

**Next meeting is ? due to COVID-19 pandemic**

**PRESIDENT'S PAGE**

**Bonjour Renaultphiles**

I hope all are members are well and surviving the COVID -19 lockdown and instead putting some time into their Renault projects. That is what I have been doing. My 1969 A110 is now back on the road after fixing the head gasket that let go during Targa High Country last November and reinstalling my 5 speed gearbox reengineered by Rob Sealey in Melbourne. Fortunately, I got it back to Canberra before Victoria closed its borders.

There is good news on the proposal to merge to with the Pug Club. Brad Pillans, the President of the Pug Club, recently advised me that his members voted unanimously on the special resolutions to merge with our club to form a new French Car Club of Canberra. I am currently doing the paperwork to submit to Access Canberra to arrange the merger. Hopefully, the new club will be up and operating by the start of the next financial year.

This year is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Renault Fuego and, as members know, I have had a few with from favourite being the Fuego Turbo that I imported from NZ. It is now up for sale on Just Cars along with my 1987 Renault Alpine GTA V6 Turbo as I just have not any more room in my garage.

I have translated from French into English (courtesy of Google Translate) an interesting article celebrating the Renault Fuego and the interesting parts are the tables on production numbers, performance and specifications of the various models of this great Renault.

Our club sponsor, Shannons, has recently announced a competition that would enable club members to show off their Renaults in a Show N'Shine contest and win money not only for yourself but also for our club. I encourage all members to enter. My 1969 Alpine A110 is entered.

In the meantime, let's hope the COVID -19 restrictions become relaxed enough to allow us to meet, to drive our cars in club events and especially allow the F1 season to get back underway.

Keep Safe

Barry McAdie

## **Social Report:**

### **French car drives in 2020**

Program of French car drives together with Peugeot and Citroen clubs, 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of even months.

All drives currently suspended due to COVID-19 pandemic, those we are not able to run will be postponed to 2021.

**June 28: Tharwa-** afternoon tea at Tharwa Country Store

**August 23: Queanbeyan-** visit local history museum and print museum, lunch or coffee at local cafe, <https://queanbeyanmuseum.org.au/>, <http://queanbeyanprintingmuseum.com/>

**October 25: Hillbrook Hygge-**lunch

**December 6:** Christmas BBQ

### **Local and interstate events for 2020:**

#### **Jugiong motorsport weekend. 10-11 April**

Postponed until later in 2020.

### **Reports on past events:**

We have had no events since the last publication, and unlikely to be able to hold any for several months to come.

So with all this spare time to spend in the garage, could you please send me photos of the projects that you are working on.

### **Useful websites for Renault spare parts:**

In responding to a request for an R12 number plate light members helped with suggestions of parts websites to search. These might be useful to other members.

Simon Auto <http://www.simon-auto.de>

GBS Alpine <http://www.gbsalpine.com/english.html>

Mecaparts <http://www.mecaparts.com/index.php>.

<https://www.retroptic-auto.com/en/10-renault>

<https://www.franzose.de/en/Renault/R16/Rueckbeleuchtung/>

## **Fuego launched in 1980**

Since this year is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the release of the Fuego, I asked Leigh McEwan for his experience of Fuego ownership as he bought one new, and still owns it.

My first encounter with a Fuego was when travelling in France in 1984, at what is now L'Atelier Renault on Champs-Élysées. In mid 1984 it was a showroom and boutique cafe downstairs, and a Renault racing museum upstairs. Hence my visit there.

Sitting in the new Fuego on display there, I was very impressed with the design, quality and overall finish of this very stylish coupe, with the large rear glass hatch.

Back home later that year I found Corin Motors in Fyshwick ACT were selling the Fuego. They were keen for me to take a test drive, and okayed me taking the car for several hours for a long drive out to the Cotter River. This is a great road for testing with many winding corners and a variety of road surfaces. The Fuego exceeded all expectations and was so comfortable as well. I was sold. Epping Motors in Sydney had stock of the Silver color I wanted [Corin Mtrs only had red, white or bronze at that time] and Epping Mtrs offered \$3,000 discount on the list price to make it worth my while to buy in Sydney. \$15,695 was a great price, even in December 1984.

