

CLASSIC DRIVER



The collector car auction year 2020 in review – Part 2

31 December 2020 | Simon de Burton

Online auctions continued to be pretty much the only option as we head in to part two of our 2020 auction round-up. Taking us from June to December.

June



The start of summer saw R.M Sotheby's stage its 'European Sale' that included 96 cars from the Marcel Petitjean Collection - which should have crossed the block three months before at the cancelled Techno-Classica in Essen. The French former racer offered everything at no reserve, but there were no bargains to be had. His 1958 Mercedes-Benz 300SL was the star at Euros 759,000, followed by an imperfect 1968 Lamborghini Miura at Euros 715,000. An additional 200-plus non-Petitjean cars helped the event to Euros 19.2m, making it the highest grossing online sale held by

R.M Sotheby's. Back in the U.K, H & H proved it had entered its stride with a new monthly online sale format, achieving a 50-per-cent over estimate £188,600 for a 1934 Lagonda M45 and more than £40,000 for a Ford Escort RS2000.

July



Further evidence that not being 'in the room' is no barrier to serious buyers was seen in late July when Silverstone Auctions posted its highest ever sale total at £15.8m, £1.9m of which was thanks to a 1972 Lamborghini Miura SV. Further UK action came from Historics which succeeded in staging a successful 'in person' sale at an open air venue called Windsorview Lakes, while Bonhams held another MPH auction at Bicester where a 1927 Bentley three-litre drew £225,000. The really big money of the month, however, was spent in the U.S. with Mecum (\$3.8m for a 1965 Shelby GT350R prototype) and at RM Sotheby's European sale (Euros 1.4m for a 1966 Ferrari 275GTB alloy).

August



Ah, Monterey time. Or not. Instead, official Pebble Beach Concours auctioneer Gooding & Co. entered internet-only waters with its first Geared Online sale, achieving \$3m for a Ferrari 275 GTB long nose and \$2.3m for an Enzo - both prices being eclipsed by the \$4.3m R.M Sotheby's took for the 2001 Ferrari 550 GT1 Prodrive prototype, establishing another new online record in the process. Bonhams 'not Monterey' sale also proved successful, achieving \$12.5m and being highlighted by a 1959

Porsche 718 RSK that failed to reach its low estimate but still sold for \$2.3m.

September



As autumn arrived, all eyes were on the UK and the single-owner car sale of the year - the re-scheduled 'Passion of a Lifetime' collection amassed by Belgian tycoon Hubert Fabri. The 15 lots, sold before a select 'live' audience at the time of the Hampton Court Concours of Elegance, achieved an eye-watering £34m. The top seller was a 1939 Bugatti Type 59 at £9.3m (a marque record) with a Type 57S Atlantic and Type 35C following at £7.8m and £3.9m respectively. Only one car from the collection failed to find a buyer - a 1961 Aston Martin DB4 GT Zagato. It was bid to £6.3m, £700,000 short of low estimate. Other notable events of the month included Artcurial's auction of 170 cars from the collection of Frenchman Andre Trigano (highlighted by his owned-from-new Lamborghini 400GT, Euros 481,600) - and Bonhams auction of a 2014 Lamborghini Veneno for Sfr 8.2 million.

October



Bonhams was busy in October, staging sales in Philadelphia to clear-out the Simeone auto museum (\$3.3m), at Zoute in Belgium where it sold the ex-Prince Constantine of Greece BMW 507 for almost Euros 2.1m, and back in the UK, where an auction staged in tandem with Goodwood's inaugural socially-distanced, crowd-free, internet-streamed Speedweek was not a roaring success, despite realising £5.3m. Likewise, R.M Sotheby's London event proved weak, while its U.S. sale of the 'Elkhart

Collection' (more than 270 cars and motorcycles amassed by Interlogic CEO Najeeb Khan and sold under duress at no reserve) drew a sky-high \$42m across two days of bidding.



The month was nicely rounded out in New York, meanwhile, when Sotheby's sold the trio of Alfa Romeo B.A.T concept cars for \$14.8m - as part of its flagship contemporary art sale.

November



Silverstone Auctions usually holds its last sale of the year at the NEC Classic Motor Show - but the cancellation of the event meant an online auction conducted from its Midlands base following by-appointment viewings. It raised £7.7m, with the top lot being a 1980 BMW M1 that soared to £382,500. Memorabilia relating to the late Sir Stirling Moss was also on offer, including a watch fitted with one of his own-design 'wipe clean' bracelets. It realised £67,850.

December



It might have been an 'annus horribilis' for many industries around the world, but 2020 has certainly proved the resilience of the classic car market - not to mention its ability to adapt and the dedication of its enthusiasts. The year ended pretty well, too: Artcurial staged a Euros 2m sale in Paris that was led by a fabulous, two owner, low mileage, unrestored AC ACE at Euros 310,000, and Bonhams rounded things off nicely with what we thought was one of the most appealing cars to cross the block at any time in the last 12 months - the Mercury Cougar convertible that featured in the 1969 Bond film *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*.

It sold for an estimate-busting £365,500, complete with seasonally-appropriate period skis.

Here's to a smooth run into 2021.....

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