

MILLIONAIRE[®]

The background of the cover is a photograph of the Burj Al Arab hotel in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The hotel's distinctive sail-shaped architecture is illuminated against a clear sky. In the foreground, a balcony with white furniture and cushions is visible, overlooking the sea.

TRAVEL ISSUE

DUBAI

PALM BEACH

AMALFI COAST

LONDON

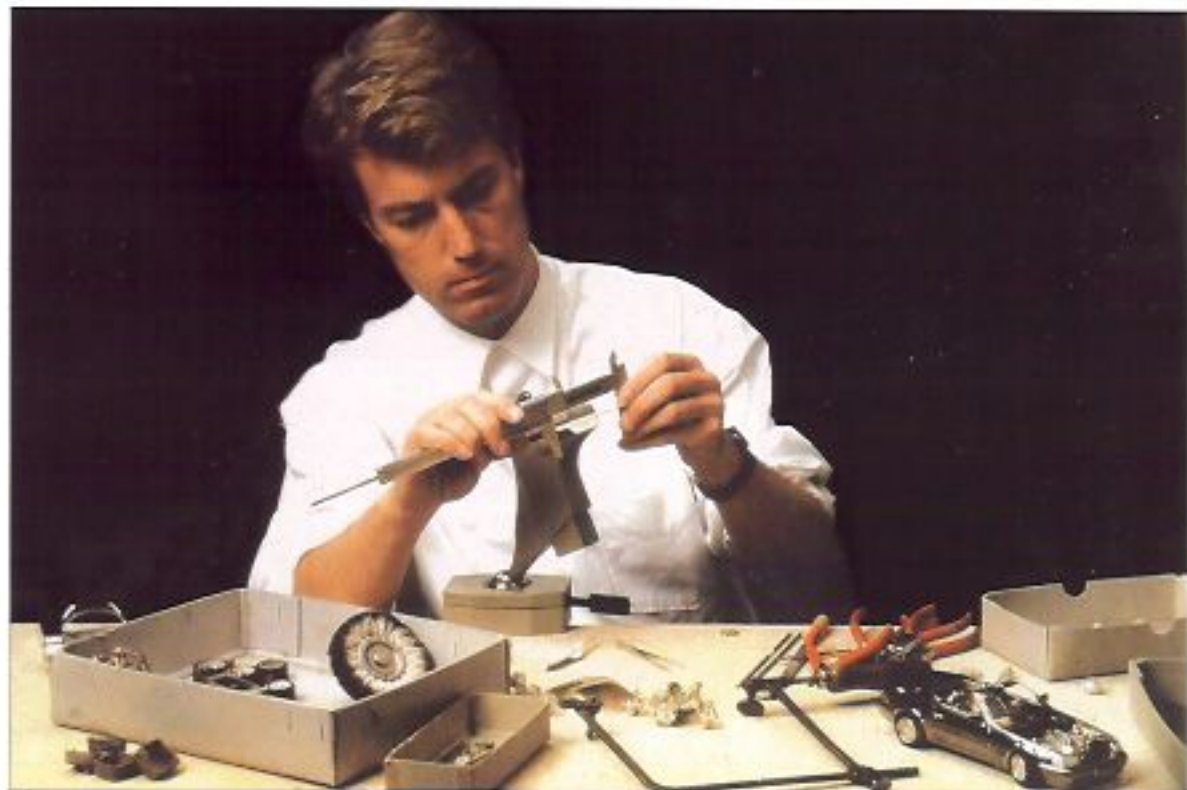
SPRING/SUMMER

FASHIONS



Precious Wheels

Unique Model Cars in Sterling Silver, Gold, and Platinum



Some of the finest automobiles in the world—including Maybach, Porsche, Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi, Opel, and Volkswagen—have production roots in Germany. And the creations of German engineer Robert Gülpen are no exception. They're just much more rare... and a lot smaller.

Gülpen's limited edition model cars, never before seen in any U.S. publication, are sought after by model car collectors worldwide. But these miniatures are nothing like the plastic model cars that many of us glued together from kits as youngsters.

Each of Gülpen's premium models is, in fact, a limited edition work of art, created in a precious metal—platinum, 18 karat gold, or sterling silver—in various scales and levels of intricacy. In addition to model cars, Gülpen also creates models of other luxury items.

"We do motorbikes, yachts, aircraft, and every other model-object the client may want, and in the best German quality you can find. The client decides what he wants; then we realize his dream," he says.