Some of the unique features that impressed me were the 'Le Plip' infra-red remote central locking, the hidden door releases, the plush seating, the 0.29 coefficient of drag, and the tapered bead rims with Michelin TRX tyres. The 2.0 Litre engine has great torque and performed well with the 5sp manual gearbox. The rear brakes had a mechanical load sensing system to adjust how much braking was applied at the rear and stopped rear brake lockup. This made it hard to pass the primitive brake tests at the ACT Motor Registry on the annual rego checks, unless several bags of cement were placed in the rear of the car, or some rear passengers! Another interesting feature of the aerodynamic design is the way the rear hatch glass stayed dry above 80kph, even in heavy rain.

The Fuego has been very reliable and a great car to drive and travel in with many trips taken to Sydney and Leeton, and once to Adelaide.

It is currently off the road awaiting a leaking fuel tank replacement, preventative timing belt change, new brake master cylinder, and new tacho.

Leigh McEwan

## **Fuego wheels out the charm**

By DAVID MORLEY

Thursday 25 October 2001

With the recent relaunch of the Renault marque in Australia, it will be interesting to see whether there's a resurgence of interest in Renault's older models.

Stranger things have happened, and it's also true that some of Renault's earlier cars have a faithful following in this country.

The Renault 16 is still revered as a cutting-edge design and a ripping drive in the bargain, and older 8s and 10s have their admirers, too. The 12 isn't exactly missed by many, but there are some who will sing its praises.

But later Renaults never seemed to capture the public's attention, and cars like the 25, 19 and the utterly unloved 21 are just curiosities these days.

But that doesn't explain where that leaves the Fuego.

In fact, it is probably fair to say that the Fuego was a car that polarised opinion at the time and continues to do so today.

When the Fuego landed in Australia in 1982, its looks were far and away its most controversial aspect.

There are plenty of 1980s wedges and straight lines in the overall styling theme, but it is the details that stamp it apart. The blacked-out trim pieces, integrated spoiler and fog lights and the wrap-around rear window all helped make it a standout in its heyday, but equally stamp it as an older car today.

Inside, the quasi space-age thing doesn't work any longer and the cloth trim that might have been OK in Europe will probably have disintegrated under nearly two decades of Aussie UV radiation.

The paint, too, hasn't fared too well under our sun and metallics such as charcoal and silver, as well as red cars, have either faded or have been resprayed.

Launched in 1982 as the GTX, the Fuego was more or less a three-door, sportier-looking version of the Renault 18. In any case, it retained a certain French-ness in its mechanical layout.

While the rest of the world was turning engines east-west to make the most of front-drive, the Fuego was, in fact, front-wheel-drive but used a longitudinally mounted engine.

At 2.0 litres, the engine itself was classic Renault stuff with a single overhead camshaft and wet-sleeve liners forming the cylinders.

The single carburettor seems a bit pedestrian in 2001 but the engine was all alloy and cranked out 77.5kW, which was just over the magic 100 horsepower barrier.

As such, the performance that was pretty good in its day is still quite OK now, even though a few of those horses may have strayed over the years. The engine is, however, relatively strong and smooth to use as well as being pretty flexible in the best French tradition.

Combine that with the lithe 1,060kg kerb weight and the fact that there was no automatic option, and the car's spritely performance is explained.

The car's first facelift – and its greatest claim to fame – arrived in 1984. As well as a mild make-over, the Fuego became the first car in Australia to have standard remote-control locking. Named the PLIP system after the inventor Paul Lipschutz, the word quickly entered the language and, even today, people all over Australia refer to their TV remote control unit as the "plipper".

If you know anything about Fuegos, you may have wondered why such a high percentage of them aftermarket alloy wheels have fitted. Well, in a stroke of French-ness the average Gaul would be proud of, Renault, in conjunction with Michelin, took the amazing decision to fit the Fuego with a wheel that would accept only a specific (and expensive) Michelin tyre.

