
SK

SAULIUS KAROSAS

Oldtimer COLLECTION

Saulius Karosas: The Story of a Man Fascinated by Automobiles

THE FIRST CAR THAT KICK-STARTED the entrepreneur's hobby was acquired in 1988. It was a one-of-a-kind Mercedes-Benz Typ 500K W 29/100/160 PS (Compressor) Cabriolet C with bodywork created by the specialists at Erdmann & Rossi, the famed coachbuilders, in 1934.

This car's acquisition is somewhat of a Cinderella story. At the time, Saulius Karosas had no intention of collecting cars. His desire to purchase a rare car was very pragmatic: he was planning on moving to the United States and starting a business there. But at the time, it was forbidden to take any valuable things with you when leaving the Soviet Union. As old cars were not included on the list of valuables, so the Lithuanian planned to take the Mercedes with him and then sell it on the other side of the Atlantic to generate start-up capital for his business.

The Mercedes-Benz 500K Cabriolet was found in Omsk – the depths of Russia – in near ruin. Even though the car wasn't much more than scrap-metal, Saulius saw a true beauty in it. He made the owner an offer to trade it for a GAZ-24 Volga, which was a real source of pride and envy in the Soviet Union at the time. A deal was made and the old Mercedes made it to Lithuania. It turns out that the car was commissioned by a very wealthy

German industrialist Reinhart Henschel, but a Soviet general took it back to Moscow after the war as a trophy. A German living in Omsk later purchased it for sentimental reasons; the car was already quite run down, but he was confident that he could restore it. However, once he started repairing it, he saw that he wouldn't be able to do it on his own. This is why he agreed to give it to Saulius Karosas, who first worked on it himself and then gave it to skilled Lithuanian repairmen to complete. Now the car's appearance earns it awards at collector car competitions.

SAULIUS WAS BORN WITH AN INCLINATION FOR CARS. When he started attending school, the boy got interested in kart racing, and by the time he was thirteen he was already working at a race car workshop.

Due to his strong interest and diligent and careful work, Karosas was recruited to the team of technicians that was responsible for the cars driven by the drivers of the Lithuanian Republic and Soviet Union racing circuit. Together with experienced mechanics, he would go to car factories and observe how engines were assembled and other mechanisms were constructed. Karosas was on the same team as Vikis Oleka, six-time winner of the Soviet Union racing championship. In 1974, he won the USSR championship at a race in Leningrad (current-day St. Petersburg) and became the first Lithuanian to win this title.

The sixteen-year old Saulius was awarded as the best mechanic of the championship. "If you were to ask me who my life teachers were, the first name I would mention would be Oleka' s. He was like a second father to me. I am happy that as a teenager, I was able to spend a year with such a person," says Karosas. "It was probably thanks to him that I didn't become a race car driver, though I still dreamed about it in my teen years. Vikis used to say that I shouldn't get involved in a sport that the government doesn't support, doesn't allot enough money for equipment, and doesn't give drivers any health guarantees. I remember after one awards ceremony he showed me the 68 roubles and 12 kopeks that he got as a monetary bonus for winning the USSR championship. That was one of the reasons I decided not to become a race car driver."

Nevertheless, after finishing high school, Saulius didn't hesitate to enter Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, where he studied at the Department of Mechanical Engineering from 1976 to 1981 and got a degree as an engineer-mechanic.

"I had a lot of practical experience, and I liked what I was studying, so it was easy. During my studies I had conflicts with a few teachers who, as theorists, made some mistakes. I remember one said: 'I'm going to give you a perfect grade, but I'm going to check what you said.'"

After completing his studies and getting his master's degree, Karosas stayed there until 1986 to work at the University Automobile Department, where he explored the field of hydraulics and mechanical reliability.

In 1986, he moved to the United States, where he founded SK-Impex Inc. in 1988. After a couple of years, he moved the business to Europe and set up several companies in Lithuania as well.

Karosas did not take his first collector's car to the United States. It turns out its restoration took 16 years! "At first I believed that I could restore it in a year, but unfortunately, when we started working on it we saw that we would have to redo just about everything. For the first time in my life I saw how meticulously cars could be made, since before that I'd only had experience with Soviet cars. From then on I became interested in Erdmann & Rossi models, which for me are like pieces of fine jewellery. I usually buy them in rather bad condition; highly skilled mechanics then restore them at my workshop in Lithuania."

Patrick Rollet: This Collection is Unique

IT IS VERY ENCOURAGING AND REFRESHING TO WITNESS, in this age of electronic and automated vehicles, the lifelong devotion of dedicated sponsors like Saulius Karosas. Without the initiatives of entrepreneurs and dedicated enthusiasts of his calibre, important historic motorcars would have fallen into oblivion and important pieces of motoring heritage could not be admired or rediscovered by experts, enthusiasts and the general public, including the younger generations. Several thoughts come to my mind when I look at what could well be the exhibit of the year.

First is the variety of vehicles. The elitist Horch collection, probably unique in the world, is an impressive tribute to pre-war engineering excellence. At the other end of the spectrum, the cute microcars of yesteryears remind us that hard economic times prevented most people from affording much more than a motorcycle, and demonstrate how engineers and designers of the time achieved remarkable simplicity and ingenuity. Add to this the awesome Erdmann & Rossi collection, also a world première, which pays a long awaited tribute to a grossly under rated *grand carrossier*. The collection of cars from Russia is a rare delight and help us to better understand what went on behind the Iron Curtain for so many years. And if all this was not enough, the SK Collection tops it up with an exciting mix of famous makes like Hispano-Suiza, Maybach, Minerva, Packard or Bugatti and innovative designs from Röhr or Adler.

Authenticity is the second word which comes to my mind. All these cars have been preserved or restored with extreme care and dedication by talented craftsmen from all over Europe. An impressive library of documentation has been painstakingly gathered for all these projects, and traditional skills, tools and processes have been implemented with scrupulous attention to details in order to achieve results which are most respectful of the original designs.

The onlooker also comes to realise that the wealth of resources lying behind this exhibit encompasses educational, scientific and cultural dimensions. A lot of young people have been trained to acquire specific know-how, much effort has been put to revisit numerous technologies from our rich automotive heritage and all the stakeholders involved evidently considered these cars as true artefacts of definite historic interest. These dimensions precisely coincide with the overall missions of UNESCO, with which FIVA signed a long term partnership agreement, with consultative status, in April 2017.

This exhibit represents a significant effort to protect, preserve and promote world motoring heritage. It is fully aligned with FIVA's overall mission and I am grateful to all the people who made it possible.

This collection is unique. Enjoy!

PATRICK ROLLET
President of Fédération Internationale
des Véhicules Anciens

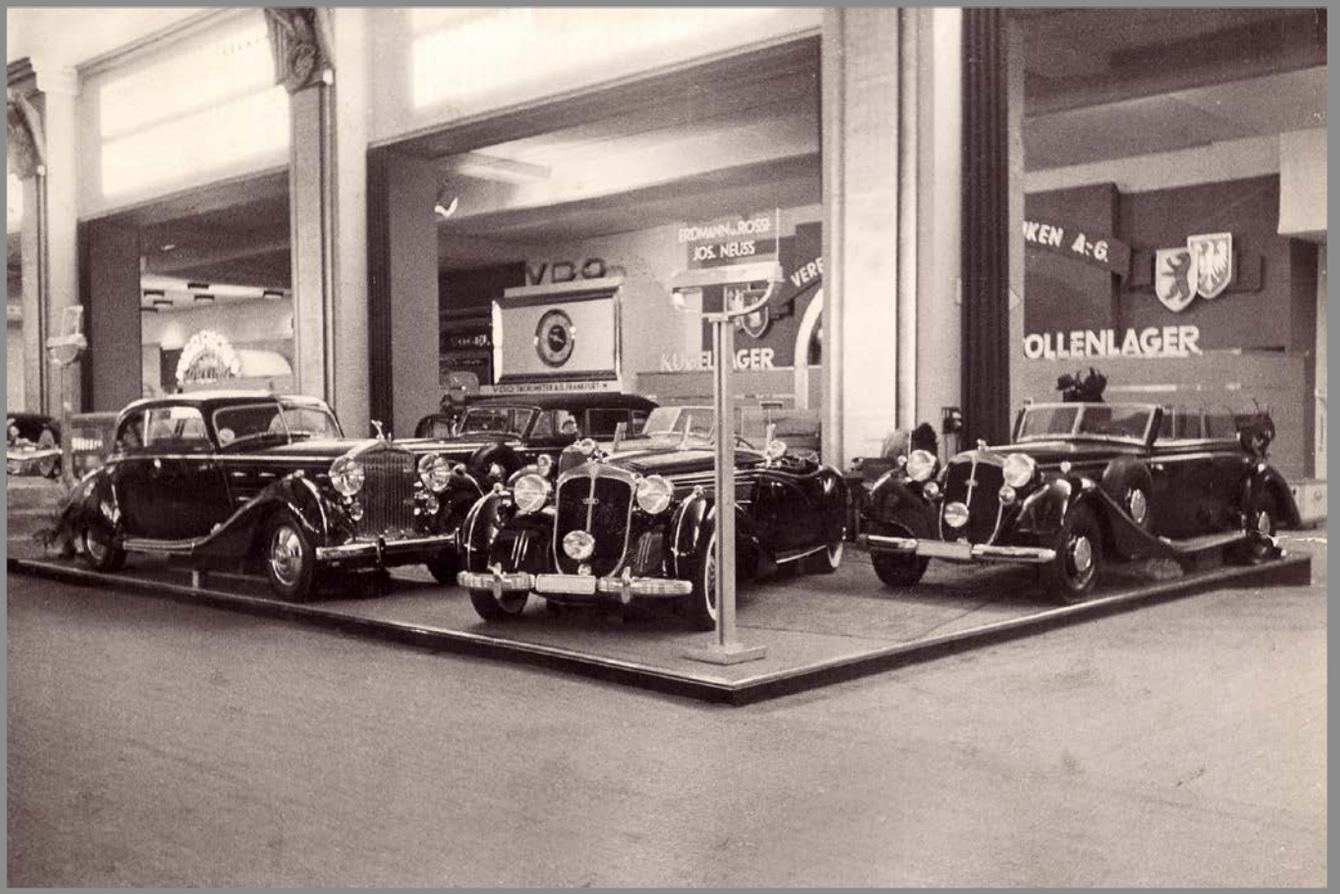

35PACK8


HORCH 930 V

Saulius Karosas Oldtimer Collection

Mercedes-Benz 500K Cabriolet 1935

Erdmann & Rossi Collection



Rolls-Royce Wraith at the Erdmann & Rossi exhibition in Berlin. 1939

A Little History about Erdmann & Rossi

Factory in the Karlsruher Str. 19-22 in Berlin-Halensee

IN 1897, WILLY ERDMANN, the owner of a foundry in Luisenstrasse, Berlin, founded a modest carriage building shop that produced elegant coaches. Eduard Rossi, who was already in the still young automotive sector, entered the company in 1906. It was decided to give priority to producing components for automobiles. This consistently growing branch of production very quickly required relocation to a more spacious production site. So, in 1908, the company moved to a new five-storey building in Oranienburger Tor, at Linienstrasse 139/140.

