


CLASSIC DRIVER



1928 Bugatti Type 43 - Type 43 Grand Sport 3/4 places

Type 43 Grand Sport 3/4 places

Lot sold	USD 0 EUR 0 (listed)	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1928	Interior colour	Other
Chassis number	43171	Condition	Used
Lot number	164	Location	
		Fuel type	Other
		Exterior colour	Other
		Car type	Other

Description

French title

- One of the most desirable Bugatti models
- Used by Malcolm Campbell in the TT 1928
- Matching numbers and body
- Extremely rare in this condition and with this history
- Ex-Malcolm Campbell 1928 Tourist Trophy - ex-WM Faulkner Essex Six Hours

When Bugatti presented its new 2.3-litre Grand Sport model to the press in March 1927, it boasted performance no other car could match. This brilliant torpedo-bodied car had a special chassis with a 2.97 m wheelbase, curved like the Grand Prix Bugattis, and with the Type 35B engine. Sales of the first Type 43s were contemporary with the rare, early Type 35B model, and between 1927 and 1930, exactly 160 examples left the workshops. Amongst the first cars produced, in March 1927, were four examples ordered by the London agent, Colonel Sorel, for his showroom " Bugatti Automobiles " on

the Brixton Road in London. " The Autocar " on 18 March 1927 suggested that " Bugatti will offer its clientèle a genuine Sports car, fitted with a supercharger - equipment reserved for racing cars until now ! The car is an evolution of the model that won the Targa Florio in 1926 ". In his article, the English journalist revealed that he had travelled to Molsheim where Ettore Bugatti had taken him for a test drive in the Alsace countryside. " Le Patron " stopped the engine, engaged fourth gear and pressed the starter...The car proceeded to accelerate rapidly to 140 km/h, without a change of gear. The test drive continued through the foothills of the Vosges mountains, crossing scarcely passable roads that showed all the qualities of the suspension. This article is believed to have been written by the journalist WF Bradley, the magazine's European correspondent and Ettore Bugatti's future biographer.

PRODUCTION OF THE TYPE 43

In December 1926, the first engines left the assembly workshop and seven cars were built before the end of the year. By the spring of 1927, production had settled at 7 - 10 cars a month, with some 80 cars - half the total production - on the road by the end of 1927. In 1928, over 60 examples were built, with the last 15 leaving the workshop before April 1929. The sales did not follow such a straight line, with unsold examples taking up space in the factory workshops from 1930. However, the model sold very well, early in 1927.

THE PRICES

The sale price of the Type 43 was very high, although it never corresponded to the listed price in the catalogue of 165 000 francs. In 1927, examples of the Type 43 GS were delivered to the Paris showroom for 107 500 francs each, and the cost to the New York dealer was 115 484 francs. For the Brixton Road depot, the price was 82 280 francs and even fell to 76 266 francs at the start of 1928, while the Italian agent paid 90 000 francs and a private French client 97 500 francs.

FACTORY DELIVERIES

The car on offer, châssis 43171, is noted in the monthly Sales Register :

" 28/1. W. Sorel. G .S. 43171. 63. 11.4.28 " The cars with chassis numbers 43168 to 43171 are all recorded with "W. Sorel 28/1", with the number undoubtedly referring to the order date. For these same cars, the invoices are noted with the date 27/04/1928. To determine whether the Bugatti chassis 43171 corresponds to that driven by Captain Malcolm Campbell in the Tourist Trophy on 18 August 1928, as indicated by British historians, it is necessary to consult the list of Bugatti Type 43s delivered to Great Britain before this date, to study their histories and eliminate those already assigned an owner or not available.

THE TYPE 43 BUGATTIS DELIVERED TO ENGLAND IN 1927-1928

From the early 1920s, the market for Bugatti was very strong in England, and the agent Colonel Sorel of Brixton Road covered a vast market that extended as far as Australia. Chassis 43169 crossed the Channel and was delivered in January 1928. There were numerous cars of this marque already competing on English circuits, open-road racing having been banned soon after the 1903 Paris-Madrid race. Brooklands, the world's first purpose built speed circuit, was opened in 1907.

THE FIVE TYPE 43S DELIVERED IN 1927

The London depot run by W. Sorel was quick to order one of the first examples of the Type 43 Grand Sport, in April 1927, chassis 43159/engine 10. In August and September of the same year, four other Type 43s were imported :

- 43188/26 on 04/08/1927 for Lord Howe (registration YT 8241).
- 43189/29 on the same date (registration KO 5128).
- 43160/30 on 23/09/1927 (registration YV 2681)
- 43161/37 on 23/09/1927 (registration GJ 53)

THE FIVE TYPE 43 GSS DELIVERED AT THE START OF THE 1928 SEASON

Two cars were delivered to Sorel at the end of January 1928 each costing 76 266 francs :

- 43170 /52 was registered in Surrey in April 1928 (PH 9397)
- 43168/65 was registered in Essex in April 1928 (PN 1095)

There are invoices for three other vehicles on 27 April 1928, for the same price of 76 266 francs :

- 43171 /63 was delivered on 11 avril (the invoice arrived after the speedy delivery which was fairly

uncommon !)

