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Issue 320 October 2022 £5.50



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**S**o next year, Alfa Romeo says it will unveil a brand new supercar. As you can read in our news story on page 6, if enough people say they want to buy it, it could go into production by 2025. Quite possibly, this will be the last-ever all-new Alfa with a petrol engine, as all fresh Alfa models from 2027 will be fully electric.

There's no detail whatsoever on the new supercar, except that it will be – according to Alfa's CEO Jean-Philippe Imparato – "very exciting, very selective, very expensive". Who knows what form it could take? It might even be based on co-brand Maserati's MC20, which would be poetic justice and a story coming full circle.

Why do I say that? Because the new Alfa supercar certainly reminds me of the idea, teased four years ago but quickly abandoned, that Alfa would produce an all-new supercar called the 8C. This would have been a carbon-tubbed supercar with a mid-mounted twin-turbo V6 boasting 700hp. If that sounds familiar, it should: it's pretty much the same spec as Maserati's MC20. Rumour has it that the MC20 came about after FCA management basically purloined the Alfa 8C and turned it into a Trident.

That reminds me of an analogous episode 12 years ago. The Alfa Romeo 4C started out life as an Abarth project but was grabbed by Alfa in 2010. You can now buy an Alfa 4C converted by FCA Heritage back into the car as it would originally have been: the Abarth 1000 SP.

Who knows what form the new Alfa will eventually take when it arrives next year, but being as enthusiastic a fan as I am of the Maserati MC20, I am extremely excited by the prospect of an even more driver-focused, Alfa-badged evolution of the MC20. Who's with me?

**Chris Rees**  
Editor

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# ITALIAN CAR NEWS

## Alfa To Reveal New Supercar in 2023



**A**lfa Romeo will unveil a new halo supercar next year, Alfa Romeo's CEO, Jean-Philippe Imparato, has revealed in an interview. He said that the new supercar would be "very exciting, very selective, very expensive". The new supercar will be shown initially as a design prototype in the first half of 2023. If enough interest is shown, it will enter low-volume production by 2025.

There is no official statement on the power source, but since Imparato has decreed that Alfa Romeo will release electric cars only after 2025, it is thought that the supercar could be a swansong for the Giulia-based V6 twin-turbo petrol engine – possibly with even more power than the 540hp of the recent Giulia GTA.

Imparato is a great fan of the Alfa Romeo 33 Stradale of the 1960s, saying: "If one day, I'm able to say okay, 'Alfa Romeo is secure now', Duetto and 33 Stradale are my favourite options for the future."

But design chief Alejandro Mesonero-Romanos says that, even if the new supercar is a spiritual successor to the 33 Stradale, its design won't be retro. "Our cars are going to be daring but don't expect retro cars – our cars are going to be full Alfa Romeo. I loved the Alfa Romeo Montreal from Gandini but I wouldn't bring necessarily those elements. I will try to think about the spirit of a car... very horizontal, very agile. I will try to analyse what is its spirit, what inspires me and then... I try to build it into a new philosophy."



ABOVE: Stradale 33 Visione was a 2021 virtual project by Andrea Castiglione  
BOTTOM: Original Alfa 8C announcement from 2018

 RESURRECTION OF AN ICON – 8C



CARBON FIBER MONOCOQUE CHASSIS  
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## MASERATI'S TWO-PRONG TRACK ATTACK

Maserati has unveiled two new track-only MC20-based models: the MC20 GT2 racer and the trackday-focused Project24. The new MC20 GT2 will feature in the Fanatec GT2 European Series Championship, which debuts in 2023. Maserati's last GT racer was the MC12, which ran in FIA GT Championships from 2004 to 2010.

The MC20 was designed from the outset to be a racer as well as a road car. The GT2 keeps the road car's 3.0-litre V6 Nettuno engine, but its 630hp output is likely to be reduced to comply with FIA Balance of Performance regulations. The same rules could also see the car's weight – estimated to be around 1250kg thanks to a host of weight-saving measures – altered between races.

The MC20 GT2 retains the road car's carbonfibre monocoque but adds a safety rollcage and air jacks. The double-wishbone suspension is also retained but receives adjustable racing dampers and adjustable anti-roll bars. The transmission is a six-speed sequential racing gearbox with paddle shifters, plus a racing clutch and self-locking mechanical limited-slip differential. Also new are bespoke forged 18in centre-lock aluminium wheels with slick tyres, ventilated brakes, adjustable ABS, adjustable traction control and a 120-litre fuel tank.

The GT2 boasts a new aerodynamics package including a multi-adjustable



rear wing, while the front and side windows are in Lexan. Inside the single-seat cabin are an adjustable racing pedal box and steering column, six-point safety belt, carbonfibre steering wheel and a data acquisition system.

Meanwhile, Project24 is a track-only version of the MC20 that adopts many elements of the race car, including its rollcage, fuel tank, sequential racing gearbox, Lexan screens, air jacks, adjustable suspension and adjustable traction control. The Brembo CCMR ventilated racing brakes have bespoke cooling, callipers and adjustable ABS, while the forged 18in aluminium wheels come with slick tyres.

## ALFA TONALE FROM £38,595

UK pricing has been revealed for Alfa Romeo's new Tonale. Three models are on offer: Speciale launch edition (£38,595), Ti (£39,995) and Veloce (£42,495). PCP rates start at £429 per month based on a customer deposit of £8300 and a 48-month contract at 8000 miles per year.

Standard across the range is a 10.25-inch touchscreen with DAB radio, Bluetooth, sat nav, Apple CarPlay/Android Auto, wireless charging, dual-zone air conditioning, automatic headlamps and wipers, heated mirrors, keyless entry, power tailgate, parking sensors and camera, adaptive cruise control, forward collision warning, autonomous braking and traffic sign recognition.

The Ti has a satin chrome V-grille, 18-inch diamond-cut alloys, gloss black bodykit, black mirror caps, black cloth upholstery, four-way lumbar adjustment, 60/40 split rear seats and leather steering wheel. The Veloce gets a dark V-grille and bodykit, gloss black window surrounds, privacy glass, 19-inch alloys, red callipers, aluminium pedals and sills, aluminium gearshift paddles and black-and-red Alcantara upholstery. The Veloce also adds Dual Stage Valve adaptive suspension.

Six colours are offered: Alfa White, Alfa Red, Alfa Black, Misano Blue, Montreal Green and Vesuvio Grey. The sole engine available in Britain is the 1.5-litre MHEV mild hybrid with 160hp, allied to a seven-speed DCT automatic gearbox.

Project 24 (top row) & GT2 racer (bottom row)



## FERRARI UNVEILS 296 GT3

Ferrari's new GT racer, the 296 GT3, has been unveiled. Replacing the 488 GT3, it's designed to race in 'Pro' classes, targeted at "gentlemen drivers", and will make its debut at the 2023 Daytona 24 Hours.

Based on the 296 GTB, the V6 engine has had its hybrid electric system removed to comply with race regulations, and develops around 600hp. The engine is sited further forwards and lower down than in the road version, to the benefit of centre of gravity and torsional rigidity (the latter 10% higher than the 488 GT3's). The Xtrac gearbox is new and specific to this car: a single-clutch unit with six gears, arranged transversely. Clutch actuation is electronic via the steering wheel, rather than using a foot pedal.

The all-new chassis is made of aluminium and has a longer wheelbase than the road-going 296 GTB, as well as all-new suspension, upgraded braking and Rotiform forged wheels. The aerodynamic configuration yields 20% extra downforce over the previous 488 GT3. Inside, a completely redesigned cabin incorporates an F1-inspired multi-function steering wheel, a single Sabelt seat, adjustable pedals/steering and air conditioning.

## LEGO'S 1:1 LAMBORGHINI SIÁN

Lego Technic has built a 1:1 scale model of the Lamborghini Sián FKP 37. More than 400,000 pieces and 154 different types of Lego were used to ensure accuracy, with the end product requiring over 8500 hours to complete. The model has exactly the same dimensions as the real version but weighs 2200kg – more than the real thing. The lighting shines and even the interior is reproduced, with a steering wheel, instrument panel and racing seats. The model is finished in paint-effect UV colour coating, a first for a large-scale Lego model. You can see it on display at the Museo Automobili Lamborghini in Sant'Agata Bolognese until 6 October 2022.



## FERRUCCIO LAMBORGHINI ENTERS HALL OF FAME

The Automotive Hall of Fame in Dearborn, USA, has inducted Ferruccio Lamborghini into its ranks. Andrea Baldi, CEO of Automobili Lamborghini Americas, accepted the honour on behalf of the company. A marble plaque etched with Ferruccio Lamborghini's signature now sits in the Hall of Honor, celebrating "the men and women whose automotive innovations have changed the world".

## LAMBO BREAKS SALES RECORDS

Lamborghini has set a record for its best ever six months in terms of sales, turnover and profitability. To June 2022, deliveries stood at 5090 units (up 4.9%), while turnover of €1.33 billion marked an increase of 30.6%. Lamborghini says increased profitability was driven by sales volumes, product mix, higher customisation and positive exchange rates.

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**KIMERA LANDS IN USA**

The first US market Kimera EVO37 has been delivered to its owner during Monterey Car Week. Chassis number 008 is painted light blue, in tribute not only to the traditional American racing colour, but also the seas off the Californian coast. Details are picked out in gold and carbon, while the interior is trimmed in blue. The owner is an unnamed but well-known collector and driver, who chose the name 'Edda' after his passion for the soprano singer, Edda Dell'Orso. Kimera reports that more than 30 of the 37 units planned to be built have already been ordered by collectors around the world.

**BIZZARRINI DELIVERS FIRST 5300 GT**

The first customer Bizzarrini 5300 GT Corsa Revival has left the company's UK production facility. 24 are due to be produced between now and 2023. The Revival series is built using the original blueprints, components from original suppliers, and the input of experts originally involved in the 5300 GT project. Bizzarrini says it is "as representative of the original as possible, while conforming to modern safety standards". A single-piece composite body is fitted over a steel frame, giving a weight of 1230kg. The two seats are protected by a six-point roll cage, while the safety fuel cell meets FIA Appendix K historic racing regulations. The spec includes independent rear suspension, all-round disc brakes and a carb-fed 5300cc V8 engine with over 400hp.

**ALFA SPIDER GOES HYBRID**

Restomod specialist Garage Italia has transformed a classic Alfa Romeo Spider into a hybrid. Designed as a tribute to the city of Milan and unveiled at Milan Design Week, the 1992 Spider S4 has undergone a "non-conservative restoration" to modernise it in almost every way.

To the 2.0-litre fuel-injected Alfa engine has been added a hybrid Newtron energy recovery system with batteries to boost engine power. Minor changes have been made to the bodywork, such as a new front bumper and rear spoiler, while many areas lightened and reinforced, and the lighting upgraded. The unique light blue paint is called GICMiramare. The cockpit features Poltrona Frau leather upholstery, a Sonus Faber 700W sound system and nautical-style wood panelling.



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## ARES EXPANDS

Italian coachbuilder ARES has announced an expansion plan that will see it move away from custom-made enhancements of existing models to the manufacture of its own, self-designed luxury models, although ARES says it will continue to offer one-off and small series supercars like the S1 Project. In the pipeline are a series of luxury electric vehicles that will include bicycles, scooters, motorbikes and city cars, all due to be previewed by the end of 2022. 'ARES Studios' showrooms will open in three new sites (Bologna Airport, Milan and London) later this year.

Meanwhile, the one-off ARES S1 Project Spyder (below) has sold for €1.2 million at a charity gala, the proceeds going to UNICEF. The custom supercar has a carbonfibre body, divided passenger compartment and two wind deflectors in place of a windscreens.



## GOLDEN AGE OF RALLY SHOW

A new exhibition called 'The Golden Age of Rally' is opening at the Museo Nazionale dell'Automobile (MAUTO) in Turin. Presented as "a journey through the history of rallying", it centres around the Fondazione Gino Macaluso collection. Cars on display will include some of the most important rally championship winners from the 1960s to the 1990s, from the Lancia Stratos to the Rally 037 Evo2. The show will include a hall of fame showcasing Biasion, Mäkinen, Kankkunen, Mouton, Sainz and others. The exhibition runs from 27 October 2022 to 2 May 2023.



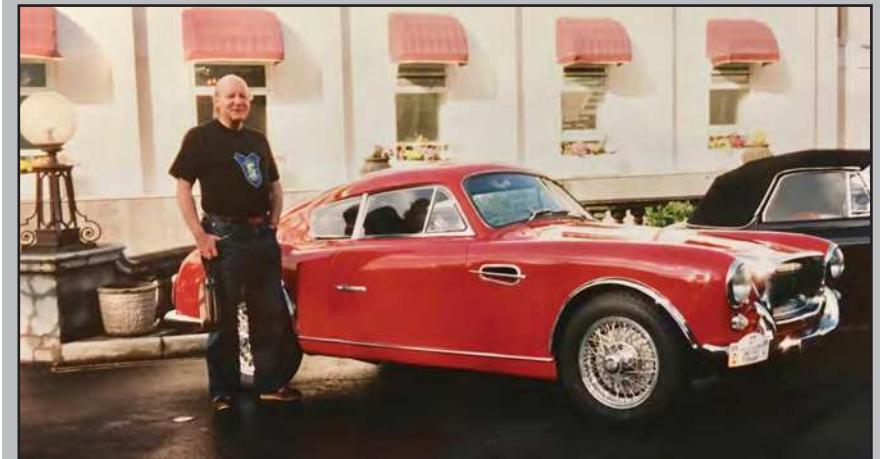
## MITCAR RETURNS

Midlands Italian Car Day (MITCAR) is returning to a venue it first used in 2001: Kedleston Hall near Derby. The new Sunday 18 September date follows the cancellation of the planned event in June due to heavy rain. Cars will be shown in the parkland area of the Grade 1 listed building. The show is organised by the Alfa Romeo Owners Club but is open to owners of all Italian cars. Prizes will be awarded, sponsored by Meguiar's, with the car of the day winning the Camshaft Trophy, chosen by public vote. Admission is £10 per car by advance ticket only, which admits all occupants to the show and Kedleston Hall's grounds. Admission to the house is optional at £5 a head. For tickets, visit [mitcar.co.uk](http://mitcar.co.uk)

## ALEXANDER FYSHE 1938-2022

Italian car collector and past President of the Maserati Club, Alexander Fyshe, has passed away after a long illness. Over his lifetime, Alex assembled a collection of 20 Italian cars including such exotics as a Ferrari 250 GT Lusso, Bizzarrini Strada, De Tomaso Mangusta and Maserati Ghibli SS and Merak SS. But he also loved the unusual, including a Fiat OSCA 1600S with Fissore body, Siata Daina, the first Maserati Biturbo to be imported to the UK and an Innocenti De Tomaso Mini which he collected in person from Alessandro De Tomaso. However, the jewel of his collection was an OSCA MT4, in which he competed in the Mille Miglia on numerous occasions.

Well connected and respected in the classic car world, Alex was a regular judge at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance and an entrant in many others. He regularly attended international rallies for his favoured marques, as well as national club events almost every weekend and was a great supporter of Auto Italia from the beginning. Many will remember his eccentric dress sense – in particular his 'stars and stripes' trousers – as well as the huge sense of humour, but he was a serious enthusiast, who championed originality and preservation, though he firmly believed in using old cars. – Andy Heywood



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# Blind 'Ally'

Our Italian correspondent, Matteo Licata, recalls how aluminium-bodied Fiat X1/9 prototypes were tested to destruction in... Nuneaton

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Fiat X1/9, which was presented in Sicily in November 1972. Much has been written about this brilliant mid-engined sports car, but to me, one of the most intriguing facets of X1/9 history is the one described in SAE paper number 890718, whose rather clunky title reads: 'The Building and Test Track Evaluation of an Aluminium Structured Bertone X1/9 Replica Vehicle'.

The key word here is 'replica', as the point of the experiment was to demonstrate how Canadian aluminium company Alcan's adhesive bonding technologies could replace steel for aluminium, keeping the existing design largely unchanged. Alcan approached Bertone in 1986, and five aluminium-bodied X1/9s were duly constructed.

The aluminium panels were press-formed with the same gauges as their steel counterparts (between 0.7 and 2.5 mm) and then spot-welded, with bonded-in doublers and additional brackets placed wherever the mechanical properties of aluminium were deemed insufficient for the job.

One of the aluminium bodies was then subjected to static testing – interestingly, at Austin Rover's R&D facility in Gaydon. The results made for interesting reading: the experimental aluminium body weighed 136.6kg, a whopping 30% less than its steel equivalent (197kg), while offering comparable torsion stiffness (3155 Nm/degree versus

3100). However, it must be said that the bodyshell's bending stiffness was far less convincing: 18% less than its steel counterpart (2490N/mm versus 3040).

The five cars were fully trimmed and assembled at the same assembly line that built the 'regular' X1/9, and then tested to destruction at MIRA's facility in Nuneaton, with results that sometimes make for grim reading. For example, after nearly 600 miles of unforgiving Belgian pavé roads, both rear suspension turrets cracked so severely that they had to be repaired to allow testing to proceed any further.

However, the prototype bodies did not deform and maintained their rigidity – remarkable given that the X1/9's body hadn't been designed for aluminium and doubling panels had been impossible in some areas. But that was the whole point of the exercise: demonstrating that aluminium bodyshells were possible and even compatible with existing production facilities – even if the way those X1/9s were built would undoubtedly make Audi engineers squirm.



One of the five prototypes met its demise in a 30mph frontal crash test at Fiat's safety centre in Turin. Although the results wouldn't impress today's Euro NCAP officials, they were comparable to the regular X1/9 and well within the legal requirements of the time.

Of the five aluminium X1/9s built, one survived its various test ordeals to be tucked away in Bertone's company museum, with only a few decals hinting at its uniqueness. It's currently on display at the Volandia museum near Milan Malpensa airport, together with 79 other vehicles and prototypes purchased in 2015 by the Automotoclub Storico Italiano following Bertone's bankruptcy.





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# GENERATION GAME

Not all supercars have to be hard work and feel brash. So says Maserati, whose MC20 picks up the mid-engined reins from the 1971 Bora as a usable, liveable and above all likeable supercar

Story by Chris Rees  
Photography by Michael Ward

**Y**ellow and blue – the colours not only of the flag of Ukraine, but also the city of Modena, and by association, the most famous child of that city, Maserati. Yellow and blue – the colours at two opposite ends of the

Maserati supercar spectrum, separated by 50 years. You might think there's an insurmountable divide between the 1971 Bora and the 2022 MC20, but this pairing of first and last mid-engined Modena mounts has more in common than you might at first suppose.

Those similarities extend well beyond their shared mid-engined format. For instance, both were marketed as grand touring supercars, easy to live with on a day-to-day basis, in sharp contrast to the highly challenging nature of most rival supercars. Rarity also links them. Between 1971 and 1978, just 524 Boras were built, a mere 42 of which were right-hand drive (as here), 38 of which came to the UK. The UK allocation for the MC20



“ There’s a definite link with the Bora’s oh-so-seventies ‘banana’ seats in the MC20’s curvaceous chairs, even if they channel ultra-modern sci-fi vibes ”



*MC20 is properly quick in a straight line and superbly balanced through corners. The ideal daily supercar?*

## MASERATI MC20 & BORA



is also very limited – for instance, just 40 of the new open-top Cielo will arrive here in the first year. Citroën owned Maserati from 1968 to 1975, and in a twist of fate Maserati is today alongside Citroën again (as part of Stellantis). And both cars cost the same to buy today: the MC20's £190k price tag is roughly what you'd pay for a nice Bora.

Don't they look great in their respective colours? Blu Infinito for the MC20 and Giallo Sprint for the Bora, an official but modern Maserati hue that zings much more than the original 1970s yellow (which owner Matt Briffa describes as "eggy"). Personally, I'd be inclined to swap them around: I think the MC20 looks best in yellow, while the Bora suits a more subtle shade. But I'm certainly not complaining.

