



## MUSEO NAZIONALE DELL'AUTOMOBILE DI TORINO: BETWEEN HISTORY AND INNOVATION

*30 new areas to tell the story of a symbol:  
from a means of transport to a cult object*

The story of automobiles is not only the story of a means of transport, but the events and the chronicles of nations are also narrated through it; the great events of Europe in the XX century and above all the transformations of society and of culture.

What would Futurism be without its symbol of progress and modernity? The manifesto of movement states that "A roaring car that seems to ride on grapeshot is more beautiful than the Victory of Samothrace". How can we fail to consider the increase of the diffusion of the internal combustion engine, which took place during the First World War? And can we ignore the Volkswagen van which became the universal symbol of freedom and unconventionality of "hippies" in the 60s and 70s?

The lasting connection between the story of automobiles and the story of our society and culture is represented by Torino's Museo Nazionale dell'Automobile through **30 sections that cover over 9,000 square metres. These are broken down into** a room repartition that precisely define different topics and specific historical periods. This provides visitors with a clear narrative itinerary, expressed by titles and settings, from the origins to nowadays.

The journey starts on the second floor by the **GENESI (Genesis)** section; a homage to all the forerunners who, during the last five centuries, have been looking for a way to move and carry things and people without the help of animals. On the shelves of the great Genesis library, visitors can see some early works preceding the real invention, which made the creation of cars –occurring at the end of the XIX century – possible. These vehicles include a reconstruction of the self-propelled cart first thought of by Leonardo Da Vinci in 1478, and the reconstruction of the steam cart by the French inventor Nicolas Cugnot; the first automobile vehicle in history dating back to 1769.

The scene moves to the XIX century industrial revolution and to steam engine in the **I CAVALLI DIVENTANO FANTASMI (Horses become ghosts)** section. Here the carriages belonging to the XVIII and XIX century are exhibited, which created a strong communication network among the most important European cities and inside the States. An example of this is the steam carriage built in Torino in 1854 by Virginio Bordino.

It is quite clear that the shape of the carriages could not match the speed, becoming the myth of the incoming century. In the **A TUTTA VELOCITÀ (At full speed)** section, the new shapes facing this new need are presented: for example the torpedo, which reached an incredible speed of over 100 km per hour, marked by the record of the *Jamais Contente* on April 29 1899. Speed starts to be part of life, as the concept of space, time, distance changes, the relationships between people, exchanges, trading activities. The exhibited car is the reconstruction of the *Jamais Contente*, created by the Belgian Camille Jenatzy, with an electric engine. It was the first vehicle to overcome the wall sound of 100 km per hour (04.29.1899, 105 km/h).

In the **IL GRANDE GARAGE DEL FUTURO (The big garage of the future)** section the location is a big garage from the beginning of the XX century, maybe in Torino, maybe in Germany, France or England. Skilled workers, sophisticated craftsmen, brilliant designers, mechanics, drivers, test drivers and entrepreneurs work side by side on the object embodying future, progress, and innovation: the car. At the bottom of the room there is a lab, "the magician's workshop" with drawings, design, tools, parts, sketches. A great number of cars are the main focus of this section: the 1893 *Benz Victoria*, the 1892 *Peugeot Type 3*, the first car bought in Italy; the 1896 *Bernardi 3,5 HP*, the first three wheel car entirely produced in Italy; the 1899 *Benz Break*, a taxicab almost ahead of its time; the 1903 *De Dion & Bouton 8 HP*; the 1899 *Panhard Levassor B1*; the 1899 *Renault 3,5 HP*; the 1901 *Ceirano*; the 1902 *Darracq 5HP*; the 1903 *Florentia* 1903, the only existing sample of this brand; the 1904 *Oldsmobile Curved Dash*, the first featured economy car;

the 1899 *Fiat 4 HP*, the first model of Torino's manufacturing company; the 1901 *Fiat 8 HP* racing in the first Tour of Italy; the 1902 *Fiat 12/16 HP*, the first Fiat car to be exported, the 1903 *Fiat 16/20 HP* (touring).

