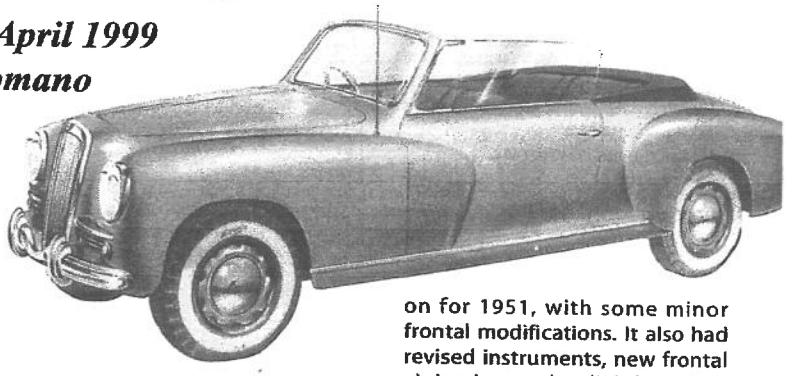

ARDENNES



Two Aurelia Specials

From La Manovella, *April 1999*
Translated by Jack Romano



Following tradition, the Aurelia Berlina was no sooner launched than it was followed by a cabriolet version from Pininfarina. To this end, Lancia made available a special chassis, with a lowered platform, reduced central tunnel, and a length of 2910mm. On this base chassis were built 265 cabriolets, while another 118 were reserved for 'Giardinette', (viz. shooting brakes) and others. Built in sequence, their chassis numbers were: 1950, 1001-1035; 1951, 1306-1484.

Those built right hand drive were dubbed B50, and left hand drive models B51.

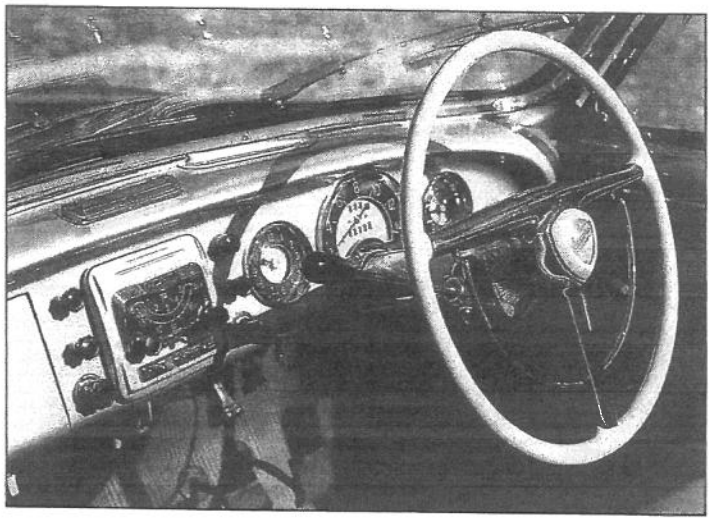
The cabriolets were sold both by Lancia and Pininfarina, and many clients specified personalised features. Among the first customers were the likes of Federico Fellini, and Elena Varzi.

The Pininfarina cabriolet was exceptionally stylish, with aluminium bonnet and bootlid, lightweight doors with a special profile, curved screen, heater, fresh air intakes, cigar lighter, plus radio on request. The mechanical side remained untouched and was exactly as the Berlina. The cabriolet was first seen at the 1950 Paris Salon and the theme was carried on for 1951, with some minor frontal modifications. It also had revised instruments, new frontal air intakes, and a slightly revised rear line. The following photos and text deal with both versions of what was – and remains a superb, exclusive and very desirable Aurelia variant.









1950 B50

This exceptional car was built on June 13, 1950 making it one of the earliest B50s. It was specially constructed for Lancia 'appassionato' Giuseppe de Venuto. In due course it was sold to a notary in Biella, who intended to give it a minor restoration. However, for various reasons this wasn't realised and it was left to the Sandri brothers (Bassano del Grappa) to undertake a 10-year painstaking restoration. Chassis No. 1012, this is the oldest cabriolet Aurelia known to the Registro Storico Aurelia. Finished in Lancia blue with dark bordeaux interior and 'biscuit' hood, it was voted one of Pininfarina's top 20 capolavori (masterpieces) at the 1997 Trieste Concours.

