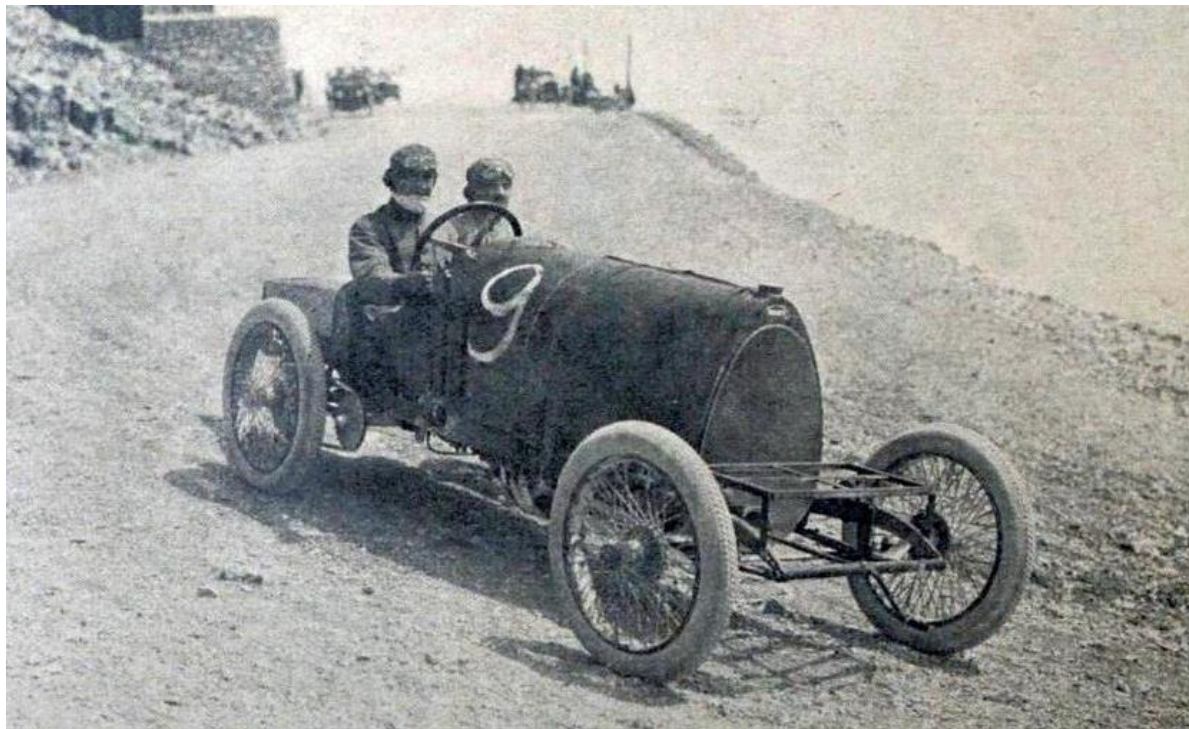


## 1912 BUGATTI TYPE 18 – ETTORE BUGATTI'S RACING CAR.

SCRATCH BUILD AT 1/20 SCALE BY NIK LEVECQUE



Ettore Bugatti understood very soon after starting his factory in 1909 that his brand could gain fame fastest by competing in races. Bugatti had already participated in some local races in 1911 with his first four-cylinder (1327cc) Type 13, but he wanted to take a more serious approach. From his time at Deutz, he still had an interesting design for a five-liter engine, and he built a first prototype with it (chassis 471), with which he personally participated in a race at Le Mans, a sprint around Lac de Sillé, and a mountain stage on Mont Ventoux. During this last 'Course du Mont Ventoux', the car bore the number 9 on one side. He finished first in his category and fourth in the overall standings. The car was fitted with a luggage rack at the front, because Ettore Bugatti had to carry a large suitcase with gear for a multi-day trip from Molsheim (750 km round trip).

