

Ferrari fever

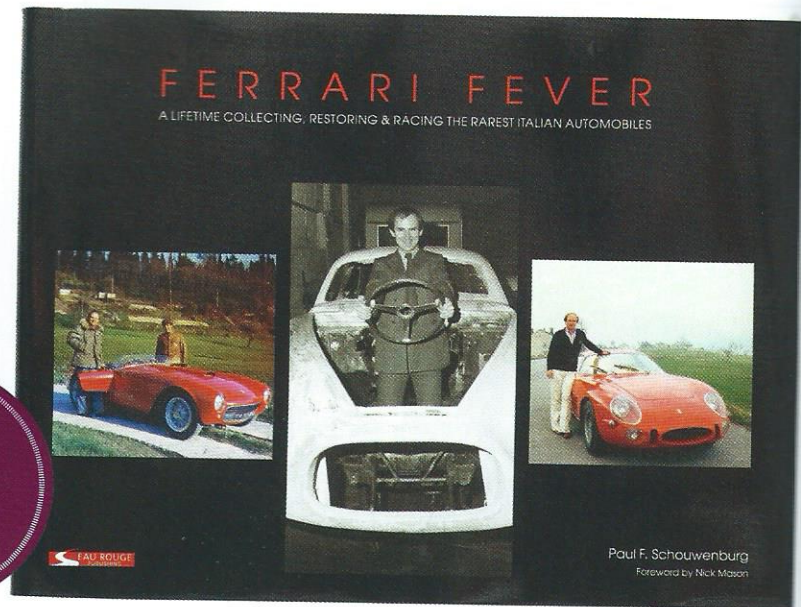
PAUL F SCHOUWENBURG, Eau Rouge Publishing, £85, ISBN 978 0 9573978 2 8

WE HAVE BEEN EAGERLY awaiting the arrival of this latest offering from Eau Rouge. Evoking memories of Antoine Raffaeili's fabulous *Memoirs of a Bugatti hunter*, this fine work recalls the author's exploits discovering, restoring, racing and selling some of the most desirable historic machinery imaginable from the 1960s on, fitting all of this in alongside his day job as a surgeon.

A chance sighting of a Jaguar XK120 during 'an enforced shopping trip with my mother in downtown Amsterdam' left nine-year-old Schouwenburg enraptured by automotive exotica. He vowed that he too would one day own just such a car. Considering the mouthwatering array of cars that have passed through his hands as an adult, it's ironic that he has yet to buy a Jaguar.

The Dutch enthusiast rapidly moved on apace from spotting 'sophisticated automobiles' in Amsterdam as a pre-teen, and blagging brochures at motor shows. He was tipped over the edge on getting to know collector Pim Hascher in the late '50s. Alfa 1900s kickstarted his car-buying habit, a rare pre-Ti Berlina and a sensational Touring-bodied C Sprint among his early projects.

The story evolves with the discovery of a moth-eaten 212 Inter (aka Export Lungo) in 1968.



That in turn led to him finding a Veritas in Chimay, Belgium: it had been left abandoned in a ditch, although he was unable to purchase the German single-seater as the owner wanted too much money for it. That would be a common theme over the next three decades.

Then there was the 250GT with Boano coachwork that was discovered atop a pile of pallets in Boom, Belgium, or the 275GTB with ultra-desirable all-aluminium coachwork that was languishing in a police storage yard (he was able to buy that one). Or the ex-Hans Tek 250 Monza Spider he found and

restored. Or the 340 America Le Mans. Or the 250GT Berlinetta Comp/61. Or the... Well, you get the idea. This is just a thumbnail sketch of the author's car hunting (and buying) exploits, and that is before you touch on his trackside forays.

It isn't just Latin stuff, either. Take the story of how he came to purchase a pair of Mirage-BRMs, the super-sexy but not very successful Len Terry-penned sports-prototypes, in Switzerland, of all places. 'I admit I was impressed, but that is not enough to actually like a car...' he writes. He wasn't alone in not being enamoured of the model.

Aside from the wonderful reminiscences, this slipcased-offering really appeals because of the many evocative photos. Many of these are snaps of cars being dragged from their resting places 40 years ago, or pics of friends and their exotics on driveways or at the side of the road. The informality of, say, Rob de la Rive Box posing by his one-off Frua-bodied Maserati 3500GT – his daily driver in the late '70s – really captivated.

This is a superb book, and not all that expensive considering the production values. It has a foreword by *Octane* contributor Nick Mason, a man who has similarly seen the move from people loving cars for what they are to the more recent commodification of exotica and obsession with values.

