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Bonhams set to obliterate auction record with Ferrari 250 GTO at Quail Lodge sale

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When Bonhams sells a Ferrari 250 GTO at its Quail Lodge sale in August, it won't be a question of whether it breaks the World Record for the most expensive car sold at auction – but by how much it surpasses it...

In a massive coup for the British auction house, the consigned car (s/n 3851 GT) will be the first 250 GTO to be sold in the public domain for several years – and will astonishingly carry no reserve at the California sale. First sold to French racing driver Jo Schlesser, it was soon campaigned in the 1962 Tour de France, ultimately placing second. Three years later it was sold to Fabrizio Violati, who “saved the car from scrap and hid it from my parents – I only drove it at night so nobody would see me,” he recalled before his death in 2010. The significant Ferrari has remained with his family since, their 49-year custody meaning 3851 GT is the longest single-family-ownership 250 GTO in existence. Bonhams holds the current auction record for the Mercedes W196, sold for the equivalent of around \$30 million last year – but this Ferrari has a realistic chance of doubling that figure.

Photos: Bonhams/Goddard Picture Library

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