Ultimately, seven Type 18s were built, of which three still exist today. One of them, the car that once belonged to war pilot Roland Garros, stands proudly in the Louwman Museum in The Hague.

The Type 18 was, like virtually everything Ettore Bugatti built, a very remarkable car. The four-cylinder 5L already had three valves per cylinder back then, and its top speed was around 170 km/h. That was for 1912! The wheels had a diameter of 88 cm, and comfort was completely out of the question. In 1912, the tires were still made of white rubber, and the car was not yet equipped with lighting. Today, it has black tires, a set of headlights, and batteries on both sides of the chassis.



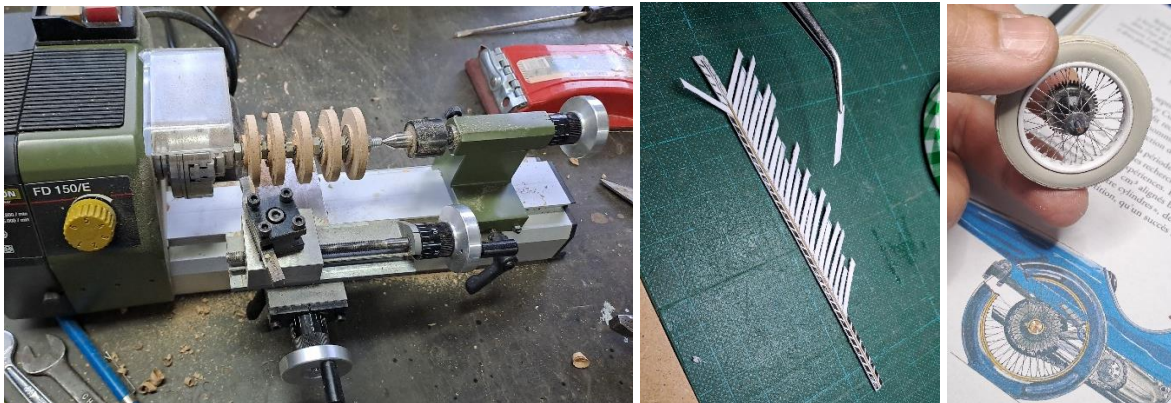
It was in many respects an experimental car, with its double leaf springs at the front, its high center of gravity, and its front axle mounted far in front of the engine. A petrol and an oil tank were located in the low, elongated rear section.

### **The model: no plan, no kit, no AI, no 3D print...**

Fortunately, I found 16 good photos and a sketch from a book. In addition, I found some blurry photos from 1912 that I could work with in my familiar scale: 1/20.

I also found the dimensions: track, wheelbase, and wheel diameter, and I projected those measurements onto a side-view photo to create a workable sketch.

As always, I started with the wheels: tires were turned from MDF from laminate flooring, well-suited due to its high density. A tread was applied using paper, and the rim came from a 32mm drainpipe.

