

CONTENTS

FEATURES

- 14 **Fiat Panda Cross 4x4**
Multi-skilled urban off-roader
- 20 **Lancia Delta HF integrale**
Three of the best
- 30 **Talacrest's Ferraris**
Interview with John Collins
- 36 **Alfa Romeo 6C 1750 Zagato**
We drive the 1929 Mille Miglia winner
- 44 **Fiat 60HP**
The world's most expensive car in 1905
- 50 **Italian Coachbuilders**
Carrozzeria Colli
- 56 **Cisitalia**
Focus on the D46 and 202
- 62 **Mission Impossible 2**
Determined Alfasud restoration
- 68 **Fiat X1/9s**
Two takes on how to improve the breed

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AND SAVE MONEY!
SEE PAGE 48 FOR DETAILS

REGULARS

- 06 **News**
Paris Show revelations
- 12 **Design**
Lamborghini Asterion LP910-4
- 82 **Events Diary**
Italian car club contacts and events
- 88 **Auto Vendo**
Pre-loved readers' cars for sale

CLUB ITALIA

- 76 **Monterey 2014**
California concours weekend
- 98 **Obscurati**
Bertone Spicup





new concept using chrome-molybdenum tubes used for building bicycles, the material was provided by another company owned by Dusio.

The mechanical set up utilised stock Fiat elements such as the engine block and braking system from the Milicento and parts of the suspension from the 500 'Topolino', namely the leaf spring suspension and rear axle. This was supported longitudinally by two leaf springs, two small coil springs and two lateral friction dampers. The arms of the independent front suspension were transverse leaf upper and lower wishbones that had been streamlined by Savonuzzi to improve aerodynamics. Subsequently, in 1948, the suspension was updated by adopting telescopic shock absorbers on all wheels and, at the rear, a transverse leaf top spring.

The light alloy cylinder head was produced by Cisitalia and had overhead valves with double springs that were driven by a lateral camshaft driven by pushrods and rocker arms. The exhaust valves were sodium filled. At first the engine was fuelled by an inverted Zenith carburettor, which was soon replaced by two twin choke Webers. At the height of development, the small four-cylinder engine delivered 70hp at 6000rpm, a big jump from the 32hp of the original Fiat engine.

The transmission had a three-speed semi-automatic gearbox designed by Giacosa specifically for the D45. Gear changes from second to third, and vice versa, were performed by simply pressing the clutch pedal, with no other changes by the driver. A lever on the steering column engaged first or reverse gear. The beautiful aluminium bodywork was built by Motto to a design by Giacosa.

Savonuzzi followed the whole development of the D45. The debut, as previously mentioned, took place in Turin in September 1946 in the race reserved for cars up to 1500cc. Seven Cisitalias presented themselves at the start line and the drivers included Nuvolari, Chiron, Taruffi, Sommer, Cortese, Biondetti and Dusio. Immediately after the event, the workshops at Carso Peschiera began production of 30 further examples.

ABOVE LEFT: Emotive picture of D45 production
BELOW CENTRE: Detail of the pre-select gearbox

CISITALIA 202

Meanwhile, the Ferrara engineer certainly did not lose sight of the other projects that the technical department at Cisitalia had undertaken. First of all was the new tubular frame for the 202 two-seater sports car. The first chassis was bodied by Colli in Turin (to a design by Savonuzzi) with eye-catching rear streamlining that gave the name 'Berlinetta Cassone' to the car. The second body was embellished with very pronounced tail fins and was known as 'Aerodynamica Savonuzzi'. It turned out to be one of the most successful cars of its time, thanks to the car's profile being designed in the wind tunnel at the Politecnico di Torino and was made even more pleasing when formed by the hands of Alfredo Vignale, who was working at Stabilimenti Farina at the time. From the Aerodynamica came the next variant that was an open car but with less pronounced fins. The first example was built by Carrozzeria Garelli of Turin and the other two by Stabilimenti Farina.

With these five cars Cisitalia appeared at the start of the 1947 Mille Miglia. It was a resounding success. The final victory of the race actually went to the Alfa Romeo 2900 of Biondetti/Romano, but behind it were

the Cisitalias, with the spider of Nuvolari/Carone in second place just 16 minutes from the winner, in third place was Bernabei/Pacini in a 'Berlinetta Cassone' and Minetti/Facetti with the 'Aerodynamica Savonuzzi' in fourth place. After the race the model driven by Cisitalia's 'Mantovano Volante' ('Flying Mantuan') was baptised Spider Nuvolari.

The sixth 202 chassis was sent to Carrozzeria Pininfarina. Here, on the basis of the 'Aerodynamica Savonuzzi' and with further guidance of the coachbuilder, was built the famous cars that would forever change the automotive design world – the Cisitalia 202 coupe (and later Spider). Its success was immediate, following its first appearance at the 1947 Paris Motor Show. Four years later, in 1951, the Museum of Modern Art in New York organised an exhibition of automotive design entitled '8 Automobiles'. The curator Arthur Drexler, considered the exhibited Cisitalia 202 to be a mobile sculpture par excellence. At the end of the show the 202 became part of the MOMA permanent collection.





Cisitalia Automobili

Giacosa, Dusio, Savonuzzi and Nuvolari – a combination of famous names that created the Cisitalia legend

Story by Luca Gastaldi
Photography by Archivi Gastaldi and Auto Italia

Let's begin with an image – an old photograph in black and white that has gone around the world. It was taken in Turin back in 1946 on September 3, on the occasion of the Coppa Brezzi that took place on the street circuit in the shadow of the spire of the Mole Antonelliana that dominates the Turin skyline. Tazio Nuvolari was at the wheel of a small car, indeed he 'has' the wheel of the car (picture below). This is the debuting Cisitalia D46 driven by the legendary 'Nivola', and the steering wheel literally came away in his hand during the race.

