

# Arno Bron's Empire Sabre.

Hi Barrie,

Sorry for the late reply.

I will send you a couple of emails with photos of my Empire Sabre.

I think only the badges on an Empire Sabre are different from a Royale. Same Sabre badges on the side of the car but Empire script on the bootlid and an E on the nose instead of an R. That's it I think.

Mine is based on a '85/'86 Scorpio (I think in the UK they were still referred to as Granada mk3). 2.8 V6 Cologne engine with stock EFI, manual 5-speed gearbox. Those cars came with the rare combined electric brake booster / ABS, only found on '85/'86 Scorpios and a few Sierras from around those years.

In my younger years (still in school) I started off building a VW Beetle, converted it into a convertible Speedster. After that, I built a Cobra kit car (Dax Tojeiro) in '95. But just before that I came across an article in Kit Car Magazine about the Royale Sabre. I was in doubt building a Cobra, Super seven or a Sabre. Cobra it was. Built and drove it for about 10 years. Then kids appeared, and being a two seater the Cobra had to go. Next came a '72 Triumph Stag, small kids in the back. Then the kids and the car grew up with a '67 Ford Galaxie convertible. Nothing's bigger than a full size Galaxie. But then the kids left the house and my wife and I started looking for a smaller car again. We visit the UK quite regularly and I can tell you, a Ford Galaxie on your narrow roads with the wife on the "wrong" side of the car not able to do anything when passing oncoming traffic with 50 mph, it's not always relaxed driving :-)

Being curious, two years ago I just typed in the word "Sabre" on Google, just to have a look for some photos and to my surprise there was a Sabre for sale at a car dealer in the Netherlands. Never seen a Sabre in all those years. But to my surprise it wasn't a Royale but an Empire Sabre. Looked into the Empire Motor Company. It was in fact a Dutch

## Empire Sabre

### Afmetingen

Breedte	: 1870 mm	Wielbasis	: 3030 mm
Lengte	: 4580 mm	Rijklaar gewicht	: 1390 kg*
Rijhoogte + kap	: 1350 mm	Topsnelheid	: 165 km/u*
Rijhoogte - kap	: 1280 mm	0 - 100 km	: 10 sec.*

\* Afhankelijk van de gekozen motorisering

### Kleuren

Exterieur:	Keuze onbeperkt aantal kleuren, two-tone en metallic lak zonder meerprijs
Interieur:	Keuze uit 28 leer- en 8 tapijtensorten
Cabrioletkap:	Blauw, zwart, bruin, wit/beige of rood

### Opties

Op aanvraag

### Motor

p 2.4 liter / V6 (120 pk)	
p 2.8 liter / V6 (150 pk)	€ 960,-
p 2.9 liter / V6 (150 pk)	€ 960,-
p 2.8 liter / V6 / 24 kleppen (200 pk)	€ 1600,-
p 2.9 liter / V6 / Getuned (200 pk)*	€ 1600,-

\* gebruikt uitsluitend superbenzine met loodvanger.

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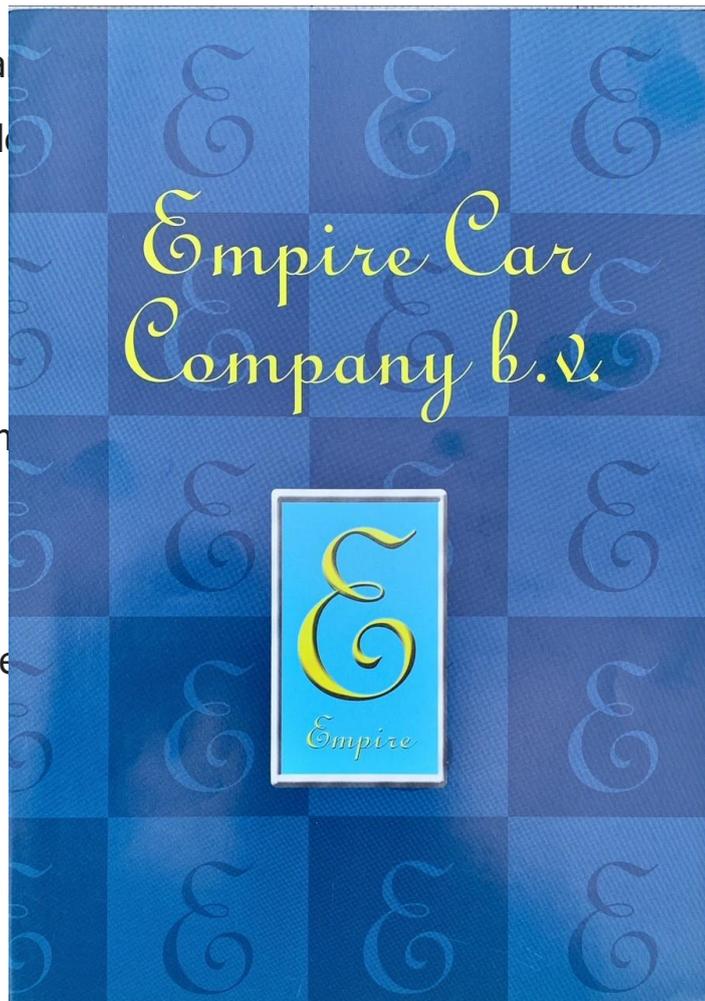
company from 2001 to 2003, only building complete cars, and finished just 3 cars as far as I was told by the car dealer. He purchased the third and last Empire Sabre made when Empire closed their doors.

