


CLASSIC DRIVER



1947 Lancia Aprilia Pininfarina Convertible

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|---------------------|--|-----------------------|---|
| Lot sold | USD 242 420 - 269 356 GBP 180 000 - 200 000 (listed) | Drive | RHD |
| Year of manufacture | 1946 | Condition | Used |
| Gearbox | Manual | Location |  |
| Chassis number | 439-11854 | Fuel type | Petrol |
| Number of seats | 2 | Exterior colour | Other |
| Drivetrain | 2wd | Car type | Other |
| Lot number | 519 | Engine number | 2442 |
| | | Exterior brand colour | White |
| | | Interior brand colour | Red Leather |

Description

Guide price: £180000 - £200000. Built on a Type 439 chassis, this supremely elegant Cabriolet is one of ten clothed by Batista FarinaRHD from new and powered by a narrow-angle V4 of 1486cc, a very advanced design, unique at the timeIt spent most of its life in Switzerland where it was purchased by Jean Pierre Baumgartner, a world authority on Lancias of this periodThen subject to a five-year restoration (two years on the body alone) by the top Lancia experts in Europe The car remains in superb, post-restoration condition and we welcome any inspection#439-11854 is a significant motor car and probably the finest example of Pinin Farina's post-war CabrioletsOffered to the market for the first time ever. A once in a lifetime opportunity<p>The Lancia Aprilia Berline was introduced in 1937 and was the last Lancia to have Vincenzo Lancia's input before his death. The engine was a narrow-angled V4 1300cc unit (one cylinder head) and sliding pillar front suspension was carried on from previous models. The rear suspension was by trailing arm with a transverse leaf spring mounted onto the rear differential. Brakes were hydraulic front and rear drums with the rears being inboard. The original

Berline bodyshell was a monocoque construction with a pillarless, front and rear door opening. All very advanced and all of which made the car a revelation in its day.

After the war, Lancia resumed production of the small car, continuing until 1949. Special designs were built on these cars by such legendary coachbuilders as Zagato, Carrozzeria Touring, Bertone and Vignale but, it is generally agreed that the most beautiful ever built is the Pinin Farina 'Speciale Cabriolet'.

Carrozzeria Pinin Farina was founded in 1930 by Batista 'Pinin' Farina, having broken away from his brother's company, Stabilimenti Farina. Later, best known for their tie-up with Ferrari, Pinin Farina was initially helped in the early days with financial backing from Vincenzo Lancia so it's no surprise that there has always been a strong connection between the two companies. Their engagement with the Aprilia began from the model's introduction and, before the war, they built bespoke Aprilias for road and competition use, as well as two-door cabriolets and four-light and six-light Berlinas, which were offered in the factory catalogue. Remarkably, although late-war production was greatly reduced by Allied bombing, Aprilia production continued throughout the conflict. As a result, when Aprilia chassis number 439-11844 was delivered to Pinin Farina in 1946, the Carrozzeria was intimately familiar with the model and its design potential.

In the pre-war and immediate post-war years, most coachbuilders designed cars with long bonnets, due to the length of the engine, however, with the compact Lancia 1482cc V4, Pinin Farina was able to build the new car with a shorter nose, enabling a more centrally positioned passenger compartment and slender, elegant rear styling. It was clothed in cabriolet coachwork and fitted with two seats plus rear jump seats. The driver and passenger face a dashboard colour-matched to the body and filled with unique Pinin Farina gauges and styling touches. It's a masterpiece in Bakelite and chrome. It is, however, the cabriolet's exterior that sets it apart - a remarkable exercise in sculpted panels and distinctive details. With the lines of the windshield pillar and side window extending into the door cuts, it is as beautiful with the top up as with it down. With its smart brightwork, radius wheel arches, and subtle modelling, the design established Pinin Farina's post-war direction for years to come.

After the end of the Second World War, car manufacturers were changing over from wartime obligations to the production of, much-needed, motor cars. Plans that had been shelved for years were dusted off and 'show cars' were produced for the 33rd Salon de l'Automobile de Paris in October 1946. Most of the cars brought to the show were utilitarian pre-war designs, however, after an eight-year hiatus, the auto show nevertheless generated significant excitement. Twice as many people attended (809,000) as had in 1938. Lines of people stretched from the main gate all the way to the Seine. Two things were missing, however, as car makers from Germany and Italy were banned from the show that year (so was Japan, but that wasn't considered to be significant).

Gian Battista "Pinin" Farina was not a man to be dictated to and he had two cars that he fully intended to bring to the show - ban or not! With his 20-year old son Sergio, and accompanied by a couple of family friends, the group set off from Turin for the drive to Paris. Gian Battista drove the Lancia Aprilia Cabriolet and Sergio took the wheel of an Alfa Romeo 6C 2500 Speciale. They stopped at a local garage, cleaned up the cars and set off to display the new creations. Since he knew that the cars would be denied entrance to the Grand Palais, Gian Battista (and Sergio) slowly drove to the exhibit and parked the cars on Avenue Winston-Churchill, right in front of the Palais. The manager of the show was furious, but the crowd that gathered was thick and the press photographers were enthusiastic. The renowned magazine "L'Illustration" produced a special Motor Show edition and paid tribute to the talent of Pinin Farina by placing the Lancia and the Alfa Romeo on the cover. Such was the excitement created by the stunning 'Speciale Automobili' that the frustrated show officials threw up their hands and allowed the two automobiles to remain parked outside the exhibition, becoming the unofficial stars.

Chassis Number 439-11854 was built by the factory in 1946 and first registered on the 1st January 1947. It was one of ten chassis allocated to receive the attentions of Pinin Farina and be fitted with a cabriolet body and, as was the custom at the time, it was built in right-hand drive. We understand its lucky first owner lived in Switzerland and certainly it was found there by the car's second owner, Jean Pierre Baumgartner. Herr Baumgartner is well recognised within the world of classic Lancias in Switzerland and has published a book based on his experiences of the restorations of vintage Lancias and rare Pininfarina examples. (280 pages). 11854 had spent a number of years in a field and was in a rather sorry state (see pics) when he purchased it so the decision was taken to restore it, returning it to its original appearance.

The whole

restoration process took five years and was an object lesson in how to do it properly.</p><p>The mechanics were restored by a Master Lancia Specialist, Mr Ermanno Bassigna who became a master mechanic at the Lancia Factory. All the original parts were ordered by Enrice Barlaam from the world famous Company " Cavalitto " from Torino in Italy. Over a time period of two years the body (bare metal respray) was restored by two famous body and sheet metal restaurateur,s Mr Margainarz and Mr Jose Fernandez from Lausanne in Switzerland. All the interior work was done by Mr Trinkler, a known Swiss car upholsterer also from Lausanne. The whole project was overseen by Herr Baumgartner with the intention of returning this rare Lancia to the way it was when it left Pinin Farina in early 1947. The car was finished in gleaming White with a wine-red leather interior and a bespoke hood was crafted in dark blue mohair. The Lancia was later sold to a Swiss gentleman and we understand that our vendor is only the fourth owner of this historic car.</p><p>The car's current condition is outstanding and we welcome any inspection.</p><p>This Lancia Aprilia is a highly significant Pinin Farina post-war design. Equally importantly, its advanced engineering makes it as usable as it is beautiful and as rewarding to drive as it is to admire.</p>

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