



212

1948 Divco Twin Coach Half Ton

CHASSIS NO. F4162A31773

\$150,000 - \$200,000

OFFERED WITHOUT RESERVE

- Built for Helms Bakery of Los Angeles
- Original aluminum body by Standard Body Company
- Recent restoration to factory Helms specifications
- Custom oak chest of drawers specified by Helms Bakery
- Converted to 12-volt electrics

Paul Helms, a New Yorker who moved to southern California in 1926, opened a bakery at the corner of Venice and Washington on 2 March 1931. The next year Helms was named the official baker of the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics, its signature “Olympic Bread” a regional staple for decades to come. The bakery’s massive production plant straddling Los Angeles and Culver City once produced 150 different lines of baked goods. But Helms baked goods were not available in grocery stores and supermarkets, instead delivered fresh to neighborhoods from San Diego to Fresno by a fleet of Twin Coach vans manned by “Helmsmen” wearing white shirts and chinos, neckties, and caps.

Twin Coach vehicles were originally built by brothers Frank and William Fageol in Kent, Ohio, who also produced twin-engine city buses. The Twin Coach had a unique patented drop-down center frame section allowing easy entry and exit for deliverymen and were designed to be driven seated or standing. The driver used only two pedals to operate the coach, with a unique left pedal that acts first as a clutch, then, when pressed further, engaged the brakes. The brothers sold the delivery truck division to Divco (Detroit Industrial Vehicle COmpany) in 1936, and the rectangular vans were then known as Divco Twins, not to

be confused with the famous “snub-nose” Divco Model U trucks favored by many dairy producers. Not surprisingly, Helms Bakery was the largest buyer of Divco Twins, but after World War II Divco no longer produced the Twin. In 1948 Helms Bakery ordered 195 bare chassis, a last one-time buy for the discontinued model, then had aluminum bodies made by the Standard Body Company of Los Angeles. Like previous Twins built for Helms, interiors were fitted with oak chests of drawers custom-made to Helms’ specifications, used to display bakery items for customers. Built for the long haul, Helms used their special Divco Twins until 1969.

This 1948 Divco Twin Coach is one of the 195 ordered by Helms in 1948. It’s powered by a Ford 172 industrial engine producing 62 hp at 2200 rpm driving a four-speed manual transmission. Beautifully and recently restored with updated with 12-volt electrics, it carries the specification and distinctive livery of Helms Bakery, a wonderful memento of life in mid-century America.



BROAD ARROW AUCTIONS

RADIUS

AT THE MONTEREY JET CENTER



HAGERTY

FRIDAY, 18 AUGUST 2023

Acknowledgements

Broad Arrow extends its gratitude to the writers, photographers, research professionals, industry veterans, and designers who have collaborated on this auction catalog.

AJ Shipitofsky	Katelyn Whitman
Al Sisson	Marcel Massini
Alexander Knox	Maxx Shostak
Benjamin Shahrabani	McKlein Photography
Bill Steinman	Michael Mason
Blackhawk Collection and Museum	Motorsport Images
Brit Kwasney	Nadir Ali
Charlie B Photography	Naveed Yousufzai
Chris Summers	Nick Berard
Courtney Cutchen	Nick Lavion
Diane Brandon	Pawel Litwinski
Don Hudson III	Peter Linsky
Dr. Clare Hay	Peter Singhof
Dr. Miki Bellagarda	Pierre Yves-Laugier
Dr. Peter Larsen	Rami Garcia
Drake O’Konski	Rasy Ran
Drew Grundfor	Robert Denning
Emma Camps	Robin Adams
Fabian Rärer	Ryan Merrill
G. Bunk Talbert	Scott Grundfor
Geoff Pitts	Scott Harrison
GM Design Archive & Special Collections	Sean Smith
Harrison Keller	Stephen Heraldo
Jan Götze	Steven Kittrell
Jeremy Cliff	Ted7
John Steinman	Theo Civitello
Jonathan Sierakowski	Thomas Pistai
JR Photon	Tim Main
Juan Martinez	Tom Glatch
Karissa Hosek	Tom Nisco