

THE BIRTH OF THE COMPANY

Ironically the features that made the ASA a commercial failure in the mid-60's may now ensure the preservation and survival of remaining examples some thirty years later. These features centre around the uncompromised Ferrari-based design, which resulted in a purchase price the market was not prepared to pay. Where-as serious Ferrari buyers at the time, and indeed Enzo Ferrari by his very action of selling the design and production rights, refused to acknowledge the Ferrari connection, this relationship now adds pedigree and acceptability to collectors and historians throughout the world. Finally, had the ASA been successful by selling in the numbers targeted in the beginning, the rarity factor that adds to the interest today may well not exist either.

However, we should go back to the beginning.

With the passing of time the beginning of ASA is not so distant in relative terms from the beginning of Ferrari. Whilst Enzo Ferrari's racing career commenced in the late twenties, the construction of cars bearing his name did not start until after the second world war and the place in history was perhaps ensured by Chinetti's win at LeMans in 1949 or by Ascari's World Championships in 1952-53. By the end of the 1950's Ferrari had assumed an enviable record in motor racing with victories in every major event in Europe. Ferrari was a household name even to those with no interest in motor sport, and the demand for road going Ferraris was increasing. The very successful 250 series offered the exciting yet civilized and usable GTE at one end of the scale; the fabulous California Spyder; or the SWB and TDF at the other extreme for those wishing to still go motor-racing. These cars were all based on the V-12 engine of 3-litres capacity. In addition, a series of special, larger engined cars provided levels of performance and luxury by which all others were judged.

Ferrari had built, and indeed won races, with cars other than the V-12s. In fact four and six-cylinder engines in various configurations had played their part in the development and successes, and even a two-cylinder GP engine was built and tested. Never-the-less, it was a somewhat stunned audience at the annual press gathering at Maranello in December 1959 who first heard the news and saw a four-cylinder unit of 849cc built apparently for a road car and not specifically for racing. Simply called the "854" and given engine design Number 161, the specification included a bore and stroke of 65mm x 64mm, a compression ratio of 7.5:1 and a power output of 68 bhp at 7000 rpm using two 38DCO Weber carburettors or 64 bhp with a single twin choke Weber. A cross flow head was used with inclined valves, hemispherical combustion chambers and a single overhead camshaft, and the whole design exhibited a remarkable resemblance to two-thirds of one bank of the outside plug Colombo V-12. At or about the same time two further designs, types "164" and "164 bis", both overhead camshaft, four-cylinder in line configurations of 973cc were also built and tested. With bore and stroke of 67mm x 69mm and a compression ratio of 9:1 the first of these produced 80 bhp at 7000 rpm with twin 32 DCN Webers and the second gave 86 bhp at 7000 rpm using two 38 DCO carburettors. Various other power outputs within the range of 64 to 86 bhp have been quoted, probably indicating the range of

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variations tested, but, what-ever may have been said about road use, the equivalent outputs in the range of 80 to 88 bhp per litre in 1959 showed the racing pedigree from which these engines were derived.

Whilst the above variations were produced and tested other twin-cam, four cylinder designs of 1500 and 1600cc were apparently also considered for a small car.

By March 1960 the Press were speculating about the “Baby Ferrari”, “Ferrarina” and even “Volks Ferrari” when the engine appeared in a chassis based on that of a Fiat 1200. At the front independent suspension was by wishbones and coil springs and a rigid axle suspended on leaf springs was used at the rear. The prototype had standard Fiat drum brakes, a Fiat gearbox, Fiat disc wheels and hub caps, and even Fiat instruments. The body, although a one-off built by Scaglietti, to a Pininfarina design had a passing resemblance to the Peugeot 404, Austin Farina, Lancia Flaminia, and the Ferrari 250 GT Pinin Farina Coupe of the period. History may have judged the style unkindly but the lines were clean and the style was popular at the time. It may be said that the style suited the larger Ferrari or Lancia better than the smaller cars, which tended to look rather chunky. The prototype had wide doors with swivelling quarter-lights and there was an open, airy appearance to the driving compartment. The paintwork was in blue and it carried no Ferrari badges but had a curious emblem in the middle of the grille: a rectangle surrounding a machine gun. Some said this was due to the unusual note of the highly tuned little motor and the car became affectionately known around the factory as the “mitra”, the Italian word for machine gun. Others said the badge was an attempt by Ferrari to interest an Italian armaments manufacturer to build the car under licence. The bonnet had a flat wide air scoop towards the front and a small star badge for which no explanation has been given.

