

Understanding the Design Origins of the 2026 Bertone Runabout

By Guy Dirkin, January 2026.

The 2026 Bertone Runabout will debut on January 29, 2026 at Rétromobile 2026, set to be held at Paris Expo Porte de Versailles. Let's discuss the origins and heritage of Bertone's latest stunning offering. For Bertone's webpage on the 2026 Runabout cab found here: <https://bertone.it/runabout/>

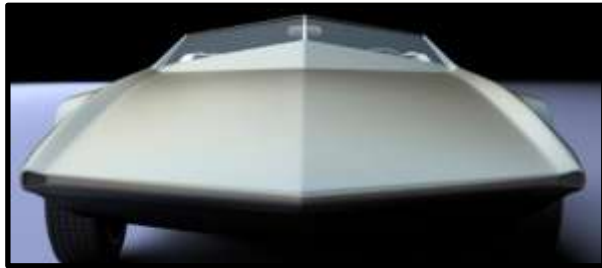


The 2026 Bertone Runabout is a homage to the Bertone Concept car the 1969 Autobianchi Runabout, by Italian design icon Marcello Gandini. In brief, the 1969 Autobianchi Runabout was the design basis for the Lancia Stratos road /rally car (2018 Interview with Marcello Gandini) and the Fiat X1/9. The 2026 Bertone Runabout clearly leverages from the 1960's and 1970's "wedge car" era.

The 1966 Cannara has been embraced as a design anchor for the wedge car movement, winning the Dean Bachelor Trophy at the 2024 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. The Cannara is currently on display in the wedge car exhibit at the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles. Ray Cannara was a mentee of Stroher MacMinn at Art Center

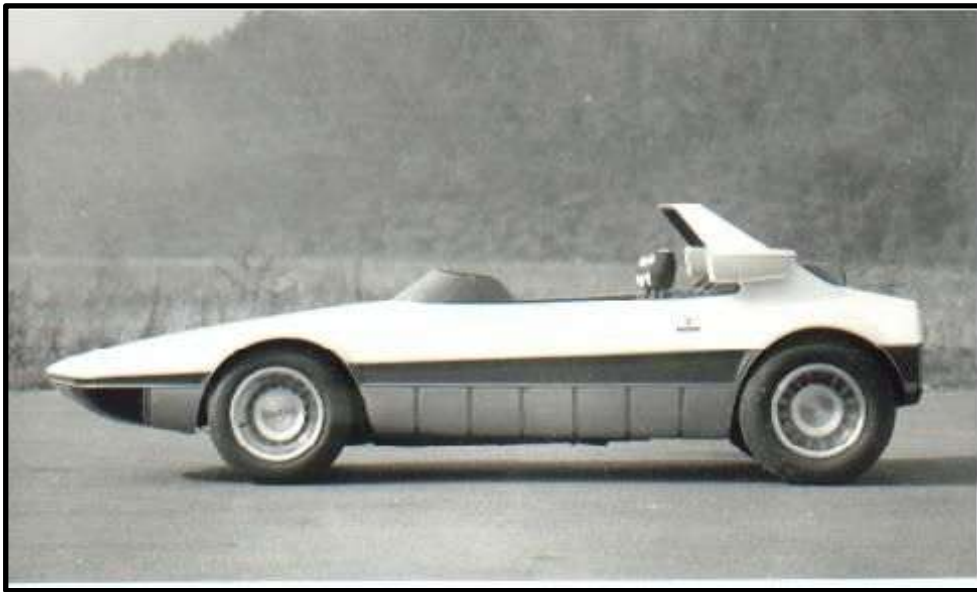
in California. He designed and built his car, notably driving from Florida to California in 1966, with his mother riding in the passenger seat.

When comparing the 1966 Canara with Marcello Gandini's 1969 Bertone Autobianchi Runabout Concept there are striking similarities between the two designs. The front view and front quarter view are almost identical. The side view has a similar wedge silhouette. The rear views are different.



In Gautam Sen's 2024 book, When the Wedge had the Edge, the author speculates that the Cannara had either subliminal or actual design influence on the 1969 Autobianchi Runabout, by Marcello Gandini. This relationship cannot be confirmed and is not intended to take anything away from the maestro, Gandini. However, to completely understand the 2026 Bertone Runabouts design origins the Cannara and the wedge car era is relevant.

A personal notation from this author. Gandini said he was inspired by “speedboat” shapes when configuring the Autobianchi. When Ray Cannara built his car, the cars rake climbed from rear to front. This certainly gave the car the look and feel of a speedboat. Whether this relevant to a potential design link with the Autobianchi or whether its speculative; I found the reference to a speedboat interesting gestalt. The below phot was taken by Stother MacMinn, circa 1967, note the upward rake of the centerline.



For more information on the 1966 Cannara and the Wedge car era see:

https://undiscoveredclassics.com/files/1_Flipbooks/Wedge_Car_Design/

And <https://www.guydirkin.com/1966-cannara-at-pebble-beach>

To be transparent, the author is the owner of the 1966 Cannara. Dr Dirkin has a research background and pursues academic integrity to the best of his ability.