



GOING ONCE...

As the Aston Martin Works Service team gears up for the annual Bonhams auction, **Simon de Burton** looks forward with relish to some of the expected highlights of this year's sale

International auction house Bonhams stages classic car sales all around the world, yet few are anticipated with such enthusiasm as the annual spring fixture that takes place at Works Service in Newport Pagnell. This year's Aston Martin auction, on Saturday 17 May, will be the ninth in succession and will feature 30-40 cars spanning almost every decade of the marque's existence. There will be immaculately presented vehicles – including a V8 Vantage Zagato owned by film and television star Rowan Atkinson, and a DB6 MKII Volante lovingly rebuilt by Works Service that fetched a record £430,000 at last year's sale – together with long-lost 'barn finds' offered as 'ripe for restoration', 'daily driver' cars, and modern classics including the Virage and DB7. Automobilia will be on offer, too, with estimates from as little as £200.

As this edition of Aston Martin Magazine goes to press, cars already consigned for the sale include a 1963 DB4 Series V Vantage that has been in the same family ownership for almost 35 years and comes complete with its correct 'Dubonnet Rosso' paintwork, grey leather interior and enclosed headlamps. Just 136 DB4s with the 266bhp Vantage engine were built (one of which was used as a prototype DB5 that subsequently appeared in the James Bond movie 'Goldfinger') and this exceptionally original and well cared-for example is expected to fetch up to £100,000.

Another rarity is the works prototype 'Oscar India' V8 Vantage of 1978 that was driven to victory at Silverstone in that year's St John Horsfall trophy race by Ray Mallock. Since it was also a press car, this example is believed to have been fitted with a tuned engine. It is on offer here for £35,000-£40,000. Yet this event has come to be regarded as so much more than simply a place to buy and sell Aston Martins: it is now looked upon by enthusiasts the world over as an opportunity to gather together, meet old friends, make new ones and generally become immersed in all things Aston Martin. Toby Wilson, one of the regular auctioneers at the event, says the sale never ceases to surprise Bonhams with its popularity.

'I look after the automobilia side of the sale and it is consistently oversubscribed,' says Toby. 'We usually have to turn away 200 lots or more and pare it down to a really strong and varied selection of objects that specifically relate to Aston Martin, be they James Bond posters showing an image of the DB5, parts catalogues, instruction manuals, dealer display signs or rare and useful parts. Perhaps more than in any other car auction, buyers seem to be genuinely enthused by Aston Martin and to thrive on the competition that occurs in the saleroom – they travel to the event from all over the world and it is usually standing room only.'

The Bonhams Aston Martin auction takes place at Works Service, Newport Pagnell, England, on Saturday 17 May. Viewing will be on sale day only. Full details from the Bonhams Motoring Department by calling +44 (0)20 7447 7447



PREMIER LUNCHEON

Aston Martin will once again stage its popular Premier Luncheon on sale day. Limited to 100 people, the £155 ticket price entitles holders to an auction catalogue, bespoke 'access all areas' enamel badge, VIP reserved parking, a two-course buffet lunch and afternoon tea. Tickets are available strictly on a first come, first served basis by contacting Wendy Harrison-Drake at Works Service on +44 (0)1908 619239 or wharri64@astonmartin.com