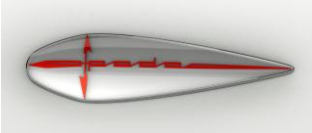
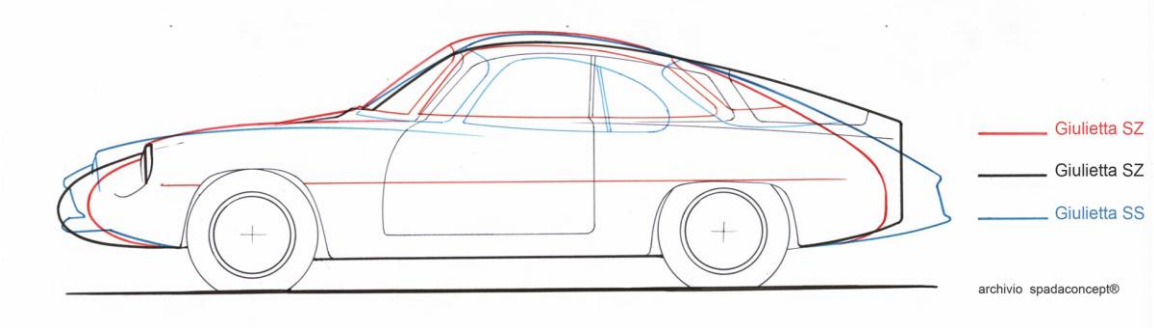
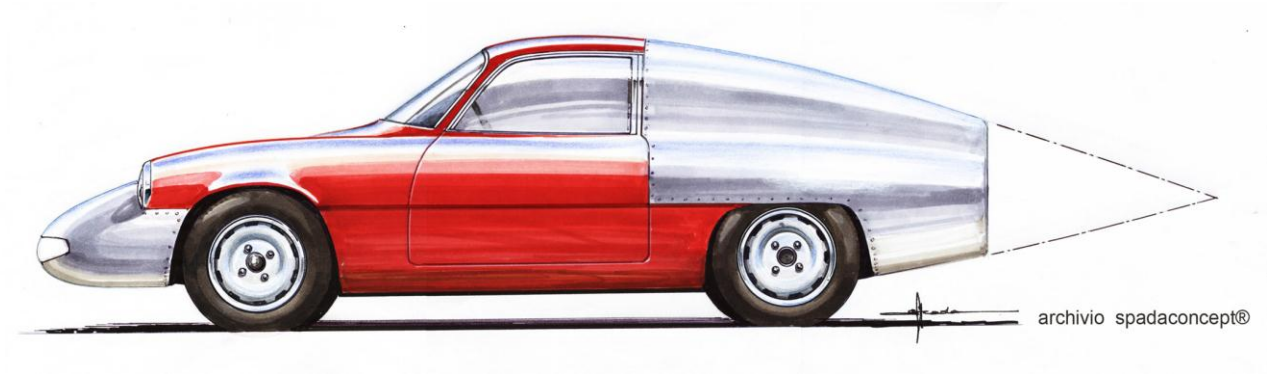


CODA TRONCA STORY

Right from the very first days when I started working as a designer for Carozzeria Zagato, I found myself plunged into the world of racing. Coachbuilders focused almost all their production on racing and Elio Zagato himself competed successfully in the Gran Turismo category. This is why everything I have designed since then has been permeated by a philosophy of constant improvement and perfection based on the results of a series of experiences.



