

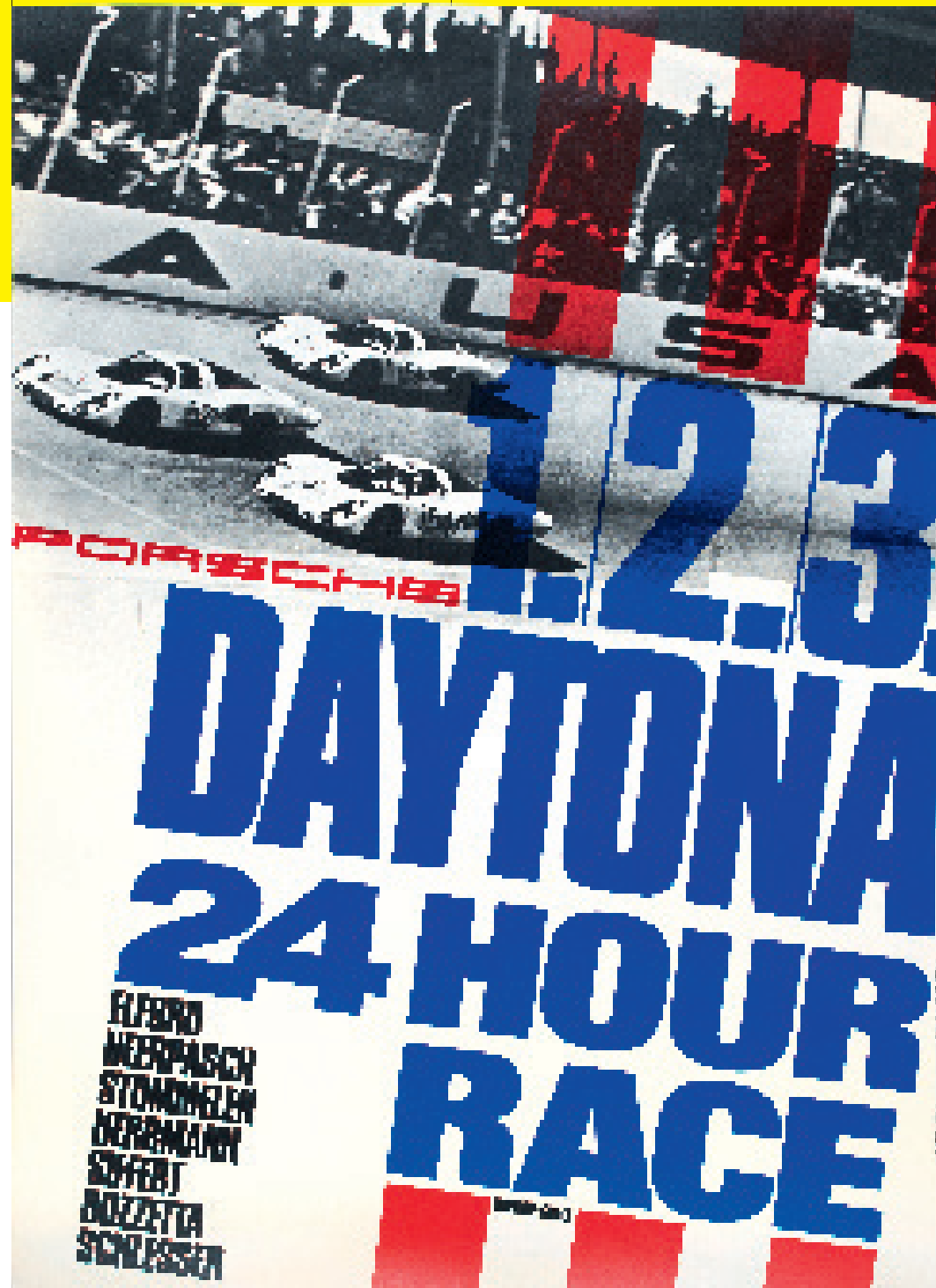
AUTOMOBILIA

WALL PAPER

When posters were the primary form of publicizing an event or new car, top artists were commissioned to produce them. Now, they're highly collectible. Here's what to look for

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WHAT COULD BE BETTER TO DECORATE your garage walls than a vintage automotive poster? There is a huge range of styles and prices available – and such an artwork will always provide a great talking point.

If you have ever paid any attention to the subject, you'll probably already have come across California-based Tony Singer, who has been dealing in posters since 1980 as Vintage Auto Posters. He's always quick to point out that the price will depend on the rarity of the poster, the appeal of the image itself, the artist and the event depicted.

