

45 years of the Citroën Méhari

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Throughout the company's history, Citroën has been known for producing innovative and fascinating vehicles. Well, here's one that not everyone may be aware of... The firm is currently celebrating 45 years since the introduction (on 16th May 1968) of its now rarely encountered Méhari.



This diminutive but versatile and useful vehicle was built for utility and pleasure, and was unpretentious when launched, but has since attracted a following of near-cult proportions.

Created by Roland de La Poype (a French fighter ace during the Second World War), the vehicle combined the basic charms and economy of operation of the legendary 2CV, but boldly incorporated contemporary materials in its construction.

Notably, the lightweight bodywork was made from Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene (ABS), which was tough, durable and malleable, and could be vividly coloured. The Méhari could also be fully opened above the waistline, with the windscreen folding flat onto the bonnet.

Between 1968 and 1987, nearly 150,000 examples were built, and a four wheel drive version had been introduced in 1979.

Méharis took part in the Liège-Dakar-Liège rally in 1969, the Paris-Kabul-Paris event in 1970, and many rallies.



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The vehicle found favour too with the French army, as its lightweight credentials made it ideal for dropping by parachute behind enemy lines.

The Méhari name is derived from a word used in North Africa and the Sahara desert, for dromedaries whose speed and endurance makes them perfect for coping with the tough conditions in the area, enabling them to transport people and goods.

To celebrate the car's 45 years, a special area at Citroën's C_42 showcase on the Champs-Élysées in Paris has been set aside to highlight key moments in the history of the Méhari.