

GQ Südafrika, Ausgabe April 2019



IT'S JUST YOU, YOUR CLASSIC CAR AND 5.7KM OF ALMOST QUALITY tarmac between La Rōsa and Ospizio Bernina. Well, you, the stopwatch, more than 50 exhilarating curves and wild nature that only the Alps can provide.

While Swiss police are regarded as the most serious and unforgiving in Europe towards fast and loud vehicles, for those two days on Bernina mountain pass it's all different. The uniforms are only there to make sure the race is safe for participants and spectators.

There are six runs on the closed (normally public) road on Saturday and Sunday, two of which are test runs. A total of four are timed competition runs. For those who don't want to race, you can take part in the regularity

event, where all your driven times should be as close together as possible.

The reinvented classic car 'hill' climb is inspired by another motoring highlight: the Bernina Grand Prix, which was first held in 1929 and 1930. Today, those good old days are coming back as the newly established St. Moritz Automobile Week. Indicators of which were already visible during last year's Bernina Gran Turismo. The pilot project, Autofilmstage St. Moritz, was very well received and attracted spectators to come to the theatre of the Kempinski Grand Hotel des Bains, where car film classics such as *Le Mans* and *Rush* were screened.

The scrutineering on Friday already attracted a lot of spectators. The race itself, on Saturday and Sunday, offered the chance to watch some spectacular cars,



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such as the pristine Porsche 912 and the 1931 Martin Special Ford. Both from California. The latter not only had the look, but the performance as well. It raced on the salt flats of Bonneville just as well as on

the twisty Bernina mountain pass. Other participating racing cars ranged from pre-war Bugattis and Rileys to Ford Falcons, Shelby Mustangs and a couple of wild Italian Lancia Stratos rockets.

Due to its family-oriented atmosphere, Bernina will never become an overcrowded event. There's a max of 80 starters with the focus on great, unusual cars and interesting drivers. So spectators

are able to admire familiar classics that take part in the most prestigious motoring events in the world, from Mille Miglia to Pikes Peak.

A total of about 70 vehicles, from many different countries, took part in the hill climb in 2018. And for 2019 the organisers would love to welcome some South African classic car enthusiasts to this perfectly (like Swiss clockwork) organised motoring event, which is regarded as one of the best in the world.

One idea would be to ship your classic car from SA to Europe during the rainy season and participate in a couple of vintage car events. Or you can just buy a historic car there and have an appropriate first run in it.

Personally, I think Bernina Gran Turismo isn't only about the fantastic racing. It's a combination of wild nature, breathtaking landscapes and the wonderful food on offer. This year, I don't want to be a mere spectator, I want to be alone with those 5.7km of mountain road for about three and a half exhilarating minutes. ♦



#### GQ Recommends

##### A STAY AT THE STAZIONE DELLA POSTA

At the foot of the La Rōsa is the Stazione della Posta, right where the building has stood since it served as the 17th Century post office that its name recalls. Today, the hotel provides the ideal setting in which to spend the night before taking your trip around the twists and turns of the Bernina - and to soak away any exhilaration-induced muscle aches the evening after.

GEAR  
GREAT  
DRIVE



The four  
Bernina Gran  
Turismo offers  
an exciting finale  
to the summer  
classic car  
season in Europe.  
**Dieter Losskar**  
took in all of the  
race action



**Natural  
high**



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