

## **For Immediate Release**

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## **GOLDEN ERA OF MOTOR RACING AT CHRISTIE'S IN DECEMBER**



A photograph from the Robert Fellowes Archive

### **Exceptional Motor Cars & Automobilia Tuesday, 7 December 2004 at 6pm**

**London** – Christie's International Motor Cars is pleased to announce the final sale of 2004 which will take place in the Jack Barclay Showroom, London, on 7 December and will offer a selection of evocative and magical items from the Golden Age of motoring. Leading the sale are two outstanding lots. The Robert Fellowes Photographic Archive, which includes more than 1750 negatives of pre-war Grand Prix footage, is a unique record charting the rise of the Mercedes-Benz Grand Prix Team during the 1930s (estimate: £75,000-100,000) and is sold with copyright. A 1936 Delahaye 135S Two Seater Sports (estimate: £280,000-320,000) driven by René Le Bègue and Kaye Don in the 1936 Donington Grand Prix also highlights the sale.

In 1931, Robert Fellowes began to travel Europe and follow the European Grand Prix calendar. There were no restrictions around the racetrack at this time, and he was able to capture images from the most precarious and inventive of positions, always looking for the most illustrative of angles. Fellowes was a friend of Dick Seaman, an English racing driver who drove for Mercedes-Benz in the mid to late 1930s, and as a result, he gained an inside view of the rise of the infamous Mercedes-Benz team during the pre-war years.

Throughout the 1930s Fellowes always used the same camera, which is also offered in the sale. The Deckrelo Nettel Press Camera was made in Germany and fitted with a Zeiss lens (estimate: £800-1,200). However, it is the pictures that he took with this camera that highlight this collection. Christie's is pleased to offer some 1,750 monotone negatives, contained in 10 special albums, all with individually numbered semi-transparent sleeves and sold with copyright (estimate: £75,000-100,000). Also offered is Robert Fellowes' Tyrolean-style felt hat, adorned with approximately fifty badges from the world of motor sport and recreation (estimate: £500-700) as well as

various race programmes, press release packs and assorted items related to motor racing during the 1930s (estimates ranging from £280-400).

In 1942, having fought in the North African campaign and on the eve of Alamein, Fellowes was travelling in an army jeep that drove over a landmine. Although he lost a leg in the accident, he recovered and returned to Africa with a prosthetic limb. On his return, he became a Liaison Officer to a film company, and worked on the set of 'The Way Ahead', a propaganda film co-written by Sir Peter Ustinov and starring David Niven. Due to failing health, Fellowes relinquished his commission and returned to Britain in 1944. Tragically, he died of war wounds related to his jeep accident in December 1945.

While Mercedes-Benz was dominating Motor Racing during the 1930s, their competitors were striving to catch up with their German rivals. The Automobile Club de France stipulated that cars competing in the French Grand Prix would have to be of two-seater configuration, encouraging their national market and giving hope to French manufacturers like Bugatti, Delage and Delahaye. It was Delahaye who were best positioned to take advantage of this legislation, as their six-cylinder 135 model had already proved itself to be a very successful high-speed racing car. The Delahaye marque had built itself a strong reputation and become popular with French high society, especially as the high performance models could be bought by privateer racing drivers. One such man was René Le Bègue, a wealthy young Frenchman, who bought the example offered here in April 1936 and immediately entered it into the Marseilles 3 hours race. The car finished a creditable fifth, and went on to contest 11 more races during the 1936 season. This example is offered for sale in unspoilt order and carries an estimate of £280,000-320,000.

This sale will include 6 immaculate cars, the 'Property of a Private Collection', all of which have been housed in Mayfair for many years and all used on a regular basis. This collection includes a concours-restored 1936 Packard Twelve Convertible Coupe (estimate: £80,000-120,000), a concours 1969 Jaguar E-Type Convertible (estimate: £25,000-35,000) and the first ever supplied 1996 Bentley Azure, with just 5,000 miles from new (estimate: £75,000-100,000).

Also offered in this sale are a range of collectors cars. A 1931 Bentley 8 Litre Sedan de Ville, supplied new to Lord Brougham and thought to be the only surviving example with Sedan coachwork, carries an estimate of £240,000-260,000. Also on offer is the 1980 Le Mans class-winning Lancia Beta Montecarlo Turbo Group 5 Racecar (estimate: £130,000-160,000), a race/rally prepared 1954 Aston Martin DB2/4, complete with FIA Papers (estimate: £35,000-50,000), a 1976 Lamborghini Countach LP400 'Periscopica' (estimate: £35,000-45,000) and a 1997 Land Rover 110 TDi Expedition Vehicle, commissioned by Sir Ranulph Fiennes for a Transglobal Expedition (estimate: £14,000-20,000).

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*Images available on request*