



24L – Peugeot 402

London taxis were purpose-built cars that had to comply with specifications ordained by the Public Carriage Office, but in Europe and North America taxis were adapted from standard sedans. Dinky followed the same practice, basing its European and North American taxis (as well as specialized vehicles like police cars and fire chief cars) on existing versions of the same toy.

Dinky's Peugeot 402 taxi (no. 24L) was a sibling of Dinky's Peugeot 402 sedan (number 24K). Both were produced by Dinky's factory in Bobigny, a suburb of Paris.

Frank Hornby, the mastermind behind Meccano, Hornby trains and Dinky toys, set up an office in Paris to import Meccano toys as far back as 1912. A factory was opened in Paris in 1921 and a second in Bobigny in 1931.

The Bobigny factory began turning out Dinky



toys at almost the same moment as Dinky's Liverpool factory. Both factories initially produced the same line of toys but in the late 1930s the French factories began to focus on toy versions of French vehicles.

The toy Peugeot 402 taxi was produced from 1939 to 1940 and from 1946 to 1948 (during World War II the Bobigny plant was commandeered by German invaders). The color schemes were maroon with cream sides, dark blue with yellow sides and black with yellow sides. A meter with a red flag was mounted just ahead of the right front passenger door.

A peculiarity of the 1945-1950 French Dinky toys is that instead of rubber tires the toys, including the Peugeot 402 taxi, were fitted with solid metal wheels. This was because the outbreak of the Indochina war in the former French colonies of Laos and Cambodia disrupted supplies of rubber.

The real-life Peugeot 402 was a large sedan with a long wheelbase that was produced from 1935 to 1942. It was modeled on the Chrysler Airflow (in fact Peugeot bought one or two Airflows to disassemble and study).

The car's size made it suitable for taxi service. Unlike rival manufacturers, Peugeot did not operate its own Paris taxi business but merely sold the 402 to other taxi companies. At the 1936 Paris Motor Show, the

Peugeot catalogue claimed that several thousand of its taxis were already in service "in Paris and the principal cities in France or the colonies."

Contemporary photos of the 402 taxi are black and white, but three Hollywood movies depict the taxi in color, suggesting that Dinky's black and yellow scheme may be based on an actual taxi fleet livery.

However, since all three movies were shot in Hollywood, the Peugeot (probably the same one) is likely an expatriate that was owned by a studio or supplied to the movie producers by an American owner.

This raises a question: is the movie Peugeot genuine, or a standard sedan disguised as a taxi? And is the color scheme authentic, or is it perhaps copied from a Dinky toy?

Movie Links (right)

Top: 1936 Peugeot 402 taxi in *April in Paris* (Doris Day, Ray Bolger, 1952). Internet Movie Car Database ([Link](#)).

Middle: 1936 Peugeot 402 taxi in *Gentlemen Prefer Blonds* (Jane Russell, Marilyn Monroe, 1953). Internet Movie Car Database ([Link](#)).

Bottom: 1936 Peugeot 402 taxi in *An American in Paris* (Gene Kelly, Leslie Caron, 1951). Internet Movie Car Database ([Link](#)).



Picture Sources (page 1)

Left top and middle -- Blue and yellow 24L taxi – QDT ([Link](#))

Left bottom -- Maroon and cream 24L taxi – Amazon.com ([Link](#))

Center – Maroon and cream 24L taxi – Traffic Modelautos ([Link](#))

Other Notes

Information on Dinky toys and the Peugeot 402 taxi comes from:

- "Dinky Toys," Wikipedia ([Link](#)).
- "Peugeot 402," Wikipedia ([Link](#)).

