

# On Duty

## A BUGATTI VEYRON PATROLS THE STREETS OF DUBAI. ON THE BEAT WITH A TRULY EXTRAORDINARY POLICE CAR.

It is a typical Friday afternoon in front of the Dubai Mall – exclusive cars pull up at the main entrance in a steady stream. Gullwing doors are raised, proud owners in the traditional local attire known as dishdasha hand over their automotive jewels to the men from valet parking and disappear into the world's largest shopping centre. Countless SUVs line up behind to unload their precious cargos; women from the land's wealthy families - wrapped in black abayas, completely shrouded apart from their eyes – stream into the mall to indulge in their favourite pastime – shopping. Beneath the black robes, you can briefly make out the flash of expensive high heels. Then, suddenly, a hush falls over the hustle and bustle; passers-by turn their heads to look. The Dubai police are patrolling in front of the mall.

Not that the Emiratis would have anything to fear from the police. What they are staring at is the new, green and white patrol car being driven by the officers. Even in the glittering metropolis on the Persian Gulf, a Bugatti Veyron is not the average cop cruiser.

The Dubai Police Department announced it a year ago and, a few weeks ago, it arrived – the already extremely high-calibre Dubai police fleet was crowned

by a Bugatti Veyron. “We acquired the vehicle as part of our fleet modernisation programme, in order to expand our presence primarily in the important tourist centres,” says Major General Khamis Matter Al Mazeina. The Veyron will be in service first and foremost around the Burj Khalifa, the Dubai Mall, the Jumeirah Beach Residence, the Burj Al Arab, Sheikh Mohammed Boulevard and everywhere else in Dubai where the tourism is particularly “classy”. But Brigadier Ana al Matrooshi assures us that it won't just be in these places. At any given time, around 140 police vehicles are patrolling the streets of Dubai – 140 of a total of 600 patrol vehicles. Despite its extraordinary status, the Veyron is being integrated quite normally into the everyday work of the Dubai police force. It will be all over the city. Depending on workload and duty roster, the police officers in the Veyron can pull up when they have to deal with a break-in at an apartment in Al Barsha or smooth out an argument at a car park in Jebel Ali. Although the drivers

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of the Veyron police car receive specialist training, being permitted to drive the Veyron is not intended as a special privilege. In principle, any police officer on duty can sit at the wheel of the Veyron.

The vehicle modifications that turn the Veyron into a real, fully functional police car were carried out in Dubai itself. As well as fitting a strip of blue lights to its roof, this included the installation of modern digital radio equipment that connects the Veyron to the police radio system for the whole city - now located beneath an oriental carpet in the passenger footwell.

The Bugatti Veyron is the property of the Dubai government and is made available to the police patrol for undertaking its particular tasks. The vehicle was bought by Dubai's Crown Prince Hamdan bin Mohammed al Maktoum, son of the current ruler Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. It is for this reason that, alongside the official police colours and the usual symbols of authority, the vehicle also bears on its licence plate the logo of the campaign initiated by Crown Prince Hamdan "My Dubai".

Dubai is one of the safest cities in the world. Even women can stroll along its streets in the dead of night without worry. Nobody would even speak to them, let alone bother them. Drivers often leave their vehicles unlocked and with their engines running for several hours at a time in the car parks of shopping malls

and hotels to keep the air conditioning running and ensuring their owners can return to a pleasantly cool car once they have completed their business. There's no risk of anyone actually stealing the car. What is a problem in the United Arab Emirates, however, is the aggressive, risky driving style adopted by many young Emiratis aged between 18 and 30, who frequently indulge in serious racing on public roads in their extremely powerful luxury cars. While traffic is often bumper to bumper on the Sheikh Zayed Road in the centre of Dubai and speed is strictly regulated, these young men are often to be seen on the roads outside the city thundering past at more than 200 km/h. These high-spirited lads often indulge in hair-raising automotive acrobatics - hanging from the open doors of their cars at ridiculously high speeds, sliding their feet along the smooth asphalt. This neck-breaking, potentially deadly pastime is dubbed "sandal surfing".

The police Veyron, which underscores Dubai's image as a luxury city in its own inimitable style, can obviously keep up in any such high-speed chase.



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