Just a year later, the company ran into serious difficulties as Rossi had a fatal accident in his car in 1909. Erdmann, considering withdrawing from the company to focus on other companies operated by him, found a skilled employee in the young Friedrich Peters from Schwerin, who proved himself both in production and in sales. Due to a marriage with good prospects, he was in a position to replace the company boss and pay him off in 1910. From then on, the company was called Erdmann & Rossi, owner Friedrich Peters. Meanwhile, the company had gained respect. Expression of this acquired reputation came not least in naming Peters as royal supplier to the two reigning houses of Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Mecklenburg-Strelitz.

After stopping the production of civilian vehicles during World War I, the upward development of the company continued. At annual automobile exhibitions, three to five luxury cars were regularly exhibited including a Rolls-Royce with its elegant bodywork, almost every year!

In 1923, Peters' operations experienced a significantly reduced order balance due to the global economic crisis, but in spring 1933 Peters took over the coachbuilding company Jos. Neuss from Karl Trutz. After this merger, the company bore the name Erdmann & Rossi-Jos. Neuss.

The reanimation of the economy and the particular promotion of the automotive sector by the ruling regime, which proved to be fatal later on, led to one of the biggest heydays of the company, with up to 250 employees. The head designer Johannes Beeskow, who continued to work under the owner's successor, Friedrich's brother Richard Peters, insisted on continuity of the series and production quality, in this place of peak performance. Johannes Beeskow came from Jos. Neuss, together with his brother Karl.

As the leading manufacturer in car-body construction in Germany, with a celebrity clientele – Werner von Siemens, Crown Prince Wilhelm, Prince Bernhard of Holland, Rudolf Caracciola, Bernd Rosemayer, Ernst Udet, Ernst Heinkel, Emil Jannings and even Göring and Hess – the company carried out bodywork on Mercedes, Horch, Maybach and Rolls-Royce models.

The company design engineers also adapted some 4.2 l Bentleys in 1936–1938, which generally represent the conservative British style, to the modern tastes preferred in Germany. Furthermore, they cultivated the typical German sports-car style, with two-seater convertibles on Horch, Mercedes and Maybach chassis.

With World War II the heyday of the company was over. But it remained as a workshop for exclusive types of cars until around 2003.

Mercedes-Benz 500K Cabriolet 1935

8 cylinders, 5000 cc, maximum speed 160 km/h

THE CLIENT WHO ORDERED THIS MODEL in 1935 was Reinhart Henschel. He came from the well-known Henschel family from Kassel, in whose factories locomotives, trucks, buses and steamrollers were built over many years.

The leading Berlin car-body shop in Germany before 1945, Erdmann & Rossi-Jos. Neuss fitted a Maybach and the Mercedes 5.01 compressor with bodywork for Henschel & Sohn and Privy Councillor Henschel in 1936 and 1937. The Mercedes was in their ownership until 1945, when it was confiscated by the Soviet Army as a war trophy.

The vehicle was driven by a KGB general in Moscow. After his death, the family sold the car.

In the 1980s the Mercedes was found in a Russian garage bearing serious signs of use but still complete, apart from the compressor. This was later found, built into a Russian private waterworks. It should have been available for sale, but the owner didn't want to sell it, even for $5,000, as the German quality had served him very well for 40 years, without any maintenance. The compressor is still running today!

The Mercedes was lovingly restored using the original parts available and is now in the large Erdmann & Rossi-Jos. Neuss exhibition Oldtimer Cars of Saulius Karosas.

Rolls-Royce Wraith 1939

6 cylinders, 4257 cc, maximum speed 135 km/h

IN THE YEARS BEFORE THE WORLD WAR II the Rolls-Royce company advertised their cars under the slogan "Rolls-Royce the best car in the world" and later on in the 1950s with the phrase "One for forever".

Over the years Erdmann & Rossi-Jos. Neuss, main importer of the English brand, produced about 30–40 bodies for Rolls-Royce cars in their production site in Berlin-Halensee and later also for Bentleys – a company that had fallen into serious difficulties and been taken over by Rolls-Royce. English original bodies were hard to sell in Germany at the time. Erdmann & Rossi-bodies though were considered especially developed and stylish and embodied the so-called German-style which set itself apart from the often very fashionable French style, the conservative English style and the streamlined Italian style.

The company Erdman & Rossi-Jos. Neuss presented three to five cars in nearly all of the annual International Berlin Automobile Exhibition. Often they included a Rolls-Royce or a Bentley as their highlight. In the summer of 1938 the company ordered a Rolls-Royce chassis model Wraith no. WXA 106 with a 25/30 hp engine no. B5WF on their own account. It reached the site on November 30, 1938. The plan was to build a four-window, two-door, four-seated limousine body from light metal with a sunroof around this chassis. Furthermore it was to be equipped with the newly developed electric windows in both doors. The company had just received the patent for this contraption made from a Bosch wiper motor. The measurements on the dashboard should be shown in the German version: "km/h", "Liter" and "Grad Celsius". And finally they wanted to equip it with a modern Telefunken radio model 1 A39. All these details are mentioned on the commissioning document no. 3214 at hand. After it was finished this unique car was presented in the halls beneath the radio tower from February 17 to March 5.

According to the official Rolls-Royce commissioning document Dr Michael Reichsgraf von Althan, Castle Mittenwalde in Schlesien, purchased the well admired car after the exhibition. Following his wish the body was repainted in fish-silver. A collector from the West saw the unique car again for the first time after many years in the still existing Soviet Union in Riga. It had strong signs of use and was equipped with different wheels as it was impossible to get the original ones. The cover caps of the rear mudguards were missing. The paint job which had been changed from black to fish-silver was completely worn down. Victors Kulbergs, then head of the Veteran Vehicle Club, had purchased the car in the mentioned state in Moscow. It is supposed to have been used by the Moscow patriarch, amongst others. Years later the car reached the West in its run-down state, like so many other vehicles. Here the Rolls-Royce was restored in an exemplary manner using original parts.

On the occasion of three veteran vehicle exhibitions 2012 the originality of its form and the exquisite restoration of the car won first prizes: at the 36th International Oldtimer Meeting Baden-Baden, at the Classic Days Castle Dyck and at the exhibition Unique Special Ones in Florence.

Mercedes-Benz 630K 1929

6 cylinders, 6300 cc, maximum speed 130 km/h

AFTER FRIEDRICH PETERS' DEATH in Richard Peters' room a whole row of pictures were hanging in Friedrich's office opposite to the windows to Karlsruher Road. These mainly showed Erdmann & Rossi-Jos. Neuss exhibition stands on the Berlin car exhibitions but also some photos of extraordinary personalities with their cars with Erdmann & Rossi-Jos. Neuss bodies. One of these pictures showed a Mercedes K with a four-door dark blue convertible body. In front of the doors were separate running boards. This luxurious vehicle was equipped with a broad sun visor which could be tilted according to the sun. A searchlight was fixed to the A-pillar. The company from Karslruher Road had used Erdmann & Rossi-Jos. Neuss typical door handles. According to hearsay, those had been designed by Walter Gropius. The Mercedes K had a powerful compressor engine with 24/110/160 hp.

Emil Jannings who soon advanced to be the best actor of his times moved to Hollywood and brought his Mercedes K with him. When he came back to Germany he was winner of two Academy awards. His probably best film *The Blue Angel* was shot in 1930 with the then still young Marlene Dietrich. The Erdmann & Rossi-Jos. Neuss stayed in the United States.

After 1945 Baron Raben Levetzau purchased the splendid car for his Automobile museum in Nysted in Denmark. A short time after that a car collector from Hamburg bought the Mercedes before it reached the SK Collection. No commission document from Erdmann & Rossi-Jos. Neuss could be found.

Mercedes-Benz 380 Special Roadster 1933

8 cylinders, 4019 cc, maximum speed 160 km/h

INTRODUCED IN 1933, the 380 was a thoroughly modern motor car with an all-new straight eight engine, in many respects the most modern automobile of the early 1930s. The chassis now featured swing-axle independent rear suspension, parallel A-arm front suspension, coil springs, synchromesh on the top three gears of its four-speed gearbox, 12 volt electrical system, central lubrication and four-wheel vacuum-assisted hydraulic brakes. Fitted with Mercedes-Benz's driver-controlled supercharger, the 380 made 120 hp supercharged from its 3,820 cc displacement and 90hp when the blower was not engaged.

Thus, in 1933 it was no surprise that a sporting prince, Max, Prince of Schaumburg-Lippe, living in Berlin looking for a bespoke body for his then-new Mercedes-Benz 380 chassis should turn to the firm Erdmann & Rossi. He acquired a specially-prepared 380 from Mercedes-Benz in late 1933, its type M22I designated engine enlarged to 4,019 cc and tuned to give 144 hp and fitted with a larger fuel tank for long events and had it delivered to Erdmann & Rossi. Prince Max specified a spare, lightweight special roadster particularly adapted to his sporting predilections. The realization of Prince Max's commission was undertaken by ex-Neuss designer Beeskow, who executed it in aluminium, with cutaway doors, trim fenders without running boards and a tidy rear deck with no more overhang than necessary to cover the chassis.

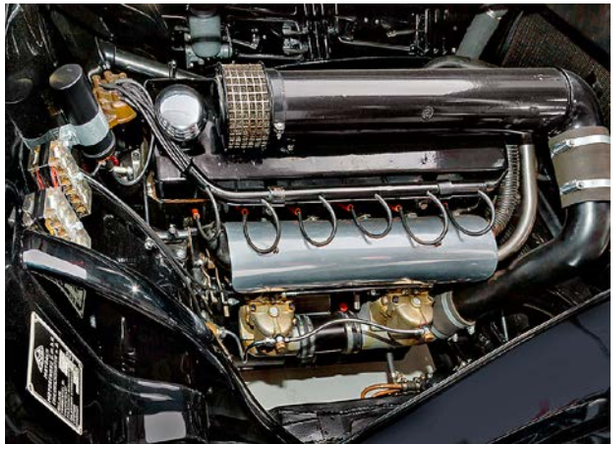
With this special roadster which carried nothing more than a pair of giant headlights, a driving light and the most elemental weather protection, Prince Max captured the gold medal in his class in the 1934 AvD Deutschland-Fahrt.

Robert Wells found the car in 1966 hiding on the back lot of a Mercedes-Benz dealer in Alexandria, Virginia, USA, and began its restoration in 1993. On two trips to Europe to research the car´s history Wells met Prince Max´s widow, Princess Helga Lee zu Schaumburg-Lippe, who authenticated the car and supplied important details of its history and original appearance. Fragments of the original paint and upholstery survived on the car which ensured it could be restored exactly as it had been delivered from Erdmann & Rossi shop and raced by Prince Max in 1934. Presented to the world at Pebble Beach in 1996, the roadster won the Mercedes Trophy. Perhaps more importantly it also won this accolade from one of the judges, "You have the most honest restoration on the field."

Prince Max's 380 Special Roadster is perhaps the only example of its line that will equally grace both competitive events and Concours d'Elegance with an aristocratic history of both marque and ownership.

Maybach SW38 Cabriolet 1937

6 cylinders, 3800 cc, maximum speed 180 km/h



WILHELM MAYBACH FOUNDED Luftfahrzeug-Motoren-gesellschaft with Graf Zeppelin. From 1909 to 1914, airship engines were their most important product. Around 1921–1922, the company, located in Friedrichshafen, began to build their own passenger vehicle chassis. Before the war they had never built the bodywork themselves; these were produced by car body workshops such as Spohn & Gläser or Erdmann & Rossi.

