


CLASSIC DRIVER

1967 Ford GT40 Mk IV

- Lot sold
USD 2 500 000 - 3 000 000
Year of manufacture 1967
- **Lot number** 056
- **Drive** LHD
- **Condition** Used
- **Location** 
- **Exterior colour** Other
- **Car type** Other
-

Description

PROVENANCE

Ford Motor Company, Dearborn, Michigan (built new in 1967)
Charles and Kerry Agapiou, Los Angeles, California (acquired from the above in 1969)
Martin Yacoobian, Los Angeles, California (acquired from the above in 1989)
Nick Soprano, White Plains, New York (acquired from the above in January 1996)
Current Owners (acquired from the above in 1996)

RACE HISTORY

Labatt's Blue Trophy, Mosport Park, June 1969, Revson, No. 15 (DNS)
Labatt's 50, St. Jovite Circuit Mont-Tremblant, June 1969, Revson, No. 15 (DNS)
Klondike 200, Edmonton Speedway Park, July 1969, Cannon, No. 15 (DNF)
Buckeye Can-Am, Mid-Ohio, August 1969, Follmer, No. 15 (DNS)
Road America, Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin, August 1969, Follmer, No. 15 (DNF)
Michigan International Speedway, September 1969, Brabham, No. 15 (DNF)
Texas International Grand Prix, Texas World Speedway, November 1969, Cannon, No. 15 (DNS)
Fuji 200 Miles, Oyama, Japan, November 1969, Cannon, No. 45 (2nd Overall)
Watkins Glen, July 1970, Cannon, No. 15 (DNF)
Klondike 200, Edmonton Speedway Park, July 1970, Hobbs, No. 15 (DNF)
Buckeye Can-Am, Mid-Ohio, August 1970, Cannon, No. 15 (DNA)
Road America, Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin, August 1970, Cannon, No. 15 (DNF)
Road Atlanta, September 1970, Yarbrough, No. 15 (DNF)
Minneapolis Tribune Grand Prix, Donnybrooke International Raceway, September 1970, Elford, No. 15 (DNS)
Monterey Castrol Grand Prix, Laguna Seca Raceway, October 1970, Cannon, No. 15 (DNF)
Los Angeles Times Grand Prix, Riverside International Raceway, November 1970, Cannon, No. 15 (DNF)

EXHIBITED

Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance, Amelia Island, Florida, March 2018

LITERATURE

Trevor Legate, , Individual Chassis Record, chassis no. is listed

Ronnie Spain, , chassis no. is listed

Shelby American, , discussed on pp. 1,043–44

THIS CAR

The Ford GT40 famously holds the distinction of being Dearborn's first and most important purpose-built sports-racing model, undergoing fervent development during the mid-1960s and delivering four consecutive wins at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. But success was not instantaneous. After the early retirement of all three of the Ford-entered GT40s at Le Mans in 1965, there was a considerable focus on transforming the mid-engine racer into an endurance winner.

The following year, the GT40 ran nearly unchallenged at Le Mans, with Carroll Shelby's seven-liter GT40 Mk II examples finishing first and second, and a Holman-Moody Mk II entry finishing third. While the Mk II model received all the glory in 1966, the engineering of another GT40 iteration was quietly underway.

In October 1965, predating the emphasis on updating the Mk I car to Mk II specifications, Ford approved the development of a more domestic version of the model. The GT40 had originally evolved out of Eric Broadley's Lola GT, a British mid-engine sports racer powered by an American V-8. When Ford purchased rights to develop Broadley's design, the company established a subsidiary to build the car in Slough, UK, called Ford Advanced Vehicles. The English racing specialist John Wyer, who had managed Aston Martin's 1959 Le Mans-winning team, was hired to run FAV, and the Ford race car became very much a hybrid of American and British build.

Seeking to transform the GT40 into a cutting-edge all-American product, Ford commissioned Kar Kraft, the company's unofficial specialty builder in Michigan, to substantially revise the model. The Brunswick Aircraft Corporation was contracted to provide honeycomb-aluminum paneling – extremely light and impressively rigid – for racing tubs. The first of its kind, this honeycomb racing-tub design soon evolved into a mainstay in motor-sports technology. Under new FIA regulations, the cockpit was relatively narrow, as the reduction in windshield-width minimums enabled Kar Kraft to sharply taper the front glass at the sides for improved aerodynamics.

