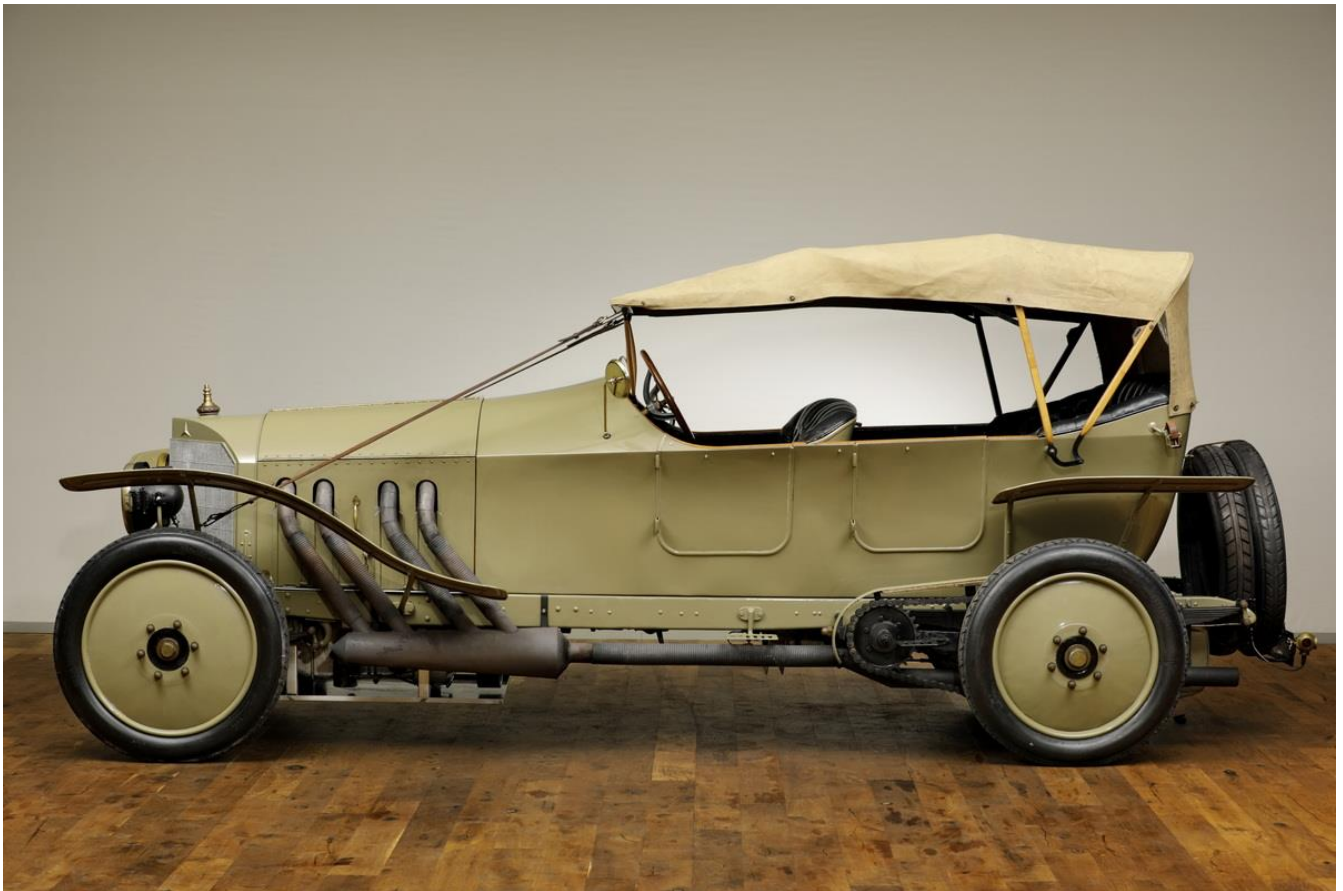




1912 – Mercedes Type 37/90 Saoutchik Torpedo Speedster



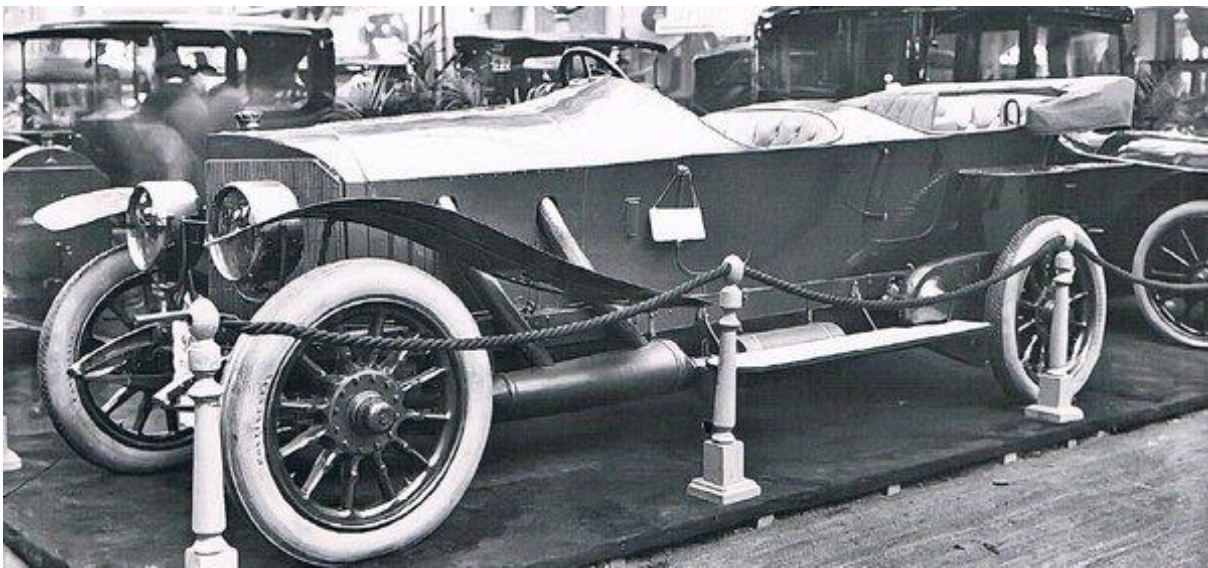
- One of about 15 built and only six still existing Type 37/90 with chain drive and 9.5 litre of displacement and 90 hp
- Exhibition car of Saoutchik at the Paris Automobile Salon 1913
- According to Mercedes Benz Classic engine is "matching numbers"
- All original chassis
- Older restoration, continuously technically maintained
- History known, most recently in a Swiss collection for over 30 years
- 110 years ago the fastest road car in the world



This Vehicle

The chassis of this Mercedes 37/90 with the number 12390 was manufactured in the model year 1912. According to the Mercedes Benz Classic Archive, it was delivered to Paris under commission number 8755 together with engine number 15368 on February 21, 1913. This original engine is still installed in the vehicle today. In Paris, the rolling chassis was fitted with a sporty body by the well-known coachbuilder Saoutchik. This design was named the "Torpedo Speedster" and the car was then exhibited by Saoutchik at the Paris Motor Show in 1913.

Jacques Saoutchik had a close relationship with the Mercedes sales company in Paris since 1906 and was an important partner for special coachwork requests. The design of the Torpedo Speedster was adapted from the factory body of the 90 hp Mercedes touring cars. However, it was finished much slimmer and lower, giving the car a particularly sporty attitude. This was further emphasized by the factory external exhaust system emerging from the side of the front body.



Mercedes 37/90 12390 „Torpedo Speedster“ by Saoutchik on the Paris Automobile Salon in 1913

The drive of the Type 37/90 is a four-cylinder in-line engine with a monumental 9.5 litre displacement (!) and an output of 90 hp. A sensational value 110 years ago. The engine developed by Paul Daimler was the top model of the Daimler-Motoren-Gesellschaft (DMG) and was also called the "chain car" because of its chain drive. It was one of the most powerful automobiles on the market at the time and is still considered the fastest road vehicle in the world at the time of its presentation. In this context, it is also referred to as the "SSK" of the 1910s.

This is why the 37/90 models were also used in motor racing in particular. Famous racing drivers such as Christian Lautenschlager, Otto Salzer and Ralph De Palma won a multitude of racing competitions with this engine type. Motorised racing was then the ultimate and expensive hobby of wealthy "pioneers" of the automobile era. Due to its exorbitantly high price, only very few examples of the Type 37/90 were manufactured.

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Following the Paris Automobile Salon, this special car found its way to its buyer in Great Britain. According to our research, the car remained in Great Britain until 1986 and had several owners there. It was used in motorsports in the 1940s and 1950s, but with a different, lighter racing body.

