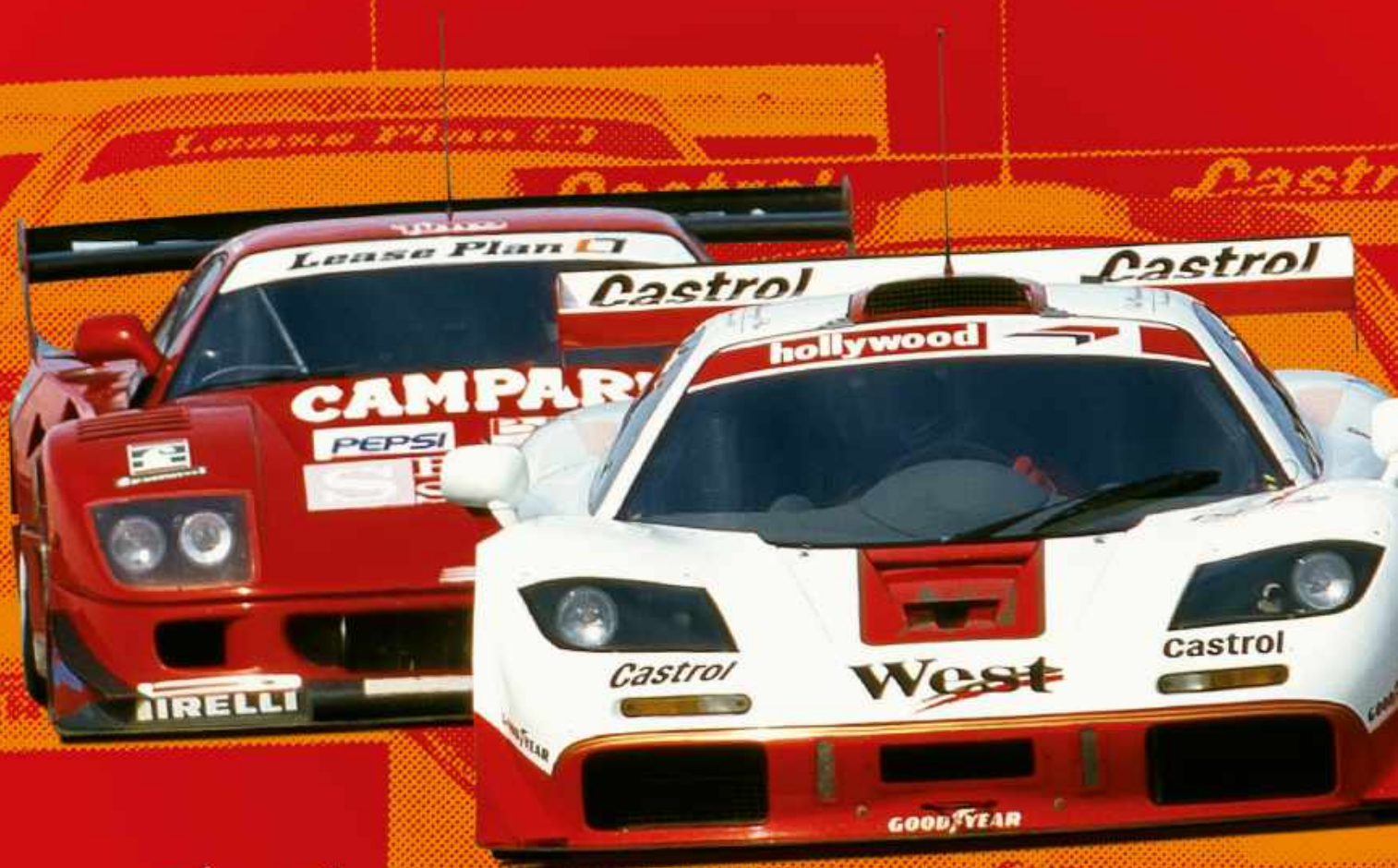




AUTOMOBILSPORT

RACING | HISTORY | PASSION



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BPR GLOBAL GT SERIES 1994-1996

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LEFT Jaguar D-Type (#XKD511) on the way to the Coppa d'Italia in 1990.

