

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## 1935 Auburn Phaeton - 653 Phaeton

653 Phaeton

- Lot sold  
USD 0
- **Year of manufacture** 1935
- **Lot number** 301
- **Condition** Used
- **Location** 
- **Exterior colour** Other
- **Car type** Other
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### Description

- True barn-find example discovered in a South Dakota barn where it sat for many decades
- Featured on two episodes of History Channel hit television series American Pickers
- Nearly all-original survivor in fully operational running and driving condition
- Perfect restoration candidate or can be left and driven in "as-found" condition

In 1934, the Auburn Automobile Co. continued to suffer through significant losses when Harold T. Ames, executive vice-president of Auburn and president of Duesenberg, believed development of an all-new Auburn line could return the company to profitability. He handed the styling portion of the makeover to Gordon Buehrig and equipped him with a total redesign budget of only \$50,000. After moving to Auburn, Indiana from Indianapolis, where he had been working on a new "Baby Duesenberg" (Cord 810) concept, Buehrig began the project in February of 1934. Amazingly, new Auburn model production started just four months later. The first two series introduced to the public were the Auburn 653 Six and 851 Eight Standard models.

The 653 Six debuted with five different body styles—the Phaeton being the most expensive model priced at \$995, followed by the Cabriolet, Coupe, Sedan, and Two-Door Brougham. Powered by a Lycoming six-cylinder engine producing 85 horsepower with a three-speed transmission and an optional Columbia Dual-Ratio rear axle (as found on this example), the 653 rode on a 120-inch wheelbase. A solid front axle and live rear axle suspension with semi-elliptic leaf springs was used, with four-wheel hydraulic drum brakes. Offering both speed and fuel economy, a 653 averaged an impressive 23.7 mpg during city and highway testing.

Styling was updated with a signature sloped grille, enlarged hood with checkerboard-style louvers, and pontoon shaped front fenders. Period sales brochures and advertisements described the reshaped Auburn as "Exclusive-Distinctive-Individual," and it was appreciated by Hollywood stars such as Mary Astor and George Murphy, who both drove 1935 Auburns.

This Auburn tells a story worthy of Hollywood, as witnessed by countless viewers when featured on two episodes of the popular American Pickers series. The star of the show, Mike Wolfe, discovered this car in the back of a barn in Valley Springs, South Dakota in 2014. Slumbering peacefully for decades in the care of Jan M. and Sandy Aichele Sr., the Auburn sat untouched except for a light coat of white housepaint brushed over some of the original finishes long ago. Mike excitedly purchased the car and carefully extracted it from its resting place by removing the back wall of the barn, while promising to get the car running before returning to Valley Springs to give Jan a ride in his long-cherished Auburn.

The car was trailered back to the Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg Co. in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, where Doug Pray, son of ACD purveyor Glenn Pray, carefully removed the white housepaint, cleaned the original finishes, and installed a new convertible top. He also went through the car mechanically to return it to full operating condition. Jan passed away while the car was still being worked on, much to Mike's chagrin as he could no longer fulfil his promise to Jan. Mike and his co-star Danielle Colby drove the car from Broken Arrow back to Valley Springs in 2016, and gave Sandy a ride in the Auburn as she held her late husband's photo.

Now is the time for a new owner to write the next chapter in the story of this memorable Auburn. To view this car and others currently consigned to this auction, please visit the

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