

CLASSIC DRIVER

Aston Martin Shotgun Under the Hammer



If your twin passions in life are shooting and Aston Martin motor cars, a visit to specialist gun auctioneer Holt's should certainly be on your agenda next month, when a unique Browning shotgun comes under the hammer.

The bespoke B25 12-bore was ordered from the legendary Browning factory four years ago by an Aston aficionado called Ron Collier. He specified that one side of the breech be engraved with an image of his short-wheelbase Vantage Volante and the other with his V8 Vantage Volante from the twilight years of Newport Pagnell production.

"In my opinion an Aston Martin is all about craftsmanship and hand-finishing, and the same applies to a tailor-made gun," said Collier at the time.

"The two go hand-in-glove. My V8 Vantage Volante was one of the very last to be built at the Newport Pagnell factory and I thought it seemed appropriate to commission a gun that somehow commemorated the final run of cars that were made there."





But now that Collier no longer owns the Astons he has decided to also sell the Browning, which is estimated to fetch £16,000 – 20,000 when it is offered at the Holt's London sale on June 23.

Valuer Roland Elworthy says the gun, which took a year to manufacture, will inevitably appeal to an Aston enthusiast. "It has hardly been used – I doubt if 500 cartridges have been through it since it was built. We often deal with guns that have been specially commissioned and they usually sell well. It is just a matter of matching them to a suitable buyer."

Customisation aside, a Browning 12-bore is certainly a gun that would appeal to most game-shooting enthusiasts. Although it is now based in Belgium, the firm's history dates back to the birth of John Moses Browning in Utah in 1855. His gunsmith father was a Mormon and John was one of a startling 22 children.

The young Browning is said to have known every part of a gun before he could read, so it was natural that he should enter the family business and bring it to worldwide prominence through his inventive genius. From his first patent, lodged in 1878 for a new percussion mechanism to the 9mm semi-automatic pistol for which he is most famous, the Browning story is one of almost unbroken success.





During the early 1900s, the firm formed a manufacturing deal with the Belgian Fabrique National – the national weapons factory – through which more than 10 million Browning pistols have been sold to armies and police forces throughout the world during the past 100 years.

The Herstal factory remains the European base of Browning today and, although it produces a range of high-quality, computer-designed and manufactured weapons, it still offers a bespoke service where every part of the gun is made by hand.

The Holt's sale takes place on Thursday, June 23 at Princess Louise House, 190 Hammersmith Road, London W6. On view from Tuesday, June 21. See www.holtsauctioneers.com.

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