

CLASSIC DRIVER

Meet the Trans-Atlantic Porsche that caused quite the stir

Lead

While Porsche had high hopes of bringing their top-of-the-range 'pre-A' 356 to the North American market, a questionable name landed them in hot water with a rival car brand. Now, this 1955 Porsche 356 'Continental' heads to Art Rite's upcoming auction on October 28th.



Talk about almost every great sports car in the 1950s, and it's almost certain the topic will lead to one gentleman, Max Hoffman. A prolific European car importer during the 1950s, Hoffman was instrumental in development and refinement of several iconic luxury sports cars, including the Mercedes-Benz 300SL Gullwing, the BMW 507 roadster and even a Porsche or two.



One of those Porsches came in the form of the 356, Porsche's first flurry into the sports car world, and a car the European market simply couldn't love anymore if they tried. As the model became more mature, Hoffman devised a plan to reignite the passion for the 356 one final time.

He suggested naming them 'Continental', to emphasise the international, sophisticated European nature of the advanced sports cars from Zuffenhausen. A fantastic marketing idea, where the cars could be distinguished from regular examples by chrome badging and high specification as standard. All was going swimmingly, and a small number of Continentals became to arrive with their lucky new owners, until a fellow car brand caught wind of the naming, and naturally, wasn't pleased. Continental had been used on Ford's Lincoln brand for some time at this point, and after legal proceedings, Porsche was forced to rename the special editions, opting for 'European', not quite as catchy.



That makes this stunning Silver example something of a real rarity, proudly sporting the Continental badges finished in Porsche's signature font on both front fenders, while the rich red leather interior provides the perfect contrast to the sleek exterior. Now residing in Italy, this example has been lovingly restored Autocarrozzeria 2000 for the bodywork and Ferraresi for the interior, as well as a complete overhaul of the engine. Now, this example heads to Art Rite's upcoming [collector car sale on October 28th, with an estimate of EUR 200,000 to 220,000.](#)

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