



AUCTION REPORT

by Dave Selby

A 1955 Swallow Doretti has defied value guides to sell for an astonishing £36,200 at Brightwells' latest auction. After emerging from a painstaking 10-year restoration, the rare British-built TR2-derived sporting hybrid was snapped up by a major private British collector.

Although it's not quite an auction record – last year another of these rare cars made headlines when it sold for a reported record £40,000 at a Dutch sale – it's a significant benchmark, confirming a major shift in the marketplace. Traditional market wisdom has rated Dorettis on a par, or a little ahead of, the TR2. Indeed, Brightwells had estimated the powder-blue Doretti, restored with no regard to cost, at £20,000-25,000, which is within the orbit of top, truly stunning TR2s.

However, in recent years rarity has

become an appreciating currency in the marketplace, with major collectors increasingly prizing cars that really stand out. That's where the Doretti scores, with just 276 built and only an estimated 181 still in existence.

As for whether the Doretti is actually any better than the TR2, that's a different matter and still the subject of heated debate. Certainly comfort, fittings and equipment were better on the Doretti, although it was heavier and slightly slower. Some reckoned handling and ride to be an improvement, though.

When the Doretti sold in Holland for £40,000, I wrote in *TW* (November, 2008): *'With this new high water mark I'd expect other Dorettis to be enticed on to the open market.'* I told you so! Now let's see if any more emerge. ■