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ALFA ROMEO

In Italy's second city on 24 June 1910, the recently defunct Società Italiana Automobili Darracq was revived and rebranded as Anonima Lombarda Fabbrica Automobili, and ALFA was born. From the very beginning, the Milanese firm created vehicles that inspired and enthused their drivers. Its first model, the 24hp, made its debut on the Targa Florio before ALFA was a year old, and on-track success continued as the decades went by.

When Neapolitan entrepreneur Nicola Romeo took over management of the firm during the First World War, the iconic Alfa Romeo name was forged. After supporting the war effort, as peace returned Alfa Romeo had the leadership it needed to emerge fighting. The period between the wars would be a golden era for the company in competition, with a combination of the finest engineers and the greatest drivers bringing victory after victory at the highest level, which in turn boosted the reputation of its roadgoing machinery.

Grand Prix glory would eventually fade after the Second World War, to be replaced by wins in other formulae, and during the 1950s and '60s



Alfa Romeo became recognised as the creator of some of the world's most charismatic road cars – not always the best, and occasionally flawed, but always beautiful, desirable and dripping with character.

From a precarious independence via emergency government control to a reluctant merger with Italy's automotive Goliath, the 110-year career of Alfa Romeo hasn't always been gilded with success, so we couldn't let our tribute pass without acknowledging that there have been lows as well as highs. And we can't claim to be comprehensive, either: there were alternatives for just about every letter in our A-Z (well, except perhaps X) on the cutting-room floor.

After a raft of below-par machines that have tested the loyalty of even the most passionate *Alfisti* over recent decades, Alfa Romeo began to wow the world again with thrilling models such as the 156 GTA, 8C Competizione and 4C, and now appears to be entering its most promising period for a generation with the breathtaking Giulia and Stelvio Quadrifoglio. And if the firm does lose its way again, surely all it has to do for guidance is take a look into its enviable back catalogue.

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From top: Helmut Marko in an Alfa Romeo T33 on the '71 Targa Florio; Roberto Bussinello/Nino Todaro's Scuderia Sant'Ambrogio TZ on the 1964 Targa

A

AUTODELTA

For two decades Alfa Romeo's factory racing exploits were conducted under the Autodelta banner, even though the Alfa Corse name carried a successful (albeit broken) history. Autodelta wore the mantle far and wide in those 20 years from 1963-'83 and bagged a world title, too, but not anywhere near the same stage.

The great Carlo Chiti returned to the Alfa Romeo fold from Ferrari with a Formula One World Championship under his belt courtesy of his 'sharknose' 156, and with his short-lived ATS soon to be defunct. He'd left Enzo's firm during the Palace Revolt of 1961, when top staff quit in protest at Girolamo Gardini's dismissal, and teamed up with former colleague Lodovico Chizzola and his brother Gianni to form Auto-Delta. Its name was drawn from the triangular Greek letter and signified the linking of their three locations: Chiti in Bologna, Lodovico in Milan and Gianni in Udine where the concern was based in one of Lodovico's workshops.

Initially Auto-Delta was independent, an offshoot formed to put together the spaceframe Giulia TZ racer because ATS was otherwise engaged trying and failing not only to beat Enzo, but even to make/take a point in Grands Prix.

Zagato received Giulia chassis from a Veneto workshop, and once bodied the cars were sent to Udine for Auto-Delta to fit the mechanicals.

As the ties strengthened between the factory and Auto-Delta, the latter lost the hyphen and moved nearer to Milan when it was absorbed by Alfa Romeo in 1963. The TZ's results began well



GETTY

on paper: second to fourth in the very modest SP entry of the Coppa FISA at Monza, led by Lorenzo Bandini no less, and the spoils in a class literally of its own. Then third overall on the '64 Targa Florio in the hands of Roberto Bussinello, who added class honours at Le Mans. TZ pilots included Silvio Moser and Giancarlo Baghetti in a full debut year that featured plenty of scalps.

For some, Autodelta means the road-car-based TZ and TZ2 – the first Alfa to carry its blue triangle. For others, it's the little sports-prototype Tipo 33 and derivatives that appeared infrequently on the top step of the World

Sportscar Championship. Or perhaps the GTA and GTAm tin-tops that rocked up in the European Touring Car Championship and beat all-comers. Latterly it could be Formula One cars and engines, or the homologation-special saloons of the early '80s.

Touring Cars had been constant throughout Autodelta's early years, and it was there where the name was made. Giulia GTAs tore through races, while Andrea de Adamich (who had claimed a class win at the Nürburgring 1000km in a TZ2) cantered to the European Touring Car Championship title with four wins in both 1966 and '67, the manufacturers' pot following suit.

The wide-body 2000 GTAm – Am for America or *Alleggerita maggiorata*, depending on what you believe – added the 1970 ETCC and Nürburgring 6 Hours, and runner-up plus its class at the Ring in 1971. By then, eight years in, Autodelta had graduated to the world stage at Brands Hatch that April when bespectacled, long-serving *Alfisto* de Adamich won paired with Henri Pescarolo. It was an endurance in the truest sense, the tortoise beating the Porsche and Ferrari hares. The three-lap win for the white-nosed T33/3 could have been a glorious 1-2: the eventual winners had just been lapped by the sister car of Rolf Stommelen and Toine Hezemans when it blew up. Still, Autodelta and Alfa had feasted at the top table at last.

As its name suggests, the Tipo 33 had taken much development and persistence. The start for the V8-powered, 2-litre T33, with a bizarre



GETTY

spaceframe comprising three fuel tanks, had been inauspicious: at Monza in 1967, in front of Alfa's top brass, it flipped and burned after brake failure sent Teodoro Zeccoli into a bank and over a drain cover. By 1978 it had gained four more cylinders, gone from a tubular chassis to a monocoque and in some cases back again, ended Porsche's run of five wins on the Targa Florio, and scored a handful more wins across the globe.

The T33/TT/12 had claimed a world title, too – not under Autodelta's name, but with former Porsche man Willi Kausen's eponymous, factory-assisted squad in the 1975 year of WSC flux. That was put right in '77 when 'Little Art' Merzario and Vittorio Brambilla shared all eight wins for Autodelta – although the bigger manufacturers and races were busy in the World Championship of Makes, with Autodelta playing flat-track bully against two-seater Group 6 Osellas, Lolas and Chevrons.

The Autodelta-bred V12 unit powered Brabham to two Grand Prix victories but never with the squad run by Chiti's men. Alfa/Autodelta had become a fully-fledged factory team with Marlboro backing in 1979, picking up second places with Andrea de Cesaris at Hockenheim and Kyalami in 1983, but Chiti departed the following year and Autodelta faded into the history books to replace Alfa Corse, which was revived by Fiat when it took over the building. **JP**



TOM SHAXSON/PHILLIPS

Wow... just look at them! There has arguably never been a more visually striking set of show cars that can run, drive and continue to captivate open-mouthed onlookers nearly seven decades later. In 1953, Italian styling house Bertone sent the first of its 'Berlinetta Aerodinamica Tecnica' creations to the Turin Auto Show, and promptly rewrote the concept-car rulebook in one fell swoop.

The youthful Franco Scaglione, heavily influenced by the aeronautical industry of the time, penned what was to be the most exciting and important set of sketches for the future of Bertone. It not only signalled the intentions of the *carrozzeria*, but also inadvertently shone a laser-guided global spotlight on Italy's styling cottage industry as a whole.

After such a bombastic entrance in 1953 with BAT 5, Bertone surely couldn't top that for drama the following year with BAT 7, could it? As it turned out, the '54 offering was even more sensational, with wraparound fins, a protruding nose and a split rear window. It must have seemed from another *Jetsons*-inspired planet when it was unveiled to an incredulous public.

B
BAT CARS

Alfa Romeo's bosses would surely have witnessed the excitement that re-clothing one of their conventional 1900 Sprint chassis in such extravagant bodywork could bring. With that in mind, the following year BAT 9 was unveiled and, while it was not as wild as previous cars, for the first time the Alfa badge and shield proudly adorned the nose. Whether

Alfa officially sanctioned the BAT cars is debatable, but it's clear that the styling cues of BAT 9 tally with Bertone's work on subsequent models in the Alfa range in the ensuing years.

Scattered to the four corners of the Earth once the show circuit excitement died down, all three were reunited in the 1980s and have periodically popped up across the world to excite a new generation of adoring fans. I'm not sure there are many other concept cars that can still carry that level of wow factor 70 years on.

Many stylists and designers point to the BAT show cars as a high-water mark for automotive creativity, and it's fair to suggest that the car design world owes a debt of gratitude to the pioneering souls at Nuccio Bertone's little firm for their stunning contributions. **DC**



C
CARABINIERI

Both the Italian state police and the military-style Carabinieri have used Alfas extensively and remain faithful to the marque, although others have featured – even Lamborghini and Ferrari. The police link got under way with the 1900 and quite a few 2600 Sprints were used, but if you had to conjure an image of an Italian cop car it would likely be a Giulia (pictured), dozens of which were shunted and generally abused in *The Italian Job* – not to mention countless badly dubbed '70s capers. Real-life police drivers liked the 105-series saloons, too, for their handling and durability. **MB**

RM AUCTIONS



D

DARRACQ, ALEXANDRE

The formation of the future Alfa Romeo was just one chapter in the packed life of Pierre-Alexandre Darracq. It came about, intended or not, via his Società Anonima Italiana Darracq, formed in 1906 to sell Darracqs into Italy. They didn't sell well, so his partners in the business created Anonima Lombarda Fabbrica Automobili in 1910 to build its own designs. The Frenchman lasted only one more year in the company, his insistence in using Henriod engines a mistake compounded by his own model flopping not long after.

Still, he had much to fall back on. Trained as a draughtsman, he designed a sewing machine that won a gold medal at the 1889 Paris exhibition and by the turn of the century he had formed and sold the Gladiator Cycle Company. He had a hand in Millet motor cycles and gained experience building Léon Bollées under licence, but partnering with Opel took him and Darracq Automobiles to new heights.

Selling out but staying on around the time of his greatest success, the Darracq Flying Fifteen of 1904, his machine-made pressed-steel cars only added to his fortune. Darracqs reigned in Land Speed Record pursuits and on tracks across the globe, not least with Victor Hemery winning the Ardennes and Vanderbilt Cup in 1905, and Louis Wagner in 1906.

Alexandre left the industry for good in 1913, a year or so before Nicola Romeo changed ALFA for good. Darracq's old business had gone bust, and Romeo was placed in charge by the Banca Italiana di Sconto. That Alfa, a make you reputedly have to have owned to be a true car fan, was formed by a man who couldn't drive and didn't like to be driven, is one of the great ironies. **JP**



GETTY

E

EUROPEAN CAR OF THE YEAR



Sales are the ultimate measure of success, but there's no denying the prestige that comes with a European Car of the Year award – an accolade decided by a group of Europe's most influential motoring journalists. Against stiff competition (the Peugeot 504 and Audi 80), Alfa's 1750 Berlina and Alfetta mustered third-place finishes in 1969 and '73. It wasn't until the firm's '90s revival that it finally came good, scooping the award in 1998 with a landslide for the 156 (left). Three years later the 147 hatchback repeated the feat against the Ford Mondeo, albeit with a slender margin of just a point. **GM**



In terms of pure logic, Fiat's ownership of Alfa Romeo was a done deal in people's heads long before the two were legally combined in 1986. Alfa had been ailing for years, the result of ageing products and production inefficiencies, whereas Fiat had been doing well, mostly from small cars such as the Uno, which collected Europe's Car of the Year Award in 1984. And both were all-Italian.

