

# A LOOK BACK

BAT 5



BAT 7



They might look wild, but the curves and pressure relief vents of these cars actually work to channel air around the vehicle and add stability.

## The 1953-1955 BAT Cars

BAT 5, BAT 7 and BAT 9 were designed for Alfa Romeo by Franco Scaglione while working for Nuccio Bertone. BAT stands for Berlinetta Aerodinamica Tecnica (Aerodynamic Technical Coupe). The aim was to build an aerodynamic car, partly in response to the problems with the Disco Volante (Flying Saucer) designed by rival Touring. The wing-section shape of the Disco, not surprisingly in retrospect, caused the cars to lift and attempt flight.

A new BAT design was shown at successive shows in Turin in 1953, 1954 and 1955. Scaglione was an avid fan of aero design and the study of air flow and pressure. The shapes and air channels of the BAT cars are functional and are not merely for decoration, although the scale chosen by Scaglione was more for flamboyance than necessity. At the same time as BAT 7, Scaglione also penned the Giulietta Sprint, which was chosen by Alfa Romeo over a competing design by Boano at Ghia. The descendant of BAT 9 was the Giulietta Sprint Speciale, with the original Sprint Speciale Turin show car now owned by Bill Damm of Vancouver, British Columbia. Three similar, hand-built cars reside in Michigan, of which two made appearances at the 2007 AROC national convention. These early "low nose" Alfas hammered by artisans at Bertone do not share any body panels with production Sprint Speciales which have front bumpers.

### After the show lights were turned off

After the show circuit was completed, "Wacky" Arnolt, an American in cowboy boots and hat and who had Bertone develop the Arnolt Bristol and MG Bristol, purchased BAT 5, driving it around Los Angeles for a number of years. In 1958 he sold it to Joe Pryzak of South Bend, Indiana. Pryzak dismantled BAT 5 for restoration, but sold it to collector Said Marouf who had the car restored to its original appearance.

BAT 7 was found in poor condition in a warehouse in Northern California by Ken Shaff, at the time a San Francisco area racer, auto collector and Alfa enthusiast in San Francisco Bay area. Shaff restored the car as a driver and used it as such from the late-1950s to early-1960s. Somewhere along the line, he removed the wheel



covers and tail fins for club racing. After BAT 7 was sold to another collector, an attempt was made to restore the shape. However, the fins proved difficult to duplicate and make symmetrical, so it took a second restoration by a more skilled artisan after acquisition by Said Marouf.

### **BAT 9d and Gary Kaberle**

BAT 9d was sold after the New York auto show of 1956. It went to a succession of owners who took it to Sebring, then Chicago, then an auto dealer in Lansing. He passed away and his widow sold the car at a dealer auction, which brought BAT 9 to Greenville, Michigan as an attention-getter for a car lot. In 1962, BAT 9 was sitting in that Plymouth-Dodge dealership in Greenville ("The Danish Festival City"), a small town best known for assembling of refrigerators and growing potatoes, located south of Gary Kaberle's boyhood home of Ewart, Michigan. Not surprisingly, BAT 9 caught the attention of the 16-year Gary Kaberle, who a few months later bought it with money from his popcorn stand and a loan from his parents. The car was given a new paint job, then parked outside his parent's Ewart gift shop.

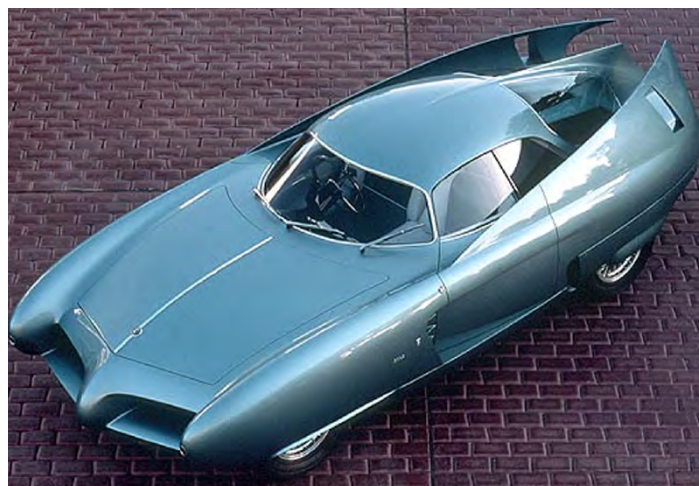
Kaberle eventually became a dentist (partly because of his own cavity-filled teeth), and took BAT 9 to his new home in Traverse City, Michigan. Years later he brought it to the 1990 AROC convention in Detroit, still in excellent unrestored condition.

