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CARROZZERIA TOURING



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Carrozzeria Touring

Superleggera, Anderloni and Alfas

Text by Ed McDonough

Photos by Peter Collins



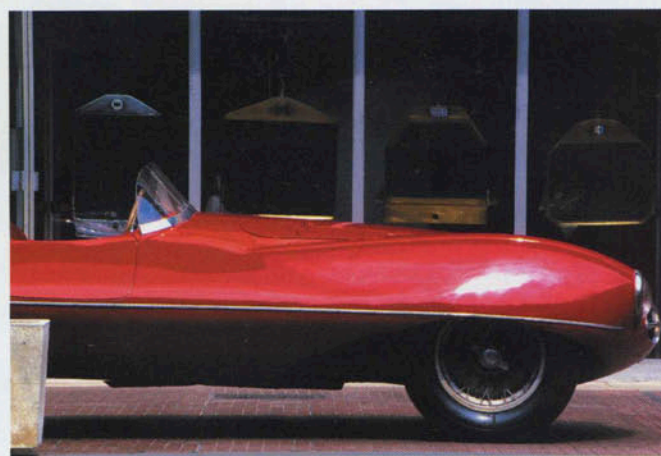
The death of Carlo Felice Bianchi Anderloni on August 7, 2003 at the age of 87 was something of a shock to many people, especially to those who knew this tough, resilient and highly respected man. His name was synonymous with Carrozzeria Touring, the company founded by his father in 1926. Touring was one of the earliest coach building houses, and its influence on not only Italian but world car design and construction, was enormous. The senior Anderloni worked closely in the early years with many Italian companies: Lancia, Isotta, Fraschini, Fiat and most notably Alfa Romeo.



As the company prospered, and the son, known as 'Cici', went to work with his father in the pre-war days, their design and construction enterprises broadened to include Aston Martin, BMW, Bristol, Citroen, Ferrari, Frazer Nash, Hudson, Maserati, OSCA, Pegaso and Rootes in the early 1960s. When the senior Anderloni died in 1949, 'Cici' took over design and production responsibilities, while administration remained with Gaetano Ponzoni, who had been an original partner in the company.

Alfa Romeo provided the chassis and mechanicals for virtually all of their cars up to WWII and the bodies were designed and built by the various Italian coach builders: Pininfarina, Zagato, Touring, Bertone and many others. Two- and four-seater open bodies were constructed by Touring for the late 1920s Alfa 1500 and 1750, and the occasional luxury saloon such as the Touring coupe Royale on a 1750GT chassis, which appeared at the Copenhagen Motor Show in 1931. The company achieved recognition over its long life for its considerable flexibility, and the designers could respond equally well to the challenge of open or closed cars, as well as turning out superb road and racing vehicles. Touring tended to be the exception in this area.

Touring saloon bodies turned out to be both lighter, lower and more agile than many of their competitors at the time, and could produce exceptionally fine lines for their drop head coupes. The 1750 GT chassis with a Touring racing berlinetta body was probably the ultimate racecar of 1932 when it appeared for the Coppa Della 1000 Miglia. The company pioneered the use of lightweight and long front fenders to incorporate faired-in battery and toolboxes. As well as building fine competition cars, Touring produced successful show cars,



The famed Disco Volante was one of Touring's great masterpieces and one of Carlo Anderloni's favorite design projects.



As beautiful as it was, the Disco Volante suffered from aerodynamic instability that rendered it uncompetitive on the international scene. However, the lessons learned were applied to later designs including the 6C 3000CM.

their cabriolet spider and drop head coupes gaining particular success. One of these, built on a 1500 chassis, won the Drop Head Coupe class, as early as 1928, in the Milano Concours, an extremely important event of the time.

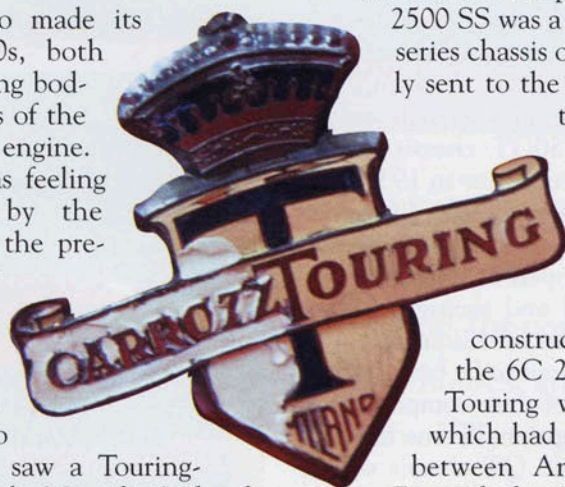
When the 2.3 Alfa Romeo made its appearance in the early 1930s, both Zagato and Touring were supplying bodies for the road and race versions of the new car with the superb 2.3 engine. While all of Italian industry was feeling the pressure being exerted by the policies of Benito Mussolini in the pre-war period, the Italian dictator had a special interest in motorcars. He used competition to promote the image of Italy, much as Hitler did in Germany with Mercedes and Auto Union. The 1935 Mille Miglia saw a Touring-bodied, unblown 2.3 coupe driven by Mussolini's chauffeur Boratto and Alfa's Gianbatista Guidotti finish 4th and win the touring car group. Touring provided spider, closed coupe, Le Mans, drop head coupe and closed two-seater body work for some 32 Alfa Romeo 8-cylinder 2.3s, from works

