

Saab convertible prototype No 1.

Saab 900 turbo 16 convertible 1985

Modell: SAAB 900 T16 Convertible
Year: 1983
Chassie year: 1985
First registration year: 1989
Built by ASC, American Sunroof Company, USA



This car was built as the first 1983 prototype by ASC and the Swedish group under the supervisory of the head of the prototype department, Gunnar Arwidsson. The prototypes manufactured were done with a starting point from regular two doors 900i. They were solely built by hand (welded by hand using beams formed in a prototype metal adjustment machine). Thereafter a trial series was manufactured.

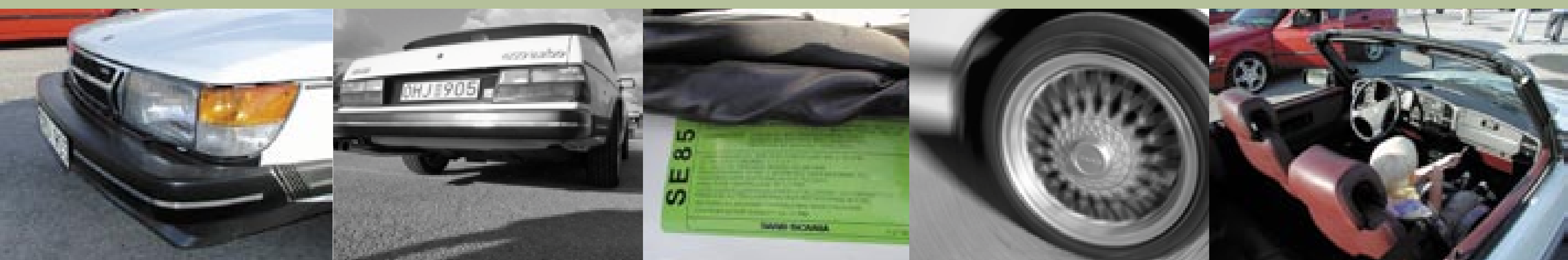
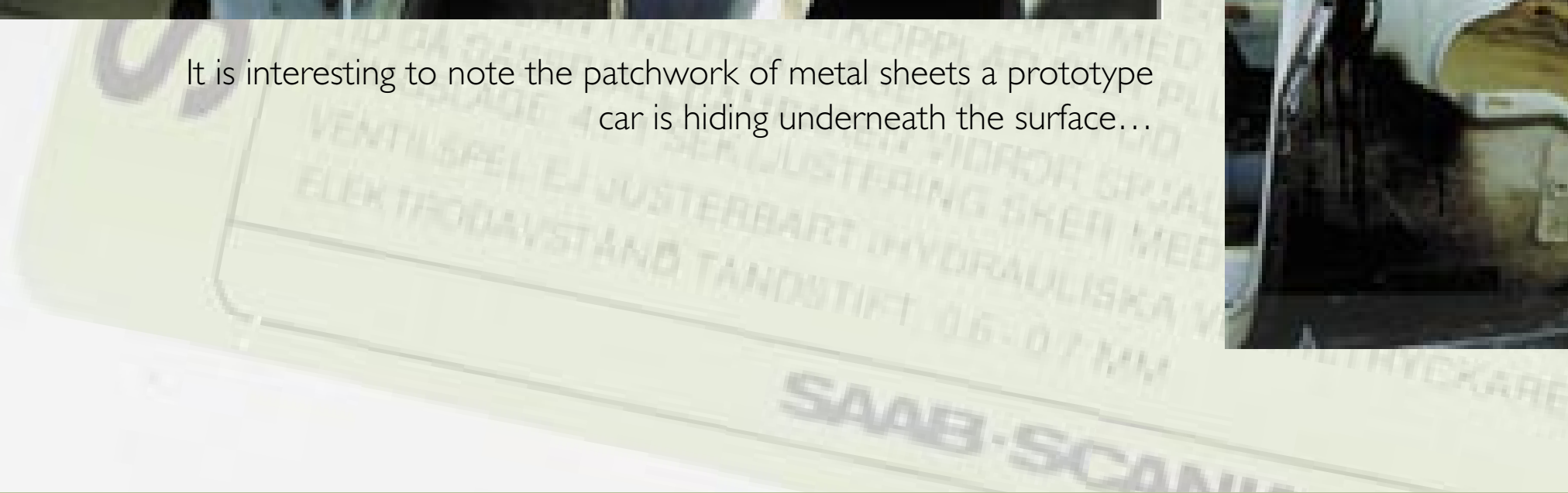
This car was supposed to have been cut down together with the other cars from the pre series.



