

The ex-Zora Arkus Duntov/ Auguste Veillet - Le Mans 24-Hours class winning
1955 Porsche Typ 550 Spyder
Sports-Racing Two-Seater/ Coachwork by Wendler



Private Portfolio No. 056



Chassis no.
550-0048

Price €1,050,000

- Works car with outstanding racing history: Le Mans class winner and Swedish Grand Prix for Sports Cars overall winner
- 'Road & Track' test car, January 1956 issue
- Comprehensively restored by veteran Porsche specialist Alois Ruf
- Supplied with two engines
- European tax paid and road registered
- Suitable for the Mille Miglia, Tour de France, Colorado Grand, Goodwood Revival, Le Mans Classique or Highway 101...

In many ways no other motor manufacturer in history has done more for world-class motor sport – or derived greater technological and commercial benefit from it – than Porsche System Engineering of Germany. And amidst all the star-studded galaxy of specialised competition cars that the Zuffenhausen-based concern have ever produced for customer sale, perhaps the most influential was the long series of Typ 550 and 550A sports-



racing models which provided the marque with such a solid worldwide foundation through the 1950s.

Here we are delighted to offer a particularly fine example of the Porsche 550 Spyder, in this case none other than one of the factory's 1955 Le Mans 24-Hour race class winning entries, now offered not only with an original-type engine as an accompaniment but with the additional attraction of the extra driveability, torque and horsepower of a 2-litre variant engine installed.

No small-capacity sports-racing car from the mid-1950s can offer a better combination of

1955 Porsche Typ 550 Spyder



Above: Tip-toeing through the treacherously wet Esses at Le Mans in 1955, the Veillet/Duntov Porsche 550 '0048' heads towards its victory in the 1100cc class.

superb engineering quality plus manoeuvrability, nimble handling and straightforward driving enjoyment than the immortal Porsche 550s and 550As, the first of which were produced as early as 1953, initially in both open and closed-cockpit versions. The external skin of the Typ 550 Spyder was fashioned in aluminium sheet, its one-piece structure augmenting the torsional stiffness of the chassis. These sleek little Porsches were unusual in featuring twin trailing arm independent front suspension sprung on transverse torsion bars, while at the rear a similarly transverse torsion-bar sprung swing-axle system was controlled by trailing arms. The welded-steel ladder-type chassis weighed only some 59kg – c.120lbs.

The cars' sophisticated flat-four cylinder, air-cooled, four-overhead camshaft rear-mounted engine breathed through Solex carburettors to develop a quoted 110bhp at what was, for the time, the astronomic crankshaft speed of 7,800rpm.

Chassis '0048' was one of three sister 550 Spyderys manufactured during May 1955 in the Race Department in Porsche Stuttgart's Werke Nr 1 facility. The three cars were constructed specifically to compete in that year's Le Mans 24-Hours race, by far the most important endurance event of the motor racing season. The Spyderys were fitted with Wendler-made aluminium bodies, on which the oil tank filler caps were exposed on the right-rear quarter instead of being hidden beneath the rear deck. The front rubbing strip was also omitted to permit two small-dimension oval cooling holes to be punched-through to feed direct airflow to the front drum brakes.

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Above: Porsche 550 Spyder '0048's defining German registration plate - 'W21-8517' - identifies the Veuillet/Duntov car during a scheduled pit stop at La Sarthe under the watchful eye of company boss Ferry Porsche.

brother joined the French Air Force, and following the fall of France in 1940 they succeeded in extricating their family via a Portuguese port on board ship to New York, where they settled in Manhattan.

The Duntov brothers then founded their Ardun motor accessory company – deriving the title from 'Arkus' and 'Duntov' – supplying parts to the military and manufacturing aluminum overhead-valve cylinder heads for the 'flathead' Ford V8 engine. These cylinder heads increased the potential of the stock V8 engine to around 300bhp, and became one of the mainstays of the immediately post-war American hot-rod and racing movements.

