
1970 Intermeccanica Italia

Lot sold	USD 132 760 - 199 140 GBP 100 000 - 150 000 (listed)	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1970	Condition	Used
Chassis number	IM59254314	Location	
Number of seats	2	Fuel type	Petrol
Drivetrain	2wd	Exterior colour	Other
Lot number	273		

Description

1970 Intermeccanica Italia Convertible

Registration no. XRM 101H

Chassis no. IM59254314

One of the first companies that sought to combine the best of Italian and American automotive technology, Intermeccanica was founded by Hungarian-born American Frank Reisner. A chemical engineer by profession and car enthusiast by inclination, Reisner travelled to Europe in 1958 and, after finding employment with Giannini Automobili in Rome, for whom he designed a mid-engined Formula Junior racing car, set up Intermeccanica in Turin the following year.

The company commenced production of performance conversion kits for popular small cars before resurrecting Reisner's Formula Junior design. At the same time, a diminutive sports car - the IMP (Intermeccanica Puch) - was conceived around Steyr-Puch 500 components, and proved effective enough in tuned and lightened race trim to defeat the class-leading Abarths on some occasions. The prototype of a larger sports car, the Apollo, was constructed during the winter of 1961-62 using a Buick V8 engine and running gear. Styled by Franco Scaglione, the man responsible for many of Bertone's most memorable designs as well as the first Lamborghini, and part financed by Jack Griffith, US importer of the eponymous V8-engined TVR, the Apollo entered production in 1963. However, in 1965, just as a 2+2 version was ready, Griffith's company collapsed, leaving Reisner to seek another partner. Some 90 Apollo GT coupes and around 11 convertibles had been completed by

this time.

Production of the car, now renamed Omega, continued for another year before the new partnership foundered leaving Reisner on his own. The arrangement whereby bodies were shipped from Italy to the USA for final assembly was discontinued; from now on all Intermeccanicas would be built entirely in Turin using Ford V8 engines and running gear. Deliveries of the first Italian-built cars commenced in 1967, the coupé being called the Italia and the convertible Torino (briefly) before both models adopted the former name. Ford V8 engines were used of, successively, 4.7, 5.0, and 5.8 litres.

In 1969, Intermeccanicas began to be sold officially in Europe (hitherto all production had been exported to the USA) and the car's favourable reception there led to collaboration with Opel and the production of the Indra coupe using GM components. In 1975, Opel's dissolution of the partnership forced Intermeccanica's re-location to the United States, by which time around 1,000 American V8-engined models of all types had been built. Henceforth, Intermeccanica production in the USA (and later Canada) would be concentrated on replicas, most notably of the Porsche 356 Speedster.

This Italia convertible comes with a letter of authenticity from Intermeccanica International Inc confirming its delivery new to a Mr M Bende of New Jersey, USA. The car's early history is unknown until 1999 when it was registered in Sweden to Mr Peter Christopherson. At that time the car had been restored, there being anecdotal evidence that a bare metal re-spray and mechanical refurbishment had been carried out.

Imported by the vendor from Sweden in 2011 (he drove the car back to the UK without fault) the Italia has since formed part of his impressive private collection of Italian motor cars. During his enthusiastic ownership, the Intermeccanica has seen little use, save for high days and holidays. New rear suspension arms were fitted in 2012. Kept in his dehumidified cruck barn, the car was not used for some years until the braking system was refurbished at Calderwell Engineering in 2017, while a major service and re-commissioning was undertaken by GT Engineering in 2018. The car now presents well and is a delightful and well-maintained example of this rare and interesting Grande Routière, offering Ferrari style and performance for a fraction of the price.

Bonhams 1793

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