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1966 FORD GT MARK II



**THE TRANSFORMED
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REMEMBERING SERGIO PININFARINA

WINTER 2012 \$14.99 DISPLAY UNTIL 2/19/2013



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FERRARI MADE THEM FAST.

P I N I N I



PININFARINA

MADE THEM BEAUTIFUL.

"PURITY OF LINE AND HARMONY OF PROPORTION.

IF THEY ARE GOOD, THEY ARE GOOD FOREVER."—SERGIO PININFARINA, 1926-2012



Like Son, Like Father Sergio and Battista, the original "Pinin" Farina.

"I WAS SCARED TO DEATH," SERGIO TOLD AUTOMOTIVE NEWS. "BECAUSE ENZO FERRARI WAS ALREADY A LEGEND IN CAR RACING AND, NOTORIOUSLY, HE WAS NOT AN EASY MAN TO DEAL WITH."



Postwar Curves 1947 Cisitalia Coupe

IN 1951,

at age 25, Sergio Pininfarina was a year out of Turin's Polytechnic University with a degree in mechanical engineering, a year into full-time work at his father's famous firm, and newly married. That was when Battista "Pinin" Farina, highly esteemed in the world of Italian automobile design, approached Enzo Ferrari for his business. Ferrari told Pinin that the deal was his, provided son Sergio would be the only contact between the companies.

"I was scared to death," Sergio told Automotive News senior reporter Luca Ciferri years later, "because Enzo Ferrari was already a legend in car racing and, notoriously, he was not an easy man to deal with. At the same time, I was proud: My father gave me a great chance."

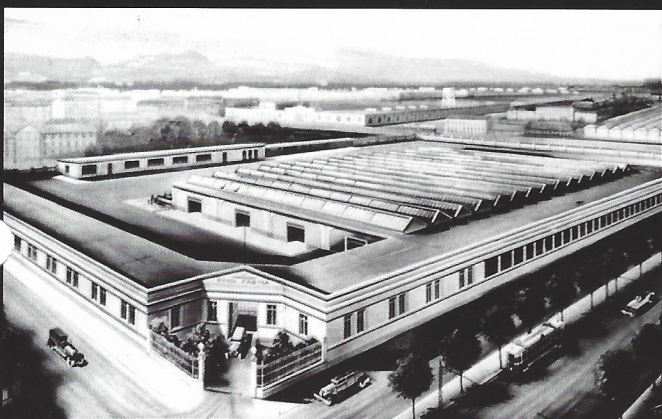
The relationship clicked, and the two men became—and remained—close. As a result, nearly every roadgoing Ferrari since has boasted Pininfarina style. Such was the personality that would mark Sergio's career: He could get along with, work with, and positively influence just about anyone.

THE FIRM

Battista Farina established the Società Anonima Carrozzeria Pinin Farina in Turin in 1930. (He was the tenth of 11 siblings and the youngest boy, and he'd been given the childhood nickname Pinin, or "little.") Not only was his facility modern and well-equipped, but his senses of shape and proportion were superb at a time when the importance of automotive design was not well understood or appreciated.

Almost immediately, Farina was designing elegant "Italian line" cars for volume makers and coachbuilt specials for royalty. Among his pre-World War II trademarks were curved, steeply raked windshields and rounded, streamlined forms.

One of Farina's best postwar designs was the simple but elegant 1947 Cisitalia coupe, which set the trend for a new generation of modern sports cars by not looking like a spindly, wing-fendered box. By the time he added Ferrari in 1951, his firm was styling and building cars for a growing list of clients in Europe as well as Nash (Nash-Healey roadster, Statesman coupe, Rambler convertible) and American Motors (Ambassador sedan) in the U.S.



The Legend Sergio with Ferrari, 1966 **Torino** Pininfarina factory, 1930

• • • • WORDS GARY WITZENBURG

THE PARTNERSHIP

By middle school, Sergio had decided to follow in his father's footsteps, so Pinin began teaching him the business: working the shop floor, touring auto shows, meeting clients. Sergio worked part-time in the design department during college and full-time after completing his degree. His best friend was Renzo Carli, a fellow engineer and frequent visitor to the Farina home who married Sergio's sister, Gianna, in 1947. Within a year, Carli was a Farina employee and a much-loved family member. Soon, Pinin made up his mind to turn over leadership of his company to these two talented, hard-working young men.

"I formed a fantastic harmony between these sons. It is one of the most important things I have done in my entire life," he told author Griff Borgeson for the article "Pininfarina, the New Generation" in the March 1964 issue of *Road & Track*. "Sergio not only accepted his father's will but recognized the wisdom of his plan and had no misgivings about sharing the patrimony with his sister's husband and his own bosom friend," Borgeson wrote.

