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The new classics: the cars becoming collectors' items



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A new wave of enthusiasts is driving more recent models to must-have status.



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As far as investments go, there's little doubt **classic cars** are one of the most fun. As it turns out, they're not too shabby as a financial decision too.

According to a recent [AXA XL Art & Lifestyle insurance report](#) on the global classic car market from 2018 to 2019, classic cars have remained stable "against a backdrop of widespread depreciation in passion assets".

Specifically, the AXA report noted "an escalation in demand for instant classic cars built over the last 10 years".

"A study of the past 10 years suggests something of a switch in interest from the traditional vintage models (such as **Bugatti** and **Rolls-Royce**) towards racing cars, which may well indicate new buyers entering the market," AXA stated.

"In the Top Lot segment [cars over 1 million euros] **Ferrari** once again heads the table for turnover (mainly by virtue of numbers sold), with **Porsche** having vaulted a host of other prestige marques in the past 10 years to now hold second place, just ahead of **Aston Martin** and **Mercedes-Benz**."



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Christophe Boribon, national auctions manager of Shannons, agrees that newer buyers are changing the tide as to what constitutes a "classic" car.

"The baby boomer generation were into their '60s and '70s cars, but we're seeing new emerging classics amongst younger buyers, with the **'80s and '90s limited-production** stuff starting to come through," Mr Boribon says.

"Most collectible classics are vehicles that have been produced in limited numbers, have something quirky or interesting about them or when they were launched had a certain effect on collectors, whether it was 'I can't believe they brought this out' or 'this is revolutionary'."

Brett Mudie, chief marketing officer at Lloyds Auctions, says condition is also key when determining rising classics.

CarAdvice's Kez Casey concurs: "The thing that makes a mint condition low kilometre HQ Holden or XB Falcon so valuable is their relative scarcity. No one thought they wouldn't always be around and used and abused most of them.

"Forty-plus years from now there'll be so many kept-aside VF Commodores and FG X Falcons in showroom condition that while they won't be worth nothing, I don't reckon they'll repeat the success of older Holdens and Fords as collectors items."

As a general rule, Mr Mudie adds, "the first and the last runs is where I'd be parking my money," as well as cars with any kind of celebrity affiliation.

With Mr Mudie and Mr Boribon's guidance, plus input from the *CarAdvice* team, we've pulled together a list of cars with rising collector's item status.

Disclaimer: *Of course, this article should not be used as official investment advice.*

Japanese sports cars

"There's been a big appreciation for Japanese sports cars in the last five to 10 years," Mr Boribon says.

"In the '80s and '90s they started producing some really interesting cars and the turbo era was an interesting phase for the motoring industry."



Mr Mudie concurs: "We're seeing less of the traditional Aussie muscle car and more of the Japanese muscle car, with a rising demand for things like **Mazdas** and **Datsuns**."

Specific up-and-comers include the Subaru WRX-STI (the two-door models in particular), Mazda RX-7, Honda NSX and Nissan Skyline GT-R.

A key predictor of demand for classic Japanese sports car is their age.

Most US states allow the importation of right-hand drive vehicles 25 years of age or more. As a result, those still remaining in Japan get snapped up, often irrespective of condition.

Porsches from the 1980s

"We're seeing '80s Porsches starting to come into their own as emerging classics, particularly the 944 and 928 models," says Mr Boribon.

"Also '80s and early '90s 911 models in coupe form (not so much convertibles) are rising, while the 1984-88 Carrera 3.2 coupe is very popular and very useable and the 1989 911 C2 and C4 are also both coming into their own now."

"The 944 turbo coupe is good buying, [as is] the early 928 from 1977, or later cars like 928S4 and GTS models are also sought after."



CarAdvice's James Ward also notes that the 968CS is rare and, thus, coveted, while Targas are also on the rise.

Mr Boribon adds that the manual iterations of Porsche models from the '70s to the '90s tend to be "more desirable" than their automatic or tiptronic counterparts.

Limited-run Fords

At a February 2020 Shannons auction, the top-selling vehicle was a 1970 Ford XY Falcon 'GT Replica' sedan built by oil company Nulon as part of a prize giveaway in partnership with *Street Machine* magazine.

With only 246 miles on its odometer, the transformed six-cylinder Falcon 500 fetched \$135,000.



When it comes to emerging Ford classics, "it's probably some of the later FPV models and some GTs, like the Ford Cobra GT in 2008, that have a bit traction," Mr Boribon says.

Early Series 1 Land Rovers

The February 2020 Shannons auction also saw a 1954 Land Rover Series 1 96 SWB utility fetch

The February 2020 Shannons auction also saw a 1954 Land Rover Series 1 60 GVD utility return \$46,000.



Previously, UK collectors have also been known to buy up pre-1951 **Land Rover models** from farms around Australia because they're so rust-free.

Two-door Range Rovers are also still in hot demand.

Original Toyota LandCruisers

Original examples of 40, 55 and 60 Series appear to be on the rise.

Mr Mudie also reports having "a couple of early **LandCruiser 70 Series** traybacks come through [Lloyds Auctions]."



Mercedes-Benz SL-Class models

"The '80s and '90s era Mercedes-Benzes, especially the **SL range** and the convertibles, are on the rise," Mr Boribon says.

"[This includes] later models of the 500SL – like the R129 models from 1990 to 2002 – while the 1983-86 380SL and 1986-90 560SL convertible (107 model) is very popular.

Most recently, a 1986 Mercedes-Benz 560SL convertible sold for \$85,000 at a Shannons auction.





"The 380SL is still great buying and the 1983-86 380SEC and 1986-90 560SEC (W126) coupes have gained in popularity once again as the super coupes of their day," Mr Boribon adds.

"The 1986 to 1990 190E Cosworths (the W201 model) are also extremely rare in Australia."

Limited-run Holdens

While the effects of the **Holden brand's demise** in Australia may be felt in the classic car market in years to come, for now it's all about the older models that were produced in limited numbers or sold out quickly.

"It's all about supply and demand – there were only 85 of the Holden Commodore VS GTSRs ever made, so they're in demand," Mr Mudie says.

"Australians love their muscle cars, so they love the Blue Meanies and W1s because they were the only ones that sold out."



Mr Boribon adds: "Some of the VLs, the VKs, even the Police Interceptor VLs are quite popular with the younger drivers today, while the '90s HSV models are coming up."

At Shannons' February auction, a low-kilometre 1985 Holden HDT VK Commodore 'Blue Meanie' Group 'A' SS sedan fetched \$110,000 on the same day General Motors announced the brand would cease to sell cars in Australia and New Zealand.

Alfa Romeo GTVs

"The late '70s and early '80s Alfa GTVs are coming into their own," Mr Boribono says.

"Specifically, the GTV 2.0 Coupe and GTV 2.5 V6 Coupe."



Last-run BMWs

"The E30 3 Series two-door coupes are proving very popular, especially the last of the series – the 318iS and 325iS models," Mr Boribon says.

"There's also good interest in the '80s M5s and the 635CSi."



There's plenty of discussion around the CarAdvice office on what the next-generation classics will be – have you got your eye on anything? Weigh in on the comments section below with any questions and opinions you may have.

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