

CLASSIC DRIVER

Bonhams' Paris sale turns the Grand Palais into a theatre of dreams

Lead

In the past half-decade, Bonhams' sale at the awe-inspiring Grand Palais has established itself as a major feature of the Parisian classic car week. We take a closer look at a selection from the fifth 'Les Grandes Marques du Monde' auction...

We've already presented an *hors-d'oeuvre* by looking at a [selection of the motorbikes on offer](#); now it's time to taste *les plats principaux*. There are no 'halo cars' to speak of, but expected to bring the greatest share of revenue are the [blue 'torque-tube' Ferrari 275 GTB](#) (estimate: 2.5m - 3.5m euros), [Lancia Aurelia B24S Spider](#) (900,000 - 1.3m euros) and [Mercedes-Benz CLK-GTR](#) (800,000 - 1.2m euros) - the latter of which has been [tipped for a bright future](#), despite its rather dull road manners.



A number of ultra-desirable Alfa Romeos will be offered at the Rétromobile week auctions, and the [Bonhams sale at the Grand Palais](#) is no different. As well as the [1937 6C 2300B](#) (700,000 - 1.1m euros) - displayed at Pebble Beach in recent years, both mid- and post-restoration - there will also be both [Coda Ronda](#) and [Coda Tronca](#) (round- and kamm-tail) versions of the Sprint Zagatos, pitched at 450,000 - 650,000 and 600,000 - 800,000 euros, respectively. It'll be interesting to see whether there's enough of a market for so much similar fare to sell for its true worth within such a small window. One thing's for sure: they'd all look pretty good being towed to a race meeting by the rare [Alfa 'Autotutto' minibus](#) (60,000 - 90,000 euros).



If there's anywhere to sell (or buy) a French curio it's at Rétromobile, and all auction catalogues glow with yellow-tinted promise, Bonhams' included. Examples include the 85,000 - 125,000-euro [Citroën 2CV Sahara 4X4](#) and the [Citroën DS21 Le Caddy](#) built by Henry Chapron for the 1967 Paris Motor Show (250,000 - 350,000 euros), complete with matching luggage. We also like the [Citroën Visa 1000 Pistes](#) as one of the more approachable (and affordable) Group B homologation specials, pitched at 20,000 - 30,000 euros with no reserve.



But possibly our favourite French fancy from the sale is the [1961 Facel Vega HK 500](#) (estimate: 140,000 - 180,000 euros). Such cars are well remembered for attracting the rich and famous, and this example spent the majority of its life in the custody of Bill Murray - no, not the Hollywood actor, but an American Airlines captain who ferried the Jet Set between the U.S. and Paris. He bought the four-year-old car as 'abandoned property' after seeing it languishing, flat-tyred, in an airport car park - and shipped it back

to California, where it remained until last year. It looks to be in exceptional condition considering its originality, but it's the romance of its fittingly Franco-American back-story that might excite bidders most.



A number of Maseratis in the lotlist catch the eye, and not only for their striking colours. There's a [3500 GTI](#) previously owned by the frontman of eponymous '60s rock outfit The J. Geils Band (260,000 - 300,000 euros), a [4.7-litre Bora](#) with a charmingly original interior (220,000 - 260,000 euros), and a [manual-gearbox SS version of the Ghibli](#), attractively finished in Red over Beige (300,000 - 350,000 euros). Trident-bearers of this vintage have spent the last few years gracefully riding on the back of the Ferrari value wave, and this (rightfully) shows few signs of stopping.



Speaking of which, the latest set of limited-edition modern classic Ferraris that could hit heady heights at auction are a [2005 Ferrari 575 Superamerica](#) (300,000 - 400,000 euros) and a 2002 [Ferrari 550 Barchetta Pininfarina](#) (450,000 - 550,000 euros) - the latter of which is as good a candidate as any to break the current auction record for the model (Gooding's circa-670,000-euro result for a 150-mile example last year), considering its 395km odometer reading and stunning colour combination. For us, it'd be a toss-up between this and the [white/chocolate V8 Volante](#), were we invited to a wine-tasting session in the South the next day.



Photos: Bonhams

Gallery

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