Imperial War Museum Duxford (163)
Wed, 29th Mar 2017

Lot 70

Estimate: £45000 - £55000 + Fees

1985 Audi Quattro

Registration No: B828GWJ
Chassis No: WAUZZZ85ZFA900827
Mot Expiry: March 2018

- One former keeper before entering the Gilder Group Collection

- A total timewarp that has covered just 8,200 miles from new

- Thought to have never seen a touch-up stick or to have had any of its alloys refurbished

Audi's Quattro is a legend that re-wrote the form book of international rallying, as well as causing rival manufacturers to rethink their offerings to members of the public desiring road cars of above average traction. It was, quite literally, a trail blazer. The story began with Audi chassis engineer Jörg Bensinger, who spent a Finnish winter testing the Volkswagen Iltis - a four-wheel drive West German military and forest service vehicle - and found it could out perform all other machines on snow, whatever their type or power output. He put the idea of a four-wheel drive version of the Audi 80 Coupe to the company's hierarchy and, well, you know the rest.

The resulting model was launched to great excitement at the 1980 Geneva Salon and then released to European customers later the same year. It was initially powered a 2144cc in-line, five-cylinder, 10-valve SOHC unit with turbocharger and intercooler. This was the first time the mass car market had been introduced to the intoxicating combination of turbo power and four-wheel drive, and the results were electric. Motor magazine rocketed their test car to 30mph in a dismissive 1.8 seconds and to 60mph in 6.5 seconds, causing them to comment '.such acceleration can hardly be bettered by any other four-seater in current production', and that was irrespective of engine size.

With such a devastating weapon at its disposal, Audi wasted no time in taking on the rallying establishment. The results came thick and fast, with victory for versions of the model in the 1982 and 1984 Manufacturers' Championship and in the Drivers' one for Hannu Mikkola in 1983 and Stig Blomqvist in 1984. It was also in a Quattro that the female French ace Michelle Mouton became the first woman ever to win a World Championship rally, and was very unlucky not to enjoy outright victory in the 1982 Championship.

During its production cycle, what enthusiasts now refer to as the 'Ur' (original) Quattro enjoyed two engine upgrades and continuous development, but the basic concept never changed and even the outward appearance altered very little. Boasting its own dedicated assembly line and crew, some 11,452 examples are understood to have been completed

between 1980 and 1991. Enthusiasts will never totally agree on a list of cars that changed the world, but few would deny Audi's 'Ur' Quattro a place.

The sale car is a special version of a special breed. A true time-warp example, it was manufactured to right-hand drive specification in 1985 and is therefore powered by the original 2144cc 10-valve engine. It is finished in Tornado Red, trimmed in Dark Grey and cheque English Tweed, and rides on immaculate period-correct alloy wheels. It is so original the vendor was moved to tell us that 'to the best of my knowledge the Quattro has never even had a touch-up stick applied to it, or one of its wheels refurbished'. It was supplied new to its first and only private keeper by the Gilder Group, and then acquired by the company as a promotional tool some years later. Apparently the odometer was replaced in 1990 but the old one comes with the car, and the total mileage travelled currently stands at a fully warranted 8,200! This collectors' dream is being offered complete with its original 'WR' engine and factory stickers, an MOT valid into March of next year, plus a letter of provenance relating to its time in the Gilder Group Collection of Audis and VWs.

That an original Quattro is a desirable classic is beyond discussion. The problem is that many have been used and abused and could be expensive to return to prime condition. This pristine example would seem about as perfect and unmolested as they come.