

Guidelines and Criteria used for Classification of Classic Vehicles

Introduction

In 2003 the Government of Malta introduced favourable measures to help owners of classic vehicles. These were aimed at encouraging the use and preservation of genuine classic vehicles in order to perpetuate and uphold Malta's mechanical and transport heritage and to encourage those classic vehicle activities that would benefit Maltese society and culture.

These guidelines listed in this manual are to be used in order to decide whether applicant vehicles can be awarded classic status. They are designed to allow genuine classic vehicles to benefit from the Government of Malta classic vehicle concessions, whilst at the same time flexible enough to be workable and allow minor modifications. The guidelines are partially inspired by the Technical Code (2010) of the *Federation International Vehicules Anciens* (FIVA), which is the international body based in Brussels responsible for classic vehicles.

In Malta the *Federazzjoni Maltija Vetturi Antiki* (FMVA) www.fmvamalta.org is the official FIVA-appointed National Authority entrusted with coordinating classic vehicle matters in the Maltese Islands. Members of the FMVA also form part of the government-appointed board that adjudicates applications for classic vehicles.

Interested persons may consult the guidelines below in order to ascertain whether their vehicles merit being awarded classic status, especially prior to importation from abroad. There are also worked examples based upon the experience of the FMVA committee members who have carried out certification of classic vehicles since 2003.

General Criteria

Eligibility

All genuine classic vehicles 30 years old from their date of manufacture may become eligible for classic status according to set criteria. This cut-off date is established by the Laws of Malta and may be subject to change. For the purposes of these concessions, the words Classic, Historic, Vintage, Veteran and Period are understood to mean the same and are interchangeable.

Definition of Year of Manufacture (YOM)

The year of manufacture counts from the 1st January. This means that a vehicle produced on the very last day of the year in question is still considered to be eligible.

Condition of Vehicle

Notwithstanding their age, applicant historic vehicles shall be kept in a condition that reflects the manufacturer's intentions and respects the spirit of the concession namely, the preservation of genuine classic vehicles. Applications for vehicles that are dirty and not kept in a good state or condition similar to period will not be considered.



The engine bay of this Toyota pick-up is clean and kept in a good condition, most likely indicating that it is used only occasionally and is within the spirit of classic vehicle preservation.

Use of Classic Vehicles

Vehicles certified as classic are not to be used for commercial purposes. For more details please refer to the **Important Notes** section at the end of these guidelines.

Modifications

Out-of-period modifications and other changes should be avoided and in principle be restricted to those required by the authorities or, due to disability or infirmity of the owner/driver, to ensure the safe use of the vehicle on the road. Any modifications carried out should be according to manufacturer's specifications and made in the spirit of the period in question and in such a manner that the vehicle can, if necessary, be converted back to its original condition.

Technical Guidelines

Body and Chassis

No major modifications are allowed save for the exceptions listed below. No lengthening or shortening of the body or chassis except in line with factory specifications. The vehicle must appear exactly as a similar model left the factory and must reflect the period in question.

However, if a vehicle has been converted exactly as it would have been at the factory, this is allowed as long as proof is provided by the applicant.

Notwithstanding the requirements above, certain body kits may be allowed as long as these are similar to period factory extras or else supplied by recognised period aftermarket suppliers.

Certain cases of body-building are allowed because some manufacturers used to provide a chassis cab upon which the owner would then build a loading bay or box locally. Therefore, locally built bodies on genuine chassis are allowed so long as the build reflects the period in question.

Roof-racks and tow-hooks are not normally allowed as these indicate that vehicle is possibly being used for commercial purposes. However, period-looking roof-racks (e.g. with wooden slats) or tow-hooks on ex-military vehicles may be fitted.

Motorcycles are not to be fitted with non-factory or non-aftermarket carry cases, boxes racks or platforms. Any factory or aftermarket panniers or top-boxes must look correct for the period in question and be of a size that is proportional to the dimensions of the machine.

Certain modifications to the chassis are allowed as detailed under the Reproductions, Replicas & Re-Bodied Vehicles section of this manual.

Example B1

Acceptable: A Morris 1000 2-door converted from saloon to convertible using the special stiffening kit with the proper folding hood. Conversion is indistinguishable from the original factory model and only a marque expert would notice the difference, if at all.

Unacceptable: An applicant vehicle has had its roof removed to be made into a convertible in a way that the Morris factory never did.

Example B2

Acceptable: A VW Beetle has been converted into a Karmann replica that is virtually indistinguishable from the genuine factory car.

Unacceptable: A VW with its roof removed in a way that the Volkswagen factory never did.

