
1938 Bugatti Type 57C Atalante

Lot sold	USD 2 800 000 - 3 300 000	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1938	Condition	Used
Lot number	132	Location	
		Exterior colour	Other
		Car type	Other

Description

PROVENANCE

Nicholas Stamati Embiricos, London, England (acquired new via W. Sorel, London in 1938)
Ray Murray, Blue Ridge Summit, Pennsylvania (acquired from the estate of the above circa 1941)
Al Garthwaite, Malvern, Pennsylvania (acquired from the above in 1947)
Dr. Samuel Scher, Mamaronek, New York (acquired from the above in 1951)
Henry Albert Rudkin Jr., Norwalk, Connecticut (acquired from the above in 1951)
Samuel J. Rivman, New York, New York (acquired by 1954)
John Wendell Straus, New York, New York (acquired from the above in 1955)
Dennis Nicotra, Connecticut (acquired from the above in 2007)
Keith Anderson, New York, New York (acquired from the above in 2008)
Dr. Rick Workman, Windermere, Florida (acquired from the above in 2013)
Current Owner (acquired from the above)

RACE HISTORY

Bridgheampton Cup Race, June 1949, Garthwaite, No. 51 (DNF)
Mt. Equinox Hillclimb, Vermont, July 1950, Garthwaite (8th Overall)

EXHIBITED

Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance®, Pebble Beach, California, August 2007
American Bugatti Club Finger Lakes Rally, Watkins Glen, New York, September 2007
Saratoga Auto Museum, Saratoga Springs, New York, January–March, 2008
Greenwich Concours d'Elegance, Greenwich, Connecticut, June 2008

Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance®, Pebble Beach, California, August 2011 (Second in Class)
Saratoga Auto Museum Invitational, Saratoga Springs, New York, May 2012 (Best of Show)
Pinehurst Concours d'Elegance, Pinehurst, North Carolina, May 2013
Lake Mirror Classic, Lakeland, Florida, October 2014
Hilton Head Island Concours d'Elegance, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, November 2014 (Best of Show)
Cavallino Classic, Palm Beach, Florida, January 2015
The Elegance at Hershey, Hershey, Pennsylvania, June 2015 (Hotel Hershey Award)
Greenwich Concours d'Elegance, Greenwich, Connecticut, June 2017 (Best in Show, International)

LITERATURE

, March 2008, cover article
, vol. 5, no. 1, 2015, feature article on pp. 19–22

THIS CAR

The rich history of this Bugatti Type 57C can be traced back to its first owner, Nicholas Stamati Embiricos, the scion of a large Greek shipping firm. Like his cousin, famed racer André Maris Embiricos, Nicholas was a successful gentleman driver with a passion for sporting automobiles. During the mid-1930s, Nicholas campaigned both a Corsica-bodied Bugatti Type 57S and an ex-works ERA in several European events. With his experience racing a Bugatti, Nicholas was quite familiar with the thoroughbred bloodline of the French marque, and he placed an order for a new Type 57C with Colonel W. Sorel, manager of Bugatti's London agency.

Completed at Molsheim, France, in November 1938, Nicholas' Type 57C, chassis 57766, was sent to Gangloff of Colmar, France, where it received Stelvio cabriolet coachwork. In May 1939, the Bugatti was registered in the UK as "FXF 55"; by 1941, Nicholas had shipped the car to Palm Beach, Florida, where he maintained a vacation residence. On July 1, 1941, however, tragedy struck: Nicholas perished when his Fairchild 24 Monoplane crashed near Matunuck, Rhode Island.

Following Nicholas Embiricos death, his Bugatti remained in the US and was sold to Ray Murray of Blue Ridge Summit, Pennsylvania, who owned a late, non-supercharged Type 57 Atalante, chassis 57733. That Atalante, one of 12 built with aluminum coachwork and distinguishable by its ridged fender lines, was displayed in the French Pavilion at the New York World's Fair in 1939. With two late-production Type 57s in his garage, Mr. Murray decided he preferred having the exotic Atalante coupe body on the supercharged chassis, and the two Bugattis traded coachwork during the war years. In 1944, Mr. Murray parted with the now Stelvio-bodied 57733, and three years later he sold 57766 to Al Garthwaite of Malvern, Pennsylvania, via Inskip.

An early ARCA and SCCA member, Garthwaite was one of the key players in the burgeoning US road-racing movement. On June 11, 1949, Garthwaite's 57C was one of 17 cars on the starting grid for the 100-mile feature event at the Bridgehampton Cup Race. Pitted against an impressive group of sports cars, the supercharged Atalante gave a valiant performance until a broken connecting rod put an end to its effort. Garthwaite's next appearance in 57766 came at the Mt. Equinox Hillclimb in Vermont in July 1950. Although it was one of the few prewar cars to compete, the 57C managed the eighth-fastest time of the day, placing just behind the XK120 Roadster of George Rand.

