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HISTORY-MAKERS AND RECORD-BREAKERS: UNITING BUGATTI'S QUARTET OF WORLD RECORD CARS FOR THE FIRST TIME



453.91 km/h is the new top-speed world record for an open-top car. Achieved at the track facilities of ATP Automotive Testing Papenburg GmbH, Germany, on November 9th — a day now immortalized in

2026 BUGATTI AUTOMOBILES S.A.S.

Bugatti's history, and the history of the automotive world. At the end of its incredible run, the one-of-one W16 Mistral[1] World Record Car returned to the dedicated team that had made it possible, reveling in the history they had made together. But before the landmark day was done, the W16 Mistral returned to the track — joining its three world-record-setting forebears in an iconic moment in Bugatti's story.

Together, the four cars represent the purest essence of innovation — showcasing not only the evolution of Bugatti machinery, but the expanding boundaries of engineering possibility and an ever-growing mastery of outright performance. The Veyron 16.4 Super Sport World Record Edition; Veyron 16.4 Grand Sport Vitesse World Record Edition; Chiron Super Sport 300+[2]; and now the W16 Mistral World Record Car — all have played a unique role in carving out their place, and Bugatti's incomparable legacy, in the story of the automobile.
Building on a beautiful, intricate history of unparalleled elegance and grace stretching back to the early 20th century, Bugatti was to enter a new world — one defined by a record-conquering pursuit of performance. It is a tale that was set in motion at the turn of the decade, in June 2010, with an achievement that redefined the world's perception of speed.

REWRITING THE RULEBOOK FOR ROAD-GOING PRODUCTION CARS

On a sunny day at the proving grounds of Ehra-Lessien in Germany, the stage was set for the Veyron 16.4 Super Sport World Record Edition to usher in a new decade of Bugatti creation with an unparalleled statement of intent.

For Bugatti's first Pilote Officiel, Pierre-Henri Raphanel, it was a day to draw upon his rich expertise in motorsport and high-performance driving — assuming the controls of a unique vehicle imbued with the power of a modified, 1,200 PS version of the Veyron's W16 engine. Featuring four enhanced turbochargers and larger intercoolers, the Veyron 16.4 Super Sport saw the Veyron's chassis also comprehensively redesigned — prepared to cement its impact on the automotive world.

The momentous achievement of Bugatti's world-leading engineers was made starkly clear with Pierre-Henri's searingly fast world-record-breaking run, in which he reached an unprecedented 431.07 km/h. It was an accomplishment honored by bestowing the first five production Super Sports with their own special series — the World Record Editions — featuring the same configuration as the record-setting vehicle, and allowing Bugatti customers to experience the spirit of endeavor that created them.

OPENING UP A NEW WORLD OF POSSIBILITY

Such top-speed records were not only the preserve of closed-cockpit vehicles. Staying true to its ethos of uncompromising invention, in 2013 Bugatti turned its exquisite engineering expertise to open-top vehicles. Based on the Veyron Super Sport platform, the Veyron 16.4 Grand Sport Vitesse World Record Edition was the result. Chinese entrepreneur and passionate racing driver, Anthony Liu, was to take the breathtaking machine to the hallowed grounds of Ehra-Lessien — with a steadfast resolve to showcase the heights to which masterful engineering could take an elemental driving experience.

The immense physical forces of open-air performance required a meticulously curated design to tame. With the cockpit open to the elements, a strengthened carbon monocoque was crafted to deliver supreme torsional rigidity, while a bespoke roof spoiler and intricately designed windbreak ensured optimal management of airflow at high speed.

The fruits of the Molsheim engineers' passion and dedication came to bear at Ehra-Lessien, with Anthony reaching 408.84 km/h — and setting another world record for the marque. As the realm of open-cockpit automotive engineering was conquered, eight World Record Edition vehicles were created, resplendent in the signature two-tone black and orange paintwork that had become a revered symbol of Bugatti's world records.

TAKING TOP SPEED TO THE ULTIMATE HEIGHTS

As Bugatti had established an inimitable history of world-record-beating achievement, in the summer of 2019, it was to take automotive performance to a level that had been widely deemed impossible.

