
THIS IS A TRANSLATION OF THE ARTICLE 'SAAB 900 CABRIOLET OLI SUOMANLAINEN ERIKOISUUS: JUHALLA ON TALLISSAAN YKSI ENSIMMÄISIST:A TESTIAUTOISTA', AS PUBLISHED BY ILTALEHTI.FI ON MAY 28TH, 2017.

Saab 900 Cabriolet was a Finnish specialty: Juha Lehtonen has one of the first test cars in his stable

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At the 2017 Lahti Classic Motor Show Saab stand, a shiny and remarkable red Saab 900 convertible is present. It is a car model originally made in Finland only. The Saab 900 Cabriolet remained a Uusikaupunki special for over a decade, and Juha Lehtonen has one of the first in his stable.

The beige leather upholstery of the red convertible invites to have a seat. The dashboard represents a familiar Saab design which was said to be derived from Saab's fighter aircraft cockpit.



The first Saab 900 cabriolets were flatnose versions. The flatnose on Juha's car was restored.

(PENTTI J. RÖNNKÖ)



The roof neatly disappears behind the rear seats when it is opened.

(PENTTI J. RÖNKKÖ)

The Red Cabriolet is not just one of thousands of convertible Saabs produced in Finland. It is one of the first seven handcrafted Saabs convertible, and this particular species belonged to a series of test cars that were not intended for sale at the dealerships.

The car's model year is 1986, but it was registered on a factory plate already in November 1985.

The first Saabs 900 convertible were designed for the US market, and the test car displays the requirements of the Yankee market, such as air conditioning and a catalytic converter, which became mandatory in Europe just a year later. Saab's rear brake light was yet still prohibited in Finland.

‘The first convertibles were flatnoses, but these have only been built for half a year. That is why these are now so rare’, says current owner Juha Lehtonen. ‘This test car was somewhat heavier than the normal car, because this car has more reinforcements.



Saabists are familiar with the design | One of the first Saab 900 Cabriolets from Finland has a delicious cabin.

(PENTTI J. RÖNKKÖ)

In the first years, Saab drove various test runs with the car. Approximately 100,000 kilometers were then put onto the odometer. Juha bought the car from Saab Turku in 1990, after long persuasion. The passionate Saab enthusiast has long been looking for such a car and finally got lucky.

'I had the car in normal use at first, in a couple of winters even. After that, I started to make it into the original condition and now it's mostly an exhibition car'. The restoration meant, among other things, that the slant nose that made way for the original flatnose. Lehtonen searched and bought the original parts for his car, such as the grille, the US-style headlights and the bumpers with their extensions.

As a result of the upgrading, the Saab convertible now looks much better than a new one. Lehtonen tells that he met a man in Lahti, who had worked with these new pre-series cars in Uusikaupunki. 'The man said that this car is in a better shape than the new ones', Lehtonen laughs.

The Saab 900 Cabriolet was a Finnish specialty because it was manufactured in Finland from 1986 to 2003. It was not until 2004 that this story ended, when the owner GM transferred the production of the convertibles to Austria.

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