Maserati Bora

A Guide to Authenticity

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Intro

The Maserati Bora made its public debut on March 1971 at the Geneva Auto show. This was the first time that Maserati introduced a mid-engine model. Lamborghini already had the Miura and DeTomaso the Mangusta; and it was rumored that Ferrari was also developing a mid-engine car. The Bora was therefore a logical step for the new Maserati flagship model.

The objective of this guide is to document via photos details of how these cars left the factory. As these cars get older, more and more of their original decals, paint, plating and overall details are lost. My objective, with the help of other Bora owners with original cars, is to document these details before they are lost.

This is not a technical document nor intended in providing tips of how to make your Bora better. Original does not necessarily equate to good; just that this was the way the Maserati factory built it.

I am in no way presuming to know it all. My comments are based on observations from my current Bora (#1044) and from about a dozen other Boras I've owned through the years, plus many others I've observed and photographed. Most of my cars have been the USA version, although two of them were European delivered cars.

This is intended to be a live document. As other Bora owners observe an original feature not included in this document, I would encourage them to take a photo and describe what they saw. It is imperative that only original features be included in this document. I cannot stress this enough. Many good intentioned restorers improperly paint or plate components in ways the factory never did. They may look great, but they are not original and should not be in this document.

Production numbers and engines

Although it is difficult to know exactly the production numbers, between 1971 and 1978 the most widely accepted numbers are that 564 Boras were produced of which 275 were fitted with the 4.9 liter V8 engine and 289 with the 4.7 liter engine. Most, if not all, of the Boras destined to the USA had the 4.9 liter engine, while most of the Euro cars had the 4.7 engine.

While some Maserati models, such as the Indy, had very significant changes during their production, the Bora had some minor adjustment but nothing dramatic.

VIN number locations

The VIN is usually found stamped on the chassis in two locations: 1) on the crossmember located between the engine and the spare wheel 2) on the inner side of the right headlight bucket. Most people are not aware on the VIN number stamped next to the headlight bucket therefore that is a good place to check if you suspect the VIN has in any way been altered. In addition to the stampings on the chassis there are several plates that contain the VIN. These plates can be seen in the plates section of this document.

VIN stamped on cross section – 1977 USA

VIN stamped to the left of the right headlight bucket – 1974 USA

Engine number

The engine number is stamped on the rear top of the engine. The last 3 or 4 digits of the engine number need to match the last 3 or 4 digits of the VIN.

This is the original engine for 1977 Bora AM117/49US*1044*
All V8 Maserati engines of this era were designated as either “107” or “115”. A 107 engine means it has a wet sump, while a 115 is a dry sump engine. The first Maserati to use this wet sump engine was the tipo 107 Quattroporte and therefore this engine is an AM107. Confused? To me it would have been clearer if they had simply stamped the VIN of the chassis to the engine …. but they did not ask for my opinion.

Vented vs non-vented hoods

One of the most visible change was the addition of cooling vents on the front hood. The effectiveness of these vents has been questioned and some people claim that the vents made matters worse. The change seems to have appeared sometime in 1973.

Hood without vents (1973 Euro)

Hood with vents

With the introduction of the vents the trunk itself was modified:

Trunk of Bora without vents (1972 Euro)

Trunk of Bora with vents (1974 USA)

Lower front valance vent openings

Many of the early cars without the hood vents also did not have vents cut out on the lower valance. Later cars had the vents. I have seen at least one early car with the valance vents. Were these added by a prior owner?

No lower valance vents on a 1973 USA

No lower valance vents on a 1973 Euro

Vents on a 1977 USA

Lower valance vents on a 1973 Euro. Might this have been added by a prior owner?

Hood hinges

Originally the Bora hood was hinged near the firewall. It was discovered that at high speed travel, if the front latch was to fail, the hood could (and did on occasions) fly open. To fix this problem, Boras in 1977 had their hoods hinged in the front.

