

CLASSIC DRIVER

Timeless Classics: Ferrari 275 GTB/C Speciale

Lead

It's a distillation process: identifying the crème de la crème... de la crème, until you finally arrive at a car so superlatively special that, to quote one expert source, its sale "sends shockwaves through the community of automotive enthusiasts around the world".

Ferrari is a badge most car-lovers would be proud to wear on the grille, whatever the model. But even among the top Ferrari collectors, the 275 GTB – unveiled at the 1964 Paris Motor Show – is a very special, beautifully proportioned, race-inspired successor to the 250 GTO that commands huge interest (and prices) today. Especially the lightweight competition versions. But the competition versions were themselves based on the remarkable 275 GTB/C Speciale, of which only three were built by the Ferrari factory – specifically for FIA homologation and factory racing development.

All three Speciales could boast super-lightweight aluminium bodies that utilised smaller, lighter tubes, along with a race-style, 3.3-litre, dry-sump engine sitting low in the chassis, and topped by six Weber carburettors (as seen in the 250 LM).

A remarkable racing machine – as proved at Le Mans in 1965



What this meant in practical terms was an extra 70 horsepower over the standard 275 GTB road car, packaged in a much lighter chassis. It was a remarkable racing machine – as proved at Le Mans in 1965. Prepared by Ferrari for the Belgian team Ecurie Francorchamps, and painted in the team's traditional yellow, chassis no. 06885 was driven by Willy Mairesse and Jean Blaton in the GT class of the famous 24-hour race. Not only did the car win its class with supreme confidence (gaining the first Le Mans victory for a 275 GTB), it was also placed third overall: an astounding result.

Eyebrow-raising rumours



The Le Mans car, chassis 06885, has been owned since 1970 by renowned enthusiast Preston Henn and is of almost unguessable value. Henn has stated that he has no intentions of selling his prized Ferrari but there are rumours that – if ever it did come to the market in future – it could perhaps be the first car in the world to sell at the magic ‘nine-figure’ level. Since it’s not for sale, there is no way to establish the truth of such an eyebrow-raising rumour, and nor is the third and final car built, chassis 07185, about to see the auctioneer’s gavel. It remains firmly part of a private collection.

The crème de la crème (de la crème)



But that leaves [the first 275 GTB/C Speciale](#) built, chassis no. 06701, the car pictured here. The latest news running through the collectors’ market like wildfire is that this superlative Ferrari is indeed being put up for sale – by RM Auctions, at [its Monterey sale on 15-16 August 2014](#). With a meticulously researched and well-known provenance from new, with – of course – an original, matching-numbers engine, we wait with baited breath to see what this crème de la crème (de la crème) Ferrari will achieve on the world auction stage.

Photos: Darin Schnabel © 2014 courtesy RM Auctions

Gallery

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