

to still have the original instrument, pedals, footrests, and brass fittings. Restored to a very good standard. **SOLD AT \$167,500.** *Mercur aficionados who examined the car felt that neither the engine nor the transmission were authentic to the car. The audience apparently agreed, as the car sold for less than half the pre-sale estimate of \$300,000–\$400,000.*

1956 DESOTO FIREFLITE convertible, S/N 50381576. Yellow and black over white and black vinyl interior. Factory-equipped with a rare 341-cubic-inch, 320-bhp "Pacecar" Hemi V-8. Completely restored, but not particularly well. Filler in both sills, chrome trim doesn't match up. Decent interior with no rips or tears. A big, lumpy cruiser. **SOLD AT \$46,000.** *Restored DeSoto convertibles are rare, as their normal market value of \$15,000 to \$25,000 won't support the costs of turning out a first-rate car. By no means a first-rate restoration, this was an exceptional price.*

1962–63 FERRARI DINO 196SP endurance-racing sports-prototype, S/N 0806. Red over blue. Body by Fantuzzi. One of a handful of the famous twin-nostril racing Dinosaurs. Originally a "low rear deck" car, now rebodied to resemble the Ferrari Press Conference car of 1961. Well-documented but relatively insignificant racing history. In race-ready condition. **SOLD FOR \$1,285,000** (after the auction). *This was a fair-enough price, although other similar cars, with original low-deck bodywork and more impressive histories, have brought more.*

MARK DIXON



1938 Delahaye 135 Competition

1938 DELAHAYE 135 COMPETITION "GÉO HAM" roadster, body by Figoni & Falaschi, S/N 49169. Black with orange painted trim lines over cognac leather. One of just eleven cars built with this flamboyant bodywork, of which only three are known to survive. Originally sold to the Talbot/Delahaye importer in Algiers, North Africa. Discovered abandoned under an olive tree in the Algerian mountains in 1992 in disheveled but complete condition. Now restored to absolute first-class condition. A stunning, impressive, world-class car. **SOLD AT \$1,322,500.** *As the first Delahaye of this type to be offered on the open market for at least twenty-five years, the price seemed fair enough for a mechanized jewel.*

Brooks, in its second year hosting an auction in Monterey, had sales of \$8,638,000, significantly more than last year's \$5 million. Twenty-seven of forty-four cars offered sold, a 61 percent ratio.

Christie's

Exceptional Motor Cars Auction
Pebble Beach, California • August 29, 1999



1937 Bugatti Type 57S Atalante

1937 BUGATTI TYPE 57S ATALANTE cabriolet, S/N 57482. Gray blue over red leather. Right-hand drive, chrome wire wheels. "Modifie" emblem on grille refers to the 1960s General Motors prototype aluminum V-8 under the hood. Automatic transmission, power steering, air conditioning, and hydraulic brakes, too. Built for Charles Chayne, engineering VP for GM in the Fifties and Sixties. Cosmetics are generally good, and workmanship of the conversion is flawless. Little used in years and needs attention. **SOLD AT \$1,267,500.** *Bugatti purists may cringe at the GM running gear, but the car has an intriguing, fully documented history and probably drives much better than if it had an original Type 57S engine. When even a "Bugolet" like this can bring over a million dollars, it's proof that Bugattis continue to be blue-chip collectibles.*

1946 MG TC roadster, S/N 1834A13286. Black with Union Jack painted on polished aluminum hood over red leather. Triumph TR4 engine fitted some time ago. Red-painted wire wheels, fog lamps, wind wings. Looks recently restored but little used. **SOLD AT \$25,300.** *The more powerful Triumph engine makes the TC a much more drivable car. The engine, along with the flashy exterior, combined to bring this high price.*

1954 MERCEDES-BENZ 300SL Gullwing, S/N 1980404500072. Red over black leather. Period Becker Mexico radio, belly pans. Removable wheel arch trim. A very good older restoration to showroom condition, still in excellent shape. **SOLD AT \$156,500.** *It takes a perfect car to break the \$200,000 barrier; the price paid here was fair for a car in this condition.*

1957 FERRARI 250GT PININ FARINA SERIES I cabriolet, S/N 0801GT. Red over tan leather, black top, chrome Borrani wire wheels, covered headlights. One of just forty Series I Pinin Farina cabriolets. A good older restoration that is starting to need attention. Rust bubbles around decklid badge, some chips on the door edges and around the left rear wheel arch. **SOLD AT \$409,500.** *The later Series II PF cabs, which sell in the \$125,000-to-\$150,000 range, are more common (200 built) and lack the stylish lines of the Series I cars. Brooks*

sold a better Series I, with some celebrity history, the same weekend for \$530,500.

1962 ASTON MARTIN DB4 SERIES IV coupe, S/N DB4/801/L. Black over dark red leather, gray carpets. Chrome wire wheels. *Road & Track* cover car in 1962. Good older repaint with minor orange peel by the trunk, decent interior that could stand a thorough cleaning. Driver's door doesn't close flush. A careful older restoration with several Aston Martin Owners Club show wins. **SOLD AT \$96,000.** *Good DB4 coupes have been changing hands regularly in the \$40,000-to-\$60,000 range, so this price was very high for a good but not perfect car.*



1937 Alfa Romeo 8C 2900B cabriolet

1937 ALFA ROMEO 8C 2900B cabriolet, S/N 412012. Gunmetal gray over gray leather. Driven by Cisitalia motor company creator Piero Dusio to third place in the 1938 Mille Miglia and to victory in the Stelvio hill-climb later that year. Rebodied by Pinin Farina around 1939. Disappeared in 1947, surfaced in Sacramento, California, in 1989 with a Jaguar XK engine. Restored thereafter and reunited with its original engine. Excellent condition with little evidence of use beyond some stone chips on the nose. **SOLD AT \$4,072,500.** *It's unusual for one of the thirty or so surviving Alfa 2.9s to show up on the market, as their owners rarely part with them, which makes this public sale an important event. The 2.9s were the Ferrari F40s and McLaren F1s of the 1930s and sixty years later are still regarded as supercars. The \$4 million price was, according to Christie's, a world record for any classic car sold at auction since 1990 and in line with recent private sales of 2.9s.*

Christie's sold sixty-two of seventy-four cars that crossed the block, an 83 percent ratio, for a weekend-leading total of \$17,923,250. The auction tent was overflowing with well-heeled bidders, and the combination of an extraordinary selection of cars and the excitement of the Monterey Historic Automobile Races made this event, once again, the highlight of the weekend.

Auction information provided by Keith Martin, editor and publisher of *Sports Car Market* magazine. Phone: 800-289-2819.