



# RM SOTHEBY'S NIGEL MANSELL'S LEGACY COLLECTION AUCTION

## A Review by Stephanie Connell

**In Britain we have a long association with motor racing, dating back over 120 years. Since those early days, memorabilia connected with motorsport has been a popular area for collectors. Motor racing collectables combine the glamour of the automobile with the excitement of high-octane sport. Today, Formula One memorabilia is perhaps the most desirable field in automobilia collecting.**

When RM Sotheby's announced they would be selling the archive of legendary racing driver Nigel Mansell, collectors were prepared for prices to 'hurtle' away.

Nigel Mansell began his career as a Formula One driver in 1980 and continued to race in F1 until 1995. During this period, Mansell won over 30 Grand Prix races and was the 1992 Formula One World Champion. These achievements made him the most successful British racing driver (a record only broken by Sir Lewis Hamilton).

Mansell's skill as a racing driver went beyond Formula One. Immediately after his 1992 Formula One World Title win, he moved to CART IndyCar for their 1993 the season. Remarkably he won his debut IndyCar World Series. Therefore in 1993 he held both the Formula One World Title and the IndyCar World Series - Mansell is the only driver to have held both titles at the same time.

Nigel Mansell's extensive collection had previously been on display as part of his museum in Jersey, which closed in 2019.

The collection included over 320 pieces capturing Mansell's entire career. The sale was held during the early part of October as a week-long online auction, with all lots being offered without reserve.

Prior to the auction RM Sotheby's had focused publicity on the trophies, racing suits and racing helmets. These pieces, which are the closest associated with racing are typically the most desirable.

Demand was high throughout the sale. The highest prices of the sale were indeed achieved for racing helmets. Lot 142 the 1985 Canon Williams-Honda European Grand Prix racing helmet being the most expensive lot. The European Grand Prix was held at the British racing circuit Brands Hatch in October 1985. The action-packed race saw Nigel Mansell winning his first Grand Prix, beating Ayrton Senna in second place by a margin of over 21 seconds. The important racing helmet which is clearly visible in images for the race sold for £68,400.

LOT 142



### 1985 Canon Williams - Honda European Grand Prix racing helmet

Sotheby's Online Auction  
October 2023

**Sold for £68,400**

The second highest price was achieved by Lot 200 the 1992 Canon Williams-Renault Arai Formula One helmet. This example was worn by Nigel Mansell during his record-breaking World Title winning season for Williams, it reached £61,200.

LOT 200



### 1992 Canon Williams-Renault Arai Formula One helmet

Sotheby's Online Auction  
October 2023

**Sold for £61,200**

Like the helmet, pieces connected to the 1992 Formula One title were expectedly the most valuable.

The sale included several significant trophies earned during this F1 World Title winning season for Williams.

The 1992 San Marino Grand Prix 1<sup>st</sup> place trophy was the most expensive of the collection. The trophy marked Mansell's fifth win of that competition, making him the first driver to win the first five races of a season. The Automobile Club Bologna trophy was engraved with the names of other former prominent winners including Jim Clark, Niki Lauder, Alain Prost, and Ayrton Senna. The impressive and large gilt trophy sold for £28,800.

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LOT 384



### 1992 San Marino Grand Prix 1st place trophy

Sotheby's Online Auction  
October 2023

**Sold for £28,800**

One of the most coveted of the trophies was in fact for a second-place finish. Lot 212 was the 1992 Monaco Grand Prix 2<sup>nd</sup> place trophy. The race is known as a classic of the sport, with Mansell starting the race from pole position, battling for first place against the eventual race winner Ayrton Senna. This lot eventually sold for £24,000. Nigel Mansell's pole position trophy from the same event, was also on offer and achieved £16,800.

One of Nigel Mansell's most remarkable achievements of the 1992 season was the British Grand Prix. Held at Silverstone in July, it was here that he became the most successful British racing driver. Mansell started the race from pole position, going on to win every lap, set the fastest lap and break the track record!

