

Full-color print

车之经典系列丛书



Car History

Appreciation of 100 classic cars in the world

Compiled by Ye Hong



CHINA MACHINE PRESS



Rich content
Brought to you by car
industry veteran
Car lover must-have

Post-war Period

1945~1970

Post-war refers to the period of time after the end of World War II. During the Second World War, the development of cars was under stagnation and only to the year of 1949 was it able to make a change. At that time, American cars were the lead in automobile technology development, GM equipped its subordinates Cadillac and Buick with a high compression ratio V8 engine. In respect of the shape of the car in the 1950s, the American design used the elements of a rocket-shaped headstock and space-ship tailstock. Since then, the construction style was to be better and bigger, functions outweighed the outside look, comfort and design were of top importance. The typical characteristic of American cars was long tail. In the 1960s, simple wedge-shaped car body began to get its way.

Britain led the car industry in Europe a few years after the end of the Second World War. Maurice, MINOR and Rover P4 cars brought along a new phase of development in the British car market. Car industry of Italy was quickly recovered. Lancia launched AURELIA with many advanced designs; Alfa Romeo produced Alfa Romeo 33 series using horizontal front engine front drive (later discontinued due to fund issue)

By contrast, the German car industry was still recovering from the heavy blow of the war. Many well-known car brands vanished from the market and those stayed had to struggle for their existence. After decade-long recovery since the Second World War, German car industry began to gain its recovery. Karl Benz launched the Ponton series, a gesture of a competent Benz to produce advanced luxury sedan. With the design of Beetle before the war, Volkswagen quickly recovered from the post-war misery and grew into one of the most renowned car manufacturers in Europe. BMW launched BMW 1500 and thus a brand-new market segment of sports car was created. In Japan, the government put into effect the Lightweight Autocar Enactment, which helped boost the development of car companies including Toyota, Nissan, etc.

Over one decade of economic development largely increased Europeans' demand for family cars. British and French car manufacturer designed a series of cars with both technical-innovation and outstanding quality. The horizontal front engine, front-wheel-drive chassis structure they applied became industrial standard for the chassis design of today's family sedan. And Reynolds P4 was the best seller among the front-wheel-drive cars. During this period of time, the development of all car companies shared one common feature, that is they all gain their power and rapid development by one or two successful launch of cars. In the 60s and 70s, the technologies that we apply today became popular, for example, integral body structure, independent suspension, fuel injection engine. Security had also become one of the major indicators to measure the intrinsic quality of a car. Wankel engine was the most popular innovation in the 1960s.

Citroen DS in 1965



Appreciation of 100 classic cars in the world

“A small family sedan with best price and high performance, which help promote the front-wheel drive car.”



Citroen 2CV

1949

The Citroen 2CV was a family sedan that enjoys almost the same fame in Europe as Beetle, not only because it was created in the same year with Beetle, but also its technology and application innovation. Although it was designed early in 1939, 2CV was not put into quantity production until Citroen was affected by the Second World War in 1949. 2CV had an extremely light body, 3830mm long, 1480mm wide, 1600mm high with only 555 kg. of kerb mass. The small car is powered by a two-cylinder air-cooled engine with a displacement of 0.425 liters and a maximum power 12 kW. The lightweight body and small displacement engine was a perfect match, the maximum speed could reach 95 km/h.

As an economy family car for the general public, it was fully customized, and the practicality was duly taken into account when designing. Fenders, bonnet and windows and other components could be quickly disassembled for maintenance by the owner. Being an economical family car entirely, the greatest advantage of the car was durable, thus its basic design had nothing to do with the performance, refinement, multi-functions, only a controlling system that functioned while driving was included in its interior fitments including the steering wheel, shift lever, lights and wiper control system.

As it was simple in structure, cheap in production cost, since its production in 1949 to 1983, Citroen 2CV made a gross production of over 7 million, enabling a lot of ordinary French and European people of other countries to enter the automobile era. In the meantime, as a front-wheel drive sedan itself, it had popularized the technology.

Appreciation of 100 classic cars in the world

Citroen DS

1955

Citroen DS was recognized as a generation of classic car from various perspectives. DS showed a path for car development in 1955 and it achieved harmonious unification of technology, functions, styling and performance. The production of the car owed to the car workers Andre Lefevre and a design team led by shape-designer Flaminio Bertoni.

Generally speaking, the sense of beauty is obscure and it depends more on the personal subjective interpretation, and yet the beautiful design of Citroen DS was still recognized by most people after 50 years, proving the designer to be an accomplished designer. 20 years of experience after designing TRACTION AVANT made Flaminio Bertoni a better designer whose understanding of the art reached a higher level. His advanced sedan design concept was blended with the art of sculpture to make a DS shape with great beauty and rich artistic connotation.

Of course, the shape of DS did not simply reflect the artistic inspiration of its designers, but more of the need to adopt innovative technology and for the convenience of the driver. The thin A-pillars and low engine bonnet widened the driver's vision, and thus became a leading mark for engine development in the car industry. In respect of configuration, as a family sedan, DS was not only equipped with power steering, power brake system, which were limited to a small number of top-of-the-range car models, its adaptive liquid-gas suspension system was especially unique.

DS models were mainly DS19, DS20, DS21 and DS23, numbers representing different power of the engine. The first DS19 was equipped with a 1.9-liter 4-cylinder engine with maximum power of 46 kW, and the ultimate version DS23 was equipped with a 2.35-litre 4 cylinder EFI engine with a maximum power of 92 kW, thus DS was also one of the first family sedan ever equipped with EFI engine.

“The design concept of machine and body was advanced, so that greater comfort was achieved through high-tech.”



Appreciation of 100 classic cars in the world



"Unique in technology and design, a premium sedan of the Citroen brand

Citroen CX

1974

As the successor of Citroen DS, Citroen CX had a low streamline shape with a length of 4666 mm but only a height of 1360 mm, which was distinct from other sedans of the same period. It inherited and surpassed its predecessor in the design of a romantic and elegant body shape. Besides its beautiful shape, the technical innovation was not inferior to its predecessor, with a new generation of hydraulic lift suspension system, whose efficiency ensured excellent stability when driving; a variable power steering system, the first of its kind in the world that facilitated the driver; a digital dashboard with mechanical display of numbers (only romantic, stylish Frenchman would make it mechanical), limited by the level of technology at that time (LED digital display in the 1970s was an extremely expensive technology).

Since its listing in the stock market, Citroen CX made excellent sales performances, selling over 110 million cars in 3 years, which was a great success for high-end cars. The French president at that time used a CX as his special car. But Citroen was later owned by Peugeot and the situation changed. PSA Peugeot owned two premium sedans itself, Peugeot 604 and Tagara Horizon. Of course Peugeot favored its own brand more and slowed its pace in subsequent technology upgrades for CX, in this way CX was cast in the shade of its predecessors.

In 1983, China imported 2500 Citroen CX20 sedans and station wagons, 76 kW maximum powered by a four-cylinder gasoline engine with a displacement of 2.0-liter. It was such a fashionable car for Chinese people of that time that they wondered the way it was designed. Chinese people's inherent idea of a sedan's shape was completely overthrown by CX20 that they crowded around wherever it went. The driver was all the more proud of the hydraulic lifting chassis. Citroen CX was almost China's first joint venture sedan, whereas defeated by Germany Volkswagen Santana, it eventually failed to make its production in Shanghai, China.

Appreciation of 100 classic cars in the world