The reasons behind the decision to build the various engines and the prototype have never been clearly explained. The production of an entry level “Ferrari” is one possibility. Against this is a consciousness that the quality and performance of the larger cars should not be allowed to be diminished by a “cheaper”, quantity model. This resulted in the prototype, the motor and all press releases labelling the car as anything but a Ferrari. The early stress on the concept as a road car contradicts any intention to take on Abarth, Lancia, and others in the smaller capacity competition events. *Road and Track*, in an article by Ray Thursby, put forward the theory from a one-time member of Ferrari’s staff that pressure may even have come from the Italian Government to produce a small car. Whilst the financial benefits are tenuous, Stanley Nowak, writing in *Cavallino* in January 1979 notes “Rumours of full scale production by Ferrari were widely voiced and a large scale production facility at Bologna was apparently given serious consideration. At some point in 1960 it was decided that Ferrari themselves would not build the car but would continue the design of a complete car to be offered for sale to be built under licence.” Although purely speculative, it is possible that Ferrari saw benefits in selling the production rights, some form of royalty, and even sub-contract work to the new purchaser. Speculation of the proposed sale was confirmed by the German journalist Gunter Molter who was given a privileged run in the prototype in October 1960 and reported in *Autosport* “It is to be hoped that Ferrari will be able to find a manufacturer who can produce a series of more than 3000 cars a year, then he will be able to produce it for a reasonable price.” At about the same time Bernard Cahier wrote in *Autocar* “Ferrari explained... his 850cc prototype will be sold after proper testing and demonstration to

Notes from various sources

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a firm which will produce and market it". The estimated selling price for a production of 3000 to 5000 cars per year was \$2600. *Automobile Year* gave the venture little chance of success reporting "it is right outside the tradition of Ferrari road cars and enters a field well covered by specialists like Abarth.... apart from the sale of a few hundred as competition machines it is difficult to see a commercial future for an expensive car with such a small engine"

Development continued and Enzo Ferrari used the prototype himself as personal transport for a time. At some stage it was fitted with disc brakes and the Fiat gearbox was replaced by one of English manufacture. Whilst the press may have lacked enthusiasm for the body they were generally more enthusiastic about the performance. Gunter Molter wrote that "the driving characteristics are similar to a first class sports car.... and that riding comfort is better than on much bigger cars." He was able to record 0-140kph in about 30 seconds and a top speed of 160 kph. Innes Ireland who was once given a ride by Ferrari himself found "it an extremely fast little machine" and assumed it carried a 1500cc engine. On the other hand, perhaps with one of the smaller prototype engines fitted, Enzo Ferrari is said to have complained of lack of torque in the hills after taking the French designer Amadee Gordini for a ride. Certainly towards the end of 1960 a larger engine, given Type Number 173, was designed having bore and stroke of 69mm x 69mm, a capacity of 1032cc, and a compression ratio of 9:1. As tested this remarkable little engine put out 100 bhp at 7200 rpm when fitted with two 38DCOA Weber carburettors.

In keeping with Ferrari's commitment, developments to the design continued. Rumours began to circulate that a special tubular chassis similar to that used on the 250's had been built to accommodate the 1032cc engine and that Bertone was making a body for it. This was some time before the 1961 Turin motor show. Several companies were even rumoured as prospective buyers and manufacturers of the car.

If the body of the prototype had failed to impress, the appearance of a new car simply called the "Mille" at the October 1960 Turin Motor Show certainly turned some heads. Designed by young stylist Giorgetto Giugiaro and shown on the stand of Carrozzeria Bertone as a "Coachwork study for a car of medium cylinder capacity", the sleek two-seater berlinetta had the unmistakable look of a pure Ferrari from the centre lock wheels right down to a nostril nose similar to the racing cars of that period. The lines of the car were said to be influenced by a special one-off Ferrari 250GT built by Bertone at the same time. *Quattroroute* magazine in 1965 suggested the body of the Turin Show car was fibreglass. On a wheelbase of only 2200mm and sitting no more than 1200mm high it was, and remains, a classic design, tiny but precisely detailed, and to some the modern day equivalent of the Cisitalia. The interior provided comfortable accommodation for two and there was an adequate boot and a small parcel shelf behind the seats. The badge on the front was a simple Italian tri-colour with the word "Mille" across it and yet the car was well known to be Ferrari's latest prototype for a small car. Said to have the same dimensions for bore at 73mm and stroke at 58.8mm as the V-12 250 the capacity would thus have been 985cc. An output of 98 bhp at 6800 rpm was announced using a pair of Weber sidedraft carburettors with maximum torque of 80lb ft at 5200 rpm. The chassis had a remarkable similarity to the 250 GT and the suspension was a scaled down version of that on the latest competition cars. The independent front end consisted of A-arms and coil springs, and at the rear a live axle was supported by semi-elliptic leaf springs and

