

MILANESE EXOTIC SEES THE LIGHT



Lopresto (on right) helps extract the Zagato from storage. Right, from top: racing in period; stylish cabin; twin-cam 'four'



A rare Zagato-bodied Alfa 1900 has been disinterred from secret storage in a Rome garage where it has been sitting for more than 40 years. Renowned collector Corrado Lopresto has known about this car for many years, but approaches to reclusive owner Giuseppe Strippoli – who bought the 1900 in 1969 – had long proved fruitless.

Never a man to give up, Lopresto eventually struck gold and on 12

December 2012 the Milan-based architect realised his ambition to buy the SS. “It’s done just 7000 miles and the interior is perfect,” said Lopresto. “I felt like a boy opening his presents at Christmas. After two hours’ clearing out the garage and checking the engine, we even got it started. For the moment I want to leave it unrestored.”

Just 39 lightweight 1900 Super Sprint Berlinettas were bodied by

the illustrious Carrozzeria Zagato. They were popular with Italian Gentleman racers and best known as the ‘esse esse zeta’. The potent Super Sprints featured twin carburetors and produced 112bhp.

Depending on the axle ratio, the five-speed coupé was good for up to 130mph. This timewarp survivor is chassis 01845 and was finished on 24 September 1954 before being sold via Lucca’s Grande Garage

Internazionale. It was first owned by Ruggero Ricci, who raced it successfully with Othello Biagiotti, including an impressive fifth overall behind the works Lancias and Oscas on the Coppa Firenze-Siena in October 1954.

The 1900SSZ will be part of a special Italian Cars exhibition at the Louwman Museum in The Hague until 8 June, with eight other stars from Lopresto’s collection.