Exactly why the world has stuck with imperial (inches) measurements for rim sizes is a moot point, but that didn't stop Renault specifying a metric-sized rim for the Fuego, which, of course, no other tyres would fit.

So, after 50,000km or so, many owners found it cheaper to replace the wheels *and* tyres, rather than buy the expensive Michelin replacements for the standard wheels.

With that in mind, any Fuego you look at buying is a better bet if the standard wheels have been replaced.

Make sure you check everything else, too, because most Fuegos have now comfortably passed 200,000km, with many having clocked up much more. True, the engine is a better bet to go the distance, but that doesn't mean they never wear out, so check it carefully yourself or have a mechanic run a professional eye over any prospective buy.

Ultimately, the Fuego no longer offers anything in the way of a cutting-edge driving experience, which is what made it remarkable nearly 20 years ago.

But it isn't without its charm and it's certainly an alternative to the generally bland Japanese offerings from the same era and the same price bracket.

## **What to pay**

The best news is that Fuegos now fetch between \$3,000 and \$5,000 for anything from a decent example to a really tidy one. Make sure you buy one with a roadworthy certificate, though, because parts can be expensive.

# AERODYNAMITE.



Introducing the most exciting Fuego yet: the new Renault Fuego Turbo.

Its turbo-charged 1565cc, 132 bhp engine can rocket you to a top speed 125 mph.\*

Yet its sleek, aerodynamic shape (with a drag co-efficient of just 0.35) provides fuel figures almost as equally impressive. 49.6 mpg

at a constant 56 mph, 36.7 mpg at a constant 75 mph. And as much as 26.9 mpg around town.

On top of which, the new Renault Fuego Turbo offers many luxury features as standard.

Like, for example, a 5 speed gearbox, power-assisted steering, electric front windows, central doorlocking (with remote control), BBS

alloy wheels and low profile tyres.

Just to make the car even more desirable, during March and April, it comes with a free new Philips "Turbo Sound" car audio system.\*

And although it'll go like a bomb, the new Renault Fuego Turbo won't cost you one.

The price is just £8,800.\*

## THE NEW RENAULT FUEGO TURBO

\*Price is correct at time of going to press; includes 15% VAT, Car Tax and front seat belts. Excludes plates and delivery costs. †Manufacturer's figure. Government Test Figures simulated urban cycle: 26.9 mpg (10.5 l/100km), 56 mph 49.6 mpg

(10.5 l/100km), 75 mph 36.7 mpg (17.1 l/100km). Road End allowances: 77.50. Motorist's Guide, RAC. \*Offer applies to all new Renault Fuegos ordered and registered between March 1 and April 30, 1984. RENAULT recommends 80W lubricants.



# The new Fuego. The fastest 2 door car in the world.



It actually unlocks its own doors for you.



Dashing to your new Fuego on a rainy day, you press a button on the tiny gadget attached to your keyring. Instantly, there's a reassuring click as both doors unlock.

Allowing both you and your passenger to dive straight in without fumbling with keys.

'Le Plip', as Renault calls it, is just one of the many civilised touches

on the new model Fuego.

You will also find luxurious new fabrics inside. And a new, sleeker aero-slat grille at the front.

To that you can add all the standard luxury features the Fuego has always enjoyed: air conditioning, electric windows, central locking, AM/FM stereo radio cassette, alloy wheels and Michelin TRX tyres.

Yet, for all of its comfort, the Fuego's potent two-litre alloy engine, five-speed gearbox and front wheel drive make it a true European thoroughbred. With handling that proves Japan still has a lot to learn.

For \$16,795,\* you get a car that opens up faster than anything else on the road.

**RENAULT FUEGO**

For your nearest Renault dealer, please contact your State Distributor: NSW: Renault Distribution (02) 888 7277; VICTORIA: LNC Distribution (03) 791 5888; QUEENSLAND: Annand & Thompson (07) 399 0999; SOUTH AUSTRALIA: Champions Pty. Limited (08) 211 8166; WESTERN AUSTRALIA: Eurocars Pty. Ltd. (09) 367 6699; CANBERRA: Corin Motors (062) 80 4409. \*Price as at 1/9/84, plus statutory and dealer charges. Renault Importers (A member of the LNC Group).


