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## **L&K Voiturette A (1905–1907): The first automobile made in Mladá Boleslav**

- › Laurin & Klement continued their success as a manufacturer of bicycles and motorcycles with their first car in the autumn of 1905
- › 44 units of the L&K Voiturette A were produced between 1905 and 1907

**Mladá Boleslav, 4 August 2020 - The first automobile of the company Laurin & Klement, which would later become ŠKODA AUTO, made its debut on 29 October 1905: the Voiturette A was a light two-seater that was easy to drive and reached speeds of up to 40 km/h. The 7 hp vehicle also impressed customers with its attractive price-performance ratio. Forty-four units were built in Mladá Boleslav between 1905 and 1907.**

The Voiturette A received official licensing for use on roads on 18 January 1906 and was first presented to the public at the Prague Motor Show on 15 April. With its advanced design, precise engineering and attractive price of 3,600 crowns for the basic version, it was an instant success. To provide some perspective, the average worker earned 2 crowns a day at that time. And fuel which, in those days, was not measured in litres because of differences in quality and density, cost 66 hellers per kilogram. The Voiturette A consumed around four kilograms of gasoline per 100 kilometres.

The chassis of the L&K Voiturette A consists of a ladder frame that supports two rigid axles with semi-elliptical leaf springs. The two water-cooled cylinders of the front-mounted V-engine face each other at a 55-degree angle. They produce 7 hp (5.2 kW) from a total displacement of 1,005 cubic centimetres. The direct shift three-speed transmission is flanged to the gearbox via a leather-covered cone clutch. The power was usually transmitted to the rear wheels via a cardan shaft, but chains were also available on request. The agile, 465-kilogram vehicle accelerated to a maximum speed of 40 km/h; it could be decelerated by a brake acting on the cardan shaft or by a hand lever operating brake drums on the rear wheels. In addition to the wooden rims with wooden spokes that were common at the time, Laurin & Klement also offered its customers wheels with wire spokes. Instead of two individual seats, there was also an option for a wide bench seat; each version offered an enclosed boot. The list of extras also included lighting, a roof and other equipment details. The Voiturette A was available in red, green, blue and white.

The “little carriage” laid the foundation for the subsequent dynamic development of the Czech car manufacturer. The range of models quickly expanded – from other vehicles with two-cylinder engines to the FF type, which came onto the market in 1907 with an in-line eight-cylinder engine, to other passenger cars, commercial vehicles and very successful racing cars. Laurin & Klement soon became the leading car brand in the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, dominating the voiturette segment, in particular. In 1908 more than 90 per cent of all new vehicles in this segment were from Mladá Boleslav.

The L&K Voiturette A from 1906 shown in the pictures is one of five surviving originals and is part of the portfolio of a Czech private collector. It is roadworthy and will be taking part in the excursion to celebrate ŠKODA’s 125<sup>th</sup> birthday. One other Voiturette A is a permanent exhibit at the ŠKODA Museum in Mladá Boleslav.



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## Further information:

Vítězslav Kodym

Communications Classic

T +420 326 811 784

[vitezslav.kodym@skoda-auto.cz](mailto:vitezslav.kodym@skoda-auto.cz)

## ŠKODA AUTO

- › is this year celebrating 125 years since the company was founded during the pioneering era of the automobile in 1895, making it one of the longest-established car manufacturers in the world.
- › currently offers its customers nine passenger-car series: the CITIGO, FABIA, RAPID, SCALA, OCTAVIA, KAROQ, KODIAQ, as well as the KAMIQ and the SUPERB.
- › delivered 1.24 million vehicles to customers around the world in 2019.
- › has belonged to Volkswagen Group since 1991. The Volkswagen Group is one of the most successful vehicle manufacturers in the world. In association with the Group, ŠKODA AUTO independently develops and manufactures vehicles, as well as components such as engines and transmissions.
- › operates at three locations in the Czech Republic; manufactures in China, Russia, Slovakia, Algeria and India mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan with local partners.
- › employs over 42,000 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.
- › is pressing ahead with the transformation from a traditional car manufacturer to the 'Simply Clever company for the best mobility solutions' as part of the ŠKODA 2025 Strategy.