

Giovanni Michelotti. A free stylist

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There are names that passed the border of the motor world to reach people not really into cars, modern or classic: Giugiaro or Pininfarina, for example, will turn on a light in the mind of anyone. Then there are names that sound unknown to the most, sometimes even to those who pretend to be car enthusiasts; names whose shadow is not given by the lack of merit but by the expressed desire to remain on the sidelines, to enjoy the creative freedom given by anonymity - at least to the general public.



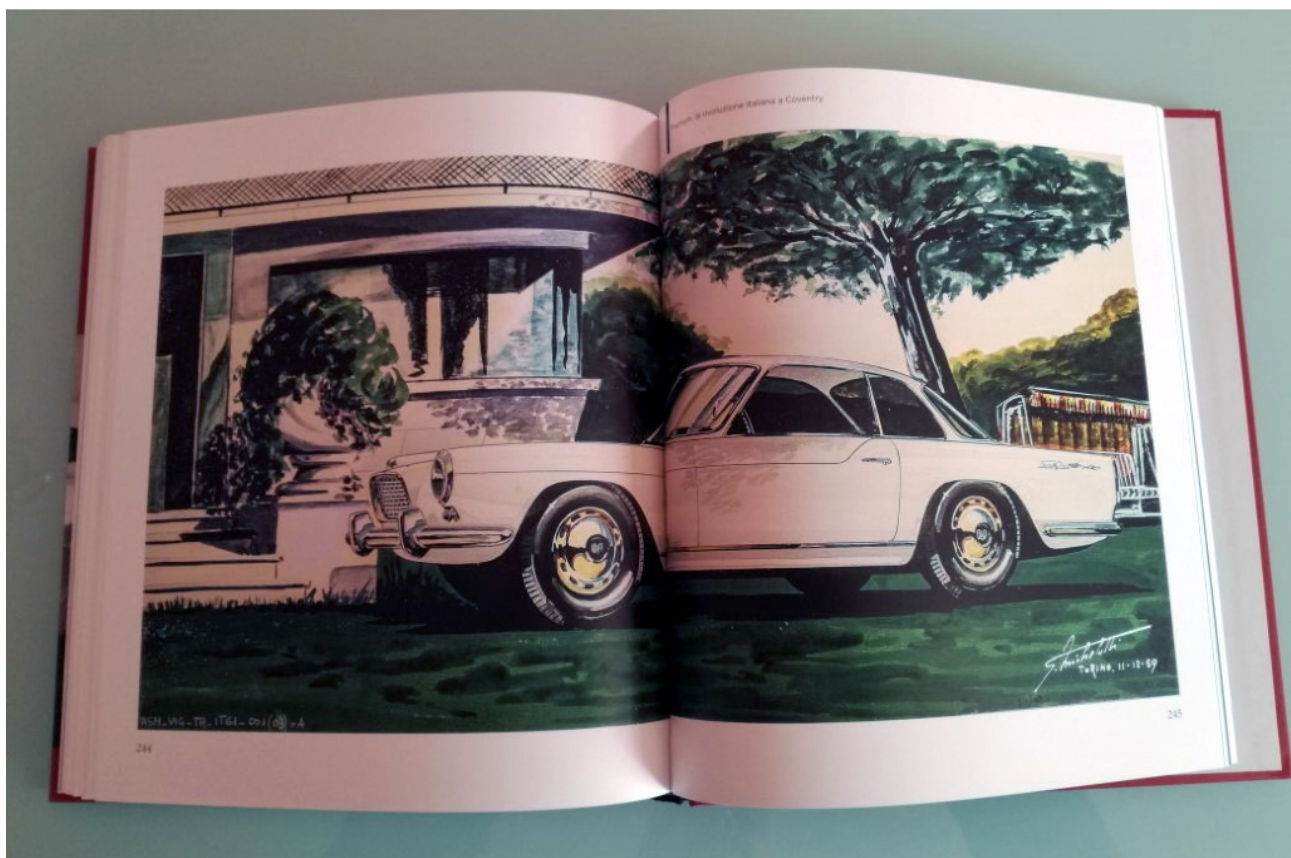
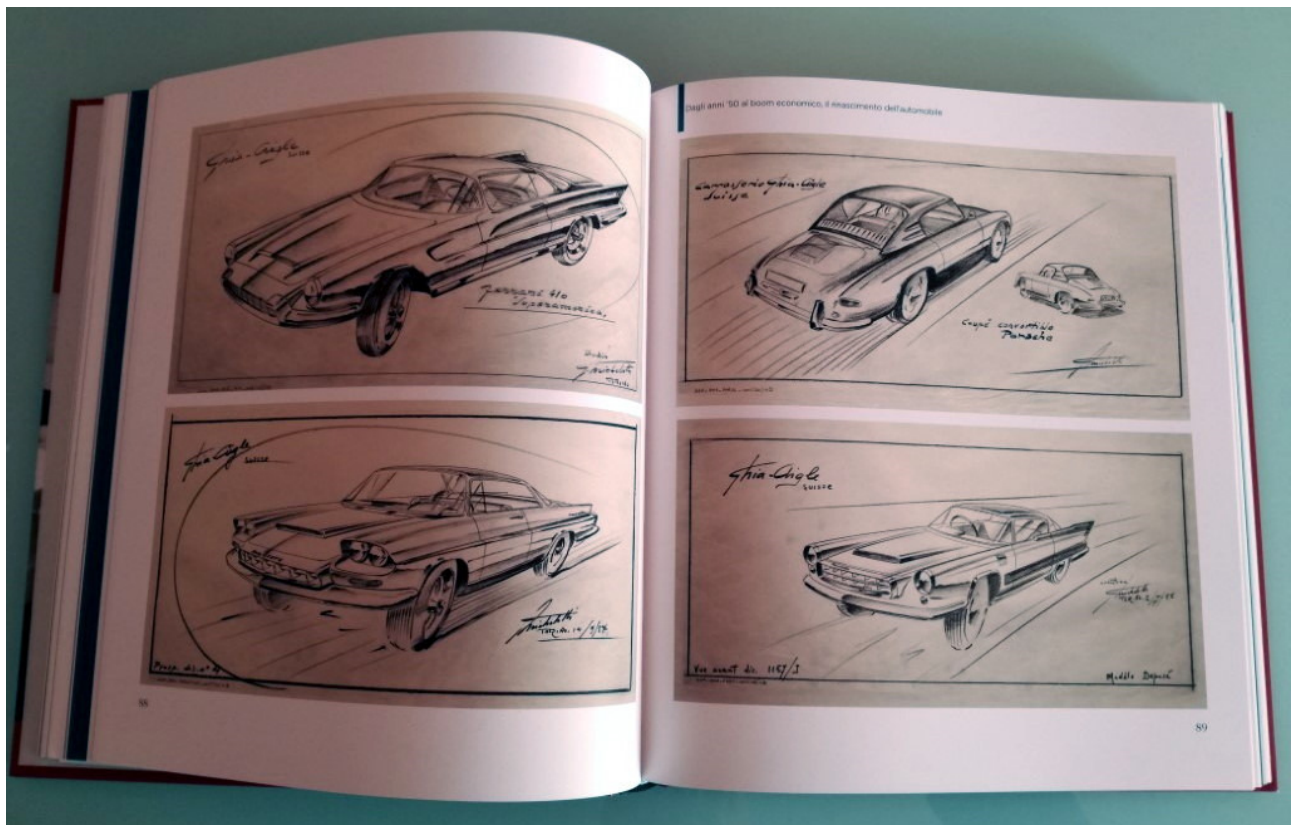
The cover and case of the book, both in hard cardboard.

