



MAUTO - Museo Nazionale dell'Automobile di Torino
MICHELOTTI WORLD
EXHIBITION ROUTE AND CARS ON DISPLAY

EXHIBITION ROUTE

A shop boy, 1937

At 16 years of age, window dresser Giovanni Michelotti responds to a job posting from Stabilimenti Farina, the most prestigious coachbuilder in Turin. He goes to work by bicycle, dressed as a shop boy. He sharpens pencils, he tidies drawings up, he runs errands. But, most of all, he tries to learn. Pietro Frua, older than him by a few years, is the director of styling. He will be his first teacher. When Frua leaves the company because of his arguments with Attilio Farina, the young handyman has just completed a night design class. He finds himself with a pencil in his hand and in the workshop, working on a new Alfa Romeo for Mario Revelli di Beaumont.

The coachbuilder's coachbuilder

Between 1938 and 1947, Michelotti designs the most important cars ever to be fitted with a Stabilimenti Farina coachwork. The opportunity is extraordinary and some of his creations memorable. Sadly, the Second World War puts the automobile industry on a five years long hiatus and, by the end of the 1940s, the star of the Farina brothers is fading. Michelotti becomes a freelance draughtsman for old and new coachbuilders. Allemano, Ghia, Canta, Balbo, Monviso, but also Bertone and, most importantly, Vignale. One edition of the Turin Auto Show will have forty of his cars on display. Each one is different from the others and is designed with a specific style, in order to confer personality to each constructor.

Corso Francia 35

In 1949, Michelotti opens the first professional studio specifically dedicated to coachwork design in via Ormea, Turin. This is a radically new approach in Italy. The studio will soon become larger and larger, moving to corso Duca degli Abruzzi and finally to a penthouse in corso Francia, which will become very famous among the insiders of the industry. What follows is an attempt to recreate its splendour through photographs taken between 1965 and 1969. Next to the designer, by then at the peak of his success, we can see Paolo Martin, Diego Ottina, Dany Brawand, Piero Ambrino and Beppe Pasta, as well as several foreign clients and his son Edgardo.

Michelottimania

The extraordinary collaboration with Vignale (310 projects between 1949 and 1963) represents the golden era of Michelotti's limited editions. But he never works exclusively for one brand: he designs

simultaneously for Moretti, OSI, Nardi, Siata and two great names that made history: Cisitalia and Abarth. A crucial step towards the foreign markets is the start of a collaboration with Swiss coachbuilder Ghia-Aigle. As a matter of fact, great international carmakers, which are keeping their eye on Michelotti, are about to knock on his door.

Naughty And affordable

The Alpine Renault A110 is a French superstar of rally championships and one of the best examples of a small, naughty sports car for petrolheads but still not an unattainable supercar. The coachwork is made of fiberglass, paired with a very modern backbone chassis. It will become a nightmare for the Lancia Fulvia coupes and for the Porsches. It wins the 1973 World Rally Championship by dominating it. Michelotti designs it, as he did the A106 cabriolet and A108 that preceded it: a true test bench for a winning idea.

Michelotti World

Four remarkable stories. Four corners of the globe (plus France from the previous chapter) that help us understand the reason behind the title for this exposition. And car styling has never changed so radically as it did in the period between the start and the end of Michelotti's career. The bulk of his projects and commercial success is tied to Britain's Triumph: roadsters (but not exclusively) that will leave their mark in Europe and in the US. Thanks to the ideas coming from Turin, BMW avoids bankruptcy and enters modernity. It claims back the most profitable market segments and receives those styling features that can be recognised even in today's models. And in uncharted Japan - through Prince and Hino Motors - Michelotti anticipates everyone else in promoting Italian style abroad. But calls also come from Dutch DAF and Australian Leyland, while General Motors already invited Michelotti to come to Detroit.

Future past

Small hatchbacks and micro-cars are not what Michelotti is best known for. However, the LEM prototype (Laboratorio Elettrico Mobile or Mobile Electric Laboratory, 1974), designed together with renowned car journalist and engineer Gianni Rogliatti, belongs to a series of interesting projects. From the studies for an evolution of the Isetta, to the Siata Mitzi, to the Meadows Frisky with gull-wing doors, to the projects for the DAF 44 and coupé, even economy cars benefit from Michelotti's signature style. And the Fiat 126 City, with its sliding doors and extremely reduced dimensions, raises more than a few eyebrows at the exposition "Carrozzeria italiana: cultura e progetto", which debuts in Turin on the 18th April, 1978.

