

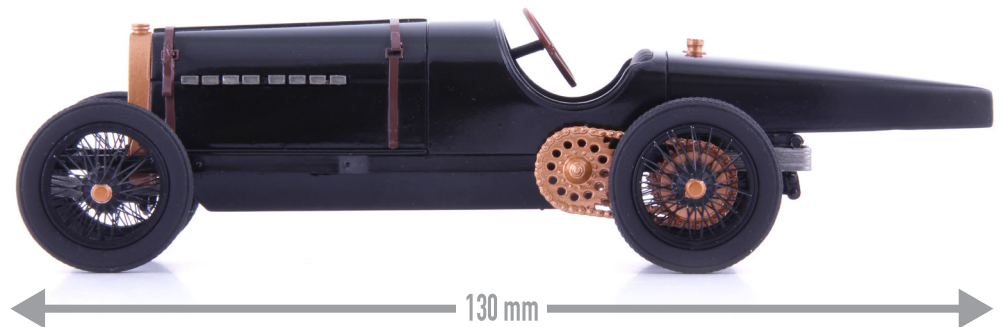
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03/2021

limited edition 333 Stk.



As two men met

Ettore Bugatti launched his 'Automobiles Ettore Bugatti' on New Year's 1910. The then well-known 26-year-old aircraft pilot and athlete Roland Garros was an early customer of Bugatti and both had a close friendship. Roland Garros planned to cross the Atlantic Ocean by plane in the early stages of World War I, after having already successfully crossed the Mediterranean Sea. He was able to win over Ettore Bugatti for his plan, and the car manufacturer offered his help for the realization of his ambitious project.

While the flying ace took care of the construction of the aircraft landing gear, Bugatti developed an engine for it. Around the same time, however, the idea of setting a luxury car on its wheels, which was supposed to outclass all the vehicles known at the time, matured in Bugatti's head. As a drive for his car he went for a very powerful engine, a monstrous 8-cylinder in-line engine. Therefore he merged two 4-cylinder engines together and even increased the displacement. The result was a displacement of 14.5 liters,

which developed the then immense power of 250 hp at 2,160 rpm.

The project of Roland Garros and his high-performance Aircraft suddenly became obsolete, as he died in an accident on October 5, 1918. Bugatti's great engine survived the war and he quickly mounted the powerful 8-cylinder engine into a car, whose long, pointed rear end was probably a homage to aircraft construction.

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