

CLASSIC DRIVER

Talking 100 years of Larusmiani and the future of FuoriConcorso with Guglielmo Miani

Lead

While the Milanese gentleman's destination Larusmiani is celebrating its 100th anniversary, the brand's president Guglielmo Miani is busy making plans for an even bigger edition of FuoriConcorso and a Como Car Week. To learn more, Editor-in-Chief Jan Baedeker joined him for a ride.



A lot has happened [since we first met Guglielmo Miani in Milan in 2018 to speak about his passion for cars and his family's fashion brand](#). This year, Larusmiani is celebrating its 100th anniversary – and while the Milanese luxury label is constantly reinventing the classic gentleman's wardrobe with [new, handcrafted and desirable clothes and items](#), the historical bottega in Via Monte Napoleone has become a destination (and Instagram opportunity) for car enthusiasts: Showcasing some of the world's finest and unusual collector cars in its store window, Larusmiani has intelligently connected the worlds of luxury and automobiles. At the same time, and despite the pandemic, Guglielmo has scaled up [his start-up event series FuoriConcorso](#) into one of the world's freshest, most exciting and most talked about automotive get-togethers. As the exclusive media partner, Classic Driver has supported the FuoriConcorso team from the very first event in 2019. Now Jan Baedeker, our Editor-in-Chief, paid Guglielmo a visit to talk about Larusmiani's centenary, the upcoming, bigger-than-ever FuoriConcorso event – and their shared vision of a Como Car Week.



Guglielmo, first of all congratulations on 100 years of Larusmiani! In a nutshell, can you please sum up the history of your company for us?

Of course! In 1922, my grandfather came from Puglia to Milan and opened a small tailor shop in the Monte Napoleone district. His priest actually suggested to use the name 'Larus' – which is Latin for seagull, a symbol of freedom and good luck. Naturally, my grandfather as a superstitious Italian man agreed immediately. As the business started booming, he decided to not just import prestigious British fabrics for his own shop, but also for other tailors. In the 1950s, the brand incorporated our family name Miani and started producing prêt-à-porter fashion. At the time when my father joined the company, upcoming fashion designers from France and Italy were in need of lighter, softer and more fluid fabrics – so he decided to take the textile division to another level, starting to create and produce his own fabrics 'Made in Italy' for the fast-growing fashion industry. I joined the company in 2000 and scaled the textile division from one million metres to two million metres of fabric per year in a decade. In 2015, I finally started working on the brand, moving it towards the style it represents today. I also managed to acquire the know-how of Aldo Lorenzi and his cutler store G. Lorenzi, our neighbor in Via Montenapoleone. He had offers from several luxury conglomerates – but in the end he decided to leave me his knowledge, artisans and stock. We still create products together and meet regularly. It is a source of continuous inspiration for me and for Larusmiani.



After one century: What are the core values of Larusmiani?

For me, small is beautiful. I don't have a desire to open a hundred stores around the world. I rather want to give a limited number of people the pleasure of buying the best of the best. I feel that Larusmiani is a very special brand, as we still use very old know-how, yet the output is very fresh and innovative. Our clients often have a cultural background, they understand the artisan skills that go into our products, no matter it is a handmade shirt or a knife. Unlike fashion items that you throw away after one season, our products are practical, timeless and made to last. Consumer society has taught us to constantly replace our things with something new, but real sustainability is to utilize things for a long time. Most of our collections consist of classic, iconic pieces inspired by the past, but designed with a fresh approach. In a way this is also my philosophy for collecting cars: I always try to find real value and quality, something that has been well designed and made when it was built, not the latest trend.



Larusmiani's store in Milan is also famous for always displaying an exciting car in its window. Can you tell us a bit more about this fascinating machine?

Yes, this is [the one and only 1954 Fiat Turbina](#), an experimental prototype powered by a gas turbine capable of reaching 160 mph. I love the car because it achieved this incredible performance, yet looks like a vehicle out of a cartoon from my childhood days. It was kindly lent to us by the MAUTO museum in Turin. It has almost never left their collection since the 1960s, so we are very proud to host it.

Since our interview, the cars in Larusmiani's boutique have changed - [now on display is the unique Ferrari 250 GT Zagato Berlinetta Speciale](#), a car born in Milan, now flown in from California.



