

15 questions to Matthias Hinz and Michael Maasmeier of SCUDERIA AZZURRA

Please introduce yourselves and your company. What is your company's field of expertise?

Maasmeier: My partners Matthias Hinz and Lukas Mühlemann are passionate classic car lovers – just like me. We have been collecting classic cars for decades. This passion for classic cars has brought us together, regardless of national borders. We have long been looking for the perfect restoration, but our expectations remained unfulfilled. Eventually, we decided to take matters into our own hands and founded SCUDERIA AZZURRA.

We are offering classic Maserati, Alfa Romeo and Lancia on the international market. All cars have been restored in top condition exclusively by us in our own workshop. Using original components, we restore the cars completely, from car body, engine and gearboxes to technology.

When did you fall for classic automobiles? Was there a key experience in your childhood/youth that turned you into a classic car lover?

Hinz: I bought my first classic car, then a rather modern classic, at the age of 18. It was a 1968 VW Beetle Convertible. With the help of an alleged expert, I gained a first insight into car restoration. I discovered my passion for Italian sports cars in the early 90s. I read an article on a Lancia Flaminia Touring Coupé in a magazine for classic cars and it was love at first sight. I was so excited that I took the next opportunity and bought one in the US, without even looking at it beforehand.

Maasmeier: My father was a true sports car fan and owned a Jaguar. I was only six years old, when I opened the passenger door while he was driving out of the garage. In no time, I learned about restoration and why this is necessary. My first classic car was a MG A Roadster. I bought it at the age of 18 and drove it on a daily basis when I was studying at the university. Then it really got me: I have bought several Alfa Romeos, Lancia and Mercedes since.

What do you like most about your job? Is there something you don't like at all?

Hinz: Oh, that is difficult to say, because I actually like many things about my job. It is so great to see the whole process of an old „wreck“ coming back to life. When you finally see the completely restored car, it is hard to believe that this is the same car, you found two or three years earlier in a barn. I am not so fond of all the traveling though. I am on the road a lot, because I monitor every single step of the cars' restoration process.

Maasmeier: I like that it is in fact not my job, but rather a passionate vocation.

Which brands do you favor? What are your three favorite classic cars and why?

Hinz: Maserati and Lancia are my absolute favorites. Regarding models, I am a huge fan of the Lancia Flaminia Zagato Super Sport. The Zagato Design is simply spectacular and Lancia was way ahead of most manufacturers in technical development at that time. My favorite convertible is the Lancia Flaminia Touring, preferably with the 3C motor design. In my opinion, this is one of the most beautiful convertibles of the 60s – next to the Maserati Vignale Spider. Last but not least, I also like the Maserati 3500 GT a lot, with its classic and timeless lines and ample horsepower.

Maasmeier: I have been driving an Aston Martin DB5 for several years until I discovered Maserati. The brand has got wonderful cars, great designs with fantastic engines. For me, Maserati is the ultimate brand of production vehicles of that time. I love my Mistral Spyder and the 3500 GT – and if you have never sat in a Bora before, you should do so as soon as possible.



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What was the most exceptional vehicle, that you encountered so far?

Maasmeier: That definitely was the Aston Martin DB4 GT Zagato. A great design by Ercole Spada. It would have been Richard Williams' Sanction II series. Unfortunately, this is one of the many missed chances in the life of a classic car lover.

Regarding value increase/ preservation: Which model or brand should you go for now? What is your assessment of the value development within the next years?

Hinz: It is commonly known that prices have increased considerably in the past two to three years. However, they had remained rather stable in the years before. I think it would be good for the market to calm down a bit and stay on the same level. It seems this is happening right now. Buyers are becoming more selective and looking out for high quality, which by the way fits our restoration philosophy.

In general, I think that the main intention for buying a classic car should not be its increase in value. You should buy the car you always wanted. If prices decrease, you will still be able to enjoy the car of your dreams.

In your opinion, which classic car is the most underestimated or overrated one and why?

Hinz: That's a difficult question. With regard to underrated classics, I spontaneously have to think of the Lancia Flaminia Convertible. It is as beautiful as a Maserati Spyder but costs only a fraction of its price. I cannot really name a car that I would consider an overrated classic. However, I sometimes ask myself why vehicles with mediocre technology, of which some were produced in rather high quantities, are sold for hundreds of thousands.

Maasmeier: I agree with my friend. Additionally, I still think that classic Maseratis, compared to an Aston Martin DB4 and DB6, still are being underestimated.

Do you see a generation change on the classic car market? If so, what do you think of it?

Maasmeier: Every generation has got its car quartet and special vehicles, that you dreamt of. It is just a logic consequence that veteran and vintage cars are losing ground and cars like a Montreal, Bora or BMW 635 CSI gain interest.

What do you consider an absolute taboo with regard to classics?

Hinz: We try to restore our cars as closely as possible to their original condition. That sounds easier than it is since it is sometimes quite difficult to find out the exact original condition. Is it the right shade of lacquer finish, the right leather quality, the right carpet and are all the details correct? In my opinion, it is a taboo to colour the car in a shade that was not originally offered by the manufacturer or to change technical details.

Where does the topic „classic cars“ end for you and especially why?

Maasmeier: As soon as I no longer feel any passion for design and technology in cars and only encounter mass-produced goods, there is an end to „classic cars“. For me as a collector, this is around 1975, because there have been produced only few interesting Gran Turismos afterwards.

Which modern cars have the potential to become true classics in 30 years?

Maasmeier: Quiet clearly the Maserati 3200 GT

How do you see the future of classic car trading and what are the challenges?

Maasmeier: The industry is on the move – from backyard via Wall Street to a serious collectors' and investment market. It will require completely new dealer concepts and the „classic car salesman“ will fall short as well, at least in the upper classic range. It is more about real



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substance, high quality vehicles and the curation of valuable collections.

Which vehicle would you like to drive and why?

Hinz: A while ago, I saw an original Ferrari Testarossa from the 50s at a car dealer. It would be pretty cool to drive the Mille Miglia with it.

Maasmeier: That's easy: „Mother Gun“!

What are the most beautiful routes that you can discover with a classic car?

Maasmeier: The Moyen Corniche at the Côte d'Azur in the mornings at sunrise before rush hour – and then go for a coffee at the port of Nice.

What would you like to say to a classic car lover who just discovered his passion?

Maasmeier: Do not care about an increase in value, but drive the care you enjoy. There is more than Porsche and Pagodas...