


# CLASSIC DRIVER



## 1938 Alta Two-seater racing sports

Lot sold	<b>USD 251 368 - 307 228</b> GBP 180 000 - 220 000 (listed)	Lenkung	Links
Baujahr	1938	Zustand	Gebraucht
Chassisnummer	66S	Standort	
Zahl der Sitze	2	Kraftstoff	Benzin
Antrieb	Zweirad	Außenfarbe	Sonstige
Losnummer	308	Motornummer	66S

### Beschreibung

1938 Alta Sports Supercharged Sports Two-Seater

Registration no. GPL 3

Chassis no. 66S

Engine no. 66S

Of all the British sports car manufacturers that emerged in Britain during the 'tween-war years of the 1920s-30s, Geoffrey Taylor's Alta Car & Engineering Company of Surbiton, Surrey, became renowned as one of the most enthusiastic, utterly dedicated to the cause of producing high-performance fun cars for like-minded sporting gentlemen.

Geoffrey Taylor was a remarkably hands-on engineer. He had actually hand-filed and crafted components for his first Alta engine upon the kitchen table at home. His first car had used an ABC chassis frame but for his subsequent production models he bought-in frames made for him by Rubery Owen in the Midlands. His first model used a 1074cc 4-cylinder engine developing around 49bhp unsupercharged or 76bhp with supercharging. He made a choice of 4-speed non-synchromesh or pre-selector gearboxes available on the 13 Alta cars made between 1931 and 1935.

His later pre-war Alta cars were even more select, with only six believed to have been made from 1935-39. They were equipped with 1496cc or 1961cc engines, featuring aluminium cylinder blocks, hemispherical combustion-chamber heads and chain-driven twin-overhead camshaft engines, in place of the shaft-drive system featured in the earlier units. With supercharger, these Alta engines

were rated at 180bhp, giving a top speed approaching 120mph. This made the Alta one of the fastest pre-war sports cars and certainly one of the fastest in the 2-litre class. In postwar years Geoffrey Taylor concentrated upon single-seater racing car production, aspiring to both Formula 1 and 2 level, before concentrating upon engine production for supply to such emergent new marques as Cooper and Connaught.

This supercharged car was built new in 1938 for Ken Gammon who ran it competitively in such events as the Lewes hill-climb in Sussex and on the parkland Crystal Palace circuit in south London. In 1939 it was sold to one of the Swan family of Swan Hunter & Wigham Richardson ship-building fame, who retained ownership throughout the war years before eventually selling the car on to John Brown in 1954.

John Brown then raced the car in Border region club events, with some success. Subsequently the car passed through a succession of ownerships, including J. Grice (1961), P. Bevis (1961), Voiche Mushek in 1962 who took the car to the United States, Carleton Coolidge (1971) and by 1978 it was back in the UK with dealer Dan Margulies, who raced it at the Nurburgring in 1980. He then found a customer for it in Australia, where the Alta appeared in the hands of J.C.T. Hewison (1981) and M. Sutcliffe (1983). In 1985 a full rebuild was undertaken by Australian long term Alta owners and engineers Graham Lowe (mechanicals) and Mike Bishop (body). Mr Sutcliffe retained the car until 2000 when it was acquired by prominent British collector John Ruston. By this point the restoration was nearly complete and John Ruston entrusted respected pre War specialist Ian Polson with its completion. He then used the car for several more years, the car proving competitive in a variety of pre War events, before selling it to Pierre Honneger in 2002 who used it frequently with some success.

Graham Galliers finally acquired the car from Pierre Honneger in 2004 and enjoyed a successful series of hill-climb and sprint outings in it, his exploits including the current class record at Shelsley Walsh hill-climb, an accolade which in period in the late-1930s would have been a tremendous feather in Alta Engineering's corporate cap...

The car has always been most scrupulously maintained in Graham Galliers' ownership with many invoices being available for inspection on file from leading marque specialist Spencer Longland for work completed in the last few years, totaling nearly £9,000.

It is offered here now complete with a spare new crankcase for the 4-cylinder engine, while the installed power unit has recently received attention to the top end by Spencer Longland. It is scheduled to be dyno-tested and presented in first class order by the time of this Sale.

In 2007 Mr Galliers also had the car's pre-selector gearbox rebuilt and upgraded by leading specialist Cecil Schumacher at a cost of £7,238.

The sports Alta's light weight and punchy blown 2-litre engine make them ideally suited to contemporary historic sprint type races and hill-climbing. Making a well driven example a contender for top honours in pre War sports car competition against the most exalted of its contemporaries.

As offered here this fine and very well-known supercharged Alta Sports is accompanied by a documentation file and has old-style FIA papers dated 2000.

Bonhams 1793

# Bonhams

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