Giovanni Michelotti was one of the most ingenious exponents of Italian design and the undoubted quality of his trait has accompanied an incredible prolificacy, hundreds of his drawings (over 1200, according to this book) became exhibition or production cars and, in fact, an edition of the Turin Motor Show in the 1950s showed more than forty cars drawn by his incomparable pencil. Yet very few know his name or his work, despite his signature was put on to designs of both prestigious and more popular models. The discretion, in his case, was intentional: by doing this, Michelotti was able to let his creativity free without being tied to the constraints and stylistic features of a particular manufacturer, nevertheless he could work for various coachbuilders who were sometimes competing with each other. This book, born by the will of his son Edgardo, finally does him justice.



The first photo of the book is a declaration of intent, Michelotti will be pictured as a professional but without forgetting his human and family aspect.

The text can ideally be divided into three sections: the first one coincides with the first chapter and summarizes the life of Giovanni Michelotti narrated by his son, wisely opened by the image above which shows the designer working while surrounded by his two sons. Work and family, as described by Edgardo. The second section traces Michelotti's life in parallel with his professional career, divided for decades, and in five chapters takes us from the late 30s to the dawn of the 80s, when the great Turin designer left us. The second section goes into detail about Michelotti's professional career, divided for decades, and whose five chapters takes us from his beginnings in the late 1930s to the dawn of the 1980s, when the great Turin designer left us. Finally, the third part deals with the most important collaborations of his career: BMW, DAF and Triumph are the manufacturers for which Michelotti not only supplied some models on request, but defined the style of their production. We clearly put a particular attention on the Triumph chapter which gave a definitive version of facts and anecdotes already known and brought to light some gems hidden so far.



Above: the book includes a lot of period photos but we feel that mostly Michelotti's drawings and studies make the volume precious. Below: style studies or paintings? Michelotti's talent is beyond question.

The book had a painful genesis, as stated by Edgardo, the idea was many years ago but came up against the difficulty of finding a writer who ventured into the arduous job of managing such a wide variety of cars. Giancarlo Cavallini has taken on the honor and burden of fixing on paper Michelotti as a designer but, also and above all, talking about Michelotti as a man, whose life is intertwined in a double thread with Turin "motor capital" and its transformation from an artisan reality to an industrial town. A story which crossed names and faces of excellence and workers who to transform the post-war Italy into an economic power.

Scrolling through the pages you come across some book's youthful errors, which can be remedied in a future second edition: some typos and some anecdotes repeated in different chapters are however venial sins, children of a not too accurate revision of the text, which do not affect the quality of the reading that is always smooth. The many images show preparatory sketches, complete drawings and photographs taken in the workshop or in the bodywork, a behind the scenes that invites you to discover how much other material is kept in the archive of Edgardo Michelotti and to aim to have, one day, a photo book that will summarize 40 years of design through images.

A tip: while reading, keep your smartphone or tablet handy because the precious and accurate descriptions of the models highlight details that a less expert eye would not grasp and, given that it would have been impossible to keep text and photos always on the same page, a second support that keeps an image of the car visible will make you fully appreciate the work of the authors without forcing you to go from page to page several times.

The effort made by the publisher is clear as soon as the volume is in your hands, the price might seem high at first glance but is fully justified not only by the limited edition (600 copies in Italian and as many in English) but by the overall quality of the volume, the glossy coated paper, the good bookbinding and the box, which make it a prestigious edition.

In conclusion, we recommend this book without reservation to anyone who is passionate about cars and even more to those who have had the pleasure of owning or driving a Triumph, whose birth is most likely described in these pages.

