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1931 BENTLEY 8 LITRE BOAT TAIL

1931 Bentley 8L Two-Seater Sports Coupé Cabriolet by Barker

·   The only open two-seater 8 Litre Bentley by Barker

·   As specified by first owner Sir Percy Malcolm Stewart

·   49th of 100 8 Litre Bentleys, matching numbers

·   Resided in a series of respected Bentley Collections

·   Appearances at Pebble Beach and Villa d'Este

The only open two-seater 8 Litre Bentley originally constructed by Barker, the exquisite Sports Coupé Cabriolet coachwork is arrestingly beautiful, historically important, and was entirely worthy of the title of supercar in its day. As a pure two-seater this example was unique, truly rakish and even self-indulgent in conception.

The fastest production chassis anywhere, capable of a genuine 100 m.p.h., the 8 Litre was the ultimate expression of W.O. Bentley engineering – with characteristic four valves per cylinder, single overhead camshaft with three-throw drive, and much use of Elektron for major engine castings.

Dispatched from Cricklewood on 18 March 1931, chassis YR5099 was delivered to coachbuilders Barker in the shorter 12' length with the higher-compression engine. Barker's cabriolet featured wings and pontoon running boards in Malcolm Campbell style, rear opening doors with fashionable sloping forward edge, and of course just two seats ahead of the pointed boat-tail. She was passed off test at the factory on 1 July 1931, and registered GN 82 in London.

This alluring coachwork was specified by first owner Sir Percy Malcolm Stewart, reprising the style of his previous Speed Six also by Barker. Chairman of the London Brick Company, and one of Britain's richest men with a taste for Bentley sporting cars, Stewart also promoted better working conditions for employees and was a noted philanthropist, writing in his will that "[t]rue happiness is to be found in giving and helping others."

Appointed an unpaid special government Commissioner to alleviate unemployment and poverty in England & Wales during the Great Depression, Sir Malcolm dined on the Royal Train with Edward VIII during his tour of poverty-stricken Wales, when the uncrowned King strayed into politics by declaring "something must be done." Among his philanthropic acts, Stewart purchased Nelson's telescope from Trafalgar at Christie's, donating it to the Maritime Museum at Greenwich for the nation.

First changing hands to G. Stewart Ferguson of Birmingham in 1935, GN 82 was likely laid up during hostilities, and after the war, she was acquired by J.A. MacHarg of Scotland, the tail being modified to four-seater form. In July 1966 an amusing "Letter from a Bentley" appeared in Motor Sport signed GN 82, gently mocking a writer daring to suggest that Derby Bentleys were superior to their W.O. forebears: "Shortness of breath from birth to death – that's what Derby "Bentleys" are made of!"

Passing to Peter Agg (the well-known collector, Trojan/Heinkel light car manufacturer, McLaren associate and Formula One principal), the pointed tail, wings and pontoon running boards were reinstated, adding a useful dickey seat for friends or children. In this form and wearing two shades of blue GN 82 won her class at the 1983 BDC Kensington Gardens concours. Afterward she had a period in America, first with Frank Miller and making her first appearance at Pebble Beach in 1987, then later with the Blackhawk Collection.

In more recent years this sporting 8 Litre was restored to the highest standard in striking black livery, appearing at the prestigious *Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este*. She again appeared at Pebble Beach and was a highlight of the 2019 tour helping mark the 100th anniversary of Bentley Motors. Today GN 82 is offered from distinguished private ownership in excellent condition.

This arresting and unique two-seater open Bentley is the only one of its kind – certain to be welcome at outstanding concours events or to make the ultimate statement and deliver thrilling performance on the open road.

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