No qualms about either car's styling, with a definite family feel to them, even though the MC20 is much longer, wider and taller. The Bora has stood the test of time incredibly well. Some have described Giugiaro's masterpiece as the most beautiful Maserati of all, and I wouldn't disagree: the uninterrupted ellipse of its silhouette; side windows tapering elegantly away; stainless steel roof and moon disc trims over Campagnolo alloys – all lovely. The MC20 echoes the Bora's subtlety by relegating its sophisticated aero downforce package to the separate lower-body zone, leaving the upper body to form a fluid, organic sculpture.

The Bora had a difficult birth. Just as Enzo Ferrari balked at the idea of a mid-engined road car, so did Maserati. In fact, it was not until Citroën took the company over in 1968 that new French manager, Guy Malleret, persuaded Giulio Alfieri to create a mid-engined supercar using Maserati's trusted V8. Famously, Maserati's long-standing test driver Guerino Bertocchi hated the notion, and his long-windedly critical approach delayed the car's launch until 1971. But the Bora still stole a march on Ferrari in getting a V8-powered mid-engined car to market. Although quite advanced for Maserati – a steel monocoque, for instance, with independent rear suspension in place of coil springs – the Bora very much feels its 50 years compared to the MC20's exotic conception of a carbonfibre chassis tub co-developed with Dallara.

Getting in is not the hokey-cokey of contorted limbs enforced by most supercars. The MC20's doors open up scissor-style (take care as they swing outwards slightly, as well as upwards) to reveal a surprisingly minimalist cabin. There's very little switchgear here, the carbon dashboard banishing virtually everything to a 10-inch central touchscreen (shared with the Fiat 500 electric and a bit slow to respond). I note with pleasure that this right-hand drive model offers plenty of space for my left foot to rest, unlike the LHD MC20, whose wheel well intrudes massively.

The Bora's cockpit is a masterclass of classical design, the multiple gauges angled towards the driver, switchgear readily to hand. The colour scheme is the personal choice of owner Matt Briffa, who is an architect by trade and understands colour. It's certainly unusual: cream seats and a burgundy, cream and black dash. It feels utterly different to the MC20, except in one regard: the seats. There's a definite link with the Bora's oh-so-seventies 'banana'

seats in the MC20's curvaceous chairs, even if their black-and-blue 'laser' pattern channels ultra-modern sci-fi vibes. Oh, and offer far more lateral support than the Bora's loungers (which, incidentally, are fixed – it's the pedals that adjust).

OK, time to fire the engines up, and to confirm that these cars are like chalk and cheese to drive – or should I say marble and parmesan? After some hesitation, the quadruple Weber 42DCNF carbs allow the Bora's quad-cam V8 to settle into a smooth, burbling idle. Blip the throttle and a gruff thrum greets you. At low revs, the V8 is smooth and refined but at higher revs it really starts to scream. The 4.7-litre version in this 1973 example (it grew to 4.9 litres from 1975) has an abundance of torque. With 310hp, it builds speed nicely and is an effortless cruiser, although it doesn't feel viscerally fast.

The MC20's 'Nettuno' V6 may have only 3.0 litres, but with twin turbos it delivers fully 630hp and 730Nm of torque. With just 1470kg to haul, it's properly quick: 202mph tops, 0-62mph in 2.9 seconds and 0-124mph in 8.8. But here's the thing: it doesn't feel fast. Pace is piled on with deceptive ease and in a surprisingly muted fashion. This is a source of disappointment for me: how has Maserati – the arch-sorcerer of sizzling sounds – conspired to deliver such a downright dull soundtrack?

The dual-clutch eight-speed transmission works brilliantly in all driving modes (Wet, GT, Sport, Corsa and ESC Off), especially Corsa with its rifle-sharp yet super-smooth changes. While the Bora's ZF dog-leg five-speeder has well-chosen ratios – you can reach 100mph in third! – it's compromised by a very long lever throw. But it's effortless: owner Matt says of his recent 1500-mile continental trip: "It drives beautifully, sitting easily on the torque on the motorway. It's great over long distances."

Everyone says it but nothing prepares you for it: just how on/off the Bora's brakes feel. That's because paymaster Citroën insisted the car use its LHM hydraulics for the brakes (and indeed the clutch and adjustable pedal mechanism). The tiniest blip of foot pressure makes the car stand on its nose. You quickly learn to compensate by resting your foot lightly over the pedal before you need to brake, then squeeze down gently.

Otherwise, the biggest challenge of driving the Bora is its steering. Even with the engine in the back, there's an awful lot of weight over the front end, and no power assistance to draw on, so at low speeds the heft required is bicep-building (easing greatly as your speed increases, though). Even with holes drilled in the sills and engine cover to save weight, the Bora's a bulky thing at 1545kg. You do feel that heftiness around corners, with body roll, mild understeer and the potential for tail-out antics if you're over-enthusiastic. There's a certain sensitivity to mid-corner bumps, but you feel the inherent balance in the chassis. The Michelin XWX tyres are narrow and high-profile (215/70 VR15) – good for ride but not necessarily grip. On early cars like this, significant airflow goes under the car, creating high-speed lift; Maserati introduced a grille in the front bonnet on later cars to counteract this.

The MC20 feels mighty impressive, seemingly whatever you do with it. Raw grip is astounding. You



“ With 310hp, the Bora builds speed nicely and is an effortless cruiser, although it doesn't feel viscerally fast ”



*Heavy low-speed steering  
and on/off brakes aside,  
the Bora is an effortlessly  
rewarding car to drive*



## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

### MASERATI BORA

ENGINE:	4719cc V8
BORE X STROKE:	94mm x 85mm
COMPRESSION RATIO:	8.5:1
POWER:	310hp at 6000rpm
TORQUE:	440Nm (325lb ft) at 4200rpm
TRANSMISSION:	5-speed manual
SUSPENSION:	Double wishbones and anti-roll bars
BRAKES:	Discs all round
TYRES:	215/70 VR15
DIMENSIONS:	4335mm (L), 1768mm (W), 1134mm (H)
LUGGAGE CAPACITY:	283 litres
WEIGHT:	1545kg
MAX SPEED:	165mph
0-62MPH:	6.5sec
PRICE:	£140,000-£200,000

really have to try hard to induce oversteer but in Corsa mode, it's possible to drift the car with an easy progressiveness. It even rides comfortably – almost as well as the high-profile-rubbered Bora – although it bottoms out on bumpy roads. That's supercars for you.

Boring though practicalities may be when talking about this sort of beast, these are supposedly 'subtle supercars' that can take on grand touring. Surprisingly, the Bora is superior in this regard. Firstly, it has almost twice the luggage capacity. Then there's fuel range. The MC20's 60-litre tank is meagre, especially if you're pushing on hard and mpg drops to the low teens. Visibility is excellent by supercar standards in both cars: you can actually see out of the side windows at angled junctions, unlike 99% of supercars, while the upright windscreens offer a great view out. But there's a slight ointment-fly with the MC20's rear-view mirror: since the Lexan rear screen offers no view out, Maserati has fitted an LCD camera which is tricky to focus on and behaves oddly in certain lights.



## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

### MASERATI MC20

ENGINE:	3000cc V6 twin-turbo
BORE X STROKE:	88mm x 82mm
COMPRESSION RATIO:	11:1
POWER:	630hp at 7500rpm
TORQUE:	730Nm (538lb ft) at 3000rpm
TRANSMISSION:	8-speed DCT automatic
SUSPENSION:	Double wishbones and anti-roll bars
BRAKES:	Ventilated discs all round
TYRES:	245/35 ZR20 front, 305/30 ZR20 rear
DIMENSIONS:	4669mm (L), 1965mm (W), 1221mm (H)
LUGGAGE CAPACITY:	150 litres
WEIGHT:	1470kg
MAX SPEED:	202mph
0-62MPH:	2.9sec
PRICE:	£190,580

## VERDICT

This pairing of Maseratis proves that supercars don't have to be brazen and vulgar: there can be subtlety in sensationalism. There's almost nothing to dislike about either of them. To look at, the MC20 is a bastion of restrained taste, while the Bora's charms sing with crystal clarity 50 years on. As well as looking incredible, both cars feel lovely to sit in and offer very rewarding drives.

Yet their character is peculiar among supercars: each one feels unexpectedly relaxed, with a refinement and ease of driving that's far removed from the extremes of mid-engined supercar rivals like the Ferrari Berlinetta Boxer of the 1970s, or the Ferrari F8 today. Both Maseratis are just so *comfortable*, with a great ride, easy cruising ability and a forgiving nature around bends. In short, all the glamour but none of the hardship. And all the good will, too, as both cars seem to bring out the best from bystanders. I guess that's the true power of beauty.

*Bora's 4.7-litre V8 feels less urgent than MC20's Nettuno twin-turbo V6, but somehow sounds nicer*

*Many thanks to Matt Briffa, Andy Heywood and McGrath Maserati*



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## MID-ENGINE MASERATIS MULTIPLYING



Merak

The Bora was Maserati's first ever mid-engined road car; the MC20 is its latest; but in between there have been several others. Maserati's answer to the Ferrari Dino was a 'baby' version of the Bora whose mid-mounted engine was downgraded to a 2965cc V6 borrowed from the Citroën SM. In its top-spec 'SS' guise, the Merak boasted 220hp, a top speed of 153mph and 0-60mph in 7.0 seconds. Giugiaro's styling changes over his Bora included flying rear buttresses, a flat rear engine cover, vertical rear window and inset front half-bumpers. Between 1972 and 1983, some 1140 examples were made, 224 being the more powerful SS version.

The front-engined Biturbo then dominated at Maserati but in 1990, Modena hatched plans for a new mid-engined supercar to rival Ferrari and Lamborghini: the Chubasco. Engineered by Giacomo Caliri, it had a backbone chassis and was planned to use the Shamal's 430hp V8 (in fact, no engine was ever fitted). Marcello Gandini's radical

coupe design featured a sliding targa roof, detachable spoiler and scissor doors. Despite Maserati talking about production of 150 units per year from 1992, the Chubasco had no future.

Maserati's efforts were instead deflected in 1991 to the Barchetta, which essentially used the Chubasco's backbone chassis. The mid-mounted 2.0-litre Biturbo V6 was tuned to develop 315hp at 7200rpm and was mated to a six-speed Getrag gearbox, while inboard pushrod suspension mimicked Formula 1 practice. The doorless, roofless shape was done by ex-Italdesign penman, Carlo Gaino. Although there was a street-legal Stradale version, the Barchetta was really a track machine. A one-make race series ran in 1992 and 1993, but it wasn't popular enough and only 17 Barchettas were made out of a planned 30-strong run.

By 2004, Maserati was firmly within Ferrari's orbit and a plan was hatched to make a road and race version of the Enzo

Ferrari with Maserati branding. The result was the MC12, a car that was even more expensive than the Ferrari. Despite its 5998cc V12 engine being less powerful than the Enzo's (630hp versus 660hp), the MC12 had better low-down torque. With steel brakes, grander dimensions and Boge dampers, the MC12 weighed more, too (1335kg dry, versus 1255kg for the Ferrari). Other changes over the Ferrari included unique bodywork with a much longer tail, targa top and engine snorkel. The MC12 was a true hypercar with its carbonfibre/Nomex tub, 205mph top speed and 0-62mph time of 3.8 seconds. Up to 2005, 50 road cars were made, plus an additional 12 racers.

The MC12 formed the basis of the spectacular Birdcage 75th concept car, created by Pininfarina to celebrate its 75th anniversary. First seen at the 2005 Geneva Show, it drew inspiration from Maserati's Tipo 61 Birdcage of the 1960s but remained a one-off. 



Barchetta



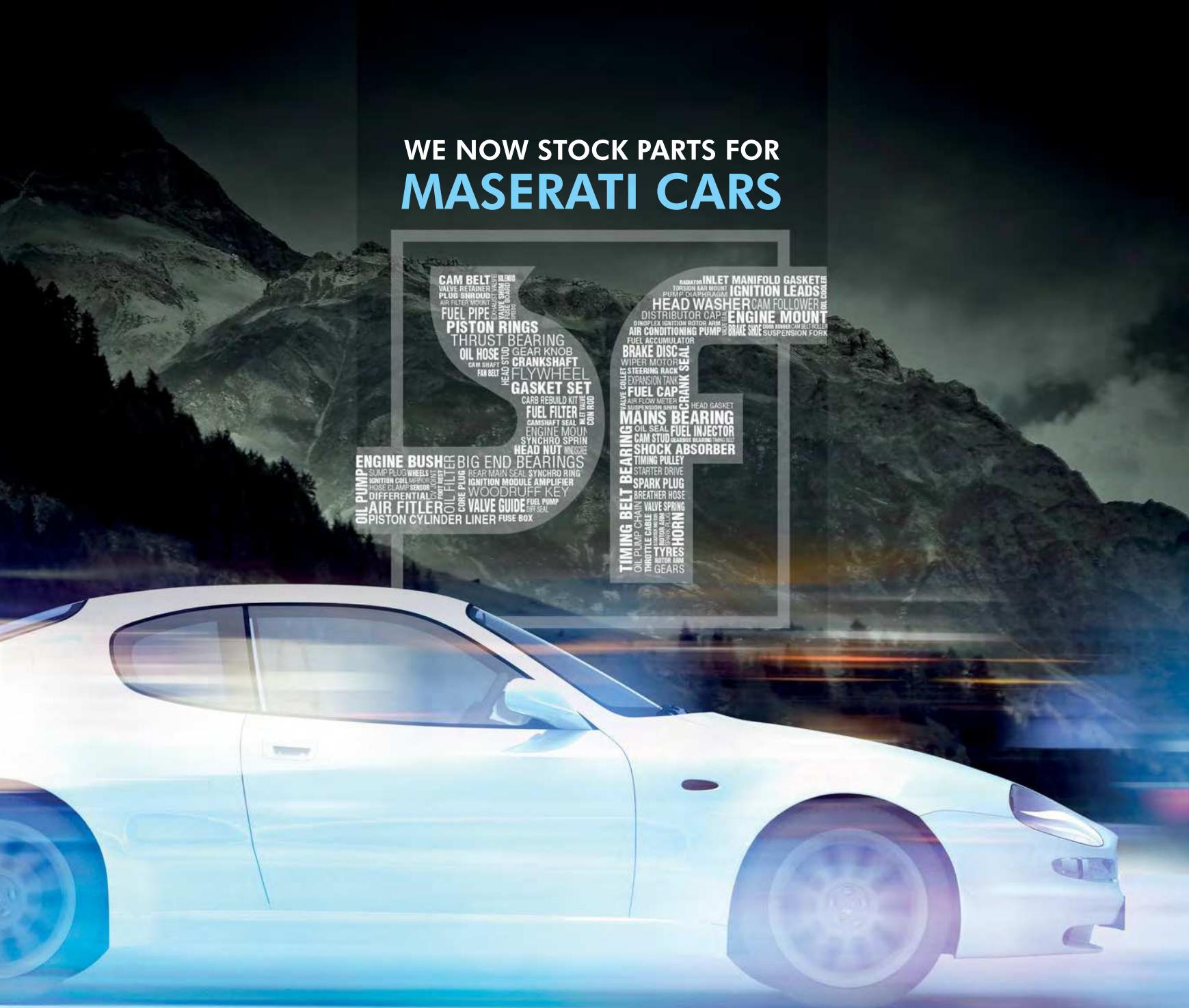
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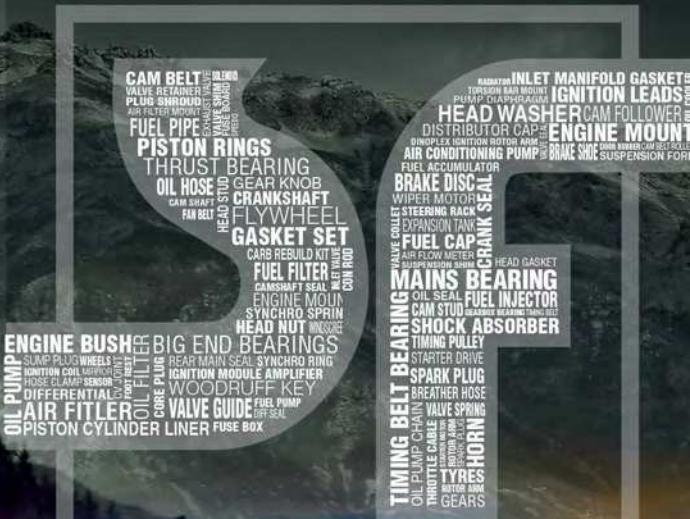
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# The Mouse That Roared

This innocent-looking Fiat Topolino hides a big secret. Under the skin, it's a full-on 180hp hot rod with a real Jekyll/Hyde character

Story by Chris Rees  
Photography by Michael Ward

Camped out by the start line at the Prescott Italia hillclimb a few months back, as the Ferrari 250 GT Breadvan and various other exotic beasts fire off, an innocuous-looking Fiat Topolino lines up. Surely this pre-war Fiat with its 569cc engine has to be the slowest car to go up the hill today? Then the lights go green and all eyebrows raise as the baby Fiat fairly shoots off the line and disappears under the bridge in a haze of burnt hydrocarbons.

This is clearly no ordinary Topolino. In fact, it's an absolute beast under the skin. It's the work of an extraordinarily talented builder called Jacqui Kowalewsky who is a mechanical design and tooling expert by trade – for instance, she designs the robots that make today's production cars. She is also an old-school hot rodder, which begins to explain why this baby Fiat has some very grown-up manners.

"I used to be a drag racer," says Jacqui, "and I remember seeing lots of Topolinos on the drag strip, usually with replica glassfibre bodyshells. I was always a fan of the Topolino's shape but once I saw what they are supposed to look like, I fell in love with it. In

2014, I found a very early 1937 example that was originally built in Lingotto within the first nine months of production starting. Sadly it was in a terrible state because it had been kept in a garage with the door left open. It was complete but it was in pieces. I bought it with the idea of turning it into a discreet hot rod, keeping the shape as close as possible to standard."

Despite doing pretty much all her work these days on a computer, the skills that Jacqui learnt as an apprentice stood her in good stead when it came to restoring the bodywork. It's remarkable that this was the very first time she'd ever tackled a steel

body (she has built several glassfibre-bodied hot rods over the years).

Amazingly, it's still possible to buy some reproduction Topolino body parts – like sills and floors – but most of the damaged bodywork had to be fabricated by Jacqui, including the inner wheelarches, front three-quarter panelling, inner A-pillars and vents. The doors had to be welded in place to maintain the integrity of the shell while the sills and so on were repaired. Even the underbody louvres were pressed out by Jacqui herself. One modification was a cut in the scuttle panel to make the whole front bodywork above the engine removable for easier access. Jacqui has also fabricated an alternative-style 'waterfall grille' front end but she prefers the original style. Pretty much the only thing Jacqui didn't do in the whole build was shot-blast the wheels.

The chassis was painted the same colour as the body, namely Nouveau Red, a 1990s Ford colour. Using clear over a base coat really makes it gleam in sunlight. The wheels and engine bay were painted in contrasting Ivory.

The repair process took fully 18 months. Only then could the process of hot rodding the Fiat

begin – which took another 18 months. An engine upgrade was top of the list. While Jacqui would have loved to use a Fiat twin cam, they are very expensive these days. Instead, she chose a 2.0-litre twin cam from a 20-year old Ford Focus. It retains its standard valves and cams but has a ported head, higher compression ratio, uprated conrod bolts, motorcycle carbs and lightened flywheel, and is running about 180hp.

The Quaife-manufactured four-speed manual gearbox is basically Ford 2000E. It's Quaife's close-ratio dog 'box version, chosen because the ultra-close-ratio





alternative would have been unsuitable for drag racing (first gear is too high). Jacqui has employed a vintage trick by lubricating the engine with castor oil. The gear lever looks authentic but it's actually a Ford Anglia item with a Fiat knob. Likewise, the handbrake looks convincing even though it's from an MG Midget.

At first glance, the lowered stance is one of very few things to mark out Jacqui's Topolino as non-standard. The original car's 15-inch wheels were made of solid steel and very thin – great-looking but far from ideal for the extra power and performance of this car. Jacqui searched for more robust wheels that resembled the originals and settled on Triumph Spitfire 13-inch fronts and Morris Minor 14-inch rears, suitably modified to accept the original Fiat hubcaps.