Even though Alfa's baby car, the Sud, had won great acclaim through the '70s, that model was out of production (though the Sprint soldiered on) – and in any case, Alfa Romeo never made proper money from the little car. What's more, the Alfa 33 that followed had nothing like the Sud's charisma. Despite many attempts at a corporate renaissance, nothing worked. Bigger Alfas were significantly uglier, just as poorly made, and they rusted.

From 1980 Alfa Romeo was controlled by IRI, an Italian government body dedicated to rescuing troubled industrial companies, and its factories never seemed able to rise above 60% production capacity – not least because politicians were never expert at running car manufacturers. An early '80s joint venture with Nissan was tried, producing twin models called the Arna (L) and the Nissan Cherry Europe, but buyers rightly rejected the awful idea.

In 1986, exasperated Italian prime minister Romano Prodi put Alfa Romeo up for sale. Fiat initially proposed a joint venture, but the deal was temporarily upset when Ford arrived with a counter proposal, offering to stabilise Alfa while increasing its stake over time. Fiat withdrew to cogitate, then brought back an outright acquisition plan that included job guarantees for Alfa's workforce, a concept Ford (always notably hard-nosed on labour agreements) wouldn't match. A further attraction of the Fiat deal was that Italians would be managing Italians. Better to be working with the Torinese giant than an American conglomerate unlikely to put a high value on Alfa's rich heritage.

So the deal was done, and within months Alfa Romeo was combined with its traditional rival, Lancia, in a deal the two firms' founders would have seen as profoundly shocking. Despite having since been coveted by the VW Group's Ferdinand Piëch, Alfa Romeo has never really prospered. Perhaps it will do now, with Peugeot in charge, the result of yet another deal no old-time Alfa lover would ever have wanted or predicted. **SC**



GETTY

The Alfa 158 that dominated the first season of the F1 World Championship, that new dawn for new technology, first saw competitive action before WW2, in 1939. Several years were lost to conflict, but 12 years is a long time in racing – even then. Within two seasons it was obsolete, and Alfa Romeo was cut off by the bill-paying government. Ferrari, run by former *Alfista* Enzo, would carry *Il Tricolore* from then on.

It was a long time coming – and after lying hidden under a woodpile on a pig farm during the war – for a short time blossoming.

But what a two years it was. When the World Championship rocked up at Silverstone in May 1950 it was only going to be about Alfa: less than half a second covered poleman Giuseppe Farina and teammates Luigi Fagioli and Juan Manuel Fangio in qualifying. In fourth was Reg Parnell, who had joined the team for the day, a second further back but ahead of Prince Bira's Maserati. Parnell would please the home crowd with third place come race day, his green-nosed, hare-dented 'Alfetta' capitalising from a rare Fangio mistake that forced his retirement.

The precedent had been set, and Fangio and Farina split six wins evenly between them, the latter taking the spoils on points.

The rear suspension of the 158, a car powered from the fertile mind of Gioacchino Colombo by a blown straight-eight, went independent for 1951's 159, which took its bow – and Farina to victory and the title – at Monza the previous September. In '51 the growing might of Ferrari was swatted away, mainly by the magic of *El Maestro* Fangio, and Alfas went all-independent as the factory programme and Alfa Corse shut down.



G

GRAND PRIX

Alfa Romeo had been there before, well prior to people properly keeping count. The RL, P2 and even the old ALFA 40/60 took major wins in the '20s, including with that man Ferrari at the helm. The firm's first true star was Giuseppe Campari, a giant of GP racing who could have been an opera singer. He broke Alfa's duck at Mugello in 1920, winning the same race again a year later in a seven-year-old 40/60. The 3-litre

RL took a win on the Targa with Ugo Sivocci in 1923, as Antonio Ascari spluttered to a stop and crossed the line with a car full of mechanics...

Sent back to cover the ground solo, Sivocci got the win and Alfa 1-2.

The P1's '23 Monza debut was dark, with Sivocci killed and the team pulled, but the P2

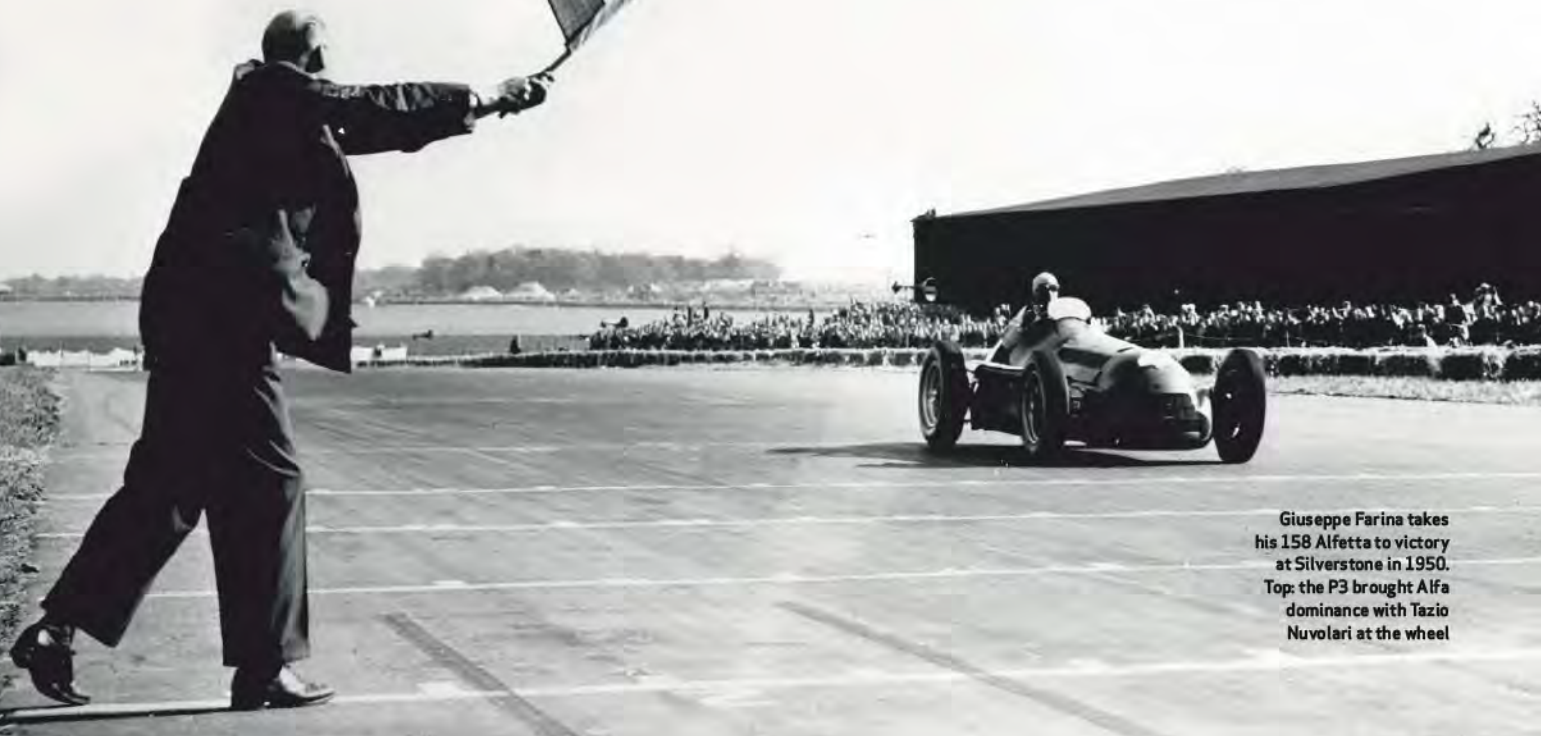
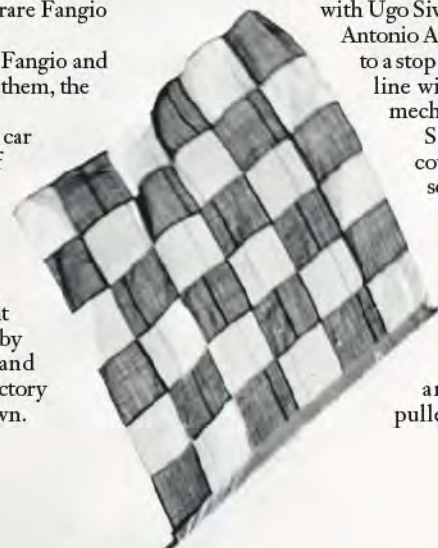
turned some wins a year into a few, with Ascari, Campari, Achille Varzi and Gastone Brilli-Peri victorious over five years. Most importantly, Ascari and Brilli's brace in 1925 wrapped up the mongrel 'World Manufacturers' Championship' that tried in vain to unite Europe and America. From 1926 it had been all but outlawed, too capacious for the ever-changing formula: 2 litres into 1.6 doesn't go. But it still claimed victory elsewhere, including on the 1930 Targa Florio.

The P3 brought Alfa's first era of dominance – instantly, winning on debut with home hero Tazio Nuvolari in the Italian Grand Prix of '32. The 8C had upheld honour admirably with wins in Sicily and elsewhere in 1931, but this was the original *monoposto* and some of the world's greatest wrung its neck from 1932: Nuvolari, Campari, Caracciola, Chiron; the list goes on.

Success did not bring money, though – or not enough. By 1933 Enzo's Scuderia Ferrari took Alfa's corner as factory efforts were streamlined to save the firm, and Nuvolari took many top steps. The middle of the decade welcomed another new dawn, thundered in by the mighty Mercedes and only Tazio's win at the 'Ring (*N*) broke the Championship dominance.

The need to fight back led to that 158, the formation of Alfa Corse, a few wins including the Coppa Ciano on debut just before the war, and the fracturing of the relationship with Enzo. Which ultimately sent Alfa's Grand Prix pedigree tumbling into the sidelines.

Carlo Chiti had his eyes on F1 again in the '70s, when the Autodelta V12 found a home with Brabham. The infamy of Gordon Murray's 'Fan Car' was never matched by the factory when it made a brief return. And today's F1 Alfa is as much a badging exercise as it is a way for Ferrari to run another team... How history repeats. JP



Giuseppe Farina takes his 158 Alfetta to victory at Silverstone in 1950. Top: the P3 brought Alfa dominance with Tazio Nuvolari at the wheel



MOVIESTILLS.CO

H

HOFFMAN, DUSTIN

Thirty-year old Dustin Hoffman, acting in Mike Nicholls' hugely popular 1967 film *The Graduate*, became the world's greatest proponent of Alfa Romeo's then newly launched 1.6-litre 'Duetto' Spider almost overnight – and without ever meaning to.