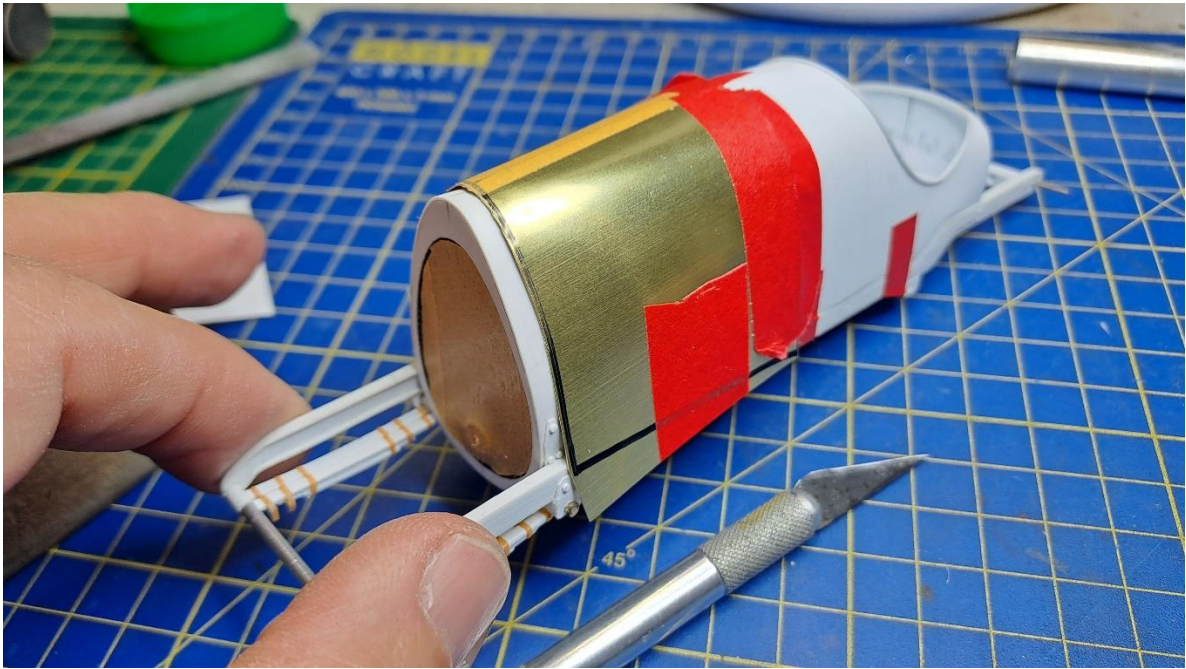


Hubs were turned and spokes were fitted.

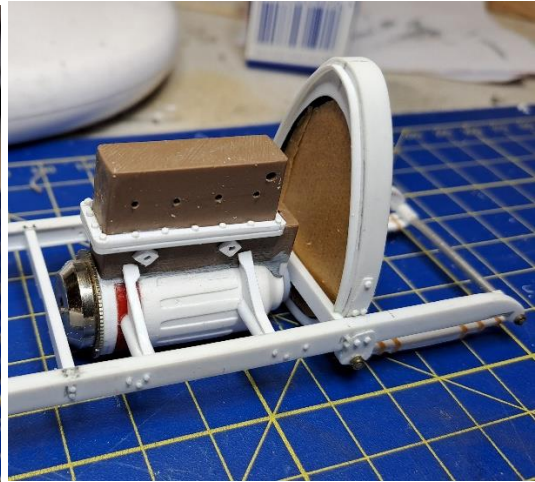


The chassis, the radiator, and the central part of the bodywork were made of polystyrene, the hood of brass.

