

ONE YOU CAN BUY...

SUNBEAM VENEZIA

Year of manufacture 1966 Recorded mileage 7253

Asking price £10,000

Vendor Hurst Park Automobiles, East Molesey, Surrey;
tel: 01372 468487

For rare, usable **Against** non-original wheels

When it was new

Price £1400 (1963) Max power 88bhp Max torque 95lb ft

Top speed 101mph 0-60mph 18.4 secs Mpg 25.6



Sunbeam's Venezia was never marketed in the UK, purchase tax making it prohibitively expensive. Touring clothed a Rootes chassis with an attractive Superleggera body that looks like a cross between an Alpine and a Rapier, but the model died with the *carrozzeria* in 1966 after 145 cars had been made.

This car came to the UK in '69 and has a huge history file: the tiny mileage is believed genuine. It is a lovely unmolested example – no concours queen, with some chips to the bluff nose and the odd microblister here and there, but the car's attractive patina and usability are part of the appeal. Panel fit is fine for a handbuilt car.

The brightwork is very good, with stainless steel bumpers and detailed door and window surrounds. The Minator alloys are period-style, but look too small – exaggerated by its nearly new Pirelli P2000s.

It uses the Rapier's 1592cc 'four', with a single Solex carb, giving 88bhp. But this car has a desirable Holbay cylinder head and it all looks tidy in the clean matt black engine bay. The Sunbeam looks solid beneath too, with the underseal intact and a recent exhaust. Open the boot and it's the same story, with immaculate original carpet, jack and tool roll.

The airy interior has big, comfy vinyl seats and the roomy rear looks unused. Matching carpets are sound and the only blemish is loose stitching on the top of the driver's seat. It has a period radio.

The engine starts easily and runs with 50psi oil pressure at tick-over rising to 60 under load, but was reluctant to tick over smoothly. The Sunbeam drives beautifully with a positive gearbox (overdrive on top), and light steering. The torquey but rev-happy Venezia feels much livelier than the figures suggest, with a rorty engine note. It stops OK too, with front discs and servo assistance.



Luxury interior in good nick; motor features Holbay head

VERDICT

Different and delightful – so nice it should be used more