Hood hinged near firewall (1972 Euro)

Hood hinged in the front (1977 USA)

Wheels

While the Ghibli had at least seven different types of wheels, all the Boras essentially had the same Campagnolo wheel. Originally the wheel was fitted with a plain hubcap. In 1977 the hubcap was removed, a trident placed in the center and the lug nuts changed to chrome, since they were now exposed. This simple change made a significant difference in the wheel's appearance. A close look at the wheel from a 1977 reveals that the indentations that hold the hub caps are still present making this a very inexpensive method to modernize the look of the wheels.

Campagnolo wheel with hubcap – 1973 USA

Campagnolo wheel with center trident and chromed lug nuts. Decals are also different on the early and later wheels. Refer to the decal section for details.

Bumpers

Perhaps the most dramatic change through the years were the USA bumpers. The bumpers as conceived by Guigiaro were mostly decorations. Pretty they were, but when it came to protect the car and its driver, they were useless. USA regulations in the 1970's was quickly changing. In 1974 bumpers were required to protect the vehicle from a collision at 2.5 mph. For 1975 that number was increased to 5 MPH. Maserati had to modify the Bora's bumpers to meet USA regulations if they wanted to sell cars in the USA, which at that time was its biggest market.

Elegant Euro bumpers. USA cars never had these bumpers, although some cars have been converted.

Rear bumper of Euro car. Pre-1975 USA models had same rear treatment.

1973 USA front bumper (fog lights are not original)

1974 USA rear bumper

Rear bumper treatment on a different 1974 USA. Notice the small overriders and the license plate lights placement.

1977 USA front bumper

1977 USA rear bumper

Side and rear markers

Euro and USA cars differ on the location and size of the side markets. Euro cars had two red markers above the bumper and two front amber markers in the front fenders. Also, the rear taillights on the Euro cars are red/amber while the USA cars have red/red taillights

1973 Euro rear reflector and red/amber tail light

1973 Euro front side marker

1977 USA front amber side marker

1977 USA rear red side marker

1977 USA red/red tail light

Steering wheel

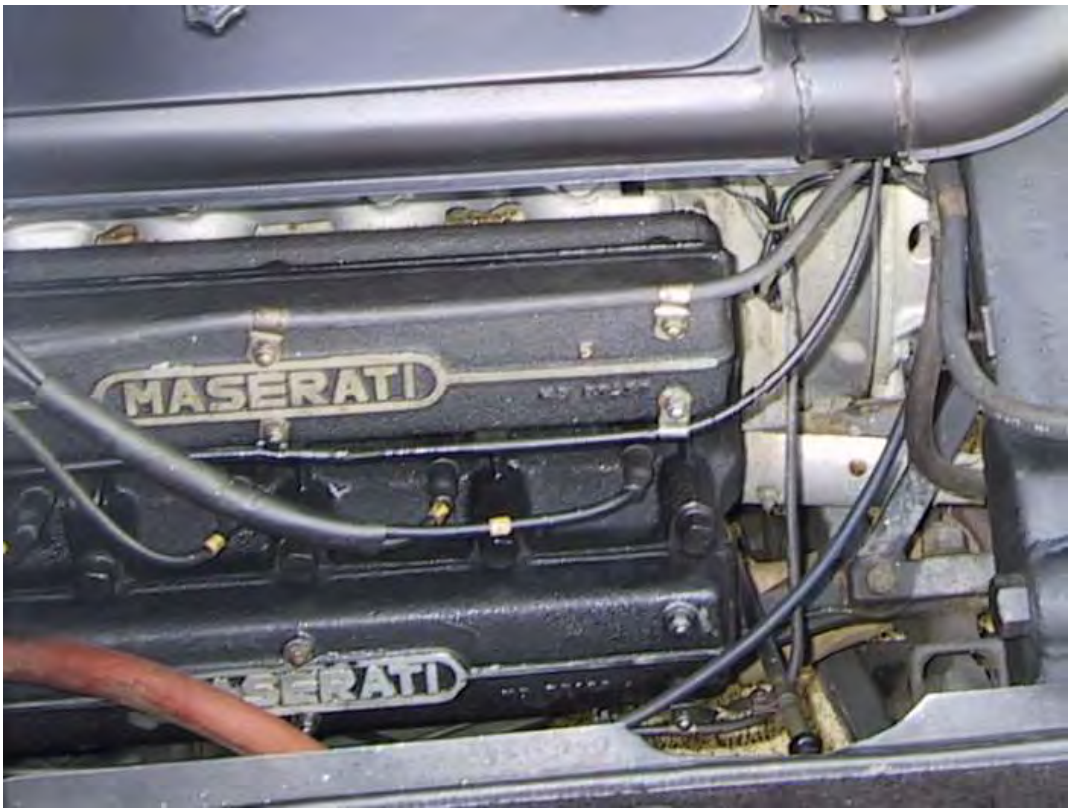
Another mandated item was the steering wheel. USA regulations required the steering wheel to provide some padding as protection in a collision. The padded steering wheel was first introduced on the Ghibli in 1970. Most Euro cars had a non-padded steering wheel although I believe Boras sold in France had the same steering wheel as the USA.

