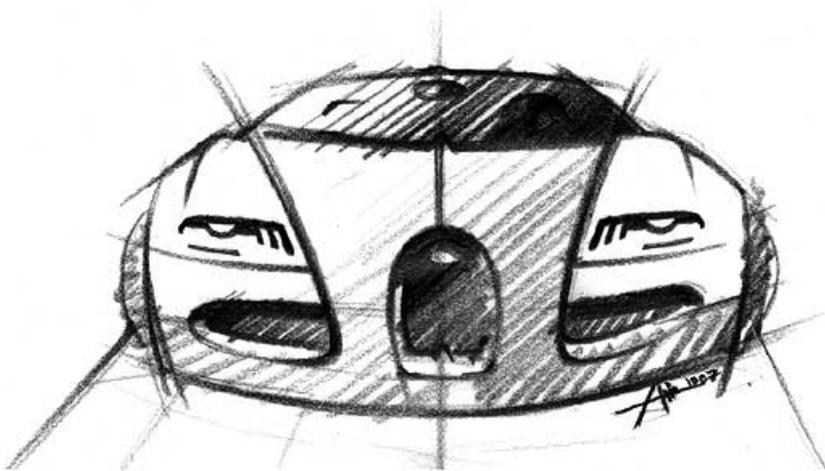

Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Grand Sport

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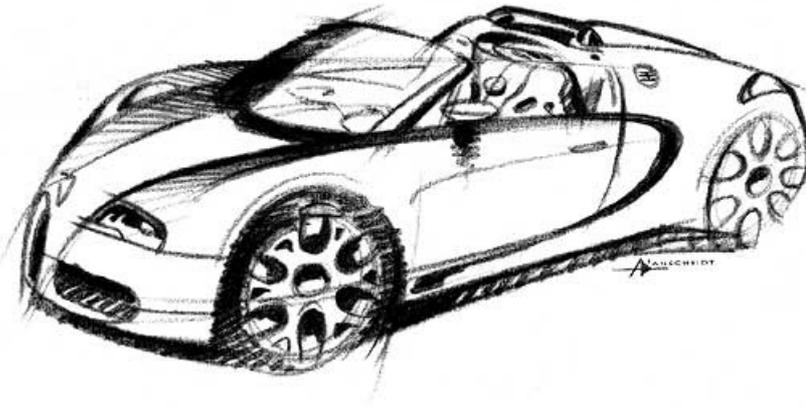


Chris Hrabalek gives his expert view on the styling of Bugatti's extravagant, open-topped masterpiece...

This year's **Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance**, arguably the most prestigious of all annual automotive events, was the ideal location to introduce something truly special to the global car-collecting elite: the **Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Grand Sport** - not only the world's fastest, structurally stiffest and most expensive form of open-top motoring, but also the most complete.

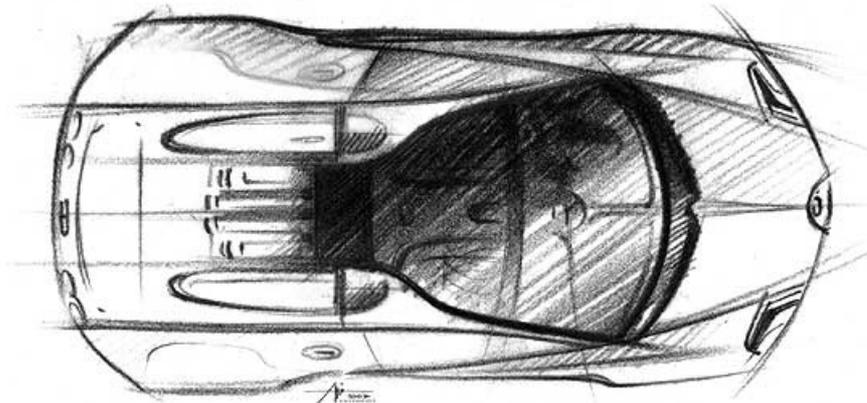
First impressions are generally the most difficult to alter. Yet, when an initial perception has been reassessed, it's certain to be of greater substance. Initially, the **Bugatti Veyron** received much criticism - both from quick-to-judge journalists and opinionated enthusiasts. It was therefore necessary not only to meet their scepticism through rock-solid deliverables, but also to exceed their expectations by such a large margin that their initial doubts now seem embarrassingly far from

reality.

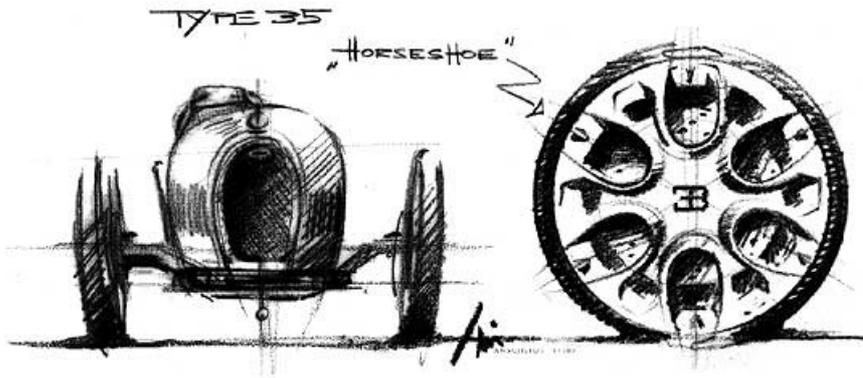


As with all hyper-luxury goods, design changes and new model introductions must be subtle enough not to be noticed by the non- and never-owners, but significant enough to create desire and consequently to open the pockets of existing owners and other potential customers. A perfect example of this theory is in the luxury wristwatch market; often the difference between new and old, desirable and commonplace, is only defined by the colour of sub-text on the dial, the engraving on the back or the variation in internal mechanism. In the case of the new **Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Grand Sport**, this meant a great deal of professional restraint from the **Bugatti Design Director, Achim Ansheidt**.

Apart from Achim and his team, only the eagle-eyed automotive anorak would have immediately spotted the aggressive new LED front headlights, the 12-spoke horseshoe-inspired diamond-cut rims or the dynamic quilting in the interior. The average human might only have picked up on the large glass panel in the removable targa roof which, apart from transmitting daylight, has the primary function of maintaining airflow to the large air-intakes at the rear.



It requires a very experienced and confident designer to appreciate the little details, the creation of which takes near endless design-loops, but whose existence is necessary in transforming an engineering masterpiece into an open-top derivative that loses none of its many unique traits. The **Grand Sport** covers the full spectrum between ultra-refined luxury boulevard cruiser and radical road-rocket, with every shade and variant in between. To understand the full complexity of its character, think of this car as a domesticated **Angelina Jolie** with multiple skills, ranging from **Dido's** voice to **Nigella Lawson's** palate to **J. K. Rowling's** astute business sense.



While, at first glance, the transformation from coupé to roadster might seem nothing more than a cut-off roof to the average amateur, the skilled eye will immediately spot the extended front window and modified A-pillars to maintain technical parameters, while giving the impression that the design remained constant. There have been other open-top supercars before the **Grand Sport**, some classic models even commanding a multiple of the limited **Bugatti's** asking price – even in the current global financial crisis. However, even early **Veyron** doubters would have to agree that all this is completely irrelevant. In comparison to the completeness of the Grand Sport, no automobile past, present (or possibly even future) comes a close second.

Text: Chris Hrabalek

Photos: Bugatti

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