

CLASSIC DRIVER

RM Sotheby's announces sale of cars from Nigel Mansell's private collection

Lead
With the first round of the 2022 Grand Prix season due to get underway in a week, could there be a better time to reveal a collection of cars being sold by a former F1 world champion who has frequently been ranked among the best drivers of all time?



Probably not, which is why RM Sotheby's has asked Classic Driver to break the news that British motorsport hero Nigel Mansell is off-loading five cars from his personal collection – including the 1991 Williams FW14 that became famous the world over for enabling one of the most enduring displays of sportsmanship in motor racing history. The cars are being sold by Florida-based Mansell from his private museum on Jersey and will come under the hammer as the stars of [RM Sotheby's May 14 Monaco sale, which will take place in the principality during the weekend of the historic grand prix](#)



The auction house says Mansell feels it is time for the prized cars, four of which he has owned for more than 30 years, to be given a new lease of life - and has even offered to meet the respective buyers to advise on their future use. The combined pre-sale estimates for the five cars range from a low of Euros 4.1m to a high of Euros 8.2m - the broad spread being accounted for by their unique combination of historic importance and 'motorsport royalty' provenance. And, on the basis that the FW14B 'Red Five' in which Mansell won five GPs during his 1992 championship-winning season fetched £ 2,700,000 three years ago (despite not belonging to the driver) the upper prediction is not unfeasible. In order of importance, then, here are the five Mansell-owned cars coming up for grabs.

1991 Williams FW14-5



Chassis number 5, 'Red 5' and five wins – it's all in the number for FW14-5. Regarded as one of the most technically advanced F1 cars of its era, Adrian Newey's brilliant opening design for Williams featured advanced aerodynamics, innovative active suspension and the first sequential, semi-automatic gearbox ever used by the team. Although it carried-over the 3.5 litre V10 engine from the

previous year's FW13B, the combination of Newey's genius and Mansell's rugged driving style proved difficult to beat, with the result that 'Il Leone' (as the Italians called him) achieved a remarkable five wins in this particular car during the '91 season.

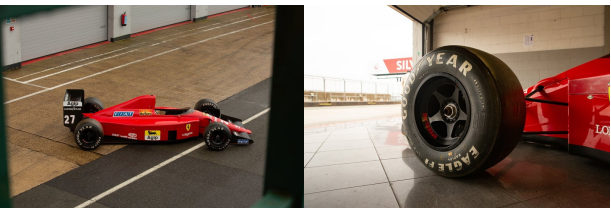
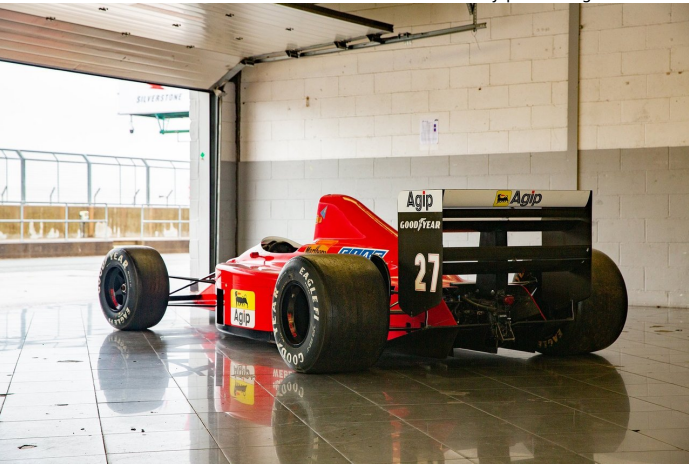


He first took the chequered flag in it at Magny Cours on July 7, following up a week later with a home win at the British Grand Prix where he crossed the line a staggering 42.293 seconds ahead of second-placed Gerhard Berger. The winning streak in FW14-5 continued in Germany, Italy and Spain - where, on a damp and slippery Catalunya circuit, Mansell and Senna staged an epic wheel-to-wheel battle in which the sparks literally flew. But it was back at the British Grand Prix where the everlasting image of FW14-5 was formed - when Mansell pulled-over during his victory lap to give a 'taxi ride' to the beleaguered Senna, whose McLaren had run out of fuel on the 58th lap. The set-back didn't prevent Senna from winning his third world championship that year, but in recognition of Mansell's impressive second place Williams gifted him FW14-5 - albeit without its engine which had to be returned to Renault. The car is estimated to fetch 1.5 - 3m euros.

