

CLASSIC DRIVER

Incredible Abarth 'Monoposto da Record' found sleeping after many years

Lead

Occasionally, fate throws up a unique opportunity – and photographer Piotr Degler was recently given the chance to shoot a one-off car literally kept in the dark for many years: the Fiat-Abarth World Record Monoposto from 1960. We research the history of this streamlined beauty...

Pininfarina's aerodynamic fever



The tale began in 1960. On the eve of the 42nd Turin Motor Show, Pininfarina arrived at the venue with a severe case of aerodynamic fever. As well as presenting the [Pininfarina X](#) – a whimsical, four-seater saloon with a drag coefficient of 0.20 and wheels arranged in a diamond formation – the Italian coachbuilder also revealed the 'Monoposto', built on behalf of Fiat-Abarth. It was so streamlined that it could probably have slipped beneath the reach of any Cold War radar equipment, but Pininfarina didn't stop there. Alongside these two aerodynamic pioneers, the Ferrari 410 Superamerica and no fewer than 11 other new cars were presented.

A star at the premiere

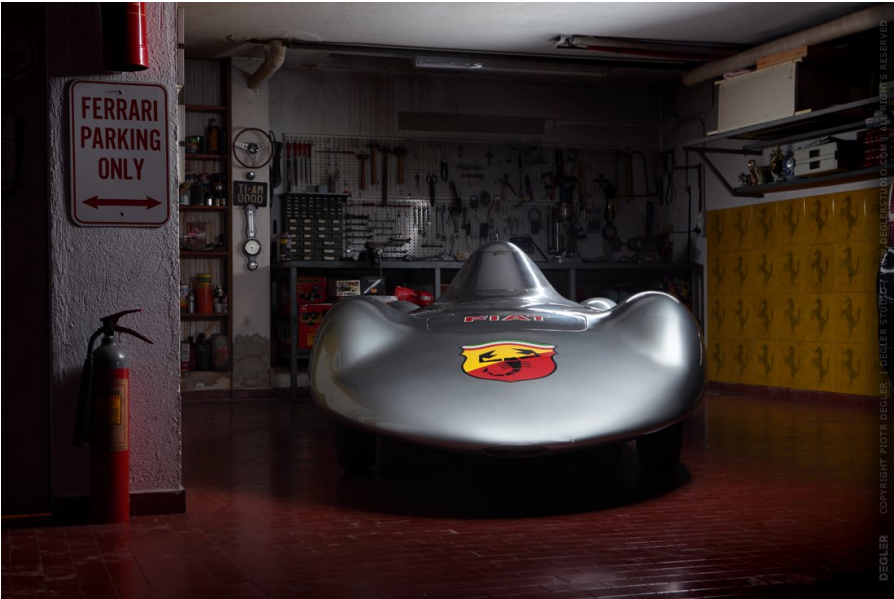




After a round of aerodynamic experimentation with Bertone in 1956, the following year saw Fiat-Abarth turn to Pininfarina to design two new cars using the wind tunnel at Turin Polytechnic. Using specially made, small-capacity engines, they set numerous World Records – and for 1960, the almost-1,000cc four-cylinder engine was used, capable of producing 105HP at a screaming 8,000rpm. The power was transmitted to the rear wheels via a four-speed gearbox.

While the running gear was relatively modest, the opposite was true for Pininfarina’s outward handiwork. Measuring only 1.2 metres tall, 1.55 metres wide and 4.56 metres long, the body was low and narrow in order to pierce the air as effectively as possible. The resulting figures were spectacular: 10,000 kilometres at an average speed of 118.7mph, and 72 continuous hours at an average of 116mph. Those were just two of the nine International and World Records set.

The streamliner resurfaces



The current owner of the Abarth ‘Monoposto da Record’ allowed Degler exclusive access to the private garage in which the aerodynamic legend – completely original, right down to the stickers – has slept for many years. We’d love to see it at a major concours event in the near future.

Photos: [Degler Studio](http://deglerstudio.com) (info@deglerstudio.com)

Gallery

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