

## Content

### **Affordable and suitable for everyday use: The newer classic cars have still got what it takes**

The sight of vintage cars often fills people's hearts with joy – and they're also valued by many as an indispensable cultural asset. "For a lot of people, historical vehicles are sympathetic objects that often have very special memories associated with them. Therefore, they're usually maintained with far more dedication than everyday vehicles," says Andreas Lahne, one of DEKRA's experts on classic vehicles.

### **Modifications to motorbikes: The devil's in the details**

Motorbike conversions are becoming increasingly popular: After all, a bike with individual flair has its own special appeal. However, making such plans a reality often involves navigating a bumpy road. Although a great deal of modifications are permitted, certain changes are naturally out of the question. Therefore, the motorbike experts at DEKRA advise that any modifications or tune-ups are carefully planned in advance.

### **Successful financial year 2024: DEKRA continues on its course of growth**

Moving into the centennial year of its existence, DEKRA is excellently positioned and successfully continuing its transformation from a traditional vehicle inspector into the leading independent expert for digital and software-defined mobility. Despite the prevailing volatile economic and geopolitical environment, the company has continued to grow.

### **Further topics:**

- Motorway construction sites: Navigating the eye of the needle
- No one gets anywhere without a good understanding of the rules
- Windshield cleaners: The time of year has come round again to switch over to a summer cleaner



*From vintage cars to modern  
classics: Memories of childhood  
and youth*

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### Affordable and suitable for everyday use

## **The newer classic cars have still got what it takes**

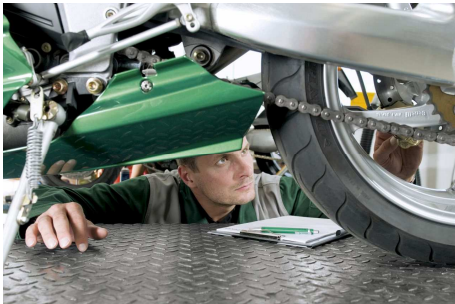
The sight of vintage cars often fills people's hearts with joy – and they're also valued by many as an indispensable cultural asset. "For a lot of people, historical vehicles are sympathetic objects that often have very special memories associated with them. Therefore, they're usually maintained with far more dedication than everyday vehicles," says Andreas Lahne, one of DEKRA's experts on classic vehicles.

If you're looking for a vehicle that brings back memories of your youth or childhood, classic cars from the 1980s and 1990s may be a more viable option than you first think, as the DEKRA expert explains. "There's still potential in such cars, even for everyday earners," remarks Lahne. "The majority of these vehicles are now 30 years old or more, making them eligible for Germany's 'H' vintage car license plate – and they can still be driven normally on the road. The supply of spare parts is also generally good."

Vehicles built from the 1950s to the end of the 1970s may also be of interest – though enthusiasts will have to dig considerably deeper into their pockets. By contrast, there's very little viability left in vehicles from the pre-war and immediate post-war periods. According to the expert, there's much less activity surrounding purchase and sale of these older vehicles nowadays – in light of the current recession, it only remains a focus for more wealthy enthusiasts.

Therefore, it's the more modern classic cars – built up to 1995 and therefore 30 years old or more – that are driving the current market. Since classic cars are generally known as "old-timers" in German, these newer models have affectionately come to be known as "young old-timers" ("junge Oldtimer"). "They're still available at affordable prices. So it's the perfect chance for people to fulfill their dreams of the past: Those would have liked to have had such a car back then, and can now afford it," says Lahne. For the expert himself, it's the thought of a Vectra now being 30 years old with an H-license plate that's most emotionally affecting: The car brings back memories of his time as a young father. "It was the vehicle that had the cheapest financing rate, at 13.9 percent – the others were between 18 and 25. That kind of thing sticks in your mind."

