

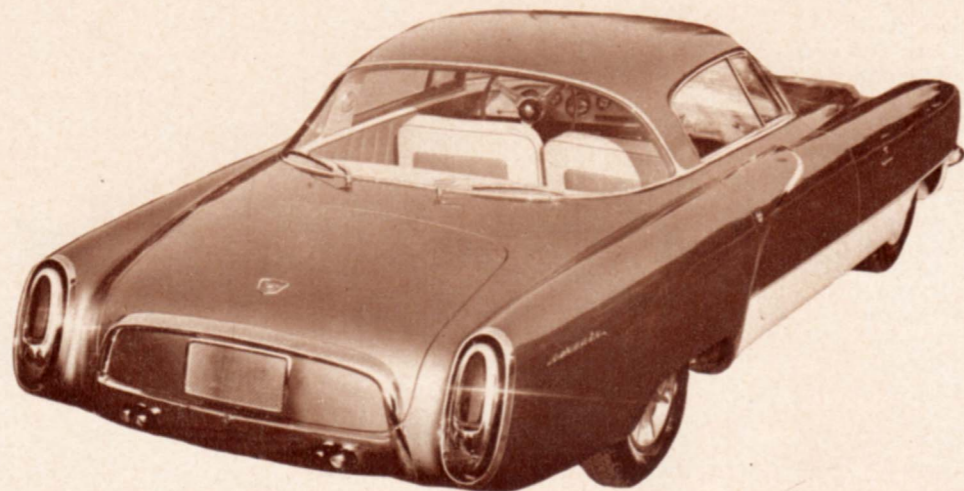
INTERVIEW  
WITH

# BOANO

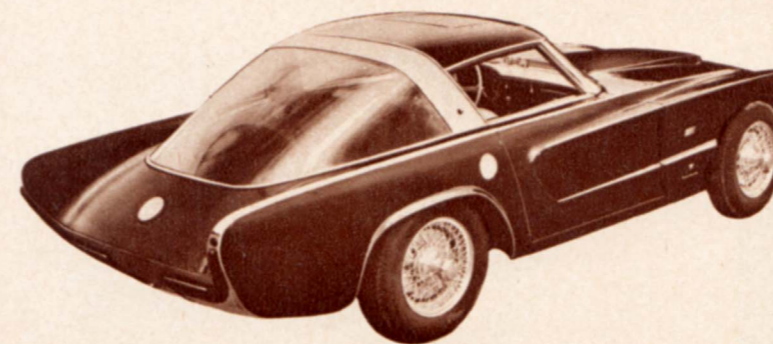
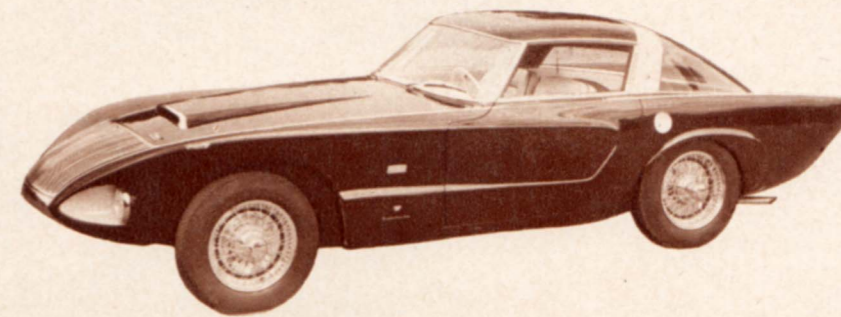
by Dal Corradini



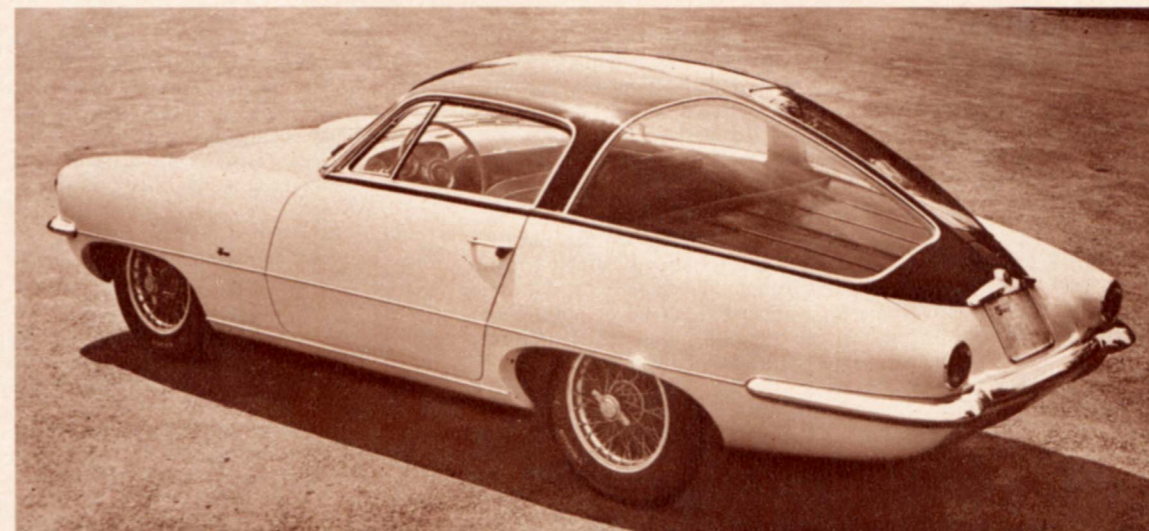
*This Chrysler-powered, 2-passenger coupe called the "Corsair" was well received at the Paris Show. It is built on a tubular Nardi lowered frame with functional air ducts to the front and rear brakes, four headlights (two are retractable) and four windshield wipers (two for the rear window).*