Dr. Kaberle never planned to part with car, but his wife was found to have cancer and after the usual treatments failed to eradicate it, the Kaberles needed funds for experimental treatment. All three BAT cars were sold at the Kruse Auction in Phoenix to a Japanese collector for \$9 million. The collector soon went bankrupt when some of his real estate investments proved to have not been chosen wisely, and a lending bank took possession of the cars.

All three are now the property Don Williams and the Blackhawk Museum. The BAT cars have made a handful of appearances away from the museum on very special occasions, such as at Motor City Alfa, the AROC national concours at Meadow Brook near Detroit in August of 2007. The BATs can be yours for a mere \$15 million.



BAT 7 photo by Brewster Thackeray



# BAT PICTORIAL



# BAT 11



Photos from Gary Kaberle/design by Dave Hammond



# BERTONE

*Excerpts from the Stile Bertone official web site, Car Design News, and bits from memory - DH*

Bertone was founded in November 1912, when Giovanni Bertone, then aged 28, opened a workshop specializing in the construction and repair of horse-drawn carriages. He started out with three workers. In 1914 Giuseppe, the second son in the Bertone family, was born. Everyone took to calling him Nuccio, the nickname which was to stay with him for the rest of his life. But the first World War spelled hard times for Bertone, who was forced to shut up shop.

The end of the war signalled a turning point for Bertone as the company focused its attentions on the motorcars. The new offices at number 119 Via Monginevro opened in 1920. A year later the first important job arrived: the construction of a Torpedo body on an SPA 23S base, immediately followed by a Fiat 501 Sport Siluro Corsa, the first in a line of sports cars which would come to represent the Bertone name.

By the 1950s, Nuccio was taking over operations, with Franco Scaglione as the chief designer. From his drawing board came the Alfa Romeo BAT cars, the Giulietta Sprint and Sprint Speciale. Bertone had a talent for spotting upcoming designers. When Scaglione left in late 1959, a very young and unproven Giorgetto Giugiaro took over until 1965, penning the Alfa Romeo Giulia GTV, Montreal show car, Maserati Ghibli, Ferrari 250 GT Berlinetta Lusso and the Iso Grifo, and many other trend setting cars. Then came the Lamborghini Countach and Dino Ferrari 308 GT4. These were golden years for Bertone, from with handsome designs for everyone from ISO to Ferrari. When Giugiaro left to form Ital Design, Marcello Gandini (1965-79) rose to occasion with designs ranging from the prototype Alfa Romeo Navajo (1976) to the Lamborghini Diablo, 1967 Lamborghini Marzal (the first car with glass in lower doors), the 1968 Alfa Romeo Carabo and the 1970 Lancia Stratos. Marc Deschamps (1979-95) followed. You will not find any of the old designers mentioned on the Bertone web pages because Nuccio felt betrayed when he trained raw talent only to have



Marie-Jeanne Bertone holds a copy of the March 3, 2008 edition of *Automotive News* with BAT 11 on the cover (photo by Gary Kaberle)

each new designer become famous and turn into a competitor.

In 1972, at the age of 88, Giovanni Bertone passed away, the same year the Maserati Kamshin and the Fiat X1/9 came out. The latter was the heir to the Fiat 850 Spider.

Jumping ahead to recent times, Nuccio Bertone passed away in 1997, but the company stayed in family hands, with his widow, Lilli Bertone, in charge. In 2003, The two parts are Carrozzeria Bertone (production) and Stile Bertone (Design). David Wilkie joined Stile Bertone as Interior Design Director. Born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1958. Wilkie studied at the Royal college of Art in London and worked at Ghia prior to coming to Bertone.

He was named Design Director at Bertone in 2006. the company filed 'concordato preventivo', the equivalent of the US's Chapter 11 bankruptcy, in November of 2007. Carrozzeria Bertone had sought bankruptcy protection while it underwent 'reorganization' following a slump in manufacturing since it ended a 2,000 unit run of the limited-edition Mini GP in 2006. Its once thriving production line has been idle since then.

To make a long story short, the family has been hurling court orders and firings ever since. Lilli Bertone sold the company without the stock holdings to do so. Her daughters, COO Barbara and Vice-Chair Marie-Jeanne Bertone fought back in court, so Lilli fired Barbara, but as the tumultuous events continue, the designers still design autos.



Peter Pleitner translates a 1994 interview in *Motor Klassic* with the late Nuccio Bertone. At the time Bertone was still going to work each day although he turned 80 that July 4. Bertone died in 1997.

## An Interview With Nuccio Bertone

In 1912, his father, Giovanni, founded a coach building firm. The late Nuccio Bertone developed the family business into a design house next door to the Italian auto industry.

