

# Bonhams

MAGAZINE | MOTORING

**Porsche power**  
Celebrating the Spyder

**Lightning fast**  
The record-breaking  
Vincent motorcycle

**Rev hot Ferraris**  
Design classics

**Bothwell Collection**  
The vintage racing car  
that set the pace



# News & forthcoming sales

## COMING DOWN THE TRACK FOR WINTER SEASON 2017

• Craig Mallory, the newest recruit in the Bonhams Motorcycle Department, is to join the L.A. office. Craig has an encyclopaedic knowledge of all types of collector's motorcycle, and is a former amateur road racer in his native United States.



• The last sale of the year for the Motoring Department takes place on 6 December under the vaulted glass canopy of London's Olympia. It will feature some classic British marques, such as the 1963 Jaguar E-Type 3.8 Series 1.

• On 8 February, Bonhams will return to one of its most dramatic auction locations for the Grandes Marques au Grand Palais sale. Exquisite motor cars such as the 1958 Jaguar XK 150 3.4-litre 'S' (£150,000-200,000) will be arranged beneath the wrought-iron and glass domes in the centre of Paris.

Front cover: 1967 Ferrari 275 GTB/4  
To be offered at Scottsdale in January

### WINTER SALES DIARY

#### THE BOTHWELL COLLECTION

Sat 11 November  
Bothwell Ranch, Los Angeles

#### THE BOND STREET SALE

Sat 2 December  
New Bond Street, London

#### LONDON OLYMPIA

Wed 6 December  
Olympia, London

#### THE SCOTTSDALE AUCTION

Thur 18 January  
The Westin Kierland Resort & Spa, Scottsdale

#### THE LAS VEGAS MOTORCYCLE AUCTION

Thur 25 January  
Rio Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas

#### GRANDES MARQUES DU MONDE AU GRAND PALAIS

Thur 8 February  
The Grand Palais, Paris

## Sixty years a star

### The 300 SL is the epitome of automobile elegance

When it comes to automotive design, 'timeless' is a term too frequently used, but for the Mercedes-Benz 300 SL it is the truth. It must rank as one of the most widely recognised and desirable motor cars in the world. Celebrating its 60th birthday this year, the 300 SL remains head-turningly elegant. Bonhams will offer a very special example in its Scottsdale Auction on 18 January: the first 300 SL to be imported to the US. A very early 1957 example, with matching numbers. It received a no-expense spared restoration in the capable hands of Mark Allin and his team at Rare Drive. It was

voted 'Car the Editors Would Most Like to Drive Home' by *Road and Track* at the Amelia Island concours earlier this year. In 60 years, the car has had only two owners, one of whom kept it for more than 50 years.

#### THE SCOTTSDALE AUCTION

Thursday 18 January

#### 1957 MERCEDES-BENZ 300 SL ROADSTER

\$1,400,000 - 1,700,000

Enquiries: Jakob Greisen  
+1 415 503 3284  
jakob.greisen@bonhams.com



## The Beatles' ticket to ride

### McCartney's Aston Martin is in pole position at Bond Street

The Bond Street sale will see not one, but two, motor cars previously owned by members of the Beatles go under the hammer. Resplendent in the 'Bond' colour scheme of Silver Birch with red interior, this 1964 Aston Martin DB5 was purchased by Sir Paul McCartney shortly after the band completed the filming of *A Hard Day's Night*. The licence plate, '64 MAC', leaves little doubt as to the original owner. Then, in 1967, Brian Epstein decided that British icons deserved a British icon, and gave each of the Beatles a Mini Cooper. Taking a practical approach, Ringo modified his car so as to allow him to get his drum kit into the boot. The 1966 Mini Cooper 'S' Radford Conversion will also be offered in December.

