

The Bugatti type 35B course and sport models by Eligor

By Bart Oosterling

The French/Swiss/Chinese 1:43 scale die-cast Bugatti 35B in all its variations in detail.

Introduction

Jacques Greilsamer (*1938), the son of a famous mechanic, founded the Eligor model brand in 1975 in Martignat, France, near the Swiss border. The name consisted of the name of his father's two garages, named "Elite" and "Vigor", the latter translates to strength, energy, vitality and decisiveness. Some sources called him a Bugatti fetishist. He was one time owner of a 57 Atalante (ch. 57660), and also owned chassis' 441074, 57363, and 57409.

He was already early involved in model cars as co-author the "Catalogue of Model Cars of the World" (Nov. 1967), owner of a specialist model shop in Paris (94 Boulevard Sébastopol) in the 1960-70s and publisher of a magazine in French on model cars, by the same name as his shop, "Modélisme". He created a model car museum in the basement of his shop in 1961 and also was initiated the first model car fair in Paris in 1964. He also published a book on Bugatti in 1978 with Bugatti guru Hugh Conway (sr.). Greilsamer realised early that there was also a demand for affordable ready-built models, by those who did not had time, talent or skills to build the intricate white metal kits that were available at the time. And also because by then the real cars were starting to become less available and more expensive. Two talented model builders, Messrs. Dubray and Evrat, who regularly published their own creations in the "Modélisme" magazine, presented him with a feasible solution: the use of plastic resin for smaller, more intricate parts, and metal (zamac) for the main parts. With Jean-Paul Juge overseeing the technical aspects of the tooling bought from Norev, they started production.

Production started in 1976, first as Editions Modélisme, Paris. Later production as Hobbycar SA (Société Anonyme) Lausanne (Switzerland; 1 av. de Riant Mon). Greilsamer handed over the management of Modélisme to Jean-Paul Juge in 1981 and moved to Lausanne in Switzerland. In 1986 the marque was sold to Louis Surber, and slowly started to specialise in model trucks with custom decorations. In 1996 the company was in the hands of Paul and Anne-Marie Vullierme. 2004 was the start of the transfer of production to China. From 2008 there were co-operations with publishers of magazines and special collectors' editions. From 2020 the company was owned by mr. Gester and further specialisation to (promotional) model trucks continues, though re-issues of older models with new decors are still released and custom orders possible.

Collector's identification, catalogues and boxes for regular Eligor Bugatti 35 production models

The manufacturers numbering of the models seem to have started at 1001; making the Bugatti 35B course (1025) the 25th and the sport model (1045) the 45th model in the (planned) development of the production series. From around 2000 a new 6 digit numbering system from 100001 for issued models is applied. The colour variations of early production models are identical within the same manufacturers' number.

From 1977 the Bugatti 35 Course model (1025) was available. With chromed parts, single windscreen, double bonnet straps, chrome steering wheel, black seat and optional triple waterslide decals (#18 and #21) provided separately with booklet in the box. Eligor and Hobbycare on base.

Despite being in earlier catalogues, from ca. 1983 the Bugatti 35 Sport model (1045) was added to the range: it was identical to the course version but with double windscreen, single bonnet strap, shock absorbers on front axle, spare wheel plus strap, headlights, rear number plate, separate mudguards (still on sprue for optional assembly) and waterslide decals for a non-Bugatti dashboard and license plate (685 RE 8) provided separately with booklet in the box. The sports version required small alterations to the body casting to allow mudguards to be mounted by the buyers. Eligor and Hobbycar are mentioned on the base. Special (limited) edition models have only Eligor on the base and extra details as do the later versions (as detailed in the table below). From about 2004 to 2011 a series of models was released in the racing liveries of countries: France (2x), Spain, Hungary, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, USA. Later, this

idea was also copied by other brands as CMC (Nation colour project), Ixo (English “Williams” livery) and Odeon/Momaco (imaginary Swedish livery). The original Eligor logo was never changed on the model itself, even when the logo on the packaging was changed it remained unaltered, except for the deletion of Hobbycar.

Quality and accuracy

The proportions of the model are good. Louvres and body screws are well defined. The supercharger hole is open. Wheels have big brake drums and hubnuts are good. Tires have realistic profile. Fuel cap is present. The characteristic front wheel camber is present. Decals, paint and masking on multicolour versions are accurate. All models have double exhausts. But there are lesser points too. The separate drivers cowl in plastic is mounted sloppy/not well aligned with the cockpit. The windscreen(s) are often leaning forward. The spare wheel is missing its integrated brake drum. The sport model is missing the front bonnet strap and the front mudguard mountings on top of the mudguards are too high. The front shock absorbers are missing (course) or mounted wrong (sport). Also on the later Chinese models the steering box drop link and steering arm are often mounted too far from the body. The models’ best improvements through time are the dull chrome and addition/correct positioning of the front shock absorbers.