The first owner of the Maybach was Rekord GmbH from Berlin. In 1945, the vehicle, like so many others, was taken to Riga by the Soviet Army, where it should have been shipped to Leningrad (St. Petersburg). It is not known why the Maybach never arrived in St. Petersburg, but it stayed in Riga.

The vehicle remained the property of the state party of Latvia, in the city of Jelgava, for a long time. In the 1950s, the vehicle ended up in private ownership. As no spare parts were available for the repair or maintenance of the Maybach, it was parked in a barn.

When found and acquired in the 1980s, the vehicle was in a desolate state. Many parts had been stolen over time. Through intensive research in many archives and a happy accident in a Berlin archive, with the help of Erdmann & Rossi expert Rupert Stuhlemmer the vehicle was able to be restored in an exemplary manner, using parts recreated according to the originals. It is now shown in all its glory in the extensive Erdmann & Rossi-Jos. Neuss collection of Saulius Karosas.

Bentley 4.25 l Coupé Cabriolet 1938

6 cylinders, 4257 cc, maximum speed 150 km/h

THE FIRST OWNER OF THE 4.25-LITRE BENTLEY CABRIOLET was Baron Harold von Oppenheim. In April 1938 he contracted Erdmann & Rossi to build the chassis as a four-seater Sport Cabriolet, remove the full trim of the rear mudguard, and finish the Bentley in the Oppenheim color scheme: dark blue and red.

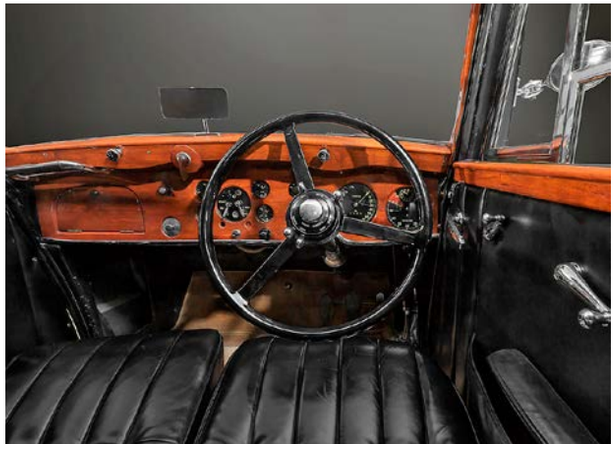
In August 1939, immediately before the outbreak of World War II, Oppenheim went to Le Havre, where he managed to get both himself and his Bentley aboard the last ship to leave for New York before the war started.

In the official documents, a certain G. F. Cronkhite, Vice-Chairman of the Southern California Rolls-Royce Owners' Club, is recorded as the second owner. He bought the Bentley sight unseen in 1962 from a scrap and car dealer in Nyack, New York. Cronkhite asked Erdmann & Rossi for spare parts such as the coachwork badge for the interior and exterior and the chrome-plated, drum-shaped license plate lamps at the rear of the vehicle, as well as the automobile club badge and the "D" for Deutschland. Some of his requests were met. Cronkhite sold the car, probably in 1967, to the owner of Chicago's Heinemann bakery, Herbert Dorner.

In 1988 the Bentley B58 LS was acquired by Mr. Stuhlemmer, a historian of the Erdmann & Rossi brand, and subjected to extensive restoration work. The vehicle was sold to Saulius Karosas on April 15, 2014, who restored it to its original condition. Now, the colors of the blue bodywork, the red "Benedikt" interior as well as the rear wings with their Bentley logos are present once again.

Bentley 4.25 l Coupé 1937

6 cylinders, 4257 cc, maximum speed 150 km/h



ACCORDING TO THE COMMISSIONING DOCUMENTS Erdmann & Rossi-Jos. Neuss have built bodies for 10–11 Bentleys. Document no. 30006 lists a certain Dr Nagelschmidt as buyer of a Bentley-body no. B174KT, engine no. W6BP, which arrived on August 5, 1937 at the company grounds in Halensee. Nagelschmidt had attached a photo of a Bentley to the order asking them to build an identical body. It was supposed to be made from aluminum – including the running board. The mudguard should be made from steel plates with a pointed back, the doors and sides with a thin chrome border into which the door handles were to be set. The boot was to be ornamented with two flat chrome borders as well.

Chrome-plated landau bars were used for the hard top and the windshield was to be made from Sekurit glass which was coming into fashion at the time and in one piece. Numerous further details were to be imported in England: door handles and counter presser, Lucas-headlights, safety locks and windscreen wiper motors.

The English Bentley specialist for production in the years 1933–1940, Neill Freser, found out that Dr Nagelschmidt's car was actually a copy of a Bentley with a body of Gurney Nutting. The same is true for the door handles in art-deco style according to Gurney Nuttings programme, the black painting, as well as the black leather upholstery.

The vehicle was shipped from Germany to the USA on unknown paths, spent part of its life there, was sold back to Germany and eventually bought by Neill Freser in England before it was passed into the possession of the SK Collection.


IA-5951

Horch 853 Sport Coupé Manuela 1937

8 cylinders, 5000 cc, maximum speed 130 km/h

ON JULY 28, 1937 THE GERMAN AUTO-UNION ordered a two-seater limousine body with built-in rear boot from Erdmann & Rossi-Jos. Neuss for their successful racing driver Bernd Rosemeyer.

The chassis was a 5-liter Special-Horch-Chassis with engine no. 857256. According to the company's commissioning document Rosemeyer's following wishes had been taken down: the chassis should be built with an aluminum plate in order to reduce weight. Front and rear mudguards were to be lined with chrome railings which had to be extra-thin with an edge in the center. In the rear of the vehicle two spare wheels had to fit. And the running boards had to be slim. The driver's windshield had to be in V-form and made from Sekurit glass. A Golde sunroof was another of Rosemeyer's wishes. The included standard spoke wheels as well as the radiator grill including the blind had to be chromium-plated. And finally an American radio with antennae that he himself provided had to be installed in the car. He wished for the complete interior fittings to be made from pigskin, including the dashboard and the steering wheel. And he placed special emphasis on having a padding underneath his knees. The built-in fine wood and the window linings had to be in the color of the pigskin and he wanted the whole body to be painted in fish-silver. Rosemeyer lovingly called the finished vehicle Manuela.

The whereabouts of this car are not known but there are photos of an apparently identical Horch from Erdmann & Rossi which is painted black. It is at least possible that the vehicle in the picture is Rosemeyer's car which might have been sold and repainted after Rosemeyer's death in an accident in 1938.

Over the last years the Manuela-body was rebuilt on original Horch-chassis various times – some of them more diligently, some more freely designed.

Audi 920 Cabriolet 1939

6 cylinders, 3200 cc, maximum speed 140 km/h

AFTER ERDMANN & ROSSI-JOS. NEUSS had already built a car body for an Audi 8/40, Baron von Jenisch from Hamburg ordered another convertible body for an Audi chassis model 920 from this manufacturer in the end of 1938. On January 13, 1939 the chassis for the model 920 arrived at the manufacturing site and von Jenisch expected completion of the automobile for June 13.

The planned material for the body was mainly aluminum. Tank and hood should be lockable, a Telefunken car radio including speakers, all the instruments as well as a clock were to be built into the dashboard. The interior of the body was to be lined with green leather and the doors had to have bags with elastic on the inside. The finished convertible was to be painted black with green borders and the wheels were to be painted green as well.

How long the baron was able to use this formally so well done car is unknown. An inquiry with the family von Jenisch showed that both cars survived the war but since then were not in their ownership anymore. The 1934 Audi 8/40 reached a veteran car dealer in Ulm via Denmark and is now, restored, part of a collection in Holland.

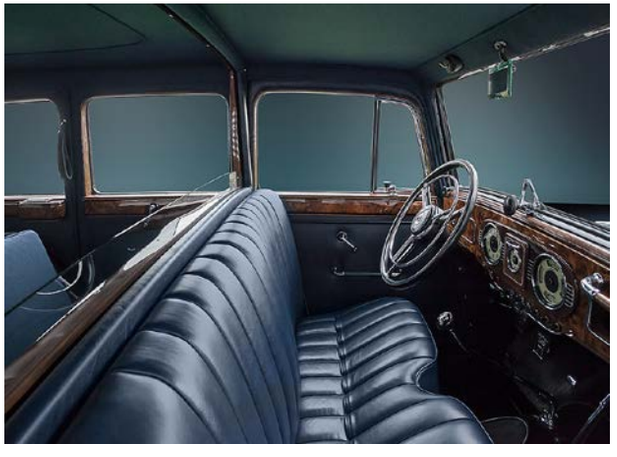
What happened to the 1939 Audi 920 is not known. The car at the exhibition still has its original chassis whereas the body was precisely reconstructed in Erdmann & Rossi's style from original photos and the commissioning document.

Horch 670 Sport Cabriolet 1931

Horch Collection

Horch 850 Pullman Limousine 1935

8 cylinders, 4944 cc, maximum speed 125 km/h



THIS EXQUISITELY BEAUTIFUL and impressive-looking Horch 850 Pullman Limousine was bought in late 1935 by a Mr Hehmann, a businessman based near Zwickau. An expert in the metal industry, he owned a successful company that enabled him to purchase this magnificent car, which would go on to travel far and wide. The car was "confiscated" in 1939 by the Third Reich to be used by a local military official. At the end of the war, this Horch Pullman was unfortunately stolen by Soviet soldiers. It ended up in Liepaja, a city on the coast of Latvia and the site of a major Soviet military port. Fortunately, the car ended up making it all the way to Finland!

A Russian sold the car to a prominent Finnish figure and it received its first Finnish registration number: UY-144. Apart from the copy of its registration document, we could not track down any other documents in the archives in Kirkkonummi where the car was registered. However, we do know from the registration card that the Finnish TÜV (Technical Inspection Association) inspected the vehicle on June 28, 1956.

On July 12, 1957, the car was sold to Ms Elsa Haulika, a teacher living in Kirkkonummi in the Finnish town of Veikkola. With the help of Horch expert Hubertus Menke from Osnabrück in Germany, the Horch 850 became part of the SK Collection on December 20, 2007. It had belonged to Elka Haulika's daughter Ms Ilka Brotherus from Hyvinkää, who had to part with the car as she could not afford to restore it.

After much hesitation and deliberation about its planned restoration, in 2012 the car was entrusted to Werner Zinke, a well-known restorer in Chemnitz, not far from Zwickau. The car was completely stripped down and painstakingly restored over a period of four years. Thanks to the valuable support given by Peter Kirchberg, a historian known around the world for his research and publications on Horch cars, and the countless talented technicians in Werner Zinke's team, this stunning model has regained all of its shine and beauty. In December 2016, the car returned to join its fellow Horch in SK Collection.

Horch 780 Sport Cabriolet 1932

8 cylinders, 4944 cc, maximum speed 125 km/h

Presented at the exhibition in Berlin in February 1932 and at the Paris Salon in October 1933, the Horch 780 took over the chassis and body of the Sport Cabriolet Horch 670. The Horch 780 was developed to compete with the Mercedes-Benz Type 770 and the 12-cylinder Maybach Zeppelin, the two competing brands in the niche of luxury cars. August Horch, however, strongly inspired by French achievements in the field of bodywork, saw to separate and isolate the body from the chassis. To attract customers from the model's competitors, the selling price of the Horch 780 was remarkably lower for the same standard of quality.