As for the suspension, that's essentially 100% home-made. The hubs are Triumph Spitfire up front and Mazda MX-5 at the rear, the Mazda also donating its limited-slip differential. Everything else is Jacqui's own design from scratch. The independent front end uses an A-arm, lower and upper wishbone and coil-over dampers, with the bigger engine dictating two towers to support the A-arm. The rear end consists of a caged 'module' welded into the chassis, with a removable rear casing in case Jacqui ever needs to drop the diff out.

The fuel tank was originally front-mounted but it's now relocated to the rear. The question of where to

put the fuel filler vexed Jacqui initially, as she didn't want to cut the bodywork if possible. In the end, an ingenious solution was found: the centre of the spare wheel cover flips up to reveal the filler tube.

The interior has quite a few changes over the original Fiat, without looking over-the-top in any way. Some alterations were forced by the new engine installation, which is considerably longer and wider than the 569cc in-line four of the original Fiat. The bigger central tunnel resulted in a loss of some four inches of cabin length. It also forced Jacqui to move the pedals to the right, as well as the original steering column, resulting in the Fiat Bakelite steering wheel nudging the door. Jacqui simply couldn't find a replacement in the style she wanted so she built her own 'banjo' spoked wheel from scratch, keeping the centre moulding from the Fiat with its horn button.

"The seats were pretty much shot, with rusted-out springs," recalls Jacqui. "It's possible to buy reproduction seats but they aren't cheap. The seat backs were solid enough to be restored, though, so I made new marine-ply bases and foam, while I used the original covers as patterns to make new ones in vinyl. I'd never done any sewing before and had to buy a sewing machine especially, educating myself on YouTube."

The convertible roof frame was intact with the

**Interior is remodelled around much bigger engine - a 2.0-litre twin cam lump with no less than 180hp**



*Lowered stance is virtually the only clue to this car's radical underpinnings. Hot rod techniques abound*

remains of the canvas still present. Jacqui used this as a pattern to make a new roof out of triple-layer Mohair, colour-matched to the bodywork. "It felt very dark, though," she recalls, "so I added an extra layer of cream-coloured vinyl inside to brighten things up. The car leaks like a sieve, but not through the roof – water comes in around the pedals and doors, while the bonnet vents allow water to collect in the twin cam head covers. And because there's no heater, the windows do steam up quite badly."

The headlights are original, restored using new lenses. Originally, the Topolino had just one rear light – cost-cutting was pretty extreme back then! – but Jacqui has extravagantly opted for two. They're non-

original but look great: 1939 Ford teardrop units that are much favoured in hot rodding circles. The bonnet ornament, meanwhile, is Jacqui's own version of Fiat's.

The project was finally finished in August 2017 after a three-year build. It's been nicknamed 'Shortcake' by Jacqui's daughter. Is that because it's short and sweet, we ask? "No," replies Jacqui, "it's the red-and-cream colour scheme which reminds her of a strawberry cheesecake!" And how about usage? "I drive the car all year round, going to meets and events," says Jacqui. "I do use it in winter, provided it's dry and there's no salt on the roads. It's pretty sketchy in the wet!"

So how does it drive? As we head off, I'm immediately struck by how stiff the suspension is,





crashing over the slightest bump. That's because the engine sits very low, with a notably low-hanging exhaust (it exits under the sill because there's no room for it to be routed to the back), so the stiff set-up is needed to avoid bottoming out.

As soon as we're on the open road, a hearty dab of throttle reveals this baby Fiat to be an absolute beast. It weighs around 750kg, which is truly featherweight by modern standards but actually about 50kg heavier than the standard Topolino. The power-to-weight ratio is around 240hp per ton, so the car's exceptional pace shouldn't be too surprising – but it certainly surprises other road users. The Topolino has no problem keeping up with modern traffic and can happily see off a large proportion of new cars. It sounds great, too, with an urgent twin cam revviness.



It hugs the road with a darty, pointy feel from the front end. But if you're injudicious with the loud pedal, oversteer awaits in large measure. The short wheelbase certainly gives it a feisty feel – readiness to apply opposite lock is definitely required! Jacqui reports being very pleasantly surprised by her Prescott hillclimb experience: "It was great fun!"

With a drag racing background, it's only natural that Jacqui should give the little Fiat a go up the strip. So far she's only dragged the Topolino once, at the Hot Rod Drags at Santa Pod in September last year. There she achieved a quarter-mile time of 14.39 seconds with a terminal speed of 94mph. That's very impressive by any standard, and the NSRA (National Street Rod Association) understandably rewarded Jacqui with a 'Dirty Dozen' trophy.

*Restoration pics give clue of shocking state as found. Wheelspin and oversteer readily available on request*



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# Blue Chip Classic

Rising values show that car collectors truly love the Alfa 8C. But will they be rewarded with a drive that matches the price tag? We find out in a one-of-one Ultramarine Blue example

Story by Nathan Chadwick  
Photography by Michael Ward

If you spend your evenings scouring the internet classifieds – let's face it, we all do it – and happen across the rare occasions when an 8C is offered for sale, you may notice a couple of things. They all tend to be low mileage, for one. They all tend to be virtually untouched, for another. Trinkets in a collection, barely moving in real life.

That seems a great shame, especially as I've just seen Clive Richardson's superb Blu Oltremare (Ultramarine Blue) example rumbling into view. In the flesh, the 8C is much larger than you expect, but there's no denying the impact – this is one good-looking car. There is not a crease out of shape, not one clumsily arranged line, no function-over-form hack-and-slash. Wolfgang Egger's design changed very little from the 2003 8C concept car, which you can still see in the Alfa Romeo Museum in Arese.

Then there's the noise. Under the bonnet is a Maserati V8 4.7-litre F136 YC V8 engine. Introduced in 4.2-litre guise in the Maserati Coupe of 2001, the F136 engine ended up in the GranSport, Quattroporte and GranTurismo with cross-plane crankshafts, and in the Ferrari F430, California and 458 with flat-plane crankshafts. The Alfa 8C followed the Maserati route.

In fact, the 8C is pretty much a Maserati underneath, the Quattroporte being the

most closely related model. Its central floor section has carbonfibre bonded on, while the 8C uses Maserati-specification double-wishbones with dampers specifically tuned for the model; Maserati's Skyhook adaptive damping was jettisoned for a more analogue feel. The engine sits far back in the engine bay and the transaxle gearbox is forward of the rear differential, to localise the mass in the centre of the car.

Buoyed by the great response to the 8C concept at its 2003 Frankfurt Show reveal, Alfa Romeo wanted to build the car, but parent company Fiat was struggling for cash. Then in 2005, Antonio Baravalle became Alfa's CEO, and luckily he was an avowed fan of the car, along with Maserati boss Karl-Heinz Kalbfell. Between them, they cooked up a plan to deliver a halo project at minimal cost. The flipside would be brutally slashing Alfa Romeo's advertising budget. In fairness, in 2005 Alfa's fleet was looking a little old hat – late-era remodels of the 156 and 166 were sticking plasters – so what better way to inject some new dynamism into the Alfa brand than a new supercar? The 8C Competizione got the green light.

Just 500 would be made – all sold in no time, so a further 500 8C Spiders would be built. In the years since, conventional wisdom about Alfa Romeos depreciating has been turned on its head: I can recall seeing only



one 8C sell below its original £110,000 list price and that was many years ago. You're looking at between £230,000 and £250,000 to make an 8C yours these days.

That presents another query: given the Maserati underpinnings, is the driving experience manifestly different to a GranSport or GranTurismo? Strip away the styling, limited numbers and Alfa Romeo badge, could you save yourself £150,000 and get either a GranTurismo MC Stradale or GranSport MC Victory, and have an extra pair of seats into the bargain?

Such practical thoughts take a little while to seep into my mind, as my gob is currently grazing the tarmac – it really is very pretty, this, isn't it? But enough of the gawping, let's get touchy feely. It's tight in the cabin – the 8C has a 10in shorter wheelbase than the Maserati GranTurismo, and is 20in shorter overall. You get just two seats and a small gap behind your head for light luggage, plus a tiny hole in the boot that Clive suggests is just enough for a couple of wine bottles.

It's hard not to be drunk on the 8C already. It feels special in here: the cold metal of the shift paddles, the gorgeous leather pews, the sheer immediacy of the environment. It might be a little cramped given the 8C's exterior dimensions, but you do feel part of it all.

That feeling continues in motion. Anyone familiar with Maserati's Cambiocorsa paddle-shift gearbox will immediately get to grips with the six-speeder here. It's nowhere near as quick as modern dual-clutch gearboxes, and in purely objective terms it is indeed 'worse', but the 8C's clunky single-clutch set-up has a proper mechanical feeling that requires some finesse to get just right. It's clunky at low speed and in full automatic mode it's more lurchy than the dents in The Addams Family's hallway door frames. You quickly become in tune with the system, though.

Each paddle pull unleashes another gruff, baritone snarl. It's pure tailpipe theatre, with fuzzy crackle on the overrun, and a bassy war-cry as the engine sprints towards the

its 7000rpm peak power point, when 450 horses are being hammered into the asphalt by a limited-slip differential-aided rear axle. 60mph is a memory after little more than four seconds and flat-out you'll see 181mph. The 8C doles out 480Nm at 4750rpm, with 80 per cent of it available from half that, but it could do with more torque, considering the 8C's role as more of a GT than a high-revving sports car.

In steering terms, you might be expecting an approximation of the GranTurismo MC Stradale, but the 8C's feel is very different. It's still a quick rack, but the weight is heavier, and there's far more information about what's going on through its 20in wheels than the somewhat aloof feeling of even the GranTurismo's sportiest variant. This means the Alfa suddenly shakes off its 'Maserati in Alfa clothing' demeanour; it develops into an engaging, engrossing experience in the manner of the marque's predecessors. Of course, it doesn't corner with the razor-sharp accuracy of a Ferrari

*Blu Oltremare paint is unique. Driving the 8C dispels most of the poorly formed 'received wisdoms'*



F430, but people let you out of junctions. How about that for real-world pace?

The 8C still feels engaging, exciting and visceral in a way that the GranTurismo only really manages in a straight line. Despite weighing 200kg less than the GranTurismo, the 8C still feels big, not helped by a fair degree of body roll when pushing on. Start to push on and the 8C provides a nibble of understeer to remind you of your own mortality, and a playful rear end if you push it further. However, it feels at its most comfortable on A-roads, with a slow-in, fast-out style. It might not be the last word in vehicle dynamics, but I get into the

giggle zone more often than most supercars, more of the time.

It even rides fairly well. The 8C has been criticised for its ride quality, and although it's noticeably firmer than a GranTurismo, it's certainly not the filling-uprooter it's purported to be – perhaps something to do with non-original compound tyres. Take the 8C on to choppy B-roads and the damping protests but this is a car that's not really intended for B-road thrashes. Keep it to the smoother A-roads it was designed for, and you're unlikely to feel what all the fuss is about.

There is plenty of fuss about the 8C, even

in its discreet Blu Oltremare hue – apparently the only 8C to be so painted. People stop, stare and smile. It's a car with good vibes, this – from the way it drives to the reaction it receives. There are any number of ways to cover ground that are ultimately faster, but very few offer the same level of theatre, engagement and excitement, even if you roll up at 20mph.

For Clive, it carries on a tradition for eight-cylinder Alfias, for his father owned an original 2300 8C – and a rather special one at that. Chassis 2111033 won the Mille Miglia with Campari behind the wheel in 1932, then again a year later with Nuvolari and yet





## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

### ALFA ROMEO 8C COMPETIZIONE

ENGINE:	4691cc V8 DOHC
COMPRESSION RATIO:	11.3:1
POWER:	450hp at 7000rpm
TORQUE:	480Nm at 4750rpm
TRANSMISSION:	6-speed semi-auto, RWD
DIMENSIONS:	4381mm (L), 1894mm (W), 1341mm (H)
WEIGHT:	1580kg
MAX SPEED:	181mph
0-62MPH:	4.2sec
PRICE NEW:	£110,000
VALUE NOW:	£230,000-£250,000



again in 1934, this time with Varzi on driving duties. More recently, it has appeared on the Mille Miglia revival runs with Clive's dad behind the wheel. It's now moved to a United States collection, but Clive's got a much-loved and much-enjoyed Montreal to keep the eight-cylinder Alfa theme going. The 8C Comp is a keeper, too, and Clive is considering taking it on a trip to the Alfa Romeo Museum at some point.

## VERDICT

Many pundits have described the 8C as disappointing, but when you consider its ultimate aims, it pretty much nails its brief. It's not perfect – the most loveable things rarely are – but they are forgivable, and not just because it's Italian. Go in expecting a nimble sports car and you won't find that. Instead you'll find a very Italian take on the Aston Martin V8 Vantage. Both are achingly pretty, both have 4.7-litre V8s, and both put out a similar amount of power.

In objective terms, the 8C is expensive. It needs to feel special to justify its price tag. You know what, it does. The interior is far more special than the Aston's, and the 8C's steering is drastically better than the GranTurismo and GranSport. The 8C is left-hand drive only, but if ever you needed encouragement to travel Europe in style, this is it. The 8C might make little sense, but then the very best things never do. 



Many thanks to Clive  
Richardson and the Alfa  
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# Seeing the Light

Lightweight and rare, the short-lived 308 GTB Vetroresina is the only plastic-bodied road car ever made by Ferrari. How special does it feel to drive?

Story by Tim Pitt

Photography by Michael Ward



We are all being urged to use less plastic, but today I've made an exception. The Ferrari 308 GTB I'm driving is an early Vetroresina version, with a fully glassfibre body by Scaglietti.

Lightweight, small and still going strong after 46 years, it makes an unorthodox case for sustainability.

While this particular 308 has lived to a ripe old age, the same wasn't true of the Vetroresina in general. Launched in 1975, Ferrari's first – and to date only – glassfibre road car lasted until 1977 before production switched to steel bodywork. During those two years,

Maranello says 808 cars were made, although many experts put the number at 712. Whatever the truth, with more than 12,000 examples of the 308 GTB and GTS made in total, the Vetroresina is a rare beast.

What this car isn't, however, is a homologation special, even though it has elements of exotic, motorsport-inspired pedigree – including a dry sump. The 308 did enjoy some success in Group 4 and Group B rallying thanks to Michelotto, but all that happened after 1978. Like the turbocharged 288 GTO that followed, this was very much a road car first.

Ferrari's reasons for using glassfibre aren't well



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documented – perhaps it caught wind of the rival Lotus Esprit, also revealed at the Paris Motor Show in 1975 – but ‘adding lightness’ was certainly a consideration. Hung on a tubular steel chassis, the plastic body and panels – excepting the aluminium front lid – resulted in a dry weight of just 1090kg. Add around 100kg for the ‘DIN’ kerb weight figure, including fluids and a 90 percent tank of fuel, and this V8-engined Ferrari is still lighter than many of today’s three-cylinder superminis.

Significantly, the Vetroresina also weighs 150kg less than the steel-bodied 308. Fitted with a 255hp V8 that was still unfettered by emissions equipment, the result

is the fastest 308 of all: Ferrari claimed 0-62mph in 6.7 seconds and a top speed of 157mph.

Another reason for choosing glassfibre may have been the rush to get this ‘junior’ Ferrari into production. Rewind to the early 1970s and the 308 GT4 – the effective replacement for the Dino 246 GT – was selling slowly, not helped by the oil crisis and its slightly awkward Bertone styling. Ferrari had to bolster its bottom line, and tooling up for a glassfibre body was quicker than using steel. Ironically, it was the added time that Carrozzeria Scaglietti needed to assemble each individual car – and the associated cost



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- that would seal the Vetroresina's fate.

Colin Sowter, owner of this stunning 1976 308 GTB in Argento Auteil, describes it as his "favourite car ever". When your collection includes a stable of Ferrari Challenge race cars (348, 458 Italia, F430 and more), that's high praise indeed. The owner of Superformance, which supplies parts for a huge variety of Ferrari models.

Amazingly, Colin bought his first 308 GTB - a Vetroresina - when he was just 18 years old. The princely £5500 he paid was around half the car's cost when new. He's owned the example you see here for 16 years and recently put it up for sale. "Then I decided

Boxer. Forever made famous by a starring role in the 1980s crime drama, *Magnum PI*, it's one of Pininfarina's prettiest shapes. Besides, any car with pop-up headlights is automatically cool.

At first glance, the Vetroresina looks identical to any steel-bodied 308. Look closer, though, and you'll spot the reversing lamps integrated into the rear bumper, rather than being part of Ferrari's traditional round tail lights. There's also an indentation where the top of the windscreen pillar joins the roof, plus standard 14-inch alloy wheels on bulbous 205/70 tyres (later cars had the option of 16-inch rims).

Lift the (surprisingly heavy) glassfibre engine lid and

**“ You sit low, hips thrust forward, arms outstretched, the Momo wheel more horizontal than you expect ”**

I couldn't bear to part with it," he says with a smile. "The glassfibre cars are the pinnacle for me. I love the purity of their design, which predates all the aerodynamic appendages. And they're really tactile to drive, with a fantastic exhaust note."

We'll come to driving shortly, but it's worth taking a moment to stop and stare first. Combining sensuous curves with the wedginess that was *alla moda* in the 1970s, the 308 successfully bridges the gap between the dainty Dino 246 GT and the brawny Berlinetta

the transverse 2.9-litre V8 is wedged tight against the rear bulkhead. Clearly, Ferrari wanted to make the 308 GTB as 'mid-engined' as possible. The full-width boot is located behind, with a zip-up cover and enough space for a set of golf clubs, putting most modern supercars to shame and making the 308 practical enough for road trips and holidays.

The cabin isn't so spacious, and downright cramped for anyone over 6ft tall, but my modest 5ft 8in frame finds it very comfortable. Slim pillars and the vast

*Reversing lamps in rear bumper are one of the few giveaways that you're looking at a Vetroresina*



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# FERRARI 308 GTB VETRORESINA



Great steering and grip by 1970s standards are offset by weak brakes. Open-gate 'box needs a brawny shove



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amount of glass make it feel more spacious, too. All-round visibility is excellent, even if the Vitaloni California 'bullet' door mirrors (common on Italian cars of this era) are pretty hopeless. The only other ergonomic flaw is the hooded instrument binnacle, which reflects badly in the windscreen. It's the reason why many 308s have dashboards covered in aftermarket flock or Alcantara.

You sit exotically low, hips thrust forward and arms outstretched, the Momo steering wheel slightly more horizontal than you might expect. The Veglia rev counter is redlined at close to 8000rpm and the speedo reads to 180mph. There are two supplementary gauges (oil temperature and clock) down by your left knee. The sliders and toggle switches on the centre console feel delicate, but the open-gate manual gearbox demands a firm shove when cold.

Colin's car has a cassette player and air conditioning – both optional extras when the 308 GTB was new. However, even on a stuffy August afternoon, I'm happy just to lower the window and enjoy the gurgle of four Weber 40DCNF carburettors and the crisp bark of the

flat-plane crank. A feature of right-hand drive 308s with carbs (including all 154 Vetroresinas made in RHD) is a rubber pipe behind the driver's side door scoop that feeds straight into the air cleaner. It's like having V8 music pumped directly into your left ear.

This breathy induction growl, which becomes a hard-edged snarl as the revs rise, sounds like no other Ferrari I've driven. It instantly evokes a rally car soundtrack and is a huge part of the Vetroresina's charm. However, it could certainly become wearing on long journeys. Ted Pearson, friend of *Auto Italia* and another long-term Vetroresina owner, told us he temporarily removed the air pipe to make his car quieter. Nonetheless, Ted has had some "absolutely joyous" drives during nearly 50,000 miles with his 308 GTB. "There's a reason why I've owned it for so long," he explains. "I enjoy it more than the F355 I had previously."

You get the sense that Colin Sowter prefers this little 308 to modern Ferraris. "They're such different experiences, there's almost no comparison. You can't drive modern Ferraris to an enjoyable level on the road.

