
Bugatti Veyron and beyond...

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At Bugatti's spiritual Alsatian home of Molsheim recently - before production commences at the nearby Strasbourg factory - Dr Thomas Bscher presented the company's eagerly-anticipated Veyron model to a carefully selected group of potential customers.

The manufacture and launch of the new 'hyper-sports' car, at a totally new factory, opens a new chapter for the Volkswagen-owned company. As well as the 400 km/h Veyron, a car that will only ever be sold to the most discerning collectors in the world, Bugatti will also be producing a smaller road sports car available to a greater audience.



The guest list for the event was exclusive, and who has actually ordered the fastest and most expensive sports car in the world will remain a closely-guarded secret. In order to manufacture the highly complicated 16-cylinder car, with 4wd and over 1,000 BHP, the factory requires three months - so perhaps there may be one or two presents under the Christmas tree this year? It is believed around 50 orders have been received so far, most of them from Asia, the Middle East, the United States and Russia.



That the Volkswagen Group did not choose the IAA show at Frankfurt this week for its launch is significant. The link between the modern company in Alsace and its original incarnation founded by Ettore Bugatti is strong. Born into a family of artists and sculptors in 1881, Ettore decided to follow his technology-inspired heart in 1910 and set up the car company - rather than pursue a career in the Arts. The result of course were a series of designs by Ettore, and his son Jean, that truly married engineering to Art.



In the 1920s and '30s the visionary company created breathtaking designs for road and track. Success in both Grand Prix events, with the Type 35B and Type 59, as well as Le Mans (two victories by the famous Type 57 'Tank'), mingled with the Type 57SC in its 'Atlantic' form being one of the most desirable car of the period for rich 1930s socialites. And of course the extraordinary 12,736 cc Type 41, commonly know as the 'Royale'.



The current Veyron 16.4 is a true heir to this tradition, and with another model planned at the new Alsace factory who knows, we may be entering another 'Golden Age' for Bugatti...



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