In **FERVORE MECCANICO DEL NOVECENTO (The XX century mechanic heat)** the big colourful image on the background recalls the works of Futurism, the revolutionary artistic and cultural movement born in Italy at the beginning of the XX century. The symbols of this movement, leaning forward to the future and modern times are automobiles, airplanes, motorbikes, the thrill of speed and the love for risk and hazard. It is one of the rare moments combining art and industry. The exhibited cars are the 1905 *Fiat 24/32 HP*, the 1906 *Fiat 24/40 HP*; the 1912 *Fiat Zero*, the father of Torino's economy cars; the 1908 *Brixia Züst 10 HP*; the 1909 electric *Stae*, the 1908 *Legnano*; the 1907 *De Dion Bouton BG*; the 1908 *Fiat landaulet 18/24 HP* owned by Count Biscaretti; the reconstruction of the scale model of the 1914 *Alfa Romeo Ricotti*.

The challenge for never attempted enterprises, which became prevalent in those years (in 1901 Guglielmo Marconi carried out his experiments on the radio waves and sent a letter in Morse alphabet through the Atlantic Ocean, whereas in 1903 the Wright brothers made their first flight); these make up the topics of the **FINO AL CENTRO DEL MONDO (Up to the centre of the world)** section. Automobiles are the means of reference for impossible actions: in 1907 the idea of a race through Asia and Europe was launched, from Beijing to Paris, in areas where neither roads nor supplies were available. A modern Marco Polo, the Italian Itala won over the other cars, on a 60 day journey. The Italian car manufacturing industry celebrated this event as a success. The 1907 *Itala Beijing-Paris* is the main car in this section.

In that period, automobiles became not only objects for experiments, but also a synonym of luxury and therefore valuable items, desirable products. The **IL LUSO DELL'AUTO (The luxury of cars)** section presents those vehicles that were considered as "travelling sitting-rooms" used by aristocratic and royal families as showcases of their power and ostentation. Ostentation was also used for car "shopping windows", the first Motor Shows, organized in Paris, London, Torino, Milan and other important European cities. The exhibited cars here are the 1909 *Isotta Fraschini AN 20-30 HP*, the 1913 *Delage AB-8* and the 1909 *Itala* 1909 owned by the Queen Regina Margherita who used to name it "Palombella".

**LA GUERRA SCOMBINA LE CARTE (War messes up cards)**: the war is a mirror of the historical events of an age and a reference in history. Research about automobiles received a new development during the First World War. Car production for civil use dramatically dropped, but at the same time the internal combustion engine appeared and the first motorized troops materialized. The style of war was transformed, adding technology to the strength of the States. This section exhibits two cars: the 1910 *Renault AG- Fiacre Paris*, the taxi taking French soldiers to the front on the Marna, thus saving Paris from the German invasion, and the 1911 *Fiat 4*, used in the military version by the Italian Army.

**I FOLLI ANNI VENTI E TRENTA (the roaring twenties and thirties)** tells the story of post war life and the spreading taste for modernity. Charleston dancing and jazz started to be popular, the Art Nouveau style gave way to Art Déco and ladies became involved in sectors which were traditionally reserved to men, such as the air force and motor racing. The exhibited cars are the 1914 *Rolls Royce 40-50 Hp*; the 1920 *Isotta Fraschini 8* and the 1929 *8A* (a model of this car was even bought by Rodolfo Valentino); the 1922 *Spa 23 S*; the 1928 *Diatto 30*; the 1922 *Citroen C3*, called "citron" for its bright colour.

In the 40s, the design of series automobiles was helped for the very first time by a science that, up until then, was only used by aeronautics: **AERODINAMICA (aerodynamics)**, being the name of this section. Thanks to this science, performances and road holding developed and the line became revolutionized as the models, designed by the aeronautic engineer Gabriel Voisin, were almost "flying" along the city skyline. The 1948 *Lancia Aprilia*, one of Vincenzo Lancia's masterpieces, is exhibited here.

