BUGATTI: AN ENDURING AND REMARKABLE TALE IN THE WORLD OF HOROLOGY



For 115 years, Bugatti has written an unparalleled story of technical excellence, precision, and artistry — values that have not only defined its cars but have also forged an enduring relationship with the world of horology. Throughout its evolution, the French marque has maintained an intrinsic connection to watchmaking, with its iconic designs inspiring some of the most innovative and luxurious timepieces in history.

The bond between Bugatti and the most esteemed watchmakers can be traced back to 1925, when Bugatti caught the eye of Swiss watchmaker Mido. Known for its automotive-inspired

timepieces, Mido saw in Bugatti the same dedication to performance and design that it expected of itself. Reflecting this, and in respect of Ettore Bugatti's wishes, Mido released a collection of watches that perfectly echoed Bugatti's aesthetic.
The passion that led to the creation of these remarkable timepieces was clear to see. A fusion of heritage, elegance, and sophistication, the Swiss timepieces were united with Bugatti in its forward-thinking design philosophy, an approach that solidified the French marque's place at the pinnacle of automotive innovation and development.

Often offered to Ettore's best drivers and mechanics as well as his family, the Mido Bugatti creation was a precious jewel as exclusive as the marque's vehicles — less than 100 hand-crafted into existence — and featured a gold case shaped like the now iconic horseshoe grille capped with the renowned Bugatti red 'EB' logo.

Described as elegant watches with robust movements that allow drivers to rely on their timepieces even in the most challenging circumstances — with the driver able to read the time while their hands were on the steering wheel — Bugatti's unique creations with Mido illustrated in inimitable fashion how watchmaking and driving could so seamlessly intersect.

It was a beautiful fusion that came to frequently cross the boundaries between the worlds of the automobile and horology. While Mido was producing wristwatches for Ettore, in 1932, the founder of Bugatti also commissioned a series of clocks for the iconic Type 41 Royale — the most luxurious car ever built. Defined by its scale and elegance, the Type 41 Royale required a timepiece that matched its grandeur.

For Ettore, no other brand than Breguet would suffice for this honor. The Swiss watchmaker tasked with crafting a range of chronographs — with a tachometer function to measure speed over time — to be proudly displayed in the center of the steering wheel of the Royale automobiles. Incorporating all the expertise acquired by Breguet since its creation in 1775, a series of 9 on-board chronographs was thus delivered to Bugatti.

The individualized feel of the timepiece was to be enhanced yet further, with the watch's cream dial bearing the words 'Spécial pour Bugatti' and Breguet's famous pomme hands. Crafted from chrome-plated brass, the dashboard clock was powered by a mechanical movement featuring a power reserve to last eight days with metronomic precision.

This spirit of excellence flowed inexorably together with the sands of time, and Bugatti's dedication to innovation, ultimately into 2016, when Breguet acquired an original copy of the dashboard chronograph bearing the number '2023' — an emotional touch to reintegrate one of the most emblematic timepieces in its history into its heritage. More than a historical artefact, this unique chronograph reflected with extraordinary presence Bugatti and Breguet's common commitment to ingenuity, precision and refinement — symbolizing Ettore's avant-garde vision.

As decades rolled into the period of renaissance for Bugatti in the early 2000s, the influence of this resolute passion was to grow only further. The marque sought artisans united in the desire to craft a timepiece as revolutionary as its Veyron hyper sports car; a creation that would draw on its pioneering spirit in establishing a new segment, and its unequalled combination of performance and precious elegance. The brand found such a collective of craftspeople in the workshops of Michel Parmigiani, who had launched his watchmaking company in 1996. The story of Bugatti and Parmigiani Fleurier thus resulted in the creation of the groundbreaking Bugatti Type 370 timepiece.

With its dial on the side and a design curated to captivate, the Bugatti Type 370 proved to be just as revolutionary as the W16-powered Bugatti that inspired it. A true 'Driver's Watch' — featuring a manually wound movement with a 10-day power reserve, arranged along a single axis inspired by the Veyron's gearbox — the Parmigiani Fleurier was first questioned before winning the highly prestigious 'Watch of the Year' recognition in 2006.

A resounding success, and emblematic of Bugatti's triumphant return to prominence, the shared creation between Bugatti and Parmigiani Fleurier spanned a decade — with unique editions celebrating the engineering genius of the Veyron 16.4 and Veyron 16.4 Grand Sport Vitesse, cementing its status as a highly coveted horological treasure.