DDR 125.2 2/85 NAT






## THE NEW RENAULT FUEGO:

If Renault Fuego was racy before, there's only one word for Fuego's husky new 2.2 litre engine that cranks out 40% more torque for 1984. And now Fuego has a racier personality through the curves. With power front discs featuring ventilated rotors for added fade resistance. And redesigned instrumentation to **RACIER** monitor Fuego's extra power. Want your Fuego racier still? Choose Fuego Turbo. Inspired by the winningest turbos in Formula One racing. With stiffer shocks and larger sway bars, front and rear. And the sophistication of Bosch L-Jetronic fuel injection and Michelin TRX radials. Even air conditioning is standard. The new Renault Fuego 2.2 is just **\$8,995.\*** Renault Fuego Turbo, **\$11,395.\*** More than ever, the ones to watch.

\*Manufacturer's suggested retail price. Tax, license, destination charges, met. clearcoat paint (\$150), extra. Sold by American Motors.  Safety belts save lives.



# RENAULT

**THE ONE TO WATCH** 



## **Focus on: The Renault Fuego, the story of a French myth**

Posted on March 5, 2020 by Absolutely Cars

Geneva Motor Show requires, it was impossible for us not to tell you about the Renault Fuego. A success story in its time, later shunned, the little "Frenchie" of the 1980s has now become a cult car in the world of collection. It must be said that she has someone to hold! Coupé fitted with a bubble tailgate, presented ten years after another coupé, the famous Citroën SM, in the same lounge, they have much more in common: they were born from the legendary stroke of Robert Opron. Astonishing, not to say "explosive", this popular coupé with a particular design creates a burst of nostalgia among young generations ... ABSOLUTELY CARS invites you, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Renault Fuego, to (re) discover this model which is becoming increasingly rare.

### **Renault Fuego, the world's first Renault**

The Renault Fuego had the heavy task of replacing the splendid Renault 15 and Renault 17 coupes; produced from 1971 to 1979, in 304,856 copies. The windows of the doors were, this time, provided with uprights, a proposal with an injection engine being absent. Its platform came from the Renault 18, itself from the Renault 12, the renewed technical solutions being the traction, the longitudinal engine, the independent wheels and the disc brakes at the front, the rigid axle at the 'rear, the assembly offering high mechanical reliability. However, the negative offset front axle came from the Renault 20 diesel. The Renault Fuego immediately found its customers.

TABLE

Production de la RENAULT Fuego		Ventes à l'étranger
1980	75 425	48,8%
1981	55 875	58,5%
1982	52 258	74,5%
1983	41 158	83,3%
1984	24 926	89,9%
1985	5 100	95,6%

Between 1980 and 1992, 265,257 copies were produced, a great success due to its certainly divisive line, which we like or do not like, but which did not leave indifferent. Its particularly sharp Cx is between 0.34 and 0.35, which allowed the modest entry-level 64hp to approach 160km / h. We can also highlight its magnificent interior for the most upscale versions and its list of options which made it possible to obtain a high level of comfort and a certain personalization. The basic version TL could be optionally fitted: • a 5-speed gearbox, • power steering, • imitation seats, • metallic paint, • light alloy rims, • a rear wiper, • projector wipers, • laminated with tinted windows, • an electrically operated canvas sunroof or a vinyl roof, • a Grand Touring Package (adjustable steering wheel, tachometer, adjustable rear view mirror, reading spot on the passenger side, radio pre-equipment, watch), • an All Weather Pack (rear wiper, headlight wipers, fog lights under the shield, half-opening quarter windows, fixed rate wipers). From the GTL version, a lot of equipment was present, notably the electric windows and the "petal" seats. As for the GTX variant, the leather seats were optional. Its wheelbase of 2.44m and its length of 4.36m offered good livability. In 1982, the turbo diesel engine was introduced and this coupe was called "the fastest diesel car in the world". In 1983, the turbo petrol engine was launched, the 4 disc brakes then becoming necessary.