- 43178 /59 delivered on 23 May

- 43179 /76 also delivered on 23 May

It has been said that Lord Howe first raced his 2.3-litre car, chassis 43188, in the Essex Six Hours at Brooklands on 12 May 1928. In this same race, Malcolm Campbell also drove a Type 43, which was a new car : chassis 43171 in the sale. Clearly, the car used by Campbell to start his racing season on 12 May 1928, could not have been either 43178 or 43179, both delivered ten days after that date. It is also clear that he drove the same car in the Tourist Trophy in August of that same year. Photos exist of 43189, 43168 and 43170 (Howe's test car), with their specific features and respective registration plates, showing that they could not be the car used by Campbell in the 1928 TT. This only leaves just one contender, chassis 43171, to be the 2.3-litre Bugatti of the World Speed Record Holder, Malcolm Campbell. This is the car that he would have raced and tested on the circuit at Brooklands, where his garage "Brooklands Motor Co" was situated.

MALCOLM CAMPBELL

At the start of 1928, Malcolm Campbell had just beaten the World Speed Record at Daytona Beach in Florida. On 19 February, at the wheel of his Bluebird, fitted with a new 900 bhp engine, he set the record at 332.992 km/h.

He went on to beat this record every year in Florida between 1931 and 1935. In February 1931 his Bluebird II reached 395 km/h, a record that rose to 482 km/h by September 1935.

Between these attempts, he regularly took to the wheel of his Bugatti to compete in race or sporting categories, often in the 1500cc class. Campbell's private residence at this time was Byron House, 7-9 St James' Street SW1.

COMPETITIVE EVENTS DURING 1928

- The Essex Six Hours

Two Type 43s were entered for the inaugural Essex Six Hour race on 12 May 1928. They were described as " the fastest supercharged four-seater torpedos entered, along with Miller's Mercedes ". The Bugatti set such high speeds that they were the first to return to the pits to fold down their hoods. Lord Howe retired early with ignition trouble, and Campbell lost a considerable amount of time having a wheel changed. Subsequent problems with fuel pressure forced him to retire after four hours. This is believed to be the first race on English soil for 43171.

- The R.A.C Tourist Trophy

The R.A.C Tourist Trophy took place on 18 August 1928 on the circuit at Ards, near Belfast. Lord Howe was there with his two Type 43 Bugattis : the vehicle registered PH 9397(43170) used for testing and 43188 (YT 8241) which took part in the race with the number 50.

Malcolm Campbell's Bugatti appears not to have had number plates, and was entered with the race number 49. All the other English Type 43s were fitted with number plates from their first outings. As stated later, 43171 was registered for the first time in 1931, which is a plausible theory if this was a car kept by a garage. The third Type 43 torpedo, number 48, was entered by Léo d'Erlanger and driven by Louis Dutilleux, from the factory. During the re-fuelling of Campbell's 2.3-litre car, the fuel tank caught fire and exploded soon after. The back of the car was burnt and badly damaged, along with the aluminium wheels. The officials and mechanics could do nothing to stop the fire, as the heat was too intense. This car was the only example with a tail rear, truncated to hold a spare wheel vertically. This arrangement is clearly visible in certain photos of the rear at the time of the fire. It appears that the steel strut survived the disaster, as the current rear axle of the car, chassis 43171, is a Type 44, but the strut's number 61 corresponds to the number of the original axle.

The TT race also proved disastrous for the other two Type 43s : Lord Howe's car was in the lead, travelling at close to 160 km/h when its fuel tank caught fire, forcing the driver to abandon the race. Dutilleux was driving a car sent by Molsheim to Léo d'Erlanger, the baron and banker involved in the London Bugatti agency. This car's fuel tank also caught fire, and having succeeded in extinguishing the flames, the driver valiantly carried on and finished in ninth place. Malcolm Campbell competed in other races during 1929, but not in his Type 43.

THE OTHER CONTENDERS

It has been stated that the Bugatti Type 43 of G. Eyston in the 1929 Irish Grand Prix was 43171. This

is not the case as a photo taken during the race shows clearly that this was YT 8241 (43188). This same car was used by Howe and Campbell in the Brooklands J.C.C. in May 1930. Moreover, it has also been claimed that 43189 could have been Campbell's car, since traces of a fire were found during its restoration. We can confirm today that 43189 was the car driven by John Field in the Irish GP at Phoenix Park in Dublin in July 1929. It caught fire during re-fuelling. Another car, chassis 43154, has also laid claim to being Campbell's car in 1928, but wasn't in fact imported from France until 1930 ! Finally, an advert appear

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