WHERE IS HISTORIC MOTORSPORT HEADING?

BY MORITZ WERNER · PHOTOGRAPHS: RM SOTHEBY'S (3), BONHAMS (2), KW (1)



Moritz Werner is one of the managing partners at KW (Klassische Automobile GmbH & Co. KG). Forty years ago his father Klaus Werner started racing and trading Alfa Romeos, Maseratis and Ferraris from the 1930s to the 1960s. Fuelled by their own passion, his sons Moritz and Max stepped into their father's shoes several years back, and can be found both behind the wheel of and in the market for historic racing cars.

In historic motorsport, as in any other sport, it's all about competition. You want to be better or faster than everyone else. Or racing a more interesting or rarer car. For various reasons, however, fewer and fewer original cars are being raced. Why is it happening? And where is historic motorsport heading?

Roughly speaking, historic motorsport competitors can be split into two groups. There are those who share an enthusiasm for the history of their cars. And those who are looking for an authentic racing experience.

Until 15 or 20 years ago, the overwhelming majority belonged to the first group. Particular attention was paid to how original a car was, and racing events were a way to chat and exchange ideas with like-minded people. It was a case of the more down-to-earth, the better. Most cars arrived on a normal trailer or even under their own steam, the 'crews' manned by friends and family. I can remember some of the Oldtimer Grands Prix at the Nürburgring in the 1990s when a gentleman from England would drive his Alfa Romeo 8C Monza over complete with tow bar and caravan – and then race it in the pre-war class.

It's perfectly understandable that not everybody can run their own car. For a number of reasons, safety included, professional support can be very useful. However, there is a growing sense of professionalism in the sport, and that's fuelling some negative trends. If you look at the sheer number of ultra-modern transporters in the paddock, a historic event looks almost like a Formula 1 Grand Prix these days.

It's a real positive that hobby racers invest so much money in the sport to have their cars prepared at such a high level. But there is also a growing sense of ambition at these events, which, in my opinion, is why we're seeing an ongoing reduction in original cars being raced. As the FIA only checks for technical conformity, not originality, when issuing log books for historic events, replicas can also take part in the races.

That's where the second group comes in, those competitors more likely to use a legal, but not original car. One form of that is racing cars built out of road car shells, like Ford Escorts and Capris in touring car events, where the performance can be considerably improved. A car like that can be built in a more uncompromising and optimised way than an original racing car. The more extreme variant is the pure replicas, usually space frames fitted with bodywork. Again, the scope to improve the car distorts the competition. In some extreme cases, these replicas are fitted with bigger engines, better suspension and five-speed gearboxes.

Another factor that is influencing the sport is the increased use of former and current professional drivers. It's understandable that some amateur racers use professionals for guidance on how to be a better, faster driver. But mixing professionals and amateurs in the same field brings risks of its own. Amateurs may only do one or two races per year, and can sometimes misjudge situations due to a lack of experience.

If all of these factors are fostering an environment of increased risk, why do some owners still expose their priceless works of four-wheeled art? I think it's because there are people out there who want their cars doing what they were built to do. Plus, there's a buzz that comes from racing an original car that you just won't get from a replica. After all, those are the foundations on which the historic racing scene was built.

NOTES

REMARKABLE AUCTION RESULTS

1901 PANHARD ET LEVASSOR, BONHAMS, LONDON 2019

£442,750



1964 OSCA 1600 GT 'DOUBLE BUBBLE', BONHAMS, KNOCKE 2019

€379,500



1969 LAMBORGHINI MIURA P400 S, RM SOTHEBY'S, LONDON 2019

£1,248,125



1989 JAGUAR XJR-11, RM SOTHEBY'S, LONDON 2019

ESTIMATE £1,050,000 - 1,250,000 - NOT SOLD



1994 FERRARI 412 T1, RM SOTHEBY'S, LONDON 2019

ESTIMATE £1,400,000 - 1,800,000 - NOT SOLD



What about the spectators? Does it make a difference to them if the cars are originals or replicas? If you look at the marketing strategies used by event organisers, you will find that the extraordinary value of the vehicles is often touted as a big part of the appeal. Hence, if it turns out that the advertising was misleading because the number of original cars continues to dwindle, you run the risk of driving the real enthusiasts away.

