

# Alfa Romeo

MODELLO 2300



Angela Cherrett

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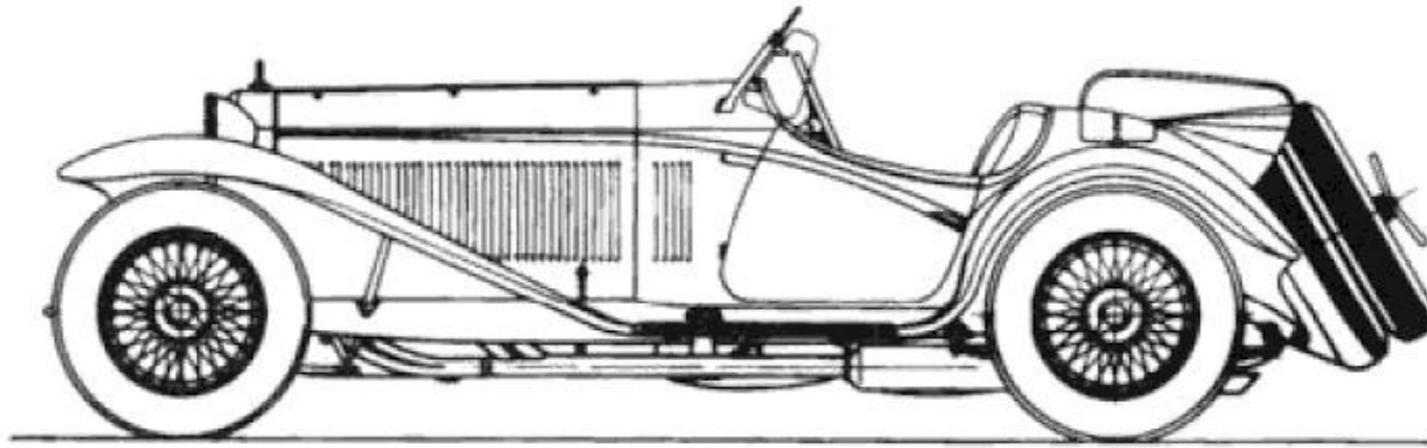
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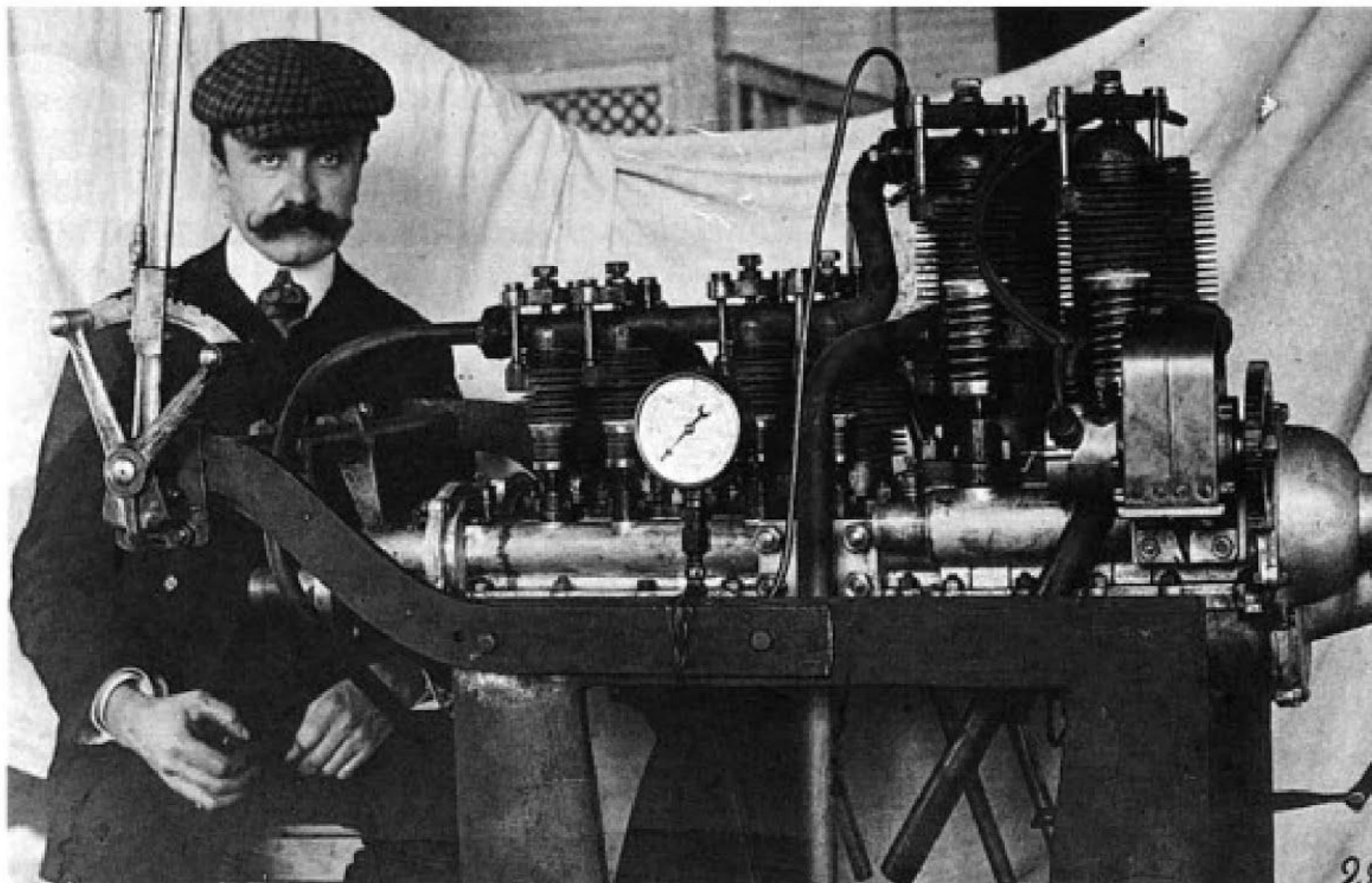
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# I ALFA AND ALFA ROMEO, MEROSI AND ROMEO

The factory site known as Il Portello took its name from the nearby Trattoria del Portello; this Trattoria had originally been an old Coaching Inn, where refreshment for the passengers and fresh horses for the carriages travelling between Switzerland and Lombardy could be obtained and the road which led to it was eventually named the Strada al Portello. The 18,627 square metre factory site had originally been acquired in January 1907 by a consortium known as the Società Italiana Automobili Darracq, the development of the site being completed just before the financial crisis in the autumn of the same year; delays in production of the first vehicles (which were not ready until September 1908) and the price-cutting necessary in order to sell even part of the company's output led to the dismissal of the Managing Director, Henry Elliott, and his replacement by Ugo Stella. Stella, born in Ancona in 1867, had a varied career before his arrival at Portello and though unable to 'rescue' the Italian Darracq Company he did preside over the company's transition from S.I.A.D. to A.L.F.A., or Anonima Lombarda Fabbrica Automobili, to give the new enterprise its full name.

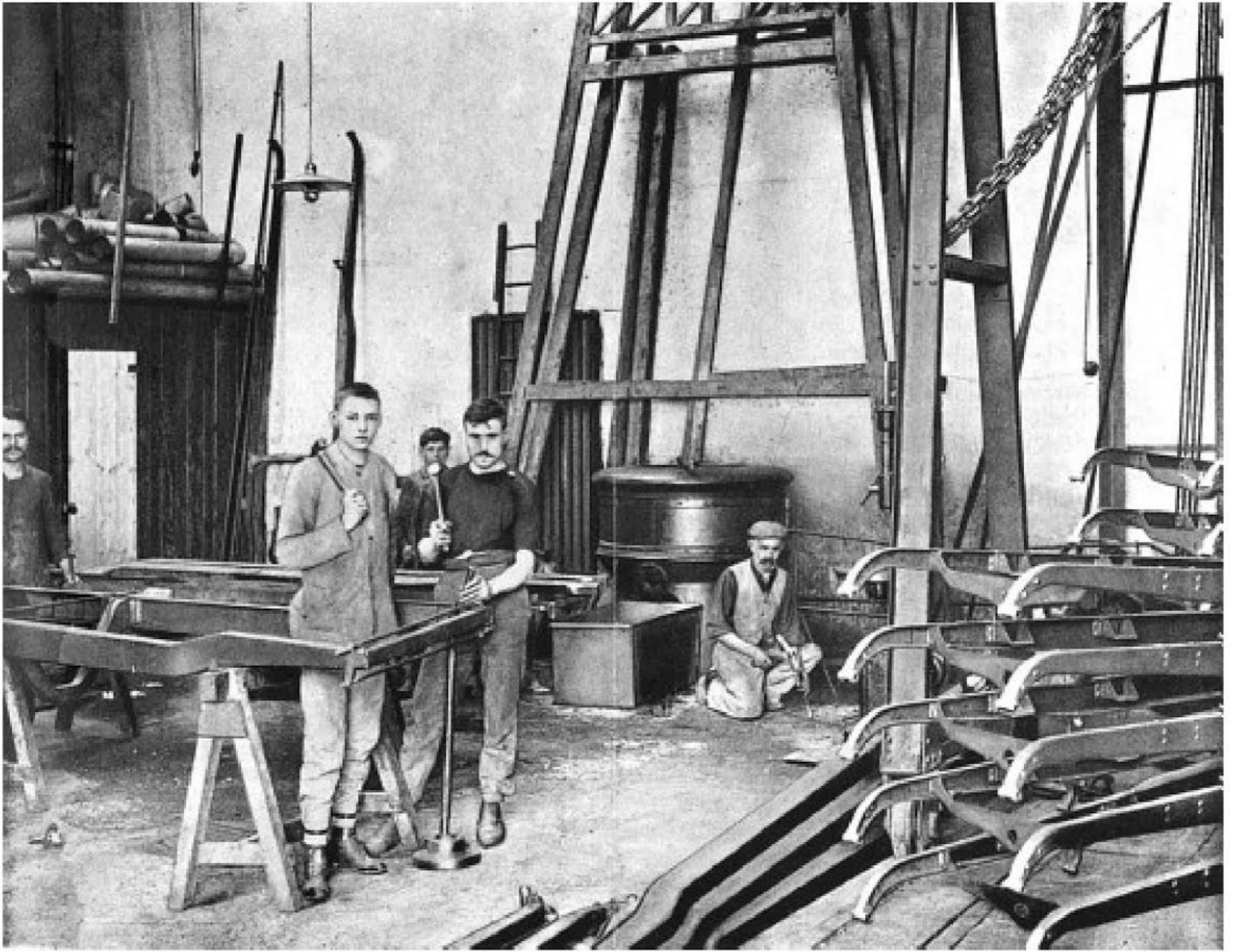


*The designer Giuseppe Merosi, photographed on 28th August 1906 - the month in which he left FIAT to go to work for Bianchi Automobili. (Roy Slater/author's collection)*

Giuseppe Merosi, Ugo Stella's choice as Chief Designer for the new company, was born in Piacenza on 17th December 1872 and had qualified (at the Istituto Tecnico, Piacenza) as a surveyor in 1891. Having completed his compulsory military service and obtained some financial assistance from his father, Giuseppe and a friend named Vittorio Bassi opened a bicycle manufacturing business in 1893. However, the little Bassi & Merosi enterprise did not survive a chance meeting between Merosi and the Marchand brothers (Lorenzo and Paolo) which led to the offer of a job with Orio e Marchand as



tester and demonstrator of the company's bicycles: Merosi accepted, joining Orio e Marchand on 5th May 1898. The company had been formed in 1895 when Paolo and Lorenzo's father had invested in the sewing-machine and bicycle manufacturing enterprise run by Stefano Orio and his sons and which, by the time Merosi joined, now consisted of Stefano Orio, the two Marchand sons and approximately twenty employees. Giuseppe Merosi's abilities soon led to his becoming the company's chief designer and by 1900 the *Gazzetta dello Sport* was commenting favourably on a new *bicicletta a motore* designed by Merosi, the machine having a 1.5HP engine and, reportedly, very effective brakes. The Marchands were keen to start motorcar production and, after Orio left the company in 1900, Merosi's contributions to the business included a water-cooled 5HP car which could be fitted with two, four or six-seater coachwork; a 10HP model followed in 1902 and, by the time Merosi left in 1904, the range included several two- and four-cylinder models. Merosi's departure for Torino (where he was employed by Fiat Ansaldo) was a great blow to the Marchands; in 1907 the company was virtually absorbed by Dufaux Freres of Geneva and in 1909 Marchand-Dufaux went into liquidation.



*Officine A.L.F.A., the ALFA chassis assembly shop photographed some time between 1910 and 1920. (Centro Documentazione Alfa Romeo)*

Merosi stayed at Fiat until August 1906, when he moved to Edoardo Bianchi's factory in Milano. There he designed all the models produced by Bianchi between 1907-1909, including the 35HP of 1907 and the first vehicle with cardan-shaft transmission (which appeared in 1910). He was still working at Bianchi when Stella, the 'saviour' of the Portello factory,

approached him and offered him the job of chief designer with the proposed new ALFA company: his title was to be Technical Director and Chief Designer, his brief to design two medium-capacity sporting cars. Working at home (in Via Cappuccio, Milano), Merosi prepared general outline drawings for the two new vehicles and on 1st September 1909 he and Ugo Stella met at the headquarters of the Automobile Club Milano where these drawings were presented for Stella's approval. This approval was granted and Merosi was authorised to begin work on more detailed drawings of major components so that production could begin as soon as possible after 1st January 1910.

By the end of 1909, Ugo Stella had dismissed the French technicians and installed thirty year old Giovanni Agostoni, whom Enzo Ferrari once described as "capable of making a pair of gloves for a fly", as the new workshop foreman. Agostoni was in charge of some eighty employees who included Giuseppe Campari and Attilio Marinoni (who were already working at Portello) and Amleto Bossi and Nino Franchini (both of whom had been working at Bianchi). Initially, there were problems in obtaining materials owing to the difficulty in securing credit but an Extraordinary General Meeting on 24th June 1910 officially approved the change of title to Anonima Lombarda Fabbrica Automobili, ending (for the present, at any rate) these financial problems, which had been related to the continuing use of the S.I.A.D. name.

Luigi Fusi, in his book *Le Alfa di Merosi e di Romeo*, relates how - Ugo Stella having asked Merosi to design a badge for the new cars - Romano Cattaneo, who was a member of the design team, was waiting for a tram in Piazza Castello and, while looking at the Visconti family's heraldic devices on the

Castello Sforzesco, had the idea of incorporating the Visconti serpent in the design of the radiator badge. Merosi thought this an excellent idea and added the red cross on white ground from the badge of the Comune di Milano, plus two *nodi di Savoia* (a knotted cord with tasselled ends) to separate the words ALFA and MILANO. Fusi records that Cattaneo prepared the detailed drawing from Merosi's sketches.

The first ALFA model was the 24HP, which had a 4084cc four-cylinder sidevalve engine developing 42bhp, a four-speed gearbox and rear wheel brakes. By the summer of 1910, prototypes were being tested by the team headed by Nino Franchini and, in the autumn of that year, the first chassis with coachwork by firms such as Bollani, Castagna, Cesare Sala and Schieppati were delivered. An alternative model, also produced in 1910, was the 2114cc four-cylinder 12HP and the 1st Series of both models (fifty of each) had all been sold within the first year; the 1911 accounts actually showed a profit - although at 4572 lire this was barely half the price of a chassis ...

Early in 1911, Merosi was working on the designs for an ALFA 'economy car', codenamed the *Bon Marché*, which had a 2413cc four-cylinder engine with automatic overhead inlet valves and gear-driven camshaft, a cone clutch and three-speed gearbox. However, the ALFA management rejected this new design in favour of improvements to the existing 12HP model (which was then renamed the 15HP). At the end of April, Franchini appeared at the first Criterium di Regolarita at Modena (a five-stage event over 1500km), driving a prototype 15HP ALFA, and was classified sixth - five other drivers tying for first place; in May, Franchini's ALFA led Ceirano's SCAT for two of the three laps of the Targa Florio

before crashing and retiring from the race.

Production of the 2nd Series of both the 24HP and 12HP (now re-named the 15HP) chassis began in 1912 and by the end of that year Merosi had begun designing the 40-60HP. This new model, of which twenty nine examples were produced, featured a 6-litre overhead valve engine developing between 70 and 74 bhp, a multiple-plate clutch and four-speed gearbox: the model's chassis utilised a number of parts common to the 24HP's chassis. One of these new 40-60HP chassis was acquired by Count Ricotti, who commissioned the coachbuilder Castagna to create a remarkable streamlined body for the ALFA - an early example of aerodynamic coachwork.

Although two prototypes of the 40-60HP were completed by September 1913, this was not to be a particularly happy year for the company which lost the equivalent of two months' work thanks to two protracted strikes called by Milanese machine tool workers. At this stage in the company's development, 184 workers were employed at ALFA - the most numerous being machinists (43), followed by chassis assemblers (37) - and some of the employees' complaints seem to have been based on the feeling that four or five of their number were failing to produce work of sufficient quality, although being paid the same as their fellow workers.



*The first Parma-Poggio di Berceto hillclimb was held over a 53km course in 1913 and was won by Giovanni Marsaglia's Aquila Italiana; Nino Franchini's ALFA was second, a position equalled by Campari's ALFA in 1914. The ALFA team (seen here) was unsuccessful at the third edition of the hillclimb, held on 5th October 1919, which was won by Antonio Ascari's FIAT; Luigi Fusi has identified the car in this picture as the 40-60HP driven by Conter and Baldini. (Centro Documentazione Alfa Romeo)*

Despite these difficulties Merosi's design work continued and in October 1913 he made the first drawings for his new

Grand Prix ALFA, to be known as the Grand Prix 1914. The racing car was to have a four-cylinder twin overhead camshaft engine of 4490cc (the Formula limited engine capacity to 4500cc) with four valves and two sparkplugs per cylinder and two carburettors. The prototype Grand Prix car underwent its first road trials in May 1914 and, at the end of that month, Nino Franchini and Giuseppe Campari finished third and fourth respectively in their 40-60HPs in the 446km Coppa Florio. Unfortunately, the political situation in Europe became ever more tense and war seemed increasingly likely. ALFA's already precarious commercial position was worsened by a corresponding crisis in the Italian economy and the final blow came on 1st August 1914 when the Italian government banned the export of strategic supplies: an act which, in this instance, included automobiles and their components. A few days afterwards, a temporary Postponement of Payments Act was invoked which paralysed all commercial activity: for ALFA, especially, this was a disaster. With scores of vehicles unsold and suppliers' bills to be paid, the lack of credit facilities reduced the company to a state of near collapse; shortly after hostilities between France and Germany began, all ALFA employees were summarily dismissed. Protests by the Unione Sindacale Italiana obliged the ALFA management to rename their action "indefinite suspension" but the actual situation was unaltered. Although the Government relaxed the export restrictions (for the automobile industry, at least) within a couple of months, it made little difference to ALFA's position. In the summer of 1915, only a few months after the King of Italy renounced his country's declaration of neutrality and declared war on Austria, almost all the shares in ALFA were acquired by the Società Italiana di Credito Provinciale

and on 4th August 1915 a man named Nicola Romeo was appointed Public Administrator of ALFA.

Nicola Romeo was born at Sant'Antimo (Napoli) on 28th April 1896 and his many qualifications included diplomas in mathematics and physics and as a teacher of English and degrees in civil engineering and electro-mechanical engineering. Despite these impressive credentials, the only employment which Romeo could find was as stationmaster at Tivoli railway station! According to Duccio Bigazzi's book *Il Portello*, Romeo was on his way to take up this appointment when he met a representative of Robert W. Blackwell & Co. - a meeting which led to his employment with Blackwell & Co. from 1902 to 1906.

Romeo's next venture was to set up his own company - Società in Accomandita Ing. Nicola Romeo & C. - whose modest initial capital of 115,000 lire was provided by Romeo and his lifelong friend Edoardo Fucito, which acquired agencies for such companies as Ingersoll-Rand, Blackwell and Hadfield. In 1909 the company acquired premises in Via Ruggero di Lauria and began assembly and repair work for Ingersoll-Rand. At about the same time, Romeo made contact with Angelo Pogliani (Director of the Banca di Busto Arsizio - which became the Società Italiana di Credito Provinciale shortly after the meeting between Pogliani and Romeo) who later became an investor in Romeo's company.

The shares in ALFA which had been acquired by the Società Italiana di Credito Provinciale then passed to the Banca Italiana di Sconto (constituted on 30th December 1914 and promoted by Pogliani's Credito Provinciale and the Società Bancaria Italiana) and, backed by the bank, Romeo was appointed Administrator and given wide powers. Following



Romeo's appointment the ALFA Board of Directors resigned at the end of August and an Extraordinary Meeting on 21st September 1915 sanctioned BIS's control of the company - which was promptly put into liquidation, Zefferino Pogliano (Angelo's younger brother) being nominated as Liquidator. A lone voice of protest appears to have been that of Giuseppe Merosi but it was in vain: on 2nd December 1915 ALFA was absorbed by S.A. Ing. Nicola Romeo & C. and all attempts to continue building cars ceased. All available 15-20HP ALFA engines were set aside for use in motor-driven compressors, initially produced by Ingersoll-Rand but - from 1916 onwards - also produced to Merosi's designs (more than 1200 'Merosi' units having been produced by the end of the war). The stock of 20-30 chassis were used to build ambulances and light trucks, while ALFA workers were building aero-engines under licence from Isotta Fraschini and a vast production line was organised for the 75mm shells ordered by the War Ministry.



*Two versions of Merosi's successful RL design, photographed outside Mulliners London showrooms - shared at the time with Alfa Romeo (British Sales) Ltd. - at 54 Baker Street. The 'touring' four-door saloon is accompanied by the special 'sports' RL prepared for Agostino Lanfranchi and raced by him at Brooklands during the mid-1920s. (Cherrett Stiles collection)*

Merosi, who had been far from happy at the liquidation of the old ALFA company and the use of the Portello Works for the production of munitions, was sent to Napoli to direct Romeo's Officine Ferroviarie Meridionali during 1917-1918

and, appearing before a Tribunal in Milano to seek payments owing to him from the old ALFA company in liquidation, he complained that the Romeo company had been making a 400 per cent profit on the sale of compressors. However, an enquiry subsequently cleared Ing. Nicola Romeo & C. of a charge of making excess wartime profits and it appears that Merosi severed his connection with the Romeo company on 31st May 1918. During the postwar reorganisation of Romeo's little empire (which on 13th February 1918 was reconstituted as Società Anonima Ing. Nicola Romeo & C.), it was decided that the factory at Pomigliano d'Arco would concentrate on aero-engine production, railway engines would be built at the Saronno site and Portello would produce tractors and motor vehicles. During the war, the area of the Portello site had been greatly increased by the purchase of a large piece of land and now covered approximately 160,000 square metres and a large cast-iron foundry (with its own laboratory and test department) had been set up in 1918. The company had obtained a licence from the USA to build Titan tractors but revitalising the car production line was more difficult; lacking a designer of sufficient stature, Romeo made his peace with Merosi and offered the latter a five-year consultancy contract "in the field of automobiles, aeroplanes and engines" which took effect from 1st August 1919.