After several years of enthusiastic use, Garthwaite sold his Bugatti to Dr. Samuel Scher, a pioneering collector of antique automobiles. Then came short stints with two additional enthusiasts, Henry Rudkin Jr. and Samuel Rivman, before it was purchased by John Wendell Straus, the grandson of Isidor Straus, at one time a co-owner of R.H. Macy & Company.

A sophisticated collector of art and automobiles, John Straus was also a great admirer of French culture, and he recognized this Bugatti as a perfect fit for his collection. During the 1950s, the car was a frequent sight in the New York area and was pictured in a Ralph Stein article on the Type 57 model.

In 1962, Mr. Straus parked the Atalante in a nondescript suburban garage, leaving it virtually abandoned for nearly 45 years. It was not until 2007 that the long-hidden Bugatti was finally uncovered. The Bugatti remained in an essentially undisturbed state, looking just as it had when put

away in 1962. Beneath layers of dust was a wonderfully original Type 57C, and it was found to be very well preserved and completely intact. Following its sale to an East Coast collector, the unrestored Bugatti was carefully returned to operating condition and displayed in the Prewar Preservation class at the 2007 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance®.

In 2008, the Bugatti was acquired by a prominent collector in the Northeast. That owner entrusted Scott Sargent's Sargent Metal Works of Fairlee, Vermont, to perform a thorough restoration. Sargent was uniquely qualified, and he found the car to be an incredibly correct and intact example. In discussing this unique Atalante, Sargent recalls:

"The best restored cars begin with a very complete and solid foundation, where you have all the information available. You rarely find prewar cars that are this way, especially Bugattis. They have usually been restored several times before and it is very difficult to find any trace of the original maker. Here we had a car that was fundamentally sound and untouched, but everything was there. It was a really exciting opportunity to restore this car. We just kept discovering these amazing details."

In fact, only during restoration did the extraordinarily genuine character of this Bugatti become apparent. The engine, rear end, transmission, and front axle are the matching-numbers components fitted at the factory; additionally, a remarkable number of minor components are also stamped with the indexed sub-assembly no. 350. This number was found throughout the chassis, from the cam boxes and lower sump to the pressure plate and flywheel. Similarly, the aluminum Atalante coachwork and underlying wood substructure were found to be exceptionally original, with the body no. 32 stamped into the fenders, doors, floorboards, brackets, dashboard, and firewall. Grease-pencil markings that also read "32" were discovered in the rear toolbox area and on sections of the interior upholstery.

Once the bodywork was prepared for paint, O'Donnell Classics finished the car in a striking black and blue livery carefully selected for its period-correct appearance. The cabin was meticulously restored using the well-preserved original features as a guide for authenticity. Mike Lemire of Richmond, Vermont, was responsible for upholstery and went to great lengths to match the distinctive grain and color of the original leather.

With the engine completely disassembled and inspected, Gary Okoren and Sam Jepson performed a thorough rebuild utilizing the finest internal components available. As the engine work was being carried out, Sargent Metal Works restored the chassis and rebuilt the gearbox, rear end, suspension, and braking systems.

During final assembly, every detail was addressed, from the proper etching on the window glass to the correct hand-scraped finishes in the engine bay. Outfitted with elegant "moustache" bumpers, Marchal headlamps, and Scintilla taillights, this Bugatti is simply brilliant in every respect. Upon its completion in 2011, the restored Atalante was shown once again at Pebble Beach, earning a class award, and has gone on to wide acclaim at numerous concours, being honored with several best of show awards.

As a late-series Type 57C, this Bugatti offers brisk acceleration, accompanied by the distinctive mechanical pitch of a Roots-type supercharger. Its road manners are also said to be very responsive, thanks to the use of tubular shock absorbers and the large-diameter finned brakes.

During its current ownership, the Atalante has been further refined under the continued care of Sargent Metal Works. Significantly, this car is accompanied by one of the very limited complete sets of Bugatti Type 57 road tools, including a handcrafted case, blueprints, as well as many original period tools including a jack, jack handle, grease gun, and tire pressure gauge. The creation of the tools has spanned several years, and, due to the quality, execution, and accuracy of the finished product, each of the sets earned the endorsement of the Bugatti factory. A work of art in its own right, the tool set and its hand-trimmed leather folios and cases must be seen to be fully appreciated.

In 1938, as today, there is little that could compare both in terms of performance and design to a Bugatti Type 57C. As a matching-numbers example with sensational aluminum Atalante coachwork designed by Jean Bugatti, this is already an immensely desirable Bugatti and thus one of the great prewar automobiles. Consider then its rich provenance, fascinating competition history, genuine

character, and multiple award-winning restoration, and you have a classic automobile of the very highest order. Without question, 57766 is among the very best of an extraordinarily refined breed.

Gooding & Company

Title Mr

First name Charles

Last name Blonigan

1517 20th Street

Santa Monica 90404 California

United States

Phone +1 (310) 899-1960

<http://www.goodingco.com/>

<https://www.classicdriver.com/en/car/bugatti/type-57-atalante/1938/546082>

© Classic Driver. All rights reserved.