Example B3

Acceptable: A VW beetle is converted into a Beach Buggy that is an exact reproduction of a recognised and identifiable 1960's model (for example a Rhino) as long as the chassis and running-gear are within the applicable cut-off period.

Unacceptable: A VW beetle is converted into a Beach Buggy that is simply the result of the owner's own design or imagination. This would make it a customisation which is not allowed.

Example B4

Acceptable: An Austin Cambridge has been converted from a saloon to a pick-up just like used to be done in the 1950s and 60s.

Unacceptable: The same car as above but with a non-original American-style "side-step" loading bay.

Colour

The colour should reflect the period in question. Metallic paint is allowed as long as it reflects the period. No non-original flake, matte or pearlescent finishes allowed. It is not necessary that the colour be the exact one offered by the factory

Example C1

Acceptable: A 1960s Alfa Romeo is painted in a 1960s Ferrari colour.

Example C2

Acceptable: A 1960s Ford Mustang is painted in a modern Toyota metallic gold that looks very similar to the period Ford colour.

Example C3

Acceptable: A VW Beetle has been sprayed in two-tone.

Example C4

Unacceptable: A 1920s Morris painted in metallic blue.

No graphics, flames, artwork, etc. are allowed except where these were offered as a factory-option or else carried out by factory-approved third parties.

In the case of replica or reproduction racing or special vehicles, period colour schemes such as chequered roofs or matte black bonnets, etc. are acceptable as long as this was the practice during the period in question.

Interior

The interior must look as close to standard as possible. No customisation is allowed except for very minor “reversible” fittings.

Example I1

Acceptable: A Ford Escort MkI is fitted with Ford Capri seats. This is acceptable because they look so similar to each other and the two vehicles are of the same period. Also acceptable are 13GT instruments fitted instead of the standard 1100 ones on base models.

Example I2

Acceptable: A mini has been fitted with a removable wooden or plastic dashboard which was a popular fitting during the 1960s. It is “reversible” and no damage has been done to the bodyshell. In such cases the overall look and feel of the period in question must be respected and period clocks, switches, etc. must be used. If modern-looking items are used vehicle will be disqualified.

Unacceptable:

- Bucket seats or seats from unrelated cars with or without headrests that jar with the period in question.
- Holes cut in the dashboard for switches and instruments.
- Large prominent out-of-period holes for speakers in doors or rear parcel-shelf.
- Dark-tinted windows
- Stickers, labels, stripes, adverts, etc. that are non-period.



The interior of this Ford Orion is virtually immaculate and within the spirit of the Maltese classic vehicle concessions

Engine

The engine has to be the same series as that fitted by the manufacturer. If the engine fitted to the applicant vehicle was never fitted by the factory, this is an automatic failing point. The overall look and feel of the period in question must be respected. Upgrades and engine modifications are accepted as long as they reflect the period.

Conversions to run on gas are acceptable as long as the original carburettor(s) are retained and the general standard factory look remains similar.

Example E1

Acceptable: A Ford Escort Mk 1 was originally fitted with an 1100cc Kent pushrod engine. It is now fitted with a 1600 Kent or Pinto engine fitted with Weber side-draft carburettors.

Unacceptable: The same car as above but fitted with a turbo or fuel injection system.

Example E2

Acceptable: A mid-Sixties Mercedes 220 4-cylinder vehicle has been fitted with a mid-sixties Mercedes 6-cylinder engine.

Unacceptable: The same car as above fitted with a Mercedes 5-cylinder turbo-diesel from the 1980's

Example E3

Acceptable: A sixties Land Rover was originally fitted with a 2286cc Rover petrol engine but is now fitted with a 2286cc Rover diesel engine.

Unacceptable: The same vehicle as above originally fitted with a 2286cc rover engine, now fitted with a later 2500cc Rover engine which was never fitted by the factory.

Example E4

Unacceptable: A Ford Anglia has been fitted with an Escort engine i.e. cross-flow instead of down-flow.

Example E5

Unacceptable: An early Ford or Morris was originally fitted with a side-valve engine but is now fitted with a later pushrod engine.

Wheels

Any wheels can be used as long as they reflect the period in question. Period spoke wheels are also allowed.

Example W1

Acceptable: A 1960s Mini is fitted with period Wolfrace wheels.

Example W2

Points Deducted: A Ford Escort Mk I is fitted with modern 17" Alloys and low-profile tyres.

