

# Cars That Matter Ep 05 – Andreas Thurner & Karma Automotive Transcript

**Announcer:** From Curtco Media, this is Cars that Matter.

**Robert Ross:** This is Robert Ross with Cars that Matter, and I'm here this afternoon with my guest, Andreas Thurner. Greetings, Andreas.

**Andreas Thurner:** Hi, Robert. And thank you very much for having me.

**Robert Ross:** This is very fun. Andreas is with Karma Automotive in Irvine, California, and has been there since 2016. Now he's the vice president of Global Design and Architecture. But I know before that there were some interesting goings on with Rolls-Royce and BMW. A lot of history there. You graduated from Pforzheim in Germany, the University, with a transportation degree in 2004. Is that right?

**Andreas Thurner:** That is correct, yes.

**Robert Ross:** But you leapfrog right away into an important job. You went to Rolls-Royce?

**Andreas Thurner:** Yeah, I was twenty five years old and had basically no experience as a professional car designer. I did my internship during the studies with BMW Group in advance design. I was then invited to come back and do my final thesis. So the theme of my final thesis was the spirit of BMW luxury in the future. I was fascinated by finding out what was the spirit like of the neue klasse in the 70s. And what was this all about and what is the meaning for that for the future? Should there any meaning be? And so I wanted to find out, is there a unique way, a BMW way of doing this, of challenging that? What I did, I reached out to this designers of that period. I reached out to Manfred Rennen to Paul Bracq, to Boyke Boyer, tried to arrange meetings with them, bought a nice bottle of wine.

**Robert Ross:** It's always a good way to get the conversation about cars going.

Exactly. And ask them if I could visit them in their houses. They were all the gentlemen. They were happy to invite me in to talk about the past. So what made that special? Why? How did they work? What was different to the established companies at that time? Mercedes was established and I talked about like.

**Robert Ross:** BMW was really the underdog.

**Andreas Thurner:** It was the underdog. They were basically the not the startup but the challenge for sure.

**Robert Ross:** Absolutely.

**Andreas Thurner:** Small symbols like they, I recall they said, you know, we all had short arms shirts. We didn't wear a tie. The guys at Mercedes wore ties and long shirts and jackets and so on. They all at BMW, there were very few people, very small teams. You knew exactly by first name who was responsible for aero dynamics, who was responsible for this and that.

**Robert Ross:** You were responsible for some very beautiful cars?

**Andreas Thurner:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Robert Ross:** Hard to imagine something being more perfect as an exercise in economy and efficiency than the BMW 2002 or something more beautiful than a 3.0 CSL.

**Andreas Thurner:** Absolutely. And then you listen and then you hear about the small stories and the vent on what he did in order to challenge the Fords and so on. It's amazing. It was, it was inspiring for me. And then of course you heard not only the attitude, how they interacted, how fast, how agile they were as well. How would they describe their products, like a tailored suit. Just enough never, never more than just enough.

**Robert Ross:** That's right.

**Andreas Thurner:** Perfect.

**Robert Ross:** An understatement, but understatement that was absolutely right.

**Andreas Thurner:** Anyway, this was probably my start to something of a little bit more meaningful car design and really trying to bring the point across, OK. One can make a difference by showing that there are different approaches. My model was shown at BMW to the board. The board came down into design to see, to review my scale model of the seven series. You know, that never happened before. And I was then, was asked to present my model to the group design chiefs of, you know, Mini, Hildebrand at that time. Ian Cameron at Rolls-Royce.

**Robert Ross:** Right. And of course, at the time, Chris Bangle was in charge of things at BMW.

**Andreas Thurner:** And Chris Bangle was leading that. So I was, I recall when I presented that was even before I presented in Pforzheim where I'm in school and I was so worn out, I was so worn out. I couldn't even think of any like CV or application or even fact. I didn't want even to work in that industry at all because I was just tired. I was just burnt out.

**Robert Ross:** You hadn't even started yet.

**Andreas Thurner:** So I already had an application to go in, go into Israel for one year into a kibbutz or to go. The other application I had was to go on a boat in Netherland's for a year and just play guitar and just, you know,.

