

Biography



Bibliography

Prices



Bertoni at the "Carrozzeria Macchi".



Bertoni chez la Citroën.



1903 • Born on January 10th in Masnago, a small town in the Como administrative region, which was later (1927) included in the borough of Varese, the main town of the area.

1918 • Obtains his professional diploma at the technical school "Francesco Daverio" of Varese. Following the death of his father, he breaks off his studies and finds a job as a joiner's apprentice at the local body maker's "Carrozzeria Macchi" before moving to the tinker's department, where his passion for automobiles takes off.

1919 • A great admirer of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo he starts drawing and carving under the direction of prof. [Giuseppe Talamoni](#), and attends the workshops of sculptors [Lodovico Pogliaghi](#) and [Enrico Butti](#), with whom he co-operates in the realization of the war memorial in Varese.

1922 • The management at Macchi, impressed by his skills as a draughtsman, transfers him to the planning department.

1923 • A visiting team of French technicians, having seen his drawings, invites him to gain experience in France. In April he leaves for Paris.

1924 • Having finished his French stint, he moves back to Italy and returns to Macchi as a Head Draughtsman. He opens his own artist workshop in downtown Varese in Via Indipendenza n° 3.

1929 • As a result of dissatisfaction with the management, he quits Macchi and opens his own workshop of drawings and projects in Quartiere Vittoria 7 (today via F.Crispi). His first customers are "Carrozzeria Varesina" in the same city and "Carrozzeria Baroffio" in Malnate (suburbs of Varese).

1930 • For the first time he takes part in three exhibitions: the "Exhibition of San Pedrino" in Varese; the "Esposizione Sociale" of the Fine Arts Accademy in Milan, of which he has been a member since 1928; the "First Exhibition of Animals in Art" in Rome.

1931 • He falls in love with a young woman, [Giovanna Barcella](#), but his mother is against the relationship because she wants him to marry a cousin. He therefore closes his two workshops and in October leaves with Giovanna for Paris.

1932 • On April 25th [Leonardo](#), his first son, is born and on the 27th of the same month he is hired by Citroën.

1934 • In only one night he creates the [Traction Avant](#) in plasticine: for the first time in history a model of a car is realized instead of on paper. He starts exhibiting in France, obtaining the third prize for sculpture at the 46th Exposition Des Beaux Arts in Asnieres.

1935 • He takes part in the 5th Exposition des Beaux-Arts in Asnieres and to the Exposition City of Versailles, obtaining in both the second prize for sculpture. At Citroën under the direction of Boulanger, he begins to work on a new car, the TPV ([2 CV](#)).

Carrozzeria Baroffio in Italy carries out, on his plans, the first total bus with total view, i.e. with the cabin above the engine.

1936 • He exhibits at the Gallery Carmine in Paris, with other Italian artists including De Chirico, De Pisis, Corbellini. His frantic artistic activity makes him spend much time away from his family so that Giovanna decides to separate from him and on February 15 she goes back to Italy with her son, Leonardo.

Now alone he takes part in many Parisian exhibitions: the Salon des Tuileries, the Salon d'Automne, the Show of Independant Artists, the Show of French Artists.

He projects a three-wheeled vehicle, called V3R, for the company ERSA of Courbevoie, that however remains at the prototype stage. It will appear in 1954 with the name of [MATHIS 333](#).

Bertoni sur sa BMW.

La mère de Bertoni.



La DS présentée à Papa Giovanni XXIII.



"Cacteurs", Expo Limoges, 1956.

1937 • His son Leonardo returns to Paris with his paternal grandmother, Angela.

1939 • He signs the work on the body of the first single platform van, called **T.U.B.** The winds of war in Europe persuade Bertoni to send his son and his mother to Italy. In Spring he presents his first personal exhibition at the Gallery Dyes Carmine in Paris, then presented in Varese in August.

1940 • After the declaration of war of Italy, Bertoni is an enemy of France, and since he does not give up Italian nationality, he is arrested on June 11 and awaits deportation to the French colonies. The arrival in Paris of German troops prevents his deportation and he is freed.

A serious motorbike accident during a service check for Citroën, forces him to stay in a private clinic for over one year and undergo six operations to save the left leg that however will remain three centimetres shorter.

