

CLASSIC DRIVER

Japanese royalty is set to dazzle the crowds at RM Sotheby's Paris Sale

Lead

It's a car that truly needs no introduction, Toyota's first and only dip into the illustrious and highly competitive supercar market turned out to be an instant hit. Now, this incredible Toyota 2000GT heads to the upcoming RM Sotheby's Paris sale on the 1st February.



In 1967, while Toyota were slugging away producing mass-market machines like the Corolla and Corona, sun-drenched Italian car makers were gleefully enjoying the golden age of supercars. Ferrari had the 275 GTB, Lamborghini had the freshly launched Miura, while Maserati, Fiat and Alfa Romeo all also wanted a slice of that sweet, sweet gran tourer action. Not to mention Jaguar with their silky-smooth E-Type, and Porsche hadn't long released that strangely-named car called the 911? That'll never catch on...



Toyota, however, had no real business being amongst these brands. The Japanese firm's key ethos, even back when it was born in 1937 was to create cars for people to enjoy, feel safe in and carry with them whatever they desire. These are traits not usually found in supercars, but in the middle of 1960, Toyota felt the time was right to down the mass-market tools and create a car that proved Japan could do luxury and performance, and so, the 2000GT project began.

Toyota called upon Yamaha to collaborate on the 2000GT, which was officially unveiled at the 1965 Tokyo Motor Show to a flurry of onlookers from around the world. It was a car that procured inspiration from every brand within the sector - its rear suspension and chassis components were a clear nod to Lotus, while the 2-litre twin-cam straight-six was like that of an Aston Martin or Jaguar. Of course, the styling too was something that stunned so many, featuring an elongated front-end with almost no seams, only that of a small front-hinged bonnet that housed the 148-horsepower heart of the 2000 GT. Its design was somehow familiar, yet so original and exciting at the same time, with a Zagato-esk double-bubble roof and curvaceous rear panels. The result is a truly beautiful looking car, one that many regard even today as being one of the best-looking classic cars ever made, especially after seeing 007 behind the wheel of a convertible version in *You Only Live Twice*.



It might have had the presence and the looks, but in order for the 2000GT to really prove itself as a rival against the mighty prancing horses, the Toyota needed to go racing. Toyota dutifully took its movie star racing, notable results including first and second in the inaugural Suzuka 1000 km.

Despite the initial wave of excitement and ambition, just 337 2000GTs were ever made, mostly due to the production costs and Toyota having to focus on the real money-makers in the form of the Celica and Corollas, but the 2000GT remains a true motoring icon. This example, finished in Pegasus White, is a right-hand-drive example that was restored before being imported from Japan in 2013. Since arriving in Europe, it has been a focal point in a Toyota showroom and made appearances at various shows around Europe, no doubt causing quite the stir wherever it ends up.



While golden era Ferraris and Lamborghinis will always hold their own against most supercars, the Toyota 2000GT is a supercar that was made purely for the purposes of experimentation, from a motivation to be the very best in any sector, all wrapped up in a gloriously stylish and sophisticated package. This fantastic example is set to stun the crowds and set the bidding alight at the upcoming [RM Sotheby's Paris sale](#) on the 1st February, with an estimate of EUR 500,000 - 700,000.

Gallery

