

CLASSIC DRIVER

From winning the Dakar Rally to rescue missions, the Volvo C303 does it all

Lead

It may not be the largest off-roader ever made, but what this unique Volvo C303 lacks in size, it certainly makes up for in ability. This example from 1976 is now looking for a new home as it goes under the hammer at RM Sotheby's upcoming St Moritz sale on September the 15th.

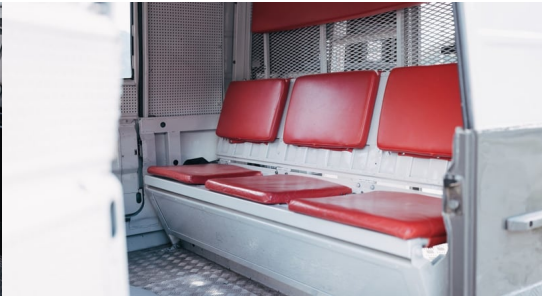


Land Cruiser, Geländewagen, Defender: whichever one you opt for, it'll most likely get you to your destination. These rugged, go-anywhere vehicles were built for adventure, and have in-turn become the go-to vehicles for thrill-seekers looking to get down and dirty. However, in the process their prices have been bumped up to eye-watering levels.

Thankfully, machines like this Volvo C303 from 1976 have flown under the radar, offering true all-terrain ability for next to nothing. Once used as troop transporters for the militaries around the world, this unique example had a far smoother life after its time in the army. Deployed as a service vehicle at El Paradiso, the iconic mountain club in St Moritz, it helped to keep operations moving smoothly in the harshest conditions throughout the winter seasons.



While some C303s carried out life-saving rescue missions, others were used in the pursuit of sporting success, which would come to fruition after a C303 would win the 1983 Paris-Dakar rally in a class for trucks under 10 tonnes. The Volvo's relentless durability was impressive, but it was its engine that got people talking. Powered by a torquey 3.0-litre six-cylinder engine taken from the then-contemporary Volvo road cars, notably the 164 family saloon, the C303 had enough grunt to power its way out of just about any situation, unless it was a drag race.



This fine example takes the off-roading look to another level, featuring a Warn winch, front- and rear-mounted spotlights, and BF Goodrich All-Terrain T/A tyres. Finished in a grey and white two-tone colour scheme, this utilitarian machine even sports some creature comforts inside its metal cabin. Carpet and sound-deadening is non-existent, but the C303 features patinated red leather seats, with a bench seat in the rear and plenty of storage for, well, adventure things.

If you're in the market for something truly unique, an automobile that's more than capable of scaling whatever mother nature decides to throw at us this winter, we urge you to put a bid on this Volvo, especially with its mere CHF 15,000 to 25,000 estimate!

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