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CHIRON SUPER SPORT ‘GOLDEN ERA’: THE ART OF BESPOKE CRAFTSMANSHIP



The Chiron Super Sport ‘Golden Era’ is the very embodiment of Bugatti’s peerless Sur Mesure program, designing and delivering totally unique and completely personalized cars for customers. The intricate, complex and highly creative process took two years to complete. Perfection on every level was achieved by using the combined skills and expertise of Bugatti’s craftspeople.

This journey – as with every Sur Mesure creation – is one of intense collaboration between the Bugatti team and the owner. With the ‘Golden Era’, the customer wished for a masterpiece that was truly incomparable and original to beautifully pay homage to what he believed to be the apex of combustion engine development: the Bugatti W16. Having closely consulted with

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designers and paint experts in Molsheim, the customer immediately fell in love with a proposal to celebrate the revolutionary eras of Bugatti; a visual art piece that would plot the route from the founding of Bugatti in 1909, right up to the latest W16-powered models.
A series of 45 hand-drawn sketches which poetically illuminate the legendary milestones of Bugatti's rich story was set to seamlessly transform a blank canvas into a complete work of art. With the customer involved and consulted by the team at every step of the process.

The devoted artists: highly experienced and accomplished Bugatti designers who meticulously drew by hand the 19 sketches on the driver's side — depicting the modern era of Bugatti since 1987, tracing from the EB110, through to the Veyron and the Chiron[1] — and the 26 sketches on the passenger's side — outlining the landmark Bugatti moments from 1909 to 1956 including icons like the Type 41 Royale and the Type 57 SC Atlantic. The commission encompasses a sequence of standalone pieces of art that creates one brilliant masterpiece spinning the unparalleled Bugatti legend, an adventure that has spanned over 115 years.

To highlight the intricate work on each sketch and emphasize the artistry of the 'Golden Era', the body paintwork had to illustrate this glorious celebration of Bugatti. The design team and the paint specialists therefore developed an entirely new shade of 'Doré' gold, and created an delicate fade into a special — more metallic — version of 'Nocturne Black', offering the Chiron Super Sport[2] a beautiful balance. Only the gifted Bugatti painters could be entrusted with this delicate task of creating a gentle flow from one color into the next entirely by hand and by eye.

With the canvas now prepared, the artists' intricate and meticulous work could begin. The vision for 'Golden Era' was very specific and sophisticated: the drawings must be finished in a visual style that resembles a pencil sketched on paper; a style that has long been associated with the Bugatti brand. Following the Bugatti philosophy of 'what you see is what you get', if it looks like hand-drawn sketches, then it must be exactly that. Authenticity was key during the whole process. Creating the appearance of matte paper on a smooth polished surface, or ensuring the ink adheres properly and does not fade out over time, would be an enormous challenge and something never before done. And if any mistakes were made, the process would have to be repeated again until it was flawless. Not only now, but far into the future.

This quest for absolute perfection led the material, color and design experts of the brand to explore the use of decals, foils or vinyl wraps, but such techniques were quickly ruled out due to them looking artificial and also being prone to peeling or decay over time. As is the case with every masterpiece that leaves the Atelier in Molsheim, the 'Golden Era' car must be imagined on a Concours d'Elegance lawn a century from now, so not only did the finish have to look authentic but it also had to be long-lasting. A masterpiece in every detail, but a masterpiece that must be able to withstand decades of use, driven under the intensity of a beating sun or soaking rain, and subjected to high speeds and massive G-forces. A Bugatti is meant to be driven and enjoyed, so this artwork's ability to endure was just as important as its beauty.

With late night creative sessions, impassioned discussions and the very first steps ventured into the unknown, it was clear that the only way to truly deliver this blend and recreate the look of the designers' intricate initial sketches for the car, the team had to draw directly on to the body of the Chiron. To produce the exact same effect as on paper, the team first tried to use the very same pencils they might use to sketch a new Bugatti hyper sports car but a first application revealed the drawings were prone to smudging and the clearcoat would crack when applied over the sketches. So, they continued to explore new techniques to achieve the perfect result they wanted, working in collaboration with the paint team to develop an artwork that had depth, beauty and longevity.