The years between 1920 and 1930 have also been characterized by big social, financial and political changes, involving not only Europe but the whole world: **TUTTO CAMBIA (Everything changes)** is dedicated to the 1929 financial crisis, to the arrival of European totalitarian regimes and to the imminent outbreak of the Second World War, in which new faces and new cars were introduced. The 1936 *Mercedes Benz 500 K*, a classic model of Nazi party leaders; the 1932 *Fiat 508 "Balilla"*, the 1932 *Austin Seven*, one of the very first economy cars; the 1937 *Packard Super-Eight 150*, one of the last traces of a disappearing world; the 1934 *Citroen Traction Avant*, a revolutionary car; the 1936 *Fiat 500*, the world's smallest car ever built in large series; the 1941 *Ford Jeep*, the "General Purpose" created in the US for military purposes.

In the 50s, Italy showed its huge creative ability to design and reconstruct the nation. The Italian car industry developed thanks to entrepreneurs, engineers, designers and mechanics that started from scratch. The Italian car makers industry experienced one of its most fertile periods, teaching automobile design to the world: this was a real **RIVOLUZIONE ITALIANA (Italian Revolution)**, as the two exhibited cars prove: the 1948 *Cisitalia 202*, the century's "self-moving sculpture" and the 1954 *Fiat Turbina*, a test prototype provided with a gas turbine.

**RIVOLUZIONE FRANCESE (French Revolution)** is dominated by a car produced by the Citroen car manufacturing company, and still considered nowadays as a real masterpiece: the 1955 *Citroen DS 19 (Déesse)*, presented at the Paris Motor show and since then has always been remembered for its extraordinary characteristics, being at least ten-years ahead of its time. Its line, exalted by the fitting it was presented with at the 1957 Triennale di Milano, was designed by the Italian Bertoni.

In Italy **GLI ANNI DELLA RIPRESA (Booming years)** saw some welfare hints appearing in families. Fiat 600 was the first real Italian economy car to become accessible to a larger part of the population: it was the Italian Ford T forty years later. The first "August exodus" was born, which meant mass migrations towards beaches during the hottest weeks of summer. This was also the period of the *Giulietta Sprint*, an exclusive car and symbol of the beautiful Italian design. Exhibited here is the 1955 *Fiat Multipla* revisited by the IDEA Institute, and the 1954 *Alfa Romeo Giulietta Sprint*, one of the most representative models of the style and Italian car engineering of the 50s.

**DAVIDE E GOLIA (David and Goliath)** represent the dualism between the European and the American style, a "love-hate" relationship involving all sectors of social life, from cinema to cuisine and from literature to music, which is still evident nowadays. If the American taste prefers cars with a baroque and super charged design with extremely high consumption rates suitable for huge parking lots, Europe produced cars designed for affordable costs and low consumption rates, letting people who were tired after five years of war, start their life from fresh. No sharper contrast could be seen between American and European design at the end of the 50s, as shown by the exhibited cars. This section shows amazing contradictions and differences, the 1947 *Cadillac 62*, one of the flagship models of American manufacturing companies, the 1958 "micro car" *Acma Vespa 400*, designed by Piaggio and produced in France, and the reconstructions of the *Cadillac Eldorado* and *Chevrolet Impala*.

**ARRIVA LA FELICITÀ (Happiness is coming):** two shopping windows, inspired by those of the renowned chain of Department Stores "La Rinascente", display the items that in the "financial boom" years (1958-1963) finally became within the reach of many people, if not everybody's. The first household equipment, such as washing machines and fridges, arrived in people's homes, TV spread, advertising became an integral part of people's life and the Polaroid camera reached the height of its popularity. The 1958 *Fiat 1900 GL*, the 1955 *Fiat 600* and the 1957 *Fiat 500*, the two economy cars which were symbols of Torino's manufacturing company; the 1959 *Mini Morris* by the extraordinary designer Issigonis and the 1969 *Jaguar E* type, an icon of luxury.