Horch 670 Sport Cabriolet 1931

12 cylinders, 6300 cc, maximum speed 140 km/h

The Horch 670 was a technologically advanced luxury car developed under the regime of Fritz Fiedler. The car debuted in 1931 shortly before the Auto Union merger which absorbed Horch into a larger group. After the merger the car was replaced by the technically identical Horch 600. The cars featured a 3.45-metre wheel base and a massive V12 engine. The market for cars this large was minimal, however. Only 54 of the 670 models were sold, followed by just 27 of the 600s. This model is one of the latest running cars to have survived.

Horch 830BL Cabriolet 1938

8 cylinders, 3517 cc, maximum speed 120 km/h

The Horch 830, which was introduced at the 23rd International Automobile and Motorcycle Exhibition in 1933 in Berlin as the successor to the Type 430, features an 8-cylinder V-engine and rear wheel drive. The first owner in Germany of this Horch 830 is unknown because the Horch archives were largely destroyed in 1945 by Allied bombing. In the 1960s it was acquired by the Russian M. T. Aleksandrovich, who replaced the 3.5-litre engine by a 3-litre model. The car was found in 2001 in very poor condition at a vintage car fair near Moscow. Restoration work began in 2014 and went on for two years. In order to do justice to the car's history, the 3-litre engine was not replaced.

Horch 930V Cabriolet 1939

8 cylinders, 3823 cc, maximum speed 130 km/h

The Horch 930V is the successor to the Horch 830B. The V8 models had a 3.5-litre engine and delivered 82 hp. It had a double-joint axis and was produced as a cabriolet, roadster cabriolet, and sedan. In 1938 its output was increased, enabling a 3.8-litre unit with full 92 hp. The Horch 930V achieved a maximum speed of 130 km/h with its strongest engine. This car was built in August 1939. It was kept in America after World War II, before being shipped to Spain in 2006. Saulius Karosas acquired it in its original condition in 2011. The car's manufacturing date, August 18, 1939, is engraved on the radiator, indicating that it was the last 930 to be produced just two weeks before the beginning of World War II.

Horch 951A Pullman Cabriolet 1938

8 cylinders, 4944 cc, maximum speed 130 km/h

The Auto Union AG presented the Type 951 at the Berlin Automobile Exhibition in 1937. With its flowing lines and proportions, designer Günther Mickwausch made it the most elegant German Pullman of the 1930s. The Type 951A was launched in 1938 at the International Automobile and Motorcycle Exhibition in Berlin. The double bumper was replaced by a single bumper, the rear vent window was gone, but the “artillery wheels”, the holed rims, had remained. The front axle was now identical to the new construction used in the sport cabriolet 853A, with a screwed rather than welded radiator crossbeam, front support tube and wishbones.

Horch 853A Sport Cabriolet 1939

8 cylinders, 4944 cc, maximum speed 135 km/h

The Horch Type 853, which came onto the market in February 1935, represented the high point of the sport cabriolet tradition of this marque, and immediately caused a sensation as one of the most beautiful car in its class. This Horch 853A belonged to Hugo Poddig, the owner of the Poddig Works in Berlin. After his death, the car was bought by Daimler Benz AG and offered to the Museum of Technology in Berlin in 1981. By this time it no longer had the original engine. Approximately 400 Type 853A cars were built. The chassis number indicates that this car was one of the very last in the series.

Lancia Astura Cabriolet Pinin Farina 1937

Other Cars

Maybach DS8 Zeppelin 1931

12 cylinders, 7977 cc, maximum speed 140 km/h

IN 1934 A MAYBACH DS8 belonged to Theodor Temmler, who wanted to have the old Pullman coachwork replaced by a modern convertible from Erdmann & Rossi. Temmler named this order Project 1336. Erdmann & Rossi removed the old Pullman coachwork and disposed of it. However, as was the case throughout the automobile industry, with the outbreak of the war, Erdmann & Rossi's private orders came to a standstill except for those that directly served the war effort. The Maybach chassis was brought to a warehouse outside Berlin and remained there for several years.

Sometime between 1945 and 1955 the chassis was acquired by Serge Pozzoli, a French racing driver and collector of classic premium-class cars. When the chassis was sold on by Pozzoli in 1966 to the famous collector Fritz Schlumpf in Alsace, France, at the extremely favorable price of 2000 francs, it was in a perfectly preserved condition, with all of the peripheral units, on authentic wheels and tires, and equipped with a crank handle, which suggests that the engine was started up at regular intervals to prevent it seizing up due to non-use. The original type plate is still present and shows the chassis number 1336, a high total permissible weight of 3210 kg, a displacement of 7977 cc and 200 hp output.

Franz Prahl acquired the chassis from Arlette Schlumpf out of the famous Schlumpf Collection in Mulhouse, Alsace. His intention was to buy this rolling chassis for Saulius Karosas to finish the Temmler Project 1336. The Prahl company succeeded in creating this fabulous cabriolet after consultation with a wide range of experts in the art of coach building – including Rupert Stuhlemmer from Berlin as a recognized Erdmann & Rossi expert and book author.

Lancia Astura Cabriolet Pinin Farina 1937

8 cylinders, 2972 cc, maximum speed 130 km/h

THIS PARTICULAR CAR LANCIA ASTURA BY PININ FARINA, perhaps the most prominent member of the 4th series production, featuring a timelessly beautiful open four-seater cabriolet. This car came out of the factories November 30, 1937. Having been delivered new to Switzerland in 1938, this car has remained in Switzerland for all its life before arriving at the SK Collection in 2011.

This stunning and completely original car, custom-designed by Battista Pinin Farina, was given a partial mechanical restoration in 2002 at the Graber Garage workshop in Toffen, Switzerland.

Once it had been acquired by Saulius Karosas, the collector wanted to give this slightly faded masterpiece a fresh new look and restore it while at the same time retaining as much of its uniqueness and as many of its original parts as possible. The Bachmann workshops in the German town of Malsch were handed the task of completely restoring the vehicle. The original instruments have been retained and restored, with the exception of the clock, which is new. The car has chassis no. 41-2909 and an eight-cylinder, 2,972 cc engine, no. 41-005. It is fitted with Marchal Aerolux headlights and a pair of Bosch high-beam lamps. The exposed spare wheel on the back of the car fits under a metal wheel cover.

Remaining extremely faithful to its original appearance, this Astura cabriolet embodies the style exhibited by the purest cars of its era.

Mercedes-Benz 320 Cabriolet A 1938

6 cylinders, 3200 cc, maximum speed 125 km/h

The Mercedes-Benz Type 320 (W 142 series) celebrated its premiere at the International Automobile and Motorcycle Exhibition (IAMA) in Berlin in February 1937. With it, the brand closed a gap in the market between medium-sized vehicles and vehicles of the largest format. At least, this is what the renowned *Allgemeine Automobil-Zeitung* felt upon the presentation of the new 3.2-litre motor car. With this model Mercedes-Benz broke new ground in this particular vehicle class, which in those days was characterised by extreme competitiveness.

Mercedes-Benz 320 Roadster 1938

6 cylinders, 3400 cc, maximum speed 125 km/h

At the IAMA in February 1939, Mercedes-Benz presented a revised version of the 320 model. Although no particular emphasis had been placed on the fact, the car was already available with a larger engine from the autumn of 1938. The background was the increasingly inferior fuel quality with lower octane numbers, something that began to be felt in 1938. Other manufacturers, such as Maybach and Horch, were also forced to take similar measures in order to maintain engine output levels.

Mercedes-Benz 320 Pullman Cabriolet 1938

6 cylinders, 3400 cc, maximum speed 126 km/h

The Pullman F Cabriolet was a limousine with a retractable manually-operated soft top that came with the same luxury and vast interior room package as its hard-top sibling. Despite the identical design, the F-type was somewhat sportier thanks to its roadster appearance and rear-end design which was similar to the Pullman's and smoother than the Tourenwagen's. Other differences from the Touring model included a smaller set of rear doors and a slightly different cabin design. While the Touring type had a removable pillar construction, the Cabriolet F had a pilarless design with removable windows.

Mercedes-Benz 320 Pullman Limousine 1942

6 cylinders, 3400 cc, maximum speed 126 km/h

The Pullman was specifically designed for an “Oh, my God” level of comfort and refinement. Having sported an extended cabin with an extra pair of side-rear windows, the car was a spacious ride with plenty of rear compartment room enhanced by the presence of drink-coolers, storage boxes and other pleasure-augments. Marketed as a top luxury vehicle, this great limousine was not only larger than its siblings but finely crafted to rigorous specifications. The design was milder and more luxurious with gradually narrowing side lines towards the rear end and an updated interior. Summer days? The car also came with a removable sunroof.

Mercedes-Benz 230 Limousine 1939

6 cylinders, 2300 cc, maximum speed 110 km/h

The Mercedes-Benz W 153, called the 230, was a luxury six-cylinder passenger car built in parallel with the W 143 from 1938, and first presented in public at the Berlin Motor Show early in 1939. It was one of several Mercedes-Benz models known, in its time, as the Mercedes-Benz 230.

Minerva AKS 2 1930

12 cylinders, 27500 cc, maximum speed 240 km/h

In 1883, a young Dutchman named Sylvain de Jong settled in Antwerp, Belgium. He started a bicycle factory and by the end of the century was producing motorcycles. In 1902, he started making cars as well with a 6 hp four-cylinder model. The following year he founded Société Anonyme Minerva Motors in Berchem (Antwerp) and volume car production began in 1904 with a range of two-, three- and four-cylinder models with a chain drive and metal-clad wooden chassis and the Minervette cycle car. At the height of its success, the Minerva was considered the Belgian Rolls-Royce. The previous owner disappointed by performance and technical problems installed an aircraft engine in this car.

Hispano-Suiza H6B Torpedo 1924

6 cylinders, 6500 cc, maximum speed 150 km/h

Hispano-Suiza (literally “Spanish-Swiss”) was a Spanish automotive and engineering firm, best known for its luxury cars and aviation engines in the pre-World War II era of the twentieth century. In 1923, its French subsidiary became a semi-autonomous partnership with the parent company. In 1968, the French arm was taken over by the aerospace company Snecma, now part of the French Safran Group. The Spanish parent sold all of its automotive assets to Enasa in 1946.

Rolls-Royce Phantom II Cabriolet Murphy 1931

6 cylinders, 7200 cc, maximum speed 120 km/h

The Rolls-Royce Phantom II was the third and last of Rolls-Royce's 40/50 hp models, replacing the New Phantom in 1929. It used an improved version of the Phantom I engine in an all-new chassis. A Continental version, with a short wheelbase and stiffer springs, was offered.

Röhr Junior 1934

4 cylinders, 1495 cc, maximum speed 90 km/h

The Röhr Junior was manufactured as of summer 1933 under license of the Czech Tatra Type 75 in Ober-Ramstadt, and was designed by Hans Ledwinka with the central tube chassis from Tatra as well as the typical single-wheel suspension. The sedans were built by Drauz in Heilbronn. Drauz and Autenrieth shared the building of the sedan convertibles. We know of seven Röhr Juniors with this body form currently in existence. With a body made by the Swiss coachbuilders Langenthal, this sedan convertible is a special edition.