TABLE

Modèles Fuego français	Années de production	Moteur	Alésage	Course	cm³	Puissance	Couple	Boîte à vitesses	Vitesse maximale	0 à 100km/h
Fuego TL	1980-85	4 cyl. OHV (carburateur simple corps)	76	77	1397	64ch à 5500tr/mn	103Nm à 3000tr/mn	4 rapports (5 rapports en option)	158km/h	15s
Fuego GTL	1980-82									
	1982-85	4 cyl. OHV (carburateur double corps)	79	84	1647	73,5ch à 5000tr/mn	130Nm à 3000tr/mn	5 rapports	163km/h	13,5s
Fuego TS/GTS	1980-85					96ch à 5750tr/mn	133Nm à 3500tr/mn	5 rapports	180km/h	12,1s
Fuego Automatique	1980-82	4 cyl. OHC (carburateur double corps)	88	82	1995	110ch à 5500tr/mn	163Nm à 3000tr/mn	3 rapports	173km/h	14s
	1982-83							182km/h	13s	
Fuego TX/GTX	1980-83	4 cyl. OHC (carburateur simple corps) + turbo	77	84	1565	132ch à 5500tr/mn	200Nm à 3000tr/mn	5 rapports	190km/h	11s
Fuego Turbo	1983-85								200km/h	9,5s
Fuego Turbo D	1982-84								4 cyl. OHC diesel + turbo	86

### Renault Fuego produced in Maubeuge and exported to North America

The Renault Fuego was better received abroad than in France. The Maubeuge factory exported it to North America. This represents 41,460 copies, all the same, in 4 years, all equipped with injection and anti-pollution devices! The Renault Fuego in its 107hp Turbo version was available from 1982 to 1985, in its 1.6-liter 81hp version from 1982 to 1983, in its 2.2-liter 103hp version from 1984 to 1985, these two atmospheric versions also being offered with a 3-speed automatic transmission.

Its length was 4.46m because its bumpers with built-in shock absorbers imposed by North American regulations, were larger and could absorb a shock less than 10km / h.

## Renault Fuego made in Santa Isabel

¡Caramba, qué deportivo! The Renault Fuego won consecutively 8 times from 1986 to 1993 in El Turismo Competición 2000 and Juan María Traverso (1950-....), At the wheel, was TC 2000 champion in 1986, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1992 and 1993. The racing version was extrapolated from those produced in the Santa Isabel factory located near Córdoba in Argentina. Thanks to this car, Renault has since benefited from an excellent positioning in terms of brand image in South America. The Argentine Renault Fuego was manufactured from 1982 to 1992, in 19,352 or 19,857 copies, depending on the source. Its length was 4.38m. It adopted power steering and remote control for central locking, in 1986, the 4 disc brakes, in 1987, air conditioning in series, in 1991.

TABLE

Modèles Fuego argentins	Années de production	Moteur	Alésage	Course	cm³	Puissance	Couple	Boîte à vitesses	Vitesse maximale	0 à 100km/h
Fuego GTX 2.0	1982-86	4 cyl. OHV (carburateur double corps)	88	82	1995	103ch à 5500tr/mn	159Nm à 3000tr/mn	5 rapports	180km/h	12s
Fuego GTX 2.0 Automatico	1985-86							auto. 3 rapports	170km/h	14s
Fuego GTX 2.2	1987-88		88	89	2165	116ch à 5500tr/mn	183Nm à 3000tr/mn	5 rapports	190km/h	11s
Fuego GTA 2.2	1988-91								198km/h	9,7s
Fuego GTA Max	1991-92					123ch à 6000tr/mn				

