

CLASSIC DRIVER

RM Auctions - Automobiles of London 31st October 2007 - Review

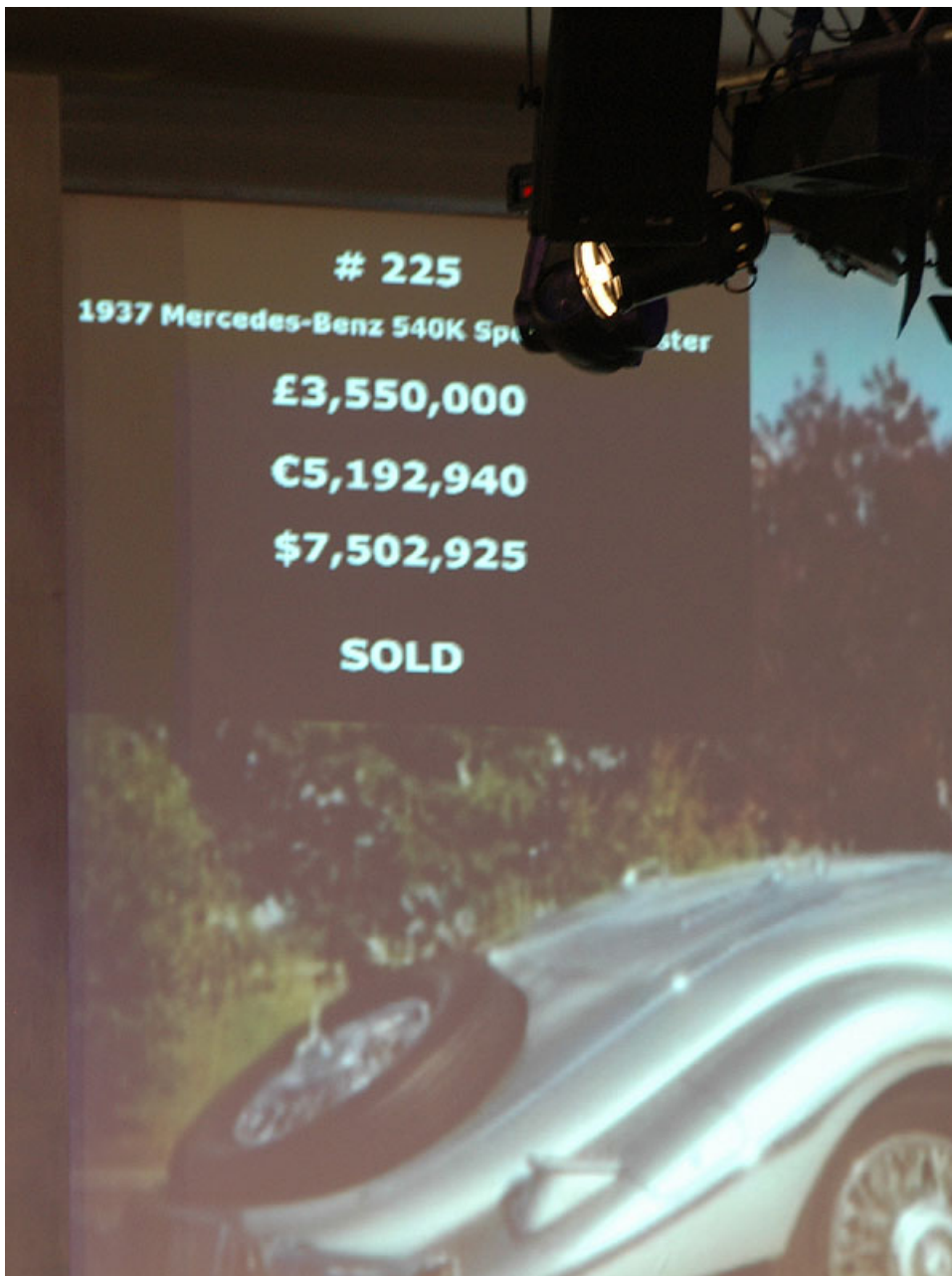


The star of RM's inaugural London Sale was undoubtedly the Ecclestone Collection 1937 Mercedes-Benz 540K Special Roadster. The elegant silver pre-War car was lifted onto the stage accompanied by dramatic music, and went for £3,967,125 - one of the most expensive road-going Mercedes-Benz ever sold at auction.

The event started the previous evening with a **1920s-themed VIP cocktail party**. Over 1,000 guests (including Mr and Mrs Ecclestone) attended in the large exhibition hall at Battersea Park, just on the other side of Chelsea Bridge. With three collections forming the majority of the Sale, RM had had plenty of time to put together a superbly photographed catalogue with finely written descriptions. Although as rival auctioneers pointed out on the night, it's not so easy to do that when late entries are accepted only a couple of weeks before the actual sale.

