



The sale early this month in Melbourne by Bonham's and Goodman of a 1922 Lorraine Dietrich brought to mind how rare this French car is in Australia. Recalling that this is only the second one I have seen made me realize how few photos there are in our albums. The best know in the early VSCCA days was an ohv 15cv six cylinder 3445 cc car owned at one point by Doug Helsham. Doug's motoring exploits in this car are written up in our 50<sup>th</sup> year book together with several photos. He reckoned it was good for 80mph and a delight to drive

De Dietrich, of Alsace – Lorraine, is an old French company having begun in 1684 and is in fact still a major manufacturer of glass lined chemical equipment. By the 1870's De Dietrich were locomotive manufacturers and in 1896 took on car manufacturing by building cars under license from Bollee, Vivinus and Turcat Mery. Ettore Bugatti joined De Dietrich in 1902 as chief designer and began to produce innovative designs with a wide range of engine types. In 1908 the name was changed to Lorraine Dietrich. After WW1 the company concentrated on two models, these being the 12cv 2297cc and the 15cv six of 3445cc. The 15cv was the main staple of the company and this car became a well developed and reliable fast tourer. So developed was it that the model won Le Mans in 1925 and then again in 1926 beating the Bentleys and Sunbeams.



Doug Helsham's car carried the number plate PW 354 and at first glance is easy to confuse with the model shown below with the number TH 345. The Helsham car in the photos above is described as the ex Van-Praag car although no one of this name is listed in the members list. The car below list. The car below however seems lighter and is described as a two seater despite the three men squeezed in. Was this the 12c 2297cc model. No details are given and I presume by the background it was photographed in a Sydney street in around 1946.



And what of the car shown below. It is described in the Pritchett album as Alan Roberts driving a six cylinder 3.5 litre Le Mans 2/4 seater, presumably photographed in about 1946. The car has fabric body and Le Mans style guards. Is this the same car as Doug Helsham's despite the painted bonnet without straps and the lack of knock off ears to the wheel nuts. It certainly looks very similar.

Can some of our senior members throw some light on this. And of course where are the cars now?

