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## 1900 Darracq Perfecta 2 Quadricycle

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Lot sold	<b>USD 106 745 - 160 118</b> GBP 80 000 - 120 000 (listed)	Condition	Used
Year of manufacture	1900	Location	
Chassis number	Frame no. B 362	Exterior colour	Other
Lot number	214		

### Description

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1900 Darracq Perfecta 2 Quadricycle

Registration no. BS 8714

Chassis no. Frame no. B 362

The earliest vehicles to carry the name De Dion appeared in 1883 and were steam-powered, Count De Dion and Georges Bouton being in partnership with steam engineer Trépardoux at that time. De Dion and Bouton turned their attention to the internal combustion engine to the annoyance of Trépardoux who quit in 1893, leaving his erstwhile partners to develop what was, in effect, the first high-speed internal combustion engine. Early experimental 137cc engines ran at speeds of up to 3,000rpm, and the first internal combustion-engined tricycles were built in 1895. As well as producing their own machines, De Dion-Bouton found a ready market with other manufacturers who eagerly bought their state-of-the-art engines.

Born in Bordeaux in 1855, Alexandre Darracq made a fortune in the bicycle industry's boom years of the late 19th Century and like many of his contemporaries subsequently turned his attention to powered transport. Darracq's motor manufacturing venture was financed by the sale of his Gladiator bicycle business to Dunlop, though he continued to make bicycle components in his new factory at Suresnes, Seine, marketing them under the 'Perfecta' brand name.

The availability of Perfecta components and the De Dion engine made it relatively easy for independent assemblers to produce their own motor vehicles, as exemplified by the charming and original quadricycle offered here, which was fitted with carries a single-cylinder De Dion engine in one of Darracq's Perfecta No. 2 'Touriste' frames. Dating from June 1900, the engine is the most desirable

402cc 2¾hp version with water-cooled cylinder head, which transmits power via a Bozier two-speed gearbox. On this machine the original handlebars have been replaced with a steering wheel and there is the additional facility of foot-operated rear brakes, features commonly found on such vehicles from around 1902. This is very possibly a period modification.

The quadricycle's history is unknown prior to 1992 when it was discovered - complete - in the USA by John McMullen and restored to a high standard by Brian Joseph. The vehicle was offered for sale at the 'McMullen' auction in the USA in 2007 and purchased there by John O'Keefe to add to his significant private collection. Following Mr O'Keefe's death, the quadricycle was sold at auction in London to a new owner in October 2010. It was placed with Julian Parker Ltd in early 2019 for various minor works and re-commissioning and was purchased from Julian Parker Ltd by the current vendor later in 2019. It is offered with a current UK V5C document and a De Dion-Bouton Club dating letter confirming the manufacturing date as 1900, making it eligible for numerous Veteran Car Club events including the London to Brighton Run and Pioneer Run.

## Bonhams 1793

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