
1957 Cooper T43

Lot sold	USD 116 211 - 129 883 GBP 85 000 - 95 000 (listed)	Drive	RHD
Year of manufacture	1957	Condition	Used
Chassis number	F2/27/57	Location	
Number of seats	2	Fuel type	Petrol
Drivetrain	2wd	Exterior colour	Other
Lot number	215	Car type	Other

Description

An immaculate example of John Cooper's Formula 2 design for the 1957 season Number 27 of 28. Shipped to Cooper's US Agent, Joe Lubin History since 1958. Returned from the US in 1989 and a comprehensive UK history from then. Dozens of wins with Mike Haywood, Martin Stretton, Harvey Sykes and Clive Wilson 1475cc Climax FPF recently rebuilt by Sid Hoole (11,000). Only a few hours running since FIA Historic Technical Passport (HTP) for the F2/2 Class valid until 31/12/2025. Superbly presented, on the button and eligible for Goodwood, pre-1961 Monaco Historique, HGPCA and more. Stirling Moss and Vanwall had won the last two races of 1957 but by then the world title was done and dusted. But anyone who expected Juan Manuel Fangio to resume his stranglehold on the championship when the real action resumed in Argentina in early 1958 was in for a wake-up call. The world of Formula One was moving on with some fairly major rule changes. Alcohol-based fuel was banned in favour of Avgas, drivers pitting and swapping cars was all but outlawed and a championship for manufacturers had also been instigated for the first time. Fangio's Maserati team had withdrawn from the sport but were still providing cars to privateers, and Vanwall also opted not to travel to Buenos Aires leaving Moss free to drive for his friend and mentor, whisky heir and absolute gentleman, Rob Walker in his RRC Walker Racing Team Cooper-Climax T43 recently purchased from John Cooper. The T43 gearbox had been a source of problems all through the development of the car and it wasn't solved until ERSA in Paris were prepared to manufacture some thicker casings. Time was tight so with the Walker cars departure for the Argentine in a matter of days, John Cooper flew to Paris and brought the first three casings back in his suitcase. Customs

