


CLASSIC DRIVER



1990 ERA Mini Turbo

Lot sold	USD 20 843 - 23 449 GBP 16 000 - 18 000 (listed)	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1990	Condition	Used
Chassis number	SAXXL2S1T2046276	Location	
Number of seats	2	Fuel type	Petrol
Drivetrain	2wd	Exterior colour	Other
Lot number	180	Engine number	12HD26104343

Description

1990 ERA Mini Saloon
Registration no. G20 ERA
Chassis no. SAXXL2S1T20462767
Engine no. 12HD26104343

During the 1930s, English Racing Automobiles produced formidable single seaters that dominated their class in European motor racing in both the pre and post-war seasons. The company's involvement with the sport continued until 1954, when the name was changed to Engineering Research & Application Ltd. The now Bedfordshire-based firm worked with Austin Rover to develop a Mini which would be the fastest traditional-style production Mini ever, the resultant ERA-branded Mini Turbos were produced 1989-1991 in Dunstable.

Body modifications and spoilers were designed by Dennis Adams of Marcos GT and Probe concept car fame. The well tried Austin Rover A Series 1300 Turbo engine was employed to provide a useable 94bhp at 6200rpm and higher capacity water and oil cooling ensured that the pocket rocket would be reliable in high temperatures. Specially made lower front suspension arms achieved the necessary 1.5 degrees of negative camber, which, combined with increased toe-out minimised torque steer; potentially, a problem with powerful front-wheel drive cars. ERA Minis were equipped with ventilated

front discs and four-pot callipers and modified rear drum brakes. Servo-assistance ensured acceptably light pressure.

Painted in BRG with full grey leather, ERA Mini car number RJ 1026 of the 337 cars originally exported to Mini-enthused Japan from the total production run of 436 was exported to Japan and, with air-conditioning as standard, was sold with full warranty through Rover Japan's dealer network. First registered in November 1990, and with 20,000 mileage verified by the Japanese registration document and fully documented service history, the regularly maintained example was treated to an expensive complete body repaint in the original colour with rubber seals renewed all round. The present owner bought the car directly from Mr Imai, a Mini enthusiast in Chiba, near Tokyo, from where it was repatriated in July 2014.

On its return to the UK, the car was checked over by Northern specialists Mini Sport and the only attention needed was a new clutch slave cylinder. New original style Hella foglamps have been fitted recently. The underside is claimed to be very clean and apparently corrosion-free thanks to the benign climate of central Japan. The 'G30 ERA' registration is, of course, model-appropriate.

We understand that the rubber suspension cones have been replaced by 'Hi-Lo' adjustable coil springs with Spax shock absorbers. A sports exhaust has been fitted as have sports-style door mirrors and alloy interior handles, though the original Rover items are with the car. The correct Compomotive Trackstar alloy wheels for the ERA Mini have just been refurbished and powder-coated and shod with Bridgestone tyres with plenty of tread remaining.

The interior appears to be clean and undamaged with full leather seats, the original carpets and door trims in good order. All instruments are present and correct, including an oil pressure gauge, and original UK Rover radio/cassette unit has been fitted. Under the bonnet, additional engine cooling for Tokyo traffic in summer has been provided by an electric fan.

ERA Minis, well engineered and put together, are enormous fun to drive and just as happy at motorway speeds as they on twisting country roads. With 94bhp and a claimed top speed of 112 mph, and offering an upgraded combination of performance, roadholding and interior comfort, this very British heir to the Cooper S with freshly passed MOT is worthy of any classic Mini enthusiast's consideration.

Bonhams 1793

Bonhams

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