

# IL FUTURO È ORA

Built on a foundation of craftsmanship, Italian design has always looked to tomorrow

*Preface written by Robert Klanten and Blake Z. Rong*

The story of Italian cars is the story of the future. It represents a nation's collective eye for art, craftsmanship, high fashion, and bravado; it manifests itself in the crowds dangling over balconies to catch a glimpse of the Targa Florio; it appears in every stitch of upholstery crafted by Zegna or Poltrona Frau; it is imbued in the stiletto-edged noses of the Alfa Romeo Carabo, the Maserati Boomerang, and the Lancia Stratos Zero. This willingness to experiment reflects the optimism of an age that offered a new realm of speed, as the Jet Age and the Space Race captured the imaginations of futurists.

In 1909, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti wrote the *Futurist Manifesto*, placing himself at the head of a new philosophy of art that celebrated modern machinery, technology, and speed. "We declare that the splendor of the world has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed," he wrote. "A roaring motor car...is more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace*."

Italy had industrialized rapidly in the late 19th century, especially in the northern regions of Lombardy and Piedmont; here Fiat and Alfa Romeo, respectively, call Turin and Milan their home. These carmakers gave a generation of Italian talent the chance to hone their skills: Enzo Ferrari managed the Alfa Romeo racing team, Vincenzo Lancia drove for Fiat, and Tazio Nuvolari brought victory home on two and four wheels. The Fiat S76 "Beast of Turin" and "Mefistofele" were infernal, fire-belching machines whose enormous engines propelled them to victory as the fastest cars in the world, and with it the pride of a nation.

Futurism, however, was corrupted by the malevolence of fascism. Its death knell may have been in the ubiquity of its success: with dizzying circuits across endurance

events and land speed records on public highways and autobahns, the beauty of speed was attainable to the gentleman racer now. Into the darkening years of the 1930s, the Grand Prix racing car was an avatar for a nation's core philosophy; when Italy faced the tremendous superiority of Germany's Silver Arrows, it did so on the strength of its often outgunned, yet always tenacious drivers.

Be it Carrara marble, Murano glass, Renaissance painting, or the *carrozzerias* of Bertone, Ghia, Pininfarina, and Zagato, Italian craftsmanship has stood the test of time—since long before the age of the automobile. Imagine what it takes to earn a place in this tradition: to handcraft the bodywork of a coachbuilt car (and to do it over and over again, in limited production) requires the construction

