

# On a high over French classic

### What do you drive?

A 1973 Citroen Pallas DS23. They came out in '55 and the last one was produced in '75. She is 5m long and a five Zspeed which was rare back then. There's no brake pedal, just a button. She's incredibly sensitive and has a great stopping power for a car of that era. My Dad has always been a simple car person, he likes Toyotas, but I have liked complicated things. I like the beauty of the DS, the lines and the complexity as well. When I was about 7 I had a relieving teacher and she was late to school one day because of a flat tyre. She told us she had to change the tyre but she didn't have to jack her Citroen up like other cars because it had hydro pneumatic suspension. That's when I started liking these cars.

### Why a classic car?

I don't have a huge general interest in classic cars but I am obsessed with the DS. In the 1970s in New Zealand you couldn't just order and buy a French car, you had to have overseas funds. This car was bought new in Singapore by a New Zealand soldier who brought it to New Zealand when he returned from service and sold it for more than the asking price had been brand new.

**Classic cars aren't always easy to work on. Whom do you turn to when you need mechanical help?**

**Owen Foster is a pilot for Airlines of PNG flying Dash 8 50-seaters. He works three weeks on, three weeks off — heading home to Waiheke Island.**



Picture / Ted Baghurst

The idea of buying this car was it would be something for me to work on when I'm on my break from flying. I do as much work as I can but for something special I go to Auto France at Wiri.

**Main consideration if you are buying a car?**

I like comfort.

### First car you owned?

A red Honda Civic in 1997, I bought it at the Ellerslie Car Fair. That was before Trade Me and everyone used to go there on a Sunday. I was 17 and my Dad was able to give it a really good look over.

### Dream car?

A Citroen SM, a two-door sports car.

It was made in the same era as this but it has a Maserati V6 engine.

### Favourite colour?

Different cars suit different colours.

### Who taught you to drive?

I grew up in a country area and I don't remember being specifically taught to drive but did a lot of driving on bikes and tractors. Probably earlier

than I should.

### Manual or automatic?

I love how automatics work, I like the design of them, torque converter, planetary gears, things like that I find fascinating.

### Most memorable road trip?

Probably crossing Danseys Pass after a Christmas with my partner's family in Central Otago.

### How often do you clean your car?

Once a week, often more if people are coming to visit.

### And what do you listen to?

Waiheke Radio, it's eclectic.

### Great day trip off Waiheke?

When I'm back in New Zealand I often visit my parents at Ruakaka. It drives really well on the highway.

### Who else is allowed to drive your car?

Anyone, but they are scared of it. My partner, Stu, he drives it. I think that people know how obsessed I am with the DS and are scared something would go wrong.

### Cycles and cars . . . is there space for both on NZ roads?

No, because when I have biked in the city it was terrifying — the proximity and being so exposed to vehicles. My friend has just bought an electric bike and I would love to ride that but how she can ride it around the CBD in Auckland, I just don't know.

■ As told to Donna McIntyre

## Me and my car

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