



The sweeping lines of designs such as this 1932 Alfa Romeo 8C 2300 stand amongst Figoni's artworks

# Don't just judge it by the cover alone...

What lies beneath the lovely exterior is a true work of passion, devoted to some classic automotive artwork

**I**F I WENT IN FOR JUDGING BY COVERS, I'd be smiling on this with its lovely speckle-bronze finish, and the fact that it's packed with Alfa Romeos is for me the perfect cake to go under the icing. Unusually, this *catalogue raisonné* begins by applauding the work of others, notably Simon Moore, even advising us to look out for his next 2.3 8C book. It's their way of saying that the book is not going to spend as much time on the mechanicals as it otherwise might. Sound judgement, as this is about coachwork, specifically that produced by the *carrosserie* of Joseph Figoni in Paris.

With access to the firm's sales books the authors are starting from the horse's mouth, and continue with much information about both the Figoni firm and Alfa Romeo in Paris,

including its very striking modernist HQ, and the significant link between the two Italian expats Figoni and Luigi Chinetti. "Pasta is more bonding than *pommes frites*," it says. Those early days have their fascination, illuminated by period adverts including one offering different racing tails for your Le Mans 8C2300, and a terrific cubist Alfa poster by René Magritte, and one section is about the Le Mans entries. But the meat here (to mix culinary metaphors) is the catalogue of each chassis, its history, its original body and changes since then, with all phases illustrated if humanly possible.

With designs ranging from skimpy racing torpedoes to sinuous and streamlined road cars, often featuring in concours (a whole appendix on these features some stunning machines), one marvels at the effusion of creativity that can be applied to the same chassis. As well as at the dedication that produces books like this...



**Joseph Figoni**  
Peter M Larsen and  
Ben Erickson  
**Moteurs!, £190,**  
**ISBN 9788797288207**