The last spiaggia

Since the late 1950s, the trend of the "spiaggetta" (or "spiaggina") cars had started to spread in the most elegant beach resorts all over the Mediterranean. Well known are the photographs that portray "l'Avvocato" Gianni Agnelli driving Jacqueline Kennedy and her sister Lee on the Amalfi coast on a special Fiat 600. The 1968 Fiat Shellette, designed by Michelotti, is the swan song of these little summer cars: 80 cars based on the Fiat 850, some of which are exported to Greece and Spain. Michelotti will take on this new trend too, by designing a one-off DAF for Dutch royal family, a Volkswagen Ghia Aigle, and a small series based on the Fiat 850 here on display.

Many happy returns!

Giovanni Michelotti passes away in Turin on 23rd January, 1980 because of an incurable form of cancer.

He wasn't even 60 years old yet. It is difficult to imagine what else he might have designed, if he only had had more time. The automotive industry was changing rapidly: computers and robots were taking over, and the new production flexibility allowed carmakers to produce everything in-house, while carrozzieri shut down and the factory design studios era started. All these factors contributed to the end of an era of which he, more than others, was the perfect ambassador. Even in his last years, the maestro never ceased to propose innovative ideas, bold aesthetic solutions, meliorative technical hints, of which we probably appreciate the ingenuity more than the lines. However, it's the power of Michelotti's stylistic taste, of the young designer with customers from all over the world, that inspires us a hundred years after his birth, in a world where every idea looks within our grasp, but so often slips from our hands.

CARS ON DISPLAY

- FIAT 1100 CABRIOLET STABILIMENTI FARINA (1949)
- FERRARI 195 - 212 INTER VIGNALE (1951)
- LANCIA AURELIA B52 BERTONE (1952)
- CISITALIA FORD 808 ROADSTER CARROZZERIA VIGNALE (1953)
- ALFA ROMEO 1900C SS "LA FLECHE" VIGNALE (1955)
- MASERATI A6 2000 GRAN TURISMO ALLEMANO (1956)
- FIAT 1200 GARDEN CAR VIGNALE (1958)
- TRIUMPH HERALD COUPE' (1960)
- TRIUMPH TR4 SPORT (1962)
- FIAT 850 SHELLETTE SPIAGGETTA (1968)
- BMW 1800 NEUE KLASSE (1968)
- BMW 2800 CS (1971)
- RENAULT ALPINE A110 (1973)
- LEM - Laboratorio Elettrico Mobile (1974)

FIAT 1100 CABRIOLET STABILIMENTI FARINA - 1949

Straight 4-cylinder engine

Capacity 1,089 cc

The Fiat 1100 with the bodywork designed by Stabilimenti Farina, which was sold in both the coupé and cabriolet version. The 1949 overall style resumed shapes that were very fashionable back then, which were taken to the best harmony by the 1947 Cisitalia 202.

However, also the bodyworks for the Ferrari 166 were not so different from this small Fiat. Enzo Ferrari, who was disappointed with this, then found his right match with Pininfarina.

SOMMAVILLA COLLECTION – BELLUNO

FERRARI 195 - 212 INTER VIGNALE - 1951

60° 12V-cylinder engine

Capacity: 2,562 cc

The Ferrari 195 Inter was a kind of Grand Tourism version of the 195. It was very successful among customers less used to extreme performance. The bodywork of this specimen was made by the Vignale – Michelotti pair.

UMBERTO CAMELLINI COLLECTION - MODENA

LANCIA AURELIA B52 BERTONE - 1952

60° 6V-cylinder engine

Capacity: 1,991 cc

1952 Lancia Aurelia B52 Coupé is one of as little as 98 frames manufactured by Lancia, onto which different coachbuilders fitted their bodies. This is a one-off specimen by Carrozzeria Bertone after Giovanni Michelotti's perfectly proportioned design. Exhibited by Bertone in the 1952 Turin Motor Show.

COLLEZIONE PRIVATA

CISITALIA FORD 808 ROADSTER CARROZZERIA VIGNALE - 1953

6-cylinder engine

Capacity: 3,528 cc

Giovanni Michelotti designed this sports car specially for Henry Ford II, a great fan of roadsters. The design proved to be an interesting challenge, because the body shape and size had to be fit to a Ford Mercury chassis, which was considerably larger than an Italian frame.

The exhibition of the 808 Roadster Cisitalia, a truly unique specimen of its kind, is a world premiere and comes after a complex restoration that has been completed lately in Italy.

URS JACOB COLLECTION, USA

ALFA ROMEO 1900C SS "LA FLECHE" VIGNALE - 1955

Straight 4-cylinder engine

Capacity: 1,975 cc

A one-off car presented by Vignale in the 1955 Turin Motor Show. It was designed by Giovanni Michelotti on the Alfa Romeo 1900 Super Sprint frame. Sold as a new car in Trieste, it was then taken to Rome and, among the other things, was featured in two 1980s movies: "Giovanni Senzapensieri" and "Sapore di Mare 2".

