

CLASSIC DRIVER

1940 Buick Super - Estate Wagon

Estate Wagon

- Lot sold
USD 0
- **Year of manufacture** 1940
- **Lot number** 158
- **Condition** Used
- **Location** 
- **Exterior colour** Other
- **Car type** Other
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Description

Estimate:
\$90,000 - \$110,000

- Desirable first year of the Buick 'woodie' wagon model
- One of 495 1940 Estate Wagons built for the U.S. market
- Powered by a 107-bhp overhead-valve "Dynaflash" straight-eight
- Restored by noted pre-war Buick expert Doug Seybold
- Extensive list of awards attesting to its quality and appeal

No vehicle style blends utilitarian functionality with timeless, easygoing glamor quite as deftly as the classic American wood-bodied station wagon. It is something of a surprise, then, that Buick's appealing interpretation of the 'woodie' formula came about almost by chance.

As told by historians Terry Dunham and Lawrence Gustin in *The Buick: A Complete History*, Evelyn "Bunny" McLeod, a Hollywood socialite and wife of director Norman Z. McLeod, gave a party at her Beverly Hills home. In attendance were GM's Harley Earl and Buick president Harlowe Curtice. Mrs. McLeod happened to mention that she did not own a Buick because the marque did not offer a station wagon. Upon return to Detroit, Earl set out to design one, and Curtice placed an order for 501 bodies: 495 for U.S. sales and six for export.

Built on the 121-in. wheelbase Super chassis, the resulting vehicle was designated the Model 59 Estate Wagon in accordance with Buick nomenclature. Motivation came from the 107 bhp, 248 cubic inch overhead-valve "Dynaflash" straight-eight used by the rest of the Super line, here mated to a three-speed manual transmission. Biehl's Auto Body Works in West Reading, Pennsylvania supplied the wooden bodies, though only for 1940; the following year, Buick turned to a different manufacturer capable of meeting unsurprisingly strong demand for the model.

This 1940 Super Estate Wagon is one example of that relatively limited first-year run. It received a 5,000-hour restoration at Doug Seybold Restorations in Westlake, Ohio. His expertise is readily apparent in the finished result. The body is framed in northern ash, with African mahogany panels. All hardware is polished stainless steel, as is the exhaust system.

The list of awards earned by this car is long: AACA First Junior, First Senior, Grand National, Senior Grand National, and an AACA National award for the "Best of the Best." Buick Club of America awards include BCA Senior, BCA Gold, and a BCA award for the highest-scoring car at a national meet. At the Glenmoor Gathering, it was the best 'woodie' of 21 shown. At Stan Hywet in Akron, Ohio, it won 1st in Class, Spectators' Choice, and Judges' Choice. It was also the Top Pre-war car at the Arthritis Foundation show in Columbus, and in 2019 it was awarded Most Elegant Pre-War Closed Car at St. Michaels Concours d'Elegance in Maryland.

Now ready for a new caretaker, this Buick is equally suitable for a relaxing life in the countryside or another turn of the show circuit—or, if its next owner so chooses, a little bit

of both. To view this car and others currently consigned to this auction, please visit the RM website at rmsothebys.com/en/auctions/0520.

RM Sotheby's

Title Mr

First name Augustin

Last name Sabatie-Garat

5 Heron Square

Richmond

TW9 1EL

United Kingdom

Phone +1 (519) 352-4575

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