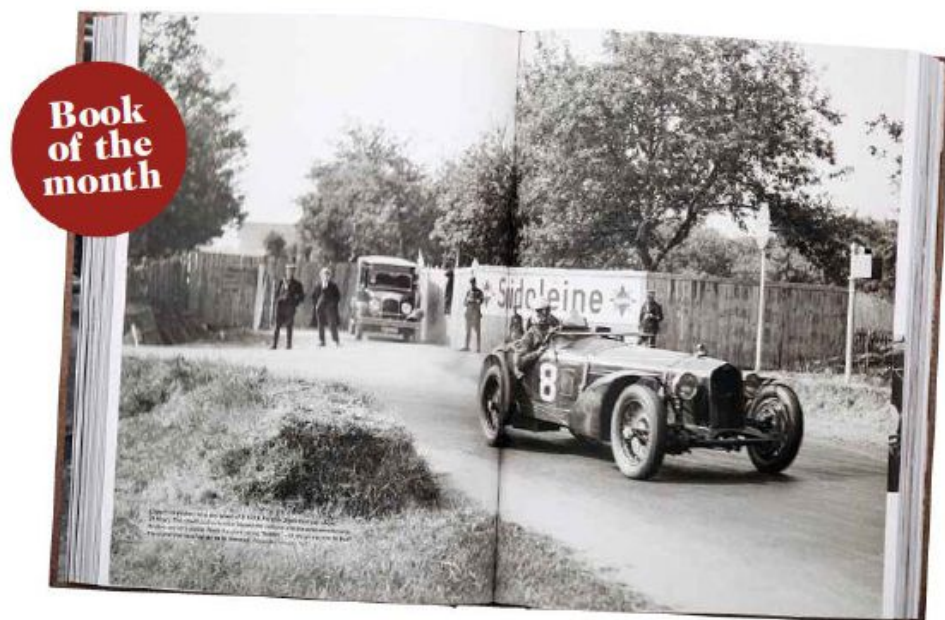


# Books

REVIEWED BY OCTANE STAFF AND CONTRIBUTORS



## Joseph Figoni Volume One: Alfa Romeo

PETER M LARSEN & BEN ERICKSON, *Moteurs!*, \$195, ISBN 978 8 797288 20 7



It sometimes feels a little perverse to award Book of the Month status to a pricey, limited-edition work that relatively few people can afford. You have to *really* want a book like this to justify spending the thick end of 200 quid on it.

However, it would be even more perverse to exclude such a book on the grounds of elitism. This hefty hardback is, literally, a work of art and as such fully deserves its equally hefty price tag. What's more, it is pretty much guaranteed only to go up in value rather than down, which may be a useful bargaining chip on the domestic front.

What we have here is the first volume in a *catalogue raisonné* of the chassis bodied by notable Parisian *couturier* Joseph Herménégilde Louis Figoni. This one is devoted to Alfa-Romeo (the name was hyphenated back then); the next will be on Bugatti, followed by separate books on Delage, Delahaye and Talbot-Lago. The series will be rounded off by an A-Z of miscellaneous other Figoni-bodied marques and a biography of Figoni. As the authors admit, 'It is a big project.'

If this initial volume is anything to go by, the complete series will be quite fantastic. Wisely, Peter Larsen and Ben Erickson have collaborated with Alfa historian Simon Moore to avoid duplicating material regarding the 8C 2300 in his seminal work *The Legendary 2.3*. Besides, the focus here is on the coachwork of the cars as originally delivered, rather than their later histories or the technical aspect of the chassis. The same is true for the 6C 1750, which has been well covered elsewhere.

The introduction explains how Figoni kept its production records and sets out the difficulties faced by the authors – not least the fact that Figoni's production book for 1935 onwards is believed to have been stolen relatively recently. Then there comes a chapter on Alfa's first presence in France, including some fabulous shots of the Art Deco showroom built in Paris during 1926/27. Further sections follow on personalities such as Luigi Chinetti and Raymond Sommer, and on the Figoni-bodied Le Mans cars, before getting into the meat of all the individual Alfa-Romeo (sic) chassis that he clothed.

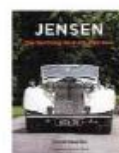
Every car is illustrated with an incredible selection of both period and, where available, modern images. Appendices include a lengthy chapter on French concours events, a brief look at some other Alfas bodied by contemporary French coachbuilders, a glossary of terms, and much more. We can't wait for the A-Z volume that promises to include all the long-forgotten Chryslers, Fords and Simca 8s... MD



## Ferrari Formula 1 Car by Car

STUART CODLING, *Motorbooks*, £40, ISBN 978 0 7603 6777 3

If you're looking for an attractive and easy-to-navigate overview of Ferrari's F1 cars, this is a good place to start: not massively in-depth, but comprehensive and very well illustrated. Starting with the 125 F1 of the late 1940s, it typically devotes two to four pages to each model, ending with the SF1000 of the ill-fated 2020 season. There's a useful appendix of Ferrari works team results for each year, slightly marred by the fact that the 1952 table appears twice, while that for 1951 has been omitted. MD



## Jensen: the Surviving 3 1/2 & 4 1/2 Litre Cars

DAVID DAVIES,  
*Independent Publishing*, \$25,  
ISBN 978 1 800495 60 9

This self-published book covers an era of Jensen history that even few marque enthusiasts are aware of. Guilty, m'lud. Hence a comprehensive 300-page paperback on the subject is a welcome addition to already bowing bookshelves. With a foreword by marque guru Richard Calver, it does exactly what it says on the tin. Brilliantly. There are fascinating tales of the lives of all 22 of these glamorous pre-war survivors, excellently supported with photos and as much info on the cast of owners as on the cars. JE