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Bonhams 'The Scottsdale Sale', Arizona 19 January 2012: Review

24 January 2012 | Steve Wakefield

Holding its first-ever sale during 'Scottsdale week', Bonhams did well, selling a significant number of cars including pre- and post-War classics, iconic Americana and the inevitable 'barn-find'.

In the latter category, one of the stars was this 1955 Porsche 356A Speedster (above), one of only 233 from the 1955 model year (out of just 4,800 or so in total). The price of \$100,620 is typical of today's obsession with originality and rare specification.

Other Porsche 356s sold included the 1964 356SC Cabriolet (\$133,500) and the 1954 356 'bent-window' Coupé (\$93,600). Unfortunately, Bonhams was not so successful with the headlining Porsche 906, which failed to find a new owner.

It was in the pre-War arena that Bonhams did best, with the sale's top-seller being the 1937 Mercedes-Benz 540K Cabriolet C, which achieved \$667,000 after a fierce battle between bidders in the USA, the UK, Eastern Europe and the Far East. It had been offered from long-term (40 years) ownership in a New York collection and is to return to continental Europe.



A 1929 Rolls-Royce Phantom I Transformable Phaeton, formerly owned by the screen goddess Marlene Dietrich, made its top estimate (\$524,000), while the Figoni et Falaschi-bodied, extravagantly styled 1947 Delahaye 135M 3-Position Drophead Coupé (above) sold well for \$472,500, way over its \$250,000 - 350,000 estimate.

Another car with celebrity connections was the LHD 1966 Aston Martin DB6 Vantage once owned by the old crooner, Bing Crosby, which went for a strong \$298,500. The other Aston in the sale, the 1989 V8 Vantage Volante sold for \$150,000. Surprisingly, perhaps, neither Ferrari nor Maserati was represented in Bonhams' Scottsdale catalogue.

We always like tiny, Abarth-tuned Fiats and Bonhams sold the 1958 Fiat Abarth 750 GT 'Double Bubble' by Zagato for \$111,150 and the 1967 Fiat Abarth TC Berlina Corsa for \$46,800.

At the other end of the spectrum, a wonderful matching-numbers 1968 Shelby Mustang GT500KR Fastback, beautifully presented in 'Bullitt' Highland Green, went for a not-unreasonable \$70,200. The similarly desirable, Bristol-engined 1956 AC Ace, ripe for sympathetic restoration, achieved \$221,500.

Bonhams' next motor car sale will be in Paris, on 2 February where the star lot is a 1961 Aston Martin DB4GT estimated at 1,100,000 - 1,400,000 euros.

Photos: Bonhams

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