Röhr 8 Typ F Cabriolet Gläser 1935

8 cylinders, 3200 cc, maximum speed 120 km/h

The German Hans Gustav Röhr was a young fighter pilot during the 1914–1918 war. In 1927, he decided to build his own cars. With the help of rich benefactors, he managed to buy the old Falcon car factories located in Ober-Ramstadt. It was a precursor of the front wheel. Based on small eight cylinders, he designed original technical solutions. Only a small number of vehicles were released at the time. Very few Röhr specimens have survived to today.

Bugatti 57 Galibier 1935

6 cylinders, 3527 cc, maximum speed 150 km/h

The Bugatti Type 57 and later variants (including the famous Atlantic and Atalante) was an entirely new design by Jean Bugatti, son of the founder Ettore. Type 57s were built between 1934 and 1940, with a total of 710 cars produced. Most Type 57s used a twin-cam 3527 cc engine based on that of the Type 49 but heavily modified by Bugatti. Unlike the chain-drive twin-cam engines of the Type 50 and 51, the 57s engine used gears to transmit power from the crankshaft.

Packard 8 1935

8 cylinders, 4621 cc, maximum speed 140 km/h

Launched in 1935, the eight-cylinder, “economy” model Packard-One-Twenty was renamed simply the Eight after the large Packard Eight was discontinued. The car has an in-line, eight-cylinder engine with lateral valves, 4,621 cc displacement and an output of 120 hp (88 kW) at 3,800 rpm. The power of the engine is transmitted to the rear wheels via a single-disc dry clutch and a semi-synchronized three-speed gearbox with central gearshift. All four wheels have hydraulic brakes. This vehicle in excellent condition was acquired by Saulius Karosas in 2012 from a dealer in Santa Ana, California.

BMW 326 1937

6 cylinders, 1971 cc, maximum speed 115 km/h

The BMW 326, a medium-sized sedan, was introduced at the Berlin Motor Show in February 1936. It was BMW's first four-door sedan. It had an innovative design, and sold well despite its relatively high price. Designed by Fritz Fiedler, the 326 featured a box-section frame that could be readily adapted for derivative models, a torsion bar rear suspension, and a hydraulic braking system, the first to be used on a BMW car. Styled by Peter Schimanowski, the 326 was offered as a four-door sedan and as a two or four-door cabriolet. The 326 sedan was the first BMW available with four doors. The 1,971-cc, in-line, six-cylinder engine was a version of the 319's power plant, with the bore increased from 65 to 66 mm.

Adler Junior 1935

4 cylinders, 995 cc, maximum speed 80 km/h

The Adler Trump Junior is a small car introduced by the automotive company Adler in 1934. The vehicle has front wheel drive and an engine with just under 1 liter displacement. The relatively few sports versions were built from 1935 to 1937.
28 hp was sufficient for the “lightweight”, which weighed in at 750 kg, to pass the 100 km/h mark. With a relatively long wheelbase, it was also quite comfortable to drive. The engine was a so-called SV – side valves – unit. At the time the Adler Trump Junior Sport embodied a new, sporty, fast car type that was able to achieve high speeds without overloading the chassis, or the engine constantly having to deliver its maximum output.

BMW Isetta 1961

Microcars

BMW Isetta

GOGGO, LLOYD, ISETTA, NSU, FIAT, CITROEN – these simple, appealing, sometimes a little funny-looking but very seriously engineered microcars all left their mark on the timeline of automotives in 1950–1960.

The European automotive industry was very slow to recover after World War II. A majority of factories, especially those in Germany, had been destroyed, there was a shortage of raw materials and workers, petrol, and understandably, money. The first post-war cars were mostly models that had been in production prior to the war, and came out in limited releases and were expensive. People had to choose two wheels (bicycles) instead of four, yet they dreamed about an automobile and being sheltered from the wind and rain when travelling. Microcars created by ingenious engineers came to the rescue. There were two- or three-seater vehicles with 3 m long bodies and motorcycle one, or less commonly two, cylinder engines. Microcars were meant for short and average-length journeys as they lacked a boot and other comfort elements. In most countries it sufficed to hold a motorcycle license to drive these kinds of automobiles, which drew the least amount of taxes.

The best known post-war microcar was the Isetta designed by the Italian engineer Renzo Rivolta. The BMW Isetta was a 2.28 m long rear-wheel drive two-seater car with a motorcycle engine in the back. The bubble-shaped body only had one door in the front that opened together with the steering wheel and dashboard. The car, then known as the Motocoupe, weighed only 353 kg and with its 9.5 hp engine reached a speed of 85 km/h. The Isetta was manufactured under license in Germany, as well as in Argentina, Spain, Belgium, France and Brazil.

Each microcar from the 1950s had interesting, sometimes even odd, features. For example: the body of the Lloyd was made from plywood lined with imitation leather; the Messerschmitt had no doors; in the Zundapp four passengers would sit with their backs to one another – *dos-à-dos*, the engine was in the middle of the car and there were two doors, one at the front, as in the Isetta, and one at the back.

These odd microcars found their place in the market in the 1950s and firmly held onto it. People's lives improved in Europe, the economy was recovering, incomes increased, accordingly, so did people's requirements. They wanted larger and more comfortable cars, protection from the wind and rain was not enough. In the beginning of the 1960s the demand for microcars dropped off quite sharply and their production ceased. Incidentally, the famous British Mini saw the light of day in 1959, and was spot-on in meeting minimalists' needs.

Messerschmitt KR-200 1955

1 cylinder, 191 cc, maximum speed 90 km/h

DESCRIBING THIS MEANS OF TRANSPORT is not as easy as it seems: not quite a car, and not quite a motorcycle; it has windows but no doors. In the first years after the war, such means of transport were called Flitzers, and when series production began, they started being called Rollermobil or Kabinenroller.

The creator of the Messerschmitt, Fritz Fend, constructed the first three-wheelers in 1948 for disabled war veterans. Limited series production began, and the construction was improved each year. Fritz Fend lacked the financial means to expand production, which is why he approached his former employer in 1952, Willy Messerschmitt, the owner of the Messerschmitt airplane factory that was no longer in operation. Willy liked the idea of this vehicle and by the middle of 1952 the two-seater Kabinenroller with a 150 cc Fichtel & Sachs engine was ready for series production. In 1953 the Messerschmitt FK-150 participated in the Geneva Motor Show and the KR-175 was presented at the Frankfurt Motor Show.

The narrow Kabinenroller body appears quite long. Entry is by lifting the cabin made from organic glass to the side. Two passengers can sit there behind one another. Instead of a steering wheel there is a fixture similar to the steering bar in a plane. There are two rotation wheels at the front and one drive wheel at the back, next to which is the engine.

The production of the improved KR-200 model commenced in 1955. The new Kabinenroller now boasted all the control features of a regular car: a steering wheel, accelerator, brake and clutch. This meant anyone who could drive a regular car could also handle the Messerschmitt.

The secret to the Messerschmitt's success was the efficiency of a motorcycle combined with a car's comfort (protection from the wind and rain).

BMW Isetta 1961

1 cylinder, 247 cc, maximum speed 85 km/h

THE INTERIM BETWEEN A MOTORCYCLE AND A VEHICLE was officially known as a Moto Coupe by the manufacturer. The emergence and popularity of these small cars with motorcycle engines was influenced by the economic and legal situation. In the 1940s in Germany, which was just recovering from World War II, the population's purchasing power was still low, and the laws allowed driving vehicles a motorcycle license so long as the engine was under 250cc. To fill this gap, certain manufacturers created inexpensive car-motorcycle hybrids, such as the Goggomobil, Messerschmitt, and others.

At the time, BMW produced only expensive cars, yet even good sales did not cover production costs. The company was on the brink of a financial crisis, and there was no time to create a new low-powered car. The only option was a license. The BMW delegation spotted a nice, small Moto Coupe at the Turin Motor Show – the Iso Isetta. A licenced manufacturing contract was soon signed, and the Italian engineer Renzo Rivolto's creation, after some added improvements by BMW, appeared on the market in March, 1955. From 1955 until 1962 almost 162,000 of these microcars were sold. The Isetta's success provided BMW with financial stability and much-needed time to create new models.

The most important feature of the Isetta is its only door which makes up the whole front of the car, opening up together with the steering shaft and dashboard. The motorcycle engine is fitted into the back of the car. The rear-wheel track is much narrower than for the front wheels. The car was called a Knutschkugel, or cute bubble, for being so cute.

Dixi DA-1 1928

4 cylinders, 748 cc, maximum speed 75 km/h

The Dixi is a car name from Germany's Fahrzeugfabrik Eisenach AG factory (1897–1928) that was used as a trademark from 1904. The Dixi factory had produced different kinds of cars, yet the two-seater mini Dixi DA-1 that only started being built in 1927 (in the years 1927–1929 a total of 9,300 were produced) has made this name known even today. The car's construction is very straightforward, there are no untested innovations, it was reliable and easily serviceable. Its only distinguishing feature was the wooden bodywork lined with aluminium tin sheeting. Evidence of its reliability was that at the Reichs-Alpenfahrt race held in 1928, three Dixis finished with no demerit points, and three first positions were secured at the international ADAC-Bergrekord race in Freiburg.

Fiat 500C 1951

4 cylinders, 570 cc, maximum speed 95 km/h

The Fiat factory has a long tradition of low-powered vehicle production: beginning in 1933, they continue to this day. The first Fiat 500 appeared in 1936, while the third C edition started being produced in 1949. As soon as they hit the streets, Italians called the first mini Fiats *topolini* – little mice, while the manufacturer made this nickname the car's official title. Its creators tried to make this car as light as possible: the body weighs only 250 kg. The engine and transmission have been pushed forward, while the radiator has been fitted behind the engine, thereby increasing space inside. The petrol tank is in the front, under the dashboard. In 1936–1955 Fiat sold 520,000 *topolini*, making it the most bought car in Italy.

Goggomobil TS 250 1964

2 cylinders, 246 cc, maximum speed 85 km/h

At 1954 at the IFMA international bicycle and motorcycle show in Cologne, the agricultural machinery producer Hans Glas GmbH presented a new product – the Goggomobil – a super-small four-seater sedan. Series production began one year later. In 1955–1969 as many as 66,511 of these cars were made. At the front, above the legs of the driver and passenger, is a small boot that opens from inside that contains the spare tyre. The body does not have a frame, all the car units and body are attached to the base plate. The two-stroke, two-cylinder, air-cooled engine is coupled to a four-speed gearbox and a differential which is fitted across the body at the rear of the car. In 1955–1965 several thousand Goggomobil coupes (Coupe de Ville) were sold in the USA.

Fiat Abarth 1967

2 cylinders, 695 cc, maximum speed 130 km/h

The Abarth company earned renown in the 1950s and 1960s for specialising in car remodelling: series Fiat, Simca and Alfa Romeo cars were adapted for racing and released in limited editions. In 1964 the Fiat Abarth 695 was presented at a motor show in Geneva and remained on the company's production program until 1968. Fewer Abarth 695s were made in the 1960s, and over time some of them disintegrated with only a handful of the genuine releases remaining. As interest grew in these miniature sports cars in the 21st century, replicas of this automobile started being produced with races being organised according to the technical requirements of the last age.

