

CLASSIC DRIVER

Bonhams at Mercedes-Benz World, Weybridge, 1 December 2011: Review

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1966 Mercedes-Benz 230SL: Sold for £55,400

Top-selling car at Bonhams' December sale was the famous 'Le Mans '55' Healey 100S which achieved an impressive £843,000. In addition to that 'barn-find', there were many other cars ready to run, only needing a big red bow to be that perfect Christmas gift.

The Healey was a quite extraordinary car. Inherently highly collectable (a works prototype 100S with extensive in-period racing history at Sebring, the Carrera Panamericana and Nassau), its fame is due to its central role in the racing disaster at Le Mans in 1955. The £843k price no doubt reflected that, but was also an indication of the car's eligibility for so many events and its potential performance once fully restored.

James Knight, Group Head of Bonhams' Motoring Department, who took the sale, commented afterwards: "As an unashamed Austin-Healey fan – and owner of a '100' myself – I'm thrilled with today's result. The '100S' is, to me, the most desirable Healey of all and to have sold an ex-works example with Special Test Car lineage and such significant racing history for such a magnificent price is a dream come true."

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'Barn Find' fresh from 42 years in single ownership, The Ex-Works, Le Mans 24-Hours, Sebring 12-Hours, Carrera PanAmericana and Bahamas Speed Week, Nassau, 1953-55 Austin-Healey Special Test Car/100S Prototype: Sold for £843,000

And it wasn't just this Healey that turned in a big result; the immaculate, Ice Blue metallic ex-Turin Motor Show, 1953 Austin-Healey 100 Pre-production Prototype sold for £102,700. A beautiful car.

Of the other British marque entries, the 1959 AC Aceca Bristol sold for £65,300, the 1955 AC Ace £102,700, and the 1959 Jaguar XK150S 3.4-Litre FHC £40,000. On the Aston front, of the four cars in the sale, three sold, highlighted by the £271,000 1964 DB5.

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1966 Citroën DS21 Décapotable: Sold for £52,100

The older cars did not fare quite so well, with quite a few non-sellers such as the 'cover car' 1929 Bentley 4½-Litre Drophead Coupé with Dickey. Things were better for more recent Bentleys, with the 1937 4¼-Litre All-Weather Tourer achieving £135,700 and the stylish 1954 R-Type Coupé by Abbott of Farnham going just over top-estimate at £104,900.

A Classic Driver favourite, the 1967 Maserati Quattroporte, sold for £51,000, and someone picked up an attractive little British GT, in the form of the 1961 TVR Grantura Mk II, for an oh-so-reasonable £21,850.

Prior to the motor cars, Bonhams offered over 300 lots of automobilia including a 'Victoire' glass mascot by René Lalique, French, designed 1928, which sold for £11,875.

Bonhams' next motor car sale will be its inaugural Scottsdale, Arizona one on 19 January 2012. Its European office will hold a sale in Paris - timed to coincide with Rétromobile week - on 1 February 2012. An early entry is a 1961 LHD Aston Martin DB4GT (1,100,000 – 1,400,000 euros).

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1967 Maserati Quattroporte: Sold for £51,000

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1954 Bentley R-Type 4.6-Litre Coupé by Abbott: Sold for £104,900

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1965 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud III Drophead Coupé: Sold for £113,700

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1964 Ferrari 330GT 2+2 Series 2: Sold for £56,500

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1961 TVR Grantura MkII: Sold for £21,850

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Photos - Bonhams

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