**Andreas Thurner:** Every everybody's dream.

**Andreas Thurner:** But then just in this presentation, three or four of the different brand chiefs give me their business card. And Ian was one of them said, well, we should talk.

**Robert Ross:** Well, that's Ian Cameron, of course, former design director at that Rolls-Royce Motor Cars. And we've had Ian on the show. And what a fascinating character he is. I guess a bit of a mentor to you.

**Andreas Thurner:** Absolutely. The mentor. And that's the thing. One of the most inspiring people in this industry now. Later, I got different opportunities, but really Ian brought his team around that same time, this was a small Rolls Royce team within BMW that was kind of very special. Nobody saw them really. They were in their own corners and like, the elite. They just launched a Phantom some years ago and that car inspired me in.

**Robert Ross:** Talking about a car that matters.

**Andreas Thurner:** At car that matters. So the Phantom, I thought such a car would not at all be possible anymore. And I was a student, so that had a big impact. Still, it was so far away for me that I would have never dreamed even to applying there again to work. There was just too far away. So when Ian then brought his team around and said no, can you wait? And you know, he brought Marek Djordjevic and Dean Smith and Charles Coldham, and.

**Robert Ross:** Marek was responsible for the exterior of the Phantom. Am I right?

**Andreas Thurner:** Marek was the Phantom designer, and of course set the tone for the future then of Rolls-Royce with his styling. And this is with his feeling as well. But everybody there was just so warmhearted and so impressed by the approach. Not everything that I did for my thesis was wonderful or perfect. When I look today at the sketches, I don't even want to look at the sketches.

**Robert Ross:** Well an artist is his own worst critic.

**Andreas Thurner:** But I remember when I met Ian again for the interview. And the first thing he said. I'm Ian, by first name directly. Of course he's British,.

**Robert Ross:** So there's no worry about sie or du .

**Andreas Thurner:** No worry about sie and du. And I remember it, he said in one he said to one of the other team members in the very beginning that he hired me because he liked my eyes. You know, this is just it was just different. It was just not about

business. It was not about, I had as well offers where I would have earned in the beginning more money. But with Ian I didn't even ask. I didn't. I did not even know what I was going to earn. It was just like, oh, it was just an honor.

**Robert Ross:** It's fantastic. Well, obviously, we want to talk about what's happening at Karma and how a lot of these past experiences of yours and the great depth of knowledge you gained with BMW and Rolls Royce kind of informed your notions of luxury with the new company. But, you know, let's go back before we kind of jump into Karma and talk about for a minute some of the things that really inspire you. You know, I had a chance to look at you with your portfolio. And obviously the drawing is remarkable. A lot of car designers, quote unquote, obviously have some great executive skills with the pencil or the pen. But drawing is obviously something that's really important to you. And you have an art background and maybe you want to talk about that for a moment. I think that very few designers have a fine art background. And to me, it seems like a rare connection that informs design in a way that would not otherwise be so informed.

**Andreas Thurner:** Yah and sketching design means a lot for me, even before I could probably articulate in any other way, I was sketching all the time. My parents have four boys and they tell even when I was 2,3 years old, I was sketching all the time. Two older brothers later, when I was in kindergarten and then in school, I was asked by my older brothers to sketch their homeworks. When they were when they were in high school or in university. I did some art projects for them and they paid me. So that was the way where I gained respect from my olders, but it was very special. There's this story as well that I love to sketch so much. And then kindergarten. I had teacher who who let me do that, right?

**Robert Ross:** I usually they're yelling at you, young man. Put the pencil down and listen to this history lesson.

**Andreas Thurner:** No this this is actually really reason why we decided. Here's why in California, our boy goes to a Waldorf kindergarten because he can be. Being creative this is the best education you can have. Yet the academic education starts much later there.

**Robert Ross:** Yes.

**Andreas Thurner:** And in my experience, there was the same thing I just was allowed to sketch all day. The rest of the time I wanted to be carried around because I was just a mom kid. But then coming into school, I had a teacher who did not understand that. Oh, who for sure thought doing good by being strict, wanting to be strict, and wanted to forbid me to sketch. And I realized much later that this was really a critical phase for me. I was getting afraid. I was slipping down and not really catching up with the others in terms of reading. I was sick a lot. I was home and so on. So my parents learned that as soon the topic school came up at home, I was quiet. I couldn't express it, but I was not healthy, not happy there.

