
1964 Ferrari 330 GT - Nembo Spider

Nembo Spider

Lot sold	USD 1 GBP 1 (listed)	Drive	RHD
Year of manufacture	1964	Condition	Used
Mileage	26 625 mi / 42 849 km	Location	
Gearbox	Manual	Fuel type	Petrol
Chassis number	5805	Exterior colour	Other
Number of seats	2	Car type	Other
Number of doors	2	Engine number	5805
Drivetrain	2wd		
Lot number	36		

Description

- Widely regarded as the fourth and final Nembo Spider not to mention the only RHD car and the sole 330-series 4-litre V12 powered example
- Commissioned from and reconfigured by Giorgio Neri (the 'Ne' of Nembo)
- The jewel in the crown of the late Richard Allen's collection since 1992 (Mr Allen was chairman of the Ferrari Owners' Club of Great Britain for many years)
- Offered for sale at No Reserve to benefit the East Anglian Air Ambulance Service

'Here is a car of such elegance that I defy anyone to suggest that it doesn't belong up there with the greatest works of the greatest Renaissance masters. It is a truly exceptional thing, as near to perfection as makes no odds' (Malcolm Thorne on chassis 5805, Classic & Sportscar magazine, March 2017)

Who or What were Nembo?

Nembo was essentially Giorgio Neri and Luciano Bonacini. They collaborated with Tom Meade over various re-bodied sports and racing cars but continued to use the Nembo moniker after the American entrepreneur became engrossed with his self-referential Thomassima designs. Members of Maserati's competition department during the 1950s and therefore witnesses to Fangio's F1 championship winning 1957 season, Neri and Bonacini were used to delivering 'miracles' on a shoestring budget. Well respected in Modenese automotive circles, their peers included Giotto Bizzarrini and Piero Drogo. Indeed, they are credited with introducing the former to Ferruccio Lamborghini and were responsible for not only building the tractor magnate's prototype 350 GTV but also fabricating his nascent marque's earliest chassis. Engineers as well as craftsmen, they helped run Count Volpi's Scuderia Serenissima and hone the famous Ferrari 250 GT SWB 'Breadvan'. A safe pair of 'go to' hands, they undertook a series of one-off commissions such as the Lamborghini 400 GT 'Monza' and Nembo II (the latter being profiled in the August 1966 issue of Road & Track magazine). Perhaps frustrated with making others look good, the duo decided to build and market their own sports car. Christened the Studio GT Due Litri, the resultant mid-engined two-seater proved a bridge too far prompting a divorce in late 1967 with Neri going to work for De Tomaso and Bonacini joining Drogo's Carrozzeria Sports Cars. Neri subsequently set-up on his own and it is perhaps no small irony that a man who helped Maserati achieve some of its greatest racing victories went on to create what is, in our eyes at least, one of the most beautiful coachbuilt Ferraris ever made.

H&H are indebted to renowned Ferrari historian and author Keith Bluemel for the following description:

This unique Ferrari automobile, chassis 5805, started life as a standard specification 1964 right hand drive 330 GT 2+2 model, that was sold new to a Mr Bill Knott of Poole in Dorset, who had it UK registered on his personal licence plate 'BK 47'. He was the founder of the Bluebird Caravan Company which was at one time the world's second largest producer. He was also a keen golfer and sailor in his powerboat, with a fine collection of performance and luxury cars in his garage. As an aside, interestingly he was a keen supporter of the RNLI (Royal National Lifeboat Institution), whom were the beneficiaries of the proceeds of the earlier H&H auction of the late Richard Colton's Ferrari 250 GT SWB Berlinetta, chassis 1995 GT and 275 GTB/4 Berlinetta, chassis 10177.

Some 25 years later the car had seen better days, and a Sussex based Ferrari enthusiast, who revelled in the power and torque afforded by his similarly powered Ferrari 4 litre GTO, had the idea of turning it into an elegant spider in the style of the "Nembo" spiders produced in the mid sixties. The original company, Neri & Bonacini, had ceased trading in 1967, but Giorgio Neri (the "Ne" of Nembo) still had a workshop in Modena, and was approached to rebuild 5805 in the form of the spiders that he and Luciano Bonacini had built in the sixties for an American client, resident in Modena, Tom Meade, who gained worldwide attention with his Ferrari based Thomassima creations in the late sixties.

In fact they built two spiders, one on a Ferrari 250 GT Cabriolet, chassis # 1777 GT, and another on a Ferrari 250 GT SWB Berlinetta, chassis # 3771 GT, plus a coupe on a Ferrari 250 GT Coupe, chassis # 1623 GT, all with similar lines, for him and his clients. There are rumours of a third spider, reportedly built on a 250 GTE, chassis # 2707 GT, allegedly delivered to Lebanon, but this has never been seen, and is thus unconfirmed. Some quarters say that "Nembo" was a compilation of the names Neri, Meade and Bonacini, but the name was also that of the 184th Airborne Division of the Italian Army in WW II, and also a popular Italian comic book hero of the time, the 'Nembo Kid' (actually Superman re-branded). Nembo translated into English is Nimbus, as in the type of cloud, and as clouds are a place of dreams, as in "head in the clouds", all are viable reasons for the name. The Nembo spiders have also been credited as having provided Luigi Chinetti with the inspiration for the small series of, the now highly desirable, 275 GTB/4 "NART" Spiders, that he persuaded Ferrari to build in 1967-68.