concerns at London Airport meant that John didn't get back to his unit until mid-evening and he and the legendary Alf Francis worked all night to rebuild the gearbox and get it back in the car in time to be loaded and off to the airport bound for South America. The 2-litre, rear-engined, Cooper-Climax was the only non-Maserati or Ferrari in the field and the 'Little Bug' was the subject of much derision from the established teams. Defending champion Fangio, who had won the previous four Argentine Grands Prix, took pole in his privately-entered Maserati and led early on, breaking the lap record several times. Starting from well back on the grid, Moss cautiously got to grips with the rear-engined Cooper and quite soon fought his way past both the V6, OHC Dino Ferraris of Musso and Hawthorn. When Fangio pitted on lap 35 for tyres and fuel (5-6 minutes in those days) Moss sailed into the lead requiring neither fuel nor tyres as the Cooper was comparatively fuel-efficient and Stirling was famously kind to his tyres. In the closing stages, and with his Continental tyres now shredded, Moss just managed to hold off Luigi Musso with Mike Hawthorn a close third. Moss' Argentine Grand Prix win was the first in the championship for a rear-engined car, the first for an independent team and the first for Cooper Cars, bookmarking the start of a complete sea change in the design of Grand Prix cars. A leading motorsport publication recently described the Cooper T43 as One of the ten most important Grand Prix cars of all time. According to John Coopers excellent biography *Grand Prix Carpetbaggers*, 29 examples of the T43 were built in 1957, one prototype and 28 customer cars. The car offered here is # F2-27-57 which presumably was one of the last assembled. We know that it was shipped to the States where Coopers US agent Joe Lubin sold the car to the husband-and-wife team, Bob Drake and Mary Davis. Some old photos in the owners file show the car being raced at Paramount Ranch, California in December 1957, where Mary Davis finished second overall. Shortly after, the car was sold to Ron Ellico who used it to some effect in the Palm Springs Road Race in April 1958, and in Hawaii's International Speed Week the following month achieving a Formula Two class win at the latter. We understand that #F2-27-57 was next raced by John McLaughlin, making several appearances at Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) regional events, as well as the Pomona Road Races in early 1959. Having spent the first 30 years of its racing life in America, the Cooper was destined to return home. Mike Haywood is a charismatic Bewdley entrepreneur whose car collection was looked after at the time by competition car preparer and talented pedaller Martin Stretton. Amateur racer Mike was keen to try historic single-seaters so in response to an advert, he and Martin flew to the States in mid-December 1988, sealing the deal and arranging for the Cooper to be shipped to the UK. It duly arrived in January and was properly prepared for the start of the season, shaken down and set up by Martin allowing Mike to learn his craft in the predictable little car. Martin raced the car occasionally with notable successes at Brands, Monza and Spa. Inevitably Mike moved on to later cars but the Cooper remained in Martin's toy cupboard for many years and was later purchased by Harvey Sykes in 2003. It was maintained impeccably and campaigned in numerous events whilst in Sykes' care, and changed hands again in 2010 when it became the pride and joy of Clive Wilson. He used the car extensively in the Historic Grand Prix Cars Association European series at home and on the continent winning his class on a regular basis and over the years #F2-27-57 became a well-known and much-liked fixture in the world of historic single-seaters. It has been owned by our vendor for the last two years. It's not common with old racing cars to find much in the way of history but in this case, we are spoilt with several folders of technical specification sheets, comprehensive notes, engine running logs and detailed records of dozens of race results. Invoices on file from Harvey Sykes' ownership show pre-race prep and maintenance by the knowledgeable team at Pearsons Engineering. In September 2018, a substantial engine and gearbox overhaul was overseen by renowned Cooper specialist, Sid Hoole at a cost of over 11,000. This included a thorough top-end rebuild of the Climax engine with new seals and gaskets, refurbished oil pumps, and a rebuilt starter motor. The gearbox was stripped and rebuilt, with a new crown wheel and pinion, as well as replacement bearings and finally, the power unit was set up on the dyno. We understand that since the engine build it has only been run for a few hours during 2019. All of this history can be inspected at our Documents Desk. The car itself presents superbly in a dark British Racing Green with a white band around the nose cone and black wheels. We understand that it's on the button and that all the safety equipment is in date (Lifeline extinguisher system, Willans harness, ignition cut-out etc.) however it's always advisable to check. Accompanying the car is an FIA Historic Technical Passport (HTP) for the F2/2 Class, which is valid until 31/12/2025. #F2-27-57 is an important historic racer and

a great example of a design that was to change the face of Grand Prix racing. It has travelled the world, won numerous trophies and been looked after by many talented engineers. Its in lovely condition, ready to race, Goodwood and Monaco eligible and will continue to be competitive in the right hands. However, no amount of description can replace the excitement of seeing and touching this venerable little racer. Come to Race Retro and sit in the car. Narrow your eyes and picture John Cooper and Alf Francis out the back at Coopers Garage Surbiton in 1957 burning the midnight oil trying to get the car ready to be shipped to Joe Lubin in the States. Imagine being one of its American owners surrounded by admirers who had never seen a little British formula car and the pleasure in winning races from Palm Springs to Hawaii. Feel the excitement when Mike Haywood climbed into his recent American acquisition in 1989 prior to his first single-seater race at Silverstone and Martin Strettons satisfaction at the start of an incredible career preparing the car and scoring successes at Spa and Monza and more. Sense the way the little Coopers predictable handling looked after Harvey Sykes and Clive Wilson steering them safely to innumerable wins. You cant get all that from an Internet description. Come to Stoneleigh, sit in the car and feel free to dream.

Silverstone Auctions Ltd

Title Mr

First name Guy

Last name Lees-Milne

Silverstone House

Kineton Road

Gaydon

Warwickshire

CV35 0EP

United Kingdom

Phone +44-01926691141

<https://www.silverstoneauctions.com/events/2020-auctions/race-retro-classic-comp...>

<https://www.classicdriver.com/en/car/cooper/t43/1957/735133>

© Classic Driver. All rights reserved.