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located by parallel arms at each side. Telescopic shock absorbers were used on all wheels as were disc brakes. Upper and lower ball joints on the front are similar to the bigger Ferraris. Better than the Ferraris of the period, there was rack and pinion steering. All work on the chassis is credited to Ing. Giotto Bizzarrini who went on to be responsible for the legendary GTO programme.

Despite the impression made and Ferrari's enthusiasm, the "Mille" still failed to find a buyer. *Autocar* reported in November 1961, "it is obvious that the present Ferrari organization, although it is very self contained, could not be expanded to such a level without a great deal more finance" to build the cars at the rate approaching the 100 cars a week discussed. This seems a justified statement in view of the fact that Ferrari's production in 1961 was only 441 cars and his total production of all road cars up to that time was only 1680 or one third of the predicted annual output for the "Mille". The fact that no buyer could be found apparently caused tension within Ferrari and may have been one of the factors leading to the famous "Palace Revolt" of 1962. Noted Ferrari Historian and motor racing writer, Hans Tanner, writing under the title "Italian Newsletter" in *Sports Car World* in April 1962 wrote: "The biggest motor racing news item to recently make headlines in Italy was the fact that eight of Ferrari's top men left the SEFAC company. The men affected were the Commercial Director Gardini, Chief Accountant Della Cassa, Racing Manager Tavoni, Chief Racing Designer Chiti, Chief Tester Bizzarrini, Foundry Manager Galazzi, Production Director Gilberti, and Personnel Manager Selmi..... it all arose after a falling out in public between Gardini and Ferrari, after which Gardini was asked not to set foot again on the Ferrari premises. The other seven resigned in support of Gardini. However, rumour here has it that there had been some friction between Gardini and Ferrari previously over the construction of the 1000cc Gran Turismo car which Ferrari apparently wants to build in a large series at the earliest opportunity. Gardini, however wanted to first set up complete service and spare parts facilities and there was apparently a great deal of disagreement over this."

The future of the car was in doubt through much of 1962 and it was not until the appearance of the car again under the new name of the "ASA 1000 GT" at the October 1962 Turin Show that the buyer and production was confirmed. The buyer turned out to be not an established motor manufacturer but a new company to be known as ASA, Autoconstruzioni Societa per Azioni, which had been set up as part of the huge de Nora electro-chemical company of Milan. Heading the new firm of ASA was Nicolo de Nora, then 33 years old. Joining him in the operation were racing drivers Gerino Gerini from Maserati, and Ferrari drivers Lorenzo Bandini, and Giancarlo Baghetti. Ing. Giotto Bizzarini also briefly joined ASA. Despite the timing of the announcement the new venture was officially set up some months earlier on 5th April 1962, and was to be located at Via San Faustino 65, Milano. Unlike Lamborghini, a new manufacturer that was building an entirely new factory and would become a direct competitor of Ferrari, ASA was to use an old mill building to manufacture their car, the ASA "1000 GT".

Ing. Romolo De Stefani was appointed Director in charge of production and the initial outflow of cars was predicted to be 20 per month stepping up to 30 per month before the end of 1964. When questioned by the press about the future racing activity of the company, Niccolo De Nora stated that it was enough for the moment that he had

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started to produce automobiles however it was rumoured at the time that organizers of the Targa Florio had already received an entry for an ASA.

