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A World record, which did not yield the desired effect

While BMW was providing the booming German automotive market with the micro car named Isetta – lovingly nicknamed as the “bubble car”, Vélam offered a visually slightly modified version to the French market.

The French Isetta-offspring enjoyed great popularity and the sales went very well in France, before they nosedived in 1957. To counter this development and to heighten the profile of the company name, the beating of a world record was considered to be a suitable and promotionally effective measure. Therefore the car was fitted with an all-new car body out aluminum sheet that was riveted together out of several parts. Contrary to a usual upright sitting position in the Isetta, the aerodynamically designed car body, whose shape was reminiscent of a zeppelin, led to an almost lying position of the driver. To access the vehicle it was necessary to remove the steering wheel and only after the driver had taken his seat he could refit it to

the steering column. On July 30th, 1957, an eleven-person company crew with a French racing blue painted vehicle in tow struck off to the racetrack of Montlhéry to perform their first record drive. Bianchi and his colleague Claude took it in turns to do the record attempt. In the end they were rejoiced over altogether seven new records in the so-called K-class.

Between September 1957 and January 1958 the team performed further record drives and set eleven new records. Nevertheless this did not have the desired effect. In the meantime the financial situation was so bad that the production was completely ceased in January 1958.

AutoCult GmbH
Äußere Further Straße 3
90530 Wendelstein
Germany

Tel. +49 / 9129 / 296 4280
Fax +49 / 9129 / 296 4281
info@autocult.de

www.autocult-models.de