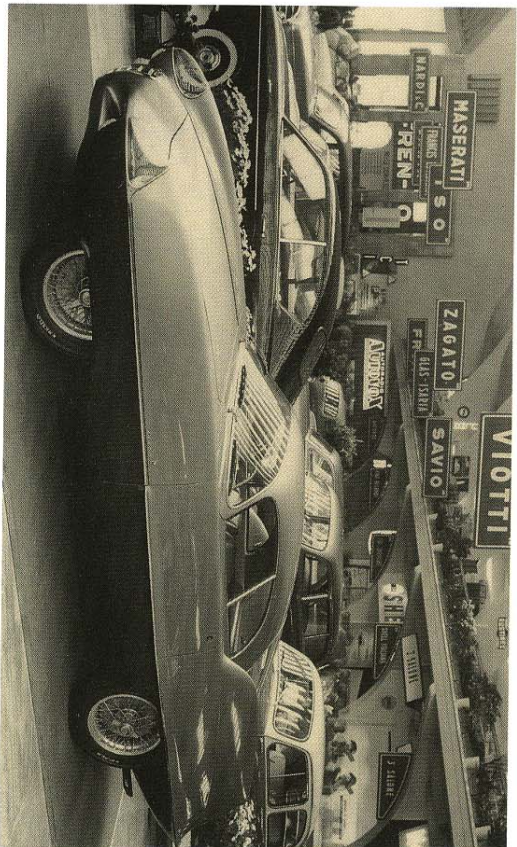
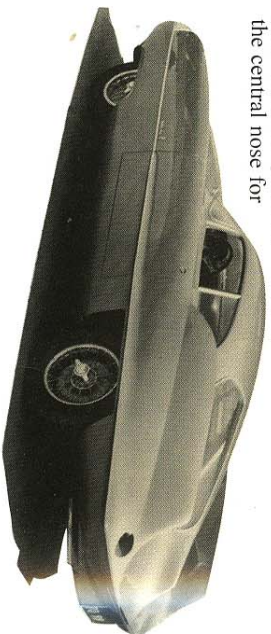


B.A.T. 9d (top), shown at Turin in 1955 (right), featured exposed headlights and rear wheels (far right, in final livery), modest fins and an Alfa Romeo Giulietta grille (above).



## B.A.T. 9d

Two successes in a row considerably heightened Bertone's prestige as an *avant garde* coachbuilder. However, the first two cars had been pure laboratory experiments that were not really suitable for translation into normal consumer products. For his third expression on the theme, exhibited at the 1955 Salon, Scaglione elected to simplify the idea and aim it toward an ideal *gran turismo* coupe. On the B.A.T. 9d, he added the new Giulietta grille to the central nose for



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unmistakable Alfa Romeo identification and eliminated the waste gates on the side. A horizontal ledge or "fence" was added halfway up the side to keep turbulence generated by the front wheels from "dirtying up" the upper side panels, and the fins were much more modest in both height and curvature. The rear wheels were left unskirted as the simplest way to insure air flow to the brake drums. Admission for this more feasible future proposal ran high and, again, the car was featured prominently by the international press.

The life of a show car can be brutal. For one brief moment it is all flashbulbs and endless poses with the rich, the famous and some lightly clad models. Then, with a little luck, there might be a continuing display in a showroom and, finally, obscurity in some remote corner of the factory or warehouse if there is space. Occasionally, there has been a friendly museum or historically minded collector who would acquire and treasure such testaments to ingenuity, craftsmanship and styling.

So what happened to the B.A.T.5?