***Around the world your name is identified with automobile design, although your training is in accounting. Did you originally plan for a different career?***

As I left school, my parents had no one to keep the company books. Consequently I chose my professional development to be in accounting and management. I didn't particularly enjoy this line of work. Above all else my passion was in design. This passion evolved naturally as I grew up surrounded by my father's creations on the chassis furnished by Fiat, Alfa Romeo, and foreign manufacturers. Before WWII, our plant's output was in the neighborhood of 5000 vehicles per year. As a boy I was lucky to have been able to experience all the steps involved, from concepts to finished products.

***Were there particular things you looked forward to changing once you entered the family business?***

In the beginning I followed my father's lead, because after all, he had founded the business and developed it in a certain direction. But back then coachwork was based on wooden models. On these we'd hammer-form the sheet metal, and the completed bodywork would then be bolted to the frame.

Deliveries were made primarily to Lancia and Fiat. The era of this system of production was however becoming outmoded. But the most important thing for me was a certain fantasy that accompanied each delivery, a quality that was expected by our select clients.

***How would you today describe your father and son Bertone relationship then?***

My relationship with my father was quite good, especially so because I would only consider changes to the business very carefully, and of course wouldn't think of changing anything too quickly. My father entrusted me with special projects from the start. Like all bodybuilders, he never had the intention of building a complete automobile. But his ego always demanded that his work portray qualities which would be noticed. Even before the war custom coach work became too expensive for most clients. In addition the quality of serial production cars started to approach that of custom cars. I determined that there was no future in delivering one-of creations for individual clients, that it was time to work with the automobile manufacturers.

***Which direction did you then take?***

What I now needed was a new production basis. I bought drivable chassis from Fiat, Lancia and Alfa Romeo. On these chassis I'd build bodies that would appeal to a larger set of clients. From these models I'd create a number of variants, as it is still done today. We'd first create the base model, then a Spider, a Coupe, a Cabriolet, all based upon the same basic design. Then I'd try to get independent dealers with far ranging clientele to purchase my creations. I'd have in our plant a small series run of, for example, 50 Spiders and 100 Coupes, all handcrafted. In this way we had over the years enough work and the business flourished. But then we had this new problem develop, where dealers would only accept new cars between March and September, but we had to run production the whole year. This we couldn't live with, and on top of that we'd have to wait up to 36 months to be paid.

***Which year was that?***

In the 1930s.

***Your first successful project after the war was the custom bodied MG, that you joint ventured in 1952 with that American, S. H. Arnolt.***

We could not live for long dependent on Italian dealers and their new business practices. So I tried to build relationships with foreign manufacturers

and importers. First I bought two chassis from MG, just to see if there was a possibility to work with foreign concerns. And right away at the opening of the Turin Auto Show in 1952, I found myself standing next to an American, a typical Texan complete with cowboy hat and boots, and a blinding ring stone on his finger. This Mr. Arnolt approached me and asked, "You're Bertone, right? I want these two cars." Gladly I would have sold both. But I was obliged to tell him that there might be a problem. My objective was to get MG to commission a couple of hundred examples.

***How did you get this English-Italian project off the ground?***

I drove with Mr. Arnolt to England, to convince the reluctant MG management of my idea's merits. The English were concerned about my model competing with theirs, but Mr. Arnolt's salesmanship convinced MG management that my production of a small series based on their chassis could in no way detract from the demand for their own product. We brought gifts for all, clocks for the secretaries, and a fantastic Gorgonzola in the trunk. But the cheese lover at MG wasn't there. We had to leave it in their refrigerator, even though there were many protests about the smell. Eventually and in consort with Arnolt I obtained an agreement with MG to produce a series of my models.

***That MG project lead to the Giulietta?***

I have to make something clear first. At this time a representative arrived one day from Finmeccanica Italia, more exactly IRI, (Institute for Industrial Redevelopment) in other words the nationalized Italian industry, which consisted of various industrial sectors. Finmeccanica was the one for machinery and transportation.

The president of IRI was very worried that they were not producing enough of the right kind of vehicles to pay back their loan guarantees. It was his opinion that the Giulietta has to enter production quickly, since it had been in Finmeccanica's plans to sell these for 1,850,000 Lira. It was critical that Finmeccanica solve this production problem, because it was putting IRI in severe financial circumstances due to its inability to get Alfa's facilities redeveloped for Giulietta production. Then another representative of Finmeccanica was sent, this time Rudolf Hruska. Because we had worked together at Abarth and Cisitalia we were already friends. At the head of Alfa was Franco Quaroni, who came from Pressing Steel.



