

Tarrant 1906



vehicle specifications

- Two seater roadster
- 4 cylinder side valve unit
- 3.5 litre
- 14-16 hp
- Designed and built in Melbourne by the Tarrant Motor Company
- Tarrant cars were the first production cars built in Victoria and were the first petrol driven cars produced for sale in Australia

the last surviving tarrant

This Tarrant car was recovered in 1932 by Maurice Shmith, a former employee of the Tarrant Motor Company. Shmith presented the car to Kenneth and Peter Holmes, grandsons of its creator Colonel Harley Tarrant in 1960. They painstakingly restored it with their mother, the late Mrs Doreen Holmes. Mrs Holmes was the mastermind behind the restoration, employing elderly tradespeople who could apply the original methods of production. Some even worked on the car during its original manufacture.

Harley Tarrant built about 16 cars between 1900 and 1907. The cars were well manufactured, but Tarrant could not compete in price with such imports as the Model T Ford. Production of the Tarrant car ceased when Tarrant Motors became the main distributor for Ford in Victoria.

Colonel Tarrant was a foundation member of RACV. He was a councillor from 1906 to 1910 and was awarded life membership in 1947. He died in 1949, aged 89 years.

This Tarrant car is probably Australia's most precious piece of automotive history. RACV acquired the car in 2002 and is proud to display it in its Club premises.

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