

Hypercar to megacar

With today's extraordinary hypercars – it seems “super” is no longer sufficiently impressive – many have their roots in the DNA that binds racing cars, past and present, writes Formula One journalist **James Roberts**

From the Bugattis that competed in the pre-war era, to the heritage of Ferrari's Prancing Horse, and the latest Aston Martin shaped by one of the pre-eminent designers of modern Formula 1, each car carries a clear lineage from the race-track to the road.

FERRARI F80

Ferrari has long been synonymous with performance, yet the F80 raises the benchmark further still. Producing 1,200hp, it is the most powerful road-going model the Italian marque has ever created. Central to this is a 3.0-litre V6 generating 900hp, complemented by an electric front axle contributing a further 300hp.

This architecture draws directly from Ferrari's endurance racing programme, with key elements derived from the 499P hypercar that secured victory at the Le Mans 24 Hours in 2023 and 2024. While the hybrid V6 may lack the distinctive high-pitched note of Maranello's traditional V12 engines, its performance credentials are unequivocal: 0-60mph in 2.1 seconds, a top speed of 217mph, and aerodynamic downforce of

Below: The F80 mimicks a single-seater Formula 1 car, with a narrow tub that requires the passenger seat to be set in and behind the driver's seat

up to 1,050kg that ensures exceptional stability.

Named to mark the 80th anniversary of the company founded by Enzo Ferrari, the F80 stands as a fitting successor to LaFerrari. ferrari.com

ASTON MARTIN VALKYRIE

For those who follow Formula 1 closely, the name Adrian Newey has been impossible to ignore over the past three decades. Wherever he has designed cars, success has followed. From Williams to McLaren and Red Bull, and now as Technical Partner to Aston Martin's Formula 1 team, Newey has consistently been at the forefront of innovation

and radical design – an approach that is fully realised in the British brand's Valkyrie, a racing car for the road.

From its elongated, dial-laden steering wheel to its low-slung cockpit and double-harness seatbelts, the Valkyrie delivers an experience that closely mirrors that of a Formula 1 car. With a top speed of 224mph, generated by an extraordinary 1,139hp, 6.5-litre V12 hybrid powertrain and seven-speed transmission, this mid-engined, rear-wheel-drive coupé combines engineering prowess with extreme performance. Acceleration is equally formidable, reaching 60mph in just 2.5 seconds and 100mph scarcely a second later.

With its sweeping rear diffuser and cockpit-style canopy, the Valkyrie looks more at home on a racetrack than the road, and the Gaydon-based carmaker will hope that interest in its spectacular machine will slow its operating losses and reduce the debt it is amassing. astonmartin.com

BUGATTI MISTRAL

Bugatti's rich competition history and the achievements of its drivers have played a central role in shaping the marque's identity. The most notable was Monaco-born Louis Chiron – who famously won on the streets of the Principality in 1931 – and his legacy continues to inform its road cars. The Mistral, which succeeds the Chiron, takes its name from the powerful wind that sweeps through southern France.

This is a car designed to immerse the senses. Its sculpted aerodynamics are matched by the visceral experience of open-top driving, as the world's fastest

convertible. It also marks the final application of Bugatti's remarkable 8.0-litre, 1,578bhp W16 quad-turbocharged engine – an engineering icon that has defined the French automaker for more than two decades.

With performance comparable to the Valkyrie in acceleration and a recorded top speed in excess of 280mph, achieved by Le Mans winner Andy Wallace, the Mistral

represents both a culmination and a farewell of extreme engineering. bugatti.com

KOENIGSEGG AGERA RS

Koenigsegg may not possess the same depth of racing heritage as some of its contemporaries, yet the Swedish firm's commitment to performance is no less formidable. Founded by Christian von Koenigsegg in 1994, at the age of 22, the company has built

Left and above: Road-legal hypercar Aston Martin Valkyrie
Top: Bugatti Mistral – the world's fastest roadster

Below: Koenigsegg Agera RS – all 25 examples were pre-ordered before full-scale production began

its reputation on challenging convention and redefining what is possible in a road car. The Agera exemplifies this philosophy. Once the holder of the production car speed record at 277.9mph, it combines a 5.0-litre twin-turbocharged V8 producing 1,160bhp with extraordinary acceleration, reaching 186mph in just 14 seconds. The RS is an even faster version of the Agera that was first produced a decade ago. With only 25 examples produced, exclusivity is assured. Koenigsegg itself refers to such machines as “megacars” – a reflection of performance that transcends even the hypercar category. koenigsegg.com ■