II

THE ASA 1000 GT IN PRODUCTION

The body of the “ASA 1000 GT” had changed only slightly from the “Mille”, losing the cowled headlights in favour of conventional ones and receiving changes to the instrument panel and the seats. Bertone was given the job of producing the bodies, which were to be all steel except for the aluminium bonnet and boot. The triangular ASA badge was featured on the bonnet, a flat chrome badge with the words “ASA 1000GT” was fixed to the bootlid and small flat badges “Designe di Bertone” sat each side below the vents in the front wings. The Bertone shield with two arrows through it that appeared on the sides adjacent to the closing edge of the doors on the “Mille” is shown on some of the early ASA 1000 GT catalogues but does not seem to have been regularly used on the production cars.

On the production cars the leaf springs at the rear were replaced by coils and the rear axle was now located transversely by a Watts linkage as well as the previous fore and aft location by longitudinal parallel arms. An anti roll bar was now fitted at the front. The brakes were reported in *Autocar* as servo assisted and an engine bay photo at the time seems to confirm this although it is doubtful that this was followed through to production. A servo does not appear in the parts book or on the later cars.

On the ASA 1000 GT the engine was again changed, to a capacity of 1032cc with the bore and stroke equal at 69mm. The compression ratio was 9.1:1. With two 40DCOE9 dual throat Weber carburettors *Autocar* reported the power output was now 95.6 bhp at 7000. In fact the sales brochures for the new model claimed only 91 hp SAE at 6800 rpm. Maximum torque was 79 lb ft. at 6000 rpm. ASA motors were given the numbering system 173/** and engine numbers were known to range from 29 to 313, not necessarily in sequence with the chassis number. The engine numbers may not have been continuous either. Only odd numbers were used. The black crackle finished cam cover now had “ASA” cast into it rather than “854” on the prototypes. The four speed Sunbeam gearbox was fitted with a Laycock de Normanville electric overdrive operating on third and top gears. The choice of a Sunbeam gearbox is curious and may have been in the interest of economy. Gear ratios were:-

First.....	3.55
Second.....	2.14
Third.....	1.39
Fourth.....	1.0
Overdrive.....	0.8
Reverse.....	4.24

The rear axle was also brought in and was of Salisbury manufacture as used on the Morgan 4/4, Daimler SP 250, and later on the Lotus Elan although it was modified for the ASA suspension mounts, disc brakes, and splined hubs. The differential cover was cast in aluminium by ASA to accommodate the Watts linkage. The rear axle ratio was 4.55:1. A tubular prop shaft with rubber doughnut drive to the rear axle was used. The

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wheel splines were Rudge 32mm as used on the 275 GTB and 330GTC Ferraris although the splined section is some 15mm shorter so that the Ferrari wheels will slide on but the centrelock cap will not screw on. On the ASA a neat miniature three eared Borrani cap was fitted. The caps of course are not interchangeable from side to side as all unscrew by hitting in the forward direction of travel. The wheels are variously described as Borrani discs and light alloy. In fact most were extremely heavy 13-inch slotted steel discs, 4-inches wide on the Coupe and 4.5-inches wide on the Spyder, with the splined centres rivetted and also fully welded in place. Some had aluminium rims and one competition car had wire wheels.

If the appearance and the performance of the motor whispered “pure Ferrari” to the observer the specification backed it up in every way. There was nothing particularly novel in the design of the engine but the Silumin block with pressed in cast iron liners, the three bearing crankshaft, the connecting rods, combustion chambers and valve gear all had an undeniable Ferrari resemblance. There was a simple stamped steel sump that sat behind the front chassis cross member and carried 4.5 litres of oil; the handbook recommending Shell 100 SAE 40 in Summer and SAE 30 in Winter. After the running in period oil changes at 2500 mile intervals were specified. The ancillary equipment included a Peugeot electro-magnetic fan, Marelli generator of 300W/25 amp capacity, Marelli starter and distributor. A 42Ah battery was located at the rear right hand side of the engine compartment not ideally situated above the exhaust headers. The cam cover was crackle black finished and even had the ignition leads contained in a tapered tube like the “real” Ferraris.

The exhaust system had a set of free flowing headers and then a combination of parallel pipes with no less than six mufflers shown in the parts book! Parallel small bore pipes exited at the rear with a twist to the right hand side of the car. The exhausts were nicely finished with SNAP tips, similar to, but much smaller than the 250 GTO Ferrari.

The all up weight of the Coupe was 780kg.

