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MINERVA

TYPE KK 1914 TOURER

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Introduction:

Own a Piece of Automotive History: The Minerva Type KK 1914 Julian Parker LTD

This wonderful 1914 Minerva KK 18hp tourer is an important and extremely rare period car of very high quality. It was ordered and imported straight to Portugal by a very wealthy owner of multiple hotels; indeed, it still wears its Lisbon registration plate. It would seem that it only changed ownership a couple of times in eighty years and remained in Portugal for almost all of its life. In the 1990s upon the death of its second owner, a highly respected collector, the family avoided the complicated process of opening a car museum in Portugal, and instead, opened a museum in Malaga, Spain. This car was part of that collection and remained in Spain until it was sold via Sotheby's in 2014 and came to the UK.

The Minerva is not only extremely elegant with its beautiful proportions, plentiful brass work and boa constrictor horn details, but it is also strong and reliable. A 4-speed gear box gives you the confidence to tackle more challenging terrains; on one of our recent test drives, the car following us reported that we were travelling comfortably at 42mph, and this was by no means the top speed possible.

At some point there has been restoration work to the interior which included very high-quality leatherwork upholstery. This remains in superb condition and the mellow warmth of the beautiful leather adds gentle character to the car.

Minerva motorcars are often referred to as 'The finest car to come out of Belgium', with production starting in 1902, Minerva offered a wide range of two, three and four-cylinder engines in the 36 years that they were operational. In 1908 they took the bold step of gaining the license to adopt the Knight sleeve-valve engine which, although almost silent and fairly trouble-free, was expensive to manufacture and so remains something of a rarity to this day.

This example is both rich in history, and in very impressive condition.

Contact Julian Parker today.

- Minerva Type KK Tourer
- 1914
- 18 hp
- Engine number 27640
- 3307 cm3
- 4 Cylinder
- Bore 90mm
- Stroke 130mm
- Chassis number 26490

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Minerva, a Belgian “Portuguese Car”



1914 Minerva Model KK 18hp Touring

- This is a rare and unique example of the few survivors of the "Portuguese Automobile", a common expression used among Portuguese Collectors to describe any car initially imported to Portugal.
- The first owner, Alexandre de Almeida, was a pioneer entrepreneur in the hotel business and the owner of some of the most emblematic Portuguese hotels, such as Curia Palace Hotel, Bussaco Palace Hotel, Hotel Astória, and Frankfurt Hotel in Lisbon.
- The second owner, António Ferreira Magalhães, a prominent Portuguese collector, is still remembered today as one of the first known collectors in Portugal, with a vast collection dedicated to cars built before 1930.
- The third owner, João Manuel Magalhães, son of António Ferreira Magalhães, continued the father's collection with the vision of opening a Museum that connects the car with fashion, art, and sculpture. With great success, the Málaga Museum opened in 2010, where this Minerva was on display until it was sold by Sotheby in 2014.

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What is a "Portuguese Car"?

"Portuguese car/automobile" refers to every car imported initially to Portugal. Portugal had one of the finest veteran car populations and some of the rarest models, all thanks to the refined automobile taste of wealthy Portuguese families. Portugal was also connected to racing in the early years and strongly supported by the Portuguese Royal, like the Raid Figueira da Foz Lisboa in 1902, the first long-distance run in Portugal, won by Giuseppe Bordino in a Fiat owned by the Portuguese Royal Family.

Despite the magnificent models in existence in Portugal, several historical incidents, such as the regicide of King Don Carlos in 1908, the implementation of the Republic in 1910, the First and Second World Wars, and the establishment of a dictatorial political regime known as "Estado Novo," contributed to the destruction on a large scale of Veteran, Edwardian, and Vintage cars. During these times, Portugal was experiencing severe economic problems and poverty, making the supply of spare parts very scarce. Many were salvaged for spare parts in scrapyards or destroyed and melted.