*There's nothing like a carb-fed V8 singing behind you to make you feel joyous of a morning, if a little deaf*

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

### FERRARI 308 GTB VETRORESINA

ENGINE:	2927cc V8
BORE X STROKE:	81mm x 71mm
COMPRESSION RATIO:	8.8:1
POWER:	255hp at 7700rpm
TORQUE:	284Nm (210lb ft) at 5000rpm
TRANSMISSION:	Five-speed manual, rear-wheel drive
SUSPENSION:	Unequal-length wishbones, coil springs, telescopic dampers, anti-roll bars
BRAKES:	Hydraulic discs all round
DIMENSIONS:	4230mm (L), 1720mm (W), 1120mm (H)
WEIGHT:	1090kg (dry)
MAX SPEED:	157mph
0-62MPH:	6.7sec





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The 308 offers great communication through the steering, plus surprisingly high levels of grip for the period. But if you exploit the performance, you do need to take the 1970s brakes into account."

For me – piloting Colin's car with due respect, rather than on the ragged edge – the brakes feel quite adequate. Indeed, the 308 GTB proves remarkably easy to drive, with smooth steering (power assistance wasn't fitted or needed), modest dimensions and a supple ride on those tall tyres. The gearbox also becomes pleasingly slick once the oil has warmed through. Only its dog-leg first gear – located opposite reverse, with the other four ratios in an H-pattern – can feel a bit cumbersome in traffic.

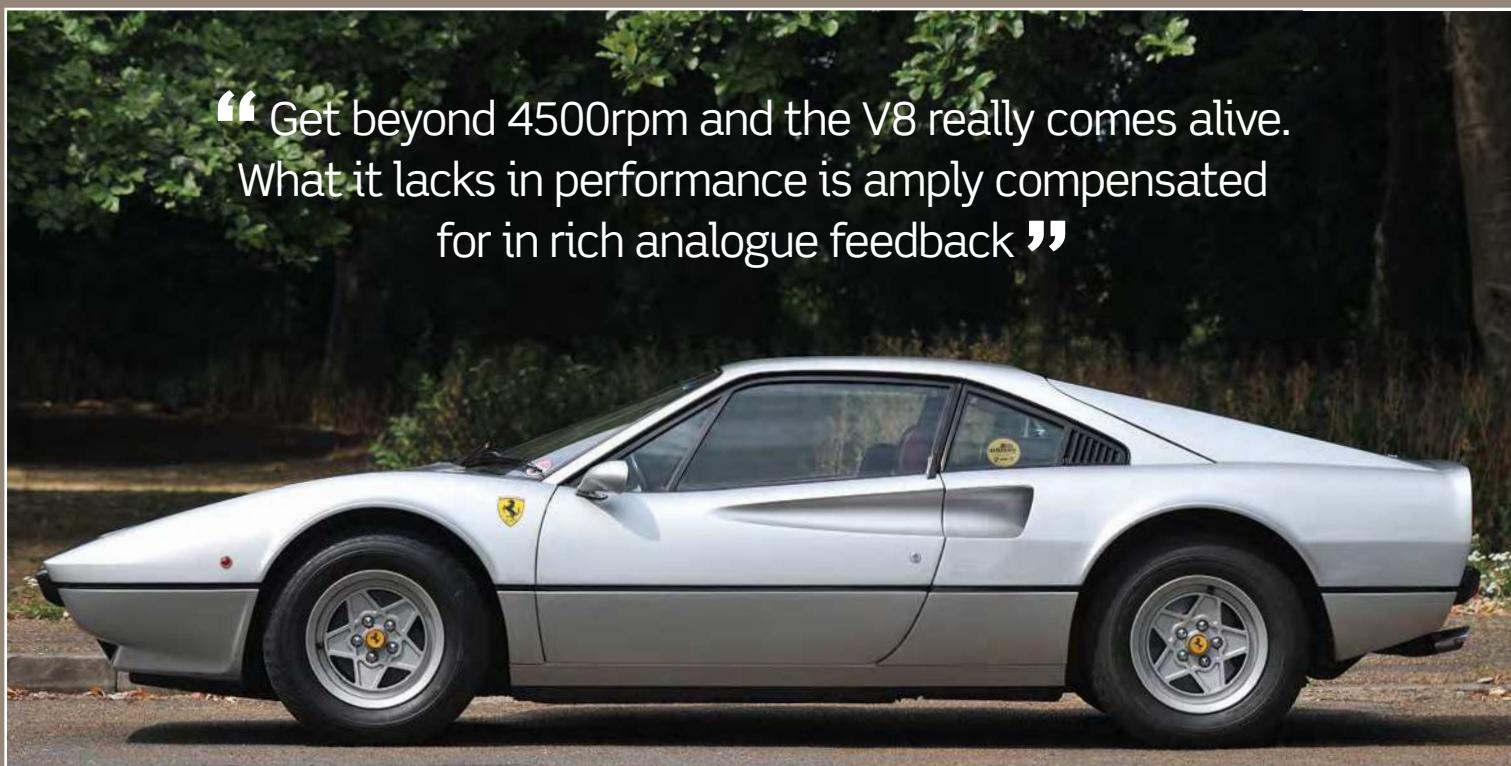
Get beyond 4500rpm and the F106 V8 really comes alive. To modern sensibilities, the 308 can feel a bit floaty over bumps and undulations, but you soon learn

to trust it, revelling in its artfully poised balance and the glorious rasp of its quad-tailpipe exhaust. What it lacks in performance – its 255hp, delivered at 7700rpm, is scarcely hot hatch territory today – is amply compensated for in rich analogue feedback. Ted is right: 'joyous' is the word.

For a long time, there was very little price difference between glassfibre and steel versions of the 308. That started to change around 20 years ago, as the market woke up to the rarity and added appeal of the Vetroresina. These early plastic cars now command a healthy premium, with the best examples advertised for well into six figures. In a society that sees plastic as cheap and disposable, that might seem expensive. However, when an equivalent Dino 246 GT is three times the price, this rather special Ferrari suddenly looks a bit of a bargain.

Many thanks to Colin Sowter at Superformance ([www.superformance.co.uk](http://www.superformance.co.uk), 01992 445300) and Ted Pearson, whose 308 GTB is for sale with Kent High Performance Cars ([www.tfcgb.com](http://www.tfcgb.com), 01622 759599)

“ Get beyond 4500rpm and the V8 really comes alive. What it lacks in performance is amply compensated for in rich analogue feedback ”



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# Plastica Fantastica

Why have so few Italian cars ever used glassfibre bodywork? We investigate

Story by Chris Rees

Glassfibre. On the face of it, it's brilliant stuff. You can fashion just about any shape you choose out of it; it's easy to produce car bodies in small series; and it's cheap. Ever since the 1950s, glassfibre reinforced plastic (GRP) has been used for car bodywork, initially as the perfect substitute for metal which was in short supply after the war. The first ever plastic-bodied car was the 1941 Ford 'Soybean' prototype, made out of a bizarre mix of plant fibres, resin and formaldehyde. After further GRP prototypes from Stout and Darrin, the very first plastic car to reach the market was the 1949 Kurtis Sports Car, while in 1953, the Chevrolet Corvette ushered in an era of mass-produced glassfibre cars.

Kit cars or 'specials' with plastic bodies then became all the rage in the US and Britain in the 1950s, based on contemporary chassis. Glassfibre monocoque cars followed with no metal chassis at all, including Colin Chapman's Lotus Elite.

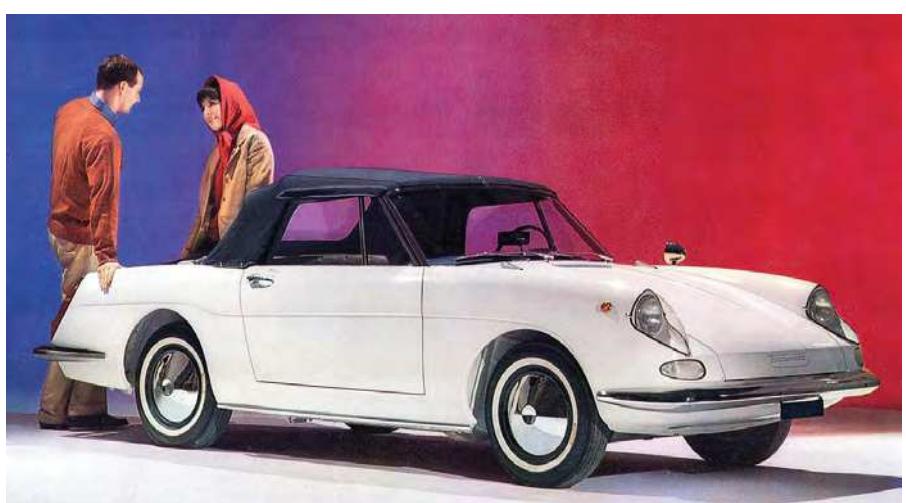
So why was it that, in stark contrast to the rest of the world, glassfibre remained singularly unpopular in Italy? The reason was quite simple: Italy was swimming in highly skilled metalworkers who could hand-form steel bodywork like no others. GRP just wasn't needed.

However, Italians did dally with plastic, mostly as a way to save weight. The first was bus coachbuilder Viberti, which created a Fiat 1100 estate in 1951, some of whose panelwork was made of Formica (a plastic-impregnated laminate) but this never reached production. Surprisingly, the first all-plastic Italian body came from Carrozzeria Touring of Milan. In 1953 a chemicals company called Montecatini approached Touring with the idea of building a car to show off its skills with plastic. Touring's penchant for 'superlight' bodywork chimed with the inherent light weight of glassfibre, and the body that Touring built weighed just 40kg. Its doorless, open-topped, three-sear sports

LEFT: Alfa 33 Stradale used glassfibre body to keep weight low. RIGHT, FROM TOP: Viberti Fiat 1100 estate; Touring-built Montecatini; Zagato Panther; OSI Secura made safety claims



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car design was very simple and almost symmetrical. Making its debut at the Milan Chemical Show in April 1953, it was quite possibly the very first plastic-bodied car ever seen in Europe.

Another celebrated Italian design house – Zagato – was next to the plastic party. In 1954, a Milanese company called Panther Diesel asked Zagato to design a coupe using a 520cc two-stroke diesel engine. Highly unusually, Zagato's body was realised in glassfibre. The Panther was all set to be manufactured by a company based in San Marino but it's believed that production never started.

Even the mighty Fiat experimented with glassfibre. At the 1954 Turin Motor Show, it showed the 8V Vetroresina (glassfibre) prototype. One half of the car was painted green while the other half was left transparent. Fiat hoped that glassfibre might prove a suitable material for small series production cars, but ultimately it stuck with metal and the plastic-bodied 8V (chassis 101) remained unique. A much more obscure Italian plastic car was shown at the Pincio concours event in 1957. The Crispolti Castelfusano 750 Sport Spider proudly sported 'Carrozzeria in Plastica' labelling but it remained a prototype.

The first Italian production car to make use of glassfibre was an Alfa Romeo: the Giulietta SZ of 1960-1962 had a glassfibre dashboard to keep weight down. Going one stage further, Alfa Romeo experimented with an all-glassfibre body for its Giulia TZ of 1963 and found that 30kg could be shaved from the aluminium production version. That persuaded Alfa to adopt glassfibre bodywork for the TZ's successor, the TZ2 of 1965, but only three plastic-bodied TZ2s were made (by Balzaretti & Modigliani).

By then, another car had already become the first Italian production car to use an all-glassfibre body. The Autobianchi Stellina, first seen at the 1963 Turin Show, was a sports car based on a Fiat 600 platform. From its Plexiglas-cowled headlamps to its pointy tail lamps, it looked a bit unhappy but its glassfibre body made it light and cheap to manufacture.

Emboldened by the burgeoning use of plastic bodies, another legendary Italian name, OSCA, dabbled with the substance in 1964 with its 1600 GT 'Shock-Proof'. It was so named because OSCA claimed the plastic bodywork dampened the effects of a crash – a bit disingenuously, it must be said – while it also cited other advantages, including lightness, acoustic insulation, heat insulation, rust proofing, resistance to the sun's rays and resistance to flexing. The bodywork was made by Carrozzeria Corbetta, a company specialising in glassfibre boats. The 1964 Turin Show also saw two further glassfibre-bodied OSCA models, based on the Fiat 850.

Safety was the reason why coachbuilder OSI adopted glassfibre for its Secura concept car, which was bodied with the assistance of Alpine of France – itself no stranger to glassfibre. Another car with French connections, the Abarth Simca, received a 'longnose' design in 1965 whose front end was made of glassfibre – the first time this material had been used by Abarth.

Low weight led Bizzarrini to offer its 1965 GT Strada 5300 in glassfibre as an alternative to aluminium, while Bizzarrini's later Europa was also plastic-bodied. And while De Tomaso's 1963 prototype for the Vallelunga had aluminium body panels, by the time

OPPOSITE, FROM TOP: Unique plastic-bodied Fiat 8V prototype; Crispolti Castelfusano 750 Sport Spider; Alfa Romeo TZ2; Autobianchi Stellina of 1963

RIGHT, FROM TOP: OSCA 1600 GT 'Shock-Proof' was clothed by a boat builder; Bizzarrini 1900 GT Europa; Scaglione-penned LMX Sirex; Ferrari 308 Vetroresina

production started in 1965, its pretty Giugiaro-styled body was in glassfibre.

Roll on 1966 and a whole slew of high-class Italian cars were boldly using plastic bodies, like the 'baby Ferrari' ASA Roll-Bar and Alfa Romeo's 1750 Zagato 4R neo-classic. The following year came Alfa's 33 Stradale, whose Franco Scaglione-designed plastic bodywork kept weight extremely low (just 700kg all in). Scaglione also designed the LMX Sirex of 1968, which was built by two men – Giovanni Mandelli and Jean Michel Liprandi – who had created a glassfibre company called Limaplas and decided to make a Ford-engined sports car using the material. LMX stood for 'Linea Moderna Executive', incidentally.

Italians also embraced the 'fun car' movement of the 1960s, typified by basic glassfibre bodies over VW or Fiat chassis. The very first of these came from the illustrious pen of Ercole Spada: the Bikini of 1965, a beach-cum-utilty car with very stripped-down glassfibre body panels, but this remained a one-off. Another one-off was Marcello Gandini's Autobianchi Runabout of 1969 with its striking wedge-shaped glassfibre body. Commercial success had to wait for such Italian buggy makers as Totem and Baldi.

Glassfibre was more widely used in the 1970s, notably by Lancia for its Stratos and by Abarth for the 124 Rally's hardtop, bonnet and bootlid, while the 131 Abarth's bodywork was extensively lightened with glassfibre panels. Lancia continued on the glassfibre route with its 037 Stradale of 1982 (whose bodywork was constructed by Viberti) and later the Delta S4.

Ferrari first made use of glassfibre in a production car for the 365 GTB4 Daytona (some of its inner body structure was GRP). Then the 365 GT4 Berlinetta Boxer of 1973 had a body divided into two halves, the lower part having panels made of glassfibre. Two years later, the 308 GTB 'Vetroresina' would debut with fully glassfibre bodywork. This was the first and only Prancing Horse ever bodied entirely in this material, although the 288 GTO did mostly use glassfibre for its bodywork, together with a Kevlar roof (the first ever production use of Kevlar in a car).

Alfa Romeo returned to plastic bodywork for its SZ of 1989, which used a newly-developed glassfibre-reinforced injection-moulded resin called Modar. Also made of plastic was the distinctive clamshell bonnet of the Alfa GTV/Spider 916 – a material called KMC (a mix of polyester resin, glassfibre and epoxy). Even Maserati experimented with glassfibre bodywork for its Barchetta of 1991, only 17 of which were ever built – the bodies being made by TIR of Sant'Ilario d'Enza in Reggio Emilia. Ultimately, though, Maserati – like almost all Italian companies – ultimately preferred metal to plastic. 





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# Sting Operation

Abarths are great out of the box – but just how far can you push Scorpion hot hatch tuning? We assess six very different modified takes with wildly contrasting budgets

Story by Nathan Chadwick  
Images by Michael Ward



**A**ll hail the Abarth. Rivals may be newer, faster and brimmed with more tech, but the Italian miniature marvel has people coming back for more, year after year. It's all down to its sheer sense of fun. Who cares about lane assist, dual-clutch transmission and infotainment overload? Abarths deliver smiles whatever your age or bank balance. We've met Abarth owners with car collections valued in telephone-number digits who are happy rubbing shoulders with youngsters enjoying their first quick car. Everyone is welcome in the cult of Abarth.

Modifying hot hatchbacks is of course

nothing new, but the Abarth scene takes this to its heart, from cosmetic tweaks to serious engineering upgrades. To make sense of what's possible, we've drawn together six tuned Abarths from across the spectrum, some with mods that cost only a few hundred quid, right up to £50,000-plus.

First, let's delve into the raw material. Although the Abarth 500 family fundamentals are the same – front-wheel drive, five-speed gearbox, 1.4-litre turbocharged engine – there is a whole myriad of specs, editions and trim lines. Colin Rear of the Abarth Owners Club ([www.abarthownersclub.com](http://www.abarthownersclub.com)) guides us

through the four main generations: "When first launched in the UK in 2009, there was just one Abarth 500 model with 135hp. An optional Esseesse kit, delivered in a wooden crate, gave you uprated wheels, springs and ECU, boosting power to 160hp."

The first significant change came with the Series 2 of 2012. The



135hp model continued (eventually becoming the Custom) but new 595 Turismo and Competizione versions got 160hp. The Series 3 appeared in 2013 with only minor changes. In 2015 the Competizione was upgraded to 180hp with a Garrett turbo (previously seen on special editions only), with the standard IHI version bumped up to 140hp.

The Series 4 of 2016 got revised bodywork, lights and audio. In 2018, the Garrett turbo arrived in the Turismo model to give 165hp (essentially, anything with 165hp or above has the Garrett turbo, anything less has the IHI).

Colin says it's the people that make the scene what it is: "Owners often say they thought they were just buying a car, but instead they've had a life-changing experience, with new friendships built up over years. There are about 25,000 Abarths in the UK and a significant percentage are in the club or regional group. We have a packed events calendar and more than 20 regional groups – a testament to the sense of community. You get huge fun from driving, owning and listening to Abarths. The noise is a big part of it – such a small car making a big noise like that is beguiling, yet it isn't over the top."

Abarths are generally reliable, with most issues down to owner abuse. Modifying is popular and widely encouraged in the scene, says Colin: "Lots of people personalise their car, from stickers to full-on mechanical modifications. People keep experimenting, which is very much in the ethos of the original Abarth company, and the modification scene definitely attracts people."

## £1000 BUDGET: IHI TURBO

Recognise the IHI name? It's provided the turbochargers for all sorts of boosted Italian exotics, from Ferrari F40 down. In the Abarth world, the IHI VL38

turbo is fitted to 135hp, 140hp, 145hp and 160hp variants and, due to its petite dimensions, it spools up quickly, with little lag, although the amount of power you can achieve at the top end is restricted. Identify an IHI car by its stamp in the compressor housing.

John-Paul Schrieber's car is now pushing around 183hp with 342Nm of torque via an AutoSportivo remap, uprated turbo intake elbow/air intake and decat exhaust system (with a Bombardone 2.0 back box for maximum brap noises). These upgrades cost around £600.

If you're looking to maximise your £1000 budget and want to build on John-Paul's £600 template, one wise option is upgraded pads and discs, which are £170 and £65 per pair respectively for a road-biased package. Various induction kits are available, with Ramair and Forge well thought of. The consensus is that panel filters are best avoided as the standard airbox's design is restrictive; an upgraded filter will do much to improve matters.

John-Paul uses his Abarth daily and transports his kids around in the back, though he's fitted bucket seats for extra sportiness. "The Abarth is just an underestimated, tiny little car and it can pack a punch, even with a simple remap," he says. "When you have a big and heavy but powerful car in front of you, they'll beat you in a straight line but in the corners a modified Abarth will keep up and push it. The Abarth community is awesome – everyone's friendly and helps each other out. There are always a lot of events to go to and there's a vast number of age groups; it's not just young kids, there's older people, too."