*Right: a design by Raymond Loewy executed by Boano on a Jaguar XK140 chassis. The body is of a light, strong alloy, Itallumag 35, but construction was difficult due to odd lines and abundant use of chromium moldings.*



*Left: body lines of the Loewy car are not highly aerodynamic even though the general appearance may give that impression. Below left: a 2-litre Alfa Romeo with Berlinetta coupe body similar to the one built for Peron of Argentina.*



WHEN Mr. Boano visited Detroit this last summer, as he usually does every year, the writer had occasion to meet him personally and to request an exclusive interview, which was graciously granted. The conversation took place on a very informal basis and, of course, in Italian.

One of the first questions the writer asked Mr. Boano was about automobile style in general and evaluation of styling schools in particular. Mr. Boano's remarks were precise and up to the point, and this is a verbatim quotation of his viewpoints:

"There are several factors which determine a style, and not all of them are of an esthetic nature or pertain to style itself. In the case of big automobile companies (American firms especially), which must consider complete model changes every 3 or 4 years and annual "face-lifting" changes of their models, there are basic problems to be considered such as, cost, dies, production sched-

ules, etc. These frequent changes, which are usually due to market conditions and competition by other firms, do not always create conditions under which esthetics and good taste may prevail.

After this necessary premise, we must admit that the American automobile, which was originally derived from the European school, is today the basic inspiration of all auto makers throughout the world. In fact, it is already evident that the lines of the bodies, the main details, the colors, etc., are already becoming more and more "Americanized" according to the various possibilities and economic levels of other countries.

The American car made in a rich country and most of all for a rich country, is generous in dimensions and usually overpowered, offering considerable comfort and a variety of details and accessories, the weight of

which become irrelevant when compared with the power of the engine.

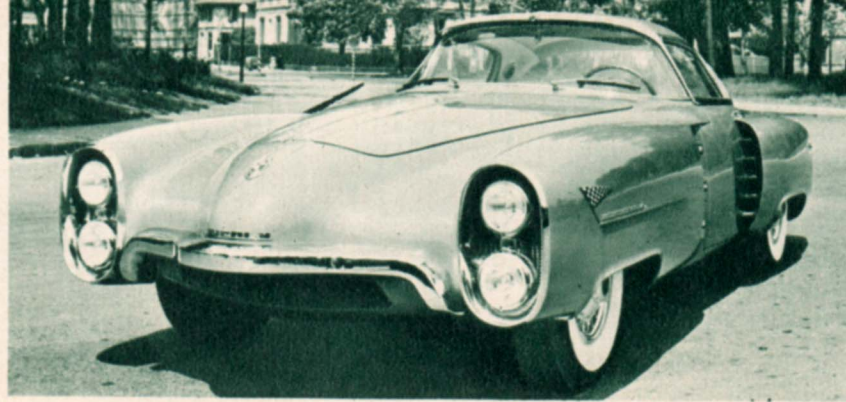
In Europe our manufacturers sometimes forget the issue of horsepower and try to imitate American cars with all the various accessories on very small chassis having even smaller engines and with inevitably mediocre results.

In other words what makes a car beautiful is actually the sense of proportion, the overall picture, the bright colors in the "Countries of the Sun," the modern but classic line for the traditional countries.

The Italian style is simplicity. The purity of the lines is emphasized more than the richness of the chromium. The Italian style is pivoted around the idea of light, simple and economical cars, which can last for a long time.

