THE JEAN BUGATTI LEGACY: A DEFINING INFLUENCE ON BUGATTI'S MODERN-DAY CREATIONS



January 15 is a date that will forever be entwined within the history of Bugatti. On this day — exactly 115 years ago — Jean Bugatti, the visionary engineer and designer whose incredible groundbreaking contributions continue to leave an indelible mark on the wider automotive industry, was born.

The pioneering work that came from the genius mind of Jean back in the 1920s and 1930s continues to play an ever-crucial role within modern-day Bugatti; his trendsetting ideas — often

being unlike anything else of their time — being used as inspiration and reference points by the Bugatti design team as they shape the brand's latest creations and future visions.
In many respects, the recently unveiled Chiron Super Sport[1] '57 One Of One' embodies the enduring influence of Jean timeless masterpiece, the Bugatti Type 57 SC Atlantic, transporting the breakthrough design treatment into focus within the 21st century.

Approaching its 90th anniversary, Jean's awe-inspiring Type 57 SC Atlantic continues to captivate the design community and automotive enthusiasts worldwide, retaining its status as one of the most precious, luxurious and exclusive automobiles in the world.

The design influence of the Type 57 SC Atlantic still resonates deeply within Bugatti's modern design DNA. Many of the car's iconic features, including the bolted fin that runs along its body, have exquisitely infused Bugatti's contemporary design language. The La Voiture Noire[2] is an especially fine example of Jean's enduring mark on the aesthetic innovation playing out within contemporary Bugatti hyper sports cars. For one passionate customer, however, the Type 57 SC Atlantic became more than just a reference; it became a true passion — the source of inventiveness for her personalized Bugatti Chiron Super Sport.

In crafting the Chiron Super Sport '57 One Of One', Bugatti's Sur Mesure team collaborated closely with engineers, staying true to the brand's 'form follows performance' philosophy and honoring some of the original car's core design attributes. The result includes a modern interpretation of the remarkable Type 57 SC Atlantic's grille, with polished vertical lines and a thicker center spine, meeting the extreme cooling and aerodynamic needs of a 440 km/h hyper sports car.

Establishing an aesthetic arc influenced by Jean's pioneering work in the 1930s, the one-off Chiron stands proud on five-spoke Super Sport wheels featuring polished chrome. The Chiron's body is adorned with the same original silver-tinted blue finish, a core visual identity that underpinned the original Type 57 SC Atlantic. A hand-drawn silhouette of the Atlantic, a shape that can be recognized from far away, elevates the underside design of the Chiron's rear wing. It is a true modern homage to the sheer craftsmanship excellence and design innovation that inspired Jean's unique automotive masterpiece — a work of art that is revered worldwide.

But the deep-rooted influence of Jean's work extends from today's Bugatti Sur Mesure one-off customer projects through to the creation of the latest limited-production hyper sports car unveiled by the brand. One such example of Jean's legacy is the W16 Mistral[3], Bugatti's ultimate roadster that will be hand built at the Atelier in Molsheim and delivered to customers later this year. A key source of inspiration for the design and development of the W16 Mistral is the awe-inspiring Type 57 Roadster Grand Raid Usine, which was engineered for performance and designed within the highest parameters of craftsmanship and luxury.

As rare and mysterious as it is beautiful, chassis number 57222 is the only Bugatti Type 57 Roadster Grand Raid Usine in existence of the ten 'Grand Raid' ever built. And it is an iconic one in every sense: finished in the black and yellow colors favored by Jean's father, Ettore Bugatti, this highly personal 'Grand Raid' served as an inspiration starting point for the black and yellow W16 Mistral that was unveiled at Monterey Car Week in 2022.

The Type 57 Roadster Grand Raid Usine — designed under the meticulous guidance of Jean — is still today widely regarded as one of the most elegant open-top automobiles ever crafted. It successfully distinguished itself from the other Bugatti Type 57 models, including the Type 57 SC Atlantic and Type 57 S Atalante. Numerous innovations were pioneered on the 'Grand

Raid', including streamlined and elongated fenders, a V-shaped windscreen and aerodynamic headrest supports. Adjustments to the steering column angle, gear lever, handbrake and pedals further underline the roadster's performance-oriented capabilities. This legacy — throughout his career Jean relentlessly pushed boundaries, challenged norms and established new benchmarks — shaped the design and aerodynamics engineering of the W16 Mistral.

But Jean's pioneering work is not only shaping today's Bugatti hyper sports cars; it also continues to influence the overall design philosophy and direction of the brand. This is especially true of the Type 57 SC Atlantic: as well as forming the basis of the customer's vision for the Chiron Super Sport '57 One Of One' car, some major design elements of Jean's Type 57 SC Atlantic can be found today on each and every modern-day Bugatti models.

In Jean's earlier Bugatti creations, his distinctive — and now iconic — C-line is skillfully employed, effortlessly extending the aesthetic contours of the side profile of the car. This line not only enhances the visual appeal but also instills a sense of fluidity, creating the illusion of motion even when the vehicle is stationary. This sophisticated visual attribute is now a core design element of Bugatti's modern cars. Similar principles apply to Jean's breakout center line visual which was employed to great effect on the Atalante and Atlantic models. This piece of design narrative focused on creating the optimum aesthetic proportions of a car, with the bold accentuation of the center line exquisitely running through the exterior and dropping to the beltline. Jean's use of duotone colors and highly original shapely forms is consistently referenced in the modern world of Bugatti design.

Jean passionately took on his father's undertaking to bring to the fore automotive masterpieces that have the perfect combination of power, sportiness, luxury and elegance. The Type 57 SC for example was a sports car ahead of its time in every respect, seamlessly absorbing the key attributes of a Grand Tourisme within a unique design and level of elegance never seen at the time. In creating this car some 90 years ago, Jean opened a new segment within the automotive industry, with his cars offering customers the perfect combination of performance and luxury, a direction that set the base for all the Bugatti hyper sports cars since the launch of the Veyron.

JEAN BUGATTI: THE LEGEND BEHIND THE MAN

Jean's impact on the Bugatti brand was revolutionary and such was the progress of positive change and innovation that in 1936 Ettore transferred leadership of the company to his free-thinking son.

But in addition to design greatness, Jean also left an enduring mark on automotive engineering and production having devised and implemented a highly flexible, scalable and modular architecture in the early 1930s to enable platform sharing and efficient derivative model development, a core strategy that remains key in the industry today.

"Jean epitomizes an automotive artistry operating at the very highest caliber. Like Ettore, he drew inspiration from architecture, sculpture and furniture in his automotive craft. His cars were more than mere means of transportation. Each car he led the creation of was a piece of art on wheels and this is exactly what inspires Bugatti to achieve today. His exceptional work, characterized by visionary thinking and extraordinary concepts — at the time, Jean's automobiles were seen as reference points across the world, setting new standards and demonstrating that machines can envelop emotional aesthetic appeal from within technical beauty and via the quality of the materials used — remains a perpetual source of inspiration for our design team.

"Today the Bugatti family marks the birthday of a true pioneer; a man whose ideas continue to shape and influence the wider automotive sphere in addition to modern day Bugatti hyper sports cars. In every respect, Jean Bugatti's work is a limitless source of inspiration; his incredible contributions will forever be revered by those in the automotive world but also more generally speaking in the design community."

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