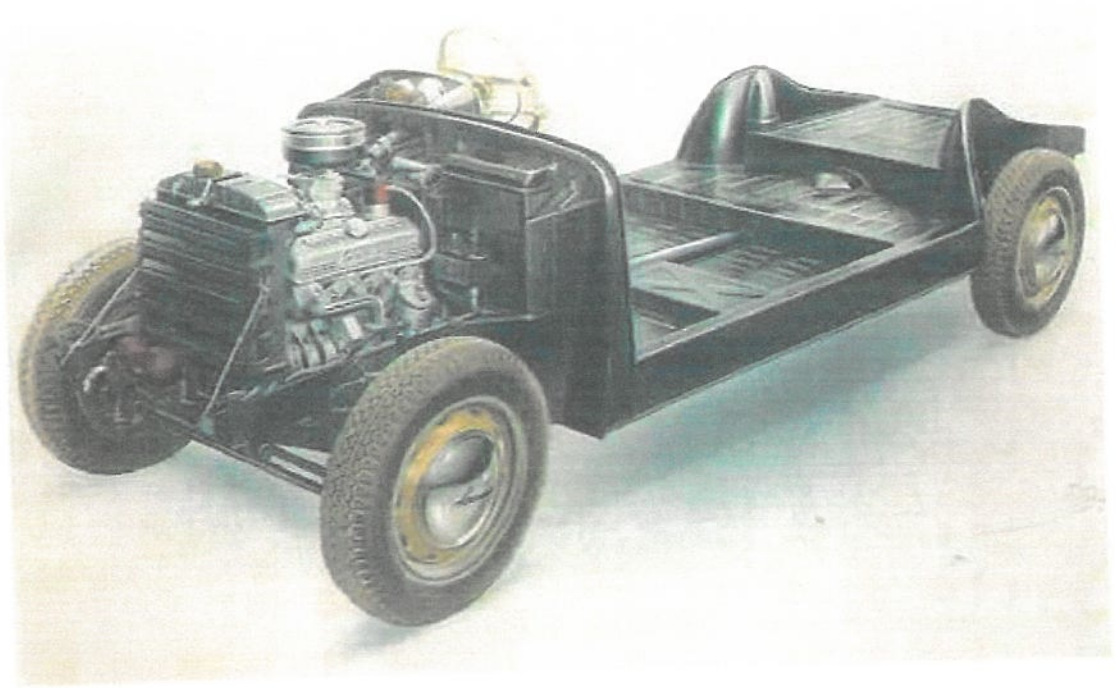
Aurelia Cabriolet Speciale

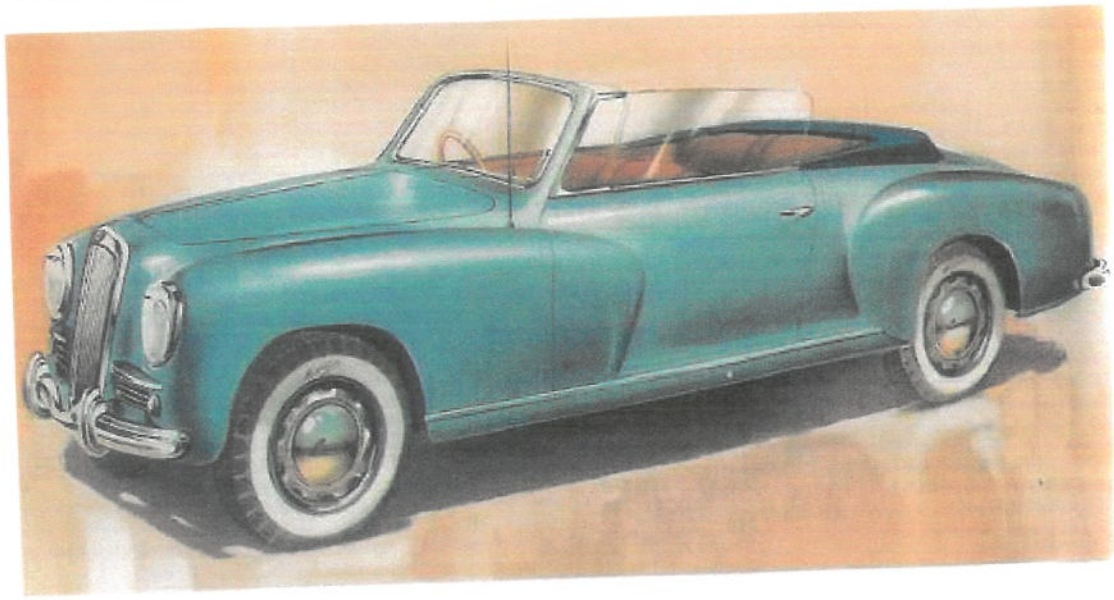
Pininfarina were authorised by Lancia to sell a small number of cabriolets direct to special customers, and most of them were constructed to order. The one shown here is chassis 1225, sold in 1951 to a German Baroness, who ran it as personal transport for many years. It eventually turned up in Switzerland in the 1990s and was bought by a well-known Italian collector, who undertook a full restoration, which was finished in spring 1999. The differences between this bespoke model and the original design are evident. They include revised rear styling, reminiscent of contemporary Alfas, chromed bumpers and an unusual instrument grouping. The owner has kept the car as original as possible, replacing only what was necessary, and leaving all else untouched – right down to the original luggage straps.

