

Car once belonging to George Whittell up for auction

By Katya Kazakina, Bloomberg

A tiger-hunting Rolls-Royce, a Ferrari estimated at \$13 million and a Steve McQueen motorcycle are among the highlights of automotive auctions in California next week.

The sales coincide with the Aug. 15-21 Monterey Car Week, the annual extravaganza that gathers rare vehicles and wealthy owners. Auction houses Gooding & Co. and Bonhams will offer more than 500 lots of cars, motorcycles and memorabilia.

Bragging rights may go to a Ferrari 250 Testa Rossa prototype that's coming on the block Aug. 20 at Gooding in Pebble Beach. Its forecast price of more than \$13 million would set an auction record for an automobile.

Assembled in 1957, it competed in the Le Mans 24-hour race as well as in endurance races in Argentina and Venezuela. Its curvaceous red body and a 12-cylinder engine made the Testa Rossa the most popular Ferrari racing model in the 1950s and 1960s.

"This model won almost all races between 1957 and 1963," said Marcel Massini, a Swiss-based Ferrari historian, in a telephone interview. "It's an iconic car and an iconic design."

A star lot at Bonhams's annual two-day sale in Carmel is a red 1925 Rolls-Royce New Phantom. Custom-designed for the Bengal tiger hunting expeditions of India's Maharajah of Kotah, the four-door convertible is powered by an 7.7-liter, 6-cylinder engine and is expected to bring \$750,000 to \$1 million.

You could blow away the whole village along with the poor

tiger. The car was outfitted with a mounted double-barreled shotgun, a rifle stand in the rear passenger compartment and a machine gun on a trailer hitch. A cannon could be mounted on the rear bumper.

“I highly doubt that anyone would go hunting with it,” said David Swig, a motorcars specialist at Bonhams. “It’s more of a museum piece.”

Another highlight is a 1931 Duesenberg, which is expected to fetch as much as \$7 million at Gooding, exceeding the current \$4.5 million auction record for a “Duesy.” One of the grandest and most elegant cars of its type, it was commissioned by Captain George Whittell Jr., who had a pet lion and a 40,000-acre Lake Tahoe estate.

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