Booklets, catalogues and boxes

An early undated version of the Eligor range booklet in the model’s box, probably ca. 1977, featured only the type 35 course inside.

The booklet version of 1980-1981, featured the 1931 type 41 Kellner Royale on the cover page and the type 35 course and sport on the second to last page. For 1981-1982, the booklet in the model’s box featured the type 35 sport on the cover page and the type 35 course and sport on the second to last page. Up until this one the booklets mention Production Modélisme Paris.

In 1982, the booklet in the model’s box featured the type 35 course and sport both only on the cover page. This is the first with Hobbycar S.A. Lausanne (Suisse) mentioned as manufacturer.

A later thick fold out sheet replaced the booklet in the model’s box, featured the type 35 sport only on the cover page.

Through the years the logo on the booklet changed with white vs. black outline and the model in the hand changing from purple to blue and back to purple. Eligor’s brand identity was in development or not constant and probably not a priority.

The 1983-1984, 1985, 1986, 1991, 1992 in-box catalogues show the course and sport models inside. The large 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1999 company brochures feature the blue course model on the front, probably indicating its continued popularity.



Earliest boxes (type A1; probably only used of 1025 issue) were green/blue boxes with a small one sided cut-out window (type A2) and contained a model range booklet. Manufacturer: Editions Modélisme, Paris. The model in the “hand logo” was purple. The Eligor brand name had a specially designed letter which unknowingly also could be read as “Elicor”.

Later boxes (type A2; used of 1025 and 1045 issues) had a large 2 sided cut-out/window, and contained a model range booklet or fold out sheet. The model in the hand logo had changed to green. Also a text “Creation diffusion” was on these boxes. Manufacturer: Hobbycar S.A. 1025 was printed directly on the box; 1045 applied with a sticker (over 1025?). The models in both the A1 and A2 boxes are on beige coloured plinths with square sides.

Later boxes (type B; used of 1025 and 1045 issues) were dark blue, still with the “Elicor” logo and now with the manufacturer name Louis Surber S.A. (Martignat) on it, with a slightly larger 2 sided cut-out/window, partially folded inwards to form a background décor for the model in the box. 1025 was printed directly on the box; 1045 applied with a sticker (over 1025?). The models in both the B boxes are on black plinths with different chamfers on the long and short sides.

Later boxes (type C; used of 1025 and 1045 and later issue 100879) were also dark blue with a slanted broad green stipe on it with 2 smaller yellow stripes, with the larger 2 sided cut-out/window/fold-in. The brand name now clearly reads Eligor in a normal font and a www and email of the manufacturer Eligor S.A. La Plaine and a USA contact Eligor Inc. is provided. The models in both the C boxes are on the same black plinths as the models in the B boxes. Up until the C boxes there are booklets or fold out posters with the model range provided under the plinth.

The most current boxes (type D) are higher in size, dark blue and yellow and have the large 2 sided cut-out/window and 2 small windows on the flaps. Eligor S.A. La Plaine and Eligor Inc. USA; made in China mentioned. Inside the transparent plastic vitrine a cardboard photo décor is added to some models. The model is extra secured by a removable vacuum formed transparent plastic insert. The models in both the D boxes are on black plinths without chamfers. All boxes were universal and distinguished for the specific model with a sticker designating the exact model inside. The special “Kiosk” editions made by Eligor have different boxes and plinths.









Rarity and pricing




The Eligor type 35 course and sport can be easily found at reasonable prices. Some variants seem rarer and are harder to find. No production numbers are known. The chrome plated issue is one I have only seen once and is identified as rare in the Eligor book. And the Delaunay version I have not seen yet – if it exists at all. The V752 is difficult to find with the Chiron figurine still present. Original and undamaged boxes, decals and booklets add value. Beware of missing or broken off parts and unoriginal/personalized/superdetailed models. Today a good complete undamaged model in box can be found from € 10-45,-. Rarities can demand higher prices.