During this time he realizes many portraits and dedicates himself to the study of patents, the German language and he begins to study for the diploma for the occupation of architect.

He then attempts to patent, through the Italian Ministry for the Navy, a magnetic torpedo (a magnet in the top attracts it to the iron mass of the ship) but the Ministry refuses the patent on the grounds that the project is not supported by practical evidence.

1941 • At the end of the year he is reinstated at Citroën; at the same time, in his workshop at 48 Rue du Theatre, he prepares new sculptures to be presented at the various Parisian exhibitions.

1942 • He moves back to Varese to visit his mother Angela and his son Leonardo, and takes the opportunity for a holiday.

1943 • During a personal exhibition at Montparnasse, he meets **Lucienne Marodon**, prima ballerina at the Scala in Milan and at the Opera of Paris, and falls in love with her.

1944 • Friday August 25, the French troops liberate Paris and on 31st, Bertoni is once again imprisoned, this time with the charge of collaborating with Germany but after three days he is freed and acquitted on all counts.

1945 • At Citroën he takes up the projects of the T.P.V. and the V.D.G., a vehicle which will replace the Traction avant. Bertoni presents further new works to the largest exhibitions in Paris.

At the "Institute of the Sisters of Mercy" (Order of Italian nuns in Paris), he strikes a friendship with the Vatican envoy in France, Monseigneur Angelo Roncalli (who later became Pope John 23rd), and his adviser, Monseigneur Silvio Oddi (who later became Cardinal of the Vatican Council).

1946 • He moves back to Varese and meets Giovanna to discuss the future of their son Leonardo, whose custody is perpetually awarded to the mother on August 26th.

1947 • On March 27th he marries Lucienne Marodon at the Chapel of the Italian Sisters.

1948 • On October 7th, at the Paris Salon de l'Automobile, he presents his second stylistic oeuvre, the 2 CV, which will become a world phenomenon.

1949 • On June 27th his second son **Serge** is born, and two days later, Bertoni obtains the degree in architecture, thus fulfilling the efforts of his studies on a hospital bed in 1940. This is the year in which he submits patents to the Ministry for Industry for the "**multiple adjustable chain**" and the "**Triple pressure spring**".

1950 • He starts his architectural activities with various projects in Paris and suburbs. He is nominated honorary member of the Accademia degli Euteleti at Saint Miniato di Pisa, for having donated to the Accademy a funeral mask of **Napoleon**, which he found at an antiques merchant in Rue Montparnasse in Paris. According to analysis made by the Accademy, it seems to be the first cast of the Emperor's face.

1953 • He is awarded the first prize for drawing and second prize for sculpture at the International Show of Free Art in Paris.

1954 • Yet again at the International Show of Free Art he obtains the first prize for sculpture.

1955 • His design masterpiece, the [DS 19](#), is presented at the Salon de l'Automobile in Paris. As well as marking this century's automobile history, this event places Bertoni among the Masters of Design.

1956 • In the field of architecture he patents a novel [system](#) for the construction of family houses; thanks to which over 1000 will be built in San Louis USA in only 100 days. U.N.E.S.C.O. asks him to present his sculptures at the exhibition in Limoges, in celebration of the Melbourne Olympics. He will be present with three sculptures.

1957 • The Citroën DS 19 is shown at the "[Triennale](#)" in Milan and obtains the prize for best industrial work of art.

1959 • He is once more awarded first prize for sculpture at the International Show of Free Art and second prize at the Show of French Artists.

1960 • Third prize for sculpture at the Show of the French Artists. He begins the construction of his second artist workshop in rue Ville Maurice, Antony.

1961 • His last work as a designer, the Citroën [Ami 6](#), is produced. The French Minister for Culture, the Nobel Prize Winner André Malraux, nominates him Master of the Order of Arts and Letters of the French Republic. It is the fair recognition to a man who has given so much to French culture.

1962 • He is awarded once more the first prize for sculpture at the International Show of Free Art in Paris.

1964 • On February 7th he dies after an apoplectic fit. Helios Ilo Tarbuyo, editor of the "Artistic and literary AWAKENING" in Paris wrote this obituary:
Flaminio Bertoni sculptor of talents and sincere friend whom we have just lost. We were dismayed to learn of the untimely death of our good friend Flaminio Bertoni. He was a higher spirit and a noble soul.
He was part of the elite which soars over that which one dares to call "Société Humaine" .



