

# 1922 PIERCE ARROW LIMOUSINE

1922 Pierce-Arrow Enclosed Drive Limousine; Model 33; 4-door sedan, 7 passenger

Owner: Bernie and Janice Taulborg Collection

Original cost: \$8,250.00 (\$117,562.00 in 2018 dollars)

Number made: 1,200 (Model 33, 1922)

Engine, etc.: 6 cyl.; vertical T-head, 255.6 cu. in, 38 hp; 3-speed; 138 in. wheelbase

Before becoming one of the most prestigious automobile makers, the George N. Pierce Company made a variety of household items including birdcages and ice boxes. By 1905, the company was producing some of the biggest and most expensive automobiles available.

The Glidden Trophy was first awarded in 1905 and won by Percy Pierce, driving a Great Arrow. The Glidden Tour was an endurance run with the most roadworthy car winning the trophy – which Percy Pierce did for the next four years.

The Pierce Company brought out its first six cylinder car in 1907. It had a 135 inch wheelbase, weighed over 4,000 lbs., and cost between \$6,500.00 – 7,750.00. No doubt, it was aimed at a very wealthy market. These were good years for Pierce, with the reputation gained from the Glidden Tour and other awards, it was able to sell an entire year's production before the year began.

The Pierce-Arrow Company was launched in 1908 and the Great Arrow cars were named Pierce-Arrow.

Its prestige continued to grow when President Taft ordered two Pierce-Arrows for the White House in 1909. He was the first president to use an automobile for official occasions. This tradition continued into the Roosevelt administration when the last Pierce-Arrows, 1935 models, were ordered by the

White House. The car was a status symbol with many Hollywood stars owning Pierce-Arrows. Most royalty of the world had at least one Pierce-Arrow including the royal families of Japan, Persia, Saudi Arabia, Greece, and Belgium.

The company pioneered extensive use of aluminum and power braking but the most famous of all Pierce-Arrow features, the fender headlamp, arrived in 1913. By 1915, the company was preeminent in the highest echelon of the luxury car market in terms of both prestige and output.

The Series 33 was produced from 1921 – 1926. The engine and design were new to Pierce-Arrow, having been introduced after World War I. The cars were elegant and stately with a price tag that rivaled other luxury cars of the day. Their higher price meant these were exclusive machines, finished with all of the luxury amenities available.

The six-cylinder engine had a dual-valve set-up, integrated by Pierce-Arrow's chief engineer, David Fergusson. The design of the engine was influenced by European techniques and its incorporation into an American engine was a rarity. The dual-valves resulted in increased power and better fuel economy. The engine was smooth, reliable, and durable, producing enough horsepower to carry large and stately bodies. It proved popular with the driving public and the rum-runners of Prohibition.

Pierce-Arrow was a strong believer in the 6-cylinder engine while other manufacturers, including Cadillac and Packard, were using the more powerful and more easily tuned 8-cylinder engines. This did not change drastically during the 1920's, another potential reason for their demise.

With its size, adequate brakes were required and the Series 33 were among the first to be given four-wheel mechanical brakes. The company viewed hydraulic brakes as less reliable and prone to fluid leaks.

One of the most prominent and famous design features were Pierce-Arrow's headlights which were integrated into the front fenders. This feature was designed in-house in 1913 and patented by Herbert M. Dawley. The design was used on all models until the end of production in 1938.

Advertisements for the car were artistic and understated. Unusual for the time, the image of the car was in the background of the ads, rather than in the foreground of the picture. Only part of the car was visible and it was depicted in elegant and fashionable settings.

The onset of the Great Depression and problems with management prompted a merger with Studebaker in 1928. A new model was introduced in 1933 in hopes of appealing to the wealthy and a slightly lower priced model came out later. Neither generated the sales needed to keep the company going. Pierce was the only luxury brand that didn't produce a lower-price car to help with cash flow. Without sales or funds for development, the company declared insolvency in 1938.

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

<http://www.conceptcarz.com/vehicle/z17600/Pierce-Arrow-Model-33.aspx>

<http://www.pierce-arrow.org/history/index.php> (Pierce Arrow Society site)

<https://www.pierce-arrow.org/advertising-gallery/> (Advertising for Pierce Arrows)

[http://uniquecarsandparts.com/lost\\_marques\\_pierce\\_arrow.htm](http://uniquecarsandparts.com/lost_marques_pierce_arrow.htm) (History)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierce-Arrow\\_Motor\\_Car\\_Company](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierce-Arrow_Motor_Car_Company)