



# Quentin Willson's SMART BUYS 2024

If you thought you'd missed out on that dream classic, think again. Over a broad spectrum of prices, some of the most desirable models have been sliding back

Words QUENTIN WILLSON Photography JONATHAN FLEETWOOD

No wonder the economy has buckled. Since 2021 UK interest rates have risen 14 times and are now at the highest level for 15 years. Our hobby, largely unaffected by previous geopolitical ructions, hasn't escaped and values have fallen. We're also seeing a similar contraction in Europe and the US where many prices have returned to 2019 levels. We tracked 1400 models across the Classic Cars Price Guide from 2019 to 2024 to identify the biggest casualties. From that analysis we've chosen five classics that over five years have shed between 21% to 43% of their values and now look like smart buying opportunities. These are all desirable, hot, and captivating classics at prices you thought we'd never see again. Some are the lowest they've been for a decade. We think now could be the time to start hunting for a bargain.

The **Fiat 124 Spider** is our most affordable faller. Prices have slipped by 21% since 2019 with cherished cars now around £13,500. Back in 2018 Anglia sold a restored '68 Series 1 with factory alloys for £17,000. Four years later it was back with ACA, fettled and improved, but sold for £15,500. Over the last year the Spiders that have been at auction either haven't sold or changed hands for the low teens. Yet this cute Italian makes a distinctive alternative to an MGB and is cheaper than an Alfa Spider.

Some 198,000 were built during the '66 to '85 run, first by Fiat and later by Pininfarina. Twin cam engines rose from 1438cc to a fuel injected 1995cc, and 80% of production went Stateside. All are lhd - although there were a few bespoke rhd conversions - and there was even an auto option.

The Spider has a strong heritage. Pininfarina badges adorn its flanks, the shape penned by Tom Tjaarda of Ferrari 275GTB and 330GTS fame. The clever dohc cylinder head was delivered by Aurelio Lampredi and sits on a slightly revised 124 block. It's a highly praised unit that became a Fiat staple right into the Nineties. Four-wheel discs, Panhard rod, trailing arms, a later five-speed gearbox and a soft top that can be raised with



Conversions are out there if you insist on rhd



Spiders got the crossflow cylinder head



**Owning a Fiat 124 Spider**

'I bought it in 1990, when it had done 36,000 American miles,' says owner Marc Gordon. 'I paid £9000 for it, which was pretty heavy in 1990, but it was in excellent condition, a rust-free Californian import with one doctor owner.'

'I kept it street-parked until recently. Twelve years ago I got DTR to refurbish it; they cleared up some rust but it wasn't heavily rotten. The biggest challenge has been keeping its ANSA exhaust - spares aren't available so I've had to have sections fabricated for it.'

'But I've hardly had any problems in 34 years. With the exception of a sole distributor issue it's never let me down. The refurbishment was expensive - £20k, including rust repairs, rebuilt engine and suspension and changing the hood - but that's a lot cheaper than my other cars to restore and run. It's not in the E-type or Dino league.'



'The 124 Spider's real allure is its chaste elegance'



Ergonomic abandon, but a lively drive

one hand at traffic lights make the Spider a much more refined proposition than an MGB, Spitfire, Sprite or Midget. Fiat's period press ads made much of the Spider's sophistication - and the crudeness of the competition - trumpeting, 'For the price of an imitation sports car you can own the real thing.' There was an Abarth version - the 124 Spider Rally - with independent rear suspension, flared wheelarches, GRP hardtop, bonnet and bootlid, LSD and tuned 1756cc motor. A works version won the 1975 European Rally Championship, the Spider's greatest motor sport victory. Abarth Spiders are rare and have sold for more than £40k; the US-only 2000 Turbo conversions with 120bhp are also coveted with only 700 made.

A sorted 124 Spider is a surprisingly lively drive with the rev-happy, twin cam, four-cylinder delivering decent urge - 80mph is easy cruising - with a top speed of around 100mph. The

driving position is long arms, short legs, with a long-throw gear lever and an oddly angled steering wheel a bit like a Mini.

But the 124 Spider's real allure is its chaste elegance. The front has a Ferrari 250GTE vibe and the gently tapering wings give the small 89-inch wheelbase a fine fluidity of line. The cabin is classic Italian with white on black Veglia gauges (with a wood fascia and steering wheel on the early cars), pleated seats and weirdly positioned switches that look like they've just been thrown at the dash by an angry toddler.

