

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Which derelict collector car will you rescue from this junkyard of broken dreams?](#)

Lead

There are mythical car collections, and then there's the Rudi Klein collection. This mysterious Californian junkyard is RM Sotheby's latest stage for an extraordinary collection of rare and revered automobiles, parts, and memorabilia heading under the hammer on October 26th.



You're driving along a side street in Southern Los Angeles, shards of litter line the sidewalks, there's a distant but constant sound of sirens coming from the more densely populated areas, and that famous Californian sun beams down on your skin like a laser beam. You glance to your right, skimming partially derelict buildings and housing projects, and despite the low speed blurring your vision slightly, you're a car guy, and so you know what you've just spotted. "It couldn't be, could it?" Thoughts like these lead to a quick U-Turn, just to confirm the glimpse wasn't a figure of the imagination. Between the rusted railings, the unmistakable rear decklid of Ferruccio Lamborghini's crown jewel could be seen, confirming the split-second gaze wasn't a dream, a Miura sits covered in dust, dirt, rust, and various other car ruins sprawled across it. If there was a Miura in there, what other treasures must this place have?



Well, plenty. But only the closest to the owner would ever know what exactly was behind the walls of Rudi Klein's mysterious Porsche Foreign Auto salvage yard, and even those who were lucky enough to know, were sworn to secrecy. That's all about to change this October, as [RM Sotheby's are presenting arguably one of their most-hyped auctions to date](#), known as 'The Junkyard,' bringing to market Klein's extraordinary collection of rare and revered automobiles, parts, and memorabilia in a series of auctions. This place is far more than just a scrapyards or a source for rusty-but-rare parts, it's a glimpse into the world of a true collector, giving bidders the opportunity to acquire significant models long thought to be lost or destroyed, along with a trove of automotive parts and treasures.



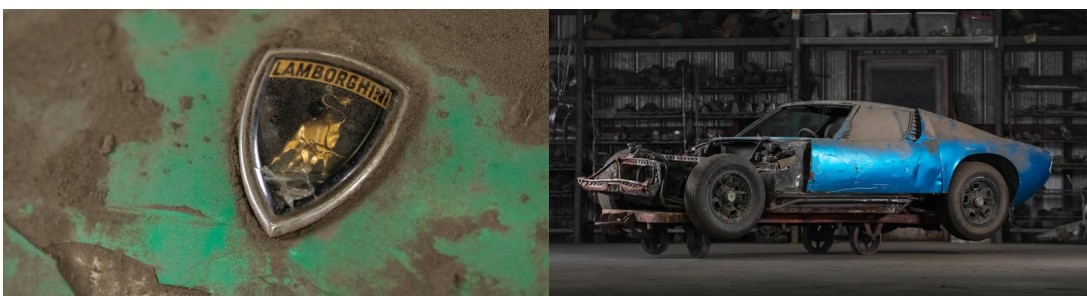
Rudi Klein was a German immigrant who initially built his career as a butcher based in California, and later founded his scrapyard business known as Porsche Foreign Auto in 1967. Even back then, it was the place to go for replacement cars for Stuttgart's creations, and Klein slowly began to amass parts for other European delights from Mercedes-Benz, Ferrari, Lamborghini and more. Parts were easy commodities to sell on, but entire cars were Klein's passion, and over the course of 40 years, he quietly accumulated an astonishing collection of European classics, some of which we can't help but talk more about below, but many of which had been the subject of much speculation and rumour within the Southern California car community, a close-knit culture that exploded with stories about Klein, most of which untrue. Klein's cars remained untouched and hidden from the public eye for years, until he sadly passed away in 2001, leaving the business to his two sons.



At present, there are over 200 lots heading to the first in a series of sales with RM Sotheby's, and is your chance to pick up what are essentially new-old stock from some of the world's best manufacturers. Desperate for a replacement steering wheel for your [Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Gullwing](#)? Klein had one, or two in fact. Disregarding the cars and spare body panels momentarily, the sheer number of engines within this auction is simply jaw-dropping, from a sea of fully assembled 911 motors to Maserati V8s, there's an engine here ready to roar once more.



However, if its rusted, crash-damaged priceless classics you're after, Klein was your guy. It's somewhat heart-breaking, and yet so interesting to see golden-era Ferraris crushed into cubes, or half of a Porsche 356's shell laid peacefully on the Californian dirt. Every car has a story to tell, and while some may be beyond repair and will be used only for their chassis numbers, there are some survivors. Among those survivors, sporting a healthy layer of dust and dirt, is a car RM Sotheby's describe as "the single most pursued Full Classic automobile of the last half-century", and it's easy to see why. Built in 1935 and set to be delivered to Mercedes-Benz's legendary champion racing driver, Rudi Caracciola, this [one-off 500 K 'Caracciola' Special Coupe by Sindelfingen](#) truly is the holy grail of barn finds. Despite sharing the same first name, the two Rudi's couldn't have been more different when it came to owning this three-pointed star unicorn. Caracciola used the car for several years before selling it, where it passed to a few other collections through the years. In Klein's ownership, however, it stood dormant for 44 years, tucked away hidden under cloth covers along with other prizes in the large tin-roofed shed at the centre of his junkyard. With an estimate of 4 to 6 million dollars, and a plethora of other icons from Mercedes-Benz's history also heading under the hammer, we'll be watching this one closely!



While there are many lots that would require some basic maintenance and a quick spruce up, others weren't so lucky. Klein's space was a junkyard after all, and even some of

the rarest cars in the world find themselves at the mercy of a heavy-footed driver or two. Among the sea of Porsche bodies and unrecognisable Ferraris, sits three Italian icons, all in varying states of decay. Often regarded as the first supercar, the Lamborghini Miura is every car lover's dream, and Klein's yard has three. Whether you choose the [Giallo Miura over Bleu Fintapelle](#) example, the 53rd Miura to ever leave Sant'A'gata, or the equally as stylish [Bleu](#) or [Verde](#) examples, the lengthy restoration needed on all three will undoubtedly lead to multiple concours wins and accolades.



Whatever your viewpoint is on seeing motoring icons in such states of decay, it's hard to ignore the importance of bringing an auction like this to the limelight. Not only for the rarity of the cars involved, but the stories behind the character who carefully curated what he chose to keep for himself, and what he chose to strip out for parts. We know what you're thinking, it's sacrilege to see Enzo and Ferruccio's masterpieces left to become Californian dust, but on the flip side it now represents an opportunity for some of the world's most talented restoration companies to showcase their talents and bring these gems back to the open road once more. This is far more than just your average barn find, Klein's collection showcases true pieces of automotive history, once lost, now found. What you do with them, is entirely up to you.

[DISCOVER THE AUCTION](#)

Gallery

RM Sotheby's - The Junkyard : The Rudi Klein Collection

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