

Thoughts, ideas, criticism about cars. Interesting news and facts from the world of the automobile. Events in Italy and Modena. What you can find elsewhere, filtered through the eyes of a discerning enthusiast. Design, style, everything on the chopping block. Nobody is safe anymore.

Monday, September 21, 2009

## 7.4 1963: A Space Odyssey, Chevrolet Corvair Testudo



So you're Giorgetto Giugiaro, it's 1963 and you're the head of the design at Bertone.

What do you design?

The answer is this mind blowing white shape.

This design happened to be so important for both Nuccio Bertone and Giorgetto Giugiaro that the first drove this car to the 1963 Geneva auto show when the S. Bernardo and Mont Blanc tunnels from Italy to Switzerland were just a dream, and the latter tried to bring it home with him as a souvenir when he left the Turin based company. As you can imagine, he was not successful, seeing how the car is now exhibited at the Bertone Museum.

What really impresses me is the look of this car, its mighty long bonnet, the bubble cockpit and it's space ship shape. It's a strong and somehow disproportionate design, especially when you think there isn't another huge and powerful American V8. The engine, a 2.7 liter 6 cylinder boxer, is positioned at the back, sort of creating what was referred to as the American Porsche.

As many other cars from that period, especially high end ones, the trend was to create a soft and voluptuous body, geometry was still quite far from bringing to the car the boxy look which would be have

been born in the seventies and lasted through the first nineties.



This car is exactly this, a perfect mixture of a water drop and stone smoothed by the slow and constant action of natural elements over the years.

It doesn't look very aerodynamic, but it definitely looks like something we would consider as a car for space trips, something to drive to the moon and back. That's probably due to the large, bubble shaped and all transparent cockpit, more similar to the one of a dreamed UFO than of a plane. I'm actually wondering if people were already so used about space ships in 1963.

Ok, the famous Roswell accident happened 16 years before, but considering the lack of world wide media, and a much more practical focused public opinion, I don't think UFOs were such a common argument of conversation. Maybe it wasn't so at Giugiaro's house, as this would have look perfect in the middle of the living room on the last sequence of Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey.

If you think about the peculiar and uncommon choice of the car featured in the 1971 movie A Clockwork Orange, the 1969 M-505 Adams Brothers Probe 16, then I'm wondering why Kubrick didn't modify the plot of the movie to create a role also for this white beauty.



Cinema aside, the interior is another trip into the future. It's quite

spartan, very simple, still it resembles something more powerful than a car, something whit something that is more of a command bridge than a steering wheel and some dials. The squared a three-dimensional steering wheel is the main feature together with the reversed-L shaped dashboard.



An excellent example and simple, pure and minimalistic concept car which would have been quite a success if produced in a limited production run I think.

Perhaps what makes things even better is their exclusivity, the fact of being unique, that there isn't another one like it and it never will, but honestly, would you have minded 1.000 more Testudos storming those sweet sixties?



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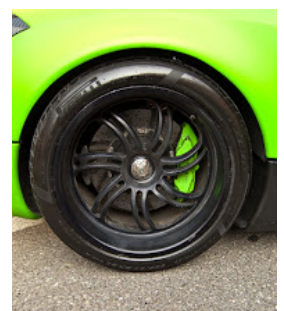
 

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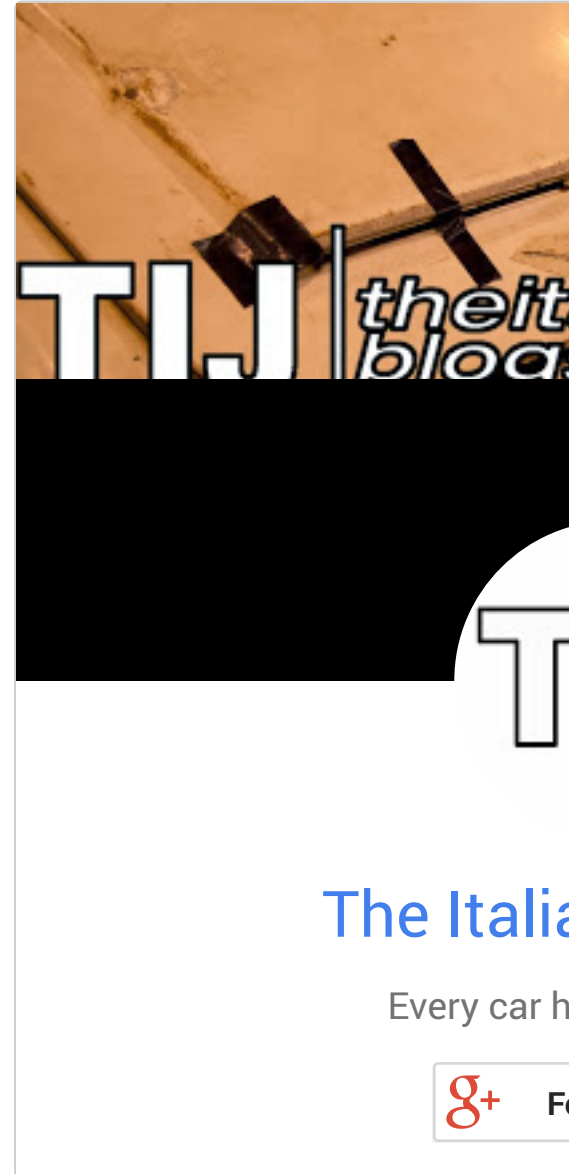




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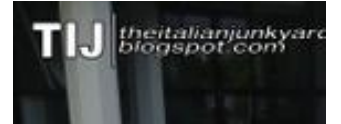
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