

RALLYING SUPERCARS ARE THE NORM these days: their standard specification includes several hundred horsepower and four-wheel drive. Their drivers, meanwhile, can do clutchless gearchanges courtesy of a Cray computer and several miles of hydraulic piping.

Not so many years ago, though, rally drivers had much less technology on their side. And despite the best efforts of the corporate designers of the 21st century, some of yesteryear's cars made up in good looks for what they lacked by comparison with today's high-technology racers. One such was the Lancia Fulvia Coupé.

This attractive little car arrived on the European rally scene in the mid-1960s, at a time when front-wheel-drive cars largely ruled the roost. The impact of rear-engined cars such as the Porsche 911 and the Alpine Renault A110 was yet to occur.

In the early 1960s, front-wheel drive gave sufficient traction for the modest power generated. At the same time, the car could be controlled even in the most slippery conditions by the application of new driving techniques, such as left-foot braking. For example, in the early 1960s, the 850cc Saab 96 had only 75bhp yet clocked up a brace of Monte Carlo wins and a hat-trick on the RAC Rally. It was shouldered out of the way by the Mini Cooper S, whose 110bhp gave it the best power-to-weight ratio of the front-wheel-drive cars of the era. Conventional cars such as the Ford Lotus Cortina could win forest rallies, but not the majority of European events.

It was during this time that the Italians were becoming more interested in rallies. Alfa Romeo had always encouraged participation with their Giulias and Giuliettas, while Lancia, in their post-F1 era, had supported private drivers in Appias and Aurelias; the latter won Monte Carlo and Liège-Rome-Liège for them. But now Lancia wanted to be more hands-on.

Cesare Fiorio, son of Lancia's commercial director, Sandro, had a vision of Lancia becoming a major player in European rallying. He could not have known then that his vision would be fulfilled many times over.

Lancia were an independent ➤





# LANCIA FULVIA: V4 VICTORY

THIS INNOVATIVE TURIN MANUFACTURER BUILT SOME OF THE WILDEST RALLY CARS EVER. BUT THEY ALL STEMMED, WRITES JOHN DAVENPORT, FROM THIS SIMPLE LITTLE NEAT COUPE

photography by LAT



*Despite being the only crew with no road penalties on the 1972 Monte Carlo, Harry Källström and Gunnar Häggbom finished second*





*René and Claudine Trautmann  
finished 13th on the 1968 Monte,  
and won the team prize along with  
Pat Moss and Bengt Söderström*



company; short of money, in other words. Thus the 'modern' rally programme started under the old system of private drivers running their own cars under the aegis of HF Squadra Corse. The factory-based operation started out supplying privateers with know-how and parts, and finally grew into running its own cars. These were mainly Flavias powered by the flat four-cylinder 1.8-litre boxer engine, and with either the standard Bertone coupé bodywork or the highly aggressive and lighter Zagato option.

The Fulvia was launched in 1964 as the replacement for the Appia and Aprilia. Initially, it was only available as a saloon with a 1091cc engine giving a mere 58bhp. This was soon followed by a more powerful version known as the 2C, with almost 80bhp. And it was as a four-door saloon that the Fulvia created its first major impression by winning the Rally of the Flowers (later the San Remo Rally) in 1965, driven by Leo Cella. The conditions on that event were tricky, with a high proportion of the roads coated with ice or snow. Cella's smooth driving style, and the agility of the new Fulvia, proved that it had potential.

The win also provided the excuse needed to make HF Squadra Corse a more formal part of the Lancia factory. Fiorio was retained as a paid consultant and the team was allocated space in an old part of the Turin factory. This modest Reparto Corse was soon to become a staging post for a multitude of rally drivers, for whom fame and fortune beckoned thanks to the Fulvia.

For 1966, Ove Andersson, the amiable Swede who had been number two at Saab for several years, joined Cella. The Fulvia Coupé had made an impressive debut on the previous Tour de Corse, Cella finishing eighth despite losing third gear. He did even better on the Monte and was fifth. But several things have to be noted about this result: firstly, the beautiful coupé was running in Group 1, which meant that it was heavier than the lightened Corsica car, and yet still only had about 80bhp; secondly, the Mini Coopers, Cortinas and Hillman Imps were excluded from the results; and thirdly, René Trautmann and Ove Andersson finished second and third overall in Flavia Coupés.

