

CLASSIC DRIVER

Driving the new Carrozzeria Touring Disco Volante

Lead

At the Geneva Motor Show, Carrozzeria Touring will resurrect the legendary Disco Volante – and the famous coachbuilder exclusively allowed Classic Driver to commandeer the ‘UFO from Arese’ a week before its maiden flight.

Nothing against the industrial area of Arese, but how can such dreary surroundings produce something so elegant? It's a 60-year-old question, as the first Disco Volante – [the Alfa C52 of the early '50s](#) – managed to spread glamour by floating between the same kind of anonymous post-War buildings. Touring stylist Federico Formenti had given the extra-terrestrial Alfa such an extraordinary form that, even six decades on, it still looks futuristic. At the 2012 Geneva Show, Carrozzeria Touring celebrated this by presenting a modern interpretation, and the skillful execution of shapes, lines and proportions was so well received that confirmation of a limited production run was inevitable. Fast forward 12 months to this year's event, and the first production car is poised to wow the crowds yet again. Classic Driver has been following the creative development of the Alfa 8C-based car since September 2012, and has been exclusively allowed to pilot the machine on northern Italian highways just days before its worldwide debut.





Entering the industrial spaces of Carrozzeria Touring Superleggera would send any human with a millilitre of petrol in their veins into a dream-like state. Strewn across the factory floor are numerous prototypes from more than half a century of automotive history, all waiting to awake from deep slumber. Men in powder-blue overalls scurry between such classics as Alfa Romeo 6Cs and Aston Martin DB2s, readying them for the upcoming concours season. Among them hang the hand-sculpted body panels of the modern supercar, patiently waiting to receive their coats of paint. And what a treat they're in for; just feet away, a pair of finished cars sit proud of the creative chaos, resplendent; as though bathed in molten lipstick. One is the wood-and-clay mockup that was the 2012 Geneva car; the other is the first production car - the key to the latter sits in my (slightly moist) palm, and right now it feels like the key to the city.







I'm caught gazing at the voluptuous bodies of the otherworldly beings by Head of Design Louis de Fabribeckers, who saves me from further locker-room thoughts. "From above they look like Coke bottles, don't they?" he asks. "Sure..." is my sheepish reply. But I won't be the last to compare the Disco to the feminine form in the coming weeks. It's astonishing how faithful Touring has remained to last year's curvaceous concept, retaining the distinctive hips, sweeping tail and characterful aluminium strip which extends from the familiar Alfa grille to the door handles, all of which contribute to making the *Neo Disco* such a unique phenomenon. Only small details - the most obvious being the adoption of Ferrari 599 headlights - have been altered in respect of feasibility and safety approval. The Alfa 8C donor car provides the V8 and associated running gear, but Touring is responsible for hand-crafting the aluminium and carbonfibre body, along with the newly-panoramic roof and interior flourishes such as the red and blue ambient lighting. That elegant tail also offers improved boot space, too.



It's not just there to look pretty, though; attack mode is brought on by firing up the 4.7-litre V8, which offers the sort of rich, gruff sound only the Italians seem able to extract. Pedestrians track the car with open mouths, alerted by its bark then stunned into motionlessness by its appearance. Such attention just serves to put more

pressure on the pilot, as if the car's uniqueness and importance in Geneva weren't enough. Even a single stone chip would be disastrous, so the car's true abilities are only tested on the quietest, smoothest Tarmac in the surrounding area. Nerves are soothed slightly by the ride quality - which has been improved during its transformation from 8C to DV in order to match the coachbuilt car's sophisticated character.





Its designers, coachbuilders, engineers, painters and interior trimmers have ploughed around 4,000 man-hours into perfecting the Disco Volante. The result speaks not only for the quality of a team that capably bridges the spectrum between high technology and skilled manual labour, but also embodies Carrozzeria Touring's idea of a modern bespoke masterpiece. While many manufacturers produce design studies which are never intended to touch Tarmac, Touring has taken inspiration from its legacy and created a special series for small-scale manufacture. The Disco may wow on the showfloor at Geneva, but a fortunate few will also be able to order one for their own collection; Touring expects to produce four to six customer cars, with the show car being offered too. That's one UFO encounter we'd be happy to recommend.

Text & Photos: [Jan Baedeker](#)

Gallery

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