The hood ornament of the ZiS-102A 1940

Russian Cars

ZiS-110 1947

AMO – ZiS – ZiL

THE ZIL FACTORY (which first operated under the title AMO – *Avtomobilnoe moskovskoe obcshchestvo*; Moscow Automotive Society) was best known as a producer of Soviet trucks: it provided them for close to a century (1917–2016). The production of luxury automobiles commenced in 1933 when technical documentation and two experimental L-1 limousines were taken in from the Leningrad Fordson-Putilowez factory (*Zavod Krasnyj Putilovec*).

The director of the ZiS factory Ivan Likhachov convinced Stalin that the highest class of Soviet automobiles had to bear the ZiS (*Zavod imeni Stalina*) emblem, as the manufacturer had all the necessary equipment and specialists. This was not true however. In 1933, ZiS was commissioned by the state to produce luxury limousines; the American Buick 33-90 was selected as a prototype.

In 1935 everything was ready for the production of the first trial line of ZiS-101, however the process was suddenly halted and the produced sample was sent to the Budd manufacturer in the USA so that the creation of the bodywork could be completed and adapted for series production. Templates required for the production of the new bodywork was also ordered at the same American company. The latest equipment for the galvanising workshop was purchased in Europe for the production of chrome details. Series production of the highest-class ZiS-101 limousine commenced in November 1936.

During World War II, as the German army approached Moscow, the conveyor belts at the ZiL factory were shut down on October 15, 1941 and evacuation commenced.

Workers and the engineering-technical staff started returning from evacuation in late 1942–early 1943. Truck production resumed, as a group of engineers started creating a new luxury limousine. The plant director Likhachov said to one of the engineers, Andrei Ostrovcev: "Today no one knows when the war will end, but when it does end, in that year of triumph we must release an automobile that will show the whole world the highest level of Soviet technology".

In July 1945 in the purpose-built mechanical assembly plant no. 6, the production of the first line of new ZiS-110 limousines began. The ZiS-110 successfully passed state tests and smaller scale production began in 1946: between 100–300 automobiles were produced every year. When the long-serving director Likhachov died in 1956, the factory was named in his honour – *Zavod imeni Likhachova* (ZiL).

In 1958 the increasingly outdated 110 model was replaced by a newer version – 111. The scale of the production of this model was even smaller, with only 120 automobiles of various modifications of the ZiL-111 being produced over a period of eight years, i.e., around 14–15 cars annually. Following the ZiL-111, a new era of luxury Soviet automobiles began. These cars were kept only in the Special-Purpose Garage at the Kremlin, and only the highest ranking leaders of the Soviet Union and their guests would ride in them. The country's ordinary citizens started to refer to the exclusive automobiles sarcastically, "chlienovoz" (an automobile that transports members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee).

In 1967–1976, 120 seven-seater ZiL-114 cars were produced, while in 1971–1984, 77 five-seater ZiL-117 limousines were made. In 1976, production started on the ZiL-115 (4104); in 1986, after modernisation, it received the index code 41047.

The already small-scale production that was continually decreasing stopped specialists from being able to progress, halting the development of production processes and the creation of new models, not to mention the modernisation of the existing models. There was also a shortage of funds. The cost of this automobile was exorbitant – it was possible to buy four luxury Mercedenz Benz cars for the price of one ZiL. The last ZiL reached the Special-Purpose Garage of the Kremlin in 2003.

ZiS-101 1938

8 cylinders, 5762 cc, maximum speed 115 km/h

One of the first ZiS-101 cars. 1936

THIS WAS THE FIRST LUXURY CAR IN SERIES PRODUCTION in the Soviet Union – the tradition of luxury government automobile production began with this six-seater limousine.

By the decree of the Council of the People's Commissariat of the USSR in 1933 reconstruction began on Stalin's Automobile Plant in Moscow (*Zavod imeni Stalina* – ZiS). When Stalin visited the plant in 1934, he turned to the thousand-strong collective and said: "We need to produce a large, seven-seater car that will be able to comfortably serve the bright life of the Soviet Union."

Engineers at ZiS took on this complicated task, constructing a chassis from several American cars, thus "improving" them. Car body engineers made four body models, while the technical documentation and fittings for the final version, ready for series production, were prepared by the American Budd company. The Americans prepared body production documentation for a sum of 1.5 million dollars, created body detail templates and produced two sample cars with a Buick chassis – without this initial work, series production would have been impossible. In the spring of 1936, the plant director Ivan Likhachev carried out a 70 km test drive.

A long-standing tradition became established in the Soviet Union in 1936 where the highest-ranking state leaders would be presented with the latest automotive industry production for assessment. The first two ZiS-101 models, analogues of a 1934 Cadillac and a 1936 Buick, were presented for inspection at the Kremlin on April 29, where they left a fine impression on the state's "fathers". After another inspection on May 1, Stalin gave his stamp of approval and preparations were underway for series production. The first ZiS-101 cars rolled off the new conveyor belts on November 3, 1936. The *Za ruliom* magazine wrote: "The ZiS-101 designed by engineers at Stalin's Automotive Plant clearly reflects contemporary automobile production trends in creating a powerful and fast vehicle. We have created our own, Soviet, beautiful and spacious "luxury" automobile".

The vehicle interior matched its class, boasting heating and a radio – a novelty not only for the Soviets. There was a clock on the driver's side, a light panel and glove-boxes. A glass divider that could be lowered separated the passengers from the driver. The passenger space had two fold-down seats and a fold-out footrest for those sitting in the back of the vehicle. Rollette blinds could be lowered on all the rear windows, while fine plaited handles hung near the doors. Some vehicles had an internal telephone for communicating with the driver when the glass divider was raised. The driver's seat and the doors were usually leather upholstered, while the passenger seats and doors were upholstered in expensive Kersey cloth.

A cherry-coloured ZiS-101 was demonstrated at the World Expo in Paris in 1937, where it aroused great interest. In 1936–1941 a total of 8,752 Zis-101 vehicles were produced. This was the most mass-produced Soviet limousine, yet today only a few samples have survived.

ZiL-111D 1964

8 cylinders, 5969 cc, maximum speed 170 km/h

THE FIRST ZIL-111G CABRIOLET was assembled in July, 1964 with 12 such vehicles being produced up to 1967: the eight black and four grey-blue cars were driven exclusively during military parades in the Red Square in Moscow. Some of the ZiL-111D were given as gifts to socialist state leaders, or, as it was commonly said in those days, "to people who had earned the Soviet Union's merit". In April, 1963, whilst visiting the Soviet Union, the Cuban leader Fidel Castro was taken to the ZiL plant where he was ceremoniously presented with a ZiL-111D cabriolet; the gift was transported to Cuba by steamship.

The ZiL-111D in the SK Collection has its own interesting history. A Czech collector acquired this rare vehicle at an auction where the property of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party was being sold. The General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Leonid Brezhnev gave this particular ZiL to the first Czechoslovakian astronaut Václav Remek as a gift. However, following the astronaut's enthusiastic welcome-back tour through the country's cities, the cabriolet was taken away back to the garage of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party's Central Committee, while Remek was given a new low-powered Škoda as compensation. The astronaut did not dare object, while the "nationalised" parade cabriolet appeared several times on the streets of Prague on various special occasions.

The leader of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party Gustáv Husák and honoured guests, such as Pope John Paul II, were some of the more well-known passengers.

With the collapse of socialism, the vehicle collected dust in the corner of the government garage for such a long time that even its tyres took on a "square" shape. The collector who bought this car did not care for it very much before eventually selling it to Saulius Karosas. Thanks to the master restorers at the Saulius Karosas Restoration Workshop, the cabriolet has become the highlight of his luxury Soviet automobile collection.

ZiL-41047 1990

8 cylinders, 7680 cc, maximum speed 190 km/h

THIS LUXURY SOVIET LIMOUSINE signalled the peak of the years-long evolution in vehicles produced by ZiL, and also its end. The last car was manufactured at special plant no. 6 in 2003.

The ZiL-41047 is an improved version of its predecessor created by Russian designers and engineers in the 1970s. Cars changed along with the leaders of the Soviet Union. The ZiL-4104 appeared under Brezhnev, while under Andropov the ZiL-41045 came out. Gorbachev took a ZiL-41047 limousine. The production technology of manual luxury cars mastered over many years in ZiL plant no. 6 allowed changing the car's exterior quickly and with little additional outlays, keeping almost the same interior. Button-operated window lowering and raising functions and seat regulation were standard in America and Europe by the late 20th century, and climate control was no surprise. However, the monumental 41047 had one very important exception. At 6.34 m it was one of the longest ever passenger cars.

This ZiL-41047 reached the SK Collection from Berlin, but has a mysterious past. A very important, interesting document came along with the car – the driver's journal listing in detail all the minor and major repairs ever made. The driver's signature and date appears under every entry. The garage number 94 was neatly painted on the front panel under the hood and on the door posts. The first page of the notebook mentions that the car arrived in the Special-Purpose Garage at the Kremlin on February 6, 1991. The last journal entry was made on November 15, 1999.

The Special-Purpose Garage (*Garazh osobogo naznacheniya* – GON) is a branch of the Russian Federation's Security Service. Based on the State Security Law, the garage personnel ensure the vehicular transport safety of the Russian president, the prime minister, parliament leaders and state guests. The garage was founded on January 5, 1921. Its first director was Lenin's private chauffeur Stepan Gil, while from 1923 to 1953 the garage was under the watchful eye of Stalin's former private chauffeur Pavel Udalov.

In the 1920s and 1930s the garage contained luxury vehicles made by the world's most famous manufacturers. Even though the first Soviet luxury limousine, the ZiS-101, started being produced in 1936, they were not used by the country's highest-ranking leaders, but by their family members and lower-ranked leaders.

After World War II, the leaders of the Soviet Union with Stalin at the fore decided to use Soviet cars after all, to show pride in their victorious state's achievements. The first ZiS-110 limousines produced in 1945 went straight to the GON in the Kremlin. From then until the collapse of the Soviet Union, Communist Party and state leaders used only Soviet luxury cars. The GON specialists were always actively involved in the creation and improvement of Soviet luxury vehicles.

The advisor to the director of the Federal Security Service (FSS) Sergei Deviatnikov about the country's first private chauffeurs: "There was no proper way of starting working in the GON. People would first start working in the FSS in the transport section, only after a strict selection procedure, passing a set of medical and other tests. They would only sit behind the wheel following the most stringent professional training. Even after all of this, the driver could not participate in serving the heads of state. They would be under observation their entire time in service; it was a long, complicated and controlled process. Prospective GON drivers had to pass difficult exams to prove they could expertly handle an automobile and drive under extreme and unpredictable conditions. It would be many – seven, ten or even 12 – years before the leadership would give their final verdict. A young person could never become a driver for heads of state. All our drivers are military officers, and one does not become an officer suddenly".

GON staff were often both witnesses to and participants in the most important political events in the state. The most valued drivers regularly participate in complex security operations with effective precision, sometimes at risk to their own lives.


LT
TVK 653
МОСКВА КРЕМЛЬ

ZiS-102A 1940

8 cylinders, 5762 cc, maximum speed 120 km/h

In the spring of 1938 the first Phaeton car, called the ZiS-102, was presented for inspection to the Kremlin's state leaders and specialists. In the May Day parade that same year in Moscow, the ZiS-102 was shown to the workers of the country: the automobile, adorned with flowers, was transported on the back of a truck on a special platform. A modernised Phaeton went into production in late 1938 featuring a new front body that was later also used in the ZiS-101A limousine. Befitting an open vehicle, the interior was finished in leather. In 1939 the ZiS-102A was shown on the other side of the Atlantic, at an international show in New York. The chassis, transmission and engine were the same as in the ZiS-101 limousine.