WHAT I REMEMBER MOST ABOUT SERGIO

"One thing that always struck me about Sergio was the importance of family. He was an unusual guy, unusually talented as a designer and a businessman. But the Pininfarina family was number one in everything that happened. And he was respected everywhere he went. If anyone was critical of him, he would accept that and never argue. He would take in what people had to say, then refer back to his own opinion and feelings about whatever it was—the design of a car, a political issue, or a family thing—say what he thought, then leave it alone. When we introduced the Allanté to our [top 100] Master Dealers, Sergio came over to unveil it. He was such a personable man, such a very honest, open, and compatible individual, that he put himself in their place and talked about what this car could mean to them. When he pulled the curtain back, and they had a chance to see the car and come up on stage and touch and feel it and get inside, he had them so emotionally inspired that they jumped to their feet and cheered and clapped. It was an amazing, heartwarming experience."

—**JOHN GRETENBERGER**

former Cadillac general manager and GM vice president

"My association with Sergio occurred when I was program manager for the Allanté. He asked if I would please make a point of privately contacting him whenever I had ideas to share about his firm's people, including his son Andrea, or any thoughts on how to make our relationship smoother and more effective. During the next three years, we developed a close personal relationship, which also included social activities. I always found Sergio to be warm and friendly, a good businessman, and a gentleman of the highest moral character."

—**TOM SCHREITMUELLER**

former Cadillac Allanté program manager

"Something I always appreciated was that he worked through his organization. He was not a micromanager. He understood his role and those of others, including myself, and he respected all of those roles. Also, in the various organizations in which he was involved, more often than not, he wound up being the CEO, which gives you the idea of the tremendous respect he carried as a human being. He really was legendary in the industry. His standards were high. His personal conduct and appearance were perfect, and the conduct of his family and all key members of his organization was always proper and businesslike, starting with the suit and tie. He built the San Giorgio plant specifically for the Allanté and hired as fine a workforce as I have ever witnessed. I've had some great people work for me, but I have never seen a workforce as skilled as that one. His facilities throughout were immaculate. That San Giorgio factory was as clean as the cafeterias in our plants' medical departments. That all started with Sergio."

—**BILL BUSCHMANN**

former Cadillac Allanté on-site operations manager

continued...



A One-Off Ferrari 250 GT/L (Berlinetta Lusso), built in the summer of 1963 for Battista Pininfarina.

It was early 1957 when Pinin called the two men into his office and essentially handed them the company. "This old plant has reached the limits of his growth," he said, according to Borgeson. "It has no room for expansion and is far from being up to date. If I were alone, I'd leave it as it is. But I want you to decide which way to go—to stay as we are or to enlarge. Either way is fine with me. It's your decision to make, and I don't even want to know what it is. I'm finished, and it's your time to take over. The future is absolutely up to you."

Sergio and Renzo decided to design and build a new plant, and a year later, when it was almost done, the old man took off on a world tour with strict orders not to be disturbed. The business grew and flourished with the partners dividing responsibilities and client relations. "Sergio looks after the needs of one customer, Renzo after those of the next," Borgeson wrote, "and each customer is treated as though no other existed."

In 1961, Giovanni Gronchi, the president of Italy, issued a decree by which the family's surname—and the company's name—officially became Pininfarina. The firm was famous around the world, he said, and since Pinin's brother ran a company also named Farina, why not end the confusion by combining the two names into one?

(Here's another version of that story, told by Sergio himself and related by Frank Stephenson, design director for Ferrari and Maserati from 2003 to 2006: "When Pinin began designing cars for Ferrari, his full name, Pinin Farina, was always placed on the car sides. And he became so upset that the assembly line workers often did not align the two names properly that he decided to combine them into one to avoid any misalignments. Sergio and his siblings were sent to Rome, not knowing why, and had to register and sign official documents changing their last name from Farina to Pininfarina. Had that not happened, he would be known today as Sergio Farina.")

When Pinin died in 1966, Sergio became president and Renzo director general. They expanded and developed their research capability so the company's 180 technicians could produce 25 prototypes a year. By 1972, Pininfarina employed 2000 people with a capacity of 130 bodies per day and had built and opened Italy's first full-scale wind tunnel, one of few in the world. As an independent design and production company, Pininfarina could design a vehicle and, if the client wished, build it. At its peak, it was building 50,000 bodies and vehicles a year.

In the half-century since assuming the firm's leadership, Sergio and Renzo created and built some of history's most memorable designs. In addition to



Peugeot 404 Cabriolet



Sergio and Renzo discuss design options using a wood model.

models for Alfa Romeo (Giulia Spider), Fiat (124 Spider), Lancia (Beta Monte Carlo), Peugeot (404 Coupe/Cabriolet), and Bentley (Azure), the firm's artists penned a near-unbroken string of stunning roadgoing Ferraris: the 250 GT Berlinetta, 365 GTB/4 Daytona and Berlinetta Boxer, GTO Berlinetta, F40, 456GT, F50, 550 Maranello, and today's gorgeous new F12—not to mention the sexy-sleek (not-quite-Ferrari) Dino 206 and 246.