**Robert Ross:** Well, obviously, drawing for you became a creative endeavor early on. And it seems to me that it's still really a fundamental building block to your creative process in your current design role. I mean, without drawing, how would you do it?

**Andreas Thurner:** No, it's the starting point for everything. I think you need to understand. You need to articulate. I had a fantastic life drawing professor at Pforzheim. He always said you need to through drawing, understand basically the backside what you don't see. So you draw it all around, you understand, you immerse yourself in something. That's an important thing. It's an important thing as well. Like you, you're exposing a lot of your personality. It's like a hand writing. Don't have the most beautiful handwriting, but the still the art of how a line is. What importance you can put into one single line is what kind of respect, you know, knowledge experience can go in one single line is astonishing. It's amazing.

**Robert Ross:** And many times, of course, a car can carry that same line and carry that same signature through the arc of a fender or a profile or a or even a detail that really sort of identifies its creator in a way that's completely unique.

**Robert Ross:** Before we go on, we're going to take a quick break and then come back with my guest, Andreas Thurner on Cars that Matter.

**Promo:** Hey, this is Chris and Jenny from When Last I Left another Curtco Media podcast. And we have some awesome news for you. Super exciting if you're anything

like me gift giving can be kind of difficult this time of year. I'm not like you. No, you're not. I'm really great at giving gifts. She's much better at giving gifts. You want to know why? Why? I got to Vicesreserve.com, Vicesreserve.com, Vicesreserve.com. It's the perfect place to get unique curated gifts that don't suck like cocktail kits, cool gadget, really great liquor. They don't stop there, though. They don't. If you use the code podcastVIP, you get an extra 15 percent off everything in the store. Everything is 15 percent off with the code podcastVIP, everything at Vicesreserve.com That's insane. You should go now. I'm going to go as soon as I finish listening to this episode. Go buy me something. I will.

**Robert Ross:** Welcome back to Cars that Matter. Andreas, we talked about Rolls-Royce briefly, but I think it's important to kind of go back and touch on some of the really important breakthroughs that you and the team made with both the Ghost and the Dawn. The Ghost, of course, being the smaller sibling to the large and stately Phantom and of course, the Dawn being the convertible or drop-head version of a very beautiful personal Rolls Royce.

**Andreas Thurner:** I was hired for the Ghost. 2004 when I started, the project was not defined at all. It could have been this or that. So it was prior to the proportion phase. It was the concept discussions. And one of the first trips that the design team did was to Goodwood and Karl-Heinz Kalbfell was actually still a CEO. That was the day before he left.

**Robert Ross:** Was that right, for Maserati?

**Andreas Thurner:** The day before he left. So I was brought in for this project. And I remember, of course, when you come in and you mean I'm the only one and I failed. Oh, my gosh. This is what history, what responsibility. And there's somebody who really believes in you, so you better deliver. The first weeks, I put up sketches and sketches and sketches, the hall I filled the hall full of sketches and I remember Ian coming in and saying, Andreas. Don't stress yourself. We're just building one car. You know, it wasn't not about, it was not about quantity that he wanted. That was something I learned immediately and was about quality, though. Do the right thing, believe in it. Don't open if you don't believe in it, all the possibilities go for what you believe. Yeah. So many,

many, many of these, of these occasions. And then so we continued, had a one and a half, two years proportioned phase. Not an easy.

**Robert Ross:** What does that mean. Does it ,when you say proportion phase, help me and our audience understand what that exactly means.

**Andreas Thurner:** So after identifying what the general concept of the car is. So let's say it's a four door, right? Sit down and not a two seats roadster. You start concept phase with your engineers and you know, different parties have different proposals. See, it makes sense to spend, take so and so many carryover pieces from a seven series or do something completely different. or find a hybrid. And what is that hybrid worth? So you need to, then it's modern negotiations is really, you have different passes. The same design and the best case that you can compare it and go one or the other pass. So we had a good proportion phase, I think a successful proportion phase. And then we went into a 16th century house in Southern England and West Sussex.

