and the number of events. We're constantly searching the world for interesting race cars and work together on all our deals. For 2022, we even plan to be involved in organising a special race – more on that soon!



What would you say is the key change since Classic Driver last visited?

Nick: Others in the industry think of us as a leader in race-car sales, which has become our focus since we last saw you. We aren't actively moving away from road cars, but there's so much growth on the racing side, with so many great people entering the scene, that we've found ourselves drawn to it. The fascinating stories with race cars makes searching for and rehoming them even more rewarding. We're also keen to continue to maintain DHR as a relaxed and informal place to visit - we want to be able to have a laugh with our clients. Racing and buying cars should be fun and a happy by-product is that the market is moving healthily in the right direction. Jack and I always tell new and seasoned buyers to buy for the love - if they love the car, someone else will down the line. We want them to enjoy owning it, rather than seeing it as a piece of stock.

Jack: While our focus has become race cars, our philosophy is simple and broad: if it's cool, a lovely example, a great story, very eligible, we'll happily have it in the showroom, regardless of value. Whether it's a factory Group C Mercedes C11, or a really good continuation FIA Cobra that can be raced anywhere, we'd enjoy finding a new home for it. The fact that one is worth millions more isn't important - both look and sound great, and will give the owner huge enjoyment in different ways. In particular, we enjoy selling to racers; seeing a car you sold being raced hard is great, and you can enjoy the experience with your client in the paddock.



I love that ethos, I think that's becoming more apparent with collectors now, that cars and collections should be fun and usable without barriers. Are you getting out to more events and races now, too?

Jack: Yeah, we're doing a bit more racing - the obvious greats such as Goodwood Revival, Festival of Speed, Members' Meeting and Speedweek. When our current personal projects are complete, we'll be out with Motor Racing Legends, Masters, Peter Auto, etc. Next door, in the ROFGO Racing workshop, the guys run cars at Monaco Historic, Le Mans Classic and Goodwood. We're slowly feeding some very select clients into them.

Nick: We have some other in-house projects like the prototype Schuppan 962 road car that's currently being restored with ROFGO Racing, where the cars are prepared to modern F1 standards in every department. It's great that we can offer that service, but the workshop isn't big enough to serve many clients - just a few, trusted individuals who are already on the sales side; we feed them into the race shop. We're all feeding off each other, including Venture Engineering, which we're linked to. They have some of the best engineering brains in the country. We're relatively competitive at racing, but the business currently takes most of our focus.





The space here is fantastic; just seeing all the details, models, books and art, I could spend all day looking around. Do you have plans for any events here?

Jack: We've talked about doing mornings here, and meets of various sorts, but not on a grand scale. That's not really our style, but something intimate and exclusive would be nice. We're very private here, and like to get to know people a bit before we open all the secret doors!



I completely agree, it's nice to create that buzz where people see photos from an event after it has happened. So, not all cars you source make it to the website; you've also been involved in some high-profile off-market sales. Tell me about one of the bigger star cars you've been involved with recently?

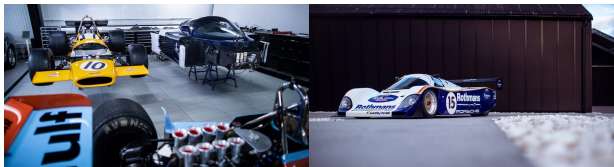
Jack: There have been quite a few in the last four years, probably a couple of star cars stand out for Nick and I in terms of satisfaction, the chase, and being a joint effort...

Nick: Yeah, the Miura, which you guys did a big article on recently, and a very special Porsche 911.

Jack: We found the Miura in Japan. I had a chance discussion with someone at Goodwood who knew we were building a collection of silver road cars for a client and he said, "Oh, I've heard about this Miura that's in Japan, it's silver." "Okay, well let's have a look at the pictures." A few rivets in strange places, ducts, wide wheels... "It's an SVJ! THE one everyone has been trying to get access to" Anyway, it took a good few weeks of endless phone calls, but we finally found the end user, this gentleman in Japan. About 48 hours later, plane ticket to Japan, deal done.

That was a special deal. It may well be the most valuable Lamborghini in the world, who knows. It was unveiled last year at Retromobile on the Lamborghini stand, and it's now with a true Lamborghini man who's beside himself with excitement over how special it is.

Jack: The 930 Turbo was another cool deal, again, it was a chance discussion. "Oh, there's this Porsche hidden away in the Swiss countryside, it's a 930 that's done Le Mans." We were on a flight the next day, and it turned out to be the first ever turbocharged Porsche to win at Le Mans. We bought the car from a lovely, very private Swiss man; it had been hidden away in a little village since 1976 and is now with a great client in the UK. The pursuit of cars like these is really special and exciting.



Fantastic! If that's the past few years, what's the future for you guys?

Nick: In the future, we'd love to do more racing and prepare more cars for clients.

Jack: Yep, offer people more than just sales and acquisition, and with our close links to ROFGO Racing and Venture Engineering, that will happen. We'd like to gently, and very selectively, expand that side of things, while our focus will remain on hunting the world for exceptional race cars for our clients to enjoy.

We'd love to travel again. In the last three years, we were both on planes a lot, the most interesting cars we've discovered were all because we've been able to get a flight at short notice. Despite that, I do get up every morning and look forward to going to work - you never know who might call you in our world.

Nick: I think we are very lucky. It's not a chore coming to work in the morning, that's for sure, and the future for DHR is exciting.

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Gallery

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