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EVENTS NEWS



Pending projects: Vignale-bodied 1955 Fiat 8V (front) and Alfa Romeo 1900 Zagato

BARN-FIND FEAST AT CONCORSO ITALIANO

Yet-to-be-restored classics and well-preserved gems bask in the limelight at US celebration of Italian style

AN ORIGINALS AND BARN-FINDS

display provided an attention-grabbing contrast to the usual seas of perfectly-restored Italian exotica at California's Concorso Italiano in August. At the barn-finds end of the scale were two coachbuilt cars belonging to Dan and Marilyn Simpson of Glendora, California: an ex-Mille Miglia 1955 Fiat 8V with Vignale coachwork resembling a scaled-down Ferrari 375 America, and an Alfa Romeo 1900 Zagato.

Says Simpson: 'I came across the Fiat while on a fishing trip at June Lake near Mammoth, California. It was last on the road in 1982. I'd always loved Zagato-bodied cars and the Alfa turned up in San Diego, having last been on the road in 1973.'

Simpson adds that both cars remain unrestored 'partly out of necessity – four daughters and four lots of college education to pay for'.

Well-preserved originals included the 1952 Ferrari 212/225 Inter Touring Barchetta gifted by Enzo Ferrari to Henry Ford II and now owned by the Petersen Museum in Los Angeles, and a 1964 Ferrari 330 America owned by Bill Noon of Symbolic Motor Car Company.

Essentially a 250 GTE with the more powerful four-litre version of the Colombo V12 engine, the 330 – known as 'Captain America' – has been used and cared for in equal measure over its 88,000 miles.



Ferrari 212/225 Inter Touring Barchetta



1964 Ferrari 330 'Captain America' is an up-engined 250 GTE



Simon Kidston

Is it mad to pay £10m for a car? Time will tell

PHEW! IT'S BEEN A MONTH to remember. Financial markets crashing around us, investors worried about the US Government paying its IOUs, never mind getting your savings out of a Greek bank account or a Florida condominium.

Then along comes someone who pays £10million for an obsolete old Ferrari at auction. One that's been written off... twice.

As always, though, there's more to the story (see also page 24) than meets the eye. The car in question isn't any old Ferrari: it's the first of the iconic 250 Testa Rossas, built from 1957-62, and it battled fearlessly around the world for the works team's glory: the Nürburgring, the Targa Florio, Buenos Aires... it contested all of them, driven by the greatest aces of the era. Graham Hill, Olivier Gendebien, Wolfgang von Trips, Luigi Musso all pushed the blood-red projectile to its limits and, occasionally, beyond, as when Dan Gurney's co-driver came into violent contact with a French-entered Jaguar D-type that had rolled in a night-time rainstorm at Le Mans. Exit one poor Jaguar driver and the Ferrari didn't fare much better, engulfed in a fireball and thoroughly toasted. Except that in Maranello tradition rarely was anything thrown away that couldn't be sold or recycled and, one large factory repair bill later (nothing changes), the Testa Rossa was back to fight another day. Or in this case to be sold to a private Californian punter who was ready to graduate from his trusty Aston Martin DB3S.

Several did-not-finishes later, and presumably somewhat disheartened, the Ferrari's latest custodian put it up for sale and it caught the attention of a local Buick dealer who fancied something more exotic for his own personal street use. You can guess the rest: rides galore for the kids when he got home in his latest acquisition, not to mention apologies to the neighbours. To underline how times have changed the Testa Rossa had to go when Mr Buick's latest toy arrived: a new Ferrari 250 GTO. From this point on its fate declined until in the Sixties, looking unloved, engineless and with gaping holes in the bodywork, it was doused with petrol and ignited for the insurance money by its young owner. How much? Probably less than \$1000.

Luckily, even back then a few eccentrics took an interest in cranky old cars and two university professors rescued the tired old warhorse from a probable fate in a scrapyard. Over the years they gathered spares to rebuild it until, almost two decades later, the job was done. However, they hadn't tracked down the original engine – a must in Ferrari circles – by the time they accepted a generous offer to buy from a retired Seattle businessman.

Thankfully, he had retired from a rather good job – president of Microsoft as it happens – and many fistfuls of dollars later the Testa Rossa was re-united with its original engine, discovered in a workshop where it had sat since 1963. Concours awards and historic racing trophies followed until, with nothing left to prove, the 73-year-old owner decided to test the market. Luckily for him another 73-year-old, a lingerie magnate, decided that now was a good time to start collecting Ferraris and he pushed the mysterious final bidder up to a new world record price. Madness? Maybe, but only if it's worth less when he sells. In the meantime I just want to know if the kid who torched it back in the Sixties has heard the news.

Simon Kidston lives and works in a world filled with the finest classics. In between acting as a consultant to collectors and performing as the multi-lingual presenter at top European events, Geneva-based Simon (www.kidston.com) finds time to enjoy his own cars, including a Porsche 911 Carrera 2.7 RS and a Lamborghini Miura SV.