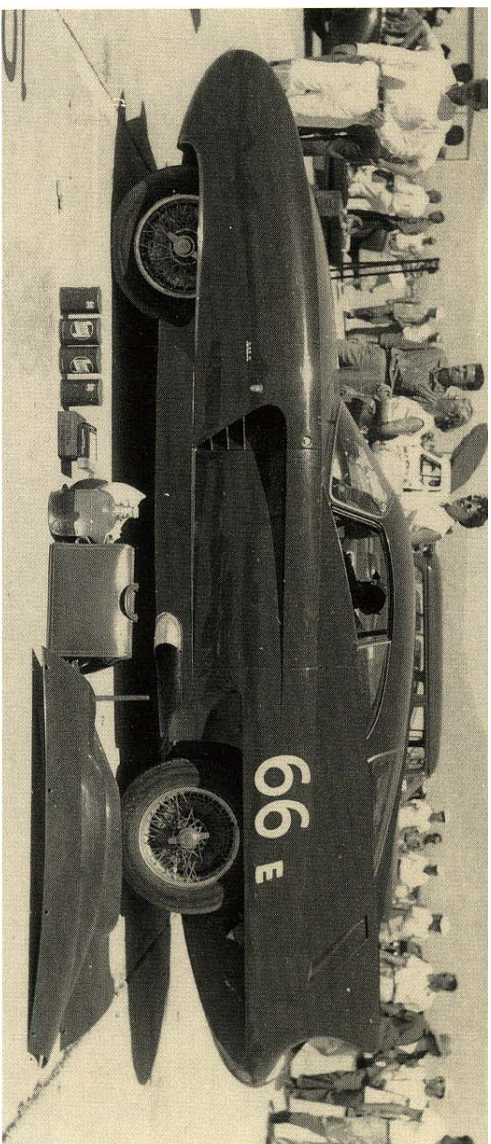
### B.A.T. 5 OUT OF THE LIMELIGHT

**S**tanley Arnolt bought B.A.T. 5 on October 1, 1953, for \$7,650, brought it to the United States, and loaned it to Herb Shriner for his great car shows where it carried a tag denoting its cost as \$25,000. Arnolt drove it occasionally, had it painted a darker silver and kept it in his Hoosier International Motors showroom in Warsaw, Indiana. The car acquired about 7,000 miles on the odometer from 1952 to 1956, when Arnolt sold it to his good friend Joe Pysak in South Bend. There was a little skin damage so Joe decided to make a long-term project out of restoring the car. A local hears maker did some metal finishing on the body, and then Joe attached it to a pipe and hung it from the rafters of his shop after he'd disassembled everything. And there it remained until finally, in 1987, it was advertised for sale in *Hemmings Motor News*. Said Marouf, a car collector and Alfa Romeo enthusiast in La Jolla, California, spotted the ad and immediately flew to

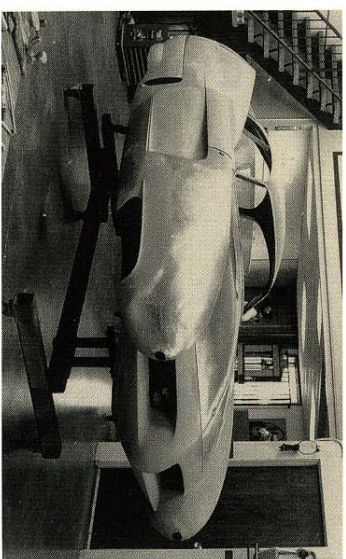
South Bend, accompanied by friend and restorer Rob Shanahan, and negotiated a sale. They researched the car extensively before commencing a year-long restoration to the car's original perfection. The car was shown at the 1988 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance where it received marvelous attention and a class prize.

### THE FINNS AND FORTUNES OF B.A.T. 7

**B**A.T. 7 was sold to Alfa Romeo on January 13, 1955, for 3.85 million lira (approximately \$6,200), painted red and sent to the United States where it was first shown at the New York Auto Show and then the Chicago show. Here the mists of time swirl a little, but the car was acquired by Al Williams, a San Francisco restaurateur, and Charles Rezzaghi, who placed it in his Alfa Romeo/Ferrari/Fiat showroom on Hyde Street. The car was then brought to Southern California and raced at the SCCA sports car races at Palm



**B.A.T. 7 was raced at Palm Springs in 1955 (above) but was uncompetitively heavy. Shorn of its fins in the late Fifties, the body was carefully reconstructed when B.A.T. 7 was restored in the Eighties (below).**