## MODS

AutoSportivo Stage 2 remap, upgraded turbo intake elbow & air intake, decat exhaust, Magneti Marelli Bombardone 2.0 back box



IHI turbo might be small, limiting power ceiling, but it spins up very well. Stage 2 remap unleashes 183hp

# MODIFIED ABARTH GROUP TEST



## £1000 BUDGET: GARRETT TURBO

Garrett turbochargers were reserved for the highest-specification Abarths, in 165hp, 180hp and 190hp forms, before being rolled out later. The turbo is called 1446, and is a little bigger than the IHI, which means it yields more power at the top end. The downsides are a higher boost threshold and increased lag – although for those of us old enough to remember 1980s turbo lag that took an entire episode of *Neighbours* to kick in, that's not necessarily a bad thing and adds to the drama.

Antonio Damiano's 2017 car has an AutoSportivo Stage 1 remap (around £400), which raises power to 192hp and torque to 330Nm. In our £1k budget that would leave £600, which we'd put into the suspension. To get more power from this point would require much more money, and the standard Abarth suspension can benefit from modding. A set of lowering springs costs from around £130 to £160, while strut bars can be had for around £180 (rear) and £150 (front). Alternatively, a Magneti Marelli Bombardone exhaust will cost around

£220, although other options are available.

Antonio loves Abarths from a slightly different angle, as he runs AutoSportivo ([www.autosportivolt.co.uk](http://www.autosportivolt.co.uk)) and works on them day in, day out. "I love them as a mechanic – everything comes off easily, although you have to remove a lot of stuff to get to the bits you need. Parts are easy to come by and there's strong club support."

Antonio's plans for his Abarth include stopping power as the priority. "I want to change the discs as they're due, and I want to go bigger," he says, even though he admits larger discs aren't really necessary at this level. "I absolutely love driving Abarths," he concludes, which is quite the accolade seeing as he also owns a Ferrari 360 Modena, Lancia Delta HF integrale Evo and Fiat Uno Turbo (the latter featured in our April 2022 issue).

## MODS

AutoSportivo Stage 1 Remap





## £10,000 BUDGET: KEEPING COOL

Things start to get serious once you get to Stage 2, although the car you see here is a 2016 595 Competizione still running its original Garrett turbo. It belongs to Bilal Nawaz and provides a good example of what heading beyond 200hp involves. Although the main mods cost £10,000, this doesn't include the genuine 695 Biposto bodykit which was – gulp – £20,000 alone. While it's certainly eye-catching, the beauty continues below the surface.

With any turbocharged car, heat – or more pertinently, cooling – can be a challenge and in the tiny confines of a 500/595/695, especially so. The standard car has two small intercooler cores connected by what appears to be a Windows 95 screensaver's worth of pipework. A single large front-mounted intercooler from the likes of Forge or Airtac significantly drops temperatures; Bilal's car has a Forge item and a Scuderia Turin cold air intake.

Although the turbo is standard, a remap has taken power to 220hp, helped by an HRE stainless steel exhaust manifold, Scorpion decat and mid box and Akrapovic back box. It's also got a lightened solid flywheel with an uprated clutch.

Bilal's car isn't simply wearing Biposto clothes, it's also running genuine Biposto suspension. There are a multitude of suspension set-ups in range for this price, starting with Bilstein B14 coilovers that offer adjustable height of between 30mm and 50mm; BC Racing Coilovers (which offer 30-click damping adjustment) for around £800; right up to a £3000 Öhlins multi-adjustable set-up.

"I'd class this car as a 'daily driver plus,'" says Jamie McKee of Scuderia Turin, who built the car for Bilal. "It runs a standard ride height, despite the upgraded suspension. It's loud but not too loud and though it draws attention, it's not too much – it's the ideal daily."

To illustrate that point, his car can seat three

*With power up to 220hp, work on the cooling front is necessary. Biposto bodykit looks great on 'ideal daily'*



# MODIFIED ABARTH GROUP TEST

## MODS

OEM Biposto bodykit, Biposto suspension, HRE stainless steel exhaust manifold, Scorpion decat and mix box, Akrapovic back box, Forge intercooler, Scuderia Turin cold air intake, lightened solid flywheel, upgraded clutch, OZ wheels



“ Things start to get serious once you get to Stage 2. Spending five figures really opens up your options ”

passengers in the rear. Its MTA automated manual gearbox has a TCU map as well as an ECU remap that give a much snappier response in both paddleshift and automatic modes. Personalisation options include OZ alloy wheels finished in shadow chrome wrapped in Michelin Pilot Sport 4 tyres.

Like the others here, Jamie believes a big part of the Abarth modifying scene is its sense of community. “I like the variety of people who go to an event – everyone’s just lovely. That camaraderie behind one brand is great. It’s always a joy seeing familiar faces and having flat-out banter.”

## £15,000 BUDGET: PUMPING UP THE POWER

Spending five figures really opens up your options. Oliver Andrews’ car shows just what can be done with a TD04 hybrid turbo (£1600) which, along with other modifications, can see up to 320hp. Oliver’s car is currently making 253hp – a big step up from its original IHI-boosted 145hp. Such a big jump in power requires an upgraded intercooler and intake system and a full exhaust. Forged pistons and rods are recommended for those shooting for more than 270hp, and upgraded camshafts are also a good idea.

“I never started wanting to make silly power,” says Oliver. “I got the TD04 for a cheap price and then it became a track car for the road, something I could still use for my commute.” That said, look inside and you’ll





find bucket seats and a half rollcage. Oliver did most of the work himself in his garage, aside from the mapping.

To aid the power, he's fitted an Airtec intercooler, Bonalume blow-off valve, Ora Racing low-mount intake and RS expansion tank. The engine's also been treated to an aluminium dress-up kit, and the exhaust system has been upgraded with a custom three-inch decat and cat-back system, while the suspension is BC Racing coilovers with Silver Project solid top mounts and DNA rear camber plates.

Oliver has also tweaked the aesthetics with a Forza splitter and centre-exit rear diffuser, plus CHD vented front wings, sideskirts and spoiler extension. For this budget, we'd also be looking at big brake kits. For example, Tarox has a number of options with six- or eight-piston callipers that start from £1300.

Oliver shares his fellow owners' thoughts on the Abarth scene. "The community is very good, with so much information out there and nicer communication than other marques. Abarths go very differently to the usual lack-of-character cars – small engine, big power, great fun."



## MODS

TD04 hybrid turbo, Airtec intercooler, Bonalume blow-off valve, Ora Racing intake & expansion tank, aluminium engine dress-up kit, custom 3in decat/cat-back exhaust, BC Racing coilover suspension, Silver Project solid top mounts, DNA rear camber plates, CHD vented front wings, sideskirts and spoiler extension





## £30,000 BUDGET: CALL THE POLICE

The oldest car here is also one of the most potent. Damien Morley's 2009 car started life as an IHI-equipped machine but is now running around 280hp thanks to a TD04 conversion and a full Scorpion exhaust system with sports cats, along with an uprated sump.

However, that's just the start. Running an ECU master system means flexibility over the state of tune, and there's more to come. Damien's looking at up to 350hp courtesy of a forged engine and fuel injectors from a Ferrari 599, plus a larger throttle body and higher-spark coils. To cope with the power, Damien's car runs Bilstein suspension and a full polybush set-up, and to make sure it stops in time, he's fitted custom-made 330mm Brembo disc brakes. Gearshifting has been upgraded with a single-mass flywheel with a dual friction clutch.

Inside, there's a genuine Abarth half roll cage (one of only around 15 ever made), plus Sabelt seats, harnesses and steering wheel, the latter featuring a quick-release boss. There's also a carbonfibre dashboard and CAE short shifter. The exterior is a cheeky Dubai police livery – a tribute to the supercar-hunting police cars over there. On most tight British





## MODS

Wossner pistons/rods, TD04 turbo, custom induction system, ECU master control, uprated head gasket, bigger injectors, uprated throttle body, uprated coils, uprated sump, Nuke catch can, Scorpion exhaust, single-mass flywheel, dual friction clutch, CAE short-shifter, Bilstein B14 suspension, polybushes, OZ alloys, Brembo 330mm discs, Abarth half cage, Sabelt seats, harnesses & steering wheel



roads, it's easy to imagine this car outpacing many a supercar, so keep an eye on your mirrors...

"It reminds me of the 1980s hot hatches I had as a kid, like the Ford Escort XR3i and Peugeot 205 GTI 1.9," says Damien. "I have faster cars but nothing feels like an Abarth – light, no driver aids, nothing to help you when you get it wrong. Other cars may have more power but they weigh so much more – Abarths are just so much fun to drive."

Damien's car has had the full works – Wossner pistons and rods, a thicker head gasket and bigger injectors to reach his lofty power figure – but he warns that horses shouldn't be the only goal. "If you've got an older car like mine, £1500 will see a big increase power with a TD04 turbo conversion, but realistically you're going to need to upgrade other areas, too. Do the brakes and suspension as well and you'll have an amazing car."



## MODIFIED ABARTH GROUP TEST



“ Ben’s taken an ‘OEM++’ approach to the car, imagining what Abarth engineers might have done given free rein ”



### £50,000 BUDGET: SCORPION EXTREMIST

Ben Au's amazing Abarth started out humbly: it originally had 135hp, but now it's double that. "I wanted something that revved, something that felt like a 3.0-litre V6," he says – and it certainly does, as it revs to a lofty 7300rpm and delivers a conservative but usable 260hp at 6400rpm and 295Nm of torque at 5100rpm on 1.57bar of boost.

"We tuned the engine to where I think the engine is reliable for a standard set-up without a forged bottom end," says Ben, who runs Tuning Art UK ([www.TuningArt.uk](http://www.TuningArt.uk)). This car demonstrates his ethos: if he fancies trying something out, he investigates it, engineers it and puts it on sale. The mod list is huge – check out the separate panel – but what's interesting is that Ben's taken an 'OEM++' approach to the car, imagining what Abarth engineers might have done given free rein.

That applies to the fetching plug-and-play BFF carbon light pods (£599). Then there's one of the biggest criticisms of the car among non-Abarth devotees: the lack of a sixth gear. Ben has re-engineered the Vauxhall M32 gearbox with custom gear ratios. The gear ratio selection – with a tall sixth – helps long-distance cruising and saves the lower gears for accelerative action. "We wanted a reliable GT car," he says, "so we decided not to do the Punto gearbox as it's chocolatey and rare."

Of course, the car's been upgraded almost everywhere else, with better brakes (Tuning Art-specified Brembo six-pot calliper kit), adjustable suspension and a limited-slip differential. But Ben's not resting on his laurels. "It's continually evolving, raising



the bar – it's got chassis upgrades in the form of an adjustable rear beam on the way, and then there's CNC wheels and subframe upgrades. We know we can get the power but we're extending the modifications – every year we try to create something new, to create a buzz."

There's no stopping his enthusiasm for the Abarth scene: "I love the passion behind the brand, and the people themselves – I never cease to be amazed by the enthusiasm they have to spend money on a hot hatchback." ■



## MODS

**Engine:** Stock Internals/head/cams, APA engine mounts, HRE GT1446BW hybrid turbo with thermal barrier, APA boost pipe, HighSpark ignition coils, HRE ProFlow Euro Spec cold air intake with airbox dummy kit, HRE ProFlow Euro Spec front-mount intercooler, HRE High Flow 200-cell sports cat, HRE High Flow cast exhaust manifold, HRE centre pipe (3in to 2.75in), HRE quad-exit back box with 4x2in internals, HRE High Flow fuel pump, HRE High Flow injectors/sensors, HRE custom map, Prometeo Meccanica large-capacity oil sump

**Transmission:** AP Automotive 6-speed conversion, Bonalume short shift, LSD, APA bell-housing plates, APA custom driveshafts, APA gearbox mounts, modified gear cables/selector/linkage, APA modified slave cylinder and clutch pack, APA hydraulic clutch lines

**Chassis:** Custom JRZ Pro two-way suspension, external rear damper reservoirs, SuperPro adjustable front drop links, custom rigid collar subframe bushing, Tuning Art aluminium top hat doughnuts, 10mm Eibach camber bolts, DNA -1.5 rear camber plates, custom upper front strut brace, Radical rear lower brace, OZ Racing 18in Biposto Ultraleggera wheels (18x7.5 4x98 ET33) in custom matt bronze, silver Abarth centre caps, 205/40 18 Goodyear Eagle F1 tyres, wheel stud conversion

**Brakes:** Tuning Art six-piston Brembo Kit, Tuning Art 362mm two-piece floating front discs, Tuning Art 324mm rear discs, PBS ProRace front pads, Carbotech rear pads, HEL braided hoses

**Bodywork:** 695 Tributo Rosso Corsa paint, ceramic coating, 3M Satin Grey wrap, custom Abarth alloy wing shields, rolled front and rear arches, S4 custom front bumper, custom carbonfibre front splitter, Tuning Art Evoluzione foglight, Tuning Art carbonfibre sideskirts, custom carbonfibre mirror covers, matt carbonfibre rear wing, Fifty Go carbonfibre lower rear diffuser, carbon fin antenna, Biposto titanium fuel filler cap, Series 4 HID headlights conversion, bonnet strut conversion, dechromed with Competizione trims

**Interior:** Custom Tuning Art bolt-in rollcage, steering extension adapter, Nappa leather steering wheel, carbonfibre trim and inserts, carbon gauge cowls, carbon 500 GTO dash trim, carbon gear cowling, carbon door panels, AutoPlus carbon centre console, Assetto Corse Sabelt seats, Sabelt four-point racing harness, custom red seatbelts, BlackVue front/rear camera, rear-view mirror parking camera, Biposto alloy gearchip, red-stitched gear gaiter, Competizione alloy pedals, Pioneer double-DIN DVD, Diatone DS-SA3 drivers, JL Audio 10TW1-4 subwoofer, Helix Mini DSP active crossover, Phoenix Gold amp, custom boot build by Rutherford

## IN MEMORIAM

Most of the cars featured in this article belong to members of a specialist group called Modified Abarth (find it on Facebook). This was created several years ago to share knowledge and experience of the sort of modifications you have just read about. The founder of the group, Adam Henry (better known in the community as Adam Abarth), used his knowledge of the community to help suggest cars for this feature. Very sadly, Adam passed away in August, making this article a poignant tribute to the group he founded and led. He remained passionate for the brand right to the end. The whole Auto Italia team would like to extend their sincere condolences to Adam's family and his many friends.





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# COLIN SOWTER

# Parts & the Solution

COLIN SOWTER IS THE OWNER & MD OF SUPERFORMANCE, ONE OF THE WORLD'S LEADING INDEPENDENT PARTS SUPPLIERS FOR FERRARIS. WE TALK WITH HIM ABOUT HIS PASSION FOR FERRARI

Story by Chris Rees  
Images by Michael Ward



**“ Ferrari has always been number one for me. I had posters of the Testarossa on my wall. I bought my first Ferrari – a 308 – aged 18 ”**

**N**ow in its 40th year, Superformance is one of the world's best-known names in Ferrari circles for the supply of parts. Its ever-expanding catalogue of product lines currently stands at over 10,000 across V6, V8 and 12-cylinder models. Based in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, it's owned and run by the genial Colin Sowter, a man who is obsessed with Ferrari, and always has been, as he told *Auto Italia*.

“Ferrari has always been number one for me. I had posters of the 308 and Testarossa on my wall as a kid. I bought my first Ferrari – a 308 Vetroresina – aged 18 for £5500 and then owned a 365 GT 2+2. Racing Ferraris is a huge part of my life, even today, as I compete in the Ferrari Classic series in my 348, as well as Masters Endurance Legends in my 458 GT3.”

So what's your background? “I was always a petrolhead. I rode and raced

motorbikes from the age of 14, and did karting for 10 years at the highest level, including racing in the same team as Dario Franchitti. My father owned a garage, which I started working at straight after college. We were an Alfa Romeo dealer up until the 164 came out.”

You bought Superformance in 2006. How has it evolved since then? “In 2006, it was a very small operation, employing three people and occupying 1200sq ft.



Today, there are 14 staff and 25,000sq ft of premises. In the early days, Superformance specialised in Dinos (both Fiat and Ferrari) but the crossover with Ferrari 308 parts soon saw the business expand in an organic way.

"We introduce new product lines whenever newer Ferrari models drop out of the dealer network and begin to be serviced by specialists. For instance, in 2006, we carried no parts at all for the F355 but quickly developed an extremely

extensive range of parts. The same thing happened with the 360 and 430. One recent example is the California – quite unexpectedly, independents began asking us for parts, so we've expanded to cover that model, too. We've also just started doing Maserati parts for models like the 3200, 4200, Quattroporte and GranTurismo. We update our website with new product lines on a daily basis.

"We sell mostly to private individuals and

independent specialists, but also official dealers. We supply parts all around the world – and yes, that includes Italy! We supply parts right back to the 1950s Ferraris but if a customer asks, say, for an indicator lens for a 500 Superfast, that isn't going to happen, as only 36 cars were ever made. But we'll always look into making new parts where we know there's a demand."

How do you go about remanufacturing parts? "Our philosophy is to go for the highest quality

possible. We work closely with Paul Hill of Hill Engineering to identify shortcomings in original parts and improve them if we can. For instance, we might use higher-grade materials or improved production methods. But the market for more ambitious upgrades is very limited; originality is key these days."

What's the secret to your success, and what about the future? "If there's a secret to our success, it's the passion, enthusiasm and love for what we do, as well as

hard work. After 39 years in the business, we're used to seeing cycles. With the massive boom in classic values, restorations became much more viable and investors spent a lot. Now the market has cooled, it's a much more enthusiast-led market. There are plenty of challenges but we're very optimistic about the future."

*Superformance, Unit G1, RD Park, Stephenson Close, Hoddesdon EN11 0BW. Tel 01992 445300. Web: [www.superformance.co.uk](http://www.superformance.co.uk)*



# British GT Championship

Mid-season, Lamborghini is snapping at Mercedes' GT3 heels

Words by Mike Rysiecki

Photos by Leigh Jones



The British GT Championship held the first race of its 30th season on Easter Monday at Oulton Park in Cheshire. A 31-car entry comprising 18 GT3 and 13 GT4 cars assembled for two hour-long sprint races.

For the 2022 season, three single-car Lamborghini Huracán GT3 Evo teams go up against 15 other GT3 cars including McLaren, BMW, Audi, Bentley, Mercedes-AMG and Porsche.

Former British GT Champion, Sandy Mitchell, once again joins Adam Balon in Barwell Motorsport's sole Lamborghini. Also unchanged is WPI Motorsport's

Michael Igoe and Phil Keen, the latter British GT's most successful driver with fastest laps aplenty, but still looking for his first GT3 title. James Dorlin also returns after several years away, partnering rookie Alex Malykhin with Teesside-based Redline Racing.

The series organisers made some adjustments to Balance of Performance parameters, affecting weight, ride height and air intake diameter. The Lamborghinis were all prescribed additional weight, while the McLarens and Mercedes-AMGs enjoyed more favourable BoP changes.

For the 2022 season, Pirelli has an all-new GT





**ABOVE:** Redline Racing's Huracán GT3 EVO en route to class win at Donington  
**ABOVE RIGHT:** Silverstone victors Mitchell and Balon

racing tyre: P Zero DHF. The new tyre demands fine tuning to qualifying and race set-ups but with a new family of compounds and structures, GT teams enjoy a more durable and also faster tyre. The Lamborghini teams confirmed that the dry tyre's grip and race distance degradation are both improved. The new tyres are a bit 'peakier', switching on much sooner, typically making the first hot lap the fastest in qualifying.

Barwell and WPI race in the GT3 Pro-Am class, while Redline's drivers are in Silver-Am. British GT qualifying sessions are usually a tight affair and Oulton Park was no exception, with the fastest 13 drivers of the first session all within one second of each other. The first of the two Oulton Park races was a close-fought classic but sadly the Lamborghinis were locked out of the podium. WPI finished fourth, Barwell ninth and Redline fourteenth overall. Pitstop time penalties apply to podium finishers in the subsequent race, so at least the Lamborghinis suffered no 'success penalty' for the second race.

