

CLASSIC DRIVER

Conquer the concours lawns with the most desirable pre-War sports car of all

Lead

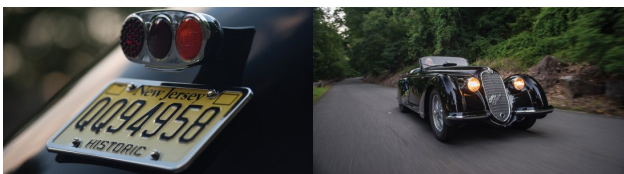
If you've narrowly missed out on that 'Best of Show' trophy one too many times, RM Sotheby's could well have the car for you. It's just consigned a 1939 Alfa Romeo 8C 2900B Lungo Touring Spider to its Monterey sale - a car it's labelled the pre-War equivalent to the Ferrari 250 GTO...

Upper echelon



This sensational pre-War Alfa Romeo 8C 2900B nibbles at the heels of the Bugatti Atlantique in the desirability stakes, such was its cutting-edge construction, jaw-dropping beauty and peerless competition lineage. Its innovative long-wheelbase chassis was clothed by Carrozzeria Touring, which employed its newfangled Superleggera technique to create one of the most sensuous and well-proportioned bodies ever to grace an automobile. Its Vittorio Jano-designed straight-eight engine boasted *two* Roots-type superchargers and was proven on the racetrack. It was, without doubt, the most advanced and desired sports car of its day. Suffice to say, that desirability has only fortified over time, suggesting RM Sotheby's could well establish a new pre-War benchmark in Monterey this summer.

A tale of two halves



The particular example is offered straight from the esteemed Sam & Emily Mann Collection, in which it's resided since the early 1990s and covered over 12,000 miles. Its known story began in 1949, when it was imported to Brazil by an amateur racing driver. As was the way with competition cars, its Touring bodywork was subsequently separated from the chassis, which was modified to accommodate, bizarrely, a Chevrolet V8. It wasn't until 1993 (and many owners later) that the chassis and the body were reunited. Sam Mann seized the opportunity to restore the car as one, entrusting the renowned British Alfa specialist Tony Merrick with the painstaking project. The result was nothing short of astonishing, particularly after Mann has the car painted deep black - the perfect shade to accentuate those swooping curves.

Some 32 Alfa Romeo 8C 2900 chassis' were built, of which just 12 Touring-bodied Spiders are believed to remain. The renowned marque authority Simon Moore famously dubbed the 8C 2900s the 'Immortals'. Certainly, should this example win you any silverware on the concours field, your name will go down in automotive history.

Photos: Darin Schnabel courtesy of RM Sotheby's © 2016

Gallery