Euro steering wheel

USA steering wheel

Cam covers and heads

The heads and cam covers were always painted in black wrinkle finish. In most engines the lettering was sanded down as shown in this photo. I have also seen the lettering painted in black wrinkle, although less common.



Spark plug wires

The spark plug wires have a white plastic band with the cylinder number identified. A small black rubber boot goes over the bakelite connector for the spark plug. Around this connector is a rubber insert that keep debris away from the spark plug hole. This insert is missing on many cars as they are sometimes misplaced by prior owners and mechanics.

Head light buckets

Early Boras had head light buckets with square corners. Not long into the production the buckets were modified, and the corners rounded.

Square buckets

More common rounded buckets

Seats

While the seats on all Boras were the same the pleats were either flat or “puffy”. The puffy pleats are like those seen on the Citroen SM. I have not seen an explanation as to when or why the pleats were different. It seems to have been a random thing.

1972 Euro with puffy pleats

1977 USA with flat pleats

Passenger foot rest

Some Boras had passenger footrests and others did not.

No foot rest – 1974 USA

Passenger foot rest – 1977 USA

Stainless steel roof

All Boras came with a stainless-steel roof. This was simply a design element and has no practical purpose. Damaged stainless-steel roofs are one of the most difficult things to fix on a Bora as they are no easy to remove.

1973 Euro

1973 Euro

Side Mirrors

Side mirrors were many times determined by the country to which the Bora was being sold. While there is no right or wrong mirror in general the early cars (pre-1975) had chrome or plastic chrome plated mirrors while the later cars had the black rectangular Vitaloni Tornado mirrors. The mirrors on the later cars were electric and provided adjustment with a paddle switch mounted on the door panel.

Typical mirror found on a pre-1975 Bora

Original Vitaloni Tornado on a 1977 USA

Engine cover

The engine cover changed very little during the Bora's production except towards the engine the factory finally realized that placing a couple of handles on the cover would make it much easier to remove.

1972 Euro without handles

1977 USA with handles

Engine compartment paint

The engine compartment on most Boras are painted the match the exterior. For the 1977 models the engine compartments were all black and I would say the finish was not as good as the earlier cars. I suspect the engine compartments were painted black as it would be easier to hide imperfections, thereby saving some cost.