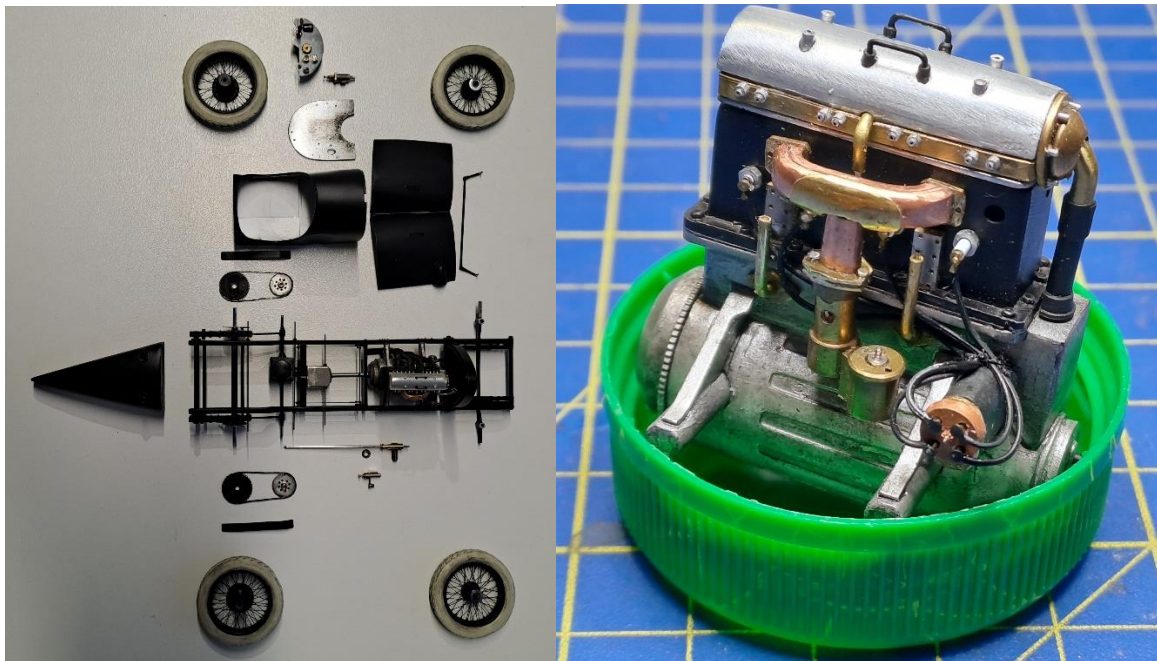
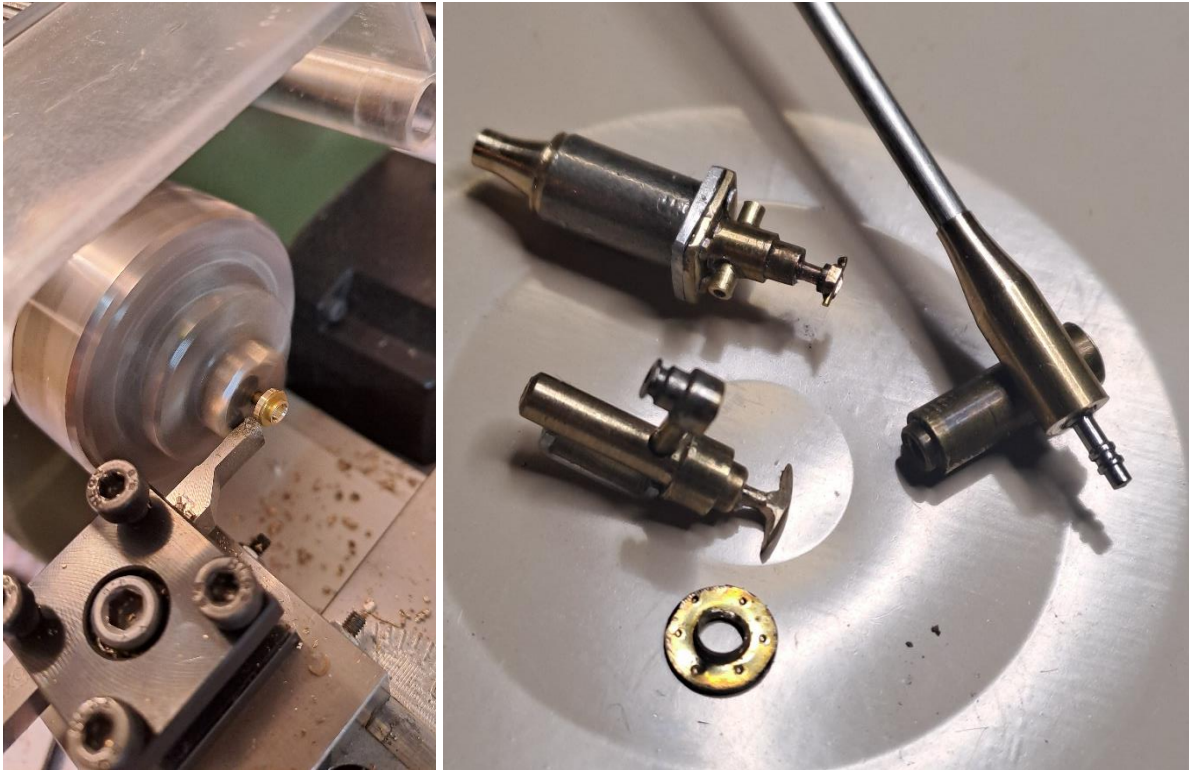