*The thirteenth Targa Florio, held over four laps of the Medium Madonie circuit on 2nd April 1922, resulted in a win for Giulio Masetti's 4.5-litre Mercedes and the highest placed Alfa Romeo was driven by Ascari, who finished fourth. This 20-30 ES, driven by Sivocci and Marinoni, finished in ninth place nearly twenty six minutes behind the Mercedes but did achieve a second in Class award. (Centro Documentazione Alfa Romeo)*

Car production was officially resumed in 1920 - the cars now bearing the legend "Alfa-Romeo, Milano" on their radiator badges (the only place, incidentally, where the words "Alfa" and "Romeo" were hyphenated) - but the number of chassis was pitifully small. 1920 was a terrible year for Milanese industry: at the beginning of the year, *L'Ordine Nuovo* opined "The city is infested with around 20,000 delinquents. The police are more brutal, more violent, more crafty than in any

other place. The number of spies and informers is immeasurable". Thousands of working days were lost through strikes and those workers who wanted to continue working were frequently waylaid and abused by pickets; on August 30th the Alfa Romeo management ordered a lock out at the Portello Works. Retribution was swift, the Federazione Italiana degli Operai Metalurgici (the Metal Workers' Union) called for the occupation of all the factories in the City and workers in Bologna, Firenze, Genova and Napoli swiftly followed suit. However, by the end of September most of the Portello workforce was back at work and the unrest appears to have diminished; the 1921 production figures show a more cheerful outlook - fifty 35-50HP G1 chassis and one hundred and nineteen 20-30 ES chassis having been produced. The latter was a more sporting version of the pre-war 20-30 and the model achieved several competition successes driven by Antonio Ascari, Giuseppe Campari and Ugo Sivocci. The G1 (and the G2 which followed it) was intended to be the company's De Luxe model, with a six-cylinder, 6330cc, engine in a 3.4m wheelbase chassis intended for luxury four- or six-seater coachwork; it was not a commercial success, partly due to the motor taxation system in force at the time, and only fifty two chassis were produced. At the end of the year, despite the popularity of the ES model, the company's deficit amounted to nearly ten million lire and the collapse of the Banca Italiana di Sconto - a major shareholder - exacerbated the position.

According to some early production figures, 1922 was another dreadful year for Portello with only six chassis being produced. However, these chassis were the first examples of one of Giuseppe Merosi's most famous and best-loved

designs, the RL series, which was to prove Alfa Romeo's best selling model (over 2600 were sold between 1922 and 1928) until this position was usurped by the four-cylinder 1900 model produced in the 1950s. The RL had a six-cylinder pushrod-operated overhead valve engine, the RL Normale's capacity being 2916cc and the RL Sport's 2994cc. Both chassis had rear wheel brakes only and the RLS had a handsome V-shaped radiator whereas the RLN's radiator had a flat front. Later versions were known as the RL Turismo and the RL Super Sport and four wheel brakes were available from 1924; there was also a racing version, the RL Targa Florio, examples of which finished first, second and fourth in the 1923 Targa Florio and won the Circuito di Cremona and the Coppa della Consuma in the same year. Only a few of these RL TF cars were produced, six of which had the 'normal' engine capacity of 2994cc, two were 3154cc and two 3620cc.

The 1914 Grand Prix ALFA, which had been hidden in a pharmaceutical factory for the duration of the war, did not make its competition debut until the Parma-Poggio di Berceto hillclimb in October 1919 when, driven by Franchini, it finished third. Although the 1914 Grand Prix achieved class awards at the Gallarate Flying Kilometre in 1920 and the Parma-Poggio di Berceto hillclimb in 1921, it was not particularly reliable and failed to finish many of the events for which it was entered. The pre-war 40-60HP also appeared at postwar events and although the team of 40-60s retired at the 1919 Parma-Poggio di Berceto, Campari won the 1920 Circuito di Mugello and was third in the Coppa della Consuma while Enzo Ferrari, also driving a 40-60, was second in the 1920 Targa Florio.

The RL Super Sports and Targa Florios were to bring the

company a good deal of success, mainly in events for sporting - as opposed to Grand Prix -cars but both Merosi and Romeo had more ambitious ideas. Merosi began work on the design in the autumn of 1922, the result being his second Grand Prix car, the Gran Premio Romeo 1923 (otherwise known as the GPR 1923 or P1). The current Formula decreed a maximum engine capacity (2000cc) and a minimum weight (650kg); Merosi's design was for a six-cylinder, twin camshaft 1990cc engine with two plugs per cylinder and two carburettors. The chassis was fairly traditional, with semi-elliptic springing and drum brakes on all four wheels (and a hand-operated transmission brake, as on the later Series RLs), and a four-speed gearbox operating through a multi-plate clutch: the overall dry weight was 850kg. Handsome two-seater bodywork, with a pointed tail housing the 120 litre fuel tank, completed the picture. Three P1s were built but the model was never seriously campaigned. All three cars appeared at Monza for the European Grand Prix in September 1923 to be driven by Ascari, Campari and Sivocci, but Ugo Sivocci's P1 left the track during practice; Sivocci was killed in the accident and the Alfa Romeo team was withdrawn from the event. The race (which - according to Avanti! - was watched by nearly 200,000 spectators, including 5000 FIAT workers who had journeyed from Torino on four special trains) was won by Carlo Salamano's eight-cylinder FIAT 805, ahead of his team mate Felice Nazzaro and Jimmy Murphy's Miller.



*Nicola Romeo at the wheel of a Grand Prix P2 Alfa Romeo, posed outside the workshops at Portello. Vittorio Jano, with his customary modesty, avoided being included in the photograph but the young mechanic, Giulio Ramponi, (standing by the offside front wheel) had no such qualms. (Centro Documentazione Alfa Romeo)*

Nicola Romeo must have been disappointed; within a few days an emissary had been sent to the Villa Francesco, Torino, in an attempt to engage the services of Vittorio Jano. In an interview with Griffith Borgeson recorded towards the end of his life, Jano could still recall the financial inducements offered by Romeo to persuade him to leave FIAT: 3500 lire per month (at FIAT he received 1800), plus living expenses and bonuses. Perhaps of equal importance was the promise of his own department, heading his own design team; at any rate, it did not take Jano long to make up his mind and the family - Vittorio, his wife Rosina and their son



Francesco - moved to their new home in Corso Sempione 71, Milano.

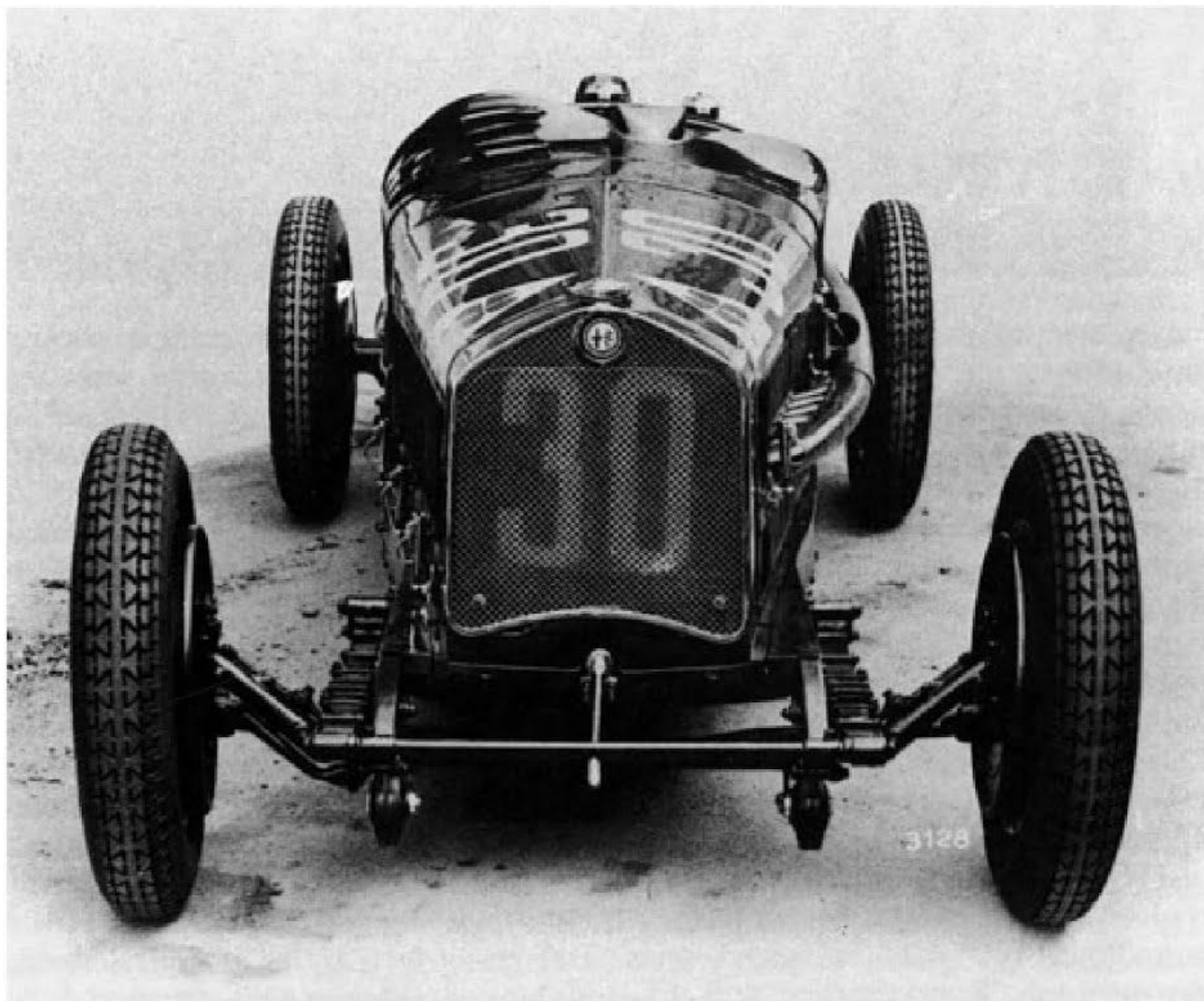
While Giuseppe Merosi remained in charge of the production of touring cars, Jano's brief was to design a new race-winning Grand Prix car and this he achieved in a manner which probably exceeded Romeo's wildest dreams. The P2 Alfa Romeo made its (victorious) debut at the Circuito di Cremona on 9th June 1924, driven by Antonio Ascari and with Luigi Bazzi - head of the engine testing department at Portello - in the passenger seat. Jano had designed an eight-cylinder, twin overhead camshaft supercharged engine which produced 140bhp at 5500rpm, the bore and stroke of 61x85mm giving a capacity of 1987cc. Prior to deciding to opt for a supercharged engine, Jano had tested a Roots-type supercharger on one of the P1s and the results had been sufficiently good for him to decide to choose this system - which would later be adopted for all his supercharged Alfa engines. The P1s also came in useful prior to the first great test of the new P2 - the European Grand Prix at Lyon - when Jano and his team tried out various gear and axle ratios on the P1 prior to despatching the team of P2s to France for the race on August 3rd. Nicola Romeo, who had gone to Lyon with fellow director Edoardo Fucito and the company's Commercial Director Giorgio Rimini, must have been more than delighted with the result; a win for Giuseppe Campari's P2, ahead of the Delages driven by Divo and Benoist, with Louis Wagner's P2 fourth.

In October P2s finished first, second and third at the Gran Premio d'Italia (the entire Portello workforce was given a day off to celebrate the victory) and some development work on the engine design during the winter of 1924 prepared the way

for an even more successful season in 1925, P2s finishing first and second at the 1925 European Grand Prix held at Spa and first and second at the Gran Premio d'Italia held at Monza in September. There had also been a disaster, however, as Antonio Ascari was killed when his P2 crashed during the French Grand Prix at Montlhéry on July 26th, the rest of the Alfa Romeo team being withdrawn as soon as news of Ascari's death reached the pits. At the end of the year the A.I.A.C.R. (the International Association of Recognised Automobile Clubs) announced that Alfa Romeo had won the first manufacturers' World Championship and the handsome bronze trophy designed by the sculptor Maraini. To commemorate the victory, all Alfa Romeo radiator badges were henceforth surrounded by a silver-plated laurel wreath but, the 2-litre Formula having come to an end, the company management decided to retire from racing.

Jano, meanwhile, had been invited to design a new high-performance production car for the company and the prototype of this model - the 6C 1500 Normale - had been shown in chassis form at the Salone di Milano in the spring of 1925. One wonders how Giuseppe Merosi, nominally in charge of production car design, felt when the younger man received this assignment; sales of Merosi's designs had increased from a total of 769 RL and RM chassis in 1924 to 1109 the following year, the latter figure representing the highest yearly production from the formation of ALFA in 1910 until the outbreak of the second World War. While development work continued on the new 6C 1500, Merosi decided that it was time to leave Alfa Romeo and submitted his resignation in January 1926: it is reported that both Jano, who respected his abilities greatly, and Nicola Romeo

tried in vain to persuade him to change his mind.



*Alfa Romeo re-purchased several P2 chassis in the late '20s, after modification the cars re-emerged as the P2 modificato for the 1930 season. The distinctive 'bullnose' radiator cowl was an upgrade - resulting in a radiator similar to the 6C 1750's.  
(Lando Degli Esposti)*

Romeo himself had suffered a series of reverses; when the Banca Italiana di Sconto had failed in December 1921, the shares which it held in S.A. Ing. Nicola Romeo & C. had passed to the Banca Nazionale di Credito. The management of this bank had begun to lose faith in Nicola Romeo's abilities

to keep the Romeo company - still seriously under-funded despite the involvement of the BNC as a major shareholder - afloat. In 1925, Romeo's post as General Manager of the company had been abolished in favour of a Management Committee consisting of himself, Ambrogio Molteni and Carlo Fachini the latter closely associated with the bank. Perhaps in an attempt to soften the blow this loss of prestige caused him, Romeo was also given the largely honorary position of Company President but worse was to follow; despite Nicola Romeo's objections the BNC backed the appointment of Pasquale Gallo as General Manager of the Romeo Company. Gallo, born in Bari in 1887, had already proved his worth to the Banca Nazionale di Credito when at its request he had revitalised the ailing Itala company (another victim of the failure of the Banca Italiana di Sconto) and it appears that he was initially reluctant to leave Itala. Having been persuaded, he initiated a comprehensive "pruning" of the workforce - especially those individuals who had been closely associated with Romeo himself. One of the first victims was Romeo's lifelong friend and co-founder of the first Romeo company, Edoardo Fucito, who had been in charge of the air compressor department; next was Michele Nicolais, head of the foundry and forges and Technical Director of virtually the entire establishment. Giorgio Rimini, who had been Commercial Director, the engineer Angelo Gradi and Giovanni Agostoni (who had been working at Portello since the old ALFA days) were the next to go - although Agostoni returned to Portello as soon as Gallo had left and remained there until the outbreak of the second World War. Nicola Romeo remarked that all these changes had not brought any increase in car production - quite the reverse - and the

production figures for the year confirmed his view, only 280 chassis of all types had been built. All these changes failed to bring any improvement in the company's finances and on 6th November 1926, S.A. Ing. Nicola Romeo & C. passed into the ownership of the newly constituted Istituto di Liquidazione and was thus effectively nationalised.



*The rear view of the P2 modificato, showing the spare wheel inserted in the pointed tail, reminiscent of the Grand Prix Sunbeams. Achille Varzi won the 1930 Targa Florio (averaging 78.019kph) in one of these cars, just under two minutes ahead of Louis Chiron's Bugatti. (Lando Degli Esposti)*

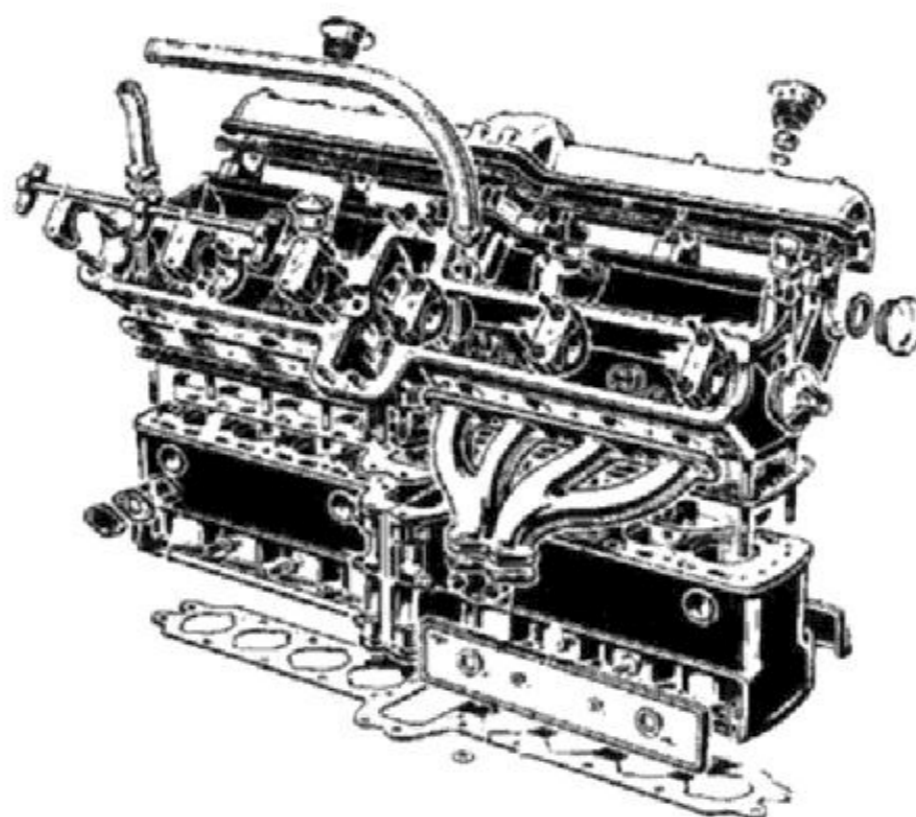
Doubtless these financial and managerial difficulties were partly responsible for the long gestation period of the 6C 1500

as, despite the 1925 appearance at the Salone, the first production cars were not sold until late 1926/early 1927. The 6C 1500 Normale was the forerunner of a remarkable family of six-cylinder Alfa Romeos, the best-known of which is probably the 6C 1750 Gran Sport. Jano's original design, the 1500 N, was for a 1487cc engine with single overhead camshaft, a four-speed gearbox, multi-plate clutch and fully compensated rod-operated brakes. Over eight hundred 1st and 2nd Series 1500 Ns were produced in 1926-1928 but it is the more sporting twin camshaft version which many people remember with most affection. The twin camshaft 1500 Sport was introduced in 1928, together with a very limited series of supercharged cars known as the 6C 1500 MMS (or Mille Miglia Speciale), the latter being so named in celebration of the model's win in the 1000 Miglia of that year. The 1750 made its first appearance the following year, in single camshaft (Turismo), twin camshaft (Sport) and supercharged (Super Sport) forms and both the 1500 and 1750 - especially the twin camshaft supercharged models - were highly successful in hillclimbs and sports car racing, as well as being delightful touring cars. This 6C range also included the 1500 Super Sport and Gran Sport, the 1750 Gran Turismo, Gran Turismo Compressore and Gran Sport and, finally, the 1900 Gran Turismo. Before any of these made their appearance on the market, however, Nicola Romeo had retired from the company which still bore his name: Duccio Bigazzi records in *Il Portello* that Società Anonima Ing. Nicola Romeo & C. did not formally change its name to Società Anonima Alfa Romeo until 30th March 1930.

# II

## VITTORIO JANO AND THE 8C PROJECT

Vittorio Jano, the second and perhaps greatest of Alfa Romeo's designers, was born at San Giorgio Canavese on 22nd April 1891, the fourth of five children (three boys and two girls) born to Francesco Jano and his wife Angela. Having obtained a job as Director of the Arsenal (the Regio Arsenale) in Torino, Francesco Jano and his family moved to Torino where Vittorio - having completed his studies at the Istituto Professionale Operaio - went to work at the age of eighteen at the Società Torinese Automobili Rapid.



By 1909 the company, which had been formed in 1904 by Giovanni Battista Ceirano, was employing over three hundred workers at its premises in Barriera Nizza, Torino, and producing five models - all with four-cylinder engines and ranging from the 12/16HP to the 10.5-litre 50/70HP. Two years later, in November 1911, the newly-married Vittorio Jano obtained a job as junior draughtsman at Fabbrica Italiana di Automobili Torino (FIAT) and accompanied the team of 14B FIATs to the French Grand Prix at Lyon in 1914 (where the three Mercedes driven by Lautenschlager, Wagner and Salzer finished first, second and third). In 1917 he was promoted to senior draughtsman and after the war was also involved in the organisation of FIAT's racing teams. Another promotion placed him at the head of a small group of designers working on FIAT's touring car production, including the 501, 505 and 510 models, and he later became involved in the racing car design team of Giulio Cesare Cappa, Tranquillo Zerbi, Fornacca, Bertarione and Becchia, working under Carlo Cavalli. Some of the FIAT racing cars were remarkably advanced in design and extremely successful and it is true to say that the FIAT company was an important 'school' for designers. Vincenzo Bertarione, whose signature appears on some of the drawings for the 404 engine (fitted to the 804 racing cars, one of which won the Italian Grand Prix at Monza in September 1922), and Walter Becchia, who had also worked on the project, were tempted away to join the Sunbeam design team. The FIAT management was not pleased, especially when the new six-cylinder, 2-litre Sunbeam beat the FIAT team to win the French Grand Prix at Tours in 1923. The Sezione Studi Speciali's next project was the tipo 805 Grand Prix FIAT, whose tipo 405 eight-cylinder



twin overhead camshaft engine, bore and stroke 60x87.5mm, gave a top speed of around 220kph. Jano's signature appears on some of the chassis drawings (dated April 1923), although in a fairly minor role, and when the team of three 805s went to Monza for the European Grand Prix on September 10th Jano was working in the pits as assistant to Severino Rossi, FIAT's Pit Manager. The race, which was to have seen the competition debut of the Gran Premio Romeo 1923 (or P1), was won by Carlo Salamano's tipo 805, with Felice Nazzaro's similar car second; one can imagine that Jano had had the opportunity of seeing the P1 in action before the Alfa Romeo team was withdrawn after Ugo Sivocci's fatal accident in practice.



