DRIVING FOR PERFECTION: BUGATTI CENTODIECI



The creation of each 10 examples of the coachbuilt Bugatti Centodieci is one defined by perfection. Having undergone thousands of hours of testing of every single component, the Centodieci is meticulously assembled with millimeter precision at the Bugatti Atelier in Molsheim. But before it is delivered to its custodian, it must be given the seal of approval by the most experienced of Bugatti test drivers, Steve Jenny, who upholds a reputation for accepting nothing but the best.

Steve pays attention to the smallest detail, familiar with each intricate characteristic of every modern Bugatti. He has driven more than 350,000 kilometers in the Veyron, Chiron[1], Divo[2] and Centodieci[3], as well the one-of-one La Voiture Noire[4], and it's his job to ensure that every single one of them feels exactly like a Bugatti, free from imperfections. Each car, whether one-off or

few-off like Centodieci, must follow the same demanding procedure to ensure it will adhere to extremely precise criteria that Bugatti demands before delivering a car to a customer. Despite sharing a powertrain with the Chiron Super Sport[5] — the iconic 8.0-liter W16 engine producing 1,600 PS — Bugatti's engineers worked extensively to perfect the Centodieci's handling to produce a unique dynamic experience that blends incomparable comfort and unrivalled performance. With only 10 cars ever set to exist, Steve's experience of driving around 800 different Bugatti vehicles is crucial in allowing him to quickly dial in to how the Centodieci should feel.

Having been finished in 'EB110 Argent' paint, and with its interior meticulously hand assembled in the Molsheim Atelier, Steve takes the utmost care to ensure its finish remains perfect. Before setting off, the body of the car as well as the seats are carefully protected by the Atelier team. The Centodieci is about to be subjected to one of the most intense pre-delivery inspections in the automotive world.

His drives through the countryside around the home of Bugatti in Molsheim normally take around five hours, covering at least 300 km on a variety of different roads and surfaces. Set routes are defined adjusting to the season and no matter the weather conditions, allowing Steve to consistently judge the attributes of a car. Taking in twisting mountain roads, carving through the famous Route des Vins d'Alsace, fringed by vineyards, taking to the autoroute and crawling through typical Alsatian villages, the drive is designed to replicate all conditions that a customer may encounter, assessing Centodieci's character throughout.

For this coachbuilt few-off car, taking inspiration from the Bugatti EB110 Super Sport, the W16 engine is located underneath an EB110-style glass sheet, as opposed to mostly uncovered as it is in the Chiron. With the engine isolated in this way, Centodieci has a different aural signature to Chiron Super Sport and Steve must ensure it is consistent across each of these 10 cars.

During the test drive, he will check not only the personality of Centodieci but also for any almost-imperceptible discrepancies, only obvious to someone with Steve's deep knowledge of Bugatti. The amount that noise from the road and suspension is isolated from the cabin or even the subtle sounds of flexing leather and carbon fiber that change with the temperature and humidity. Each must pass the high standards required by Bugatti.

This work is taken to its extremes on the closed runway of a local airport. Centodieci accelerates from 0 to 100 km/h in 2.4 seconds to a top speed of 380 km/h. High speed slaloms, emergency lane changes ('Handling' mode) and emergency braking are all tested in complete safety to ensure that even at these speeds, and subjected to intense conditions, Centodieci is honed until flawless. Dynamically perfect in every way, and completely safe and stable for customers.

At points on his drive, he will also be checking the various material finishes and bespoke touches applied to each Centodieci. Bugatti developed custom shapes, parts, and workmanship processes for this car, and as with all coachbuilt models, the key elements of the interior were differentiated for the Centodieci. These include a precise leather quilting in the interior, which creates a chessboard effect and is designed to look uniform and composed.

His sense of the exacting standards set by Bugatti is so acute that even if any material feels rougher than it should, if the buttons, switches and handles don't feel or look as they should, he will return to the Atelier to identify, explain and correct the issues with his colleagues. Everything is measured and analyzed, delivered to extremely precise tolerances with zero room for interpretation.

Only once a long list of stringent Bugatti criteria has been fulfilled is a car deemed ready for its next stage with the Atelier team. The filter in the gearbox is changed, the final set of wheels is fitted, any imperfections are corrected or parts replaced if needed, and the car is taken on one final test drive of around 50 km, with each car having covered a minimum of 350 km before it is delivered to the customer. Then this few-off work of automotive art, an homage to 110 years of Bugatti history and the culmination of engineering and design excellence, leaves Molsheim.

Steve Jenny, Bugatti Test Driver, said: ''There is no compromise in the creation of a Bugatti, especially one as rare and unique as the Centodieci. Since only 10 will ever be created, the opportunities to drive such an extraordinary car are so rare that we must redouble our attention during the final drive. Ensuring consistent perfection across each Centodieci, and every Bugatti, is extremely important. If we encounter any issues we will not be swayed by deadlines or timing; the car will not be delivered until we are confident it is perfect in every single detail. It's what has come to define the Bugatti brand, and it's what our customers expect.''

Just ten examples of the Bugatti Centodieci are being hand-built in the Molsheim Atelier. At a unit price of eight million Euros, it was sold out before its unveiling in 2019.

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[1] Centodieci: 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: NA; efficiency class: G