A small minority of these Portuguese cars that weren't salvaged or destroyed were used until they broke down, stored away, and forgotten in cellars. Many years later, they reappeared in dust in old and crumbled cellars.

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This movement, known as the "Race to Scrapyards", took place from the 1950s until the late 1990s and was marked by the reemergence of these automobiles on the roads once again. This Minerva is even rarer because it is one of the very few survivors of the existing early Portuguese Automobiles. Some still exist in Portugal, while others can be found spread worldwide. Some of these may be seen as participating in some of the most notorious and exclusive motor events, like the London-Brighton Veteran Car Run, Villa d'Este Concours Elegance, and the Pebble Beach Concours, genuinely showcasing the historical significance and exclusivity of these Portuguese Automobiles.

Minerva and the Hotels

This Minerva was imported to Portugal in 1914 and owned by a wealthy entrepreneur, Alexandre de Almeida, one of the first hotel entrepreneurs in Portugal and owner of several luxurious and historical hotels that still exist today and are currently run by the 3rd generation of the family of Alexandre de Almeida.

The list of hotels includes Hotel Metropole (Lisbon), Hotel Europa (Lisbon), Frankfurt Hotel Rossio (Lisbon), Bussaco Palace Hotel, Hotel Astória (Coimbra), and Curia Palace Hotel.



1. Alexandre de Almeida Hotels in a original hotel guide dated from 1927

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The Curia Palace Hotel, a luxurious hotel inaugurated in 1926 and constructed in the style of "Arte Nova", was one of the destinations for many wealthy Portuguese families searching for leisure, known for the thermal waters and the wine region of Mealhada. But Curia is still remembered for its historical automotive contribution, especially due to the Garage Palace. Palace Garage was the hotel garage, a closed space built to store the clients' cars while they stayed in the hotel. Some of the most exclusive automobiles passed through this garage, which was prepared to receive 60 vehicles and had rooms to accommodate the chauffeurs of these vehicles.



2. Garage of Palace Hotel – before and nowadays



3. "Think in Saint Christopher... and go in peace" Saint Christopher mosaic that still prevails today at the entrance of the Garage of Palace Hotel Curia

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Curia was also a landmark for motorsport, with “Grande Prémio da Curia – Grande Prémio de Turismo,” a Grand Prix Race of Curia held in 1927, won by Alfredo Marinho Júnior, in a Bugatti.



4. Grand Prix Race of Curia in 1927. In photo, the Bugatti of Alfredo Marinho Júnior

António Ferreira Magalhães Collection

It is not possible to be precise when, how, and in which state the Minerva was sold from the first owner, Alexandre de Almeida, and acquired by its 2nd owner in the 50s by António Ferreira Magalhães, a prominent Portuguese Collector, who started collecting cars at the age of 16, beginning with an Austin Seven and slowly collecting several rare and unique Portuguese cars such as Minerva, Pierce-Arrow, Ballot, Renault, Hotchkiss, Rolls-Royce, Bentley, Tatra, Talbot, Delage, Delahaye, Bugatti, De Dion Bouton, CGV, Hispano-Suiza, Mercedes, and others. It was one of the most significant car collections, with cars built before 1930.

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António Magalhães's collection mainly focused on Portuguese cars (originally imported to Portugal) built before 1930. He was known for restoring every car in his collection to Concours standards and making them ready to be driven at any time. Even today, on national TV, a few programs feature António Ferreira Magalhães, who shows his cars in an immaculate state, precisely restored and preserved in 1991; in these videos, António Ferreira Magalhães explains and shows two cars from his collection: another example of a Minerva, a 1904 Minervette, and a 1939 Talbot T23. António Ferreira Magalhães was always a figure connected to the preservation of the Portuguese automobile but also a figure remembered today for its contribution to the CPAA (Clube Português de Automóveis Antigos), participating in several events and concours of elegance organized by this club.