Race Two culminated in a 25-minute dash for victory after a mid-race downpour just as the pit window opened. This was another closely-fought crowd-pleaser with a number of incidents involving the Lamborghinis. WPI and Redline finished seventh and eighth respectively, with Barwell in twelfth.



The Championship moved on to its showpiece, three-hour event at Silverstone in May. The Lamborghinis shed a little of their BoP weight and came away with decent results. Barwell scored an outright victory, with Redline and WPI finishing fourth and seventh respectively. Donington Park's two-hour enduro in May ended with a fifth place and a second Silver-Am class win for Redline, sixth for WPI and fifteenth for Barwell after two on-track incidents.

At Snetterton in June, the race format reverted to double-header sprints. The two 60-minute sprints couldn't be more different to the previous three-hour endurance races at Silverstone and Donington. The emphasis switched to outright speed rather than pitstop, tyre and brake degradation strategies, with no 'success penalties' affecting any of the Lamborghinis.

The first race went well for Michael Igoe and Phil Keen, who finished second; the Barwell and Redline Lamborghinis were sixth and eighth respectively. In the second race, an outstanding drive by Adam Balon and Sandy Mitchell earned second for Barwell, with Redline fourth and WPI fourteenth.

Following the championship-leading Mercedes is a triple-Huracán storm. WPI is in second, Redline in third (and leading Silver-Am), while fourth-placed Barwell will be looking to its endurance expertise for the final three rounds at Spa, Brands Hatch and Donington.



# Classic Alfa Challenge

Looking back on a cracking season of racing so far

Story by Michael Lindsay  
Images by Jeff Bloxham



If you want to see super-close Alfa racing, then the series to follow is the HRDC's Classic Alfa Challenge. Organiser Julius Thurgood is a lifelong Alfa enthusiast and race organiser. Back in 2018 he reckoned that gathering together 750, 105 and 116 series cars, with the addition of carefully chosen other models from the Alfasud and 75 ranges, would attract competitors. Julius reasoned that he had the right formula of classes: Corsa (Post Historic race specification), Monza (Historic Race

Specification), Nord (Road Sports specification) and Alfasud (Post Historic). They would be combined for 30-minute races, although as time has gone by this has been altered on occasion to two 15- or 20-minute races, depending on the circuit, combined to achieve an aggregate result.

There have been some constant factors during the three years that the series has been running – notably Chris Snowdon with Richard Melvin's beautiful Alfetta GTV complete with Napolina and Dealer team

decals, and the 1600 Giulietta Ti of Gavin Watson. When the 2022 calendar was announced, the late start at Mallory Park on 15 May was probably a relief to Chris, as the Alfetta had been badly damaged after an 'off' in the wet at Silverstone last October, and a bit of extra time to finish the rebuild was welcome. Julius had decided that the Mallory format would be two 20-minute races, which provided an enthralling 40 minutes of action. Chris Snowdon was virtually tied to the 105 series GTV of Ambrogio Perfetti throughout –





nose to tail, side by side, the finishing order was always in doubt. Multi-class racing has given Chris a well-honed ability in traffic but even so, he had to wait until the final lap in the first race to line up Ambrogio going into the esses for that essential pass. He crossed the line just 0.288sec ahead. Jonny Horsfield had been able to keep the leaders in sight to begin with in his Alex Jupe-prepared Alfetta GTV but drifted away to finish 41sec adrift in third, while winning the Nord class. It was good to see Peter Smart in sixth place in a

Giulia Ti, winning the Monza class ahead of the ever-impressive Gavin Watson. Sadly, a gearbox problem ruled Peter out of Race 2.

The second 20-minute race was almost a repeat of the first, except that this time Chris Snowdon couldn't find a way past Perfetti, however hard he tried. Traffic again played a major role and maybe on a longer circuit he might have had more opportunities to pass. As it was, the gap at the flag was a mere 0.885sec. Jonny Horsfield was much more competitive this time, finishing only 15sec

behind Chris, again winning the Nord class. Eagerly awaited was confirmation of the combined result. This gave a very happy Perfetti overall victory, the final gap being just 0.6sec – try judging that by eye! Jonny Horsfield kept a well-deserved third place, delighted to see his ever-improving son Frank in a Giulietta 116 finish sixth place overall. Gavin Watson continued to "punch above his weight", as Chris Snowdon put it, to finish eighth overall, just 5sec behind Richard Ibrahim's Alfasud Sprint.





After Mallory, it was on to Thruxton as part of the annual Historic Festival there on 12 June. Unfortunately, a number of factors were at play which reduced the size of the grids, including Classic Alfias. However, the addition of James Wright (75 Twin Spark), Richard Merrell (105 series GT Junior 2.0) and Ben Coburn (ex-Chris Taylor 1750 Berlinia 2.0) lifted the level of competition on this fast and demanding circuit. Qualifying on a dry track saw the top five (including Jonny Horsfield's Alfetta GTV) covered by just 1.8sec, so a close race was in prospect.

It was James Wright's 75 Twin Spark that made the initial break to the front but it was not to last long. By the end of the third lap it was the familiar sight of Chris Snowdon's Alfetta leading the way from Perfetti's GTV, with James hanging on gamely. By the end of lap five, however, Richard Merrell was in third place and then up to second on lap nine, right on the tail of Chris Snowdon. Then, imagine the surprise on the pit wall at the end of lap 11 when James Wright came into view 4sec clear of Perfetti, while there was a 12sec wait for Merrell and Snowdon to come into view, recovering from a mix-up at the

chicane. Once in front, James Wright wasn't going to let the opportunity of a win disappear and pushed on to finish 7sec ahead of Perfetti, with Merrell 6sec further back for the final podium slot. Richard Ibrahim upheld Alfasud honour with his smart Sprint in fifth place overall. It was also good to see a class win go to series sponsor Richard Norris in his Sprint GT.

We'll be returning to report on HRDC Classic Alfias as they move on to Lydden Hill for a Historics on the Hill meeting, followed by a 'first' at Snetterton and then the ever-popular Festival Italia at Brands Hatch.



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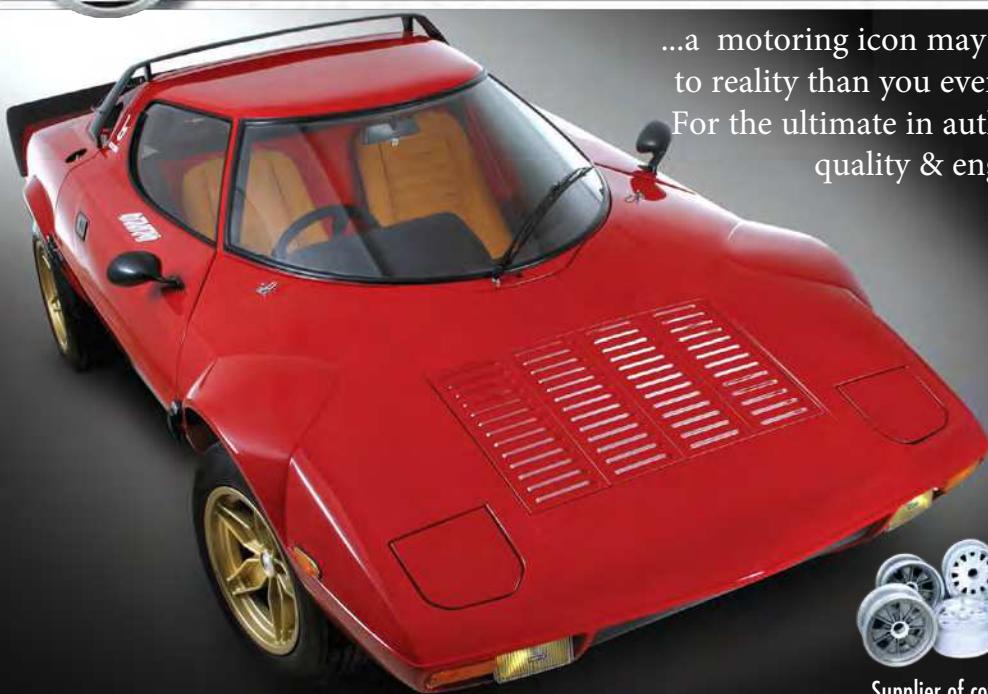


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# Vernasca Silver Flag

Historic hillclimb action from the Piacenza hills

Report & images by Matteo Grazia



**F**or 26 years, the beautiful weekend-long motor festival that is Vernasca Silver Flag has been held in the Piacenza hills. This dynamic yet elegant contest for historic and racing cars is organised by CPAE (Club Piacentino Auto e Moto d'Epoca) and is a true star of the calendar. Thousands of enthusiasts, both from Italy and abroad, brave the scorching heat of summer to invade the medieval village of Castell'Arquato every year. The stretch of road that leads to Vernasca is the spectacular setting for the public to applaud the passage of each competitor. It's not difficult to guess the secret of this event's success: in an atmosphere of absolute relaxation, amidst splendid landscapes and excellent local food, you can admire about 170 amazing cars.

The cars span a vast time period, from centenary Fiat 501s of 1922 to the Lancia Delta integrale 16v of the 1990s. There's everything here, from formula racers from the 1950s and 1960s, to Group C cars, rally cars and touring cars. This year, the event paid homage to single-seaters, the likes of the 1948 Cisitalia D46, 1953 Maserati A6GCM 'Interim' (forerunner of the extraordinary 250F) and the fabulous Formula Junior single-seaters. Among the latter were the only model built in 1959 by Bosato Automobili Torino with a Fiat 1100cc engine, and the rare OSFA, also powered by Fiat, with an aluminium body made by Aldo Faccioli, just two of which were made. Italian manufacturers like De Sanctis and Tecno, and the Fiat Abarth Formula Italia SE025 and SE033, were also present among the Junior formulae. These latter models raced in a dedicated single-make championship until the mid-1980s.

Some of the most popular cars were the GTs and barchettas of Ferrari, Alfa Romeo and Abarth. In the 2022 edition, we were able to admire some rare pearls, above all the Ferrari 212E/206S (serial number 020), winner of the European Hillclimb Championship in 1969 with the Swiss driver Peter Schetty. At the time, it was equipped with a Formula 1-derived engine: a 180-degree 2.0-litre V12 with around 320hp at 11,800rpm. In 1971, the engine was sold to privateer Edoardo Lualdi Gabardi who installed it in chassis 0862 with a different body to the original. This Italian driver won the national mountain championship in 1971. Chassis 020 and the original bodywork were then bought by the Austrian driver, Egon Hofer, who already owned a Ferrari Dino 206S (chassis 016). To have a performance racing car equivalent to the original 212E, he decided to install the bodywork on the chassis of the Dino 206S. To do this, he entrusted Piero Dromo's Carrozzeria Sports Cars of Modena. Later he bought a Ferrari 2.0-litre Formula 2 V6 engine in Switzerland, of equivalent power to the V12. Unfortunately, the project to race with this car failed because the vehicle was stolen once completed. For decades, all trace of it was lost but almost 50 years on, the car was discovered in Sweden. After repurchasing the car and undertaking a restoration to its 1970 configuration, Hofer paraded the Ferrari at Vernasca Silver Flag to great applause.

Alfa Romeos that captured our attention included a beautiful 1930 6C 1750 GS, a 1934 8C 2300 Touring Spyder, several Giulia GTA and GTAm models, a Giulietta Sprint Zagato and GTV6 'Safari'. This year's 'Best of Show' award went to an Alfa, too: a 1966 Giulia TZ2, one of only 12 units made, belonging to Simon Kidston.





Representing Lancia, we admired many different examples, from a Fulvia Coupe Rallye HF and Sport Zagato Competizione to a Stratos Gr4, 037 'Safari' and Delta integrale 16v GrA. One of two beautiful Aurelia B20 GTs present was the 1952 one belonging to Paolo Saporetti, awarded the prize for the best-preserved car. The 1957 OSCA S187 racing barchetta driven by Franco Adamoli was awarded the 'Best Restoration' prize.

Many racing Abarths were present, such as 1000 TCR, 1000 SP and 2000 SE021, in addition to many Fiat-Abarth models, including the unforgettable Ritmo, 124 and 131. Furthermore, the Italian State Police brought along the unique Ferrari 250 GTE 2+2 that was used by Marshal Armando Spatafora in Rome during the 1960s to fight crime. Chassis number 3999 remained at police headquarters from 1963 to 1973. In 2022, the public really appreciated seeing it in action with its lights flashing and sirens on.

On Sunday, as usual, at the end of the last hillclimb, all the cars gathered in the central square of Vernasca. The view from above is always a magical moment for enthusiasts. Can we say that the 2022 edition was a magnificent one? Certainly yes, even if a tightening of the rules on speed has, in my opinion, affected the overall spectacle. We all agree that safety comes first but I would prefer to ensure that enthusiasts are made safe by the roadside rather than asking the participants to drive their cars like it's a 'walk in the hills'. That way, Vernasca Silver Flag can continue to offer the fun and entertainment that few events in Europe do. See you in 2023!

**ABOVE:** Ferrari 212E/206S was a real highlight for many spectators. Quality of entries always makes this hillclimb magical



SEP  
18



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# Northern Italian Car Day

Auto Italia's grand gathering at Raby Castle

Report by Phil Ward  
Photography by Michael Ward



**B**ack in the 1980s, events dedicated to Italian cars were unheard of until the first official Italian Car Day was held at Syon Park in 1986. Over the years it expanded and moved to Brooklands to become Auto Italia's jewel in the crown and the largest all-Italian event in the UK. We then decided to establish an Italian car event for northern Italian owners at Raby Castle near Darlington – a stunning, friendly venue that's conveniently located for visitors travelling from the North East, North West and Scotland. The display area was better prepared this year, with shorter grass. As a

bonus, entry to the castle was included in the price.

The quality and variety of cars on display was outstanding, with great support from the Alfa Romeo, Fiat, Abarth and Ferrari clubs. Auto Italia brought along a Lamborghini Urus Graphite Capsule edition, which was joined by an Alfa Romeo Stelvio NRING, the holder of the SUV lap record at the Nürburgring (7min 51sec). Just 108 examples were made, all in Circuito Grey paint.

Among the classic Alfias was a green Zagato Junior (last year's Car of the Day winner), a rare go and a concours Montreal that had arrived from Lincolnshire. It was good to see a growing number of excellent 156s,





**ABOVE:** Car of the day: Norman Hawkes' Abarth Simca. **BELLOW:** Extremely rare Neckar Weinsberg 500

now that model is reaching classic status.

Lancia was represented by a group of integrales and a very rare concours-standard 1988 Delta GTie. However, the star Lancia was the Fulvia HF that had been the personal transport of Cesare Fiorio, the former Lancia rally team boss, complete with a photograph of him signing the car.

Among the throng of Abarth 500s was a superb blue 131 Abarth Stradale. A 500 EV also managed to slip silently into the display and looked great. There was a fine selection of production Fiats that included a metallic brown Strada Cabrio, several Mk1 Punto GTs and

some Fiat Coupes. Of particular interest was an ex-press fleet Punto Cabriolet that took part in the 1997 press launch and test driven by *Auto Italia* way back in Issue 4.

Classic Fiats included a Topolino, 500 saloon and estate, and several 124 Spiders. Star of the Fiat-based visitors was a Neckar Weinsberg 500 Coupe, which the owner towed to the show behind his Fiat Coupe(!). Neckar grew out of the NSU-Fiat operation in Germany, which built Fiats under licence until 1957, when the brand name was changed to Neckar, after the river at Heilbronn. The Weinsberg, named after the town near Neckar's base, was adapted from the Fiat





Nuova 500 with new bodywork. Two versions were offered: a formal-style saloon called the Limousette and the Coupe. This super-rare right-hand drive Coupe at Raby had been sold to a car rental company in the Channel Islands in 1964.

The Yorkshire Ferrari Owners Club brought along a variety of models including a Roma, which many visitors were seeing at close quarters for the first time. Maserati was well represented with several Ghiblis, a Biturbo and an excellent first-series Quattroporte.

Car of the Day judging was a close-run thing, with several cars competing for the top honour, including a delightful Innocenti Mini-Cooper. However, the Auto Italia award went to Norman Hawkes and his superb Abarth Simca 1300. This was originally imported in the 1960s by Radbourne Racing, which then installed Simca 1200 S engine, brakes and suspension. Newly restored by DTR, Norman drove his Abarth to the event from Yorkshire.



### RABY'S RABBLE-ROUSING PAST

The site of Raby Castle was originally a Viking settlement known as Rabi, occupied by King Cnut (Canute) in the 11th century. The castle as it stands today was built for the Nevill dynasty in the 14th century and was the birthplace of Cecily Nevill, mother of two English kings (Edward IV and Richard III). The Nevill ownership of Raby lasted until the 'Rising of the North' of 1569, when it was forfeited and held by the Crown until 1626 when it was purchased by Sir Henry Vane the Elder, who made Raby his principal home. His descendant, the 11th Lord Barnard, owns Raby Castle today.

# Abarth Festival

Over 450 Abarths attended the second UK Abarth Festival

Report by Tony Skipper



Finedon in Northamptonshire hosted the second Abarth Festival in July – one month later than last year. What a wise move by the that was, as July became one of the hottest on record. Once again, this year's event was jointly organised by the Abarth Owners Club and the Petrolheadonism club.

As last year at Finedon, the steady early morning trickle turned into a feast of arriving Abarths, giving a taste of what was to come during the day. Hard work by the marshals soon had a lovely line-up of 595s and 695s in an arc. There was also a huge turnout of Puntos lined down from the traders, while the 124 Spiders had their own area. It was great to see Rockingham Abarth, the local official dealer, present with two interesting cars. However, it was a shame that only one

classic Abarth attended.

With the sun beaming down and Italian music filling the air, the Festival turned into one big party. Food and drink stands included pizzas, of course, with tables and much needed umbrellas set out. One very busy lady was Lorraine Samwell who had a lovely wrapped Abarth which was filled with stunning Abarth-themed cakes – I for one enjoyed a few. Bonus deckchairs were free to use and move around the site. It was also great seeing all the clubs this year. I spent the day moving around their awnings, catching up with old friends and making new ones along the way.

Busy traders supported the event with prizes. This year the standard of cars was very high and it seemed no two cars were alike. After studying the 457 cars on site, the

judges made a shortlist of 20 cars of an exceptional standard. At 3.00pm, Ciro Ciampi of Petrolheadonism and Bertie Bryant and Colin Rear of the Abarth Owners Club took to the stage. A Punto Abarth, 124 Spider and 595 formed a superb backdrop as the etched glass prizes were laid out.

The winners were as follows. Best in Show was Adam Kanner in his subtle red Abarth, with Paul Hamilton as runner-up. A worthy winner of Best Paint was Mark Ware's stunning Abarth 595. Lewis Higgins had driven from Glasgow to collect the Best Presented trophy, while Gregg Ellis won Best Modified. The prize that all the clubs wanted to win was the one for biggest attendance and a cheque for £500 – won this year by Abarth Club Essex, just beating last year's winner.





**Made in Italy**  
By Piotr Degler  
Degler Studios  
€135

With a title like *Made In Italy*, here at *Auto Italia* we were always going to be all over this book. On one level, you could say it's a simple photography book about Italian cars. But this book is very far from being on such a mundane level. It is in fact a stellar comet of a book, unlike any other title we've seen.

It's the work of renowned automotive photographer, Piotr Degler, who has spent more than 10 years completing it. It feels like a true

labour of love: the patience and dedication required to create the 100-plus images in the book can only be imagined.

The subject matter is nothing less than the best of Italian car design. Degler managed to persuade Italian car companies, museums, designers and collectors to photograph their cars in a wide variety of locations, from studios to quarries. Here you will find classics like the Lancia Stratos and Alfa Romeo Giulia; concept cars like the Lamborghini Marzal and Ferrari P6; and track cars like the Abarth 1000

Record and Maserati Eldorado.

I was not expecting there to be one image – and only one image – for each car; and for sometimes only a tiny detail of that car to be highlighted. Yet this is what gives the book its power to delight. What you see through Degler's eyes is fresh and unexpected.

