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# Essex (automobile)

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The **Essex** was a brand of automobile produced by the **Essex Motor Company** between 1918 and 1922 and by **Hudson Motor Company** of **Detroit, Michigan** between 1922 and 1933.

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## Corporate strategy [[edit](#)]


During its production run, the Essex was considered a small car and was affordably priced. The Essex is generally credited with starting a trend away from open [touring cars](#) design toward enclosed passenger compartments.<sup>[1]</sup>

Originally, the Essex was to be a product of the "Essex Motor Company," which actually was a wholly owned entity of Hudson's. Essex Motors went so far as to lease the [Studebaker](#) auto factory in Detroit for production of the car. By 1922 the Essex Motor Company was dissolved and the Essex officially became what it was all along, a product of Hudson.


## Essex cars [[edit](#)]

Essex cars were designed to be moderately priced cars which would be affordable to the average family. Proving durable, their capabilities were checked upon and confirmed by AAA and the United States Post Office. In 1919 an Essex completed a 50-hour, 3,037.4 miles (4,888.2 km) endurance test in Cincinnati, Ohio,



The Essex enjoyed immediate popularity  following its 1919 introduction. More than 1.13 million Essex automobiles were sold by the time the Essex name was retired in 1932 and replaced by the [Terraplane](#)



Essex racecars on display in [Salt Lake City](#), 1920 

at an average speed of 60.75 miles per hour.<sup>[2]</sup> The early Essex cars also captured many hill climb records. In a special Essex race car, Glen Shultz won the 1923 [Pikes Peak Hill Climb](#).<sup>[3]</sup> It had a 108.5-inch (2,760 mm) wheelbase.<sup>[2]</sup>

Initially Essex marketed a line of touring cars (open four-door cars with canvas tops), which was the most popular body style of cars in production at the time.

While Essex added an enclosed [sedan](#) in 1920, it was the introduction of the 1922 closed coach, priced at \$1,495 (which in early 2015 would be between \$15,917 and \$21,015, depending on the inflation calculator used), \$300 above that of the touring car. By 1925 the coach was priced below the touring car. While Henry Ford is credited with inventing the affordable car, it was Essex that made the enclosed car affordable.<sup>[4]</sup>

In 1928, the big news was the use of four-wheel mechanical brakes.<sup>[2]</sup> Essex boasted "piano hinge doors" which were exceptionally strong. An advertisement shows a man fully supported by an open door to demonstrate the strength of the hinge. **1926 Specs**

- Wheelbase = 110.5 in (2,807 mm)<sup>[5]</sup>
- Length = 14 ft 6 in (4,420 mm)<sup>[6]</sup>
- Turning Radius = 23 ft (7.0 m)<sup>[5]</sup>
- Road Clearance = 8.75 in (222 mm)<sup>[5]</sup>
- Brakes = 14 in (356 mm) drums<sup>[5]</sup>

By 1929, the Essex was third in U.S. sales, behind Ford and Chevrolet.<sup>[7]</sup>

Essex sales remained strong into 1931 before sales began to trend downward. For 1932 a redesigned Essex debuted and was named the **Essex-Terraplane**, a play on the word aeroplane. For 1934 the Essex name was no more and the car carried on as the [Terraplane](#).

The instrument panel of the 1932 Hudson and Essex automobiles featured the first use of "[warning lights](#)" instead of gauges.

## Essex production models [\[ edit \]](#)

- [Essex Coach](#)

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### Essex Super Six Automobiles



A 1920 Essex at the [Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum](#)

Essex Super Six 4-Door Sedan  
1928



Essex Super Six Coupé 1929



Essex Super Six 4-Door Sedan  
1930



Essex Super Six Model E Coupé  
1931



Essex Super Six Model E 4-Door  
Sedan 1931

1931 Essex "Boattail"

## References [[edit](#)]

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