

THE HISTORY OF THE CROSS AND SERPENT ALFA ROMEO BADGE

The badge is the coat of arms of the city of Milano where the company was founded with the emblem split vertically into two halves: The cross on the left the snake on the right. These were the symbols of the two ruling families of Medieval Milan which were adopted in the 11th century. At that time, both families financed armies in the First Crusade. The local Archbishop gave one of the armies a banner of a large Serpent, said to be of Biblical origins, to carry into battle as a symbol of Divine protection. The other army, not to be out done, adopted the Crusader's Red Cross on a white field. The first Crusade was relatively successful and upon returning, a defeated Saracen was placed in the Serpent's mouth as a symbol of victory.

Sometime in the 15th century, the two families joined forces (and Flags) to form the powerful Visconti Dukes. To signify royal consent of this merger, the Dukes of Austria who were ruling Italy at the time, approved the placement of a crown on the Serpents head. Even after the power of the Visconti faded, the crowned snake and cross remained as the symbol of the city.

In 1910, the fledgling "Anonima Lombarda Fabbrica Automobili" was searching for an emblem to use on their soon to be introduced first car. History states, a junior draftsman was waiting at a tram stop when he looked up and saw the City's emblem on the sign. Thinking this would make an excellent emblem, he suggested it to management who, surprisingly agreed. They took the Snake and Cross, surrounded it



1910 - 1915



1915 - 1925



1925 - 1946



1946 - 1972



1972 - 1999



with a blue field saying “A.L.F.A.” at the top and Milano at the bottom, two Savoy dynasty bows, representing the two royal families of Milan were placed on either side.

Nicola Romeo reorganised the company after WW 1 and by 1920, he had added his own name to the badge while removing the acronym style of spelling ALFA. When they won their first World Championship in 1925 a large laurel wreath was placed around the badge. In 1932, the French branch of the company had enough control to have “Paris” replace “Milano” on the badges of all Alfa Romeo heading for that country.



Where it all began: the original ALFA logo



The post WWII badge, found on some of the most famous Alfas, like the 1947 Alfa Romeo 6C 2500 Sport Freccia D'Oro

For a short period after WW11 the multicoloured badge was replaced by a simple brass casting with the letters and figures in polished metal on a blood red enamel background. It was further simplified when the Italian monarchy was abolished and the country became a republic and the Savoy dynasty bows were exchanged for two wavy lines and by shrinking the laurel wreath, at this time the badge diameter was reduced to 54mm. The coloured badge was soon restored, however, first in cloisonné and later in plastic. The latest changes occurred in 1972 when a second factory was opened in Naples, not wanting to show favouritism, the ‘Milano’ was dropped along with the two wavy lines and the hyphen between ALFA and ROMEO. Unfortunately the laurel wreath was reduced to nothing more than edge filigree. The original 1910 badge was 65mm in diameter, the size changed over the years but has now settled on 75mm. (Note: That is the same diameter as our new owners club window sticker, currently \$1ea in our club shop), So there you have it folks, when next we are trying to explain the History of our Badge, we can be very proud of its origin, let us hope our badge remains as it is today for another 103 years.

Malcolm Ebel



This badge was adopted in 1972 to commemorate the establishment of the Pomigliano d'Arco factory (outside Naples).