In effect, this famous image recalls some historical events that are worth repeating, maybe observed from a different point of view than usual and with more attention with regard to some of the characters too little mentioned. This is not the case with Nuvolari, of course, but the key reference here is to Giovanni Savonuzzi. Mention of the Nuvolari incident is relevant because Savonuzzi's attention to detail, so legend has it, resulted in a re-engineered steering wheel that had indentations on it to increase the grip of Nuvolari's fingers should it be required. True or not, this story does give a true picture of Savonuzzi, first as technically ingenious but also as a flamboyant spirit, full of life and always ready for a joke.

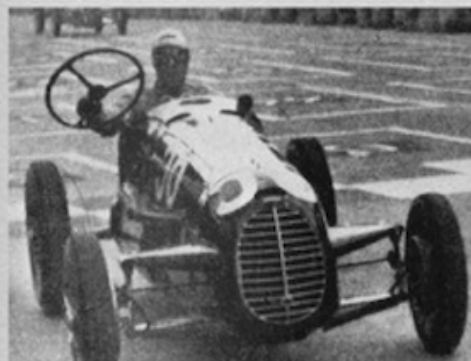
Giovanni Savonuzzi was born January 28, 1911 in

Ferrara. In 1939 he graduated in mechanical engineering at the Politecnico di Torino. At that time employment at Fiat was almost obligatory, so much so that Savonuzzi first became part of the aviation department at Lingotto. It was a fundamental step for the education of the technician from Ferrara in terms of aerodynamics, the concepts of which would subsequently be applied in the automotive field.

CISITALIA D46

After WWII Giovanni Savonuzzi was contacted by Cisitalia's Dante Giacosa and Piero Dusio. In August 1945, Dusio invited Savonuzzi to completely reorganise the technical department at Cisitalia where he designed new premises for workshop preparation and prototype testing. He started to build the Cisitalia D46s designed by Giacosa, as well as the tubular chassis to develop the first Cisitalia 202, later produced in several versions for both motorsport and touring road cars.

Savonuzzi, along with Giacosa, were key men in the development and affirmation of Cisitalia. Indeed, Giacosa set the initial projects, but it was without doubt Savonuzzi who brought them to a successful conclusion. As for the D46 (the acronym stands to indicate 'Dusio' and the year of construction, 1946), Giacosa had prepared a tubular frame, which was a





SAVONUZZI MOVES ON

After about two years of intense and passionate work with Cisitalia, Giovanni Savonuzzi decided to leave Piero Dusio's company in 1947. His master plan was aimed at the realisation of the Tipo 360 Grand Prix car in association with Ferri Porsche, Carlo Abarth and Rudolf Hruska. Savonuzzi quickly realised that this project would lead to disaster which began to fail in 1949 with the departure of Dusio to Argentina. This ended the first Cisitalia era and in 1948 he founded the Società Valdostana Automobili with Virgilio Conrero.

In 1951 Savonuzzi opened a new Cisitalia operation with the construction of the V8-engined 808 XF

sportscar designed in collaboration with Ford. Between 1954 and 1958, Savonuzzi became the technical director for designing and manufacturing car bodies at Ghia. Here Savonuzzi's footprint is unmistakable and we can see his style in prototypes and cars like the futuristic 1955 Ghia Gilda, the Volvo P1800, Ford Futura and the Volkswagen Karmann Ghia.

Savonuzzi moved to America to work for Chrysler in 1957 where he headed the ambitious turbine programme. His proposal was to build a turbine-powered Gilda. Finally, he returned to Fiat in 1958 where he became director of automotive research until he died in 1987.

ABOVE: Very little is known about this particular car, which appears to be a 202 Mille Miglia Coupé



Giovanni Savonuzzi at the wheel of a D46



NUVOLARI'S 1947 MILLE MIGLIA

The 1947 Mille Miglia was the first edition to be run in the postwar period. The route was longer than usual because it included Turin and Milan. In total the distance was 1823km. The race ran from Brescia through to Rome via Vicenza, Padua, Ferrara, Forlì, Fano and Terni. From Rome the route returned along the Via Aurelia to Livorno, Florence, Bologna, Parma, Voghera, Asti, Turin and Milan. At the start on June 21, 155 cars lined up and two of the debuts included the Ferrari 125 of Franco Cortese and the Maserati A6GC5 with Gigi Villoresi. There was also great interest in the five sensational new Cisitalias, but it was the great Tazio Nuvolari who was the real hero of the race.

Nuvolari was 55 years of age and the already suffering physically from the disease that would end his life six years

later. However, he soon proved to be the undisputed leader of the long and tiring Mille Miglia.

In Rome, after the first 718km race, Nuvolari found himself in command with seven minutes lead ahead of Biondetti (Alfa Romeo 2900) after covering the first part of the route at a 112km/h average speed. In Florence, the gap dropped to two minutes, but with the winding Futa Pass and the small Cisitalia Nuvolari managed to stretch the lead by another seven minutes. However at Asti, a real hurricane broke with lots of hail that presented serious difficulties for the crew of the Cisitalia. Besides having to deal with bad weather in an open car, there was also a water leak that damaged the ignition system, causing a loss of more than 20 minutes. Overtaking Biondetti was impossible on the fast highway and it was no longer possible for Nuvolari to recover the lost time. For Tazio, however, this was a second place that was worth more than a win. ||

