

ms07 Mike Lewis

Frontrunners



Abarth or Not

Following your 'Fiat X1/9 Abarth' article [Ed McDonough's feature in the April issue], I'm writing with regard to the old issue of when a car is 'original'.

I spoke with Guy Merenhout today, who claims the car to be 70% original. He denies fitting the Abarth chassis plate – and nor did he speak to the journalists involved – (this type of chassis plate was never used on the later Abarths produced after Abarth became part of Fiat in 1971). He confirmed that the shell/body was not original (just a random Fiat X1/9). The engine was not original, and nor were the wheels, brakes or suspension. He claims that the transmission and some of the interior belongs to an original car, but even the wheel arches are new, albeit made from moulds taken

from original parts. How he arrives at 70% is a mystery to

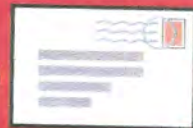
me. I would have thought that most, if not all, the original body/chassis would have to exist in order to claim that the original vehicle 'lives'.

In this case, the car upon which the recreation is based was, apparently, written off in Poland. This is a sad reality – but the car is dead. Kaput. Pushing up daisies. There is no continuity in the life of this vehicle. It cannot be brought back.

A replica can be built; but there should be no suggestion that it is the original car produced at the Abarth factory. All those enthusiasts who own and maintain 'real' Abarths deserve more respect, and so do

LETTERS

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the cars themselves. Abarth put a huge amount of effort into producing very effective road and competition cars. They were always expensive and are difficult to restore accurately. In turn, many true Abarth enthusiasts put huge effort and money into bringing genuine Abarth cars back from the brink of obscurity. These are the cars that deserve to be hailed as original, and it is these enthusiasts who should be recognised as the true friends of the Scorpion. A modified Fiat that sort of resembles an Abarth is just not acceptable.
Tony Castle-Miller,
Middle Barton Garage, Oxfordshire

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First Mistake Ever

Love the feature on the Abarth 850TC [March issue; feature by Simon Park]. But one of the sexiest parts of this car is its dash: so incongruous in a shopping car's silhouette! May I request a pic of the bespoke dash either in the mag or direct to my PC? If I were a critical reader, I'd say not publishing a pic of this in the feature was an editorial oversight – the first I have ever noticed! (That's me off the Christmas card list.)

Chris Taylor, *by e-mail*

You've never spotted an editorial oversight before, Chris? Pay attention!

