



A 1932 Auto Union dealership featuring Audi, DKW, Horch and Wanderer.

# MY HORCH

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Making a stately presence when called to the ramp.



August Horch in 1936

The most frequently asked question that I answered on the Sunday of the 2019 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance was, **“What caused you to look for and buy a Horch?”**

There is really no answer. Over the past several years my interests have shifted from Prewar American Classic to Prewar European Classics. Again, the question begs itself, “Then why a Horch?” Over the past several months when people inquired about the car I was taking to Pebble Beach and were told it was a 1937 Horch, they smiled and said, “Cool!” I then asked if they were familiar with a Horch? Few people were and that caused me to carry a portfolio of pictures in my phone. Once they saw the picture of the car their interest was piqued, and they wanted to know more.

“My Horch” is a model 853A Sport Cabriolet. This chassis was built in 1937 at the Horch plant in Zwickau, Germany and the cabriolet body was made by Gläser-Karosserie of Dresden, 120 kilometers to the east. At the time, Horch was part of Auto Union that included DKW, Wanderer, Audi and of course, Horch.

August Horch was born October 12, 1868 and graduated from the Technical Academy in Mittweida, Saxony. During the infancy of the automobile, Horch worked with Karl Benz before founding the company bearing his name in Cologne on November 14, 1899. An early proponent of racing, Horch enjoyed victory over both Benz and Mercedes in the 1906 Herkomer Tour, but disagreements with company management regarding the value of racing led to >>>



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August Horch's departure from the firm in 1909. Unable to use the Horch name for his new automotive venture, August Horch chose the name "Audi" which is Latin for Horch (or "Hark").

An inline eight-cylinder passenger car was introduced in 1926, designed by Paul Daimler, the son of Gottlieb Daimler. Its twin overhead cam design was something typically found in racecars and this touring model remained in production until 1931.

In 1932, both Audi and Horch had suffered significant financial setbacks and the two companies were combined under the Auto Union banner along with Wanderer and DKW on June 29 of that year. Each nameplate catered to a specific market with DKW building small cars, Wanderer building medium-sized cars, Audi targeting the upper-medium market and Horch producing top-tier luxury automobiles, comparable to the Maybach and Mercedes-Benz offerings. At this time, Auto Union was the second largest automobile manufacturer in Germany.

Auto Union's performance reputation was solidified by the highly successful Silver Arrow racecars designed by Ferdinand Porsche and built in the Horch factory. The Auto Union Silver Arrow Type A, B, C and D racecars garnered numerous victories from 1934 to 1939, equipped with a supercharged V-16 engine positioned behind the single-seat cockpit (a V-12 in the final Type D), Passenger car development led to a new eight-cylinder model, the 853, which was manufactured between 1935 and 1937. In 1937 the company introduced the model 853A that featured a slightly shorter wheelbase, a 120-horsepower engine with a top speed of 87 mile per hour and a fully synchronized four-speed gearbox. Only 342 853A examples were manufactured and roughly 12 are known to survive today. A mere four are listed in the current CCCA directory.

The original owner of this Horch is not known. Like many prewar German automobiles, the car was appropriated by American serviceman Porter E. Whitney who used the car as a daily driver during



*1906 August Horch leaning against the car after victory.*



*Ready to hit the road the morning of August 15, 2019 for the Pebble Beach Tour d'Elegance.*

the remainder of this his tour in Germany. Upon his discharge from the Army, the car was shipped to the United States and remained in his ownership until 1961. It was then sold to car collector Walter Soldano who later acquired a second Horch 853A. In 1999 Sodano sold both to car broker Earl "Butch" Gordon. In 2004 my Horch was sold to Beernes NV, a dealer in Antwerp, Belgium. The car was sold to Dieter and Silvia Roth of Zwickau, Germany who performed a sympathetic

restoration on the Horch. In 2016, I located a posting on the Internet for the sale of the Horch and acquired it from the Roths.

Upon receiving the Horch it was sent to Nicks' Old Car Specialty in Redlands, California where it received a complete frame-off restoration. During the restoration the Horch was entered and accepted into the 2019 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance where it was awarded a second-place class award and the Elegance in Motion Award. ●



*853 Sport Cabriolet*



*Aaron and Valerie Weiss and their Horch.*



*The four rings representing the Auto Union.*