RENAULT Fuego GTA Max from 1991 similar to the one owned by footballer Diego Maradona. In South America, RENAULT Fuego cars are highly sought after by collectors. They have their aficionados and finally, they honorably replaced the duo RENAULT 15 and 17. The Renault Fuego was based on the platform of the Renault 18 which was, itself, an improved evolution of the Renault 12, essential car in the history of Renault, having already been the subject of an article in the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Renault 12. Its wheelbase of 2.44m was retained, its side windows becoming curved, the proposals in terms of engines and equipment

becoming extensive. Designed by Gaston Juchet (1930-2007), introduced in April 1978, the sedan had a length of 4.38m, the station wagon, launched a year later, a length of 4.49m. It was produced in 2,028,964 copies by the factories of Flins (France), Valladolid y Palencia (Spain), Santa Isabel (Argentina), Ciudad de Los Andes (Chile), Envigado and Duitama (Colombia), Mariara (Venezuela), Ciudad Sahagún (Mexico), Montevideo (Uruguay), Tehran (Iran), Bursa (Turkey). It was sold for 20 years, until 1986 in France and from 1980 to 1986 in the United States and Canada. A series was also produced by the Austrian establishments Steyr-Daimler-Puch: the famous Renault 18 station wagon 4 × 4 with increased ground clearance, a pluggable rear axle and a rigid rear axle retained. The Renault 18 and the Renault Fuego coupe were respectively replaced by the Renault 21, in 1986, by the Renault Laguna coupe in... 2008.



# Chariot of Fire.



◆ RENAULT

*Fuego*  
GTX

## It means 'fire' in anyone's language.

It's pronounced Fway-go.  
Fuego means 'fire'. And, in Europe, it's really caught on. It's coming to Australia in October, 1982. In Britain, it's been called...

“a sort of French Porsche 924”  
*Evening Gazette*

Its appearance is...

“stunning...the sleekest and most handsome Renault have ever made”  
*Financial Times*

It's brilliant, all alloy, electronic ignition 2-litre is a veritable fire-engine...

“it gobbled up the twisty road with almost indecent haste”  
*Aberdeen Evening Express*

“on the autoroute, the 2-litre GTX ran up to 5,500 in fifth quite willingly”  
*Financial Times*

But Fuego does much more than burn...

“Most Fuego buyers, I suspect, will be attracted by its looks. They will only discover, after a few hundred miles what a sporting, well mannered package they have bought.”  
*Financial Times*

Now, the car that's the toast of Europe is about to be fully imported into Australia. Consider these features. We think they'll fire your enthusiasm.

*Fuego*  
GTX



◆ RENAULT

## Specifications:-

- 2.0 litre overhead camshaft engine
  - electronic ignition
  - 107 DIN BHP @ 5500 rpm
- 5 speed, fully synchronised transmission
  - automatic option available in 1983
- Front wheel drive
- Rack and pinion steering (negative geometry)
- Servo assisted disc drum braking system
  - dual diagonal configuration
  - double pressure sensitive valve limiters (anti locking)
- Michelin low profile 200 x 65H 340 TRX wheels/tyres (5)
- Factory installed air conditioning
  - integrated with fresh air and heating system
- Laminated windscreen
- Electric window lifts (front)
- Electromagnetic centralised door locking
- Velour upholstery
- Pioneer KE 4000 AM/FM stereo cassette system
- Front and rear seat belts
- Heated rear window
  - rear window wiper
- Quartz iodine headlights
- Remote adjustable external mirror.
- OPTIONAL
  - Metallic paint

All specifications tentative only and subject to change without notice.

Your Renault dealer is:

CORIN MOTORS  
101-103 NEWCASTLE ST.  
BOX 151, Fyshwick 2609  
PHONE 80 4409

\$16,827 on road A.C.T.  
\$ 205 metallic paint

# The Renault Fuego – Cult Classic, Not Best Seller

By [Chris Pollitt](#), October 19, 2019



The [Fuego](#) was a very late answer to a question nobody was asking. That question was 'what do the French have to rival the Capri and the Manta?' nobody was asking because it didn't matter. By 1980, when the Fuego (pronounced 'Fwey-go' in case you're wondering) was released, the Capri was old hat along with the Manta, which was in effect just a re-branded Mk1 Cavalier coupe or hatch, which in turn was *really* old hat. We were switching away from the rear-wheel drive coupes in favour of spritely, cheeky front-wheel drive hatchbacks. Cheaper, easier to drive on the limit and, thanks to not having a propshaft running through them, immensely practical, hot hatches were the future.





