


CLASSIC DRIVER



1953 Jaguar XK 120

Lot sold	USD 78 455 - 104 606 GBP 60 000 - 80 000 (listed)	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1953	Condition	Used
Chassis number	667082	Location	
Number of seats	2	Fuel type	Petrol
Drivetrain	2wd	Exterior colour	Other
Lot number	366	Engine number	KE 8560-8

Description

In current ownership for 39 years
1953 Jaguar XK120 Drophead Coupé
Registration no. to be advised
Chassis no. 667082
Engine no. KE 8560-8

'We claimed 120 mph (for the XK 120), a speed unheard of for a production car in those days' -
William Heynes, Chief Engineer, Jaguar Cars.

Conceived and constructed in but a few months, the XK120 debuted at the 1948 Earls Court Motor Show where the stunning-looking roadster caused a sensation, the resulting demand for what was then the world's fastest production car taking Jaguar by surprise. With orders rolling in apace, Jaguar had no choice but to think again about the XK120's method of construction. The work of Jaguar boss William Lyons himself and one of the most beautiful shapes ever to grace a motor car, the body had been conceived as a coachbuilt, aluminium panelled structure for the simple reason that Jaguar expected to sell no more than 200 XK120s in the first year! In conjunction with the Pressed Steel Fisher Company a new all-steel panelled body was developed, which retained the fabulous looks of the coachbuilt original while differing in minor external details. Beneath the skin the steel car was

entirely different and it would take some 20 months of development before manufacture could begin.

The XK120's heart was, of course, the fabulous XK engine, which had been developed during the war and was intended for Jaguar's forthcoming Mark VII saloon. A 3.4-litre 'six' embodying the best of modern design, it boasted twin overhead camshafts running in an aluminium-alloy cylinder head, seven main bearings and a maximum output of 160bhp. It went into a chassis that was essentially a shortened version of the simultaneously announced Mark V saloon's, featuring William Heynes' torsion bar independent front suspension. Jaguar lost no time in demonstrating that the XK120's claimed top speed was no idle boast. In May 1949, on the Jabbeke to Aeltre autoroute, an example with its hood and side screens in place recorded a speed of 126mph and 132mph with the hood and windscreen detached and an under-tray fitted.

The XK120 set new standards of comfort, roadholding and performance for British sports cars and, in keeping with the Jaguar tradition, there was nothing to touch it at the price. Coupé and drophead coupé versions followed, and for customers who found the standard car too slow, there was the Special Equipment (SE) package which boosted power to 180bhp. With either engine and regardless of the type of bodywork, the XK120 was a genuine 120mph car capable of sustained high-speed cruising.

The XK120 was produced until 1954 and would prove to be the most popular of the XK series, with 12,078 examples built, of which only 294 were right-hand drive dropheads like that offered here. Introduced in 1953, late in the XK120 production run, the drophead coupé is considered by many enthusiasts to be best of the breed, retaining the original open roadster's lines while boasting much greater practicality and refinement courtesy of its wind-up windows, opening quarter lights, heater, improved ventilation and a permanently attached lined Mohair hood, all of which had been first appeared on the fixed head coupé in 1951.

This XK120 drophead coupé was purchased by the current owner in December 1975. Nothing is known of its prior history. Works carried out since acquisition include rewiring the electrics forward of the bulkhead in the late 1970s and a 'body off' restoration undertaken circa 2000/2001. The latter involved removing and repairing all body panels; minor patching to the chassis; a complete interior re-trim in red Bridge of Weir leather; and a new hood. In 2013 the car was treated to a new clutch, all new brake hydraulics, an engine flush and new core plugs. Rear wheel spats, air horns, copper brake pipes, two 12-volt batteries and negative earth electrics are the only notified deviations from factory specification. Currently taxed, the car is offered with a V5 registration document and a photographic record of the restoration.

Bonhams 1793

Bonhams

AUCTIONEERS SINCE 1793

Title Mr

First name Jamie

Last name Knight

101 New Bond Street

London

W1S 1SR

United Kingdom

Phone +44-2074685801

Fax +44-2074477401

<http://www.bonhams.com>

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