1989 Ferrari 640, chassis 109



Described by RM Sotheby's as 'exactly as it was when driven by Mansell in the Australian GP at Adelaide in 1989', this Ferrari 640 was raced to victory by Mansell at both the Brazilian and Hungarian rounds, helping him to end the season in fourth place and earning the Scuderia third in the constructor's championship. Having moved to Ferrari in 1988 to replace Michele Alboreto after his first, three-year stint with Williams, Mansell proved to be the very last team member to have been personally recruited by Enzo Ferrari himself - an occasion that Il Commendatore marked by presenting the British driver with an F40 as a 'welcome gift'.



The tifosi embraced Mansell wholeheartedly and dubbed him 'Il Leone' as a result of his courageous approach to driving the V-12 engined 640, which was the first Ferrari F1 car to be equipped with the game-changing, soon-to-be-ubiquitous paddle shift, semi-automatic gearbox. Mansell quickly got to grips with the new 640, setting a new record at the Fiorano circuit in a January practice session prior to chassis 109 becoming the first Ferrari team car to be unveiled to the press without Enzo Ferrari being present - he had died six months earlier.



Chassis 109 proved to be a key element of what was a tumultuous F1 season for Mansell, with the manufacturer presenting it to him directly after the final race in Adelaide, from where it was shipped to his personal collection (then located in England). The car is not believed to have run for 32 years but is 100 per cent complete and ready to be preserved in its 'last race' state – or recommissioned for the track. The Ferrari is estimated to sell for 2.5m – 5m euros.

2005 GP Masters Reynard 2KI



Mansell's stellar F1 career might have officially come to an end at the Spanish Grand Prix in 1995 after 15 seasons, but his enthusiasm for racing never waned – as demonstrated by his move to the CART Indy World Series in 1993 which he duly won in his debut year, making him the only person to hold both the World Driver's Championship and the American open-wheel National Championship titles at the same time. After a decade out of the spotlight he returned to the track in 2005 as both financial backer and driver in the new Grand Prix Masters series for former F1 racers - in which he twice drove this Reynard 2KI to victory, first at Kyalami (the only race of the season) and again in Qatar at the 2006 season opener.

The car is based on a 2000 Reynard Champ Car and is powered by a 3.5 litre derivative of the Cosworth XB V8 engine, which is said to give a potential top speed of 200 mph - all without 'driver aids' such as ABS, power steering or traction control, the aim being to highlight the raw skill of the 'masters'. Offered in its original livery from the 2006 season, the car is said to be complete but will require full (and not inexpensive) recommissioning before again being used in anger. The car is estimated to sell for 100,000 - 150,000 euros.

1991 Birkin 7 Sprint



Mansell may have reached the top of his profession in the most advanced racing machines of their era – but even the world's best drivers appreciate the back-to-basics thrill of being behind the wheel of a car based on Colin Chapman's legendary Lotus Seven design. That partly explains why Mansell acquired this South African-built Birkin 7 Sprint direct from the manufacturer, which was established in 1982 by John Watson, a direct descendant of the legendary Bentley Boy Sir Henry 'Tim' Birkin.

Watson had long been a fan of the Lotus 7, so decided to build his own version for sale to like-minded enthusiasts – and launched it during the 1983 South African Grand Prix at Kyalami in the presence of Chapman's widow Hazel and the Lotus F1 team driver of the time – Elio de Angelis and, of course, Mansell. He is said to have driven the Birkin quite extensively in the UK but, as with the other cars in the collection, it has now been dormant for many years. It is estimated to fetch 10,000 - 15,000 euros.

1992 iC Modulo



Never heard of it? No, neither had we – but the three-wheeled Modulo is said to offer blistering performance thanks to its combination of a three-cylinder BMW K75S motorcycle engine and an all-up weight of just 390 kilos. It was created by Italian designer Carlo Lamattina and put into production in 1988, complete with Kevlar-reinforced bodywork, independent front suspension and a 28-litre fuel tank that gave it a range of up 560km/335 miles.

Mansell acquired this 1990 example directly from Lamattina, who presented it to him after the qualifying round of the Italian GP in 1992. It will be sold complete with photographs of the two men taken at the circuit, another of Mansell behind the Modulo's wheel and a letter from the designer confirming its authenticity and that it was previously owned by him, being the first example produced. Suitable for road or track use, it has covered just 3,000 km from new – and is expected to sell for 5,000 - 25,000 euros.

Photos: Tim Gidden / Sutton Images

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