ZiS-110 1947

8 cylinders, 6000 cc, maximum speed 140 km/h

As the course of events in World War II changed and the Tehran Conference came to a close, Soviet propoganda started heralding a crushing victory. Words would not be enough to show the world the highest level of Soviet technology – they had to be backed by deeds. It was rumoured that Stalin liked Packards. So, when "scientific research" had ended, the Packard 180 was chosen as the prototype for the impending "victory" automobile, only with a limousine body. The ZiS designers successfully created a body and the new ZiS-110 looked even better than its predecessors – the combination of a Packard, Cadillac and Buick turned out to be an excellent vehicle, and looked truly modern for its time in 1945 and 1946.

ZiS-110B 1957

8 cylinders, 6000 cc, maximum speed 140 km/h

The Phaeton ZiS-110B went into production in 1949. From 1955 open, grey-blue ZiS automobiles replaced the horses hitherto used in military parades in Red Square. This colour of parade Phaetons and cabriolets was used until 2010. The Phaeton ZiS-110B were used in military parades not only in the Soviet Union's capital Moscow, but also in all capitals of the socialist countries. The ZiS-110B in the SK Collection was found in Germany, but before that it was in Latvia. It was very worn down but an original, and even in somewhat working order.

ZiL-114 1978

8 cylinders, 6960 cc, maximum speed 190 km/h

To mark the 50th anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution, ZiL produced its latest luxury limousine, the ZiL-114. It replaced the outdated ZiL-111. The new model was the first Soviet luxury automobile created without being guided by a specific pre-selected analogue, even though the ZiL factory, as it had previously, continued to regularly receive the best luxury class vehicles from various manufacturers. Compared to its predecessor, the new ZiL-114 had a radically different exterior and interior. The body was strict and plain with straight lines, while its lower height made it appear longer than it actually was, giving it both a modern and somewhat conservative look – features that usually characterised government vehicles.

GAZ-21 Volga 1971

The Gorky Automobile Plant – GAZ

Soviet limousine GAZ-13 Chaika

IN THE 1920S, as the Soviet Union's leaders understood that it would be a long time before they could start series production of vehicles themselves, they appealed to the USA for assistance. The Ford Motor Company was the largest automotive manufacturer in the world at the time. With the mediation of the American government, a nine-year license contract for automotive production and technical assistance was signed with Ford. Two years later, the largest automotive-manufacturing plant in the Soviet Union was built in Nizhny Novgorod. Renaming of the city to Gorky in 1932 meant the company became known as the Gorky Molotov Automobile Plant. Mastering American technology in the pre-war years led to 450,000 cars of various modifications being released at by the Gorky Automobile Plant, or 68.3 percent of the automotive industry's production in the Soviet Union at the time. The city of Gorky was sometimes called "Soviet Detroit".

When World War II began, the plant was reorganized to serve the defence industry's needs: soon enough, series production of new, light all-wheel drive GAZ-64 jeeps began, light-armoured vehicles and tanks were developed, but the main product remained trucks.

Winning the war with the Allies' help, the Soviet Union tried to demonstrate the power of its own industrial sector. New model automobiles started being manufactured in the country in 1945 and 1946: the low-powered Moskvich 400, the executive class GAZ-20 Pobeda (Victory) and the luxury ZIS-110 limousine. Medium-ranking officials made do with the Pobeda but the directors of larger companies, higher-ranked party members and ministers of the "brotherly" republics needed a better and larger car, yet no one dared to lay claim to Stalin's ZiS. GAZ was given the task of creating a six- or seven-seater "not quite luxury" limousine that would fill in the blank row in the "fifth five-year automotive production plan". The ZIM was born in Gorky in 1950, while by 1959 it had been updated to become one of the finest Soviet limousines, the Chaika. In 1956, replacing the ageing yet reliable Pobeda, engineers at the Gorky Automotive Plant released the Volga, which became the dream car of the Soviet working intelligentsia and proletariat.

An interesting fact: when Viacheslav Molotov was dismissed from all his political and state posts in 1957, all the factories, steamships and vehicles that bore his name were quickly and quietly renamed. The ZIM logo (*Zavod imeni Molotova* – literally, Plant named after Molotov) was removed from ZIM hubcaps, chrome radiator grilles and steering wheel centres, being replaced by GAZ (*Gorkovsky avtomobilny zavod* – Gorky Automobile Plant), while Molotov's name disappeared completely from the plant's title.

The slow creation of new vehicles, rigid production processes and ageing production line equipment continued to widen the gap between Soviet GAZ and Western vehicles. With the collapse of the Soviet Union there was no longer a centralised government or state commissions. In 1992 the factory underwent restructuring and several open joint-stock companies were formed, but competition was too fierce and car production ceased.

GAZ-13 Chaika 1971

8 cylinders, 5520 cc, maximum speed 160 km/h

THIS GOVERNMENT OR EXECUTIVE (though not luxury) seven-seater limousine replaced the aged ZiM in 1959. It was a car that was created at the dawn of the space age: speed, scope, space, power; hydraulic and electric mechanisms everywhere – the steering wheel, brakes, window controls and gear change. Excellent in appearance, panoramic front and rear windows, the rear wings reminiscent of a rocket, and most importantly – a whole lot of exterior shine. A completely new 8 cylinder V-shaped 195 hp engine and automatic transmission with switch controls on the dashboard gave it excellent dynamics. The interior design was ultra-modern, with darkened windows and mostly leather used for the upholstery.

In his book *GAZ 1932–1982. Russian cars* Ivan Paderin wrote: "The GAZ-13 was a powerful car from a stylish era. Created by people who knew nothing about rock 'n' roll, but hit those notes with precise accuracy." Neither its predecessor nor its successor in the class of Soviet nomenclature cars matched this model in terms of luxury or style.

Three GAZ cars were on display at an international industry show in Brussels in 1958: the GAZ-13 Chaika, GAZ-21 Volga and the GAZ-52 truck. The show's major prize went to these three vehicles.

When series production, or more accurately, limited series production, began, the Chaikas went into the garages of ministries, Soviet army generals, and republic and district party Central Committees. Black was the default governmental colour. It is said, perhaps in jest, that the only white Chaika in Moscow was made for the first female astronaut, Valentina Tereshkova. It should be added that both Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev enjoyed taking an odd ride in a Chaika. This was truly a legendary automobile: it was produced for 22 years running, without any modifications or modernisations. In total, 3,189 Chaikas were produced.

A new model, the GAZ-14, started being manufactured in 1977, however production of the GAZ-13 continued until 1981. In 1972–1982, several dozen GAZ-13S ambulance vans were made in Latvia at the RAF factory.

GAZ-67B 1945

4 cylinders, 3280 cc, maximum speed 90 km/h

The four-wheel drive GAZ-67 is an improved model of its predecessor, the GAZ-64 (1941–1943). It was used during the war to haul anti-tank cannons, and as a headquarters and signallers vehicle. Assembly units from other series GAZ vehicles were used in its construction: the engine was from the GAZ M-1, the four-speed gearbox was from the GAZ MM, while the bridge, cardan, steering-wheel mechanism and brakes were from the GAZ-61. The simple body construction meant no special equipment was required for its production, vehicles could be assembled manually. The undemanding and reliable four-wheel drive earned fine recommendations on the war front and on farms after the war. Over ten years, almost 100,000 GAZ-67 were made.

GAZ-20 Pobeda 1953

4 cylinders, 2120 cc, maximum speed 105 km/h

The creation of the Pobeda began in 1943. Engineers at the Gorky Automobile Plant managed to create a completely new vehicle. Its main innovation was the unibody construction. The engine and radiator were pushed forward, compared to the front bridge, allowing positioning the rest of the interior forward. The rear wheel niches remained behind the back of the rear seat, which allowed widening the passenger seating and creating room for the boot. The innovative-looking vehicle no longer had wings or footsteps protruding from the sides, the front lights were integrated into the wings, the hood was of an “alligator” type and the windscreen was V-shaped. The GAZ-20 Pobeda was also produced as a cabriolet, retaining the unibody construction.

GAZ-13B Chaika 1968

8 cylinders, 5520 cc, maximum speed 160 km/h

Ivan Paderin was rather reserved in his comments about the Chaika cabriolet in the book *GAZ 1932–1982. Russian Cars*: "The cabriolet has a cloth roof that opens and closes automatically. The roof mechanism, which has many components, operates using hydraulics." Several open-top Chaikas were produced in 1961–1962. While there are no precise statistics, the data suggest somewhere between six and 15 cars. These open-top Chaikas were used by Soviet government leaders and army generals during ceremonial events, and on holidays near the Black Sea or in Jurmala in Latvia.

GAZ-22G Volga 1969

4 cylinders, 2445 cc, maximum speed 130 km/h

In 1962, during regular modernisation of the basic GAZ-21 model, the production of the station-wagon style GAZ-22 also commenced. The straight roof line, the steep end and the unchanged rear wing alignment retained the visual determination and elegance of the Volga. The large glass paned area made the car lightweight and bright inside. The body has reinforced suspension. By folding down the rear passenger seats, the floor of the station-wagon boot extended to 1.6 m, while opening the back horizontally split swing-door, the flat floor length reached as much as 2.2 m. People could sleep in the cabin by folding back the front seats.

GAZ-21 Volga 1971

4 cylinders, 2445 cc, maximum speed 130 km/h

The first experimental versions of the GAZ-21 appeared already in 1955. The GAZ engineers managed to create a nice, modern automobile, yet by the time series production could commence, it had already aged. The European and American automotive industry moved forward in leaps and bounds, but for the Soviet “market” and workers, despite its shortcomings, in the 1960s the Volga was a true dream car. Three modifications of the Volga were created during its 13 years in production, easily distinguished based on the radiator grille, depicting either a star, a shark, or whalebone.

Other Russian Cars

Moskvich 400-420A 1951

4 cylinders, 1070 cc, maximum speed 90 km/h

THE STORY BEHIND THE EMERGENCE of the folksy low-powered vehicle in the post-war USSR was unclear for a long time. How did the German Opel Kadett model find its way onto Soviet conveyor belts? Many historians have tried to find answers to this question. The official story was that the model was copied without actually taking anything beyond Germany's borders. Yet in fact, the story went a little differently.

Once World War II was over, in accordance with the reparations agreements, the Soviets removed equipment, technical documentation and even some specialists from the Opel factory in Rüsselsheim. Some of the equipment went straight to Dnepropetrovsk for the planned truck factory, while others went to Moscow, where production of the low-powered Opel Kadett K-38 soon began, only now it was called the Moskvich 400. When speaking about this vehicle, even specialists make the error saying it was a copy; in fact, the Opel Kadett was never copied – it was simply war booty.

The new car was ready for production before the end of 1946, and the first 400-420 was built in December (400 – a type of engine, 420 – the body style). Approved for mass production on 28 April 1947, 1,501 were built the first year; 4,808 in 1948, and 19,906 in 1949. The 100,000th Moskvich was built in October 1952. The Moskvich 400-420 was produced until 1954 when it replaced by the Moskvich-401 which had a more powerful engine. In total, 216,000 sedans and 17,000 cabriolets rolled out of the factory. In 1956, the car was replaced with the new Moskvich-402.

