

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## The Bugatti EB112 is the V12 space egg we never got

### Lead

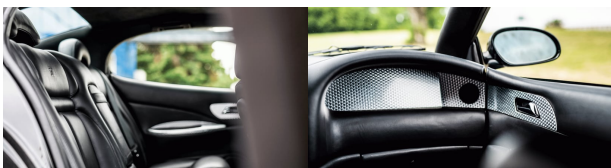
The Bugatti EB112 was meant to be the luxurious sibling to the superfast EB110. Sadly, financial issues robbed the world of this pebble-smooth supersaloon.



The title of 'world's fastest car' has been attached to Bugatti time and again over the last century. However, the brand has often been world-renowned for its slower vehicles, too. Boasting Rolls-Royce rivalling luxury, cars like the Bugatti Royale proved to the world that the men in Molsheim were capable of producing more than just a land speed record machine.



Someone who clearly had an appreciation for this was [Romano Artioli](#), the businessman responsible for waking Bugatti from the dead in the '90s. [We're all familiar with the fabulous EB110](#) - which was built to celebrate the marque's 110th anniversary and prove Bugatti was still top dog when it came to top speed - but there was a second, more luxurious and much weirder half to Bugatti's revival line-up: the wondrously ovoid EB112.



Let's start with the elephant in the room: the EB112 is a weird-looking car. It was designed by the legendary Giorgetto Giugiaro, but Artioli turned away the initial design sketches for failing to align with his crystalline vision for Bugatti's return to limousines. After a brief trip to the drawing board and back, Giugiaro produced the car you see before you. Looking like an unholy matrimony between a Bonneville salt-flat racer and, if we're being harsh, a Chrysler PT Cruiser, the EB112 fully embraced the ultra-smooth surfacing typical of the '90s.



That's not to say it was unrecognisable as a Bugatti – far from it. The split rear window and central spine hark back to the Type 57 SC Atlantic, while the C-pillar also retains the 'C' side motif typical of Bugatti and of course the iconic horseshoe grille is much larger (and more chrome) here than on the EB110. The end result is certainly visually imposing, and at the time of the EB112's launch, publisher Automobile even went as far as crowning it 'most beautiful car in the world', earning itself the title of 'world's most visually impaired editorial staff' in the process. One can definitely see echoes of this car's design in Bugatti's subsequent products, with the success of the Veyron going some way to elevate its looks by association, but overall there's an undeniable air of elegance about the EB112.



Beneath the undulating aluminium bodywork, the car was a technological marvel. Using its experience from building the EB110, Bugatti engineered the EB112 to be the fastest saloon on the market. A naturally aspirated front-mid-mounted 6.0-litre, 60-valve V12 putting out around 450 horsepower gave the super-slippery EB112 enough shove to hit 100kph in just 4.3 seconds and go on to an impressive top speed of 300kph. And there's one last detail that'll come as a shock to those familiar with the current crop of supersaloons: the EB112 had a six-speed manual gearbox. The end result was a car Artioli described as "similar to a go-kart", which we're sure was a totally unbiased opinion. Perhaps more interesting is that he went on to say it was even more enjoyable to drive than the EB110 – a car that raced at Le Mans.



The 1993 Geneva Motor Show provided the stage for the EB112's global unveiling. The car entered under its own power, impressing the crowds with its eye-catching design and then-modern features. Shortly afterwards, the Bugatti facility in Campogalliano began production, before promptly going completely bankrupt. At the time, only chassis #39001 had been completed, finished in burgundy and built by Italdesign, which still owns it to this day. The car you see here, chassis #39002, is the second of the three ever built and was only partially completed when Bugatti imploded. After being put up for auction with its similarly incomplete sister car, chassis #39003, the two were bought by Monaco-based businessman Gildo Pallanca Pastor, who entrusted the completion of the two cars to the Monaco Racing Team.





Chassis #39002 is the only car to actually commence assembly at the Bugatti factory, and as one of just three in existence, is about as close as you'll get to a unicorn without attacking a horse with arts-and-crafts supplies. Completed in February 2000 in Dark Anthracite, this EB112 is believed to have a single previous owner and just 3,900km on the clock. With production numbers mirroring those of the Type 57 SC Atlantic, does this ultra-rare Bug have the potential to reach the latter's stratospheric values, or will this quirky super-limo remain a footnote in Bugatti's history?



If you're itching for more info on the wild EB112, [Schaltkulisse has just released a 30-minute documentary on Bugatti](#), which takes a closer look at the marque's two Italian cars - the EB110 and EB112. The film features Bugatti legends such as the designer of the EB110, Giampaolo Benedini, the EB112's chief electrical engineer, Fernando Gabellini, and test driver extraordinaire, Valentino Balboni himself. If you'd like to learn more about this incredibly rare car, you won't want to miss it!

**Watch the new Bugatti documentary 'Aceto Blu'**

*Photos by Remi Dargegen*

**Gallery**









































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