



The Pavilion Gardens (85)

Wed, 22nd Nov 2006, The Pavilion Gardens

Lot 14

Estimate: £1500 - £2500 + Fees

1983 Datsun Laurel 2.4

Registration No: A749GEH

Chassis No: MJC31-015393

Mot Expiry: Aug 2007

Although not the first Japanese manufacturer to sell cars in the UK (Daihatsu had made a brief appearance in early 1965), Datsun quickly became the largest of the Japanese importers. Under UK importer Octav Botnar, Datsun exploited the weaknesses of a UK industry plagued by strikes which simply could not deliver the cars being ordered. Coupled to a well deserved reputation for reliability and temptingly high levels of standard equipment, Datsun quickly became one of the top three importers in the UK market. It was the meteoric rise of Datsun in the UK which led to the 'Gentlemen's Agreement' under which the Japanese voluntarily agreed to take only 10% of the UK market.

The Laurel was launched to the UK in February 1970 as the '1800', slotting between the 1600 Bluebird and 2000. It evolved rapidly with frequent bodystyle changes, each being more in the European idiom than the last. The March 1981 launched Laurel was the cleanest styled yet, with distinct overtones of the Opel Senator about its clean wedge shaped lines. Launched with a 2.4 litre 6-cylinder engine but quickly followed by a lower specification 2.0 model, the Laurel 2.4 was exceptionally well equipped compared to European rivals such as the Ford Granada, Peugeot 505 and Audi 100 with such features as power steering, electric windows and alloy wheels. Following the usual Japanese 4 year lifespan, the Laurel was replaced in October 1985 by a new model with squarer, US orientated styling and the name died on the UK market in 1989 with the launch of the all new Maxima. Due to modest sales (less than 1,000 were sold in the UK each year) and the tendency of all period Japanese cars to rust, Laurels are now exceptionally rare. The 1983 2.4 model offered here today (an even rarer 5-speed manual model) has been owned by the same family for last 10 years and the mileage is guaranteed from new with service history for the first 57,000 miles. There are invoices for £1500 on file for work including new suspension ball joints and brake pipes and the owner describes the engine and interior trim as excellent, with electrics, paintwork, bodywork, transmission, chassis and wheels/tyres as good. With MOT until August 2007 and tax until April 2007 this rare piece of 1980s Japanese 'kitsch' is ready to drive away from today's sale.