

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## 1911 Hydroplane Racer Vieser

- Lot sold  
USD 42 361 - 54 465  
GBP 35 000 - 45 000 (listed)  
**Year of manufacture** 1911
- **Number of seats** 2
- **Drivetrain** 2wd
- **Lot number** 527
- 
- **Drive** LHD
- **Condition** Used
- **Location** 
- **Fuel type** Petrol
- **Exterior colour** Other
- 

### Description

1911 Vauxhall-engined Racing Hydroplane

The vessel offered here, 'Jazz', is one of three of its type designed prior to WWI by Montagu Batting to compete in the Royal Motor Yacht Club's Restricted Class, the rules for which had been announced in 1911. Almost identical, Batting's three boats were constructed on the Thorneycroft hydroplane principal and built under licence by Morgan Giles & May in Hammersmith. Named 'RIP II', 'Pixie II', and 'Batboat I', the boats were owned by, respectively, Mr James Bird, Colonel Cowper-Essex, and Montagu Batting himself. It is not known for certain which one of these three became 'Jazz'.

The Restricted Class rules permitted engines of up to 4.1 litres capacity, and Vauxhall, established marine engine makers long before they turned to motor manufacturing, built a dozen suitable units, three of which found their way into Batting's boats. Designated 'A10', Vauxhall's four-cylinder sidevalve marine engine was essentially the same as that used in its 30/98 sports car. Producing 55bhp at 2,200rpm in racing trim, it gave the lightly built Batting boats a top speed of around 30 knots. Handling difficulties were encountered at speed, which soon gave rise to a series of modifications, which included brass planes at either side to give the stern greater lifting power.

Already renamed by 1924, 'Jazz' was offered for sale that year by a Mr Campbell-Farrer and was purchased by one Donald Rowe, a garage proprietor who was a committee member of the Southampton Motor Boat Club. Rowe refurbished the hull and engine, and raced 'Jazz' throughout through to the end of the 1920s. He meticulously maintained the boat and kept her until 1967 when she was sold to Alan Betteridge, another garage proprietor and collector of Veteran and Vintage cars. There is (copy) correspondence on file between Rowe and Vauxhall Motors Ltd concerning the adaptability of D-Type engines to hydroplane use.

Betteridge carried out further refurbishment and, despite the boat's age, entered 'Jazz' in the 1968 Daily Express Bollinger Trophy (now the Round the Island Race) which circumnavigated the Isle of Wight. He kept 'Jazz' until 1997 when ill health forced her sale, and it was at this point in her life that the boat was acquired by the current vendor.

Examined and assessed by John Hewett and Steve Mills, 'Jazz' was found to be in remarkable condition for her age and exceptionally original, even down to the engine's cast-iron racing pistons, which were in perfectly serviceable condition. The hull merely required some additional bronze fastenings and was then refinished in traditional Epifanes yacht varnish. Since her 1998 re-commissioning, 'Jazz' has proved to be

virtually watertight, while the fixtures and fittings, including the additional brass planes fitted in 1913, are nicely patinated. The comprehensive history file contains plentiful material in the form of correspondence, race entries, invoices, etc but, sadly, nothing prior to 1924. The file also contains an excellent article by Simon Everett, published in Classic Boat in 2003, which gives a fuller account of the craft's history (perusal recommended).

While in the vendor's care, 'Jazz' has taken part in numerous classic motor boat races around Europe at venues such as Monaco, Lake Como, and Aix-les-Bains, while in recent years she has been on display in the Motor Boat Museum on the Isle of Wight.

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