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## FACTS & STORY

Arzens La Baleine (France, 1938)

STREAMLINER

scale 1:43

#04017

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## The Whale of Paris

The French Paul Arzens graduated in beaux-arts, was said to be a great talent of this genre and was able to make a living with his creative work.

In the first half of the 1930s he got into automobiles and eventually designed his first own car in 1938. The car based on the chassis of a Buick from 1928, was powered by a 3.5-liter six-cylinder engine with a performance of 68 hp and with a length of seven meters far longer than common production vehicles. Large overhangs at the front and rear end characterized the exceptionally long visual appearance of the car. Striking feature of Paul Arzens' body design was an extravagant radiator front. Eye catcher was definitely the centered, slightly protruding "nose" of the car, which appeared quite strange and abstract to the neutral viewer. On a closer look, however, it became apparent that behind the thin metal bars on both sides of the nose two headlights found their place. Overall a famous sea mammal

guided the design of Paul Arzens' car. The metal bars at the front should be reminiscent of the barbels of a whale. And indeed, when one gets used to the idea and with some imagination, it is recognizable that the mouth of a whale served as an inspiration for the front end. Matching to its look, Arzens christened his car "La Baleine"; French for "the whale". He drove his "whale" until he died in the age of 87 years in 1990.

Today the unique convertible is on exhibition at the museum Cité de l'Automobile – Musée National – Collection Schlumpf in Mulhouse, France.

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