Arkus Duntov subsequently moved to England where he helped develop Allard sports cars, in which he competed in the 1952 and 1953 Le Mans 24-Hour races, before joining General Motors after being attracted by the release of the Motorama Corvette in New York. He wrote to its creators saying how much he loved the

Chassis '0048' is recorded in factory records as having been fitted with a 1098cc 'pushrod 4-cylinder Boxer Porsche engine' and was to be co-driven at Le Mans by American General Motors engineer-cum-driver Zora Arkus Duntov and Parisian dealer Auguste Veuillet. The former was on his way to becoming an extremely important figure within the history of the global motor industry, adding significant cachet to this Porsche Spyder. Auguste Veuillet, meanwhile, would find favour as Porsche's French importer.

Belgian-born to a Russian family, Zachary 'Zora' Arkus Duntov graduated from the Charlottenburg Technological University in Berlin, Germany, in 1934. At the outbreak of war in 1939, he and his

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Above: Moment of victory - '0048' carrying race number '49' takes the chequered flag at Le Mans in formation with its sister 550, race number '65'; the private entry of Gustave Olivier/ Josef Jeser finishing second in the 1100cc category.

car's appearance, while expressing great reservation at its technical specification beneath the skin. He was invited to join GM to help put that right...

He kept abreast of European sports car development not least by continuing to race occasionally there, first driving a Porsche 550 Spyder at Le Mans in '54 and winning his class. Soon after joining Chevrolet, Arkus Duntov penned a memo to his engineering management, entitled, *'Thoughts Pertaining to Youth, Hot Rodders and Chevrolet'*. His paper proved a major factor in Chevrolet's development of a performance-orientated 'youth market' model strategy, with the man himself as Chevrolet director of high performance optimising the immortal Corvette and culminating in the Gran Sport purebred racing model.

At Le Mans in 1955, Duntov and Veillet drove their Porsche 550 Spyder '0048' to finish 13th overall after officially completing no fewer than 3,303.57 kilometres during the day-long grind, much of it in torrential rain. The Franco-American driver pairing also won the 1100cc class, and '0048' was timed along the Mulsanne Straight during the race at 190km/h – 118mph. The fastest of the sister 1.5-litre Typ 550 Spyder cars which finished 1-2-3 in the concurrent 1500cc category was timed at 224.414km/h on 'The Muldoon' – 139.45mph.



Chassis '0048' ran under number '49' at Le Mans, and following its class-winning success in the legendary 24-Hours race it was re-deployed by the factory to the Rabelovsbana road circuit outside Kristianstad in Sweden for the Swedish Grand Prix on 7th August, 1955. It was entrusted this time to German journalist/ driver Richard von Frankenberg, carrying number '25' – winning the Production Car race outright ahead of competition from Ferrari, Maserati and Mercedes-Benz.

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Above: The lightweight aluminium-skinned body of '0048' showing off its front-brake cooling intakes as they gulp in rain and spray during the long 24-Hour grind.

The Spyder reappeared in public driven by journalist Hansjorg Bendel just after the September 1955 Frankfurt Motor Show, its prowess being featured in the American magazine 'Road & Track' the following January. Its German registration number at the time was 'W21-8517' and the evidence of this registration plate appearing on one of the works entries in the subsequent 1956 Mille Miglia persuades leading Porsche specialist Juergen Barth to conclude: "My guess is that it is the same chassis...but with a modified body".

It is also worth noting that the 'Road & Track' article refers to '0048' (it specifically quotes the chassis number) as having a four cam, 1.5 litre engine (no. P900-54) which confirms that after its Le Mans success (and probably before the Swedish GP, judging from its speed there) the factory fitted the larger, more complex engine which most other 550 Spyders received. The author goes on to comment: "Upon the push of the starter button, the engine came to life with a deep roar, idling at about 1500rpm...going through the gears conveys really startling acceleration...Handling is as if the center of gravity were underground...The brakes are absolutely sensational: it was easy to frighten any passenger unfamiliar with this car by approaching a corner at full throttle and, apparently, braking only when it is much too late." He ends by noting that the test car is fitted with a small racing 'screen and helpfully advises: "If you want to remain on speaking terms with your wife, it would be wise to order the '550' with the alternative large screen before taking her out."

