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For Your Bookshelf: Superfinds (previously unseen 1960s and 70s photographs of exceptional cars)

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viewed by Kieron Fennelly.

Title: Superfinds (previously unseen 1960s and 70s photographs of



exceptional cars)

Author: Michael Kliebenstein

Published by: Porter Press International

420 pages (with 900+ photographs); hardback

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This sumptuous book is a compilation of the roving photography of Corrado Cupellini, a pioneering classic car collector who travelled extensively in the Americas and North Africa as well as his native Italy and elsewhere in Europe. Fifty years ago, cars such as BMW 328s, today million-pound classics, could be found languishing in backyards in Britain, selling if they were offered for perhaps a thousand pounds. Cupellini made the same kind of discovery in Italy and his pictures shown any number of Ferrari 166s, the immediate post-war equivalent of the BMW, in barns or back gardens mouldering and forgotten. His travels take him to Morocco (Ferrari 166) to Sicily where he finds Alain Delon's old BMW 507, Budapest, Dakar where he spots a couple of retired competition cars, a Porsche 904 and a Mini Cooper S in a garage and numerous Ferraris, Maseratis and Lamborghinis, mostly in Italy.

Black and white photographs of finds, half under dust sheets, sometimes partly dismantled, are truly atmospheric, while other fascinating shots show shabby exotics evidently still in use in the period. Many of the pictures demand several minutes study, so much is there to take in. A perceptive enthusiast, Cupellini was also astute, jumping at the opportunity to acquire an Aston Martin Zagato, the only one built with upright headlights, as soon as a pal reported he had seen it by chance. The photograph is undated, but the \$5,000 price which Cupellini paid would certainly require three more zeroes today.



Compiler Michael Kliebenstein, a collector and expert himself has captioned many of the photographs, though frustratingly Cupellini did not apparently always note when and where he found some cars, so captioning can only identify what they are. Pictures of engines and parts, again largely in black and white, are also intriguing and Kliebenstein recounts that Ferrari used to auction off parts, usually viewed as scrap, as containerised lots. With his eye on the future, the presumably well-heeled Cupellini would simply buy up everything on offer.

VERDICT

SuperFinds is a compelling work, though for the enthusiast more textual information would be an asset.