*A group of Alfa Romeo personnel gathered beside one of the P2s at the 1925 French Grand Prix, held at Montlhéry. Vittorio*

*Jano, wearing a rather smart bow tie, is fourth from the left of the picture and one can also recognise Antonio Ascari (seventh from the left), Edoardo Fucito (co-founder of the first Romeo business, on Ascari's left), Ingegnere Giorgio Rimini and Count Carobbio. (Centro Documentazione Alfa Romeo)*

Having been approached by Nicola Romeo's emissaries and moved to Milano and a new job at Portello, Vittorio Jano and his wife Rosina must have been surprised to receive a visit from the Carabinieri in December 1923. The latter had, according to Duccio Bigazzi in *Il Portello*, been sent to Milano by the FIAT management which feared that Jano might have 'appropriated' some of FIAT's latest designs. Naturally nothing was found, either at the Jano family's home or at Portello, but the Torinese company's action does suggest an intense fear of what Alfa Romeo might achieve and, probably, continuing annoyance at Sunbeam's success at Tours.

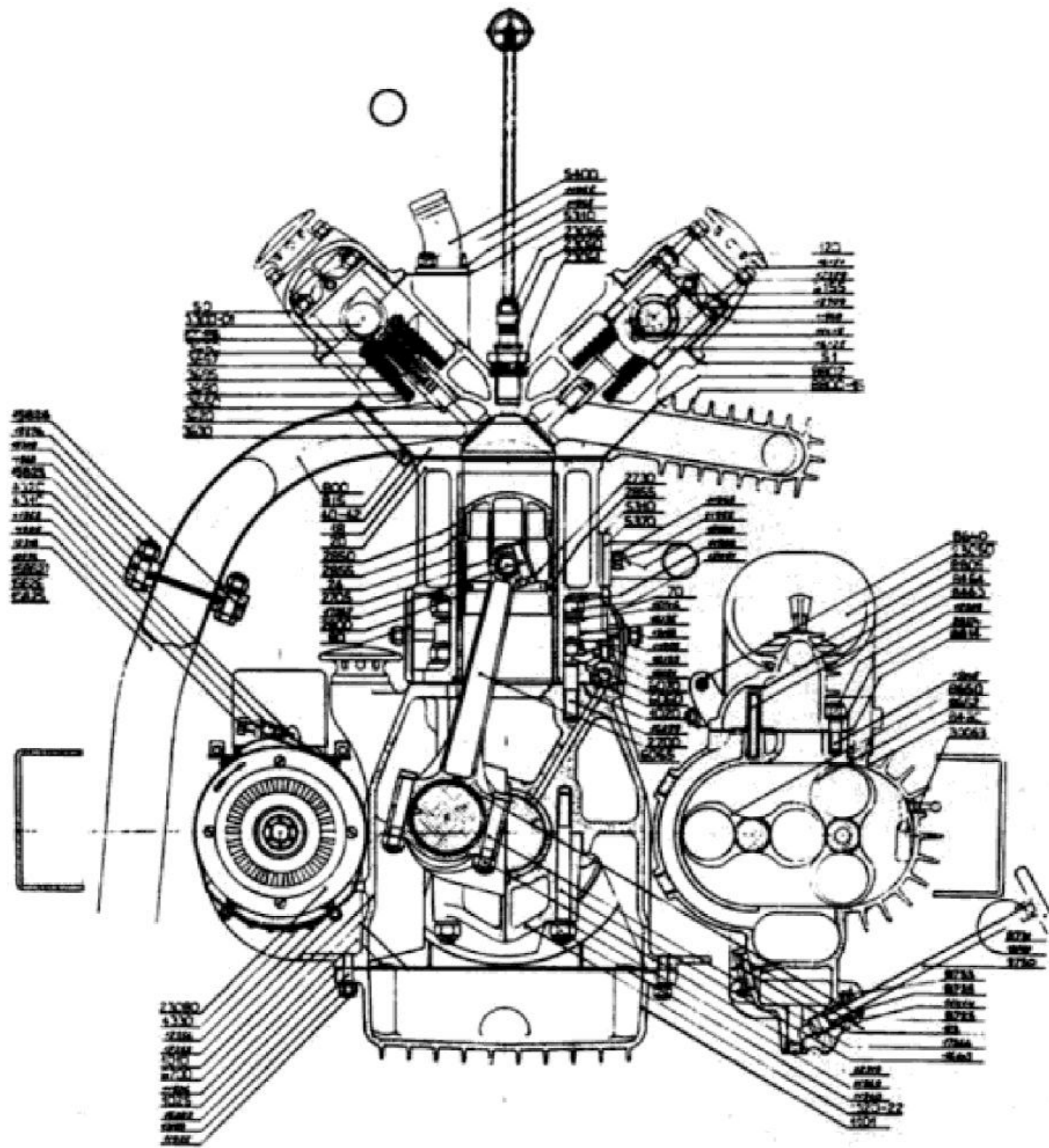
Thanks to Luigi Fusi, who had started work at Portello in 1920 and who had been a member of Jano's P2 team from the beginning of the project, we have a picture of Jano's working day. He invariably walked to work, smoking a cigarette, arriving at his office at 8 o'clock; at noon he would collect a chassis or a test car from the "Prova" department and drive home for a two hour lunch break. He returned to Portello, remaining until 7 or 8pm, working a six day week, and frequently took cars out on road tests - to Modena, Bologna or, on Sundays, to the mountains north of Milano: Fusi often went with him, as did Attilio Marinoni or Gianbattista Guidotti. Jano always drove (Fusi says that this is why he never had time to get a driving licence himself) and the others were instructed to listen for odd noises or to observe anything

untoward. Work on the P2 progressed rapidly. By the end of March 1924 an engine had been bench tested and the first complete car was running before the end of May; the win at the Cremona 200 Mile race on June 9th heralded the start of an extremely successful racing career.

The next Jano project - the 6C 1500 - took much longer to make the transition from the drawing board to the market, for the reasons previously mentioned, but the design innovations were sufficient to ensure that the new car was still a market leader despite the two years which had elapsed between its intended and actual first sales to the public. All the 6C models were typical of the 'Jano style' and of the excellence of the factory's foundry and machining expertise: every item on the engine, inside and out, was beautifully designed and executed. Excellent road holding, powerful brakes and wonderfully accurate and light steering make the 6C Alfa Romeo a delight to drive today, more than sixty years after the design first came onto the market. Even in its original single camshaft form the 6C was successful in sporting events: the 1927 Trento-Bondone, Cuneo-Colle della Maddalena and Monte Pellegrino hillclimbs were all won outright by 6C 1500s. The twin camshaft 6Cs' successes are too numerous to mention in detail but outright wins included the 1000 Miglia in 1928, 1929 and 1930, the Essex Six Hour Race, the Georges Boillot Cup and the Circuit Routes Pavées in 1928, the Irish Grand Prix, the Double 12 Hour Race, the Spa 24 Hour Race and the Circuit Routes Pavées in 1929, the Spa 24 Hour Race and the Tourist Trophy race in 1930, as well as many other races, sprints and hillclimbs. It was an impressive record for Jano's next car to emulate.

Car production at Alfa Romeo had been increasing - albeit

slowly - since the 'low' of 280 chassis in 1926 when Nicola Romeo remarked that Pasquale Gallo's re-organisation was doing little for the company: according to the figures compiled in November 1941, 492 chassis were produced in 1927 and 533 in 1928 (almost all the latter figure consisting of 6C 1500s). At the end of 1927 Gallo himself had been removed from his job at Portello and his place was eventually taken by Prospero Gianferrari, an enthusiastic motorist who had enjoyed some competition successes with his own 6C 1500. Vittorio Jano had somehow managed to keep his job during Gallo's pruning of the workforce and, with the encouragement of Gianferrari, at least some design work on the new 8C 2300 appears to have begun as early as 1929. On 3rd September 1929, Jano wrote to Alfa Romeo's British Concessionaire, F.W.Stiles: "Regarding the 'Eight Cylinder', I am not yet able to guarantee that these cars will be ready for next year; in fact, it is a very difficult undertaking. Let's talk about it when we next meet".

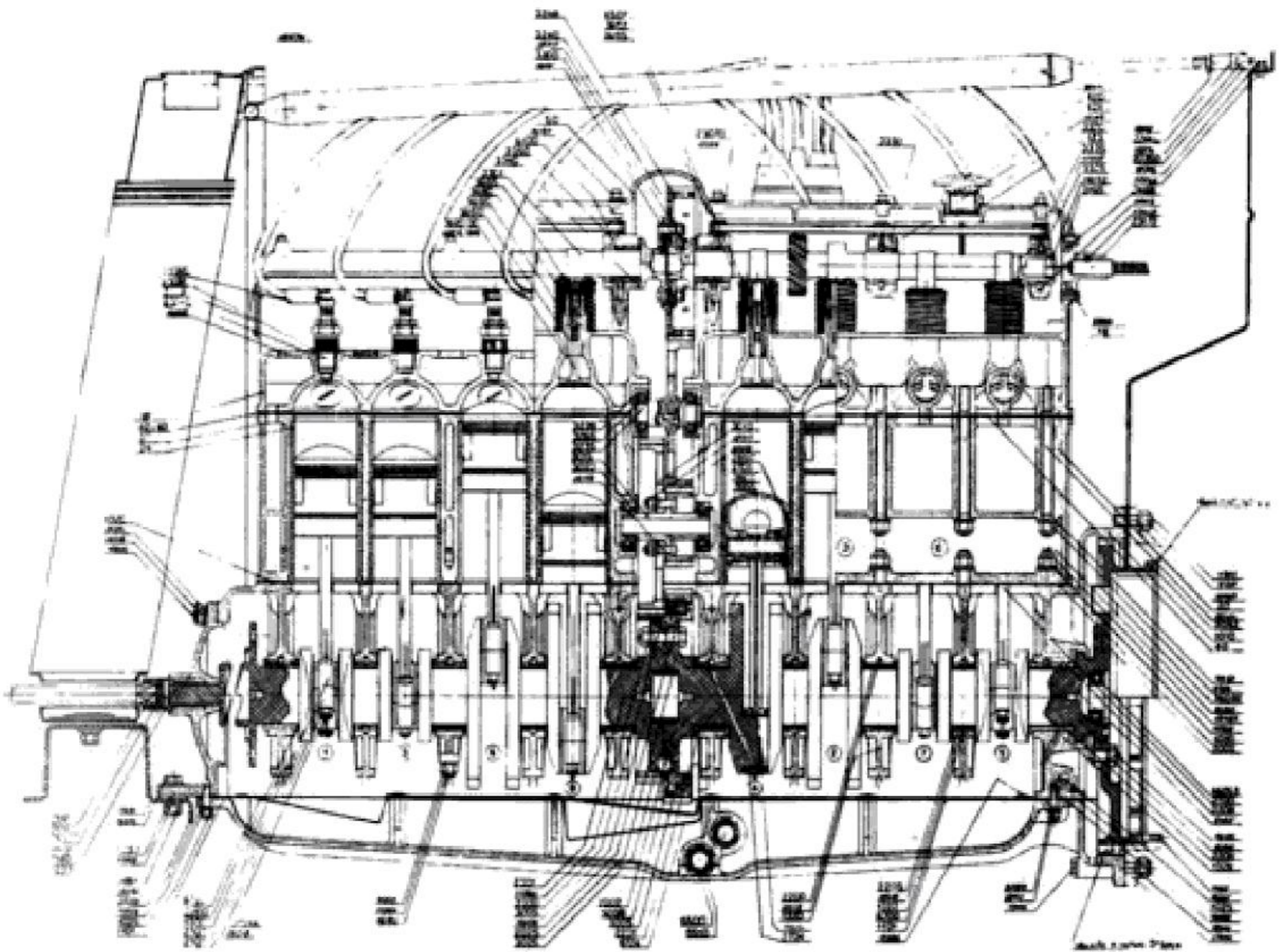


*Jano's design for the transverse section of the 8C 2300 engine, seen from the rear. (Centro Documentazione Alfa Romeo)*

The new eight-cylinder, twin-camshaft engine had a bore and stroke of 65x88mm, giving a capacity of 2336cc; the cylinder blocks and detachable cylinder heads were cast in

two blocks of four cylinders with a central gear train which drove the camshafts and ancilliary equipment. The cylinder block was cast in aluminium with steel liners and the cylinder heads in what the handbook describes as "patented light alloy". The crankshaft - running in ten main bearings - was also in two halves, with two helical gears bolted in the centre driving the camshafts and the supercharger, water pump and oil pump; the crankcase was also made in light alloy. Lubrication was by dry sump, some very early cars having the oil tank between the front dumb irons and later chassis under the passenger seat (1st and 2nd Series) or the driver's seat (3rd Series). The Roots-type supercharger was fed via a twin choke Memini carburettor and early cars (1st Series and the first twenty seven chassis of the 2nd Series) were fitted with an Autovac tank on the scuttle while later chassis had Autoflux electric fuel pumps. There were two chassis lengths originally, Corto (Short) and Lungo (Long), the former having a 2750mm wheelbase and the latter 3100mm and both types had a 1380mm track. The Corto model was sometimes known as the "Mille Miglia" and the Lungo as the "Le Mans", which led to some confusion between actual 1000 Miglia or Le Mans 8C 2300s and ordinary Corto or Lungo chassis. The Corto chassis could be modified, on demand, by the factory to Spyder Corsa specification but the wheelbase remained the same - 2750mm; very early Monza models also had this wheelbase but the 1932 Monza chassis had shorter dumb irons and front springs, the springs being attached to a crossmem-ber underneath the dumb irons and the front axle moved back slightly, making the wheelbase 2650mm. The braking system was similar to that of the 6C 1500 and 1750 models, except that the brake drums were much larger in

diameter, and Rudge Whitworth 19" x 4" wellbase wire wheels were standard.

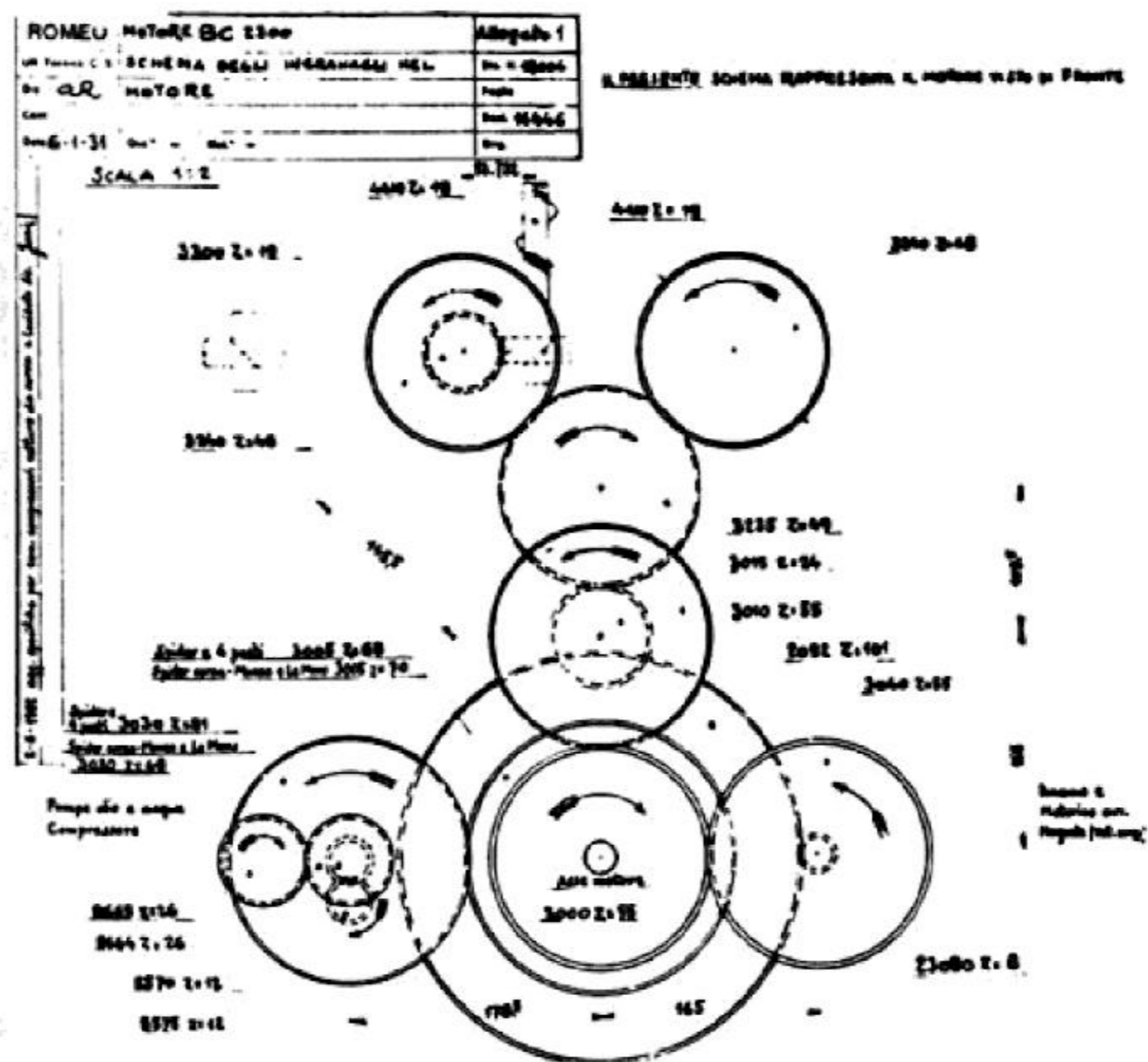


*The 8C 2300 engine, longitudinal section. (Centro Documentazione Alfa Romeo)*

The Corto chassis was most frequently fitted with open two-seater bodywork (variously described as 'spyder' or 'spider' in contemporary illustrations), often by Touring or Zagato, but there are records of several two-seater coupés and saloons. A

great variety of coachwork was built on the Lungo chassis, from the genuine Le Mans four-seaters built by Zagato and Touring to the elegant and luxurious drophead coupés and saloons and several of these were seen at the most prestigious Concours d'Elegance of the period. But they were expensive cars - costing anything between 80,000 and 125,000 lire - and were placed on the market at a time of terrible world-wide recession. Italy, like almost every other country, was suffering, and the loss of public confidence in the banks eventually led to the formation of the Istituto Mobiliare Italiano for the financing of industry. Perhaps it was for this reason that the factory does not seem to have given the new model much advance publicity; according to the magazine *Motor Italia*, the 8C 2300 did not make its first Motor Show appearance until the Paris Salon in September 1931. The writer opined "... the new 'Eight' is, like the same manufacturer's famous six-cylinder, a product of Vittorio Jano's genius ..." and estimates of the model's top speed varied from 170kph (torpedo 4 posti) to 210kph (tipo corsa). A report in the magazine of the Reale Automobile Club d'Italia in January 1932 gave the prices shown in Table 1. These prices included all accessories, two spare wheels plus tyres and 'shatterproof' glass. Export prices were generally somewhat higher.





*A drawing showing the layout - seen from the front of the engine - of the central gear train which operated the dynamo, starter motor, supercharger, water and oil pumps. (Centro Documentazione Alfa Romeo)*

The 8C 2300's first competitive appearance was at the 1000 Miglia in April 1931 and, unfortunately, it did not live up to the Jano tradition of a new model winning its first competitive event (as had the P2, the 6C 1500 MMS and the 6C 1750 SS and GS). The two 8Cs entered were both short chassis examples, fitted with Zagato two-seater bodywork and with the oil tank between the front dumb irons; Nuvolari's Circuito Bordino car also had the front-mounted oil tank, as did the 8C with which he won the 1931 Targa Florio in May. After this date, photographs of cars with the oil tank mounted

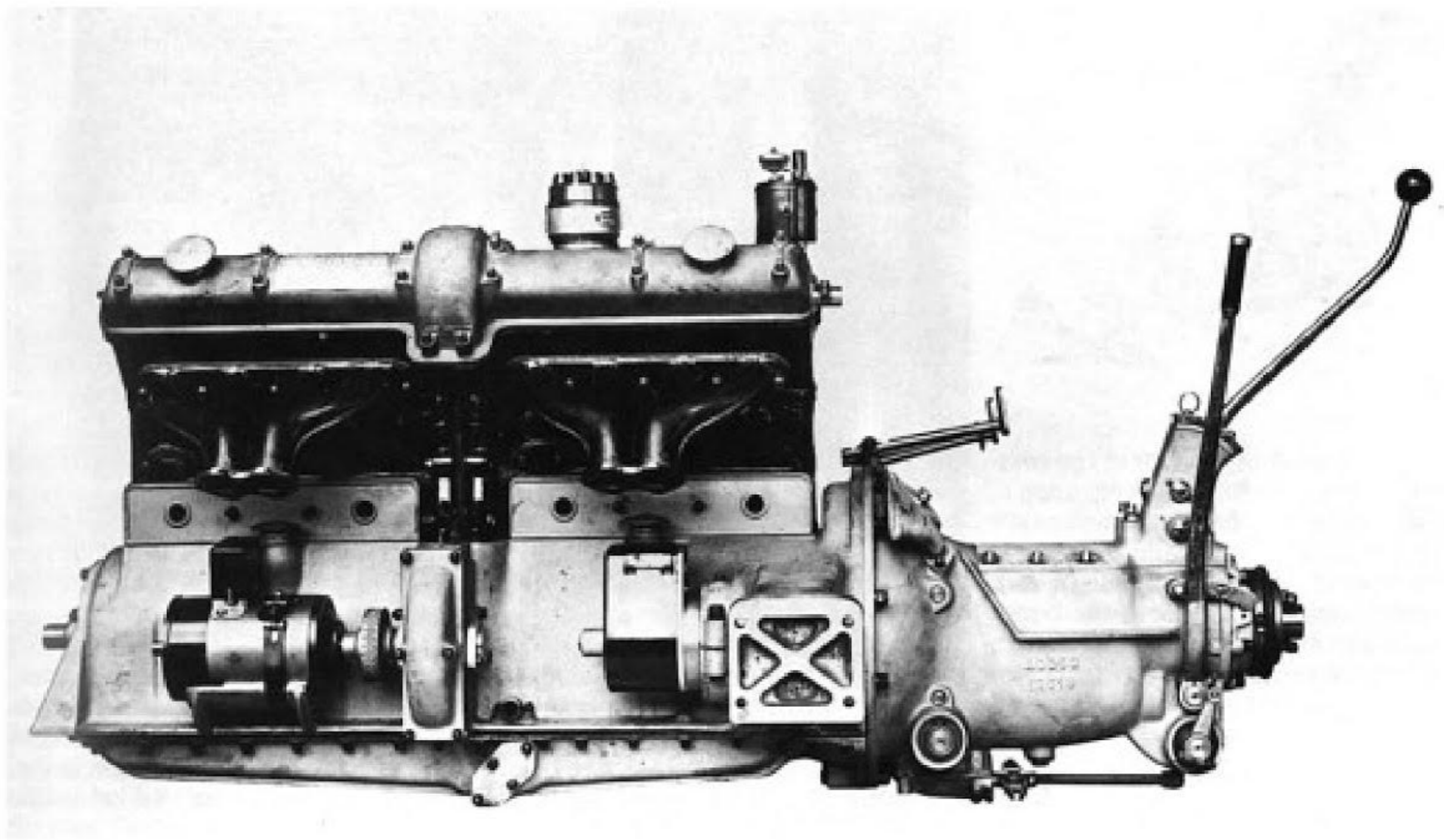
between the front dumb irons are rare and, although the chassis drawings (dated 5th March 1931) for the 8C Le Mans four-seater show the oil tank mounted between the front dumb irons, the two cars which actually ran in the 1931 Le Mans 24 Hour Race appear to have had their oil tanks mounted under the passenger seat.

