



Bugatti – Art, Forme, Technique

History

1881. Ettore is born in Milan on 15 September. His father, Carlo Bugatti, is a well-known furniture designer; his younger brother, Rembrandt, is a famous sculptor.

1897. After finishing school and spending a short time at the Academy of Art in Milan, Ettore begins working in the foundry at Prinetti & Stucchi, Italy's leading company in small-scale engineering, involved primarily in the manufacture of bicycles and sewing machines. He was fascinated by the technology and mechanics of automobiles, which were still in their infancy. At the age of just 17, he fitted an engine to a tricycle, which was used to take part in races. Little by little, he expands his technical and mathematical knowledge in order to ensure that his ideas are more than simply flights of imagination. From the beginning, he strives to create what he calls, "Pur Sang," or thoroughbred, designs. His high standards in terms of technical design and performance must always be directly tied to his sense of aesthetics.

1901. At the age of 20, Ettore presents his first vehicle, the Type 2, at an exhibition in Milan. This vehicle wins the "Coppa Grande" and a special prize by the Automobile Club de France. The license to build the vehicle, that is equipped with a 12 PS 4-cylinder engine and is capable of 65 km/h, is sold to the De Dietrich company in Niederbronn in the Alsace region.

1902. Carlo Bugatti signs a seven-year contract for his son Ettore, who is still under 21, to allow him to work as a designer at De Dietrich. Ettore moves to the Alsace and the first De Dietrich Bugattis are built.

1904/05. The partnership with Baron de Dietrich ends. Ettore designs vehicles for the Strasbourg car dealer Emil Mathis, of which some are built by the "Elsässischen Maschinenbau-Gesellschaft" company in Illkirch.

1907. Ettore marries Barbara Maria Guiseppina Machera Bolzoni and the couple go on to have two daughters and two sons. Following the conclusion of the partnership with Mathis, Ettore signs a contract with the Gasmotorenfabrik Deutz in Cologne. He designs and builds various prototypes in the basement of the house he rents from Deutz in Cologne-Mülheim.

1909. Ettore's son, Jean Bugatti, is born in Cologne on 15 January. The family moves to Molsheim in the Alsace region around Christmas. There, Ettore establishes his own business in an unused dye factory.

1910. Once the first tool machines have been delivered at the end of January and the necessary skilled team is assembled by Ettore's long-standing assistant, Friderich, five vehicles are built and quickly sold. In the same year, Friderich begins to race for Bugatti. Having taken second place in the Gaillon mountain race in October, Bugatti gradually becomes a serious competitor.

1911. A series of racing victories follows, most notably a sensational second place finish in the overall placings in the French Grand Prix. By now, 65 employees work in the factory. In the same year, Bugatti signs a contract with Peugeot for the production of the Bébé Peugeot, the Bugatti Type 16. In total, 3,000 models of this vehicle are built, making it the highest production run of any Bugatti design.

1914-1918. Production of the Type 13 in Molsheim comes to a standstill due to the First World War. Bugatti switches to developing airplane engines for the French and American governments. The money for the license contracts is used after the war to expand production in Molsheim. The factory survives the war in good shape, and Bugatti's production program fits perfectly into the France's dawning Golden Twenties.

1921. All four starting Bugatti Type 13 models take the first four places at the Grand Premio Voiturette in Brescia. To celebrate this win, all of Bugatti's 16-valve engines will bear the name of the city of Brescia as an additional title.

1922. Bugatti's first 8-cylinder race car is built. The Type 29/30 has a revolutionary body in the shape of a cigar and is fitted with hydraulic brakes. This "cigar" takes third place at the Grand Prix de l'A.C.F. in Strasbourg. Production is increased again in the same year and the workforce grows to almost 1,000.

1923. At the Grand Prix de l'A.C.F. in Tours, Bugatti causes a sensation with a revolutionary wing-like body and covered wheels. Known as "the Tank", the Type 32 features a very short wheelbase and is powered by a redeveloped version of the previous year's eight-cylinder engine. With Ernest Friedrich at the wheel, the car took third place.