The first and last models are most desirable. Pre-1975s have slim chrome bumpers and a lower ride height, while the 1979-on cars have Bosch-injected 2.0-litre engines and more refinements. The 1438 and 1608cc versions feel more revvy with a rousing exhaust note. Mechanicals are generally long lived, but rust is an issue, so buying US imports from dry states reduces the risk of expensive metalwork repairs. A couple of thousand Spiders have been imported from the US so there are plenty around. Rustproofing an already solid car will help keep corrosion at bay, although bodies on the pre-1979 cars appear to last longer. Doors, sills, and floor pans need checking, engines should sound sweet, and some trim parts are getting hard to find. Electrics can be a challenge - it's a Fiat - with sometimes glacially slow wipers and electric windows. But, at around £13,500 for a mint one, you can afford to be choosy. Buying an obviously cherished Spider will avoid any tears before bedtime.

**1981 Fiat 124 Spider**

**Engine** 1995cc in-line four-cylinder, dohc, Bosch L Jetronic fuel injection **Power and torque** 102bhp @ 5500rpm; 111lb ft @ 3300rpm **Transmission** Five-speed manual, rear-wheel drive **Steering** Worm-and-roller **Suspension** Front: independent, double wishbones, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar. Rear: live axle, parallel trailing arms, Panhard rod, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar **Brakes** Discs front and rear, servo-assisted **Performance** Top speed: 109mph; 0-60mph: 10.6sec **Weight** 1060kg **Fuel consumption** 28mpg **Cost new** £4920 **Classic Cars Price Guide** £5750-£16,000

# 'The SP250 really was Daimler's last hurrah'



Leather abounds in plush interior  
Small-capacity V8 integral to the experience



### Owning a Daimler SP250

'I've had it four years now,' says Trevor Green of his Daimler SP250. 'A few different things drew me to it – its sheer quirkiness, its rarity, and that lovely V8 engine.'

'I made a point of buying one in great nick because the prospect of restoring one isn't for the faint-hearted. Just before I bought it for £30k, this one was restored by leading SP250 specialist Robert Grinter; looking through the history it's probably had £60k in total spent on it. As a result it's never let me down.'

'As with all classics, it always needs a bit of fettling, and spares aren't as easy to come by as they are with Jaguars. I'm looking for a new rev counter, for example, and the windows aren't winding very well at the moment. These things don't cost much money though, it's more time. But if they aren't properly serviced, things soon get expensive.'

Road at 100mph. The optional Borg Warner Model 8 three-speed was specially fitted with a second gear hold making it a formidable opponent. Jaguar did its best to improve the car with the B- and C-spec versions but only 2654 Darts were built before Sir William Lyons pulled the plug in 1964. Jaguar test driver at the time, Norman Dewis, once told me that Sir William 'hated the thing.' But survival rates are impressive with the SP250 Owners Club and DLOC having records of 1748 Darts, thanks in no small part to the GRP body and strong girder chassis.

But that chassis does rust. Suspension outriggers, front cross tube, suspension turrets and spring hangers all corrode but can be repaired with new sections from Robert Grinter. Some chrome parts like front grilles and windscreen surrounds are now unobtainable and the supply of cars for breaking has long since dried up. Oily bits are easy to source and the tough little V8's only downsides are worn valve guides and badly corroded waterways in the alloy cylinder heads. Gearboxes – there's no synchro on first – can be fragile but a diaphragm clutch from a 'Healey 3000 reduces the pedal effort. The DLOC has remade new crown and pinion sets for the rear axle – another problem area. The SP250 may have started life as a crudely engineered machine but over time, enthusiasts, owner's clubs and specialists have made it drive, handle, and perform infinitely better than it ever did when it left the factory.

If you've got the loot, a Dart is an enormously special, long-lasting classic with a lively turn of speed. You can buy tired left-hand-drives for £15k, but I'd recommend going for the very best UK-supplied cars with long histories, expensive recent restorations and modern upgrades. I reckon they look their most distinctive in Old English White with painted wires. At less than £30k for a mint one we think they're a stylish steal.