The 8Cs soon lived down their failure in the 1000 Miglia, caused by lack of sufficient testing as well as by terrible problems with tyres; however, no chances were taken at the Targa Florio, Jano himself directing a team of twenty five mechanics, and Nuvolari's victory was well-deserved. Other major 1931 successes included wins at the Italian Grand Prix, the Eireann Cup race, Le Mans 24 Hour Race, the Dieppe Grand Prix, the Comminges Grand Prix and a host of other races and hillclimbs. In December 1931 a contest at Littorio airport between Nuvolari driving a Scuderia Ferrari 8C Monza and Suster's Caproni C100 biplane resulted in a win for the Caproni - but by only a couple of seconds.

<b>Model</b>	<b>Chassis/Complete</b>	<b>Price</b>
8C 2300 GS	chassis	75,000 lire
8C 2300 GS Lungo	chassis	80,000 lire
8C Spider GS	complete	80,000 lire
8C 2-4-seater & torpedo 4-seater	complete	91,000 lire
8C Cabriolet 2-4-seater	complete	98,000 lire

Vittorio Jano's workload during these first seven or eight years at Alfa Romeo was formidable; in charge of production

car design since Merosi's resignation in January 1926, he had also become involved with the aero-engine department (the D1 and D2 aero-engines were designed by Jano) and in 1931 he was put in charge of bus and truck production. Design work on the 8C 2300 model ran in parallel with that on the monoposto tipo A, an interim model intended for fast circuits, which was fitted with two supercharged 6C 1750 engines mounted side by side in the chassis and equipped with two linked gearboxes; overall capacity was 3504cc. This particular model - four of which were built - was not particularly successful competitively but Luigi Fusi (who collaborated on the design) says that it provided a useful testing ground for Jano's next design: the monoposto tipo B, popularly known as the P3. First campaigned in 1932, the new eight-cylinder racing car had a bore and stroke of 65x100mm giving a capacity of 2654cc; perhaps as a result of experiences with the 8C 2300 engine, the alloy cylinder heads (although retaining the two halves separated by a central gear train layout of the 8C 2300) were cast in one piece with the cylinder blocks. The chassis design benefited from the new Grand Prix Formula which, for the first time, allowed genuine single-seater bodywork to be fitted. Jano's design mounted the differential unit at the rear of the gearbox, with separate drive shafts to the rear wheels which allowed the driver's seat to be placed centrally - between the two shafts - and thus lowering the car's body profile. The new monoposto made its competitive debut at the Gran Premio d'Italia at Monza in June 1932 and, as in all the best fairy stories, the tipo B driven by Tazio Nuvolari won the race.



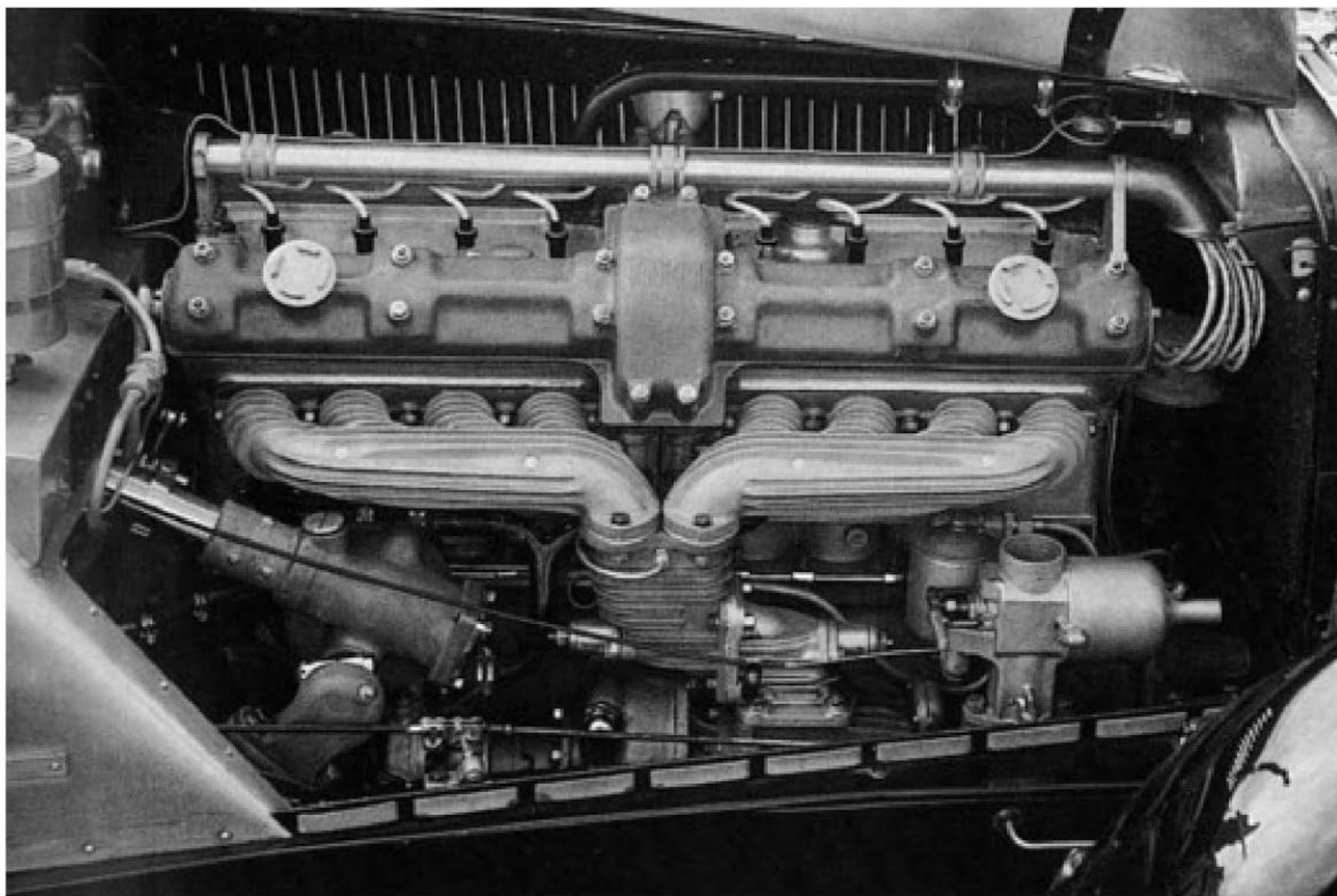
*The 8C 2300 engine and gearbox, seen from the exhaust side, showing the original coil and the correct type of distributor. The cast numbers on the gearbox casing relate to the drawing and part numbers for each item: in this case, 40050 is the drawing number and 16619 the part number. (Centro Documentazione Alfa Romeo)*

The tipo B monoposto proved to be such a success that, in track events at least, the 8C 2300s were in danger of being eclipsed. However, the first half of 1932 still belonged to the 8C 2300 family, with Borzacchini: Bignami and Trossi: Brivio (the first pair entered by the factory, the second by the Scuderia Ferrari) finishing first and second in the 1000 Miglia and the Monzas driven by Nuvolari and Caracciola achieving the same result in the Monaco Grand Prix. The Scuderia

Ferrari, with a number of 6C and 8C Alfa Romeos at its disposal, maintained a strong presence at all kinds of events. Luigi Orsini (in his book *La Scuderia Ferrari 1929-1939*), notes that, around the middle of 1932, the now-famous *cavallino rampante*, or prancing horse, device appeared for the first time on cars entered by the Scuderia. Since 1923 or thereabouts, all Alfa Romeos had previously appeared with a *quadrifoglio*, or four-leaf clover, painted on their bodywork; the legend concerning this particular badge says that Ugo Sivocci was the first driver to use the symbol, the occasion being the 1923 Targa Florio (which Sivocci won). When Sivocci was killed during practice for the Gran Premio d'Italia in 1923, his P1 Alfa Romeo was not wearing a *quadrifoglio*. The 1923 green cloverleaf was painted on a white, diamond-shaped, background; from 1924 onwards, the background was the more familiar triangular shape and there was an unusual aspect of the *quadrifoglio* badge worn by the team of P2s during 1925, as it was a three-leaf clover instead of the usual four-leaf variety. When the French toymaking firm CIJ produced their lovely 530mm long clockwork models of the P2 racing car in the mid-1920s, they must have had the 1925 season, and the European Grand Prix at Spa in particular, in mind as all the clockwork P2s have green trefoil badges and all wear the number 2 (as did Antonio Ascari's winning car).

After a wonderfully successful six months, when the tipo Bs - in addition to the Italian Grand Prix - won the French and German Grands Prix, the Coppa Acerbo and the Coppa Ciano, an announcement by Alfa Romeo at the beginning of 1933 that the Works was retiring from racing threw the sporting fraternity into disarray. The excuse was that the P3s had won all the major races for which they were eligible but the real

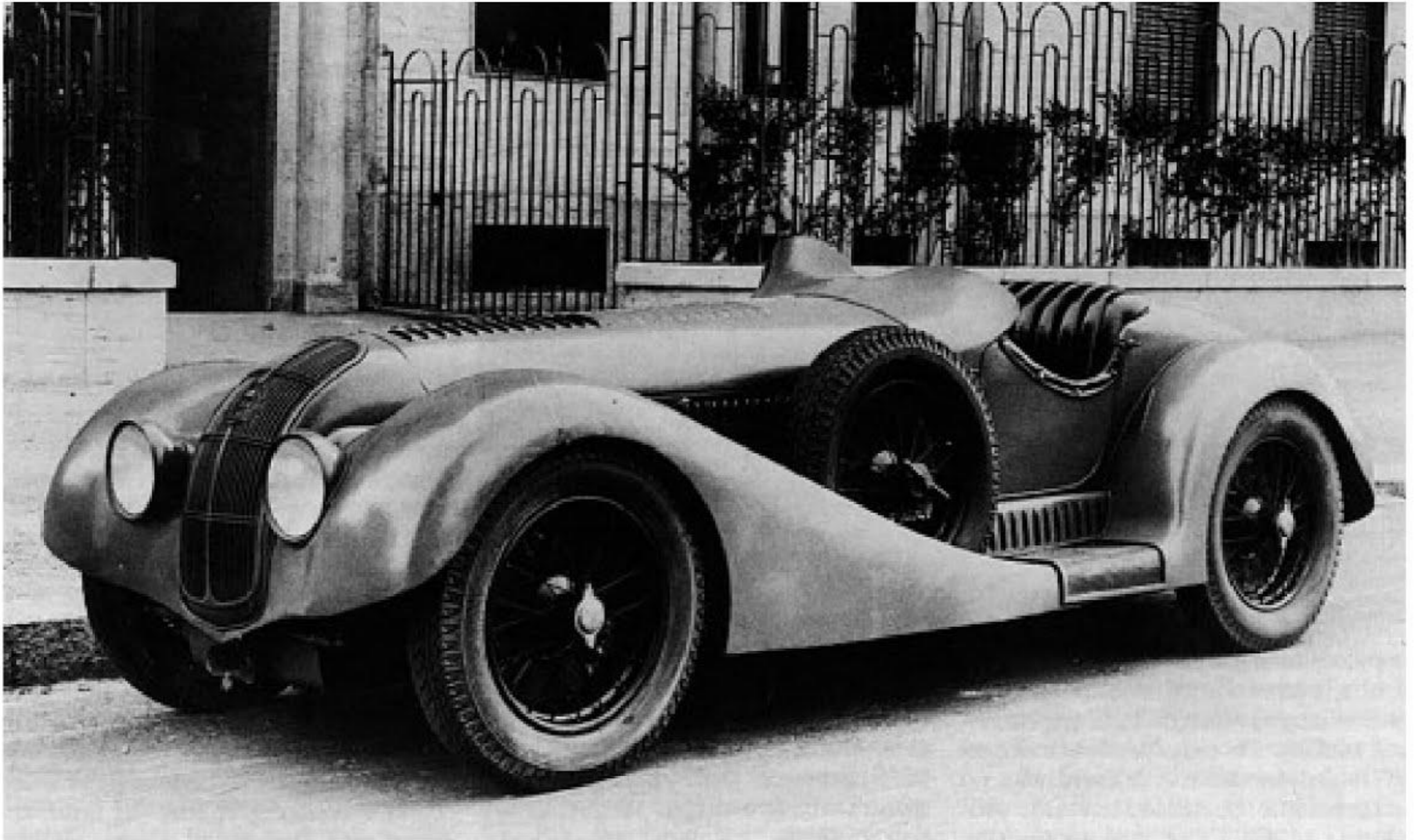
team mate Louis Chiron. Some contemporary reports suggest that the car was actually entered by the Scuderia Siena (which consisted of Eugenio Siena, Luigi Soffietti, Giovanni Minozzi and Walther Grosch): Siena was Nuvolari's co driver in the event, Soffietti and Minozzi sharing another 8C Alfa Romeo.



*Donald Healey's eight-cylinder, 2-litre Triumph Dolomite engine bore a strong resemblance to the 8C 2300 Alfa Romeo engine, especially the camshaft covers and inlet manifold. (David Baylis)*

An unusual 'tribute' to Vittorio Jano appeared in England

of other important events. But while Jano struggled to produce the state required all conquering Grand Prix cars on a very limited budget (Alfa Romeo was deeply involved in aero engine and heavy vehicle production), the man who was to take his job arrived at Portello.



*Professor Mario Ferraguti took delivery of this 1st Series car at the end of 1931, converting it to run on charcoal-produced gas.*

*Ferraguti, aided by Vittorio Jano, had already carried out a successful gasogeno experiment on a 6C 1750 GS Alfa Romeo but this 8C version proved more troublesome and failed to turn up at the 1936 Mille Miglia, for which it had been entered.*

*(Author's collection)*

Wifredo Ricart, an engineer from Spain, had been employed



*A rare picture of Jano, usually a somewhat serious looking man, in high good humour. The 8C-35 Alfa Romeos enjoyed mixed fortunes at the 1935 Gran Premio d'Italia (Nuvolari retired after setting a new lap record, when a piston failed but the Dreyfus car - which Nuvolari then took over - finished in second place behind Stuck's Auto Union) and Marinoni's tipo B could only manage fourth place behind a second Auto Union. (©*



**Table 4**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Series</b>	<b>Chassis Numbers</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
1931	1st	2111001-2111024	24
1932	1st	2111025-2111050	26
	2nd	2211051-2211092	42
1933	2nd	2211093-2211139	47
	3rd	2311201-2311243	43
1934	3rd	2311244-2311250	7

Table 5 (below) shows a selection of chassis numbers and the date of their original sale and/or registration and type of bodywork fitted, as described in various records - including Società Anonima Alfa Romeo, Alfa Romeo (British Sales) Ltd., the Scuderia Ferrari and several registration authorities. It is worth noting that Società Anonima Scuderia Ferrari was an Alfa Romeo sales agency as well as a racing team and that a sale/registration recorded under Soc. Anon. Scuderia Ferrari in no way guarantees a 'competition' history. Where a second name is included, this indicates that the car was passed on by the original registered owner within a matter of months. All 8C 2300 Alfa Romeos began life with matching chassis and engine numbers, although changes have sometimes been made subsequently. The 'SF' numbers appear to relate to cars built (or built up) not by Alfa Romeo but by SA Scuderia

Table 5 continued

Chassis Number	First Registered	Bodywork Type	First Owned/Registered By
2111041	11.05.32	Sport 2-seater	SA Alfa Romeo
2111042	11.05.32	Sport 2-seater	SA Alfa Romeo
2111043	09.06.32	Corsa 2-seater	SA Alfa Romeo / Jean Pierre Wimille
2111044	21.07.32	Spyder 2-seater	SA Scuderia Ferrari / Lelio Pellegrini
2111046	09.05.33	Siluro da Corsa	Paul Emil Hofmann
2111047	17.05.33	Cabriolet 4-seater	Angelo Sintoni
2211051	04.04.33	Aperta 2-seater	SA Scuderia Ferrari / Gaspare Bona
2211053	26.06.32	Coupé 4-seater	SA Scuderia Ferrari
2211055	00.02.33	not recorded	Alfa Romeo (BS) Ltd / D. & A.H. Bloomer for Harry Rose
2211056	31.05.32	Chassis	Gaspare Bona
2211058	01.07.32	Sport 2-seater	Vincenzo Cavalli
2211060	10.08.32	Cabriolet 4-seater	Conte Edoardo Visconti di Modrone
2211062	08.06.32	Corsa 4-seater	SA Alfa Romeo
2211063	08.06.32	Corsa 4-seater	SA Alfa Romeo
2211064	08.06.32	Corsa 4-seater	SA Alfa Romeo
2211065	08.06.32	Corsa 4-seater	SA Alfa Romeo
2211065	12.01.33	Cabriolet 4-seater (see note c)	S.E. Italo Balbo
2211067	08.06.32	Corsa 4-seater	SA Alfa Romeo
2211068	02.10.33	Coupé 2-seater	Mario Viscia
2211070	18.11.32	Cabriolet 4-seater	Guido Maglione
2211071	00.03.33	Open 2-seater	Alfa Romeo (BS) Ltd / L.G.Maller
2211072	28.06.33	Spyder 2-seater	SA Alfa Romeo
2211073	18.01.33	Berlina 4-seater	Vittorio Felizola
2211074	24.03.34	Berlina Apribile 4-seater	Giulio Gianetti
2211077	13.09.32	Siluro da Corsa	Wictor Emanuel Widengren
2211078	12.01.33	Cabriolet 2-seater	Maud Thyssen
2211082	10.10.32	Spider 2-seater	SA Alfa Romeo
2211083	25.02.33	Vettura 4-seater	Mario Lualdi
2211084	30.11.32	Aperta 2-seater	Hans Ruesch
2211089	12.01.33	Sport 2-seater	SA Alfa Romeo
2211091	20.12.32	Cabriolet 4-seater	Matilde Piccio
2211092	25.03.33	Cabriolet 4-seater	Adalberto di Savoia, S.A. Duca di Bergamo



**ENGINE** - QUENCH - 2000 cc. from the top  
the end of "ALFA ROMEO" cylinder

The "SUPERCHARGER" is a mechanical device and is located in order to draw an atmosphere of the fresh air during a certain distance before the mixture to form a homogeneous and the liquid and solid molecules combined

**SPECIFICATION**

1. 2000 cc. 2 valves 10000 cc. per hour 2000 cc. per hour

2. 2000 cc. 2 valves 10000 cc. per hour 2000 cc. per hour

3. 2000 cc. 2 valves 10000 cc. per hour 2000 cc. per hour

4. 2000 cc. 2 valves 10000 cc. per hour 2000 cc. per hour

5. 2000 cc. 2 valves 10000 cc. per hour 2000 cc. per hour

6. 2000 cc. 2 valves 10000 cc. per hour 2000 cc. per hour

7. 2000 cc. 2 valves 10000 cc. per hour 2000 cc. per hour

8. 2000 cc. 2 valves 10000 cc. per hour 2000 cc. per hour

9. 2000 cc. 2 valves 10000 cc. per hour 2000 cc. per hour

10. 2000 cc. 2 valves 10000 cc. per hour 2000 cc. per hour








**ALFA ROMEO MOD. 8C. 2500**

# ALFA ROMEO & MOD

**CHIEF FEATURES**

Engine 8 Cylinders, 2500 cc. with detachable head. Bore 81 mm. Stroke 86 mm. (2000 cc.)

Distribution by overhead valves opened directly by the camshaft.

Crankshaft perfectly balanced, with 10 bearings.

Lubrication forced feed lubrication by means of a gear pump.

Cooling by water by means of centrifugal pump. Heavy-duty radiator.

Ignition by coil and battery.

Carburettor of the new type.

Supercharger "Alfa Romeo" model of car over compression.

Starting electric coil by hand.

Clutch dry multiple plates.

Speed gear 4 forward speeds and reverse with 1 sliding piston. Central hand lever.

Transmission by a single rod. Control lever tube 2000 cc. in stamped steel sheet. Control wheel and piston with "Gibson" type teeth.



**CHIEF FEATURES**

Suspension by simple springs.

Steering on the right of the wheel and wheel type.

Brakes on the 4 wheels mechanically operated by pedal on hand lever placed in the center of the car.

Wheels of the wire type, straight-side. Tyres 20 x 5 1/2.

Lighting electric. 12 Watts auxiliary equipment.

Wheelbase long chassis 85 1/2". Short chassis 79 1/2".

Track 4 x 31 1/2".

Weight of the chassis alone with wheels and axles, battery, lamps and fuel tank about 1200 lbs.

Speed of the car with a new motor Spider body 110 miles p. h.