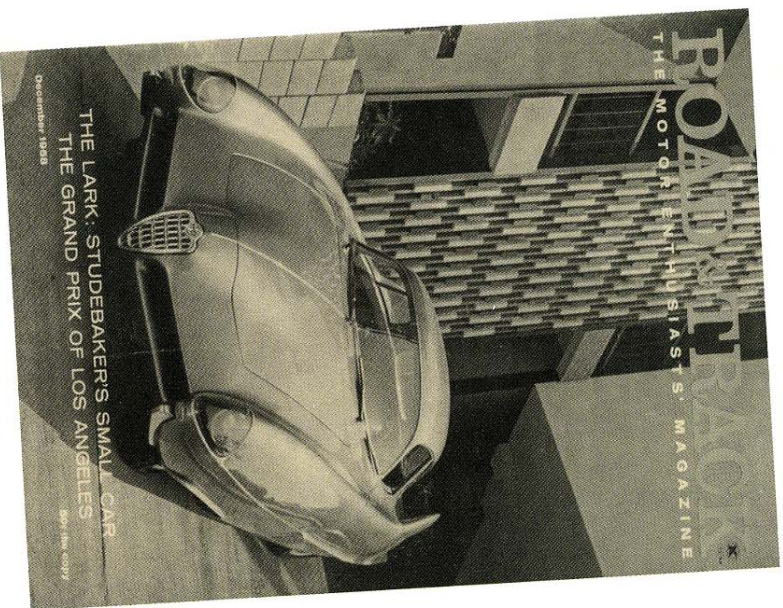
Springs in March 1955, where it performed well but was somewhat outclassed by the lighter roadsters in the two-liter class. Following that, it was displayed at Bill Doeheny's Ferrari sales and maintenance office on Sunset Strip. The author remembers sitting in it to check rear visibility and finding that you could *just* see backwards over the wildly curving fins. Nevertheless, when the car returned to the Bay area the fins were removed by a local body shop to make the car more street-driveable. The engine had been removed and, in the process, dropped on the right front fender leaving an ugly dent. Primed and re-surfaced by Ken Shafr, the car sat for almost a year before it was bought by Ken Shafr. Since it was his only car at the time, he quickly made it operational but found that the race-tuned engine was too hot for the street. He had the camshafts reground to a milder lift profile. He also had the car repainted Rolls-Royce sand and black and showed it at the 1958 Pebble Beach Concours. It was not listed

among the class winners and may even have been somewhat controversial among the more staid Rolls-Royce, Jaguar and Mercedes-Benz entries. The windshield was broken in 1960 and cost estimates for its replacement were more than the car's market value. The next owner was Col. James Sorrell, who had a great affinity for exotic cars

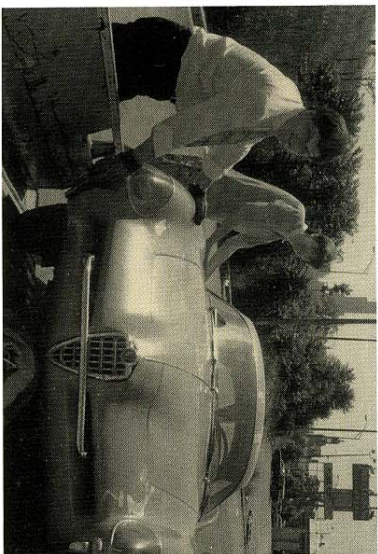
and owned a number of them. He sent the 7 to Salvatore di Natale's S & A Italian Sports Cars on Sepulveda Boulevard in Van Nuys. Sal di Natale was undoubtedly the finest Alfa and Maserati man on the West Coast.