In the **I GIOVANI ALLA CONQUISTA DEL MONDO (Young people conquering the world)** section, the years of student demonstrations are narrated: the hippies, Citroen 2 CV and Volkswagen van, universal synonyms of adventure and non conformism. These were the symbols of a generation of young people who in the 60s left to conquer a world which was ideologically, socially and culturally different from that of the adults. Exhibited here are the 1948 *Citroen 2 CV* and the *Volkswagen Transporter Bulli van* dating back to 1949.

The oil crisis at the beginning of the 70s was faced in Italy by the Energy saving policy known as "austerity", leading to a serious energy solution. Its consequences were felt on sectors such as the large-scale retail trade, and industries related to car manufacturing, tourism and show business. Despite this fact **NUOVE TENDENZE IN EUROPA E NEL MONDO (New trends in Europe and in the world)** came to the surface; in Italy, luxury cars were still on the stage. Those years produced the 1980 *Ferrari 308 GTB Carburatori* by Pininfarina, the 1972 *Iso Rivolta Lele F*, designed by Bertone and the *NSU R0 80*, with rotating pistons Wankel engine.

In the **GOODBYE LENIN** section, we find ourselves by the famous Check Point Charlie; connecting East to West Berlin, which in the years of the Wall separated the Western world from the Soviet regimes. On one side are small cars such as the Trabant and Syrena, two small old fashioned Eastern produced economy cars, and on the other side is one of the gems of Western capitalism, the red Ferrari. The Berlin Wall fell on November 9 1989, finally re-unifying the German capital. Presented here are the 1973 *Ferrari 365 GT4*, the 1987 *Trabant 601*, a symbolic car of East Berlin and the 1973 *Syrena L 105*, with a 3-cylinder engine.

The world of the 90s was overwhelmed by a deep cultural revolution: these years produced **GLOBALIZZAZIONE (Globalization)**, the cancellation of both financial and market-based borders, where the internal crisis of a country could trigger disastrous consequences for the whole world economy. These years also saw a "return to nature", an interest in the environment and the protection of the planet. Society became divided: on the one hand it is an obscure and dark world made of oil, traffic, pollution and deterioration, on the other, it is a bright world, where energy is produced by renewable energy sources and our lifestyle is compatible with the issue of environmental protection. **DESTINO (Destiny)**, the last section on the second floor, shows automobiles as a symbol of this contradiction, embodying the role of both the problem and the solution: on one side, being the cause of pollution, and on the other being a concrete response to the increasingly strong need for the safeguard of nature, by researching and applying environmentally friendly solutions. Exhibited here are the 1987 *Phoenix II electro solar* and the 2000 *Fiat Ecobasic*.

In **AUTORINO**, visitors are led down to the first floor where they can view over 70 car companies born in Piedmont's capital city during the whole XX century: over 80 car designers working in the sector and, the area of excellent design and project groups (such as the Politecnico, the IAAD – Istituto d'Arte Applicata and Design and the IED – Istituto Europeo di Design). In this section, the 1962 *Fiat 500*, the 1914 *Storero*, the 1926 *Scat-Ceirano 150S* 1926, the 1920 *Temperino*, the 1929 *Fiat 509* and the 1926 tiny *FOD* are exhibited.

**SINFONIA MECCANICA (Mechanical Symphony)** is dedicated to the mechanical creation as a form of art expression, produced by human imagination and creativity. Just like in a great symphony this room contains the hidden parts of cars, engines, chassis and wheels, constituting its core, opposed to its bodywork, its outer clothes. The 1924 *Chiribiri's chassis*, the 1924 *San Giusto 750's chassis*, the 1924 *Lancia Lambda's chassis*, the 1928 *Alfa Romeo 6C 1500 Mille Miglia Speciale's chassis*, the 1935 *Fiat 1500*, 27 engines, 14 wheels and 7 tires.