#### THE BOND STREET SALE

Saturday 2 December

#### THE EX-PAUL McCARTNEY 1964 ASTON MARTIN DB5

£1,250,000 - 1,500,000

Enquiries: Tim Schofield  
+44 (0) 20 7468 5804  
tim.schofield@bonhams.com



# A fine vintage

When it comes to racing cars, the 1914 Peugeot L45 is the daddy.  
**Poppy McKenzie Smith** explores the Bothwell Collection

In early November, Bonhams will offer the astonishing collection of the late Lindley Bothwell, pioneering collector of veteran and vintage motor cars. At one time, Bothwell had the largest private collection of motor cars, trams and horse-drawn carriages in America, all of which he kept on his sprawling California ranch. Loath to let any of his acquisitions fall into disrepair, he would encourage his friends to borrow cars and race against him. It was not unusual for starting grids to be made up entirely of Bothwell vehicles.

The star of his collection is the great-grandfather of all racing cars, the 4.5-litre 1914 Peugeot L45. Unlike the Ford Model T, which was considered outmoded a mere 20 years after its conception, the L45's dual overhead camshaft engine was a revelation that spawned a lineage still in existence today. Its successors are now seen in everything from Formula 1 cars tearing up Eau Rouge to economy hybrids placidly cruising the motorway.

*Poppy McKenzie Smith is Press Officer at Bonhams*

---

**THE BOTHWELL COLLECTION**  
Saturday 11 November

**THE EX-INDIANAPOLIS, RALPH MULFORD, ARTHUR H. KLEIN 1914 PEUGEOT L45 GRAND PRIX TWO SEATER**

\$3,000,000 - 5,000,000

Enquiries: Malcolm Barber  
+44 (0) 20 7468 8238  
malcolm.barber@bonhams.com

---





# Greased Lightning

It was the motorcycle that took the land-speed record in 1953 in memorable style. **Simon de Burton** looks at its track record

It is probably the most-famous image in the history of motorcycle milestones. A black-and-white photograph from September 1948 shows Rollie Free scorching along Bonneville Salt Flats – head down, pelvis pressed to the rear mudguard of his motorbike, legs stretched out behind him – and his body clad in nothing but a pudding bowl helmet, plimsolls and a pair of swimming trunks.

Free had chosen to discard his leathers after ripping them on a trial run, a decision that may have helped him race into the record books at a speed of 150.313mph. The bike he did it on was a prototype of what soon came to be recognised as the fastest motorcycle in the world: the mighty Vincent Black Lightning.

Cambridge graduate Phil Vincent established his eponymous marque in 1928, having bought an existing manufacturer called H.R.D. for £450 (hence early models were designated 'Vincent H.R.D.'). The first notable machines to emerge from the venture were the single-cylinder, 500cc Comet, Meteor and T.T. Replica bikes, bikes that were developed in house by the Australian Phil Irving, an engineering genius who went on to design the

V8 powerplant that made the Brabham Grand Prix team both drivers' and manufacturers' F1 champions of 1966.

