



# Lancia and De Virgilio: At the Center

*Geoffrey Goldberg*

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## **Lancia and De Virgilio: At the Center** Geoffrey Goldberg

In the postwar era Lancia was the most innovative and design-driven automobile company in Italy, if not the world. Francesco De Virgilio was one of the company's leading designer-engineers whose quiet drive for excellence reflected the company's goals. His beautiful technical drawings illustrate that period's tension between traditional artisanal processes and mass production.

De Virgilio worked in the 1940s and 1950s with Gianni Lancia, the founder's son, and Vittorio Jano, the brilliant engineer who had designed race-winning engines for Alfa Romeo. De Virgilio himself was responsible for Lancia's famous V6 engine, the first in production, used in their successful, trendsetting Aurelia. His fundamental V6 architecture is still used by most manufacturers to this day. Having married into the Lancia family, De Virgilio remained an intimate part of the Lancia company into the 1970s, and worked on the Stratos rally car.

Despite his technical achievements and popularity within the company, De Virgilio's contributions have been largely overlooked until now. With full access to the De Virgilio family archives, author Geoff Goldberg, himself a long-time Lancia Aurelia owner, uses original documents, technical drawings, and photographs to explain the ideas and personalities at Lancia and De Virgilio himself. Goldberg guides the reader through early work that led to the design and development of the Aurelia, and its racing team, as well as other important models including the D50 Grand Prix car, and the Appia, Fulvia and Stratos.

This is automotive and social history best understood from the inside. The atmosphere of post-war Italy is magnificently reflected by both the Lancia company's culture and the De Virgilio family.

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