During the restoration it became apparent that the measurement of the different metal sheets etc was not very precise.



It is interesting to note the patchwork of metal sheets a prototype car is hiding underneath the surface...



The car that should not exist...

Saab Convertible prototype No 1.



Presentation of Saab 900 turbo I6 convertible 1985

Modell:	SAAB 900 T I6 Cabriolet
Year:	1983
Chassie year:	1985
Firsst year of registration:	1989
Built by:	ASC, American Sunroof Company, USA

This car was first built as a prototype in 1983 by ASC and the Swedish group supervised by Gunnar Arwidsson, the head of the prototype department. The initial prototypes were made using a standard two door 900i. It was entirely built by hand with welded beams that had been formed in a prototype metal adjustment machine. The intention was that one of the prototypes should have been shown at the car show in Frankfurt 1983

The color of the first prototype was white/oyster-white with red/ox-blood colored interior and a white ceiling. The prototype number one did not have the "detailing" requested, so instead prototype number two was shown instead (as it was in better condition) at the car show in Frankfurt where the car made its debut. Number one got a new overhaul and was later shown at numerous car exhibitions, among others the show in Geneva 1984.

As Saab wanted one of the prototypes at the museum, prototype number two was the choice as this was the car first shown at the Frankfurt car show. Car number one ended up with the head of the prototype department.

Next a test series of cars was made. This car should have been cut down together with the cars in the test series. When the cars in the test series were cut down, the head of the prototype department took different parts from these vehicles, such as the roof as well as parts from the model year 1985 and assembled prototype number one so that it got the same look as the serial manufactured cars and had the correct specifications. Prior to this it was only a shell without ordinary reinforcements. It was equipped with a cross-like beam construction underneath the car. The square shaped frame was only a "bent frame" without the typical reinforcements that production cars normally has. The windows were made of plastic material instead of real glass, etc.

Even after the car had been rebuilt it was lacking identity. With some help from colleagues at SAAB-Sverige Car AB, product planning as well as SAAB-SCANIA AB, Central Kvalitet and Lagar & Säkerhet the car was finally labeled a 1985 year's model. The identity was really intended for a 900i, but was instead changed so that it gave its identity to the prototype.

This car was not really intended for the "market".

Since the car is registered as a 1985 year's model it has been in my interest to uphold the characteristics of that year's model features. For example, it has been equipped with a chromed front, steering wheel, motor head and the blue SAAB-decals as specified for the 1985 year's model.

As I also appreciate the SAAB's original add-ons, the car has been equipped with all sort of extras, such as 16 inch Cross Spoke rims, US-type of exhaust system (it has a funnel shaped end instead of an oval shaped), original leather steering wheel and leather covered knob on the gear shift handle. In addition, I have been able to locate the first edition of wood panel in walnut in its original packaging (there are only a limited number manufactured) as well as a ski rack that is attachable to the baggage compartment.

When I was informed by the head of the prototype department about deficiencies in the assembly of the car (spot weldings and rivets etc) I had it taken apart to make the appropriate reinforcements. Through this effort it was also possible to adjust excessive gaps in doors, etc (previously it was a difference of 1 mm-1 cm).

It is foremost "underneath the shell" where it is still possible to detect that this is a prototype. However; there are still small external details that reveal its origination, if one is very observant and knowledgeable about Saab's yearly model changes. Amongst others, there are no side blinkers forward of the car; those were first introduced on 1986 year's model. It also lacks manual ventilation for maneuvering the roof. The moldings/weather stripping around the rear side windows has the wrong lengths because they are shortened standard moldings/weather stripings (something I learned when I lost one the of the original moldings/weather stripings)

When the car came into my possession I contacted the person responsible for the SAAB Museum in Trollhattan (Pelle Ruud). He remembered this car very well, which he also confirmed in a conversation with Anders Tunberg, former journalist at Bilspport. Later, after Ruud's unfortunate early demise I learned that he himself had had one the very first built cars of this model line.