'A Dart is an enormously special, long-lasting classic with a lively turn of speed'

**R**eally special Daimler 'Dart' SP250s peaked at £80k back in 2017 – which is fortunately when I sold my last one – and they've been gradually weakening ever since. We tracked a 21% fall since 2019 and found that fine, properly restored cars are now buyable for £27,500 – or less.

Last year, Historics sold a lovely, restored and upgraded 1960 example that needed nothing, with a huge history and £15k of bills, for £28,000 – although it took several different auction appearances before it eventually found a buyer. That's proper value and wouldn't come remotely close to covering what had been spent over the years. And SP250s are beguiling motors. The 140bhp 2.5 V8 is a lovely lump with an ack-ack burble and a power delivery that just keeps pulling and, if you're brave enough, is good for 120mph. The 'Coventry Quaint' finned styling grows on you, there's a really useful boot and the plush hide interior – even the dash is padded leather – is a delight. Think of it as a little Cobra and you'll get the idea. Very vintage, cart springs, lively ride, quick, unruly, noisy. The manual gearbox click-clacks nicely – when the synchro works – but the worm and peg steering is heavy and numb. A Triumph Spitfire-based rack-and-pinion conversion helps lighten things up with a bit more direction and feel. Most owners keep their Darts for years and David Manners,

Barry Thorne and Robert Grinter can supply most parts and some very well-engineered upgrades.

The SP250 was Daimler's last hurrah before it was taken over by Jaguar in 1960 and the rather naïve business plan predicted 5000 American sales over three years – which was wildly optimistic. Its desperation to enter the booming and lucrative American sports car market took Daimler to the edge of bankruptcy. It was forced to change the name from Dart to SP250 because nobody had checked that Dodge had already lodged a trademark, the guppy styling didn't go down well, and while period road testers praised the performance and price, the tail happy handling and flexing chassis on early A-spec cars were much criticised. One of the Dart's more famous moments was the Metropolitan Police using a fleet of automatics as pursuit cars against the then plague of motorcycle café racers or 'Ton-Up Boys' who would race between cafés along the Great North

### 1960 Daimler SP250

**Engine** 25547cc V8, ohv, two SU HD6 carburettors **Power** and torque 140bhp @ 5800rpm; 155lb ft @ 3600rpm **Transmission** Four-speed manual with overdrive, rear-wheel drive **Steering** Cam-and-peg **Suspension** Front: independent, double wishbones, coil springs, telescopic dampers. Rear: live axle, semi-elliptic leaf springs, lever-arm dampers **Brakes** Servo-assisted discs front and rear **Performance** Top speed: 127mph; 0-60mph: 9.1sec **Weight** 940kg **Cost new** £1539 **Classic Cars Price Guide** £19,000-£43,000



A drive that assaults your senses

In May 2023, Iconic Auctioneers sold a 2001 Vanquish with 7000 miles for £46,125, rather less than the £101,000 paid back in September 2019 for a 19,000-mile 2005 example at Bonhams' Festival of Speed sale. Were used examples of the 460bhp V12 Aston ever worth over a hundred grand? Maybe not, as our data shows they've always struggled at auction with lots of no sales. Of the 13 offered for auction in 2023, seven went home unsold – even with reserves pitched at around £50,000.

The biggest faller of our five with a precipitous 43% drop, the 2001-07 gen-one, 190mph, 4.5sec-to-sixty **Aston Martin Vanquish** looks a tempting supercar with mint, low-mileage examples on the market for £45k.

And who can't forget the hoopla at its 2001 launch. *Motor Trend* called it 'One of the most superbly designed front-engine GTs of all time' while *The Sunday Times* simply hailed it 'An automotive masterpiece'. James Bond driving a Tungsten Silver Vanquish in *Die Another Day* galvanised both kudos and interest, and even with a £160,000 list price before options, waiting lists ballooned, build slots changed hands, new cars sold for premiums and the factory couldn't cope because every Vanquish took eight weeks to meticulously build by hand. Aston's most technically advanced car ever – and its strongest and stiffest body structure – was designed from a clean sheet by the massively talented Ian Callum with a little help from Lotus. It boasted a bonded and extruded aluminium tub, composite panels, paddle-shift manual gearbox, drive-by-wire throttle and a fabulous Cosworth-tuned, rev-hungry, 48v, 5.9-litre V12.

