



Works DB2s at the Villa d'Este

by Gareth Tarr

The 2010 Villa D'Este Concorso D'Eleganza featured not one but two ex-works DB2s and a V12 Lagonda Rapide amongst the 58 cars in competition, as well as several other cars with Aston links.

For many the 1950s were the greatest years for sports car racing and undoubtedly a significant contribution to this affection is the look of the cars themselves. Think not just DB2s, DB3Ss and DBR1 but also C and D type Jaguars, countless Maseratis and Ferraris plus Osca, Lister, Lancia... the list goes on.

The Villa D'Este Concorso celebrates these cars with a dedicated class and it was in this category that DB2 VMF 64 was entered. It was one of three 1950 Works cars that ran at Le Mans that year (and in 1951 where it was 3rd overall) before becoming David Brown's personal car for a few years and then passing on to the Lascelles family who owned the car until last year.

It attracted a lot of interest when it was sold at auction to its present owner, Helmut Rothenburger, for a record price of £550,000. Helmut reports that the car is running well and he will keep it in its current condition with countless scratches and dinks rather than have it restored.



The Waltenberg DB2, one of two ex-works DB2s on show.



Unique Bertelli-bodied Bugatti Type 57.



Right: The Villa d'Este and Lake Como provide the perfect setting for displaying some of the world's most beautiful cars.



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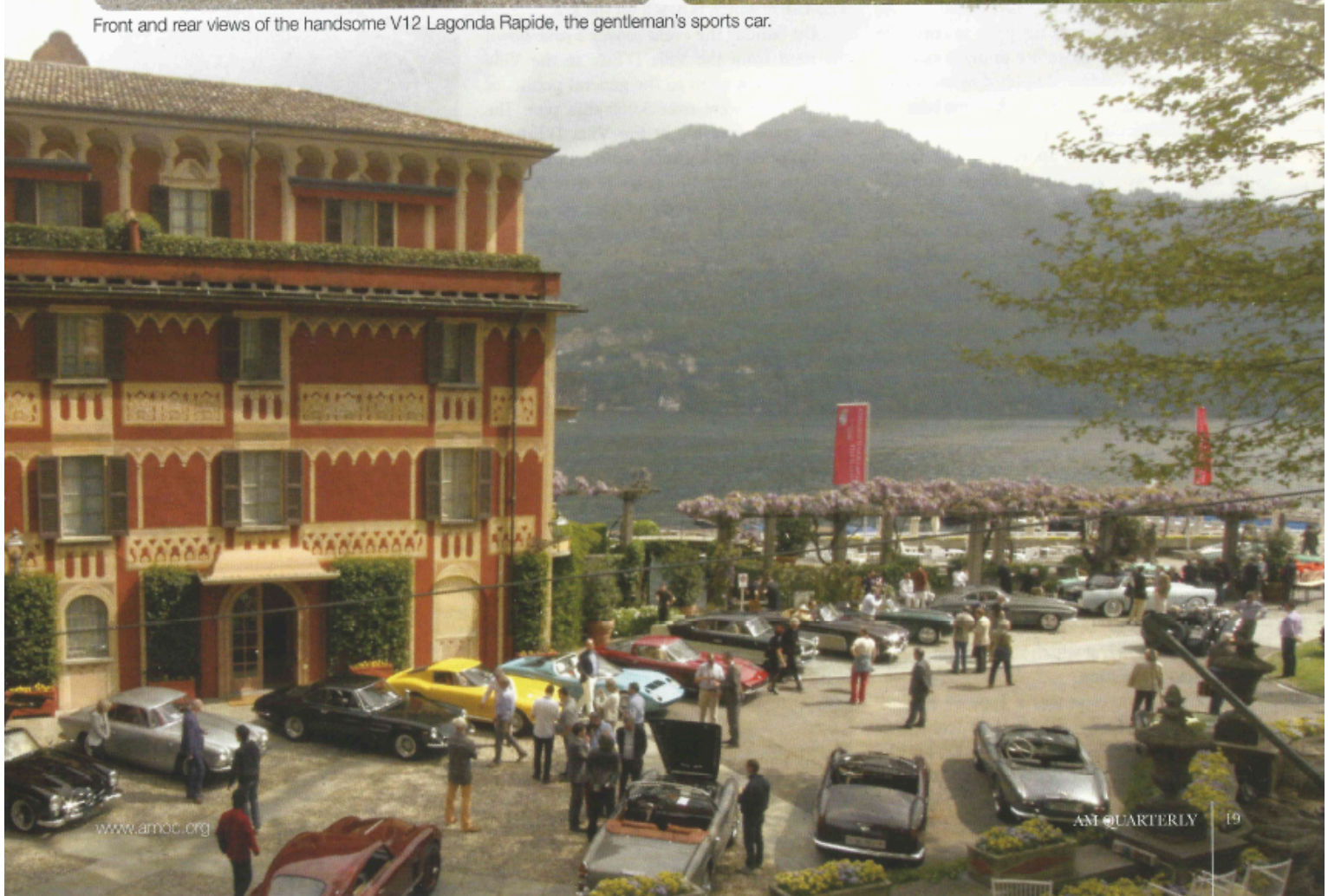
Mercedes Gull-wing owned by Paul Stewart.