As requested, Sal did get the car running again, but then time went by and no one came to collect it. After some years he eventually placed a mechanic's lien on the car and acquired ownership. Jim di Natale, Sal's son, remembers driving the car to high school in the Sixties but parking it blocks away because of its disreputable appearance. The car was also shunted around to different locations during the 17 years that Salvatore owned it—parking space for a treasured heirloom was at a premium. He knew that the car had significant value, but did not know exactly how much it was worth. He even tested the waters by running an ad in *Road & Track* at one point. But the results (or lack of them) convinced him that it was still worth keeping. At last it was decided to begin restoring the body, but the first step of reconstructing the fins was so abortive that the project was abandoned. Knowledge of the car's existence was shared among the local sports car cognoscenti, including Steve Tillack who had, at one point, worked just around the corner from di Natale's shop and remembered seeing the car on the street. Finally, as an established restorer, in 1986 he was able to approach Jim di Natale and begin negotiations for a sale on behalf of a strongly interested client. Salvatore had returned to his native Sicily in 1985, so it took a year to complete the deal. The first move was to completely disassemble the car and deliver the stripped body shell to Sebastian Dominguez's shop in Bell Gardens for complete metal resurfacing, including reconstruction of the famous fins.

Not enough can be said for Sebastian's superb craftsmanship on that part of the restoration. Working from many photos he was first able to accurately mock-up the complete rear quarter on one side of the body and then take templates from it to create the symmetrical wooden forms on which the final skins would be fitted. This work can only be appreciated when one sees the perfect fluidity of surface control and the precise replication of the original design. This, along with all of the other repair and construction of a mold with which to make a new windshield, took another year. The body then went to Steve Alcala and Rick Fitzgerald who, respectively, completed the flawless metal surface preparation and final paintwork. While detailing the body they found a small hidden area showing the original color and were able to match it accurately. By carefully choreographing his entire workforce, Tillack was able to complete the mechanical restoration, fully trim the interior and assemble all of the components to have the fully operational car ready for presentation at the 1989 Pebble Beach Concours.



B.A.T. 9d was *Road & Track's* December 1958 cover car (above); in the Sixties it was displayed at the Kaberles' shop (below). In 1987, Kaberle and his son took 9d to Chicago for paint (above right).



## THE SEVERAL LIVES OF B.A.T. 9d

Harry Woodnorth, enthusiast and purveyor of fine motor cars in Chicago, had spotted the dark gray metallic B.A.T. 9d in the parking lot of the Sebring 12-Hour race in March 1965, with a "For Sale" sign on it. No one was in the car, but he was curious and interested, so he waited. The race was over when Juan Manuel Fangio and Eugenio Castellotti won with their Ferrari and then it began to rain. Woodnorth's new Harris Tweed suit was soaked and shrinking but still he waited, joined now by fellow sales entrepreneur Tom Barrett. They agreed to buy the car together and took turns waiting for the driver to show up.

Finally, a man and woman made their appearance an hour after the race was over, and Tom gave them a short blast for not having put at least a name and phone number on the sign (which Harry said probably cost them an extra \$1,000), but they struck a deal on the spot. Tom agreed to drive the car to Chicago and left with Jim McNamara as co-pilot while Harry went off to an after-race party. After a couple of hours of mellow celebration, Harry received a phone call from a little town about 100 miles away. Tom was tired of nursing the tightly confining little Alfa and would Harry come and pick them up? When he finally arrived in a rented Ford convertible, he found the two men sitting back-to-back in an empty parking lot with the B.A.T. nowhere in sight. Tom had flagged down an empty car carrier headed for Indianapolis and persuaded the driver to accept a consignment.

Losing interest, Barrett eventually sold his part of the car to Harry when re-sale turned out to be a slight problem. After about two years Woodnorth sold the car to Ed Beseler of Lansing, Michigan, who didn't really care for the silver gray, so Harry had Joe Newmeyer paint it Italian

red. After Beseler died, the car went into limbo and was eventually bought by Arlen Regis from an estate sale. Regis, the manager of Chapin Motors, a Dodge/Plymouth/Fiat dealership in Greenville, Michigan, drove the car occasionally but also displayed it in the front line of new cars outside the dealership as an attention-getter.

Sixteen-year-old Gary Kaberle, from Ewart, a small town about 50 miles north of Greenville, was riding south to Ionia with his cousin on a warm summer afternoon in 1962 when they passed through Greenville and spotted the B.A.T. The shock hadn't worn off when they stopped again on the way back home and Gary mused to himself, "I wonder what it would be like to own a car like that?"