The Vanquish was the final incarnation of handmade Astons and the last to be assembled at the old Newport Pagnell works, one day collectors may see it as an AM milestone car like the DB4. Production numbers were low with only 2578 produced – including the S models – and it's significantly rarer than the DB7, DB9 or V8 Vantage. But its driving dynamics are the true milestone with fluid, controlled and perfectly damped progress through corners and a ravenous appetite for long straights. On sharp bends you don't feel the



This is the only Vanquish in this spec  
Torque from venerable V12 is a delight



**Owning an Aston Martin Vanquish**

'I've had it three years, it's only got 10,000 miles on the clock, and it's been 100 percent reliable,' says Ian Griffiths. 'I haven't had to spend a penny on restoring it. Good ones are bulletproof. That said, I do a lot of my own servicing. They suffer with rubber perishing on suspension components, which can lead to MoT test failure. If you indulge a specialist it could soon get expensive to run, but in reality a lot of components for Astons of this era were shared with Jaguar thanks to Ford ownership, so if you get to know the car you can save yourself a lot of money. Because of this, believe it or not, it's one of the cheaper Astons to own. I know because I have an earlier-era V8 Vantage too.'

'The gearbox gets criticism, but you have to learn to shift smoothly. The clutch comes in at 1350rpm – if it doesn't, anticipate a big bill.'

Aluminium tub means the Vanquish is defter than it has a right to be



'One day collectors may see the Vanquish as an Aston Martin milestone car like the DB4'

car's mass shifting because it just glides tightly and securely round, as if attached to the road by some supernatural force. It's worth going for the optional Sports Dynamic Pack available from 2003 with uprated suspension and brakes which brings the handling close to the pricier Vanquish S. The automated, paddle-shift, six-speed 'box is preferable to the notoriously heavy Aston clutches of yore, but it's quirky and selecting reverse is a faff. Aston Works offered a manual conversion using the six-speed Tremec unit from the DB7GT. Around 100 cars have been converted and finding a three pedal version means you eliminate one of the few driving downsides of the Vanquish.

The 2+2s are the most desirable, full leather rather than Alcantara is preferred, and Tungsten Silver is more saleable than the dark greens and blues. Our cover car has done just 10,000 miles and drives and handles like new – it's a privilege to be

able to drive such a perfect original example. But before we get carried away, this £160,000 supercar needs an awful lot of love. Lower prices mean that expensive servicing may have been skimped; any prospective purchase should have a full AM dealer or specialist history with the six-month 7500-mile services ideally done and corresponding stamps in the service book. If it's missed any annual services, it's probably walk-away time.

Getting a works inspection is a shrewd move because with the earliest Vanquish now 23 years old we're seeing rust in the front steel subframe and sills, electrolysis between the alloy panels, failing coil packs and most serious – stuck valves in the oil breather system that can eventually starve oil circulation to the crankshaft. Control arm bushes can be expensive because some can't be removed and you need to replace the whole arm. Clutches can last up to 40k miles with care but have been known to fail at 15k. A new one is four grand. These are the sort of issues you won't spot in a casual walk round, so getting a Vanquish expert to do a proper inspection with a condition report could save you some enormously expensive heartbreak later.

Find the perfect Vanquish, checked over and ideally with a warranty, and you'll have a classic that makes your heart leap whenever you open the garage and hear its siren start up song. Unlike the DB7 which hard core enthusiasts never took completely seriously, this is the Real Deal. Big, butch, noisy, and very fast. The Vanquish is a proper Aston.

**2004 Aston Martin Vanquish**

**Engine** 5935cc V12, dohc per bank, Visteon PTEC electronic fuel injection **Power and torque** 460bhp @ 6500rpm; 400lb ft @ 5000rpm **Transmission** Six-speed manual with electrohydraulic sequential selection, rear-wheel drive **Steering** Power-assisted rack-and-pinion **Suspension** Front and rear: independent, double wishbones, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar. **Brakes** Servo-assisted discs front and rear **Performance** Top speed: 190mph; 0-60mph: 5sec **Weight** 1835kg **Fuel consumption** 21mpg **Cost new** £160,000 **Classic Cars Price Guide** £40,000-£51,000



An era of baby-Ferrari pretensions

Quad lights a longstanding tradition



SP250 dash took a pelting in the name of luxury



Gently canted rear deck a Tjaarda treat



Does any car suit wire wheels better than an S1 E-type?