Months went by, as the craftspeople experimented with the tenacity and dedication of a team of scientists, tweaking the formula until the perfect solution was found. That solution was an entirely new finish that would create a 'matte' surface for the ink to adhere to, developed over the course of three months, with hard labor, experimental creativity and stubbornness. The paint team would lightly sand down the panels to create gentle ridges and pits that the ink could seep into as the designers sketched. In this way the drawings could be hand-drawn before a crystal-clear-coat was applied to the 'sanded' Chiron Super Sport, creating an immaculate base level for the 45 artforms. To give these sketches depth, the team would draw them, sand them and coat them up to four separate times, creating a piece of art with real contrast no matter the light conditions, as well as a three-dimensional sense of foreground and background. The owner was invited to see the first sketches when they were complete and was overwhelmed by the effect.

Jascha Straub, Lead Designer for Sur Mesure at Bugatti said: ''We knew there were easier and faster ways to create these sketches. But there is only one priority with a Bugatti — and particularly with a Sur Mesure project — and that is to deliver a simply flawless and timeless finish. That meant, for the 'Golden Era', using real sketching pencils, no matter how complex it would be. We tried several different techniques and pencils, looking for the right contrast and desired visual effect, but when we applied the clearcoat over the sketches it would always crack or smudge them. Together with our painting specialists, we challenged ourselves until we finally discovered the right combination of repeated gentle sanding, sketching and clear coating. A true team effort that enabled us to push boundaries!''

Despite the long and hard-won process, the 'Golden Era' is a project that we can be immensely proud of, showcasing work that sets a new benchmark in the world of automotive couture commissions. With the combined vision of our craftspeople and the immense passion of this special customer, we have delivered a superb tribute to the golden era of our brand.''

From the exterior of the 'Golden Era' Chiron Super Sport, the artistry extends into the cabin of the hyper sports car with a subtle hint of the exterior sketches. Applied to the curved leather door panels are head-on illustrations of the most important models from each golden era of Bugatti represented on the body of the car. This process would be far from simple, with the sketches painted onto a flat piece of leather that would then be stretched and curved to fit the door panels. In a stern test of their artistic talents, the craftspeople would have to predict and account for this stretching and curvature, creating drawings that would look imperfect when flat, but perfect in their final position nestled within the door.

A fine paintbrush and a very special paint — highly resilient but also sublimely delicate, forming the exact consistency needed for the bespoke hyper sports car — was developed by the expert team at Bugatti. Over decades of use, the soft leather of the door panels will be touched and cleaned and subjected to the heat of a burning sun or the frost of a cold winter. But despite these conditions, the uncompromising craftsmanship behind the 'Golden Era' project ensures the artforms not only look elegant but that they can withstand the demands of daily use, with a special leather 'clearcoat' applied to protect them. The interior is completed with a mixture of leather, suede leather and further customized touches, including treadplates marking the time periods represented on each side of the car. The flowing and elegant Bugatti handwriting also forms 'One-of-one' gold script in the cabin, and 'Golden Era' both stitched into the headrests and written underneath the rear wing.

The Chiron Super Sport 'Golden Era' is a masterclass in how Bugatti is unrivalled and unmatched the world over when it comes to meeting the exacting needs of customers, in the process

bringing to life their dreams. The project also exemplifies how the brand's Sur Mesure program welcomes the customer to be part of the magical creative endeavor, fostering a close collaborative relationship of limitless creativity that is based on trust, transparency, respect and artistry.

The Bugatti brand is built not only on performance, but on craftsmanship and beauty, paying tribute to the words of the founder, Ettore Bugatti, who said not only must a Bugatti be incomparable but also that 'nothing is too beautiful.' The 'Golden Era' isn't just an homage to the creations of Bugatti but to the man whose genius continues to inspire it and to the customers that continuously inspire the teams with their passion and creativity. The 'Golden Era' will be handed over to its owner at Monterey Car Week later this week. After a collaborative process of creation that lasted more than two years he will now be able to enjoy his car as a timeless piece of incomparable Bugatti history.

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[1] Chiron Super Sport: WLTP fuel consumption, l/100 km: low phase 40.3 / medium phase 22.2 / high phase 17.9 / extra high phase 17.1 / combined 21.5; CO2 emissions combined, g/km: 487; efficiency class: G