Sensational Alfa Romeo 2900B Touring from the manufacturer's own museum.



Front and rear views of the handsome V12 Lagonda Rapide, the gentleman's sports car.





Works DB2s at the Villa d'Este



Pininfarina's 2uettottanta celebrating Alfa Romeo's centenary.

Following Villa d'Este the car was expected to compete in the Mille Miglia and Classic Le Mans. VMF 64 was given a mention of honour (effectively runner-up) in its class which was won by a 1900SS Zagato Alfa Romeo, a class, that also included a C Type (raced by Phil Hill), a D Type, a 255 Export Ferrari (Vignale body) and the diminutive Gaur 750.

Entered in the post-war sports car class was the other Works DB2, UMC 272, a year older than VMF 64 and hence a 1949 car which was used for development and not raced by the factory. In contrast to VMF 64 this car has been restored three times and is now back in its original maroon colour.

Owner, Daniel Waltenberg of Switzerland, has a fascinating file covering the history of this car, including 1966 letters from both Stirling Moss and Lance Macklin (the car's second owner who did race it) explaining details about it. As with VMF 64 this is not the place to cover the history of this car but suffice to say it raced in the 1950 Targa Florio and finished second in the Coppa Inter-Europa at Monza the same year.

An immaculate 1954 Gull-wing Mercedes, now owned by Paul Stewart whose father was also present at the Villa D'Este, won this class. When asked about his recollections of the Gull-wing in the 1950s Sir Jackie recalled Denis Jenkinson once stopping for fuel at the Stewart garage with a Gull-wing on his way back from a Rest and Be Thankful hill climb. The Stewart family used to stay at the Villa D'Este when Jackie was racing at Monza.

The V12 Lagonda Rapide on display, owned by Michael Kaufmann of Austria, was one of only 13 similar cars. Built in 1938 the Lagonda was painted in a colour described as 'special mushroom', in reality a two-tone green that suits this lovely car.

This car was upgraded in 1939 to a four-carburettor Le Mans spec engine. Works cars with the same engine finished 3rd and 4th at that year's 24 hours. The car was in America for many years before its present owner bought it in 1997, at which stage he initiated a complete restoration.

In the same class was a Type 57 Bugatti with bodywork by the Bertelli company. During the 1930s Enrico Bertelli mostly built bodies for Aston. Originally ordered by



Lord March and Sir Jackie Stewart.

Colonel G M Giles, founder of the Bugatti Owners Club, this is the only Bugatti clothed by Bertelli.

A magnificent Gurney Nutting Bentley 8 litre, entered by Peter Livanos, earned a mention of honour in its class which was won by a superb Pininfarina Lancia Astura. A super car in its day capable of more than the ton, approximately 100 of these Bentleys were made during 1930-31 before Rolls Royce took over the company and stopped production.

The Concept and Prototype class, which was memorably won by the Aston Martin One-77 last year, included cars from two coachbuilders with historical Aston Martin links. Touring Superleggera showed the Bentley Continental Shooting Brake which debuted at the recent Geneva Motor Show whilst Zagato paid homage to Alfa Romeo's centenary by giving a world premiere to its TZ3 Corsa which is based on the 8C.

On Sunday the event moves a mile down the road from the Villa D'Este to the Villa D'Erba and is open to the general public, of which there were over 5,000 this year. The extra space available at the Villa D'Erba is used to celebrate a special anniversary, which this year was the 100 years of Alfa Romeo. It was made up mostly of cars from Alfa's museum, including a pale blue 2900B similar



The Frua Maserati that won the Coppa D'Oro.

to the winner of the Concorso last year.

This display also included Pininfarina's gorgeous 2uettottanta concept revealed at the Geneva Motor Show, which hopefully suggests that the Alfa name will continue to be associated with beautiful cars for many years to come.

A splendid 1955 Maserati A6GCS by Frua was the winner of the main prize at the Concorso, the Coppa D'Oro, which is voted for in public referendum by guests invited to the Villa D'Este on Saturday. The judges, who included Lord March, instead voted for a flamboyant teardrop Talbot Lago by Figoni and Falaschi, which was also the favourite of the public vote on Sunday. The 2010 Villa D'Este was yet again a spectacular celebration of the beauty of the motor car.



The dashboard of VMF 64 shows 60 years of use.



Magnificent Lagonda V12.