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1925 VAUXHALL 30-98

1925 Vauxhall 30-98, ex-Clive Windsor-Richards

- Well-documented Brooklands racer with the 2nd fastest 30-98 lap record set at the hands of Brooklands royalty Clive Windsor-Richards
- Pat Driscoll designed L.W. Owens of Chiswick coachwork; period development by ex-Bugatti mechanic Louis Giron
- Further period successes in Lewes and at Prescott
- Spectacularly original, retaining all its period charm and character
- Modern historic participation in the Klausenrennen and Gran Premio di Nuvolari

The Vauxhall 30-98 is one of the finest British sports cars of the vintage era, and a very worthy rival to the Bentley 3 Litre.

It had its roots in a car built in 1913 for wealthy enthusiast Joseph Higginson, but production only started in earnest in 1919. Four year later, the 'OE' model was introduced with a new 4224cc, overhead-valve, four-cylinder engine, and Vauxhall offered four-wheel braking from late 1923.

This particular 30-98 not only perfectly embodies their sporting appeal, it also boasts an enviable period competition history at significant venues such as Brooklands, Donington Park, Crystal Palace, Shelsley Walsh, Prescott and the Lewes Speed Trials.

Chassis number OE184 left the factory on 9 May 1925 and was sold new to HE Marsh of Bexhill-on-Sea. Although it was originally fitted with four-seat tourer coachwork, it was soon rebodied by its second owner, Pat Driscoll – a well-known motorcycle racer who also went on to have a successful competition career on four wheels. Driscoll designed a rakish new two-seater body for his 30-98, and commissioned LW Owens of Chiswick to build it for him.

Driscoll kept the Vauxhall until 1931, when it was advertised for sale in *The Autocar* as 'undoubtedly the best ... in the country'. Its next owner was Clive Windsor-Richards, a qualified engineer and keen amateur racer. He used it not only as a rapid road car, but also – with the help of famed ex-Bugatti mechanic Louis Giron – set about developing it for racing. He built a new engine around the crankcase from OE249, fitting high-compression pistons, larger valves with stronger springs, and Zenith triple diffuser carburettors. The cylinder head was polished, the ports gas-flowed, and a new exhaust system fabricated.

A Delage front axle slightly lowered the front end and allowed better brakes to be fitted, and a later 30-98 rear axle was used, complete with its larger drums. Extra crossmembers were also added to the chassis in order to give it more rigidity.

Windsor-Richards embarked on a busy few years of motor racing with his 30-98, and was a regular competitor at Brooklands. In 1935, he finished second there in the August Short Handicap, losing out to Roy Eccles' Lagonda Rapier single-seater by one-fifth of a second. The following year, Windsor-Richards again finished second in the Easter Short Handicap, this time beaten only by the famous Pacey-Hassan special. Then, at the 1936 Whitsun meeting, he won the Long Handicap and, in the process, lapped the Outer Circuit at an astonishing 112.47mph. That would stand as the fastest lap of Brooklands by a 30-98 that retained its original bore and stroke and the second fastest 30-98 lap of the course; it was enough to beat the MG of Billy Cotton and the 3.3-litre Bugatti of Earl Howe.

The Vauxhall also enjoyed success at other venues such as Shelsley Walsh, Prescott, Lewes and Crystal Palace, clocking a number of wins in the unlimited class at Lewes and Prescott.

With the outbreak of war in 1939, Windsor-Richards carefully laid up the Vauxhall and offered it for sale four years later. He wrote to a prospective buyer and said that: 'If you are wanting a 30-98, you probably know all about mine! It is, as you will be aware, the

fastest one about, and is in absolutely perfect condition.' He claimed a top speed of 110mph in full road trim, and said that it could be stripped down for competition use in only 30 minutes.

Windsor-Richards ended up selling the 30-98 for £230 – a move he clearly came to regret. 'The war seemed to be going on forever,' he later wrote, 'I was convinced I would never race her again, car prices were at [a] nadir and I must have had a touch of lunacy.'

The Vauxhall's history since then has been comprehensively researched and includes a long spell with Anthony Derbshire from 1956 to 1982. The 30/98 then went to Mr R Heselton from 1984 to 1989 before going to well known historic racer Alex Boswell for 9 years. More recently, it was in American ownership with Mr C Mallory between 2000 and 2007, before returning to the UK and subsequently being acquired by an enthusiastic owner in 2008, who entered it for the Klausenrennen, Gran Premio Nuvolari and Flying Scotsman rally.

This unique, well-known 30-98 comes with an extensive history file that includes period photographs, articles and correspondence. It would make an invigorating road car and is eligible for a wide range of prestigious events, allowing its next custodian to enjoy it in a manner of which Pat Driscoll and Clive Windsor-Richards would surely have approved.

SOLD











