

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

NO. 135
FOR RELEASE:
DECEMBER 11, 1972

CLASSIC ITALIAN SPORTS CAR ACQUIRED BY MUSEUM

The Cisitalia GT, 1946, a trend-setting sculptured Italian sports car designed in 1946 by Pinin Farina, has become part of The Museum of Modern Art's Design Collection and will be on public view from December 11 through January 29 in the Museum's Goodwin Galleries. The Cisitalia is the first automobile to enter the permanent collection of any art museum in the world. It is a gift of the manufacturer, Pininfarina of Turin, Italy.

Originally shown at the Museum in 1951 in the exhibition Eight Automobiles, the Cisitalia has been selected for its aesthetic excellence and technical innovation. Emilio Ambasz, Curator of Design, observes that: "Its aerodynamic lines and subtle sensuality have strongly influenced world production. It is still the best example of coachwork conceived as a single shell--a continuously enveloping topological surface. Fenders and hood bulge under the terse, taut skin. The doors seem not to be cut into the metal but sketched on the surface. No sharp edge interrupts the smooth flow of the sculptured body; the window and grill openings do not violate the continuity of the shell; instead they delineate the outline of the hood and body. The tension of the metal skin tightly stretched over the chassis contributes to the powerful suggestion of flow the car communicates even when at rest."

Mr. Ambasz further points out that while the objective of the 1951 exhibition was to influence the attitudes of the public and car manufacturers toward automobile design, the two subsequent decades have focused increasing attention on problems such as air pollution, urban congestion and the proliferation of super-highways. "While such problems are the counterparts of the genuine pleasure the car can give us," he notes, "it should nevertheless be observed that the car is not their sole cause." One must look to urban and transportation planning boards, highway industry lobbies, automobile industry engineers, and oil refineries for other root causes of these problems.

(more)

"All these notwithstanding," adds Mr. Ambasz, "and in expectation of that time when the car becomes, indeed, a museum piece, the specific criteria which determined the selection of the Cisitalia have remained as valid today for acquiring it for the Collection as they were twenty years ago for showing it: aesthetic excellence and technical innovation."

Specifications

model:	CISITALIA "202," GT
designer:	Pinin Farina, 1946 (production 1948)
coachwork:	Pininfarina, Turin, Italy
dimensions:	length: 12'5" width: 4'10" height: 4'1"
chassis:	tubular
weight:	1850 pounds
maximum speed:	100 miles per hour
mechanical characteristics:	engine 1089 cc; 50 HP; 4-speed gear box; dry disk-clutch; tires: 5.00 X 15"

Additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, and Mark Segal, Assistant, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 St., New York, N. Y. 10019. Phone: (212) 956-7501, - 7296.
