

1964 Alfa Romeo 2600 Spider

£135,000. Southwood Car Company, Bletchingley, UK

WHEN I SAW photographs of this superb Alfa Romeo 2600 Spider I felt a sense of déjà vu – brought on not so much by the car itself as by its number plate. The reason became clear on reading Southwood's description. The Alfa had been among the lots at one of Sotheby's erstwhile monthly auctions held at the RAF Museum in Hendon.

It flashed into my mind because, as a Sotheby's employee during the '90s, I worked on the sale – on 11 April 1994 – and clearly remember lusting after the Alfa, which was then in original, unrestored condition with a tiny mileage. If memory serves me right (I can't find the catalogue) it was in its factory colour of silver and estimated at less than £10,000. And I couldn't afford to bid.

Now, 23 years later, all is revealed about one of the best-preserved examples of the model in existence, and almost certainly the lowest-mileage of the 103 right-hand-drive 2600 Spiders built.

Imported new into the UK in 1964, it is believed

to have been bought by a racing driver as a gift for his wife who, finding it too 'heavy' to drive, simply didn't. So it stayed almost dormant until it was sold in 1980 with only 98 miles on the odometer.

The buyer kept it until 1994 when it was sold at Sotheby's to rally driver John Rondeau. He ran it for five years before selling it to an Alfa enthusiast who set about restoring the cracked and faded paintwork. This led to a degree of dismantling, followed by the car's sale as an 'unfinished project'.

The new owner treated it to a quality repaint in the gorgeous Blue Sera metallic it wears today, plus a re-trim in tan leather. Ill-health forced a sale to Southwood (southwoodcarcompany.co.uk), which completed the restoration with a full rebuild of the engine, which on being stripped showed virtually no wear. Still with fewer than 23,000 miles on the clock, this is probably one of the best and least-used Alfa 2600 Spiders on the planet.

Simon de Burton

