

# Pristine 1936 Packard Super Eight

The age of classic luxury automobiles arguably peaked in the pre-war era, a period when the artisan production of fine cars remained a viable alternative to the cost-saving allures of the assembly line. In the age of hand-produced luxury, Packard Motor Car Company stood out due to its custom production of well-reviewed, limited-production models, including the **1936 Packard Super Eight**



(\$100/150,000) on offer at Michaan's Auctions Winter Fine Sale on Thursday, December 14th.

In only 50 years, the automobile had risen from extremely humble origins to become a highly refined piece of intricate engineering and fine design. The first production automobile was invented in Germany by Carl Benz in 1886. Called the "Benz Patent-Motorwagen," the car had three wheels, made two-thirds of a horsepower, and had a top speed of only 10 mph. Only seven years later, the Duryea Motorwagen was introduced as the first American car in Massachusetts. Making over 4 horsepower, the car won several early automobile races as car production

grew in popularity over the coming years.

Each of these early models was limited to only a few examples each year due to the hand-made nature of production. That would change in 1908 with the introduction of Ford's Model T and the debut of the era of mass-produced cars. Ford's factory used assembly lines to dramatically reduce the man-hours needed to produce a single car, making retail prices affordable to the middle class. Selling as little as \$260 in 1925 (about \$4,570 in 2023), owning a car quickly became a realistic possibility for the working family.

While Ford and other companies were working to bring the automobile to as broad an audience as possible, other companies continued to focus on making bespoke luxury vehicles, each custom-made for the lucky few who

could afford them. Such was the case with Packard Motor Car Company, a Detroit luxury car maker founded in 1899. Packard aimed to compete with Rolls Royce and Mercedes Benz in the luxury market and was priced accordingly, with cars starting at \$2,600 (about \$90,000 today.) The company reached its peak in the inter-war years, exporting more cars than any other brand in their price range, quickly becoming a status symbol amongst prominent families, including the Japanese royal family, who came to own ten Packards.



---

**Michaan's Auctions**

2751 Todd Street, Alameda, CA 94501  
1-800-380-9822 | (510) 740-0220

Packard was so successful in the 1920s that the company had built a financial reserve significant enough to survive the Great Depression, even as many similar brands succumbed to the nation's economic woes. Packard responded to the Depression both by introducing a junior line of models, which featured more mass-produced parts than its existing senior line, and by enhancing the luxury features of the senior line, thereby increasing its value to the company's wealthiest clients. Packard also benefited from military contracts during WWII, producing engines for Mustang and Spitfire airplanes, as well as the engines for Navy PT boats.

In 1933 Packard introduced the Packard Super Eight as a smaller brother to the Packard Twelve. The 1936 model line was Packard's 14th series (no. 13 was skipped) and is considered

one of the brand's most iconic lineups. The reputation of the model peaked between the 1933 and 1936 production years, as the Super Eight was at its largest and most luxurious, featuring suicide front doors, a solid front axle, spoked wheels, and other fine details. The 1936 Packard Super Eight featured a 6.3l (384.4 ci) inline eight making 150 hp, with a 3-speed manual transmission, and continued the luxury automaker's tradition of custom order paint and interiors. Production of the vehicle was necessarily limited by its bespoke nature, in 1936 only 1,330 were made. It was offered in four configurations, a two-door coupé and convertible, as well as a four-door sedan and station wagon.

Given the importance of this specific model and year of manufacture, Packer Super Eight models sell for high prices and faithfully retain their value over time. While a 1936 Packer Super

---

**Michaan's Auctions**

2751 Todd Street, Alameda, CA 94501  
1-800-380-9822 | (510) 740-0220

Eight sold for the equivalent of \$90,000 off the showroom floor, today these same examples will earn well north of \$100,000. The brand has a devoted community of supporters, with a robust community evident both in-person and online. Furthermore, the 1936 Packard Super Eight has proven to have achieved real historic significance as the pinnacle of one of America's earliest and most prolific luxury automakers.

Michaan's Auctions Winter Fine Sale on Thursday, December 14th, features notable names leading the fine

art, decorative, and jewelry departments. BANKSY's 2004 screen print "Barcode" headlines a sale featuring Tiffany Studios Bronze Lamp and Wisteria Table Screen, wristwatches by Rolex and Hublot, and a Chalcedony, Yellow Gold Brooch attributed to Suzanne Belperron.

Michaan's Auctions catalogs can be viewed on our website ([www.michaans.com](http://www.michaans.com)), LiveAuctioneers, and on our Michaan's Live site. Bid live in our gallery or remotely via absentee, phone, or online.

---

**Michaan's Auctions**

2751 Todd Street, Alameda, CA 94501  
1-800-380-9822 | (510) 740-0220