
1968 Citroen DS

Lot sold	USD 214 244 - 248 072 EUR 190 000 - 220 000 (listed)	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1968	Condition	Used
Chassis number	4609606	Location	
Number of seats	2	Fuel type	Petrol
Drivetrain	2wd	Exterior colour	Other
Lot number	12	Engine number	0318007358

Description

1968 Citroën DS21 Décapotable

Coachwork by Henri Chapron

Chassis no. 4609606

Engine no. 0318007358

Just as it had done 21 years previously with the revolutionary Traction Avant, Citroën stunned the world again in 1955 with the launch of the strikingly styled 'DS'. Beneath the shark-like newcomer's aerodynamically efficient, low-drag bodyshell there was all-independent, self-levelling, hydro-pneumatic suspension plus power-operated brakes, clutch, and steering.

The project had been initiated in the 1930s by the company's managing director, Pierre-Jules Boulanger, and would be brought to fruition by designers Andre Lefebvre, previously with Voisin and Renault, and Flaminio Bertoni, who had worked on the styling of the pre-war Traction Avant. Part of Boulanger's brief had been that the proposed 'VGD' (Voiture de Grand Diffusion or Mass Market Car) should be capable of affording a comfortable ride over sub-standard rural roads while remaining stable at sustained high speeds on the Autoroutes. The solution to these seemingly incompatible requirements was the famous hydro-pneumatic suspension, suggested by Citroën engineer Paul Mages. No European car would match the DS's ride quality for several years, the fundamental soundness of Citroën's ahead-of-its-time hydro-pneumatic suspension being demonstrated by its survival until recently in top-of-the-range models.

In September 1965 the DS's original 1,911cc, overhead-valve, long-stroke engine inherited from the Traction Avant - was replaced by a short-stroke 1,985cc unit, also available in 2,175cc and 2,347cc versions, while other DS developments included swivelling headlights, fuel injection and a five-speed gearbox. Other models offered alongside the original DS were the ID (a simplified, cheaper version), the cavernous Safari estate and the two-door Décapotable (convertible), the latter boasting coachwork by Henri Chapron. Chapron's first convertibles had been produced independently of Citroën but the factory eventually gave the project its blessing. Built by Chapron, Citroën's own Décapotables were erected on the longer, stronger chassis of the ID Break (Estate). In total, 1,365 usine (factory) convertibles were made with either the DS19 or DS21 engine between 1960 and 1971, while Chapron built a further 389 of his own, the last in 1973.

Built in 1967 and first registered in 1968, this matching-numbers DS 21 Décapotable has the most desirable hydraulic semi-automatic gearbox and retains its original registration, '6394 UY 75'. A journalist working in Paris, the first owner was a relative of the Chapron family, and the DS remained in his possession until 1988 when it was sold to a Parisian professor of psychology, Mr Ike Benzakein. This car has belonged to only two families since it left the factory.

In 1990, Mr Benzakein commenced a restoration to the highest standard; the chassis, body, engine, transmission, hydraulics, interior, and convertible hood all being restored to 'as new' condition, while the car was repainted in Bleu Antartique, a colour that was available in 1967. Today, this DS remains in outstanding condition; fastidiously maintained, it runs and drives superbly. Restoration bills are on file and the car also comes with its original plates and a French Carte Grise. An eye-catcher at any gathering, this magnificent and rare piece of French motoring history is 'on the button' and ready to be enjoyed.

Bonhams 1793

Title Mr

First name Jamie

Last name Knight

101 New Bond Street

London

W1S 1SR

United Kingdom

Phone +33-142611011

Fax +33-142611015

<https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/25565/>

<https://www.classicdriver.com/en/car/citroen/ds/1968/700620>

© Classic Driver. All rights reserved.