One potential remedy would be to entirely split historic motorsport in two, with races for original cars and races for replicas. Doing that would require strict, comprehensive checks from organisers regarding history and technical legality.

Barring that, a recent court ruling in Italy may well initiate a u-turn. In Bologna it was determined that the Ferrari GTO, an icon of the automotive industry, is legally a work of art and therefore can't be reproduced by anyone except the Ferrari factory itself. A second hearing is scheduled for 28 November, after we close for press. If the verdict is upheld, it remains to be seen what will happen with the many replicas already in existence. A GTO replica won this year's Kinrara Trophy at Goodwood. The owner also has the more beautiful, but probably slower, original in his collection. ➔



NO HALF-MEASURES

Our last auction in Zoute produced some great results. Over 80 per cent of the lots were sold, headlined by the beautiful Ferrari 275 GTB/2 with the aluminium body. It was a well-chosen, top-quality offering, and cars sold at realistic prices.

A good example was a 1974 Lancia Stratos, in beautiful original condition with just over 24,000 kilometres on the clock and a documented ownership history. Including the premium, it sold for €402,500. Not long ago another Stratos went under the hammer. The car had been repaired at the front and over-painted, and was expected to fetch even more. But it didn't sell. That reflects the current mood of the market, with few spending what you would class as 'too much'. There are no more half-measures. Prospective buyers prefer to wait until they have found what they are really looking for. When they do decide to buy, however, they'll be prepared to pay a fair price.

The Zoute event has become bigger and better. 'Best of Show' in the Concours was the Ferrari 166 that won Le Mans and the Mille Miglia in 1949. As the first factory Ferrari to win those two big events, just two years into the brand's history, it's a significant car. The Concours is now recognised at international level, underlined not just by the cars on show, but also by the fact that there were names like Thierry Boutsen and Jean Todt on hand. I'm already looking forward to 2020.

Philip Kantor
Head of Department Motor Cars Europe, Bonhams



1952 Aston Martin DB3 "Works" car chassis #5

One of the five Factory Team cars and winner of the 1952 Goodwood Nine Hours driven by Peter Collins in the 1952 season it also competed at Le Mans, Sebring, Monaco, Silverstone and in the Mille Miglia. Supplied by us to the current owner, it has proved highly competitive in historic events, most recently with a win in the 2017 Goodwood Freddie March Trophy.

Offered with a spare engine etc.

AUCTIONS JAN/FEB/MAR

AUCTIONEER/AUCTION	DATE	LOCATION	WEBSITE
RM Sotheby's - Arizona	16-17 January 2020	Phoenix, Arizona (US)	www.rmsothebys.com
Gooding & Company - The Scottsdale Auctions	17-18 January 2020	Scottsdale, Arizona (US)	www.goodingco.com
RM Sotheby's - Paris	5 February 2020	Paris (FR)	www.rmsothebys.com
Bonhams - Retromobile	6 February 2020	Paris (FR)	www.bonhams.com
Race Retro Classic & Competition Car Sale	23 February 2020	Coventry (GB)	www.silverstoneauctions.com
Bonhams - The Amelia Island Auction	5 March 2020	Amelia Island, Florida (US)	www.bonhams.com
RM Sotheby's - Amelia Island	6-7 March 2020	Amelia Island, Florida (US)	www.rmsothebys.com
Gooding & Company - The Amelia Island Auction	5-6 March 2020	Amelia Island, Florida (US)	www.goodingco.com
RM Sotheby's - Palm Beach	20-21 March 2020	Palm Beach, Florida (US)	www.rmsothebys.com
Bonhams - Goodwood Members' Meeting	28-29 März 2020	Goodwood (GB)	www.bonhams.com



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