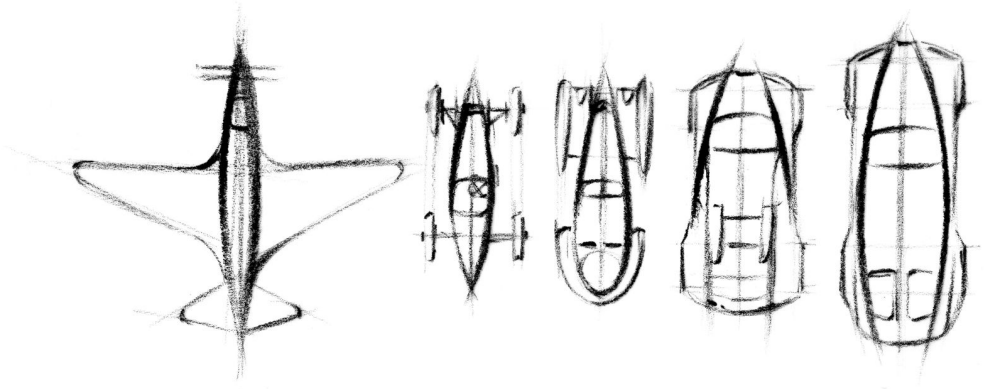
BUGATTI'S "DARE DEVILS" — COMBINING FLYING AND RACING CARS



Many successful Bugatti racing drivers of the "golden era" were former pilots

Uncompromising racing cars and daring pilots. Bugatti is directly associated with numerous historic racing successes, in the glorious Grand Prix days of the brand. Racing cars produced by this French manufacturer from Alsace won several thousand competitions between 1920 and the mid-1930s alone. But apart from the extraordinary cars such as the legendary, agile and light Bugatti Type 35, the racing drivers in particular were largely responsible for this success. They were all cut from a very special cloth, sharing a passion for technology and speed, on land and in the air.

Aviation developed in parallel with the motor car, both of which were driven forward in France at the start of the 20th century. The first motorised aircraft took off in 1906, developed by a Brazilian living in Paris. Frenchman Louis Charles Breguet developed the first helicopter in 1907, and Frenchman Louis Blériot became the first man to fly across the English Channel in 1909. Ettore Bugatti decided to settle in Molsheim, Alsace that same year. The young developer loved extraordinary technology and was just as fascinated by aviation and pilots as he was by the motor car, which was still in its infancy. So it was hardly surprising that Bugatti didn't just restrict himself to developing and designing light and powerful automobiles and thoroughbred racing cars, but developed speedboats, high-speed trains and aircraft as well.

"Bugatti has been closely associated with motorsports and aviation for over 110 years. Early

models demonstrate clear parallels to these two technical areas. This includes open mechanical systems, consistent lightweight construction a good power-to-weight ratio and initial attempts to improve aerodynamics,'' says Stephan Winkelmann, President of Bugatti. ''Ettore Bugatti also designed and produced a wide variety of high-precision, light, powerful and technically demanding machines. In addition to the uncompromising racing cars, this also includes aircraft engines, and an own constructed aircraft.''

The first aircraft engine built by Bugatti around 1915 was a massive eight-cylinder in-line engine producing 250 PS. These were followed by 16-cylinder engines with two blocks of eight cylinders, each positioned vertically side-by-side on a shared crankcase. The French government had no interest in the aircraft engines, but the Americans did. The further-developed King Bugatti 16-cylinder aircraft engine delivered 420 PS at about 2,000 rpm. It was planned to build at least 2,000 of these engines, but this plan was rendered obsolete when the First World War came to an end in November 1918. Probably only 40 of these engines were produced. Bugatti devoted himself increasingly to his vehicles in the years that followed, but in 1925 he still built a 16-cylinder aircraft engine, the Type 34, which he later used in a modified form in the Type 41 Royale. Ettore Bugatti was also interested in aviation on a personal level: he maintained close contact with former First World War pilots throughout his life. They wanted to transfer the allure of speed from the air to the road. And this was an idea that particularly appealed to Ettore Bugatti.

LOUIS BLÉRIOT

Louis Blériot was the first Frenchman to drive a Bugatti. This was a real honour for Ettore Bugatti, because Blériot was already famous by then. In July 1909, he became the first person to cross the English Channel in an aeroplane with the Blériot XI, a machine he developed himself, and became a national hero in France. It took him just 37 minutes to cover the around 35 kilometres from Calais to Dover. This didn't go unnoticed by Ettore Bugatti either, who at the time was working as a design engineer at Gasmaschinenfabrik Deutz AG in Cologne. At an air show in Cologne, Ettore Bugatti asked Louis Blériot to stay at his house in Cologne and chauffeured him to the airport in the car he designed himself. Blériot was enthusiastic about the car and implored Bugatti to build the car himself. At that time, the 1909 Type 10 was just a draft design — still before Bugatti founded his own company. The vehicle anticipates what the brand Bugatti has stood for ever since: powerful and fast vehicles with a sometimes unrivalled power-to-weight ratio. With a weight of around 365 kilograms and an output of 10 PS, the car was able to reach speeds of up to 80 km/h, something which appealed to the pilot Louis Blériot. The two entrepreneurs kept in touch for life. Blériot remained loyal to flying, founded his own aircraft company and built his own aircraft. The aviation pioneer died in Paris in 1936.

