

Birth of the Badge

Giuseppe Merosi, first designer of A.L.F.A. cars, had at last completed, in the first months of 1910, all the drawings regarding the particulars of the 24 HP model. The Managing Director cav. Ugo Stella, in the June of the same year, took care in modifying the legal name of the Factory of the "Portello" from "S.I.A. Darracq-Milano" with the new one Anonima Lombarda Fabbrica Automobili-Milano. On that occasion, the Board of Directors charged Merosi to study also the badge to be applied on the radiator of the new car and immediately he talked about it with his direct collaborators.

On the next day, the youngest draftsman of the technical department, Mr. Romano Cattaneo (brother of the Isotta Fraschini designer engineer Giustino Cattaneo) went to Mr. Merosi and related to him that while, at the Castello square terminus, he was waiting for the tramway would have taken him to the factory, looking up at whole historical stronghold, it flashed across his mind that the visconteous adder could figure well on the badge for the milanese car.

Merosi judged Mr. Cattaneo's idea very good and together they began to make a sketch adding the cross of Milan town surrounded by the inscriptions: ALFA MILANO separated by two Savoia's knots.

The Managing Director liked the idea begun in this way by Mr. Merosi and Mr. Cattaneo was charged to make the definitive drawing for the preparation of the suggestive many-colored badge of the milanese trade.

News on the Badge

The badge which had been chosen as trade mark for the Alfa cars and that Alfa Romeo went on placing on the car grill is a combination of the two symbols forming the emblem of the Milan city. In the 1st half of the badge the red cross on white ground recalls the heroic deed of the Milanese Giovanni da Rho who was the first to climb Jerusalem walls and place there the cross symbol during the first Crusade in the Holy Land.

In the right half the 4 fold snake represents the Visconti's family badge. In fact, to Ottone Visconti, founder of the noble milanese family, is ascribed the legend of the killing in duel, in the course the first Crusade, of a Saracen who had on the shield, as blazon, a picture representing a snake devouring a man; the visconteous badge should be derived just from this blazon.

The use of the badge of Milan and Visconti's snake, symbols of initiative and power, chosen by the milanese Factory, represents a wish for its success in the world.

The outside diameter of the badge was 2.56 in both on the Alfa cars from 1910 to 1915 and from 1920 to 1925. When adding the wreath of laurel the outside diameter was increased from 2.56 to 2.99 in. From 1930 on the badge as well as the wreath were reduced; the outside diameter of the latter was of 2.36 in. In 1932, on the cars bound to

France, badges reading ALFA ROMEO PARIS were applied; later on for the different foreign countries only the writing ALFA ROMEO with three figure-of-eight knots was used.

Since 1945 the badge outside diameter was reduced to 2.12 in; both for the pressed metal and the enameled metal one, and later on also for the plastic one.

In 1972, with the start of production of the new “Alfasud” model at the new industrial plant expressly made at Pomigliano d’ Arco (Naples) the writing in the blue circle of the badge was reduced to the only name Alfa Romeo.

[Followed by two pages of the various badges on pages 811 and 812.]

This material excerpted from:

Fusi, Luigi. (1978). *Alfaromeo All Cars from 1910*. Milano, Italy: Emmeti grafica, (pp. 808-812).

Again, this material is not in the public domain and is subject to copyright, permissions, and correct citing.

One further note, this is copied directly as printed in the text, complete with draftsman being misspelled as in the original, the incorrect grammar due to the translation, and the incorrect capitalization rules by our English standards.