



HISPANO-SUIZA H6B

Dubonnet Xenia 1938





Dubonnet Machine, Saoutchik Sculpture

Saoutchik's teardrop-shaped wings and sculpted cockpit mated with Dubonnet's signature hyperflex suspension system offers drivers an entrancing sensation of flight.

One of the most extravagantly streamlined cars produced in an era of tall and boxy coaches, the Xenia's wildly futuristic design reflects the prewar fascination with machines and flight.

André Dubonnet—inventor, racecar driver, and World War I fighter pilot in the SPAD (Société Anonyme pour l'Aviation et

ses Derivés), or Stork, Squadron—was among those entrepreneurs who sought to use his engineering and aviation background to test the limits of technology. Rather than merely building a sophisticated coach to market standards, Dubonnet designed the Xenia to showcase his inventions and aerodynamic designs.

The Xenia features an independent, coil-spring hyperflex suspension system, engineered by Dubonnet's company and later adopted by Cadillac, Oldsmobile,



and Buick, among others. Dubonnet claimed the suspension system had “the suppleness of a cat”— memorialized by the Dubonnet logo, a jumping cat. The resulting smooth handling gave the evanescent feeling of floating on air. Dubonnet chose the H6 Hispano-Suiza engine to power the car and commissioned aerodynamics expert Jean Andreau to design the streamlined coachwork, which was built and engineered by luxury coachbuilder Jacques Saoutchik.

While the overall body is evocative of the elegant lines indulged in by coachbuilders of the Art Deco era, the details of this car are its truly Deco components. One exquisite feature is its door mechanism. Using a centrally mounted handle, the doors effortlessly slide open and backward, parallel to the body.

The Xenia was André Dubonnet's personal car.

It was hidden during World War II and did not resurface until June 9, 1946, when it led the parade celebrating the reopening of the Saint Cloud highway tunnel outside Paris to civilian traffic. Alain Balleret, president of the French Hispano-Suiza Club, purchased and restored the Xenia in the 1960s. In 1999 the American Charles Morse purchased it at auction. Peter Mullin purchased the Xenia in 2003. Today it is owned by the Peter Mullin Automotive Museum Foundation.



PROFILE

Coachbuilder	Saoutchik
Chassis number	103
Profile type	Touring
Body type	Coupé
Number made	1
Acceleration	0
Top Speed	160

BODY | CHASSIS

Front brakes type	Servo-assisted
Rear brakes type	Servo-assisted
Front suspension type	Solid axle with four-wheel independent "Hyperflex" (Coil Spring) Suspension
Rear suspension type	Live axle with four-wheel independent "Hyperflex" (Coil Spring) Suspension
Length	18' 7"
Height (Ground line to highest roof)	5' 2"
Width	6' 5"
Wheelbase	13' 4'

ENGINE

Engine number	103
Type	Inline
Number of cylinders	6
Engine construction	Aluminum
Displacement	7983
Distribution	Single-overhead camshaft
BHP at 3050 RPM	160
Transmission	Hispano-Suiza 4-speed manual with multi-dry-plate clutch
Gearbox	manual
Number of gears	4
Overdrive	0