As previously mentioned the reworking and re-body of 5805 was commissioned by a British Ferrari enthusiast, providing Giorgio Neri with a remit to shorten the chassis frame, retaining all the original mechanical components, including the 4 litre V12 engine, transmission and running gear, and to provide a new aluminium spider body in the style of those constructed in the mid sixties. Each had slightly different features, thus each is a unique example of the company's craft, as would become

5805, which would also be the only right hand drive example produced, albeit some 25 years after the original examples. The two-seater aluminium coachwork was crafted to a very high standard as an examination of its inner wheel arches will attest. There are a number of pictures of 5805 during its construction at Giorgio Neri's workshop in the car's file, which show the aluminium body during stages of construction. Unfortunately, at a stage when it was approaching completion, aside from its windscreen, brightwork, hood and various inner panels, the then owner of 5805 had financial problems, and didn't have sufficient funds to complete the project, or pay for outstanding works, thus the car remained in storage at Giorgio Neri's, until Richard Allen arrived on the scene.

The late Richard Allen was an active member and director of the Ferrari Owners' Club of Great Britain at the time, and later became Chairman, a post that he held from 2008 to 2015. He learned of the car's existence on the grapevine and it caught his imagination. Thus accompanied by fellow marque enthusiast Tim Blackburn they travelled to Modena, to visit Giorgio Neri's workshop to inspect the car. They were impressed by what they saw, not only the craftsmanship on 5805, but also the presence of a 250LM, assorted bucks / jigs and a scrapped Drogo body! Determined to make chassis 5805 the jewel in the crown of his collection, Richard Allen struck a deal and had the Ferrari brought back to the UK, where the outstanding works necessary to finish the car were carried out by Hayward & Scott in Basildon, Essex, whilst the respected marque specialist Neil Corns, then of Corns Chiltern-Hunt, prepared the car for road worthiness and completed the final detailing. It took a while to get everything to his satisfaction, and it made its debut at The Ferrari Owners' Club concours at Cornbury Park in 1998, where it won Class S for Modified Ferraris and Cars of Special Interest, and appeared at the club's events regularly over the next fifteen years. Chassis # 5805 is rumoured to have covered a mere 26,000 miles or so prior to its transformation, with very few having been added in its last ownership.

None of the Nembo re-bodied cars are eligible for Ferrari Classiche Certification because they are not as they left the factory. However, they remain part of a noble artisan coachbuilding tradition, and are certainly very elegant examples of the Modenese coachbuilders craft. There are those who consider chassis # 5805 to be a continuation car or a Sanction car because of the time span between its construction and that of the earlier cars. However, others feel it has a genuine claim to being the final Nembo Spider because of Giorgio Neri's involvement. Regardless, chassis # 5805 is a unique motor car made all the more so by the late Richard Allen's incredibly generous decision to offer it for sale at no reserve so as to benefit the East Anglian Air Ambulance Service. H&H consider it to be the final Nembo Spider, and it is the only RHD example and the only 4-litre V12-powered one.

Richard Allen never drove chassis 5805GT in anger, but nonetheless had it road registered as 'BPR 455B'. The 'NMB 64' plates it wears in many of the accompanying photos were for show purposes only. Still looking very smart in its lustrous metallic blue paintwork with tan interior, several years after its reconstruction, the Ferrari possesses a current MOT certificate valid until October 2017.

Richard Allen (1938 - 2016)

Richard Allen, grew up in Essex and became Chairman and owner of the family car dealership chain, 'Allen's Ford'. Richard started racing during the early 60's in Ford Anglias but retired from the track after a very bad accident in 1964.

He bought his first Ferrari in the late 70's and started racing again in the 80's. Over the years Richard built up a stable of Ferraris used on both road and track. As a Director of the Ferrari Owners' Club of Great Britain Richard started the Club's Hill Climb Championship back in 1986 winning it himself on a couple of occasions. As well as this passion for Hill Climbing, Richard was also a regular competitor in the FOC Racing Series with his Ferrari 328.

Since a very unhappy experience with a near fatal flying accident whilst in the armed forces Richard never flew again so while his legacy will benefit an air ambulance charity, he would never have willingly got into one. The gift was motivated by Richard's first hand understanding of the importance of the air ambulance service for racing drivers as well as a desire to support, as a resident of Suffolk, a local charity.

It is expected that at the very least his enormously generous legacy will enable the East Anglian Air

Ambulance to add an extra 180 hours per year to its flight schedule saving countless lives in the process. Should the Nembo well and truly take flight then the EAAA will be in a position to countenance 24/7 operations (something its selfless flight and ground crews have already volunteered).

H&H would like to thank the following for their assistance: Keith Bluemel, Tony Willis, Robin Ward of Damax who has maintained the Nembo in recent years, the RAC's Motoring Chairman Peter Read, Chris Butler and of course the late Richard Allen.

H&H Classics

The Motor House

Lyncastle Road

Warrington

Cheshire

WA4 4SN

United Kingdom

Phone +44-1925210035

Fax +44-1925269631

Mobile phone +44-1925269631

<http://www.handh.co.uk>

<https://www.classicdriver.com/en/car/ferrari/330/1964/439459>

© Classic Driver. All rights reserved.