Hoffman was in his first major acting role. His character was Benjamin Braddock, a serially confused, newly graduated student returning from an East Coast college to his rich parents' California home, which he aims to use as a base for deciding what career he will follow. He is seduced by Mrs Robinson (Anne Bancroft), the alcoholic wife of his father's law partner, while also inconveniently attracted to her daughter.

Much confusion ensues, but from an Alfa point of view just one thing matters: Braddock is frequently, sympathetically and



lingeringly shown driving the Spider 1600 (the boat-tail version unofficially called Duetto), which was a present from his parents.

The Spider is implicit to the movie's plot – in the sense that Braddock does a lot of driving and the car is repeatedly and lovingly photographed. The story goes through various twists and turns but ends well for Benjamin and Elaine Robinson (Katharine Ross).

And the sentimental attachment audiences had for Benjamin and his Alfa Spider seems to have stayed all this time with those who admired them in the first place. **SC**



I

IL DUCE

Having a Fascist dictator on your books might not be a very welcome kind of celebrity association, but Alfa Romeo superfan Cavaliere Benito Mussolini was a huge supporter of the marque's Grand Prix ambitions – and even helped keep the company afloat during the troubled 1930s with his orders for commercial vehicles and aero engines.

A keen driver – though not a very good one according to his chauffeur, the former Portello test driver Ercole Boratto – *Il Duce* owned a dozen Alfas over a 15-year period, beginning with an ES Castagna Spider in 1924. Despite the risk of

assassination, the Italian premier preferred open cars to the more obvious limousines, including a pair of RLSSs and an ex-Mille Miglia 6C-2300 Pescara (*C&SC*, March 2008) that he was gifted and used both as a parade car (above) and to impress women, his other great indulgence.

Mussolini even gave an Alfa Romeo – a 1939 6C-2500 Sport Berlinetta (*C&SC*, February 2012) – to his mistress, Clara Petacci. After the despotic leader was deposed, the elegant coupé formed part of the ill-fated escape convoy whose interception led to his capture and execution. **AC**

J

JANO, VITTORIO

Ingegnere Vittorio Jano is best known for supercharged pre-war greats, but there was much more to his legacy. Born in 1891 in San Giorgio Canavese, near Turin, Jano's origins were Hungarian, his family name changed from János when it came to Italy in the 18th century.

In 1911, Jano joined Fiat to work under Carlo Cavalli on projects including its revolutionary Grand Prix cars. When Alfa began planning a race programme in 1923, Fiat's talented team was headhunted with the aid of consultant Enzo Ferrari and 33-year-old Jano was eventually persuaded to move to Milan.

The straight-eight P2 was ready for tests by May 1924, but the first challenge came on 3 August at the European GP. Jano's team developed a supercharger to boost power from 80 to 118bhp, and three P2s lined up for the race. To the amazement of the crowds the Alfas dominated, ending Fiat's supremacy. Wins at Monza and Spa followed, earning Alfa Romeo the World Championship.

As well as his racing commitments, Jano focused on a road car unit and in 1925 Alfa announced a new 1½-litre ohc 'six' that was developed through the 1920s into the superb twin-cam 6C-1500 and 6C-1750. The brilliant engineer was also responsible for commercial vehicles and aero engines, and developing better fuels with Shell's Italian arm.

The failure of the 12-cylinder Tipo A made him determined to build a worthy

successor to the P2 and, as the 8C sports car dominated road races, Jano was hard at work in summer '31 creating the Tipo B. Slim and brimming with innovation, the new *monoposto* couldn't have been more different from its bulky predecessor.

The dominance of the Nazi-funded Silver Arrows put renewed pressure on Alfa Romeo, and Jano was the scapegoat. His final racing design was the magnificent 12C, but even with Tazio Nuvolari at the wheel it was beaten by Mercedes-Benz and Auto Union.

Jano was replaced by Spaniard Wilfredo Ricart, and eventually joined Lancia.

Although Turin was his proud home, he returned regularly to Milan to meet up with Alfa associates and one of Jano's last road cars was a new Giulietta.

Tragically, having seen his brother struggle with cancer, Jano wrongly convinced himself he had the disease and took his own life on 13 March 1965. **MW**





Under the stunning skin, the Canguro featured a TZ tubular chassis and a dry-sump, twin-plug 1570cc twin-cam engine tuned by Conrero

K

KANGAROO

Giorgetto Giugiaro was on a roll in the early '60s. The 26-year-old had just finished the Sprint GT when Alfa invited Bertone to style a production car based on the TZ. The result, oddly named *Canguro* (Italian for kangaroo), caused a sensation when it appeared at the '64 Paris Salon. The racer's tubular frame and 170bhp 'four' were clothed with a taut aluminium body that many regard as one of the most beautiful GTs ever. The TZ's profile was lowered by Gin and novel features included bold side vents (later used on the Montreal), Cloverleaf cutouts in the rear pillars and a bonded windscreen. Inside, the moulded seats dipped below

the floorpan and the speedo was mounted ahead of the passenger. Sadly, Alfa decided that Autodelta didn't have the capability to produce the fabulous coupé.

After its debut the Canguro was rarely seen, but when taken to Monza in 1967 for a promotional film it was crashed then, stripped of its mechanicals, dumped

in Bertone's yard until discovered and saved in '71 by enthusiast Gary Schmidt. The project was sold in the '90s to collector Shiro Kosaka and, after two attempts to remake the bonnet, the car appeared at Villa d'Este in 2005 before returning to Japan, where it now keeps company with the one-off Pininfarina TZ2. **MW**

Alfa's most tragic 'lemons' were luxury saloons. None were bad cars as such, but they tended to be victims of poor timing, a lack of funds or a general lack of interest on the part of their creators. Local conditions also had a part to play in the failures of cars such as the 2600, Alfa 6 and Alfa 90: Italians tend not to be drawn to thirsty, luxurious big saloons because of tax implications and high fuel prices. Certainly anything with more than four cylinders was the kiss of death at Arese before the front-drive 164 of the mid-'80s.

The 1962-'68 2600 Berlina was actually quite good, but few saw beyond the austere and formal looks to appreciate its fine twin-cam straight-six and five-speed 'box. Developed from the similar-looking four-pot 2000, the 2600's only real dynamic shortcoming was being under-geared, but at 2092 cars it was handsomely outsold by the Bertone Sprint coupé and Touring Spider.

Alfa big-car customers (an exclusive club) had to wait more than a decade for the Alfa 6, which was a far more embarrassing misjudgement. The angular shape (using Alfetta saloon doors) was signed off in the early '70s but production was delayed, thanks to the fuel crisis, until the end of the decade. Alfa explained away its anonymity by pointing out that it would be less likely to draw the attention of the kidnappers that were prevalent in Italy at the time, but the shame was



L

LEMONS

that the 6 was a fairly nice car underneath. Its saving grace was a delightful 156bhp V6 that would push it to 120mph. For a time it was Italy's fastest production four-door and it handled well – useful when outmanoeuvring all those *Brigate Rosse* types who weren't noticing you...

In a way, the 90 was an even more desperate attempt to capture the hearts of executive car buyers. This comprehensive '80s re-hash of the Alfetta brandished all kinds of gimmicks: LED instruments, electric window switches mounted aircraft-style in the roof and, best of all, a fitted

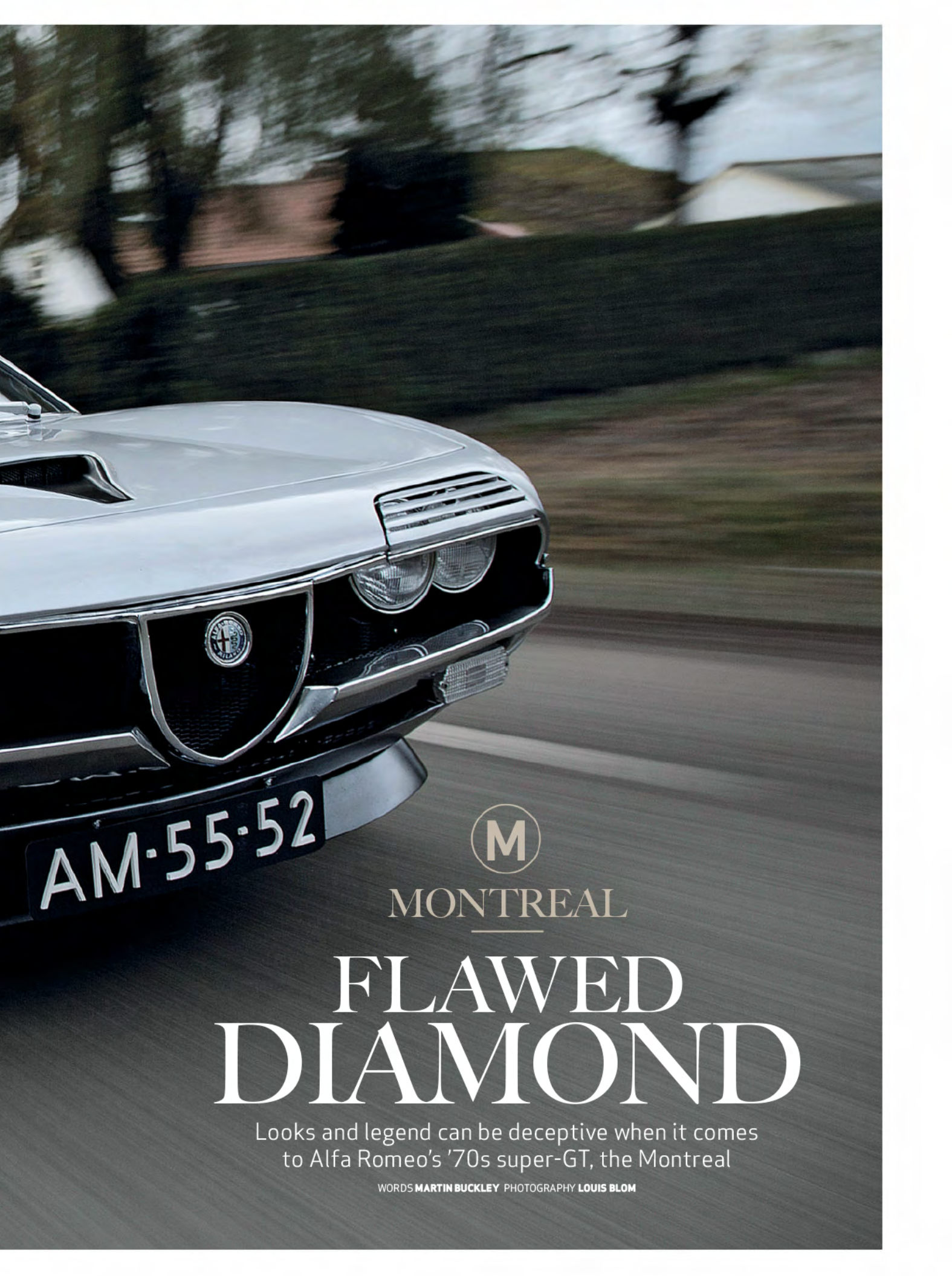
briefcase that slotted into the dash. There were diesel, 2-litre and V6 options, all manual; the latter was fast and fun, but hardly a worthy adversary for the latest Mercs and BMWs.

