

THE MAN WHO SHAPES METAL

SCAGLIETTI'S APPRENTICE

Impelled by his incredible natural talent, Egidio worked for the famous Modena auto stylists during the 1960s and 1970s, modeling sheets of anonymous aluminum with his hands, transforming them into the bodywork that "dressed" some of the most striking road and racing Ferraris. Today collectors look to him to restore them.

Text by Gilberto Milano - photos by Roberto Brancolini

There is no shortage of good restorers in the auto world, especially in the golden triangle between Reggio Emilia, Modena, and Bologna, home of some of the best specialists restorers of Ferraris, Lamborghinis, Maseratis, Stanguellinis, and classic sports cars in general. However, very few of these can boast a direct descendance, in a certain sense of "paternity", with the cars that they renovate today. One of these is certainly **Egidio Brandoli**, born in 1940, possibly the best qualified of all for skillfully "shaping" some of the most outstanding Ferraris of all time. The reason is simple: **he was involved in the creation of many of these models**. Egidio Brandoli is not only one of the best auto body makers and panel beaters active today, but also a living witness of a special part of Ferrari history, from which, as the years go by, ever fewer direct participants remain. **From 1963 to 1980 Brandoli worked at the Scaglietti auto body workshop**, seventeen of the most fertile years for the creativity of this mythical Modena auto body maker, and when vehicles were born that send a tingle down the spine just to mention them: we are talking about the **Ferrari 250 LM, 250 GTL, 330 Sport Prototype, as well as the 275 GTB, 275 GTB/4, 365 GTB/4 Daytona, 365 GTS/4 Daytona Spider, 512 S, 512 M, 312 P, 365 GT4 BB, 308 GTB and GTS, obviously without forgetting the Dino 206 Sport Prototype, 206 GT, 246 GT and GTS, and 308 GTS**, only to cite the best known. All vehicles that Egidio Brandoli laid his hands upon, in some cases even modeling something of his very own.

Egidio was taught by Sergio Scaglietti and despite his young age he was among the most able and reliable of the staff. The young boy was entrusted with the most complicated and demanding bodywork and aluminum beating jobs. Abilities that, combined with his professional commitment, would later bring him to be appointed second in command to Scaglietti, and which would help him again, in his personal adventure after the purchase of Scaglietti by Fiat, when he decided to commit himself directly by opening his own auto body workshop in Montale Rangone, in the province of Modena.

*“He is not just one of the best auto bodywork experts in the market,
he is also one of the few remaining active witnesses
of an exciting chapter in Ferrari’s history.”*

“I just managed to play a part in the last **250 GTO**, for which I made all the internal elements and the front mudguards under the very enveloping wheel arch, which had to have a special shape”, recalls Egidio. The young Brandoli was not limited to carrying out orders and producing bodywork parts. Sometimes he himself was called on to find the most suitable solution for a specific model: the shape of the back of the **512S** and the position of the fog lamps on the **Berlinetta Boxer** racing prototype are two examples of details born out of **Brandoli’s inspiration**.

“Originally at Scaglietti” recalls Brandoli, “there were no scale drawings to refer to. It was a question of taste, of imagination. The shapes arose on the spot with everyone’s contribution, in particular the workshop foreman **Giancarlo Guerra**, a true style wizard. We followed the instructions that **Enzo Ferrari** gave to Scaglietti, and we also drew inspiration from vehicles designed by other major producers, who had designers and style centers. Sergio was given a free hand by Ferrari, he only had to improve on the idea that the “**Drake**” had in mind. The “**Commander**” indicated what he wanted to construct and then, three times a week, at eight o’clock in the evening he presented himself at the workshop to see what we had come up with. If he liked the work then we carried on, otherwise we had to adapt. ‘**You could do something new, more attractive**’, he would say when he was not satisfied”. Some masterpieces were born in this way that today collectors exchange for millions of euro. And which Egidio restores, possibly like no-one else in the world.

He already worked as a panel beater at 13 years of age, when he started shaping aluminum at an auto body shop in Montale Rangone, but it was at Scaglietti that he perfected his art. “It was he who inspired me with a great desire to always improve. In particular, he taught me that you had to care for cars as if they were people, you had to respect them”. Egidio can see at a glance whether a shape is correct, whether a curve is original or if something does not match up. And for a collector who is considering investing hundreds of thousands of euro in a restoration, there is no better guarantee. This is what his old customers know so well, having turned to him right from the start for their cars, and today it continues to attract new customers from all over the world.

His son Roberto has worked alongside him since 1984, the heir and continuation of the paternal tradition, to whom he has passed on the secrets and experience of the trade. His daughter **Francesca** deals with the accounts and his other daughter, **Cecilia**, is in charge of communications. But Egidio is not giving up and is in the workshop every day, where four other young men work alongside Roberto and himself.

The restoration and repair of the bodywork of all the Ferrari models constructed from the 1950s to the end of the 1970s is their main activity, together with the construction of individual bodywork parts to be sent all over the world. But their ability, when required, is also applied to other sports cars of different makes. The assessment methods are still the traditional ones. “When a vehicle arrives we first make a full assessment of its condition. We have to establish what condition the patient is in. The actual restoration begins when we have identified all the problems that we have to deal with”, underlines Roberto Brandoli. “Then we start dismantling the whole auto and every individual part is examined, stripped of paint, restored and refitted. If a part has to be reconstructed and we do not have the die on hand, we make one, matching it against an original model. We complete the entire process for restoring the bodywork and components, and then we refit them. We do not deal with mechanics, but if a customer asks we can provide a complete restoration service in collaboration with specialists that we select together with the collector himself”.