The series production is explored in the **METAMORFOSI (Metamorphosis)** section: do men turn into robots or rather do robots acquire human attributes? The series' industrial production, for the very first time in the US, was experimented with in Ford workshops for the T manufacturing (15 million cars in 19 years). This is the XX century "engine", the process of the manufacturing and spreading of millions of equal objects all over the world at affordable prices. Representing this serial production, are the 1967 *Autobianchi Primula*, the 1969 *Fiat 850S*, the 1952 *Volkswagen Tipo 1*, the 1959 *Autobianchi Bianchina*, the 1916 *Ford T* and the 1958 *Lloyd Alexander TS*.

In **PUBBLICITÀ (Advertising)** all the devices along the walls, metal media totem, recall the concept of the "brain washing" that commercials are often accused of. In the contemporary industrial world, advertising communication is at the centre of all financial activities, and automobiles cannot be excluded from this; from the very beginning, cars needed advertising as much as any other complex industrial objects. Although invasive and incessant, it is unavoidable.

An excessive, grotesque and exaggerated love for cars stands at the centre of the **FOLLIA (Folly)** section: as with every other passion, the one for cars can turn into an obsession, in the heads of the people living in this "house", as well as in the surrounding furnishings.

Next is the **GIUNGLA (Jungle)** of road signs that cars have to follow in our streets; simulacra of the infinite bans and of the necessary rules to follow when both driving and living. Displayed here are the 1986 *Lancia Delta Integrale* and the 1995 *Fiat 500 Sporting Kit*, which practically used roads as a racing circuit.

**FORMULA** enhances the myth of speed, a great contemporary concept. Similar to a stampede of horses, all the racing cars of the collection, from any period, are gathered together to race towards the finish line,

under the visitors' eyes. On the other side of the track, there is a reconstruction of four racing boxes belonging to four different periods. "Whizzing past" on the Automobile Museum track, are the 1907 *Fiat F2 130 HP*, the 1914 *Fiat S 57/14 B*, the 1912 *Aquila Italiana 25/30 HP*, the 1925 *Itala 11*, the 1928 *Maserati 26B*, the 1954 *Maserati 250 F*, the 1929 *Bugatti 35 B*, the 1930 *Alfa Romeo P2*, the 1951 *Alfa Romeo 159*, the 1981 *Alfa Romeo 179B*, the 1975 *Alfa Romeo 33 TT 12*, the 1996 *Alfa Romeo 155 V6TI*, the 1935 *Monaco Trossi*, the 1948 *Tarf*, the 1952 *Ferrari 500 F2*, the 1963 *Ferrari 156 F1*, the 1980 *Ferrari 312 T5*, the 1960 *Ferrari 246 F1*, the 1954 *Mercedes Benz RW196*, the 1955 *Lancia D50*, the 1955 *Nibbio 2*, the 1965 *Dragster*, the 1953 *Lancia D24*, the 1987 *Ferrari F40* and the last generation *F1 Ferrari*.

And finally comes **DESIGN**, the most representative word of the world of automobiles from this decade. It combines not only the definition of the outside characteristics of an object, but it also develops the functional, structural and aesthetic relationships that identify the industrial products. In the last few decades design technologically evolved, making Italy a breeding ground of ideas, talent and inspiration. In this section, located both on the ground floor and on the first floor, the exhibited items are the representation of the most astonishing products of contemporary design, as well as interviews with the most important designers of those days: the 1912 *Itala 25/35 HP*, the 1926 *Alfa Romeo RL SS*, the 1928 *Fiat 520*, the 1934 *Alfa Romeo 8C 2300*, the 1958 *Lancia Aurelia B20*, the 1954 *Alfa Romeo Giulietta Sprint's front mask and grille*, the 1923 *Fiat 519 S*, the 1930 *Lancia Lambda torpedo*, the 1947 *Cisitalia 202 SMM spider Nuvolari*, the 1952 *Alfa Romeo Disco Volante*, the 1961 *Lancia Flaminia presidenziale*, the 1964 *Abarth 2400 coupé Allemano*, the 1965 *Alfa Romeo 2600 touring spider*, the 1968 *Maserati Mexico* and the 1982 *Ferrari 208 GTB turbo*.

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