

AN ITALIAN PARTY FROCK



Those of you who attended the 2010 Bristol Italian AutoMoto Festival will no doubt recall a Triumph Italia, which had just been imported from Switzerland by the late Tony Ranson, occupying pride of place. These cars were transformed from the traditional-looking Triumph TR3 by the deft strokes of stylist Giovanni Michelotti's pen into a very Italianate creation and were quite a contrast to the base vehicle, having something of a mini-Maserati look about them. It was the purchase of an example requiring extensive restoration by a friend that turned my thoughts in their direction once again, but before we look at Rob's car and the task he has before him a bit of background might be in order.



from this...to this



Created at the behest of the Italian Triumph importer and constructed at Vignale, although 1000 cars were projected only a figure in the low 300's was ever achieved during the 1959-62 production run and of these only six were RHD. Unsold cars were sent to America as late as 1964 and even



some of these were not sold until 1965, so the car cannot be said to have been the



success that had been envisaged. However, it is an interesting marriage of British mechanics and Italian styling and obviously a precursor of the later TR's in appearance, which of course came from the same designer.

It has to be said that the car has aged very well in terms of appearance, as the pictures of the restored examples show. On the other hand, Rob certainly has his work cut out in bringing his car up to the same standard, something which



may be

hampered by the fact that the Italian parts bins of the day were raided to provide sundry parts, so their sources are often unknown until some chance discovery of another make with them fitted.

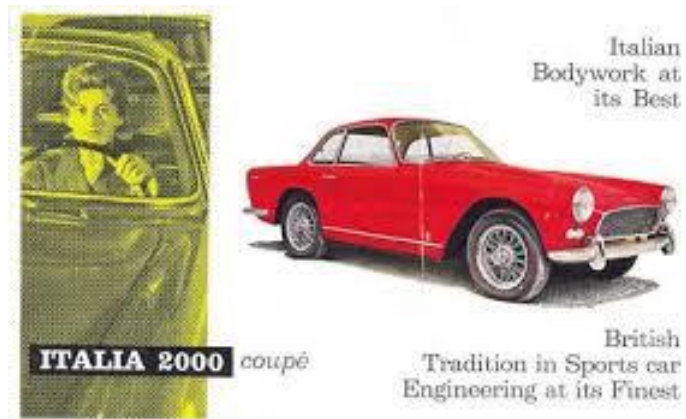
Rob's car was imported from the States in 2014 and is number 27. It's low mileage of only 28000 and general completeness mitigate against its many years of obvious neglect, but knowing Rob I have every confidence that it will one day emerge as a shining example. It is only a matter of time, but quite a bit of it as the pictures included here well illustrate!



It is always difficult to understand how interesting cars are allowed to get into the condition shown above and below!



All photographs courtesy of Rob Lovell except the silver car by Paul Hanmore





MJB