

# Velocity vanquished

A trio of seismic supercars opened up the automotive market with full throttle in 2017. *F1 Racing* associate editor and sports car expert, **James Roberts**, lifts the hood on the superlative Bugatti Chiron, Lamborghini Veneno and La Ferrari FXX-K

**A**n open road ahead of you and 1,000hp under your right foot: what more could you ask for? In a world that is heading towards both electric and autonomous vehicles, it's reassuring to know that a handful of supercar manufacturers are only interested in one thing – speed.

Bugatti, Lamborghini and Ferrari and have not only built three of the fastest machines to ever grace the planet; they also happen to be absolutely divine, gilt-edged machines.

## LAMBORGHINI VENENO

Author Ernest Hemingway once famously said, "There are only three sports – bullfighting, motor racing and mountaineering – all the rest are merely games." So, it's perhaps apt the Italian car marque Lamborghini has a tradition of naming its supercars after famous bulls. After the Murciélago and Islero, now comes the Veneno (Poison) – the bull that fatally wounded the famous torero José Sánchez Rodríguez during a 1914 bullfight in Andalusia.

When the Veneno was unveiled on the Italian naval aircraft carrier, *Cavour*, it eclipsed the Veyron as the world's most expensive supercar at €3.3m.

The launch of the 221mph-machine was to celebrate Lamborghini's 50th anniversary, but you won't see many blasting down the autostrada. It's arguably the world's most exclusive car. Only three of the coupe exist – and nine of the roadster.

Based on the Lamborghini Aventador, with similar carbon fibre

styling, the 6.5-litre V12 is capable of producing 750hp. That translates to 0-62mph in 2.9 seconds. And while it's not the most powerful supercar, a lightweight chassis pays dividends in braking and cornering, making light work of those Apennines hairpins.

## BUGATTI CHIRON

This luxurious mid-engine supercar is fast. Seriously fast. ►

**Below: The Lamborghini Veneno Roadster**





Bugatti's successor to the Veyron is now the world's quickest production car and is capable of an eye-watering 261mph. Our beautiful two-seater accelerates from 0-62mph in less than 2.5 seconds and hits 124mph four seconds later. An astonishing 1,479hp is blown out from its 8-litre engine, with the 16 cylinders arranged in a 'W' formation, forced by four turbochargers. The tail pipes emit their waste gasses into the diffuser, creating downforce inspired from none other than Formula 1 technology.

Not surprising then, this supercar is named after former multi-grand prix winner Louis Chiron. In the 1930s, the Monégasque raced for Bugatti and will be forever synonymous with his home track. As late as the 1970s, Chiron was responsible for waving the flag to herald the start of the Monaco Grand Prix.

The Chiron's interior is comfortable, leather-lined with a minimalistic metal styling. But the car's tour de force is its speed. Bugatti have only made 500 units at a cost of €2.4m.

**Above: Bugatti Chiron at the 2017 Goodwood Festival of Speed Below: Ferrari FXX-K on one of Ferrari's Racing Days at Mugello Circuit in Italy**

#### LA FERRARI FXX-K

Ferrari have come a long way in 70 years since the first car to bear Enzo's name – the 125 S.

La Ferrari FXX-K plays successor to the original FXX, but

take note of the 'K'. This Prancing Horse has benefitted from Formula 1 engine regulations.

The 'kinetic' energy recovery system (KERS) has been developed in parallel with the Scuderia's impressive Formula 1 hybrid power unit programme.

Additional electrical power is harnessed under braking, then stored in the car's batteries to supplement the 848hp from the 6.3-litre V12. That produces a combined output of 1,036hp.

Four newly-calibrated engine settings exploit the dual power sources to the driver's demands – maximum performance for a handful of laps or a longer stint.

It's the first Ferrari to produce more than 1,000hp and it can lap Fiorano circuit – the testing facility a stone's throw from its Maranello factory – five seconds quicker than the first generation La Ferrari.

Unfortunately, this supercar is restricted to the race track. Owners only get the chance to drive the FXX-K in Ferrari's research and development track days and all 40 units of the €2.5m hypercar have already been sold. ■

