



## The Centaur (77)

Tue, 21st Feb 2006, The Centaur

### Lot 53

**Estimate:** £50000 - £60000 + Fees

**1971 McLaren M6B GT Recreation**

**Registration No:** 2 GLA

**Chassis No:** M6BGTR50/34

**Mot Expiry:** Nov 2006

Rising phoenix like from the ashes of a thwarted Group 5 'Le Mans' project, McLaren's first road car, the M6 GT, remains one of motoring history's great what ifs. Although, total period 'production' would only ever amount to three or four cars (sources differ on the exact number), it was evidently a concept very close to Bruce McLaren's heart (and no doubt partial inspiration for the company's later F1 hypercar). Essentially an enclosed version of the M6 aluminium monocoque chassis that had so dominated the 1967 Can-Am series, it promised sensational performance and excellent handling. Styled by Jim Clarke at Specialist Mouldings with input from Bruce McLaren and Gordon Coppuck, the resultant two-door coupe was stunning to look at if a little uncompromising to drive. Though, the Kiwi maestro's own car - OBH 500H - had progressed as far as door seals and seat padding by the time of his fatal Goodwood testing crash in June 1970. Still in the development phase, the M6 GT project perished with its figurehead. Inspired perhaps by OBH 500H's paddock appearance at the 1970 Brands Hatch Race of Champions meeting or its mythical exploits on the Surrey stretch of the A3 dual carriageway, half a dozen or so enthusiasts - including the vendor - have managed to successfully recreate their own versions over the past thirty-odd years.

Using the 'same recipe' as the original, this accurate recreation is based around a genuine McLaren M6B chassis that was imported from North America in 1989 where it had lain undisturbed but with "some of its corners missing" for several years. A real find (sub-contractors Trojan made just twenty-eight 'B' versions of the M6 works racers for customer use), it was suitably repaired prior to being fitted with a 5.7 litre Chevrolet V8 engine and close ratio five-speed ZF manual gearbox. As luck would have it, Specialised Mouldings had not only retained the M6's original moulds but were happy to both refurbish them and then finish the resultant glassfibre panels to 'road car' standards. Still a long process, the rebuild / recreation took three years. Once finished, however, the seller reports that "the completed car was shown to Charles Agg of McLaren by Trojan for verification purposes. He was unable to throw any light on the origin of the Tub but was happy that whatever its origin it was sound and correct and he was able to assign a post period M6 chassis number to the car which facilitated the initial road registration of MWV 96J".

Classified by the DVLA as a 'historic vehicle', this fabulous McLaren has since acquired the numberplate '2 GLA' (that for years lived on a family Porsche and which the current owner would like to retain if the car sells abroad). Unlike the original M6 GTs and indeed some of the other M6B GT recreations, this example has two crucial advantages. The first is the

installation of air conditioning to combat the greenhouse effect engendered by the vast Triplex-supplied windscreens, while the second is a wheel conversion. Where the 'factory' cars ran a racing biased set-up with ten-inch wheels at the front and seventeen-inch wheels at the rear, 2 GLA rides on four sixteen-inch rims. The work of ex-Reg Parnell F1 team mechanic Jimmy Potton, this evolutionary measure necessitated various modifications to the all-round independent double wishbone coil-over suspension and disc brakes.

First invited to the highly prestigious Goodwood Festival of Speed as part of the Mulberry Challenge in 1996 (during which saw it tackled the hillclimb course, performed a twenty-minute high speed trial round the circuit and competed in a timed autotest / wheel change with credible results), 2 GLA made a return visit eight years later to play a starring role in Cartier sponsored Style et Luxe display.

Finished in red with tan leather upholstery and brown carpets, the McLaren is described by the vendor as being in good condition with regard to its engine, transmission, electrical equipment, interior trim, chassis, bodywork, paintwork and wheels / tyres. Recently treated to further fettling at the hands of Specialised Moulding's Clive Robinson, the 'Big Mac' was found to weigh a surprisingly light / race friendly 1,000kg.

This lack of mass helps explain (a) its savage performance (Racing Line magazine guessed it capable of 180mph / 0-60mph in 4.5 seconds in their February 2001 issue) and (b) how it came to be used as a camera car for shoots involving both the McLaren and Benetton F1 teams.

Fully street legal, this wonderful machine even incorporates hatches in its rear wheel arches that will accommodate "reasonably sized soft bags in each side for weekends away etc". Now sporting circular rear lights in place of the initial rectangular units, it is worth noting that the last real M6 GT to sell made an astounding \$423,500 (£237,000) in January 2006. Offered at a fraction of that price (and indeed at a relatively modest percentage of its build cost), this McLaren M6B based recreation looks to be both good value and enormous fun. Twice featured in 'Racing Line' the TAG-McLaren group magazine (January 2000, February 2001), it has also graced the pages of the Danish Bilen Motor & Sport publication (as part of a three way test with a McLaren F1 and Ferrari F40).

Presented for sale with copies of these various articles, it also comes with MOT certificate valid until December 2006 and historic class (free) road tax until January 2007.