ROLAND GARROS

Although Roland Adrien Georges Garros (1888-1918) never raced for Bugatti, this French aviation pioneer had a close relationship with Bugatti. Garros bought a Santos-Dumont Demoiselle aircraft in 1910 and taught himself to fly. He then went on to become one of the most famous aviators in France. Garros achieved world fame when he successfully crossed the Mediterranean in an aeroplane in 1912 after winning various flying events and air races. Garros became aware of Ettore Bugatti and his vehicles after his victory in the Type 18 at Mont Ventoux. Garros, who loved speed, was looking for a car that would allow him to go as fast on land as he

did in the air. In 1913, he decided to purchase the Type 18, later known as ''Black Bess'' (after a British racehorse). The 5.0-litre, four-cylinder engine delivered up to 100 PS and was capable of speeds in excess of 150 km/h. Only six or seven of these racing cars, with a then unknown power-to-weight ratio and uncompromisingly sporty set-up were built. These vehicles became the first roadgoing super sports cars in the automotive history. Not only was the sale to Garros a huge marketing success for Bugatti, it was also the beginning of a close, albeit brief, friendship with the pilot, who once described Ettore as ''the only artist who succeeds in filling steel with life''. During the First World War, Garros flew for the French Army and was shot down and killed in 1918.

ROBERT BENOIST

Robert Benoist, born on 20 March 1895, served as a fighter pilot and flew reconnaissance aircraft during the First World War before becoming a flight instructor in 1918. After the end of his time as an active pilot, he increasingly transferred his enthusiasm for technology and speed to cars. So it was only logical that this talented young man should start in smaller races from 1920 onwards — initially as a test driver, later as a works driver. In 1924, Benoist became famous overnight when he won the French Grand Prix in a 12-cylinder Delage. He dominated races in 1927, winning the French, Spanish, Italian and British Grand Prix races and becoming the first World Champion. From 1934 onwards, Benoist handled assignments at Bugatti as a kind of motorsports manager, and ensured further successes as sales manager for Paris. But he wasn't quite able to get by without the buzz that speed gave him: Benoist drove again in a few races between 1934 and 1937, winning the 24 Hours of Le Mans together with Jean-Pierre Wimille in a Type 57 G Tank. Robert Benoist was not only a gifted technician and racing driver, but also a man with attitude. During the Second World War he was one of the leaders of the Resistance in the fight against Nazi Germany. Benoist founded a resistance group alongside his former Bugatti colleagues William Grover-Williams and Jean-Pierre Wimille. Benoist's courageous commitment cost him his life in 1944 — he was executed at the Buchenwald concentration camp on 12 September.

BARTOLOMEO COSTANTINI

Bartolomeo ''Meo'' Constantini (1889-1941) was fascinated by technical vehicles, and in particular aircraft, from childhood. He won fame as a daredevil ace pilot during the First World War. He began to develop an interest in fast cars not long afterwards. He raced for Aquila Italiana between 1914 and 1917 before then taking a break. Costantini achieved his greatest racing successes from 1923 onwards, when he joined Bugatti. In 1925 and 1926 he won the Targa Florio in Sicily and the French Grand Prix. Costantini ended his career as an active racing driver when his closest friend Giulio Masetti died at the Targa Florio in 1926. That said, he was unable to leave motorsport behind and went on to head the Bugatti works team for the next few years. It wasn't until nine years later, in 1935, that he gave up his post and retired.

ALBERT DIVO

Albert Eugène Diwo, born on 24 January 1895 in Paris, began training as a ship mechanic at the age of 13. His phenomenal understanding of technically complex systems brought him into aviation, which at that time was still in its infancy. Diwo quickly got to grips with aircraft as both

a technician and a pilot. He fought the First World War as a pilot while continuing to work on the ground as a mechanic. He didn't want to leave behind the adrenaline rush in peacetime, and he won a number of races as a driver as early as 1919. Diwo switched to Bugatti in 1928 and soon changed his name to Divo, which means 'star' in Italian, before winning the famous Targa Florio in Sicily in the same year and again in 1929 in a Type 35 B. For years the Type 35 B has been regarded as the most mature and reliable racing car with an excellent power-to-weight ratio. Divo won many races, including six Grands Prix, over a period of 20 years. He continued to work in motorsports after the Second World War, as a race director for an oil producer. Albert Divo died in France in 1966.

BUGATTI AIRCRAFT TYPE 100 P

Ettore Bugatti's fascination with speed remained unbroken despite the many blows of fate dealt to his friends. In 1937, ten years after Charles Lindbergh travelled from New York to Paris and crossed the Atlantic, the French Air Ministry asked him to design a modern aircraft for an air race — and so he got to work. Above all, this new machine had to be light and nimble. Initial trials with two counter-rotating propellers, driven by two engines in series, were very promising. Bugatti was aiming to break the speed record of 709 km/h with the Type 100 P. The French Army was enthusiastic about the idea of this powerful aircraft and even offered a bonus if the record were to be broken as this would give the French Air Force a better aircraft than the Germans. However, the outbreak of the Second World War prevented completion of the Bugatti aircraft. It wasn't until decades later that a replica of the Type 100 P actually took off.

The connection to aeronautics and to particularly light and uncompromising racing cars has existed at Bugatti for over 110 years. And the story is by no means over yet.