

# CLASSIC

Monégasque princes, French aviators and British playboys pioneered the world's most fabulous sporting regattas. From the Bosphorus to the Bay of St Tropez, they initiated activities from bobsledding to cross-continental swimming. Best of all, each event still beguiles today, allowing spectators to rub shoulders with corinthian amateurs and gung-ho dilettantes.

# SEASON

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MONACO

## Rallye Monte-Carlo Historique

In 1911 Prince Albert of Monaco hit upon a fine idea. To promote Monaco's modernity, automobiles would race through winter from the four corners of Europe, then 'rally' together in the sunny Principality. The inaugural race started from 11 European cities. Over a week later, the competition was won by French racing driver and aviator Henri Rougier who averaged 13.8kph, around twice walking pace. (Rougier's previous exploits in a Voisin biplane, where he flew from Monaco to Nice until a storm at Cap d'Ail forced a crash landing in Port Hercule, made him a worthy winner.)

The glory years for the Rallye Automobile Monte Carlo spanned from 1955 to 1980. Winning automobiles read like a Who's Who of classic racing cars: the Mini Cooper S, Renault Alpine A110, Citroën DS and Lancia Stratos. Then as now the route included the Col de Turini. The 15km climb at 7.2%, with its tortuous descent to follow, was raced in the icy darkness, earning it the sobriquet 'night of the long knives' after vehicles' headlights sliced through the frigid sky. In the 1980s the race became a stage on the World Rally Championship. Back then Ford Fiestas and Subaru Imprezas competed with five times the horsepower of the 1960s entrants, but without the vintage élan. The race's most recent winner, Sebastien Ogier, averaged speeds of nearly 100kph.

How to recreate those halycon days? Enter the Rallye Monte-Carlo Historique. From the late 1990s, classic rally cars have been invited to hotfoot from across the continent for a more leisurely, but no less rivalrous, racing regatta through rural Provence. "For our 2019 race, spectators can watch from starting cities including Barcelona, Milan, Reims and Bad Homburg," says Gery Mestre, President of the Automobile Club de Monaco's Automobile Collection Commission.

"The last night of the Col de Turini is always magical," attests Mestre. This winter, drivers will bolt out of Monaco at 8.30pm uphill towards La Turbie. Then they will zigzag the Alpes-Maritimes' most curvaceous passes before completing the course at Port Hercule by 1.00am. The following day's prize-giving at the Monte-Carlo Sporting Club concludes the race's illustrious history in style. That's because the ceremony is sometimes performed in the presence of Prince Albert II, great-great-grandson of the event's creator.

IMAGE, THIS PAGE Poster for the 2019 Rallye Monte-Carlo Historique  
IMAGE, NEXT PAGE Navigating the icy back roads of Provence

# 22<sup>E</sup> RALLYE MONTE-CARLO

# HISTORIQUE



**30 JANVIER**  
**6 FEVRIER 2019**



50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la victoire de l'équipage n°37  
Waldegaard-Helmer sur Porsche 911S  
au Rallye Monte-Carlo 1969



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