This Minerva participated in several rallies, was temporarily displayed in the Museum of Caramulo, and participated in several car expositions. One of these expositions was held in Matosinhos, Porto, organized by CPAA in 1988, entitled "Retromobile—Exposition of Motorcycles and Veteran Automobiles," where António Ferreira Magalhães had several of his cars, including the oldest Minerva survivors in Portugal, the 1904 Minerva Minervette and this Minerva. In this exposition, 148 cars were displayed, with the earliest car dating from 1895 to 1969.



5. Handbook of the CPAA Exposition of 1988 entitled “Retromobile,” with the 1914 Minerva and as well the 1904 Minervette, both from António Ferreira Magalhães

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6. Minerva in the CPAA 1988 exposition entitled “Retromobile”

This Minerva also appears on page 37 of the book “Automóveis Antigos em Portugal” (Antique Automobiles in Portugal), written by Eng. João Lopes da Silva, president of the CPAA representation in Lisbon (Clube Português de Automóveis Antigos—Portuguese Clube of Antique Automobiles).



7. Minerva in the book “Automóveis Antigos em Portugal” published in 1990, page 37

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João Manuel Magalhães and the Málaga Museum



8. A glamorous front in the Automotive and Fashion Museum of Málaga

João Manuel Magalhães (son of António Ferreira Magalhães) also followed in his father's footsteps and started collecting cars. His father was more focused on “Portuguese Cars” built before 1930, while João Manuel Magalhães enjoyed collecting exclusive, luxurious, extravagant, and unique automobiles from worldwide.



9. João Manuel Magalhães, founder of the Automotive and Fashion Museum of Málaga, next to his Mercedes

540K

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After António Ferreira Magalhães's death, his son, João Manuel Magalhães, had the vision and ambition of opening a Museum in Portugal where his father's collection would be on display. Unfortunately, opening a Museum in Portugal was impossible due to many bureaucratic setbacks. However, without giving up, traveled to Madrid, reaching into contact with the Ministry of Culture of Spain, and happily, Spain accepted the Collection Magalhães in the city of Málaga, in an old tobacco factory, "Museo del Automovil y la Moda de Málaga" (Museum of Automobile and Fashion of Málaga). This Museum has been open to the public since September 16, 2010, and currently displays 120 vehicles from the Magalhães collection. The Museum ensembles the vision of João Manuel Magalhães, who had a taste for rather eccentric, unique, unusual, and special automobiles from various manufacturers and also a taste for fashion, sculpture, and painting, creating a bond and a mix of these three elements with his car collection, and displaying the evolution of fashion and automobile through the different decades.



10. Minerva in Automotive and Fashion Museum in Málaga

The Minerva was displayed in the Málaga Museum from 2010 (the year of the Málaga Museum inauguration) until it was sold by Sotheby's in 2014 without any history or background to Portugal. It was possible to identify this car because it maintained its features from when it was in Portugal (despite currently displaying a different color) and still displayed the original license plate from Lisbon, "AA-20-07" or "S-2007." On August 9, 2023, João Manuel Magalhães, the founder of the Museum of Málaga, passed away at the age of 79, leaving behind a testimony of his passion and vision.

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11. An imposing duet... Minerva and the “Boa”

This Minerva is not only a rare car but also a “page of automotive history”, with a vast history surrounding this Automobile as previously mentioned in this work, with the objective of recovering the history and link lost to Portugal. It tells a part of the beginning of Portuguese automotive history, which has survived the obstacles of time. A Collector not only collects but preserves and fights against the obstacles of time so that these cars may survive in time and that their stories and backgrounds may survive and accompany them. Here is a brief history of a car that was presumed to be lost in time but appears renewed, as well as a memory of two great collectors who marked the Portuguese Automobile with their work, passion, dedication, and vision. May this be a testimony not only to two important Car Collectors but to all Veteran Car Collectors and to all who are connected to these cars and dedicate their lives daily to the preservation and conservation of the Veteran Car.

Dr. António Marques Vilar (Author)

Collection António Vilar - Portugal

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