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BiturboInside the 2015 Maserati Quattroporte
Ermenegildo Zegna Limited Edition

BY
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Italians don't subscribe to the belief that something that is built for speed cannot also be built for comfort. Or vice versa.

Maserati and Ermenegildo Zegna—two storied Italian brands: one a 104-year-old suit-making giant and the other a 100-year-old car manufacturer known for speed and devilish good looks—have come together to create an automobile worthy of the world's most exclusive collections.

I'm in Italy, sitting in the driver's seat of the

2015 Maserati Quattroporte Ermenegildo Zegna Limited Edition in front of the Zegna Wool Mill, surrounded by buttery leather, soft wool and buffed-to-perfection wood veneer, feeling as cool as Marcello Mastroianni himself. Rob Allen, my personal tour guide and director of product planning for Maserati North America, is sitting beside me. He's pointing to the badge on the dash, which reads Limited Edition: 1 of 100.

The winding alpine roads of northwestern Italy provided the perfect testing grounds for the 530 horsepower and 524 lb-ft of torque offered by the 2015 Quattroporte's V8, twin-turbo engine, which growled and spat like a mountain lion as we fled to the densely forested mountainside. My first impression was that the cabin was likely the most sumptuous place I had ever sat—every surface and touch point designed to impress the senses. My second impression was that it drove like a bat out of somewhere it no longer wanted to be—fast, really fast.

My foot is heavy on the pedal and the speedometer is moving like it's angry at all numbers under 100. I ask Allen if he's comfortable. "I can slow down..."

"Oh, no," he says from the passenger seat. "Don't slow down, please." He is wearing a big, confident grin, looking relaxed and comfortable in his black pinstriped Zegna suit.

We zigzag our way up the narrow mountain road and I switch to sport mode and play with the elongated paddle shifters, which are made from forged aluminum and are cool to



the touch. The response I get is nothing if not rewarding; I flick down a gear as we enter a curve and the engine revs. I accelerate through the turn, the tires sticking to the tarmac, and gear up when we straighten out again. Pure bliss.

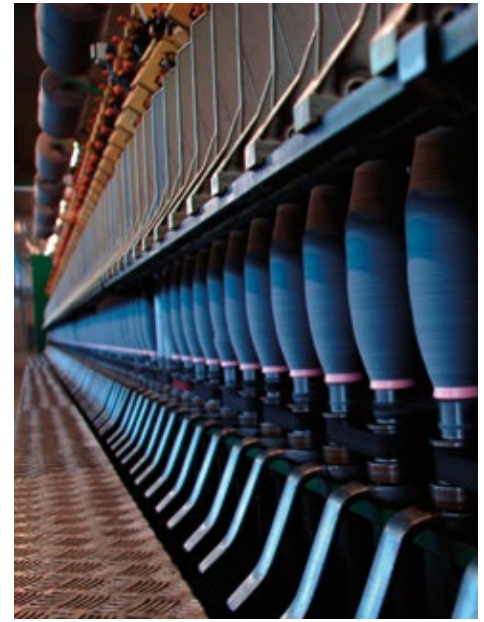
Soon after—too soon, it seems—we arrived at our destination. The Zegna Wool Mill sits overlooking the valley below from the small mountain village of Trivero. The Zegna family knows wool and has been producing fabric

for their suits from this picturesque location since 1910. From the outside, the facility looks more like some royal family's country estate than a factory, but that's to be expected: this is Zegna, after all.

Inside we are greeted by the noises and smells of modern machinery at work. Here, the wool is cleaned, stretched, dyed and otherwise processed, the machines humming away to transform the raw fibre shipped from sheep farms in Australia into roll upon roll of

fabric destined for Zegna's own tailoring as well as the workshops of Gucci, Yves Saint Laurent and Tom Ford. Seeing the entire process, from raw wool to fine cloth, in less than an hour is overwhelming—the transformation is remarkable.

Toward the end of the tour, we come to a room where a handful of women sit on track-mounted chairs, sliding back and forth, armed with tweezers, painstakingly examining every inch of the backlit fabric and correcting any



blemishes by hand. The level of quality on which Zegna prides itself necessitates that some jobs will never be automated.

On our way out, we spot a roll that looks familiar. It's a jersey silk fabric in the colour of light grey by way of amber, and one of our group points to it with an inquisitive gesture. Our guide confirms that this is, indeed, the very same fabric that lines the roof of the Zegna Limited Edition Quattroporte. It's one of a few Zegna fabrics used in the interior, produced exclusively for these 100 cars. Seats are draped in a 100 per cent chevron weave (similar to herringbone); smooth, bright and silky. Accenting the fine-grain, mocha-brown

leather on the door panels and dash is a creamy contrasting stitch that provides a welcome accent to the masculine hues.

The exterior paint colour was also created solely for this car. As they pull it out of the shade into the direct sunlight, it appears to soften from a cool platinum silver to a warmer colour that hints at a velvety chestnut. They're calling it Platinum Silk—perfect. Allen points out the series of Vs that make up the Quattroporte's profile—the hood, the rear, the grill, the logo—and suddenly, it's all I can see.

The trunk reveals a 19-piece kit of Zegna accessories and luggage made in an exclusive limited run of, you guessed it, 100. The

set includes a weekender, a sheath for the key, sunglasses and case, and a 3.5-metre bolt of the same chevron-motif fabric as lines the interior, which buyers can have cut into a made-to-measure suit.

Soon it's time to leave the factory and bid farewell to the Quattroporte. I stand for a moment and take in its curvaceous profile, the paint subtly shifting colours in the late afternoon sunshine. Soon it will be delivered to one of 100 lucky owners, perhaps destined to live out its days in a garage, surrounded by other rare and precious autos. I hope this isn't the case—this is a machine designed at every stage to be touched, driven and felt.