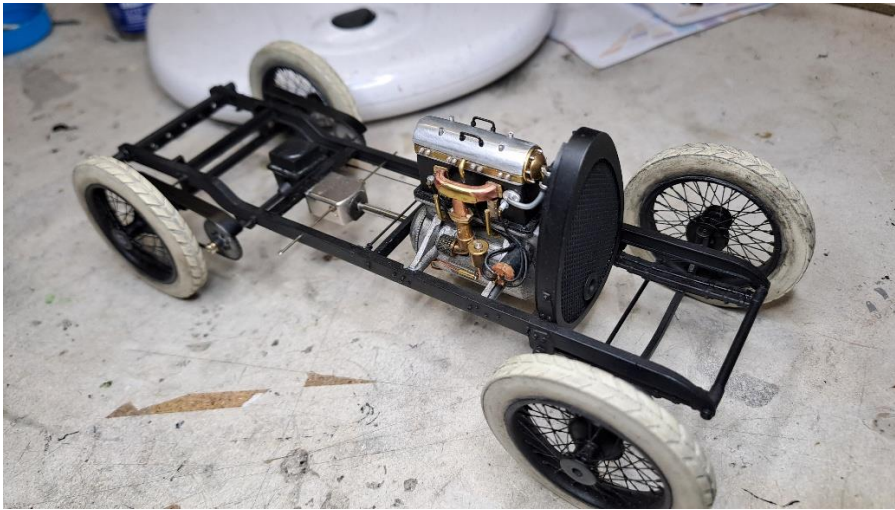
The stern was made from MDF, and the engine block from various plastic parts. In doing so, I often had to think several steps ahead to provide holes for later steps in the build process.



Next, a great many small pieces were made; the car ultimately consists of a total of 1,217 parts. Brass, aluminium, copper, wood, and leather were primarily used. My little lathe was running at full speed....



Every model builder knows the feeling when everything starts to fit together: you see your model grow!



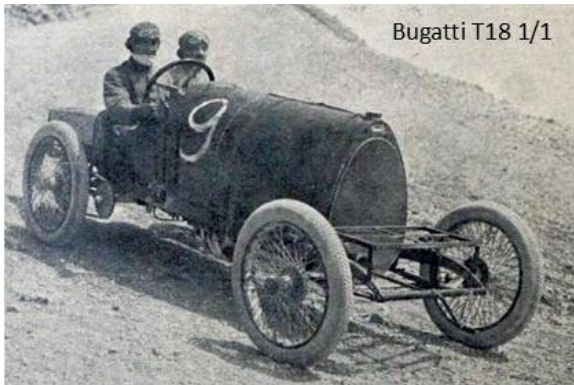
By way of comparison, here are a few photos of the two cars: 1/1 on the left and 1/20 on the right...



Bugatti T18 1/1



Bugatti T18 1/20



Bugatti T18 1/1



Bugatti T18 1/20



Bugatti T18 1/1



Bugatti T18 1/20



## THE TRAVEL SUITCASE BY ETTORE BUGATTI

When Ettore Bugatti set off for the Course du Mont Ventoux in September 1912, he had no choice but to plan for several days, given the distance of 750 km from Molsheim in Alsace to Mont Ventoux. Even driving a racing car, the abominable condition of the roads did not allow for excessive speeds. Therefore, he mounted a large leather case on a carrier in front of the radiator, as there was no other place for it.

reunited with the car, which had since been restored , in the early 2000s . It had been in the possession of the family of Ettore Bugatti's gardener all those years...



A lovely subject to make this to scale, using aniline leather from a discarded wallet, wax brass, and patinated with shoe polish. This car was a joy to make!

Nik Levecque