**Robert Ross:** That would be a new house in England, wouldn't it?

**Andreas Thurner:** Probably, yeah. It's a beautiful, beautiful house with a ball room with our own chef who later became a two Michelin star chef.

**Robert Ross:** And only one to go.

**Andreas Thurner:** This was this was a very, very impressive time as well. In many ways, that was called the kick off of the design phase after the proportion phase. The tricky part for me was there was the first time for me after like two and a half years living and already breathing and already like dreaming and carrying the car through to make sure. This this is this dance. This is proportion. So it was already my baby, right? Basically. And I was 27 or 28 then. And then suddenly the design competition started. So suddenly we had a designer coming in from DesignWorks. We had somebody coming in who just did E92 BMW.

**Robert Ross:** But wait a minute. This was yours.



**Andreas Thurner:** This was, you know, this is normal, like just a normal life of a designer. So. So more people came in and they started than first day with beautiful renderings and sketches. And I was, I was kind of in shock. I said no. And I wasn't anticipating that something that this could happen. And another one of those stories that I will never forget. You know, of Ian Cameron, he comes in and realizes that I have kind of a a blockage or I can't deliver in the first couple of days or even a week. I don't know when it's was. And he just says, well, you don't have to show me anything anymore. You showed it before that you can do it. Not a problem. Just enjoy your time. Boy, talk about faith. My gosh. And the next day, I was able to sketch again, And these, basically these renderings that I have here are done in this house like the days after he said this to me.

**Robert Ross:** This is amazing. I wish our audience could see these renderings. They are absolutely exquisite. Talk about artistic, its artistic capabilities. These are gorgeous illustrations. Very soft and painterly. Are those done with markers or a computer? How do you render these things?

**Andreas Thurner:** So I was experimenting with a watercolor with hand. My sketches are all, first of all, hand sketches. I'm not a good sketcher on the computer. And I think differently on a piece of paper. But the young designers, they sketch on a computer, but it is actually not always good. And I try it as well to challenge them from time to time.

**Robert Ross:** Yes.

**Andreas Thurner:** Because as you know, busy, busy, you can just, it's just replaceable. So easy.

**Robert Ross:** And that's the difference between typing on a keyboard and actually being or being able to write in cursive. If you write it, you feel it in a way that you can never feel it if you click the keys.

**Andreas Thurner:** Absolutely. And to have this as well that you actually you know, you could screw it up if this were something special. You know, a sketch, a rendering where you have to know exactly when to stop. That's a beauty as well into that. Right. It's a different relationship you have with a sketch. So, for example, in this series of these

blue renderings, it meant for me something how I did them that was the Ghost straight out of the shadow. That was, they should be powerful. They should be elegant. They should be like nobody else has done them before. Never seen them before. So this was, this was the meaning for me behind that. .

**Robert Ross:** Andreas, give our audience a quick glimpse of Karma's history as it is and what the opportunities and challenges were when you came there.

**Andreas Thurner:** So Karma was bought by the Wanxiang Group, some like, four years ago, five years ago, four years ago. And Wanxiang is the largest parts supplier manufacturer in China, but they have many, many other business as well. There's a Wanxiang North America and Wanxiang China. Insurance companies, hotels and much, much more. But Wanxiang is a company with principles, with very noble principles. We got to know the chairman and now his son. Unfortunately, the chairman died. But he was a hero. He still is a hero in China. He never sold the company. He was always good to his people. He did everything for his people. And he bought Karma as well by saying he want to not only be part supplier. He want to build up his own luxury brand to give back to his people. And people believed him because he never took more for himself than up to they needed. So his office was super simple.

**Robert Ross:** What an inspiring story.

**Andreas Thurner:** He flew economy. You know, he was a billionaire.

**Robert Ross:** With Andreas at the forefront of new car design. I had to ask him to take a look into his crystal ball to see where car design was going, specifically through the lens of luxury.

