

CLASSIC DRIVER

One-off Lamborghini to go to auction

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A unique prototype version of Lamborghini's 400GT will be offered for sale at the December Bonhams auction at London Olympia. Christened the '400GT Monza', the car has been laid-up for 35 years with just over 7,000 kms on its odometer.

The car has been the object of speculation not only by Italian car collectors and Lamborghini enthusiasts, but also by myriad lovers of classic cars worldwide. Indeed, many have doubted its survival and its whereabouts has been a much-discussed question.

In fact, this Lamborghini Monza first saw the light of day in May 1966, combining the Sant'Agata marque's acclaimed 400GT chassis with Ferrari-esque coachwork hand-crafted by tiny local autofficina Neri & Bonacini, best remembered for their masterly coachwork creations on rival Ferrari chassis but also builders of the original prototype Lamborghini chassis and engine.

The Lamborghini 400 Monza's coachwork is, in fact, reminiscent of a Ferrari 250GTO, right from its low, wide mouth through to its steeply raked windscreen (which was taken from a '64 GTO). But the Monza was distinguished by a Maranello sports-prototype-inspired vestigial 'basket handle' roof design, the body styling then terminating in an almost horizontal fastback which was truncated by a classically cut-short, 'Kamm' or 'transom' tail treatment. Trademark blade-like bumpers completed its signature Neri & Bonacini styling.



According to at least one contemporary source, company founder Ferruccio Lamborghini followed this 400GT Monza project closely, hoping that it might bear greater fruit than an earlier design by the Modenese

autofficina for a lightweight 350GT.

Exhibited to the public for the first and only time at the 1966 Barcelona Motor Show, the Monza was instead sold to a wealthy Spanish sportsman with the necessary high-level connections to enable him to import such a car when most of Generalissimo Franco's citizens were obliged to make do with home-grown utility vehicles.



After being used mainly to transport its owner to race meetings in which he was driving his Porsche 906 and 908 competition cars, the unique Lamborghini Monza was laid-up in 1970 with just over 7,000km recorded on its odometer.

Retained by the owner's family after his death, this unique Lamborghini Monza is preserved exactly as last driven and when offered at Bonhams' pre-Christmas Olympia sale on December 5th, this legendary, almost mystical machine - the Lamborghini 'missing link' - will be seen by most enthusiasts for the first time ever.

The car is estimated at £80,000 - 120,000.

Bonhams remaining motor car sales of 2005 are -

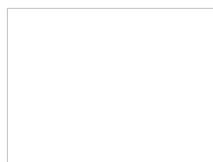
A Sale of Veteran Motor Cars & Related Automobilia - 4 Nov 2005, London to Brighton Veteran Car Run, New Bond Street, London, UK.

Important Sale of Collectors' Motorcycles and Related Memorabilia - 12 Nov 2005, Petersen Museum, Los Angeles, CA, USA.

Important Collectors' Motor Cars, Pioneer & Vintage Motorcycles, Fine Automobilia, Formula 1 Memorabilia, Toys & Models - 5 Dec 2005, Olympia, London, UK.

WilliamsF1's Reserve Collection of Formula One cars and memorabilia - 14 Dec 2005, WilliamsF1 Headquarters, Grove, Oxfordshire, UK.

Historic Ferrari Motor Cars - 17 Dec 2005, Palace Hotel, Gstaad, Switzerland.



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