

CLASSIC DRIVER

1953 Jaguar XK 120

- Lot sold
USD 613 480 - 736 176
GBP 500 000 - 600 000 (listed)
Year of manufacture 1953
- **Chassis number** S661110
- **Number of seats** 2
- **Drivetrain** 2wd
- **Lot number** 248
-
- **Drive** LHD
- **Condition** Used
- **Location** 
- **Fuel type** Petrol
- **Exterior colour** Other
-

Description

1953 Jaguar XK120 SE 3.4-Litre Competition Roadster
Registration no. PCR 379
Chassis no. S661110

'Three coachloads of Jaguar employees made the pilgrimage to Silverstone and were rewarded for their enthusiasm by seeing one of our cars gain one of the most convincing victories seen on a race track... whenever or wherever a production car race is held again, we may be sure that Jaguar will be well represented and will give a good account of itself.' ? Jaguar Journal, 1949.

The XK120 set new standards of comfort, roadholding and performance for British sports cars, and in keeping with the Jaguar tradition there was nothing to touch it at the price. It was an immense success in North America, finding the majority of its customers there, and when Road & Track tested one in 1951 they announced that 'the XK120 has performance far and above any stock American make... by far the fastest car yet tested by Road & Track, a two-way average of 121.6mph being attained.'

Although it had not been designed with racing in mind, the XK120's competition potential was immediately obvious, not least to the factory, which entered a three-car team in the Daily Express one-hour race for standard production cars at Silverstone in August 1949. The XK's of Leslie Johnson and Peter Walker duly rewarded Jaguar's faith in its new sports car by finishing 1st and 2nd respectively, thus setting the scene for an illustrious competition career that would culminate in the development of the legendary C-Type.

This XK120 roadster was manufactured in 1953 and delivered to Jaguar factory apprentice Mike Salmon as a 21st birthday present. Mike began his racing career with this XK120, moving on to a C-Type in 1957, and would go on to enjoy considerable success in international sports car racing, the highlights of which were two 3rd place finishes at Le Mans ? in 1963 and 1977.

This XK was upgraded by Mike during his period of ownership, gaining a close-ratio gearbox, larger carburettors, metal tonneau, headlight air duct, competition brake drums, etc. It must have been very quick,

as Jaguar's legendary test drive Norman Dewis lapped this car at MIRA in period, recording a speed of 134mph.

Mike Salmon competed with 'PCR 379' in various hill climbs and speed trials during 1954-1956 including Firle, Shelsley Walsh, Brunton, Brighton, Bo'ness, and Rest-and-be-Thankful, achieving 1st-in-class results at Bo'ness in July and September 1954. He also raced the XK at major UK circuits during 1955-1956 including Aintree, Crimond, Silverstone, Mallory Park, Oulton Park, and Goodwood, achieving podium finishes in the Oulton Park 3-Hour race and the Aintree 100 as part of the 'Autosport Trophy' series.

Salmon continued to run the XK while he was working at Rossleigh Motors in Edinburgh and then, when the car had covered only 13,000 miles in total, sold it to purchase a Jaguar C-Type. The XK120 was sold to George Hilditch, a Coventry scrap metal merchant, who later crashed it, causing relatively minor damage to the front end. Hilditch entered the Jaguar in the Mancetta hill climb in 1957 and also used it for touring Scotland (photographs on file).

In the late 1970s, a restoration was carried out for the then owner, Mr D Winstanley, this being a 'body off' rebuild that included a new radiator, petrol tank, and front wings; and a total re-trim and rewire, etc (bills on file). The preceding owner purchased the car in May 1980 from Vintage Autos Limited; at that time 'PCR 379' had covered fewer than 1,000 miles since the total overhaul. For the next 20 years the owner had the XK maintained by his own dedicated engineer.

An original right-hand drive Special Equipment model, this XK is finished in the rare factory colour of Lavender Grey, with red leather interior. Since purchased by the vendor the car has been treated to a 'body off', 'last nut and bolt', total restoration, which was completed early in 2017. During this restoration the original un-restored cylinder block was found, but is separate and comes with the car. This XK has featured in many books and articles, and comes with an extensive history file containing, among other documents, copies of race programmes and period photographs. It recently featured in a photo shoot with fashion model, David Gandy.

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