Speaking of cars - while last time you picked us up in a Bentley from the 1990s, we are now about to drive to Como in your rather modern McLaren 675 LT. Did you grow tired of the modern classics?

I research and think about cars a lot, and somehow performance and technological advancement have become my main priority in collecting cars. This is my first supercar – and it is a remarkable machine: It was made my McLaren MSO for a special client who wanted to use the car on the track. It is basically a race car with a plate. You can feel the dedication of the McLaren engineers to lightness and performance in every detail. At the same time, there's a certain simplicity in the aesthetics and the design that I highly appreciate. Since I own this car I have trouble driving anything else.

As you have become a bit of an automotive trend-setter our readers will want to know: Which other cars are on your wish list right now?

Definitely more McLarens! (laughs) And I have a particular love for Porsche Exclusive cars because of the level of personalization and craftsmanship they represent. For me it's always a search for perfection, the best of the best. I just bought a triple-blue Porsche 997 Turbo made by Porsche Exclusive Manufaktur. Oh, a first series Audi RS6 Avant, I found it at a Spanish dealer on Classic Driver. It's an iconic car I always wanted to own.



In May 2019, you organized a car event under the name FuoriConcorso at Lake Como. Since then, and despite the limitations of the pandemic, FuoriConcorso has grown into a series of global events. What is the winning formula?

The idea for the first event was to share my passion for handmade Bentley Continentals from the 1990s with likeminded people. As Larusmiani was a sponsor of Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este, I decided to rent the Villa del Grumello closeby on the same weekend to [showcase some of these very special Bentleys](#). The success of the event first caught us by surprise, but then quickly led us to organize other events. We assembled [iconic Formula 1 cars at Villa Necchi](#) in Milan during the Monza Grand Prix, we organized rallies of white cars [in the California desert](#) and [in Sardinia](#). Last autumn we returned to Villa del Grumello with [a big exhibition of legendary Turbo cars](#). It is important for us that FuoriConcorso does not become repetitive – it always needs to entertain and surprise. In the end, it's all about automotive culture and we are listening closely to the car community. Our guests are between 20 and 60 years old, but they all share a passion for cars. I am also very happy to continue the partnership with Classic Driver – you guys have supported FuoriConcorso since day one. We share the same values, the same audience, the same cultural sensibilities and the way we look at things. That is very important to us.



Well, thank you! As media partners we have been discussing this a lot in the past months. Now can we let our readers know a bit more about this year's headline Fuori Concorso event on May 21-22 at Lake Como?

Absolutely. We should not yet reveal the main theme of the event in order to not spoil the surprise. As always at FuoriConcorso, it will be a celebration of excellence and craftsmanship. But what we can say is that from this year onwards, there will be three villas instead of two: Besides Villa del Grumello and Villa Sucota we add Villa Olmo, a neoclassical summer retreat for the Lombardian aristocracy with a fantastic lakeside garden. It is the perfect setting for a very special exhibition – and every year we will host a world-class car museum, a foundation or a collection at this outstanding location, taking their cars out of these holy halls and giving them visibility way beyond their usual audience. We will announce this year's museum shortly.



Does the public have a chance to see all this? Or will it happen behind closed doors?

FuoriConcorso's exhibition at Villa Olmo will be open to the public at all times, both Saturday and Sunday. It's a gift to the car community. The themed event at Villa del Grumello and Villa Sucota will be invitation only on Saturday, but open to the public on Sunday afternoon.

With the Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este and the FuoriConcorso there are now two major European car events taking place simultaneously at Lake Como. We spoke about this before: Why not expand the format even more and create a week-long festival like the Monterey Car Week?

Absolutely! Creating a Como Car Week should be a top priority. I am convinced that together with the organizers of the Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este, the BMW Group, and the local government of Como we can create a very impactful series of events that simply cannot be missed by anyone interested in car culture and collector cars. Of course, Villa d'Este is the place to be and the Concorso d'Eleganza would always be the pinnacle of a Como Car Week. Still, other events with different formats like FuoriConcorso add to the appeal, as they attract new audiences and communities. The opening of Villa Olmo and doubling the amount of cars on display is one next step towards that goal. Apart from that, there will be even more emphasis on entertainment at this year's FuoriConcorso – we all need a lot more joy in our lives and we have created a whole new experience so our guests can really enjoy themselves and have the time of their lives. And after all, Lake Como in spring is the perfect place to do so!

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Gallery

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