


CLASSIC DRIVER

1954 Bristol 404

- Lot sold
USD 97 301 - 121 626
GBP 80 000 - 100 000 (listed)
Year of manufacture 1954
- **Chassis number** 404/2014
- **Number of seats** 2
- **Drivetrain** 2wd
- **Lot number** 247
- **Drive** LHD
- **Condition** Used
- **Location** 
- **Fuel type** Petrol
- **Exterior colour** Other
-

Description

1954 Bristol 404 Coupé
Registration no. MHO 485
Chassis no. 404/2014

Imitation is said to be the sincerest form of flattery; nevertheless it seems unlikely that BMW's engineers felt particularly gratified when the Bristol Car Company obtained the rights to their automotive designs as part of Germany's post-WW2 reparations. Thus it came about that the Bristol 400, which commenced production in 1947, was effectively a synthesis of three pre-war BMW designs, with a chassis derived from that of the 326, an engine from the 328 sports car, and an aerodynamic bodyshell similar to that of the 327 coupé. But Bristol did more than simply copy the work of its German counterparts; the application of aviation industry standards to its manufacture resulted in a car more refined and considerably better constructed than its Teutonic forbears.

With the 1953 introduction of the short-wheelbase 404 coupé, the Bristol line at last lost its resemblance to the pre-war BMW, swapping that distinctive two-piece radiator grille for an equally unmistakable, aeronautically inspired air intake. The body was still an ash-framed, aluminium-alloy panelled structure, but the bonnet was now forward-hinging and for the first time the spare wheel was accommodated in the near-side front wing. Bristol continued to use the BMW-based, 2.0-litre, six-cylinder engine with its ingeniously arranged, pushrod-operated inclined valves, and this was available in either 105bhp or 125bhp form in the 404. The gearbox remained a manual four-speed unit with first-gear freewheel. Famously dubbed the 'Businessman's Express', the 404 excelled at providing high-speed travel in comfort -the very definition of 'Gran Turismo'. The car's aircraft-industry standard of construction did not come cheap however, and only 52 examples found customers between 1953 and 1955.

Running and driving well, the rare Bristol 404 offered here is an older restored example that still presents beautifully. The vendor purchased 'MHO 485' in December 1985 from Richard Fuggle of Bushey Heath, a well-known and respected specialist. Servicing has been carried out by Martin Barnes at American Cars and later by Bristol Cars themselves in London. This car and its stablemates have always been garaged in a dry, well-aired barn and in recent years maintained in situ by the same mechanic. The estate has a 1-mile circuit

over which the cars have been regularly warmed up prior to use.

Finished in dark green with original Biscuit leather interior, silver wheels, and excellent chrome, this fine example of a true connoisseur's Gran Turismo is offered with a V5C document and MoT to June 2019.

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