

CLASSIC DRIVER

[RM Sotheby's is selling these 100 dream cars with no reserve](#)

Lead

Tomorrow, the bidding will open on The European Sale by RM Sotheby's, an online auction that includes the Petitjean Collection, a jaw-dropping assembly of 97 predominantly European collector cars. And the best thing? They'll all be offered without reserve...

Last weekend, an immaculate two-owner 2003 Ferrari Enzo sold for 2.64m US dollars in an online-only auction held by RM Sotheby's.

The impressive sum, a record for a dedicated digital collector car sale, is indicative of two things: that amid the coronavirus crisis, established automotive auction houses such as RM have been able to shift successfully online without a marked drop in volume or quality, and that online sales are a viable and cost-effective alternative, on which more emphasis will no doubt be placed moving forward.



Another of RM's physical auctions to fall foul of Covid-19 was its Essen sale, which was due to take place during the Techno Classica fair back in March. The show's organisers optimistically pitched rescheduled dates in June, but as coronavirus swept across Europe like wildfire, it quickly became clear that a cancellation was inevitable.

Buoyed by the success of its online-only Palm Beach sale, RM quickly announced it was instead taking the Essen sale, including the headlining Petitjean Collection, online under the banner of [The European Sale](#), the bidding for which commences on 3 June and closes on 10-11 June.



Before we delve further into the Petitjean Collection, a single-owner assembly of close to 100 cars that will be offered entirely without reserve, let's highlight a few standout lots from the rest of the catalogue, which, until just last week, was being bolstered with last-minute additions. Chief among those is the 2020 Porsche 935, an 'as-new' example wrapped in the nostalgic Martini livery that hasn't even been driven yet. The second of just 77 produced, the track-only quasi-racer is estimated to fetch 1.275-1.375m euros.

Other lots we earmarked from this portion of the sale include the early, low-mileage 1981 Lancia 037 Stradale (est. 420,000-520,000 euros), the 1975 Volkswagen Golf Mk1 Group 1 that became the first Golf to enter a competitive race (115,000-125,000 euros) and, arguably the coolest of the bunch, the 1988 Hartge F1.



Built by the German Hartge brothers as a showcase of their audacious modification talents, the latter looks like an innocuous W124-gen Mercedes-Benz E Class but is in fact

fitted with a tuned BMW M88 engine, the same unit found in the M1 and the E28 M5. Unsurprisingly, the Frankenstein ‘Beemercedes’ became an object of great intrigue for the press and featured in countless different titles as a result. RM expects it to sell for 80,000–120,000 euros.

The aspect of this particular auction that will be of the greatest interest for discerning collectors and first-time buyers alike, however, is the Petitjean Collection. The wonderfully diverse selection of 97 cars built between the 1950s and 1990s embody the lifelong fantasy, passion and work of one man: Marcel Petitjean. The French former racing driver amassed the collection over the course of five decades, choosing to ignore safer, more conservative investments. At this point we’ll let Oliver Camelin, the RM Sotheby’s specialist responsible for consigning the collection, take up the tale.

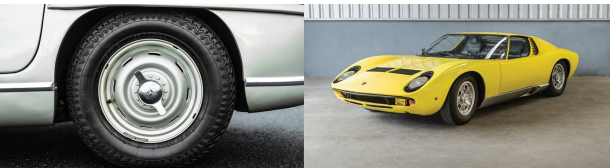


Oliver, could you tell us about Monsieur Petitjean?

Monsieur Petitjean is a former competitive racing driver who entered a number of prestigious events in the 1960s and ’70s driving Porsches. An established businessman based in France, he oversaw the running of several family businesses including a car dealership, which his son Pascal heads today. He is devoted to driving and owning classic cars, the result of which is the collection that we’re proud to present as part of The European Sale.

How did Petitjean go about building this collection and over what period of time?

Monsieur Petitjean originally intended to build a motor museum in his native city of Strasbourg. The collection began in the late 1970s and has grown ever since, Petitjean’s ethos of never paying more than one third of what a vehicle was originally worth remaining the same. In the early years, he slowly started acquiring the most desirable versions of each car, so we have some unique and very exclusive cars for sale in this auction. The groupings reflect the underlying idea for the museum – many of the cars can be grouped by their country of origin, with an especially large presence of those from England, Germany and Italy.



We understand that many of the cars were bought, stored and barely driven – in what condition are the cars today?

Yes, that’s correct. The cars have been dry stored for many years, some without turning a wheel. They’re almost all presented in good condition cosmetically, but due to their inactivity, every car offered will need recommissioning or restoring before being driven on the road again.

What are the most desirable cars from the Petitjean Collection?

The Mercedes-Benz 300SL Roadster is one of the standout cars, valued at 800,000–1.1m euros. One of just 30 examples with factory Rudge wheels, it was delivered new to France and has been owned since Petitjean since 1976. There’s also a Porsche 904 GTS, which has been in the collection since 1993 and was bought as a reminder of Petitjean’s own Porsche racing history. We’re also proud to present a Lamborghini Miura, valued at 700,000–800,000 euros. This 1968 example, an early ‘thin-gauge’ P400, was the first Miura delivered to Paris.



At the lower end of the spectrum, which are the most enticing cars offered?

There's something for everyone in the Petitjean Collection, with lots of accessible and affordable lots for potential first-time classic car buyers or even seasoned collectors in the market for an affordable project. Many are desirable European sports cars from the 1970s, '80s and '90s, so should be relatively straightforward to return to the road.

Was it important to follow the epic Youngtimer Collection at last year's Essen sale with something equally special?

Of course! Not only in terms of the volume of cars offered, but also the nature. A lot of the cars in the Petitjean Collection are the rarest and most exclusive versions of classics from previous eras. As we saw with the Youngtimer Collection last year, a lot of the cars captured the imagination of bidders and some sold for more than double their pre-sale estimates.

What is your personal favourite car from the collection and why?

It's almost impossible to pinpoint just one as there are so many interesting cars through the ages and it'd be difficult for anyone to choose from all the marques offered. That said, the car that really did it for me is the De Tomaso Mangusta, because it was born light blue metallic and delivered new to France.



Building your fantasy collection of cars, without the common limitations of space and budget – it's every car guy's dream, isn't it? Marcel Petitjean's tireless work over the last half-century is about to reward a wide array of enthusiasts from across Europe (and beyond). From classics ripe for first-time owners such as the 1966 Lancia Fulvia (15,000–20,000 euros) to ultra-rare obscurities including the 1972 Ligier JS2 Coupé (60,000–80,000 euros) to established icons like the 1966 Aston Martin DB6 (550,000–650,000 euros), we're expecting a flurry of bids before The Petitjean Collection online auction ends on 10 June.

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Gallery

