

CLASSIC DRIVER

Danish Delights - A day exploring the incredible Frederiksen Collection

Lead

Bonhams has announced the consignment of a significant, single-owner collection, curated over several decades by Henrik Frederiksen, a respected Danish businessman. Classic Driver was exclusively invited to inspect the 48-car fleet, and talk to the owner about his reasons for selling...

A self-made man, Mr Frederiksen was able to steadily build the collection over several decades, as a result of numerous successful business moves. "I went to the bank as a young man, and got a loan for £10,000. With this, I bought some shares in a company for the equivalent of £300 each, and ultimately sold them for £3.5 million apiece," he tells us. This, along with success in medicinal, shipping and automotive concerns, has allowed him to not only amass a stunning and diverse collection of cars, but also to take up residence in an idyllic 16th Century country estate originally built for the Danish Royal Family, larger in size than Monaco. It will be here that Bonhams hosts the sale of the 48-car collection, the auction house's first ever to be held in Denmark.

Predominantly pre-War



The lotlist is largely made up of pre-War cars, although there's the odd post-War delicacy in there, too – including two 1970s Citroëns, a unique Frua-bodied Rolls-Royce Phantom VI, and a rare Bentley S1 Drophead that we'll present to you in more depth in the coming weeks. Elsewhere, numerous cars from the first half of the 20th Century are split among themed storage barns, divided into American, German, and other European classics. Altogether, the cars are estimated to be worth around \$40m.

A slew of Best in Show winners



"The majority of the cars were acquired through personal contacts," says Frederiksen, "and, of course, I go to all the auctions. Some of them were bought from other collections – I bought three cars from the collection of Mr Key [a prominent American collector], and all three were Pebble Beach Best in Show winners," he continues. Other highlights include a 1939 Lagonda LG6 Rapide Drophead, a pair of Spohn-bodied Maybachs, and a Mercedes 500K Roadster. Oh, and there are no fewer than five variants of the Rolls-Royce 40/50 Silver Ghost, seven Phantoms, and two V16-engined Cadillacs. And a fire engine.

Freedom of expression



Why the preference for pre-War vehicles, you might be asking? “There’s a kind of art to the cars of that time,” explains Frederiksen. “Once manufacturers started creating cars in a wind tunnel, they started to look the same – in the 1930s, people could make their own choices about how the cars looked.” Wandering around the collection proves his point – many examples have intricate, yet entirely superfluous details, the Art Deco influence of the time particularly apparent on the Silver Ghosts and V16 Caddys.

An invitation to the club



While the majority of the cars are bracketed by the first and second World Wars, their diversity within this time period is staggering – and also easily justified, as Frederiksen explains. “When you are a car collector, it’s as much about the social aspect as the automotive passions you share. When you are among good friends, the car isn’t as important as the friendship – it is literally a vehicle by which you are brought together. It’s like if you have a dog, you talk with other people in the street that have one.”

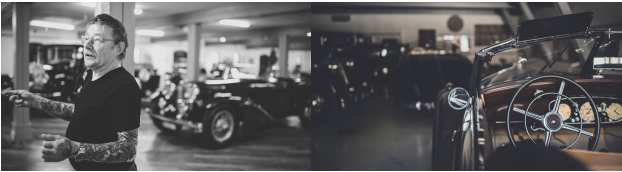
A tough decision...



Frederiksen claims never to have sold a car in his life, modern ‘daily drivers’ aside. The mass sell-off is due to the recent passing of his wife, Vivi, with whom he built the collection and enjoyed the cars during countless road trips. “I have been through the full-circle process of owning these cars, and I’m not married to them. In selling them, I close one door and hopefully open another. I’m not sad about it, because I know the buyer of every single one will be a satisfied new custodian – there are no problems with

any of them, they are in top condition.”

...born from a serious affliction



We grab a few minutes with Frederiksen’s long-serving resident mechanic, who sports a wristful of tattoos, wears a nice vintage Rolex, and has a rather dry sense of humour. “Will I miss the cars? No, not at all – the day they are sold, I can finally retire.” Despite his witty nonchalance, he has been meticulously servicing these cars for years, even decades in some cases. Managing them all has also taken its toll on Mr Frederiksen, apparently: “Collecting cars is like a disease. I asked my doctor for a cure, but he couldn’t help me. I have always bought them with my heart, not for a profit – even though it might turn out that way.”

Travel is the next chapter



So with this chapter closed, and his ‘disease’ on the verge of being cured, what’s next for Henrik Frederiksen – a new fleet? “No, I might buy a few more cars, but I am not looking for that. I would quite like to travel the world. I have some friends in Hawaii, some in India – I think it’s time for me to go and spend some time with them.” We’re sure the new custodians of his fleet will wish him a safe trip.

Photos: © Amy Shore for Classic Driver

Gallery

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