Historic Ferrari 250GT Lusso to star at Bonhams Monaco 2006

For the 16th successive year, Bonhams will be holding a sale to coincide with the start of Monaco Grand Prix week. There are already entries that include examples of Bugatti, Lancia, Alfa Romeo and Lamborghini, and several Ferraris, one of which being the only Lusso to have seen International period competition.

Chassis '4965GT' left the Maranello works on 21 September 1963, destined for the showrooms of renowned prestige motorcar dealer Franco-Britannic Automobiles in Paris for onward delivery to their favoured customer Robert Blouin. At that point it was French-registered '1 HW 49' in the Departement Le Maine-et-Loire. Monsieur Blouin specified Azzurro coachwork (code Italiver 19278M) complemented by contrasting red Connolly leather (VM3171).

Robert Blouin seems to have first campaigned his new Ferrari as early as March 20-21, 1964, competing with race number '107' in the Grand Rallye National de l'Ouest in northern France in this machine. On 17 May Blouin entered and drove this car in the gruelling Grand Prix de Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium, but failed to finish the event. Just one week later '4965GT' was back in action, this time at Montlhéry for the Prix de Paris, wearing race number '48' but the result is unknown.

The following year, on May 9, 1965, Blouin entered and drove the Lusso in its most important event - the 49th annual Targa Florio around the 44-mile Piccolo Madonie circuit near Palermo in Sicily. The car wore race number '116' and Blouin co-drove it with a friend named Sauer. The pair completed the full ten laps and, although not classified, the French team earned the respect and popularity of fellow competitors, as Jess Pourret relates in his definitive book 'Ferrari 250GT Competition Cars': "The Frenchmen Blouin and Sauer drove Blouin's Lusso all the way from Normandy to Sicily to enter the Targa...Near the end, Blouin encountered a gravely wounded competitor and stopped to pick him up and deliver him to the next Red Cross point. This put him out of contention as far as "allowed time" was concerned; nevertheless, he finished that 1965 race."

By May 16, 1965, Blouin was back at the wheel at Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium for the Circuit National's annual GT Championship-qualifying Grand Prix. He was placed either 6th or 16th overall (depending on the source)...either way a very respectable result considering opposition which included Ferrari 250LMs, 250GTOs and 250GTO/64s, the factory Shelby Cobra Daytona Coupes and several Cobra roadsters...

On February 14, 1969, '4965GT' was re-registered in a lady's name at a chic address in a residential quartier in Paris, and it is believed to have remained in her ownership for more than two decades, passing to Ralph Bruggmann of Gstaad, Switzerland and competing in the 1998 Tour Auto retrospective. It was acquired soon afterwards by well-known French enthusiast Olivier Cazalières, running at the Monza round of the Shell Ferrari Maserati Challenge in 2000 and the Le Mans Classic before finally joining the present owner's collection, so its eligibility for the most exclusive historic events is beyond doubt.

Estimate: 'Refer Department'.

Other entries so far received include a **1994 Bugatti EB110** (EURO 220,000 - 240,000), a **1975 Lancia Stratos Marlboro Competition Coupé** (EURO 140,000 - 180,000), a **1947 Alfa Romeo 6C 2500SS Cabriolet** (EURO 100,000 - 140,000) and the **ex-JCB 1965 Lotus 30 Series 2** (EURO 180,000 - 215,000). The Sale will also include the collection of Mr Vitor Manuel de Mendonca Ribeiro.

Full preview to come on Classic Driver when the catalogue closes.

The Sale also includes an extensive selection of Automobilia and will be held at the Musée Automobile de la Collection de S.A.S, Le Prince de Monaco on Saturday 20th May 2006. Automobilia Sale at 3.00 pm, Motor Cars at 5.00 pm.

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