Back in Turin, Fiorio already knew that, in this form at least, the



'Sputnik' Källström and 'Twinkle' Haggböm celebrate 1970 RAC win

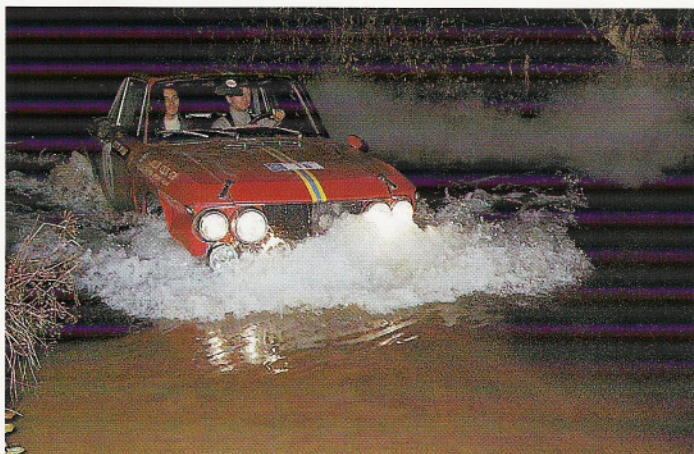
## FROM THE COCKPIT

MY FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE FULVIA COUPÉ WAS ON THE 1966 RAC RALLY WITH OVE ANDERSSON. This was a 1.2 HF with an extensively reworked Facetti engine. Just as well, for we lost third gear going into Wales and Ove drove all the stages to Oulton Park by pulling 9000rpm in second and changing directly into top. We had other problems, including a long stop in the Lake District with a blocked fuel pipe that was eventually bypassed using a Parker pen barrel to join two lengths of pipe. Otherwise we would have been second instead of seventh.

Those early Fulvias were standard in many ways. The gearlever was a metre long and inclined at 45deg. On bumps, the lever's inertia was capable of disengaging, so part of the co-driver's function was to hold it in place. This was a problem finally solved by the arrival of the five-speed 'box and remote lever with the 1.6 HF.

Reparto Corse was always trying to reduce the car's weight. Fiorio came up with extremely lightweight seats that would horrify modern safety scrutineers. They comprised a thin plastic shell with horizontal strips of foam stuck to it at regular intervals. The whole structure deformed to your body when you lowered yourself into it.

I did a full year alongside Ove at Lancia before spending a season away with him in the Ford team. In 1969, I rallied with Sandro Munari, and then did two seasons with Simo Lampinen, all in Fulvias. **John Davenport**



Colin Malkin/Keith Wood head for retirement on the 1969 RAC Rally

Fulvia Coupé was not competitive with the Cooper S. Within two months, two steps towards the solution had been taken: the Fulvia Coupé 1.2 HF was launched and homologated. This had getting on for 90bhp in standard form and an all-up weight of 820kg thanks to aluminium doors, boot and bonnet and plastic side windows.

Results picked up almost immediately: Cella won the Rally of the Flowers and San Martino di Castorossa, while Andersson was third on the Flowers, fourth on the Acropolis and seventh on the RAC. But in truth, more was needed since Porsche was now rallying seriously and the Cooper S was still superior in terms of power-to-weight.

For the Monte Carlo of 1967, the 1.2 HF was still the peak of Lancia's homologation curve but, thanks to a determined drive by Andersson, only 13sec separated it from Rauno Aaltonen's victorious Cooper S, and it came home comfortably ahead of Vic Elford's 911. In fact, there were three Fulvias in the top five places.

Fiorio had the 1.3 HF ready for homologation. This was a 'stroked' version of the 1.2 and the output was lifted to just over 100bhp, which meant that, for the first time, the Fulvia Coupé had more power in competition guise than the Mini. The 1.3 made its first international appearance on the Acropolis, where Andersson was second. He went on to win in Spain, while Pauli Toivonen was an excellent seventh on the 1000 Lakes.

But it was a young Italian called Sandro Munari whose star was truly in the ascendant. He won several minor internationals in Italy, was second on the Geneva and Spanish rallies, and then won the Tour de Corse outright. This last victory was actually with a 1440cc engine, his Fulvia running in the prototype category. But nevertheless, the effect of an Italian driver winning a premier French rally in an Italian car was sufficient to lift the Lancia effort onto the front pages.

For the time being, the Reparto Corse was stuck with the 1.3 HF and campaigned it steadily throughout 1968, up until October 1, 1969, which is when the 1.6HF (1584cc) engine was homologated.