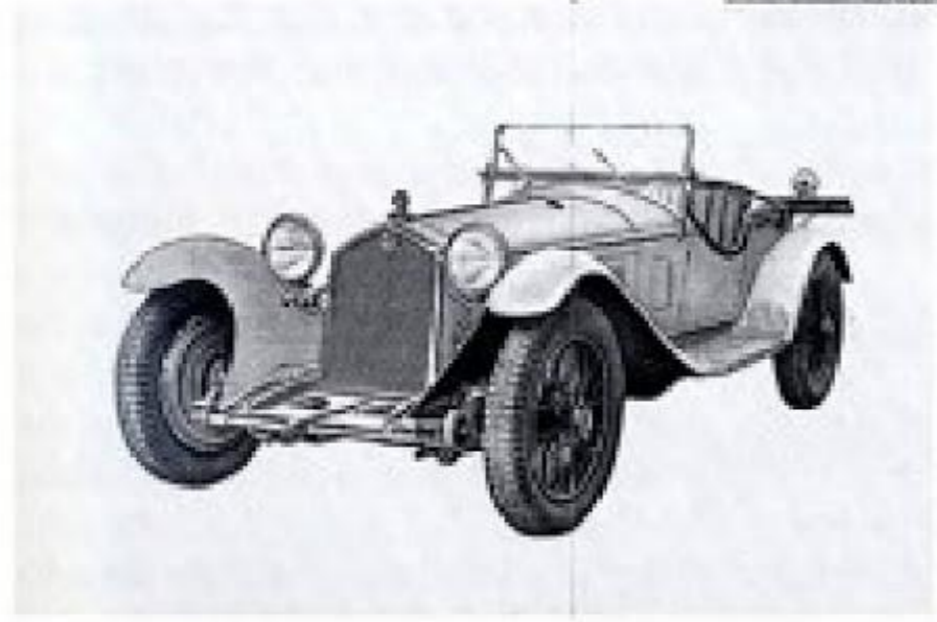
Speed of the car with a new motor Open body 106 miles p. h.

Speed of the car Racing type 110 miles p. h.

Total capacity of petrol tanks 24 gallons.

Capacity of oil tank 21.5 gallons.

Power from the Alfa carburettor. Chassis 4 7/16. Five pistons in right cylinder and 4 pistons in left cylinder in the combustion without valve in the top.



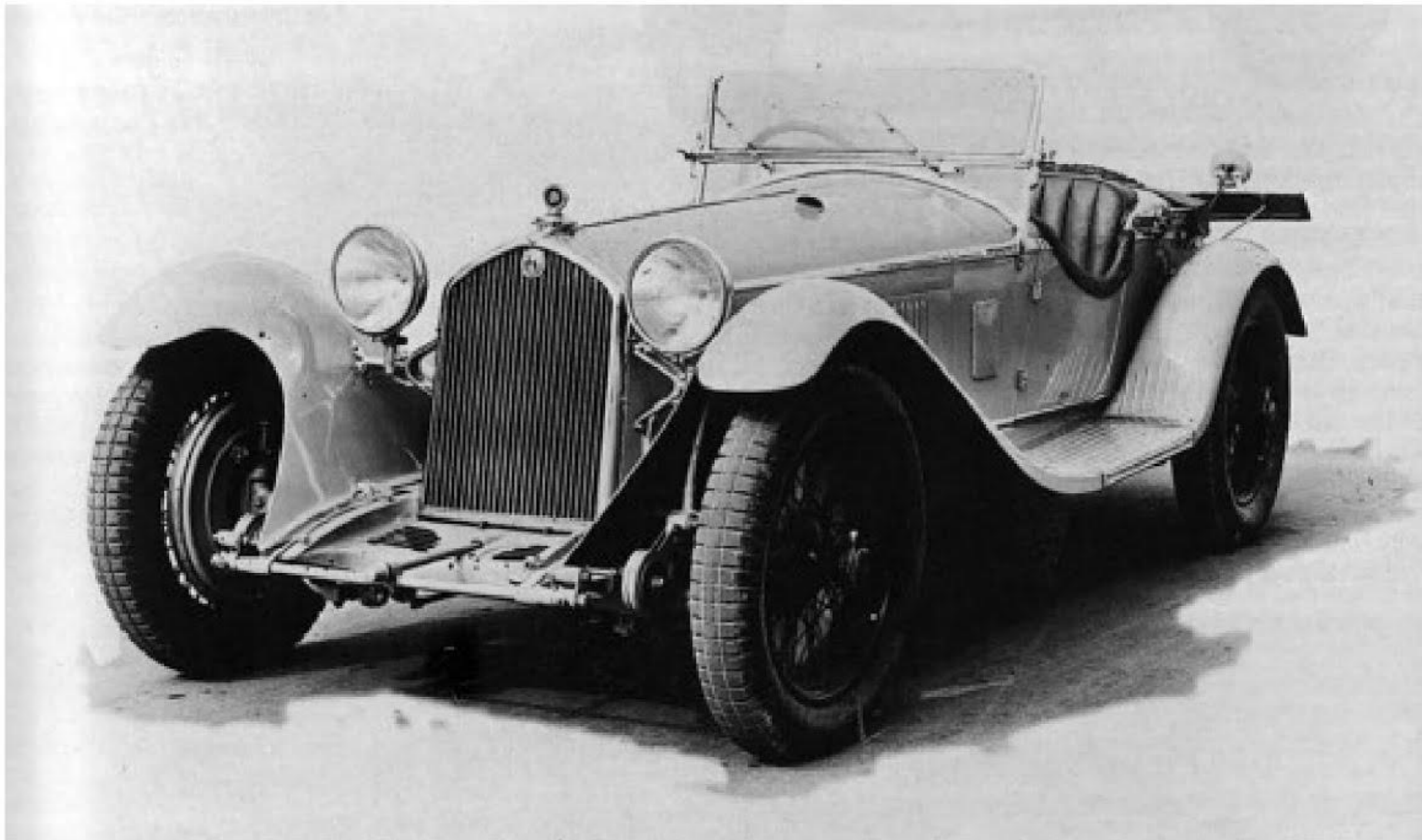
The supercharged engine ALFA ROMEO 8c.

**8c. GRAN SPORT OPEN 4 SEATER**



**8c. GRAN SPORT SPIDER 2 SEATER**

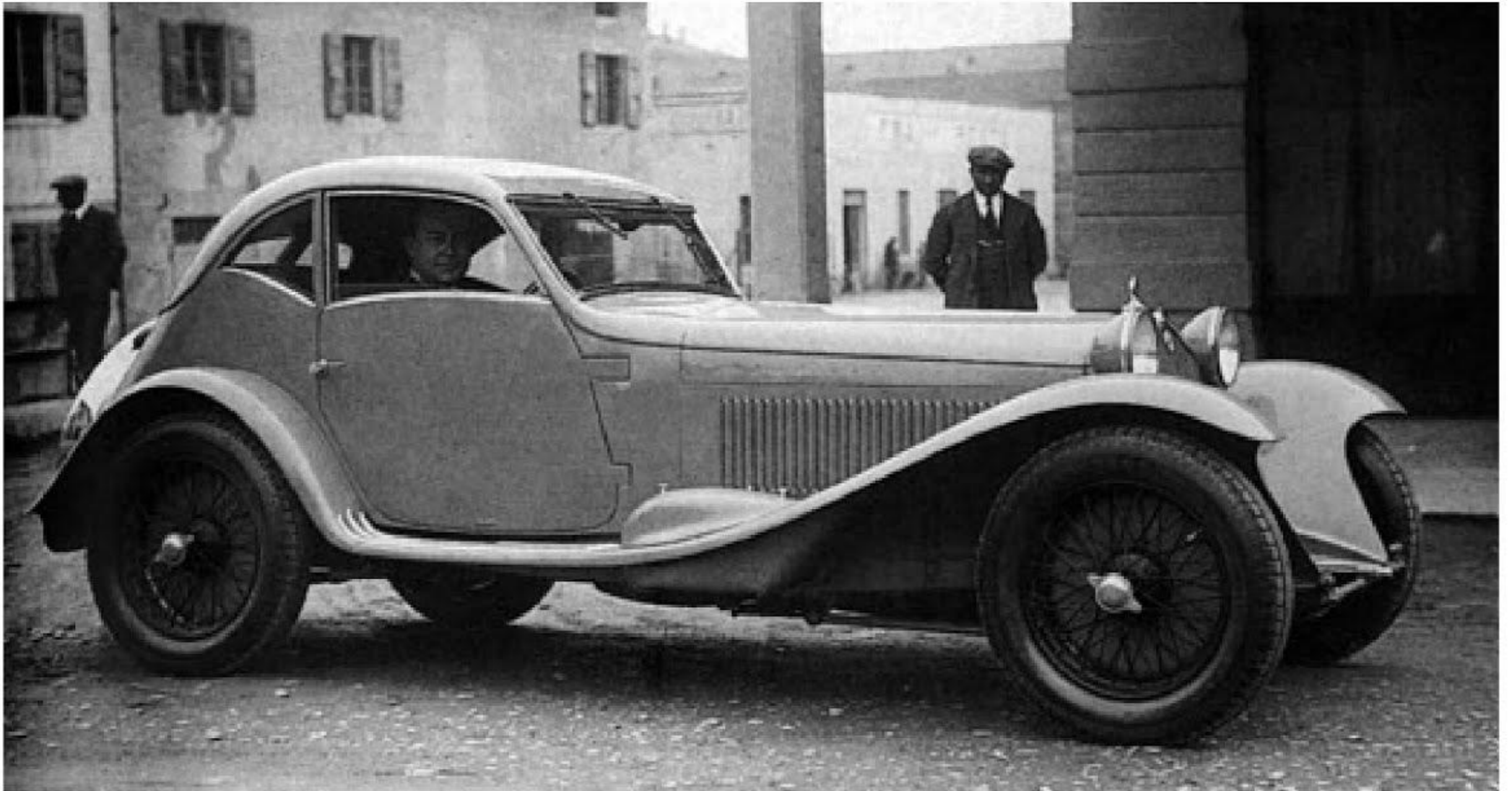
*Reproduced material from Alfa Romeo's 8C sales brochures of 1932 and 1933. The accent is very much on motor racing achievements and associated advanced technology.*



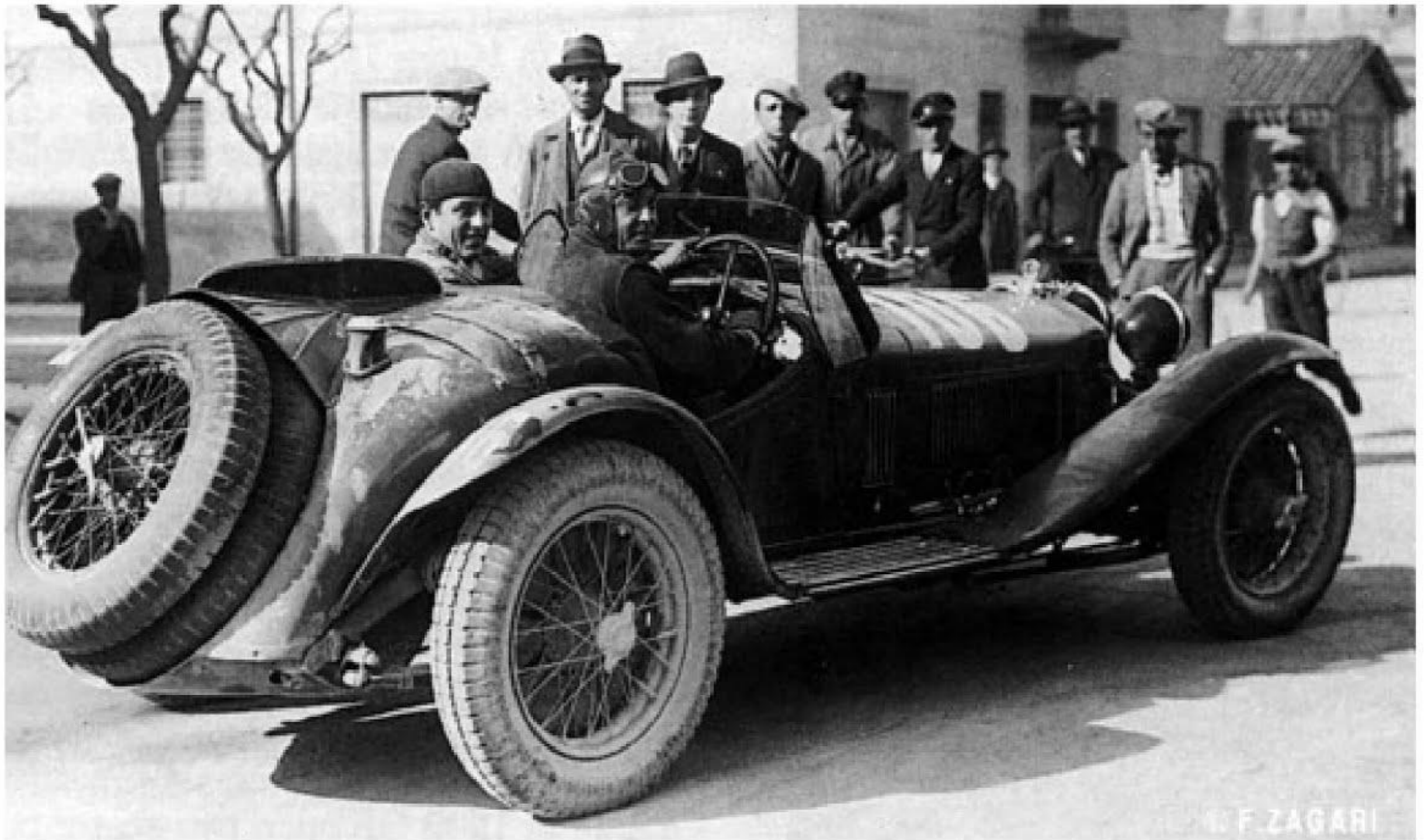
*Early publicity for the 'Standard two-seater' 8C 2300 showed this Zagato two-seater on the Corto chassis which, as well as having the oil tank mounted in the more usual mid-chassis position, differs in several respects from the Spyder Corsa version. (Centro Documentazione Alfa Romeo)*

A new venture set up in March 1935 was the Ditta Individuale (or one-man business) of Carrozzeria Italiana 'La Zagato'. The new company was the brainchild of Ugo Zagato and his ex-colleague Carlo Francia with financial backing supplied by Teresa Johnson Giorgi, a rich, middle-aged Italian lady living in Milano. From a copy of the document setting up the business dated 27th March 1935, we learn that the company's object was the "repair of automobile coachwork and the like" and that the number of employees

employed 230 workers in 1928 and was capable of building twenty bodies per month, and by the time the 8C 2300 was introduced onto the market in 1931 Touring had built coachwork of all types on 6C 1500 and 1750 Alfa Romeo chassis.

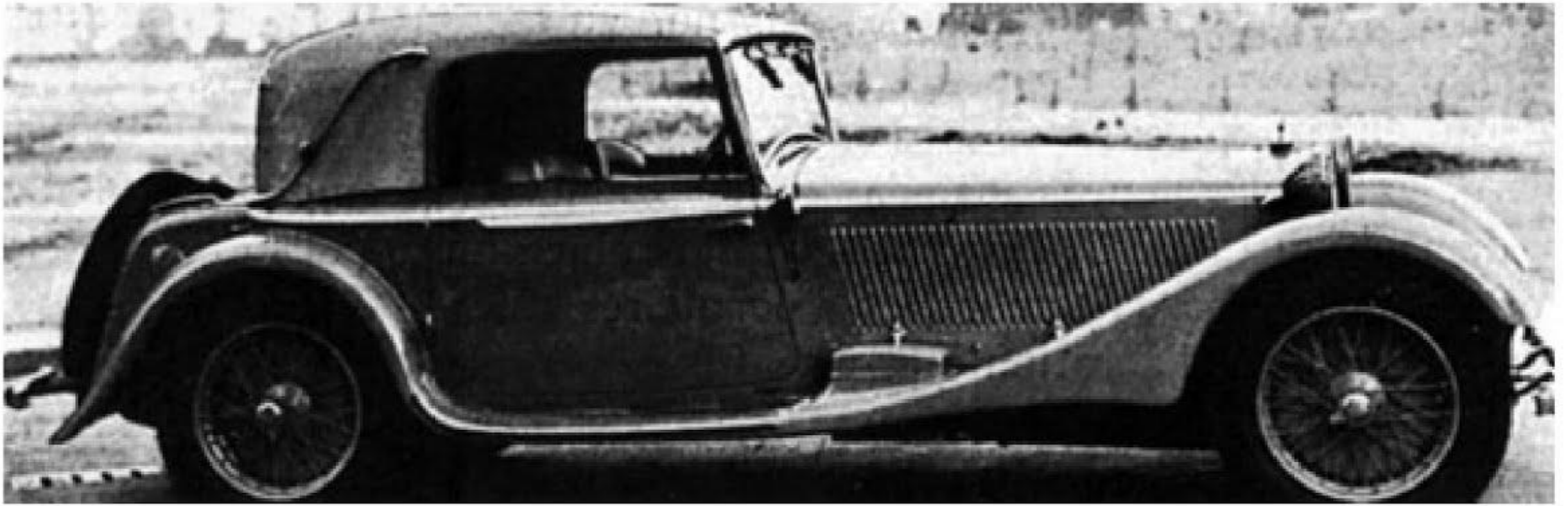


*A classic Zagato coupé, fitted to an 8C Corto chassis for Luigi Scarfiotti in 1932. For this design, Zagato has abandoned the bulbous door hinges usually found on the open two-seaters and utilised inset hinges of the type frequently seen on Carrozzeria Touring coachwork. (© Zagari)*



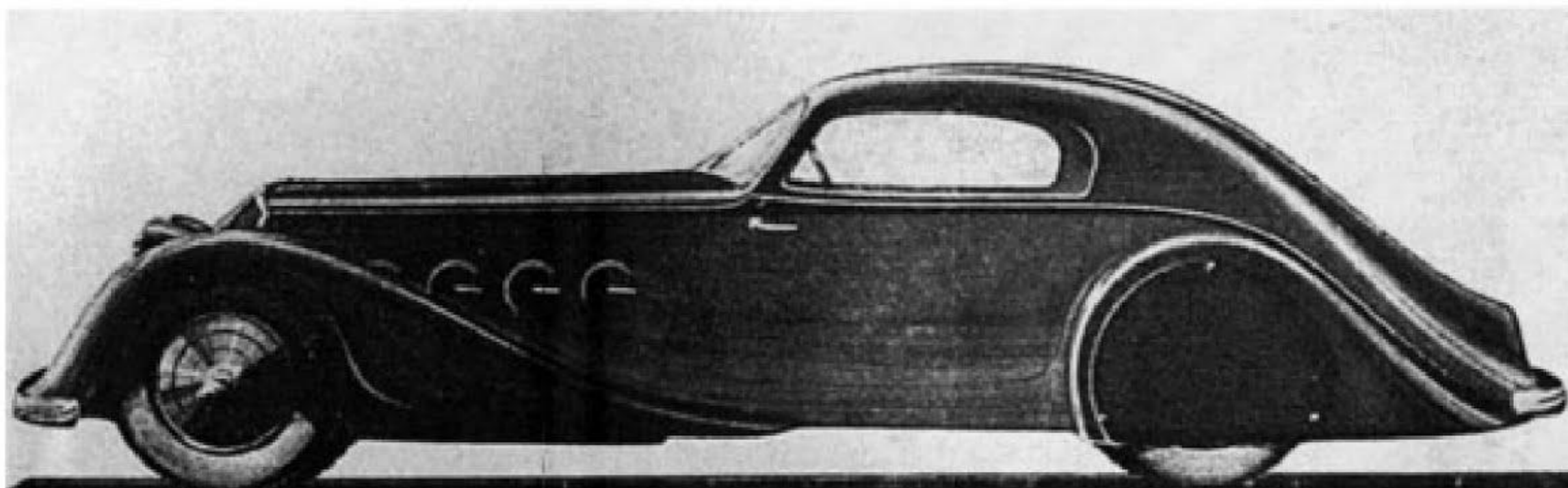
*These two photographs of Scuderia Ferrari 8Cs show the differences between the Zagato spider and the classic Carrozzeria Touring two-seater. The Zagato-bodied car (top) with Borzacchini at the wheel and the mechanic Lucchi in the passenger's seat has the normal, rather bulbous, door hinges often used by Zagato and the rather handsome two-piece fold-flat windscreen frame also often used by Zagato.*

*The Touring-bodied 8C (middle) photographed in Modena a year earlier, also with Borzacchini at the wheel, has the classic inset door hinges, the usual Touring windscreen with side screens and the famous fin over the spare wheels. (© Zagari)*



*The French magazine Auto-Carrosserie published a photograph of this Castagna cabriolet on a 2nd Series 8C chassis in May 1933; the car's colour scheme (in Mimax cellulose lacquer) was elsewhere reported as dove grey with cream lining. (Author's collection)*

Emilio Castagna was responsible for virtually all the coachwork designed by Castagna & C. until he left the company in 1933 and the period in which he was head of the design department can be said to have been the golden age for Castagna bodywork. In this period, several extremely handsome Drophead Coupé bodies were built on 8C 2300 chassis - emphasising the 8C's dual role as a luxurious Gran Turismo car as well as a sports-racing model. Salvatore Longhitano left the company at the same time as Emilio Castagna, making way for Ercole's three sons Carlo, Savino and Cipriano, but none of them was really capable of taking Emilio's place and the company's fortunes began to decline. Owners of sporting chassis now tended to patronise other coachbuilders and the acquisition of patents such as Labourdette's Vuotal (a kind of safety glass which Castagna produced in Italy in collaboration with VIS - Vetro Italiano di



*Alfa Romeo 2300 c.c. 8 cilindri, carrozzeria aerodinamica «Coach», modello anno XII.*

*A number of magazine articles reporting the 7th Salone di Milano mentioned this 8C 2300 with aerodinamico 'Coach' coupé bodywork by Castagna and this drawing appeared in the magazine Auto, Moto e Avio . A rather similar coupé was built on the 6C 2300 chassis but it lacked the brio of this 8C design. (Author's collection)*



*This Stab. Farina four-seater cabriolet was built early in 1933 and was painted black, with a chromed beading along the*



*reporter from Auto Italiana , the opening of the Salon was attended by Vittorio Jano as well as Prospero Gianferrari, the ex-Alfa Romeo designer Carlo Molino and drivers such as Nuvolari and Varzi. (Archivio Pininfarina)*

