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VANDEN PLAS
'FLATBACK' COUPE

Year: 1934

Chassis no: 11288

Registration: AYN15

Price: £150,000

VEHICLE DETAILS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION / SERVICE HISTORY

1934 Alvis Speed 20 SB Vanden Plas 'Flatback' coupe

Chassis Number: 11288

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Under previous ownership for 61 years, this ALvis is one of eight flatback coupe examples known to have been made & is a perfect candidate for the preservation class at concours events.

The most original of the eight Vanden Plas 'Flatback' Saloons known to have survived (from just thirty-six built)

For many the best looking enclosed Alvis ever made,

Previous family ownership since 1961.

Matching car, chassis, body and engine numbers.

Wonderfully conserved with a gloriously original interior and a recent exterior repaint.

Used as a reference in the restoration of a sister car (chassis 11845) which sold for \$198,000 during 2015.

The subject of an extensive engine overhaul and much other mechanical fettling.

Supplied new to Hugh Grosvenor, 2nd Duke of Westminster, GVCVO, DSO. One of the world's richest men, the 2nd Duke of Westminster had a principal residence with fifty-four bedrooms (plus homes around the globe), a private railway line and two yachts (one steam, one sail) etc.

Initially finished in Black with Brown leather upholstery and Cream coachlines that not only adorned the swage line but also extended to the trailing edge of the bonnet louvres, chassis 11288 was despatched from the Works on March 8th 1934. Issued with the London registration number 'AYN 15', the rakishly elegant 'Flatback' was supplied new to one of Europe's richest men, Hugh Grosvenor, 2nd Duke of Westminster, GVCVO, DSO. Able to call upon a fleet of up to seventeen Rolls-Royces, it is thought that the Duke - known familiarly as Bend'Or - used the Alvis for personal transport (as a two-door it was not best suited to chauffeur duties). Memorably described by the politician and diarist Sir Henry 'Chips' Channon as 'magnificent, courteous, a mixture of Henry VIII and Lorenzo II Magnifico, he lived for pleasure—and women—for 74 years. His wealth was incalculable; his charm overwhelming; but he was restless, spoilt, irritable, and rather splendid in a very English way', Grosvenor was used to getting what he wanted when he wanted it and could afford anything.

Thereafter, 'AYN 15' is known to have belonged to W.M. Anderson Esq of Rhysnant Hall, R.M.R. Davies Esq of Swansea, A. Davies Esq of Penrith and L.V. Halliwell Esq of New Earswick before entering the current family ownership in 1961 by which time its Black paintwork had been augmented with Green side panels. Renowned in Alvis Owners' Club circles for the length of time he owned the 'Flatback', the vendor's late father chose to conserve rather than restore it. To this end, the original BTH magneto was refurbished by D.H. Day (1973), the gearbox refreshed (1974) and the radiator renewed courtesy of Great Western Radiators / Motor Metalcraft (1980). Keith Taylor of Tectus Engineering thoroughly overhauled the factory-fitted straight-six engine using a brand-new crankshaft made by Farndon Engineering (1991-1993). Idle for a few years prior to being inherited by the seller, the Speed 20SB was entrusted to MCI Ltd of Blackburn for light recommissioning during 2020. While, the next year saw Tudor Wheels Ltd recondition the rear wheels and fit new tyres; the clutch relined and the engine tuned (carburettors balanced, ignition timing adjusted etc) by former Crosthwaite & Gardiner engineer John Moore.

The current owner has engaged in a sympathetic conservation of the car. The interior has been carefully re-coloured & conserved to be as largely original as possible & is a simply wonderful place to be. It abounds in period details & instrumentation. The headlining is also original as when supplied new.

The exterior has been repainted in black with green to the sides as the paint was at the point where it needed to be done. It now presents beautifully. At the same time extensive re-chomng of brightowrk was undertaken including bumpers, radiator surround & headlamps all done by the the experts at Genius of the Lamp. The boot folds open & there is a snap in fabric luggage cover that affords privacy & protection to the luggage when the boot is left open. An original instruction book comes with the car but would benefit from being rebound. There is also a thick history file dating back to 1961 showing that the car has been maintained without reagrd to expense during the previous owners tenure. This includes bills for a full engine rebuild including new crank & also a re-coring of the radiator etc along with numerous other jobs.

To sum up the car is in excellent running order & presents very smartly. It is a perfect condidate of the preservation class at concours events & has rakish rare & desirable coachwoork in vary fine condition.

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