After graduating with a mechanical engineering

degree, Gülpen worked for eight years in research and development at Mercedes-Benz/Daimler Chrysler in Stuttgart, Germany. It was there, Gülpen told *Millionaire* magazine, that he first developed the idea of designing exclusive model cars in precious metals for their premium customers.

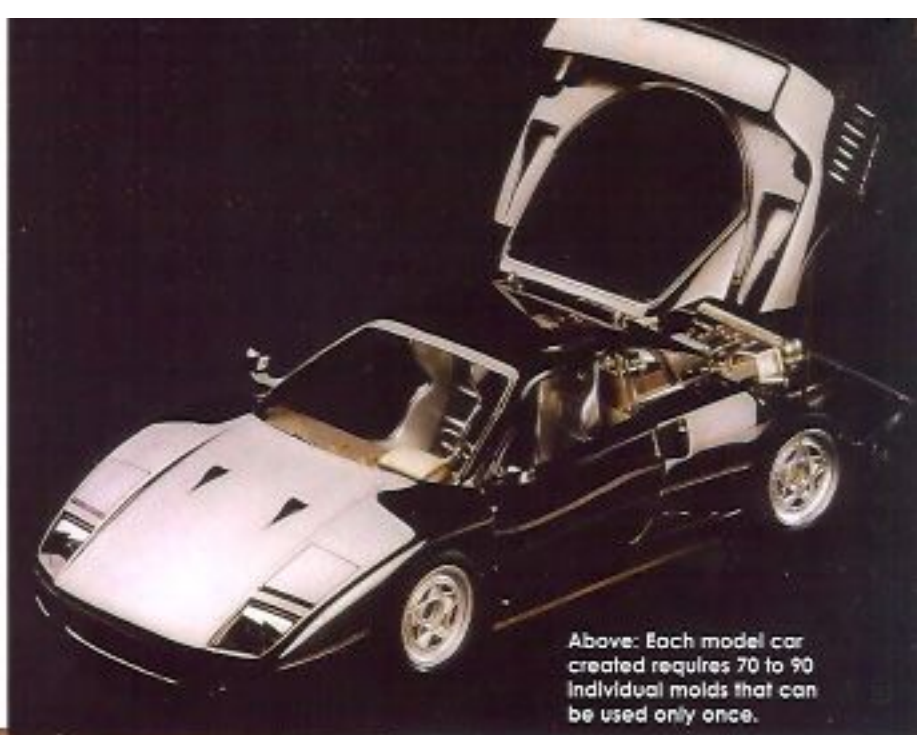
"My first model car, however, you will still find in the boardroom of DaimlerChrysler in Stuttgart, whom I am still in good contact with. This model is a Mercedes SL 600, Type R 129." Gülpen says he was personally involved in the development of the full-size versions of the SL 600 engine and vehicle. "Mercedes-Benz/DaimlerChrysler use my model cars for VIP customers," he says.

Today, Gülpen is self-employed as head of his own engineering firm. And he now builds model cars of other exclusive auto manufacturers as well, including Jaguar, Ferrari, Porsche, Rolls-Royce, Bentley, Maserati, Ferrari, and more.

"These model cars are not mass-produced, but are made by hand individually, requiring 50 to 300 hours of work for a single model. The model cars are

made of solid sterling silver and 18 karat gold, cast by hand and then lavishly and precisely finished off to the last detail," Gülpen adds. For detail accuracy, each model requires making 70 to 90 individual disposable molds that can be used only once. Therefore, each model is unique.

Gülpen's miniatures are created on a scale of 1:43, 1:24, or 1:18 (lengths of 10 cm, 22 cm, or 33 cm, respectively). Each is made to order, so the customer has an opportunity to help fashion his model from beginning to end. Finally, the models are refined with a platinum and/or gold surface using a special manufacturing process. Wheels are made of black onyx, and car windows of pure mountain crystal.



Above: Each model car created requires 70 to 90 individual molds that can be used only once.

Left: Jaguar sedan in 18K gold



"My first model car, however, you will still find in the boardroom of DaimlerChrysler in Stuttgart..."

Gülpen's remarkable model cars, yachts, and aircraft are presented to his elite clients on a black marble slab in a special case with a certificate of authenticity. "Prices vary depending on size, detail precision, and materials used," Robert explains, but generally range between \$5,000 and \$15,000 and can cost as much as \$25,000—or even more for models embellished with diamonds or other precious stones.

For car buffs and collectors, these German-made precision masterpieces are the ultimate collectible.

Below: Mercedes convertible in 18K gold

