

This mud-hugging Volkswagen Beetle was once owned by F1 star Leo Kinnunen

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What did flying Finn Leo Kinnunen like to do in his spare time when not risking it all racing a Formula One car during the 1970s? Well, skid a 1971 Volkswagen Beetle 1302 around some dirt roads of course! It hits the Getyourclassic - Hot Wheels in September online auction from 23rd to 30th.





There's something about Finland and fast drivers. The ever-changing weather conditions, the narrow, twisty dirt roads, and the determination of its people to compete and be the very best. Finland is a melting pot of talent, and during the late 1960s into the 1970s, it was Leo Kinnunen who was the very first Finn to get a taste of the cocktail of glamour and danger in the Formula One World Championship.

Before that, though, Leo was no stranger to a race or two. After various successes in national sports car races, the Finn became a works driver for Porsche. Alongside Pedro Rodríguez and driving for Brit John Wyer, the pair became dominant in many disciplines, including the Daytona 24-hour, the Brands Hatch 1000-km, the Monza 1000-km, and the Watkins Glen 1000-km rally.



Kinnunen also gained fame for his daredevil drive at the Targa Florio in 1970 in a Porsche 908, navigating by far the fastest lap ever on the Sicilian circuit at 33 minutes and 36 seconds. Therefore, it's safe to say this gentleman knew his way around a sports car. Like many racing drivers, though, the brain rarely switches to anything but racing, and Leo wanted to try his hand at everything. This led him to the Northern Lights Rally in 1971, where we drove this very Beetle to first place with his co-driver Atso Aho. After returning home, Leo purchased and registered the Beetle for himself, and competed in several rallies in the years that followed.



The car itself is a real rarity, sporting its original green paintwork despite many years of sponsor stickers and rock rashes. Better still, this plucky off-roader still retains its original chassis and body, something of a rarity in regular Beetles, let alone one that has seen more dirt roads in its 51 years than most Range Rovers!

The car is set to virtually go under the hammer at the upcoming Getyourclassics - Hot Wheels in September sale, which is an online auction spanning from the 23rd to the 30th of September. With the nights getting darker earlier and the roads getting a little more unpredictable, this is one car we wouldn't mind getting stuck in some mud with!

Photos: Dirk de Jaeger / Tazio Magazine

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