

## 1955 Jaguar XK 140

- Lot sold  
USD 211 740 - 317 610  
EUR 200 000 - 300 000 (listed)  
**Year of manufacture** 1955
- **Chassis number** 810827DN
- **Lot number** 48
- 
- **Condition** Used
- **Location** 
- **Exterior colour** Other
- 

### Description

The 1956 Paris Motor Show  
1955 Jaguar XK 140 Coupé  
Coachwork by Carrozzeria Ghia, Torino  
Chassis no. 810827DN

Although it had one of the best sports car chassis available, and unquestionably one of the best engines, the XK140 was already looking somewhat dated by the time it arrived in 1954. The XK140 had inherited its body essentially unchanged in overall appearance from that of the preceding XK120, which had been designed by Jaguar's boss, William (later Sir William) Lyons in 1948. Eclectic by nature, Lyons was well aware of the best European designs and their influence is clear enough in the XK120. But that was six years old by the time of the XK140's introduction and the world had moved on. Jaguar was happy to sell the XK140 in rolling chassis form for bodying by independent coachbuilders, and a number of its more wealthy clients went down that route in order to avail themselves of the very latest in modern automotive styling.

Jaguar supplied eleven XK140s in rolling chassis form for bodying by independents, among the most celebrated being the four bodied by Carrozzeria Ghia of Turin, which had already completed three XK120s, these being the famous 'Supersonic' cars designed by Giovanni Savonuzzi. All four of Ghia's XK140s were closed coupés of broadly similar design. They were completed on chassis numbers 'S810827DN', 'S814937DN', '814942', and 'S815404'.

These four XK140 bodies were constructed entirely of aluminium, as was common practice with hand-built 'one-offs', resulting in a reduction in weight of 100kg (220lb) when compared with the steel-bodied production cars. The first to be built was the car offered here, '810827DN', which had been purchased second-hand by Mr Hans Altweg, a wealthy Lyonnaise industrialist, with the express purpose of having a bespoke body constructed for it. Mr Altweg had bought the car from Royal Ellysées (Charles Delacroix) on 12th December 1955 (see bill of sale copy on file). The XK was immediately dispatched to Ghia in Turin, from whence it returned in time to be displayed at the Paris Salon in October 1956 (see photographs on file).

Before then, in August 1956, Mr and Mrs Altweg had displayed the Ghia-bodied XK140 at the concours d'élégance in Cannes. Photographs on file show differences in the shape of the front grille, which is believed to have been altered by Ghia between the two events.

In his definitive work on the marque, Jaguar XK140/150 in Detail, Anders Ditlev Clausager has this to say about '810827DN': "After it had been in an accident in 1959, the front end was 'modernised', supposedly by Ghia, and air vents were added to the front wings, but it still kept the air intake on the bonnet, and the same registration mark ('7434 AN 69')."

It is believed that the modifications were carried at the behest of Jean-Louis Berthelot-Mariat of Lyons, who is listed as owner on the accompanying French Carte Grise issued on 17th July 1969. It is understood the Mr Berthelot-Mariat wanted to make the car more suitable for rallies and hill climbs.

Eventually the XK140 passed into the private collection belonging to the noted French Jaguar historian, and founder and former President of the Jaguar Drivers Club of France, the late Roland Urban. Mr Urban was always fascinated by special or unusual Jaguars, their coachbuilders in particular, hence his desire to own this Ghia-bodied XK140.

Roland Urban bought the car in 1969 and installed a 3.8-litre Jaguar XK engine fitted with triple twin-choke Weber carburettors. For the next decade he participated in many historic rallies and races driving the Jaguar. The combination of low weight (the body is aluminium) and the powerful 3.8-litre engine made the XK140 very competitive, and Roland Urban even won races at fast circuits like Monza, beating a Ferrari 250 TDF on one occasion! He used the Jaguar almost daily for many years before storing it in his garage where it has remained since 1979. At some time the car was reregistered as '4254 MT 75', and there are photographs on file of it in competition carrying this and the earlier registration. In 1976 the car was featured on the front cover of XK Bulletin, described as "now fitted with disc brakes and 'D' head with triple Webers". Offered in need of total restoration with a 3.8 litre MK IX engine block currently fitted, this unique Ghia-bodied XK140 has a fascinating history and represents a wonderful opportunity for the dedicated Jaguar enthusiast to enhance their collection.

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