

Classic cars

A classic or historic car is defined as one more than 25 years old. Here on the Costas there are quite a few clubs for aficionados of such ageing beauties, (no not the over 60's singles meetings!) either for a single marque, such as Jaguar or those catering for any model. There are many meetings of these cars throughout the year so if these continue to bring a rush of blood, or remind you of your younger and more carefree days, take a look in the press or at street adverts

Whilst the vast majority of vehicles that expats bring to Spain with them are modern, a few have brought older vehicles because they just can't part with their beloved daily run-around or because they are genuinely "classic". Re-registering such vehicles has its pro and cons and for the enthusiast the advantages hold sway

The good news is that a classic car can be inspected and registered "as is", so if your windscreen wipers slow down as you go faster as with the Ford Popular, no problem. The only "but" is that the headlights must conform to Continental standards and point to the right-hand kerb or be flatlined

No need for mod-cons

Imagine that your cherished car was built without seat belts, or that the indicators are of the semaphore variety as sported by Morris Minors, it would not pass a standard ITV test as it clearly does not meet modern requirements. As for the emissions, who cared about those back then? Mind you the inspectors will still need a certificate from the manufacturer confirming what emissions standards applied to the car when built; Why? Makes no sense to me

Other advantages are that the periodic ITV inspections are less frequent, there is normally no road tax after the first year and your insurance premiums may be lower. Sporting historic number plates denoting the status of the car should add value if you decide to sell it. If a car is less than 25 years old it needs to have been made for the EU market before it can be re-registered by a resident (the rules change if you pre-owned it before "moving to Spain"). For classics, it does not matter for which market it was made, so your Mustang from the USA or Lada from the USSR are equally acceptable

Cost disadvantage

The disadvantage of re-registering a vehicle onto Historic plates is that the cost is around €700 more than for a standard re-registration and the process can take a few months, however in some circumstances you would have no choice as the normal, less expensive, routes would not be available to you. Most of you are aware that registration tax, also referred to as import tax, is levied here. For vehicles first registered before 1997, the tax is charged at 12% of the vehicle value. The best way to obtain a valuation is to ask a classic car club or search the web in your own country for a similar vehicle for sale, naturally for such a purpose you would find the lowest valuation that you can; no need to throw it away!

Two-wheelers too!

Whilst I have referred to cars, the same equally applies to motor bikes which share the same pros and cons and cost expectations. Remember those cylindrical chokes with the sliding flap and saddles with coiled springs straight off a pushbike? You can't beat the roar of a 500 Bonneville, a sound I was always wary of when riding my Lambretta, parka and hair blowing in the wind in the 1960's. But hey, don't hold it against me; we were all young and stupid once, so if you have such a bike I'd love to meet you, nearly as much as if you have a 1960's classic Lambretta!

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