Good wood: this charming Honda N600 floats our boat

Lead
Bonhams' Scottsdale Auction on January 25th features a number of amazing microcars, and this Honda N600 "Woodie" has rekindled our love for the Japanese auto giant's earliest four-wheeled rides.

By the time Honda graduated to producing four-wheeled vehicles rather than just two, Soichiro Honda's company was already world-renowned for their grand prix-winning motorcycles. While the N360 and S500 — the company's first two car models — were originally only intended to be sold in Japan, the global market beckoned, and so the N600 was born.

Powered by a 598cc parallel twin engine that incorporated much of what the firm had learned from motorcycle racing, the little N600 had a surprising amount of poke for a car that looks as though it could have been won in a gachapon vending machine. Featuring a screaming 9000rpm redline, the 45 horsepower N600 reportedly tops out at 77 mph, provided you've got the bravery to keep your right foot buried long enough.

Much like the Alec Issigonis-designed Mini from which this Honda takes a few design cues, the N600 was front-engined and front-wheel drive, although they never came from factory packing this much wood. Although non-standard, we have to say this N600 pulls off a Wood & Pickett Mini impression quite successfully, especially with that deep petrol blue paintwork and those contrasting sky-blue wheels.

Now being sold from a collection at Bonhams' Scottsdale Auction on January 25th, this 1971 N600's interior looks to be in outstanding condition, while the exterior bears a handsome smattering of patina. So, if you're looking for a city runabout or a niche alternative to the ever-popular Mini, this N600 is waiting for its next custodian.

VIEW CAR

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