**Robert Ross:** What about battery electric, pure battery vehicles? Is that going to be where we're going?

**Andreas Thurner:** Well, I think for an interim time for sure. If it is battery powered, I think definitely electric cars. But there are different ways to power them as well. For a period or for a generation or two, for sure. I'm pretty convinced right now we drive at

home two electric cars and it's just so convenient and, you know, not at all any field of range anxiety. It's just not there.

**Robert Ross:** Range anxiety is awfully overblown. By the way. I just have to butt in and say this. Somebody was talking to me the other day is like, if you've got a problem, are you insane? What do you mean? How many times do you drive from L.A. to San Francisco. Stop in the middle. You have to stop and have lunch. You stop at Harris Ranch, you go, you plug the car in. You have a steak sandwich. You come out. Your car's fueled or electrified. You go on your way. Range anxiety is absolutely overblown.

**Andreas Thurner:** Absolutely. It's by the way, as well, a great joy and fun to drive agile cars. Electric cars are bloody agile.

**Robert Ross:** That's right. All the center of gravity is down low where you want it. And then you're basically flicking around a little go-kart.

**Andreas Thurner:** Absolutely. I mean, I love driving cars. I love to drive a Porsche. It's just I think like a swiss clock. That's perfect. At the same time, I was. I don't say that the brand now is driving at loud car which would have excited me some years ago very, very much. And I thought in the end, quite a lot of noise for very little. A lot of noise. Very little. Of course, I love sound, but still, this was like somehow,.

**Robert Ross:** Especially at 7:00 in the morning when you're going to work.

**Andreas Thurner:** You know, it's so, yes, there are great opportunities. But, you know, technology should not be used for the sake of let's use more technology. It's supporting an experience that you want to bring across. What are you standing for? What are your principles? What are your experience principles? What does your company stand for? And then you need to find some certain technologies that support that idea. And the more discreet they are, they more obvious they are, the better ideas, the better they are integrated far from a design point of view.

**Robert Ross:** Yeah, maybe that kind of takes us in a direction where my observation has been that as things become more, I'm going to say, technologically ubiquitous. In other words, let's assume for the moment that auto manufacturers going forward adopt

all electric platforms and all these cars do zero to 60 in three seconds or whatever. I mean, this is all you know, it's sort of it's a given all of a sudden performance is a given. And it's astounding. All of a sudden they adopt all of the technological amenities. So you've got your connectivity, you got all the kinds of things that you want. And frankly, whether you're driving a Prius or a Phantom, it's going to have all of those things. So in a lot of ways, the playing field has been leveled. Every car is equal. Every car performs to the max. Every car delivers everything you want at that point. My question is, what will be the measure of a luxury vehicle? What role does design play in defining one car as a real statement of luxury and excellence?

**Andreas Thurner:** Well, I think it's placing a very, very important role on again, on how you get there. What are your authentic thoughts behind and how does the whole team get there and what is the story for it? So what would be the authentic experience that you interact with your car, how you feel in your car? Again, it's not a shell. One example is how something probably I learned at Rolls-Royce was called away to, let's say at Rolls-Royce, because I was always interested to have to dig a little bit deeper. But what I do with my designers as well, now I send them out not only for days, but for weeks and sometimes more than a month, to work somewhere not in the design studio. They go to, for example, they worked at the Hollywood Hills stayed there, slept there and got the task for me to try different things, dress differently, go in different restaurants in West Hollywood, go in different libraries or galleries and see different people with different eyes and experience something very unique. And so when you experienced something very unique to yourself, something very unexchangeable, then you can as well design something very unique and you can tell a story with your product that will inspire people as well. It's not exchangeable. Then you basically offer something nobody else offers. You take in materials from these experience, from these contexts, you take in feelings. And that is not the ,I don't want to say you mentioned the Prius. Any other car like it's not an exchangeable average car. There's a certain aura, there's a certain presence, there's a certain then confidence. And this well, the possibility for uniqueness, because it's not Googled. It's experienced,right?. So I ask our kind of material design at the Hollywood hills, the first review, the image boards was full of beautiful pictures from the Internet. Let's say now we change that. Now, you should at least spend half of your time not at the House or three quarters of your time, but spend it outside.

