

# Movie masters

As demand has boomed and prices risen, film posters featuring classics have become far more than just decoration. C&SC asked the guru – **Paul Veysey** of [drivepast.com](http://drivepast.com) – all about them

**G**o to any classic car event or auction and you'll find a wealth of tempting posters that would look great on your living room or office wall (or in the garage if you lose the argument). The ones most likely to be snuck past your partner are movie posters featuring historic cars, which could explain why it is a fast-growing area of collecting. Paul Veysey reveals all.

#### How big is the market for these posters?

It is certainly not mainstream. With my usual business acumen, I have put myself into a niche within a niche – narrowing the thriving original movie poster market down to one small area. That said, my collection has expanded to other original film posters from non-car-related pictures over the past few years.

#### Has the scene changed in recent years?

Generally there has been an increase, as people realise that original movie posters are an area of collectible art, and that the investment value of original movie posters, while not the prime mover, is indisputable, internationally. At the moment we have something of a plateau, because people do not seem to be convinced that the economic recovery is under way!

#### Do you think that, as a sector/interest of the classic car world, it has reached a peak or is there still plenty of growth to come?

I think there is only growth to come. Auction prices are buoyant at the top end, and there is a large number of classic car owners out there who have yet to dip a toe in the water.

#### How many posters do you sell in a year?

Perhaps 300.

#### What proportion are bought by classic fans?

I'd say around 75%.

#### Where on earth do you manage to find them?

All around the world, from auction houses, collectors and dealers. I used to spend about 30% of my waking hours on the hunt; now with



decreasing numbers available and generally increasing prices, it's more like 80%.

**How can people tell an original from a reprint?**

Size, paper quality, smell, fold wear (on pre-'70s-ish posters), provenance, and general condition.

**How big a bearing does originality have on values?**

It's a massive factor.

**Also, what impact on prices does language have?**

Country of origin is more important than language, as is artwork. For example, some Japanese posters command very high prices while not being textually comprehensible to many Westerners. The reason for the prices is a completely different style of artwork.

**And again, how does condition affect prices?**

Condition is always important. Restoration and linen backing of older posters will enhance value. 'Mint', unless applied to very recent posters, should be regarded with suspicion.

**What other factors can have an influence on what people will have to pay?**

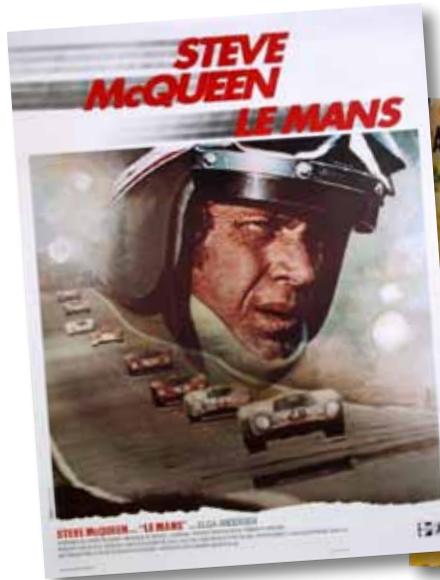
Many people prefer the smaller posters for domestic use, while some of my more fortunate customers, who have motor-houses, restaurants, showrooms and the like will gladly buy some of the much larger posters to be exhibited on large walls. Shape is more specific to domestic display. Price is more about rarity, condition and classic movie status.

**What are the most popular posters, the ones that everyone wants?**

*Le Mans*, *Grand Prix*, Hugh Hudson's *Fangio* bio-pic from 1980, Bond stuff that includes cars, *Winning*, *Back to the Future*, *The Fast Lady* (although that may be more Julie Christie than Bentley), and 1950s US Hot Rod/Bad Girl movies such as *Speed Crazy* and *Roadracers*.

**With something like *Le Mans*, how can people decide between the multiple variants that they might find?**

With *Le Mans*, the French, Japanese and Italian versions are probably the best artwork. Both the UK and US posters carry the 'classic' artwork, but the UK poster carries a considerably higher price in the 'Quad' (landscape format) than the US portrait or 'one sheet' format, but that's mostly down to scarcity.



**Which particular cars or stars (apart from Steve McQueen, that's a given!) are popular?**

Jaguar, Aston Martin, MG, Hot Rods, F1 cars, NASCAR, Paul Newman, Fangio (at least three movies) and James Garner.

**What are some of your personal favourites?**

As well as the ones everybody wants, they include Kirk Douglas in *The Racers* (French Poster); the Italian posters for Cornel Wilde's *The Devil's Hairpin*, *The Italian Job* (UK posters from 1969 and 30th anniversary posters, of which there are many fakes and repros), UK and French posters for *Grand Prix*.

**What sort of prices can they achieve?**

Contemporary (within the past decade) posters tend to be cheaper because of their greater numbers and photographic or CG images. Also, US posters tend to be less rare than their UK counterparts, and therefore cheaper. Almost anything from the 1920s through to the end of the 1950s is now fetching premium money.

**What is the holy grail of car-related movie posters (and what would it be worth if someone found one lurking in their attic)?**

For me it's a 1950 poster of an Argentinian bio-pic on Fangio – it has wonderful artwork showing him driving the Maserati 4CLT in the yellow and blue Argentinian racing colours. There are only three of these posters known to exist and I've had two of them at various times. If another did pop up, and it had impeccable provenance, it would be £10,000.

**Do you have a favourite era of poster?**

As well as those already mentioned, many of the posters from the 1920s and '30s.

**How did you get into it as hobby/business?**

Many years ago my wife gave me a UK quad for *Checkpoint*... and that was it.

**How long ago was that?**

15-20 years.

**Are you travelling all the time to shows?**

I used to travel to shows internationally, but the cost of stands now frequently outpaces the income to be drawn from them. That combined with many show organisers regarding traders as an unfortunate necessity, means that I do few shows now. Beaulieu, Spring and Summer, is an exception, and I would love to get back to Pebble Beach, plus Tony Singer's allied Californian show, but the skies would need to shower me with gold before I could do that.

**Have internet sales had an impact or is the best business still to be had at events?**

My website is my best source of income, bolstered by some big names who have become interested in what I do.

**Are there any places selling posters that people should be wary of?**

Damn right! But I can't afford the court cases from naming them. Happily there are some who know what they're doing and believe, as I do, in standing behind everything they sell.

**What is the best way to look after a poster?**

UV glass or Plexiglass is necessary for bigger posters and conservation backing is also important. Don't hang them in direct sunlight!

**You also sell lobby cards and publicity stills, how does that side of the business differ from the posters?**

It doesn't, except that they're smaller, and generally cheaper.