A week later he met Regis, who told him the car wasn't for sale but did admit that it was probably worth more than any of the new cars out in front. Little did he reckon with Kaberle's persistence. Gary gathered up all his savings plus a couple of family loans, stuffed the money (in fifties and hundreds) into a suitcase and then spread it on the manager's desk. Convinced, Regis put on a white shop coat, tuned the engine, installed a side mirror and a small chrome nerf bar in front of the vulnerable Alfa grille and taught Gary how to manage the stick shift before sending him off to hometown glory. Kaberle's life was dramatically enhanced as the finished high school, got his bachelor's degree from Michigan State and then his D.D.S. from the University of Michigan. He only used the car for special occasions and took it to each of the campuses about once a year where it swung heads, attracted beautiful girls and made the local paper as an event. He hadn't really known what the car was until about two years after he'd bought it. A visitor saw it on display in front of his parents' gift shop/restaurant and told him about the cover story in the December 1958 issue of *Road & Track*. Fired by the realization that it was a very significant one-off show car, he started an exhaustive historical investigation that began with a letter to Nuccio Bertone.

A chance introduction to Les Henry, then curator at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, resulted in an invitation to display the car at its annual Sports Cars in Review in the late Sixties. Then, in early 1987, the whereabouts of the B.A.T. 9d became known to the organizers of the Meadow Brook Hall Concours d'Elegance in Rochester, Michigan, and Gary was invited to show the car. By this time the red paint was beginning to deteriorate, so he trailered it back to Harry Woodnorth in Chicago for cosmetic refreshment that included a new, metal-up silver paint job as part of the preparation. Ninety-five percent complete (minus only a few pieces of trim), the car arrived at 3:00 a.m. on the morning of the show and was received with delight by everyone. Then it went back to Chicago long enough to be completed before returning to Gary's home in Traverse City,

## REUNIO

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## REUNION

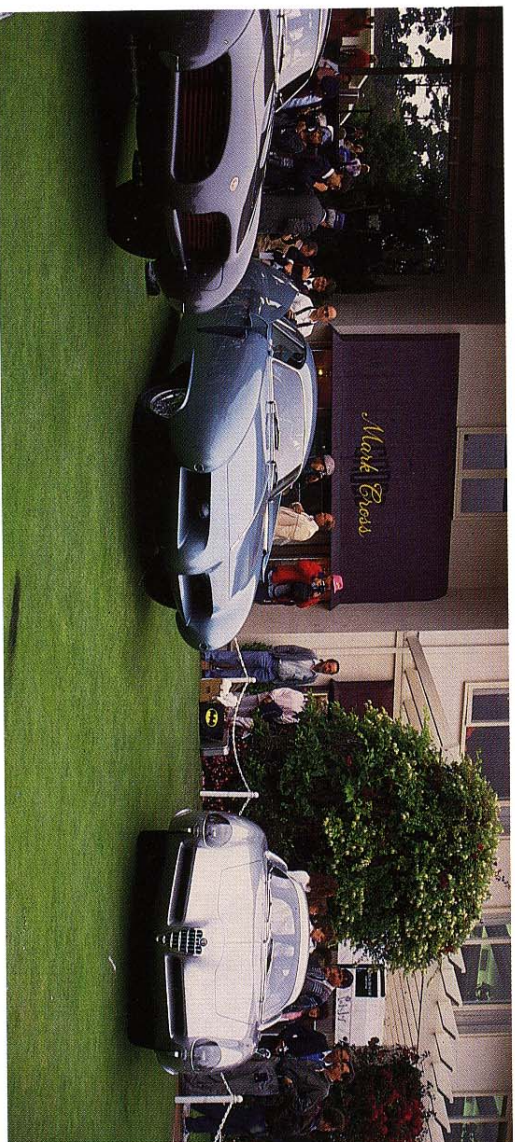
The strokes of fate that caused all three of the B.A.T.s to surface in 1987 were not lost on Lorin Tryon and Jules Huemann, co-chairmen of the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. Their combined enthusiasm for world class design had progressively raised the level of interest in the show and they kept close tabs on the restorations of both B.A.T. 5 and B.A.T. 7. In fact, Rob Shanahan completed his work on the 5 in time for it to be entered in the 1988 show where it received a class award. Steve Tillaack's job for the 7 was monumental in that virtually every part of the car had to be refinished, repaired or re-manufactured and that took even more time.

