

EVENTS / CAUSES

Bugatti taps ultra-affluent North American market with driving experience

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By JOE MCCARTHY

French automaker Bugatti is ingratiating itself with prospective North American consumers via a day-long driving program in the Grand Sport Vitesse model.

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The "Dynamic Drive Experience" enables participants to drive on challenging road courses, closed roads and airport runways to get a sense of the car's maximum potential. The brand will enact four events annually in the United States and Canada, with the first event taking place in Las Vegas this month.

"I'm not sure the models have any relevance in Southern California except for making a big statement when you pull up to your favorite restaurant," said Bob Prosser, CEO of [Auto World Marketing Corp.](#), San Diego.

"Perhaps they are investments that will appreciate over time and a client's financial adviser suggests the acquisition for various tax-based justifications," he said.

"But as for a non-track driving experience in Southern California I don't see the point: it's tantamount to a thoroughbred horse corral."

Mr. Prosser is not affiliated with Bugatti, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Bugatti did not respond by press deadline.

Dynamic driving

Consumers that sign up for the event will be accompanied by an official Bugatti Test Pilot to provide a comprehensive overview of the car. Another Bugatti team explains ownership experience and what to expect from personal concierges.

To ensure that participants get the most out of the Grand Sport Vitesse, the road course has been carefully plotted to include windy turns and long straight-aways. The featured model is the world's fastest-production roadster, according to the brand.



Bugatti Grand Sport Vitesse

In between driving, guests can network with other participants in the small designated groups and enjoy five-star hospitality.

The next driving event will take place in early 2014 in the southwestern U.S. and proceeding event locations will be unveiled throughout the year.

For a drive

Other luxury automakers have crafted elaborate driving experiences for prospective consumers, since not many tactics have the same power as experiencing a vehicle in action.

For instance, Bentley Motors is building upon its 2014 Power on Ice events in Finland with a longer lineup of cars, circuits designed by four-time World Rally Champion Juha Kankkunen and options for designing a bespoke trip.

Power on Ice 2014 will allow brand enthusiasts to hone their driving skills with Bentley's team of instructors over four days while enjoying a stay in Northern Finland. Also, the new Flying Spur sedan will make its debut on Mr. Kankkunen's circuits, where its ability to withstand harsh conditions will be tested ([see story](#)).

In addition, Mercedes-Benz USA invited five of Instagram's most lauded users to ignite interest in the CLA model among young consumers by touring the United States in the vehicle.

The automaker opened up the journey to a sixth entrant who was selected by the five recognized photographers to boost fan interest in the promotions ([see story](#)).

Although the exclusive nature of the Bugatti events will draw interest from luxury consumers, the Grand Sport Vitesse's potential will be hard to achieve outside of a race course.

"Where I live down here near La Jolla California, I've seen a Bugatti here and there," Mr. Prosser said. "They look completely out of place crawling along at five miles an hour through gridlock traffic."

Final Take

Joe McCarthy, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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