

Renowned vintage machinery collection sells for more than \$1m

ABC Rural By Tony Lingen
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PHOTO: The rain didn't stop hundreds of people turning out to this weekend's auction. (ABC South West: Jacqueline Lynch)

A renowned vintage machinery collection containing some of the rarest tractors in the world has sold for more than \$1 million at an auction in Western Australia.

Belonging to the late Tony Pallthorpe, the collection of International Harvester Company agricultural machinery was believed to be the largest in the southern hemisphere.

Organised by his three children, the sale at Aberbechan farm in Benger was an emotional day for Mr Pallthorpe's friends and family.

"It's very bittersweet," said his youngest daughter, Christina Denton.

"I'm feeling very sad to see it all go because it's like seeing Dad walk out the gate again."

Mr Pallthorpe was remembered on the day for his passion for vintage equipment, having amassed about 1,000 pieces before his sudden death from a stroke in 2013.

Despite bad weather, hundreds of people turned out from around the country to attend the auction, with bids also coming in from the US, China and New Zealand.

Tony Pallthorpe: A passionate and enthusiastic man



PHOTO: Tony Pallthorpe spent half of his life collecting and restoring his vintage machinery. (Supplied: Christina Denton Photography)

A dairy farmer by trade, Mr Pallthorpe was well-known and respected not only in Australia, but also in the US, a country he visited multiple times.

Those who knew him say his passion for collecting and restoring vintage machinery was recognised wherever he went.

One of his closest friends was farmer and vintage machinery enthusiast Bob Lukins, who spent months in the lead up to the event organising the sale.

Mr Lukins described Mr Pallthorpe as someone who was "passionate in everything he did".

"He was so enthusiastic, a great help with all the field days and just one of those incredible blokes," he said.

"Not only was he known widely in Western Australia, he was also known widely in Australia and in America."

He said it was devastating that his friend had died at such young age, but that Mr Pallthorpe would be pleased to see his collection being appreciated.



PHOTO: Bob Lukins with the most valuable tractor in Tony Pallthorpe's collection. (ABC South West: Jacqueline Lynch)

"Although he would be very disappointed if he knew we were all here bidding on his machines," Mr Lukins said.

"But he would love to see all these machines go to a collector that will take them to field days and demonstrate them.

"That's what he'd really love to see."

World's rarest tractors

Among the collection was a 1930 McCormick Deering, which is one of only two or three of its kind left in the world.

The big-ticket item, however, was the Type-D Titan, which attracted a bid of \$180,000 - enough to be an Australian record for vintage machinery.

The Titan was not sold, with the family feeling it was worth more.

Auctioneer Tiny Holly said it was "one bid off a sale".

"It's probably a bit of a goose-bump type of feeling," he said.

"Even on some of the smaller stuff that we sold it's so unique and it's so special to Tony."

"He always said that if he was to go to the big graveyard in the sky, pass it onto someone who appreciates it."

The collection was auctioned off over two sales. Mr Holly said while the gross sum of the latest sale had not yet been calculated, over the two events the thousand-piece collection would have grossed more than \$1 million.



PHOTO: Tiny Holly said the collection was worth more than \$1 million. (ABC South West: Jacqueline Lynch)

Bittersweet moment for family

The money will be shared among Mr Pallthorpe's three children.

As the sale came to a close, his youngest daughter Christina Denton could not hold back tears.

She said she had comfort knowing the pieces went to people who loved them as much as her father did.

"I've met some really lovely people who picked up his good stuff," she said.

"There was a lovely young guy who said it was my dad who showed him stuff and taught him stuff. That's

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what my dad used to do."

The last item to be auctioned off was a framed print of Mr Pailthorpe and his vintage machinery collection.

Before its sale, the crowd and auctioneer took a moment to applaud Mr Pailthorpe and recognise his outstanding achievement and dedication to vintage machinery.

Topics rural, agricultural-machinery, heritage-623, vehicles, motor-vehicles, vintage, collectables

Contact Tyne Logan

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PHOTO: Christina Denton said it was difficult to see her father's collection sold. (ABC South West, Jacqueline Lunn)

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