

CLASSIC DRIVER



Geneva 2012: Disco Volante 2012 by Touring Superleggera

08 March 2012 | Joe Breeze

In 1952, the Alfa Romeo C52 'Disco Volante' instigated a new age of aerodynamics in automotive design - and some say it even inspired the E-type. Now, the carrozzeria responsible for the styling - Touring Superleggera - has commemorated its 60th anniversary with a stunning tribute...

For many years, 'retro' has been a buzzword not only in the car industry, but throughout society. Often, it's the result of a marketing department capitalising on the memories of yesteryear. Indeed, some efforts have been so successful, there's no need even to name them.

But, occasionally, a company takes inspiration from a car not just because it makes financial sense, but because it simply deserves to be celebrated. At the 2012 Geneva Motor Show, one such example surfaced: the Disco Volante by the famous Milanese coachbuilder, Carrozzeria Touring Superleggera, which tipped its fedora to the [early 1950s space-age original](#).

In charge of the project was Louis de Fabribeckers, already responsible for penning the company's recent bespoke models: the Maserati-based Bellagio and A8GCS Berlinetta, and the [shooting-brake Bentley Flying Star](#). The designer's verve and sensitivity to detail and proportion recalls certain characteristics from the glory years of Italian coachbuilding - but builds on these to produce a stunning modern take on an all-time classic. The dramatic styling, muscular tail and trimmed front wheel-arches succeed in paying tribute to the original, while simultaneously differentiating it from anything else on the show floor. Perhaps this is what 'retro' really *should* mean.



The idea – and the all-important financial backing – for the project came from an enthusiastic collector. A devotee of the original Disco Volante, his ambition was to provide himself and his fellow disciples with an anniversary gift, so he enlisted the services of the firm responsible for the original's bulbous, curving coachwork. An Alfa 8C served as a donor for the project, its strong, lightweight chassis, 450bhp V8 engine and modern electronics perfect for the new car.

However, the two seater *berlinetta* shown in Geneva is in fact a 1:1 scale model, with the working prototype planned for the autumn – which will be followed by a strictly limited series of tailor-made examples. Potential owners should be prepared to part with roughly half a million pounds to be included in the exclusive circle of owners, but compared to the ultra-rare original this seems quite a bargain.



To read Louis de Fabribeckers' explanation of his creation, in discussion with *Classic Driver*, [click here](#).

Photos: Carrozzeria Touring

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