Bernard Cahier appears to have been the first Journalist to drive the ASA and in *The Autocar* of 16th November 1962 he reported favourably on the performance, finish and comfort. He found “it is an exciting machine from any angle.... its performance is remarkable for a 1-litre”. As tested the ASA went from 0 to 100 kph in 14 seconds and covered the quarter mile in 19.3 seconds. He also recorded “that the ASA people intend their engine can be used for racing; and at this moment two well known engineers have started the design of a new racing sports car using an ASA engine brought down to just under 1-litre.” *Autocar* took figures using the car’s own speedometer and not in the stringent conditions of their normal test. Henry Manney III of *Road and Track* also took a test run with Bandini and commented favourably on the car’s finish and luggage space but it was not until July 1965 that *Quattroroute* published a full road test.

Quattroroute recorded the following performance figures :-

Maximum speed185kph
Acceleration 0-60kph...5.3 sec
0- 100kph...13.0 sec
0-140kph.....29.4 sec

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Fuel consumption 8.4 litres/100km at 100kph in overdrive
12.3 litres/100km at 140kph in overdrive
Normal consumption 10-12 litres/100km.
Braking..60kph to stop 16.2 m
100kph to stop 53.3m
160kph to stop 150.8m

Those who reported on the car were all impressed with the size, the finish and the standard of fittings provided in the driving compartment. Comparisons were made favourably to the 250 Lusso Ferrari and rightly so. The seats were comfortably shaped and well upholstered and whilst these days they may be criticised as having little side support they were typical of better seats of the period. A full width storage shelf was provided behind the seats so accommodation was strictly for two. Headroom and legroom was excellent for a wide range of drivers and a straight arm driving position could be found where everything fell readily to hand. Only left hand drive cars were built. The hand brake sat alongside the transmission tunnel by the driver's leg. A short straight gear lever sat alongside the wood rimmed competition type steering wheel. The boss and centre of the wheel were typical Ferrari practice and instead of the prancing horse a blue, red and gold ASA badge sat proudly on the horn button. Behind the steering wheel a very full set of black faced Jaeger instruments were set on a simple crackle black dashboard. Central to the instruments were the large matching 220kph speedometer and 7000rpm tachometer both having the ASA badge on the face. These were flanked by a clock, petrol gauge, oil pressure, oil temperature and water temperature gauges. Ignition and turning indicator warning lights were alongside the ignition key on the left of the steering column and a row switches sat along the lower edge of the dashboard to the right of the steering column. Levers to control the choke, the heater, and the ventilation system are below the steering column and a turning indicator switch was mounted on the left hand side of the steering column and complemented on the right hand side by another to operate the overdrive. These lever type switches were the same as those used on the Ferrari 250 GT and many of the Lancias of the period. A cigarette lighter, ash tray and lockable glovebox were all provided and the whole of the interior was lined and carpeted to the highest standard. In the boot a 13 gallon aluminium petrol tank sat to the right and the spare wheel to the left. These were covered by a flat floor. The boot was lined and carpeted and sales catalogue photo shows five suitcases alongside ready to go in. For a small car it was certainly remarkable.

The handbook gave warm-up and driving instructions similar to other high performance cars with a stern warning "crankshafts will easily break at not much over 7000 rpm" but on the lighter side and in typical Italian fashion it said "as long as the oil temperature has not reached 60 degrees, keep going!"

The delays that plagued the development of the car continued into production, which must have been disastrous for the cashflow and prestige of the new company, and it was late in 1964 before the first cars were ready for sale. The list price was 2,520,000 Lire. Metallic paintwork was a further 95,000 Lire, leather interior 65,000 Lire, and electric window lifts a further 70,000 Lire. In the USA the List price was hard to determine and actual prices achieved ranged from a high \$6200 to discounted prices as low as \$1500 as they became harder to sell. Chinetti seemed willing to pass them on to other dealers at \$4920.

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Standard colours offered were white, light grey, dark grey, black, light green, dark green, silver, metallic blue, mid grey metallic, metallic green, metallic cherry, and sky blue metallic.

The total production of ASA 1000GT Coupes was quoted by *Automobile Quarterly* as 50-75 cars. Other sources including *Road and Track* and *Cavallino* suggest 100 to 120 cars. A recent study of the chassis numbers shows that cars in the range 01004 to 01264 were known to exist and as only odd numbers were used, and there is no reason to believe the chassis numbers were not continuous, then a total production of 130 is possible.

