

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## [Patina over Polish - Bugatti 59 wins 'Best of Show' at Pebble Beach](#)

### Lead

The beautifully patinated and highly original Bugatti Type 59 Sports once owned by King Leopold III of Belgium has won the 'Best of Show' award at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance 2024. It's the first time that a car from the preservation class has claimed the top trophy at the famous concours.



We have been in love with the race-battered Bugatti Type 59 Sports [since we first featured and drove the car in spring 2022 on its way to the Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este](#). The scuffed leather seats, steering wheel and paintwork bear the scars of many battles – and if this car could talk, it would have many stories to tell about its time being pushed to the limit around the world. Now the remarkable Bugatti grand prix racer has rightfully won the 'Best of Show' award at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance 2024 – a trophy traditionally awarded to perfectly restored and polished art déco automobiles. The car is owned and regularly driven across the continent, just like it was intended, by our friend Fritz Burkard of The Pearl Collection in Switzerland.



The Bugatti Type 59 itself is a myth in the automotive world: only six of the grand prix cars were ever built – and we won't ever forget [the day when our photo reporter Rémi Dargegen had the chance for an early-morning rendezvous with four of them on 17-Mile-Drive in 2019](#). The car that was now awarded 'Best of Show' at Pebble Beach was built in 1934 as a Type 59 Sports with a Type 57 chassis. A short time later, it received a special new chassis for the next series of Grand Prix races, where it would be driven by Bugatti's courageous racing drivers. René Dreyfus, top driver of the pre-war period and a hero of the French Resistance, took to the wheel in the mid-1930s, as did racing drivers Robert Benoist and Jean Pierre Wimille. One of the later owners of the sports car was King Leopold III of Belgium – an avid Bugatti fan himself.



After the Type 59 Sports was awarded the prestigious FIVA Trophy for “Best Preserved Pre-War Car” as the Concorso d’Eleganza at Villa d’Este in Italy in 2022, it has now crowned its history with the most desired trophy of the collector car world. We congratulate Fritz Burkard and his Pearl Collection team for preserving, presenting and most importantly driving this mythical Grand Prix Bugatti just like it was intended.

*Photos: Zach Brehl and Rémi Dargegen for Classic Driver*

**Gallery**





























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