Mille Miglia and Le Mans competitors to show cars for the Paris Salon.

After the death of his father, 'Cici' Anderloni was engaged in two important design projects which were his first sole responsibility. The Alfa Romeo 6C 2500 SS was a beautiful coupe design on a third series chassis of the 6C 2500. It was immediately sent to the most prestigious concours of all, the Villa d'Este on Lake Como in Italy, where it was the overall winner. It became known as the Villa d'Este as a result and secured the younger Anderloni's reputation. It also assisted in securing much of the

construction work from Alfa Romeo for the 6C 2500 range. The other project at Touring was the Ferrari 166 Barchetta, which had developed out of the connection between Anderloni, his father, and Enzo Ferrari before the war.

At Alfa Romeo, thoughts had turned to a series production car before the war. The 6C 2500 was the basis for this first effort, though by the time the war had ended, ideas had changed considerably. The 6C 2500 remained primarily a chassis to be fitted with spe-



cialist coachwork, of which Touring and Pininfarina were known to provide elegant examples. However, Alfa Romeo itself decided to build a body, the Freccia d'Oro, with something of a rotund rear body shape. Anderloni had acted as a consultant on this project, as had others, and the design houses often had very close relationships with the manufacturers. This led to Anderloni's association with Orazio Satta, whose brainchild was the 1900 saloon, and this became Alfa Romeo's first series production car. Anderloni, like Pininfarina, Boano, Boneschi, Ghia and Castagna, produced elegant and exotic versions of the 1900, though Anderloni's close links saw him acting as advisor to Satta. Anderloni always acknowledged the significance of this link.

The Satta connection brought Touring and Anderloni together on Alfa Romeo's remarkable Disco Volante, a project much enjoyed by Anderloni. He saw its potential and the way it would open the door to very imaginative design, though he admitted himself that design in those days was somewhat hampered by lack of knowledge of aerodynamics.

When Alfa Romeo decided to leave Grand Prix racing at the end of 1951, after two consecutive driver world championships, they did not want to leave competition. They saw that post-war interest in sports cars could be enormously beneficial to the company, especially after their long pre-war racing heritage. The



(Top) The curvaceous 1938 2900B with Spider body by Touring. (Above) An example of Touring's Alfa work in the late '50s and early '60s—the 2600 Spider.



An example of the 6C 2500SS Villa d'Este, so named because it won the famed Villa d'Este concours upon its debut.



The Alfetta Saloon was one of the last projects that Anderloni worked on for Alfa before Touring's doors were closed in 1966 and Anderloni was taken on by Alfa as a consultant. (Below) An example of one of the many pre-war coachbuilt Alfa bodies created by Touring.



The 6C 2500SS Villa d'Este was one of the first projects undertaken by Carlo Anderloni after his father died.

advent of the 1900 production car was the trigger for Alfa's idea to use some production components as the basis for a racing sports car. While there seems to have been limited enthusiasm in the Alfa Romeo design department for what would become known as the Disco Volante, it was encouraged by Giacchino Colombo, who had been responsible for the 158/159 Grand Prix cars. Alfa Chairman Pasquale Gallo was also a backer. Anderloni and Touring Superleggera took on the body design and construction, and the nature of the envisaged 'futuristic' body meant Anderloni was directly involved in chassis construction.

Anderloni and Colombo had worked together on the Ferrari Barchetta, and had developed early thoughts about aerodynamic improvement, mainly in dealing with side winds. These ideas were incorporated into the Ferrari and then later into the Disco Volante. The creativity and flexibility which had characterized the Touring work of previous years became evident in this new project, where the attention to detail in the size and shape of the car's cross section in an elliptical design required considerable advance planning. Colombo's team worked with and often at the Touring base in Milan to bring this new design together. The intention was to achieve what Anderloni called a "monolithic structure" in the chassis which had in-built strength and lightness, something of a departure for coachbuilders who were often used to clothing rather crude and heavy chassis in sleek looking body work.