With the car came the remainder of the Empire brochures and order forms, a nice touch I think, Empire being one of very few Dutch car manufacturers ever. He owned the Sabre for about 15 years and used it very little. Hence the very low number of kilometers on the clock, now about 3700 km. But the Sabre started off

with a mph speedo I found in the boot, together with an UK registration plate. It was and still is impossible to register a (kit) car in The Netherlands, even for an official Dutch car company producing limited numbers of cars. So apparently it first went to the UK for its SVA and then it was imported back to The Netherlands. Now impossible due to Brexit, I think.

After I bought it from the car dealer, I soon found out the Sabre had a lot of issues! I knew it had no APK (the Dutch equivalent to the UK MOT) but I wasn't expecting this. It took me a year to sort out the entire car and now to me it's just perfect. But to name a few things:

- wiring behind the dash was a mess, had to rewire it completely with quick connectors and at the same time changed the dash mount for easy access (no regrets!)
- no ABS (warning light on) and no brakes at the rear wheels. After months of studying the '85 / '86 Ford ABS / brake booster system, I found out the problems started off with just one of the special ABS relay switches malfunctioning, but apparently this was not recognised as such. They (the car dealer!) short wired the electric ABS pump / brake booster pump at the ignition switch, resulting in burning out the pump, then no ABS and no brakes at the back, seizing of the main valve in the ABS body, etc. Found a used complete ABS / master cylinder unit in Germany, acquired the special Ford diagnostic testing hardware (engine and ABS, chunky box with a lot of wires) and the complete '85/'86 Ford Scorpio workshop manual (in German language, which to me is not a problem), repaired the relay switch and wiring to original Ford spec, and voila. If someone needs help with sorting out this quite rare electric ABS / power braking system, ask away.
- wrong Throttle Positioning sensor, I found out eventually they installed a TPS sensor for a 2.9i engine on a 2.8i engine. They had to drill a third hole right through the sensor just to attach it to the throttle body, no joke. The TPS sensor for a Ford 2.8i V6 is very rare and if you can find one it's quite expensive (£ 100) but I found out that the 2.8i EFI Ford Cologne engine was also used in the US Ford Ranger. So I ordered a TPS sensor from the USA (\$ 12) and only changed the connector.
- changed all spark plugs, leads, cap and rotor, even the electronic ignition module just to be sure. The engine looked like a Christmas tree in the dark. Lightning everywhere but not at the spark plug electrode.
- front suspension too low, wheels touching fenders during cornering.
- fuel gauge not working, temp gauge not working (not wired at all), etc. etc.



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But on the positive side:

- the car was made using new parts extensively,
- zinc plated chassis,
- always parked inside,
- just 2.700 km's on the clock, it looks like new!

The Ford 2.8i V6 EFI Cologne engine was only produced a few years. It looks similar to the later 2.9i V6 but it isn't. And the electronic fuel injection system EFI is completely different from the earlier mechanical fuel injection system MFI found in Capri's etc. Not so easy to find parts for it. My engine now runs well, even without the air vanes (air flow meters), there is no real space for them on a LHD Sabre. But it runs well and passes MOT/APK.

The Sabre had no soft top at all. After a email to the Royale Owners Club, a Dutch member responded. He drives a Royale Sabre and has a spare soft top and hard top! I have never seen a Sabre in The Netherlands and now there is someone having a spare soft top and hardtop living 50 km away from me. What are the odds... I used the frame of the soft top, modified it a bit by adding thicker wood on top of the door glass and two extra cross bars for better shape. I used the old fabric as a template, also modified it here and there and then ordered a new hood. It fits nearly perfectly now.

I'm still looking for wiring diagrams for the Sabre, as my Sabre wiring is half original Ford / half Sabre.

Can't wait for Corona/Covid19 to go away and plan a trip with the Sabre to the UK again!

Cheers, Arno Bron The Netherlands



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Orderform

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Tel: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Type: \_\_\_\_\_  
Colour: \_\_\_\_\_  
Interior: \_\_\_\_\_  
Engine: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gearbox: \_\_\_\_\_  
Options: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

