

A ONE-OF-A-KIND COUPE

The Appia was Lancia's first major commercial success.

It was introduced in 1953 and remained in production until 1963. Keep in mind that, prior to it, the Piedmontese brand's bestseller had been the Ardea, produced in just over 31,000 units, while the Appia—across its three generations—exceeded 100,000 units. To be precise, 107,048. In its original configuration, this Lancia model had four doors and measured less than 3.9 meters, making it a “compact” sedan, to use a term in vogue today. In appearance, it echoed—albeit on a smaller scale—many of the Aurelia's lines and was designed to compete with the Fiat 1100/103 in the market. After all, at that time, Lancia was still far from being absorbed by Fiat: an event that did not occur until 1969.

Compared to the 1100/103, however, the Appia had much more sophisticated mechanics, starting with the four-cylinder engine featuring an extremely narrow 10°14' V-angle: likely the narrowest angle between the cylinder banks in the history of the automobile. The valve train featured inclined overhead valves, driven by two camshafts located in the crankcase. And its performance was also superior to that of its Fiat-badged competitor.

But the production figures mentioned above were also boosted by over 5,000 lowered chassis that Lancia made available to the leading coachbuilders of the era to create “custom-built” models with a predominantly sporty character—if not outright racing cars—to compete in GT and touring car classes, as well as in hillclimb races.

Allemano, Boano, Ghia, Pininfarina, Vignale, and Viotti (who also built 300 Appia “giardinetta” models, an extravagance for the time) took on the challenge of designing these cars, and from 1957 to 1962, Zagato joined the ranks, christening its approximately 700 Appia-based creations—which were the most “aggressive”—as Gtz (Gran Turismo Zagato), GTE (Gran Turismo Esportazione), or Sport, for its approximately 700 Appia-based creations, which were the most “aggressive” in design.

Among the special models produced by the Milanese coachbuilder, however, the Gtz Prototype featured in this article holds particular significance, as it was commissioned in April 1958 for “

personal” model, created by Elio Zagato (1921–2009), son of Ugo, founder of the Lombard atelier, and grandson of Gianni. The car has chassis no. 1875 and is now owned by Andrea Nannetti, a well-known yet young figure in the classic car industry.

With this car, Elio Zagato—who liked to compete under the nickname “Rosso”—entered the 1958 Coppa San Marino, the 6 Ore Esso at Val-lungua, the Trento Bondone, the Giro delle Calabrie, and the Coppa Intereuropa at Monza. And with him, on the Brianza circuit, the car achieved the most significant victory of its racing history, crossing the finish line in fourth place overall behind three Alfa Giulietta SZs and winning its class, notably ahead of Carlo Coppo's Fiat 1100 Zagato.

The following year, Elio Zagato sold it to other drivers who helped extend the car's racing record until the 1961 Trofeo Lumezzane Coppa Cantoni, when the GTZ Prototype ended its racing career. During its racing career, the car had only two accidents: the first at the 1959 Coppa Città di Asiago and the second, which almost completely destroyed the front end, at the 1960 Coppa della Consuma. The integrity of the body, however, was not compromised.