Not all Alfa misjudgements were large cars. The 1975-'82 Alfasud Giardinetta (estate) sold to the tune of a disappointing 5600 cars – hard to explain given the popularity of the saloon.

Latterly, while failing to recapture the magic of its rear-drive '60s output (or indeed the Sud), Alfa has served up some competent and notably well-styled vehicles within the limitations of Fiat rationalisation. There was a whiff of lemon to the 166, mainly due to buyers' well-founded caution around big saloons, but the uninspiring GM-based MiTo revived memories of the Alfa Arna, probably its all-time low. A joint venture between cash-strapped Alfa and Nissan, the 1983-'87 Arna (pictured) was seen as a cheap and handy means of replacing the ageing Sud while giving Alfa a foothold in the hatchback market. The Japanese firm doubtless saw it as a foot in the door to making its own cars in Europe.

Alfa supplied the flat-four, gearbox and front suspension, while Nissan chipped in with the latest Cherry body. Built in the former Sud plant in Naples, the Arna was unappealing to look at, not especially reliable or good to drive, and buyers saw it for the cynical effort it was. **MB**





AM-55-52



MONTREAL

FLAWED DIAMOND

Looks and legend can be deceptive when it comes to Alfa Romeo's '70s super-GT, the Montreal

WORDS **MARTIN BUCKLEY** PHOTOGRAPHY **LOUIS BLOM**



Low and kamm-tailed, the Montreal looked every inch a supercar contender in the metal

The story of the fabulous yet flawed Montreal is as much about Bertone as it is Alfa Romeo. In many ways, this car marked the end of a long honeymoon period between the two great houses that had begun in 1954 with the Giulietta Sprint.

I don't entirely buy the tale about the debut of the Montreal at the 1967 World's Fair – it has the unmistakable whiff of PR spin. The story goes that visitors to the 'Man the Producer' pavilion at Expo 67, held in Montreal, Canada, were so awestruck by the car's appearance that Alfa Romeo felt compelled to put its dream car into production. My feeling is the Italians knew they were going to build the Montreal in some form or another. Envious of the success of the Fiat Dino, at least in terms of column inches and reflected glory, the idea of this higher-priced flagship must have seemed rather appealing to Alfa bosses, particularly because there was a pressing need to replace the 2600 Sprint.

Bertone's shape, created in just nine months for this prestigious event by a 28-year-old Marcello Gandini, was extrapolated from the proportions of his Miura. Like the Lamborghini, the Alfa show car had the space-age aesthetic that had swept the fashion world since the mid-1960s in anticipation of the Apollo mission. The funky eyelids allowed for the adjustment of the headlamp heights for different regulations, but also gave the car a mean and moody front end. The clamshell bonnet didn't make it to the final Montreals, however, and the famous light

covers were nothing more than superfluous stoneguards by the time Bertone had massaged the design – with considerable difficulty due to strikes – into a viable production vehicle.

Finished in pearl white, the two show cars were pure André Courrèges Futurism. But the Kamm-tailed hatchback Montreal was not futuristically mid-engined: the faux vents in its

'Like the Miura, the new Alfa had the space-age aesthetic that had swept the world in anticipation of the Apollo mission'



Face-saving engine was provided by racing arm Autodelta

C-pillars, inspired by the Canguro concept car of 1964 (K), merely highlighted the basic conceit that this was an entirely conventional front-engined grand touring car masquerading as a mid-engined exotic. In fact, despite speculation at the time that a mid-engined concept had to be abandoned due to a lack of time, the company had never actually considered it.

Most potential buyers forgave the Montreal this visual trick, but I do wonder how many liked the idea that the car was so 'ordinary' in terms of chassis and suspension architecture – which was unashamedly shared with the 1750 GTV. That meant a live rear axle because there was no time to do anything else; it was well located, certainly, but not the sort of sophistication buyers were coming to expect in fast, expensive GT cars at the beginning of the 1970s.

In some respects this was not a valid criticism because the Montreal, apart from having more body roll than quick drivers liked, measured up to established Alfa Romeo standards of highly controllable behaviour. Its unassisted steering was a little slow, but the car was set up to transition gently through mild, safe understeer into a state of neutrality. At well-flagged but high limits that became oversteer with the option of hanging the tail out at will with complete controllability in sharper corners.

It was not a Ferrari Dino or even a 911, but the Montreal belied its 3000lb bulk and lent some credence to Alfa's claims that a live axle had been chosen rather than imposed upon the design because it was inherently more predictable than, say, semi-trailing arms. The fact that even the



'Eyelids' over twin front lights are for little more than show, but they do retract. Left: intricate and quirky dial layout



Gills on the flanks are one of many elements that suggest a mid-engined machine. Right: twin central exhausts





159 Alfetta GP car had a de Dion axle rather than true independence for its rear wheels suggests Alfa was inherently suspicious of IRS.

The glory of the production Montreal was, of course, its engine. While the two Expo 67 cars (not badged Montreal) had standard 1600 twin-cams fitted to give them basic mobility, the Montreal as put into production boasted a detuned four-cam 2½-litre fuel-injected V8 courtesy of Carlo Chiti's Autodelta (A). Its racing-style flat-plane crank was replaced by a smoother-spinning cross-plane type, and while single plugs per cylinder were deemed adequate for road use, the dry sump remained for a lower bonnet line.

Spica mechanical injection replaced the Lucas type, but this remarkable V8 was still visually the sports-racing car engine that had powered the Tipo 33 to class wins on the Targa Florio, at Daytona and Le Mans, plus the handful of roadgoing 2-litre Stradales (S).

High-revving, super-smooth and surprisingly refined and flexible, it featured considerable amounts of advanced metallurgy to keep its weight down and in every way adapted itself to civilian life quite seamlessly. With 90% of its maximum torque available from 3-6000rpm it was a pussycat around town, with clean running aided by the latest in twin-coil ignition.

At the other end of the spectrum, you didn't have to change into top until you were doing 120mph, a speed at which the car would cruise effortlessly. Combined with an excellent ZF five-speed gearbox, the Montreal's beautifully sonorous V8 was easily the most successful part of the car, although it shared practically nothing with the Autodelta racing units.

In fact, the seemingly handy cross-pollination of componentry with the four-cylinder 105-series range was not the time- and effort-saving measure it might have seemed for the Montreal project. Beyond the obvious bought-in ZF gearbox and bigger ventilated disc brakes, many of the parts the Montreal supposedly



Large steering wheel dominates a sporty cabin. Below: tight rear 'seats'



shared with the 1750 and 2000 GTV had to be beefed up to take the increased weight and power, thus negating any benefit the accountants at Arese might have anticipated.

It all seemed like a lot of effort to sell fewer than 4000 cars and the protracted four-year development process, in which all kinds of tweaks and compromises had to be made, must have made many in Milan wish they had started with a clean sheet of paper in the first place.

The engine alone was worth the price of admission for many buyers but, as lovely as it was, this special power unit looked like a lot of

fuss when its 200bhp only got you to 60mph from rest in 8.2 secs and on to a 135mph maximum, according to *Motor*. At 13mpg, only the Montreal's fuel consumption was in the true 'supercar' class, and stopping to fill the 14-gallon tank every 200 miles hardly chimed with the car's grand-touring credentials.

You could buy a Dino 246 for the £5000 Alfa wanted for its flagship when Montreals finally began arriving in the UK in 1971. A Citroën SM was £500 cheaper, a BMW 3.0 CS £500 more expensive; both offered similar performance combined with basic levels of practicality the designers of the Montreal seemed to have completely overlooked in their haste to get the car into production.

With rear 'seats' not fit for human habitation, a travesty of a luggage bay (half-filled by the spare and accommodating just 3.2cu ft of bags) and poor rear vision, this was a car you bought with your heart and not your head, even in the rarefied

sphere of Euro exotica. It is perhaps the only front-engined sports car blessed with most of the impracticalities of a mid-engined one!

The Montreal is not, then, one of the great Alfa Romeos but it is certainly one of the most interesting. Stylish and fast, although never as fast as it looked or sounded, it was conceived in a flourish of late-'60s enthusiasm but died with a mid-'70s whimper, its parents losing interest in their offspring before it realised its potential. Even if the challenges of building any sort of car in the '70s had not caused Alfa to grow bored of the increasingly irrelevant Montreal, the fuel crisis would have finished the job.

Launched at Geneva in 1970, deliveries didn't begin until '71 and production of a right-hooker required extensive modifications. After sales peaked in '72 at 2350 cars, it took Alfa until 1977 to sell the remaining 900 examples – which just about says it all. Today, however, most of their period shortcomings are easily sorted, making this truly exotic yet surprisingly affordable Alfa an ever more appealing prospect.



Hints of Lamborghini Miura are a reflection of their shared creator at Bertone, Marcello Gandini



Tazio Nuvolari's *Il Mantovano Volante* (The Flying Mantuan) title was never more appropriate than for his most famous win: the 1935 German Grand Prix, when he shocked the Silver Arrows teams on home soil. Officials were so confident, the band was only ready to play the German national anthem; thankfully, Nuvolari took a *Marcia Reale* record to all races.



This monumental day broke a run of eight German victories and the battle was fought in wet and dry conditions across 22 laps and 311 miles, in front of a crowd of 250,000.

Mercedes had covered more than 1000km of testing at 'The Green Hell' and team manager Alfred Neubauer had concerns about the 445bhp W25's tyre wear – particularly the left rear on Manfred von Brauchitsch's car, so it was decided that he would pit for fresh rubber around lap 18. The team had the best tactics, but it wasn't prepared for the awesome skill of Nuvolari in the outdated Tipo B, or the stubborn independence of von Brauchitsch.

Against nine Silver Arrows, Scuderia Ferrari prepared three 3.2-litre Alfas with new Dubonnet independent front suspension, led by Nuvolari. The Tipo B was quick in the twisty sections but no match for the W25 and Auto Union V16 on the straights. Despite being plagued by braking problems, Nuvolari equalled Bernd Rosemeyer for fastest lap at 10 mins 32 secs. An acceleration test to determine the grid was voted down by the drivers and the usual ballot was used, with



Nuvolari and Hans Stuck first.

Rain fell at the 11am start, and Nuvolari shot away but Caracciola led from the Italian by 12 secs at the start of lap two. Nuvolari spun at Bergwerk and, after driving against the pack, rejoined having lost 25 secs. He stormed back from sixth and by lap seven passed von Brauchitsch at the Karussell to take third, then led by lap 10. When the top four pitted for fuel, Nuvolari was still jumping around shouting at mechanics as the three Mercs roared out. The pump handle had broken and 90 secs were lost as the crew resorted to churns and a funnel.