Web design: [Studio Benzoni S.r.l.](#)

Design

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- TUB
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TRACTION AVANT



MATHIS 333



TUB



Flaminio Bertoni

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TRACTION AVANT

MATHIS 333

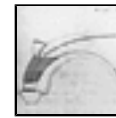
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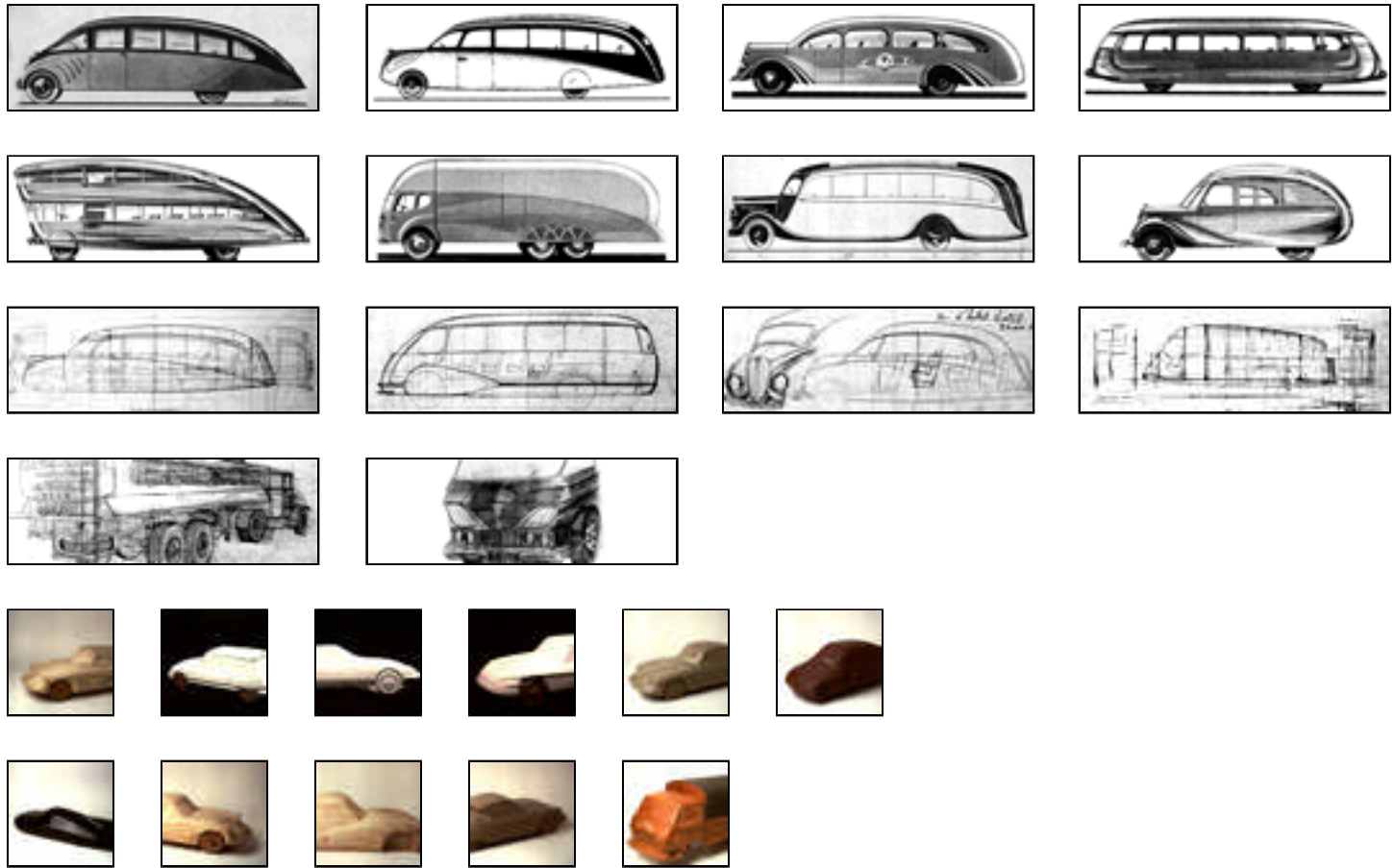
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