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## 1973 Ford Capri 3.0 GXL Group 1

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Lot sold	<b>USD 47 491 - 61 060</b> GBP 35 000 - 45 000 (listed)	Drive	RHD
Year of manufacture	1973	Interior colour	Black
Gearbox	Manual	Condition	Used
Chassis number	BBECNMO8073	Location	
Number of seats	2	Fuel type	Petrol
Drivetrain	2wd	Exterior colour	Other
Lot number	207	Car type	Other
		Exterior brand colour	White / Blue
		Interior brand colour	Black

### Description

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Guide price: £35000 - £45000. <ul><li>Built by Ford for the 1973 Avon Tour of Great Britain to be driven by HRH Prince Michael of Kent </li><li>Used by Tom Walkinshaw to win Class'C' in the 1974 British Saloon Car Championship (Group 1)</li><li>Raced by Barry Sheene in a Celebrity Race at Brands Hatch during 1974</li><li>Purchased by Stuart Rolt and raced successfully in the BSCC during 1975/76. He sold it in late 1976</li><li>Privately owned and remained in storage until 2014</li><li>Recently mechanically rebuilt to '74/75 Group 1 spec. Otherwise untouched. Runs and drives and used for shows</li><li>The only car ever to have been raced by a member of the Royal Family, Barry Sheene and Tom Walkinshaw</li></ul><p>A 'Tour of Britain', taking place on public roads, rally special stages, and established motor racing circuits and involving rally drivers, top names from circuit racing, journalists and celebrities had been mooted since the early 1960s, but never came about until 1973. The argument about whether rally drivers hurtling through forests in the middle of the night not knowing what was around the next corner were more talented/braver than circuit racers balancing their cars on tiptoe around Spa in the rain at 180mph had occupied many a night in the pub amongst enthusiasts but now it appeared it was going to be in the public domain. As Motor Sport wrote in early 1973 "The Avon-sponsored Tour of Britain for Group One

saloon cars divided into four price-groups, which takes place from July 6th-8th, is attracting much attention and looks like providing excellent publicity for the winning makes. This is because it offers something different—perhaps just that shot-in-the-arm in which the competition scene is in dire need? Racing drivers will compete against rally drivers, so this cannot be regarded purely as a "driver's benefit", in which the cars scarcely count. Speed round race circuits will be balanced against performances over rally stages. It is the variety which has caught the public imagination". Dozens of top names from Formula One, international rallying, motoring journalism and television were rumoured to be taking part with features in the press and on television and of course then, as now, there was no point in letting facts get in the way of a good story.

The Ford Motor Company are never far away when there is the possibility of publicity for their products and naturally decided to get involved. They entered three 3-litre GXL Capris in the recently homologated facelift quad-headlamp form and naturally there were a number of drivers keen for a seat, but it came together quite quickly as Ford wanted a broad-based team; which finally comprised Roger Clark/Tony Mason, (household names in period), Dave Matthews (Broadspeed touring cars), Nigel Clarkson (Aurora F1), Charles Reynolds (Ford's rallying guru) and HRH Prince Michael of Kent (sporting royalty).

The three brand new Capris were registered with consecutive number plates, XWC 712L, 713 and 714 and were sent off to Boreham to be prepared. "Our" car was 713 and was to be driven by Nigel Clarkson and HRH Prince Michael. Ford was naturally keen to enjoy the publicity that would surely follow the success of these cars and they were prepared within an inch of their lives. Our vendor, Graham, has an encyclopedic knowledge of his car (713) and tells us that Borehamwood were too busy to cope and the Capri engines so they were sent elsewhere, in the case of 713, to Neil Brown Engineering. As a production engine, it couldn't be modified but it was 'blueprinted', lightened and balanced, and returned to Fords boasting 165bhp.

The Tour started at the Avon works in Melksham on 6th July and finished late on 9th July in Bath, taking in circuit races at Llandow, Oulton Park, Silverstone, Brands Hatch and a night race at Snetterton, as well as five rally special stages and a thousand miles of public roads. The event was won by James Hunt and Rob Fearnall in a Camaro and Prince Michael finished a respectable 16th with Roger Clark suffering two breakdowns and fighting his way back up to 24th. A number of Ford privateers finished in the top ten and lots of press and TV coverage ensured that Ford were happy, the whole thing being judged a great success. The 'Tour' carried on for a few more years but 1973 was really the last year that Grand Prix drivers were also doing sports cars, F2 and saloons as well.

A few weeks later, XWC 713L was off to Spa where it was fitted with a set of Dunlops and entered in the 24 Hours to be driven by Nigel Clarkson and Jeremy Walton. Throughout the 24hours 713 ran faultlessly (apart from tyre problems) to finish a remarkable 13th overall.

713 then returned to Ford to, presumably, join 712 and 714 in retirement, however, that was not to be. A certain Tom Walkinshaw was invited to pedal the car in the 1974 British Saloon Car Championship for Group 1 cars which, for the first time, was for 'showroom' production cars on racing tyres in four classes divided by cubic capacity. Now sporting the blue and white 'Shell Sport' livery and producing 175bhp, Tom finished 4th overall and 1st in Class 'C' with six wins and numerous places. At some point in 1974, 713 was lent to works Suzuki Grand Prix rider, Barry Sheene, to contest a Celebrity Race at Brands Hatch and once again 713 and its famous driver featured in the press.

At the beginning of 1975, the car was sold to Stuart Rolt who campaigned it very successfully in that year's BSCC completing the season with 34 points. The following year, 713 was on the grid at Silverstone and Thruxton in April, at Brands for the GP support race in July, and finally in the TT in September with Jody Carr. For that race, Stuart was able to take advantage of some special TT rules including wider wheels and a deeper front spoiler. He recalls that that was the last time he raced 713 and it was sold privately.

The car's next owner put it into a garage where it was to remain untouched for 36 years. In fact, our vendor purchased 713 in 2010 but wasn't able to collect it until 2014 as at some point another garage had been built directly in front of the one with the Capri in, meaning the door would only open a couple of feet. Anyway, around four years ago 713 was extracted and began the next stage of its life.

Our vendor, Graham, never planned to restore 713 but simply return it mechanically to a level that meant it could be taken to events. He commenced by having the engine rebuilt back to factory specification to exacting standards still retaining the original block. and at the same time going through the braking system and fuel lines. He was pleased to find that it still had the 'locker' diff,

vented front discs, and drilled drums from its days in the BSCC. 713 now drives and stops but is not on the road as such, purely attending shows and displaying its heritage.

This is a fabulous opportunity to own a piece of Ford's racing history and its unique provenance means that it would be welcome at Ford events anywhere. It may be possible to prepare 713 to race in Historic Saloons, or restore the car completely, or just leave it as it is, sound but shabby, with three famous names on the side as a reminder of the 'golden days of saloon car racing.

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