
1953 Alvis TC 21

Lot sold	USD 162 826 - 189 963 GBP 120 000 - 140 000 (listed)	Condition	Used
Year of manufacture	1953	Location	
Chassis number	25255	Exterior colour	Other
Lot number	107		

Description

1953 Alvis TC21 3-Litre Cabriolet Sport
Coachwork by Carrosserie Graber
Registration no. JSU 357
Chassis no. 25255

"The Alvis has never been an ordinary car for the masses, but a mount for the sporting and discerning driver interested in a quality product, and in a car that still looks like a car and is ruggedly built. By this it is not meant that the 3-litre is old fashioned; far from it, for the chassis is in fact as advanced as most." Autocar on the Alvis 3-Litre, 1952.

Alvis recommenced production after WW2 with a single-model range little altered from that of 1939, the 12/70 - first introduced in 1938 - re-appearing as the TA14, the most obvious difference being the adoption of steel disc wheels in place of wires. An uncomplicated, separate-chassis design, the TA14 was powered by an overhead-valve four-cylinder engine of 1,892cc and featured beam-axle front suspension and mechanical brakes.

Looking much like its TA14 predecessor, but featuring independent front suspension and a new overhead-valve, six-cylinder engine, the new 3-Litre Alvis was announced in 1950 as the TA21. Styled along classic, pre-war lines, the 3-Litre was reckoned by Autocar magazine to appeal to "discerning owners who appreciate quality and good handling as well as mere performance".

Nevertheless, more of the latter was available from the mildly face-lifted TC21 - introduced in 1953 - courtesy of a redesigned cylinder head, twin SU carburettors and improved exhaust manifold, making the TA21's successor good for 90mph. Introduced at the 1953 Earls Court Motor Show, the

model's ultimate incarnation was the TC21/100 'Grey Lady', the '100' being a reference both to the maximum horsepower and top speed.

The historic Alvis TC21 offered here, chassis number '25255', is one of only 11 such bodied by Graber (five coupés and six convertibles) and shortly after completion appeared on the Swiss coachbuilder's stand at the Geneva Motor Show (photograph on file). Hermann Graber's elegant designs were always executed to the very highest standards and his creations were necessarily expensive, costing far more than those of his British contemporaries. His designs on the TC (and preceding TA) chassis would prove to be of immense significance in the development of the post-war Alvis. In his book, *Alvis The Postwar Cars*, John Price Williams observes: "These models had a grace and purity of line which made the TA/TC series look very staid, and they attracted much attention".

Graber advertised three models on the Alvis 3-Litre chassis: a closed coupé and two cabriolets, one of 4/5 seats and the other with 2/3. Alvis's traditional upright radiator grille was retained for the 4/5 seater cabriolet, while the 2/3 seater Sport (as seen here) featured a more modern looking egg-crate grille. The overwhelmingly favourable reception given to his designs resulted in Graber being commissioned to style a production Alvis based on the TC21 - the TC108G - which was built by coachbuilders Willowbrook before production switched to Rolls-Royce's in-house coachbuilder Park Ward on the introduction of the revised TD21 for 1959.

A right-hand drive model, '25255' was originally registered in Switzerland and is now registered and tax-paid in the UK. Owned by the current vendor for 35 years, the car is presented in very nice condition and comes with a good history file recording restoration and remedial work undertaken by specialists in the UK. It is a past participant in the Monte Carlo Classic and rallies to Riga and Moscow, ably fulfilling its maker's intended role as a supremely capable Grande Routière.

Bonhams 1793

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