
1911 Maxwell Model AB Runabout

Lot sold	USD 26 621 - 29 283 GBP 20 000 - 22 000 (listed)	Condition	Used
Year of manufacture	1911	Location	
Chassis number	14548	Exterior colour	Other
Lot number	203		

Description

1911 Maxwell Model AB Runabout

Registration no. BF 5033

Chassis no. 14548

Financed by Detroit sheet metal manufacturer Benjamin Briscoe and East Coast plutocrat J P Morgan, ex-Oldsmobile and Northern engineer Jonathan D Maxwell built his first car - an advanced twin-cylinder design with water cooling, mechanical inlet valves, two-speed planetary transmission, shaft drive and right-hand steering wheel - in 1904. The twin proved an enormous success from the start. A four-cylinder model joined the line-up for 1906 and Maxwell expanded from its Tarrytown, New York base, opening factories in Auburn, Indiana, and Rhode Island. Sound engineering was complemented by a series of headline-grabbing publicity stunts that helped boost sales, none more successful than a transcontinental trip from New York to San Francisco undertaken by a team of four lady drivers in 1909. The following year the firm sold over 20,000 cars, a total exceeded only by Ford and Buick. From this high point Maxwell went into decline. Hit hard by the post-WWI depression, Maxwell merged - unsuccessfully - with Chalmers and acquired a new president in the person of Walter Percy Chrysler, whose new marque would rise from the Maxwell-Chalmers ashes.

The car offered here is one of the last of Maxwell's highly successful twin-cylinder runabouts, this type being discontinued after 1912. The AB was a sturdy two-seater with high scuttle, tall horizontally split windscreen, a metal framed hood, and 20" diameter artillery wheels. Boasting mechanically operated inlet valves, the horizontally opposed engine was located at the front and cooled by a Mercedes-style radiator for the thermo-siphon circulation. Transmission was by means of a two-speed

planetary gearbox with shaft drive to the rear axle, with drum brakes on the rear axle only. The maximum speed was 35mph.

In June 1992 this Maxwell was offered for sale at a UK auction having recently been imported from the USA, and was described at that time as 'fully restored'. The car has plentiful brasswork, including very impressive original Maxwell No 27 acetylene headlamps and matching side lamps. It is described by the vendor as in very good/excellent condition in all respects: body, paintwork, glass, wheels/tyres, and interior. The vendor also reports that the rebuilt engine (still fitted with the original carburettor) starts and runs very well. Stored in recent years and not run since the restoration, the car is nevertheless said to be in very good condition overall, merely requiring some final setting up before regular use. Offered with a good history file, this delightful Maxwell represents a wonderful opportunity to own a fine example of a rare American Edwardian light car.

Bonhams 1793

Title Mr

First name Jamie

Last name Knight

101 New Bond Street

London

W1S 1SR

United Kingdom

Phone +44-2074477447

Fax +44-2074477401

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