



Bones of contention:

T-Rex scares off buyers at Vegas auction

Private and institutional dinosaur collectors descended on Las Vegas but in a depressed economy, many items failed to meet the reserve price.

A 66-million-year-old Tyrannosaurus rex named Samson failed to sell at a Las Vegas auction after the top bid of US\$3.6 million (NT\$115.7 million) fell way below the minimum price.

Samson, a female T-Rex found on a South Dakota ranch in 1992, also trailed the record US\$8.36 million that Sue, another T-Rex, sold for at a 1997 auction.

Sue, the most complete T-Rex ever found, has since become a blockbuster attraction in Chicago's Field Museum, which bought her.

But Samson, which is a little less well preserved, was one of 17 dinosaur and fossil items which failed to sell, in a sign of the depressed economy.

Officials from auction house Bonhams & Butterfields attempted to put a brave face on the sale that netted more than US\$1.7 million on 25 other dinosaur and fossil lots.

"I'm disappointed that we couldn't find a buyer, but we will, and I'm pretty happy with the results overall," Bonhams & Butterfields chief operating officer Patrick Meade said.

A pair of a less-known species of dinosaurs related to the triceratops, sold for US\$440,000 — below the US\$500,000 estimate noted in the prospectus, but according to Bonhams & Butterfields, a world auction record for such an item.

They were bought by Larry Lawson of Big Lake, Alaska, who spent about US\$1 million in all. The 44-year-old oncologist said the items will adorn his home and offices and be available for schools to visit.

"I've been into this kind of stuff since I was a little boy," said Lawson, who was attending his first auction. "I just came to see who was going to buy the T-Rex and to see if I could get anything other than that." (AFP)

The bones of a 66-million-year-old Tyrannosaurus rex skeleton on display, left and below, and Enya Kim, bottom, from auctioneers Bonhams & Butterfields stands in front of jaws from the prehistoric species, *Carcharocles megalodon*, at the Venetian Resort Hotel Casino on Sept. 30, 2009 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

PHOTOS: AFP

九月三十日，內華達州拉斯維加斯「威尼斯商人酒店賭場」所展示的六千六百萬年前暴龍骨骸標本（左圖及下圖），以及站在場內史前巨齒鯊口顎標本前的寶龍伯得富拍賣會拍賣官安雅·金。

照片：法新社

拉斯維加斯暴龍化石流標

在拉斯維加斯一場拍賣會上，六千六百萬年前的暴龍「參孫」骨骸因出價遠低於底標而流標，會中最高出價為三百六十萬美元（新台幣一億一千五百七十萬元）。

一九九二年，母暴龍參孫在南達科塔州一座大農場出土。和暴龍「蘇」一九九七年售得八百三十六萬美元的紀錄相比，參孫還差了一截。

蘇是史上保存最完整的暴龍化石，被芝加哥費爾德博物館買下後，成為館內人氣展品。

然而，保存較不完整的參孫受到經濟不景氣影響，淪為流標的十七件恐龍骨骸和其他化石之一。

這場拍賣會共賣出二十五件恐龍及其他化石，售得一百七十多萬美金。面對這樣的結果，寶龍伯得富拍賣會人員強打起精神。

拍賣會營運長派屈克·米德表示：「我很失望我們沒能找到買主，不過我們終會找到的：整體而言，我很滿意這次拍賣的結果。」

一對較不知名的三角龍近親恐龍化石以四十四萬美元賣出，成交價低於拍賣簡介上預估的五十萬美元，不過據拍賣會表示，該成交價已打破這類拍賣品的世界紀錄。

買主是阿拉斯加州大湖區的賴瑞·勞森，他共花費約一百萬美元買下若干拍賣品。這名四十四歲的腫瘤學家表示，他會把這些化石用來裝飾住家和辦公室，並開放給學校團體參觀。

第一次參加拍賣會的勞森說：「我從小就很迷恐龍化石。這次來就是想看看誰會買下這個暴龍化石，順便看看自己可以買點什麼。」

(法新社／翻譯：袁星塵)

1. ranch /ræntʃ/ n.

大農場 (da4 nong2 chang3)

例：The president usually spends the summer on his sprawling luxury ranch. (總裁通常在他佔地遼闊的豪華農場中度過夏日。)

2. blockbuster /'blæk,bʌstə/ n.

賣座的電影 (mai4 zuo4 de5 dian4 ying3)

例：The movie sequel is expected to be a huge blockbuster. (這部電影的續集預計會非常賣座。)

3. adorn /ə'dɔ:rn/ v.

裝飾 (zhuang1 shi4)

例：Garish paintings by obscure artists adorned the walls of the mansion. (大樓內牆上掛著無名畫家的俗豔畫作。)

