

LOT **39**

1948 TUCKER 48

166bhp 335 cu. in. horizontally opposed Franklin engine, four-speed electric preselection transmission, equal length, parallel A-arm front suspension, hydraulic drum brakes. Wheelbase: 126" (est.)



CHASSIS NO.
1002

ENGINE NO.
33540

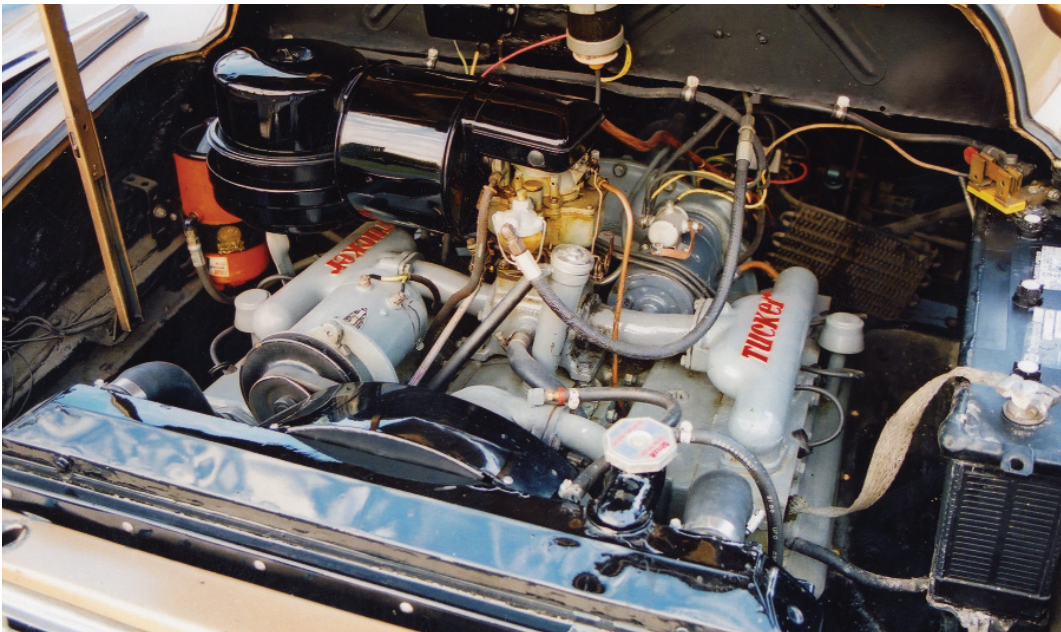
ESTIMATE:
\$275,000 -
\$350,000

The name Tucker strikes a chord in the hearts of every true car enthusiast as the saga is depicted as one man's dream to build a revolutionary automobile that would change the car industry forever. Although short-lived with only a mere 51 cars ever produced, Preston Tucker's legacy lives on as one of the most famous and admired auto manufacturers of the twentieth century. Equally impressive are his innovative 1948 Tucker automobiles that remind automotive historians of the car's advancements in mechanical engineering and design.

In the beginning, Preston Tucker's interest in automobiles was sparked by his friendship with famous racecar driver and designer Harry Miller. As such, Tucker spent much time composing concepts of mechanical ingenuity that could be applied to the inner workings of a revolutionary automobile. While the Big Three were busy dressing up old pre-war models in 1946, Preston Tucker set forth to produce an entirely new breed of car that would proudly bear his name. Hiring only the best automotive businessmen and

artisans in the country, Preston Tucker acquired the enormous Dodge aircraft engine plant in Chicago as the manufacturing site for his dream car.

Using two clay mockups, each identical in mechanical dimensions, yet different in style and character, the Tucker was brought to full scale. The car's final appearance, however, was decided upon by Preston Tucker who selected only the very best features from each clay model and implemented them into a final version---a metal prototype, affectionately coined the Tin Goose. While the exterior of the car had been finished, the interior was left requiring attention. Spearheaded by Preston Tucker's own demand for vehicle safety, the cockpit was created using a padded dashboard and carried instrumentation that was grouped around the steering column, whereby protruding buttons or gauges would not harm passengers in the event of a collision. Upon the car's overall completion, the Tin Goose debuted to a receptive audience on June 19, 1947.



