

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Ex-1939 Le Mans Lagonda an early entry to Bonhams' Revival sale](#)

Lead

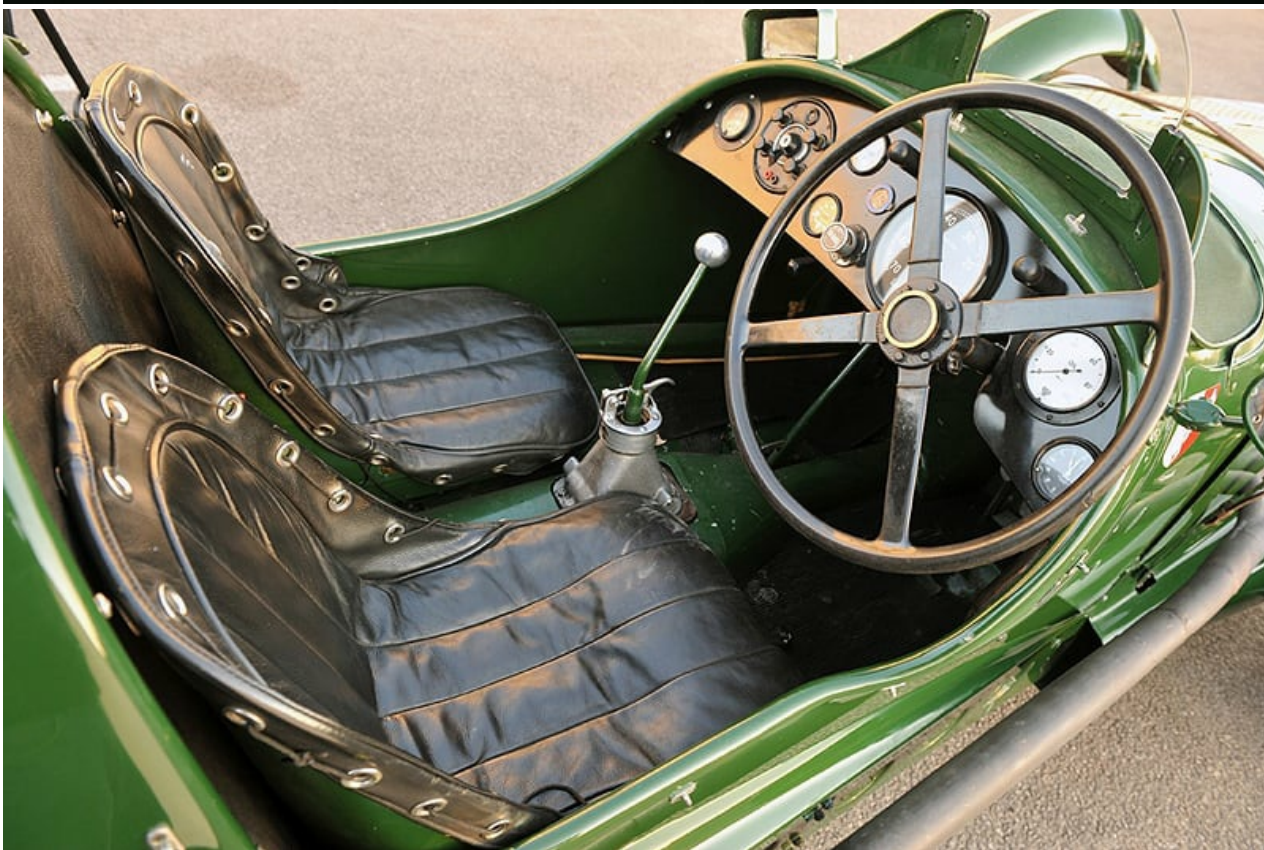
"I say, let's buy a racing car and enter the Le Mans 24 Hours!" It all sounds very Enid Blyton, but that's more or less what two friends did in 1939. Having never raced before, Lords Selsdon and Waleran brought this V12 Lagonda home in fourth place at the last-ever pre-War 24 hours of Le Mans.

Using a £65,000 inheritance, the 26-year-old Lord Selsdon (who later went on to share the winning Ferrari 166 MM with Luigi Chinetti at the first post-War vingt-quatre heures) joined forces with his friend and Lagonda fan, the 34-year-old ex-Etonian and Trinity College Oxford graduate, Lord Waleran.

Incredibly, the journey to Le Mans was to be their sole testing and running-in of the powerful British car. Carrying race number 6, it finished a highly creditable fourth, just a lap behind the sister car of top drivers Arthur Dobson and Charles Brackenbury. The winning Bugatti Type 57C 'Tank' of Wimille and Veyron was only 10 laps ahead.

Bonhams sold the Dobson/Brackenbury Lagonda V12 at its 2002 Goodwood Revival sale for £782,500.





The number 6 car will be offered at Bonhams' 15 September Revival auction, to be held for the first time on a Saturday. Estimate: "It is expected to realise in excess of £1 million," says the Bond Street house.

Another significant pre-War entry is the 1928 Mercedes-Benz 26/120/180 'S' Type Sports Tourer which has been in the same family ownership from new - another £1m+ car (in 2004 Bonhams sold a 1929 7.1-litre Mercedes-Benz 38/250 Model SSK for £4,181,500 at the Revival, a world record at the time).

Commenting on the ex-Team Lagonda V12, James Knight, Group Motoring Director at Bonhams, said, "In this day of ultra-professional race outfits, it is hard to look back and imagine a time in history when two friends

with some money to spare could get in a sports car and go racing – and at Le Mans of all places. But they and others did, and were known as ‘Gentlemen Drivers’.”

Photos: Bonhams

Gallery

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