



of a full-sized wooden buck, a careful eye for symmetry, a devotion to each resounding strike of hammer on metal. The bodywork of the cars featured in this book exemplify an artist's understanding of detail, proportion, and flourish—all the way down to the final touches: layer upon layer of lacquer paint, hand polishing, the finest leather upholstery and interior finishes. All this was wrapped around a chassis and an engine likely first designed for grueling endurance races, which came with constraints. A designer must make the most out of limited surfaces, production techniques, supplier resources, and a client's whims; to navigate this maze of challenges and create a finished product is a sign of mastery.

### The Birth of the Italian Powerhouse

The Allied invasion marked a turning point, heralding the decline of Italian fascism. By the 1940s, millions of Italians had already sought new opportunities in the United States, but the aftermath of World War II brought a realization—a better life could be built within their beloved homeland. The promises of freedom, popular culture, and prosperity that America had introduced became seeds of transformation. From 1945 onward, Italian entrepreneurs, creatives, and intellectuals embraced with fervor the call to craft some of the world's most iconic brands.

In the 1960s, Italy emerged as a global creative powerhouse. The renowned Cinecittà film studios, nestled outside of Rome, produced monumental works like *Cleopatra*, featuring luminaries such as Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. Federico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* offered a satirical reflection on the allure, aspirations, and superficiality of Italy's newfound affluence. The films of director Sergio Leone, indelibly scored by Ennio Morricone's playful compositions, reimagined the quintessentially American genre of the Western, transcending the initial label of "Spaghetti Western" to achieve enduring critical acclaim.

In the 1970s, Olivetti's iconic typewriter, the Valentine, set off a revolutionary shift in office aesthetics. This innovation not only redefined office machines but also injected workplaces with a jolt of color and desirability, a new vibrancy that would help usher in the success of Apple a decade later.

In 1980, Ettore Sottsass and a group of visionary design students founded Memphis, a movement named as playful homage to a classic Bob Dylan song. Their audacious and

colorful furniture creations sent shock waves through the dreamy design world, leaving a bold mark on modern aesthetics. Memphis's avant-garde pieces now grace the collections of esteemed museums, alongside the quirky teapots, clocks, and other postmodern knickknacks crafted by Alessi, which had long since found their way into households across the globe.

The Italian luxury fashion landscape is equally illustrious, boasting names that resonate internationally: Gucci, Armani, Zegna, Prada, Fendi, Valentino, Brioni, Versace, Missoni, Bottega Veneta, and Cucinelli, to name just a few. It represents an expanse of unparalleled scope and profundity, a testament to Italy's enduring commitment to quality, style, and craftsmanship.

This period of postwar renaissance and cultural dynamism intersected with the world of automobiles, influencing Italian carmakers' design principles and sparking a collaborative spirit among artists, designers, engineers, and entrepreneurs. The country's multifaceted creative legacy is integral to the story of Italian automotive culture, a narrative that thrives on the fusion of diverse artistic endeavors, innovative thinking, and a profound appreciation for beauty in all its forms.

### Beyond Car and Peninsula

Italy's designers, artists, engineers, and entrepreneurs have always worked hand in hand to create manifestations of desire and beauty. It comes as no surprise, then, that some of the greats in the field of automotive design have not confined themselves to one sphere: Marcello Gandini was the son of an orchestra conductor, while Giorgio Giugiaro hailed from a family of artists and painters. Franco Reggiani designed the Ferrari "Uovo" as a sculptor with an aeronautical background. Giorgetto Giugiaro designed cars, watches, cameras, the organ for Switzerland's Lausanne Cathedral, and the official FIBA basketball for the Olympic Games. Battista "Pinin" Farina enlisted the expertise of the Turin Polytechnic University to design one of the earliest streamlined cars, the 1937 Lancia Aprilia. The designers who built the reputations of the great Italian coachbuilders were—and are—artists, creators of lasting beauty, whose work would be admired by generations.

We should consider ourselves fortunate that Italy did not keep such avant-garde thinking to itself. During the 1968 Paris Motor Show, the contemporary era of car design was formally inaugurated with the introduction

of the Alfa Romeo Carabo. This audacious wedge-shaped vehicle featured a vibrant orange front end that accentuated its impressive low-profile stance. The concept shared the same chassis and race-derived V-8 engine as the curvaceous Alfa Romeo 33 Stradale, designed by Franco Scaglione. While the two cars could not look any more different, they both emerged from the space for innovation created by the potential of the mid-engine layout—which Lamborghini had pioneered in 1967, when its bare-bones Miura chassis introduced the idea of the supercar.

When the carbuilding industry emerged in Japan and Korea in the 1960s, they turned to Italy for expertise: while there were talented designers at Mazda, Prince, and Hyundai, the likes of Giugiaro could instill an aura of legitimacy. Giugiaro's 1974 concept for the Hyundai Pony Coupe, for example, has come to symbolize a young company's—and country's—self-discovery, along with the founding of a global corporation.

Great cars celebrate the joy of life: Fiat announced that it would stop selling gray cars in 2023 because the company claimed gray cars were incompatible with the Italian love of life. The revival of historic events like the Mille Miglia, Villa d'Este's Concours d'Elegance, Targa Florio, and the Italian Grand Prix at Monza are reflections of this joy: they all respond to the beckoning of passion.

The great coachbuilders are still with us, but their greatness has diminished over time, a casualty of mass production and the shifting role of design studios. Still, Pininfarina is launching the Battista, an electric hypercar; Zagato launched the Giulia SWB Coupe as a send-off to internal combustion; and the De Tomaso P72 is a retro-inspired return to form.

As with the realms of fashion and jewelry, these haute couture houses maintain their allure, buoyed by a spirit that extends beyond sheet metal and paint, Bakelite switches and Veglia gauges. Nuccio Bertone, one of the 20th century's greatest, most avant-garde designers, summed up the ethos of Italian automotive design with one essential line: "A car is the product of a feeling, or rather, a series of feelings."