

Koenigsegg, a supercar challenging Swedish stereotypes

January 8 2020, by Helene Dauschy



Not much Swedish modesty here

For a quarter century, Koenigsegg has been making supercars for a niche market typically reserved for Italian luxury brands, while challenging perceptions of Swedish modesty.

With brands like Volvo—which introduced the three-point seat belt—and Saab, Sweden distinguished itself in the 20th century as a maker of reasonable priced family-friendly cars that put safety first.

But in a workshop in the southern town of Angelholm, the term "made in Sweden" is given a new meaning, and horsepower and torque take centre stage.

"When I started the company (...) I said to myself why would anyone buy one of my cars: it is an unknown brand, by an unknown person from a country not famous for sports cars," the company's founder Christian von Koenigsegg told AFP.

"So I said to myself, they have to really stand out and be different and hopefully better in some ways than the competitors," he added.

The philosophy has been that if Bugatti and Pagani go fast, the Swedish car has to go faster and really push the limits, compensating for the lack of notoriety with performance.

In 2002, a mere eight years after the company was founded, the engine of the Koenigsegg CC8S was named the world's most powerful in a production car by Guinness World Records.



'Why would anybody buy one of my cars?'

Two years later, the Koenigsegg CCR was named the World's most powerful serially produced car.

The Agera RS arrived in 2010 and in 2017 it set a [speed record](#) by reaching 447.19 kilometres per hour (277.87 miles per hour).

That record has since been broken by the Bugatti Chiron Super Sport 300+ with 490.48 kph (304.77 mph).

"They did it on a closed track and we did it on a public road and we have not been dethroned as the fastest recorded speed on a public road by a

production car (...) also, our record was with a production car while the Chiron was a pre series prototype," Christian von Koenigsegg argued.

"But it was really impressive," he admitted.

A rare sight

While records and accolades are "not so unimportant" for von Koenigsegg, the most important thing is "the overall performance of the car."



Just 250 Koenigsegg cars are in circulation

Hailing from a family with "no real car interest," the tall Swede found his passion at an early age.

"Since I was 6-7 years old, the only thing I read was car magazines or technical books about cars and things like that," he told AFP.

In 1994, he decided to pursue his dream of building "the world's greatest super-sports car" and started Koenigsegg.

Nearly a decade later, in March 2003, the first production car, the CC8S, was delivered at the Geneva Motor Show.

Sixteen other models have followed, but some models have been limited to as few as six units, and with a total of 250 cars in circulation a Koenigsegg remains a rare sight on the roads.

The brand also cultivates secrecy and won't confirm reports of high-profile buyers like footballer Zlatan Ibrahimovic or boxer Floyd Mayweather Jr.

The privilege of owning one of these supercars however comes at a price.



Yours for \$3.3 million

The latest model, the Jesko, will set you back about three million euros (\$3.3 million), but the 125 cars still sold out in two days.

It takes between seven and eight months to manually assemble the cars, and it requires a jeweller's precision.

"It is a very different way of working than on a regular production, so of course it can be similar to jewelry," production manager Marian Gadau told AFP, adding that the manual assembly makes every car unique.

"Even though all of them need to be at the same level... all of them are

slightly different because it is the personal touch of working manually with every part."

In 2020, Koenigsegg plans to launch a new "less expensive" model—at a more modest price of around one million euros—but Christian von Koenigsegg stresses that it will still be hand made and "in a niche where we don't see any cars today."

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