As chief of Alfa, he was responsible for the delay of Project Giulietta.

***The Giulietta represented the first series production for you. What kind of difficulties did this transformation of your workshops present, from low volume custom body production to a volume production plant?***

With the Giulietta Sprint we achieved the ambitious goal of transforming ourselves from a low volume coach builder to a real body fabrication plant with commensurate quality control and finishing facilities. Then finally, as such, were we capable of bidding on production contracts from the automobile industry.

Showing the Giulietta at the Turin Automobile Salon in 1954 was a fantastic publicity coup. Right at the start of the show, to my great surprise, Alfa's upper management sought me out to plead their case that I double the volume of Sprint production. I would have been happier to discuss a contract and delivery program of several years, to be able to afford to acquire the necessary means of higher production. But they didn't want to do that, they simply wanted to extend their purchase order and didn't want to enter into a long-term contractual agreement.

***How did this request to double Giulietta?***

There was a conflict between Hruska and Quaroni. Hruska was convinced that this automobile's sensational reception at the Automobile Salon foretold a promising reception by the buying public. On the other hand, Quaroni didn't believe it would be that successful, instead he wanted to produce only enough to satisfy IRI's requirement to repay the moneys borrowed. This involved a production of 500 units. Hruska insisted that at least a thousand be built, and Quaroni finally gave in. Because of the uncertain future of this project, I had to produce each Sprint using hand-fabrication methods. But to comply with the production timetable I had to soon risk my own capital on acquiring expensive production fixtures and tooling. This was necessary to boost daily production between 30 to 40 units per day. It was a great risk, because this investment not only required all of the capital the company could raise, it also required everything the family had.

***Then the Giulietta project represents for you a dangerous walk on a tightrope?***

If this project didn't succeed, everything the family had gained over decades of

work, would have been lost. I don't know if I would do it again today.

***Your willingness to take that risk does show your faith in the Giulietta Sprint.***

In this context I think back with great satisfaction on an encounter with Ing. Quaroni. Franco Quaroni was a real unfriendly and uncultivated man, one I didn't like to deal with. But then I had to meet with him to discuss the wins and losses on individual models. With one model we would lose money, with another we'd lose even more, but the Giulietta Sprint brought profits, mostly because of our investment in fabrication and finishing facilities. I still remember how high the profits were. It was 87,000 Lira, at a vehicle price of 1,750,000 Lira. This number I mention here for the first time. So I said to Quaroni, we must finally conclude a contract. But he was strictly opposed, he liked our less formal purchase order agreement.

***The first prototypes of the Sprint were hatch-backs. Why was it never built in this form?***

The time for this concept was obviously not right. The buyers of Alfa Romeos weren't comfortable with the idea of opening practically half the car from the rear. So we settled on a small trunk lid instead.

***There were no technical reasons?***

Certainly the solution for the hatch-back introduced some problems, especially, in hindsight, the compromised rigidity of the chassis, because that panel between the wheel wells tied the upper part of the chassis together. But a decision to go with this concept would have resulted in a solution.

***The Giulietta Spider was developed and built by Pininfarina. Was it a defeat, that your competitor won this job?***

Bertone: Our company was not prepared to deliver a minimum of 2000 Spiders to the United States. We spoke with Pininfarina about that. We both built concept models, but for their unveiling to Max Hoffman, who instigated the concept for a Spider in the first place, we removed our respective emblems, so it wouldn't be so obvious from which house the concepts originated. I also tried to develop a Cabriolet variant of the Coupe but it never entered production.

***After the Giulietta Sprint, was there an automobile, that you would place on the same level of importance?***

Bertone: There were several cars which

were very important and significant, but none were as important as the Giulietta Sprint. To these others, I would count the Fiat 850 Spider and the Fiat X1/9, if only for the production numbers. At that time I worked first for Fiat and no longer with Alfa Romeo. The break with Alfa Romeo came when they accused me of designing the Montreal in 1967 and then selling the same design elements to Lamborghini for their Marzal. This was of course totally absurd because they certainly were very different.

***In what sense do automobile designs of the 1950s differentiate themselves from today's designs?***

Italian and indeed European design in the 1950s continued to be influenced above all by American designs. Even today Americans prefer large cars. Back then they were six meters long, three meters hood and three meters trunk – and in between a small, uncomfortable interior. Principally the Americans influenced the exterior form. Their Baroque shapes were transferred to European autos. In the 1960s and 1970s European lines became more clear. Especially the modern Italian design with its simple and clear lines that were adopted in America as classic, because it conveys onto the volume an encompassing harmony.