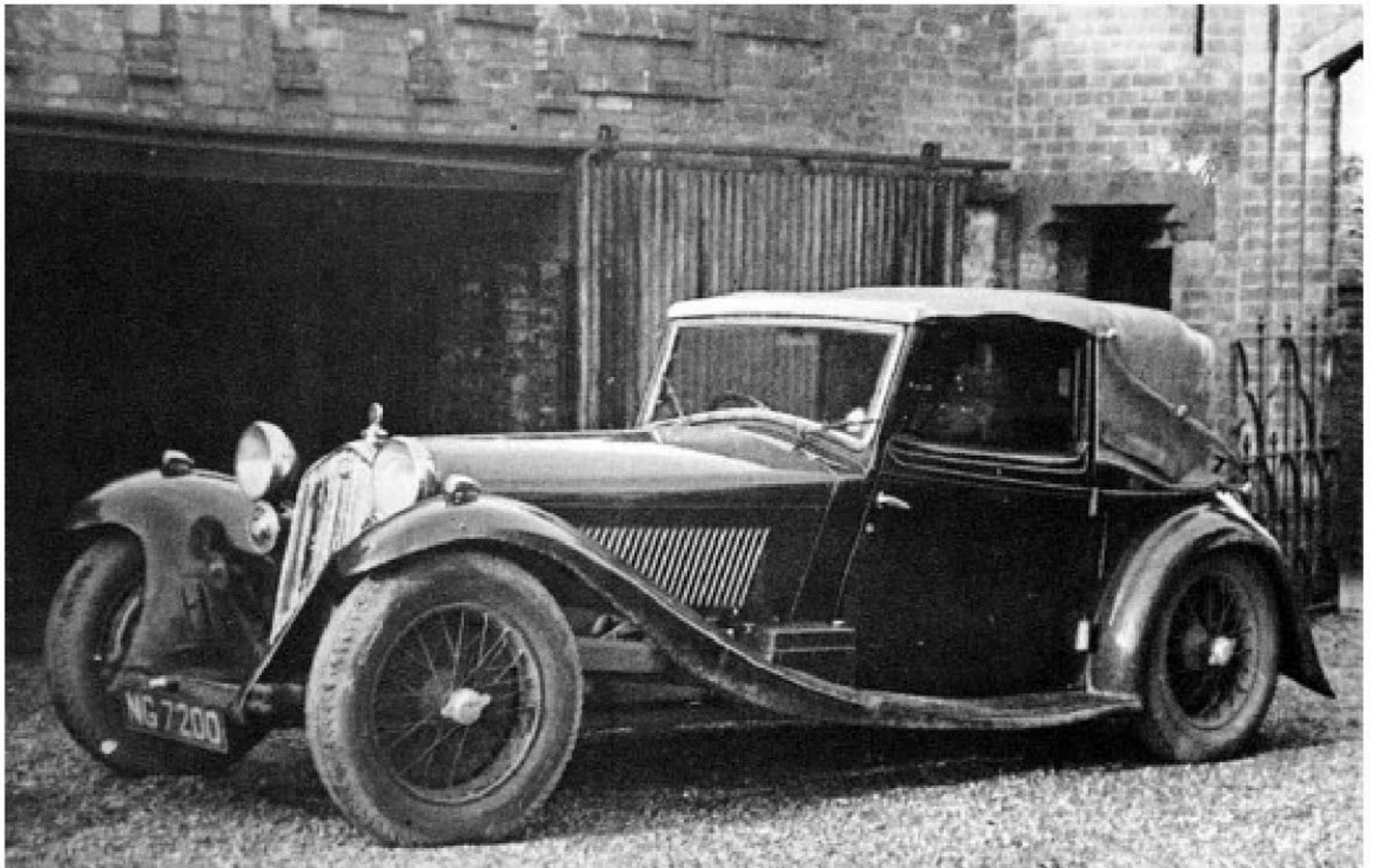
Battista 'Pinin' Farina, the tenth of eleven children, was born in November 1893 and began his working career in his brother Giovanni's workshops at the age of eleven or twelve. During the first World War (1914-18) Battista was in charge of Stab. Farina's construction of the *Aviatik* training aeroplane and in 1920 he, too, made a brief study visit to the U.S.A. Having worked with his brothers Giovanni and Carlo for nearly twenty five years, Battista Farina branched out on his own: Soc. Anon. Carrozzeria Pinin Farina was formed in May 1930, with premises in Corso Trapani, Torino, and with the signatures of Vincenzo Lancia and the sporting 8C 2300 driver Gaspare Bona amongst those on the Memorandum of Association. The brand new workshops were soon a hive of activity: in less than three months the first order was completed - a magnificent Spider-Cabriolet on a Lancia chassis for the Queen of Roumania - and within five months the new coachworks was exhibiting at the Paris Salon. Several Carr. Pinin Farina bodies were built on 6C 1750 Alfa Romeo chassis before the first recorded coachwork (a handsome Cabriolet four-seater) was produced on an 8C 2300 chassis. Although Battista Farina himself had benefited greatly from his experience at Stab. Farina, his own abilities were evident not only in the management of his company but also in the increasingly adventurous designs for Pinin Farina coachwork; some of the most successful of these designs could be seen on 6C 2300B and 8C 2900B Alfa Romeo

seaters whose design bore quite a marked resemblance to the Zagato coachwork built on similar chassis; this is hardly surprising as Ugo Zagato himself was, for a while, consultant to Brianza during a period when Zagato was briefly in liquidation. A few 8C 2300 Lungo chassis were fitted with Brianza four-seater bodywork, including the winner of the 1934 Le Mans 24 Hour Race, and the new Scuderia Ferrari 8C 2600 'Monzas' also had Brianza coachwork.

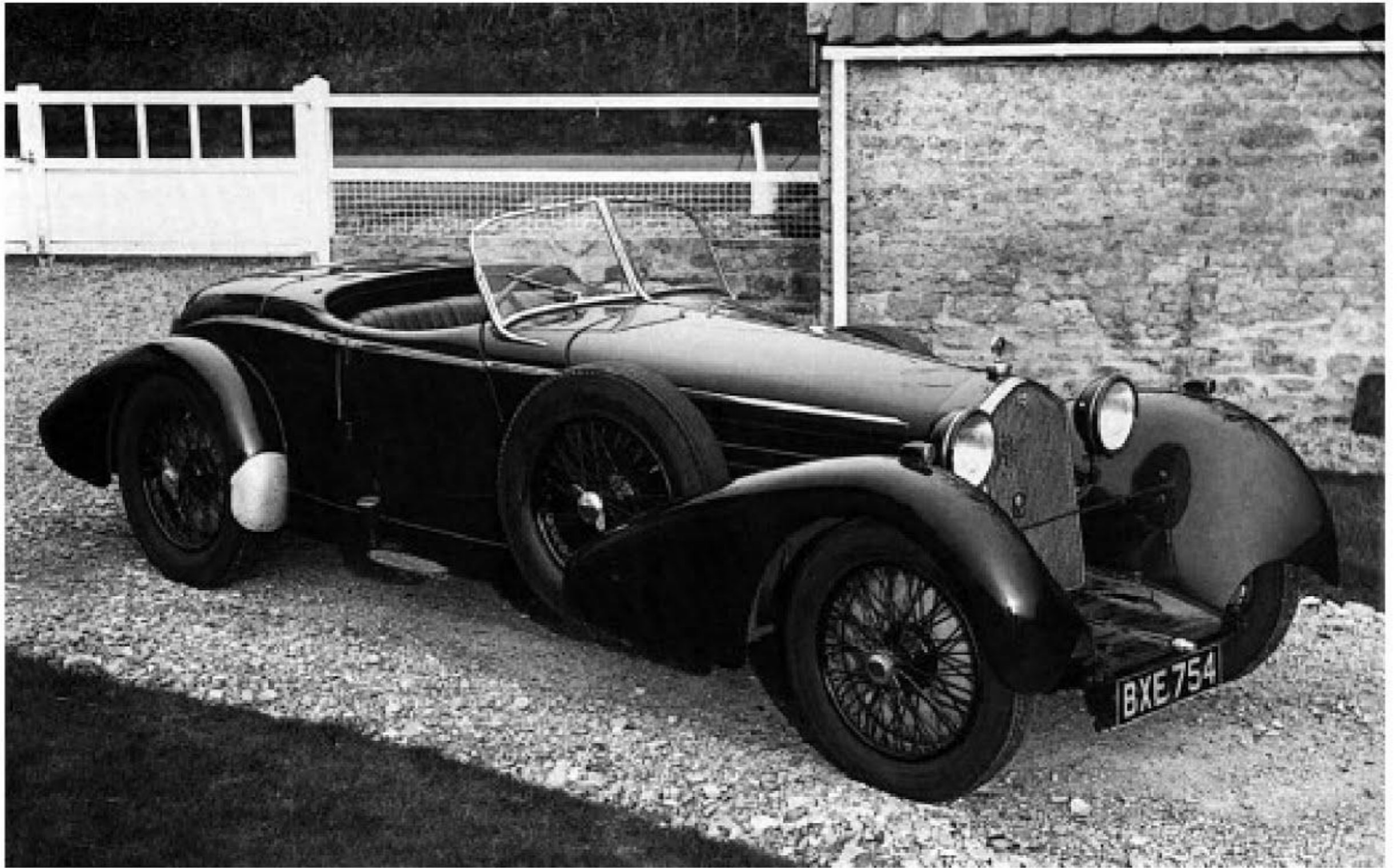
During the difficult years leading up to the outbreak of the second World War, the company attempted to diversify and became, amongst other things, an agent for the Dux gasogeno. However, by 1940 work had all but ceased and Carrozzeria Brianza did not resume trading after the war.

with beige upholstery and a "Flying Star" two-seater in red, with red upholstery. There were also a Coupé Victoria 4 seater by Pinin Farina and three Zagato two-seaters - the red 1000 Miglia winner, a black spyder with chrome body line and another two-seater which was painted ivory with a dark body line. Touring was also present at the Paris Salon (with a Spyder 2-seater) and Figoni showed a two-seater with an ingenious, Figoni-patent hood mechanism where the hood was folded away out of sight under a body panel when not in use. This car's colour scheme was a sober light grey with grey leather upholstery, but in much the same period the magazine *Auto-Carrosserie* recorded a far more striking colour scheme on an 8C Faux-Cabriolet by Figoni - 'brilliant yellow and very dark blue'.

Giovanni Boneschi Carrozzeria Automobili had been formed in 1919 by Giovanni Boneschi and early designs had been for quality chassis such as Rolls-Royce. Increasing business soon necessitated a move to larger premises in Via Padova and then (in 1931) to Via Conegliano 6, when the company's name was changed to Soc. Anon. Boneschi Carrozzeria Automobili. Through his friendship with Enrico Minetti, who was the Lancia agent for Lombardy, Boneschi was commissioned to design coachwork for Artena and Augusta chassis and it was around this time that the firm designed an interesting 'berlina aerodinamica' on an 8C Lungo chassis for a private customer, Giannantonio Cassola. The Via Conegliano premises were destroyed in the August 1943 air raids and the firm re-opened in 1946 at new premises in Via Giacosa. Giovanni Boneschi died in 1946, whereupon Bruno Pessaglia took over the management of the company and in 1968 SA Boneschi moved to its present premises in Cambiagio (MI).



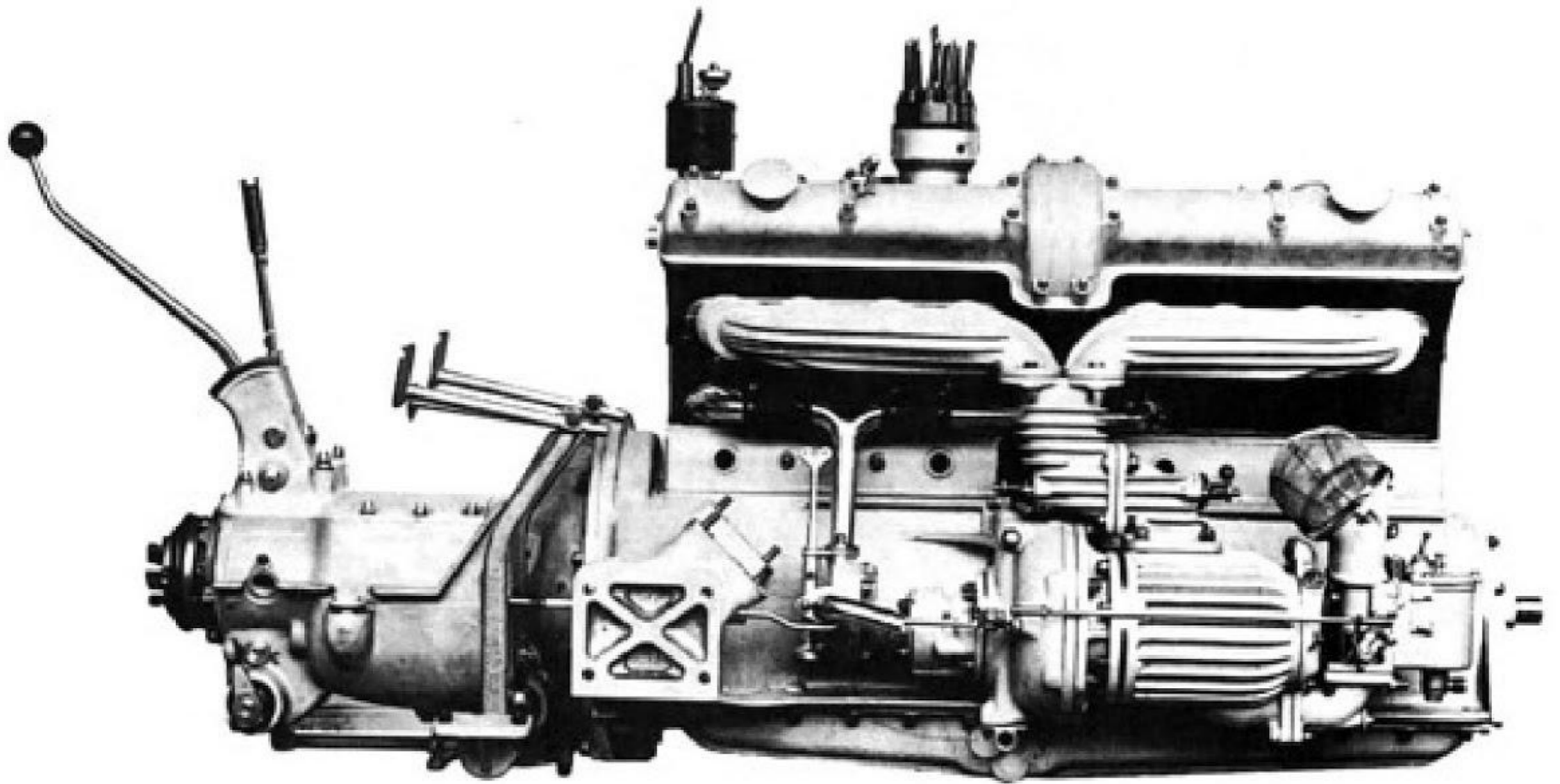
*A rare example of Carlton Carriage Co. coachwork on an 8C 2300 chassis, this one being number 2311240, whose Norfolk registration number was issued some time between June 1933 and June 1935. (© Max Hill)*



*Registered on 3rd August 1934 by S.A. Alfa Romeo, this 3rd Series Lungo car was described as a cabriolet 3 posti and an earlier photograph showed two 'steps' on the rear wing similar to those on the Zagato 3-seater. The hood is concealed beneath a hinged panel in front of the rear 'hatch'. (© Neill Bruce)*

# V

## PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS AND TECHNICAL DESCRIPTIONS



*The 8C 2300 engine and gearbox, seen from the inlet side and showing the Memini SI 36 carburettor. (Centro Documentazione Alfa Romeo)*

**Table 7 continued**

fuel tank capacity - rear tank	110 litres (130 litres)
- scuttle tank	(fitted to 1st Series chassis and to the first 27 chassis of the 2nd Series only) 12 litres
fuel consumption per 100km	27 litres @ maximum speed, 18 litres @ 100kph (no figures supplied for Monza models)
oil tank capacity	12kg
oil consumption per 100km	750 Gr.
maximum speed	185kph (1931), 200kph (1932), (210kph (1931), 225kph (1932-1933))
wheels	Rudge Whitworth wellbase 19" and 4"
tyres	5.50 x 19

Note: Alfa Romeo records state that the production 8C 2300 Corto was modified (in 1931 and 1932) to Spider Corsa specification by Soc. Anon. Alfa Romeo on request. Luigi Fusi has stated that six 'Monza' specification cars were produced by Alfa Romeo in 1931 and four in 1932, making a total production of ten Monzas.

**Technical Descriptions****Valve clearances**

Model	Inlet	Exhaust
Corto & Lungo	min 0.45mm - max 0.50mm	min 0.45mm - max 0.50mm
Corsa & Speciale	min 0.50mm - max 0.55mm	min 0.50mm - max 0.55mm

**Valve timing**

Model	Inlet:		Exhaust:	
Corto & Lungo	open	close	open	close
	18°	51°	51°	18°
	before	after	before	after
	T.D.C.	B.D.C.	B.D.C.	T.D.C.

**Fuel system:**

Operated via a rear-mounted main tank and scuttle-mounted auxiliary tank on 1st Series and early 2nd Series cars and subsequently via a rear-mounted tank and 'Autoflux' electric pump (from the 28th chassis of the 2nd Series onward). Pressurised system for Corsa (Monza) type operated at 1.5kg/sq cm.

**Supercharger:**

Roots type, manufactured by Alfa Romeo

**Carburettor:**

Memini, twin choke downdraught.

Memini SI 36 (1st Series cars)

**Table 7 continued**

**Electrical equipment** 12 volt. Ignition via 52 amp hour battery, coil and distributor

**Coil** Bosch TA 12 C1

**Distributor** Bosch VF 8AR 614. Bosch VG 8ARS 13 (1934 models)

**Dynamo** Bosch RJC 90 1100 RI  
12

**Sparking plugs**

**Model** Champion type

Points gap

Standard engines R IV 0.40-0.60mm

Tuned engines R 17 0.40-0.60mm

Racing & Special engines R 17, R 1 or R 17A 0.50-0.55mm (never more than 0.60mm)

**Starter motor** Bosch BJH 14 R328 (Bosch BJH 14 RS should suit )  
12 12

**Switchbox** Bosch HA 12 B5

**Lubrication** Dry sump via gear-driven pressure and scavenge pumps, the oil tank being located mid-chassis\* - on the passenger side in 1st and 2nd Series cars and on the driver's side on 3rd Series chassis.

\*A few, very early, cars had the oil tank located between the front dumb irons.

**Oil pressure (normal)** Standard cars - not less than 25 metres and not more than 30 metres (at 4900rpm and with warm oil); under no circumstances run the engine with less than 20 metres pressure. Tipo Corsa and Speciale - not less than 30 metres (at 5000rpm and with warm oil). Recommended oils were Oleoblitz Sport Medium, Mobiloil BB or Stanavo 100 for average temperatures of below 20°C, or Oleoblitz Sport Thick, Mobiloil B or Stanavo 120 for average temperatures of above 20°C.

**Cooling** Water, circulated by a centrifugal pump; radiator temperature controlled via thermostat.

**Water temperature** 70-75°C maximum at high speed on level terrain.

**Water and oil capacities**

Water:

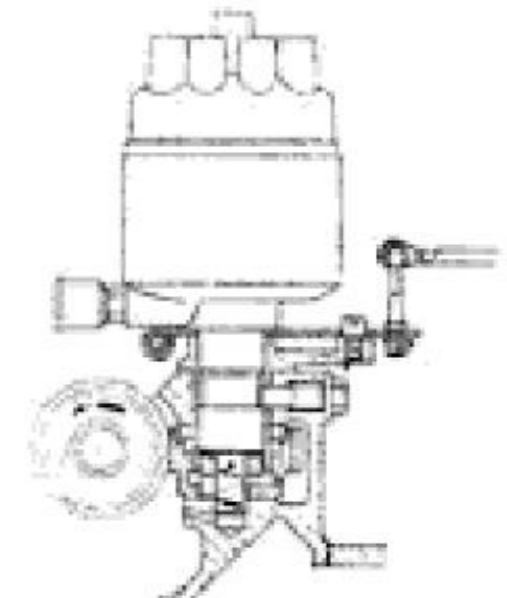
Corto & Lungo 11.5 litres (radiator & engine)

Monza 11.5 litres (radiator & engine)

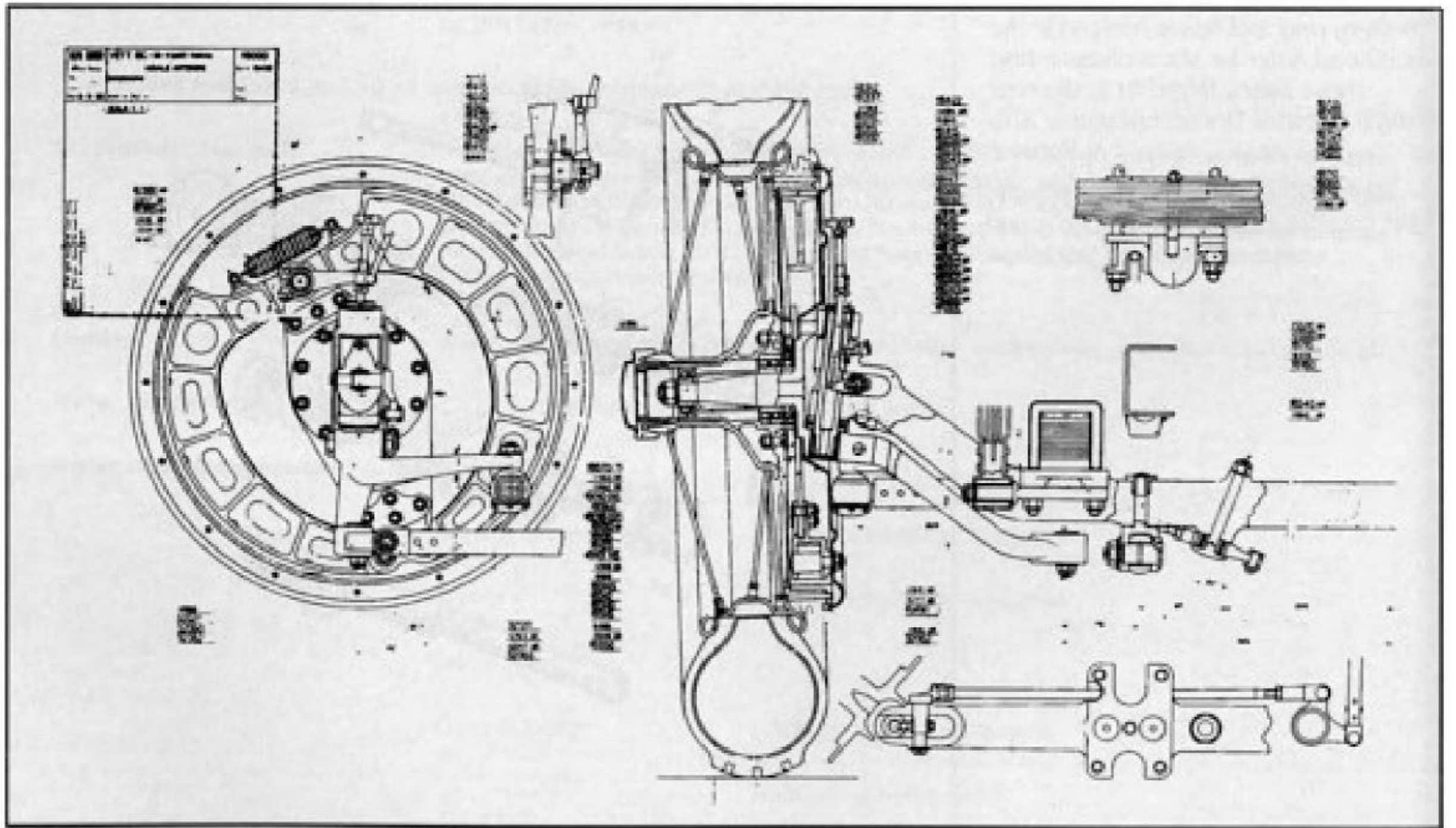
Oil:

