







Saab Automobile

Saab Automobile AB



Former type	Aktiebolag
Founded	1947
Founder(s)	Svenska Aeroplan Aktiebolaget
Defunct	During 2009-2014
Headquarters	Trollhättan, Sweden
Area served	Worldwide
Key people	Jan-Åke Jonsson (CEO) Carl-Peter Forster (Chairman)
Industry	Automotive
Products	Automobiles
Employees	3,400 (2009)
Parent	General Motors
Website	Saab.com

Saab Automobile AB, better known as **Saab**, is a Swedish car manufacturer owned by General Motors. It was the exclusive automobile royal warrant holder as appointed by H.M., the King of Sweden. Since its inception, Saab had been known for its innovation; as it evolved and adopted ever more advancements to its turbocharging, safety, and green technology. On December 18, 2009, GM announced it intends to wind down the Saab brand after negotiations to sell the company to several possible buyers failed. Spyker Cars announced a new offer following GM's winddown announcement though it is uncertain whether a deal can be salvaged at this point.

Company history

Saab was originally created as a division of the Swedish Aeroplane Company (*Svenska Aeroplan AB* in Swedish). The company had been established in 1937 for the express purpose of building aircraft for the Swedish Air Force. With World War II nearing its end, the company began looking for new markets in which to expand.

Svenska Aeroplan AB (1947–1969)

In 1944, Project 92 began, with the goal of creating the first Saab passenger car. Five years later, the Saab 92 began production. The design highlighted the company's roots in aviation. Notably, the car's drag coefficient of 0.30 was the lowest of any production car at the time. In 1955, the SAAB 92 was reworked and became the SAAB 93. The engine was upgraded from two to three cylinders but unusually remained a two stroke. The car received a facelift, including the first Saab with the brand's trademark trapezoidal grille. A wagon variant, the 95, was added in 1959 and would remain in production for the next twenty years. The decade also saw Saab's first foray into true performance cars with the Saab 94, the first of four Saab Sonetts.

Saab-Scania (1969–1989)

The need for a larger model saw the birth of the Saab 99 in 1969. The 99 was the final Saab designed by Sixten Sason, who had designed all their earlier models. Its design, a clean break from all earlier Saabs, would mark the brand's styling for the next twenty years. The 99 was also important in that it marked Saab's first turbocharged model. In 1970, the 500,000th Saab was built. Six years later the 1,000,000th would follow. Saab signed an agreement with Fiat in 1978 to sell a rebadged Lancia Delta as the Saab 600 and jointly develop a new car platform. The agreement yielded the Alfa Romeo 164, Fiat Croma, Lancia Thema and Saab 9000, all riding atop the Type Four chassis. 1974, saw the introduction of the Combi-Coupe, which continued to live on in the 99, 900, 9000, NG900 & 9-3 as the hatchback which was ended in 2002.



General Motors ownership (1989–present)

In December 1989, General Motors bought Saab's automobile division for US \$600 million, with an option to acquire the remaining shares within a decade. The Malmö plant was closed in 1991. At this point, GM's involvement spurred the creation of the new generation Saab 900 in 1994. The new car used the same polarized Saab aficionados, but thanks to profit in 1995 for the first time in seven years, GM agreed to assume the remaining shares of the automobile and agreed to assume the remaining subsidiary. In March 2005, it was announced that GM would move the production of the next-generation Saab in Rüsselsheim, Germany in 2009. The Cadillac BLS until 2009. The next-generation Saab 9-2X, a rebadged Subaru Impreza discontinued since 2008, was discontinued after the 2006 model year. The Saab 9-4X, which was to share a platform with cancelled following the decision to wind down the Saab brand. In December 2008, General Motors Corporation announced that Saab was “under review”, which also included the possibility of selling off the Swedish carmaker. 27 parties reportedly expressed interest in buying the company, among them BMW, Renault, the Hyundai-Kia group, Tata Motors, Geely Automobile, Fiat and Magna International. Saab held talks with three selected bidders, reportedly the Rencio Group, Koenigsegg with financial backing from Norwegian investors, and Merbanco, a group of Wyoming-based private investors. On 11 February 2009, Saab Automobile announced the Saab 9-3X – a new addition to the 9-3 range with all road capabilities.