After dropping to sixth, by lap 15 a pumped-up Nuvolari

was second and chasing down von Brauchitsch. The incredible pace concerned Neubauer, who instructed von Brauchitsch to slow and save tyres. He refused and on lap 20 the Mercedes ace roared past the pits pointing at the left rear because the warning breaker strip had appeared. Neubauer ordered his mechanics to be ready but von Brauchitsch charged perilously on.

The commentary announced on the final lap that Nuvolari was in the lead; von Brauchitsch was limping with a shredded rear tyre. When the Alfa appeared on the start/finish straight for the last time, the crowd went silent. Von Brauchitsch finished down in fifth, weeping in the cockpit.

Few photos remain of this amazing race, but Tipo B '50005' survives in glorious condition as a star of John Shirley's collection in Seattle. MW



The crowds were on edge around the circuit as Nuvolari pushed the old Alfa to sensationally defeat the German superteams at home



ALEX JUPE CHICHESTER, WEST SUSSEX

"I've owned my GTV6 since I was 17 in 1994, and have two standout memories. The first was the Nürburgring in 2011, following a number of years of her sitting in 'project' status. The second was going with a friend and his BMW 2002 to the then just reopened Alfa Romeo museum in Arese in 2015, taking in many Alpine passes. The car was built for exactly this and it was an incredible, unforgettable trip. As a kid, the first car you remember your car-loving dad having leaves a massive impression – a new 1978 Giulietta 1.6 was it for a very young me."



FRÉDÉRIC VAN DAMME BELGIUM

"I'll never forget driving my Montreal from Switzerland, where I bought it in 2017, all the way through the winding roads of Alsace to bring it home and park it next to my GTV6. It might have been my first journey in it, but it ran like clockwork and getting to know it on those roads was a real treat. I love its Gandini design and V8 engine."



DAYAN FERNANDO COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

"I'm a serial Alfisto. I own a Sud Sprint, an Alfetta GTV, a 105-series GT Junior and a 2000 Berlina I'm restoring. Driving my basketcase Sud Sprint home after purchase was mad but unforgettable, about 60km in a tropical storm on flooded roads with no wiper or driver's-side window glass. At some points the water was so high it seeped into the (hole-filled) footwells. The exhaust was leaking, the cabin was smoky, and the engine wouldn't idle so I had to drive it like I stole it. And here she is now, 18 years later – the only running one in the country!"



ANDI BRAY
EVESHAM, WORCESTERSHIRE

"My proudest memory is winning the Alfa Romeo Owners' Club concours with my Alfasud. I bought the car at auction after she'd been in a Dutch barn under a tarpaulin for 17 years. I got her home, stripped her back and sent her for a respray, then cleaned and refitted the interior, brakes, suspension and so on. I'm not much of a mechanic but I have done 80% of the work. I only entered the concours for a laugh and to my surprise I won!"



DAN MURPHY
GLEN RIDGE, NEW JERSEY, USA

"I've loved restoring my 1969 Alfa Romeo Spider Veloce, bought in February 2015 as a 'work in progress'. I've had the mechanical elements, the roof and the interior done professionally. It was no-expense spared – the sum of the shell, the parts and the labour exceeds the car's value – but it performs flawlessly and was a fun project. I have no regrets and it's something off the bucket list."



JAMES FOSTER
ST ANDREWS, AUSTRALIA

"I recall a blast down to Margaret River from Cottesloe Beach in Perth in my GTV. It's a classic winding road through the Boranup Forest and it was a beautiful day – I had the window open to listen to the twin-cam singing. Then something caught my eye... It was the door-mirror glass coming loose; the sticky tape had failed. I caught it while driving and then reattached it with some new double-sided tape!"



ALEXANDER STARK
OSLO, NORWAY

"Basically, Alfa Romeo defined my childhood. When I was born, I was collected from hospital in my parents' white Alfasud 1.2. I can still remember when my dad brought home a *giallo* Spider – and also when he sold it in 1994. Then, in 2017, together we bought it back. It had only had three other owners in the 23 intervening years. For me, that Alfa Spider has always been the reference point of joy."



MICHEL ALBERT KISJES

BENNEBROEK, THE NETHERLANDS
"I was raised with Alfas: my father was a big enthusiast – his first was an Alfetta 1.6 and he raced a 2000 GTV. But I loved my 1972 1300 GT Junior. It was just parked in a village nearby, so I traced the owner and did a deal with my Fiat Uno. It would be amazing to know where that car is now!"

0

OWNERS' MEMORIES

Alfa Romeos hold a special place in the hearts of all true petrolheads. That includes a huge number of *C&SC* readers, who answered the call on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram channels when we asked for their best memories and photographs of being among the passionate ranks of the *Alfisti*. Here are just a few of the many hundreds we received



PAUL MORRIS
YORKSHIRE DALES

"My first car – MLW 823V – was a 1980 Alfasud 1.5 Sprint Veloce. There was more filler in her body than steel! I used to have to put a blanket over the engine every evening during the winter to ensure she started in the morning, otherwise the plugs got damp, but it was the best-handling, most fun car I could have dreamt of."



MATTHEW BRAY
UPPINGHAM, LEICESTERSHIRE

"This is *bella* 'Rossinetta', my 1958 750F Giulietta Spider Veloce and the only car I've ever owned that's had a name – I don't know why or where it came from. I've had her 24 years and my love affair only gets stronger. I'm a lifelong Alfa fan – my first car was an Alfasud Ti, but Rossinetta was an impulse buy. I've done a lot of work over the years and drive her when I can. My dream is to take her to Italy for a long, relaxed road trip."



GINO PALERMO
PORT DOVER, ONTARIO, CANADA

"When I think of Alfa I think of my late dad, Tony (Antonio) Palermo, in his beloved Duetto. He drove a rather splendid 1967 Duetto Spider that he bought accident-damaged from an insurance company and brought back to its best. He drove and enjoyed that car for 23 years and my brother now cares for it. Dad loved Alfas so much that when he died in 2003 we commissioned an illustration of his car for his gravestone."



JON ELSON
CALDECOTE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

"My dad had a red Alfetta saloon in the late '70s. It made a super noise, but when we took it to France on holiday towing our Cavalier caravan I used to boil in the back. The itchy velour seats got so hot in the sun and with the transaxle underneath. I used to help wash it and gallons of black brake dust always came out from the front wheels. Dad bought it new and it was great, I loved it, but I imagine it has since rusted away."



ANDY DUFFEY
KEIGHLEY, WEST YORKSHIRE

"Beautiful weather, good roads and a fantastic car, does it get any better? Yes, when that drive is in my Alfa Romeo 2000 GTV with my wife and best friend Andrea by my side, and it is the first real run-out having received the all-clear after battling cancer. A dual celebration of health and automotive passion combined. I'll always have fond memories of a sunny day with a well-sorted Giulia coupé and a future."



P

PORTELLO & POMIGLIANO D'ARCO

Portello (above) was Alfa Romeo's first factory, established just outside Milan's inner ring road on the north-western side. It was first occupied by Darracq in 1908, after the French company decided it needed an Italian site and fixed on a location close to that of the 1906 International Fair in Milan. The same area was chosen by Citroën, Fiat, Touring and Zagato, among others.

Darracq lasted there until 1909, before ALFA took over and launched the 24hp in 1910. A distinguished succession of models led to the 8C. The plant was damaged by wartime bombing and didn't restart production until 1950 with the 1900. Great cars flowed for a decade and a half – Giulietta, 2000 and more – and some capacity was devoted to Renault Dauphine production under licence for four years from 1959.

The last Alfes to be made at Portello were the 2600 and the Giulia saloon; both transferred to the new Arese plant, further away from central Milan in the same direction, when production on the site ceased in '65. It finally closed in '86.

The Pomigliano d'Arco plant (below)

is best known as the source of one of Alfa Romeo's finest and most innovative models, the Alfasud, but it was also the centre of a wider political project. Italy's regional governments were concerned at the large numbers of young people leaving the Naples area for the north, and in the late '60s came up with a plan to establish a car plant on the site of a former aircraft engine factory – Pomigliano d'Arco, on the north-eastern outskirts of Naples – and produce a special model there, the *Sud* (south).

Key decisions were reached in '67 and the whole project, car and factory, was put under the management of Rudolf Hruska, a former colleague of Ferdinand Porsche. Amid continuing industrial strife it took until 1972 for the first car to roll off the production lines.

Suds were made there until 1984, then 33s, Fiat Tipos and a continuing run of Alfa models until production of the 159 was halted, and Pomigliano d'Arco (now renamed Giambattista Vico Plant after the Neapolitan philosopher) was given over to production of the Fiat Panda, which continues. **SC**



Q

QUATTRORUOTE

The automotive press and the car industry have always been closely linked, but surely never closer than for this retro roadster curiosity, initiated by an article in *Quattroruote* magazine (launched in 1956) and inspired by the 6C-1750 Gran Sport of the '30s.

Though its slightly cheesy neoclassic looks might scream posh kit-car, the Gran Sport Quattroruote was in fact very much the real deal – styled by Ercole Spada, lovingly panelled in aluminium over a tubular frame by Zagato, and based on a 105-series Giulia floorpan and mechanicals. It was even sold through the Alfa Romeo dealer network as a pukka model.

The GS Quattroruote's 92bhp, 1570cc twin-cam and stock Giulia running gear make it a rather more usable – and, at just 750kg, much faster – proposition than the exotic machine that inspired it, though its rarity, with just 92 examples built over two years from 1965-'67, means you'll likely pay the thick end of £100,000 if you want to own one today. **AC**



R

RICOTTI

The ALFA 40/60hp Aerodinamica 'Siluro Ricotti' is as fascinating visually as it was conceptually flawed. As its basis is a 40/60hp engineered by the marque's original designer, Giuseppe Merosi, and it *should* look just like any car of the 1910s. But that was not enough for Count Marco Ricotti. In 1914 he commissioned Milanese coachbuilder Carrozzeria Castagna and the result was this teardrop-shaped, airship-like aluminium body. Or 'torpedo'.

It pierced the air well enough to add 9mph to the original model's top speed, to a little more than 86mph, and even had curved window glass. It wasn't exactly comfortable: the engine and radiator were inside the car, slowly cooking its passengers – which were usually Ricotti's family. His wife refused to ride in it because it was so unbearable, so he chopped off its roof.