The 400 went on sale in Belgium in October 1950, making it a very early Soviet automotive export product. The car has been acclaimed for its engine's quietness, the calibre of its finish, and the quality of the ride.

VAZ-2101 Sport 1979

4 cylinders, 1300 cc

WHILE STILL AT SCHOOL, during his summer holidays in 1973 Saulius Karosas worked as an assistant, or more precisely, a mechanic's apprentice, to the best racing car driver in Lithuania at the time, Vikis Olekas. The famous driver liked the young man, who soon became a member of the small team. In 1974 Oleka won Lithuania its first USSR track race champion's medal. Karosas also contributed to this victory, getting the Group 2 Zhiguli cars ready for racing; he was entered as Oleka's main mechanic in the race application form, and was thus also awarded a USSR champion's mechanic diploma. This marked the beginning of the long friendship between Karosas and Olekas.

As Karosas' 50th birthday approached, the collective at his car restorations workshop, headed by Arvydas Šapoka, recalled the collector's hobby from his younger days and, with the assistance of motor-sport veterans, they put together the same kinds of sporty Zhiguli cars that Saulius prepared for racing in 1973–1975.

This is a race track automobile with a lighter body, retaining only the most necessary elements. Special homologated roll hoops were fitted inside the car, as was a sports seat with special safety belts, a sporty steering wheel and a special fuel tank. The rear drivechain has a limited slip differential. The gearbox, suspension fram and brakes were customised. It has a four-stroke petrol four-cylinder inline liquid-cooled engine. Upgraded to 1300 cc and 120 hp, this version differs from the series model by about 70 percent.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SMZ S3AM 1969

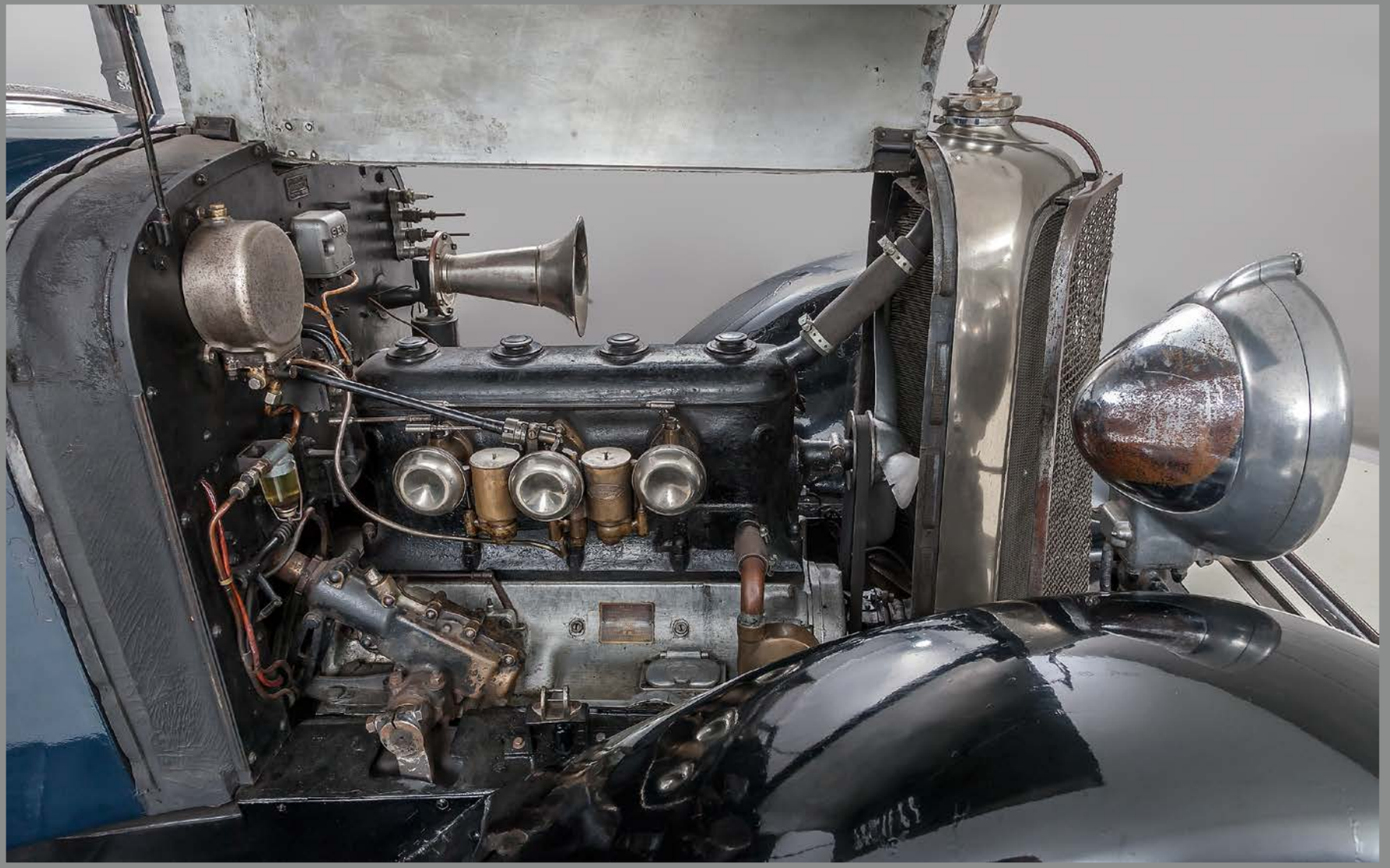
1 cylinder, 346 cc, maximum speed 55 km/h

This two-seater, four-wheel, open-top, motor-wheelchair automobile was series produced in the Serpukhov Motorcycle Plant (SMZ) in 1958–1970. Commonly known as the “invalidka”, it was intended to make short journeys possible for disabled people, however the Soviet reality forced people to use this transport as a normal car as well. The “invalidka” was given to disabled people by the social welfare system. Having received one, the disabled person would have to present the car for compulsory yet free major repairs after 2.5 years of use, and return the car outright after five years to the social welfare system; a new car would be allocated to replace the old one. Almost no older “invalidka” cars have survived, as their owners would hand them in wanting to receive new ones.

SMZ S3D 1989

1 cylinders, 346 cc, maximum speed 55 km/h

The S3D is a two-seater sedan with a unibody construction with an Izh Planeta-3 motorcycle engine in the back. The wheels are entirely on independent torsion bar suspension. There are no pedals, the vehicle is controlled by levers and additional handles near the steering wheel. An interesting fact: there are four forward and four reverse gears, though not very low. A very important advantage was a heated cabin achieved using the ZAZ automobile's autonomous petrol heating system; despite this, the body of this small car, sometimes called the "invalidka", had neither sound nor thermal insulation.



Panhard & Levassor X56 1927

Bringing Back Authenticity

Panhard & Levassor X56 1927

Mercedes-Benz 500 Nürburg 1934

Restoration of Oldtimer Cars

AS YEARS GO BY, it is increasingly harder to find well-preserved, complete rare collector cars. The long years of experience of collector Saulius Karosas and his financial capabilities allow him to periodically acquire very interesting and rare vehicles. Even before buying an exclusive car, many collectors wonder where they will be able to have their car restored. The insightful Saulius Karosas established his own restoration company three decades ago, which has grown from a garage into a top-class workshop. That's why today, the collector need not think about where his new acquisitions will be restored – the whole process can be carried out at his restoration workshop.

Other questions also arise with the acquisition of an unrestored collectors' car. If it is in good condition, technically complete, usually all that needs to be done is conservation to preserve its authenticity. This gives the piece appeal and sometimes even makes it more attractive and natural than a shiny, ideally restored sample. A good example of this kind of car is the Panhard & Levassor, a sporty and elegant vehicle in excellent driving order with an interesting and rare Knight engine.

In many other cases the cars do need restoration work. The process begins from the collection and study of technical literature: the historical material that sometimes accompanies the car or which is collected along the way is critical. When working with rare, often one-off vehicles, the collection of historical material demands time and investment; while there is no direct impact on the car's appearance, it does have a great influence on its value.

As the long-serving manager of the Saulius Karosas Restoration Workshop Arvydas Šapoka says, the right beginning of the restoration process, the car's dismantling, is a very critical moment. It influences the success of all the subsequent tasks. It is very important to thoroughly and systemically photograph every detail; this data will be needed during the entire restoration process, which can take three to five years, sometimes even more. Only after the car has been completely dismantled does the scope of the restoration work required become clear. Restorers are often saddened to discover non-original or completely worn down parts. Then, the restoration process can be planned. And imagine that four or five cars may be under restoration at the workshop at any one time.

Once an assessment has been made, the restorers decide which elements they can restore at the workshop, and which ones need to be given to other specialists – there is a whole range of various experts, craftsmen and specialised workshops that the restorers can count on, not only in Lithuania but across all of Europe. Often the tiniest detail might require the attention of a high-class specialist, sometimes the production process of a single part might need to be organised independently.

All the pre-war cars have a frame construction; their bodywork frames are made from special timber. There aren't so many masters who are able to produce complex spatial constructions from timber, there is no separate training for this kind of job – it requires a great deal of knowledge and experience.

Another part of the restoration process is body work. The metal sheeting on cars released from production plants 70–80 years ago is often highly corroded, which is why much of the body details need to be made from scratch. Sometimes a car used to belong to a "handy-man", so certain body elements, sometimes totalling almost half of all the body parts, need to be reconstructed based on photographs or sketched designs.

Once this "hard" work is over, the restorers focus on seat restoration and fitting out the interior, fixing the gadgets, installing electrical wiring, and numerous other things. Proper tyres and rims are required – tyres from contemporary cars are not suitable for old-timer vehicles.

Restoration is a long, complicated and tiring process with its highs and lows. But the greatest satisfaction comes when a restored vehicle rolls out of the workshop.

Panhard & Levassor X56 1927

4 cylinders, 5319 cc, maximum speed 150 km/h

The Panhard 20 CV X56 is an exceptionally powerful sports model. Panhard et Levassor was renowned for its engines. As a constructor, it won numerous championships and set several records right up until the 1930s. The Panhard 20 CV thus ranks alongside the Bugatti Type 46 or the Hispano-Suiza H6B.
The Panhard et Levassor 20 CV is powered by a 5,319 cc valveless inline-four Knight engine, delivering 20 tax horsepower.

Mercedes-Benz 500 Nürburg 1934

8 cylinders, 4884 cc, maximum speed 125 km/h

The basis of this car was a 4.6-l model with an eight-cylinder engine named Type Nürburg 460 developed under the supervision of Ferdinand Porsche and first presented at the 1928 Paris Motor Show. Saulius Karosas acquired this wonderful and rare Mercedes-Benz 500 Nürburg with Erdmann & Rossi body complete in its current state in November 2017. The engine is still working very well. This car was in the same family in Dresden, Germany for over 40 years. Its restoration is currently being studied in the Saulius Karosas Restoration Workshops.

SAULIUS KAROSAS EXTENDS HIS SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Rupert Stuhlemmer, Aidas Liutkus, Aleksandras Obymacha, Arvydas Šapoka, Ojārs Šaumanis

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