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Le Corbusier, who famously called a house "a machine for living," was fascinated_ even obsessed_by another kind of machine, the automobile. His writings were strewn with references to autos: "If houses were built industrially, mass-produced like chassis, an aesthetic would be formed with surprising precision," he wrote in *Toward an Architecture* (1923). In his "white phase" of the twenties and thirties, he insisted that his buildings be photographed with a modern automobile in the foreground. Le Corbusier moved beyond the theoretical in 1936, entering (with his cousin Pierre Jeanneret) an automobile design competition, submitting plans for "a minimalist vehicle for maximum functionality," the Voiture Minimum. Despite Le Corbusier's energetic promotion of his design to several important automakers, the Voiture Minimum was never mass-produced. This book is the first to tell the full and true story of Le Corbusier's adventure in automobile design.

Architect Antonio Amado describes the project in detail, linking it to Le Corbusier's architectural work, to Modernist utopian urban visions, and to the automobile design projects of other architects including Walter Gropius and Frank Lloyd Wright. He provides abundant images, including many pages of Le Corbusier's sketches and plans for the Voiture Minimum, and reprints Le Corbusier's letters seeking a manufacturer. Le Corbusier's design is often said to have been the inspiration for Volkswagen's enduringly popular Beetle; the architect himself implied as much, claiming that his design for the 1936 competition originated in 1928, before the Beetle. Amado, after extensive examination of archival and source materials, disproves this; the influence may have gone the other way.

Although many critics considered the Voiture Minimum a footnote in Le Corbusier's career, Le Corbusier did not. This book, lavishly illustrated and exhaustively documented, restores Le Corbusier's automobile to the main text.