

1938 Bugatti Type 57SC Atlantic

Like many, I'm a fan of Bugatti, and the brand-new release from CMC has pushed me a little bit over the edge. Their model of the famous 1938 Bugatti Type 57 SC Atlantic is just that terrific. In order to house this gem, I'm now forced to build my own "Garage Mahal," which will be constructed without the usual headaches since it will be built in miniature. No contractors, permits or obnoxious building inspectors to deal with.

Even though Atlantics have been done to death in so many scales, collectors still haven't tired of them. Ever since CMC first announced that they were going to produce this Bugatti as one of their super-detailed, 1:18 scale miniatures, the model-collecting hobby worldwide (myself included) has been waiting. Well, the wait is over, and it was well worth it. Not only do I like what I see, but I love it. This superb model is a must-have for any car guy with a pulse.

Of the three Atlantics built, CMC chose to replicate the third and last one built, Chassis 57591, which now resides in the collection of fashion designer Ralph Lauren.

CMC produced this model to show the car as it was originally built and delivered to its first owner, R.B. Pope in the U.K. Not long after delivery, Pope added a supercharger, which I'm glad to see has also been included. The hand-polished sapphire blue paint finish has a perfect "scale" luster. This shade of blue is correct, and is noticeably darker than the shade of blue that the car wore after a later painting.

I applaud CMC for their great effort to make this model historically accurate. In the past, they haven't done all of their homework and always created their models based on fully restored cars, which as many know, are often less than historically accurate. I could write a book on this subject, but I'm not interested in having owners of various cars get bent out of shape.

There is so much going on with this incredible model that space does not



permit me to fully cover it. All the panels open, and there are numerous big and small working features. Both doors, hung on three little hinges, smoothly pivot open and work in conjunction with a hinged sliding bar attached to the door bottom, with the other end of the bar attached in a metal framed channel with recessed spring!

Seats and door panels are trimmed in leather, which usually comes off as less than convincing in anything smaller than a huge 1:8 scale model, but this time it works, thanks in part to a thin skin with a fine grain, and careful application. The simulated wood of the dash and trim around all windows is great.

The central seams on the body and fenders are made of oh-so-thin stamped copper with simulated rivet heads. Adding to that are real, very tiny, rivet heads on the center of the body from front to rear. Yes, the engine, chassis and suspension are thoroughly detailed as well. The rear spare tire cover lifts off, and the spare is in place.

There are few minor nits to pick, but I noticed them. The pedals are a little weak, the wipers are a bit heavy, the seat backs are a bit too high, and the dash gauge bezels should protrude less. Like I said, all these are minor issues.

This model represents an incredible value, and the only way to get something better and bigger would be to spring for a scratch-built model for at least \$30k more! I give this one my highest recommendation. Priced at \$347.

Model Details

Production date: 2011

Quantity: 10,000 or more—plus a run of 5,000 pieces of the Ralph Lauren car in black

SCM Five-Star Rating:

Overall Quality: ★★★★★

Authenticity: ★★★★★

Overall Value: ★★★★★

Web: www.cmc-modelcars.de/us

Speaking Volumes by Mark Wigginton

The Fate of the Sleeping Beauties

By Kay Hottendorff, Ard op de Weegh and Arnoud op de Weegh, Veloce, 160 pages, \$37.77, Amazon

There is an entire sub-genre in the motor book world build around the quixotic quest for lost cars. Everyone has a barn find story—some of them true. The notion drives enthusiasts with the right mix of time and temperament (and that perfect job as a utility lineman in a rural area with a large, yet undemanding, territory) as they scour falling-down barns off secondary roads. It's "In Search of the Lost Ark," but this time the object of desire is that near-perfect, rare classic that slipped between the cracks and wants to be found, unloved but intact, in dry storage and covered with a thick layer of protective dust.

The greatest example of that is the story of the Sleeping Beauties. In 1983, German photographer Herbert Hesselmann published photos of a large collection of classic cars, hidden away in a 19th century farm in Villemaréchal, south of Paris. The collection's owner allowed the photos—as long as he remained anonymous and his location secret.

How did that work out? Not at all, and before long French wine writer Michel Dovaz was besieged with offers to sell, thefts and automotive paparazzi. He then moved the collection of 60 cars to a secret castle location. But what cars: 21 Bugattis, nine Lancias, Alfas, Ferraris, Cords and more. Dovaz bought them all for a song after World War II. He drove them and put them away when another car caught his fancy or his driver car broke.

Many were lost again after that (some sold and resold, some simply hidden in the new castle location), until Ard and Arnoud op de Weegh, father and son, and fellow enthusiast Kay Hottendorff took on the challenge of tracking each one down.

The Fate of the Sleeping Beauties is their tale of detective work and ultimate success, with car-by-car descriptions. Finally, collector Dovaz breaks his self-imposed silence on how he created the ultimate barn find.

Provenance: ★★★★★

The trio of authors formed the right triangle of detective skills: one a computer fan with lots of skill searching online and off, one the meticulous data organizer and the last the people person who followed every lead by letter, phone and in person to tease out the stories.

Fit and finish: ★★★

This book is full of well-reproduced images, and showing the cars in as-found state—and in many of their ultimate restorations—is on the plus side. But the typography and basic design don't live up to the subject matter.

Drivability: ★★★

Dovaz's foreword is delightful. But the meat of the book, much of it well-known already, needs to be attacked with the skills of a storyteller, more "Ripping Yarn" than the pedestrian "Stuff We Found in a Barn." There is plenty of information for the hard-core gearhead, but this is not a page-turner by any means, and that's a pity. ♦