J. Bruce McWilliams (see *AQ*, vol. 26, no. 2) has always had a profound respect for the importance of good automobile design, and his experience on the executive level has been most beneficial. Now head of his own consulting firm in Pound Ridge, New York, he is also a close personal friend of Nuccio Bertone. It was his proposal that initiated an invitation from David R. Brown, president of the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, for Bertone to receive an honorary degree during the college's commencement ceremony on August 18, 1989. Aware of this, Tryon and Huemann simultaneously invited Bertone to be guest of honor and honorary judge at the 39th annual Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance to be held two days later. The problems involved in getting all three B.A.T.s together (for the first time ever) were resolved when Knox Kershaw, a highly respected participant from Montgomery, Alabama, generously offered to have his transporter pick up Kaberle's car from Traverse City and bring it out to California.

Bertone's acceptance of the Doctor of Science degree was indeed a proud moment for everyone. He was accompanied by his wife, two beautiful daughters, his chief administrator Gian Beppe Panico and Bruce McWilliams. In turn, it was a moment of great pride for all of Art Center's students and faculty to have the dean of Italian coach-builders as their guest.

Then there was the pleasure of a day's drive up the coast to the Pebble Beach Lodge near Monterey, an essential experience for any foreign visitor.

From the moment that Nuccio Bertone complimented Dr. Kaberle on his car early on the day of the concours to the buffet supper afterwards at the Beach & Tennis Club overlooking Carmel Bay, the day was an endless celebration of his design leadership, charismatic personality and splendid achievements. In addition to eight other Bertone-bodied cars competing on the field, the three B.A.T.s were received together on the presentation ramp by Bertone as a major historic event.



All three B.A.T.s were displayed at Pebble Beach in 1989 (above), prior to being presented together with Nuccio Bertone on the viewing ramp (below).

## KEEPING THE B.A.T.s TOGETHER

The next morning during a photo shoot, Nuccio Bertone approached each car in succession and touched its hood as a silent farewell, probably thinking that he might never see them all together again. Surprisingly, he didn't estimate the emotional power of this splendid reunion but some others did. It was the kind of moment that nobody wanted to end and so the entrepreneurial wheels began to turn. Already one of the cars was eligible for sale, and if a second was to become available it would be a challenge to approach the owner of the third car in order to create the automotive triptych of the century—the three cars in one collection! There may have been others who were considering such action, but one perceptive and immensely courageous collector did supply the leverage and, in time, acquired ownership of all three cars and thus fulfilled everyone's hope that they would stay together. It is to his everlasting credit that when a change in the economy caused him to retreat in his investments, the cars were offered as a package and not individually.

This formidable trio then began to travel in 1991. First they went to Italy. They were exhibited on the center podium of the annual Genoa Autostory in February 1992, and they then went back to their birthplace in Turin to help celebrate the 90th anniversary of Giovanni Bertone's founding of his firm. Next stop was the *Centre International de l'Automobile* in Pantin (Paris) and then the Retromobile Exposition at the Porte de Versailles in



February 1993. The cars were then flown back to Danville, California, for exhibition at the Blackhawk Collection's Auction and Exposition in May. They were the centerpiece display at Blackhawk's Exposition at Pebble Beach in August 1993. Then there was a short rest before the cars were shipped to England. They were first displayed at the Museum of Science in South Kensington, London, before they were to be the main event of Coys International Historic Festival Auction and Sales Exhibition at Silverstone on July 30, 1994.

Whatever their final destination may be, we can be grateful that these three masterpieces of automobile design will survive to remind us that, in Franco Scaglione's words, "Efficiency Equals Beauty," and of Nuccio Bertone's inspired summation—"Bellissimo!" ☼