

BUGATTI WORKING FROM HOME — DESIGN DIRECTOR ACHIM ANSCHEIDT



How the Design Director continues to work creatively on the hyper sports cars from home.

Long telephone conferences and many hours in front of a computer screen. Far away from the extraordinary hyper sports cars themselves. Bugatti has suspended production of its vehicles such as the Chiron¹ and Divo² in Molsheim. Even so, many staff are continuing to work from home now, taking into account the recommendations of the respective authorities, international experts and government measures. Like Achim Anscheidt, Bugatti's Design Director since 2004.

The 57-year-old lives with his family in Berlin, and his normal working life involves commuting between Molsheim in France and Wolfsburg in Lower Saxony, on the ICE express train. "Of course, this is not possible at the moment. So I am coordinating my work and the work done by

my design team as best as I can from home,” explains Achim Anscheidt. This involves lots of conference calls, as is currently common business practice almost everywhere.

To ensure that his creative work does not suffer on account of the technical aspects of work, Anscheidt actively makes space for creative thinking and working in his small studio, under the roof of an old house in Berlin. “For me, this is both a retreat and a source of inspiration. I can try out new lines here, think about new themes and develop fresh ideas. The studio in the attic is warm and suffused with light. I feel comfortable there and can handle current challenges like social distancing and Skype for Business,” explains Achim Anscheidt. At least for a certain period.

As far as possible, Achim Anscheidt is currently drawing inspiration from people he meets — while maintaining the necessary distance — to exchange ideas. His circle of acquaintances in Berlin includes artists, musicians and freelancers who publish their creative work on social media and people who have creatively repurposed their tailoring studio to produce face masks. “Everyone has realised that the pandemic is all about the greater good. What we need now is to be there for each other without social interaction, and we need to make a commitment to human solidarity,” he says.

The creative design process is also very human; it is often fundamentally based on direct and controversial exchanges with colleagues, with everyone pushing each other forward. Quite often a kind of “trial and error” principle. It is important to trigger ideas without reservation, even at the risk of being wrong. “Design does not develop according to an Excel spreadsheet. On the contrary, there are times when you really just have to bin that Excel sheet,” explains Anscheidt. This is the point where his quiet, homely little studio stops being particularly beneficial during the current isolation. “Meeting this challenge just using Skype for Business is demanding a lot from us,” he says.

For the modelling and realisation of virtual studies with clean lines and proportions, work at Bugatti relies not only on constant discussion between designers, but also on technology — and their elaborate 3D visualisation equipment is still at the design studio they have been forced to abandon. “We are working intensively on the design of current and future vehicles, but at the moment we are not able to use the highly efficient VR goggles. This presents us with a challenge when it comes to evaluating VR models. This is why we think every day about how we can still work purposefully, even with this handicap,” explains Anscheidt.

In his small wooden alpine cabin bathed in light on the roof of his house, Achim Anscheidt enjoys the last rays of sunset. “Although it gets quite cool here at times in April, I do enjoy the evenings up here,” he says. He is not getting much of a chance to drive his restored and specially customised historic Porsche 911 at the moment. A historic 1920s Bugatti Type 35 is still waiting to be restored in the basement as he does not have all the parts he needs. Instead, Anscheidt devotes much of his time to fixing neglected bicycles he buys at flea markets — he gives them some loving attention in his little bike workshop and then gives them away to his friends. “In central Berlin, people should get out and ride their bikes a bit more now,” says Anscheidt with a wink. Perhaps there will be less distance between them soon.