1935 Mercedes-Benz Type K 500K Special Cabriolet - Sold for £698,438	1928 Mercedes-Benz Type S SSK - Sold for £1,229,250
1966 Ford GT40 - Sold for £983,400	1986 Ferrari F1/86 Turbo - Sold for £178,800

Whatever, it was an impressive sight that greeted potential buyers on the day itself, the sale starting promptly (and modestly) with an Ecclestone **1964 Ford Anglia Deluxe Saloon** selling for £5,588 (a figure that includes buyer's premium as all our prices do). First of the big hitters was a red **1961 Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Roadster**, at £234,675, although along the way some big prices were achieved by the **1966 Mercedes-Benz 230 SL** (£67,050) and the Peking-to-Paris-prepared **1960 Mercedes-Benz 300D Cabriolet** (£78,225), the latter almost doubling its lower estimate.



The first, big – in every sense of the word – **pre-War Mercedes** was the **1937 Mercedes-Benz 540K Cabriolet** selling for £670,500, and then following the excellent price achieved by the **1933 Rolls-Royce Phantom II Continental Faux Cabriolet** (£424,6500) it was dimmed lights and a fanfare for the **1937 Mercedes-Benz 540K Special Roadster**. Auctioneer **Peter Bainbridge** and RM Auctions European Managing Director **Max Girardo** handled the bidding with perseverance, the hammer eventually falling at £3,550,000 - that's £3,967,125 with premium.

All witnessed by the 'boss of Formula 1' from his front row VIP seat next to RM's own **Rob Myers**.

RM had cleverly placed the non-Collection **1957 BMW 507** we drove a little while ago halfway through the Ecclestone cars, it selling well for £430,238. It was then 'business as usual' as the three **SS/SSKs** came under the hammer. Top seller at £1,229,250 was the **1928 Mercedes-Benz SSK Roadster**, but mention must be made of the **1931 Mercedes-Benz Type SSKL Replica** going for £1,061,625, a car built up from mainly original parts.



With only one Ecclestone car non-selling (the **1938 Lancia Astura Lunga Torpedo Ministeriale**) it was time for the fabulously original metallic blue **1966 Ford GT40** to achieve a strong £983,400, and then on to the **Prevosti Collection** cars of mainly Italian origin. The *Giallo Fly* **1967 Ferrari 275 GTB/4** was highly fancied in the saleroom and sold for a good market figure of £569,925, while of the two **Bizzarrinis**, it was the silver **1966 5300 GT Strada** that had the best result; a useful £257,025.

And hats off, too, to the **1962 Ferrari 250 GTE**, its £122,925 surely some record?

Other Prevosti cars of note included a **1967 Lamborghini Miura P400** for £206,738 and the wonderful **1948 Maserati A6 1500 GT Berlinetta** at £178,800.

1967 Iso Grifo GL GL - Sold for £122,925 1968 Ferrari 330 GTC Coupé - Sold for £106,163

The **1960 Ferrari 250 GT 'Nembo' Spyder** had been carrying an estimate of £717,000 - 917,000 but it sold for £670,500 - slightly odd but possibly a result of a) the well known issues of comfort and space in these cars and b) the fact that Ferrari Classiche will not sanction re-bodied cars. I may be wrong.

We're nearly on the home straight now with the final block of cars coming from **Abraham Kogan**, also present in the saleroom. The **1985 Ferrari 288 GTO** sold well for £229,088, but neither the **1927 Delage 15-S-8 Grand Prix Car** (bid to £775,000) nor the **1952 OSCA 2000** (bid to £325,000) and **1947 Cisitalia 202 SMM** (to £300,000) found new owners.

One of the stars of the night however, was the Argentinian home-grown 'Alfa P3', the **1928 Reo Racing Car**, that saw determined telephone bidding from South America and eventually sold for £447,000.

1967 Ferrari 275 GTB/4 - Sold for £569,925 1928 Reo Racing Car - Sold for £447,000

1971 Ferrari 365 GTB/4 Daytona Berlinetta - Sold for £139,688 1967 Lamborghini Miura P400 - Sold for £206,738

At the close of the evening the motor car sale had totalled over £18 million, and RM Auctions' co-founder **Rob Myers** said: "We are thrilled with this most satisfying start of our new European business here in London. We enjoyed an incredible reception from both friends and new clients."

Bernie Ecclestone, owner of the biggest collection sold, added: "I started my car collection a long time ago, so passing it on now was an important decision for me to take. I entrusted RM Auctions with this job, and they delivered an impressive service and record-breaking results."

RM announced that the **2008 Ferrari Leggenda e Passione Sale** at Maranello will be held on **Sunday May 18th** (the Mille Miglia weekend). An early entry is a **LWB Ferrari 250GT California** estimated at EURO 3,000,000 - 4,000,000, present in the foyer at Battersea.


To see the full 'Automobiles of London' results please [CLICK HERE](#).

Text: Steve Wakefield

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