Corto & Lungo 12kg (1st & 2nd Series cars)

10.5kg (3rd Series cars)







*A Works drawing showing the front axle details for the 8C GS (or Corto), four-seater and Monza dated 6th March 1930. (Centro Documentazione Alfa Romeo)*

Campari's 1750 and Arcangeli's 8C 2300 were second and third. However, Caracciola began to regain control of the race and reached the Bologna Control only 4 minutes 35 seconds behind the new leader, Luigi Arcangeli's 8C, and at Treviso the Mercedes was in the lead. Nuvolari had a minor off-road 'excursion' at Arsié, hitting a milestone and damaging the car's oil tank which, being situated between the front dumb irons, was somewhat vulnerable, but he was able to continue - unlike Arcangeli, who had a major accident near Verona and was forced to retire. *The Motor's* correspondent described how, having stationed himself in the village of Lonato (23kms from Brescia and the finish), he saw Caracciola's Mercedes, Campari's Alfa Romeo and Morandi's O.M. appear, followed by two Alfa Romeo saloons, Klinger and Scarfiotti in Gran Sport 1750s and the Di Liddo:Ricceri Fiat 514 (winner of the Utility Class). "Where on earth were the others - Arcangeli, Borzacchini, Nuvolari? Had some dreadful accident happened... ? The question was answered in part nearly two hours after the leader had rumbled past. Nuvolari, looking sad and resigned, with a bandage over his bleeding mouth, suddenly appeared beside me ... "What has happened?" I called to the driver. "Tyres, nothing but tyres" he replied ..."

therefore staged over four laps of the Long Madonie circuit - Bonfornello, Cerda, Caltavuturo, Castellana, Petralia Sottana, Petralia Soprana, Geraci, Castelbuono, Isnello, Collesano, Campofelice, Bonfornello - in order to avoid the damaged section near Polizzi: the total distance was 595.292km. Two 8C 2300s were entered, no.14 for Nuvolari and no.18 for Arcangeli; four 1750 Gran Sports (Borzacchini, Campari, d'Ippolito and Magistri) and one RL (Pellegrini) completed the 'Alfa' entry. The 8Cs had minimal bodywork, the 'tails' having been removed and thus exposing the fuel tanks, but Nuvolari's car - like the 6Cs - was fitted with front wings as Vittorio Jano had decided that rain was imminent and that the drivers would need protection from the mud which would be thrown up by the front wheels. Only Arcangeli insisted on his car running stripped of both front and rear wings.

The official Bugatti team was absent but Achille Varzi had entered his own 2300cc Bugatti (painted 'Italian' red). He drew the race number 2 and therefore started first, followed by the rest of the twelve car field at five-minute intervals. Varzi, given the advantage of a clear road ahead of him, was fastest on the hilly and difficult first stage to Caltavuturo - his time of 25 minutes 13 seconds was nineteen seconds ahead of Borzacchini's 1750 and twenty eight seconds ahead of Fagioli's Maserati. However, the latter crashed near Castellana and was eliminated from the race. At the end of the first 148.823km lap Varzi was still in the lead, nearly three minutes ahead of Borzacchini's 6C 1750. Nuvolari's 8C was catching up fast until he stopped at the pits to change tyres (as a precautionary measure, doubtless remembering his 1000 Miglia problems) and the resultant two-minutes-plus stop lost him a good deal of ground.



*The Scuderia Ferrari entered an 8C 2300 for the eighth Circuito di Alessandria on 26th April 1931, as well as three 6C 1750s and a 6C 1500, but the 8C - driven by Nuvolari - retired after a spirited ten lap battle with Varzi's Bugatti. The group pictured with the 8C before the start includes (from the right) Gianbattista Guidotti, Alfredo Caniato, Luigi Arcangeli (who finished fifth in a 1750 GS), Enzo Ferrari, Francesco Severi, Tazio Nuvolari and H.J. von Morgen (who drove a Bugatti and finished third). (© Zagari)*

**Table 9.1931 Italian Grand Prix: starters**

<b>Driver</b>	<b>Car</b>
Klinger:Gherzi	Maserati 2500cc
Varzi:Chiron	Bugatti Type 51
Divo:Bouriat	Bugatti Type 51
Lehoux:Etancelin	Bugatti Type 51
Wimille:Gaupillat	Bugatti Type 51
Senechal:Fretet	Delage 1500cc
Ivanovsky:Stoffel	Mercedes SSK
Campari:Minozzi	Alfa Romeo 8C 2300
Nuvolari: Borzacchini	Alfa Romeo Tipo A monoposto
Minoia:Zehender	Alfa Romeo 8C 2300
Pirola:Lurani	Alfa Romeo 6C 1500
Ruggeri:Balestrero	Talbot 8C 1500cc
de Vecchio:Ferrari	Talbot 8C 1500cc
Caniato:Tadini	Alfa Romeo 6C 1500

From the outset, the race promised to be a Bugatti-Alfa Romeo duel and although Campari's Alfa Romeo took the lead after the start it was soon overtaken, first by Lehoux and then by Varzi. On the fifth lap, Varzi was still ahead (averaging 162.132kph) but Campari was only 7 seconds behind; at this stage, Minoia's 8C was sixth and Nuvolari's tipo A seventh. After an hour of the ten hour race, Achille Varzi's Bugatti had covered 162.700km; Campari's 8C was second (160 km) and Lehoux (Bugatti) third. On the twenty fourth lap Campari was given the 'go faster' signal and he set up a new lap record of 3'32.8" - 169.193kph - beating the previous Record set up by Ascari in 1924. Both Lehoux and Varzi stopped to refuel and change drivers on the thirtieth lap and there was

consternation in the Alfa pit on the following lap when the Nuvolari:Borzacchini tipo A monoposto coasted round the first bend with a dead engine. Tazio returned to the pits on foot and Jano (who, assisted by Gianferrari, was managing the Alfa pit) decided that he should replace Minozzi as Campari's co-driver and that Borzacchini should take Zehender's place in the other 8C 2300. Then the Varzi:Chiron Bugatti retired with a broken differential on the forty fifth lap making the order at the end of the third hour Campari, Minoia, Lehoux.

During the next hour Lehoux retired his Bugatti with a broken valve, Nuvolari relieved Campari and Borzacchini took over Minoia's seat: the order now was Campari:Nuvolari (638 km), Minoia:Borzacchini (610km), Klinger:Gherzi (Maserati, 600 km), Divo:Bouriat (Bugatti, 560km). The two leading 8C Alfa Romeos steadily increased their lead over the rest of the field, the Maserati having a lengthy pit stop during the afternoon, although Albert Divo made an heroic effort to reduce the 8Cs' lead. The abundance of wild life in the Parco di Monza caused Borzacchini some embarrassment on his penultimate lap when a pheasant flew into the Alfa's radiator, obliging Borzacchini to stop the car in case of damage to the radiator. All was well, though, and he quickly re-started and was still running at the finish - see Table 10 for the final results.

**Table 10. 1931 Italian Grand Prix: results**

	<b>Driver(s)</b>	<b>Car</b>	<b>Distance</b>
1	Campari:Nuvolari	(8C Alfa Romeo)	1557km 754m
2	Minoia: Borzacchini	(8C Alfa Romeo)	1535km 807m
3	Divo: Bouriat	(Bugatti)	1525km 319m
4	Wimille: Gaupillat	(Bugatti)	1386km 082m
5	Ivanovsky: Stoffel	(Mercedes)	1343km 255m
6	Pirola: Lurani	(6C Alfa Romeo)	1290km 243m
7	Ruggeri: Balestrero	(Talbot)	1290km 080m
8	Klinger: Gherzi	(Maserati)	1148km 400m

The Delage driven by Senechal:Fretet was still running at the end of the ten hours but was unclassified, having completed only 810km (to be placed in the official Classification a car had to have completed at least three-fifths of the distance covered by the winner). The wildly enthusiastic spectators flowed onto the track and carried the four Alfa drivers off in triumph; Vittorio Jano (who was accompanied by his young son Francesco) and Prospero Gianferrari also received their share of the congratulations. It is said that, after the race, the Alfa Romeo management telegraphed Benito Mussolini with the message: "We have obeyed". It is popularly supposed that it was to celebrate this victory that the racing version of the 8C 2300 was re-named the 'Monza' model, although the first mention of the nickname in the Italian press was not until more than a year later and the Alfa Romeo *Servizio Clienti* booklets were still using the description tipo Corsa as late as 1935.

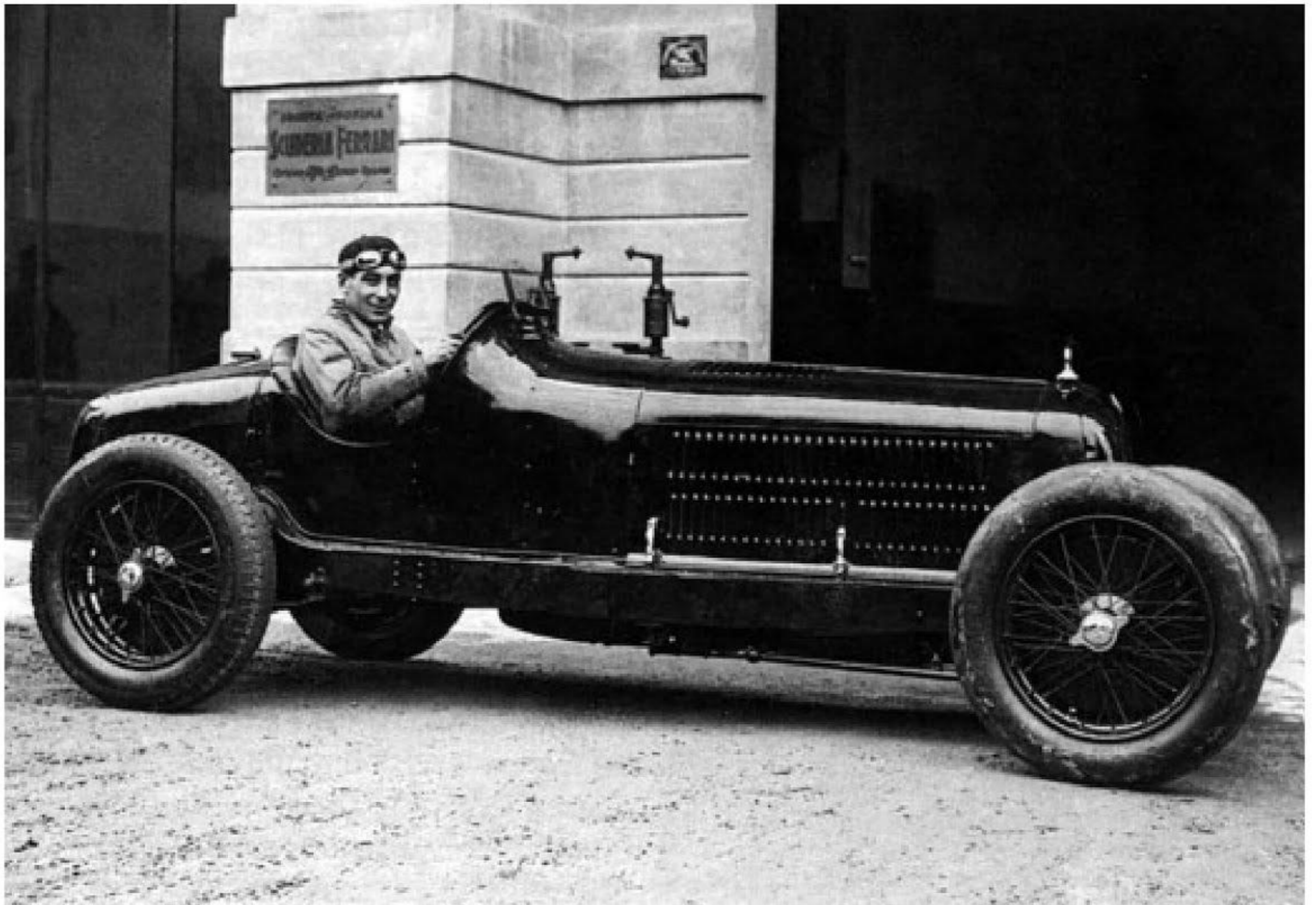
The original Alfa Romeo factory title had been 8C 2300 Corsa or tipo Corsa (racing version) and design work for the

model appears to have started very early in 1931, long before the 8C 2300's unsuccessful debut at the 1000 Miglia. Many of these drawings were executed by Luigi Fusi, who recalls a greatly increased workload during the month of May, culminating in three complete tipo Corsa 8Cs being ready for the Gran Premio d'Italia on May 24th. The most obvious difference between the 8C Corto and Corsa (Monza) models is in the bodywork, the latter having a slim two-seater body with an elegant pointed tail which was actually the fuel tank - the drawing for which, executed by Luigi Fusi, is dated February 1931 and is one of the earliest 'Monza' drawings. Another distinctive feature is the semi-cowled radiator: this cowl or grille was plain on the earliest models - such as the cars which ran in the European Grand Prix or Nuvolari's Pontedecimo-Giovi car - but later contained six 'slits' around the edge. A similar cowl (with slits) had previously appeared on a small series of Fiat 509S chassis built in 1928 with coachwork by Zagato, and the Alfa Romeo tipo A monoposto also had a semi-cowled radiator. Presumably, a 'house style' existed for the 8C 2300 tipo Corsa as it had for the 6C 1500 and 1750 two-seaters, as both the Zagato and Brianza versions of 'Monza' coachwork have a similar outline - although the later Brianza versions had the aesthetic advantage of very handsome long wings.





*The 8C 2300 Corsa cars that ran at the Gran Premio d'Italia held at Monza on May 24th were fitted with slim, two-seater bodywork with pointed tails containing the fuel tank. Borzacchini, whose tipo A had retired, took over Zehender's seat in the Minoia: Zehender 8C 2300 and is seen here refuelling the car while Vittorio Jano stands alongside. (Centro Documentazione Alfa Romeo)*



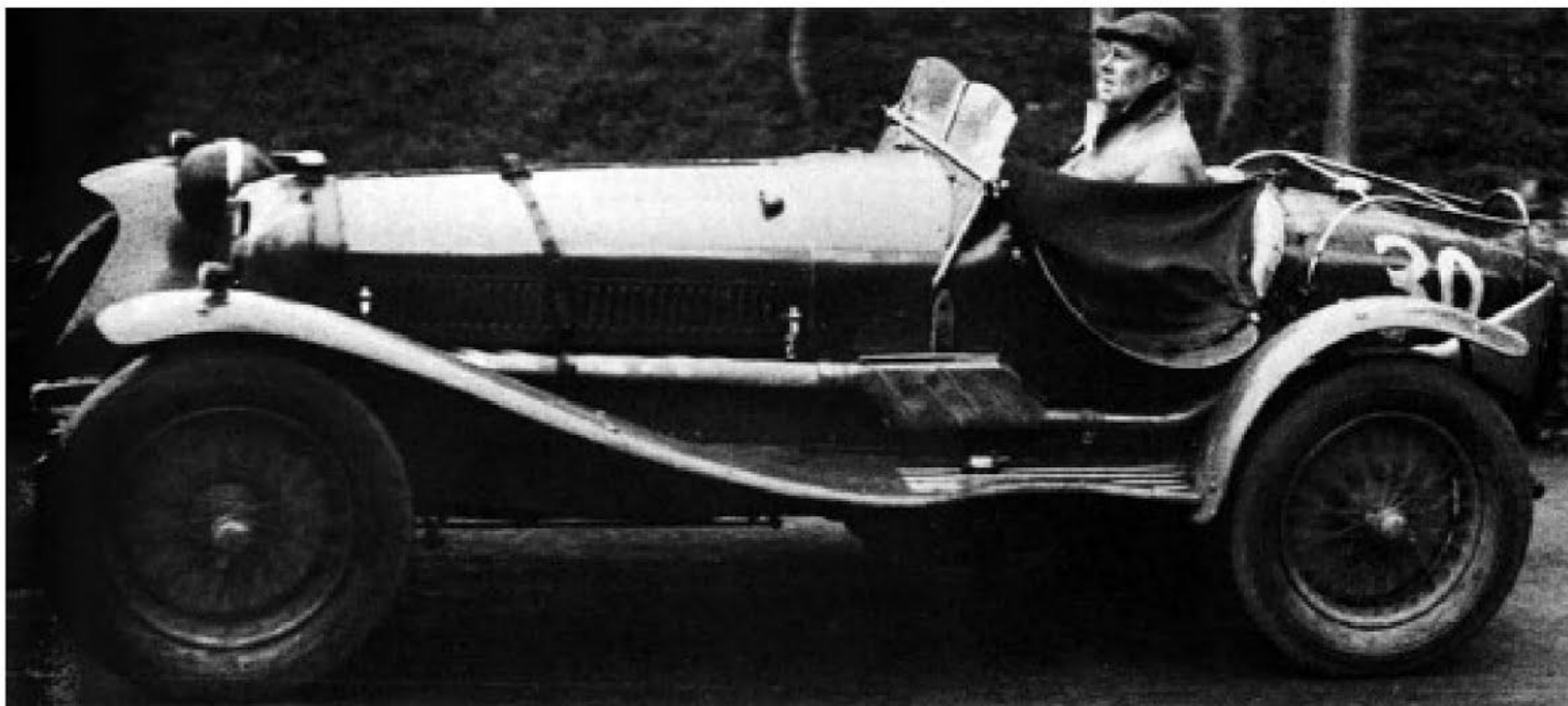
*Eugenio Siena poses at the wheel of an 8C 2300 Corsa (or Monza) outside the headquarters of the Scuderia Ferrari. This early example has a plain radiator cowl without slots and does not have the louvres aft of the bonnet as seen on the 1931 Italian Grand Prix 8Cs. (© Zagari)*



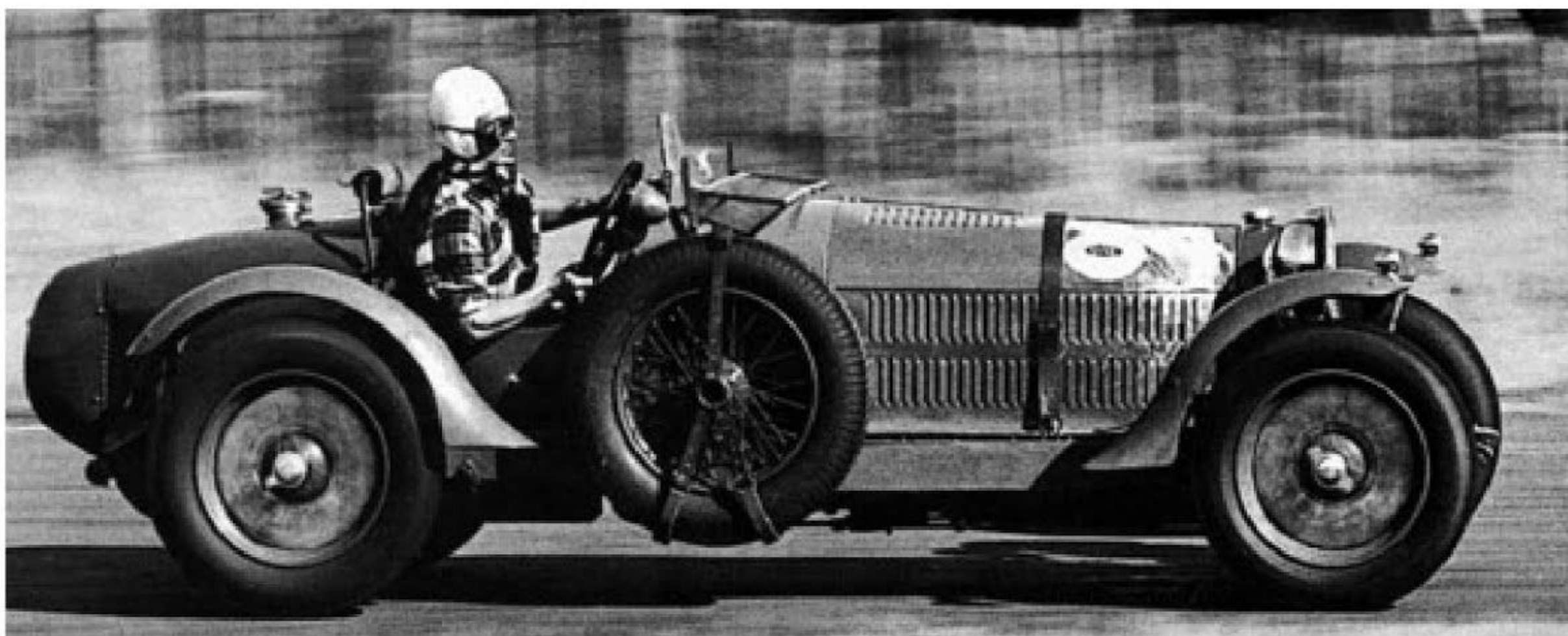
*Ferdinando Barbieri, photographed at the wheel of one of the 1934 Scuderia Ferrari Monzas prior to the Parma-Poggio di Berceto hillclimb in 1934 (© Zagari)*