From the mid-1950s, the car was owned by Charly Clifton of Northamptonshire and Harry Halkyard of Leicestershire and was raced with a two-seater body at Silverstone and various hill-climb competitions. Then in 1961 the father of the penultimate owner Bridget Laycock acquired the car. The Laycock family kept the automobile until the 1980s and had an extensive restoration carried out during that period. In 1978, the original Saoutchik body was also rebuilt in the Torpedo Speedster design from old drawings. In December 1986 this 37/90 with chassis 12390 and its reobtained appearance came to its last ownership – a private Swiss museum – via a British auction house. There it was technically very well maintained and regularly driven.

It is believed that only 15 examples of the Mercedes Type 37/90 were sold because of its high price. According to the register kept by Tymothy Russel, only six cars still exist today. Our car still has its original nameplate and the one on the engine is also still present.

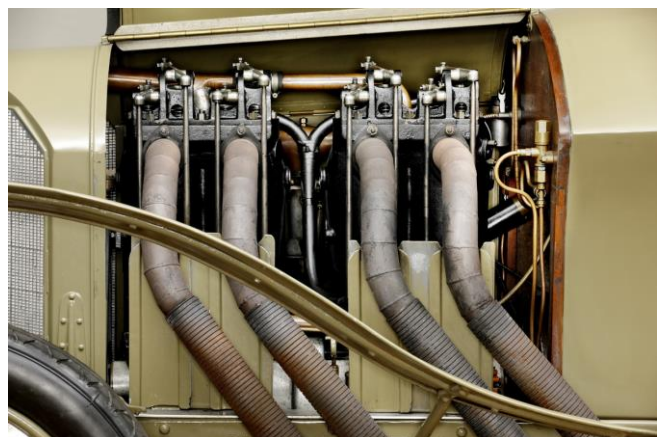
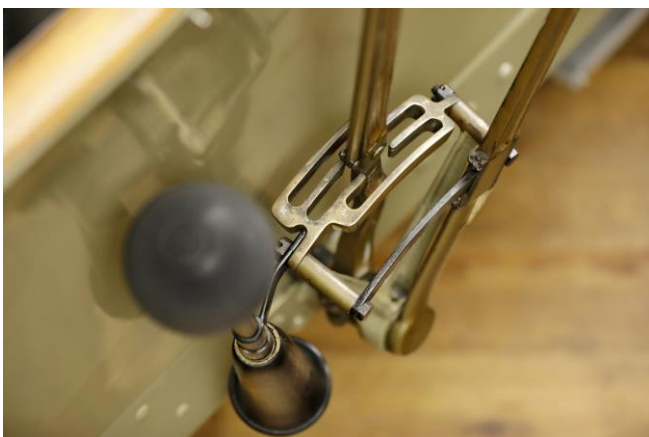
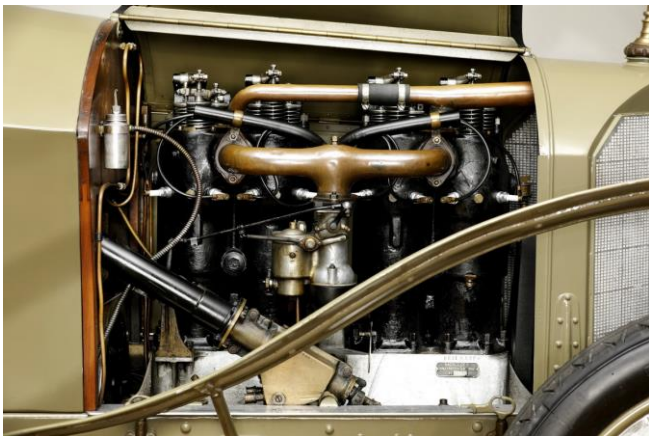
We had the opportunity to take an extended drive through the vineyards of western Switzerland with the museum collection's vehicle master. We had not thought such a brute torque of the engine possible from vehicles of this era until then !



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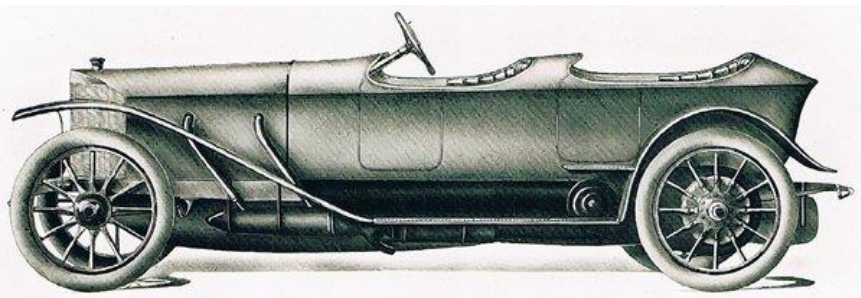




Model History

In June 1911, the Mercedes 37/90 hp, was introduced as the new top model in the Daimler-Motoren-Gesellschaft (DMG) sales programme. The new high-performance car, whose four-cylinder engine was equipped with three-valve technology and dual ignition, replaced the six-cylinder types built since 1907 and, like these, had a chain drive. The 37/90 was the last new development by Daimler-Motoren-Gesellschaft to be launched on the market with chain drive. As a special innovation, the drive chains were encapsulated and ran in an oil bath.