Even with all his passion for the topic, Lahne emphasizes the importance of approaching a purchase with a clear head: "When looking for a classic car, you can be guided by emotions – but when it comes to buying one, you need to remain calm, cool, and objective." He adds that it's otherwise all too easy to fall into the trap of falling in love and investing more than you actually want to spend. That's why it's important to bring someone along, such as a partner or spouse, who can get you to slow down and think things through. Or – if you can find one – it's even better to be accompanied by a car expert, who can assess the technical and visual condition of a vehicle and put it into perspective with the asking price. (DEKRA Info)



*Bike conversions: It might look good, but it might not be allowed*

### Modifications to motorbikes **The devil's in the details**

Motorbike conversions are becoming increasingly popular: After all, a bike with individual flair has its own special appeal. However, making such plans a reality often involves navigating a bumpy road. Although a great deal of modifications are permitted, certain changes are naturally out of the question. Therefore, the motorbike experts at DEKRA advise that any modifications or tune-ups are carefully planned in advance.

To ensure that the planned overhaul is successful and does not end in disappointment, various things will need to be clarified in advance. For one thing, it's important to know what end goal you have in mind for the conversion – for another, what kind of budget you have your disposal. But above all, it's important to be sure that your own driving skills will actually be sufficient to cope with the changes to the bike once the desired conversion has been carried out. The impact on the reliability of the machine must also be taken into account. "To avoid frustration further down the line, it's important to discuss the conversion plans with an expert or other experienced specialist first. This can potentially save you a lot of trouble, time, and money," says Achim Kuppinger, motorbike expert at DEKRA.

"When it comes to motorbike modifications, the devil's in the details," the expert remarks. "If you're not careful, you can easily run into problems with your operating license." In principle, any modification to components can lead to this license being revoked. This applies to both installations and attachments as well as the removal and dismantling of components. Such an outcome would then mean you are no longer entitled to participate in road traffic. Under certain circumstances, insurance coverage may also be lost.

Not only must any new parts have the required test certificates or certifications, but they must also have been approved for the specific motorbike and installed correctly. It's worth noting here, for example, that the issued general operating license ("Allgemeine Betriebserlaubnis" in Germany, abbreviated ABE) always refers to the series condition of a motorbike type. If the vehicle already has other modifications, it must be checked whether certain other parts would be excluded in combination with these.

For more information, see <https://www.dekra.de/de/motorrad-umbau>. Here, bikers will find comprehensive information on converting their bikes, regulations, frame, chassis, wheels, handlebars, mirrors, braking system, lights, engine, racing air filter, exhaust system and equipment. (DEKRA Info)

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*Motorway construction sites:  
When things get tight, drive  
in staggered formation*

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### Take care when driving through motorway construction sites **Navigating the eye of the needle**

Germany's highways are considered the safest roads in the nation. Construction sites, however, create exceptions to this status quo. Under normal circumstances, traffic on highways is generally quiet and low-risk – yet when a construction site is encountered, maximum concentration is suddenly required. Narrowed lanes, shorter distances between vehicles, lane bends, a jungle of signs and construction traffic all increase the risk of accidents.

According to data from the Federal Statistical Office, approximately 2,575 people were injured and 16 killed in accidents at construction sites on German highways in 2023. One common cause is a lack of clearance around the sides and fronts of vehicles. This often results in grazing damage and rear-end collisions. Studies have shown that driving at an inappropriate speed in construction areas also significantly increases the risk of accidents. Other causes include errors when changing lanes and poor visibility in dark or wet conditions. There are also particular areas that present danger, such as transitions into the opposite lane, turns, entry and exit areas, and temporary entrances without acceleration lanes.

Accident researchers from DEKRA recommend that drivers fully focus from the moment they first approach a construction site, making sure to avoid any distractions and to stick to the speed limits in force. "Dangerous situations can arise when drivers overtake, drive too fast, or reduce the safety distance on the approach to a complex construction site traffic system," says Stefanie Ritter from DEKRA's accident research team.

The lanes can often only be as wide as 2.50 meters – when these become particularly narrow, it is safer to avoid overtaking or changing lanes and to drive in a staggered formation instead. This avoids the risk of frequent grazing collisions. Dangerous situations can also occur if a vehicle breaks down in the construction site area. In such cases, where possible, you should aim to head for the next passing place and switch on your hazard warning lights. In these narrow sections, it is particularly important to only get out on the side facing away from traffic and, if possible, to seek a safe position behind a guardrail.

The emergency lanes are also important to consider. "On narrow roads, it's usually not possible for emergency vehicles to drive straight down the middle of traffic," says Ritter. "Therefore, in emergencies, it's important that all vehicles drive as far to the right or left as possible to create a staggered formation, with sufficient clearance to allow an emergency vehicle to weave its way through."