**Robert Ross:** Outside. So make sure the next pictures come from your cell phone not from the internet.

**Andreas Thurner:** Come from yourself, you know, and then it is clear no other design studio in the world will have these same images.

**Robert Ross:** Well, you know, we talked about moving forward. And obviously, I'd like to ask you what's happening with Karma and some secrets in the future there. I'm sure you're going to tell me much. But in a nutshell, can you tell us where you're going next?

**Andreas Thurner:** Well, we have an outstanding EREV powertrain technology already, right. With the Revero GT. And I can say that I'm really more than impressed I'm touched by how good it drives, drives extremely good. At Monterrey where we met.

**Robert Ross:** Yes.

**Andreas Thurner:** Journalists and former race drivers were testing the cars and the feedback the engineering team, I can't take this credit, but our engineering team got to hear from them that this car is superior to the Stuttgart which is pretty damn amazing for the first proper, ground up engineered car for such a small company. And I know.

**Robert Ross:** When you say small company, by the way, let me interrupt and just ask you how many people are with Karma?

**Andreas Thurner:** We are way under thousand, which is in the automotive industry or context. Very small.

**Robert Ross:** Yes, very intimate.

**Andreas Thurner:** Very intimate. But we have a complete full value chain, we manufacture. We do everything from A to Z. Which is pretty amazing. But what I want to say, the car already, so the existing powertrain already drives the chassis. The way how the car brakes and steers is fantastic. And I can only encourage everybody to try it out. This is the one side of our business. We will stay and cultivate basically this Serial hybrid, so you always drive electric. But you can as well generate more new electricity.

**Robert Ross:** And this is the Revero you are talking about.

**Andreas Thurner:** This is the Revero. It's a fantastic driver's car. Fantastic driver's car. And I was positively shocked I have to say and I'm driving it right now, I'm here with a car.

**Robert Ross:** Oh fantastic.

**Andreas Thurner:** The other aspect. So we will continue this powertrain and we will see lots of opportunities to use this technology in different concepts. In the same time we arrived now approaching a complete new platform, a Beth platform,.

**Robert Ross:** Which again has a battery electric vehicle.

**Andreas Thurner:** But this is a purely battery driven vehicle without an engine combustion engine. And this offers us different opportunities, new opportunities. It's the same or a more excitement for designers because we have so much opportunity, all that space, all that space which you can use as a space or as negative space. Right. You can see it both ways. And you just have to make it very deliberately.

**Robert Ross:** Yes. And of course, with, you know, the economies of scale that I assume obtained with your parent corporation, I mean, that's basically battery central. So you've got all of the technological underpinnings and all of the supply chain that you would potentially need to actually imagine and engineer and build those cars.

**Andreas Thurner:** Yeah. At the same time, you're always looking for partners. The industry is moving so fast. In one hand it is about hardware and the other hand it is about software and ecosystem and services that you can provide. And then we are here in this situation as well, in an area which is very, very positive.

**Robert Ross:** It's exciting having cooperation that never existed before, almost of necessity, but also with a mind for efficiency, profits and everybody wins.

**Andreas Thurner:** Absolutely. And we are not anymore just designers or car builders. We are not just companies who do b to c as a business to customers directly. But now as well, B2B business to business, we talk to other companies who offer services and be joined forces to offer services combined to customers that could be interested in our united forces. So it's very, very interesting. And you have to start designing with an understanding for business as well and for different opportunities from the start.

**Robert Ross:** ,So in other words, potentially you might have a client come to you who's looking to help you design something completely outside of the automotive arena, but that would rely on your expertise and your approach to problem solving.

**Andreas Thurner:** Yes. Yes. We not only design, but several departments in our house are actually set up to be their own profit centers as well, which is very interesting, which is stimulating for a design team that can be, you know, a flying car come around or they can be.

**Robert Ross:** We're waiting for those.

**Andreas Thurner:** Interesting topics. We just designed our third bus, fully electric bus, which will drive or we saw the first prototypes already driving in China.