The engine, constructed by Paul Daimler with a displacement of 9.5 litres, had one particularly large inlet valve and two smaller exhaust valves per cylinder. The valve arrangement in the



cylinder head allowed short throttle travel and thus a favourable combustion. The valves were actuated by a side camshaft via pushrods and rocker arms, driven by gears from the centre of the crankshaft. In mid-1913, the 37/90, like the other models in the sales program, received a new type designation, which was now 37/95. A year and a half later, the displacement was increased to 9.8 litres by boring, and the model designation changed again to 38/100.

The engine of the Type 37/90 was also used in motor racing. The American racing driver Ralph De Palma (photo right) won the Vanderbilt Cup in 1912 and 1914 with a modified Mercedes Grand Prix racing car from 1908 that had been fitted with a 37/90 power unit. However, the top model of the DMG programme was neither a racing car nor a typical representative vehicle, but a sporty, powerful touring car of the most modern construction. It was therefore mainly ordered with sports or racing bodies by various coachbuilders (such as Saoutchik) and was one of the first Mercedes car models available with a pointed radiator and external exhaust pipes.



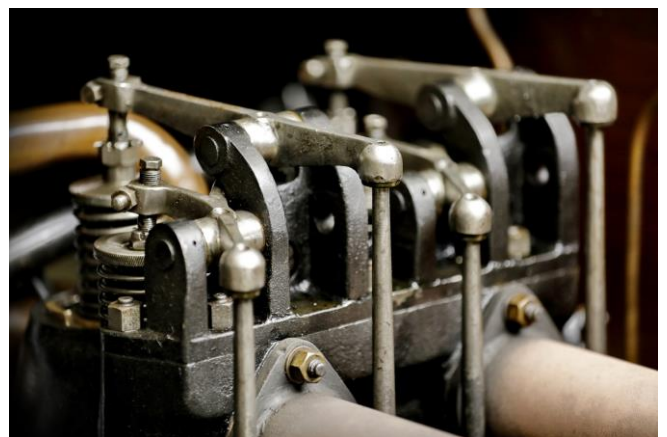
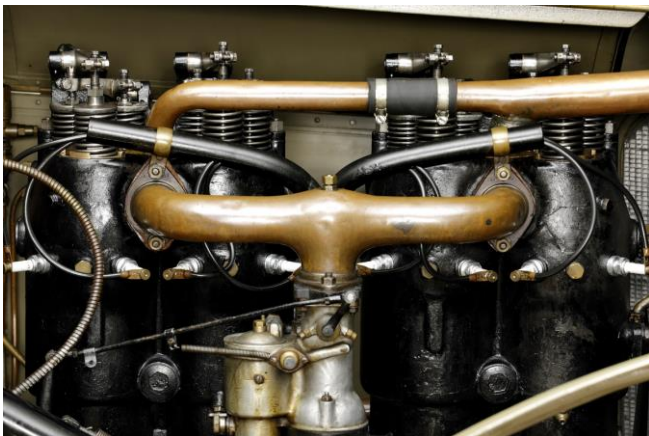
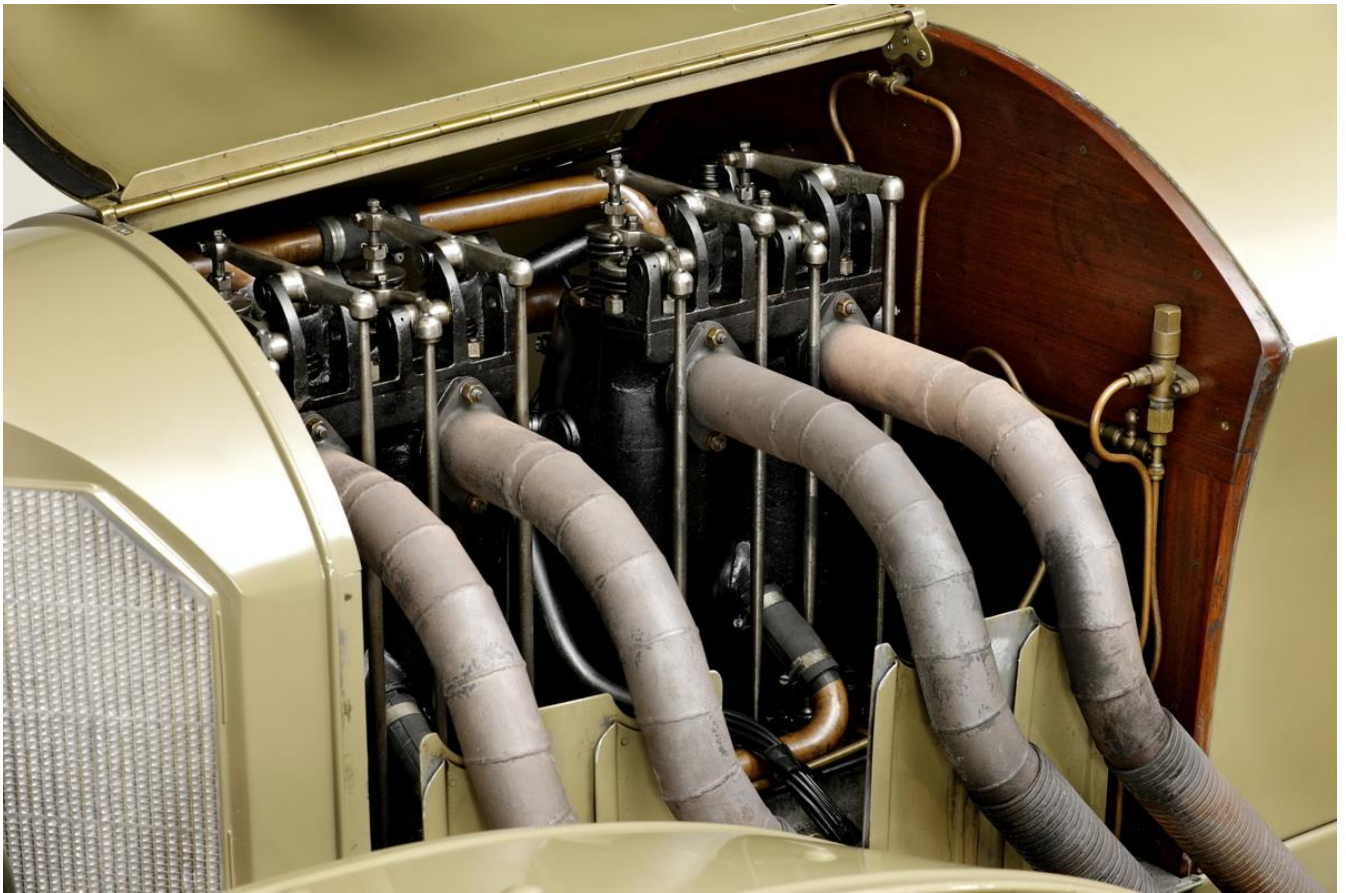
The end of production of the type 38/100 in 1915 also marked the end of the chain drive era at Daimler-Motoren-Gesellschaft, which had begun in 1897 with the "Phoenix" cars.

Source: Mercedes Benz Public Archive

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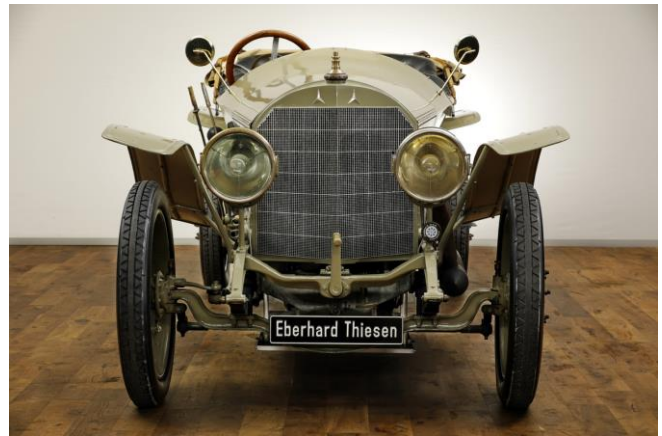
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Data & Facts