The Chiron Super Sport 300+ was the machine that, from the wheels up, had been thoroughly engineered to realize that immense feat. The 8.0-liter, quad-turbo, 1,600 PS engine equipped with an enhanced thermal management system represented the epitome of Bugatti's iconic W16 masterpiece. The extended 'longtail' bodywork, bespoke for the model, ensured greater aerodynamic efficiency, reducing aerodynamic stall by 40%.

Engineered to perfection and prepared to redefine perceptions of human endeavor, in the hands of Bugatti Pilote Officiel Andy Wallace the car stunned the automotive world. For the first time in history, a series-production car had broken the 300-mph barrier — officially achieving a monumental 490.484 km/h.

30 units of the Chiron Super Sport 300+ edition cement the legacy of a car that will remain in the annals of automotive history for eternity. Finished in Jet Black exposed carbon fiber with two Jet Orange racing stripes down the length of the machine, the spirit of the World Record Cars carried on through — on the cusp of a new decade of Bugatti innovation.

CREATING A RECORD-BEATING MASTER OF AIR

Despite the magnitude of the three World Record Cars' achievements, the Bugatti team did not stop in their quest for unparalleled speed. As the winds of change gusted through the W16 engine's story, so it was brought to the final Bugatti W16 masterpiece: the open-top W16 Mistral.

Named after a unique wind in southern France that heralds the changing of seasons, it is a vehicle that was brought into being to honor the legacy of Bugatti's W16 models. Like the natural phenomenon, its existence conjures up overwhelming sensations of adventure, awe, nostalgia, and anticipation for what is to come. In both honoring its forebears and looking to chart new record-breaking ground, the W16 Mistral World Record Car was created to complete the quartet of ultimate Bugatti innovation — etching another open-top world-record breaker into the history of Bugatti.

From the iconic Bugatti horseshoe grille at the front of the W16 Mistral, to the immense diffuser at the rear, air races through and over intricately crafted features designed to harness its power. Combined with the mighty 1,600 PS from the 8.0-liter 16-cylinder engine, the vehicle's purpose is to seamlessly slice through the air, while delivering a truly elemental open-top driving experience.

Such was the intricacy of the design and meticulous engineering of the production-series car, that the W16 Mistral World Record Car required very little modification for its run; with the body-panel gaps masked for optimized airflow, the suspension set up for less air resistance, and the speed limiter removed for unleashing the full power of the engine, the vehicle was set to make history.

Armed with minimal fine-tuning optimizations, the spirit of the World Record Cars coursing through its veins, and the experience of Andy Wallace at the wheel, so the W16 Mistral World Record Car conducted its world-record run in Papenburg on November 9th. And with the customer of the unique car and Bugatti's senior leadership in attendance, Andy made Bugatti and automotive history once more — vastly superseding the previous open-top world record with an incredible 453.91 km/h.

Christophe Piochon, President of Bugatti Automobiles, reflected on the remarkable tale and each of the World Record Cars in attendance:

"From 2010 to the present, Bugatti has celebrated the icons of its modern era with top-speed world record attempts. From the Veyron, through to the Chiron and now the W16 Mistral, the unmatched passion and dedication of Bugatti's design teams has seen the W16 era defined by monumental achievements. Seeing each of the World Record Cars gathered here is a truly emotional moment for me; contributing to these projects has been an incredibly special part of my career at Bugatti, and they are pioneers in their own right — expanding the horizons defined by the last world-record accomplishment and taking our ambitions to even greater heights. The W16 World Record Car now joins the illustrious company of The Singh Collection — to which we pay tribute for creating such an incredibly impressive, history-making group of vehicles. The Bugatti World Record Cars are incomparable in what they have achieved — and are therefore Bugatti vehicles in every sense of the word."

CHRISTOPHE PIOCHON

PRESIDENT OF BUGATTI AUTOMOBILES

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[2] Chiron Super Sport 300+: 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

[2] W16 Mistral: WLTP fuel consumption, l/100 km: low phase 40.7 / medium phase 21.9 / high phase 18.3 / extra high phase 17.6 / combined 21.8; CO2 emissions combined, g/km: 495; efficiency class: G