



From top: the Chiron's adaptive rear wing; the chic carbon fiber and leather interior



It's not particularly fashionable to show up fashionably late to a three-Michelin-star restaurant like San Francisco's Saison. However, based on the Bugatti Chiron's 300 mph speedometer, an early arrival seems likely. I calculate that, in a pinch, the quad-turbocharged, 16-cylinder, 1500-horsepower successor to the legendary Veyron could consume the 50-odd miles between the leafy Silicon Valley enclave of Los Gatos and SF's SoMa district in 12 minutes flat.

Adjusting the rearview mirror, I note the slender buttress arcing over the mid-mounted engine, an allusion to the radical riveted spine of Bugatti's 1936 Type 57SC Atlantic. Beyond it rises the imposing wing, a fully adaptive appendage that optimizes its position for every conceivable condition, from retracting almost fully for a 261-mph top-speed run to raking sharply upward to serve as an air brake for maximum deceleration. Both are constructed from carbon fiber, like the rest of the Chiron's vivid blue body panels, which shine iridescently in the California sun.

Some years ago, I drove a Veyron, and I recall a persistent sensation of mass and inertia. The Chiron, although almost identical in weight to its predecessor, feels diametrically different—light, nimble, adroit, alive, an exquisitely tactile pleasure even on twisty country roads at perfectly legal speeds. Despite its price and its rarity and the 1600 Newton meters of torque brooding behind the headrests, it's the furthest thing from intimidating to drive.

For a car whose capabilities are the product of extraordinarily sophisticated technologies, the Chiron's carbon fiber and leather interior is remarkably free of technological distractions. Four small high-resolution screens that protrude biomorphically from the central console discreetly relay the vehicle's vital signs, freeing the mind to focus on the road—to say nothing of

the potential hazard posed by nearby drivers recording their once-in-a-lifetime encounters for posterity.

As an onramp unwinds onto the freeway, I twist a machined aluminum dial on the steering wheel. Segueing into Autobahn mode, the Chiron lowers its nose for improved aerodynamics while tilting up its blue wing. Traffic is light. I let the gap ahead widen to a quarter mile and click the transmission all the way

down to first. I become aware of a rhythmic quaking—not the vibrations of the powerplant, as I initially suspect, but the beating of my heart, awash in adrenaline.

My right foot flexes, the 8-liter engine's rumble becomes a roar, and the Chiron leaps forward in a rush as indescribably intense as it is reassuringly refined. In an instant, the gap has evaporated and I'm back on the brakes, the car shedding velocity with the utmost composure, courtesy of its ultra-sophisticated calipers, carbon ceramic discs, and four massive Michelin tires, whose performance requirements were so extreme they had to be vetted in an aerospace testing facility.

Reacclimating to a more conventional pace, I find myself entertaining fantasies of a private session with a runway, or perhaps the Nürburgring. Until then, the memory of a taste of speed like nothing else on earth will more than suffice.

The Essentials

The Car
• Bugatti Chiron, \$2.998 million

The Restaurant
• A purse of giant kelp conceals a mound of caviar cured in barbecued salt. Ocher crescents of sea urchin nestle atop a sliver of sourdough toast drenched in an irresistibly umami sauce. As simple and elemental as the dishes at **Saison** appear at first glance, chef Joshua Skenes's cuisine belies the true extent of the experimentation, refinement, and technique behind its unexpected dimensions of deliciousness. saisonsf.com

The Hotel
• The views from the slim 40-story tower at the **Four Seasons Hotel San Francisco** are breathtaking: SoMa, the bay, Nob Hill, and the elegant stone facades of Market Street—the latter best savored while sipping one of the MKT Bar's signature cocktails. The five-star hotel also boasts a 127,000-square-foot Equinox Sports Club with a junior Olympic pool. fourseasons.com/sanfrancisco

The Timepiece
• The **Rolex Oyster Perpetual Cosmograph Daytona** has been linked with the world of motor sport since its progenitor was introduced in 1963.

The newest incarnation, shown here in white gold (\$28,800), is equipped with a Cerachrom bezel, a metal-reinforced elastomer bracelet, and a self-winding movement that's engineered for total reliability—even under the most high-velocity of circumstances. rolex.com



Bugatti Bay Blues

Speeding toward San Francisco in the awe-inspiring Chiron