While the beautiful photography very much takes centre-stage in this book, there are also 11 interviews – written in Italian and English – of Italian car maestros, among them Leonardo Fioravanti, Marcello



Gandini, Giorgetto Giugiaro, Ercole Spada, Giampaolo Dallara and Andrea Zagato. A fascinating index also briefly tells the story behind the creation of each of Degler's images. The quality throughout is exceptional, from

reproduction to paper choice (it's printed in Italy using paper stock from managed forests). Available online via [madeinitalybook.com](http://madeinitalybook.com), this is without question our book of the month.





## MASERATI A6GCS

**By Walter Bäumer & Jean-François Blachette**  
Dalton Watson  
**£140**

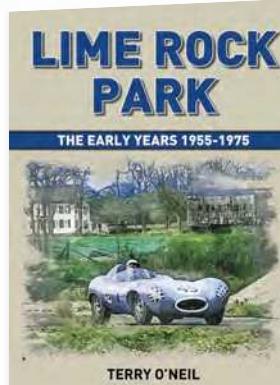
Walter Bäumer has already written major works for publisher Dalton Watson on two classic Maseratis: the A6G and 300S. Now he's written a new book aided by the president of Club Maserati France, Jean-François Blachette, on the A6GCS, described by the authors as "the last true car made by the Maserati brothers".

One of the greatest Maserati racers of the 1950s, the A6GCS was compact, agile and easy to drive by the standards of the day, making it the ideal choice for amateur racers in the 2.0-litre class in Italy. Some 54 A6GCS chassis were made in total – more than any other Maserati racer – and the model competed with notable success at hillclimbs, circuits and road races like the Mille

Miglia. The names of most of the period racers have long been forgotten but notable A6GCS pilots included Juan Manuel Fangio, Maria Teresa de Filippis and Luigi Musso. The vast majority of A6GCSs still exist and can often be seen at events worldwide.

As well as examples designed and built by the coachbuilders Fiandri & Malagoli and Fantuzzi, several other famous carrozzerie built bodies on the A6GCS chassis, including Pinin Farina, Frua and Vignale. Every individual chassis is given its own chapter, with a full racing record and what happened to the car after.

This is a major work indeed, totalling 400 pages and including 343 period images, with an unprecedented level of detail for the subject. As ever with Dalton Watson books, the quality throughout is exceptional.



**Lime Rock Park: The Early Years 1955-1975**  
**By Terry O'Neil**  
Dalton Watson  
**£182.25**

Here is another immense work of outstanding



quality from publisher Dalton Watson. It's immense not just in terms of size – it's fully 680 pages long, measures a grand 240mm by 330mm, and contains 1070 photographs – but also immense in terms of achievement.

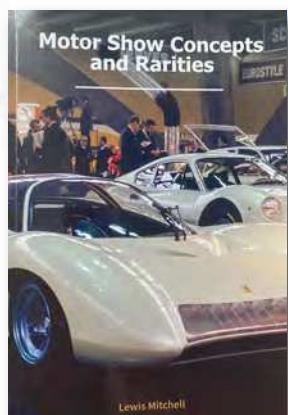
If you've never heard of Lime Rock

circuit, it's in the New England area of the US and is possibly the oldest continuously operated road course in the US, opened at a time when open road racing had been banned in many US states.

Written by a Brit, the book narrates the story of the circuit's mixed fortunes from its inception in 1955 up to 1975. The somewhat arbitrary latter date is apparently because the authors simply ran out of space.

The interest for Italian car fans starts pretty much from the outset, with the likes of the

150 of which are signed and numbered (available via the publisher at the same – rather elevated – price as the regular version).



**Motor Show Concepts and Rarities**  
**By Lewis Mitchell**  
Motor Show Publishing  
**£17.95**

We love original source material here at *Auto Italia* and this new book really transports you back to the heart of international motor shows with strictly period photography. While the subject matter is not exclusively Italian, the work of Italian design houses dominates the book.

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The quality of some of the photos is variable but every image instantly puts you right in the scene. Oh, to have been present at the Turin Shows of the 1950s and 1960s! You can buy the book online at [motorshowphotos.co.uk](http://motorshowphotos.co.uk)



## DIARY DATES 2022/23



**September 2-4**

### Concours of Elegance

Hampton Court Palace, London  
[concoursofelegance.co.uk](http://concoursofelegance.co.uk)

**September 3**

### AROC Southern Alfa Day

Amberley Museum, Sussex  
[www.aroc-uk.com](http://www.aroc-uk.com)

**September 9-11**

### Lancia Beta 50th (LMC)

Abingdon, Oxon  
[www.lanciabeta50.com](http://www.lanciabeta50.com)

**September 11**

### Italian AutoMoto Festival

Bridgnorth, Shropshire  
[italianautomotoclub.co.uk](http://italianautomotoclub.co.uk)

**Italy Sep 15-18**

### Gran Premio Nuvolari

Mantova, Italy  
[www.gpnuvolari.it](http://www.gpnuvolari.it)

**September 16-18**

### Goodwood Revival

Goodwood Circuit, Sussex  
[goodwood.com](http://goodwood.com)

**September 18**

### MITCAR

Kedleston Hall, Derby  
[www.aroc-uk.com](http://www.aroc-uk.com)

**September 25**

### AROC Northern Alfa Day

Lotherton Hall, Leeds, Yorkshire  
[www.aroc-uk.com](http://www.aroc-uk.com)



**October 1**

### All Italian Car Meet

Departure Lounge Café, Hants  
[thedepartureloungecafe.co.uk](http://thedepartureloungecafe.co.uk)

**October 9**

### Auto Italia Motorsport Day

Brooklands Museum, Surrey  
[www.auto-italia.co.uk](http://www.auto-italia.co.uk)



**October 20-23**

### Auto e Moto d'Epoca

Padova, Italy  
[autoemotodepoca.com](http://autoemotodepoca.com)

**November 10-13**

### Fiat 123rd Anniversary Rally

Bendigo, Australia  
[fiatcentral.victoria@gmail.com](mailto:fiatcentral.victoria@gmail.com)

**Nov 11-13**

### Classic Motor Show

NEC, Birmingham  
[www.necclassicmotorshow.com](http://www.necclassicmotorshow.com)

**November 18-20**

### Milano AutoClassica

Fiera Milano Rho, Italy  
[www.milanoautoclassica.com](http://www.milanoautoclassica.com)

**February 24-26 2023**

### Race Retro

Stoneleigh Park  
[www.raceretro.com](http://www.raceretro.com)

**March 9-10 2023**

### Rally Revival Cymru

Mold, North Wales  
[www.rallyrevival.co.uk](http://www.rallyrevival.co.uk)

## CLUBS



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[clubquadrifoglio.be](http://clubquadrifoglio.be)

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### Fiat 131 Mirafiori Forum

[131mirafiori.com](http://131mirafiori.com)

### Fiat Coupe Club UK

[fiatcoupeclub.org](http://fiatcoupeclub.org)

### The Other Dino (Fiat)

[Brian1Boxall@btinternet.com](mailto:Brian1Boxall@btinternet.com)

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### Club LanciaSport

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### Lancia Gamma Consortium

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**WRITE TO THE EDITOR AT: AUTO ITALIA, GINGER BEER PROMOTIONS LTD,  
ENTERPRISE HOUSE, BUILDING 52, WREST PARK, SILSOE, BEDFORDSHIRE,  
MK45 4HS OR EMAIL CHRIS@AUTO-ITALIA.CO.UK**



I feel I must respond to Martin Horrocks' letter in Issue 318, regarding the Fiat Brava/Alfa 146 comparison test in Issue 317. A bit of context. Back in 2000, I owned a Fiat Marea 20V and a Coupe 20VT. I had a 30-mile commute on rural roads, and got to know the cars very well. The Marea was undoubtedly the better car: you could dig deeper into the rev range; the torque was more controllable; the steering was sharper. I then went on to the Bravo HGT and 155 20V, the latter the fastest non-turbo car I ever had, but ultimately I felt it was just a 'product'.

At the time, the Brava and 146 were available but I felt they were both overshadowed by their sportier brothers. I remember going to sit in a Brava and 146 at my local dealership and thinking "what is the point of these cars?" They both seemed to offer a watered-down version of the core two-door aesthetic, without

much other benefit.

Fifteen years later, as a dad, I still believe that no form of automotive transport is legitimate unless it has rear doors and seats. I started to hunt about for a compact five-door project from 'my era' but I couldn't find a Marea anywhere. I seriously looked at 33s and 147 five-doors, although they were not as available or as easy to maintain as I'd hoped. Little by little, I realised I had overlooked the 146. After six months, I found

my preferred spec of a 1.8 CF2 with no sunroof and air conditioning.

I partially agree with Craig Cheetham's assessment of the 146 as compromised. The boot is impractically high, the glovebox seems incapable of holding even the manual, there are oddment trays that wouldn't hold a boiled sweet, the boot won't open if the engine is running, and the rear window demister is operated from the end of a column stalk!

However, in other respects the 146 is an amalgam of elegant and forward-thinking concepts.

The lack of a passenger side dashboard nods towards interior spaces segregated between driver and passenger, which would be developed in subsequent Alfa models. However, it is the astonishing use of panel join which is most distinct in my mind. The car makes a feature of the rear panel seam. All other manufacturers would bond, flush and paint over such a join, but the 146 celebrates it by continuing the vertical line into the tailgate edge.

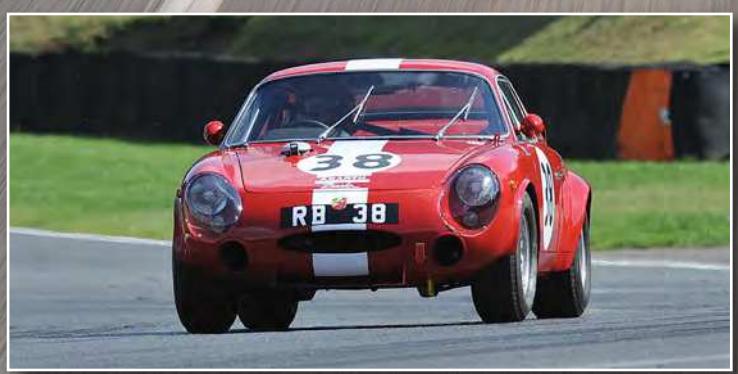
It wasn't until I started pressing the car into a regular 600-mile round trip to the Northern Isles that it was really revealed to me: I have never had a vehicle with such steering. The experience of balancing a 146 on a bend, whilst executing the perfect blip-throttle downchange cannot be explained through the

medium of words. You develop a language of phrases to be rearranged that the car accepts as a poem; the position of your hand on the steering wheel, a certain point in the rev-range in a particular gear, the position of the car on the road to account for camber; the predictability of weight-shift across the chassis under braking. A ballad of physics, performed from your right foot and arms. I have discovered that the 146 is a car you wear, whereas all other vehicles require driving.

I nearly bought a Brava last year but I just have too much on to try and save it, too. My 146 1.8 CF2 is one of six examples still running in the UK, and I intend to do everything within my power to have it continue on the road. £5k of expense so far, but it's valued by my insurance company at £127. But what could I replace it with? I only hope that I die before the car does!

**Jim Pritchard**





A red Alfa Romeo Giulia GT is shown from a front-three-quarter perspective, driving along a country road. The car's license plate reads "KYY 419C". The background consists of lush green fields and a dense line of trees under a clear blue sky.

COMING SOON

ISSUE 321 - ON SALE 6TH OCTOBER

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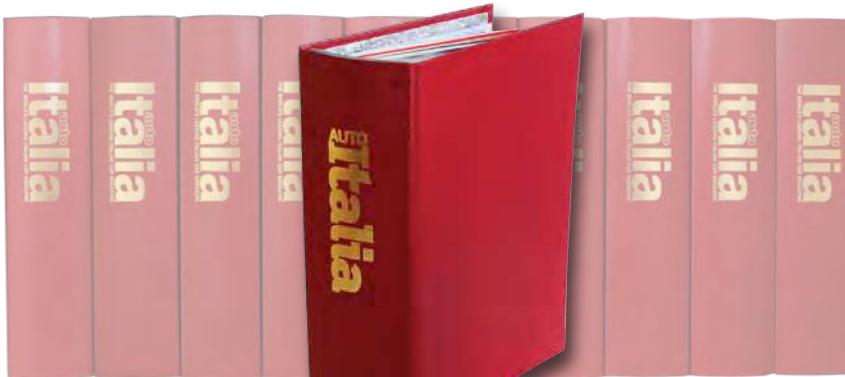


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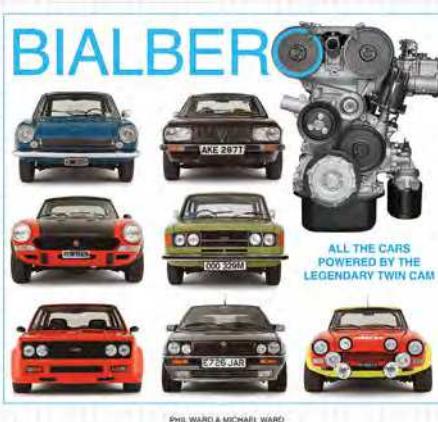


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**Alfa Romeo Giulietta Sprint.** 1961, red, purchased from US auction in 2020 and imported to UK. Work done by DTR Sports, a specialist in Italian cars. Restoration in US to good standard with paperwork to confirm, now UK registered, MOT'd and taxed. Reg plate '808 XVS' included in sale, £60,000 ono. Email: lukehtaylor@gmail.com. A320/053



**Alfa Romeo Alfetta 2.0 GTV.** 1983, silver, with sunroof, genuine 36,450 miles, all bodywork done inc genuine Alfa f/wings, this was some time ago and stored till I had time to refit engine and the interior trim. It will need some welding to nsf pass. footwell, all interior and exterior trim, seats etc included, engine has Evolution 2 cams + gas flowed head, spare f/bumper and heater assy, 2x spare wheels, more pics if reqd, £7000 ono. Tel: Jeremy, 07740 583334. A320/051



**1964 Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint GT 2.0 race car.** Step-front, newly built 2.0 litre Nord race engine by GTS with one track-day mileage only. Well-known car with overall and class victories in HSCC/HRSR Historic Touring Cars. Eligible for most historic series - HSCC/CSCC/HRDC. Rose-jointed suspension, new propshaft, new stainless exhaust, new race battery. Front brakes: steel AP 4-pot calipers with vented discs, lightened bonnet, doors, boot. Lifeline 1.5kg, ATL foam tank, £39,000. Tel: 07776 180634. A320/057



**Alfa Romeo 145 Cloverleaf.** MOTs from 2002 - 15/08/2019, 123,000 miles, Tropical Green. Very substantial service history by Alfa specialist Alfa Aid, Brunswick automotive etc. Very sought after, the Cloverleaf is hard to find in RHD, also factory fitted electric sunroof, very rare. Viewing recommended, open to offers. Tel: Colin Wing, 07973 362615. A320/046



**2000 Alfa Romeo 156 2.0 TS Veloce** saloon available for spares or repair. Been dry stored for 10 years, 2L TS engine, trailer collection from Longfield, £250 ono. Tel: 07711 416421. Email: davidfox55@yahoo.co.uk (Kent). A320/061



**2009 Alfa Romeo 159 1750 TBi Ti Sportwagon.** Grigio Stromboli, black leather interior. 138,000 miles, MOT Nov 2022, FSH. Last service 133,000 miles, front discs and pads, front springs, upper arms, wishbone track control arms and bushes, rebuilt turbo, recon injector. 124,000 miles new clutch assem, dual mass flywheel. Always garaged, in daily use until recent head gasket gone. Much loved, too good to scrap, offers. Email: martin46g@btinternet.com (West Sussex). A320/049



**Alfa Romeo 166 3.0 V6 Sportronics.** 2002, under 54,000 miles! Cambelt due 08/03/24, service due 04/04/23, MOT due 04/04/23. Recent tyres, exhaust and suspension, £4500. Tel: 07901 953064. A320/048



**2005 Alfa Romeo GT D 1.9.** 11,800 miles, silver, red leather interior, 12 months' MOT, 2 keys. All work done, with service history and paperwork to show, car is in good condition and drives nicely. Body is straight and clean but does have the stone chips etc (mainly confined to the bonnet) one would expect on a vehicle of this age, £1750 ono. Please contact: Andy, 07960 140921. Email: broster452@btinternet.com (car is located in the n.west/n.Midlands area). A320/056

**2000 Alfa Romeo GTV 916 3 litre Busso V6.** Proteo Red, 114,860 mileage, owned for 7 years. Black Motorsport alloys with 4 good Avons. Please ring for details, £3495 ono. Tel: 07442 349505. A320/062



**2004 Alfa Romeo 916 Spider 2.0 JTS.** Beautiful 2004 Lightning Blue Spider 916 with 17-inch 10 spoke alloy wheels, black leather upholstery and interior, and fully functional electric hood. 70,000 miles, I have owned and cared for this car since 2006, and it has been garaged and only used on dry days ever since! Full yearly Alfa service and history, MOT'd this month. All original handbook, keys, all accessories and full dust cover included. Children learning to drive forces sale, visit recommended, £5500. Tel: Henry, 07821 125255 (located in Canterbury, Kent). A320/060



**2005 Alfa Romeo 916 Spider Limited Edition 2.0 JTS.** Lightning Blue, Limited Edition with 17-inch 10 spoke wheels, electric hood and leather interior. Mileage is 67,277 having 3 previous owners, the last being an AROC member. Belt change at 65,750, rear polybushes fitted, front professionally resprayed. No warning lights and all gauges and electrics working as they should do, inspection welcomed. Handbook, master key, service records and all codes, MOT till 10/07/2022 but I will be selling with new MOT, £7995. Tel: 07972 035232. A320/059

**2009 Alfa Romeo Spider 3.2 V6 Q4 Auto.** 52,000 miles, Rosso Red, full year MOT, black Poltrona Frau special leather, Bose stereo. Late facelift model, only two owners (Alfa Romeo for 3 years and me for 10), only a handful of this late model in the UK. This car even appeared in a TV movie! AR and specialist service history, book stamped, file of invoices, recent service, work done to keep underside, bodywork and hood in good condition. 18-inch horseshoe silver wheels, recently refurbished, plus unused new 5th wheel. Powerful, surefooted drive. Cruiser or hooligan? You choose. Reason for sale - bought an Abarth Spider (almost an Alfa!). Includes: AR luggage rack, 5th full-size wheel, £15,000. Also available: 5x 18-inch multispoke wheels and 4x 19-inch Prodrive Brera S wheels with new tyres. Tel: Stewart Duthie, AROC member, 07780 954909 (Midlands). A320/063



**2008 Alfa Romeo GT JTS 2.0 Lusso**  
**5sp manual.** 83,000 miles, Grigio Stromboli metallic. FSH, serviced by Alfa specialist since 2010, all paperwork available, MOT due January 2023, dealer (Mangoletsi) + 1 owner, AROC member. Handbook + 2 keys, spacesaver wheel, leather interior in good condition. Bodywork in good condition, a few chips given the age of the car, slight damage to paintwork at bottom of driver's door, a/c needs attention, £2375 ono. Tel: John, 07948 974255. Email: jjarchitects@me.com (Milton Keynes area). A320/002



**2001 Alfa Romeo Spider V6 24V 3 litre.** 51,210 miles, blue. New cambelt and water pump, stainless steel exhaust, Waxoyled, long MOT, new tyres. Everything works ok, drives really nice, no dents or rust, £15,500 ono. Tel: Roger, 07872 579988 or 01460 67865. Email: voge1@btinternet.com. A320/045



**Alfa Romeo 939 Spider 3.2 JTS SV 24V V6 Q4.** 2007, 74,500 miles, manual, red, full service history, oil change every 6 months, working roof. Timing chain at 65K, rear coil springs at 71K, front and rear discs at 73K. Bodywork, tyres and interior in excellent condition, all original specification, some kerb rash to wheels. SORNed over winter, garaged and trickle maintained. MOT until April 2023, two owners, present owner since 2014, 2 keys, £14,850. Tel: Simon, 07949 845727. A320/050



