



The Incredible Blitzen Benz

Karl Ludvigsen

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Titanic motorcars that blazed a trail of speed before and after the Great War, the Blitzen Benzes were the fastest man-carrying machines of their era. Officially certified as the fastest cars in the world from 1909 to 1919, the 200-horsepower Benzes were winners in races and hillclimbs throughout Europe and America. For the first time the storied feats of the six Type RE Benzes and their colorful owners and drivers are brought vividly to life in this lavishly illustrated book. One of the most evocative names ever bestowed on an automobile, "Blitzen Benz" came to express the ultimate in power and speed. The car itself, with its sharp-tailed body, aggressively beaked radiator and colossal exhaust pipes, still stands as an unrivaled icon of velocity on land. Karl Ludvigsen weaves an engrossing saga of the men and machines of the era covering: founder Karl Benz and why he was not keen on racing; a talented Belgian who designed a great German engine; how a choleric and driven French racer inspired the first 200 PS Benz; stunning new world records set in 1909 and 1910; marrying the Benz with American racing hero Barney Oldfield; and, why the four-passenger model was fastest of all the Benzes at Brooklands; rare period images bring the Blitzen's exploits to life; shattering records with "Wild Bob" Burman; and, record-breaking at Brooklands with a stove-pipe exhaust. In his work, Ludvigsen clarifies for the first time the tangled careers of these great cars. He concludes his narrative with the exciting revival of several of the Type RE Benzes, alive again to give a hint of the immortal achievements that made these the most daunting and respected racing cars of their time.

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