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Classic prices achieved at South Western Vehicle Auctions sale...

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A bid of £21,000 for a classic car is not normally the stuff of headlines – but it was at the recent South Western Vehicle Auctions sale in Poole, Dorset when the £21,000 (before fees) set a world record for an Austin A35 pick-up.

This 1958 example was ostensibly in concours condition, having been completely restored in 2001, since then being kept in a private collection so that it arrived at the classic auction with just 393 miles on the odometer.



One of just 475 built, the pick-up was never a sales success due to its small load capacity and lack of the tailgate – but today it is highly desirable among A35 collectors due to its rarity – you are never likely to see more than half a dozen together at any one time.

Later in the sale a 1962 A35 van in excellent condition (although apparently not quite perfect, says Kim, who also mentions that the van had ‘lost’ its original registration number, which always lowers the value of classic vehicles) more than doubled its £4,750 estimate to



eventually be knocked down for £10,000.



The enthusiasm with which bidders fought over the A35s was repeated elsewhere in the sale, demonstrating that classic cars continue to increase in demand and value, many people viewing them as potential investments.

Proving this, 73 of the 80 cars entered in the quarterly sale found new homes and most sold well above their catalogue guide price.

As an example, the first lot under the hammer was the bits and pieces of a 1949 Bentley Special where there was still plenty of work to be done. With no reserve, even the



auctioneers were surprised when it went from an opening offer of £1,500 to finish at £16,250.

Showing what can be achieved, a completed, 1948 Bentley MK6 special topped its £25,000 reserve to achieve a sale price of £38,000 after some fierce competition – the successful bidder coming all the way from Malta.

In a similar light an un-restored, paint-stripped 1972 'big valve' Lotus Elan Sprint commanded a sale figure of £26,750 and there was still plenty of work to be done on it.

Big name marques still command the big prices so top price in the sale was the £62,500 for an ever popular 1970 fixed-head coupe Jaguar E-Type (this example featuring Eagle GT modifications) against a reserve of £39,000.

Even a tidy 1988 5.3 litre V12 Jaguar XJ-S Convertible exceeded expectations to more than double its guide at £25,500.

There was also a few intakes of breath when an admittedly rare left-hand drive 1971 Citroen SM Maserati registered in Guernsey sailed past its £29,000 reserve to finish at £42,000.

A sign-written Austin-badged version of the Morris Minor 1000 6cwt van, sold for a relatively modest £4,300.



MGs made up many of the lots, proving that the marque is as popular as ever, the highlights being a concours condition 1967 GT (GTs not as popular as Roadsters) that busted its reserve to find a new home for £14,000, a well presented early 1964 MGB Roadster in popular tartan red which fetched £10,400 against a £6,400 reserve and a 1960 historic rally prepared MGA which went for £18,500.

While I am an MG owner I must admit that my favourite lots in the sale was a 1949 (Bergerac) Triumph 2000 Roadster finished in gold with green upholstery and roof. Estimated at £19,500 it looked a bargain until the bidding went up to £29,000.



While the auction reinforced the view that classic cars are a great investment it also demonstrated that you almost never get your money back on restoring a classic.

This was proved when an immaculate 1951 MG Y Type one and a quarter saloon (one of just 180 known to exist) appeared with receipts for a 2005 restoration totalling £35,000 – it sold for just £17,000 to a phone bidder – which was still over its £14,750 top estimate.



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