

VOLUME LXXIII • NUMBER 6 • 2025

THE  CLUB

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER RELISHED THE COMMONPLACE

NEWSLETTER



YEAR OF THE AUBURN

AN ORGANIZATION FOR THE RESTORATION & PRESERVATION OF ORIGINAL AUBURN, CORD & DUESENBERG AUTOMOBILES



A NEAR CENTURY APART, BUT BUILT THE SAME WAY: TO BE THE BEST

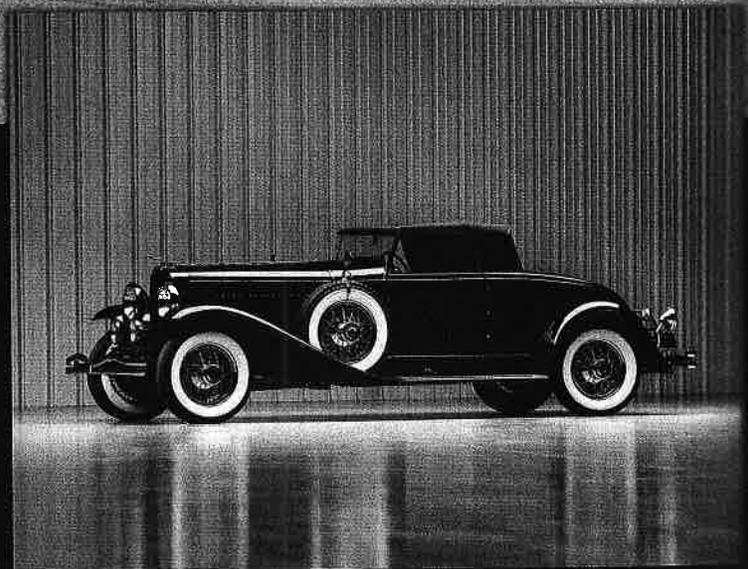
By *Bradey Gerke, Worldwide Auctioneers*

In the golden age of American motoring, one name towered above the rest: Duesenberg. The Model J wasn't just a car—it was a proclamation. A rolling embodiment of wealth, power, and impossible standards. Nearly a century later, that same spirit reemerged in a very different form, wearing a French badge: the Bugatti Veyron.

At first glance, these two machines couldn't be more different, but stay with me. One is a coach-built leviathan from the 1930s, the other a 1,000+ horsepower hyper missile from the early 2000s. But look closer, and you'll see they're spiritual twins.

