

CLASSIC DRIVER

Coys - Retailer and Auction House



"I'm standing in our showroom now," says Coys partner and auctioneer Chris Routledge, "and I can see such original period cars as an ex-Le Mans D-type Jaguar, a Ford GT40, a 6000km-from-new Lancia Stratos, one of the earliest surviving 16-valve Aston Martin Grand Prix cars, the oldest surviving 3-litre Bentley saloon in the world - and so it goes on. There are cars here from Japan, from America, from all over Europe and the rest of the world. You won't find such a broad range anywhere else in the UK - nor possibly in Europe.

"And then upstairs, above all this heritage and rich machinery, is our auction department. There are six guys up there working on a calendar covering 12 international auctions per year. We do sales in Monaco, Germany, Holland, Italy, France, London... more auctions in Europe than anybody else.

"It's this combination of products which makes us different. We have 12 auctions but we also have the showroom facility. The auction environment is an exciting piece of theatre but it doesn't suit everyone. There needs to be another way available and we have both barrels of the gun."

As a company, Coys has been retailing motor cars since 1919. "W.E. Coy saw action in France in the First World War and came back and said, 'You know, we're never going to get the populace back on horseback. They've done five or six years with mechanised infantry: the day of the horse and cart is dead.' He bought a few fuel bowsers from the Royal Flying Corps and opened the UK's first ever standing petrol station - at the Kensington mews for so long the location of Coys in London. The company's motor retail business has continued uninterrupted up to the present day. That's why our heritage is so rich and so deep."





As an auctioneer as well as a partner in the business, Routledge talks passionately about the auction market today, claiming that it's no longer enough to have "a dull and dreary room with a dull and dreary auctioneer standing at a rostrum selling cars." Those days are gone. Today, Coys works hard to give both buyer and seller a positive experience.

"We focus heavily on the venue - it's become a vitally important factor to us. For many years, for example, we did Chiswick House which was very popular but then people thought 'I've been there, I've done that', so we're constantly developing new ideas."



Take the next Coys auction at Automoto d'Epoca in Padova, Italy, on 28th October. Consigned cars include such gems as a **1970 McLaren M6GT**, plus two **Ferrari Daytonas**, a **Mercedes-Benz 300SL Roadster**, **250 GT alloy berlinetta Ferrari**, **250 GT Spyder** and re-built **Alfa TZ2**. An impressive selection: but the sale is about far more than the cars. It's fuelled by the tie-up with the Padova show, a spectacular affair some three or four times the size of the Classic Car Show at the NEC.

"A trip to the Padova show makes a great autumn 'jolly'," concludes Routledge, who believes that the classic car market is now a lifestyle industry. "In the US, auctions have become a fashion show, a movie premiere, a lifestyle whirlpool which just happens to have a classic car sale as its focal point. This is now happening across Europe - and as a result, classic and historic car sales are quite possibly the fastest-growing part of the British motor industry."



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For further information on **Coys Auctions and Showroom** sales, please visit www.coys.co.uk.

□ **Coys**
Manor Court,
237 - 241 Lower Mortlake Road,
Richmond,
London TW9 2LL
UK

Tel: +44 (0)20 8614 7888
Fax: +44 (0)20 8614 7889
Email: sales@coys.co.uk

Text: Charis Whitcombe
Photos: Coys/Classic Driver

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