



Chrysler Special Coupé by Ghia - 1953



Chrysler in the 1950's under the company presidency of K. T. Keller entered one of its numerous styling peaks. The history of Chrysler design is one of high and lows and under the styling of Virgil Exner in that period, never has the summit been so high.

The story of Chrysler's association with Ghia is an interesting one as it came about from an invitation from Fiat to advise them on high volume build processes - the irony. The tenure with Fiat introduced Chrysler to Italian styling and limited production carrozzeria. So the learnings and ultimate results went both ways. Keller was obviously a fan of Italian exotica and gave Exner the task of styling a series of design concepts for building by Ghia.

These specials were based on New Yorker chassis, with 180 bhp, 331 cu. in "FirePower" Hemi V8 engines, Power-Flite two-speed automatic transmission, independent front suspension with coil springs, live rear axle with semi-elliptic leaf springs, and four-wheel hydraulic drum brakes. In total there were four design, each somewhat evolutionary to the previous. The styling culminated with the Thomas Special which was so well received that production as considered. In the eighteen examples were built, six for Chrysler and Ghia built a further 12 under their own brand. These cars were known by several names; the Thomas Special (after the President of Chrysler's export division), the GS-1, the Chrysler Special and the Ghia Special.

Chrysler Special Coupe by Ghia

- 5424 cc - 331 in³
- "FirePower" Hemi V8
- Designed by Virgil Exner
- 18 Built



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1953

Chrysler

Special Coupe

by Ghia

USA - ITALY

Exotic

1953

Chrysler

Special Coupe



1953 Chrysler Special Coupe by Ghia

Year	1953	
Number built	18	
ENGINE		
Configuration	Hemi V8	
Layout	Front Longitudinal	
Displacement	5424 cc	331 in ³
Valvetrain	2 valves cylinder	
Fuel feed	Carburettor	
Induction	Naturally Aspirated	
Power	134.2 kw	180 bhp
BHP/Liter	33.2 bhp / litre	

BODY

Steel Body over Steel Chassis

Wheelbase	3188 mm	125.5 in
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DRIVE

Rear Wheel Drive	
Transmission	PowerFlite two-speed Automatic

SUSPENSION

Front	Independent
Rear	Live Axle Semi-Elliptic Leaf Springs

The example shown here whose most recent sale was handled by RM Auction (image credits), was sold by Société France Motors at the 1953 Paris Motor Show. It was shown by the owner at several concours such as Deauville and Bagatelle during the 5 years he owned it. The following owner kept it in original order for 27 years and ultimately sold it to its third owner, a known collector of Italian cars who was the custodian for the next twenty. Ultimately it was sold in 2005 to the owner who placed it with RM. RM in their information release (on which this profile is based) state that it is probably the only unrestored example.

A truly stunning car and a fabulous history.

Rod Halligan



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USA - Italy

Exotic