**Robert Ross:** They, no kidding.

**Andreas Thurner:** They don't drive in China. And it's impressive. You approach this differently. And you learn for your own business again, right? Yeah. It's it's like a piece of architecture, basically. And now you learn that you can bring it back and learn it. In mid-October, we are opening our new design studio in Irvine. It's a brand new, beautiful, you know, long plate of Stiefelmeyer measuring plate. It's incredible what we design, our designers as well. So it's awesome.

**Robert Ross:** We'll be right back.

**Promo:** Sometimes the exceptional is not the biggest budget. Sometimes the exceptional is someone's ability to actually take their soul and printed on the screen for a moment, I want to learn everything that there is to know about the filmmaking

process. I think part of art is hearing from the artists who create it and the number of different visions, the number of different qualifications that have to go into making any film is insurmountable. And hearing those stories can be just as exciting and insightful as the movies themselves. Certain movies or certain scores, certain actors have shaped who I am as a person. I have such appreciation for the things that people produce and the work that goes into whether it's the writer who came up with this story in general, or how the filmmakers were able to take that from the page and put it onto screen, and then from the actors themselves who are able to kind of bring that all to life. All of that is what I want to hear, because it makes me love my favorite movies even more. I'm Scott Tallal. If you love movies like I do, you're going to love Hollywood UNSCRIPTED. Wherever you get your podcasts.

**Robert Ross:** Well, we're back now with Cars that Matter. My guest, Andreas Thurner. What a great glimpse of your past experience and your present projects. Andreas, it's great to talk to you about these things, but we also want to talk about some stuff that is near and dear to our listeners, certainly to me. That's cars that matter most to you. Let's dig into that a little bit. What are some of your favorites?

**Andreas Thurner:** The very first car that I owned and bought with the very first money that I earned at Rolls-Royce was a seventy five Alfa Romero GT designed by Bertone.

**Robert Ross:** Yes.

**Andreas Thurner:** And that was very special for me. I loved that car. It's, I think, almost like the golden cuts of how it stands. It's designed by Giugiaro.

**Robert Ross:** That's right.

**Andreas Thurner:** He was actually the same age when he designed that cars. It was one of his first cars.

**Robert Ross:** Is that right? That was a 1961 design. The first stepnose was around then. Is that right?

**Andreas Thurner:** Yes. Yes.



**Robert Ross:** And then it went through, I guess, 75 in Europe, as the 2000, correct?

**Andreas Thurner:** Yes. So I've had one of the latest production cars and.

**Robert Ross:** Fantastic.

**Andreas Thurner:** And that was amazing. You know,.

**Robert Ross:** What a gorgeous shape it really is. I mean,.

**Andreas Thurner:** It beautiful. It looks so dynamic and so simple as well. You know, you talk about simplicity, reduce reduction - full of tension this car. Full of tension. And even being static, it has a lot of motion, forward motion to it. And you can just see Italian, you know, elegance and.

**Robert Ross:** Absolutely. I'd love putting that car next to a BMW 2002 and maybe next to a Datsun 510. You know, you put all three together and you realize they were racing together at SCCA, same class. And then all tearing each other up and then doing an amazing job. But talk about how a culture can have a signature on automotive design. Every single one, you can tell where those cars came from. And as Giugiaro's little GTV was really the most Italian car that you could have imagined from that time. So the little Alfa really informed some of your original inspiration for cars. What else?

**Andreas Thurner:** Definitely the definitely cars of the pre-war phase in the 30s. Definitely because, you know, this whole time seemed to have been so special in terms of pioneering or as competition. If it's the French, if it's the Bugati's of that time, the you know, the Atlantic is just outstanding. But then as well, what you know, the Phantom II, just look at the proportions of a Phantom II.

**Robert Ross:** What an amazing thing, a mile long hood. I guess you call them bonnets over there. Yeah. Proportionally, there's probably nothing more regal and stately and impressive than that car.

**Andreas Thurner:** The yeah. You say that the sheer presence and then as well. How small and how tiny but yet perfectly fitted the cabin was right. That's right. Tiny, just impressive. Just beautiful.

**Robert Ross:** So prewar, it's interesting that a contemporary designer is so affected by pre-war designs. I think that says a lot about your appreciation for history.