The original was lost, but 40 years ago Alfa Romeo built a roofed replica that now resides in the Museo Storico in Arese. **JP**



BLUE



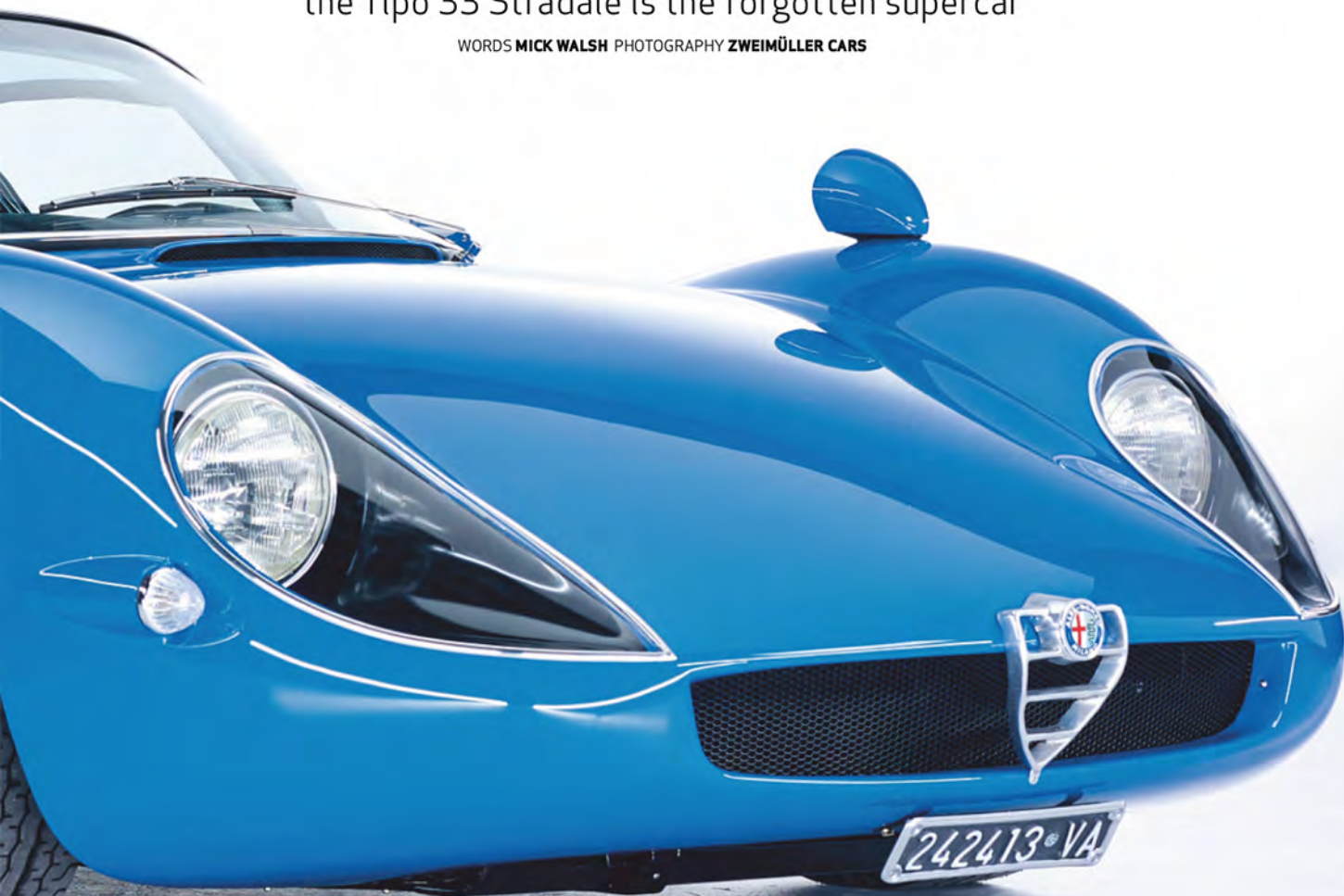


STRADALE

MOON

The most beautiful and elusive of all Alfa Romeos,
the Tipo 33 Stradale is the forgotten supercar

WORDS MICK WALSH PHOTOGRAPHY ZWEIMÜLLER CARS



Stradale, Scaglione and show cars – all are linked to Alfa Romeo’s most exotic supercar, based on the Tipo 33 sports-prototype, that wowed the automotive world when unveiled at the Festival dell’Autodromo at Monza in September 1967. Even Enzo Ferrari was impressed, stating that the only thing wrong with it was the badge! But the word ‘struggle’ would be equally apt for the troubled gestation of this fabulous mid-engined 2-litre coupé.

In 1963, Carlo Chiti was enlisted to run Alfa’s racing operation as a separate wing christened Autodelta (see *A*), and as well as developing the TZ coupés he was given the challenge of creating a 2-litre sports-prototype partially based on the old Scarabeo. The first T33 was launched at Balocco in March 1967, but the mid-engined 270bhp V8 with bold H-layout chassis – made from riveted aluminium using aviation practice – wasn’t really race-ready, as its troubled first season would prove.

As if Chiti didn’t have enough on his plate the Alfa management, led by Giuseppe Luraghi and Orazio Satta, also demanded a road car based on the new prototype, with plans for a production run of 50. Chiti had worked with Franco Scaglione in ’63 on the short-lived ATS supercar, and late in ’66 the talented Turin-based designer was contracted for the new Alfa. Scaglione’s background was in aviation and, although he was a brilliant and bold stylist, his designs also had a technical foundation in aerodynamics. From the beginning of the Stradale project the shape was tested extensively, first with scale models and then as a bare aluminium prototype. As wealthy customers would prove, the 170mph missile was brilliantly stable at high speed but the driver and passenger cooked in the cramped cockpit. Air conditioning would be an essential option for this roadgoing racer.

The first Stradale prototype based on the original aluminium/Peraluman racing chassis with a lengthened wheelbase was built by Autodelta at Via Enrico Fermi. But the racing division wasn’t set up for building bodywork and Scaglione became ever more frustrated by the lack of equipment and specialised skills. Extra specialists were taken on but Autodelta’s main man clearly saw racing as his priority and the relationship between Chiti and Scaglione – who commuted from Turin to Settimo Milanese daily – became strained. “It’s a Tipo 33 with baby fat,” said Chiti. The bodywork was finally ready in September, but no engine was available, and an argument over the colour (Chiti wanted it white) delayed presentation to director Luraghi.

In October the project was given the go-ahead and Chiti, against Scaglione’s advice, contacted Carrozzeria Marazzi to produce the ‘production’ cars, based on a stronger, longer-lasting steel

chassis. After its low-key debut, the Stradale was officially launched a week later at the Frankfurt motor show with a staggering price of \$17,000, making it the most expensive car listed.

The modest Scaglione was proud of the Stradale’s successful aerodynamic tests. Despite weighing 120kg more than the racers, the road car proved very stable around Balocco with traditional wool threads attached, turbulence only appearing behind the rear wheelarches. The finished first body, made by Saracino e Lingua of Druento, looked almost identical to Scaglione’s models. After the prototype, the shape was revised with large air ducts appearing behind the front and rear arches; the detailing would evolve – these cars were all handmade – which helps identify individual cars. The press road tests were hugely enthusiastic, praising its staggering performance, sharp rack-and-pinion steering and sensational roadholding. Up to 150mph there was relatively little engine noise,

but past 160mph it became really intense inside the snug cabin with the V8 screaming away behind. The biggest problem for lucky owners was the low ride height, and even ramps into petrol stations resulted in noisy scrapes.

Despite his experience, Scaglione was overlooked by Chiti to develop the T33 racer’s Daytona body, and through 1968 his situation became ever more overwrought. Eventually, after supervising early construction at Marazzi, he resigned and went to join Intermeccanica.

Orders were slow and spec varied from semi-competition *corsa* to full *lusso* trim with a plusher interior. There had been initial discussions about racing the Stradale and one prototype was taken to the Targa Florio, but only used for a demonstration. However, the beautiful shape was adorned with numbers when privateer owners competed in hillclimbs and races. In ’96, two Stradales ran at the Monterey Historics, an amazing sight that will likely never be repeated.

Few have experience with both early T33 racers and Stradales, but in recent years Austrian specialist Egon Zweimüller has driven them all. “They have a unique character, with a very direct feel just like a motorcycle,” he says. “The ATE brakes are superb but heavy, the racing clutch is tricky, the steering is super-direct and the ’box a little tight but it works better the faster you go. Everything – engine, brakes and gearbox – must be really warm before you can start driving. The V8 loves to rev but lacks torque for road use. A 2.5- or 3-litre engine would make it a dream machine, but compared to a Stradale the Daytona and Miura are trucks. It’s a pure racer for the road. There’s no luggage space and only one spare for the front, but there’s a special toolbox for homologation.”

Zweimüller has been involved with four Stradales and is seduced by their allure: “The shape is so sexy and very feminine. It’s a timeless masterpiece that appeals to all generations.”

The true number of Stradales built remains uncertain – not helped by a secretive run of ‘continuation’ cars built by Giovanni Giordanengo, possibly with Chiti’s help. While Giordanengo was rebuilding the Alfa museum car, he had the perfect reference to copy it.

The general belief is that 13 Scaglione-styled Stradales were completed, which tallies with Chiti’s records. The first three, including the prototype based on the riveted-aluminium chassis with fuel stored in the side members, featured quad headlights, but to make the car legal in Italy it switched to two lamps from 1968, when only trucks were allowed paired lights.

The show car starred in the 1969 movie *Un bellissimo novembre*, where its shapely form competed with curvy co-star Gina Lollobrigida. Its distinctive features included a roof-mounted single wiper, and story has it this early Stradale was sold from the factory collection to a Japanese



From top: Enzo Ferrari was impressed by Stradale; Count Agusta (right) collects the blue chassis 111 from Portello

‘Press road tests were enthusiastic, praising its staggering performance, sharp steering and sensational roadholding’



Scaglione's masterpiece is beautiful from any angle, particularly from above. Note how far the dihedral doors cut into the roof and the extra vent to cool the cabin



From top: special lusso cockpit trim for Agusta included helicopter seats and an ashtray; four-cam, twin-plug V8 with bigger-trumpet Spica fuel injection



collector, while the second was built up from spares in '69 and is now a star of Alfa's Museo Storico. While the first cars were completed under troubled circumstances at Autodelta, the rest were finished at Carrozzeria Marazzi in Caronno Pertusella, near Saronno, with the help of former Zagato and Touring specialists.

The first steel-chassis Stradale was bought by American enthusiast Henry Wessells III, who met Chiti in the early '60s on a flight to Sicily for the Targa Florio. The pair became friends and regularly chatted at race meetings, and in 1967 Wessells was invited to Balocco to see the new Tipo 33 testing. During the visit, he was shown a secret bare-aluminium coupé in a workshop. Wessells was smitten and ordered the first 'production' Stradale. The car was kept in Italy for a few months with Wessells using it regularly on the road, including a high-speed blast on the *autostrada* to Venice running at the rev limit of 10,000rpm for 4km, at 180mph. "The Stradale was fantastically stable – even in crosswinds it ran brilliantly straight," recalled Wessells in 1999, further confirming Scaglione's skill. The car was eventually air-freighted to America by Alitalia for no charge, in exchange for the publicity of transporting the world's most expensive car, and was later inherited by Alfa specialist Keith Goring. As well as blasts around Connecticut roads, it was raced at Daytona and Laguna Seca and became a concourse star. This was the final Stradale with Scaglione's direct involvement, and today resides in a Belgian collection.