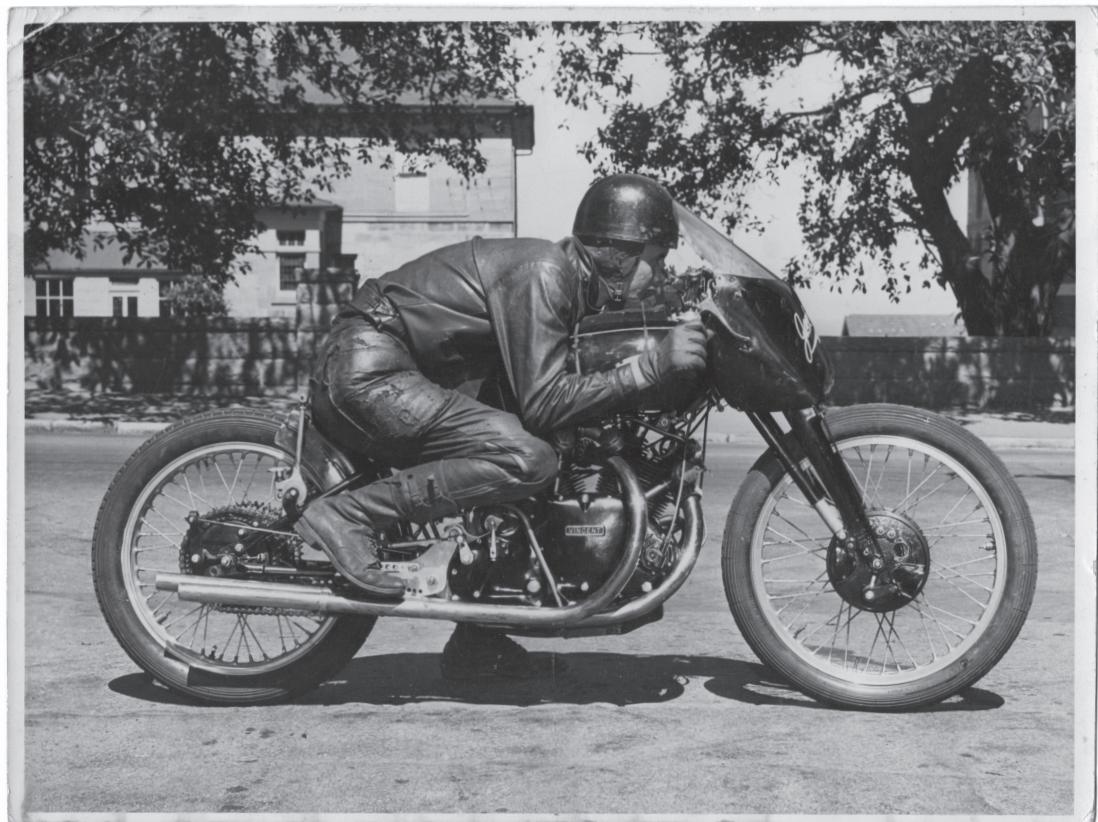
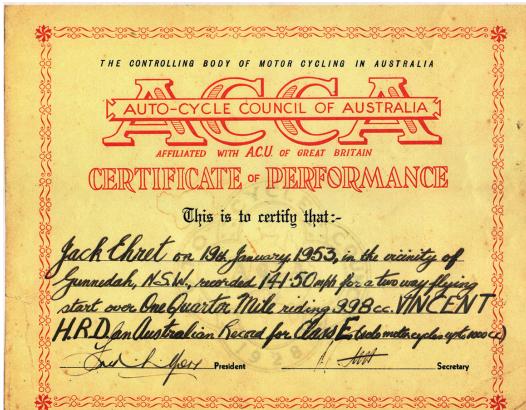
The story goes, however, that Irving's greatest legacy to Vincent came about almost by accident. According to legend, he had been shuffling around a drawing and a tracing of a new 500cc, single-cylinder engine design when he realised that, by marrying the two, he could create a 1,000cc V-twin with potentially twice the power.

The first machine to carry the new engine was dubbed the 'Rapide'. Launched in 1936, it offered genuine 110mph performance in Series A form; post-war, the Series B model then gave rise to the ultra high-performance, 125mph Black Shadow.

While the Black Shadow was the quickest street-legal object on wheels, there were calls from the racing community for something even more powerful, more lithe and faster. That 'something' proved to be the rare and uncompromising Black Lightning.

Tuned to produce 70 horsepower (15 more than the standard Shadow) at 5,700rpm, its engine had larger inlet valves, 'hot' camshafts, stronger, lighter con rods,

**Opposite** The ex-Tony McAlpine and Jack Ehret, Australian land speed record-breaking, four owners from new, 1951 Vincent 998cc Black Lightning Estimate: Refer Department



**Above** Ehret adopts the record-breaking riding position – taken prior to his record attempt

**Top left** The certificate confirming Ehret's record

**Left** Ehret at the Castlereagh Air Strip Speed Trials in 1952

polished flywheels and a high, 13:1 compression ratio designed to enable the use of methanol fuel that would be fed in through twin Amal TT carburettors.

