

CLASSIC DRIVER

The Talbot-Lago T14 was the marque’s final gift to the world

Lead
Talbot-Lago is one of the greatest French sports car manufacturers you might never have heard of. This outstanding Talbot-Lago T14 heading to the Aguttes Summer Sale serves as a reminder of the brand’s brilliance.



If you were shopping for a sports coupé in the 1950s, you really were spoiled for choice. It was a golden era for privateer racing, when you could purchase a car on Friday afternoon off the showroom floor, and line up on the grid the next morning, ready to go wheel to wheel with the fastest offerings from Jaguar, Ferrari, Maserati, AC, and even one of those strange, newfangled rear-engined Porsches. However, many of the premier marques from this time period have since fallen dormant and will be unknown to the younger petrol heads in our audience, and one of the greatest was Talbot Lago.





Founded in 1902 by the Anglo-French company Clément-Talbot, just as the automobile was beginning to boom in popularity, the company's early years were as turbulent as the political environment at the time. The First World War would significantly reduce their operations, and shortly after its end they would be combined with several other automotive companies to form STD Motors, which itself would collapse in the mid-1930s. It was at this point that Antonio Lago enters the frame, an Italian industrialist who purchased Talbot's Parisian factory to form Talbot-Lago after fleeing to France following a dispute with one Mr. Mussolini. Meanwhile, the English factory was purchased by Rootes, who renamed it to Talbot-Sunbeam, but that is a story for another day.



Under Antonio Lago's leadership, Talbot became heavily involved in both sports car and grand prix racing, and quickly established a reputation as a manufacturer of some of the world's greatest luxury and racing cars. Models like the Figoni & Falaschi-bodied T150 SS Teardrop Coupe remain among the most gorgeous automobiles of all time, while the T26C was one of the most fearsome cars built to the then-new Formula One regulations. In fact, a variant of the T26C would even claim an outright victory at the 1950 24 Hours of Le Mans.



Talbot-Lago was holding its own at the highest levels of both motorsport and the luxury car market against marques that are still household names today, but there's a reason

Talbot-Lago posters weren't plastered on our bedroom walls. The introduction of heavy taxation by the French government on vehicles with engines over 2.6-litres proved to be a fatal blow for the company, and by the end of the 1950s, Talbot-Lago had closed up shop for good. However, before that happened, the company graced us with one of the most majestic sports cars of the era: the bewitching Talbot Lago T14.



This stunning 1957 example is one of the final 54 units of the T14 LS that were ever made, making it one of the last true Talbot-Lagos built. Boasting a tubular chassis and gorgeous flowing bodywork designed by Carlo Delaïsse, this low-slung sports car was over twice the price of a Citroën DS when it was released. Under the hood was a 2.5-litre, 120 horsepower Talbot-built 4-cylinder engine connected to a Pont-à-Mousson gearbox, providing excellent performance for its age. It hits all the notes you'd hope for from a sports car of this vintage, with its fabulous design borrowing many elements from the legendary Talbot T26 Grand Sport Lago.



The T14 you see here — [which will be heading to Aguttes Summer Sale on June 23rd in Paris](#) — was purchased in 1967 by the previous owner, a 20 year old enthusiast who drove the car just 1,500 km before putting it into storage for 40 years. Eventually, one of his friends bought the car in the mid-2010s and decided to put it through a total restoration with fastidious attention to detail regarding its original specification. Today, its magnificent Radiose Grey paintwork practically looks wet to the touch, while the original beige interior has been masterfully preserved and reconditioned. The chrome Robergel wire wheels are without blemish as is the glorious engine bay, which proudly features “Talbot-Lago” embossed on its cylinder head covers.



Overall, chassis number 140038 remains in an outstanding state of preservation and is a fantastic ambassador for its breed. Aguttes' Summer Sale represents a rare chance to acquire the last representative of the great pre-war French marques, and this T14 would be an excellent choice for anyone looking to participate in the finest rallies or concours. While Talbot-Lago is long gone, it's cars like this outstanding T14 that ensure the marque is never forgotten.

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