



1920 BALLOT 3/8 LC INDIANAPOLIS & GRAND PRIX 1006

Engine: 2973cc naturally aspirated straight-eight, twin overhead camshafts, four-valves per cylinder, 107bhp at 3800rpm

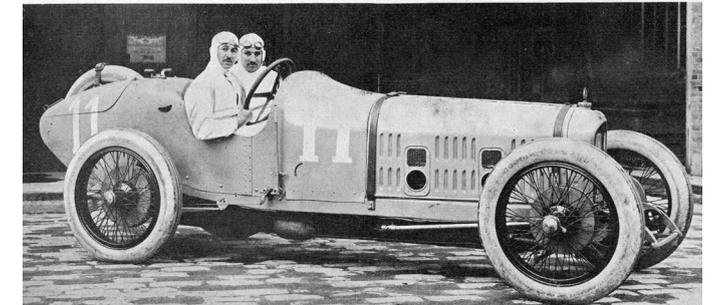
Configuration: Front-mid engine, four-speed manual gearbox, rear-wheel drive, live axles front and rear, semi-elliptic leaf-spring suspension, servo-assisted drums all round, separate ladder-frame chassis

Owner: Alexander Schaufler

Powered by the world's first really viable straight-eight, this was one of the most advanced cars of the early 1920s, driven to victory in the first Italian Grand Prix by Jules Goux. Its history is rich in characters and events. The Ballot brothers Maurice and Edouard had supplied engines to other marques before deciding to build their own car, whose qualities they wished to prove via racing. They commissioned the brilliant ex-Peugeot engineer Ernest Henry to design a car for the 1919 Indianapolis 500 and in just 101 days he built a 4.9-litre straight-eight that broke the lap record... but failed on the day because of wheel and tyre problems. A 3-litre version was then engineered for the changed race formula of 1920. Just four of these four-valve, twin-overhead-cam works models were built and, capable of more than 120mph, they proved very successful: 2nd at Indianapolis and in the 1921 French GP, and 1–2 in the Italian Grand Prix at Brescia, driven by Jules Goux and Jean Chassagne. This car also came 1st in the 1921 Coppa Florio and 3rd in the 1922 Indianapolis 500. The 3/8 LCs were only sold off when the International Formula changed to 2-litre cars in 1922.

The first private owner of this example was Sir Malcolm Campbell, who repainted it, called it "Bluebird" and raced with success at Brooklands. The car then passed through several hands, notably spending 70 years with the Milling family before coming to its current owner.

Of the other 3/8 LCs built, one is in France's Musée National de l'Automobile and another is in America. However, the car presented here, with its original engine, chassis and body, and full documentation, is the finest of all – a 1920s Parisian masterpiece.



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