Sergio never claimed personal credit for any of them. But from his father he'd inherited a keen eye for design and oversaw everything his talented artists did. "The main elements of a classic automotive design are purity of line and harmony of proportion," he said in 1986. "These are elements that last...and which, if they are good, are good forever. Every kind of car—sports car, family car, off-road car—has its own purpose, its own soul. The task of the motorcar designer is to understand the feeling and the sensation that a given car should deliver and to interpret those qualities so the car creates a like impression on the customer."

"I worked closely with Sergio when I was design director at Ferrari and Maserati between 2002 and 2006. I'll always fondly remember him as a kind and calm man with an impeccable manner, very easy to speak with, a sort of uncle you looked up to with respect."

—FRANK STEPHENSON

design director, McLaren Automotive

"Spending almost 20 years [working] with Sergio Pininfarina has been the most rewarding experience in my career. He had immense experience and charisma. He was successful beyond his design activity, in the Italian political and social arenas, but he always thought of himself as a car designer, and that was what he really loved to do. Since 1952, he has been the partner who helped build the Ferrari legend with a string of unforgettable cars. He was one of the titans who made Italian design recognized worldwide."

—LORENZO RAMACIOTTI

head of design, Fiat S.p.A.

"Most of my inspiration in car design came from Pininfarina. The elegance and beauty of what those guys created over the years had such an influence on not only me but a whole generation of designers. He did beautiful cars that resonate with people. Without him, Ferrari would be a very, very different company. He had impeccable style, impeccable manners, and a real wit, and he could not have been more charming. [As co-judges at the Pebble Beach Concours] I was honored to spend about three hours walking around with him looking at beautiful cars, many of which turned out to be either his or his dad's. We would walk past a 250GT or a Dino 206 or some other car he had had a major hand in, and he was completely modest about the whole thing. Most everyone recognized who he was, and watching how gracious he was with everyone, signing autographs and being kind, I thought most of us would love to have his style."

—J MAYS

Ford Motor Co. global design vice president

"He was always such a gentleman, very charming, a lot of flair, you might say the quintessential elegant Italian design figure. I met him around the time when I bought my first Ferrari in Italy and asked him if there was any possibility of getting the works manuals for it. I was just a young design guy meeting him for the first time and hesitant to ask him. But he very graciously said he would attend to that, and it wasn't long before they arrived. You don't forget things like that. He was always a very impressive person."

—WAYNE CHERRY

former GM design vice president



1956 Sergio scrutinizes his handiwork on an auto show display stand.

MOTOR TREND ARCHIVE

THE ALLANTÉ

The Euro-American Cadillac Allanté provides excellent insight into how Pininfarina conducted business. Early in the 1980s—a time of wrenching corporate reorganization, product downsizing, look-alike styling, and shoddy quality in the face of strengthening foreign competition at General Motors—Cadillac decided it needed a high-tech, high-image, two-seat “halo” car to boost its badly sagging image.

Cadillac general manager and GM vice president Bob Burger dispatched a group of engineers to Italy in early 1982 to meet with Pininfarina (and others) to discuss designing and building the body for such a luxury roadster. Pininfarina got the job. One unique element of the process would be an “Airbridge,” which some called “the longest assembly line in the world.” A small fleet of specially equipped Alitalia and Lufthansa 747s transported the Allanté bodies to the Hamtramck, Michigan, plant that married each to its Eldorado-based suspension and powertrain.

The Allanté’s styling was clean, crisp, and nicely proportioned—no Ferrari, but a handsome Cadillac. Right away, though, quality issues surfaced; the complex top wasn’t weather-tight. “We had sent over volumes of quality standards and approaches to things,” says Bill Buschman, Cadillac’s on-site manufacturing operations director. “I met with their chief engineer and said,

‘We’re not doing what our processes say. Where are the books?’ He said, ‘Bill, all of them are in English. My people speak Italian.’

“The program was at risk because the costs were out of sight and the quality was terrible. But the Pininfarina people, starting with Sergio, worked closely with us, and we were able to take \$5100 out of the body pricing while raising the car to number one in GM vehicle quality ratings. Quite an accomplishment. But without the leadership of Sergio and the attitude they had, I could never have had that level of cooperation and the sacrifices they made.”

Yet, despite annual improvements, GM cancelled the slow-selling \$50K roadster after 1993. Buschman recalls having to confirm its cancellation with the dedicated San Giorgio plant crew: “When I went out to meet with the people, most of them broke down and were crying. ‘Please tell us this is not true,’ they were saying in Italian. I had to tell them it was true, and try to explain as best I could. That is a moment you never forget. It gives you some idea of the tremendous importance this had for those folks.”