List of models




Colour + race number	mfg code	produced	Model	Box	Remarks/differences to standard issue	Photo
Black	1025	1977-2003	Course	A	Eligor and Hobbycar on base. Inserted: Blue version later (in 1998) re-issued as/renumbered to 100044 (inserted): then with black gearshift and handbrake, dull chrome and box B or C. The chrome issue is rare and has a white base.	
Green	1025	1977-2003	Course	A		
Mid-Blue	1025	1977-2003	Course	A&B		
Red	1025	1977-2003	Course	A		
White	1025	1977-2003	Course	A		
Yellow	1025	1977-2003	Course	A&B		
Chrome plated	1025?	Between 1977-2003	Course	A		
Dark Blue	1045	1983-2005	Sport	A&B	Eligor and Hobbycar on base. Red version later (in 1998) re-issued as/renumbered to 100089; then with black gearshift and handbrake and dull chrome. Inserted: Original 1045 version Yellow version not listed in the Eligor book. Also not listed in "LISTE DES MODELES REDUITS BUGATTI" (Oct. 2009) by Christian Anicet	
Pale green	1045	1983-2005	Sport	A		
Red	1045	1983-2005	Sport	A&B		
Yellow	1045	1983-2005	Sport	A		
White?	1045	?	Sport	A	Listed in the Eligor book and in "LISTE DES MODELES REDUITS BUGATTI" (Oct. 2009) by Christian Anicet, but never seen.	



Colour + race number	mfg code	produced	Model	Box	Remarks/differences to standard issue	Photo
Mid-Blue*	100676?	8/2007	Sport	Special	Sold in kiosk/magazine series as type 35B thru Editions Atlas / Voitures d'exception; light blue box similar to type A2, but with extra square windows in side flaps. Produced by Eligor (regular base). Double windscreen with wipers; red tail light; license 4628 CT. Smaller chamfered black plinth with brass label "Bugatti 35B 1928"	
Light blue #22	V752	1990/2000	Course	Special	Sold as a Type 51 through La Compagnie Europeenne des collectionneurs / Voitures miniatures d'exception; in Voitures miniatures d'exception series; Black box similar to type C with gold and white text. Produced by Eligor (regular base). With painted metal Chiron figurine inside; intended to resemble chassis 51123, but that car had a narrow radiator. Mounted on plinth like box B and C.	
Mid-Blue	1025-special?	1995	Course	Special	<i>Limited edition of 143 pcs;</i> For the 5th anniversary of the 1/43 model collectors friends of the Munster Valley (FR) in 1995; with separate collectors pin. Base model is a regular Mid-blue course model (100044); the only differences are a brown steering wheel rim, dull chrome. Mounted on plinth like box B and C. Probably issued without cardboard box. (Photos from Leboncoin)	

Colour + race number *Chinese production	mfg code	produced	Model	Box	Remarks/differences to standard issue	Photo
Multi colour-Delaunay	101180	2000?	Course	?	<p>Artist Sonia Delaunay was an artist and one of the founders of "orphism". She made an abstract design on a 1:8 scale model of a type 35. Only after she died a real car was authorised for a limited time to use this paint scheme (type 37 ch. 37235).</p> <p>Does it exist? Eligor's website mentioned it, but no photo is provided. Eligor does not respond to questions on this model. No photos have been found on the www, in auctions, collectors forums, ... It was probably never produced by Eligor due to legal/copyright/licensing issues. (2 combined images from the Eligor website →)</p>	
Light Blue #13	100879	2004		C	<p>French livery; Spare wheel strap but no spare wheel; looks like chassis 4327 of Bartolomeo Costantini, but that car had a narrow radiator. License 5881 YG 06. Eligor on base. A paper is included in the box with a French and English text with a short description of the races in which this chassis too part. And a papier inviting to join "Club Eligor" for collectors.</p>	
Dark red*	101087	2007	Course	D	<p>Limited edition of 210 pcs; decals of "Les Autos de l'Espoir" (Cars of Hope) and "J.F. EDET"; this is/was a humanitarian organization that supports the material needs of oncology departments in the Champagne-Ardenne region. The association was founded in 1996 by J.F. Edet, a colon cancer survivor who died in 1998, and officially established on April 25, 1999, by Alain Gauthey. Headlights with arms for front mudguards but no mudguards; shock absorbers on front axle. Eligor on base. No print on plinth. Box label reads Bugatti 1926 Les autos de l'espoir. The transparent cover has a transparent label on it with a text serie limiee (sic) a 210 exp. - n: ... No photo inside the cover.</p>	

