

JAGUAR BERTONE CARS

By Neville Barlow

The Jaguar B99 was a concept car first shown by Bertone at the 2011 Geneva Motor Show. It was shown as a compact executive B99 version and a sports car version the B99 GT. It was styled more on the traditional Jaguars of the 1980's.

The B99 is 4,500mm long, constructed of aluminium and featured suicide doors. The power train is a hybrid unit developed by Bertone and featuring a 1.4 litre range extending engine with 2 electric motors of 201 hp each, driving the rear wheels. Maximum power output of the car 570 bhp with CO2 emissions of 30g pkm. The B99 now stands for B for Bertone and 99 to celebrate the founder's 99th birthday.



It is, however, with some regret that I have to report that the House of Bertone is no more. On March 18th 2014 after having ceased trading because of financial difficulties, Bertone confirmed that it will be declared bankrupt, unless a buyer is found by the end of April 2014. However, the firm has now been closed down.

The company was founded in 1912 by Giovanni Bertone. Designer and 19-year-old son Nucci Bertone took charge of the company after World War II and after his death in 1997 Bertone was headed by his widow Lilli Bertone. Indeed, a family company for over 100 years.



The Bertone company was important for many reasons. Not only was it a design company at the edge of innovative automotive styling but they manufactured over 100 cars of their own design.



Jaguar 1958 Bertone XK150

Many were in limited numbers but some such as the Fiat 850 Spider they produced over 140,000 units between 1965 and 1972.

By 1970 Bertone had a workforce of 1500. His partnership with Lamborghini led to the Espada which was inspired by the Jaguar concept Pirana. He later designed the Lamborghini Jarama and Urraco. Also, at this time he

designed the Lancia Stratos, which had numerous victories in world rally championships.

In 1972 aged 88 Giovanni Bertone died. In the same year the Fiat X19 came out and 160,000 had been manufactured by Bertone by the time production ceased in 1988. I am sure many club members will remember that gorgeous little car.

On February 26th 1997 Nuccio Bertone died, leaving the world to grieve "one of the greatest coachbuilders of the century" stated Fulvio Cinti, a renowned car historian.



Jaguar 1966 Bertone FT

In 2009 the Bertone plant was taken over by Fiat and became a service company with staff numbers now only 300.

Jaguar B99 was one of their last projects. It was in fact the 5th Jaguar design produced by Bertone. The previous ones were the 1957 Bertone Jaguar XK150 S of which there was only 3 made, all quite different from one another. The Jaguar FT was built on an E Type 4.2 litre 2 + 2 chassis in 1967. In 1977 the Jaguar Ascot was built on an XJS chassis. All these cars are documented and exist to this day.



Jaguar Bertone Ascot

Neville