In 1980, Citroën brought a pyramid to Paris

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By 1980, the wedge profile had become... well... a bit Seventies. In order to generate more foot traffic to its stand at that year’s Paris Motor Show, Citroën gave the go-ahead for a striking trapezoidal concept car: the Karin...

Trevor Fiore, Citroën’s design chief during this period, was a curious chap. Born in England as Trevor Frost, he soon took on his mother’s name in order to add a little Italian credibility to his work. Perhaps it worked, because he became Robert Opron’s successor at Citroën in 1980, but not before penning designs for several carmakers under the flag of his own consultancy in previous decades.

Pyramid in Paris
Shortly after his arrival, a deadline was looming large for Fiore and his team: the 1980 Paris Motor Show. No new production models were in the pipeline, but he was intent on giving the French public something to ‘ooh-la-la’ over on the marque’s home turf. The resulting Karin was an instant hit: there might have been a hint of a wedge-profile hangover, but few had seen a truncated pyramid-on-wheels before. Despite the radical profile, Fiore managed to incorporate some marque references – but these were limited to SM-style headlights and a few double chevrons. In truth, though, such a concept could only have been given the green light at Citroën.

Inside, the car embraced the revolution of information overload that was to come: a specific button was assigned to every function imaginable, and one information screen was not enough – more monitors would reveal themselves from their flush position in the doorcards. But perhaps most interestingly, Fiore specified a central driving position, with a passenger seat on either side for a wife and a mistress. He had obviously been quick to add a bit of French culture to that Anglo-Italian heritage of his.

Photos: Citroën

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