



TORINO THE CAPITAL: FIRST THE CAPITAL OF ITALY IN 1861 THEN THE CAPITAL CITY FOR ITALIAN AUTOMOBILES

Automobiles have been for Torino both the **driving force and the catalyst for Piedmont's industrialization** since the beginning of the XX century. People talented in style, craft and with entrepreneurial skills have created in Torino and Piedmont a **cultural system linked to the automotive industry**, overcoming production and becoming a **cultural and social phenomenon**. Nowadays Piedmont's capital city is still the place where **groups of excellence** from the car sector are located, developed in these years above all in the domain of **training, planning and design**: the **IAAD** (Istituto d'Arte Applicata e del Design), the **IED** (Istituto Europeo del Design) and the **Facoltà di Disegno Industriale e di Ingegneria dell'Autoveicolo at Torino's Polytechnic** deal with the training of a new creative generation, allowing the Italian car industry to preserve its avant-garde tradition, paying careful attention to environmental sustainability.

Last century's Torino was a craftsmen city full of mechanics and coachbuilders, which then became the Italian birthplace of the new "technology prodigy" called the automobile. Torino is the playground for new companies: spawning the first 1898 Italian Automobile club, the Italian School for mechanics and drivers and the first Italian magazine almost exclusively dealing with motoring ("L'Automobile"). Originally from Torino, Ernestina Prola, was the first Italian woman to pass her driving test, and in the capital of Piedmont the first car exhibition took place, evolving into the Salone dell'automobile, in the XX century. Both creators of the two totally Italian produced cars were from Torino: Virginio Bordino (1854) and Michele Lanza (1895). Also in 1895, following the French example, Torino organized the first Italian car race from Torino to Asti. In 1899, in the Burello coffee-shop, Emanuele Cacherano di Bricherasio, Roberto Biscaretti di Ruffia, Michele Lanza, Cesare Goria Gatti and Giovanni Agnelli established the "Società italiana per la costruzione e il commercio delle automobili", which then became FIAT.

The honour of being the first people in Italy to trust the potential of this new machine, and to be brave enough to invest in this challenging business, goes to a few representatives of Piedmont's bourgeoisie, passionate lovers of speed: **Vincenzo Lancia**, father of the car manufacturing company of the same name, **Giovanni Agnelli**, founder of FIAT who became its first managing director as well as its President, **Roberto Biscaretti di Ruffia**, founded in 1898 the Automobile Club di Torino, then the Automobile Club d'Italia, **Giovanni Bertone**, founder of the workshop which became a benchmark for international design under his son **Nuccio**. Bertone created some of the world's best known designers such as **Giorgetto Giugiaro** and **Marcello Gandini**. Lastly, **Pininfarina**, the car manufacturing company which founded the Società Anonima Carrozzeria Pinin in 1930; Farina took its name from **Battista Farina** (whose nick name was *Pinin*), which was then given to his son **Sergio**, a world renowned designer.

Since its birth, at the end of the XIX century, Torino's engineering industry has employed 9,000 workers and housed over 30 companies out of 100 operating in this industry in Italy. Some of the most famous car manufacturers include: Lanza (1898), Ceirano GB & C. (1898), FIAT (1899), Taurinia (1902), Aquila Italiana (1905), Diatto (1905) and Lancia (1906). In the early stages of car production, small sized cars were built and the manufacturer would only supply the chassis, asking coachbuilders and spare part producers to complete the car. Torino's most respected ones were Locati & Torretta, Marcello Alessio and Giovanni Farina, Battista's elder brother. It was only after the stock Exchange financial crisis of 1907 and the increase of foreign competitors, that Torino's companies got organized and started the production in series following the Ford American model.



Even today, although in a difficult period of constant change, the engineering and design of cars, still remain the city's prized possessions. The renewed interest for the Museo Nazionale dell'Automobile proves this: the history of the car can also be narrated through the history of its emblem-city. This can be used to analyze society today and the trends of its symbolic objects: automobiles.

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