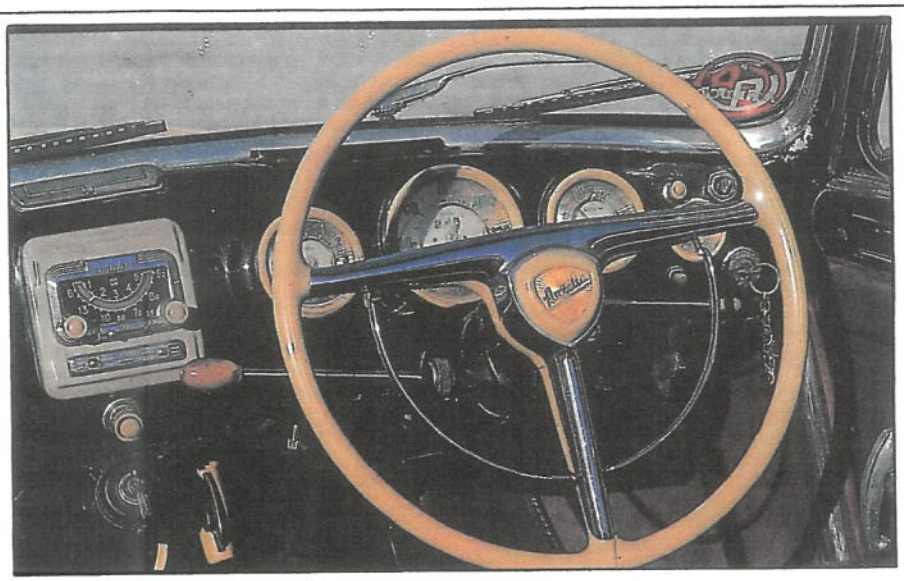


This Cabriolet, realized from Pinin Farina on the B50 chassis, was presented at Saloon of Turin in 1950, at the same time of the B10 sedan. The mechanics is the same of the ***Aurelia*** B10.

Production B10 engine







L'aménagement intérieur, très baroque, comprend un équipement très complet. La conduite à droite était obligatoire sur les premières séries et le levier de vitesses, situé à gauche sous le volant, réclame une certaine habitude...

Le comportement extrêmement sain et la légèreté du train avant sont les conséquences d'une conception d'avant-garde. Le moteur, grâce à sa grande souplesse, permet d'éviter des changements de rapports et possède une belle onctuosité à défaut de violence.

ces amortisseurs. Il contient également le liquide de freins. L'utilisateur doit prendre garde à ne pas confondre les deux orifices spécifiques et des étiquettes attirent son attention dans ce sens, en plusieurs langues et avec une orthographe parfois cocasse...

Le train arrière, quant à lui, bénéficie du premier montage, à bras tirés obliques, dessiné par Vittorio Jano. Les freins sont naturellement équipés de quatre tambours et la boîte est solidaire du pont.

Le poste de conduite se trouve du côté droit. Ce n'est qu'à partir de la 4e série que la B20 pouvait être équipée d'une conduite à gauche. Cette version recevait la désignation de B20S, ce qui signifie, bien sûr, « Sinistra » (gauche) et non pas « Sport » ou « Special »...