Colour + race number * = Chinese production	mfg code	produced	Model	Box	Remarks/differences to standard issue	Photo
Red/yellow #18*	101186	2009	Course	D	<p>Spanish livery; Spare wheel; all matte silver instead of chromed pieces; shock absorbers on front axle; double windscreen with wipers; all brown steering wheel; badge on grille; Livery corresponds with a unknown type 37 raced in Spain by Francesco Torres. Eligor on base. This is the only model issued with spoked wheels.</p> <p>Print on plinth and box label reads Bugatti type 35B – équipage Espagnol.</p> <p>Inside the cover is a historic b/w photo of the real Bugatti #18 with the driver in it in the pit before the race.</p>	
Mid-Blue #22*	101187	2009	Course	D	<p>French livery; Spare wheel; all matte silver instead of chromed pieces; shock absorbers on front axle; double windscreen with wipers; all brown steering wheel; looks like chassis 4944 of René Dreyfus . License 5872 BA 1. Eligor on base.</p> <p>Print on plinth and box label reads Bugatti type 35B – équipage Français</p> <p>Inside the cover is a historic b/w photo of a starting grid with possibly the real Bugatti #22 in the upper right.</p>	
Yellow*	101211	2009	Sport	D	<p><i>Limited edition</i>; for the 24th collectors fair (2009) held at the Thann Handball club.</p> <p>Text “THANN HANDBALL CLUB” on both sides of bonnet and on tail; double windscreen with wipers; brown steering wheel, red read light and radiator badge, all matte silver instead of chromed pieces. Eligor on base.</p> <p>Print on plinth and box label reads Bugatti type 35B THANN HANDBALL CLUB 2009.</p> <p>No photo inside the cover.</p>	

Colour + race number * = Chinese production	mfg code	produced	Model	Box	Remarks/differences to standard issue	Photo
Red/green/white #43*	101252	2010	Course	D	<p>Hungarian livery; Spare wheel; all matte silver instead of chromed pieces; shock absorbers on front axle; double windscreen with wipers; steering wheel rim brown; badge on grille; front wheels not fixed and separate jack; license Bp 27-548; looks like chassis 4918 of Antal Esterházy. Eligor on base.</p> <p>Print on plinth and box label reads Bugatti type 35 équipage Hongrois – préparation course and on the upper left side a Eligor logo is added.</p> <p>Inside the cover are 2 historic b/w photos of the real Bugatti #43 being serviced in the pit.</p>	
White #26*	101286	2010	Course	D	<p>German livery; Spare wheel; all matte silver instead of chromed pieces; shock absorbers on front axle; double windscreen with wipers; rim of steering wheel brown; badge on grille; license 1A 5555; looks like chassis 4842 of Ernst-Günther von Burggaller. Eligor on base.</p> <p>Print on plinth and box label reads Bugatti type 35 équipage Allemand + Eligor logo on upper left side of plinth.</p> <p>Inside the cover are 2 historic b/w photos of the real Bugatti #26 before and after a race.</p>	
Red #20*	101323	2010	Course	D	<p>Italian livery; Spare wheel; all matte silver instead of chromed pieces; shock absorbers on front axle; double windscreen with wipers; steering wheel rim brown; badge on grille; license 2515-KJ-2 which was on chassis 4871. Eligor on base. Print on plinth and box label reads Bugatti type 35 équipage Italien + Eligor logo on upper left side of plinth.</p> <p>Inside the cover is a historic b/w photo of the real Bugatti #20 being refuelled in the pit.</p>	

Colour + race number <small>*=Chinese production</small>	mfg code	produced	Model	Box	Remarks/differences to standard issue	Photo
Red/white #30*	101351	2010	Course	D	<p>Swiss livery; Spare wheel; all matte silver instead of chromed pieces; shock absorbers on front axle; double windscreen with wipers; steering wheel rim brown; brown seat; badge on grille; looks like chassis 4913 of Mario Lepori. License 70661 (CH). Eligor on base.</p> <p>Print on plinth and box label reads Bugatti type 35 équipage Suisse- G.P. Monaco 1929 + Eligor logo on upper left side of plinth.</p> <p>Inside the cover is a historic b/w photo of the real Bugatti #30 on a race track.</p>	
White/black #84*	101370	2011	Course	D	<p>Presented as USA livery; Spare wheel; all matte silver instead of chromed pieces; shock absorbers on front axle; double windscreen with wipers; rim of steering wheel brown; seat brown; badge on grille; looks like type 35C of Ivernel (FR). Eligor on base.</p> <p>Print on plinth and box label reads Bugatti type 35 équipage Américain + Eligor logo on upper left side of plinth.</p> <p>Inside the cover is a historic b/w photo of a real Bugatti #84 on the starting grid on a race track.</p>	
Green #7*	101376	2011	Course	D	<p>Presented on plinth as English livery, but no resemblance to a real car, except for the license 6537-J4, which refers to the #12 Williams car, chassis 4914; Spare wheel; all matte silver instead of chromed pieces; shock absorbers on front axle; double windscreen with wipers; rim of steering wheel brown; brown seats; badge on grille. Eligor on base.</p> <p>Print on plinth and box label reads Bugatti type 35 équipage Anglais + Eligor logo on upper left side of plinth.</p> <p>No photo inside the cover.</p>	