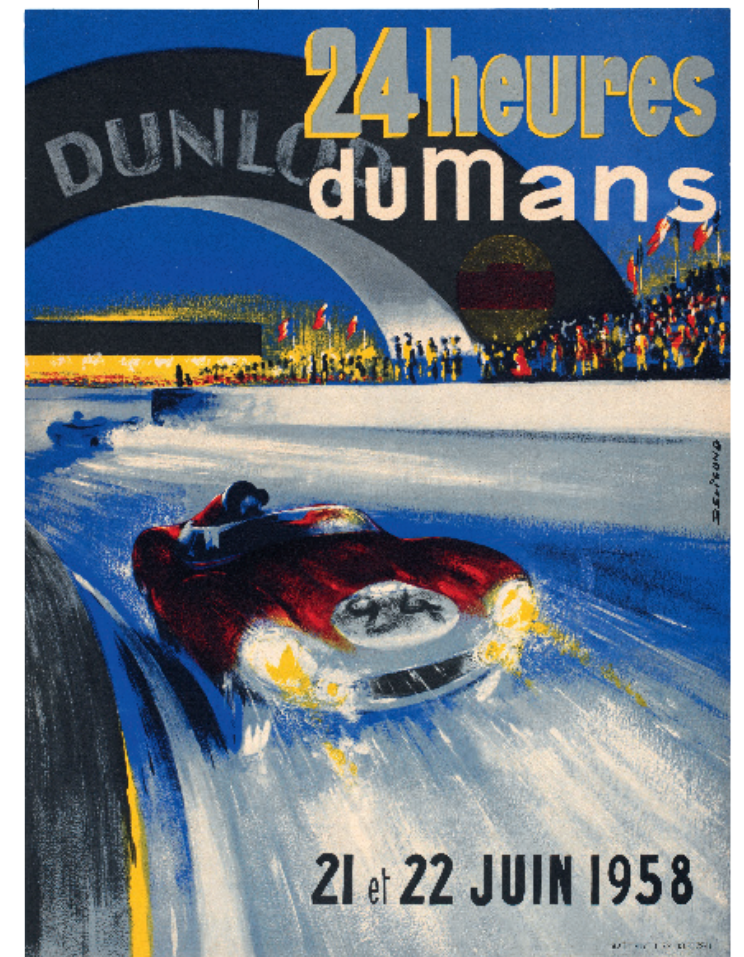
How much? Not a lot considering the impact they have. Tony's rough guide for event posters is this: 1970-80s are \$400 to \$1300-plus; 1960s are \$650 to \$2600-plus; 1950s are \$1000 to \$3000-plus; and 1900-40s are \$1000 to around \$10,000 – although they can go for far more. Marque-specific posters are usually higher.

"The market is stable; I don't tend to see

THIS SPREAD Porsche commissioned the Daytona 1-2-3 celebration poster from artist Erich Strenger; the Sebring artwork is one of several by John Zito; this Le Mans work was the first of several by Michel Belligond, who later designed the Alpine A310.

'trends,'" explains Tony. "If there's a change it's that there's less supply, but there's less demand, too. Porsche and Ferrari are popular, but the gold standard is pre-war Monaco Grand Prix and 1920s Le Mans. For example, a 1923 Le Mans poster sold at Artcurial for €20,000."

What makes the older posters special is that photography back then was rare, so the posters were illustrative not photographic, and created by the leading artists of the day, such as Géo Ham, Cappelletto, Alexis Kow and Falcucci. One of the greatest ever – and most valuable – posters is an art deco masterpiece for the 1934 Grand Prix Suisse by Kaspar Ernst Graf, but at the other end of the scale are the more



affordable 1970s posters of Daytona, Le Mans and Monaco, which now feel equally evocative.

There were often barely hundreds of posters printed, and their intended life was six months – maybe just three months. Yet plenty have survived intact and without serious fading. It all depends on how they've been stored over the intervening years.

Provenance is not a major issue, but condition is. Tony mounts his posters on pH-neutral archival linen using a water-based wheat adhesive, attending to any "edginess" – damage to the edges – at the same time.

Where things get difficult is if the poster has been DIY mounted – to fix that, it might need solvents, heat and pressure to rectify.

But, as Tony stresses, it's worth all these efforts. "People buy posters for the wackiest reasons, yet the important thing is to buy what you love. It's pure art."

See www.vintageautoposters.com for details.



THIS PAGE 1934 Grand Prix Suisse poster by Kaspar Ernst Graf is an art deco masterpiece; another Porsche item by Erich Strenger, marking its Mille Miglia victories; the Nîmes GP poster is by Geo Yrrab, better known for his advertising work.