1924. The Type 35 debuts and becomes the most successful Bugatti race car, despite not winning the French Grand Prix in its first race at the Grand Prix de l'A.C.F. For almost 10 years, the Type 35 dominates the racing scene, amassing more than 2,000 victories. It is not only used as a race car, but also becomes one of the first super sports cars to enjoy success off the race track.

1926. Even as a young design engineer, Ettore Bugatti dreamt of building the best, most luxurious and most elegant vehicle of all time. At the time, this was hindered by World War I. With the racing and sales successes of the Type 35, he was able to make his dream a reality. He then went on to create the most expensive car of all time – the Type 41 "Royale." The 8-cylinder engine has an engine capacity of 12.7 litres and 300 PS. The radiator mascot is an elephant designed by Rembrandt Bugatti. This legendary vehicle arrived on the scene along with the Great Depression, and thus only six "Royales" were built.

1931-1934. Ettore Bugatti's creativity knows no bounds and after winning the tender for a new high-speed train in France in 1931, he equips the train with "Royale" engines. He is now known as the great-grandfather of today's TGV. Ettore's range also includes the elegant Type 57 touring car. Selling more than 700 vehicles, this model is said to be his last great success.

1936. Bugatti builds the Type 57SC "Atlantic," designed by Ettore's son Jean. With its unusual proportions and unique riveted spine, it is considered to be the most impressive car of the pre-war era. Only four models of this vehicle are built; two of these have survived until the present day in their original condition.

1937. With the first Le Mans victory by Jean Pierre Wimille and Robert Benoist in a Type 57 G Tank, Bugatti revisits the more successful glory days of the 1920s.

1939. Bugatti wins the "24 Heures du Mans" with only one Type 57 C Tank and the drivers Jean Pierre Wimille and Pierre Veyron. This is hailed as Bugatti's last great victory. A few weeks later, on 11 August, Ettore's son and designated successor, Jean, dies during a test drive in exactly the same car that won at Le Mans. Three weeks later, World War II breaks out.

1947. After the war, tentative attempts to resume production in Molsheim fail due to limited funds. On 21 August, Ettore Bugatti dies of pneumonia in a military hospital in Paris at the age of 66. Under his leadership, a total of approximately 7,900 vehicles were built.

1950s. Projects conducted under the leadership of Ettore's son, Roland Bugatti, experience little success. Although there are a great many ideas for new vehicle models, no truly remarkable cars are actually produced apart from the Type 73, the 101 and the Type 251 race car.

1963. The Bugatti company and the plant premises are taken over by Hispano Suiza. From this point on, airplane landing gear and other assemblies are manufactured in Molsheim. Bugatti continues to produce replacement parts for its customers' pre-war vehicles. In 1968, Hispano Suiza is taken over by the Snecma Group and Messier relocates to the plant premises in Molsheim. Production of airplane parts is integrated and operations are conducted under the name Messier-Bugatti.

1987. The Italian entrepreneur, Romano Artioli, buys the trademark rights to Bugatti from Messier-Bugatti and builds a new plant in Campogalliano near Modena for the purpose of producing a new Bugatti super sports car.

1991. On the occasion of what would have been Ettore Bugatti's 110th birthday, the new super sports car, EB 110, is presented in Paris on 15 September.

1995. After building approximately 140 Bugatti EB 110 vehicles, the Bugatti Automobili S.p.A. company files for bankruptcy. The EB 112 research prototype designed by Giorgetto Giugiaro (Italdesign) is never put into production.

1998. Volkswagen buys the trademark rights and, at the Paris Motor Show in October, presents the EB 118: a four-seater, two-door coupé also designed by Giorgetto Giugiaro (Italdesign). The number “118” stands for “1st research prototype and 18 cylinders”.

1999. The EB 218 research prototype, a four-door saloon, débuts at the Geneva International Motor Show in March. In September, the mid-engine super sports car EB 18/3 Chiron is presented at the IAA in Frankfurt. Another super sports car is created at the same time. This vehicle, named the EB 18/4, is introduced five weeks later at the Tokyo Motor Show 1999.

2001. The advanced prototype of the EB 16/4 Veyron is presented at the IAA in Frankfurt. Named after racing driver Pierre Veyron and boasting 1,000 PS, eight litres capacity and four turbochargers, the Veyron 16.4 will also be used as a basis for the 2005 series version of the same name.

