

## Franklin Mint 1936 Hudson Eight 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Numbered Ltd. Ed. of 3500

The Hudson Motor Car Company was known for building, good-looking, well-crafted, reliable automobiles. The company was the first to introduce dual brakes, self-starters, dash-mounted warning lights (generator and oil), and the first balanced crankshaft. The 1936 Hudson Eight was no exception. It featured a more powerful engine (a flathead, straight-eight), what Hudson called “radial safety control” and “rhythmic ride suspension.” With elegant, well-proportioned lines, and innovative features, it was a car to entice the most jaded buyer. Hudson would keep this tradition of excellence alive well into the 1950s, where it dominated the stock car circuit for years.



To commemorate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, FM has commissioned a 1:24 scale model that's second to none. In my humble opinion, the sale of the famous mint to a new owner has been a step up. Once known for its innovations in design and features, as well as its penchant for doing offbeat images, FM was being eclipsed by DM, GMP, West Coast, and other die cast purveyors. But, in recent months, FM has put out some noteworthy new images. Now, they've raised the bar yet again.

First, they introduced the rotating drive shaft. This is a feature not even the high-end manufacturers use to date. This Hudson Eight image has it. How about another FM-introduced feature—roll down/roll up windows (first introduced on the 1939, World's Fair Ford image)? This image has those too. Working suspensions? Yep. Beautiful paint job with laser-cut, foil appliqué and other parts? It's got 'em. Real leather upholstery? You betcha. Oodles of detail everywhere you look, including removable fender skirts? A removable spare tire shroud? Of course. Good build quality? Shuh.

But—and here's where FM aces the other mints—FM has introduced another innovation. How about a real cloth, convertible top *that operates*? Well, with this image, you get your wish fulfilled. That's right, the top extends from the stowed, to the up position, just like the real thing! Talk about Christmas coming early! Heck, even the superb, 1:12 scale '67 L-88 'Vette didn't have this feature (though I thought it could have been easily accomplished).

I've always been a champion of FM images. I saw this mint as embodying the very things collectors dream about in 1:24, museum-quality, collector die cast cars. For awhile there, however, they seemed to be interested in nothing but remakes, reissues, and making a buck on the same tired images. Now, since the new owner has taken over, FM is motoring back into its pole position as the “innovative” mint (and doing a bang-up job of improving its reissues).

Kudos to FM for trumping the other mints and offering an image that's yet another step forward in die cast design. I'd like to see them carry this feature forward into its 1:12 line (Imagine the L-88 with an operating convertible top! It already has some features that many of

FM's competitors haven't offered at any price.) This kind of thing only improves the options for collectors, as the other mints strive to keep up.

With its gorgeous, silver paint job and bushel basket of features, this 1936 Hudson Eight image is one for the die cast collectors' record books. Thank you, FM, for listening to us and celebrating your 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in style! I'm looking forward to at least twenty-five more years of die cast excellence!

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