LOPRESTO COLLECTION - MILAN

MASERATI A6 2000 GRAN TURISMO ALLEMANO - 1956

Straight 6-cylinder engine

Capacity: 1,985 cc

The heir and evolution of the A6, the "2000 Gran Turismo" was not particularly powerful, hence a limited mass production ensued. As a matter-of-fact, this small sedan started the age of the great Italian coachbuilders in the Trident house. Out of the 60 units manufactured, many were designed by Michelotti for Allemano, by Zagato with the Competition version and some by Pietro Frua in both the coupé and the roadster versions.

UMBERTO PANINI COLLECTION - MODENA

FIAT 1200 GARDEN CAR VIGNALE - 1958

4-cylinder engine

Capacity: 1,221 cc

The "Garden Car" is an estate launched by Vignale in 1957, of which a few units only were manufactured in about two years. This type of bodywork was designed to join the convenience of the large deck with an elegant style. Available on the Fiat 1100 and 1200 models, it was characterized by a two-color scheme, which was very fashionable back then.

LOPRESTO COLLECTION - MILAN

TRIUMPH HERALD COUPE' - 1960

4-cylinder engine

Capacity: 948 cc

Legend has it that this car, which was commercially very successful, was designed by Michelotti in a few minutes, its prototype with the body painted in black and silver colors was delivered to the client on Christmas eve. Its range included the sedan, estate, coupé and convertible versions. The coupé and the convertible were the best sellers.

CMAE - CLUB MILANESE AUTOMOTOVEICOLI D'EPOCA

TRIUMPH TR4 SPORT - 1962

Straight 4-cylinder engine

Capacity: 2,138 cc

The TR4 was particularly successful among the public because of its modern design: a revolution compared to the previous TR3, of which it maintained the frame and a large part of the mechanics. Triumph's sports car philosophy mixed tradition and innovation in order to curb costs. A distinctive element was the "hump" on the hood, which was invented by Michelotti to encase carburetors, and helps to consolidate the TR4's aggressive image.

VITTORIO ARAGONA COLLECTION - MILAN

FIAT 850 SHELLETTE SPIAGGETTA - 1968

4-cylinder engine

Capacity: 903 cc

It was designed by Giovanni Michelotti in collaboration with Philip Shell, a yacht designer. Its streamlined doorless body is roofless and includes a canvas top only. Its unusual wood and wicker interiors gave it a distinctive summer look.

STUART PARR CLASSICS COLLECTION - U.S.A.

BMW 1800 NEUE KLASSE - 1968

4-cylinder engine

Capacity: 1,773 cc

The BMW 1800, the evolution of the modern BMW 1500, had better performance. The stylistic research in the second half of the 1960s was extremely dynamic. Michelotti was one of the most prolific designers, while BMW tried to expand the Neue Klasse range with additional versions.

DANIELE MANCINI COLLECTION - CERRETO GUIDI (FI)

BMW 2800 CS - 1971

Straight 6-cylinder engine

Capacity: 2,788 cc

Michelotti designed this car's new front with a slightly overhanging profile and distinctive horizontal fin side air intakes, on the sides of the "double kidney" shield. Four round headlamps were included in this set, a clever exercise of style that gave a modern look to the entire car body. It was a distinctive feature of the brand for decades and is still found, in a subliminal form, today.

ANDREA DEL VECCHIO COLLECTION - TURIN

RENAULT ALPINE A110 - 1973

Rear, projecting lengthwise 4-cylinder engine

Capacity: 1,800 cc

Renault Alpine A110 is the French protagonist of motor rallies and one of the most successful specimens of a small, aggressive sports car, a dream for connoisseurs, yet a step below an unattainable supercar. The bodywork is made of fiberglass and the state-of-the-art frame features a central beam. Michelotti designed it, like the previous A106 cabriolet and A108: the benchmark of a winning idea.

FONDAZIONE GINO MACALUSO PER L'AUTO STORICA - TURIN

LEM - Laboratorio Elettrico Mobile - 1974

4-pole, 24 VDC motor

This original, two-seat, electric city car, with a name that recalls the lunar exploration module, is the result of the collaboration of Gianni Rogliatti, a journalist and engineer, and designer Giovanni Michelotti. Michelotti's distinctive features are evident in the compact, functional and elegant shape.

The car has been presented to the Museum by the Rogliatti family in 2012

MUSEO NAZIONALE DELL'AUTOMOBILE COLLECTION