
1955 Austin-Healey 100 / S

Lot sold	USD 780 696 - 861 458 GBP 580 000 - 640 000 (listed)	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1955	Condition	Used
Chassis number	AHS 3608	Location	
Number of seats	2	Fuel type	Petrol
Drivetrain	2wd	Exterior colour	Other
Lot number	344	Engine number	1B222718

Description

The ex-Jerry Leonard, present owner since 1995
1955 Austin-Healey 100S Sports Racing Two-Seater
Registration no. Not registered in UK
Chassis no. AHS 3608
Engine no. 1B222718

This handsomely presented example of the rare and highly desirable sports-racing Austin-Healey 100S is the 18th example of the total production of only fifty completed - plus an additional five works and special test cars - that were hand-made by the Donald Healey Motor Company at Warwick, England.

During the 1950s the most accessible, most appealing and in many cases the most successful club racing car available to any aspiring racing driver was the 100S. It offered more performance for the purchase price than almost any other sports car on the market, proving to be hugely successful in national and international road and track racing. That versatility is exemplified today, equally at home at events such as Le Mans Classic, Monaco Historique, Goodwood Revival, Monterey Historics, Mille Miglia Restrospective, Tour Auto and many more.

The 'S' stood for 'Sebring', in honour of the factory entered and 100-based Special Test Car's success with Lance Macklin and George Huntoon at the 1954 Sebring 12-Hours. The car astounded more

thoroughbred opposition finishing 3rd overall and 1st in class, pretty much sandwiched between two sports-racing Lancia D24s. The further developed Works prepared competition model thus being called the 100S.

Chassis 'AHS 3608' was delivered new from the British factory to BMC Distribution of San Francisco, California. The American distributor initially ordered two such cars, later adding four more, and this particular example was one of those six shipped to the Bay city.

We understand this particular example was probably bought off the showroom floor for street use as one of its first owners replaced its original plexiglass windscreen with a regular folding screen from the sister 100 model. It subsequently found its way to Ohio where it found its métier, becoming an active racing machine on the circuits of the USA. After a long life as a club racing car within the USA it was eventually sold by Healey aficionado Bill Wood in 1986 to the like-minded Jerry Leonard.

This particularly active 100S was subsequently the first to be restored by Fourintune, the respected US-based marque specialist restoration company. The car was then shown at the AHCA conclave held in Oklahoma in 1988, alongside Fred Hunter's familiar red-liveried 100S. It won the Concours held there, and Carroll Shelby was the guest of honour who sat in this car while relating typical tales of derring-do about his own racing experiences with a 100S in such events as the mighty 1954 Carrera PanAmericana through Mexico.

Concours honours continued with '3608' winning the Chicago Historic Races Concours at Elkhart Lake, the Vintage Sports Car Show competition at the Brooks Stevens Museum, and also judged Best of Show at the AHCA HealeyFest IV event.

The restoration work completed upon this car was reported in detail in two publications - 'Carrozzeria 9' and the Pacific Centre's Austin-Healey magazine. This car was featured on the front cover of the February, 1988, issue of the Healey magazine - while a complete account of the car's restoration by specialist Tom Kovacs of Fourintune followed in the April and May issues of that year.

The wonderfully well detailed account of the car's restoration tells how the chassis and bodies for these fine cars were produced in batches of ten by the Jensen works in West Bromwich, England, alongside all the standard Healey 100 model. Each batch was then shipped to the Healey Motor Company's Warwick works where the uprated and competition derived drive-train would be installed and final assembly completed.

Hand finishing was very much the order of the day, and each batch of 100S cars was likely to emerge with its own particular characteristics. When the restorers investigated 'AHS 3608' now offered here they found that it "...did not appear to have been taken apart..." and also that "...The gearbox, engine, chassis, trim and registration panel all matched the original records. More unusually, the engine and rear fenders had never been removed. Behind the gas tank we found an original piece of armacord and under the roll-bar flange we found a scrap of the original interior vinyl. Once again luck was with us...".

The car had sustained some front-end damage, the front surround having been replaced as had the original aluminium front fenders - in their case by steel BN2 fender panels. The description of this rare Healey's restoration goes on to explain how it was fitted from new with a plastic rimmed 'banjo' steering wheel, the chassis is to factory specification with lightweight-alloy, in places drilled, to save further weight"

The Austin-Healey 100 model itself was produced by Austin-Healey from 1953 until 1956 and was based upon Austin A90 Atlantic mechanicals, hugely enlivened by ingenious fine-tuning and adoption of the striking Healey sports car body design. A single Healey 'Hundred' had been displayed at the 1952 London Motor Show which hugely impressed Austin managing director Leonard Lord, who was seeking a replacement for the unsuccessful A90. Body styling was by Gerry Coker, chassis design by Barry Bilbie. To minimise overall vehicle height the rear axle was underslung, the chassis frame passing beneath the rear axle assembly.

The '100' was named by Healey for the car's ability to reach 100 mph (160 km/h), while the lighter competition derived aluminium-bodied '100S' model offered a very respectable 132 bhp at 4,700

rpm over 30% more than the standard engine's output. Weight was minimised and performance enhanced by replacement of the engine's standard cast-iron cylinder head by a bespoke Weslake-designed eight-port aluminium component, further tweaks to the standard block, and larger carburettors.

Dunlop disc brakes were used all-round, the 100S becoming the world's first production car to feature them both front and rear. To further lighten the vehicle, bumpers and convertible top were eliminated, the grille reduced in size, and the standard windscreen made of plastic - overall saving some 200lbs (91 kg). The majority of 100Ss were the classic Old-English White over Lobelia Blue like 'AHS 3068' offered here.

The car is offered from the private collection of a prominent Swiss Austin-Healey enthusiast who acquired it from the widow of leading American Austin-Healey Club personality Jerry Leonard in 1995. The car's engine was completely rebuilt in 1998 by respected marque specialist Denis Welch, and it has featured in a number of historic events including the 2006 Mille Miglia Retro. The owner a member of the Swiss-based Scuderia Cento S Club has favoured rallies, tours and hill climbs to Historic circuit racing and we recommend the closest consideration of this lovely '100S', which is highly regarded by the immensely well-respected marque and model authority Joe Jarick...

Please note this Lot is subject to the reduced import tax of 5% should it remain in the EU.

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