**Andreas Thurner:** Well, you probably see when you see the SC1 as. That there is definitely something of that drama and something of that, again, pioneering spirit and expressive presence from those days. So you just have to imagine, just have to imagine to how would it feel to sit in the Spitfire and have that nose in front of you?

**Robert Ross:** Are you're not talking about a Triumph Spitfire. You're talking about the airplane. And yes, that is a magnificent view.

**Andreas Thurner:** Yeah. And then, you know, you have this Merlin engine in front of you, of course. Now, we don't have an engine in front of us, but still you celebrate proportions. You celebrate power. Just with the proportions. And that's something I'm convinced, there's something about proportions and stance that will never age.

**Robert Ross:** That's right. That's why a Jaguar E-type looks so good today as it did the day it was born.

**Andreas Thurner:** Absolutely. It looked like a starship landed, you know, actually were as well, thinking about that car when we did it,.

**Robert Ross:** Was that right? Yeah, very interesting. Well, I never want to be presumptuous and assume that one thing informed the other. But no question that the SC1 has that proportion and stance and kind of perfection of line. Well, what about driving? You like driving?

**Andreas Thurner:** I like driving. I'm not sure if I'm a very, very good driver, but I love driving.

**Robert Ross:** And what do you mentioned earlier, the 911 as an example of a car that, you know, you consider a great driving experience. Are there some other cars that or some others that may have kind of affected you and.

**Andreas Thurner:** Well, Several Porsches that I like to drive. You know, I love to drive. Caymen. It's just absolutely fantastic to drive as well. But then I was touched to drive the Phantom, The Phantom is just such a solid, yet light and sophisticated feeling. I had a chance of one time to drive the Silver Ghost.

**Robert Ross:** Did you really? Yeah. The 1907 Silver Ghost?

**Andreas Thurner:** yes. I mean, I shouldn't say a driver, I was passenger.

**Robert Ross:** Yeah,.

**Andreas Thurner:** But yes, there was an experience. We drove it from Sunningdale over at Windsor Castle and passing Ascot, you know, all these beautiful old trees left and right and the whole context and you set so high up, you sit so close together. You have your feet very fast, yet your posture just upright. The whole experience of how you sit is just something as-and then you feel justice, power, this energy. Yet it's so smooth, it's absolutely clear where you're going. It's like on race. It's confidence without question.

**Robert Ross:** Isn't it amazing? I've talked to some old guys that are owners of the original silver ghosts and obviously not that one. That's partly those valuable car in the world, but of that model. And they still regarded as one of the most perfectly built and engineered cars in the world. You just can't find fault with them. A hundred and something years later.

**Andreas Thurner:** Yes, yes, yes. And that's what gives me hope. Because it was really the first series car and they had a car before, like but not series. Like it was their first series meant to publish. And yet it was the best car in the world. Right. They were no startups back then, right? They were they were established companies and nobody knew before that Rolls Royce would be the best kind of worth for 110 years now. So that gives hope. And it's not easy to pull off against sophisticated and established

brands like Porsches and Mercedes and to get that feedback from professional drivers. And you know, on this, you can really build cars because you talk about experience. We talk about possibilities of new drive trains and that you have more space in this and that. But the driving experience always is very, very, very important. And you can still make your statement despite connectivity and ecosystem. All of this is important, but the driving experience is something very, very important.

**Robert Ross:** Well, I look forward to driving the Revero and obviously best of luck with that as you move forward with that and with other new projects that we'll sure hear about in the very, very near future.

**Andreas Thurner:** Awesome. Thank you so much, Robert.

**Robert Ross:** Thank you Andreas Thurner from Karma Automotive for joining us on Cars That Matter. Join us next time to start a new conversation about the passions that drive us and the passions we drive. This episode of Cars that Matter was hosted by Robert Ross, produced by Chris Porter, Sound Engineering by Michael Kennedy. Theme Song by Celeste and Eric Dick, edited by AJ Mosley, recorded at Curtcos Malibu Podcast Studios. Additional Music and Sound by Chris Porter. Our guest today was Andreas Thurner. Tune into Cars that Matter wherever you rev up your podcasts. I'm Robert Ross. Thanks for listening.

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