announced it had bought 50% of million with an option to acquire the. Despite this, losses continued and the point, Saab Automobile AB was launched of the "new generation" Saab platform as the Opel Vectra and its sales, the company declared a years. In 2000, GM purchased the division for an additional \$125 million debt, making it a wholly-owned announced that GM would move the 9-5 from Trollhättan to the Opel plant Trollhättan factory also produced the generation Saab 9-3 was scheduled to models are the 9-3 and 9-5, both of Sweden. The Saab 9-7X SUV, manufactured in Moraine, Ohio. The manufactured in Japan, was A new crossover SUV, dubbed the 9- the new Cadillac SRX has been down the Saab brand. In December

On 17 February 2009, Saab's parent company GM announced that Saab would apply for administration within 10 days unless it received substantial aid from the Swedish government. GM had requested 5 billion Swedish Kronor (US\$565 million, €449 million) in state aid to help keep the company going until the start of 2010, however the Swedish government has appeared reluctant to provide this aid, and the Swedish Industry Minister was quoted in the press to have stated “*The Swedish state and taxpayers in Sweden will not own car factories. Sometimes you get the impression that this is a small, small company but it is the world's biggest automaker so we have a right to make demands.*”

On 20 February 2009, Saab duly entered into administration, which is seen as the equivalent of US Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Saab's managing director Jan-Åke Jonsson said that this was “*the best way to create a truly independent entity that is ready for investment*”. The Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt said on 18 February 2009 that the U.S. company's demands amounted to a “trap” set to pressure the government into granting financial aid. The Swedish trade minister, Maud Olofsson suggested the company had a brighter future moving to production of wind power turbines than continuing to produce cars in an already

oversupplied market. GM with Saab Automobile AB included has had little support from the Swedish government in supporting the Swedish brand through its difficulties. During the planned "carve-out" of Saab from GM, Saab "wordmark" has now been launched as a replacement for the Saab-Griffin logo that has been used for the past twenty years. The Griffin originates from Scania the previous owner of Saab; SAAB-SCANIA AB then owned by Investor AB. On 24 November 2009, the first pre-production vehicle SAAB 9-5 second generation rolled off the serial production- line in Trollhättan. It is the second car out in Europe from the GM Global Epsilon platform. Development of that platform, has been a true team-work between fork-force in Trollhättan, Detroit and Rüsselsheim. On 18 December 2009, General Motors announced it will wind-down Saab's operations after failing to secure a buyer for the company. Nick Reilly, GM Europe's President, announced Saab's closure:

"Despite the best efforts of all involved, it has become very clear that the due diligence required to complete this complex transaction could not be executed in a reasonable time. In order to maintain operations, Saab needed a quick resolution. We regret that we were not able to complete this transaction with Spyker Cars. We will work closely with the Saab organization to wind down the business in an orderly and responsible manner. This is not a bankruptcy or forced liquidation process. Consequently, we expect Saab to satisfy debts including supplier payments, and to wind down production and the distribution channel in an orderly manner while looking after our customers."

Planned sale to 'Koenigsegg Group' (2009)

On 16 June 2009, Koenigsegg, the Swedish super-car maker, backed by Beijing Automotive Industry Holding Corp (BAIC) and a group of Norwegian investors announced their intentions to purchase the brand from General Motors. BAIC had said that it was willing to potentially contribute US\$200 million to US\$300 million toward the deal. It was announced on 18 August that GM had signed the deal, although certain financing details remained to be completed. There was a financial shortfall of some three billion SEK that must had to be sorted before the deal could go through, and although the European Investment Bank did on 21 October 2009 approve a loan of US\$599 million, to be guaranteed by the Swedish government., Koenigsegg Group AB released a press communique on 24 November, stating the the acquisition would be too risky due to delays in closing the deal. The statement indicated that they had *come to the painful and difficult conclusion that it could no longer carry out the acquisition*. According to the statement by Koenigsegg Group the reason for the abrupt end to the acquisition process was because of timing issues; the original time table established in the summer of 2009 was no longer valid and this removed Koenigsegg's ability to complete the purchase.

