
1903 Cadillac Model A - Rear-Entrance Tonneau

Rear-Entrance Tonneau

Lot sold	USD 0	Condition	Used
Year of manufacture	1903	Location	
Lot number	180	Exterior colour	Other
		Car type	Other

Description

- A rare and significant Cadillac from the first year of production
- Well-regarded in-period and highly collectible today
- 98.2 cu. in. single-cylinder engine; two-speed transmission
- Beautifully restored in maroon with black accents and gold pinstriping; red wheels and chassis
- An ideal candidate for Brass Era tours and veteran car runs worldwide

The birth of the storied Cadillac Automobile Company was complicated, involving many key Detroit industry players. Having been reorganized from the remains of the short-lived Henry Ford Company by engineer and entrepreneur Henry Leyland, Cadillac's first product was ready to launch for 1903; the single-cylinder motorcar was offered as either as a two-passenger Runabout or a four-passenger, rear-entrance Tonneau. This Cadillac would be designated the "Model A" for 1904, and cars from the prior year are sometimes retroactively referred to by that name as well.

Given the circumstances, it is not surprising that this first Cadillac bore a striking resemblance to a contemporaneous Henry Ford-designed car, which would also be designated the Model A. Power, however, came from a motor devised by Leyland. The Cadillac's 98.2-cubic-inch horizontally mounted, water-cooled "Little Hercules" engine was advertised at 6 ½ horsepower, though it was in reality probably closer to 10. Combined with its two forward gears, this was plenty to keep the Cadillac moving down the era's roads, and the motor soon earned a reputation for robustness and reliability as well.

This 1903 Rear-Entrance Tonneau, a rare surviving example of the 2,497 Cadillac cars built in the company's first year. Likely produced around May of 1903 based on its identification number, 1497, it has been totally restored to its present beautiful condition. Its coachwork is finished in maroon with black accents and gold pinstriping with black button-tufted leather upholstery, while its undercarriage and wheels are painted red. White tires, as well as an ornate Phare Solar headlamp, Dietz cowl lights, and single taillight, contribute to its appealing, period-correct appearance. In a testament to the quality of the restoration, as well as the car's continued upkeep, the car wears radiator badges for its 2008 AACA National Senior First Prize award (number W21662), as well as a subsequent 2019 Grand National award.

From the very start, Cadillacs proved themselves under demanding circumstances. In fact, a car much like this one was driven in England's Sunrising Hill Climb in 1903; it was reportedly the only single-cylinder car to finish the challenging event. This 1903 Cadillac offers its next owner a thrilling taste of that very exciting time in the history of motoring, and it would make an ideal candidate for a wide range of Brass Era rallies and tours, including the famed London to Brighton Run, both at home and abroad. To view this car and others currently consigned to this auction, please visit the RM website at rmsothebys.com/en/auctions/hf21.

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