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PEBBLE BEACH CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE 2023: A CELEBRATION OF BUGATTI'S INCOMPARABLE LEGACY



The incomparable craftsmanship and coachbuilding expertise of Bugatti have always played a leading role at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance in California, one of the most renowned collector car events in the world, ever since a 1938 Type 57 coupé de ville appeared at the very first event in 1950. The 2023 edition was crowned by the presence of six examples of the Type 57, demonstrating the beauty and exclusive coachbuilding savoir-faire of this iconic model, resulting

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in two examples being named ‘Most Elegant Closed Car’ and ‘Most Elegant Open Car’ at the event.

As part of the Monterey Car Week on the links of the historic Concours d’Elegance held at the Pebble Beach golf course, the event showcased rare and extraordinary cars from all over the world, which are judged for their beauty, condition and history by a panel of the world’s most experienced and knowledgeable experts. This year, among the highlights for many visitors was an entire class focused on the Bugatti Type 57, the legendary design still revered today for its outstanding beauty, engineering excellence and innovation.
This special class was populated by a display showcasing the diversity of Type 57 models, including a 1937 Bugatti Type 57 Franay Cabriolet, one of just four Bugatti models ever to be finished by the Parisian coachworks, and believed to be the only Type 57 featuring a Franay body. As befits such a rare car, the two-seater has a colorful backstory, having initially been the wish of German movie star and skier Hella Hartwich, who ordered the chassis and commissioned Franay to design the elegant cabriolet body. It later fell into the hands of French film maker Jean Rouch, who proudly drove it until his death in 2004. Lovingly restored in 2011, it is now the responsibility of the Evergreen Historic Automobiles Association in Lebanon, Missouri, where it is meticulously maintained.

Also in the class was one of just 42 Type 57S chassis, of which only four received a cabriolet body from French coachbuilder Vanvooren, with just three remaining today — one of which starred at Pebble Beach this year. The 57S model, developed towards motorsport, won three Grand Prix in 1936 and four in 1937, and was also victorious at Le Mans. This elegant Vanvooren Cabriolet version, still sporting its original engine, transmission, rear end, body and fenders, served as a wonderful testimony to the astonishing build quality and durability of these outstanding works of automotive art.

However, it was a Type 57S Corsica Open Sports that most impressed the panel of expert judges to be named the ‘Jules Heumann Most Elegant Open Car’. German-British shipping magnate Robert Ropner commissioned London’s Corsica Coachworks to build a sporting four-seater open tourer body, and the glorious result was delivered in 1937 featuring stunning black paint and cream leather. Having likely been raced at some point in its life, it has now been painstakingly restored.

Although many beautiful designs were placed atop the Type 57 chassis, arguably the most stunning of all came from the mind of Jean Bugatti himself — the Atalante. At Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance, two of these masterpieces sat gleaming on the lawns of the golf course, out of only 17 ever created. The streamlined coupé profile and powerful straight-eight, 3.3-litre dual-overhead camshaft engine combined to devastating effect, marking it out as one of the most desirable coupés of any era. One of the two shone at Pebble Beach is thought to be a ‘one-off’, thanks to its color configuration of black and yellow — Ettore Bugatti’s favorite colors — in contrast to the more traditional all black or black and red. The judges deemed this Atalante worthy of receiving the ‘J.B & Dorothy Nethercutt Most Elegant Closed Car Award’.

The second, a Type 57SC Atalante currently in the possession of an enthusiastic Swiss Bugatti collector, boasts the same sweeping lines, recessed radiator and protruding headlamps as other Atalante coupés, however this particular version is notable due to the fact it is fitted with a supercharger, which increased the power of its engine even further, improving the already phenomenal performance. Its impeccable condition and originality secured this car the victory within its class of Type 57 models.

Visitors of the 2023 Concours d'Elegance also had the opportunity to admire a Bugatti Type 38/49 Figoni Cabriolet Philadelphia, which was entered into Class E1 'Figoni Centennial 1923-1937', a celebration to mark the 100th anniversary of the founding of the lauded Parisian coachbuilding firm. The origin of the Cabriolet Philadelphia name is unknown, but Figoni built several cars with this bodystyle.

As Bugatti's illustrious past was celebrated as part of the prestigious Monterey Car Week, so was its incomparable present, with its latest piece of art, the unique Chiron Super Sport[1] 'Golden Era', the pure embodiment of Bugatti's Sur Mesure limitless personalization program, taking centre stage at The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering. Following The Quail, Bugatti welcomed its close customers on Saturday and Sunday at Le Domaine Bugatti, located at The Lodge, not only for a closer look at the Chiron Super Sport 'Golden Era', the golden W16 Mistral[2] and a Bolide[3] with unique golden accents, but also for discovering some of the latest Bugatti Lifestyle products.

The Little Car Company showcased the Baby Bugatti II, inspired by the Chiron Super Sport 'Golden Era', while Jacob&Co presented its range of hand-crafted Bugatti timepieces and Asprey hosting a display of some of its Bugatti most famous sculptures masterpieces. Guests could also explore more from the recently unveiled Bugatti Residences by Binghatti, the first Bugatti luxury living development in Dubai. Champagne was provided by Champagne Carbon, including the unique blends of Bugatti EB.01, EB.02 and EB.03.

The celebrations of the pioneering achievements of Ettore and Jean Bugatti's automotive creations at the Concours d'Elegance provide the perfect blueprint for the modern Bugatti brand, which draws inspiration from the founding family's relentless innovation and dedication to perfection. With the 'Golden Era 'revealed at The Quail and an exclusive experience featuring the many extraordinary facets of the modern Bugatti brand at Le Domaine, it is clear that the pioneering spirit of Ettore still resonates throughout the brand to this day.

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[2] Chiron Super Sport: WLTP consommation de carburant en l/100 km : basse 40,3 / moyenne 22,2 / élevée 17,9 / particulièrement élevée 17,1 / combinée 21,5 ; émissions de CO2 combinées, g/km : 487 ; classe d'efficacité énergétique : G

[2] W16 Mistral: WLTP consommation de carburant en l/100 km : basse 40,7 / moyenne 21,9 / élevée 18,3 / particulièrement élevée 17,6 / combinée 21,8 ; émissions de CO2 combinées, g/km : 495 ; classe d'efficacité énergétique : G