But right at the beginning of 1968, while the euphoria of the Corsican victory was still raging, fate struck the team a cruel blow. A crash ➡



on a Yugoslav motorway during the Monte Carlo Rally killed Luciano Lombardini and put Munari in hospital. Lombardini was one of the backroom boys of Lancia's success, while Munari was just coming to his peak as a driver. Sandro was out of the sport for several months.

Worse, Cella was killed testing an Alfa T33. So it was during this period that Fiorio took an enforced opportunity to try new drivers – and new events. He lost Andersson to Ford and Toivonen to Porsche, but brought in Hannu Mikkola, Pat Moss-Carlsson, Harry Källström, Aaltonen and Tony Fall to join Italian regulars Munari, Sergio Barbasio and Raffaele Pinto.

The results were equally varied: victories in Portugal (in 1968), San Remo, Spain and Sestriere (in '69). The team did the Safari for the first time, in '69, and embarked upon a steep learning curve that was to continue with the Stratos and 037 before success finally came Lancia's way with the Delta in '88.

During 1969, the five-speed 'box was homologated in the 1.3 HF, which was great relief for the drivers. The previous year, Fiorio had noticed that it was allowed to have an overdrive without any need to put it into full production. This was intended to allow retro-fitting of electro-mechanical overdrives such as were made by Laycock. Fiorio had a second, two-speed, gearbox fitted to the rear of the existing four-speed. Two gear levers allowed the driver to select – in theory – seven overall ratios. (Pat Moss always said that she reckoned that the little second lever was there to hang your handbag on!) It was a modification that was not much tried in rallies but did have some value in races such as the Targa Florio, where Munari and Pinto finished just outside the top 10, ahead of a string of private Porsche 911s and a 907.

At last, the 1.6 HF was made in sufficient quantity to be admitted to major events. Its debut as a homologated car was in October 1969 at Elba, where Barbasio won outright. This happily coincided with Fiat's takeover of Lancia. Further victories followed before the end of the year for Källström, who won in Spain and on the RAC to clinch the European Championship.

The Fulvia was now at its fittest, with 132bhp, a well-sorted five-speed gearbox, and knowledge from



*Pat Moss and Liz Nystrom's Gp2 1.3 finished ninth on the 1969 Monte*

**'Pat Moss always said she reckoned that the little second lever was there to hang your handbag on!'**



*Five works Fulvias finished in the top 10 on the 1968 San Remo Rally*



*Amilcare Ballestrieri/Arnaldo Bernacchini secured the 1972 San Remo*

three years of intense competition. But, as is so often the way, the rivals had not stood still: Alpine's A110 was more reliable, and that, too, was shortly to have a 1.6-litre engine; Porsche was still around with its 911S; Ford was just upgrading the Escort from TC to BDA; Datsun had their 240Z; and Saab's 96 V4 was still winning rallies.

In 1970, Källström was second on the San Remo and the Polish Rally, won in Bavaria and, in the face of very stiff opposition, won the RAC Rally for a second time. New recruit Simo Lampinen was third in the 1000 Lakes and won in Portugal and Austria, but none of these results brought Lancia the titles or fame for which it was searching.

Much the same was true of 1971. Third in Sweden, eighth in Safari, third on the Acropolis, second in Portugal and sixth on the RAC; the Fulvia was always there, but not in front. Behind the scenes, there were plans for a Fulvia replacement. A Stratos prototype had been shown at the 1970 Turin Show. However, these were Fiorio's plans and not necessarily those of his new bosses, who would have preferred to see a Fiat in the forefront. Something was desperately needed to launch the Stratos into orbit.

This 'something', the Fulvia 1.6 HF, finally delivered in spades. One thing that had always been missing from the Reparto Corse's rallying CV was a major Monte Carlo victory. Now, in 1972, it came with Munari storming home past the fallen vehicles of the Alpine Renault team and finishing almost 11min ahead of Gérard Larrousse's works Porsche.

The Fulvia went on to win the tough Moroccan Rally and San Remo, was third in Sweden, second in Acropolis and fourth on the RAC, all of which was sufficient for Lancia to secure the International Championship for Makes. Second in the ICM was Fiat with its 124 Spyder, which had also been soundly duffed up by Lancia on all but one of the Italian Rally Championship rounds.

It was just the right moment for Fiorio to play his cards and get Fiat management's backing, first for production of a Stratos and then to get a Ferrari engine earmarked for the project. The story of Stratos is well known, but this talismanic car, rallying's first supercar, might never have happened had it not been for the pretty little Fulvia.