Lot 386 was the trophy awarded for this fantastic first-place finish – bidding was strong, with the virtual gavel falling at £26,400. Lot 223 was a piece commemorating the race – an unusual time-chart captioned "The Ultimate Lap". To quote Mansell himself "On the last but one lap we smashed the track record". This piece had been signed and dedicated to Mansell by Williams Racing's Chief Technical Officer, Paddy Lowe. The final price here was £8,400. While lot 208 the baseball cap worn by Nigel Mansell on the winner's podium sold for £6,800.

Similarly, the highest price racing suits of the sale were those worn during Nigel Mansell's 1992 winning season. Lot 199 and 222 were two such examples. Lot 199 was the more complete of the outfits including suit, gloves, and boots. This lot achieved £21,600 whilst lot 222 which included a suit alone sold for £19,200.

LOT 199



### 1992 Canon Williams Renault Sparco Formula 1 Race Suit with Boots & Gloves

Sotheby's Online Auction  
October 2023

**Sold for £21,600**

Ferrari memorabilia is a strong collecting field within its own right. Therefore, those pieces relating to Mansell's 1989-1990 seasons driving for Ferrari were of interest. Notably, Mansell was the last racing driver to be selected by Enzo Ferrari himself.

Racing helmets were again the top lots here. Lots 174 and 182 were Scuderia Ferrari helmets worn during the 1989 racing season. They fetched £43,200 and £46,800 respectively. Lot 350 was a trophy awarded to Nigel Mansell by Ferrari. The sculptural trophy was in the form of their iconic prancing horse logo. This award fetched £28,800. A vintage red leather Ferrari briefcase was a stylish addition (lot 103) reaching £3,720. Mansell had a difficult 1990 season with the team and chose to retire afterwards. It was after his return with Williams in 1991 that he achieved his greatest success.

LOT 182



### 1989 Scuderia Ferrari Arai Formula 1 Helmet

Sotheby's Online Auction  
October 2023

**Sold for £46,800**

During 1993 to 1994 he moved away from Formula One. Mansell signed with Newman/Haas to drive in the CART IndyCar World series. As mentioned previously, he was immediately very successful, winning his first ever IndyCar race! He went on to win the World Series, winning five races out of sixteen. Helmets, suits, and trophies were again the most valuable lots, with four of the helmets achieving over £25,000 each. One of the more curious lots was lot 250 a podium wreath decorated with beer cans given as part of the 1993 IndyCar Miller Genuine Draft 200 race. This lot sold for £3,000.

LOT 250



### 1993 IndyCar Miller Genuine Draft 200 Podium Wreath

Sotheby's Online Auction  
October 2023

**Sold for £3,000**

Now to some of the more unusual lots. Lot 106 was a personalised number plate '5 NM'. The plate made reference to Nigel Mansell's initials and his association with red number 5 during his career. Red Number 5 was the name given to his winning Williams Formula 1 racing car. The number plate offered with a presale estimate of £30,000 – 60,000 and sold for £50,400.

#### LOT 106



#### '5NM' UK Registration Plate

Sotheby's Online Auction  
October 2023

**Sold for £50,400**

On a similar theme was lot 205 a petrol pump designed with Nigel Mansell livery and the red number 5, commemorating his 1992 World Title win. This decorative piece of automabilia sold for £15,600.

#### LOT 205



#### Wayne Type 1420 Nigel Mansell 1992 Livery Petrol Pump

Sotheby's Online Auction  
October 2023

**Sold for 15,600**

Champagne is a drink closely associated with motorsport and several bottles were available. The highest price for a bottle was lot 198, an unopened magnum of Moët & Chandon given to the 1991 British Grand Prix 'Driver of the Day'. The label was signed in silver ink by several celebrities apparently including Sean Connery. This impressive bottle fetched £3,240.

Also of note were two letters from Prime Minister John Major offered together as lot 202. The typed letters congratulate Nigel Mansell on his wins in Formula One and IndyCar. They were each signed and inscribed 'Dear Nigel' and on Downing Street headed paper. The pair eventually achieved £6,900.

The successful auction achieved total selling price of over £2 million.

Formula One collectors will now be looking ahead to the RM Sotheby's auction scheduled for early November. This sale will include the collection of the late racing driver and two-time World Champion Graham Hill.

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