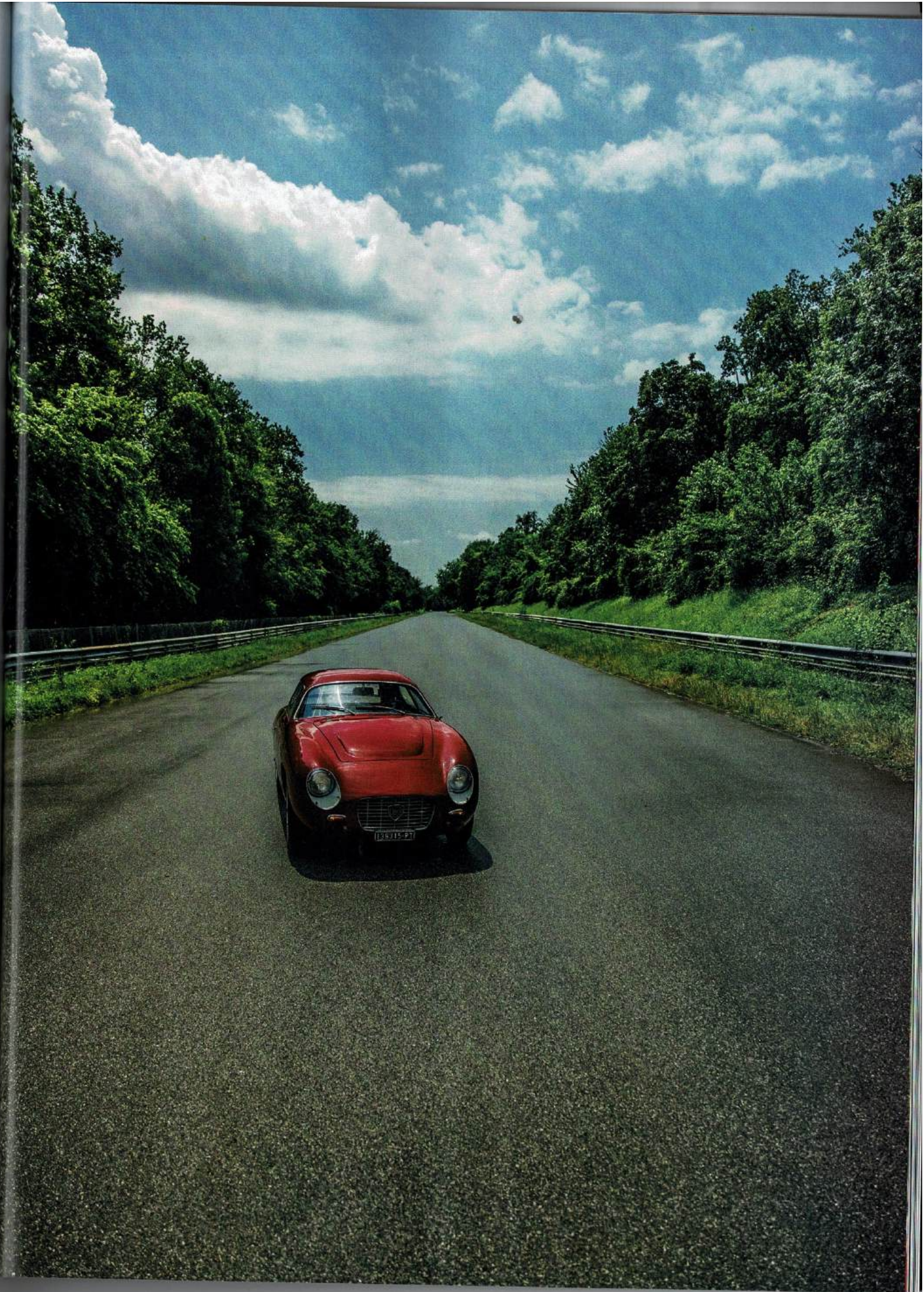
When it was built for Elio Zagato, the car was red, but over the course of its existence it was also white and silver, before being repainted in the red that still characterizes it today in the mid-1970s.

This example stands out from other Appia GTZs due to the absence of rear fins, its more tapered and aerodynamic front end, and the ca

It stands out for its greater height and for its recessed, fairing-covered headlights with a more vertical profile, while even in this case the roof bulges characteristic of many Zagatos—starting with the very first GTZ from 1956, affectionately and ironically nicknamed “Camel” precisely because of the humps on the roof—are conspicuous by their absence. Yet numerous stylistic traits remain evident that

THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 700 SPECIAL APPIA MODELS BUILT BY ZAGATO

