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1930 Bugatti Type 41 Royale





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extreme car. It was designed for heads of state and massive chauffeur-driven bodies. Thus, it was the largest Bugatti both in length and engine displacement.

It was also Bugatti's most exclusive model. Only six were ever manufactured and each had considerable presence due to their massive and distinct bodies. These typically had long, sweeping fenders that hugged 24-inch aluminum wheels.

Powering the Royale was a 12.7-liter, straight-8 engine that produced 300 bhp. This was enough power to haul a 7000 lb limousine or whatever body that was affixed to it. Bugatti had to use a nine-bearing crankshaft and a single modified carburettor.

Initial production was slated for 25 units, but much less where made due to the depression. This exclusivity has made these cars the most desirable in the world. Even when new, a Royale with a roadster body by Weinberger was \$43,000 USD.

Each Royale received a standing elephant mascot for its radiator cap. These were cast from an original sculpture by Ettore's younger brother, Rembrandt Bugatti who was one of the premier animal sculptors of the era.

Total production of the Type 41 is still up for debate since we have six original cars, 11 total bodies and and a crashed prototype. Of the cars manufactured, only three went to actual owners while the rest where kept by the Bugatti family for some time. The project wasn't a complete loss as Bugatti eventually sold 25 Royale engines to power the French Autorail.

Coupé De Ville Napoleon

The first prototype, chassis 41100, was completed in 1927. It featured engineering traits from Bugatti's eight-cylinder Grand Prix cars including their cast aluminum wheels with built-in brake drums. This first car initially wore a Packard body, and two subsequent bodies before being nearly destroyed in an accident. It later became the famous Coupé De Ville Napoleon as designed by Ettore's son Jean Bugatti at the age of 21. At that time 41100 may have been wearing it's fifth body!

This extravagant limousine was fashioned specifically for Ettore himself. It had a split skylight and a wood-rimmed interior with plush upholstery. Every detail was thoroughly considered and a speedometer was even included for the passengers.

Currently, the Coupé De Ville Napoleon is the most valuable car in the world. Ettore used the car up until his death in 1947. It eventually ended up with the Schlumpf brothers and still resides as a highlight in their Mulhouse Museum which is now preserved by the government as the Musée National de l'Automobile de Mulhouse.

Christies Auction

The Kellener-bodied Royale, 100141, still holds the world record for fetching \$8 700 000 USD at Christie's Auction in 1983. When adjusted for inflation, this price would be over \$16 million, a price which only other Royales or the first Rolls Royce Silver Ghost could eclipse.

In 1985, Pebble Beach hosted a fantastic reunion that brought together all six of the surviving Royales. This feat was again



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In Detail	
submitted by	Richard Michael Owen
built at	Molsheim, France
body stylist	Jean Bugatti
engineers	Ettore Bugatti
production	6
price \$	\$ \$43,000 USD
engine	Twin-Spark Inline-8
position	Front Longitudinal
block material	Cast Iron
valvetrain	SOHC, 3 Valves per Cyl
fuel feed	Single Custom Carburettor
displacement	12763 cc / 778.85 in ³
bore	125 mm / 4.9 in
stroke	130 mm / 5.1 in
power	223.7 kw / 300 bhp @ 3000 rpm
specific output	23.51 bhp per litre
bhp/weight	94.4 bhp per tonne
torque	785 nm / 579.0 ft lbs
body / frame	Body one Steel Ladder Frame
driven wheels	RWD
wheel type	Aluminum
front tires	6.75x36
rear tires	6.75x36
front brakes	Drums
rear brakes	Drums
f suspension	Solid Axle w/Semi-Elliptic Leaf Springs, Friction Dampers
r suspension	Live Axle w/Reversed Quarter-Elliptic Leaf Springs, Friction Dampers
curb weight	3178 kg / 7000 lbs
wheelbase	4300 mm / 169.3 in

attempted in 2007 by the Goodwood Festival of Speed but they failed to get the Berline de Voyage car out of the Blackhawk Collection.

Story by Richard Owen

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