Brescia-based industrialist and racer Giuseppe Lucchini owned two Stradales, including one *corsa* that he drove in hillclimb events. Other prominent Italians tempted by the 2-litre beauty included the debonair Count Corrado Agusta, jet-setting president of the family helicopter business, who ordered his Stradale – chassis 111, pictured here – painted royal blue (the only non-red car) with tan trim. This high-spec example has many unique features including helicopter seats with Volvo belts, an ashtray and special tinted glass. Agusta also requested twin brake servos, Magneti Marelli ignition and an extra securing bolt to prevent the engine cover lifting at speed, which was a problem with the immense underbody pressure. The car was tested at Monza by racer Teodoro Zeccoli, and kept by the Count until 1973. Japanese collector Yoshiyuki Hayashi later repainted chassis 111 red, but thankfully this low-mileage, highly original Stradale is back in Europe where it has been returned to its original blue after a 5000-hour restoration by Zweimüller's team.

Other Stradales have more complex histories. Two suffered accidents, while chassis 110 remained unsold for many years at Palumbo Garage on Via della Fontana, Rome. This lightweight featured magnesium doors with

'One Stradale is missing in America, rumoured to survive in Chicago, which all adds to the allure of the ultimate Alfa Romeo'



Perspex side windows and won the Villa d'Este concours in 2018. Several Stradales have remained hidden for decades after their exotic mechanicals became problematic, but their huge values are now tempting them out. One very original car was kept by Chiti and later stored in an underground car park near Como before its recent sale. Another is missing in the USA, rumoured to survive in Chicago, which all adds to the allure of the ultimate Alfa. Just to confuse matters, chassis number 113 was never used for

superstitious reasons, but number 133 is now in the Lawrence Auriana collection in New York.

In addition to the Autodelta and Carrozzeria Marazzi Stradales, a further four chassis were provided to Italy's foremost design studios for concept bodywork. In the age of the monocoque the H-style chassis was already outdated, so Alfa was happy to find an outlet for the spares. Most spectacular was the wedge Carabo (Scarab) by Marcello Gandini at Bertone, unveiled at the '68 Paris Salon. Novel features included scissor doors opened by pneumatic rams, and the shape would later influence the Countach.

Pininfarina had three goes at the Tipo 33, starting in '68 with a dramatic silver roadster that had an orange wing behind the cockpit and a row of lights in the nose covered by a clear panel. Frustratingly, this fantastic design was dismantled to create a second roadster, the wedge-shaped Cuneo styled by Paolo Martin for the 1971 Brussels show. For the '69 Paris Salon, Pininfarina surprisingly unveiled the 33/2 Speciale Berlinetta, a reworking of the Ferrari P5 after a request from Alfa director Luraghi

to Enzo. Repainted a dazzling acid yellow with gullwing-style doors, tartan trim and pop-up headlights, this design was initially considered for limited production.

Giorgetto Giugiaro couldn't resist having a go, too, as a possible follow-up to the Bizzarrini Manta. With a sharp nose sweeping up to a high tail that previewed the profile of the Alfetta GT, his 1969 Iguana featured extensive use of glass including the roof. The body was silver with brushed-steel pillars, and a metalflake theme inside included its bizarre gearstick and 'safety waistcoat' attached to the passenger seat.

The final T33 concept came as late as 1976, when Bertone unveiled the futuristic Navajo in Geneva, but this featured a new tubular chassis and a glassfibre body. Advanced aerodynamics included a front splitter and adjustable rear wing, while the headlights emerged laterally from the wing sides. In the stripped-back cabin were digital instruments, fixed seats, a single-spoke steering wheel and a floating centre console.

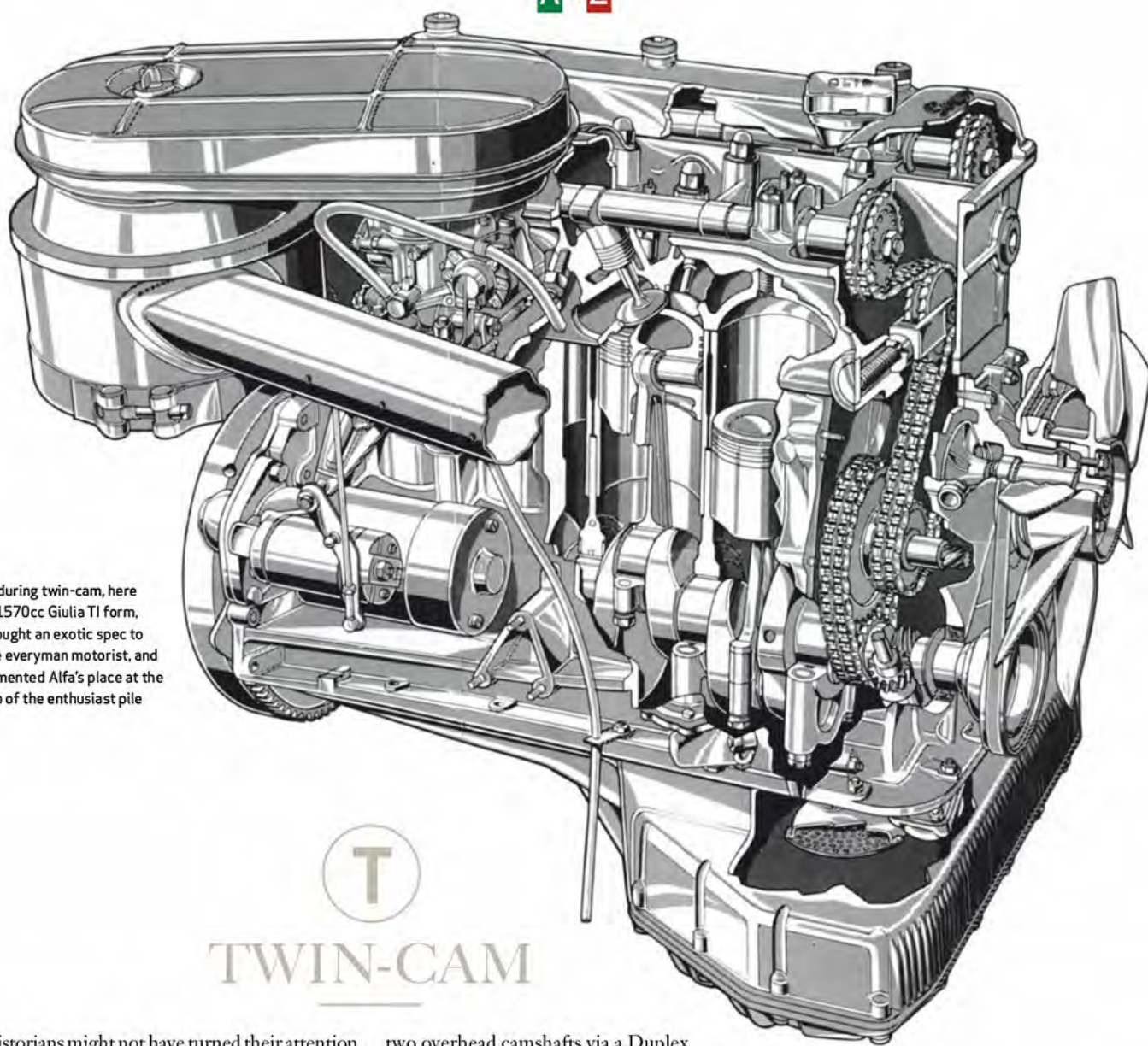
Rarer than a Ferrari GTO or McLaren F1, the Stradale is now fantastically valuable. Sadly, they are rarely seen because no one seems to drive them, other than in first gear to the awards ramp at prestigious concours events. Like the Tipo 33 racers their mechanical design is viewed as a challenge, and several histories are a mystery.

Hopefully, renewed interest in this glorious exotic will mean more use. It would be amazing to see a group touring northern Italy: imagine the sound of their massed 2-litre V8s screaming up the Stelvio or Gardena passes.

Thanks to Egon Zweimüller (zweimuellercars.com), Chanh Le Huy and Johann Wimmer

ALFA ROMEO T33 STRADALE

Sold/number built 1967-'69/18 (inc concept cars) **Construction** steel/magnesium tubular chassis with front and rear subframes, aluminium body **Engine** all-alloy, dohc-per-bank 1995cc V8, Spica fuel injection **Max power** 245bhp @ 8800rpm **Max torque** 162lb ft @ 7000rpm **Transmission** six-speed Colotti close-ratio manual, RWD **Suspension** independent, at front by double wishbones rear trailing arms; coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bar f/r **Steering** rack and pinion **Brakes** ATE ventilated discs, inboard to the rear **Length** 13ft (3962mm) **Width** 5ft 7in (1702mm) **Height** 3ft 3in (991mm) **Wheelbase** 7ft 8in (2337mm) **Weight** 1660lb (753kg) **0-60mph** 6 secs **Top speed** 170mph (est) **Mpg** n/a **Price new** \$17,000 **Now** £10-15m



Enduring twin-cam, here in 1570cc Giulia TI form, brought an exotic spec to the everyman motorist, and cemented Alfa's place at the top of the enthusiast pile



TWIN-CAM

Historians might not have turned their attention to the prospect, but we wouldn't mind betting that the old cliché of even relatively ordinary Italian cars having 'soul' didn't crop up until around the mid-'50s and the launch of Alfa Romeo's legendary twin-cam engine. The firm didn't pioneer the technology – that distinction lies with Peugeot and its Grand Prix cars of 1912 – but Alfa did become the first to bring twin-overhead-cam power to the masses with the arrival of the Giulietta in 1954.

At a time when American manufacturers were still pushing big flathead V8s, British buyers were getting overhead-valve 'sixes' and Porsche's flagship 356 laboured ahead of an antiquated pushrod flat-four, Alfa Romeo brought racing technology to the market thanks to the engineering genius of Giuseppe Busso.

Taking inspiration from the 1900, Busso created a 1290cc all-alloy engine with cast-iron cylinder liners and a crossflow head with hemispherical combustion chambers and two valves per cylinder. A forged crankshaft drove

two overhead camshafts via a Duplex timing chain, with power rated at a hugely impressive 79bhp at 6300rpm, rising to 90bhp at 6500rpm with the addition of twin carburetors, a tubular exhaust manifold and hotter camshafts.

The twin-cam was reborn in 1962 with the launch of the larger Giulia TI, the engine then displacing 1567cc. Chief among the changes was a new casting process that better lent itself to mass production, with valve-stem diameter increasing from 8mm to 9mm, different bore centres, a longer timing chain and a tweaked crank offering 92-112bhp depending on spec.

After six years of service the engine received another upgrade in 1968, with capacity increasing this time to 1779cc. During production the gudgeon pins were offset to help reduce piston slap, while sodium-filled exhaust valves kept the valve temperatures within an acceptable range – a trick first used in the Rolls-Royce Merlin engine during WW2. In 1971 the engine reached the limits of its block, with a bore increase from 80 to 84mm taking total capacity

up to 1962cc and power output to 132bhp; a year later it was adapted to fit the new Alfetta, losing its characteristic finned sump.

