

CLASSIC DRIVER

Journées d'Automne was the laid back end to a busy year we all needed

Lead
Arriving right at the end of car season, you might think Journées d'Automne would be forgotten, but there's a reason it's the favourite event for those in-the-know. Dennis Noten was there to capture the French automotive fantasy in all its glory.



As the leaves turn golden and the temperature begins to drop, autumn usually heralds the end of the annual event circuit for us car addicts, but there's one last hurrah the calendar has to offer, and that's Journées d'Automne, a petrol-fuelled weekend romp in France's Stunning Champagne region. Despite arriving right at the tail end of the year, there's no shortage of enthusiasm among regular attendees of this invite-only event, who've all reserved a special place in their hearts for this relaxed weekend among friends.



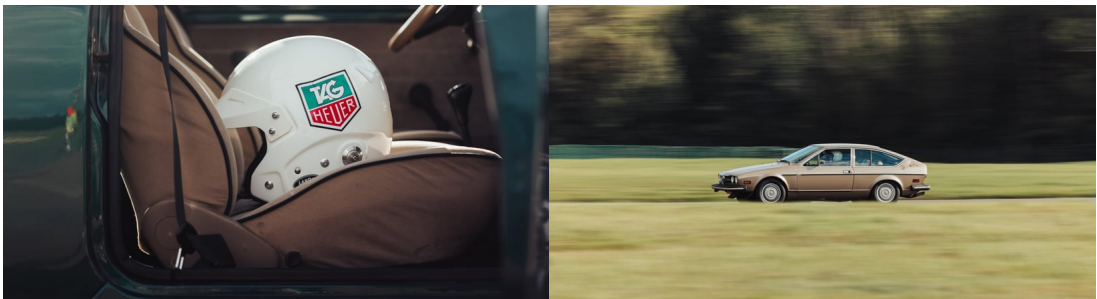


This year, Dennis Noten was our man on the ground, attending in his gloriously green 1975 Alfa Romeo Giulia. The Giulia's presence among multi-million euro classics like the 1932 Alfa Romeo 8C 2300 Zagato driven by Christoff Cowens of Fiskens and equally-impressive Bugatti Type 35B highlights part of Journées d'Automne's immense appeal: this event isn't about how many zeros you can affix to your ride's price tag, it's simply about a shared passion for everything automotive.



After an informal barbecue on Friday, Saturday saw attendees descend on Circuit des Ecuyers in a flurry of polished metal. Despite this being Dennis' first time attending Journées d'Automne, he felt right at home on the technical twists and turns of the French track, having frequented the circuit in the decade since he got his driver's licence.





It's a fantastic venue for both the less experienced drivers and the hot shoes in the crowd, with ample runoff area and a lack of guard rails providing peace of mind for those looking to find the limits of their classics' abilities, without risking a hefty body repair bill.



Friend of the magazine, Tom Hale of Morton Street Partners, could be seen hurtling around the track in a brilliant white Alpine A310, while Georgia Peck and Merlin McCormack lapped their golden Alfa Romeo GTV in style. Tom Shaxson also easily won the mental rental competition with his fabulous purple Series I Jaguar E-Type borrowed from Jaguar Classic.





An early start on Sunday morning might not have been exactly what the more enthusiastic participants of the previous night's festivities were looking for, but there's no hangover cure like a classic road rally. Around 140 kilometres across Champagne country saw a 911 Carrera 2.7 RS playing tag with the likes of a Lamborghini Espada and Ferrari 275 GTB, to name just a few from the eclectic mix of cars joining in the convoy.



Under blue skies, the attendees finally waved their farewells, bringing another magical edition of Journées d'Automne to an end. While it's certainly not short of the big ticket collector cars, the inclusion of so many accessible classics, and the universal appreciation of both, goes to show that car lovers don't discriminate, and we can't wait to see what shows up at next year's edition!

Photos by Dennis Noten

Gallery

