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[Frua's BMW 528 GT Coupé could have been Bavaria's Montreal](#)

Lead

After BMW's takeover of Glas in the late 60s, the latter's subcontracted exterior designer, Pietro Frua, saw an opportunity to establish a lucrative new relationship. As a result, he spent the next decade trying to lure BMW towards his styling services via a series of concept cars...

Earlier in the 1960s, Turin-born Frua had been tasked with the responsibility of styling an entire new range for Glas, a small Bavaria-based manufacturer that had made the leap from scooters and microcars to mid-range saloons and sports cars. In 1968, [BMW](#) completed the takeover of its smaller neighbour – but it was for reasons to do with engineering patents and factory space, rather than a fondness for the marque's styling.

Catching the big fish



Undeterred, Frua set about creating a number of BMW-based concept cars in the hope of ensnaring design contracts for large-scale production runs from the Bavarian big fish. One of his final attempts came in 1976, in the form of the 528 GT Coupé. Taking a standard E12 saloon, Frua created a coupé body that bore all the trademark BMW cues, yet had a distinctly Italian flavour. Its resemblance to the [Bertone-styled Alfa Romeo Montreal](#) was obvious; there was also a hint of [Lancia](#) in there, too. Ultimately, Frua's vision never came to fruition, and BMW decided to go it alone with its in-house design team. However, some historians argue that his influence lived on vicariously through the marque's subsequent offerings.

Gallery

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