

SWISS RACER REDISCOVERED

Unique Sauter after discovery by Fredi Vollenweider, missing its original Abarth engine and gearbox

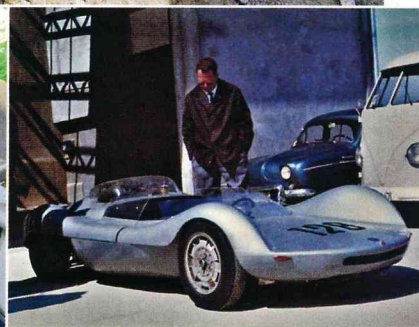
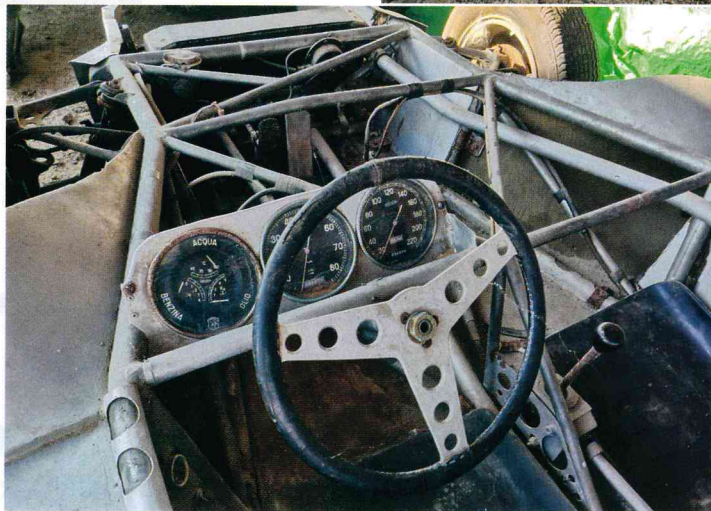
Circuit racing has long been banned in Switzerland, but during the '50s Kurt Sauter of Basel did manage to build and sell a number of Porsche- and DKW-powered racing cars. In 1963 he came up with a series of three ultra-low, spaceframe-chassis sports-racers, one of them using the 1000cc engine from an Abarth Bialbero. This special car was thought to be long lost, but it turns out that it had been in storage in an old farmhouse in the Emmental region for around 50 years.

When Fredi Vollenweider heard rumours that an abandoned Sauter had been spotted, it didn't take him long to track it down. "After making a few phone calls, I got through to the current owner," says Vollenweider. "He said, 'Yes, the car is here, but without its Abarth engine and gearbox – and, yes, it was the only Sauter-Abarth made.'"

In October 2021, Vollenweider saw the car for the first time and found it to be virtually untouched since the late 1960s. Having bought the Sauter, Vollenweider set about investigating its racing history, and unearthed historic photos and even film footage from 1963: "The first owner was a local driver, Walter Egger, from Olten. In 1964 he sold the car to the founder of Ecurie

Bernoise, which still exists, only to buy it back again later that year. The previous owner acquired the car after buying his house from a car collector who'd died during a historic motorsport event in 2014."

Vollenweider intends to restore the Swiss racer sympathetically. "It needs minor cosmetic work, but the car should show its history," he says. "Finding an original Abarth unit will be difficult and expensive, so I may put in an Autobianchi Abarth A112 engine until I track down something more suitable."



Clockwise from above: the Sauter-Abarth when raced by Walter Egger at Salom Payerre in May 1963; complex tubular chassis; stylish racer as found