Sale of assets to BAIC

On December 14, 2009, Chinese automaker Beijing Automotive Industry Holding Corp (BAIC) announced that it had acquired the intellectual property rights and equipment to make Saab's 9-5 and 9-3 sedans for an undisclosed sum. BAIC plans to immediately integrate the technology into its own cars and roll out Saab-based cars as early as 2011. Dagens Industri later reported that the deal was worth SEK1.4 billion (US\$197 million). BAIC later revealed that it paid US\$200 million for "three overall vehicle platforms, two engine technologies and two transmission systems."

Other interest

Following the collapse of talks with Koenigsegg, GM indicated that it would eliminate the brand in 2010 if it failed to find a buyer by the end of 2009.^[26] A number of buyers expressed interest in the brand, including Beijing Automotive Industry Holding Corp, a Chinese-based company, and Netherlands-based

boutique automaker Spyker. The latter company, along with its largest shareholder, Convers, confirmed that it was in talks with GM to buy Saab before any liquidation is consummated. Any purchase of the ailing automaker would have been in stark contrast to Spyker's current business model, which focuses exclusively on hand-made luxury vehicles, primarily for the U.S. market. The Swedish government remained willing to guarantee any loans made to keep Saab afloat, provided the purchasing party retain manufacturing within Sweden.

Winding down

On 20 February 2009, the district court of Vänersborg received a request for reorganization from Saab. Parent General Motors planned to divest itself of the company by the end of 2009. On 11 June 2009, a letter of intent was signed by Koenigsegg and a group of Norwegian investors to purchase Saab. On 24 November 2009, however, Koenigsegg withdrew its offer to purchase the operation. On 1 December 2009 GM's board of directors decided to give Saab until the end of the year to evaluate potential buyers for the company. On 18 December 2009, General Motors announced it was unsuccessful in finding a buyer for Saab, and would effectively shut down the company. Saab becomes the first luxury brand to be discontinued since Ford's Merkur brand (a luxury brand that marketed cars smaller than its Lincoln luxury brand) was discontinued after the 1989 model year. On 20 December 2009, it was announced by Spyker NV that a revised bid for Saab Automobile was submitted to General Motors with an approval deadline of 17:00 on 21 December 2009. The deal is said to offer concessions on intellectual property and financial backing that the previous deal lacked. Spyker later extended the deadline indefinitely to allow GM time to make a decision. However, analysts have raised doubts that a deal could be worked out.

Production

Saab's total world production in 2008 was 90,281 vehicles produced in 3 countries.

Country	Cars (2008)	Cars (2007)	Models
Sweden Trollhättan	75,073	102,915	9-3, 9-5
Austria Graz	11,047	16,997	9-3 convertible
USA Moraine, Ohio	4,161	5,485	9-7X
Total	90,281	125,397	

Saab manufactured various models at the Valmet Automotive plant in Uusikaupunki, Finland between 1969 and 2003, in a joint-venture established in 1968 together with Valmet. Since 2003, Saab no longer manufactures any cars in Finland as the production of the *9-3 Convertible* was moved to Graz, Austria.

Models

A common feature of Saab car types is the use of the number 9 in the model numbers. Current models are the 9-3 and 9-5, both which are manufactured in Trollhättan, Sweden, and 9-7X, which is manufactured by General Motors. The exception to this naming rule is the Saab 600, which was a rebadged Lancia Delta.

Current models

- Saab 9-3 (1998 – present)
 - Saab Turbo X (2008)
 - Saab 9-3X (2009 – present)
- Saab 9-5 (1997 – 2009)
- Saab 9-7X (2005 – 2009 (US only))

Future models

- Saab 9-4X (2010 – onwards) A crossover CUV based on the same platform as the 2010 Cadillac SRX. The car will feature almost identical features to it's Cadillac sibling, but will feature a very different design as shown with the 9-4x BioPower concept. The interior will be very similar to the 2010 Saab 9-5. The car will be available 2011 model year. The car will have features such as hard drive-based DVD navigation, OnStar (US and Canada only), USB ports, Saab's XWD, flip up dual screen DVD player, XM NavTraffic, HUD display, HID head lamps, panoramic sunroof, and several standard and available features.
- Saab 9-5 (2010 - onwards) A long due replacement for the Saab's Flagship, the new 9-5 advances styling cue from past Saab models and adds elements from recent Saab concepts to create a stylish large sedan. Rumored to be available at the end of 2009 or early 2010, it will boast a host of turbo engines in four and six cylinder configurations, include high tech gadgets such as a Heads-Up Display, Hard Drive based infotainment/navigation, available rear entertainment screens and an advanced chassis that might even have a Pneumatic Suspension. The wagon variant should follow the sedan onto the market in a year or so.

