


CLASSIC DRIVER

1933 Pierce-Arrow Twelve

Lot sold	USD 549 990 - 672 210 EUR 450 000 - 550 000 (listed)	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1933	Condition	Restored
Number of seats	2	Location	
Drivetrain	2wd	Fuel type	Petrol
Lot number	134	Exterior colour	Green
		Car type	Other

Description

French title

Chassis n° 355091

- Exclusive model, thought to be the only surviving example
- Meticulously restored
- Sophisticated V12 engine
- Prestigious provenance
- The only surviving car with this body
- Collection Dr. Arnold Kawlath

At the end of the 1920s, American luxury marques were in fierce competition, continually striving to out-do each other with increasing levels of power and luxury. Duesenberg led the way with performance until Cadillac responded with their multi-cylinder engines, launching the 'Sixteen' model in 1930, powered by a huge V16 engine ! To defend its place in this competitive market, Pierce-Arrow, one of the biggest luxury marques in America, launched a V12 model in 1932. It had a 7.4-litre engine producing 150 bhp, which increased to 175 bhp the following year. These impressive levels of power were combined with an abundance of luxury and equipment, as can be seen on the example we are delighted to present.

It is believed that this Pierce Arrow V12 was sold new in Hollywood to the actress Carole Lombard, who starred in many films in Hollywood's heyday. Married to Clark Gable, she died tragically in a plane crash in January 1942. In 1944, the car was bought and stored by Richard Riggs, from Portland, Ohio, who then passed it to his nephew, Samuel Merrell. In 1998, this wonderful Pierce-Arrow was acquired by Pat Craig, an enthusiast and historian for the marque who set about a careful restoration of the car. Drawing on his specialist knowledge as an historian, he confirmed that it is the only surviving example of its type with " convertible sedan " coachwork built by LeBaron.

In January 2004, the car sold to a fellow enthusiast who decided to carry out extensive work. He applied himself to perfecting the detailed finish of the bodywork, sourcing mirrors that were correctly mounted on the spare wheel cover and restoring the boot. The awning, which was cracked in places, was renewed, and the panels of the hood were refurbished to ensure that they closed properly. The running boards and lower body also received attention, so that the car was restored to near perfect condition.

On the mechanical side, careful inspection prompted an engine rebuild. The sleeves were dismantled, polished and refitted with new seals, a new cylinder head was fitted and all hoses, seals, screws and fixings were replaced with the correct parts. The radiator was taken out and restored, the wiper motors refurbished and the carburettors dismantled and rebuilt. The exhaust system was also taken apart and refitted in as-new condition, as were the thermostat and vacuum hoses. The Pierce-Arrow had already benefitted from an earlier restoration, but this work elevated the car to a new

level.

Exhibited in 2005 at the Greenwich Concours d'Élégance, it won " Best American Open Car " and similar accolades at Radnor Hut and the Burn Prevention Foundation. At the start of 2006 the car joined the O'Quinn Collection and was subsequently acquired by Arnold Kawlath, a dedicated German collector, who kept this handsome car running to maintain its condition.

Boasting splendid and completely convertible coachwork with adjustable headlights, the highest level of finish, a stunning interior sporting the finest leather, and powered by a highly sophisticated engine, this Pierce Arrow embodies the extravagance of 1930s America and its Hollywood stars.

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