The Fuego, however, was front-wheel drive. It used, though Renault didn't really want you to know, the floorpan from an 18. This meant the Fuego was incredibly spacious inside. The glass domed rear hatch also served to lighten the cabin, making the Fuego a very nice place to be. Not that anyone knew. We weren't looking.

On paper, the Fuego was the perfect answer to our issues with cars like the Capri. It took the idea and made it work, made it practical. But for reasons based around internal politics, Renault didn't want to shout about the Fuego. It had made this car, this wonderful car. But, it just seemed to appear in dealerships without much in the way of fanfare, before vanishing again a mere six years later.

Some speculate that the Fuego was sold under hushed tones because Renault didn't *really* want buyers to know it was designed under instruction from Robert Opron. Why? Because he had made a significant name for himself designing... Citroens. The SM, GS and GX were all his work. But if Renault was going to take issue with that, why hire him in the first place? The mind boggles.



And it's a terrible shame, because the Fuego was a damn fine car. There is no escaping the fact that Opron and his team did a wonderful job on the styling. The Fuego looked like a spaceship when compared to the numerically-named yawn-fest that was the rest of the Renault range of 1980. It was a car that traded on those looks though, as the 18's chassis was in no way a sporting contender, even with the inclusion of MacPherson strut suspension up front. No, the Fuego was a car for the elegant, for the journey, not just the arrival. The suspension might have been lacking in poise, but it was dripping with comfort. Add in the fact that '80s Renaults seemed to be upholstered with stuffing made from clouds and you had one supremely comfortable car. And it was a proper car that could house four full-sized people thanks to being front-wheel drive. See, clever.

The engine range started with a 1.4, though there was a 2.0 and later in life a 2.2. The one to have though, back then and today, was the 1.6, because the 1.6 had a turbo strapped to it. That meant 132hbp, and in 1980, that was a lot. You can see why Renault was so keen to slap giant TURBO decals down the side of it. With the Turbo, Renault allowed themselves to get a little bit excited. Good on them.



Drivers were also excited by the Turbo model, but not in the traditional sense. More in a wheel-spinning, ditch-finding kind of way. The Turbo had a lot of grunt, but delivery of said grunt to the floor was somewhat frantic. But it didn't matter, because in one way or another, it was exciting. And Renault needed excitement. Plus, to balance it out, what the Fuego lacked in cornering and power delivery, it more than made up for in mile-munching ability. Comfy, quiet and with plenty of pace, it was excellent.

The Fuego was also a car of firsts, not that you'd know it, what with Renault selling the car under that apparent blanket of secrecy. It was the first production car to feature remote central locking, it was the first car to have stereo controls on the steering wheel and when the clattery 2.1 turbo diesel from the 18 made it into the Fuego, it unwittingly became the first diesel coupe.





The Fuego is one of those cars that is mocked by the uneducated, and more fool them. The reality is that it was a good car that was handsome, comfortable, practical and generally lovely to drive. It was the perfect evolution of the coupes before it, taking away the intrusion of rear-wheel drive mechanicals and giving us the space we so needed. Had the launch of the Fuego been a few years earlier, it may well have truly stuck it to the likes of the Capri and the Manta. Sadly though, Renault was too late to the game and the Fuego, of which approx. 250,000 were made globally. We were too busy falling in love with the hot hatchbacks, the XR3s, the GTEs and even the 5 Turbos, and as such, we looked over the Fuego. And we were aided in doing so by Renault itself, which is no less weird now than it was back then. Renault should have been proud, it should have been shouting about the Fuego from the rooftops, but because a man from Citroen designed it, it didn't. More fool them, because the Fuego was great.