To make the most of this fire-breathing powerplant, the Lightning was trimmed of close to 100lbs in weight over the stock 458lb Shadow, thanks to the use of Elektron brake plates, alloy rims, a solo seat, alloy mudguards and lightweight, rear-set foot rests. The Shadow's famous 150mph speedometer went, too, its place taken by a rev counter.

## "Rollie Free scorched along – clad in nothing but a helmet, plimsolls and swimming trunks"

Available only to order, a mere 30 or so Lightnings were built at Vincent's Stevenage factory between 1948 and 1952 – one of which is the example pictured: a 1951 model, numbered 7305. This motorbike was imported new into Australia by well-known racer Tony McAlpine and subsequently sold to fellow competitor Jack Forrest.

But it was 7305's next owner who realised the bike's full potential. His name was Jack Ehret and, in January 1953, he successfully appealed to a local judge to close a two-mile stretch of public road near Gunnedah, New South Wales, so he could attempt to set a new Australian land-speed record.

With officialdom (but little luck) on his side, Ehret claims to have managed a run of 149.6mph on day two, but faulty timing equipment meant it was not recorded. His next attempt ended with gearbox problems but,

undeterred, Ehret soldiered on with a makeshift fix. He eventually managed two clean runs, at an average speed of 141.509mph, to achieve his record-breaking goal.

Ehret continued to race 7305 successfully for many more years, last competing on it in 1978 but retaining ownership until 1999, just two years before his death. Now this most celebrated of Vincents is destined for the limelight again, when it comes under the hammer at the Bonhams Las Vegas motorcycle sale in January. It will be offered in perfect running order, having been recommissioned by French marque guru Patrick Godet.

Note that the word here is 'recommissioned' rather than restored – because 'preservation' enthusiasts will be delighted to see that this magnificent machine is not polished, painted and gleaming like a new pin, but stained, rubbed, dulled and chipped in testament to its hard-riding years in Ehret's loving ownership.

In fact, it looks for all the world as though it has just left the Gunnedah asphalt and is standing by to break another record. Which, if bidding is as brisk as expected, it may very well do.

*Simon de Burton has been a reporter for the FT's How to Spend It since 1999, specialising in rare and exotic cars, motorcycles and boats.*

**Sale:** The Las Vegas Motorcycle Auction  
Las Vegas, Rio Hotel & Casino  
Thursday 25 January at 11am  
**Enquiries:** Ben Walker +44 (0) 20 8963 2819  
ben.walker@bonhams.com  
bonhams.com/motorbikes

# Pushing the envelope



It was a perilous time for drivers, but it was a time of glory too. **Richard Holt** gets misty-eyed about 1950s motor racing – and a very special Porsche

W henever a time is described as a “golden age”, it is best to raise an eyebrow. With matters of taste like fashion and music, whether one era is better than another is so subjective as to make comparisons all but meaningless.

What about motor racing? The Porsche 550A Spyder pictured here – and offered by Bonhams at January’s Scottsdale sale – was made in the 1950s, a decade regarded with great nostalgic reverence. The case is persuasive, with great technological leaps forward that left pre-war cars in the dust and a new breed of superstar drivers like Jack Brabham, Stirling Moss and Juan Manuel Fangio, whose track exploits are still held in awe today. But it was also the decade during which the sport lost its innocence, with an unprecedented – and unrepeatable – number of fatalities among both drivers and spectators.

Misty eyes cloud the horror of those deaths, however, and with the passing of time we think less deeply about the devastation they caused. The truth is that you cannot

entirely separate the good from the bad. Part of the appeal lay in how dangerous racing was then, with cars tearing round at previously unimagined speeds, drivers clinging to large, narrow-rimmed steering wheels with nothing but open-faced helmets to protect them. In the previous decade men risked their lives on the battlefield; in the 1950s, it was the racetrack.

The story behind this particular Porsche could not have been written in any other decade. The first owner was a Belgian aristocrat called Carel Godin de Beaufort, a man who by birth had been destined for a gentlemanly life overseeing the family estate, shooting birds and riding horses. But he fancied a go on something a bit quicker, and decided to leverage his privileged position to become a racing driver.