Fast forward to the modern day, and Bugatti's connection to the world of horology is stronger than ever. In 2019, Bugatti and pioneering watchmaker Jacob & Co. embarked on a journey continuing Bugatti's story in celebrating the concept of time. It is one that has yielded timepieces pushing the boundaries of both form and function; all forging their own path in redefining what is mechanically achievable, allowing hundreds of bespoke components to work together in mesmerizing harmony that, like Bugatti cars, deliver a degree of mechanical beauty never seen before.

Created as a tribute to Bugatti's tradition of precision engineering and its unique fusion of artistry and cutting-edge design, each Jacob & Co. Bugatti masterpiece exemplifies how Bugatti's automotive legacy and unparalleled performance has been reimagined through extreme mechanisms that are aesthetically, mechanically and functionally integrated to reflect the cars' uniqueness.

Heralding the launch of this unparalleled marriage of design excellence, cutting-edge precision, and seamless integration of car and watch design, was the Twin Turbo Furious Bugatti Edition. From the 300+, to the La Voiture Noire, each iteration of this exquisite timepiece pushed the boundaries of watchmaking, like the cars they honored.

Enriching this spirit, the next model — the Bugatti Chiron Tourbillon — was designed as a masterpiece of engineering, incorporating a miniature engine block — paying homage to the legendary W16 engine that ushered in a renaissance for the brand, and redefined the capabilities of the automobile. In an equally loving tribute, the Jean Bugatti was designed to capture the soul of Ettore's son himself — with a fitting commitment to creating one of the most sophisticated and complex chronographs ever created at the time, taking Jacob & Co. innovation into previously unchartered territory. The Jean Bugatti thus represented the watchmaker's most demanding project in its lifespan — until the pursuit of innovation surged forward even further.

As the Tourbillon[1] hyper sports car was unveiled at the home of Bugatti in June 2024, so the marque's inimitable timelessness and horological affinity entered a new era. Developed to be showcased on the concours lawns of this century and the next, the Tourbillon offers carefully curated engineering crafting techniques that will transcend time, including an unprecedented analogue instrument cluster, created in collaboration with the most skilled Swiss watchmakers.

Finished with the same care and attention as the greatest timepieces, the Tourbillon instrument cluster exquisitely blends the worlds of luxury craftsmanship and automotive engineering. A skeletonized work of art crafted from titanium, sapphire and ruby, more than 600 individual components come together to create an incredibly intricate piece of art. The mechanism is hand-engineered to operate with ultimate precision, with a smallest tolerance of 5 microns — and as the cluster remains fixed in place as the steering wheel turns seamlessly around it,

offers a striking focal point for the driving experience. And just as the finest watches become heirlooms that are passed down through generations, the Tourbillon is designed to be a car for eternity — one that will be revered for years to come.

The new chapter for Bugatti thus became a source of beautiful inspiration for the next page in its horological story: the Jacob & Co. Bugatti Tourbillon timepiece. Inspired by the new era-marking hyper sports car that will roll out of the Molsheim Atelier in 2026, and built using the finest materials in watchmaking, the 250-piece limited edition timepiece is engineered to include a total of ten defining design elements directly drawn from the car itself. Crafted to integrate the same shapes as the Bugatti vehicle, the Bugatti Tourbillon timepiece features a striking homage to the distinctive front grille, flanked by side radiator inlets, with the winding crown reflecting the finishing on the car's cockpit control-dials.

Proudly bearing a 30-second flying tourbillon alongside a double power reserve indicator in the same style as the car's dashboard and RPM counter, uniquely a V16 engine block automaton made from a single block of transparent sapphire lies at the heart of the Jacob & Co. Bugatti Tourbillon. Viewed through the two large sapphire openings forming the front and back of the watch, the automaton is seamlessly fused into the timepiece's stunningly striking design. Never before has the likeness between a watch and an automobile been pushed so far and with such accuracy; a symbol of pure design integration.

Perpetually pushing boundaries, the marque now looks forward to the next chapter in the story of horological innovation with Jacob & Co. A new exclusive edition of the Tourbillon watch is set to be revealed in Geneva in April, continuing a cutting-edge collaboration celebrating a seamless integration of automotive and horological prowess, and showcasing the innovative synergy between two of the world's most luxurious brands.

From the refinement of Breguet and craftsmanship of Mido in the 1920s and '30s, to the modern-day art pieces of Jacob & Co. and ingenious, cutting-edge design of the newly unveiled Bugatti Tourbillon's instrument cluster, Bugatti's connection to watchmaking is a testament to its unrelenting pursuit of perfection in aesthetics, mechanical excellence, and ultimate luxury. Just as Bugatti's hyper sports cars have transcended the automotive realm to become symbols of sophistication, elegance and timelessness, the watches with which it is associated are more than just instruments for measuring time. They are works of art honoring the thrill of performance-engineering, created with the same passion and precision that define everything Bugatti touches.

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