

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Auction Preview: Christie’s at Retromobile, Paris 8th February 2003

- by Charis Whitcombe



“You know, owning a DB4 GT was really something in the early 1960s.” So spoke the first owner of the blue Aston Martin DB4 GT which Christie’s is offering at its Retromobile auction on 8th February, in Paris. Ownership of such a creation is, perhaps, even more spectacular today - particularly when the car in question is the only production DB4 GT with a genuine period link to Le Mans (it ran at the official 1961 Le Mans test days as part of the factory team).



At an estimate of €720,000-820,000 (£470,000-530,000), the Aston is by no means the most valuable car in the sale but then there is some very stiff competition. Take the **1959 Ferrari 250 GT Berlinetta Tour de France**, hoping to sell at €1,000,000-1,200,000 (£650,000-780,000). This was bought new by 26-year-old Carlo M Abate (later to become a Ferrari Works driver) and the car went on to an exceptional competitive career, including a win on the 1959 rally-style Mille Miglia.



There are five “**Bugattis**” up for grabs, the earliest being an ex-Works **1928 T35B** Grand Prix model (estimate €850,000-1,000,000/£560,000-650,000), followed by the **1932 T55 Super Sport** (€900,000-1,200,000/£590,000-780,000). And then for something completely different... three full-scale **Bugatti EB110** design-concept (non-running) models, acquired directly from the receivers in 1997. I’m not sure what the buyer would do with these models but they would certainly make a powerful impact as automotive sculpture in someone’s foyer. The estimates start at €60,000 (£39,000).

Also at the less expensive end of the spectrum come 14 cars from the collection of the late Alfred H Heineken, grandson of the brewery’s founder. Heineken, a marketing genius, enjoyed cars which reflected his interest in detail and style, his American influence and, says Christie’s, his spontaneity - buying a **Bentley R Type Continental** from its lady owner the instant he saw the car at a petrol station in Switzerland.



Of the 14 Heineken cars in the sale, which include **Cadillac**, **Rolls-Royce** and **Ferrari**, it is the **1954 R Type Continental** which crowns the collection. This left-hand drive Continental, with its modern stereo and after-market air-conditioning but much original detail (such as the tool kit), is asking €130,000-160,000

(£85,000-100,000).



For a full entry list, see the [Provisional Auction Lotlist](#).

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