

CLASSIC DRIVER

Madonna! Why didn't they build this sinful Alfa Romeo 33 prototype?

Lead

Of the fascinating design studies built on the chassis of the Alfa Romeo Tipo 33 Stradale, only Pininfarina's 33/2 Coupé Speciale rivals Franco Scaglione's mythical original in terms of sheer slap-you-round-the-face beauty. Rémi Dargegen was granted an exclusive audience with the stunning one-off...



Rumour has it that when Enzo Ferrari clapped eyes on Pininfarina's Ferrari 250 P5 Berlinetta Speciale at the 1968 Geneva Motor Show, he likened its curvaceous nose to a suppository. And that probably goes some way to explain why the impressive design study for a mid-engined V12-powered super sports car was dismissed by Maranello, which chose instead to focus on the development of the 512 Berlinetta Boxer.



Cast out by *Il Commendatore*, the design of the redundant P5, which was penned by Leonardo Fioravanti under the watchful eye of Sergio Pininfarina in order to research the increasing significance of aerodynamics, was by no means dead and buried. Instead, Pininfarina made a handful of subtle tweaks, changed the colour from red to yellow and mounted the dramatic body on the chassis of an Alfa Romeo Tipo 33 Stradale. The 33/2 Coupé Speciale was born.



Unlike the other concepts based on the wildly beautiful Tipo 33 Stradale such as [Bertone's Carabo](#) and Italdesign's Iguana, the Alfa Romeo 33/2 Coupé Speciale did not follow the emerging design trends of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the most prominent of which were geometric wedge shapes and wings, spoilers and dams. On the contrary, Pininfarina's spaceship boasted soft, voluptuous curves and intricate folds reminiscent of the sports prototypes of the previous decade.



It's an effortlessly cohesive design which doesn't disagree with your eyes in the slightest. From those voluminous pontoon fenders through the slender hips to the sculptural roof that tapers into the razor-sharp Kamm tail, the butterfly-doored 33/2 Coupé Speciale makes perfect visual sense. In fact, it makes you wonder why traditional automotive design needed to be so radically changed at that time. If you think the car looks a bit like the Ferrari P3/4, just remember, this Alfa Romeo did start life a prancing horse.



Despite the fact it didn't signal a sci-fi future, this is certainly the only Tipo 33 Stradale-based concept which rivals the bed-wetting beauty of Franco Scaglione's original. And there are so many wonderful intricacies - the organic shapes of the wheel arches are utterly fascinating, for example, and the sharply cut intakes in the bonnet combined with the thin dam beneath the signature Alfa grille lend a perfectly judged amount of aggression and remind us a bit of the legendary Bizzarrini 5300 GT. And who was the genius who decided on yellow tartan for the seats?



To think that Pininfarina created both the 33/2 Coupé Speciale and the [P33 Spider Cuneo](#) within three years of each other is remarkable given how radically different they are to each other. But if there was ever a stark illustration of the turning point in the automotive design history from the soft and sultry 1960s to the sharp and wedgetastic 1970s, this is it. As inspiring as the latter decade was, we know which of these Tipo 33 concepts is our favourite, whether it looks like a suppository or not...

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