



The Pavilion Gardens (102)

Wed, 22nd Jul 2009, The Pavilion Gardens

Lot 1

Estimate: £7000 - £8000 + Fees

1953 Fiat 500 C Topolino

Registration No: 954 XUH

Chassis No: 442736

Mot Expiry: Feb 2010

Introduced in 1936, the Fiat 500 was an advanced design for its day. Able to boast such niceties as Lockheed hydraulic brakes, independent front suspension and 12 volt electrics, the newcomer helped redefine buyers' expectations in the small car market. With a compact 569cc four-cylinder engine positioned ahead of its front axle, the baby Fiat had a somewhat distinctive snout and was soon nicknamed the 'Topolino' (or little mouse). Reputedly capable of 50mph and 50mpg despite a modest 13bhp power output, the 500 quickly established itself as an integral part of contemporary Italian culture (a process helped by its antics at various sporting events including the Mille Miglia). Debuting at the March 1949 Geneva Motor Show, the 500C was visually distinguished by its 'wide-mouth' grille and near flush-fitting headlamps sunk into the front wings. While, under the skin it benefited from a new aluminium cylinder head and improved heating / ventilation system. Only in production for five years, the 500C nevertheless secured an impressive 376,371 sales.

Finished in grey with two-tone beige upholstery, this particular example is variously described by the vendor as being in "very good" (electrical equipment, four-speed manual gearbox), "overhauled" (engine) or "excellent" (interior trim, bodywork and paintwork) condition. Reportedly "bought by mistake on eBay in February 2005", it was then painstakingly restored over the course of the next three years. Stripped back to bare metal before being professionally repainted and retrimmed, the Fiat is also understood to have benefited from a thorough engine overhaul which saw it fitted with hardened valve seats. Treated to a new hood, tyres and carpets among myriad other components, '954 XUH' has reportedly won awards at several car shows. Riding on steel wheels, this charming and potentially Mille Miglia Storica eligible Fiat is offered for sale with MOT certificate and historic class (free) road tax both valid until February 2010.