Colour + race number <small>*=Chinese production</small>	mfg code	produced	Model	Box	Remarks/differences to standard issue	Photo
Yellow #31*	101565	2014	Course	D	<p>Could be interpreted as Belgian livery, but not presented as such; <i>Limited edition</i> of 312 pcs; spare wheel attachment stub but no spare wheel; all matte silver instead of chromed pieces; shock absorbers on front axle; double windscreen with wipers; rim of steering wheel black; badge on grille. Eligor on base.</p> <p>Print on plinth and box label reads Bugatti type 35B jaune + Eligor logo on upper left side of plinth.</p> <p>Inside the cover is a recent photo of a yellow Bugatti #3 ('4982'-R) on a race track.</p>	
Yellow #89*	101565	2023	Course	D	<p><i>Limited edition</i> of 312 pcs; 89th Toy collectors' fair Mulhouse 10 September 2023.</p> <p>Spare wheel attachment stub but no spare wheel; all matte silver instead of chromed pieces; shock absorbers on front axle; double windscreen with wipers; rim of steering wheel black; badge on grille. Eligor on base.</p> <p>Print on plinth and box label reads Bugatti type 35B jaune + 89eme Bourse Mulhouse le 10 Septembre 2023 + Eligor logo on upper left side of plinth.</p> <p>Inside the cover is a recent photo of a yellow Bugatti #3 ('4982'-R) on a race track, the same as with the model above.</p>	

Sources and further information about the Eligor Bugatti 35B models

There is a collectors' book titled "Eligor, l'incroyable collection", issued in September 2006, written by Didier Beaujardin, Bernard Botté and Denis Darotchetche (hardcover, ISBN 978-2-7339-0977-5), which features a type 35B course model on the cover (curiously it is printed in mirror image as a LHD car). The Bugatti type 35B is featured on page 45, and listed on 141, 143 and 159.

Limited info can also be found in the "Musée-section" on the Eligor website:

<https://www.eligor.com/collectionneurs/le-musee/> and some history on the brand and mr.

Greilsamer on <https://autojauneblog.fr/>

Catalogues can be found here:

<http://cataloguepassion.free.fr/Catalogues/pagesCatalogues/Voitures/eligor.html>

General info of the Eligor range can be found here:

<https://www.genieminature.com/Eligor%20autos.htm>

Other Bugatti models by Eligor are:

- a 1937 type 57s cabriolet (blue; open 1026 / red; closed 1027), both seem to be rare. Both were available as a kit and ready-built. Was erroneously listed as Atlantic, and in the book it is called a Stelvio. It looks somewhat similar to ch.57563.
- the type 41 Kellner (1046) ch. 41141, but it is almost certain that it was never released: it was only featured in early booklets. Listed as not confirmed in "LISTE DES MODELES REDUITS BUGATTI" (Oct. 2009) by Christian Anicet. The aforementioned 2006 book lists it as never produced.

The 1998 catalogue featured a photo of a Koux replica of a T57 Atlantic (140096) on the cover. It does exist as Eligor model, but appears to be rare: there is a picture of it in the "Musée-section" on the Eligor website. According to the book it was released under the brand "Leader".

Some modellers use the Eligor type 35 models as a base for their own modifications:

BUGATTIST (Dr. Bernd Simon) released a 35B GP ACF 1929 in English/#12 Williams livery.

On the French forum Caradisiac, in the topic about 1/43 scale Bugatti models, member "Thibug73" has customized models of around 60 different country racing liveries, most of them based on the Eligor course model: <https://forum-auto.caradisiac.com/topic/380025-143-le-topic-des-bugatti/page/232>

Thank you for contributing: Jeroen Vossen and Jaap Horst

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