

CLASSIC DRIVER

Citroën SM Cabriolet: The most beautiful Maserati ever?

Lead

When Citroën acquired a 60 per cent share of Maserati in 1967, it couldn't have come at a better time for the French company. And who better to entrust with powering its new sports car than the folks over at the Trident marque?

Citroën's innovative DS, with its hydropneumatic suspension, was revered worldwide but the media had one major criticism: it needed more power. As a custom-designed, technologically advanced 2.7-litre Maserati V6 was fitted into a new quirky saloon body, so the SM was born – finally with the oomph and versatility deserved by a true luxury car.

Kum ba ya...



Among the coachbuilders who favoured the high-end SM was Henri Chapron, the chap responsible for the elusive Mylord cabriolet, of which it is believed only six were built. The drop-top SM was elegantly styled and luxuriously equipped – the body was strengthened, a boot was added and a hood was created to cover the four-seated interior.

Its price wasn't so attractive, though. At 130,000 Francs (in 1971!), it was double the price of the standard SM and dangerously close to that of the Ferrari Daytona. Perhaps inevitably, Citroën didn't take up the project and experts believe that only six were produced, one of which was later destroyed in a fire. As a result, genuine Mylord cabriolets are, according to Artcurial, 'impossible' to find.

The last great French luxury automobile



This stunning one-owner example – arguably the very best of them all – presents an exceptional opportunity to own what is held to be the last great, French, luxury automobile. Purchased at the 1975 Paris Motor Show by a Citroën dealer in Colmar, it has remained in the same family ever since. In its day, the 'Byzantine Gold' convertible was used to transport the family to its holiday home on the Côte d'Azur. It has been professionally maintained and is offered with extensive documentation, including manuals, technical drawings, registration papers and correspondence between Chapron and the owner.

It will go under the gavel at Artcurial's Rétromobile sale in Paris, on February 7. As the auction house rather nicely puts it: "We're offering a wonderful story – it's up to you to continue the plot." Remember one thing, though: underneath that unique French exterior beats an unmistakably Italian heart.

Photos: Artcurial

Gallery