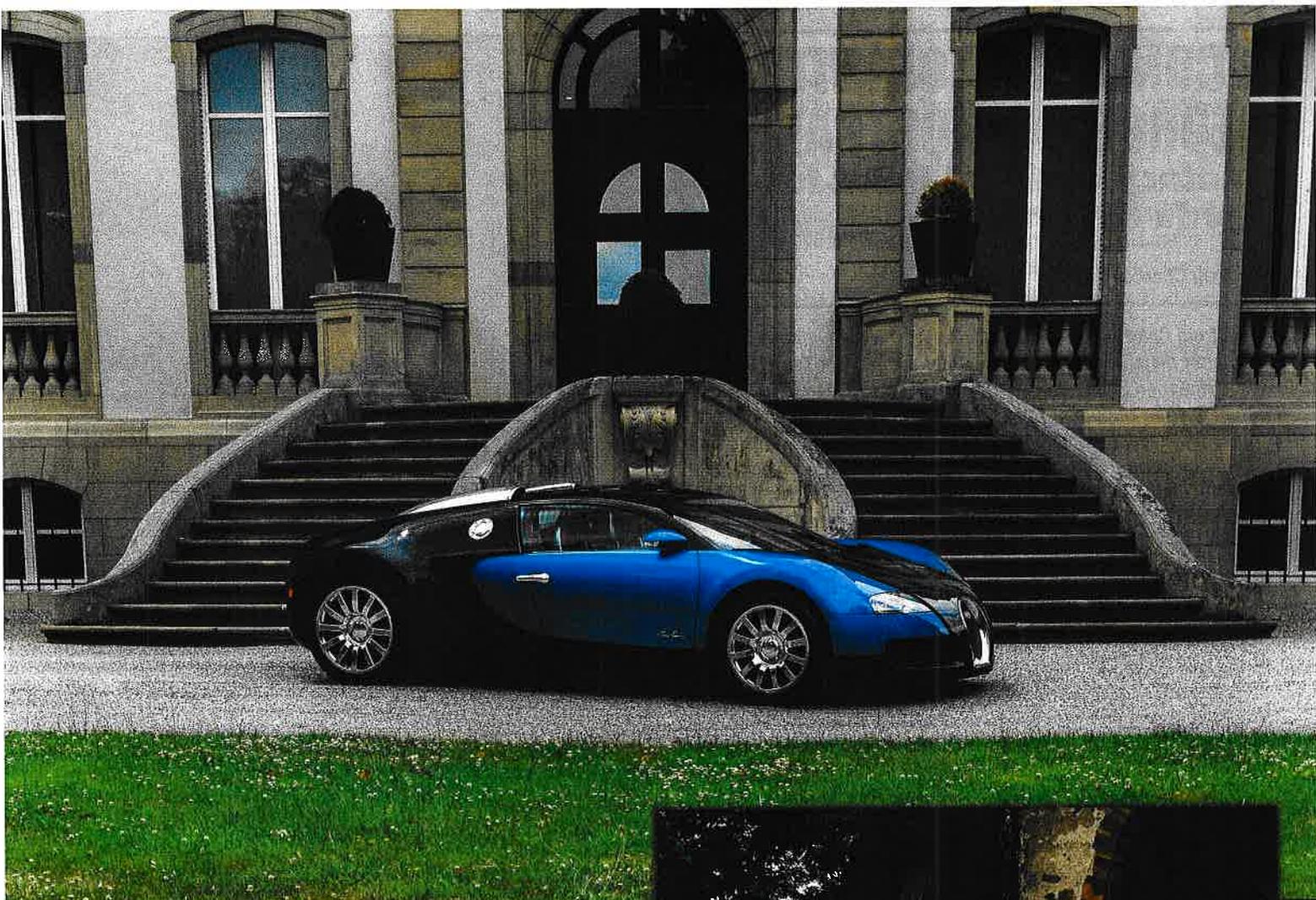
BUILT TO BE THE BEST—AT ANY COST

When E.L. Cord and Fred Duesenberg set out to create the Model J,



they weren't aiming to compete—they were aiming to dominate. The J's straight-eight engine delivered 265 horsepower in an era when 100 was impressive. It was as powerful as a locomotive and as opulent as a yacht; often cloaked in custom bodies by the finest coachbuilders in America and Europe. Owners included movie stars, tycoons and royalty. It was not just transportation; it was aspiration on wheels.

Fast-forward to 2005, and the Veyron is born under the stewardship of the Volkswagen Group. It was an engineering exercise that bordered on madness: build a car that could exceed 250 mph, remain stable, safe and civilized, and still exude luxury. It took 10 radiators, four turbochargers, and a quad-turbo W16 engine to make it happen. The cost to build each car reportedly exceeded its million-dollar price tag.



Just like the Model J, the Veyron was created not to be better than other cars—but to exist in a class entirely its own.

What truly unites these two titans is not just their luxury or presence—it's the sheer, unrelenting pursuit of speed and the fact they both evolved from a revolutionary predecessor, the Duesenberg Model A and the Bugatti EB 110. When the Model J debuted in 1928, it was the fastest production car in the world, capable of a staggering 119 miles per hour—unheard of at the time for a car that weighed over two and a half tons. Nearly eight decades later, the Veyron would claim that same crown, hitting 253 miles per hour and resetting the boundaries of what a production car could do. In both cases, these weren't just the most beautiful or the most expensive cars on the road—they were also, indisputably, the fastest.

Only 481 Model Js were built, and no two were alike, thanks to the bespoke bodies from names like Murphy, Derham and Bohman & Schwartz. They were tailored to the tastes of the elite—some conservative, some outrageous. The Veyron, while more uniform in design, was similarly rare: just 450 were made over its decade-long run, including special editions that pushed boundaries of performance and extravagance alike.

Both cars weren't just expensive—they were reserved for a particular kind of buyer. Not just someone with money, but someone with presence. Someone who wanted a car that was unapologetically the best... the most... the finest.



The Veyron, like the Model J, redefined what a car could be. It shifted the goalposts. After the Duesenberg, Packard, Cadillac and Pierce-Arrow had to catch up. After the Veyron, Ferrari, McLaren and Koenigsegg scrambled to reclaim the speed crown.

Each was, in its own time, the car that made people say, "It's a Duesy"—a phrase born from admiration of Duesenberg's impossible standards, and one that still fits the Veyron like a tailored glove.

In the end, it's not about the cylinders, the materials, or even the numbers. It's about intent. The Duesenberg Model J and the Bugatti Veyron were never meant to be ordinary. They were meant to be legends.