Le volume de l'habitacle ne provoque pas de claustrophobie : une banquette arrière permet d'admettre deux passagers supplémentaires et masque le volume de la boîte de vitesses reportée à l'arrière. Grâce à cette architecture, le plancher est quasiment plat, ce qui augmente encore l'impression d'espace. Les sièges avant, recouverts de drap gris, ressemblent plus à des fauteuils qu'à des baquets. Curieusement, ils ne sont pas par-



Quality counts

The Lancia Aurelia was one of the purest driving machines you could buy in the fifties – if you had the money! Mark Dixon found that it is even now a seriously quick car

Photos by **Mark Dixon**

We calculated later that I was probably doing 95mph... You see, the speedometer wasn't functioning properly so I was driving on the rev counter, and while hurrying past a queue of traffic on a long straight the needle touched 4200rpm in fourth. Only later was my indiscretion revealed.

Yet at that speed the 39-year-old Lancia felt as stable and surefooted as any modern GTi. This is not a car in which to take the grandparents out for a peaceful Sunday drive; it likes to be driven hard, spinning the engine into the far reaches of the rev counter to bridge the yawning gap between ratios and keep up the momentum.

It's a beautiful shape, too, clean and simple like many of the all-time greats, the low roof and big wheels filling the arches, a minimum of unnecessary detail cluttering the smoothly curved body. It's not staggeringly beautiful, not showy or flashy, just elegant and functional. The natural counterpart, in fact, to the sophisticated engineering underneath.

The history of the Aurelia GT goes back to the introduction of the Aurelia saloon in 1950. This four-door family saloon had some radical engineering by the standards of the early fifties, not least of them its 60-degree V6 engine, the first time such a design was used in a mass-produced car.

Designed by Vittorio Jano, the engineer behind the classic pre-war Alfas, the Lancia V6 featured alloy heads and an alloy block, with detachable wet cylinder liners. The V6 configuration made for a compact engine and a smooth-running one, too. In its original 1754cc capacity, power output was a modest 56bhp but within three years this was up to 118bhp (Series III Aurelia GT).

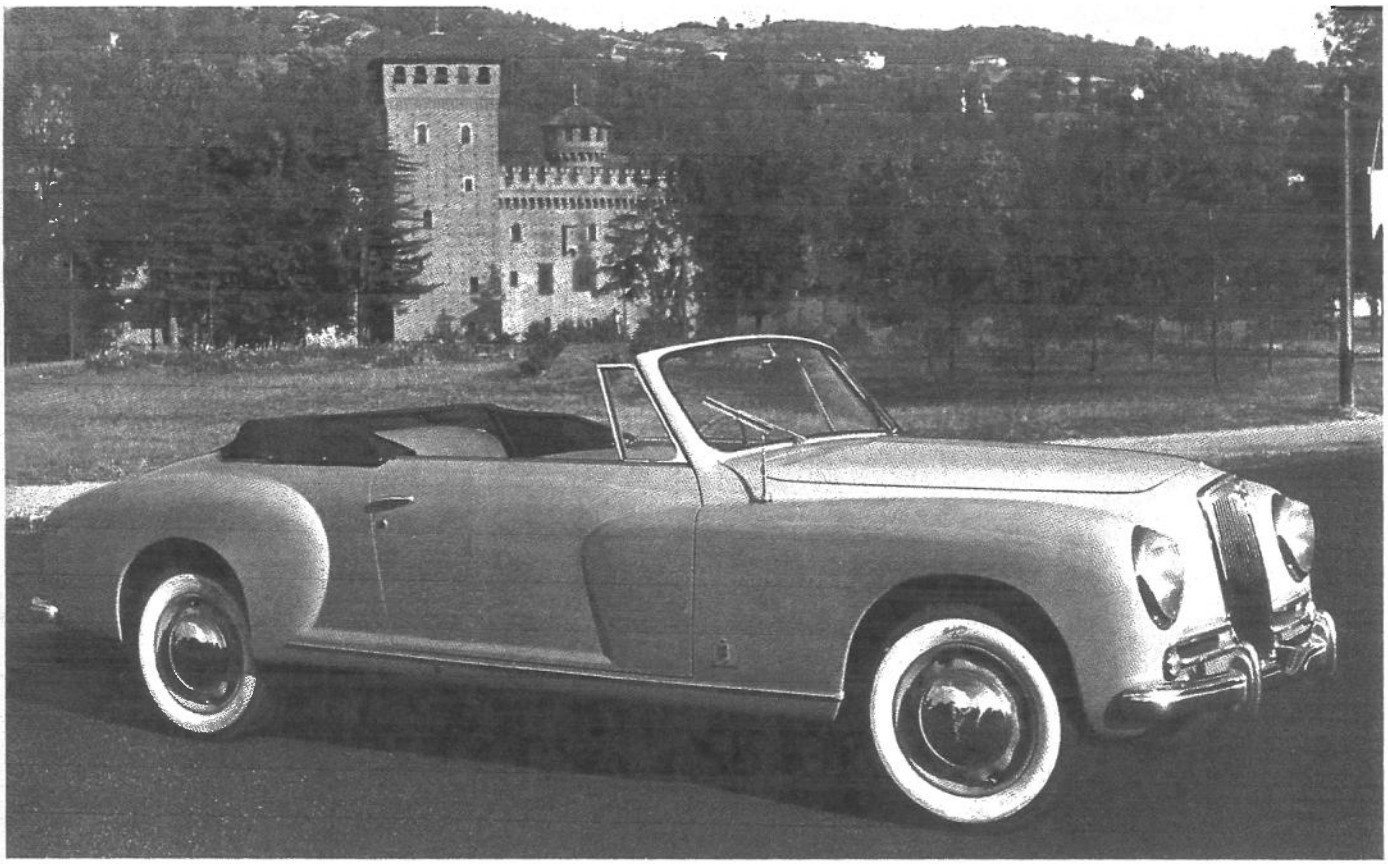
However, it wasn't just at the front end that revolution was occurring. The Aurelia had its clutch and gearbox at the back of the car, in a transaxle of the sort used much later by Porsche, among others.

