

CLASSIC DRIVER

Bonhams Aston Martin Sale 2005



Bonhams is to offer the exclusive opportunity to acquire a single-owner collection of nine commemorative hand-built Aston Martin V8 models. The collection - privately commissioned in 1987 in order to celebrate the 21st anniversary of V8 production in 1990 - will be sold by Bonhams on 4 June at Aston Martin's Works Service facility in Newport Pagnell.

Believed to be the only time that such a series of vehicles have been built, these nine V8 models are all consecutively registered and finished in identical Hunter Green coachwork with tan leather upholstery, burr walnut veneer and dark green carpeting.

The collection has been fastidiously maintained by the present, and second, owner. Each car - showing minimal mileage - carries a card in the glove box recording every occasion it has been used. Last year, all nine models were featured at Aston Martin's new factory at Gaydon in Warwickshire during a visit by HRH The Prince of Wales.

1990 marked the launch of the Virage and the end of production of the existing V8 range which had all developed from the original 1969 V8 Coupe. The V8s proved immensely popular and were in production for 21 years.

For the past ten years the collection has been housed in a purpose-built, climate-controlled environment by the current owner and every model is offered effectively 'as new'.

The collection comprises:

- Aston Martin V8 Coupe
- Aston Martin V8 Volante
- Aston Martin V8 Vantage Coupe
- Aston Martin V8 Vantage Volante
- Aston Martin V8 Vantage Volante Prince of Wales Specification (POW)
- Aston Martin Lagonda
- Aston Martin Vantage Zagato
- Aston Martin Vantage Zagato Volante
- Aston Martin Virage Coupe

Although the vendor has expressed a preference to sell the collection in its entirety as one lot, the vehicles will be offered - subject to an acceptable private treaty offer - individually as consecutive lots at the Auction.

James Knight, Director of Bonhams' UK Motoring department, says: "I've been tracking this exceptional group of cars since they were manufactured, and now, I'm delighted that we've been appointed to offer them for sale on the open market.

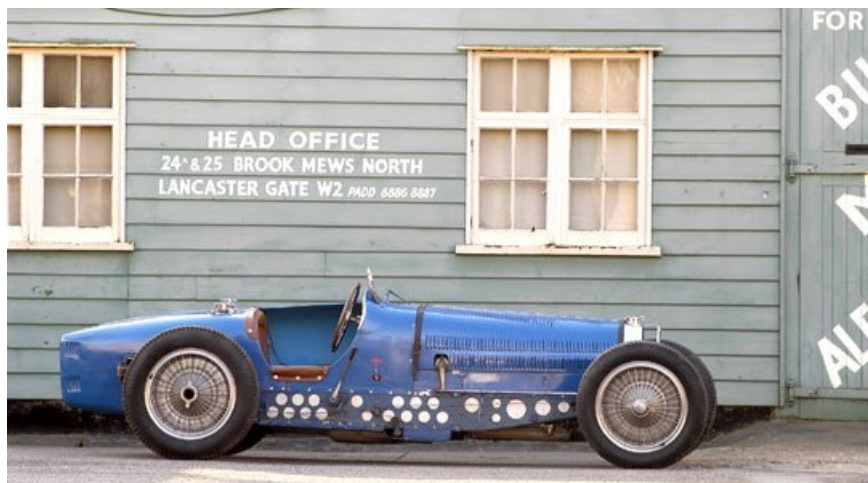
"I'm particularly excited with the prospect of offering perhaps the best example of the 21 produced POWs, and to offer, for the first time, one of the mere handful of Zagato Vantage Volantes, both of which have covered less than 700 miles.

"With past sales such as The Patrick Collection to its credit, Bonhams has proved time and again that cars with limited ownership, low mileage, and those offered 'as new' are highly sought-after by collectors and enthusiasts."

Kingsley Riding-Felce, Aston Martin's Director of Works Service and Customer Relations, adds: "Over the past few years the Bonhams Aston Martin auction has become a regular fixture on the motoring enthusiasts calendar and has consistently turned up many surprises. For 2005 they have done it again with the inclusion of the Hunter Green Collection in the sale.

"I have been involved with this group of cars since they were built and we, at Aston Martin Lagonda Works Service, recognise just how very important a collection of cars it is.

"We know each of them very well as they come from an era when we hand built every single Aston Martin and Lagonda. Together they represent something very special as there is nothing like this collection anywhere else in the world."



Factory Team Bugatti Type 59 leads Bonhams' Festival of Speed Sale

One of the most important pre-war racing cars to come to the market in recent years will top this year's Goodwood Festival of Speed sale on June 24.

The 1933 Bugatti Type 59 3.3-litre Grand Prix Two Seater, Factory Team Car 'Voiture Moteur No. 3' is surely the quintessential French Grand Prix car of its era. Of eight racing cars built, only five have survived and this example is the first ever to come to auction. 'No 3' has been owned by a life-long Bugatti enthusiast for 55 years and during that time has only been seen in public on a handful of occasions.

The exquisitely engineered Type 59 Grand Prix Bugatti, initially equipped with a 2.8-litre engine in essentially a shortened version of the Type 54 chassis, was launched in 1933 in time to participate in the Spanish Grand Prix at San Sebastian on 24 September where a team of four cars was entered. This car, No.3, driven by René Dreyfus and carrying race no.26, finished in a creditable 6th position. At Monaco in April 1934 Robert Benoist drove No.3 spiritedly but, after equalling what was destined to become the fastest lap of the race, he crashed in practice and was unable to drive the following day.

In March 1935 the Team Cars were prepared for sale to four British amateur racing drivers. No. 3 was given chassis no.59121 and sold to C.E.C. 'Charlie' Martin. The car was campaigned with considerable success by him that year and during the following years by the Duke of Grafton, Arthur Baron, George Abecassis and Kenneth Bear before passing into the present ownership in 1949 where it has remained for 55 years. During that time it was carefully rebuilt, returning to the road in 1982 and appearing in public only on very rare occasions since that time, notably the Type 59 Reunion at Prescott in 1993.

Bonhams has a fantastic line-up for this year's sale at the Goodwood Festival of Speed, with top entries in tune with the 'Racing Colours' theme. Highlights include the 1911 'La Coupe de L'Auto' winning Delage Type X (£320,000 - 360,000) and the ex-Prince Bira 1932 MG F2 Magna (refer department).

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