With the announced wind-down of automotive operations it is doubtful that these models will see production- There are, however, early indications that some future Saab models may continue under other GM brands names, such as Buick, Cadillac or Opel.

Historical models

- Saab 92 and descendants:
 - Saab 92 (1949 – 1956)
 - Saab 93 (1955 – 1960)
 - § Saab GT750 (1958 – 1960)
 - Saab 94 Sonett I (1956)
 - Saab 95 estate car (1959 – 1978)
 - § Saab 95 3 cylinder two-stroke (1960 – 1967)
 - § Saab 95 V4 (1967 – 1980)
 - Saab 96 (1960 – 1980)
 - § Saab 96 3 cylinder two-stroke (1960 – 1968)
 - § Saab Sport 3 cylinder two-stroke (1962 – 1966)
 - § Saab Monte Carlo 850 3 cylinder two-stroke (1966 - 1967)
 - § Saab 96 V4 (1967 – 1980)
 - § Saab Monte Carlo V4 V4 (1967 - 1968)
 - Saab 97
 - § Sonnet II (1966 – 1970)
 - § Sonnet III (1970 – 1974)
- Saab Formula Junior single seat racing car (1960)
- SAABO caravan/camper/travel trailer (1964 – 1968)
- Saab 99 and descendants:
 - Saab 99 (1968 – 1984)
 - Saab 900 "Classic" (1979 – 1994)
 - Saab 90 (1984 – 1987)
- Saab 600 (1985 – 1988)
- Saab 9000 (1985 – 1998)
- Saab 900 "New Generation" (1994 – 1998)
- Saab 9-2X (2004 – 2006)

Concepts and prototypes

- Saab 92 line:
 - Saab 92001 or Ursaab the prototype for the first Saab production car (1946)
 - Saab Monster (1959)
 - Saab 60 (1962)
 - Saab Quantum (1962)
 - Saab Catherina (1964)
 - Saab MF113 (1965)

- Saab Toad (1966)
 - Saab 98 (1974)
- Saab EV-1 (1985)
- Saab 9XX Concept (1991)
- Saab 9-X (2001)
- Saab 9-3X (2002)
- Saab 9-3 SportHatch (2003)
- Saab 9-5 Aero BioPower (2006)
- Saab Aero-X (2006)
- Saab 9-4X BioPower (2008)
- Saab 9-X Biohybrid (2008)
- Saab 9-X Air (2008)

Competition history

Some of the early cars such as the two-strokers, V4s and Saab 99 were quite successful in rally sport, notably the 96 in the 1960s RAC Rally and Monte Carlo Rally, driven by Erik Carlsson.