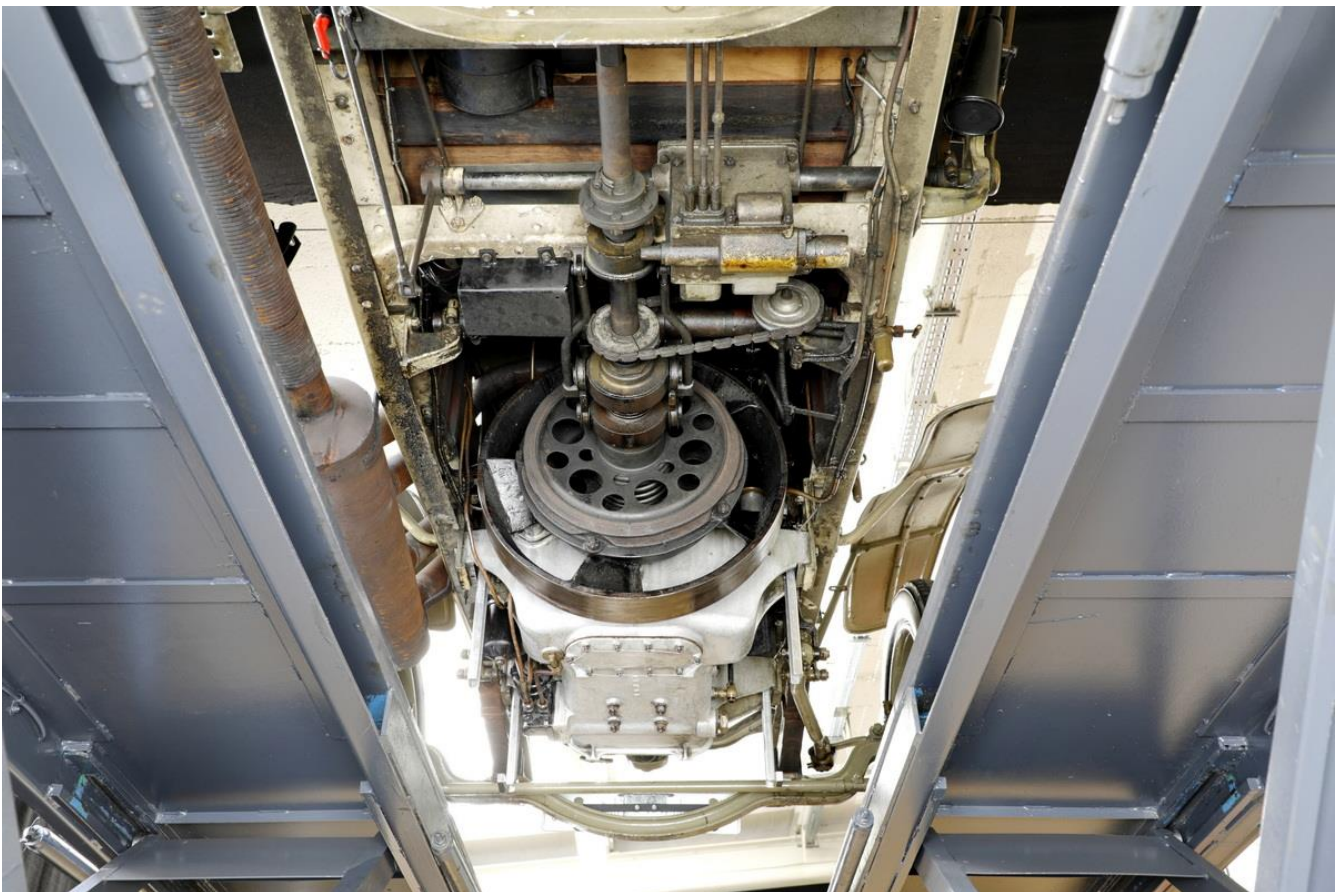
Year of production	1912
Quantity	presumably 15 examples / of which six are still known
Body style	Torpedo Speedster by Saoutchik
Engine	4-cylinder in-line, single cylinder with cooling-water jackets welded on, 1 intake valve, 2 exhaust valves overhead principle, water cooled, 2 lateral camshafts, piston-type carburettor
Displacement / power	9,530 cc, approx. 90 hp at 1,300 rpm (factory specifications)
Gearbox	manual, 4-speed, gate shifting with right outside-handling
Brakes	mechanical (water cooled), operating on drive shaft
Empty weight	approx. 1,525 kg (rolling chassis)



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Appendix

Location	Hamburg, Germany	
Price	on request (VAT not to be shown)	
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