*No matter if you're a cyclist  
or a car driver: No one gets  
anywhere without a good  
understanding of the rules of the  
road*

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### Road safety

## **It all comes down to mutual consideration – by everyone and for everyone**

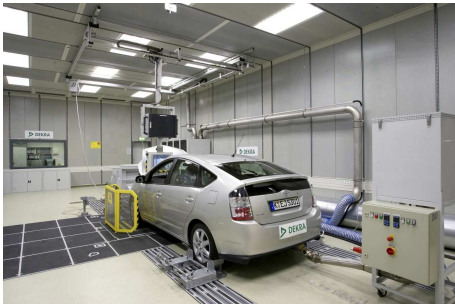
The spring season always sees an increase in the amount of traffic on roads – making good cooperation between all road users essential. “The most important and universally applicable traffic rule is and remains mutual consideration – by everyone and for everyone using the road,” says Luis Ancona, an accident researcher at DEKRA. “It doesn’t matter whether you’re traveling by bike, car, or on foot – in all cases, it’s essential to have a good understanding of the rules of the road.” Otherwise, dangerous situations and accidents can easily occur on busy roads.

As a reminder, Ancona notes that motor vehicles must maintain a distance of at least 1.5 meters when overtaking cyclists in built-up areas, and at least 2 meters in non-built-up areas. There is a general ban on stopping on roads with cycle lanes. The dashed line at the edge of the road must only be crossed if this is absolutely necessary – for example, to avoid an obstacle or a construction site. A continuous white line marks cycle lanes that cars are not even allowed to use to avoid each other. Cycle lanes must only be crossed for turning in and out and to reach parking spaces.

However, some cyclists are also not properly informed about certain rules. This was the result of a survey conducted by the opinion research institute forsa in 2024, in which almost all respondents (96 percent) had a driving license for cars. Only a minority of respondents (33 percent) were aware that pedestrian zones with the additional sign “Cyclists allowed” only allow walking speed. Nevertheless, almost everyone knew that cyclists had to be considerate of pedestrians in these areas.

When it comes to signposted bicycle paths and signs such as “Pedestrian and bicycle path”, many respondents were unaware that cyclists must use the bicycle path and are not allowed to ride on the road in areas where this signage is displayed. However, exceptions to this apply: For example, if a bicycle path is unreasonable or unusable, or if it is too dangerous to navigate due to parked cars or unclear junctions. Additionally, if cargo bikes or bikes with trailers cannot be safely ridden on a bicycle path, they are permitted to move onto the road. (DEKRA Info)





*DEKRA Technology Center  
in Klettwitz*

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### Successful financial year 2024 for DEKRA

## Continuing a course of growth and transformation

Moving into the centennial year of its existence, DEKRA is excellently positioned and successfully continuing its transformation from a traditional vehicle inspector into the leading independent expert for digital and software-defined mobility. Despite the prevailing volatile economic and geopolitical environment, the company has continued to grow. Global sales increased by 4.7 percent to €4.29 billion compared to the previous year, while in the core business – excluding temp work – they increased by 7 percent. EBIT increased by 4.2 percent to €266 million, while EBITDA reached €480.1 million, up 5.4 percent. In addition, the permanent workforce grew by 800 employees to around 33,000. In total, around 48,000 experts are currently working worldwide for the world's leading non-listed inspection organization. (DEKRA Info)



*Lubricating film on the windshield:  
Limited visibility  
can result*

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### Drive safely with the right windshield cleaner

## Switch to a summer cleaner

As we move into the spring season, it's important to switch your windshield washer fluid back over to a summer windshield cleaner. Winter cleaners contain solvents, which can easily form an unsightly film on windshields. "Winter cleaners are designed for low temperatures, and are often unable to optimally remove the typical protein-based dirt cocktail of dead insects, bird droppings, tree resin, and pollen that drivers come up against in the summer," explains Thilo Kunst, one of DEKRA's experts on automotive chemistry. If a lubricating film forms, this can severely limit visibility, especially in unfavorable lighting conditions. Drivers should look for quality when choosing a cleaner. High-quality products that bear an inspection seal have been tested for cleaning performance, harmful ingredients, and material compatibility, among other aspects. (DEKRA Info)