



ALFA ROMEO TIPO 33 STRADALE

One of the most beautiful
and ambitious cars in the world
came from the
masterstrokes of a genius.

Franco Scaglione was the greatest automotive designer you've never heard of: in a country that seems to breed legendary designers by the busload, he was a wizard with aerodynamics, a visionary, a rare talent. In his decades-long career, he deserved a spot among the Marcello Gandinis and Giorgetto Giugiaros of the world. Yet Scaglione died in obscurity, secluded from the world, long after anyone had remembered to include his name among these iconic designers. Scaglione was soft-spoken, well-dressed, a friend to animals, able to speak four languages, and a talented illustrator and sculptor. He had studied aeronautical engineering, served as a prisoner during the Second World War, and returned to Turin designing haute couture at fashion houses, but he had always wanted to design cars. Like artists who only find fame long after their deaths, Scaglione's work for Alfa Romeo lives on, waiting to be discovered again and again, deserving of immortality. Nowhere is that more evident than in the Alfa Romeo 33 Stradale, his greatest masterpiece.

The whole "race car for the road" thing is a bit of a cliché, but in the case of Alfa Romeo circa 1967, the Stradale—or street version, in the mother tongue—truly was derived

from the Tipo 33 race cars that attacked the World Sportscar Championship. These early race cars faced teething problems, and it took until 1968 and a revised 33/2 series to truly see victories. And the wins kept coming: class winner at the 24 Hours of Daytona, Nürburgring 1000 km, Monza, and Targa Florio. A valiant fight against the bigger-engined Porsches meant an overall third-place finish at the end of the 1968 Championship, though.

From this rich crop of success, the Stradale emerged with its flowing curves, its long and sensuous shape, and a stance that seemed ready to leap. Always the perfectionist, Scaglione demanded that he be given complete control over the design. He held a degree in aerodynamical engineering, just one of a handful of designers to ever receive such formal training. He didn't use a wind tunnel. He didn't need one: instead, he attached pieces of wool string with tape to the side of a prototype 33 Stradale. One test driver said, after driving the prototype at Alfa Romeo's Balocco test track, that there was no need for modification. Scaglione had nailed it on the first try.

Scaglione worked himself to the bone, commuting the 86 miles between Turin and Milan by train day in