

1930 LASALLE ROADSTER

1930 LaSalle Roadster, 2-door, 4 passenger, Series 340, Style 4002, Fleetwood

Owner: Bernie and Janice Taulborg Collection

Original price: \$2,450.00

Number made: 14,986

Engine, etc.: V-8, L-head, 340 cu. in.; 90 hp, 134 in. wheelbase; 4,340 lbs.

The LaSalle Company was started by General Motors in 1927 as an alternative to the Cadillac. There was a large price gap between Buicks and Cadillacs and General Motor's Alfred P. Sloan thought a new brand was needed to fill it.

LaSalle cars had the quality level of a Cadillac but cost about \$1,000 less. They were made from 1927 through 1940 and named for a French explorer, Rene-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle.

The LaSalle was designed by Harley Earl who founded the new GM Art and Color Department. Before this time, car design followed a set pattern with changes made mainly because of engineering needs. The LaSalle cars Harley Earl designed were more agile and stylish and were unlike anything else being built at the time. Included in Earl's design was the marque's circled trademark "LaS" cast into the horizontal tie bar between the front lights. The cars, with a wheelbase six inches shorter than a Cadillac, emerged as a smaller yet stunning and elegant counterpoint to the larger Cadillac.

The line had a roadster and two other models and was distinguished from Cadillacs by louvers on the side of the cowl. Batteries were under the front seat. The roadster could be ordered in two-tone color combinations at a time when black and navy blue were more familiar colors. A radio (\$175.00) and a heater (\$42.50) were among the options. Our LaSalle has a small side door that holds golf clubs.

LaSalles were so successful that Cadillac vehicles were updated to resemble them a few years later. By 1929 they were outselling Cadillacs and in 1930, accounted for 75% of Cadillac's sales.

The Great Depression caused LaSalle sales to fall from 22,691 in 1929 to only 3,290 in 1932. In 1933, Cadillac's output slid to 6,700 units but LaSalle accounted for half of it. In 1937, Cadillac built 46,000 cars but 32,000 were LaSalles. LaSalle helped Cadillac survive the Depression.

Sales began to recover by 1932 but LaSalle faced competition from the Packard One-Twenty and Lincoln-Zephyr introduced in 1935 and 1936 respectively. Cadillac tried a larger motor, new styling, and heavy promotion in 1937 but it was too late. The last LaSalle was the 1940 model, introduced in October, 1939. Packard was consistently outselling LaSalle and people buy prestige. Cadillac had the prestige and LaSalle didn't have time after the Depression to develop a prestigious name.

Sources: Standard Catalog of American Cars, 1805 -1942. Beverly Rae Kimes, et al. 3rd ed. Krause Publications, 1996.

<http://www.classiccardatabase.com/specs.php?series=896&year=1930&model=13073>

<http://www.conceptcarz.com/vehicle/z12066/LaSalle-Model-340.aspx>

<http://auto.howstuffworks.com/lasalle-cars.htm>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LaSalle_\(automobile\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LaSalle_(automobile))