CELEBRATING AN ENDURING LEGACY AT THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY BUGATTI FESTIVAL IN MOLSHEIM



Each year, on the weekend closest to the birthday of Ettore Bugatti — 15 September 1881 — the town of Molsheim in Alsace is transformed with a three-day celebration of Ettore's incredible legacy. The Bugatti Festival, organized by the Enthousiastes Bugatti Alsace (EBA), is a

2026 BUGATTI AUTOMOBILES S.A.S.

pilgrimage of Bugatti fans from all over the world, descending on the place that will forever be known as the home of this legendary brand.

In 1909, when he was 28 years old, Ettore founded his factory here in Molsheim in a former dyeworks and began producing the Type 13. Later, in 1928, he would purchase the now iconic Château Saint Jean as a place to welcome guests, customers, racing drivers and luminaries. To this day the Château remains a place of wonder, welcoming guests from all over the world and hand-assembling every single modern Bugatti hyper sports car.
During this year's 40th anniversary edition of the Bugatti Festival in Molsheim, celebrations were larger than ever, beginning — as it traditionally does — with a visit to the final resting place of Ettore Bugatti in Dorlisheim Cemetery. But the Festival isn't merely about paying respects to Ettore's life, but his legacy.

That legacy was palpable as, on the Saturday morning, Bugatti classic cars owners were joined by a few very enthusiastic Bugatti customers and their modern hyper sports cars to roll through the historic gates of the Château Saint Jean. Still with Ettore's initials in the railings, and with steps worn from the many visitors he welcomed over the years, the parc was the place for a breakfast hosted by the Bugatti brand to begin the weekend activities of the Festival. The grounds of the Château were transformed with a display of Bugatti cars while inside the Château itself sat a curated exhibition of the furniture of Carlo Bugatti and the sculptures of Rembrandt Bugatti — kindly provided by Perridon Holdings purely for this occasion — the artistic inspiration from Ettore's family, which translated directly into his cars. As Ettore once said: ''Nothing is too beautiful''.

Carlo's furniture is characterized by ambitious, flowing shapes, extraordinary attention to detail and the use of the finest materials, including bronze, Italian walnut and copper. The sculptures of Rembrandt, meanwhile, are perfectly formed, capturing the raw power of a lion or the gentle elegance of an elephant, even while completely motionless. All these characteristics came to influence the design of Bugatti cars. As an example, the legendary horseshoe Bugatti grille has been designed as an homage to his father Carlo who believed the most perfect shape in nature was an egg. Ettore even included a subtle nod to Rembrandt by incorporating his famous 'Dancing Elephant' sculpture as the hood ornament for the Bugatti Type 41 Royale — the only time any Bugatti was adorned with a sculpture on the hood.

Guests could also admire a series of Grand Prix cars, like a Type 57G Tank, a Type 32 Tank — which was first produced in 1923, 100 years ago — a Type 35 and a Type 45/47, recalling Bugatti's successful heritage in motorsports. Also on display, honoring the brand's incredible past: a model of the Bolide[1] — the modern track-only Bugatti hyper sports car which made its first public appearance at Le Mans this year in June, and a EB110 — which paved the way in the 90's for every modern Bugatti hyper sports car.

Although inspired by sculpture, Bugatti automobiles are designed to be driven, not only to be admired and it was time for the guests to step back behind the wheel of their cars, from the beautiful Type 57C Stelvio with bodywork by Gangloff as well as the Type 49 Long Wheelbase Two-Door Coupé by Weymann, to more modern icons of Bugatti design, like the Veyron 16.4 Grand Sport Vitesse World Record Edition and the Chiron Super Sport[2]. With the noise of revolutionary engines reverberating off the walls of the Château, the cars set off for a tour through the Alsace Wine Route. This captivating journey in the heart of Europe's rich viticultural heritage transported drivers through time, exploring typical Alsatian towns with half-timbered houses and cobbled streets.

Upon reaching the charming historic village of Ribeauvillé, where the owners shared a friendly lunch together, the 70 classic and modern Bugatti cars began winding their way back to Molsheim for a public exhibition of the cars. Parked up in the Parc des Jésuites, the sight of thousands of visitors poring over the line-up of cars revealed the intense admiration for the Bugatti brand and its extraordinary heritage across Europe and beyond. But Ettore's heritage and genius expands far beyond the automobile, as showcased by a display of the only remaining Bugatti Autorail — a luxury high-speed train he developed using the remaining 12.8-liter engine of the Type 41 Royale and that came to revolutionize the French rail network. Rarely does the Bugatti Autorail ever leave its home at La Cité du Train in Mulhouse, so its exhibition in Molsheim was a rare treat for visitors, and one made all the more special with the firing up of this legendary engine during the course of the Festival, giving the crowds a glimpse into its raw power and innovation.

Christophe Piochon, President of Bugatti Automobiles — who was participating for the 18th time — undertook this year his eleventh edition of the Festival as a member of the official judging jury that — on Saturday evening — would decide the prizes for Bugatti vehicles on display. Each car is judged on its condition, originality, its elegance and its story, with a number of trophies awarded on the Sunday to the winners.

"Through the gates of Château Saint Jean, amidst the winding roads of Alsace, and throughout the streets of Molsheim, Ettore Bugatti's footprints are everywhere. Each car, each roar of the engine, and every hand-assembled detail, tells a tale of passion, legacy and an unyielding quest for perfection. Molsheim isn't just a place; it is where the soul of Bugatti breathes and flourishes, and each year we are thrilled to participate, along with some of our most enthusiastic customers, in this celebration organized by our friends, the Enthousiastes Bugatti Alsace," said Christophe Piochon.

On Sunday morning, Bugatti Festival visitors experienced the sights and sounds of the Bugatti vehicles once more, as they took to closed roads in Molsheim in a show of power and performance. Not restricted by speed limits or traffic, it was a chance to see the full potential of Ettore's incomparable engineering. A pair of Baby Bugatti II models — all-electric modern-day scale models inspired by the Type 35, the car that Ettore built for his son Roland — also joined the roadshow. All participants were then treated to a gala lunch and a prize-giving ceremony, including the headline Grand Prix Bugatti Automobiles S.A.S., which this year went to a Type 35C. With genuine racing pedigree, this car has been selected by the Bugatti jury as a glorious reminder of the motorsport heroics that have inspired the uncompromising vision of the track-only Bolide.

Other prizes were also awarded including the Trophée Lalique — which went to the Type 49 Coupé de Weymann — and the Trophée de la Fondation Bugatti, honouring the Type 57C Stelvio par Gangloff. The Trophée Cul Pointu went to Bugatti Pilote Officiel, Andy Wallace, paying tribute to his successful career as one of the world's finest endurance racers. Part of a select group of people to have won the Triple Crown of Le Mans 24 Hours, 24 Hours of Daytona and the 12 Hours of Sebring, Andy Wallace also set a world speed record in a Chiron in 2019, becoming the first person to exceed 300mph in a series production car, reaching 304.773mph.

Forty years after the Bugatti Festival first took place in Molsheim, and over 110 years since Ettore Bugatti established his brand here, the connection between Alsace and his revolutionary cars is as strong as ever. His ethos continues to guide the brand today, and he would probably be honored that not only do his cars continue to be used and enjoyed as they were intended, but that the place that he called home for most of his life remains a core part of the Bugatti story.

Press Contact
Nicole Auger
Head of Marketing and Communications
communications@bugatti.com