

# 1916 SAXON ROADSTER

1916 Saxon Roadster, Model 14, 2-door, 2 passenger

Owner: Bernie and Janice Taulborg Collection

Original cost: \$395.00 (2-seat runabout); \$455 (Winter Top Roadster)

Number made: 21,134 (1916)

Engine, etc.: 4 cyl.; 3 speed; 12.1 hp; 96" wheelbase

Saxon Motor Car Company, Detroit, Michigan, 1913 – 1922

In 1912 the idea for building the Saxon came from Hugh Chalmers whose Chalmers car was among the most popular medium-priced automobiles in the country. Chalmers believed that consumers wanted a small well-built low-priced automobile. The Saxon is part of the lineage of the modern Chrysler Corporation.

The first Saxons offered big-car features including a four-cylinder engine, shaft drive, and electric lights which were an option until becoming standard in 1915. Three thousand Saxons were built in 1913 and sales skyrocketed. The company moved into a larger factory to keep up with demand.

The Saxon was one of the most popular medium-priced cars in the country. Unusual features included a rear-axle mounted selective transmission, one of the earliest so produced, and electric lights available as early as 1913. Smaller cars were available but the Saxon was advertised as a "woman's car" – easy to control and care for. The ghostly image on the radiator badge is the daughter of Saxon's president.

In 1914 a Saxon roadster was driven 135 miles a day for 30 days, a total of 4,050 miles, averaging 30 miles per gallon. In its transcontinental trip, it was among the first cars to drive the new Lincoln Highway.

A six-cylinder engine was introduced in the spring of 1915 and became an instant hit.

By 1916 Saxon was ranked eighth in the industry and poised to continue growth. The car was heavily marketed to women, farmers, and businessmen with the promise of economy, ease of operation and durability.

The Charles Lindbergh family used its Saxon Six on the campaign trail in 1917; other notable drivers included evangelist Bob Jones and George Olsen (Jack Benny's bandleader). Some notable Suffragettes crisscrossed the nation in a Saxon to bring the vote to women.

In 1917, 28,000 Saxons were built, both four and six-cylinder models, but the company management had over extended by buying the larger factory. It was left with little cash on hand and the recession that followed World War I ultimately led it to cease production.

It was advertised as "a high-grade well-designed, carefully built, two-passenger automobile with four-cylinder motor, standard tread and other standard features, produced by an experienced organization, soundly financed and well managed".

The latter two attributes did not prove to be true and the company entered bankruptcy in 1922.

(The Classic Car Collection owns two Saxons: the roadster which is restored and in the collection, and the touring model located outside, unrestored. The Saxon Registry notes it can account for about 140 remaining Saxons, most of which are the smaller roadsters.)

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

<https://www.conceptcarz.com/vehicle/z7174/saxon-model-14.aspx>

<http://oldcarmanualproject.com/pix/S/Saxon/1916Saxon.jpg> (Original ad)