The prototype development racer was dubbed the J-Car in honor of the new FIA regulations (termed Appendix J to the International Sporting Code), and it set the fastest times during the Le Mans trials in April 1966. A year later, after adjustments to the bodywork, including a more rounded nose and reshaping of the radiator exhaust vent, the J-Car was ready for Le Mans, now re-christened as the GT40 Mk IV. The example driven by Dan Gurney and A.J. Foyt for Shelby American won the 1967 Le Mans 24 Hours, giving the GT40 model back-to-back victories and cementing its status as a formidable endurance champion.

Ford ultimately produced 12 Mk IV chassis, the first four of which were built with early J-Car bodywork. Two of these cars were subsequently destroyed in accidents occurring during testing. The next four chassis were built with the officially updated Mk IV bodywork and raced at Le Mans and other venues during 1967. Four more chassis were under construction, but they became rather superfluous when the FIA announced new rules for 1968 limiting engine displacement to five liters, thus disqualifying the Mk IV from entry. While the final two chassis, J-11 and J-12, were ultimately completed during the 1980s, J-9 and J-10 (the featured lot) were sold to a private racing team for use in the Can-Am series.

According to the Bill of Sale from Ford Motor Company, J-9 and J-10 were sold for \$1 to Charles Agapiou of Los Angeles in February 1969, along with chassis parts used to assemble the cars. An Englishman who immigrated to the US in 1961, Agapiou was a mechanic for Shelby driver Ken Miles, and also served as a crew chief on Shelby American's Cobra and GT40 teams. He and his brother Kerry later managed an eponymous racing team that featured a number of high-profile drivers.

After receiving the Mk IV chassis, the Agapiou brothers outfitted the car for Can-Am competition with purpose-built spider bodywork, naming the car G7A. In this guise, J-10 competed during the 1969 and 1970 seasons for Agapiou Racing, achieving its best result at the Fuji 200 Miles in November 1969, when John Cannon finished in 2nd Place. The GT40 was also driven for Agapiou by famed champion drivers such as Jack Brabham, Vic Elford, George Follmer, David Hobbs, and Peter Revson.

After a racing accident in November 1970 at Riverside, California, the Mk IV chassis was sent to John Thompson's TC Prototypes in the UK for repair, including restoration of the tub from the bulkhead forward, as stated by Kerry Agapiou in a recent conversation with a Gooding & Company specialist. In 1989, after having been cared for by the Agapiou brothers for 20 years, the Ford was acquired by Martin Yacoubian, a real estate developer residing in Los Angeles. He began refurbishing the car to original Mk IV specifications, though the project was incomplete when he sold it in January 1996 to dealer Nick Soprano. Mr. Soprano would sell J-10 later that year to the current owners, who include a respected racing and GT40 specialist based in Connecticut.

Under that GT40 specialist's guidance the refurbishment recommenced around 2013 and was conducted to exacting standards, including the creation of proper new Mk IV bodywork built with molds produced from

chassis no. J-6.

The new body was fabricated by Ken Thompson of North Carolina, a longtime metalwork specialist who also worked on GT40 cars for Holman-Moody in period (and had mounted a specialized exhaust system on J-10 during Ford's ownership). The new bodywork was finished in the iconic 1967 Le Mans livery of red and white.

In addition to receiving a complete restoration of the running gear, J-10 was equipped with a correct 427 cid Ford V-8 mated to a proper Kar Kraft-built all-synchromesh T-44 four-speed transaxle. Completed in late 2017, the fastidious refurbishment resulted in an impressively authentic state of presentation. The Mk IV was then presented at the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance in March 2018, where it was warmly received.

Now available for the first time in 22 years, this expertly refurbished Mk IV is one of only 12 chassis built and 10 remaining in existence, offering particular rarity within the GT40 realm. Chassis J-10 is not only an authentic component of Ford's 1967 Le Mans-winning campaign but also was driven in the mighty Can-Am series by some of racing's most important luminaries. With such a history, this sensational Mk IV would be ideal for presentation at Ford and Shelby-themed gatherings or for vintage racing, where it should provide entry to some of the world's most prestigious events. A bona fide Kar Kraft-built Mk IV, this GT40 would make a unique complement to any sporting collection, warranting the attention of serious marque enthusiasts and Le Mans connoisseurs.

Gooding & Company

Title Mr

First name Charles

Last name Blonigan

1517 20th Street

Santa Monica 90404 California

United States

Phone +1 (310) 899-1960

<http://www.goodingco.com/>

Source URL: <https://www.classicdriver.com/en/car/ford/gt-40/1967/546078>

© Classic Driver. All rights reserved.