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FROM THE B.A.T. 5 TO THE B.A.T. 11 A sport-car inspired by the past

The B.A.T.11 designed by Stile Bertone brings back memories of an episode that marked the car sector in the Fifties and that has evolved up to the present day, indulging a passion for the car mixed with vicissitudes of personal fortune.

B.A.T.: a compendium of aerodynamics and technique.

Let us take a step back in time. 50 years ago Nuccio Bertone and designer Franco Scaglione produced a number of precious car designs, joining creativity, innovation, good taste and a touch of eccentricity.

In 1952 they pretty much amazed more or less everybody with a prototype for the spider Arnolt Bristol (the car went into production in 1954) and with the Abarth 1500. Aerodynamics and sinuous lines were the striking features of both cars. During the same year they designed the Giulietta Spring 1300. The car was launched at the Turin Auto Show in 1954 and was a great success from the start.

This long-lasting success almost “stole the scene” from an elegant family of prototype cars that were built upon the Alfa Romeo 1900 Sprint chassis: the B.A.T. 5 (1953), the B.A.T. 7 (1954) and the B.A.T. 9 (1955).

The state-of-the-art, futuristic design of all three sports cars was clearly based on the Abarth 1500, where research into more performance-oriented aerodynamics resulted in Scaglione’s unparalleled original and challenging design achievements. Indeed, B.A.T. stands for Berlinetta Aerodinamica Tecnica, which has nothing to do with the English translation “bat” that fascinates the Anglo-Saxons on account of the vehicle’s rear curved fins, which evoke a flying object rather than a car.

Apart from these wonderful flights of the imagination, Scaglione applied his entire knowledge of aerodynamics to car design when developing the B.A.T. cars, also based on his study of research work carried out by Paul Jaray from France and Wunibald Kamm from Germany a few years before.

The American student and the B.A.T. 9

All three prototypes aroused much interest worldwide as well as the interest of several collectors, and later went down history as part of Bertone style, giving way to new amazing, exciting and fabulous car designs.

And while in Turin Bertone was looking to the future, in America young medical student and big car fan Gary Kaberly had come across a strange red car sitting on the lot of a car dealer shop. The car had a streamlined design and resembled a space object.

He asked his mother for a loan and bought the car without even actually knowing what it was. He found out a few years later, when a friend of his showed him a supplement of "Road & Truck", a specialized magazine featuring the B.A.T. 9 on the magazine cover in its original, silver-coated design. The article featured inside described the car as a veritable masterful creation developed by Italian car designer Nuccio Bertone.

Gary decided to restore the B.A.T. 9 in great detail and started exchanging numerous letters with Nuccio Bertone, who gave him all the necessary information. After completing the job, Gary, who in the meantime had become a well-established dentist, decided to exhibit the car at car exhibitions and auto show contests, often accompanied by his wife Debra.

The B.A.T trio is reunited.

Later, in the early Nineties, Gary's wife had to undergo expensive medical treatment, forcing Gary to sell his car, which was purchased by a collector from Las Vegas that also owned the other two versions: hence the "family" was reunited and is now among some of the most sought-after, top rated collections in the world.

The treatment extended Gary's wife's life a couple of years. Following her death, he resumed contact with Bertone, asking him this time to add a sequel to the B.A.T. trilogy, and offering to take part in this new adventure.

The first step forward has been taken: it is called B.A.T. 11...