

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Meet the skateboarding architect who drives a Maserati 2.24v II](#)

Lead

In this latest instalment of The Classic Drivers, we speak to South Tyrolean architect David Messner about his Maserati 2.24v II and the interplay between automotive design and architecture.



David, thanks for sharing your amazing Maserati with us. To start, please could you tell us how your love of cars began?

It didn't even start, it's always been there. I think it has to do with the feeling of your body moving through space and time, most preferredly in a fast manner. I only build static structures at work, quite boring in relation.



Your family must have influenced your passion, is that right?

My beloved dad, who passed away too early, wasn't too much of a car enthusiast. He was an artist, a sculptor, and skeptical in concerns to anything shiny and representative. He introduced me to the world of metal, as he was a taught blacksmith. My uncle and my cousin both were mechanics. I vividly remember my uncle driving an Alfa Romeo Alfasud, I cannot clearly recall the series, since only its distinctive backside was burned into my mind.

In middle-school, my dad sent me to my uncle during the summer months to work on his farm. My uncle Peter has an incredible understanding for machines, which he often modified. I learned to drive at 10 years old on a Fendt Farmer 204 P. The first car I drove was a Fiat Panda, prima serie, sand coloured with this fabulous front grill, no doors,

with seats similar to beach chairs, slightly padded.



Interesting, so you learned to drive on farm equipment! However, cars are not your only four-wheeled obsession from what we understand?

In high school, my mum didn't allow me a Vespa, because my cousin died in a motorcycle incident, but he passed onto me my first skateboard. I got deeply into skateboarding in those years, always four wheels down, hitchhikin' through the night. Then in University I had no money, so I sold sneakers, t-shirts and carried Persian carpets for an Iranian friend, still hitchhikin'...





Could you tell us about your car history prior to the Maserati?

Out of university, after the first bucks earned, I bought my very first car, the same model my dear friend and mechanic Armin Pechlaner now drives: a Fiat Punto GT prima serie, painted in Rosso Etna Metalizzato. A little later, a friend of my father called me, saying they would sell me his Lancia Delta 2.0 16V Turbo HPE for little money. He was old and nobody who he knew was interested in such a car, adding that it was nothing in comparison to the old Integrale he once owned!

My first daughter Mirjam was born in 2012 and by 2014, my wife Maria and I awaited our second child, Vicky. In need of a family ride again, I chose Armin the mechanic's ride: a BMW E91 330 xDrive. People who don't have a clue should follow the advice of those who know better! I still own the BMW, it's a true companion that has never let our family down, wherever we are. After my Dad's passing in 2017, I took care of his Nissan Navara D40 2.5 dci King Cab. I modded the exterior and Armin made it quick motor-wise, but I sold it to a farmer prior to buying the 2.24v.



On that note, how did you come across your Maserati and why did you pick such an unusual ride?

I always wanted to drive and own a BMW M3, and an E30 is still the dream, but nowadays those cars are only attainable for rich collectors, not enthusiasts. The first owner, a lady from Napoli, seemed to have kept it like you should, however those after her seemingly only kept it for the money. I think it is a true engineering marvel which needs to be taken care of, always. The Biturbo engines were designed by Ennio Ascari and sound fantastic, but the icing on the cake is the low consumption.



We certainly know the feeling of longing for a model that has skyrocketed in value, and the E30 M3 is a prime example of that. Could you tell us about your car's colour and specification?

It doesn't have one colour, it's got two of them, both really similar to each other (*laughs*). It almost made my heart stop, since I noticed it only after the purchase and in my first panic attack I thought it was partly repainted very poorly. The colours are: Bleu Ischia Metalizzato and Verde Micalizzato. The colour, because somehow it is one colour, is fantastic and I don't know if it's green or blue, since in different light conditions it changes hues. My car is one of only 254 made of this 2.24v II or "facelift".



What are some of your most memorable experiences involving cars and your Maserati in particular?

Well, howlin' through the night, when the sun sets, the asphalt is still warm, and the air gets cool; cool air makes an enormous difference, of course! The parameter of time gets distorted when driving, there is only now, there is no before or after. It is pure meditation, it is religious.

I love to take rides with my girls, Mimi and Vicky. They love the back seats, the feeling of the soft leather, and the sofa-like shape. Sometimes my elder daughter hops in the front seat: she's 12 and can steer and change gears.



It's great to hear that you're passing down your passion! How does your hobby relate to your profession? From an architect's perspective, which are some of your favourite cars and what appeals about the design of your Maserati?

I don't see any separation between my work and my hobbies, everything goes fluidly into each other. I was introduced to the car world during university by my friend Benno Plunger; he's an architect, too and owns a Ferrari Dino GT4, the only project Bertone and Marcello Gandini did for Ferrari. He is a great example in life to me — he encouraged me to buy the Mase, "the Rat". You have to live your dream — better to go by foot than drive something heartless.

My father Franz Messner's 1995 work "Sphere" somehow sums up your question. It is a giant sphere made of stainless steel with a diameter of eight meters, weighting close to eight tons. It's built on an excavator bearing, meaning you can spin it around his vertical axis. All is one.

The Maserati Biturbo series, to which your car belongs, was designed by Marcello Gandini for Bertone. What is your relation to him and his work?

I absolutely adore the work of Marcello Gandini and I referenced his Lancia Stratos Zero in my masters thesis when studying architecture at Leopold-Franzens Universität Innsbruck. All of his work evokes this longing towards a future world, towards flying and space. For me it still is futuristic, yet reserved and elegant. It is full of technical details, but still minimalistic, which we strive for in contemporary architecture, of course. I got a severe lesson in what elegance means through my ride (*laughs*). I think that Gandini's work is in perfect harmony to what we at Messner Architects strive towards.



What would your dream drive be in your Maserati?

Unfortunately it is not on home turf. A scenic route connects Bolzano/Bozen to Collalbo/Klobenstein, my home town, which features 13 hairpin bends conquering approximately 890m of altitude. So I'd chose to go from Taufers im Münstertal to the Ofenpass, passing by Valerio Olgiati's National Park Centre in Zernez until arriving at Bearthdeplazes

Bernina Pass Maintenance Base. I think this would fit my Mase's gearbox and my love for boring static structures quite well!

What are your future plans? Will you sell it for something different or are you too attached?

I won't sell it, except for my beloved daughters, if I had to. If I had the chance I'd love to own a Ghibli Cup, since you can read Gandini's handwriting even better, because it's not "just" a facelift.

Photos: Murio, Karina Castro, Tiberio Sorvillo, Davide Perbellini, David Messner

Gallery

Source URL: <https://www.classicdriver.com/en/article/cars/meet-skateboarding-architect-who-drives-a-maserati-224v-ii>
© Classic Driver. All rights reserved.