The *1300 Gran Turismo* category races in 1959 and '60 were entirely dominated by the *Sprint Veloce* version of the *Alfa Romeo Giulietta*. In order to keep up this successful run, Alfa Romeo decided to commission two more specialised variants for the races. The one for fast circuits, which became the *Sprint Speciale*, was entrusted to Bertone while the other went to Zagato. This was the *SZ*, for hillclimb races. Instead of the chassis for the *Sprint* (2380 wheelbase), it was decided to use the shorter one for the roadster (2250 wheelbase) as it was lighter and easier to handle.
The result was that, even though it looked compact and apparently less aerodynamic, the *Giulietta SZ* remained unbeatable even in speed racing. This superiority, which was maintained in road racing, was attacked on fast tracks by the Lotus *Elite*. It is worth bearing in mind that the Alfa Romeo was based on a standard production chassis, while the Lotus had been created as a sports car with a special chassis, ideal distribution of weights, and specially designed suspension. From the mechanical point of view, the *Giulietta* had by this time reached the peak of its development, so in order to increase its speed we needed to concentrate on the bodywork. I decided that we needed to lengthen the body and, as an initial test, I took the profiles designed by Frank Costin in 1957 for a Maserati 5000 Sport which was driven by Stirling Moss at Le Mans. Adapting the lines to the size of the Giulietta, I had a cage made of rods built directly onto the car and a worker modelled this new shape in aluminium sheets. This operation lengthened both the rear end and the front. These new appendages were screwed directly onto the existing bodywork and, when it was ready, we carried out a series of tests. With Elio at the wheel and me next to him with a stopwatch we carried out a series of kilometre runs on the Milan-Bergamo motorway, with me taking the time of each one. After returning to the starting point, we took off all the fairings and then did the same kilometres again, recording the times in order to see the difference.



It was an empirical approach, but it worked. Even though we did not yet have a wind tunnel and electronic timing systems, we could still immediately see the effects of any changes. Measuring travelling times with the same car, in the same weather conditions, and on the same stretch of road provided very reliable comparisons.
However, we were not satisfied with this initial test so I tried out other shapes until I realised that we needed to stretch the rear considerably in order to get a significant increase in speed. I therefore decided to try out Prof. Kamm's theory: that of slicing off a long tail with a clean cut. We tried out the car with its new aerodynamic appendage on the usual stretch of road. Covering one kilometre in just over 16 seconds meant we had achieved a speed of about 220 kph! I thought I had made a mistake with the stopwatch but Elio, who was at the wheel, confirmed that the maximum revs had indeed gone up. We were very pleased when we returned to the workshop, but very perplexed about the strange shape that had enabled us to obtain such a sensational result. How could we use that shape?

In the philosophy that I have adopted throughout my career as a designer, function needs to be expressed as form. This may require courage, but it may open up a new direction.
The definitive version of the *SZ* was ready to make its debut on the racetrack in June 1961. On 29 June, the *SZ coda tronca* [literally, "truncated tail"] was driven to pole position by Elio Zagato himself and went on to win the race with ease. This new variant of the *Giulietta* enabled Alfa Romeo to maintain its supremacy in the category while a new GT was being developed: this was to be the *Giulia TZ*.
Even before this, I had already started creating the first designs for the *Giulia TZ*, but they were still influenced by traditional shapes. On the prototype, which Alfa Romeo wanted as a roadster, I knew this was not the ideal configuration in terms of aerodynamics, so I made a very high, headrest-like rear end in order to reduce turbulence behind those on board: this section, which extended to the cleanly cut-off tail, created a design that was emphasised by a peripheral frame. To my surprise, I found this again on the production version of the *Giulia* saloon. The first road tests showed that the aerodynamics were not perfect, so we decided to add fairings to transform it into a fastback coupé. After making this decision, I reworked the whole shape

and, except for a few details, this was the definitive design for what became known as the *Giulia TZ* and the *TZ2*.

This experience was so strong to permeate my design philosophy and all my following projects of cars. Some years later, when I was working for BMW in Munich, I had the opportunity to carry out accurate scientific tests in the wind tunnel, which allowed me to improve the principles I had tested exclusively through drive tests on my cars and confirm my results. Nowadays car builders systematically invest an enormous amount of resources into this kind of activities, for their results are essential to the economics of car industry, allowing to dramatically decrease energy consumption through improved aerodynamics.

Now I have started a new company (Spadaconcept) with my son Paolo and our first project brings the heritage of my past experience re-introducing the "truncated tail" which has characterised my models. Almost 40 years later, I let a new generation of designers to interpreted this concept. Times, people and context have changed, but in this car I can still see the same spirit of 40 years ago: a free-minded and anti-conformist perspective and a scrupulous, strongly personal and innovative way to translate function into aesthetics.

Ercole Spada
President of Spadaconcept