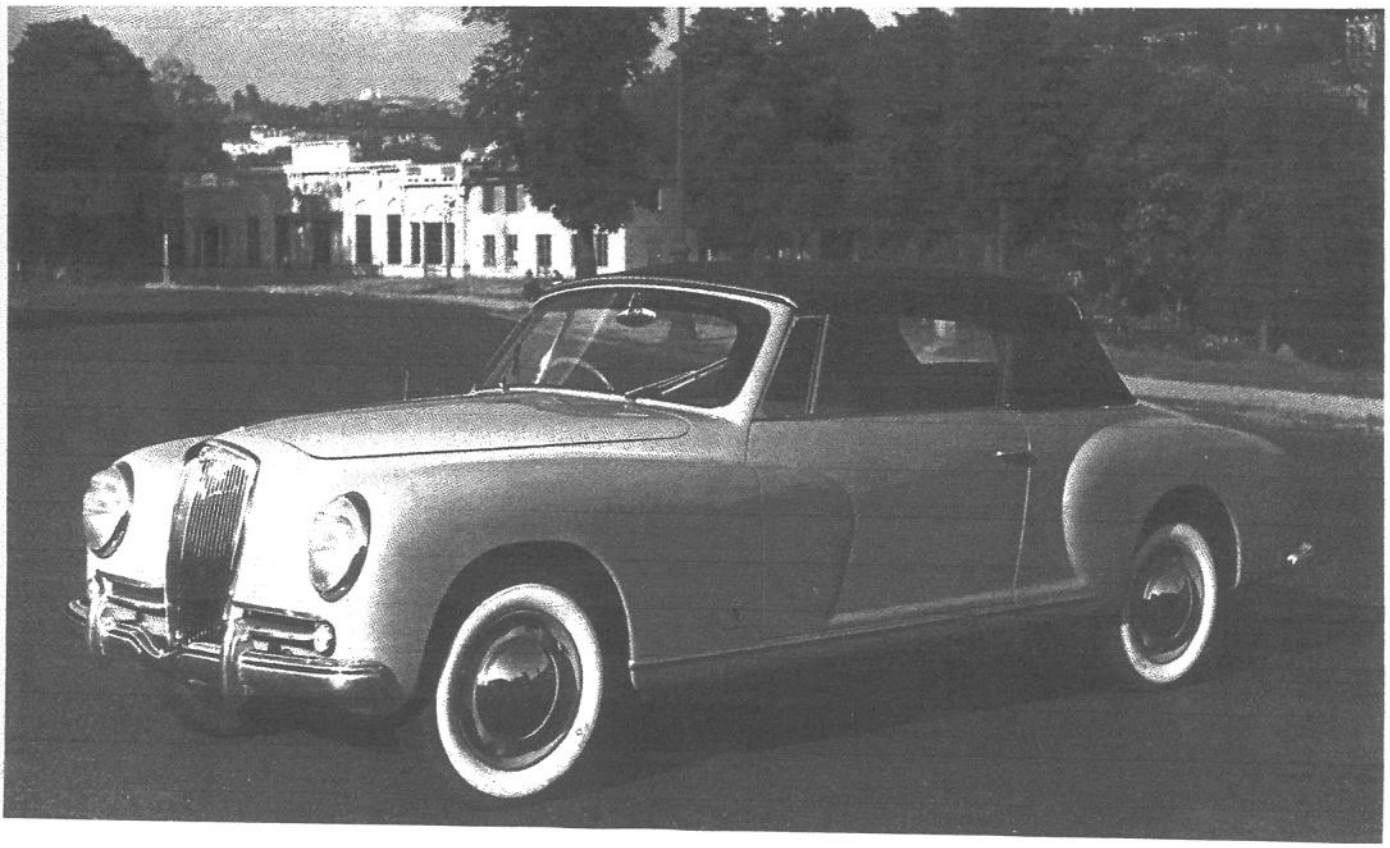


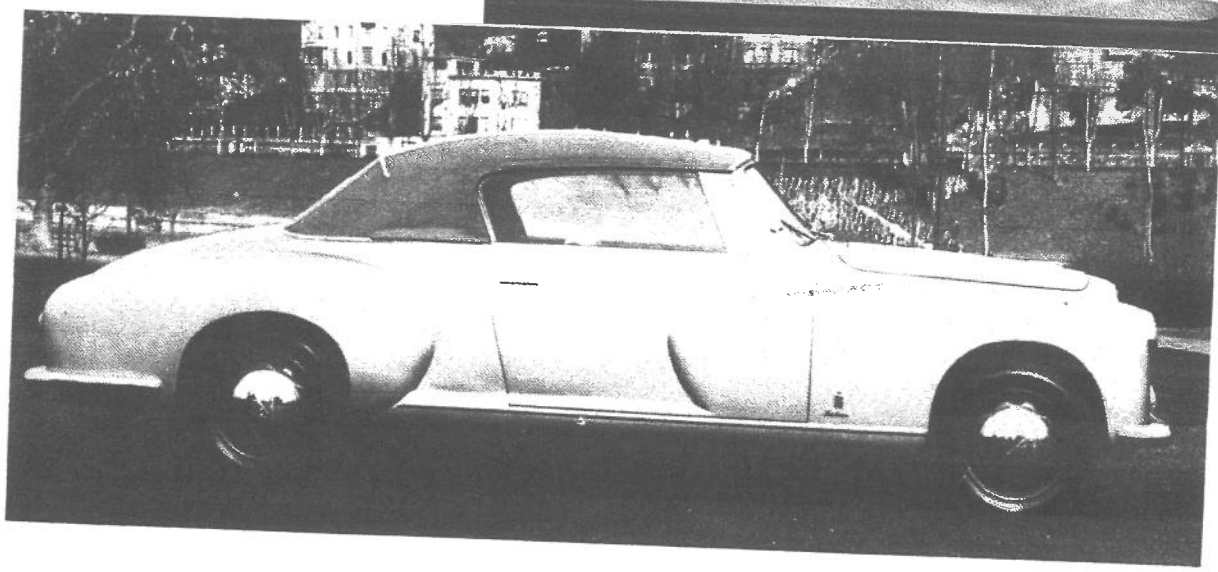
Il cabriolet Aurelia su pianale tipo B 50

Il cabriolet «ufficiale» su pianale tipo B 50 è un classico nell'attività multiforme e straordinariamente feconda di quel periodo della Pininfarina.
Il gioco dinamico dei parafanghi anteriori e posteriori che, a ben guardare, appartengono a stili diversi, anima una fiancata altrimenti piuttosto massiccia e dà slancio a un veicolo pieno di dignità.

E' lo stile, per intenderci, che il Pininfarina di quel momento trasferirà senza esitazione e con pieno successo sul telaio di almeno una Rolls-Royce e di alcune Bentley.
La selleria in cuoio colorato e le finizioni sobrie ma minuziose conferiscono una classe inconfondibile a una delle Aurelia più aderenti allo spirito della marca.







Variations on a theme. The top car is the second version with neater lines while below is a dark car with chromium mouldings to the order of a Mr. Wrightsman and beneath it looking less gaudy with minor changes to the grill is the last of the line.