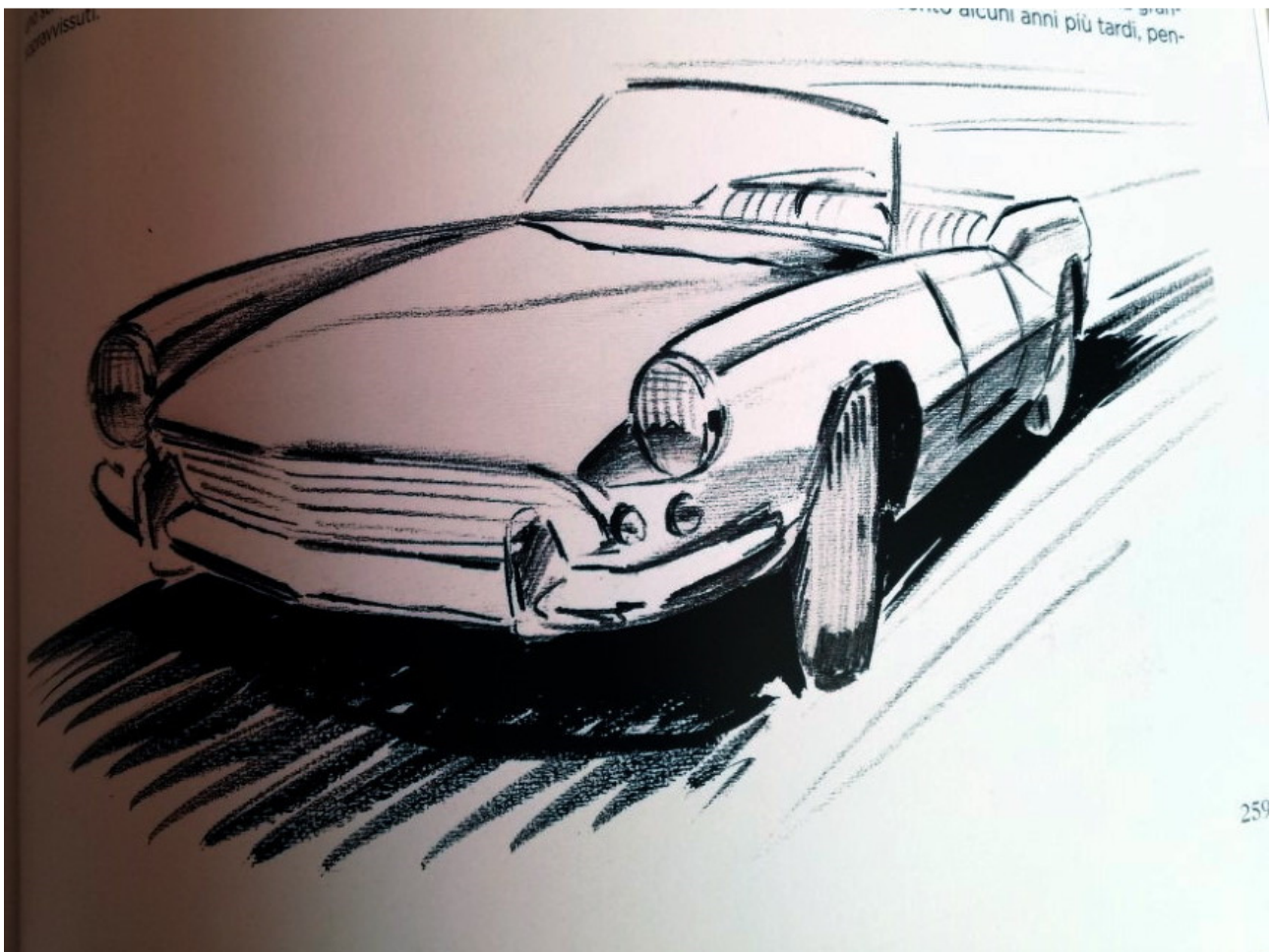
At the time of writing, the book is still available in both version, with Italian or English text, via the [publisher's website](#) or through one of its international retailers.

WHAT WE LIKED

- Edgardo's personal memories make the text personal and add details that an author outside the family might not know.
- The many images create a synthesis of Italian design and invite you to browse the book several times after the first reading, even if you feel the lack of a dedicated index.
- The meticulous descriptions of the models highlight the less evident details and teach us to recognize Michelotti's stylistic features.

WHAT WE DIDN'T LIKE

- Some anecdotes are repeated in different chapters.
- Some typos, maybe a symptom of a hasty proofreading.
- Image captions sometimes do not provide additional information because they are simple excerpts from the main text.



Above: one of the few drawings of the Spitfire that has survived to the years. On the following page: the beautiful prototype of the Vitesse GT – which never went in production – and the proof of the versatility of Michelotti who also designed industrial vehicles.

