


# CLASSIC DRIVER



## 1952 Bristol 401 - Series 3 2-Door

Series 3 2-Door

Lot sold	<b>USD 29 543 - 36 633</b> EUR 25 000 - 31 000 (listed)	Drive	RHD
Year of manufacture	1952	Condition	Restoration project
Gearbox	Manual	Location	
Chassis number	1055	Fuel type	Petrol
Number of seats	2	Exterior colour	Blue
Number of doors	2	Car type	Saloon
Drivetrain	2wd	Engine number	85C/1958
Interior type	Leather	Exterior brand colour	Turquoise Mediterranean
Lot number	41	Interior brand colour	Beige

### Description

#### DESCRIPTION

Founded in 1945 as an offshoot of the Bristol Aeroplane Company with a view to employing its workforce after World War Two, Bristol's first model - badged the 400 - was introduced the following year, employing technology from BMW after the British obtained the rights to the German manufacturer's engines and car designs as war reparations. Bristol replaced the 400 with the heavily re-styled 401 in 1949, featuring aerodynamic bodywork designed along 'Superleggera' principles by Carrozzeria Touring of Milan and refined by the company's own stylists. The 85C version of the famous six-cylinder motor switched to triple Solex carburettors in place of the earlier SUs, although the quoted power output remained 85 horsepower at 4500 rpm. The 401's box section chassis was largely carried over from the 400, suspended by independent transverse leaf springs up front and

longitudinal torsion bars and lever arm or Telescopic dampers at the rear, along with Lockheed 11-inch hydraulic drum brakes all round. Aided by the sleek lines and highly efficient engine, the 401 could reach 98 mph with acceleration to match and safe, predictable handling. The beautifully equipped and spacious cockpit with Connolly-clad leather seats providing comfortable seating for four adults and well-appointed dash with comprehensive Smith's instrumentation in the walnut fascia. Befitting a proper luxury car, the 401 came with a heater, a radio by His Master's Voice, along with lovely details like the push-button door handles clearly inspired by Bristol's aviation heritage. Contemporary road reports lavished praise on the Bristol, Motor Sport's Bill Boddy commenting the 401 was like "Driving an Epicurean Pleasure in this Near-Perfect Car for the Connoisseur." Bristol turned out just over 600 401s between 1949 and 1953 and - according to figures provided by the Bristol Owner's Club of Australia - 62 were reportedly exported here as new cars, of which 35 are currently registered to club members. Bristols make wonderful club cars, perfect for long-distance rallies, weekend runs or car shows.

#### HISTORY

- Exciting 'Barn Find' Bristol 401
- Documented Australian history from new
- Ideal preservation candidate or restoration project

A late series production Bristol 401 completed in 1952, chassis 1055 was delivered through John Crouch Motors of Sydney (whose plate is affixed to the firewall), the original owner, Ross Field of Wahroonga, NSW reportedly collected the car at the Bristol works in Filton. First registered on plates ZZ-888, the car was equipped with an HMV 4200B radio, heater and windscreen washers along with special '401' script on both the bonnet and boot lid and was originally finished in Azure Blue with beige upholstery. A lovely period photo on file shows the Bristol parked next to a Cooper-Bristol single-seater of the type campaigned by Jack Brabham and Alec Mildren. The car remained in Sydney for the next twenty years, passing to successive keepers in Mosman (1954), Northbridge (in 1955) and Avalon by 1962, by which time it had been repainted Silver Grey and well-known motor racing identity Paul Samuels owned the Bristol briefly in the early 1960s. Following two further owners, the 401 ended up with long-term keeper William Russell in 1974 who had the original 85C engine rebuilt by marque authority Geoff Dowdle back in 1995 but it later dropped a valve, badly damaging the cylinder head so a suitable replacement (from engine no. 85A/1217) was located and remains on the car today. The Bristol was recently disinterred after a period off the road and mechanically recommissioned, to the point where it starts, runs and stops. Repainted in Turquoise Mediterranean and re-chromed back in 2001, the duco is showing some wear today, with some cracking around the tail section, while the interior was re-trimmed in beige vinyl many years ago and is showing wear consistent with age. An ideal preservation candidate or restoration project, the odometer is currently reading 106,361 miles, consistent with the history file as being the original reading. The Bristol is accompanied by a good history file, both the original Instruction and Maintenance Manuals and two sets of keys. Offered for sale currently unregistered.

Note: Shannons advise that all potential buyers research all vehicles before purchase to authenticate originality.

Shannons Pty Limited



Title Mr

**First name** Damien

**Last name** Duigan

40 Corporate Drive

Heatherton 3202 Victoria

Australia

**Phone** +61

280194180

<http://www.shannons.com.au/auctions/upcoming/>

---

<https://www.classicdriver.com/en/car/bristol/401/1952/564659>

© Classic Driver. All rights reserved.