
1960 Autobianchi Bianchina

Lot sold	USD 19 169 - 23 680 EUR 17 000 - 21 000 (listed)	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1960	Condition	Used
Country VAT	IT	Location	
Number of seats	2	Fuel type	Petrol
Drivetrain	2wd	Exterior colour	White
Lot number	21	Car type	Convertible / Roadster

Description

- One of the very first examples after the pre-series.
- Completely restored.
- Original (Palermo) license plates.
- Very rare.
- Safe investment.

The model

Conceived as a luxurious version of the Fiat 500, from which the chassis and mechanics were derived, the Bianchina was presented to the public on September 16, 1957 at the Museum of Science and Technology in Milan. Initially it was proposed in only the 3-volume bodywork, called Trasformabile, equipped with small rear fins, abundant chrome-plating and a canvas roof that could be opened. The Bianchina was produced by Autobianchi from 1957 to 1969. In the first months, sales were even higher than those of the cheaper, but more spartan 500, despite the large gap in list price: the Bianchina cost LIT 565,000, or 15% more than the price of the Fiat 500. Several factors were favourable; first of all, Italian motorists at the time of the boom, even if low wages made it hard to make ends meet, none the less they disliked the frugality proposed by FIAT, paying (it was believed) too much for a car too Spartan. The French "essential" style (Citroen 2CV and Renault 4) was not much admired, unlike the Teutonic chrome-plating of the Beetle. Bianchina was the first to play the role of a luxury utility car, with improved finish, a more refined line, and even two-tone chrome and

paint livery. A lesson that would be followed with great success by the future Autobianchi A112 and Y10 and, later, by many cars of the (now) Fiat-Lancia group that relive the spirit. Among the other factors of Bianchina's success, however, we must also remember: the milanesity of the vehicle, appreciated by the important pool of Milanese buyers, the aura of nobility derived from the Bianchi brand and, probably, the convenience of the long payment terms proposed by SAVA with instalments over 30 months. Following its success, Autobianchi decided to expand the range and improve its characteristics. In 1959 the power of the 479.5 cc engine grew to 17 hp, while in 1960 the Cabriolet and Panoramica versions were presented. The Cabriolet was a real open car with a canvas roof (while the Trasformabile had a large but simple openable canvas roof with fixed side pillars) and an engine increased by 499 cc and 21 hp; the doors also changed, now upwind, hinged at the front. The Bianchina Cabriolet project dates back to 1959 and is a work of the engineer Luigi Rapi, who moved from the Carrozzerie Speciali Fiat department to Autobianchi. It's a thwarted project and not shared by all the managers of the Milanese factory. The commercial management is convinced that this off-the-rack convertible, the smallest in the world, can represent a good investment, even for foreign markets. However, due to the new technical and stylistic solutions of the cabriolet, almost all the sheet metal molds have to be reviewed. Extremely refined, with abundant friezes and chrome, distinguished by the designation "B 122", it is presented at the Geneva Motor Show in April 1960. The public and press response is lukewarm: that small object seems too "American" and flirty. Despite conflicting opinions, the cabriolet has a good commercial success in its first year of life. The aim that the Autobianchi set itself, to win over the customers of special coachbuilders and abroad, is partly achieved and about 1050 convertibles are sold in eight months. The customers of this model are extremely limited: the high cost of 635,000 LIT, that is 60,000 LIT more than the Trasformabile, limits potential buyers to wealthy people that choose it as a second or third car, for the city or for fashionable seaside resort. The Panoramica, on the other hand, was a "Giardinetta" with a 499 cc single stroke engine of 22 hp and an elongated wheelbase, derived from the Fiat 500 Giardiniera. In the same year, the Trasformabile, which adopted the engine capacity increased to 499 cc for 18 hp, was also made available in the Special version with the engine increased to 21 hp. In 1962 the Trasformabile was replaced by the 4-seater Saloon, a more squared version with a rigid metal roof. In the same year all the versions adopted a platform lowered in the passengers' foot area, to improve habitability. In 1965, in addition to a slight restyling that affected all versions, the 4-seater Saloon and Cabriolet variants adopted the F-type engine. The Biancas went out of production in 1969.

The car

The 1960 Autobianchi Bianchina Cabriolet, with chassis no. 110B122*000673 is one of the first examples of the first series, produced for less than a year, before the advent of the model D. The Bianchina Cabriolet is characterized by wraparound bumpers, the two front friezes are replaced by two larger chrome decorations that follow the line of the grille. At the centre of the grille is a newly designed mask. The front lights are also reshaped and moved towards the centre, while the old lights have been replaced by two fake chrome grilles. On the side, the line is highlighted by steel profiles that enclose a glossy black horizontal frieze. A big novelty is the opening of the doors against the wind. The side indicators, two small rhombuses that fit into the moulding, are added. The absence of the roof structure forces engineer Rapi to completely redesign the windscreen. Thanks to the more aerodynamic windscreen, the top speed reaches 110 km/h. Apart from the few models delivered in the pre-series version (all built by May 1960), the Bianchina Cabriolet Prima Serie renounces the two small side licence plate lights and returns to the previous licence plate light, modified to comply with international standards. The side direction indicators are forward with respect to the wheel centre. After June, the curves of the bumpers are fitted with white rubber extensions. These details confirm that the Bianchina Cabriolet chassis no. 110B122*000673 is one of the very first produced after the pre-production models, in the very short period of time between May and June 1960, when it was registered in Palermo. The car still retains its registration and its original black plates, all in order. The car has been completely restored, although not recently and is in excellent condition, white with red/white interior. The roof is in perfect condition. The mechanics are the correct ones, with flat fuel tank, small air filter held by three bolts and, above all, the 500 Sport engine (110.004) of the first type, accredited with 21 HP that makes the car really brilliant despite its size and also pleasant to

drive. Currently the Bianchina Cabriolet is the rarest version, with about 3150 units produced, and most sought after by fans.

State of the Art

Complete restoration, not recent.

Litterature

- Leo Pittoni, Autobianchi Bianchina, Giorgio Nada Ed., Vimodrone MI 2007.
- Sandro Colombo, Dalle auto Bianchi alle Autobianchi, ASI, Italia 2003.

Documents

Original Italian registration and plates, in order.

Eligibility

Giro di Sicilia. Eligible

Targa Florio. Eligible.

Goodwood Revival. Eligible.

Coppa d'Oro delle Dolomiti. Eligible.

Coppa delle Alpi by 1000 Miglia. Eligible.

Winther Marathon. Eligible.

Nürburgring Classic. Eligible.

Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. Eligible.

Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance. Eligible.

Chantilly Arts & Elegance Richard Mille. Eligible.

Concorso d'eleganza Villa D'Este. Eligible.

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