2005. Upon completion of the “atelier” in Molsheim, production of the Veyron begins. An opening ceremony for the new site is held on 3 September. Production of the Veyron is limited to 300 models. The construction of a super sports car offering over 1,000 PS and capable of a top speed of more than 400 km/h (248 MPH) fulfils the Group’s technical specifications. In terms of performance, each of these individual values supersedes everything previously achieved within the automobile industry.

2006. In April, the first Veyron is delivered.

2007. In June, the 100th Veyron is ordered. The special edition Bugatti Veyron 16.4 “Pur Sang” is presented at the IAA in Frankfurt. Only 24 hours after its world premiere on the evening before the first press day, all five planned examples have been sold.

2008. At the 78th Geneva International Motor Show, Bugatti and Hermès present the fruits of their partnership, the Bugatti Veyron Fbg par Hermès. In collaboration with Hermès artisans, Hermès designer Gabriele Pezzini employs the stylistic resources of the great Parisian house to lend a refined finished to the Veyron. This special edition seamlessly combines the technical and aesthetic standards of both Émile Hermès and Ettore Bugatti.

2008. Bugatti presents the open-top variant of the Veyron, the Grand Sport, at the Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance in the United States. The Grand Sport is limited to 150 units. Chassis number one is sold for 3.2 million US dollars at the Gooding & Company auction house.

2009. Bugatti celebrates its 100th anniversary in September and takes this opportunity to present four special editions of the Bugatti Veyron. These vehicles evoke the Type 35 and Bugatti’s famed racing history at the Villa d’Este Concorso d’Eleganza. As tradition dictates, the four special editions remain true to the “racing colours” of the relevant countries: blue for France, red for Italy, green for England and white for Germany. The four models each have a direct predecessor in the form of a Grand Prix Bugatti and four racing drivers as patrons: Jean-Pierre Wimille for the blue, Achille Varzi for the red, Malcolm Campbell for the green and Hermann zu Leiningen for the white Veyron.

2010. In July, the Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Super Sport sets a new world speed record for series-production sports cars, clocking up 431.072 km/h (268 MPH). The world record edition is unveiled to the general public in mid-August at Quail Lodge in Pebble Beach.

2011. In June, the 300th order for the Veyron was announced. The last Veyron is sold to a European customer and the success story of the super sports car series limited to 300 units and its powerful sibling, the Super Sport, comes to a triumphant conclusion.

2011. At the IAA in Frankfurt, Bugatti presents the Bugatti Grand Sport “L’Or Blanc”, an automotive masterpiece resulting from a collaboration with the Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur (Royal Porcelain Manufactory) in Berlin.

2012. Bugatti unveils the Grand Sport Vitesse, a roadster boasting 1,200 PS, at the Geneva International Motor Show.

2012. In December, as part of the Rubell Family Collection at the Art Basel at Miami Beach, Bugatti unveiled the fastest masterpiece in the world – the Bugatti Grand Sport Venet, created by the French artist Bernar Venet.

2013. In April, the Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Grand Sport Vitesse achieves a top speed of 408.84 km/h (254 MPH) with an open roof, thus becoming the world’s fastest open-top series sports car. Now, together with the world record achieved by the Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Super Sport in 2010, Bugatti holds a total of two world records. Created especially for the record-breaking journey and limited to just eight vehicles, the Vitesse World Record Car Edition is unveiled to the public a short time later at the Shanghai Motor Show.

2013. During the Monterey Car Week Bugatti debuts the first of its six-part exclusive Bugatti Legends edition, “Les Légendes de Bugatti”, to commemorate the renowned names which have played a crucial role in its history and which have helped creating its mystique. The first Legend is dedicated to a personality who is central to the history of motor sports and intimately linked with the Bugatti company: Jean-Pierre Wimille, who garnered two victories for Bugatti at Le Mans. The Bugatti Legend “Jean-Pierre Wimille” makes its début in the eyes of the world at the US The Quail/Pebble Beach weekend. The next twelve months will see the launch of six individual Bugatti Legends based on the Bugatti Grand Sport Vitesse. Each Legend model will be limited to three cars.