Unlike many of the Milanese coachbuilder's creations, the roof humps are missing

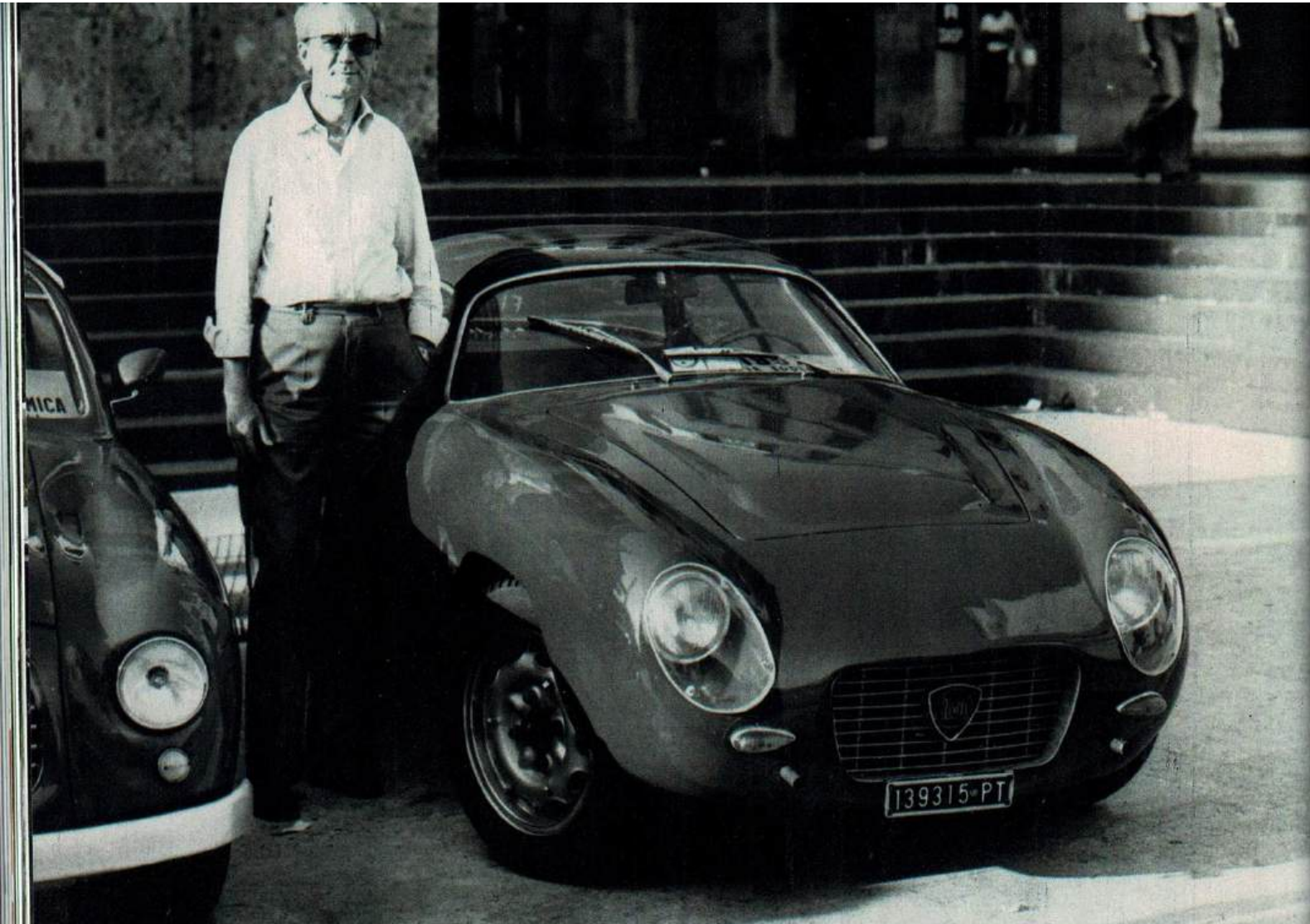




The interior is extremely minimalist to save on materials. There isn't even a heating system



Even the seats with dual-stage adjustment, both on the backrest and the seat cushion, are an absolute rarity among the Appia GTZs



Elio Zagato sold his personal GTZ prototype in 1959, but came across it again nearly 20 years later, during an event in Lugano in 1977, and, subsequently, during the first Zagato International Rally held in 1979 at Villa D'Este

Zagato would later apply this design to the Alfa Romeo Giulietta SZ, which debuted two years later. Compared to the original 1958 configuration, however, the taillights have changed; originally they were the standard ones from the Appia II Series, but in the 1970s they were replaced with the ones still fitted today, identical to those of the Osca 1600 Zagato, as well as the Ferrari 250 GT SWB.