With production moving ahead, Preston Tucker's much anticipated 589 cubic inch engine was plagued by adversity. Company engineers found the motor too noisy, woefully underpowered and required multiple batteries to get it started. In addition, the ideas of utilizing fuel injection and fluid drive had also been abandoned. Tucker's ingenious staff then considered the 6 ALV 335 Franklin helicopter engine as the ideal replacement to the ill-fated 589. They converted the engine to a liquid cooled example and employed a Cord 810 transmission. To their delight the modified 6 ALV 335 engine produced 166 horsepower and delivered an astounding 372 foot-pounds of torque. From a stand still, the engine could provide enough power in first gear to strip teeth off the transmission.

By spring, Tucker '48s began rolling off the assembly line. Reviews from automobile magazines praised the car effusively. However, the Securities and Exchange Commission were led to believe differently, targeting the Tucker Corporation with allegations of mail fraud and other violations. As a result, the publicity from the investigations caused the company's stock to fall overnight. While investigations were underway, Preston Tucker struggled to reopen the facility, with a few hundred-production workers continuing to manufacture his automobiles.

Production lasted for several months until early March of 1949, when the corporation fell into receivership and its assets were seized. Although acquitted of every charge against him and the company, the damage was irreversible. As a result, Preston Tucker's dream of producing automobiles that would grace the highways would never be fulfilled. Today, his one-model, scarce production automobiles are seen as one of the most admired and sought-after post-war American motorcars built.

One of only 48 surviving examples, RM is pleased to present Tucker no. 1002 at auction. Documented as style no. 481-19, this car has an interesting history all its own. Sold to the Tucker Arkansas Sales Corporation in July of 1948, it was sent back to the factory shortly thereafter to receive updates. Tucker no. 1002 was disassembled and scheduled for rebuild, however, it remained in pieces as it made the auction sales list once the Tucker Corporation fell into receivership. The body, suspension and loose parts were purchased by former Tucker franchise holder Ezra Schlif and brought back to Metamora, Illinois for assembly. Before the car could be pursued as a project, it was sold to long time TACA member Russell Brownell in November of 1951. Mr. Brownell purchased the car without its interior, rear end, engine or bumpers. Planning to drive the car back to



California, the new owner obtained a 335 ALV Franklin engine from a test chassis and a Cord 812 transmission. Additionally, a welder was hired to install the front engine hanger to match the Cord gearbox, while an upholsterer provided the interior and other components such as the control cables from test car no. 1027 that rolled at Indianapolis. A new instrument panel became the final component required to make the car roadworthy.

Although far from completion, Tucker no. 1002 was driven to California with ample repairs made along the way. By the end of the trip, the test chassis engine was badly damaged by dirt that had found its way inside the motor prior to installation. As a result, the original engine, number 33540, was provided by former owner Mr. Schlipf and re-installed into Tucker no. 1002. In 1952, the car was painted to a metallic gold (originally Waltz Blue) and later exhibited at Motorama, sponsored by *Trend Publications*, in Los Angeles. Interestingly, the car became an instant success and acquired the nickname Goldie by Tucker enthusiasts.

Around late 1969, Tucker no. 1002 was sold to noted car restorer Bill Hamlin of Ontario, California, whereby it received a restoration. Subtle modifications were also made to enhance

no. 1002 for driving pleasure, including a change in upholstery, a thicker rear axle shaft, and a heftier suspension. The transmission was also modified to accompany the torque of the ALV 335 engine with an extra thick third gear thrust washer, shift rail limit stops, and an oil pump suction filter. Lastly, the mechanical fuel pump is now electric, while the carburetor choke stove has been modified to eliminate aspiration of water and dirt.

Tucker no. 1002 has been featured in several books and calendars with the most noteworthy being *Car Classics* magazine. The car has also appeared at several TACA conventions since 1977, while participating in the Blackhawk's 'Tucker Day' in March of 2001. Uniquely, the car has an autographed signature from former Tucker employee Philip S. Egan on the glove box---who designed the inside door latches found only on this particular car.

A truly historical automobile, RM invites potential bidders to examine Tucker no. 1002 throughout, while noting a rare opportunity to share in the ownership of Preston Tucker's dream. An infrequent sight at auction, Tuckers continue to spark conversation of what may have been the most influential car in North America had the company survived.

