Patrick Burk: Closing a Memorable Chapter in Molsheim

As development of the Tourbillon continues and Bugatti moves into a new era, the first Molsheim employee, the man who was there when Bugatti returned to Molsheim, has left. Patrick Burk was there at the very start and he has remained ever since: through the rebuilding of the Molsheim premises, the construction of the Atelier, the birth of the Veyron, the Chiron years, and the stewardship of a Château that became, in every sense, his home. Now, on the threshold of a new chapter in his life, Burk looks back.

When Bugatti returned to Alsace at the turn of the millennium, it came back to a blank page. The Château stood unrestored, bearing the marks of time, while beyond its walls lay open fields. It was as Ettore Bugatti had left it. With no team to speak of, there was only the weight of a legendary brand and the task of building something worthy of it.

Patrick Burk was the only person on site. A Facility Manager from Saverne, he had responded to a job advertisement so deliberately discreet it carried no company name and no location. When he arrived for his interview and walked through the doors of the Château, he knew instantly that this was unlike anything he had encountered before.

Burk lived on site, behind the Château and the Remise Nord, watching over the 23-hectare domain seven days a week. He became Bugatti's sole point of contact with the outside world, its representative in Molsheim, the human link between a brand reborn and its parent company - the Volkswagen Group - in Wolfsburg, Germany. When something needed doing, the call always came to Burk.

Karl-Heinz Neumann was - in Burk's words - his first president and his mentor. Under Neumann, the Veyron was conceived, its prototypes built and its first road tests conducted.

The trust between the two men was direct and personal, expressed most memorably in a single gesture: Neumann placed the very first miniature model of the Veyron directly into

Burk's hands - a unique piece, given in recognition of everything he had done to help make it possible.

It is a trust that people immediately placed in him, and one Burk will never forget. "Bugatti was the priority," says Burk, Facility Manager at Bugatti. "24 hours a day, weekends included. Work never stopped." His children grew up at Bugatti, their family life shaped around a place that was as much his home as it was his career. "I sacrificed time with my family, for the brand," he reflects. "But I was willing to do so. I was extremely proud to work for Bugatti, to be the first and only one on site, entrusted with the care of the Château and the task of rebuilding a legend."

Over 25 years, Patrick wore many hats: from Chief of Construction to Guest Relations Manager and Concierge. When asked for his most vivid memories, one immediately comes to mind: the official ceremony marking the laying of the Atelier's first stone.

At that time, there was little to show, yet Burk was given the difficult task of orchestrating a ceremony for more than 300 guests to mark the beginning of a new era for Bugatti. Acting simultaneously as event organizer, host and project coordinator, he oversaw every detail of the occasion.

When Karl-Heinz Neumann arrived alongside local officials including the mayor of Dorlisheim, everything was in place. What had once been an empty field had become the stage on which Bugatti's rebirth was officially set in motion.

Behind the scenes, Burk became the person ensuring every event, visit and celebration unfolded seamlessly. Drawing on his own network of local contacts and suppliers, he worked tirelessly to create experiences worthy of the Bugatti name.

That instinct revealed itself perfectly during Bugatti's centenary celebrations. Nearly 300 people had gathered outside the Château: employees from Molsheim and Wolfsburg surrounded by an incredible display of cars arranged across the grounds. What nobody knew was that Burk had secretly organised a fireworks display entirely on his own initiative. At 11 o'clock, the sky above Alsace suddenly lit up. When it was over, the applause was immediate and sustained. Guests made their way through the crowd to find the man responsible.

"I was a little moved," he comments. "It was an unforgettable evening, and people still mention it when I run into them." It was a precise expression of everything Burk had always brought to the role: carefully prepared, done for others, and for the brand.

Beyond construction sites, ceremonies and celebrations, Burk also became one of the faces of Bugatti in Molsheim. He welcomed owners and guests much like a luxury hotel concierge, ensuring they experienced not only the cars, but also the spirit of the place itself.

When visitors arrived, their attention naturally went first to the cars. Everything else, as Burk recalls, "faded into the background." Yet behind the scenes, he helped shape the atmosphere surrounding every visit.

Over the years he personally collected clients from the airport, guided them around the domain and the city of Molsheim, and shared the history and anecdotes he had gathered over a decade with the brand. Bonds were formed through those encounters. "I lived several lives at Bugatti," he says. "I met incredible people. Bugatti customers are human beings who enjoy sharing simple moments. I tried my best to always make sure they felt at home in Molsheim."

As the Tourbillon moves towards production and Bugatti enters its next chapter, Burk leaves behind more than two decades of memories woven into the life of the Château and the story of the brand itself. He was there when Bugatti returned to Molsheim, when the Atelier rose from empty fields, and when a new era began to take shape.

"I had a wonderful time," he adds. "I witnessed beautiful things, met so many people, and gave a lot of time and energy to Bugatti. In return, I always felt at home at the Château."

Now, Patrick Burk has entered a new chapter of his life in Corsica, where he will enjoy spending time with his wife, children and grandchildren.