

Rare Automobilia Attracts Enthusiastic Auction Bids.

By Robert Morrison - THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

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Buyers came from across Ontario and Quebec - and another sent in bids from Philadelphia - for a collection of rare automobilia sold at auction in Martintown, near Cornwall, last weekend.

Auctioneer Theresa Taylor said the sale succeeded well beyond the expectation of the collection's owners, former domestic employees of Danish diplomat and motor sports historian J. Ditlev Scheel.

Mr. Scheel, Denmark's consul general in Montreal and commissioner general for Danish participation at Expo 67, lived in Canada after his retirement and died in 1992.

The family employees acquired part of Mr. Scheel's lifetime collection of writing, photographs, paintings, mint condition models, badges, Bugatti steering wheels and celebrity-signed souvenirs from the diplomat's widow. There are reports that other parts of the collection were destroyed after Mr. Scheel's death.

Those who came to buy recognized the worth of the surviving articles and bid accordingly. The two Bugatti steering wheels, for example, sold for \$425 and \$525. A Bugatti badge went for \$310. Car models sold for as much as \$450 for a mint condition model of a Mercedes-Benz \$300. The model was a finely detailed, wind-up replica made by Prameta in the British zone of occupied Germany.

Various Corgi-made miniatures, still in the boxes, went for \$150 to \$170. A packet of 16 photographs, one of which shows Rudolf Carraciola setting the one-kilometer speed record in his swastika-embellished racer, sold for \$250.

Signed articles fetched particularly good prices, with an F. Gordon Crosby caricature of racing driver Garic Zundari and signed by Mr. Zundari falling under the hammer for \$400. A Castrol oil advertisement and companion painting of Sir Malcom Campbell, signed and with comments by that land-speed record holder, sold for \$360 for the pair.

The crown jewel of the collection, a program from the 1953 Italian Grand Prix signed by Mike Hawthorne, Alberto Ascari, Gigi Villoresi, Nino Farina, Juan Fangio, and Felice Bonetto, will remain in Martintown.

It was purchased for \$1,400 by a local enthusiast who said he bought the program for his own enjoyment, not profit.

Mr. Scheel was the author of *Cars of The World* (Methuen & Co. Ltd., London) which was described in the Nov. 27 issue of *Wheels*. A signed copy was placed in the auction by an unrelated owner and fetched \$90.

A total of 145 collectors spent the day bidding for items and comparing notes.

Ms. Taylor said interest was spurred by the newspaper report and an Internet listing.

"There was something of a ripple effect as collectors called other collectors until a veritable feeding frenzy was established.