

CLASSIC DRIVER

[‘Quick Vic’ Elford won the Targa Florio racing this Porsche 907K](#)

Lead

Raced by legendary driver ‘Quick Vic’ Elford, this Porsche 907K famously won the 1968 Targa Florio. Now this highly authentic factory prototype is coming up for auction with Broad Arrow Auctions at their upcoming Amelia Island sale.



What makes a classic racing car truly great? A win in a major event certainly helps. Then there’s the ‘look’, the performance, the marque, the model, the rarity, it’s contribution to motorsport history - and, of course, the halo effect of having been piloted by an outstanding driver.

So if you’re wondering why the Porsche 907 pictured here is expected to fetch as much as \$5.5 million when Broad Arrow Auctions sends it across the block at Amelia Island on March 3, it’s because it ticks every one of those boxes - and then some.

With just 21 examples built during 1967 and 1968, the Porsche 907 is rare, alright. And, as the car that heralded Porsche’s multi-year dominance of the World Sportscar Championship, its place in the history books is indelibly marked.



But what makes this one extra special is the fact that it was driven to victory in one of the world’s most demanding endurance races by one of the most remarkable drivers of the post-war period - the late and legendary ‘Quick Vic’ Elford.

Elford, who died last year aged 86, was the epitome of the lost breed of gritty, determined, gentlemanly and versatile racers who existed during the 1960s and 1970s. Born to a couple who ran a café in a run-down part of London, Elford took to racing in his late 20s, first as a navigator and then as a rally driver whose innate ‘quickness’ soon attracted works contracts from Triumph and then Ford - before a switch to Porsche saw him win the 1967 European rally championship.

Demonstrating his incredible ability to drive anything, anywhere extremely fast, he raced a 911 to victory in the following year’s Monte Carlo Rally before taking the chequered flag at the 24 Hours of Daytona just a week later in one of the then-new, 2.2 litre 907s -marking Porsche’s first outright win in a 24-hour race.



Three weeks after that he raced a 907 to second at the Sebring 12 hours, nipped home to the UK to finish third in another 907 at the Brands Hatch Six Hours - and, 28 days hence, was settling into the cockpit of this car, chassis 025, to contest the 52nd edition of Sicily's Targa Florio.

The car had first competed at Sebring six weeks before but only managed 20 minutes of the 12-hour race before driver Ludovico Scarfiotti is believed to have fluffed a gearchange, over-revved the engine and ground to a halt.

The Targa Florio looked set to end in equally ignominious style for chassis 025 after Elford roared off from the Le Mans start, covered 10 kilometres and then lost drive. Coasting to a halt, he discovered that the off-side rear wheel nut had come loose, allowing the wheel to slip off its splines. Ordinarily that would have meant a significant delay for repairs - but not when the spectators are car-crazy Italians.



According to Elford, the breakdown sparked "the most amazing scene I have ever experienced. Before I could even get the jack out of the car, spectators swarmed down from their vantage points above the road and physically lifted the car while I re-tightened the wheel."

Despite returning to the pits to have the wheel replaced by the Porsche mechanics, Elford felt the car going out of control on a fast downhill section just a short distance later. The same offending nut had again come loose, this time sending the car off the road and causing a front-tyre blow-out and shattered magnesium wheel.

Again, the spectators came to Elford's assistance, helping him to re-locate the errant rear wheel and, believe it or not, exchange the smashed front one for the 'space saver'

spare carried on-board. Despite the stop-gap solution, Elford completed most of the remainder of the 45-mile lap (still his first of the race) at high speed before again returning to the pits where the crew changed all four wheels and centre-lock nuts before waving the car off on its second lap.



By then, however, Elford was already 18 minutes behind the lead car – a fact that inspired him to simply ‘go for it’ in the hope of setting a lap record. He completed three quick laps before handing-over to co-driver Umberto Maglioli (already a double Targa Florio winner) who was both fast and mechanically sympathetic.

Maglioli drove just two laps before handing the controls of 025 back to Elford, who took-over with the car by now in fourth place – a gap he proceeded to close by posting three record-breaking laps in succession and passing the lead Alfa Tipo 33 with half a lap to go, eventually finishing a full three minutes ahead.

As well as being a remarkable victory, Elford and the 907 had smashed the overall race record by almost 10 minutes, completing the near 500-mile race in six hours, 28 minutes and 47.9 seconds – a figure that included the 18 minutes required to fix the first-lap wheel problems.



With the 907 model being phased-out by the end of the '68 season in favour of the 908, chassis 025 was sold to the Valvoline Racing Team of Swiss driver Siegfried Lang, who enjoyed considerable success in hill-climbing the car before an accident at the Ollon-Villars event led him to have it rebuilt in open 'spyder' configuration.

In 1970, however, another shunt – this time at Eggberg – proved fatal for Lang. After passing through two more owners during the course of the next two decades, the historical significance of 025 was recognised by Porsche prototype authority Dale Miller, after which it entered the legendary racing prototype collection of California-based Porsche

enthusiast Dr Julio Palmaz.



Dr Palmaz - who already owned the 1956 Targa Florio-winning Porsche 550 and the 1970 Le Mans-winning 917 - commissioned a full restoration to 1968 specification, including the rebuilding of the original, 2.2 litre, flat-eight engine. In Dr Palmaz's ownership, the restored car collected awards at both the 2007 and 2012 editions of the Amelia Island Concours, after which it became part of a significant international collection before passing to the current owner in 2015.

[Broad Arrow Group](#)'s senior car specialist David Swig describes the Elford 907 as 'hands down one of the most world-famous Porsche prototype racers of the 1960s'. Want to argue with that? We certainly don't.

This incredible piece of history is set to go under the hammer at Broad Arrow Group's upcoming Amelia sale, with an estimate of EUR 4,175,947 to 5,103,935. To find out more about the car and the auction, click the links below.

Photos: Robin Adam

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