Its works racing career over, chassis '0048' was sold to the USA, and we lose trace of it until 1984 when its then-owner, Mr John A Masterson of Ventura, California, writes to the factory asking for information, to which Mr Barth, then head of the customer racing department replies.

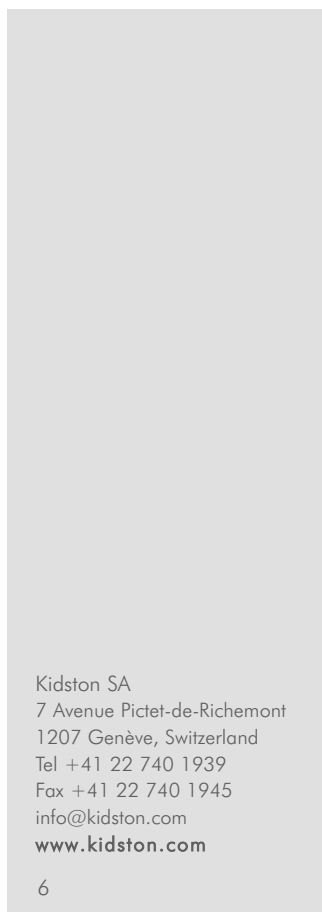
The Spyder was acquired by the current owner, a low profile German collector and longstanding Porsche customer, during the mid-1980s. It was re-imported from the USA via leading historic car dealer Klaus Werner, and was subsequently restored by the well-known Porsche competition car specialist Alois Ruf in Germany. Upon completion it was illustrated on the cover of the November, 1988, issue of 'Motor Klassik' magazine and in a detailed driving feature inside. It has been very little used since then (total running having comprised barely 800km) but it has been checked annually by a well-qualified Porsche mechanic who has regularly visited the owner's house and runs the cars for him. Most significantly – in view of the Mulsanne Straight speeds recorded at Le Mans during the 1955 Le Mans 24-Hours race and quoted above - an alternative 2-litre engine has been installed to provide greater torque, horsepower and outright performance.

The replaced engine (dismantled and believed incomplete) accompanies the car as a spare and is included

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Above: A proud history, sleek, slippery, light in weight and sure of foot - the wonderfully driveable Porsche 550 Spyder so attractively embodied in '0048'...



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within this sale offer. The only other notified modification to the car is the addition of an oil-feed cut-off tap. The coachwork is finished in overall German silver-grey with black seat upholstery. Again it is worth mentioning that the driver is over 6 feet – 1.9 metres – tall and fits the car “just fine”!

What we are offering here is an historic sports-racing car with very significant individual history, accompanied by the immensely attractive pedigree of having been a Le Mans class-winner, and with the very special additional cachet of having been campaigned in period by a most

significant motor industry figure. The car is extremely light and nimble, ideal for embarrassing very much larger-engined thoroughbreds (for example) on the twisty climbs and descents of the Radicofani and Futa Passes. It is widely regarded as being far more satisfying to drive than its more hefty Italian rivals such as the Maserati 150S and most 4-cylinder small/ medium-capacity Ferraris.

Overall, these lightweight Porsche 550 Spydres with their fine power-to-weight ratio and responsiveness shone in the 1100 and 1500cc classes of International racing through the mid-1950s and are eligible today for the majority of world-renowned Retro-type events, including the Mille Miglia, the Tour de France and – most certainly – within the increasing number of ‘drum-braked’ Historic sports car races which are now being organised worldwide. German (EU) road registered and supplied with history file, restoration invoices and Juergen Barth report, this ex-Works Porsche 550 Spyder is ready to be enjoyed right away.