

# 1933 Lorraine-Dietrich B3-6 Sport Cabriolet | Les Grandes Marques du Monde à Paris | Bonhams

1933 Lorraine-Dietrich B3-6 Cabriolet Sport

Carrossée par H. De Corvaia & Cie

Châssis n° 125674

Moteur n° 134166

Premier French marque

Model of immense historical significance

Single family ownership since the late 1950s

Restored condition

Eligible for the most prestigious historic motor sports events

Built in 1928 and first registered on 1st January 1933, this customer competition version of the B3-6 has all the characteristics of Lorraine-Dietrich's famous Le Mans-winning cars, including left-hand drive. It is a model of immense historical significance in the story of Lorraine-Dietrich, for many the greatest French racing marque of the 1920s.

Based at Luneville in Lorraine, France, De Dietrich et Cie started out as makers of railway locomotives before branching out into automobile manufacture in 1896, by which time the oft-disputed province had been annexed by Germany. Designs by Amédée Bollée, Vivinus and Turcat-Méry were licensed at first before the firm commissioned Ettore Bugatti to come up with some of its own. In 1905, the car/aero engine division's name was changed to 'Lorraine-Dietrich' and the Cross of Lorraine adopted as an emblem, emphasising the company's French origins. Considerable effort was put into racing at this time, using purpose-built cars fitted with enormous engines.

After WWI, with Lorraine restored to France, manufacture of cars (and aero engines) recommenced, the principal models of the 1920s being a 12CV (2.3-litre) four and a brace of sixes: 15CV (3.5-litre) and 30CV (6.1-litre). Of these, the 15CV B3-6 was the most successful, entering the history books by winning the third and fourth Le Mans 24-Hour races in 1925 and 1926, interrupting Bentley's run of successes. Lorraine thus became the first marque to win the famous endurance classic twice and the first to win in consecutive years. A clean sweep of the Le Mans podium places is almost unheard of, yet that is what Lorraine-Dietrich achieved in 1926, becoming the first manufacturer ever to do so.

The 15CV was manufactured until 1932 (by which time the firm was known simply as 'Lorraine') when the successor 20CV model was introduced. An expensive failure, the latter led to Lorraine quitting the automobile market in 1935 to concentrate on military projects. Today there are only 14 surviving Lorraine B3-6 Sport models, making the car we offer extremely rare.

Should one require any more proof of the importance of this motor car, a Lorraine-Dietrich B3-6 with Sport bodywork by Carrosserie De Corvaia identical to this one is currently in the Peter Mullin collection in California, a museum open to the public that is dedicated only to the most beautiful French cars. Paris-based De Corvaia built or designed bodies for various makes including Delage, Hotchkiss, Unic, Hispano-Suiza, and Lorraine-Dietrich. Some of these designs were built by Pourtout or by the car manufacturer concerned, others by De Corvaia in its own workshop.

Jean Louis du Montant, the famous Bugatti 'hunter', discovered this Lorraine-Dietrich towards the end of the 1950s, and it has been in the family's collection ever since. It was Jean-François 'Franky' du Montant, collector, dealer and a formidable figure at Rétromobile until his passing, who commissioned the careful restoration of the car. The paintwork was entrusted to Jean-François Vernhes with the instructions to execute a trompe l'oeil Art Deco 'crackled' finish. These efforts have brought about an exceptional result. An example of a rare model from a great French marque, this beautiful Lorraine-Dietrich B3-6 is offered from the long-term care of a famous family of discerning collectors and is worthy of the closest inspection.