


1936 Alvis Speed Twenty Five

- Lot sold
USD 48 434 - 72 650
GBP 40 000 - 60 000 (listed)
Year of manufacture 1936
- **Chassis number** 13380
- **Number of seats** 2
- **Drivetrain** 2wd
- **Lot number** 66
- **Drive** LHD
- **Condition** Used
- **Location** 
- **Fuel type** Petrol
- **Exterior colour** Other
- **Engine number** 14063
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Description

1936 Alvis Speed Twenty-Five Drophead Coupé
Coachwork by E Bertelli Ltd
Chassis no. 13380
Engine no. 14063

Engineer T G John founded the Alvis company in 1919 when he acquired the rights to an automobile engine and with it the brand name of its aluminium pistons 'Alvis'. Manufactured by T G John Ltd, the first Alvis car - the 10/30hp - appeared in 1920. Conventional yet well engineered, the four-cylinder sidevalve-engined 10/30 was unusual among contemporary light cars in having a four-speed gearbox. Beginning in 1922 and using the 10/30 as a starting point, newly appointed Chief Engineer Captain G T Smith-Clarke and Chief Designer W M Dunn created the car that effectively established Alvis's reputation - the immortal 12/50. The latter was powered by a new overhead-valve engine of 1,496cc, and on its competition debut at Brooklands in 1923 secured a legendary victory in the premier 200-Mile event crewed by Harvey/Tattershall. The production version went on sale later that same year priced at £550.

Pre-war development of the six-cylinder Alvis, the first of which had been introduced in 1927, culminated in the announcement of two new models for 1937: the 4.3-Litre and the 3.6-litre Speed Twenty-Five, both powered by new seven-bearing, overhead-valve engines. The cruciform-braced chassis were similar and embodied the kind of advanced thinking long associated with the marque: independent front suspension and a four-speed, all-synchromesh gearbox - introduced on the preceding Speed Twenty - were retained, with the additional refinements of driver-controlled Luvax hydraulic dampers and servo-assisted brakes. On test with Autocar, the Speed Twenty-Five demonstrated remarkable top-gear flexibility combined with a maximum

speed of 95mph, and was found to possess qualities of, 'quiet running and general refinement in a striking degree.'

Sturdily built and endowed with a generous wheelbase, the Alvis six attracted some of the finest examples of the pre-war coachbuilders' art, though the Speed Twenty-Five's initial chassis-only price of £775 meant that ownership was necessarily confined to wealthy connoisseurs.

This particular Speed Twenty-Five wears two-door drophead coupé coachwork by the Feltham-based company E Bertelli Ltd. The latter had been founded by Enrico 'Harry' Bertelli, brother of Aston Martin proprietor Augustus 'Gus' Bertelli, acting as the latter's in-house coachbuilder before branching out to body other makes. It is estimated that Bertelli bodied only a handful of Alvis cars; indeed, the 'parallel door' drophead coupé body on this example - car number '18427' - is recorded as unique in the Alvis Owner Club archive. A matching numbers example, this Speed Twenty-Five has been unknown to the Club since approximately the 1980s and was purchased by the current vendor from a collector friend of his in Europe.

The car is in running condition, the engine having recently been re-commissioned and showing good oil pressure. The body and paintwork require restoration, as does the original interior, which lacks carpets, and there is no convertible hood. All gears are free and there are no knocks from the rear axle, but the clutch is seized. The electrics are in generally good condition, all lights being present, and the car benefits from the installation of a Red Triangle up-rated starter motor. Offered without documents, this unique Alvis Speed Twenty-Five will surely be welcome at any prestigious concours d'élégance once its cosmetic restoration has been completed. A potentially most rewarding project.

Bonhams 1793

Title Mr

First name Bonhams Collectors' Car department

101 New Bond Street

London

W1S 1SR

United Kingdom

Phone +44-2074685801

Fax +44-2074477401

<http://www.bonhams.com>

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