

1929 WHIPPET 98A COUPE

1929 Willys Whippet Model 98A Coupe

Original price: \$695.00

Previous owner: Owner from Kansas City area

Number made: 242,000 in 1929

Engine, etc.: 40 hp, 6-cylinder; 178.3 cu. in.; 4-wheel brakes; 109 in. wheelbase; 2,584 lbs.

The Whippet, named for a small fast dog, was a small, fast car built from 1927 through 1931 as a successor to the Overland which was produced by the Willys-Overland Company of Toledo, Ohio.

The Whippet had European styling and features found only in more expensive cars: 7-bearing crankshaft, full force-feed lubrication, silent timing chain, finger-tip controls, and large 4-wheel brakes.

The finger-tip control was a button in the center of the steering wheel that sounded the horn when pressed and also switched on the headlights when turned clockwise. It activated the starter when pulled. Unfortunately, wiring connections for this "magic button" were located at the bottom of the steering column under the carburetor and were not shielded from dripping gasoline. This resulted in numerous fires and frequent re-wiring.

The gas tank was in the rear rather than on the firewall for safety reasons. The fuel gauge was located on the left end of the tank.

The Whippet was very economical on fuel as proven by George "Cannon Ball" Baker who drove a Whippet from Los Angeles to New York in 1926 in 14 days, a distance of 3,550 miles, and averaged 43.2 mpg. While it was economical, the speed its name suggested had to wait until introduction of the six cylinder model.

When the 6-cylinder was introduced in 1927, the Whippet Six completed a 24-hour endurance run at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway with an average speed of 56.52 mph, a new record for American stock cars costing under \$1,000.00. It was advertised as "The world's lowest priced six". The engine was well-designed with full pressure lubrication, a seven main bearing crank, and pump-circulated cooling.

The Whippet got off to a good start in 1927, selling 110,000 cars its first year. Continued success helped pull the Willys-Overland company into third place in sales in 1928, behind Ford and Chevrolet. It was a pioneer in offering a convertible with wind-up windows rather than drafty side curtains.

Willys-Overland was one of the first manufacturers to recognize the importance of exporting and by the early teens was selling cars in 37 countries. It had a factory in Toronto which built both left- and right-hand drive models, for export to Australia and New Zealand.

Although the Whippet did very well for Willys-Overland the company suffered badly in the 1929 stock market crash and ensuing Depression. The company shifted its emphasis to a lower priced model, the Willys 77, actually a reworked Whippet, and discontinued the Whippet in 1931.

The Toronto operation ceased production of Willys cars in 1933. Production in the U. S. was revived later with production of hundreds of thousands of Jeeps during World War II. The Whippet's very durable and sturdy engine was used in Jeep vehicles.

Willys-Overland was taken over by Kaiser in 1953, then by American Motors in 1970, and Chrysler in 1987.

The Whippet has been the "most asked for" car since we opened the doors of the Classic Car Collection. Our thanks to the group who contributed the funds to purchase the car from its owner in the Kansas City area.

Sources: <https://grandpasoldcars.ca/articles/whippet>
<https://www.conceptcarz.com/z28050/whippet-model-98.aspx>

<http://www.classiccardatabase.com/specs.php?series=886&year=1930&model=23397> (1930 model)

Original 1929 brochure and manual:

<http://www.oldcarbrochures.com/static/NA/Willys%20Overland/1929%20Willys-Overland/1929%20Whippet%20Brochure/dirindex.html>

<http://www.oldcarbrochures.com/static/NA/Willys%20Overland/1929%20Willys-Overland/1929%20Whippet%20Operator%20Manual/dirindex.html>