- **1950** Saab enters two Saab 92s (chassis numbers 7 and 8) in the Monte Carlo Rally. One car is crewed by Rolf Mellde and K G Svedberg, and Greta Molander and Margaretha von Essen compete in the other. Greta Molander comes in 55th overall, 5th in her class and 2nd in the Ladies Class. Rolf Mellde wins the Rikspokalen Rally in November, and Saab becomes the best marque team with Mellde, Svedberg and Greta Molander, who also wins the Ladies Class
- **1952** Greta Molander and Helga Lundberg win the Ladies Cup in the Monte Carlo Rally.
- **1953** Rolf Mellde wins the Swedish Rally Championship.
- **1955** Mellde rolls his Saab 92, but still manages to win the Rikspokalen Rally.
- **1956** Bob Wehman and Louis Braun win the Great American Mountain Rally. Rolf Mellde comes sixth and another Saab 93 finishes in seventh place.
- **1959** Two Saab 93s are entered in the Le Mans 24 Hours. The car driven by Sture Nottorp and Gunnar Bengtsson come in 12th overall and second in its class. The same year Erik Carlsson wins the Midnight Sun Rally.
- **1960** Erik Carlsson wins the RAC Rally and Saab start competing in Formula Junior with the Saab Formula Junior.
- **1961** Erik Carlsson enters the Monte Carlo Rally in a Saab 95 and finishes fourth, and wins the RAC Rally for the second successive year.
- **1962** Erik Carlsson and Gunnar Häggbom win the Monte Carlo Rally, and complete a hat-trick of RAC Rally wins.
- **1963** Erik Carlsson again wins the Monte Carlo Rally, this time with Gunnar Palm as co-driver. They also finish second in the Spa-Sofia-Liège Marathon de la Route.
- **1968** Finn Simo Lampinen wins the RAC Rally in a Saab 96V4.
- **1971** Stig Blomqvist wins the Swedish and RAC Rallies in a Saab 96V4. Erik Carlsson retires from rallying and become Saab ambassador.
- **1976** Stig Blomqvist wins the Belgian Boucles de Spa Rally in a Saab 99 EMS.
- **1977** Stig Blomqvist wins the Swedish Rally in a Saab 99 EMS.
- **1979** Stig Blomqvist wins the Swedish Rally in a Saab 99 Turbo. This was the first time a turbocharged car won a World Championship Rally event.

- **1980** Saab withdraws from all competition activities citing reasons of cost, and because it cannot compete with 'prototype' vehicles using its production-based cars. Being a small manufacturer, SAAB could not afford to build special a "Homologation Special" like the Ford RS200 and Lancia Stratos. These Group B competition cars had evolved so they had very little in common with production cars and thus were of no value to production car development. A number of personnel from the competition department branch out and start Trollspeed aimed at producing competition upgrades for Saabs.
- **2000** Saab returns to competition by sponsoring Swede Team Motor who competes with a Saab 9-3 Aero SportSedan, a Saab 9-3 Coupe and a 1964 two-stroke Saab 96. The return to competition was to attract students to the auto-mechanic educations. The students get to work on the race cars before, during and after races to expand the students' knowledge and quality awareness.

Innovations

- 1958: The GT 750 is the first car fitted with seatbelts as standard.
- 1963: Saab becomes the first volume maker to offer diagonally-split dual brake circuits.
- 1969: Saab creates an ignition system near the gearbox, instead of behind the steering wheel like most cars.
- 1970: Saab introduces a world-first - headlamp wipers and washers.
- 1971: Heated front seats are introduced, the first time in the world they are fitted as standard.
- 1971: Saab develops the impact-absorbing, self-repairing bumper.
- 1976: Saab was the first manufacturer to produce a turbo engine with wastegate to control boost.
- 1978: Saab introduces another 'world-first,' the passenger compartment air filter (pollen filter).
- 1980: Saab introduces Automatic Performance Control (APC), and an anti-knock sensor that allowed higher fuel economy and the use of lower grade fuel without engine damage.
- 1981: Saab introduces the split-field side mirror. This reduces the driver's blind spot.
- 1982: Saab introduces asbestos-free brake pads.
- 1983: Saab introduces the 16-valve turbocharged engine
- 1985: Saab pioneers direct ignition, eliminating the distributor and spark plug wires.
- 1991: Saab introduces a 'light-pressure' turbo.
- 1991: Saab is the first manufacturer to offer CFC-free air-conditioning.
- 1991: Saab develops its 'Trionic' engine management system, equipped with a 32-bit micro-processor.
- 1993: Saab introduces the 'Sensonic clutch' and the 'Black Panel', later to be called the 'Night Panel'.
- 1993: Saab develops the 'Safeseat' rear passenger protection system.
- 1994: Saab introduces the 'Trionic T5.5' engine management system, its processor is a Motorola 68332.
- 1995: Saab presents an asymmetrically turbocharged V6 at the Motor Show in Frankfurt am Main, Germany.
- 1996: Saab introduces active head restraints (SAHR), which help minimize the risk of whiplash.
- 1997: Saab introduces Electronic Brake-force Distribution
- 1997: Saab fits ventilated front seats to their new 9-5.
- 1997: Saab introduces ComSense; an alert delay feature that reduces the risk of distraction by briefly postponing lower priority alerts when the brakes or indicators are activated
- 2000: Saab introduces Saab Variable Compression, an engine in which the compression ratio is varied by tilting the cylinder head in relation to the pistons.
- 2002: Saab developed ReAxs System provides crisp steering feedback and contributes to enhanced driving stability in curves



- 2003: Saab introduces CargoSET; automatic storage well retraction for the convertible, a two-step tonneau action for quicker soft-top deployment
- 2008: Saab introduces Cross-wheel drive, an advanced all-wheel drive system with eLSD.

