

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Farm to fable - this Horch 853 Spezialroadster was saved from a life of agriculture

### Lead

Featuring coachwork by Erdmann & Rossi, this Horch 853 Spezialroadster started life as a stunning automotive masterpiece, but during WWII its body was lost and its running gear repurposed as a farm vehicle. Now after a meticulous restoration, it's back to a life of glitz and glamour.



The early 20th century was a period of rapid development for the automobile, and perhaps no country at the time saw more competition in the automotive industry than Germany. After Karl Benz invented the automobile and got the world hooked on life on the open road, new firms began springing up, one of which was started by August Horch, a former employee of Mr. Benz. Many will know that Horch's company would later become part of Auto Union, but you may not know that following a disagreement with his shareholders, Horch would leave his eponymous car company to start Audi — named after the Latin for “To listen”, a direct translation from “Horch” in German. In the end, Horch and Audi would merge along with DKW and Wanderer, forming Auto Union and the iconic four rings we associate with Audi to this day.







However, today's story focuses on one of Horch's greatest creations: the Horch 853 Spezialroadster by Erdmann & Rossi. Taking the 853's luxury grand tourer foundations, renowned coach builders Erdmann & Rossi — who also worked with Mercedes, Maybach, and Bugatti — crafted a stunning roadster body designed to attract Europe's elite. Unfortunately for this car — chassis number 853177 — it would not emerge unscathed after the outbreak of World War II, and records show that following body damage, it was equipped with a flatbed and put to work as an agricultural vehicle. Once the height of automotive engineering excellence, just the rolling chassis with the original engine and gearbox were discovered on a farm in the Ukraine.



Fortunately, chassis number 853177 entered the care of Horch-Classics, who, with the help of Erdmann & Rossi Berlin, embarked on an unprecedented restoration. Using the restored original chassis, Erdmann & Rossi Berlin utilised Horch-Classics' long-term experience, researched photographic documentation, and in-house made templates to create a three-dimensional body buck which was then draped in fabric to give a better idea of its proportions. Following numerous changes to perfect this Horch's shape, its body was finally fabricated from metal and painted in a carefully considered colour combination to perfect its period-correct look. After the engine had been meticulously dismantled and restored, a comprehensively overhauled 853a-specification five-speed gearbox was installed in place of the accompanying original four-speed, helping this stunning roadster to drive as fabulously as it looks. As a finishing touch, the Horch Logo on the radiator and the boot lid were plated with 24-carat gold by a jeweller, crowning this incredible pre-war cruiser.



Today, this is the only fully licenced Erdmann & Rossi Horch Spezialroadster in the world, representing the very epitome of pre-war elegance, performance, and design. If you're searching for a world-class Concours contender, then look no further than this stunning Horch available with [Goberson Holding B.V.](#)

*Photos by Rémi Dargegen*

[VIEW CAR](#)

**Gallery**















































