

Vintage autos to be auctioned

From staff and wire reports

AUBURN, Ind. — A rare 1940 Mercedes-Benz 770 K Grand Touring Grosser, specifically manufactured for the German government, will be auctioned to the public during the 25th annual Labor Day collector car show and auction in Auburn, Ind.

Assigned to the German Foreign Minister, Joachim Von Ribbentrop, the black Nazi convertible machine was one of very few parade cars often seen in the old news reels of World War II. A nine-passenger supercharged sedan, the famous four-door car has six forward speeds and weighs more than 4 tons.

As Hitler's top diplomatic agent, Joachim Von Ribbentrop was instrumental in the seizure of Austria and partition of Czechoslovakia.

He regularly dealt with Joseph Stalin to safeguard the eastern German border. Ribbentrop was eventually tried for war crimes and hanged.

According to the Mercedes-Benz factory in Stuttgart, Germany, No. 429311 was the first serial number for the production of the 770 K Grand Touring Grosser. The serial number on the Mercedes used by German Foreign Minister Von Ribbentrop is No. 429311, indicating that this is the first 770 K Grand Touring Grosser built by Mercedes-Benz.

"The Mercedes-Benz 770 K Grosser Touring is considered by automobile experts to be one of the most significant cars in the history of automotive production," said Mitchell Kruse, president of Kruse International. "Authentic automobiles directly connected to Adolf Hitler and the Nazi government are very rare and very desirable. This is a valuable collector car to be offered in our 25th anniversary auction celebration during Auburn '95 over the Labor Day weekend.

"Celebrity cars usually bring a premium at auction and bad guy cars are worth more than good guys cars."

A few months ago, Coys Auctioneers put up for sale in London, the 1935 Alfa Romeo 6C 2300 sports car, which originally belonged to Italian dictator Benito Mussolini.

The auction estimate for that vehicle was between 120,000 to 150,000 pounds or \$190,000 to \$240,000.

Mussolini kept the car until 1939.

Auburn '95 will offer approximately 2,000 collector cars in the auction, showcase a car corral of 3,000 vehicles, a swap meet area, a midway of over 40 food vendors, a collectibles auction for automobile related items, an art show, commercial

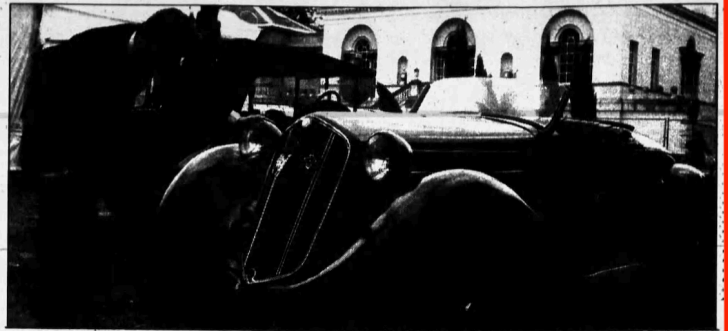
space for vendors marketing their goods and services to auto enthusiasts, a separate auction for cars valued at \$2,500 or less and on-the-spot financing through MBNA America.

With a 380-acre facility and 100,000 square feet under roof, Auburn '95, the world's largest collector car auction, is the fourth largest spectator event in Indiana — led by the Indianapolis 500, the Indiana State Fair, and the Brickyard 400.

"It's definitely the place to be if you love collector cars,"

explains ABC sportscaster Chris Schenkel. "The Kruses have done a tremendous job of bringing the world collector car marketplace together in historic Auburn, Ind., where more than 17 makes of automobiles were produced."

Founding the collector car auction consignment business with the first Auburn, Labor Day, auction in 1971, Kruse International is the world's largest collector car auction firm — offering more than 10,000 collector cars at 40 annual worldwide events.



Benito Mussolini's 1935 Alfa Romeo 6C 2300 sports car is auctioned

AP photo



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