

CLASSIC DRIVER

1990 Spice Group C

- Lot sold
USD 227 044 - 295 157
GBP 200 000 - 260 000 (listed)
Year of manufacture 1990
- **Chassis number** SE90-C-017
- **Number of seats** 2
- **Drivetrain** 2wd
- **Lot number** 221
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- **Drive** LHD
- **Condition** Used
- **Location** 
- **Fuel type** Petrol
- **Exterior colour** Other
-

Description

The ex-Desiré Wilson/Lyn St James/Cathy Muller, 1991 Le Mans 24hr Race entry
1990 Spice SE90C Group C Sports-racing Prototype, 'The Pink Spice'
Chassis no. SE90-C-017

Spice Engineering was founded in 1985 by racing drivers Gordon Spice and Ray Bellm, initially campaigning Tiga chassis in the smaller C2 class of the World Sportscar Championship. As part of the Spice team, Bellm would win that category in 1985, 1986, and 1989, by which time Spice Engineering had moved on to construct its own cars. The team's breakthrough success came in 1985 when Gordon Spice and Mark Galvin's Spice-Tiga GC85 won its class at Le Mans.

For 1986 Spice fielded the first of its own cars, the SE86, using Ford-Cosworth engines in the World Championship and Pontiac units for the IMSA series' GTP Lights category. The team moved on to the larger C1 and GTP classes in 1989 with the SE89. For 1990 Spice offered the SE90, designed like its immediate predecessors by Graham Humphrey, some 30 or so of which would be built over the next few years. Severing its connection with Pontiac, the factory squad switched to Honda power, winning the Camel Lights series for the Japanese manufacturer in 1991, 1992, and 1993. By this time the major international sportscar-racing championships were in a state of flux and Spice Engineering's finances took a turn for the worse. Production petered out but some Spice chassis were still being raced successfully by privateers towards the end of the 1990s. In its short but stellar career the Spice Engineering team had enjoyed an unparalleled run of success, scoring five class wins at Le Mans and six at Daytona in addition to the three World

Championships already mentioned, plus a further 19 championships and class wins as a constructor.

This is one of the last C1 cars built by Spice Engineering at Silverstone. Owned by Tsunemasu Aoshima, the car was entered by Euro Racing for Le Mans in 1991 when, painted bright pink, it attracted a storm of publicity on account of its all-women driver line up. The team consisted of Lyn St James, Cathy Muller, and Desiré Wilson, the latter one of the tiny handful of women ever to have competed in Formula 1. There is a related chapter with photographs in Desiré Wilson's biography (pp120-127).

During qualifying Lyn St James hit the safety barrier, severely damaging the car, which was hastily rebuilt around a chassis bought from GP Motorsport, who were selling a Spice in the paddock. With limited track time, only Wilson managed a lap fast enough to qualify; nevertheless the team was allowed to start, albeit from the back of the grid. Sadly there would be no fairytale ending for the team, the Spice being forced to retire after 47 laps following an accident.

In 2001 the Spice was purchased by David Mercer, who drove it in Group C Club races between 2002 and 2010. An experienced endurance racing driver, he won races outright at Magny Cours (2002), Donington Park (2003/2004), Brands Hatch GP (2005/2007/2010), Nürburgring (2006/2007) and Silverstone (2006). In his hands the Spice also had numerous other podium finishes (published results on file) and recorded fastest laps at Donington (2005), Brands Hatch (2006) and Silverstone (2006).

The current vendor then bought the car and had it fully restored in 2011. A less experienced sports car driver than Mercer, he nevertheless achieved a 3rd place overall finish at Imola in 2012. As well as a number of European Group C circuit races, the Spice was entered into the Le Mans 24-Hour support race in 2012 and was then invited to the 2012 Goodwood Festival of Speed where it was reunited with Desiré Wilson, who had driven the car at Le Mans in 1991. It was placed P24 in the shootout (results on file) and was invited back to the 73rd Goodwood Members' Meeting in 2015. The car's most recent outing was at the Le Mans Classic in 2018.

This car is fully race ready with a current FIA HTP and certificated crack testing. Offered with four spare wheels with slicks on, four spare wheels with wets on, a spare nose cone, a new spare crown wheel and pinion, numerous dog rings and gears, and a car cover, 'the Pink Spice' is highly competitive and eligible for the 2020 Le Mans Classic.

Bonhams 1793

Title Mr

First name Bonhams Collectors' Car department
101 New Bond Street

London

W1S 1SR

United Kingdom

Phone +44-02074685201

Fax +44-02074685802

<https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/25454/>

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