

CLASSIC DRIVER

Milan to London by Lancia was the road to automotive heaven

Lead

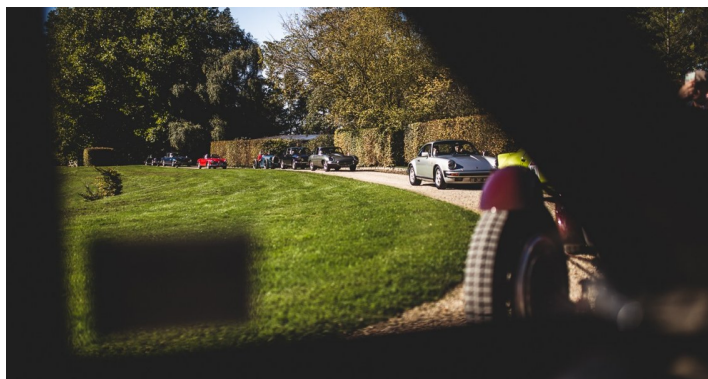
As we all know, when driving classic cars long distances, making regularly scheduled stops is important, allowing car and driver a break from the stresses of travel. On a recent trip from Milan to London in a newly purchased Lancia Fulvia, however, the stars aligned for a truly sensational detour...

Forza Fulvia



Having the rare opportunity and great privilege of commandeering cars old and new as an occupation is one us automotive journalists don't take for granted, but from time to time, everyone needs a stint away from the 9-5. Being the hopeless devotee to all things old and mechanical, several months of planning — and a lightness to my wrist, where my beloved Rolex Explorer once resided — culminated in a bucket-list holiday for this petrolhead: fly to Italy, buy an old car, and drive back to London. Indeed, after a couple days of sampling Milan's bars and restaurants and then collecting my 1971 Lancia Fulvia from the incredibly accommodating [Milano Garage](#), a short hop to Chamonix set the tone for a sensational trip, where I often found myself doubting it could get any better. That was until a flurry of Instagram messages and an introduction to a charming Frenchman yielded arguably one the finest invitations I have ever received.

On days like these



I was to cancel my hotel reservation in Reims and instead stay in the grounds of Chateau de Fère, where I would gate-crash this year's [Journées d'Automne](#), an automotive gathering so gloriously inclusive, relaxed, and with such *joie de vivre* that it could only occur in France. And so, after an evening of Champagne and a veritable feast among a passionate and varied crew of automotive disciples celebrating the 15th year of this one-of-a-kind event, the little Fulvia found itself convoying to Circuit des Ecuyers for the most relaxed track day ever — where everything from Minis to Bugatti Type 35s enjoyed spirited blasts in between crêpe breaks. This was followed by a long lunch in the medieval surroundings of Nesles Castle, before a far less captivating journey to the Eurotunnel. A testament to Lancia's early engineering prowess, and much to the surprise of many questioning car fans, "Fulvietta" tackled the 1,400km journey from Milan to London without fault — despite my occasional wishes for a chateau-side breakdown to prolong the memories that the Lancia and the kindness of friends had created...

Photos: Mathieu Bonnevie for Classic Driver © 2017

Gallery