III

VARIATIONS ON THE THEME

Just as the prototype “Mille” and the ASA 1000 GT Coupe first appeared at the Turin Motor Show, the ASA Spyder made its debut at the 1963 show. Still no Coupes had been delivered to customers.

The Spyder had an attractive body that followed the lines of the Coupe closely, had the same wheelbase and dimensions, but surprisingly did not share the same chassis. The typical, although smaller oval Ferrari tubes of the coupe were replaced by a multi-tube backbone frame still designed by Bizzarini. The suspension components were the same but the wheels were slightly wider at 13x 4.5inches. The construction of the Spyder body also differed from the Coupe as it was entirely in fibreglass and was so light it could be lifted by two people. The body was made by Corbetta. The bumpers, trim and fittings generally followed those of the Coupe as did the whole of the interior. The neatly fitting hood seemed slightly lower than the Coupe when the two cars sat side by side and there was a large back window. The hood folded well into the area behind the seats when lowered and was covered by a half toneau. The Spyder was also shown in 1965 with a very attractive detachable hard top having thin rear pillars and large areas of glass. At least two were built.

Despite the appeal of the Spyder the price was the same as the Coupe and sales proved just as difficult. Chinetti took delivery of two cars in America and the second did not sell until 1969. *Road and Track* quoted the total production of Spyderys as 14 cars, other sources say as many as 23 were built. What-ever, the results must have been disappointing for such an attractive car.

In 1965 a new version of the Coupe was produced designated the “411 GT”. It featured an enlarged engine with the bore increased to 71mm giving a capacity of 1092cc. Depending on the state of tune, up to 104bhp at 7500 rpm was claimed with a top speed of 185kph. The 4-speed synchronized gearbox now had “overdrive” available on second, third and top gears and the catalogue listed a five-speed synchro box as optional. The suspension and chassis were unchanged, wheels are listed as 13-inch light alloy with 5-inch rims but appear in photos to be the same steel pattern as earlier. Pirelli 165x13 Cinturato tyres were fitted. The body was all aluminium with the dry weight reduced to 710 kg. The “411” was distinguishable by an air scoop in

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the bonnet, sloping headlights more like the 911 Porsche than the covered lights on the “Mille”, sliding perspex side windows in doors that had no swivelling quarter lights but were fully framed, a conical exterior driving mirror, and a racing style quick action filler cap set into the outside of the body above the area where the earlier cars had a hinged cover over the fuel filler. Some say a larger fuel tank was fitted. *Road and Track* quote production as up to 20 cars none of which were ever sold as new cars in USA. The 411GT was not distinguishable by any special chassis number and nor can it be assumed that all cars with sloping headlights were 411s.

A new model called the ASA Roll-Bar 1300 was introduced in late 1966 with a fibreglass targa style body sketched out by Luigi Chinetti Jr. The car strongly resembled the 1968 Corvette. It had a 1290 cc six cylinder engine with bore and stroke of 69mm x 57.5mm and a compression ratio of 9.2:1. The power was quoted as 124 bhp SAE. The engine was in Silumin with cast iron liners and the head design was similar to the four cylinder engines and of course the outside plug 250GT Ferraris. Three twin choke Solex carburettors were used. This motor was given prefix 130/**. The chassis was the same as the Spyder. A five-speed gearbox was used and the maximum speed was 200 kph. No acceleration figures were ever given. At least two cars were made and Chinetti imported one for the 1967 Sebring race where it was consigned to John Norwood and won its class. This car was never sold and has remained with the Chinetti family.

The final effort was the ASA Roll-Bar 1800 having a four-cylinder with bore and stroke of 90mm x 69mm, a capacity of 1755cc, and quoted as producing 150bhp SAE at 6000 rpm. This was optimistically promoted as the “motore USA”. All other features were the same as the Roll-Bar 1300. Perhaps no car was ever completed before production ceased.