For the record, however, it should be noted that two additional GTZs—revised and modified along the lines of the Prototype with chassis 1875, which were later intended to give rise to the GTE series—were built (with chassis 2130 and 2131); however, there is no information about them, and it is presumed that they were destroyed. But let's return to the actual story of the star of this feature, which, at the end of the first part of its racing career—from the 1970s to the mid-1980s—took part in various historic events, entered by successive owners over the years and even sporting different license plates (the first,

in 1958, it was MI 396190). The last of the owners who preceded Andrea Nannetti was Emanuele Marciànò, an Osca collector who recently passed away, who kept it from 1975 to 2023. Marciànò had purchased it for just one million lire from Andrea Biselli, because the latter was not entirely certain of the car's authenticity, as it was so different from the other GTZs. However, Marciànò, being an expert as he was, realized that the car had not been "tampered with" at all and consulted Elio Zagato, who recognized it from the description. And he returned to see his former car, and to have his picture taken with it, during two classic car events: at the Kursaal in Lugano in 1977 and at the 1st International Zagato Rally held at Villa D'Este in 1979.

Technically, the GTZ Prototype is based on the Appia II Series, built from 1956 to 1959, which was the first Lancia on which engineer Antonio Fessia had a major influence, in his capacity as Technical Director of the Piedmontese manufacturer. Fessia, as we recall, was later the father of the Flaminia, the Fulvia, and the Flavia, but above all, he was the visionary designer who brought to Lancia the then-cutting-edge concepts of front-wheel drive, fuel injection, boxer engine, four-wheel disc brakes, and a dual-circuit braking system.

Compared to the engine of the first-series Appia, the second-series version features a modified cylinder head, different pistons, and a different carburetor. The cams on the two camshafts have also been changed, and the valves all have stems of the same length. The suspension, which uses hydraulic shock absorbers, is independent at the front, with coil springs, and features a rigid axle with longitudinal leaf springs at the rear. The transmission is a four-speed manual, the drive is obviously rear-wheel, and the brakes are drum brakes on all wheels.

On the second official series of the Appia, the declared power for the 1089 cm³ engine was 44 hp at 4800 rpm, for a top speed of 128 km/h. But in the case of the GTZ, the horsepower rose to 53, at roughly the same rpm, thanks in part to

ESTIMATED VALUE? 300,000 EUROS MIGHT BE ENOUGH

following the adoption of a dual-barrel Weber 36 Dcl d 3 carburetor in place of the single-barrel Solex 32 Pbic. The top speed was estimated at around 160 km/h for standard GTZs, but the Prototype should be a bit faster, thanks to even more extreme aerodynamics. After all, at Zagato, which had aeronautical know-how, even back then great attention was paid to airflow.

Unable to rely on a wind tunnel capable of accommodating a full-size car, 1:5 scale models were built, which were then refined in the small wind tunnel at the Politecnico di Milano. And the Appia Prototipo's weight is also extremely low thanks to further weight-reduction efforts that brought the weight down from the 800 kg of the "standard" GTZs to about 750 kg. By comparison, the second-series Appia sedan, with a steel body instead of the Zagato's molded aluminum, weighed 860 kg.

Like all Appias, the Prototipo also stands out for its simple and reliable mechanics.

reliable mechanics. Compared to the other GTZs, it features no significant modifications, and during the brief period he owned it, Andrea Nannetti had to perform, in addition to polishing the bodywork, only general inspections and repairs to the braking system because, as with all Appias, the drums exhibit a certain tendency to lock up. The engine runs like a dream, and at speeds approaching maximum power, it takes on a very aggressive tone, thanks to the relatively free-flowing, straight-through exhaust.

Obviously, since this is a one-off example, there is no officially recognized valuation for this car in the collecting world, but according to Carrozzeria Zagato itself, the car's value should be around 300,000 euros.

The small V4 engine produces only 53 horsepower, but the car's 750 kg weight enhances its performance