

CLASSIC DRIVER

Q&A with Flavio Manzoni, Ferrari Design Director



Quo vadis, Ferrari? At the awards presentation for the Ferrari World Design Contest 2011 in Maranello, Classic Driver exclusively talked to Flavio Manzoni, Ferrari's new Head of Design.

Mr Manzoni, the World Design Contest 2011 invited students from around the globe to design the Ferrari of the future. This resulted in a huge variety of futuristic and extreme ideas: how did you pick a winner?

It was an immensely challenging project that would have been difficult even for a professional designer. Our problem was in choosing a design that combined harmony and beauty with a high level of technological innovation. Not all entries managed both: for instance, the team from Turin that came second presented a truly beautiful model – but it could have been a car of today. The winning Korean students produced not only a model of genuinely professional quality, but their ideas for the exterior and interior design were unique. The eco-friendly technology approach also counted for a lot.

Can you imagine a concept like this actually being built?

Why not? It is an outstanding *barchetta* and I can imagine many Ferrari collectors being interested in a design like this.

In the past, Ferrari has kept a close relationship with Pininfarina. Will the Centro Stile gain more stylistic independence in the future?

Even today, our design centre is fully operational and the team is almost complete. But of course, we are still working with Pininfarina as well. At the beginning of a new project, I create a competition between the two teams, which gives excellent motivation to the designers. As soon as we reach a more mature phase of the project, we try to converge the best ideas into one model. It is a synergy.

The supercar of the future has to be more sustainable and more extreme at the same time. How can you as a designer meet both criteria?

Already today, performance means something different from in the past. It used to be all about maximum speed, maximum acceleration; now the demand is much more complex, and we give much thought to lightweight materials. The Ferrari of the future needs to be a hypercar – hyper-technological, hyper-ecological and hyper-fast, all at the same time. This is the balance we have to find.

What are the key design features of a Ferrari?

Our aim is to make new Ferrari models recognisable through the form language, not simply because of a

family feeling. Every Ferrari needs to be completely new. We do not want any kind of déjà vu. This makes the challenge even more difficult as it demands a deep understanding of the meta-language of the form.

Which period, or car from Ferrari's design history, is the most inspiring for your work?

My personal favourite is the Ferrari 330 P3/4 from the mid-60s. But there will be no revival, which is by definition a backward-looking idea. When I was young, I dreamt of spaceships. Now, we are always thinking of the past, and this is not the right way to go. The Ferrari heritage gives us inspiration, but also the motivation to invent something new in line with the DNA of the brand. As Le Corbusier said, tradition is the chain of innovations of the past.

On behalf of all the boys out there who dream of designing a real Ferrari one day: you have the greatest job in the world, right?

(Laughs) It is also a huge responsibility. When you work on a new car, you dream. But at the same time you think about what Enzo Ferrari did in the past and you feel obliged to create new masterpieces. I am my own harshest critic and, when I am not sure that something is right, I stop it – and start a new idea. With a mass-market brand launching many new models, it is easier to live with the occasional car that isn't perfect. Ferrari is different: you cannot rest until maximum beauty is achieved. That is the challenge.

Interview: [Jan Baedeker](#)

Flavio Manzoni was appointed Ferrari's new Design Director in 2010. Manzoni, who holds a degree in architecture with a specialisation in industrial design, began his career with Lancia in 1993. After spending three years with Seat in Barcelona, he returned to Lancia as chief of its Styling Centre before moving on to head the Fiat, Lancia and Fiat LCV Styling Centres. He joined Volkswagen in 2006 and was appointed the Group's Director of Creative Design in February 2007.

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