

1929 BUGATTI TYPE 46 CABRIOLET

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Year: 1929

Chassis no: 46524

Registration:

BL227255 (Swiss).

Price: £950,000

VEHICLE DETAILS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION / SERVICE HISTORY

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A stunning Pebble Beach class winner presented in flawless concours winning condition. You really have to see this car to appreciate the quality of the work done & the materials used. This car is close to perfection & runs beautifully having just been the recipient of Chf 15k or so in recent works to put it in tip top order.

In 1929, Ettore Bugatti introduced a new car to fill what was a vast gap between the 3.0-liter Type 44 and the massive, extravagant 12.75 liter Type 41 Royale. This new car was called the **Type 46**, and it featured a 5,350 c.c. Monobloc inline eight-cylinder engine, a three-speed rear-mounted transaxle and Bugatti's typical and proven solid axle chassis design. The Type 46 resonated with buyers, as approximately 467 examples were built between 1929 and 1933.

While this might seem like a lot of cars by Bugatti standards, its nearest competitor, the Delage D8, was made in numbers approaching 2,000 examples. Typical for Bugatti, the bodies fitted to the Type 46 chassis were as varied as their customers.

Ranging from formal and understated saloons to flamboyant and sporty roadsters, the Type 46 proved to be quite versatile and fine-driving car in true Molsheim tradition. It shared particular characteristics with the massive Type 41, including the transaxle gearbox and fabulous cast-alloy disc wheels. Its power, grace and stature earned the Type 46 the nickname "La Petit Royale."

Our featured Type 46 is chassis number 46524. According to information in Barrie Price's book Bugatti Type 46 & 50, as well as the definitive reference guide La Petit Royale, this particular chassis was ordered in a batch of 29 cars (a mix of type 46 and 49) by Swiss Bugatti agent Bucar of Zurich. The first owner is listed as Hans Lindt of Stockholm, Sweden (incorrectly noted as "Schmidt" by Mr. Price). It is understood that the car was delivered wearing the optional alloy wheels and ordered to receive four-seat Gangloff Touriste cabriolet coachwork. Upon completion by Gangloff, it was driven back to Molsheim, collected by Mr. Lindt, who drove the 1,700 KM across Europe and back to Stockholm; a task for which his Type 46 was no doubt ideally suited.

Following Mr. Lindt's time with the car, it was purchased by Rene Chatard, a fashion boutique owner, and well-known Bugatti connoisseur. It is believed that sometime during Chatard's ownership, the body was separated from the chassis and fitted with blackout lights and rudimentary seats, perhaps to make the car unattractive to occupying forces during the war. In 1940, it was equipped with a "Gazogene" unit in an attempt to run the car on wood fumes instead of gasoline, but the experiment was a failure, and the car was parked up. Chatard and his mistress were killed in 1955 when his Type 57 Atlantic was struck by a train. Chatard's widow sold 46524 along with six other cars to the famous Bugatti collector Jean De Dobbeleer. He would quickly sell this car as a running chassis with radiator, bonnet, and cowl, to Bob Estes and Otto Zipper of Precision Motor Cars in California, as noted in H.G. Conway's The Bugatti Register. At some point, the car joined the Harrah Collection in Reno, still in the same state as De Dobbeleer found it in 1956.

In 1973, 46524 was sold via auction at Harrah's and purchased by Ed Morgan and his son. The Morgans being avid collectors and restorers, and the car remained as found for many years as they planned the best course of action to restore it. During their research, they learned that Dr. Joseph Fuchs, who had commissioned the magnificent Weinberger-bodied Type 41 Royale Cabriolet had also owned a Weinberger-bodied Type 46. No photos of that car were available at the time, but the inspiration was set, and the Morgans traveled to The Henry Ford to measure and photograph the Weinberger Royale. Numerous drawings, measurements, and templates were made before a design was settled upon. In 1992, the car was finally handed over to Monty and Greg Montiller to receive its coachwork. The chassis and mechanicals were restored in the Morgan's personal restoration shop, which included a full engine rebuild, and the upholstery work was handed over to Ken Niminek, executed in lovely two-tone green and tan leather.

The rebirth of 46524 was completed in 1998, and while it differs in detail from Dr.

Fuchs' Type 46 (photos of that car have since surfaced), it remains a magnificent tribute and incredibly beautiful in its own right. The Type 46 rides on a rather long 140" wheelbase chassis, though the impeccably proportioned coachwork makes this car seem much smaller. Among most notable features of the body are the sweeping Jean Bugatti-style wings which form one continuous and graceful line from front to rear. The Royale-style 20-inch alloy wheels are a perfect match for the coachwork, and the upholstered trunk, close-coupled body, and dual rear-mount spare wheels give it a distinctly sporting appearance.

Fresh from restoration, the Type 46 was shown at the 1998 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance where it was promptly awarded first in class. Over the next five years, it was shown extensively, winning Best in Show at the 2000 Hillsborough Concours and Most Elegant Open Car at the 2003 Palo Alto Concours. The Morgans participated in the 2003 Bugatti West Coast Rally with the Type 46.

46524 has been meticulously maintained over the years and still presents in near-concours condition. The two-tone green paintwork is in excellent order, highlighted with finely restored brightwork. As expected of a Pebble Beach class winner, detailing is impeccable. The beauty of the coachwork is matched by the striking interior, which is finished in two-tone tan and green leather, with lavish woodwork and appointments. The tan top has seldom been down since it was fitted and is therefore excellent and crease-free.

This Type 46 is, quite simply an exquisite and breathtaking machine. The history is well-documented, and it benefits from forty-five years of continuous ownership in the hands of its passionate caretakers. It is ready for its next chapter and remains in showable condition, yet would also make for an outstanding touring car, where the powerful 5.3-liter inline eight can be thoroughly enjoyed.

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