**Alfa Romeo GTV 2.0.** Superb example. Lots of factory fitted extras, alloy filler/gearknob/handbrake, teledials, spoiler. New tyres, rebuilt gearbox and new cambelt in last 15,000 miles. 116,000 miles, MOT until May 2023, £3500 ono Tel: 07766 756454 (South London). A320/052



**Alfa Romeo 4C Spider.** 2016, 9500 miles, 1750 TBI 280bhp, Competizione Red, excellent example. PPF from new and ceramic coated 2021. Top spec with all options – extended leather dash with red stitching, sport exhaust, carbon air inlet and exhaust tips. Full history with major service, belts and water pump just replaced (time driven) and MOT 1yr. Garage stored throughout ownership with soft cover, last Alfa 2-seater petrol engine, an appreciating modern classic, £48,500. Tel: 07923 002902 (Scotland). A320/054



**2006 Alfa Romeo Brera 2.2 JTS.** Silver, petrol, manual (221g/km, 185bhp). Drives beautifully, brakes and pads done at MOT in January, in really good condition, £3000, reasonable offers accepted. Tel: 07585 585781. Email: kingsgeorge@gmail.com (located in Birmingham, B13). A320/058



**2006 Alfa Romeo Brera SVJTDm.** 171K miles, owned for over 5 years, old man now retiring from driving. Misano Blue, two-tone leather. All usual Brera extras, mechanically sound, minor bodywork attention required, £2450. Tel: Mike, 01730 829541 (Hampshire). A320/001

## FERRARI

**Ferrari 412 GT.** Manual gearbox and RHD, 1989 and one of the very last made. 63,000 miles and in A1 condition, Rosso Corsa with tan. Maintained regardless of cost by Keys Motorsport of Silverstone, £80,000 which reflects the fantastic condition the car is in. Tel: Jerry, 07851 565945. Email: jerry\_pinna@hotmail.com. A320/007



## 2005 Alfa Romeo 156

Auto Italia staff car. As featured in the magazine. Rare facelift V6 imported from Japan in 2018 by MCS. 49,000 miles. Comprehensive Alfaworkshop history. Belts, water pump, brake discs, front and rear suspension joints, links and roll bar. 17in alloys with Dunlops. Spare 16in teledials with as new Cinturatos. Current reg NC 03 FFF awaiting transfer. GTA coming. As featured in this issue! £9,495 Tel 07979 013239 phil@auto-italia.co.uk



**Ferrari manual 412 in unique spec.** One of 24 right-hand drive cars built, it started life as Maranello's demonstrator, spec'd in metallic black with a blue interior by MD, the late Sean Bealey. Since 1987, this car has had a further five owners, including DJ, Chris Evans. I have owned the car since 2012, in which time the car has been featured in both the FOC magazine and Classic Motoring. The history file is as comprehensive as you'll ever see and for the last decade it has been maintained by John Pogson's Italia Autosport. Email:

peterv@warnersgroup.co.uk. A320/011



**Ferrari 458 Italia.** 2011, Rosso Corsa with Crema interior and Rosso carpets, (14 months' Ferrari warranty). Yellow brake calipers, Scuderia shields, front and rear parking sensors, 20" forged painted rims, Pirelli tyres, electric seats, central tunnel in Crema leather, iPod connection, carbon fibre wheel with LED, radio navi system with b-tooth, Navtrack Tracker. Yellow rev counter, leather door cards, Rosso stitching. Full ferrari history, 20,500 miles, 4 owners, £145,000 ono. Email: bjames1440@gmail.com. A320/008

**Ferrari 612 F1.** Black interior and exterior, black alloys, 2005 plate, automatic gearbox with paddle shifters. 2 owners, 2 keys, 39,580 miles (at the time of posting this ad), 5.5 litre V12. Well looked after model with service history included, drives superbly with no faults or issues at all. Deserves an owner that will love it just as much as our family did! Please contact for images, £68,895. Tel: 07821 280742. Email: daziz\_98@outlook.com. A320/009



**Ferrari 355 Spider.** 1996, 27,000 miles, Le Mans Blue with tan, owned by me for last 7 years. Capristo stage 1 fitted, will also come with original stock exhaust. Just been serviced inc belts, full service history, everything works as it should, would consider part ex plus cash my way for an interesting car, £100K ono. Email: ajcleeds@gmail.com. A320/010



**Ferrari 308 GTS.** Selling my 1978 carb 308 GTS. Red/tan RHD UK car, 51K miles, big history file and lots of recent expenditure. Belts done summer 2021, 5 new Michelin XWX in Nov 2020, air con working. Lovely car that drives superbly. For sale through Mike Wheeler at Rardley Motors. Tel: 01428 606606. A320/006



**Ferrari 348TB.** 1993, full service history, just serviced with cam belts, new tyres, car cover, tool kit. Owned for last 15 years. Red with black interior, 55,000 miles, £49,995. Email: steve@leaboxes.co.uk. Tel: 07739 000562. A320/005



**Ferrari F430 F1 Spyder 2009.** July 2009 UK supplied, RHD, matching numbers. Nero/Nero with dark blue stitching, yellow calipers, rev counter and shields, carbon ceramic brakes. Approx 26K miles with Ferrari main dealer service history (GrayPaul, Dick Lovett, Lancaster). Heated seats and Bose hi-fi upgrade, carbon driver zone. New oil/water & F1 pumps, Challenge headers, Hill Engineering brake rebuild and 10mm wheel spacers, ceramic coated in 2020 by Barkaways, £84,995. Tel: 07967 600800. A320/004



**Ferrari 360 Spider.** 2004, black/red leather, full specialist history, special exhaust system, 4 new Pirelli PZero, superb condition, £65,000. Tel: 07710 393864 (Glos). A320/067

**Ferrari F430 manual Spider.** Rosso Corsa with Nero leather and red carpets. FSH, MOT March '22, no advisory, 23K miles. Wing shields, Yellow calipers, light upgrade including footwell lights, carbon engine panels, carbon driving zone, carbon steering wheel. Ferrari Approved Infotainment system which includes reverse camera, sat nav, DAB radio. Price £110,000. Please contact: Tom, 07376 268651. Email: tom\_kyle1996@ yahoo.co.uk. A320/064

## FIAT



**1979 Fiat 124 Spider CS2.** This has been comprehensively restored as a tribute to the 1973 124 CSA homologation special, registered and converted to RHD for use on the British roads. A Pininfarina styled classic, recent USA import from the dry state of San Diego, £27,000 ono. Tel: 07548 021219. Email: joara@ blueyonder.co.uk (Wishaw). A320/068

## PARTS



**Ferrari 250 GTE bodyshell.** Following the 10 year restoration of our 250GTE, we now have for sale the remaining parts of a second bodyshell that we needed for our project. This is a private sale of the remaining parts of the donor bodyshell as seen which includes both sills, both rear wings, boot lid, and rear panels. We also have front wings, bonnet and other parts. Please contact me for further information and more photos. Email: ben@mobley.uk. A320/016



**Ferrari F430 Daytona style seats.** I have a pair of F430 Daytona style seats in black leather with red contrast stitching, manual adjustment. They are in superb condition with virtually no evidence of wear and no marks or damage whatsoever. Tel: Jonathan, 07703 169213. Email: jcw749@gmail.com (based near Moreton in Marsh, Cotswolds). A320/019



**Ferrari 612 front bumper, used.** Bumper will require a respray, good condition, £2595, happy to send more photos. Tel: Paul, 07734 111654. Email: paulhf12@gmail.com. A320/018



**Hellebore deep-dished wood rim steering wheel.** Original (NOT reproduction) 'Hellebore' deep-dished wood rim steering wheel, stamped Alfa Romeo and Hellebore. Refurbished wood rim, new centre, new horn push surrounds and new Alfa Romeo centre badge, size 40cm across, £595. Tel: 07703 029823, (Gloucestershire). A320/066



**Ferrari 328 GTS/B rear roof spoiler.** Smooth, Rosso Corsa (FER300/g), excellent condition. Recently removed from my 328 as I have returned it to its original factory specification (roof spoiler was added in circa 2011 by a previous owner), £600 ono. Email: jackbar328@icloud.com. A320/021



**Genuine Ferrari gear knob to fit 348.** Very good condition, in its original packaging, price includes p&p to UK mainland address, £145. Tel: Pete, 07729 084979. A320/069

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**2x Pirelli P Zero Rosso Direzionale 225/35 ZR19 (84Y).** Used but good condition, both tyres manufactured 2017. 7.5mm even tread on both. For sale on eBay, buy it now £125 for the pair. Email: gregpearce@hotmail.co.uk. A320/070

#### Pioneer KE-4300 Ferrari 512 BB vintage radio.

Rarer than the car? From my collection, Pioneer Ferrari BB radio for sale. Email: ralph@gilhooly.com. A320/023

**OEM 812 racing wheel set.** OEM Ferrari 812 Superfast, set of 4x20". RSFR matte black forged racing wheels with Pirelli P Zero tyres (275/35/20 on the front and 315/35/20 on the rear). The alloys alone cost over £8000 new without tyres, so a bargain at the asking price, collection only due to the size or arrange your own courier, payment needs to be prior. Bank transfer or cash on collection. Email: rav@drb.team (based in Farnham Royal, Berkshire). A320/024

**Ferrari 812/F12 cover set.** OEM genuine original Ferrari 812 or F12, red soft indoor car cover set with logos. Used and in good condition with Ferrari storage bag (zip broken on bag). Car cover set includes, 1x bag, 1x s/wheel cover, 2x seat covers (all with Prancing Horse logo). Part number F152VS-M. COD.088139600, £595 including free recorded delivery, or welcome for collection in Farnham Royal Berkshire. Email: rav@drb.team. A320/025

**Genuine carbon fibre wheel centre caps.** Came from a 488 GTB but fit many other models. Outer side diameter 56mm, inner dia 43mm, £650. Please email me for photos. Tel: Chris, 07860 146575 for more info. Email: chrisness100@gmail.com (located in York if anyone wants to view them). A320/034

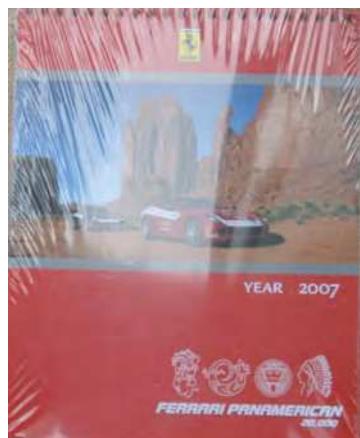
**Ferrari F8 wheels.** As new set of diamond cut 2021 F8 Spider forged alloy wheels only used for delivery, immaculate, in boxes, £3750. Tel: Alan, 07813 387102. A320/065

**Ferrari 348TS engine ECU.** Ferrari 348ts 1x engine ECU, came off working engine, £375 happy to ship at cost of buyer. Email:

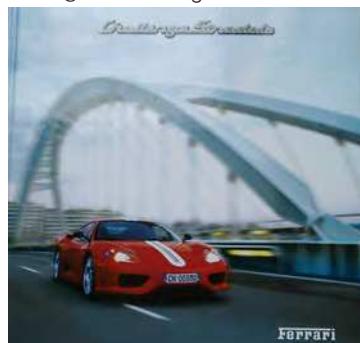
colinyoung2206@gmail.com. A320/042

**Ferrari 308 GTS front spoiler.** This has been dry stored for 20+ years and was removed from a 1979 Ferrari 308 GTS. The item is in reasonable condition for its age, the paint surface is cracked. However, the fibreglass is in exceptionally good condition - this item would only require a respray prior to fitting. More photos are available upon request, available for collection from Broadstairs, £550 ono. Email: davidmcintyre314@gmail.com (Kent). A320/040

## MISCELLANEOUS



**Calendar 2007.** Calendar produced in 2007 to commemorate Ferrari PanAmerican run, extremely rare. Still in shrink wrap therefore as new, mint condition. 60 years of Ferrari commemoration event, £40. Email: markc@cilt.co.uk. A320/012



**Ferrari 360CS press media book.** 72 page press/media hardback book with CD. Superb photographs, includes specification, excellent condition. Email: markc@cilt.co.uk. A320/013

**FF presentation booklet.** Ferrari FF presentation booklet about the iconic FF model covering dimensions of the vehicle, £50. Email: colinyoung2206@gmail.com. A320/033



**F50 DeLuxe presentation book.** Official prospectus issued by Scuderia Ferrari in 1995 celebrating the 50th anniversary and introduction of the F50, presented to select customers, red glossy hardcover, black spine and Prancing Horse badge to front, well illustrated with colour images and many fold-outs, Ferrari print number 1407. English and Italian text. This copy is unopened and in its original shrink wrap. Contents seen by web searching images for "f50 presentation book", sensible offers to: f355b@btinternet.com. A320/035



**Maserati - The Family Silver by Nigel Trow.** 872 pages in 2 volumes in slip cover. As new, no marks or damage at all, £250, free postage within UK, worldwide postage by arrangement. Email: dajhill@gmail.com. A320/071



**Ferrari 612 owners manual.** Original, good condition, £59.95. Tel: Paul, 07734 111654. Email: paulhf12@gmail.com. A320/017



**Ferrari F355 luggage kit.** 2 suitcases and suit cover with protective bags for all. Only used on 1 trip before we sold the car and then been stored in protective bags. The cases are in very good condition for their age, slight scuffs on the bottom side I guess from being put on an abrasive surface. Can provide more pictures if needed, £350 ono. Email: mark.andrew.morgan@gmail.com. A320/039

**Original Ferrari toolkits for sale.** I've been collecting early Ferrari tools and toolkits for the past 20 years and it is time dispose of them. From 250, 275, 330 Daytona and Dino, original toolkits, jack kits and a few odd tools, parts and lots of original literature. Ranging from excellent to 'needing work' condition. Please email with any requirements and I can show you what I have available. Email: leonard@leonardgreen.co.uk. A320/029



**Ferrari models 1/43.** 8 models 1/43 scale 166M, 365GT4, 400SA, 365GT4 BB, 156 (2), 330P4 and 500F2. Mint and boxed, £50. Email: markc@cilt.co.uk. A320/037



**Original Testarossa 328 tool kit.** Complete, original tool kit for any Ferrari Testarossa or 328. Comes with the complete set of Chrom Vanadium tools and original pouch. Includes: 4 screwdrivers (2x Philips, 2x flathead); 8 wrenches (22/20, 19/18, 17/16, 15/14, 13/12, 11/10, 9/8, 7/6); branding Chrom Vanadium Kram on one side, Ferrari on the other (only 22/20 with Chrom Vanadium on both sides); 1 pliers with Ferrari branding on the handle; original tool pouch with no wear or damage. Asking £2100 but open for offers. Email: julian.sprossmann@t-online.de. A320/030



**Ferrari magazines from 1992 - today.** Disposing of my 99% complete set of 'Ferrari' magazines, plus many others including 'Ferrari News' from 1992 when I joined FOC. All in great shape, only read once and then dry stored. Looking for good home, £150. Email: andrewbailey@dimatec.co.uk. A320/020



**UK magazines.** Approx 20 UK magazines with articles on Ferraris. Most models are covered including 288GTO, F40, F50, 308GT4, Daytona, Boxer, 355, 575, 166, 212, Breadvan, Testarossa and 365GTC. Magazines include Classic & Sportscar, Octane and Car. More magazines will be added to this package. Email: markc@cilt.co.uk. A320/043



**Ferrari F355 indoor cover.** Indoor original cover, looks exactly the same as the one in the picture but which is on my 458, £200. Email: keith.fisher@fairstone.co.uk. A320/036



# OBSCURATI

CURIOSITIES FROM THE AMAZING WORLD OF ITALIAN CARS

## ALFA PLUS

### RUSTY ALFASUD? THIS 1980S GLASSFIBRE REPLACEMENT BODY PACKAGE WAS ONE SOLUTION

Story by Richard Heseltine



**B**ody conversions now comprise a significant sector of the British specialist car industry. Some are produced by kit car outfits, others by more highfalutin, cough, 'coachbuilders'. Such reimagining is nothing new, though. Among the earliest such makeovers was the Alfa Plus which emerged in 1984. Devised by Tim and Suzanne Cooksey of FF Kitcars & Conversions (né FibreFab under previous owners), a concern better known for its beach buggies, the

concept was a sound one: Alfa Romeo Alfasuds were – and remain – great drivers' cars. However, the use of porous Russian steel ensured they were famously prone to rot. A glassfibre makeover was just the ticket, they reasoned.

Unlike the other British Alfasud makeover of the period, the striking the Steve Everitt-penned Alfastyle, the Alfa Plus didn't closely resemble the donor car. If anything, it looked more like the Alfa Romeo 33. According to *Kitcars & Specials* magazine: "The styling was critical and original

designs were chopped and changed with prototype panels being made of wood. Tim has an eye for a line and has some previous styling experience... The car had a very swept up boot lid line which gives the car an aggressive, eager to go look, although they haven't resorted to the ineffective 'wing' fitted to some cars. The overall length of the car is increased by about 12 inches, and the new wings are also wider than the old, with more room in the wheel arches so that larger wheels and tyres can be fitted."

It added: "The centre of the car retains the original dimensions so that in plan view it has an attractive and racy waisted look... The overall finish of the GRP panels is excellent, with no surface ripples or bumps... The panels bolt on to the car using the existing bolt holes where possible. For instance, the front wings are a bolt for bolt replacement. The rear wings cover the existing panel and are riveted in position. Where items of hardware need to be bolted to the GRP panels – like the bonnet hinges – special threaded bobbins

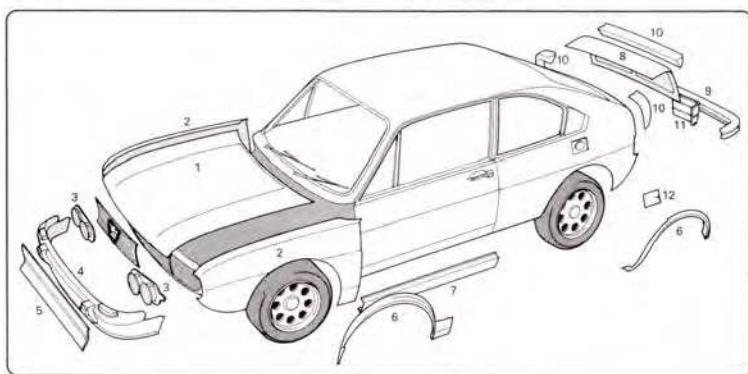
are laminated into the moulding. It is a bit more trouble to do, but it is worth it for ease of assembly."

FF reckoned it would take a seasoned car builder roughly 50 hours to complete the work, not including spraying the glassfibre parts that were supplied by subcontractor Mako Fibreglass in a dull matt-white finish. Priced at £1150, the package stretched to items such as third-generation Ford Escort front lamps and Talbot Horizon rear light clusters. However, despite plenty of positivity, the Alfa Plus didn't quite live up to its makers' expectations. Tim Cooksey told *Component Car* magazine in 1985: "To be honest, we are disappointed that the powerful initial reaction has not culminated in more firm sales. We are far from dispirited, however, and it could be that we are not promoting the car properly."

A four-door variant was announced at the 1985 Sandown Park Kit Car Show but it also failed to take flight. The project was quietly dropped in late 1986, although a revival attempt was subsequently made by Plus Cars of Mid Glamorgan. There was no reversal of fortune.

The following items are to be removed from your Alfasud

- |               |                 |                   |                     |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Bonnet      | 4 Bumper unit   | 7 Sills (Plastic) | 10 Rear spoiler     |
| 2 Front Wings | 5 Front spoiler | 8 Boot            | 11 Rear light units |
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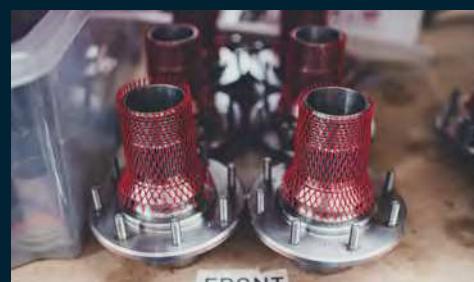
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