Typography pays homage to Astons past



Dinky piece of aluminium is the shift lever



E-type panel flips down to reveal fuses



Eight cylinders dwell behind chrome dentistry



E-type FHC has hatchback practicality



E-type made exotic spec affordable



Dart's cart springs give a lively ride



F1-'box was cutting edge in 360's day



50 Classic Cars



SP250 chrome parts are now tricky to find



360 created in a Maranello golden era



Bespoke rear light clusters, unlike DB7

Classic Cars 51



'The V8 snarls and barks and you discover that this is a precise and polished super-fast road car'



Ferrari build quality much improved  
8500rpm beckons maniacally



**Owning a Ferrari 360**

'I bought this 360 from Rardley Motors 18 months ago, and it's been absolutely amazing to own,' says Nick Drury. 'I could have bought a newer model, but more recent cars are losing that analogue feel and sense of tactility that used to define Ferrari. People criticise the way the 360 looks, but you can see the Dino influence in its curves and details, as well as the way it drives. It also set the template for future Ferraris, while being remarkably pure about it.'

'People worry about running costs with Ferraris, but in the context of both its predecessors and the later cars, it's easy to own. Unlike earlier Ferraris, thanks to extensive use of aluminium, they don't rust. Check for crash damage though, because aluminium is a lot more expensive to repair than steel, but it's a better start if you want longevity.'



it doesn't quite have the steering intelligence of a 911, it makes up for it in sheer, raw heave. Back in the day there was very little that could chew the coat tails of a well-driven 360.

Not having to take out the engine to change the cambelts – needed every four years – is a major boon, as is an alloy rear subframe that doesn't rust. Engines are proving long-lived, if serviced every year or 6000 miles, but exhaust manifolds can crack, suspension ball joints – you need four – fail regularly (but there's a stainless-steel upgrade available), front brake pads wear quickly, and clutches can last around 30,000 miles on the manuals, less on the F1s. It's worth noting that you can improve the F1's shift performance by upgrading it with later software.

The 360 Spider soft tops are surprisingly expensive at around £10k fitted – so check carefully. Likewise for electrolysis at the alloy panel edges, especially round the windscreen. Make sure the car comes with its red master key that has the codes for the central locking, alarm, and radio. Reprogramming can be done but it's good sign if the car still has the original key.

Trim-wise, the leather bolsters on the driver's seat wear, door handle cables can work loose and if the cabin is anything less than beautifully mint, you might need to worry about how the rest of the car's been treated. A continuous dealer or specialist history is an absolute must, ideally with a service stamp for every year of the car's life, so be really fussy about paperwork. Our cover car has done just 21,000 miles from new and feels it – tight, eager and totally unimposing.

The 360 Modena isn't as sensitive to mileage as other Ferraris and many owners say that a 30,000+ mile example feels sweeter than a mothballed tiny miler. Spiders are worth slightly less than the coupés, the manual – just 30% of production were six speeders – will always be more desirable than the F1, and the lightened Challenge Stradale is the most valuable of all. We'll save that one for another day. But when I look at sensible mileage, historied, right-hand-drive 360 Modenas being knocked down for less than £45,000, I wonder how long this price hiatus will last and could they fall further? Our advice is watch, wait, and deliberate.



A contender for the best sub-£50k driving experience?

It doesn't seem long ago that three-pedal **Ferrari 360s** were the next big thing with prices, particularly in the States, running at over £100k. Really miniscule milers could hit £150,000. Not any more. Our research shows that even perfect 360s have fallen by 19 per cent since 2019 and just £50,000 – or even less – will park this Italian dreamboat in your garage.

In June 2022 Frome-based auction house Dore & Rees sold a lovely red right-hand-drive 1999 paddle-shift F1 with 34,000 miles and history for £41,000. We also know of one enthusiast who in May last year bought a collector-grade 2001 manual with just 7000 miles from new for £96,750 only to return it to auction in November where it sold for £82,667. That's a £14,000 hit, plus fees, in just seven months. Ouch. But we think these falls – as long as they level off – will make the 360 a real opportunity, because this is that rare thing – a reliable and unimposing prancing horse.

