



TK-22-55

#113
Citroën
2CV "Belgium"
(1956)

Vitesse 23304

Period: 1948-1990
Built: 3,867,932

Engine: 375cc 2-cyl.
Power: 9 hp
Top speed: 65 km/h
Price: unknown

Predecessor:
none
Successor:
Citroën Dyane, AX

Date acquisition:
27/12/2000 (#113)



Approx. first plate Approx. last plate
NP-84-21 **YT-20-PD**



Ingenuous and minimalist. And as French as baguette and camembert. When first brought to market in 1948, the 2CV was meant to mobilize the French countryside, which at the time was still mostly getting about with horse and cart. Allegedly, its design brief included the ability to cross a freshly ploughed field or uneven countryside road with a basket of eggs on board without breaking any of the eggs. Hence the car was equipped with extremely softly sprung suspension that made the car lean over precariously in corners. The 2CV was also the first car introduced with the Michelin-invented radial tyre, an integral part of its clever suspension design. The wobble-like road composure gave the car the nickname “Lelijke Eendje” (Ugly Duckling) in the Netherlands.

The car was designed to be as simple as possible to reduce the cost of purchase and maintenance, but – as befits a true Citroën – with a few clever touches. The front and rear benches were removeable, for example, to allow for a spontaneous picnic. The openable canvas roof is seen as a desirable feature today but was simply meant to reduce weight and sheet metal. Likewise, the ribbed bonnet allowed for thinner sheet metal to be used. Until 1957 a ventilation system wasn’t even provided, but an openable vent underneath the windscreen provided a simple and straightforward alternative.

Many early 2CVs sold in the Netherlands were assembled in Belgium. Cars built there – as represented by this model car – were mechanically identical to the French 2CVs but differed in details, such as the placing of the rear lights. Thanks to the open roof, the model car nicely displays the rudimentary interior with dash-mounted gear lever, tartan-style upholstery, and spare wheel in the boot.



Top: the Italian, French and German take on the 1950s car to mobilize the masses. Left: Tartan-clothed benches and gear-mounted lever are easy to see from the open top roof. Middle right: Yellow lights were a remnant of the second World War, originally intended to mark out French cars from German ones in the dark. Bottom right: the 2CV would be on sale for more than 40 years and included many special editions, such as the iconic Charleston seen here.