Whilst these were the production cars from ASA, at least two very special other cars were built. The first was an aerodynamic version on a chassis and body produced by Bizzarrini and Piero Drogo in 1963 with competition in mind. The car was given chassis no 010 and was referred to as the “1000 GTC”. The body had a low front with rounded wings somewhat similar to the 250 GTO Ferrari, covered headlights, and an almost rectangular air intake. Two sloping cut out vents behind the front wheels were also similar to the GTO Ferrari. The windscreen had a broad sweeping curve to the lower edge but appears to have the same side rake and upper line as the production cars. The lower sweep had the effect of giving the windscreen much more rake. The roof line was much flatter. The line of the doors is similar to the production cars along the leading edge but the rear is steeply raked at an angle parallel to the windscreen pillars. The wide door window was fully framed and had sliding perspex panels without the opening quarter vents of the production cars. The rear wings behind the wheels also had a large vent. The tail was elongated compared to the production cars and featured a large wrap around glass area somewhat like a 924 Porsche. It appears that the back did not open and the spare wheel was visible lying horizontal below the glass. The tail was cut off almost vertically with a pair of lights one above the other on each side of a recessed panel unlike the production cars on which the lights were horizontal. No bumpers were fitted. There was a competition fuel filler on the right hand side towards the rear of the tail and the sporting appearance of the car was further enhanced by Borrani wire wheels. The car was said to weigh 590kg. To run in

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the 1000cc class, the motor capacity was reduced to 995cc by reducing the bore to 67.8mm. A five speed ZF gearbox was used and the car was capable of 200kph.

The second of the very special cars was a Formula 3 Chassis. This car was rumoured and denied by the factory on occasions but it was seen as a complete car in the 1980s, still owned at that stage by Flaviano Pisoni who bought the remaining parts and cars after the factory closed down.

IV

PRODUCTION END

The end for ASA came quietly in 1967 when production could no longer be maintained. The remaining cars and parts were purchased by Falviano Pisoni under a bankruptcy court order. This included several engines and a very large quantity of parts. Pisoni remained an enthusiastic ASA owner including racing the cars with some success. Although Pisoni is still alive the whereabouts of the parts is now unknown.

V

COMPETITION

Whilst Ferrari and De Nora both declared the ASA was to be a road car others within the ASA team certainly had competition in mind. An important step towards this was the homologation certificate issued by the Automobile Club D'Italia under the rules of the FIA. This was achieved on 1st June 1965. It is most interesting that the car is shown as having Chassis and Motor constructed by ASA but body constructed by Ellena. In all other respects the car appears the same as the production models except seats resembling those fitted in the Lamborghini Miura are shown when the car had been in production for some time with conventional seats. The Homologation Certificate consists of a detailed description and a number of photographs of the mechanical components of the car.

During the all too brief life of the ASA several competition appearances were made.

The first appearance was at the 49th Targa Florio in 1965 when two Coupes were entered in the "Classe Prototipo 0-2000cc" as Homologation had not yet been achieved. Both cars finished, completing nine tours of the famous circuit with credible results. Pianta and Bassi in car 162 were 17th overall and 7th in the class, and car 158 driven by Kim and Babbini was 22nd overall and 9th in the class. The next outing in 1965 was the Scalata colle Sant'Eusebio Hill Climb near Brescia when Dante Oliva driving an ASA 1000GT took first place in the class. Again an ASA 1000GT driven by Odoardo Donatalle and Bassi Giorgio was entered in the Rallye Jolly Hotels but the result is unknown.

In 1966 ASA showed ambition with three cars entered in the 50th Targa Florio run on 8th May; two "Works" ASA 411 Berlinettas and one "muletto" being fitted with an

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experimental 1800cc 4-cylinder engine. After 5 tours the Works car Number 216 driven by Dalla Torre and Dini could go no further and was abandoned, then on the next lap the race was over (“uscita di strada”!) for car No.202, the 1800cc Coupe driven by Pianta and Sir Ortenno. The final 411 Berlinetta, driven by the privateers Semilia and Pinto went on to finish 17th overall and 4th in the 0-2000cc class. Curiously, this car was photographed with No. 214 although in the published results the number 146 was given.

The debut of the so-called ASA1300 GTC built by Bizzarini and Drogo occurred at the well known Trento-Bondone Hill Climb also in 1966. The car carried competition number 92 but whether it ran and what the placing was remains unknown.

Three ASAs were entered at LeMans on 16th –18th June 1966. There seems to be confusion over the entry and the results. Car No.54 was entered by NART / Chinetti as a 1048cc Coupe. Car No 55 is variously described as a RB613 but appears in photos as a 411Berlinetta. Car No 61 was a 613 Roll Bar driven by Guinti. No car finished.

The final competition appearance was a 1300 Roll Bar driven to 25th overall and 7th in class at the 1967 Sebring 12-hour race. This car was Chassis No 21004.