The French style is not well defined. The latest models of the big French cars were

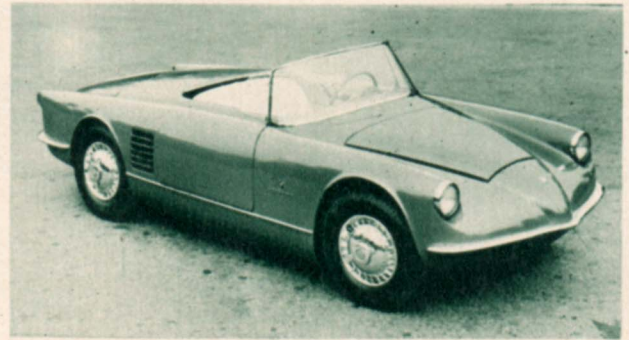
(Continued On Next Page)



*The "Indianapolis," built on a modified Lincoln chassis, has caused a good deal of comment — not entirely favorable.*



*Trim lines for a rear-engined roadster—Boano's "Torpedo".*



*The aluminum body hides a modified Fiat 600 engine.*

inspired by Italian lines. In fact, we can say that these models were copies from Italy. The body makers, the famous French body makers, sad as it may be to admit it, do not exist anymore from a productivity standpoint but vegetate on models which were built 10 years ago.

The Germans have a style of their own which I like to define "Teutonic Style"—rigid and massive although a slight improvement has been noticed on more recent models.

The British are leaving their classic conservatism and, as judged by the latest models introduced on the market, may almost be defined as "Mischievous." They have copied here and there a little from American and a little from Italian style. In doing so they have created a "Non-Style" which I personally define "disheartening". The American trend toward special bodies is sometimes atrocious. There are some aeronautical inspirations with space-ship lines of a "science fiction" nature, which are created for show and nothing else.

The only American cars with something special in their style have come out of the hands of Exner and his colleagues at Chrysler Corporation. I will also add, with all modesty, that I personally contributed to this effort. These models can be considered the seeds of tomorrow and are not awkward looking or non-functional. They are, most of all, logical.

The American designers should, according to my viewpoint, invert their ways starting with the simple, very simple things first and by designing straight lines, light to the eyes. This would possibly create new enthusiasm among the public. At this point, I am thinking, as an example, of the super-intelligent and super-modern American tourist who comes to Italy and to the Isle of Capri and is deeply moved by the sight of a straw hat, hand woven for three cents according to a pattern which is a thousand years old. In other words, originality should be associated

with simplicity and modern taste because it must be admitted that the motorist can dominate his vehicle if it is simple and will become its victim if it is too complicated."

Mr. Boano was born in Italy, 1903, and as a young schoolboy he developed a special interest for art in general and sculpture in particular.

In fact, after finishing his Intermediate schools he started working with a bronze-sculptor friend of his father. At the same time he continued to attend evening classes at the San Carlo Institute taking drawing, bas-relief work and practical sculpture.

At that time the automobile was already gaining momentum in Italy and the names of Fiat, Lancia, Spa, Geirano were already acquiring fame throughout Europe; the trend of body-making acquired importance, and from the old wagon-making activity several automobile body-makers became well established.

Boano became very interested in automobiles and, in fact, as soon as he left school he started working with the Farina Co. as assistant body designer. In a few months he became designer and, soon after, supervisor of all draftsmen. At the same time he was appointed instructor at the Turin school of body-making. A few years after the beginning of his career in the auto designing field, Boano was appointed chief designer of the Farina Co. Almost all the European makes of the time were being "dressed" by the Farina Co., while the American companies were represented by Marmon, LaSalle, Cord, Auburn and Cadillac.

The Farina Company which is no longer in existence, was formed at the time by three Farina Brothers. One of them, Pinin, who had been the organizer of the firm, in 1930 had some disagreements with his brothers and decided to form his own company. Boano, of course, was invited to join him as Chief Designer, and he gladly accepted.

In 1934, Boano decided to try his own hand in business, and, with Pinin Farina's permission, he founded the F. M. Boano Company, a highly specialized firm in the construction of automobile body wooden frames. Among his best customers he soon listed, Pinin Farina, Ghia, Viotti, Castagna, and Bertone.

During this period Boano designed and built the best automobile bodies made in Italy for almost all the illustrious personages throughout the world. During one of the Milan shows, Mr. Bertone who is considered the father of the Italian body-makers, remarked "This is not a body-maker's show; it is Boano's show."

The second world war came to interrupt everybody's good work and to reduce the art of body-making to a few vehicles designed for the Army.

In 1943 Ghia died, and Boano was invited by his heirs to continue the name and tradition of this successful company.

But in 1952 Boano decided to leave Ghia in the hands of one of his ex-partners and re-established his own company under his own name.

The rebuilt Boano body-making company is now still expanding, and, in fact, it has already established a "Special Production Section" where body-making has been standardized to a semi-mass production for local manufacturers who still want to add a special touch to their standard units.

Boano's facilities are on the up-swing, and a new building is already under construction to be finished next summer. It seems that the "Magician of the auto bodies," as Boano is called in Italy, is really going to outshine all the other well-known European names in his field. Among his most distinguished customers he now lists Chrysler Corporation, Fiat, Mr. Raymond Loewy, Alfa Romeo and Simca, and his work was one of the outstanding attractions of the recent Paris show. ●