2013. Bugatti presents the second vehicle in its exclusive Legends edition as a world premiere at the 65th International Motor Show in Frankfurt, the Bugatti Grand Sport Vitesse “Jean Bugatti” to celebrate the oldest son of company founder Ettore Bugatti and his most famous creation, the Type 57SC Atlantic. Like all other five models in the Legend series, the “Jean Bugatti” is limited to three vehicles.

2013. At Milan Fashion Week in September Bugatti launches its new Lifestyle Collection. Under the headline of “Art, Forme, Technique” there will be an exclusive collection of apparel and accessories featuring two fashion lines – Ettore Bugatti and Extreme Performance, complemented by a Tailor Made / Bespoke programme, which is dedicated exclusively to Bugatti customers. Bugatti plans to set up a retail network in the world’s major capitals of fashion and luxury, establishing up to 35 exclusive mono brand boutiques over a period of five years.

2013. The Bugatti Veyron is voted the “Greatest Car of the last 20 years” by BBC Top Gear magazine in September, in a poll of more than 100,000 topgear.com readers and the magazine’s editorial team. The Bugatti Veyron topped the list of more than 50 cars.

2013. Bugatti presents the third model in its six-part edition “Les Légendes de Bugatti” at the Dubai International Motor Show in November. This Legends car, which like all cars in the series is based on the Veyron 16.4 Grand Sport Vitesse, pays homage to Meo Costantini. Costantini was a close friend of the company’s founder, Ettore Bugatti. He was the head of Bugatti’s factory race team for many years and was also a driver, winning the Targa Florio two times in the Bugatti Type 35, one of the most successful racing cars of all time.

2013. Bugatti sells its 400th Veyron in December. Since the production run of the Veyron and its variants is limited to just 450 models, this means just 50 more are still available. The 400th Veyron is a Grand Sport Vitesse and has been bought by a customer in the Middle East.

2014. At the Geneva motor show Bugatti presents the fourth model of its edition “Les Légendes de Bugatti” (Bugatti Legends) in honour of Rembrandt Bugatti. Rembrandt was the brother of company founder Ettore Bugatti and one of the most renowned sculptors of the early 20th century. One of his most significant works is the sculpture of a dancing elephant. It decorates the radiator of the Bugatti Type 41 Royale and became the brand’s symbol.

Even before the motor shows ends, all three cars of the Legend Vitesse “Rembrandt Bugatti” are sold. As a result all twelve cars of the four Legend models presented so far are sold.

2014. At the Auto China, taking place in Beijing in April, Bugatti unveils the fifth model of its Edition „Les Légendes de Bugatti“ (Bugatti Legends). This Bugatti Legends car is dedicated to the Type 18 „Black Bess“, the fastest sports car of its time, and to its first owner, French aviation pioneer Roland Garros. The Legends model bears the name „Black Bess“.

2014 In August Bugatti celebrates the world première of the Bugatti Legend “Ettore Bugatti” in Pebble Beach, California. The sixth and final model of the edition „Les Légendes de Bugatti“ honors Ettore Bugatti, founder and patron of the brand, and is based on the historical model Type 41 Royale. On the occasion of the successful completion of the series Bugatti was showing all six models together for the first and only time. All 18 vehicles of the edition were sold – even before “Ettore Bugatti” has been revealed.

2014. In November Bugatti opens its first Lifestyle Boutique worldwide in London. After the successful launch of its Lifestyle Collection a year before this is the next big step in the French super car maker’s brand extension strategy.

2015. In February Bugatti sees one of the most important milestones in its recent history: Bugatti sells the 450th and final Veyron. So far no other carmaker has managed to successfully market a product that stands for unique top-class technical performance and pure luxury in a comparable price/volume range. An unprecedented chapter in automobile history has reached its climax.

2015. Bugatti presents the final Veyron with chassis number 450 as a world premiere at the Geneva Motor Show, the Veyron 16.4 Grand Sport Vitesse „La Finale“.

2015. Bugatti is represented in 19 countries by more than 30 dealerships and service partners and thus has a global presence in regions including Europe, North and South America, the Middle East, as well as in Japan, Singapore and China.

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