Alfa Romeo had a long history of hotting up the rasping twin-cam for competition, with various supercharged and turbocharged versions making an appearance over the years, but it was the twin-plug incarnation – an idea dating back to the firm's 1914 GP car – that signalled the biggest change. The 1962cc Twin Spark arrived in 1987 and featured two spark plugs per cylinder, sharing little beyond crankshaft, bore and stroke with the previous twin-cam. Despite similarities, everything from compression ratio to the angle of the valves was changed, raising power to 155bhp. The Twin Spark would go on, in various iterations, to power the 75, 164, 155 and more, with production ending in 1997 when it was phased out in favour of Fiat's newer 'Protola Serra' 16-valve twin-cam. **GM**



U
UGO
STELLA, SIVOCCHI
& GOBBATO

Without Ugo Stella there would be no Anonima Lombarda Fabbrica Automobili. If Darracq built the foundations, Stella put the name above the door in June 1910 when he instigated the switch away from French cars to Giuseppe Merosi-designed ALFAs. That the company floundered towards the creditors is not the point.

Without Ugo Sivocci (above, on left) there would be no Ferrari. And no cloverleaf, because before the former racing cyclist took Alfa to first place on the Targa Florio for the first time in 1923 in an RL, Sivocci had drawn the *quadrifoglio* in a diamond on his car ahead of Alfa's 1-2 on the Sicilian epic to change his bad luck. Sivocci – "A good driver, although not in the class of Ascari; about the same speed as Campari," according to Giulio Ramponi – gave friend Enzo the leg-up he needed by helping him join Costruzioni Meccaniche Nazionali. Both took on the Targa for CMN, and at Alfa Sivocci persuaded the management to sign his pal. Enzo repaid that faith with second in Sicily in 1920, and when Sivocci was killed at Monza testing the P1 he was in Enzo's arms on the way to hospital. Alfa turned Ugo's diamond into a triangle to signify the grave loss.

Without Ugo Gobbato (right) there might be no Alfa Romeo. Appointed general manager of the nationalised company in 1933, he reorganised the firm and racing was abandoned. War offered Alfa work and a new factory in Naples.

He oversaw Fiat's Europe-wide expansion and was doing likewise with Alfa when he was shot cycling home from work in '45 by an Italian communist who believed Gobbato had sent staff to Nazi camps. Yet Gobbato, according to the judge in killer Antonio Mutti's 1960 trial: "Refused to join the Fascist Party, refused to swear an oath as a retired officer to the republic of Salò, he thought only and constantly of the good of his workers, their future and the company he directed." JP



Just imagine the meltdown today if a start-up car company decided that its logo was going to feature a serpent wearing a crown, while spitting out (or giving birth to, or chomping down on, according to differing versions of the story) a child for good measure. And that this concept was actually only for less than half the logo...

Back in 1910, unhindered by blue-sky thinkers, draughtsman Romano Cattaneo was asked to create an identity for the newly-formed ALFA; he found (some of) his inspiration above the door of the Sforza Castle in Milan, in the form of the Visconti family crest.

The cultural significance of the Viscontis in the Milan area should not be underestimated; they had dominated life in and around the city between the 11th and 15th centuries, gaining control of Milan itself in 1277.

The patriarch of the family then assumed the title of duke in the 15th century, leading to the addition of the crown above the serpent's head.

Where the Viscontis had themselves sourced the logo is a matter of some debate. Many say its heritage lay in Italy, a homage to locals who killed a dragon in the fifth century, while others say it was worn on

the tunics of Italian crusaders, led – gloriously, of course – into battle by Visconti family members. Today, nobody knows for sure.

Regardless, its significance in the region remains, enhanced beyond even Alfa Romeo; from the Inter Milan football team's shirts to the company logos of local but wayward business and political leader Silvio Berlusconi, it is used widely by businesses to this day, a tribute to the region's past and as a symbol of ambition for the future. JH



W
WHALE

Alfa Romeo boldly embraced streamlining in the late 1930s with its legendary 8C-2900 supercars. Most famous is the Le Mans Coupé built by Touring in 1938, which retired at La Sarthe when 11 laps ahead; most unusual is the unique roadster secretly built in the factory during WW2.

Later christened 'The Whale' for its long, bulbous form, this enveloping body was designed in-house for a 2.9 Long Chassis and signed off by Gioacchino Colombo. Completed in September 1941, it was taken to the Milano-Como *autostrada* for high-speed runs against a standard Touring Spider. Two up and carrying 100 litres of

fuel. The Whale was fastest, clocking 136mph.

After WW2 The Whale was sold to Argentina where, with a modified grille and an aeroscreen, it was raced by Carlos Perez de Villa. It remained in Buenos Aires until the '80s, dismantled in the owner's bedroom, before it was sold to Count Zanon in Italy. Evert Louwman acquired The Whale and regularly drove it on the Mille Miglia. Recently the dramatic design has been restored using the original body and correcting various features.

The spectacular machine was expected at the 2020 Goodwood Festival of Speed's Alfa Romeo birthday celebrations. MW



X

X-RAY

The passage of time and reality of sales aren't treating Alfa's ambitions for the then-new Giulia Quadrifoglio kindly, but in 2015 the 159's successor was a symbol of rebirth for the long-languishing brand. Buoyed by serious investment, the firm launched its BMW M3 chaser at the Frankfurt motor show. A Ferrari-developed, 503bhp 2.9-litre engine told part of the story, but Alfa wanted to get across the depth of its engineering – and especially suspension – prowess. That made its car different, it claimed – with some vindication, as it turned out.

But how to do it? Run an X-ray screen (or perhaps a movement-sensitive video screen) along the side of the car, showing off the all-important mechanicals that lay behind the as-ever alluring body panels for all to see. **JH**



Y

YACHTING

Alfa Romeo has sponsored three racing yachts since 2002, each owned by car importer and former Australian Touring Car Championship driver Neville Crichton. Of the three craft designed by Reichel/Pugh and built by McConaghy Boats, *Alfa Romeo II* is arguably the most impressive at 100ft long and capable of 35 knots. With a crew of 17 including Olympic Champion Ben Ainslie, the boat finished the 2009 Transpacific Yacht Race in record time, also setting a new best for covering 431 nautical miles in just 24 hours. Kiwi Crichton skippered the boat during the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race that same year. **GM**

Z
ZAGATO

Blessed by its position in northern Italy, Alfa Romeo was no more than a metaphorical stone's throw from some of the country's most successful *carrozzerie* and the most exciting design talents. The styling houses of Turin and Milan created the firm's enduring shapes, from early racers and wild concepts to the mass-market revolution that marked the post-war years and beyond.

It was an Alfa Romeo that first demonstrated Touring's *superleggera* concept, with a 6C-2300B that starred at the 1937 Mille Miglia, followed by the sublime 8C-2900, the beautiful 1900, 2600 and space-age Disco Volante into the 1950s.

Bertone, meanwhile, shone in the same decade with its BAT concepts (*B*) and stealing the limelight at the 1954 Turin Salon with its prototype Giulietta Sprint – the car that helped launch Alfa Romeo as a major manufacturer. Pininfarina's contribution ranged from the 1935 6C Pescara through to the Giulietta Spider, the Duetto and modern designs including the 164, GTV and Brera. But none of these relationships were as long-lasting or as closely aligned with Alfa Romeo's sporting success as that with Zagato.

The collaboration began in the 1920s with the RL, but the most notable fruit of the relationship came in 1925 when Vittorio Jano asked Zagato to body its replacement, the more dynamic and

Revolutionary Junior Zagato shape swore in a new era of car design, led by Ercole Spada. Inset: iconic SZ is a direct descendant of the Junior, two decades down the Zagato and Alfa line





sporting 6C-1500. Zagato fashioned smart, lightweight, two-seater bodywork that endowed the 6C with enviable performance.

Giuseppe Campari steered the 1487cc 6C to victory on the '28 Mille Miglia, cementing the *carrozzeria* as Alfa's preferred competition coachbuilder. The 1927 6C-1750 followed in a number of guises, capturing Mille Miglia victory again in '29 and '30. The giant-killing 1500 and 1750 were impressive, but the supercharged straight-eight 1930 8C-2300 is considered the pairing's greatest pre-war triumph. With Tazio Nuvolari at the wheel, the sleek 8C Zagato became legendary for its superb performance, sublime balance and elegant looks.

Zagato in the mid-'50s rebodied a crashed Giulietta Sprint Veloce as a two-seater *berlmetta*. Not only was the bubble-like coupé beautiful, it was quick, too, and 18 were built before a 'production' competition version followed in 1960. Designed by Franco Scaglione but handbuilt by Zagato, each was bodied in aluminium panels with Plexiglas windows. Its TZ (*Tubolare Zagato*) replacement was even more striking, combining an aerodynamic nose with a revolutionary Kamm tail. By 1964 the design had been refined further, with a more streamlined body made from glassfibre rather than aluminium, giving rise to the TZ2.

By 1969, Giugiaro's elegant 105-series coupé had established itself as one of Alfa's most lauded



models, and like the Giulietta it was ripe for a riff from Zagato. Ercole Spada penned an angular, futuristic, Kamm-tailed wedge shape for a two-seater coupé based on the 105, which the Milanese *carrozzeria* brought to life using a steel bodyshe'll with aluminium bonnet and, on early cars, aluminium door skins. Available in two versions – 1300 and, later, 1600 – the Junior Zagato embodied the sharp styling that would define the following decade.

With the Junior, Zagato set out its stall of producing limited-run Alfas that were striking rather than beautiful, and never was this more true than with the SZ that arrived in '89. A joint effort between Zagato, Alfa Romeo and its new owner Fiat, the car was a celebration of the union and a spiritual successor to the Giulietta Sprint Zagato. Drawn by Robert Opron and Antonio Castellana, it was brutal and incredibly bold, made possible thanks to emerging computer-

aided design. At its heart was Busso's bombastic 207bhp V6, with Alfa Romeo 75 underpinnings that included suspension lifted from the Group A/IMSA race car mated to Koni dampers.

But while the performance and aural theatre of the SZ were impressive, it was the bodywork that made the model memorable. Aggressive and unusual, wedge-shaped and abrupt, its near-vertical rear end made the car unlike anything else on the roads. Though it was put together by Zagato at its Terrazzano di Rho facility, the thermoplastic body panels were a joint endeavour between Italian firm Carplast and French company Stratime Cappelo Systems. Each car, bar a one-off black version for Andrea Zagato, is red with a grey roof. A soft-top RZ followed in '92 and, though it appeared identical bar the roof, almost every body panel was new.

The alliance has endured, and in 2010 the *carrozzeria* paid homage by creating the TZ3 Corsa, a one-off modern interpretation of the TZ to mark Alfa's 100th year in competition. Commissioned by a German collector and created in 2010, it was designed in-house by Norihiko Harada and based on an 8C Competizione with a hand-beaten aluminium body. The coupé won plaudits and silverware at its Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este debut and inspired a series of nine roadgoing Stradale versions, which were instead based on the Dodge Viper and its 8.4-litre V10. GM CLASSIC