Replacing the delicate but much-admired 355, the bolder and sinewy 360 was the first entirely aluminium Ferrari and powered by a 3.6-litre flat plane, 90-degree V8 delivering 394bhp. Sixty came up in 4.4 seconds, top speed was a claimed 183mph and better air flow, improved exhaust pressures and a drive-by-wire throttle – another first for the marque – made the 360 much sharper and more responsive. The Continuous Damping Control system helped the handling too.

While it doesn't have the sculpted presence of the 355, it's the better car and easier to own and drive. The reception at its Geneva launch in 1999 was slightly muted – the delectable 355 was a tough act to follow – but despite a £101,000 list price, within weeks there was a two-year waiting list. Much was made of Maranello's new theology of quality and reliability and the 360 has proved to have few build-quality issues, and lower ownership costs than the 355.

But don't let that good sense deceive you. The 360 is pure mischief. When you're done marvelling at how tractable it is around town, push it harder and the V8 snarls and barks and you discover that this is a precise and polished super-fast road car. You could easily slide the rear of a 355 but the 360 feels unerringly adhesive and it's very hard to break its tremendous composure. All responses feel alive and immediate and while

**2003 Ferrari 360 Modena F1**

**Engine** 3586cc V8, dohc per bank, Bosch Motronic 7.3 fuel injection  
**Power and torque** 395bhp @ 8500rpm; 275lb ft @ 4750rpm  
**Transmission** Six-speed sequential paddle-shift automated manual, rear-wheel drive  
**Steering** Power-assisted rack-and-pinion  
**Suspension** Front and rear: independent, double wishbones, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar  
**Brakes** Servo-assisted discs front and rear  
**Performance** Top speed: 183mph; 0-60mph: 4.4sec  
**Weight** 1493kg **Fuel consumption** 16mpg **Cost new** £101,000  
**Classic Cars Price Guide** £43,500-£57,500

Having once sold an E-type for £202,000, it hard to believe that mint **Jaguar E-type 4.2s** are now down to £70,000 – a 30 percent fall since 2019. Mine was an early 1961 flat-floor 3.8, but when I sold it in 2016, Series 1 4.2s were changing hands for over a hundred grand. We think the E is now a stunning opportunity at £70k, which is vastly less than the cost of buying a project and paying for a professional restoration.

In November 2023, H&H auctioneers knocked down a pretty Opalescent Green '65 4.2 coupé with long ownership, history and in nicely patinated condition for £55,125, while in June Anglia Car Auctions sold another '65 coupé, looking mint in red – an older restoration with warranted mileage and history back to the Eighties – for £59,400. The boom in E-type values was heightened by the 60th anniversary celebrations, a decade of media hype, low interest rates that meant leaving money in the bank felt pointless and lots of cash-rich baby boomer investors, for whom the E-type had always been a poster car. A lot of those Es are now back on the market putting pressure on prices. While really perfect, forensically and accurately restored cars are still being advertised at strong money, mint, usable Series 1 4.2s haven't been this cheap since 2010.

And it's the most handsome closed-headlight Series 1s that you should seek out, in 4.2-litre form the best-driving model – the early 1964 to 1967 cars are still definitive icons. Our cover car stole my heart with its beauty and surprising turn of speed. At over sixty years old, the E's ride, acceleration and steering still feel unbelievably modern. Smooth, fast, eager, and poised, this is the one car of our five that I most want to take home. When you drive a really sorted E, it's like nothing else. That view over the bonnet, the cabin detailing, the sweet-spinning XK twin-cam motor, the pliant body control and the sheer accelerative eagerness is something you never forget. E-type roadsters are great, but the slippery coupés are a poem in metal that you just can't stop admiring.



Great value in well-restored examples  
XKE six' is lusty through whole range



**Owning a Jaguar E-type S1 4.2 fhc**

'A properly put-together E-type is still a very reliable, usable classic,' says Angus Moss of Moss Jaguar ([mossjaguar.com](http://mossjaguar.com)). However, the important part of that is "properly". Totally original cars tend to encounter running problems and overheating issues. It's why when we restore cars we always fit uprated cooling fans, 123 distributors and an electric fuel pump. It's also worth upgrading the brakes because they're fade-prone and dangerous in modern traffic. But otherwise you can use them as a jump-in-and-drive car.

'Invest in an expert inspection, and be prepared to buy an S2 if you can't afford a good S1 – you're not losing out on much – but either way, running costs are typically £3k a year including a £900 annual service. Parts prices are reasonable thanks to mass production.'



