

THE ORIGIN & CONCEPT

WE NEED TO TURN THE CLOCK BACK TO EARLY 1976 WHEN THE VERY GIFTED JEAN TERRAMORSI FIRST DREAMED UP THE CONCEPT OF THE CAR. THE DREAM WAS OF A CAR THAT COULD BE DESIGNED, BUILT AND DRIVEN TO WIN. IT WOULD HAVE TO BE OF A MODEST SIZE. MODERATE IN COMPLEXITY, ECONOMICAL, RECOGNISABLE AS A PRODUCTION MODEL AND IT WOULD HAVE TO BE WELL BALANCED IN WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION. HE KNEW THAT 1000 EXAMPLES WOULD HAVE TO BE BUILT TO GET HOMOLOGATION INTO GROUP 3 AND THE PRICE WOULD HAVE TO BE ON THE REGION OF 70,000 FRANCS.

The target was the other major European manufacturers of cars then currently engaged in road going competition in motorsport. The company saw the new turbocharged car as a natural successor to the Renault 8, Gordini and Bertinetta, both of which had made history for them in motorsport.

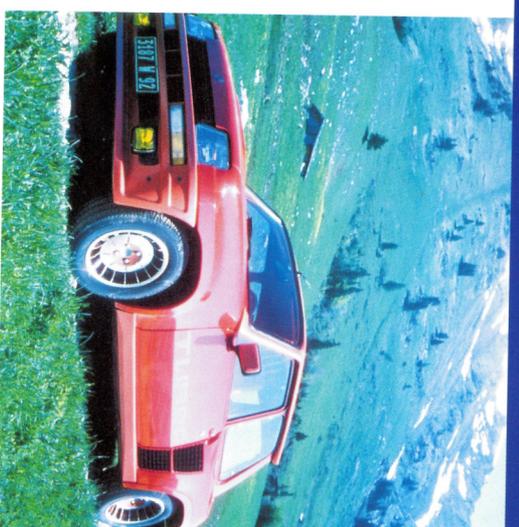
This car was to be a link between motorsport and ordinary road use and would be the first French petrol- engine turbocharged car. In lineage it was number 11 in the family tree of Renault five's. The Renault 5 was an exceptional car because of its efficient management of interior space and good safety record a corollary of front wheel drive. The French were tremendously fond of this Renault model and that was an ideal basis from where to start. If the car was going to take on all comers in the worlds greatest rallies it



August of that year

therefore would have to be laid out according to the mid-engined principles which were known to be so effective. So this new car had to be powerful with approx. 150 to 160 bhp, with a 5 speed gearbox, must be capable of 200 kmh, and be no more than 950 kg's. it would need to be tractable and have excellent road holding qualities and be capable of lasting throughout endurance rallying.

Terramorsi was a very big supporter of Renault Elf's motor sport participation in the Le Mans 24 hours and in Formula 1 where Renault were challenging with a 1500 cc turbocharged car. Sadly Terramorsi died in



without seeing his vision come to fruition but obviously the decision to go forward with the project did not depend on one man and the decision to make the substantial investment was made at Director General level in Renault and the management allocated a budget for a prototype to be built.

So the idea took hold and since Motorsport had become popular within the Renault organisation and the possibility of getting back into rallying appealed to a lot of people. As soon as the go ahead was given the Renault Sport styling department produced a basic design in a matter of weeks, those involved did not drag their feet.

The concept presented a catalogue of problems but that was the challenge to be taken up by the planners, stylists, engineers, development and testing departments. This team was led by the engineer in charge of the road car project, Henry Lherm and he was joined a little later by Marcel Tetu who went on to be a F1 and Ligier designer, both were under the direction of Gerard Larrousse. The engine