Reproductions, Replicas & Re-Bodied vehicles

A REPRODUCTION is a copy of a historic vehicle built within the cut-off PERIOD by a reproducer, with or without parts to period specification, reproducing a specific model. This must be clearly marked to indicate that it is a “REPRODUCTION”. Such historic vehicles will be called by a combined name of the reproducer and manufacturer’s names, and the model from which the vehicle is a reproduction (*Example: Smith Bugatti Type 35*).

A REPLICA must conform to the conditions above but will have been built by the MANUFACTURER of the original vehicle.

Both REPRODUCTION and REPLICA historic vehicles will be dated using the date of the completion of its manufacture and must respect the cut-off date.

A RE-BODIED vehicle is one whose chassis and running gear has been retained, which has been fitted with, for example, a special lightweight body mainly for period racing purposes. These special vehicles must retain the look and feel of the period in question. The same fabrication methods must be used (e.g. hand-beaten or English-wheeled body panels not glass fibre).

Important: In such cases the application must clearly state that the vehicle is a Reproduction. Moreover, although certification by the Board means that the vehicle has obtained classic status, this does not mean that that a vehicle is a genuine factory-produced model. The Board cannot be held responsible if a vehicle certified to be, for example, a special (such as a Cooper S) turns out to be a reproduction from a common or standard model.

Example R1

Acceptable: A Ford Escort Mark I 1100cc has been converted to look exactly like a RS1600.

Example R2

Acceptable: A standard Mini 1000 has been made to look like a Mini Cooper S.

Example R3

Acceptable: A reproduction Jaguar E-type or AC Cobra has been made by a reproducer within the 30-year cut-off period using standard engines, space-frames, chassis and/or running gear.

Example R4

Unacceptable: A reproduction Jaguar E-type or AC Cobra has been reproduced using either non-standard space-frames or else non-original chassis and/or running gear.

Example R5

Acceptable: A 1930s Triumph Saloon has been made into a 1930s style 2-seat racer using the factory engine (standard or modified), chassis and/or running gear. A hand-built aluminium body is fitted. Genuine period, lamps, clocks, steering wheel, seats, etc. are used.

Example R6

Unacceptable: A 1930s Triumph Saloon has been made into a 1930s style 2-seat racer using the factory engine (standard or modified), chassis and/or running gear, but has used a modern glass-fibre body. Non-period fittings used.

Re-shelling

Re-shelling of a historic vehicle is allowed according to the following criteria:

Non-Monocoque Vehicles (separate chassis and body)

Re-shelling of non-monocoque vehicles is allowed provided that the new replacement shell is made according to original specifications. In such cases the new body shell is deemed to be merely a spare part.

Monocoque Vehicles

In monocoque vehicles the chassis and body shell are the same and are not separable. This means that any replacement body shell must be used (i.e. not new) and it must have been produced within the period in question for it to qualify as a classic vehicle.

If a brand new replica body shell (built out of period) is used, this is considered as a brand-new chassis and is subject to a new registration with new non-classic registration fees being applicable.

Motorcycles

The above rules apply to motorcycles, however, certain period hybrids such as Norvins, Tribsas, etc. are allowed. Café Racers are also allowed. Again, the overall spirit of the period in question must be retained and period parts must be fitted to period machines.

Example M1

Acceptable: A 1960s Triumph has been fitted with a 1960s BSA engine producing a Tribsa.

Example M2

Acceptable: A 1970s Norton is fitted with a 1970s Honda motorcycle engine.

Example M3

Unacceptable: A 1960s BSA has been fitted with a 1990's Yamaha engine.

Important Notes

Onus of Proof

The onus of proof of vehicle eligibility is upon the applicant who in case of doubt must provide the necessary documentation to support the application if this is required.

Right of Appeal

Persons who feel aggrieved by refusal of their application may appeal the decision by writing to the Administrative Review Tribunal by no later than 21 days from the date of the refusal letter. Appellants must provide all the necessary research and documentation to support their claim.

Use of Vehicle

Vehicles certified as classic are not to be used for commercial purposes.

Please note that article 90 in the Bill, where there is the offence, the applicable penalty which is already stipulated in Chapter 368 - Article 21, will stipulate as follows:-

21.(1) Any person who –

"(h) without the authorisation of the Authority or in violation of any condition under which such authorisation may have been granted,

uses or allows to be used a vintage vehicle for any use other than a private use,

shall be guilty of an offence and on conviction shall be liable to a fine (multa) not exceeding two thousand five hundred euro (€2,500), or twice the amount of the registration tax endangered, whichever is the greater, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or to both such fine and imprisonment.

Notwithstanding the above certified classic vehicles may be used for certain one-off activities as long as prior written permission is obtained from Transport Malta.