***Which automobile do you use for your everyday driving?***

Bertone: Until my seventieth birthday I drove all the automobiles that we designed, for example the Iso Grifo and the Ferrari 308 GT4, the only Ferrari I ever designed. Earlier I occasionally drove a Ferrari GTO, which I rebodied in my own design. Today I am more relaxed and drive a Fiat Punto, a Citroen XM, a Bertone Freeclimber, and a Skoda Favorit. But it is not a typical Skoda, instead a model with a special red paint and leather interior, which I subsequently transferred to the Favorit for its market introduction.

***You have designed many wonderful automobiles. Is there one which you would have liked to design but didn't get the chance?***

Bertone: That makes me think most of all about the designs for Alfa Romeo, in spite of the negative attendant circumstances of our separation, I still have strong positive inclinations toward them. If I had to chose one distinct model today, I'd have to say the Java-Cabriolet of Bentley, which in a few weeks will be shown at the Geneva Auto Show. ■

# THE BACK PAGE

## AROC Election Ballots

I had Bob Kleinfeld email me that some of the AROC members have not put their membership number or return address on the AROC Board of Directors Election Ballots.

Please tell your chapter members that they need to do this if they want their ballots to count. If the chapter members have already sent in their without this information, please have them contact Bob Keinfeld (720) 226-0631 or [alfabob@comcast.net](mailto:alfabob@comcast.net)

Thanks,  
Jolene Justus  
AROC Administrator

If you received the 4-page printed version of this newsletter in the mail (with only chapter news, no Bertone and BAT supplement), then most likely we have not heard from back you regarding the survey asking whether you prefer receiving a basic newsletter in the mail or the email edition. Please respond to [alfarodeo@aol.com](mailto:alfarodeo@aol.com) by April 30, or your email newsletter will be discontinued and you will get only paper.

### FOR SALE

1991 164L, white/black. 92 K miles. Engine runs strong. Transmission rebuilt about 75K. Five original alloys. Exhaust and 2 tires new Fall 2007. Rear subframe badly corroded and rear brake line leaking. Ideal for parts or serious project. \$1800 or best offer. 216-363-9122 or [tkocovsky@faysharpe.com](mailto:tkocovsky@faysharpe.com) (Cleveland, Ohio area)

1983 Spider Veloce - Anthracite w/tan leather, 74K miles. Single owner, original, no rust. Body, interior, engine very good condition. \$7800. Mark, Ashland MA, [miampietro@msn.com](mailto:miampietro@msn.com) (3/08)

164 and Spider Parts - Parting out 164s and have many Spider parts. Sheet metal, electrical, trim, suspension. Also, check out my website for many Alfa accessories including t-shirts, golf shirts, hats, "Alfa Dog" dog collars and leashes, and much more at [www.redhousemotors.com](http://www.redhousemotors.com). Call me with your needs. Dave, Buffalo NY, [redhousemotors@adelphia.net](mailto:redhousemotors@adelphia.net), 716-839-4547, 716-982-9803

I have parts for the following cars: 1959 Giulietta Sprint, 1974 GTV, 1974/1976/1978/1979 Spiders. The following is a partial list of what is left: (1) 1750 short block, (1) 1600 short block, 3 sets of Spider door shells, one each of Spider and GTV heater units, (1) 13" ATS wheel, 1 Spider and 1 GTV complete brake/clutch pedal/cylinder sets. I have numerous other parts, so please send an email or give me call with whatever you might need. Lou, Medfield MA, 508-930-1323, [vwracebug53@netscape.net](mailto:vwracebug53@netscape.net)

Alfa photos and literature: <http://mcllellansautomotive.com/sales-lit/bymake/alfaromeo/index.shtml>

1994 ALFA Spider. Verdes Anglais with custom green leather interior. About 87,000 miles. I maybe the 2nd or third owner- can check, but the owner right before me had it for a very long time. Reluctant sale but must make room in garage. Car not driven in winter and only in Summer after salt is washed away. No rust on the car with the exception of the spare wheel well. Paint I would say is about 8.5 (maybe 9) out of 10 on most of the car, except the front bumper which is probably about a 6. All books, manuals, and tool box still intact. Come with factory CD changer.. wow (but it doesn't work). Trans if fine, but clutch is weak (it's the clutch for sure... the SOB that unloaded it off the trunk for me 4 years ag) glazed the clutch). If you speed shift it will grind, if you don't, it doesn't - just being forthright about the clutch. Price \$11,000. e-mail: [awayda@buffalo.edu](mailto:awayda@buffalo.edu)



Owners Club - Detroit



A sign outside the Dam Site Inn of Hell, Michigan