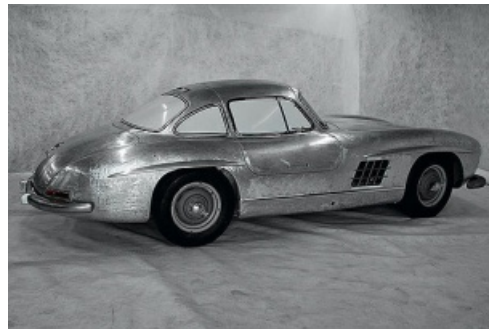

Design by Dante: Gold Leaf Gullwings

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Swiss artist Dante Rubli's striking 300 SL 'Gullwing' sculptures were a highlight of the recent Top Marques Monaco exhibition. London-based collectors, however, have been able to view one of the half-scale versions in St John's Wood, thanks to an initiative by luxury car dealer Clive Sutton, who will represent the artist in the UK.

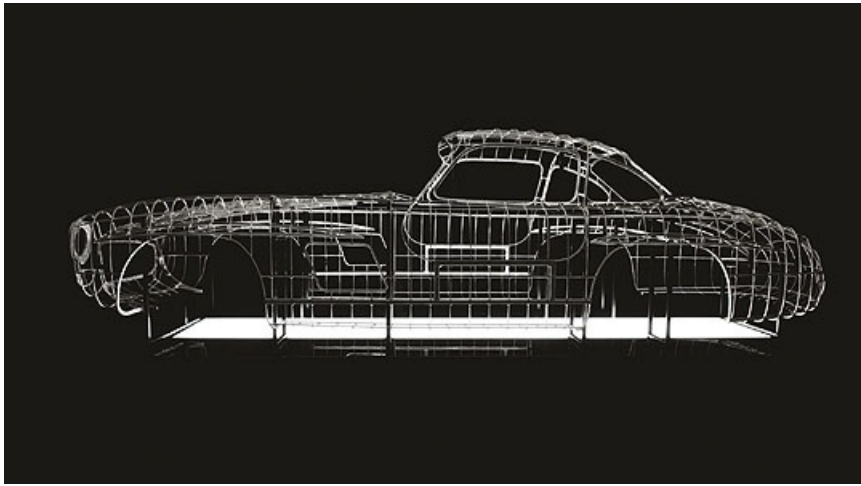
Rubli's background is in the automotive industry. As a panel-beater and sheet-metal worker he has worked in his native Switzerland and the USA, restoring and repairing luxury cars. Since 1991, his company, '**Design by Dante**', has operated from Frauenkappelen, to the west of Bern. The company does not, however, restrict itself to cars; it has built exhibition stands, produced trophies and created bespoke works of art - all in metal.





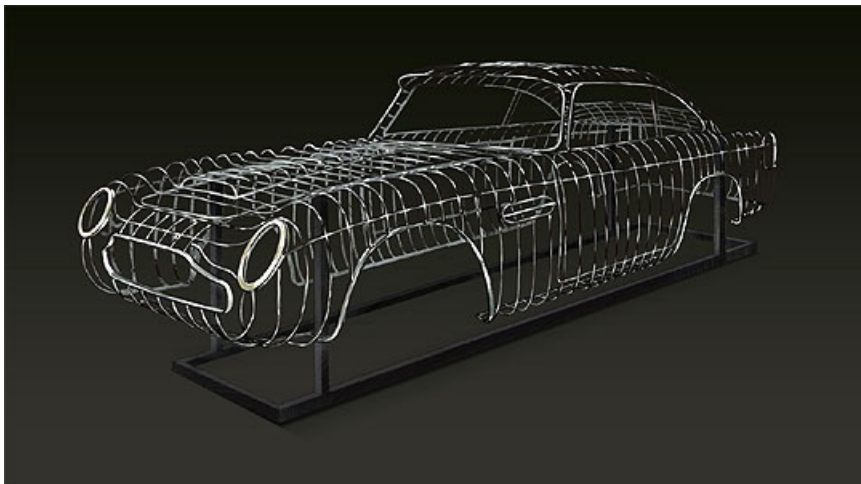
Automotive projects include making the one-off coachwork for an **Aston Martin V8 Vantage Shooting Brake**, the complete restoration of an **Alfa Romeo Giulietta SZ Coda Tronca**, a **Porsche 914/6 GT** and a rare, all-aluminium **Mercedes-Benz 300 SL Gullwing**.

It was during work on the Mercedes that Rubli, using factory drawings, developed a metal skeletal buck for hand-beating and rolling the new metalwork to the *exact* shape. **Classic Driver** readers will be familiar with wooden formers for these cars; however Rubli states that his metal one is unique and allows precise matching of body panels, with shut-lines of an accuracy impossible during the 1950s.



The all-metal former is a work of art in its own right, so Rubli decided to develop the theme and produce limited-edition sculptures in two scales: a one-to-one identical reproduction of the original car, and a half-scale version. Both are available mounted on a plinth, with a full, remotely controlled lighting system.

To complete the dramatic effect, the sculptures are hand-finished in white gold leaf. Both the 1:1 and 1:2 versions are limited to just five examples each worldwide (priced at 600,000 euros for full-size and 400,000 euros for half-scale), while the 1:2 version can also be ordered in white silver, without the plinth, for 250,000 euros. The works of art are classified as such by HM Customs and Excise and attract a VAT rate of 5% that needs to be added to these prices.



Dante Rubli's next project is a half-scale sculpture – along the same lines – of an **Aston Martin DB5**. The computer-generated photograph you see here shows another stunning 'sectional' study, available from 250,000 euros plus VAT for the powdered silver edition.

For further information, see www.dantedesign.ch and www.clivesutton.co.uk/dante

Text: Steve Wakefield

Photos: Design By Dante

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