

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Victory for the underdog at RM Auctions sale in Paris](#)

Lead

Even though the bidding began rather sedately at the opening sale by RM Auctions during *Rétromobile* 2015, with occasional star cars not scaling the expected heights, there were some happy surprises...

A useful barometer of the buying mood



For dealers, collectors and experts, the [Rétromobile auctions](#) are a useful barometer of the buying mood of the market – as RM Auctions, Bonhams and Artcurial compete to get the best price for their assigned lots, and perhaps the odd world record when two bidders fight for one car. The action again began this year with Max Girardo and his team from RM Auctions, staging the usual glamorous sale at the Place Vauban. But as with the [Arizona sales earlier in January](#), the really big surprise was the number of cars that failed to attract bids at their estimated values. Are today's estimates being set at unrealistic levels – or have we reached the end of the boom in the auction market? Whatever the truth of the matter, the stars of the sale – an ex-factory Porsche 911, estimated at 1.1 to 1.3 million euros, along with an Alfa 6C 2500 Sport Berlinetta carrying an estimate of 1.9 to 2.4 million euros – were unable to find new homes.

Underdogs exceeding expectations



Nevertheless, exceptional cars can still achieve immense sums: a Porsche 904 Carrera GTS estimated between 1.4 and 1.8 million euros sold for 1,428,000 euros including premium, while a prized Ferrari F40 (estimate: 900,000 to 1.3 million euros) brought 1,176,000 euros. And Classic Driver dealer DK Engineering bought a yellow Lancia Stratos for 386,400 euros. While the top-notch lots at best achieved their estimates, however, it was left to the (relatively speaking) underdogs to exceed expectations: a Maserati Sebring, for example – a model [previously tipped by Classic Driver as a good investment for 2015](#) – saw the hammer drop at 150,000 euros, a figure well above the too-pessimistic estimate. And while the purist's Lamborghini of choice, the [Countach LP400 Periscopio](#), failed to reach the expected 1.1 to 1.45 million euros (with bids petering out at 950,000 euros), the much less coveted Countach 25th Anniversary model attracted 330,000 euros – 10 per cent more than RM had dared to hope for the 1980s bullet. Even when it came to the estimated 15,000 to 20,000 euros for the [Alfa police car of the Italian Carabinieri](#), the gavel didn't fall until the bidding had risen to around 31,000 euros.

Photos: [Rémi Dargégen](#) for Classic Driver © 2015

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