

Bugatti Type 35

The most successful racing car in automotive history



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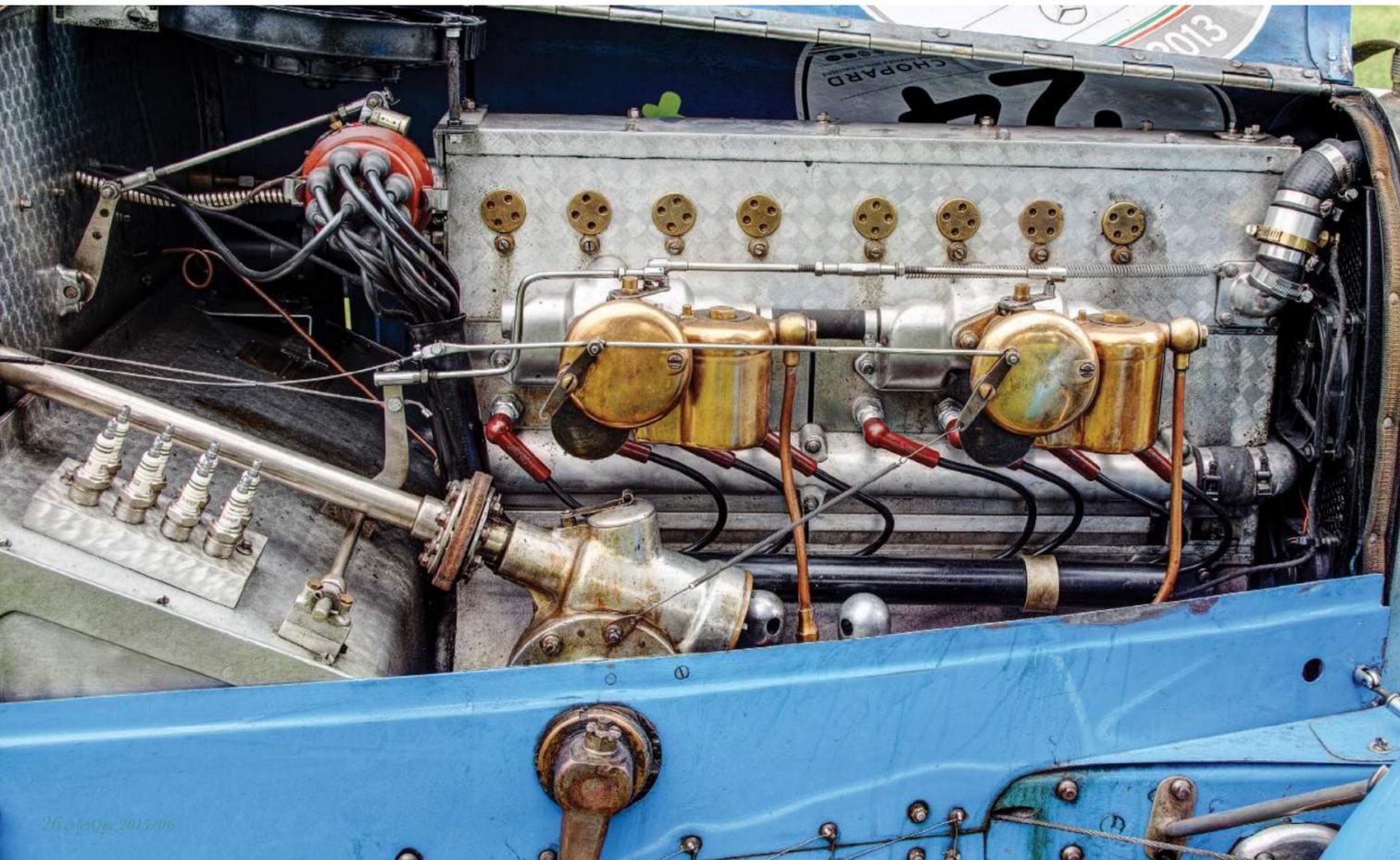


Whoever takes a ride in a Bugatti Type 35 today can still count on driving discomforts like there used to be. Private drivers piloting the open car still cower behind the wood-riveted steering wheel wearing racing overalls to protect against grime and oil and thick goggles to protect against flying rocks and insects. They take sight of the next curve through the tiny windshield. Despite being so cramped and spartan in the cockpit, it is still a lot of fun.

The motor used to have to be cranked to be started, but today the Type 35 has the luxury of a starter battery. This is turned on, the fuel tap is opened and the pressure in the tank is built up with a hand pump. When driving at full speed, it is the job of the passenger to pay attention that the fuel pressure doesn't get too high. With the ignition turned on, retard the timing lever, and, with a push of the starter button, the eight cylinders roar to life.

With a weight of only 750 kg, the car is able to master every exertion effortlessly. This can't be said of the two people sitting in the car. They both have to work hard. Without power steering, the driver has to fight the wheel on the curves and give gas when shifting between gears to increase the RPM so the unsynchronized gears can readily mesh. The passenger must brace himself in the fast curves to keep from flying out of the car. There are no doors, bucket seats or safety belts. Those are all modern inventions.

After a couple of hundred kilometers you hardly still notice how loud, hot and cramped it is in the open two-seater. Lurking beneath the long hood that is bounded tightly with leather straps is the eight-cylinder motor that is making a deafening racket. Situated between the driver and the passenger is the gear tunnel, which gets hotter and hotter while driving. Leaning on it isn't recommended, even if there is a great temptation to do so in the very cramped cockpit.



Many of the cars from back then are still around today. Some were damaged in races or were altered to keep pace with the ever stronger competition. However, certain conditions must be met in order to speak of an original Bugatti. The chassis, which is the heart of each and every Bugatti, must match the chassis number on the delivery papers from the factory in Molsheim, as do the axle, transmission and motor. Also essential in speaking of an original is a complete, unbroken history. This has an impact on the price, as well. Just recently an original Type 35 B compressor was sold for around \$3.5 million.



The Bugatti in the photos, a sky blue Type 35 A Grand Prix, fulfills all these conditions to be considered an original. This magnificent vehicle was built in 1927 and imported to South America by a certain Mr. Matarazzo, a dealer in Sao Paulo. The Pangaro brothers were already using this Bugatti in 1927 in races in Argentina.

Even the cast aluminum wheels with integrated brake drums, a sensation at the time, are original with this eight-cylinder Grand Prix. The customs export documents dated 1927 from Bugatti, Molsheim, still exist and every previous owner can be named, and there is even documentation on all repairs. Because without the so-called paper trail, the “Garage Gold” won’t gain its lustre. This Bugatti fulfills all those conditions, making it officially an original, of which there are precious few today.



Photographed by Otto H. Schulz

The proud owner of this car also drove it in the Mille Miglia 2015, a classic car race loved by many. Today it is first and foremost the drivers who have fun being there and taking part. And it should be mentioned that Bugattis still regularly win this race. The motto used to be don’t polish it, drive it and always keep it technically perfect. This tradition out of Molsheim still holds true today.

Erika Tanner