'It always was, and always will be, one of the most admired and beautifully designed cars in the world'



A sorted 4.2 will defiantly shrug off its years on a good bit of highway

When it was launched in late '64, there was very little fanfare. The March 1961 launch of the 3.8 was a global sensation that had cornered all the superlatives going and then some, but three years later the 4.2 was just seen as a model evolution. But it was dramatically improved with better gearbox, seats, headlamps, brakes, and more torque. A year later the 2+2 was launched and in '67 the one-year-only Series 1½ followed by the Series 2 in 1968. And while the Series 2s are now even better value, the closed headlamps and thin, dainty chrome bumpers of the earliest 4.2s radiate the big magic for buyers.

Our price data shows that of the 4.2s, the S1s have always been the most prized. We believe that's largely because they have the same lithe purity of line of the 3.8s but are much better to drive. And with thousands restored during the E-type boom, some of the finer cars out there are now being offered at close

to half their total cost. Serious value lies in the very best Es with supporting evidence of past major restoration work. Go for UK-supplied right handers, matching numbers, original colour and trim combos with, ideally, a long stretch of ownership and maintenance history. Don't be afraid of modern upgrades like five-speed gearboxes, better cooling, brakes, and suspension – as long as they're discreet, they'll improve both the driving experience and reliability. Parts availability is exceptional with Martin Robey, SNG Barratt, SC Parts, Moss, and David Manners able to supply virtually everything, and myriad long-established specialists exist. Start with a mint, sorted car and owning an E shouldn't be that expensive or onerous.

And while shifting demographics are also having an effect on values of Fifties and Sixties classics, we think the Jaguar E-type could be evergreen with an enduring multi-generational appeal. It always was, and always will be, one of the most admired and beautifully designed cars in the world. A special moment in British history carved voluptuously out of steel. That such a sensational motoring legend is available for such a relatively reasonable price and in mint condition is the reason why we think it's one of the smartest buys of all.

I may be biased, but every E-type I've ever owned has been a life-enhancing experience which provided many glorious – and scary – moments that I will vividly remember forever. And there are very few possessions in life that you can say that about.

**1967 Jaguar E-type 4.2 fhc**

**Engine** 4235cc in-line six-cylinder, dohc, three SU HD8 carburettors  
**Power** and torque 265bhp @ 5400rpm; 283lb ft @ 4000rpm  
**Transmission** Four-speed manual, rear-wheel drive **Steering** Rack-and-pinion **Suspension** Front: independent, torsion bars, wishbones, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar. Rear: independent, wishbones, radius arms, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar **Brakes** Servo-assisted discs front and rear **Performance** Top speed: 140mph; 0-60mph: 7.5sec **Weight** 1397kg **Fuel consumption** 23mpg **Cost new** £1967 **Classic Cars Price Guide** £48,500-£100,000



Values might have cooled, but when you're in buying mode, that's what you want to hear

## 'The trick is knowing at which point that often emotionally-driven perception of price versus worth finally arrives'

**T**he global horizon has darkened; markets are weakening. While our chosen cars may appear good value against their 2019 prices, there's still a chance they could fall in value even further. There's a lot of uncertainty in the world right now. But there's also the possibility that this could be a short window of opportunity that closes as soon as the market realises that these cars have reached an irresistible price level below which they won't fall. We don't believe we will see mint E-types, 360s or Vanquishes changing hands for thirty grand. Let's call this the Principle of Intrinsic Worth where the perceived value of an asset becomes greater than its current market price. When buyers feel that plateau has been reached, prices stabilise and sometimes move upwards. The trick – this is

the hard bit – is knowing at which point that often emotionally-driven perception of price versus worth finally arrives.

This is certainly the moment many enthusiasts have been waiting for – a return to more affordable values – where the hopes and dreams that they thought had slipped through their fingers and disappeared forever are now gradually coming back within reach. That's such a tantalising thought. So, for 2024 our advice is to carefully watch the old car market (and world events), identify the dream classic that you've yearned to own and be ready to pounce when the time and price feels right. As always, Classic Cars will be at your elbow with commentary, data, analysis, and up-to-date prices to help you get the best deal possible. Good hunting and good luck.

Thanks to: Winchester Autobarn ([winchesterautobarn.com](http://winchesterautobarn.com))