Anderloni poses with an example of his Ferrari Barchetta design during the 2002 Spa Italia event.

AO: Tell us a little about the cars displayed here at Spa in your honor...the Alfa 1900, the Ferrari 166 Barchetta and the Sunbeam Venezia.

Anderloni: Well, this Alfa Romeo 1900 is the last model of this car, and we made a lot of these cars, one of our most successful cars. The second is a very famous Ferrari because the first owner was Agnelli, the owner of Fiat, who when he was young, came to talk to me in my factory about this car and he chose this special blue color. The upper part is blue but the side is green, both metalized, to be like a calabroni, a chameleon that changes colors. The third one is the famous Venezia and there is a long story with this car. We had an agreement with the Rootes Group to assemble the standard Rootes car in Italy. We received the cars completely non-assembled. This was before England was in the European Market so it was a good job for Rootes and us. The first car was shown in the Piazza San Marco in Venice. It was brought into the town in a boat and was a big success and that is how it got its name. It was a nice car, not sporty but quick, but unfortunately the Rootes Group finished and that was the end of the car.

AO: What are some of the designs you feel most proud of?

Anderloni: Well, that is not easy to answer. Before you begin a design, you think of the problem you are trying to solve, and at a certain moment you engage with the idea, and at that moment the problem is not so difficult. A car seems to come when you work a certain way. I think I am proud of all our designs. But this Ferrari here is very important to me. But when it came to special cars, I think our Alfa Romeo designs were among the most important. We always loved to work on the Alfas.

AO: We understand you have not been to Spa before, but have you followed racing over the years?

Anderloni: My father, who started the company, was a gentleman driver many years ago with an Isotta Fraschini and a little Peugeot, and I followed his races when I was a little boy. I remember I was little when they opened Monza the first time in 1922. I was there when they had that very bad accident in 1928. I knew Monza, Le Mans, Montlhéry, but I have never been here at Spa. The Ferrari Barchetta won the 24 Hours race here with Chinetti in 1949 and that was really the starting point for the success of the Barchetta. Chinetti drove almost that whole race himself.

AO: What was your relationship with Enzo Ferrari like?

Anderloni: (The lively Signora Anderloni joins in here and encourages him to tell a number of Ferrari stories). I had a good relationship with Ferrari and he was a friend of Touring Superleggera because when he was at the Alfa Romeo racing department, he always used Alfas with our bodies. When he started his own cars, he asked my father to study his plans for the first car, not called a Ferrari, but it was known as the Autoavio. This my father was involved in. My father died not long after that when Ferrari was getting more well known. He often worked with us as we had a good sympathy, we were partners, so I went many times to Modena. The first Ferrari we did was a four seater coupe. He said he wanted to put a four seater on his chassis with that big engine and I thought it was impossible. It was a short wheelbase chassis. He had a Lancia at the time, an Ardea, and he wanted something like that. "You must make for me a car like this." We had also some fights as well. Once we were preparing a Barchetta for the Mille Miglia and one morning he came to our factory in Milan and looked at our work. It seemed he was not satisfied that we could finish the car in time for the Mille Miglia. So he slammed the door and said "tomorrow I am sending my truck to pick up the chassis and the parts." I wasn't sure what I should do after that, so I decided I would go to Modena early the next morning. You know Ferrari would not receive people easily, sometimes they waited one day, two days. He thought if a man stayed a day waiting, then when he came, the man would be happy because at least he had been seen. I was prepared to wait all day, but one minute after eight he came in and said: "What are you doing in Modena so early in the morning?" I said that I was afraid after what he said yesterday and he laughed very loud: "What, you believed me, oh my God!" So I stayed there all day talking to him of many things, but still I was afraid of what he said. I think he was a strange man, Ferrari!

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AO: Who do you think are the important people in design today?

Anderloni: Oh, definitely Giugiaro, personally I think he is so good. You know he was a painter to start, and in many ways he is still a painter. Then, at Pininfarina is the designer Lamazotti, very clever, and of course Da Silva...those three I know and respect a great deal.

The interview included some 'less official' stories from Signora Anderloni, one about going out to restaurants with her husband and father-in-law when they were young, and the senior Anderloni was always drawing on the table clothes and napkins, using them for designs... "I was so ashamed!" she said. She recounted racing and test driver Consalvo Sanesi driving 'their' Alfa 6C 3000CM and crashing here at Spa. There were some Mussolini stories too, which he asked not to be published, with the quip: "I might still get in trouble!" ❀

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