1987 Cadillac Allanté



Old Friends Sergio and Luca di Montezemolo, current Ferrari chairman.

THE MAN

Outside of his company and the auto business, Sergio Pininfarina's list of accomplishments is as long as it is impressive. Following directly in his father's footsteps, he received the Italian title Cavaliere del Lavoro in 1976, the French Legion of Honor in 1979, and the British Honorary Royal Designer for Industry title in 1983.

John Grettenberger, who inherited the Allanté when he succeeded Burger as Cadillac general manager in 1984, knew Sergio well and speaks highly of him. "I can't talk enough about the passions he had for his wife, Georgia, and his father," Grettenberger says. "He revered his father and talked about him so much. Another of Sergio's passions was that he saw beauty in everything, especially in nature. He would talk about how things looked and appealed to him, such as a beautiful natural setting. He liked complementary shapes and colors, and he liked flow. If you look at any of his cars, Pininfarina's lines generally flow—they go on and on and have a design character that lasts a long time."

Allanté operations manager Bill Buschmann formed a close personal relationship with Sergio and his family during the six years he worked at the firm. "Sergio's wife, Georgia, was an absolute delight," he recalls. "They had three children, daughter Lorenza, then Andrea, then Paolo, who is now president. They were a very close family. They all lived in one large, very nice

home, they were together all the time, and they all worked at the company.

"When Sergio made a public presentation, without fail he would recognize his father. His father built the company, and he always gave him respect for that, which is very important in Italian culture. And Sergio held his children very strongly responsible for their performance and conduct as individuals. There was no silver-spoon attitude. Pinin had trained Sergio as program manager for Ferrari, so Sergio did the same by assigning Andrea as program manager for Allanté—which was a key element of his development in preparation for eventually taking over the company—and he confidentially asked me to assist in Andrea's development."

He made younger son Paolo, fresh out of college at the time, quality manager for Allanté (quite a challenge), then later moved him to styling to give him a background in manufacturing, styling, and engineering. Daughter Lorenza was director of public relations, which kept her and the family strategically involved in corporate relations and image. "Sergio was very concerned about public image," Buschmann relates. "He understood that image is absolutely critical, and a wrong image move can cripple a corporation. Far more than what went into the press, it was also appearance and the way they managed."

Buschmann notes that Sergio also had immense personal pride. "He was once asked to attend a meeting back at Cadillac," he says, "and they unloaded a ton of problems and issues on him. He had not been aware that was going to happen, and it was tough. When he returned, he asked to meet with me privately in his office, and when I walked in, he grabbed me and with tearful eyes explained the humiliation he felt. He had not been notified of these issues in advance and had no answers, so he was very embarrassed."

"Then he said something that was very meaningful: that we Americans are too quick to use anger. He was firm, but I never saw him rant, rave, or scream. Can Italians be emotional? Absolutely. But would they ever embarrass a person of that stature? No, they would not."

TWILIGHT

Fate was unkind to Sergio, his family, and his company in the new century. In August 2008, while riding his motor scooter home for lunch one day, eldest son Andrea, then running most of the company, was hit by a car and killed. Soon after, at the end of the year, the family lost financial control. "The banks that bailed out the ailing company became its controlling shareholders," Ciferri reports. The company, now under younger son Paolo, is working to grow its design activities as vehicle and body production have fallen off.

"It's really too bad that Andrea could not have lived [to succeed Sergio as he had succeeded Pinin]," Grettenberger says, "because he revered Sergio and was so proud of him and everything he had done. Andrea was the heir apparent, highly intense, well-educated, an excellent businessman, and tough, but with a lot of his dad's traits. He learned from the way Sergio took care of things, and tried to emulate Sergio in how he ran the parts of the organization that he was in charge of—which was almost everything by the time he died."

"When Andrea was killed, Sergio was at the end of his career. He just didn't seem to have the strength any more to get in and make it run. Paolo stepped in and did the best he could, along with Lorenza."

Flash back 17 years, when Sergio Pininfarina was awarded the Premio Compasso d'Oro, the same prestigious Italian design honor his father earned four decades years earlier. In a book published on the occasion, Augusto Morello wrote (as translated from his Italian): "For the first time ever, in April 1995, the Executive Committee of the Association of Industrial Design, ADI, awarded the Compasso d'Oro dedicated to the career to the summit of a company to which it had already been awarded in the past. Almost 40 years after Battista Farina, or rather Pinin, received the award, it has been granted to the entire work of Sergio Pininfarina in recognition of the very same values of a career which has honored, and continues to honor, Italian design, design management, and business in the sphere of ideal continuity and new prospects."

Sergio Pininfarina surely appreciated the harmony of that. ♦