

= Simca Vedette =

The Simca Vedette is a large car , manufactured from 1954 to 1961 by the French automaker Simca , at their factory in Poissy , France . It was marketed with different model names according to trim and equipment levels . The Vedette was Simca 's largest model at that time and it spawned a more economical version , the Simca Ariane .

Simca acquired the Poissy factory from Ford France (Ford Société Anonyme Française , the French subsidiary of the Ford Motor Company) , along with the model line , in 1954 . The Vedette was therefore initially still marketed as the Ford Vedette .

The Vedette was manufactured in Poissy until 1961 and the Ariane until 1963 . After that , production continued in Brazil , where the Vedette finally evolved into the Simca Esplanada , following Simca 's takeover by Chrysler .

= = Origins and launch = =

In the early 1950s , Henri Théodore Pigozzi was looking to expand the manufacturing operations of his Simca company , which was enjoying much success at the time , thanks to the popular Aronde . At the same time , Ford was seeking to divest itself of its French subsidiary , Ford SAF , which had a factory in Poissy , close to Paris , where it had been manufacturing a large car called the Ford Vedette . The Poissy plant was large and there was capacity for further expansion . The Vedette was a larger car than anything that Simca had on offer at that time . These points attracted Pigozzi , who decided to take over the entire factory , along with the rights to the cars manufactured there .

The cars appeared at the Paris Motor Show in October 1954 on the Ford France stand , but there was no mention of the Ford name on the covers of the brochures offered to potential customers . The name " Ford " appeared just once , in very small print , on the final page , presumably in order to avoid confusing customers who would be expected to call the cars " Simcas " from 1 December 1954 , the date set for the formal hand @-@ over of the business . In export markets the name change was less immediate , and even in adjacent Belgium , in January 1955 at the Brussels Motor Show the cars were still appearing on the stand of the Belgian Ford importer , sharing the space with models imported from Ford of Britain .

= = First generation = =

The acquisition by Pigozzi took place in July 1954 , just when Ford was poised to launch its new , modern Vedette , with a four @-@ door saloon body of " American " style , much like the contemporary British Fords or Vauxhalls . The car was powered by an unusually small 2351 cc sidevalve V8 engine called Aquillon in France , derived from Ford 's Flathead engine family , whose displacement positioned the car into the " 13 CV " French tax class . Equipped with a two @-@ barrel Zenith @-@ Stromberg 32NX carburetor , it produced 75 to 84 hp (56 to 63 kW) . Power was transferred to the rear live axle through a three @-@ speed manual transmission with column shift . The Vedette had independent front suspension (by MacPherson struts) and drum brakes on all four wheels .

As with the Aronde , Simca marketed different trim levels of the Vedette under different model names , this time with references to the grand period of baroque in French history . The basic version was called the Simca Vedette Trianon , the mid @-@ level was the Simca Vedette Versailles and , at the top of the range , the Simca Vedette Régence . An option on all versions was a large glass moonroof that slid into the roof , called Vistadome The Vedette range was still marketed under the Ford brand in some markets , including the Netherlands and Germany , until 1956 . As the new model caught on , Simca was able to increase production from the 150 daily achieved during Ford 's ownership of the factory to 250 cars a day .

Pigozzi maintained a schedule of year @-@ to @-@ year model revisions , much like US manufacturers . For 1956 , an estate version called the Simca Vedette Marly joined the line @-@ up and the whole range was revised . A new license plate holder was added to the front bumper and

the rear license plate now concealed the fuel tank filler . A peculiar addition was a pedal @-@ operated windscreen washer , while other more ordinary changes included a second odometer , also known as a ' trip meter ' , for measuring partial distances . The Versailles and Régence were made even more comfortable with the addition of central armrests (Versailles in the rear only , Régence in front and rear) , while the Trianon was simplified , losing bumper guards and chrome windscreen decor . In 1957 , an option of the Gravina automatic clutch was added , along with better brakes and more direct steering . The Trianon regained the chrome decor around the windscreen , while the other models acquired slimmer tail lights and the front ornament was replaced with a new design . Fender @-@ mounted V8 badges were introduced but , although the whole range featured the same V8 engine , the new badges appeared on the fenders of only the Régence and Marly .

== Production figures ==

1955 ? 42 @, @ 439

1956 ? 44 @, @ 836

1957 ? 17 @, @ 875

== Second generation ==

After three years in production , the Vedettes were given new names and a new , elongated body , with a more ornate front end and large tailfins , making the cars even more American @-@ looking than before . This was part of a styling trend shown by most large European cars of that period , which were , to some extent , inspired by American styling , as tailfins appeared on Peugeots , Fiats , BMC models (Pinin Farina @-@ styled) , Fords and even Mercedes @-@ Benz cars of that era . The engine was uprated to 84 hp (63 kW) (now called Aquillon 84) but the fiscal qualification of the car remained unchanged . Using the new body , the Versailles was replaced by Simca Vedette Beaulieu and the Régence by the Chambord , while the estate retained the Vedette Marly name .

The three @-@ year @-@ old body of the previous Vedette nevertheless continued in production but it lost its V8 2 @. @ 4 @-@ litre engine . In April 1957 , fitted with the 1 @. @ 3 L Aronde engine , the old body now clothed a new model in the Simca range , the Simca Ariane . Later , in October 1957 , a V8 version of the old bodied car , with the Aquillon 84 engine , and badged as the Ariane 8 , joined the range , replacing the Trianon .

1959 brought a new option , the Rush @-@ Matic automatic transmission , which featured two modes : Rush (fully automatic) and Road (manual gear selection) . The same year , assembly of the Vedette started at Simca do Brasil . Also during 1959 , a new top @-@ of @-@ the @-@ line model joined the Vedette range , the Présidence , featuring a luxurious interior , a radiotelephone (a European first) and a continental kit . French coachbuilder Chapron built two 2 @-@ door Présidence convertibles for a governor of one of the French colonies . Chapron had another order the next year , to build two four @-@ door convertibles for the French President Charles de Gaulle . The Beaulieu was dropped in autumn 1960 , but the other models remained unchanged until the 1961 model year , when they received new seats , new chrome decor , and the engine was fitted with a new anti @-@ vibration crankshaft .

French production of the V8 @-@ engined cars ended in the summer of 1961 , by when 173 @, @ 288 had been produced , although a Simca Chambord was exhibited at the Paris Motor Show in October of that year , suggesting that Simca still had some stock of the cars to clear . The small @-@ engined 4 @-@ cylinder Ariane , of which 166 @, @ 363 were produced , survived until 1963 .

The model was continued for longer in Brazil , where it was marketed with the 2 @. @ 4 @-@ litre V8 under a variety of names like " Tufão " , " Jangada " , and " EmiSul " . It was eventually replaced by a version with new sheetmetal , called the Simca Esplanada .

== Production figures ==

1958 ? 28 @, @ 142
1959 ? 15 @, @ 966
1960 ? 13 @, @ 914
1961 ? 3 @, @ 813

== Models (Brazilian market) ==

Chambord - 42 @. @ 910
Présidence - 848
Rallye - 3 @. @ 992
Jangada - 2 @. @ 705
Alvorada - 378
Total : 50 @. @ 833

== Australian production ==

Following an announcement in July 1959 that it would assemble and market Simca models in Australia , Chrysler Australia produced the Vedette Beaulieu through to 1962 , using both fully imported and locally sourced components .