

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Talking classics and cameras with photographer Dennis Noten and his Alfa Romeo Giulia

### Lead

Photographing some of the rarest cars ever made is the stuff of dreams for so many, and for Belgian native Dennis Noten, his dream job led him to acquire his very own classic, an Alfa Romeo Giulia. We caught up with him to get the lowdown on his recent purchase...



Having been a photographer since the age of 13, it's fair to say Dennis Noten knows his way around an aperture ring and a shutter dial. Refining your skill in arguably one of the most challenging and competitive creative fields, where the outbreak of AI generated editing and photo creation seems imminent, can seem like a daunting task. However, Dennis' passion for cars and photography means he gets to live something of a dream gig, week in, week out. He, like many born in the 1990s, started his craft out on the streets, capturing London's wealthiest as they rolled through Sloane Square. Little did he know that this love for car hunting would lead him to photograph for Bugatti, Mercedes-Benz, BMW and many, many more! Dennis explains to us how he's managed to keep going since picking up his first camera in 2006, "I've always been a true petrolhead and being able to make a living out of photographing cars is such a great pleasure for me. I'm basically working 24/7 but still manage to enjoy doing what I do. I guess that's called passion – I can't imagine anyone doing what I do without being passionate about it. Things – as always – do look better on social media, though. You only see the good side, right?!"



That good side is, of course, photographing the world's coolest cars, but Dennis' journey has led him to venture into various sub-genres of the automotive world, namely track cars and the one we are most excited about, his freshly acquired Verde Pino Alfa Romeo Giulia Nuova Super 1300. Dennis sets the scene of why he chose this plucky Italian saloon, "I bought it after selling my 1998 Honda Integra Type R, and it's basically my first proper classic car. I'm not very handy myself, I always wanted an old Alfa but was too scared of running into problems and not being able to fix it."



A worthy concern to have, but what immediately struck Dennis was just how much information and support these old Alfas have, in all corners of the world. While some are prone to a bit of corrosion and faulty electrics, finding the right one can reward you with a truly unforgettable driving experience. Dennis recalls how he was bitten by the classic Alfa bug, "I first drove one over a decade ago, one that was owned by my friend Roland Van Esseveld, a man who has owned over 50 Giulia's and knows these cars like few others. The perfect man to take with me when checking out a Giulia I'd found online." After a lengthy roadtrip to Scherpenzeel in The Netherlands, Dennis was finally greeted by this wonderful Verde Pino over Tan thoroughbred. "I knew the current owner had multiple other interested parties, and so the pressure was on me slightly to get the deal done, but to my surprise the owner simply threw the keys at me, and shouted "take it for a spin, then you'll buy it."





A sharp turn of the key fired up the racy little engine, one that had been fully rebuilt by the previous owner, including a fresh gearbox overhaul, Bilstein suspension, a full respray and other general upgrades to aid with modern-day driving. This was as good as it gets when it comes to Giulias, and as Dennis set off with Roland beside him, the deal was already done in his mind, "I just couldn't get the smile of my face. We stopped for some photos on the test drive and a family cycles by - the father saying "Squadra Bianca, yeah!!", clearly a fan of the race series from the 1980s to 2002 which heavily featured Giulias, often sporting coloured front lips against sharp white paint. Roland, who had so many of these cars, assures me that it's a good example and says that if I like the looks, I should go for it. So that's exactly what I did."



The dream was sealed, and two days before Christmas Day, Dennis and a friend set off to collect the Verde classic, on the way back from photographing a Mercedes-Benz CLK DTM AMG for Bonhams (talk about a juxtaposition!). It was then that he experienced something so many of us feel when collection day rolls around, a concoction of nerves pure excitement as you eagerly wait to get the keys, "The weather wasn't great, and having never driven the Alfa in the rain my first solo drive and 200km journey back home was going to be an interesting one to say the least. Thankfully, I had a friend join me in another car for some of the journey, but after we departed, I end up in a massive traffic jam entering the highway and, with no assistance or technical knowledge, I got nervous in the stop-and-go traffic. But, again, no problems whatsoever and I managed to bring the car home in one piece. I immediately took Ellen, my girlfriend, and our dog Penny a little drive, which they seemed to enjoy as well! Happy times."



A true modern day love story, featuring a car we are so incredibly jealous of, but equally so pleased that its custodian is someone as passionate as Dennis. Classic cars, and in particular Italian classics, provide a feeling like few others, and despite the honeymoon period wearing off, Dennis is still as smitten with the Giulia as he was on that first test drive. “During the first 5 months I drove about 1,500 kilometres in it, all with a massive smile on my face. My job often pulls me from country to country, so my time with the car is limited, but when I do get the occasional free Saturday morning, there is nothing better than a quick blast in it, just to hear that engine sing.”



It also perhaps doesn't help that Dennis, like so many petrolheads has some other cars in the garage, “my 1991 Mazda MX-5 is one that's very close to my heart, as it was my first car which I bought when I was 18. I Bought it from a friend over MSN for €1.600 and have done lots of cool trips with that car. Over the years I had it built into a track day tool, and now it's enjoying a full restoration.”





It's a story that emphasises the beauty of classic car ownership. Despite being surrounded by the very latest and great machinery from some of the industry's biggest players, Dennis chose a plucky mid-1970s car for his everyday driver (with a little bit of spice added to it), allowing him to experience pure joy and excitement with every drive. "The car is loud, smells of fuel, it gives you so much sensation. My friend and fellow photographer Sian Loyson shot the photo of me drifting, and I think that shot sums up the car well. Plus, people give you thumbs ups all the time, they smile when they see the car, totally the opposite of driving a modern sportscar." Old cars are just great, aren't they?

[Follow Dennis' Alfa journey here!](#)

*Photos by Dennis Noten*

**Gallery**

















































































































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