

CLASSIC DRIVER



Fiat 125S Samantha: Small Italian, big on design

02 November 2013 | Jan Richter

The Fiat 125S Samantha is one of Carrozzeria Vignale's lesser-known hits. Taking design cues from many iconic 60s sportscars, we think this rare Italian coupé deserves far more recognition. And wait till you hear the price...

As well as the magnificent Vignale-penned Ferraris and Maseratis (among countless others), the Turin-based design house was often enlisted by Fiat for limited editions, prototypes and motor-show concepts. Alfredo Vignale personally drew the Samantha, as he wanted a luxury coupé for regular long trips. The pretty brown/tan colour combination on this car is the tip of an already attractive iceberg.





Built for comfort... and good looks

Based on the production 125S, the elegant coupé retained the same 1.6-litre 100HP engine but was cloaked in a beautiful, quintessentially 60s, coupé body. Inside, the Samantha has lashings of luxurious leather and exposed wood, while then-trick electric windows and an advanced sound system make long journeys that little bit more comfortable. Some 100 cars were built in the late 60s and distributed around the world via independent specialists.



We spent an afternoon with this gorgeous 1968 Samantha, on offer from Hamburg-based dealer E. Thiesen. Having enjoyed a recent restoration, the sumptuous tan hide leather looks brand new and almost too good to sit on. Rotate the small, simple ignition key and the four-cylinder block catches, piercing the silence with a throaty warble. At the flick of a switch, those Miura-esque pop-up front headlights stand to attention, almost spoiling the elegant, flowing lines. Despite the relatively small power output (just 100HP), its low weight and five-speed transmission help make the Samantha feel zippy and quick... most of the time.

The Fiat 125S Samantha might not be one of the sportscar celebrities of its time, but as a genuine coachbuilt 60s Italian coupé, offered at a nudge under €40,000, it's a car that seems seriously worth considering.

