

THE BRITISH ITALIANS

Even those who profess no interest in Italian styling and own British vehicles sometimes have a hidden link with members of the IAMC. At one time there was quite a bit of input into the apparently-staid British motor industry by Italian designers and it can easily be forgotten that some of those well-loved British products only look as they do due to their in-house styling departments having *not* been responsible for them.

To begin with one of my favourites, how about the Scammell Routeman? At a time when most UK domestic commercial



vehicles had a no-nonsense, traditional appearance, the **Michelotti** cab that graced this product was a breath of fresh air and introduced some nice styling touches to a maker whose



trucks were always rather utilitarian. Of course, almost all of the post-1960 Triumph car bodies came from the same source and included some very pretty and well-proportioned models, not to mention the Triumph Italia above: Hard to believe it's a TR3 under there.



Michelotti at one time worked for **Vignale** and they restyled the Phase 3 Vanguard for Standard, Triumph's associate, who actually incorporated the Vignale name into the models title, possibly in the hope of giving it a little Italian charm.

Farina, as it was before becoming Pininfarina, was rather audaciously hired by BMC to give their entire model range a makeover in an association which lasted a good number of years

and saw the production of a range of models for the Corporation's constituents. A great amount of 'badge engineering' meant that some versions of the same car came off better than others, but one of the most important must surely be the A40, whose Countryman 'hatchback' design was years ahead of its time. Ironically, along with a rebodied version of our Mini, the A40 was also made in Italy as BMC owned Innocenti and there a model with a one-piece rear door really *did* make it an early mass-production hatch.



Quickly setting aside the misuse of the **Ghia** name by Ford (calling a Fiesta model a Ghia for over thirty years must rank as one of the longest-running pieces of automotive abuse ever), let's take a look at **Zagato**, so often on the leftfield of automotive appearance. While they turned their attentions to producing



various special versions of some already-expensive British cars, their relationship with equally eccentric Bristol saw them styling the 412 model for that maker, having previously radically reworked the interesting Hillman Imp into this Zimp, although only three were ever made.

Frua was never one of the big names, but possibly for this very reason got to style the 428 for AC and after **Touring** dabbled with the odd Aston Martin they tidied up the Sunbeam Alpine and then produced their own version of it, the Sunbeam Venezia,



for the Italian market, perhaps more of an Italian Briton than a British Italian. **MJB**