Safety

Safety has a high priority in the design of Saab cars. The cars are subjected to the *Älgtest* (elk test) as elk are a common cause of accidents in Sweden. Saab have compiled a database containing over 6,100 real-life accidents with Saabs. The first recorded event was in 1948 where Julian Shermis had an accident. All modern Saabs (except the 9000 and 9-2X) have a floor-mounted ignition. This is for many reasons, some of which follow: Saab believes this is a safer position in case of an accident. The driver's knee often jerks upward in a collision; the compact and dense ignition module on the steering column of many other cars has shattered many kneecaps. Saabs have bolstered dashboards for both front seat occupants. Also, the floor-mounted position yields more space, allowing modern Saabs to have a metal bar that rotates over and up into the ignition when the key is turned to the "Lock" position. This makes Saabs very challenging to hotwire. Ergonomically, the ignition's location next to the parking brake lever, gearshift, and seatbelt, saves time as all motions associated with startup fall right at hand and become second nature. Last of all, the ignition is located on the floor because, in the aircraft that inspired Saab automobiles, the throttle controls were all located on the floor. Originally Saabs also had the key located on the right side of the steering column, but when they changed from a column shifter to a floor shifter, the ignition key followed along, except in the Sonett III and 9000.



Marketing and Ownership

Dating back to 1937, Svenska Aeroplan AB (SAAB) created airplanes, introducing their first car, the Saab 92001, in 1947. Currently, Saab AB is separate from Saab Automobile (which is owned by General Motors), and is probably best known for its Saab 37 Viggen (the Viggen badge would be shared by a 9-3). This has led to a ad campaign, "Born From Jets," evoking the days when Saab produced both aircraft and automobiles. In 1987, Saab created a TV advertisement called "Saab suite" (subtitled *Ballet in 3 acts for 8 Saab 9000 Turbos*). In the film, stunt drivers show incredible driving with stock cars, such as one-wheeled burnouts, bumper-to-bumper driving through a slalom, cars slaloming from opposite directions on the same course, two-wheel driving, sliding in full speed, and jumping over passing cars—all on a closed airport runway with classical music playing in the background. To commemorate its 40th anniversary, Saab formed a *Performance Team* in 1987, which laid on exhibitions of automobile acrobatics and formation driving. Initially this was done with Saab 9000s, as above, and then later models, such as the Saab 900 (NG) were used. All of the team's members have previously competed in rallies, but what's unusual is that all 5 Performance Team members hold regular jobs at Saab: there are two engineers, a quality controller, a technician and the head of Saab's photo studio. The picture shows these vehicles on display at the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of the Saab Aircraft Company, at Linköping, in 1997. A Hewlett-Packard CPU-support chip features a Saab 900 Turbo 16 Cabriolet etched into its structure.

Ownership and brand loyalty

As the brand has an unusual, quirky image in most markets, Saab owners tend to be correspondingly offbeat: intellectuals and enthusiasts. In his studies of brand communities, Albert Muniz, professor of marketing at DePaul University in Chicago, found significant characteristics of Saab owners which he called *Snaabery*. These included ownership of an original, pre-GM Saab; camaraderie with other Saab drivers and contempt for other brands such as BMW. Rüdiger Hossiep, a psychologist at Ruhr University Bochum, found that Saab drivers have the highest level of psychological involvement with their cars, being over 10 times more passionate than the average Volkswagen driver.

Slogans

- Find your own road. (1990s)
- Born From Jets. (2007-09; United States)
- Move Your Mind. (Current Global Slogan Used Until Phaseout)
- The Well-Built Swede





















