
1962 Facel Vega Facel II

Lot sold	USD 82 044 - 95 718 GBP 60 000 - 70 000 (listed)	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1962	Condition	Used
Chassis number	HK2 A114	Location	
Number of seats	2	Fuel type	Petrol
Drivetrain	2wd	Exterior colour	Other
Lot number	343	Engine number	212132

Description

1962 Facel Vega Facel II Coupé Project

Registration no. 491 HYX

Chassis no. HK2 A114

Engine no. 212132

In its relatively short life, the French firm of Facel produced approximately 2,900 cars, all of which were stylish, luxurious and fast. Hand built, they were necessarily very expensive the Facel II was priced in Rolls-Royce territory and bought by the rich and famous seeking something exclusive and distinctive. The roll call of owners includes royalty, politicians, diplomats and entertainers: Tony Curtis, Danny Kaye, Ringo Starr, Joan Fontaine and Ava Gardner being counted among the latter. Confirming that there was high-performance substance behind Facel's unquestionable style, they were owned and driven by great motor racing figures such as Sir Stirling Moss, Maurice Trintignant and Rob Walker.

Launched in 1961, the Facel II was destined to be the last of the V8-engined models, production ceasing in 1964 after an unsuccessful venture into engine manufacture effectively bankrupted the company. Production of the preceding HK500 amounted to only 500-or-so units between 1958 and 1961, and that of the Facel II to a mere 182. Today these rare Franco-American classics are highly sought after.

This Facel II, chassis number 'HK2 A114', had reached H W Motors (HWM) by 26th February 1962 when a first service was carried out, but was not registered (as '958 XPF') until 2nd April. It was the 15th Facel II built and the 4th right-hand drive car, but 'HK2 A112' (RHD also) was written off in an accident at the factory before being sold, so 'A114' was effectively the 14th car and 3rd RHD. HWM's demonstrator, '958 XPF' was registered in the name of Intercontinental Cars Limited and featured in Autocar's road test published in its edition of 3rd August 1962 (copy article available) and Motor's of 12th September '62, the latter describing the Facel as 'Brute Strength and Elegance'. It is also pictured in Jean Daninos's book on the marque.

The car was originally finished Facel Blue metallic with blue-piped black leather interior. HWM had decided that the standard imitation-wood dashboards were inferior and planned to have all its Facel IIs fitted with real wood ones made to their order, but after a couple had been made (one of which is in 'A114') the supplier declined to make any more. In November 1962 HWM changed the rear axle ratio to the optional 3.31:1 (from the stock 2.93:1) among various other tweaks they carried out. HWM produced a nice little booklet of photographs of this car, which had covered nearly 30,000 miles in their hands before being sold in October 1963 via a dealer in Forres to J Hepburn-Wright of Westerton House, Pluscarden, Morayshire.

There were several more changes of owner during the 1960s (details on file) and somewhere along the way the odometer appears to have been turned back some 20,000 miles as it read 38,900 on 5th September 1964 but 19,896 on 12th October of that year. Recording the change of registration from 'FSO 1' to the current '491 HYX', the accompanying old-style continuation logbook records the owner at time of issue (11th November 1970) as Wensley Haydon-Baillie. Once one of this country's 50 richest individuals, businessman and entrepreneur Haydon-Baillie enjoyed a rags-to-riches rise to prominence - he is a former owner of Wentworth Woodhouse near Rotherham, one of Europe's largest and most imposing Georgian-era private houses - before going into voluntary liquidation in 1998 with debts of £13 million. The Facel's flared wheelarches, wide alloy wheels and 7.2-litre Chrysler New Yorker engine are modifications believed to date from his ownership.

Its next owner is believed to have been a Mr Scantlebury, who lived somewhere near Huntingdon, followed by the dealers Greenwell & Grimwood of Ashwood, Devon, from whom it was purchased by the recently deceased owner in December 1976 (purchase receipt on file). Intending to restore the Facel, its owner consigned the car to his garage where it has remained to this day, untouched. Offered for restoration and sold strictly as viewed, 'A114' represents a wonderful opportunity to restore one of these supremely elegant Grandes Routières to its former glory. The car comes with an old-style V5 registration document, a document from Firestone to Haydon Baillie making reference to racing tyres and a host of valuable spare parts including a windscreen, drivers door glass, four wings, headlight glasses, chrome strips, various light lenses and other items.

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