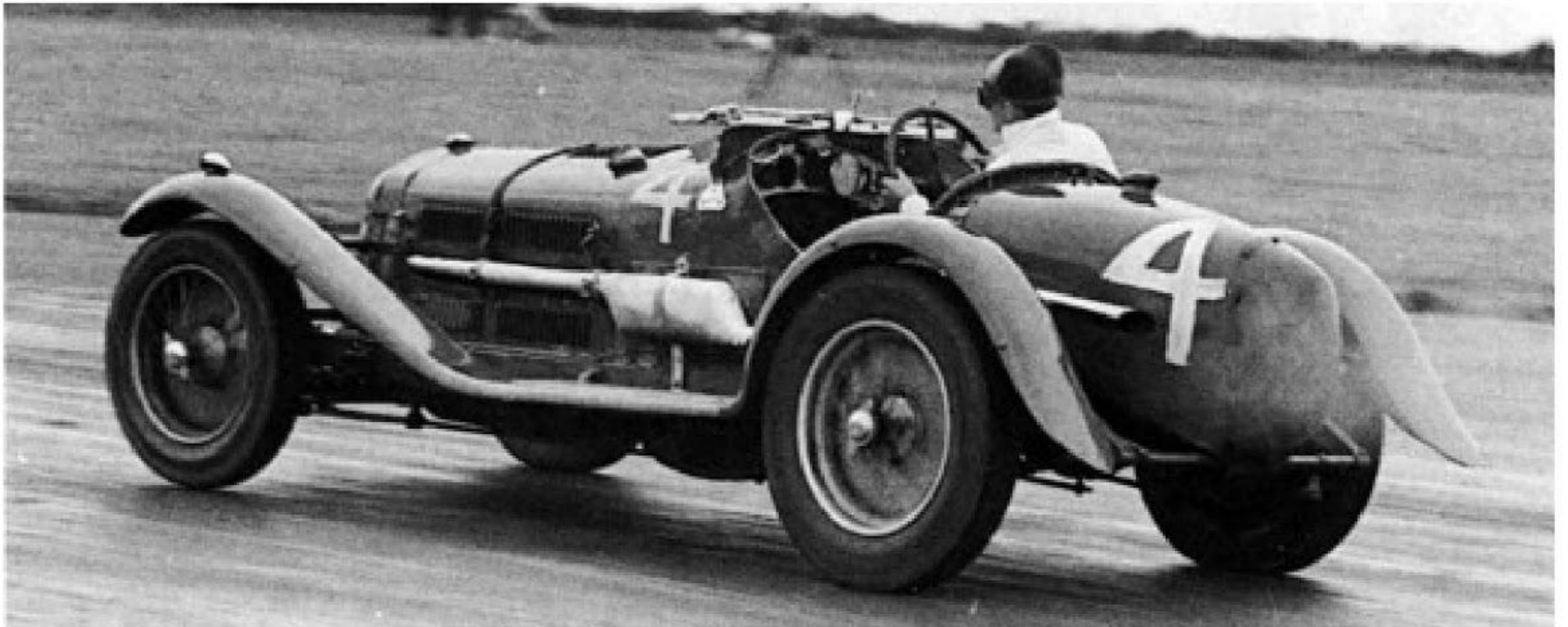
At the beginning of 1933, being deprived of the tipo Bs for Grand Prix events, the Scuderia Ferrari attempted to improve the performance of the Monzas by boring out the cylinders to 68mm, increasing the overall capacity to 2556cc. The original Memini carburettor was replaced by the more sophisticated Weber and, according to Luigi Orsini's research, some modifications were made to the cylinder heads and supercharger. Apart from having the handsome Brianza

bodywork already mentioned, the 1934 8C Monzas campaigned by the Scuderia Ferrari appear to have been constructed or assembled by the Scuderia Ferrari itself, possibly utilising components from damaged or written-off 8C 2300s. The Certificates of Origin, lodged with the Pubblico Registro Automobilistico not only give these cars' date of manufacture as 1934 (with the exception of 24SF, built in 1933) but also give non-Alfa Romeo chassis numbers which consist of two digits followed by SF. To confuse the issue, several tipo Bs are said to have SF32 or SF33 stamped somewhere on their frames or engines but when this was done one cannot be certain. It is worth recalling that the Alfa Romeo historian Luigi Fusi has stated that the factory built six 'Monza' specification cars in 1931 and four in 1932, which would make a total of only ten true Monza Alfa Romeos. Subsequent modifications by the Scuderia Ferrari, among others, may have led to the confusion surrounding the large number of so-called 'Monzas' in circulation today, although many of these have been converted from Corto and Lungo chassis within the last thirty years.



*One of the Scuderia Ferrari 2.6-litre Monzas with Carrozzeria Brianza coachwork was sold by the Scuderia to Austin Dobson in May 1934 and imported into Britain. This photograph shows the car (32SF), in full 'touring' gear even to the extent of a luggage rack, being driven at Prescott on 18th May 1946 by W.E. Ruck Keene. (© Guy Griffiths)*





*Two earlier Monzas, also imported into Britain in the mid-1930s, had "Sport 2-seater" bodywork which, according to the magazine *Motori, Aero, Cicli e Sports*, was produced by Carrozzeria Zagato. 2211122, driven at Goodwood in 1949 by its then owner Nigel Mann, is fully equipped with fold-flat windscreen, spare wheel and tiny hood; 2211130, pictured at Gransden in July 1947, has handsome long wings and - a British addition - a Brooklands-type silencer. (© Guy Griffiths)*

regulations called for standard catalogued sports cars in road racing trim (complete with wings, windscreen, headlamps etc), with bodywork conforming to the A.I.A.C.R. regulations. Both races had a handicap element involving credit laps and penalised supercharged cars - in Birkin's class (Class D, 2001cc-3000cc) unsupercharged cars received six credit laps and supercharged cars only four - the range extending from 750cc unsupercharged cars receiving nineteen laps to 8000cc supercharged cars on Scratch. Race distance for both races was nominally 70 laps.

The first day's race (for the Saorstat Cup) was run in poor weather conditions and resulted in a win by Norman Black's MG Midget from Horton's similar car. Saturday 6th June brought an improvement in the weather and by the time the Eireann Cup race started at 2.30pm the sun was shining and a large crowd had gathered. Earl Howe's Mercedes roared into the lead, followed by Campari's Maserati and Birkin's Alfa Romeo, but at the end of the tenth lap Giuseppe Campari was leading on handicap with Howe in second place.

A tremendous thunderstorm and heavy rain made the going difficult and, as the Mercedes began to lose ground, George Eyston's Maserati moved up into second place; the two Maseratis were reportedly lapping at 90mph, slightly faster than Birkin, but Eyston's engine began to misfire and Birkin took second place. Campari was struck by a flying stone which shattered his goggles, cutting his face quite badly: he came into the pits and Ramponi took over the Maserati while a doctor examined Campari's eye.

On Dr Pringle's assurance that there was no glass actually in the eye, Campari insisted on resuming the driving seat and set off in hot pursuit of Birkin who, by this time, was almost

four minutes ahead of him. Ten laps later Campari was in second place, having passed both Howe and Davis in their supercharged Mercedes and reduced Birkin's lead to 3 minutes 43 seconds, and after another ten laps Campari was only 2'43" behind Birkin.



*Le Mans 1931: Attilio Marinoni (standing on the driver's side of the car) and Goffredo Zehender pictured before the start of the race with their Works 8C 2300, chassis number 2111011.*


*Number 14 retired early on the Sunday morning, having sustained damage during Zehender's off-road excursion at Arnage. (Centro Documentazione Alfa Romeo)*



Both the Maserati and the Alfa Romeo had to stop for fuel in the closing stages of the race and Birkin's pit stop - although it was reported as taking only 27 seconds - cost him the overall lead in the Irish Grand Prix. However, he won the Eireann Cup convincingly enough, averaging 83.8mph, in 3 hours 21 minutes 31 seconds; Campari was second in 3,24'22" (82.56mph), Brian Lewis (Talbot) third in 3,24'31" and George Eyston fourth in 3,25'14". Norman Black's MG Midget was the winner, on handicap, of the Irish Grand Prix in 3,21'20", Birkin was second, Horton's MG third and Gardner's similar car fourth.

When entries for the 1931 Grand Prix d'Endurance (better known as the Le Mans 24 Hour race) closed, thirty nominations had been received. Five countries - France, England, Germany, Italy and the USA - were represented in the list and the marques included Bugatti, Mercedes, Chrysler, Aston Martin, Talbot and Alfa Romeo. Three 8C 2300s were entered, two by the Alfa Romeo factory and one by Lord Howe who was to have Sir Henry Birkin as his co-driver. This latter car was Howe's own, purchased via Alfa Romeo (British Sales) Ltd., and not the same car with which Birkin had won the Eireann Cup the previous weekend. Some correspondence between the Rt. Hon. Earl Howe, P.C., C.B.E., V.D., R.N.V.R., F.W.Stiles of Alfa Romeo (British Sales) Ltd. and Soc. Anon. Alfa Romeo and relating to the new 8C chassis has survived and it is clear that the London distributor was also disposed to help customers with their race entries: (Stiles to Howe: 10th March 1931) "The latest message received from Milan asks me to postpone my visit until the 15th or any day after this date. I am expecting to leave on Sunday next arriving Milan Monday midday, and

shall look forward to receiving your telephone message when I hope to be able to convey to you some news regarding the new chassis, delivery of same approximately: question of coachwork: Blueprints: density of petrol, and if present mixture correct, etc."After the visit, S.A. Alfa Romeo wrote to Alfa Romeo (British Sales) Ltd: (28th March 1931) "We are in receipt of your letter of the 24th inst. enclosing the original letter from Lord Howe for which we thank you. Will you kindly inform Lord Howe that we are quite agreeable that his entry to the Le Mans race should remain a personal one ... As for the drawings and specification required by the Le Mans authorities please assure Lord Howe that the same will be sent by us direct in due course. Such drawing and specifications will in any case be exactly [the] same as per Blue Print forwarded to Lord Howe ... so that [he] can send the Blue Print in his possession to Le Mans if he thinks that this course is preferable."

<p><b>The Golden Book 1931</b></p> <p><b>INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION 1931</b></p> <p>1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> - IX Italian Grand Prix 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> - French Grand Prix 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> - Belgian Grand Prix 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> - XXII Targa Florio 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> - Montevideo Circuit 1<sup>st</sup> - Irish Grand Prix</p>	 <p>8C RACING TYPE</p>	<p><b>The Golden Book 1931</b></p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> - 24 Hours at Le Mans 1<sup>st</sup> - Dieppe Grand Prix 1<sup>st</sup> - Dauphiné Grand Prix 1<sup>st</sup> - Comminges Grand Prix 2<sup>nd</sup> - Ulster Tourist Trophy 1<sup>st</sup> - Prince of Piedmont Circuit 1<sup>st</sup> - Pistoletto - Gatti 2<sup>nd</sup> - Monza Grand Prix</p>
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*Part of Alfa Romeo's 1932 8C sales brochure. The brochure boasts the model's wins.*

The previous year, Howe and his co-driver Leslie Callingham had had serious fuel problems at Le Mans when competing in Howe's 6C 1750 SS and he was determined not to suffer in the same way again. Accordingly, he supplied Mr Stiles with a can of the fuel to be used at Le Mans and received the following reply: "My Lord, I am obliged to you for sending the can of French Spirit to be used at Le Mans, which has been tested by us with a Hydrometer. We find the density is 0.735 which is practically of the same consistency as our Works recommend, i.e. 68% heavy petrol, density 0.730 or 0.735, with 30% Benzole and 2% oil. Do you think it will be possible to arrange to have the spirit brought to about 0.775 (by adding additional Benzole 30%) which was the density used by us in the RAC T.T. Race. In any case I propose taking with me to Milan a sample of the Spirit, but it would be useful to have this information beforehand if possible. If you can obtain spirit with a density of about 0.775 there will be greater certainty of eliminating pre-ignition than with the lighter grade, as the sample."

Howe's Alfa Romeo (and Madame Mareuse's Bugatti and two Talbots entered by the Fox & Nichol team) was eligible for the final of the Rudge-Whitworth Biennial Cup, Howe having qualified by finishing in fifth place the previous year while driving his 6C 1750 SS. One of the 'Works' 8Cs was among the five non-starters when the competing cars were assembled on the grid on Saturday 13th June. After Captain Woolf Barnato (winner of the race in 1928, 1929 and 1930) toured the circuit in an 8-litre Bentley, the flag fell at 4pm, the drivers dashed to their cars and Sommer's 4-litre Chrysler was the first away. Tim Birkin took the first turn at the wheel of the Alfa Romeo and was soon in fourth place, Attilio

*achieved by the Howe: Birkin 8C 2300 Lungo, chassis number 2111005, owned by Lord Howe. The winning team covered 3017.663km in the twenty four hours, averaging 125.752kph. (Cherrett Stiles collection)*

Then Louis Chiron's Bugatti shed a tyre tread in much the same way as Rost's car (although without the serious consequences) and the stop signal was given to Bouriat's Bugatti, Jean Bugatti having decided that it would be unsafe for the cars to continue with obviously unsuitable tyres. The withdrawal of the Bugatti team was a great disappointment to the spectators and some of the excitement of the race was lost. Ivanovsky's Mercedes stopped at the pits for eight or nine minutes and, while there, was passed by the Lewis:Hindmarsh and Rose Richards:Saunders-Davis Talbots and by Lord Howe at the wheel of Alfa Romeo no.16. The latter was now going really well and, by the end of the sixth hour, had moved up into second place behind Marinoni:Zehender although still a lap behind. However, as dusk fell no.16 began to creep up on no.14 and just after midnight the Howe: Birkin car took the lead. A thunderstorm heralded a violent downpour and Zehender's Alfa ran off the road at Arnage, apparently suffering only minor damage; he managed to restart and retained second place. At the halfway point (4am on Sunday 14th June) Howe: Birkin had covered 92 laps, Marinoni:Zehender 88, the two Talbots 86 and the Mercedes 84. A couple of hours later, Marinoni stopped at the pits and a lengthy examination of the car ensued: it transpired that the rear axle had been damaged during Zehender's off-road excursion and the car was withdrawn. At 10am, with three-quarters of the race run, the order was as

shown in Table 11, but shortly afterwards Hindmarsh came into the pits where it was discovered that the chassis of the Talbot was broken at the rear and, although a temporary repair was effected, the car was eventually withdrawn.

At 3.15pm loud cheers greeted the news that the Alfa Romeo had broken the record set up by the winning Bentley in 1930 of 2930.663km in the 24 hours and at 4pm Charles Faroux held out the flag to signal the end of the race. The winning Alfa Romeo had covered 3017.655km at an average speed of 125.752kph, the Ivanovsky:Stoffel Mercedes (which finished second) covered 2905.180km and Rose-Richards:Saunders-Davis Talbot 2837.398km. Only six cars were classified as finishing.

On the same day as the Howe:Birkin victory at Le Mans, a number of Alfa Romeos were competing at the Bobbio-Passo del Penice hillclimb, a 13km course some 45km from the town of Piacenza. With one exception - an 8C 2300 Corto with Zagato two-seater bodywork entered by the Scuderia Ferrari and driven by Enzo Ferrari himself - all the 'Alfa' entries were 6C models. By his own admission, Ferrari was no great shakes as a racing driver but this time he had a good run to finish first, his time of 11 minutes 43.2 seconds (66.543kph) being good enough to beat Francesco Severi's 6C 1750 GS (11 minutes 59 seconds) and Carlo Premoli's Salmson (11'20.6").

**Table 11. 1931 Le Mans: positions at 3/4 distance**

	<b>Drivers</b>	<b>Distance</b>
1	Howe: Birkin	138 laps
2	Rose-Richards: Saunders-Davis	131 laps
3	Stoffel: Ivanovsky	131 laps
4	Lewis: Hindmarsh	129 laps
5	Trebor: Balard (Lorraine)	111 laps

The next outing for the Works team of Alfa Romeo 8C 2300s was on June 21st when the French Grand Prix - a race of ten hours' duration for unlimited capacity cars - was held on the Montlhéry circuit. As well as the three 8Cs entered for Campari: Borzacchini, Minoia: Zehender and Nuvolari: Minozzi, official teams included Bugatti and Maserati (and what was described as the "semi-official" Mercedes entry). Private entries included Pesato: Felix with a 6C 1750 GS, several more Bugattis, three Delage Grand Prix cars of 1927 vintage, Sunbeam and Peugeot.

Soon after the start at 8am, a fine duel developed between Fagioli's Maserati 8C 2800 and Chiron's Type 51 Bugatti and after completing the first 150km Chiron's Bugatti passed Fagioli and went into the lead, which he kept until the end of the race. The Alfas appeared to be struggling to keep up with the Bugattis and at the halfway stage the Nuvolari: Minozzi 8C was in fifth place, nearly 40km behind the leader, with Minoia: Zehender sixth. Retirements and pit stops by their competitors, as well as some steady driving of their own, helped the Campari: Borzacchini car into third place behind Chiron and Divo in their Works Bugattis after eight hours driving; when Divo's Bugatti retired forty minutes before the end of the race, Campari inherited second place but there

Borzacchini's 8C Corto was third and also won the over 1500cc Sports Car Class.

The following weekend, Birkin was out in an 8C again - this time at the Belgian 24 Hour race at Spa. Although the car ran extremely well in the early stages (Birkin and his co-driver, George Eyston, led the race for most of the first nine hours), the engine started to misfire during the night and stopped out on the circuit. Eyston, who was driving at the time, was equipped with a small torch and attempted to locate the fault despite the darkness; unfortunately, he was unable to complete his diagnosis in the time allowed (the Spa regulations specified a maximum lap time of one hour) and so the car was excluded from the results. The eventual winner was the Djordjadze:Zehender Mercedes, which completed 2543.500km; the Pesato:Felix 1750 was second (2489.500km) and the Sommer:Delmer Chrysler third (2413.600km). Pesato and Felix also won the under 2000cc Sports Car Class.

was third (1274km, average 127.400kph), Birkin:Lewis fourth (1240km, average 124kph), the Ivanovsky:Stoffel Mercedes fifth (1206km) and the Pesato:Felix 6C 1750 sixth (1088km). The 1931 International Drivers' Championship was awarded to Minoia for the points gained at the Italian Grand Prix (second), the French Grand Prix (sixth) and the Belgian Grand Prix (third), as these were the only events taken into account.

A week later, Tazio Nuvolari was at the Nürburgring for the German Grand Prix (although, being of only four hours' duration, the race was not included in the formal 'Grand Prix' calendar); his 8C Monza finished fourth, behind Caracciola's Mercedes and Chiron and Varzi, both in Bugattis. On the same day, Borzacchini's 8C 2300 Corto won the Coppa Principe di Piemonte, held over ten laps of the 24.951km Circuito di Avellino; his winning time was 2 hours 48 minutes 41.2 seconds, Francesco Severi's 6C 1750 was second in 2,51'52.2" and Pastore's Maserati third in 2,52'21".

Philippe Etancelin entered his Monza - painted French blue - for the Dieppe Grand Prix on July 26th, the only other Alfa Romeo entered being Pesato's well-used 1750. Intermittent rain during the four hours of the race made the circuit difficult in places and there were various minor incidents. Etancelin, however, never looked seriously challenged and won comfortably; Count Czaykowski (Bugatti) was second and Lord Howe (Delage) was third and also won the 1500cc Class.



100,000 Lire. Nuvolari, driving an 8C whose bodywork consisted merely of bonnet, scuttle, two bucket seats and a 'Monza' cowl over the radiator, won in 2 hours 23 minutes 40.8 seconds (average speed 83.518kph) less than a minute ahead of Chiron's Bugatti (2,24'24.6") and Luigi Fagioli's Maserati (2,26'48.4"); Campari's 8C was fourth and Cortese's sixth. Etancelin's 8C won the Grenoble Grand Prix on the same day but on August 9th Enzo Ferrari, driving an 8C 2300 Corto, was beaten into second place at the Circuito delle Tre Provincie by Nuvolari's 6C 1750. Organised by the A.C. Bologna, the 128.500km circuit's route was Bagni della Porretta-S.Marcello Pistoiese Passo Abetone-Pievepelago-Sestola-Silla-Bagni della Poretta and Nuvolari's winning time was 1,58'46.4", Ferrari's 8C recording 1,59'19.2": Clemente Biondetti (Bugatti) and Sergio Rusca (1750) were equal third. Borzacchini's 8C retired only 5km after the start, reportedly with a burnt cylinder head gasket; Luigi Orsini, in his book *La Scuderia Ferrari 1929-1939*, notes that Borzacchini's SF-entered car was conspicuously fast prior to its retirement and remarks that, at about this time, the Scuderia had begun to experiment with 'improvements' to the original Alfa Romeo design.

"To those people who insist that motor-racing can never be really popular with the general public, the Grand Prix du Comminges forms an irrefutable answer". So began the report of the 1931 race in *MotorSport*. The account relates how, by means of erecting a splendid new Grandstand at Saint-Gauden capable of seating 15,000 spectators under cover, and by offering prize monies totalling 90,000 francs (to attract high calibre drivers), a large crowd gathered to watch a well-supported and exciting race. Those well-known 'Alfa'

exponents - Etancelin and Pesato - had entered, as had a bevy of Bugattis, a couple of Maseratis and such rarities as B.N.C, Caban and Ragot cars. Marcel Lehoux (Bugatti), Etancelin and Count Czaykowski (Bugatti) had a tremendous tussle until Czaykowski stopped on the tenth lap to change a tyre and two laps before the end of the race Lehoux also had a puncture, the resulting pit stop costing him not only his lead over Etancelin but also second place. Etancelin's 8C was first, averaging 140.117kph over the 394.500km), Czaykowski second - less than two minutes behind - and Lehoux third. On the same day, the 306km Coppa Acerbo, held on the Pescara circuit, was a triumph for the Alfa Romeo tipo A cars with Campari finishing first and Nuvolari third; the Scuderia Ferrari-entered 8C 2300s had a poor day, Borzacchini retiring again and Francesco Severi finishing sixth.



*On paper there was an excellent Alfa Romeo entry for the Tourist Trophy race held on the Ards circuit on August 22nd - a three-car 'Works' team of 8C 2300s for Campari, Borzacchini and Nuvolari and two privately entered 8Cs for their owners Howe and Birkin. Campari's number 7, pictured here at Comber, ran well enough to finish sixth overall and third in Class D. (W.A.Martin)*