This was no talentless toff. After some decent showings in rallies, de Beaufort caught the attention of the Porsche motorsport bosses. He went on to have notable class wins in endurance races like the Nürburgring 1000km and



All images © GP Library

**Opposite**  
1958 Porsche 550A Spyder  
Estimate: Refer Department

**Clockwise from left**  
Fuel stop at Le Mans, 1958  
Innsbrück Airport Race, 1958  
Tourist Trophy, Goodwood, 1958  
Racing to 5th place overall  
and a second in class  
at Le Mans, 1958



the 12 hours of Sebring, as well as dozens of Formula 1 drives. He was popular with fans and fellow drivers due to his outgoing, extroverted manner, and for little eccentricities like driving without shoes. Reportedly, he once entertained the crowds by doing practice laps wearing a Beatles wig instead of his helmet.

**"De Beaufort was popular due to his little eccentricities – like driving without shoes"**

In 1958, de Beaufort drove this particular Porsche in the 24 Hours of Le Mans. The oldest and most gruelling motor race in the world, it is also a race with no competitors in the glamour stakes, save perhaps for the Monaco Grand Prix.

The previous Porsche Spyder, the 550, was a very fine sports car, and one that has the dubious accolade of being the model that James Dean was driving when

he crashed and died in 1955 – the car that Dean had nicknamed ‘Little Bastard’. But although the two cars looked similar, under the skin the 550A was substantially improved. It kept the same glorious 1.5-litre flat-four engine, but had a space-frame chassis that saved a good deal of weight compared to the previous ladder-frame setup. It also had the spare wheel moved to the front for better weight distribution, and the suspension changed from swing axles to trailing arms, giving it better stability. The star engineer and driver Ken Miles calling the 550A the “greatest long-distance racer in the world”.

Just 40 examples of the 550A were made, and of those the most prized are the ‘works’ cars like this one, built to race as part of a factory team rather than by privateers. At Le Mans that year, de Beaufort and his co-driver piloted the 550A to second in class and fifth place overall – an amazing achievement to stay competitive among Ferraris and Aston Martins with engines twice the size of that of the Porsche.



**Above** 1958 Porsche 550A Spyder  
Spyder  
Estimate: Refer Department

**Below** Racing to 5th place overall and a second in class at Le Mans, 1958



That was the best result at Le Mans for any 550A, and a career highlight for de Beaufort. This car was driven in countless other races and rallies, by de Beaufort and subsequent owners, and since retiring from competitive racing it has taken part in numerous vintage events, including ten Mille Miglia retrospectives. Today it wears the No.32 livery that it had in Le Mans in 1958.

Even if you know or care nothing about cars, this Porsche is an object of pure, simple beauty. And after the close of the 1950s, opportunities to build such things decreased. During the next decade, a combination of safety features and advances in automotive science meant

that by 1970 a racing driver's face was hidden behind a full helmet and he was sitting in a car replete with aerodynamic wings. The kinds of car that only look good to car people.

Safety improvements did not come quickly enough for de Beaufort, who was killed while driving another Porsche during practice for the 1964 German Grand

**"He had lived just 30 years, but at exactly the pace that he wanted"**

Prix. He had lived just 30 years, but at exactly the pace that he wanted.

The car lives on, a beautiful testament to a time before motor racing became quite such a big, serious business. Nowadays drivers keep their shoes on, and absolutely never wear wigs instead of helmets. The 1950s deserves to be remembered as a golden age of motor racing, and this car is undoubtedly one of its brightest stars.

*Richard Holt is a regular contributor to The Telegraph, Motor Sport Magazine and The Wall Street Journal.*

**Sale:** The Scottsdale Auction  
Scottsdale, the Westin Kierland Resort and Spa  
Thursday 18 January at 11am  
Enquiries: Jakob Greisen +1 415 503 3284  
[jakob.greisen@bonhams.com](mailto:jakob.greisen@bonhams.com)  
[bonhams.com/scottsdale](http://bonhams.com/scottsdale)