How to import a car into India

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Most of us with boyhood dreams and fat bank accounts have at some time in our motoring lives desired to import our dream car into India. More often than not, it remains just a dream. Most people are dissuaded not just by the exorbitant import duties, but also the miles of red tape involved in dealing with various government bodies to get the permits. We all remember the unfortunate sham when our favourite sportsperson, Sachin Tendulkar, came home with his red Ferrari 360 Modena - gifted to him on behalf of Fiat by his Schumacher Ness.

That hasn't stopped true petrolheads though, who've given us a fleeting glimpse of their thoroughbred beauties on Indian roads. From Ferrari and Lamborghini to Porsche and BMW M cars, we've seen them all long before these marques officially entered the market.

Here are a few tips if you have the spare change and are determined to bring your dream machine home.

Get involved in the motoring community

The easiest way to get started isn't necessarily getting online and searching for a relevant website for correct procedures. Use your network of petrol head contacts, and ask anyone you know with a fine motor. They will probably be almost as excited as you to see a new beauty arrive. It may just be the best thing you do to make your dream a reality.

Employ professionals

Hire a legitimate customs broker. There are just as many illegitimate ones floating around, which could turn your dreams into a nightmare, so check, check and check again before you sign up. Paperwork moves faster in all directions but the right one, so hiring someone with the knowledge and right contacts at your port of arrival will save you time and money. At some point this guy will potentially have you by the balls, with your car poised hopefully at the port, waiting to break free of the reams of red tape. Remember that.

Know all the laws

Besides the ludicrous import duty, there are numerous restrictions and rules that need to be followed before a car can even be imported into the country. Here are the five big restrictions. One, the vehicle being imported should not be manufactured or assembled in India. Two, it should not have been sold, leased or loaned prior to being imported to India. Three, it must not have been registered for use in any country prior to being imported to India. Four, the car should be imported only from the country of manufacture and five, should comply with Central Motor Vehicles Rules (CMVR), 1989.

Do the maths

The total customs duty on most automobiles comes to over one and a half times the cost of the vehicle. So, give it a long, hard think before you part with your hard-earned wad. How much do you want it?

Have a blast

Most importantly, when everything is cleared and you’re living the dream in your flash set of wheels get a good long drive.