Bugatti W16 Mistral 'Le Retour du Jeune Prince': an inimitably personal tribute

In the hands of Bugatti's world-class design teams, the experience of the unbridled, elemental open-top W16 Mistral becomes profoundly personal through the brand's Sur Mesure program. The W16 Mistral 'Le Retour du Jeune Prince' (The Return of the Young Prince) is one such creation - a one-of-one roadster born from both the customer's own story and the Bugatti design team's poetic visualization of it. Shaped around earth, moonlight, stars and inspired by a famous masterpiece of literature, this Bugatti Sur Mesure W16 Mistral has been transformed from an extraordinary hyper sports car into an intimate tribute to imagination, memory and personal expression.

The journey began in October 2023 in Molsheim, where Jascha Straub, Manager of Sur Mesure and Individualization, met with the customer, a discerning Bugatti collector, to explore the creative direction for his W16 Mistral. Together, they studied several concepts and color samples, discussed nuances of tone and atmosphere and moved through a process of close ideation, until a concept began to emerge from the creative horizon. From that horizon, the customer was drawn to the poetic beauty of the moon; its softness, mystery and elegant radiance. And thus, for them the car naturally became a tribute to the world of 'Le Retour du Jeune Prince' - his own literary work, inspired by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's cherished novel, conceived as a continuation of the original tale.

Within the customer's own work, the imagery of the moon holds a central place in the equally majestic narrative, the young prince returning from the moon to earth and from that moment, his own W16 Mistral would come to be shaped as much by narrative, as the delicate strokes of Bugatti designers' pencils.

Following their first exchange, the Bugatti design team began translating the concept into a visual language where the moon and the earth played a central role - translating the emotive power of words into a mesmerizing series of richly detailed design cues.

In order to faithfully transpose the imaginary world of 'Le Retour du Jeune Prince' into an inimitable aesthetic, the Bugatti design team created a dedicated colorway with copper and bronze hues and a warm glow to achieve a highly metallic finish. The color was conceived in earthy tones to evoke lunar light with a sense of richness and wonder; its reflective quality especially important on the W16 Mistral, whose sculptural surfaces respond dramatically to changes in light.

That same attention to visual movement influenced the design of the legendary grille. While the W16 Mistral's 3D horseshoe grille retains its characteristic architecture, its internal lines were designed to follow the dynamic upward flow of the hood, drawing the eye along the car's front profile and reinforcing the sense that every detail has been shaped to tell one cohesive tale.

Rare and precious accents further enrich the exterior artwork, with the outline of the Bugatti Macaron on the grille finished in gold, the front of the vehicle bringing forward a refined detail that complements the warmth of the bespoke body color. Copper brake calipers and matching 'EB' emblems at the center of each wheel add further continuity, embracing the light with discreet brilliance.

Moving across the rearward flanks and the upper surface of the rear wing, the lunar inspiration becomes even more explicit - with a constellation of silver stars lovingly worked into the paintwork through an intricate application process of layering and refinement. A work that required a lot of time and dedication and the unparalleled expertise of Bugatti's specialists. Paying tribute to Saint-Exupéry's original story that inspired the customer's book, a hidden composition is unveiled when the air brake deploys - a reinterpretation of the most famous scene of the original piece, the prince and the fox.

Inside, the W16 Mistral 'Le Retour du Jeune Prince' carries the same story into a more intimate world. The cabin is finished in two leather tones: Terre d'Or, light and luminous; and Driftwood, darker and more grounding. On the Terre d'Or leather door panels, inlays of embroidered leather showcasing the moon. Upon and around it, star motifs are stitched into the leather, extending the theme in a symphony of delicacy and precision. This celestial language continues in the hand-stitched headrests and in the center console, where star-inspired details are inlaid into brown-carbon weave.

Encased like a rare piece of high jewelry, the intricate silver rose inside the gear shifter is a work of art and a 3D-scan from a real flower, subsequently sculpted into an exquisite miniature form. A true testament to Bugatti's incomparable craftsmanship and direct nod to the original tale, it symbolizes a sense of tenderness, delicacy and remembrance, creating a direct emotional link to the literary universe that inspired the commission.

The unique bodywork with earthy tones and silver highlights, the hand-applied stars, the embroidered moon on the door panels, the stitched constellations, the carbon inlays and

the sculpted rose all belong to the same creative world. The exterior and interior thus become two chapters of the same story.

In this union of design, craftsmanship and personal meaning, the W16 Mistral 'Le Retour du Jeune Prince' expresses the essence of Bugatti Sur Mesure, honoring Bugatti's heritage while allowing a customer's imagination to shape something entirely singular in each and every detail. It is a literary homage to the brand's expertise in translating ideas into deep personal stories, a car created to be read, remembered and felt, as much as it is to be driven.

"The W16 Mistral 'Le Retour du Jeune Prince' is a beautiful example of what Sur Mesure can achieve when a customer's personal story is placed at the heart of the creative process. Working with the customer and our specialized CMF team in Berlin, led by Sabine Consolini, we were able to transform a literary tribute into a beautiful narrative canvas. Time and dedication intertwine at the intersection between Haute Couture, architecture and design to deliver what is an exceptionally crafted vehicle in every detail. It has been an honor to bring this vision to life in a way that respects both Bugatti's heritage and the customer's individual story."

Jascha Straub, Manager of Sur Mesure and Individualization