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BUGATTI CUSTOMER CARE — ABOUT THE MAGIC OF THE BRAND



Guy Caquelin has been taking good care of customers at Bugatti for 15 years.

A pleasant voice, an eloquent style — and obviously an enormous passion for automobiles: when Guy Caquelin talks about special vehicles, he really comes into his own. Born in France, he has loved and lived cars ever since his childhood — which makes him the Bugatti perfect customer and dealer advisor. But that's not all: his role is more that of a confidant than an advisor.
As Market Manager in Europe, he looks after 14 dealers and all European customers, plus sales, configuration, coordination of vehicle delivery and planning of national and local events. Guy Caquelin takes his time when customers call during the week or at weekends with questions about new models or a new idea for configuring their Chiron[1]. ‘‘Bugatti customers are very

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special. They're inspiring, successful people who are looking for something distinctive — and they are highly valued by us," says the Frenchman.

His job is not just about selling automobiles. "Configuring a Bugatti is a long, intense process that is quite demanding — on both sides," says Caquelin. As a service provider, he wants to present the vehicle to interested parties in as much detail as possible. His customers are on the road a lot, so they determine the time and place.

UP TO EIGHT BUGATTIS FOR ONE CUSTOMER

He maintains close contact with each of his customers. Bugatti collectors are given the opportunity to see and buy certain models early on — a special form of exclusivity. Many customers own not just one Bugatti vehicle, but several. Working with these customers — helping them take their dream a step further — is a great challenge but enormously satisfying, too. The partners don't just talk about cars: other subjects are discussed as well. Bugatti opens doors to all kinds of conversations — that's the magic of the brand.

Two years ago, Caquelin met a new customer to show him a special Bugatti model. The customer immediately fell passionately in love with the brand and the Molsheim-built hyper sports cars. Since then he has ordered eight Bugatti cars — including one-off limited edition models.

UP TO SIX HOURS OF CONFIGURATION IN ONE GO

It usually takes six to eight months from the initial contact through to the signed sales contract and the final configuration. With one Bugatti enthusiast and automobile collector, Caquelin came up with more than 30 configurations for a car, and the entire process took two years. The longest configuration carried out in a single day was for a Bugatti Veyron in Molsheim and took more than six hours. "Time is not the critical factor. We don't just want the customer to be satisfied — they have to be happy, too. Only when the vehicle is perfectly configured to suit their needs are we satisfied. Bugatti is a brand that listens — a brand that invites interested parties to come in and visit and tries to make all their wishes come true. Customers like to come in for the final completion of their dream car and even fit some of the parts themselves," explains Caquelin. In addition to French and English, he speaks fluent German, understands a little Spanish and Italian and has been learning Russian for several years.

Even though most Bugatti enthusiasts are men, women influence the purchase. "Almost all of our customers make their purchase decision together with the woman in their lives. The latter have a powerful influence on the configuration and become increasingly enthusiastic the more they see the extent of what is possible," he says. According to Caquelin, new customers are usually irritated about what they have previously experienced after taking a test drive in a Bugatti. No competitor offers such unbelievable performance combined with sheer luxury. "Customers are often amazed that Bugatti vehicles are so easy and safe to drive and offer so much comfort — despite their incredible performance," explains Caquelin.

A LIFE WITH BUGATTI

You might say that it was a matter of destiny that he would end up working for Bugatti. Guy Caquelin grew up in Strasbourg, and cars always had a major role to play in his family. His paternal great-grandfather, Louis Gustave Caquelin, founded the first driving school in Alsace and Lorraine in the 1930s. Guy Caquelin heard about Bugatti for the first time when he was ten years old and started to take an interest in the historic racing cars. At the age of 13 he learned to drive on closed roads. His grandfather and father worked as driving instructors. His mother's grandfather worked for Ettore Bugatti as a mechanic in the late 1930s. ''Everything still revolves around cars in our family today — I have an hereditary bias in that respect,'' the Frenchman confesses. As a lover of architecture and art, he is a fan of the Bugatti Type 43 Grand Sport (owned by the family for over 40 years) and of course the Bugatti Type 57 SC Atlantic, and he is particularly fascinated by brand's history, the creator Jean Bugatti and the myth of the lost car.

After school, Guy Caquelin studied law, specialising in commerce and economics. Shortly after his studies he was attracted by an interesting job: a small car company wanted to establish a new brand in Switzerland with the Daimler-Benz Group and Swatch. So Caquelin started at Smart and helped build up the company. He was present at the ground-breaking ceremony of the plant in Hambach-Lorraine and contributed to developing the new brand with its unusual new car. But from his school days onwards, he was always waiting for Bugatti to re-awaken in Molsheim.

At the age of 27 he drove a historic Type 43 Grand Sport dating back to 1927 for the first time, chassis number 43183. The car belonged to Jan Cohen, the partner of his mother, who had fallen in love again after the early death of her husband. Jan Cohen had been looking for a spare part for his Type 43 — and Caquelin's mother owned it. That was how they met. Jan Cohen had been a Bugatti fan ever since he was a child — at the age of 14 he even cycled from Holland to Molsheim to meet Ettore Bugatti in person. He purchased the car in the 1960s and spent 40 years restoring it. When Guy Caquelin drove the Type 43 for the first time, he was instantly thrilled. ''I'll never forget the ride, the sound and the vibrations of the engine — and the handling like a racing car, but with four seats. Passers-by waved happily to us as we drove through the Vosges mountains. The fact that Bugatti cars were so well liked was something that made me feel very happy,'' he says. The reaction of people is just the same today: the sight of a Bugatti car generally puts a broad smile on their face — no matter whether it's a historic model or one of the latest hyper sports cars driving by.

When he found out that the traditional Bugatti brand was being revived, Caquelin immediately applied to the new Bugatti president. ''I'd always been attracted to working for companies where I could build something up. When I joined Bugatti, the Veyron had already been developed, but there was no dealer network,'' he explains. Then there was the extraordinary hyper sports car — a truly exceptional vehicle. ''The automotive world has never seen so much power and performance combined with the highest level of quality and luxury,'' he says enthusiastically. With the Chiron and the Divo^2 now delivered, Bugatti has once again raised its own high standards. For Guy Caquelin, who does his job with such conviction and passion, topping this is almost unimaginable. But that's precisely what Bugatti stands for: making the best even better. Building unique vehicles to suit special aspirations and customers.

Incidentally, the Type 43 Grand Sport is now owned by Bugatti enthusiast Oskar Meier in Zurich. As a friend of the family, Guy Caquelin is allowed to visit him at any time to continue driving this outstanding vehicle and share his passion and enthusiasm with the owner.