Painted to match exterior on a 1973 Euro

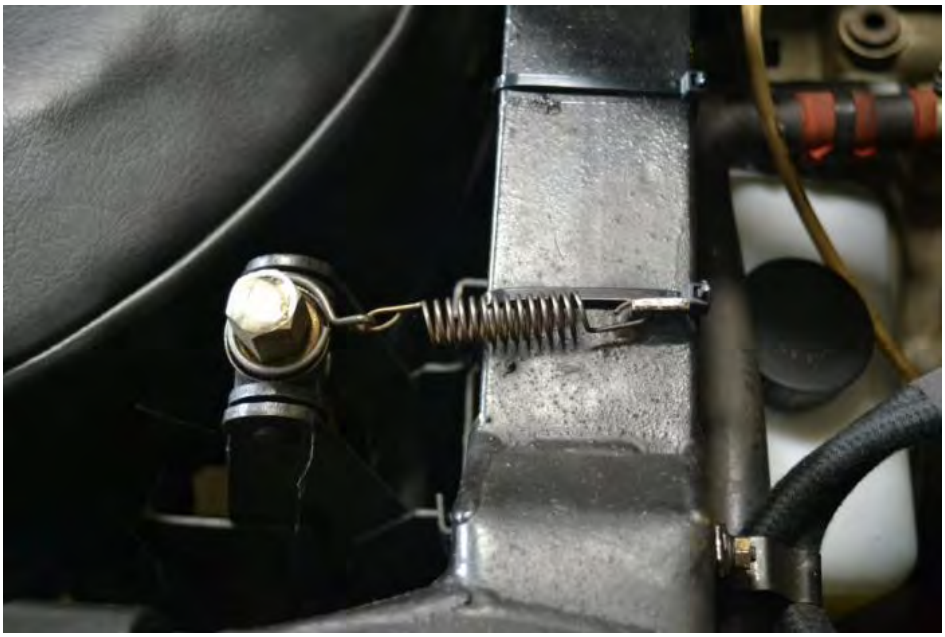
Black under the engine lid on a gold 1977 USA

Glass

The glass on the Bora was made by Saint Gobian and it is date coded. The number represents the last digit of the year while the letter represents the month. In this photo we see an “8” for 1978 and “D” for the month of April. It is interesting to note that on this car a couple of the glass were manufactured in 1973 which means the factory was using up old inventory as they were finishing up the last few Boras. This Bora was the third to last made.

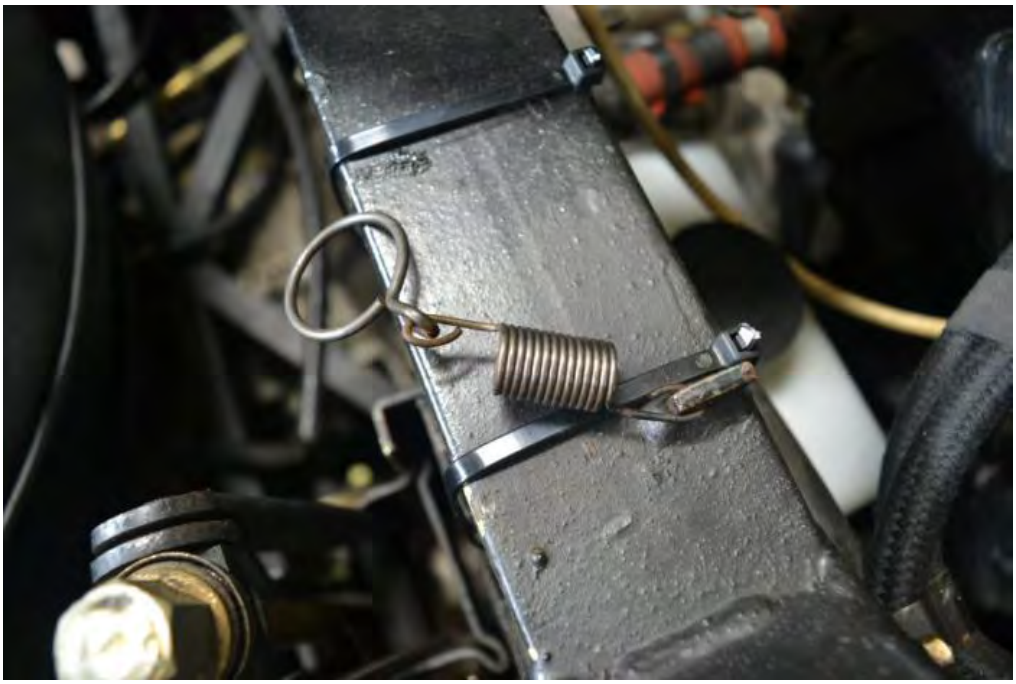
Jack

The Battaini jack is located inside the engine compartment and fits into a bracket and then held with a spring.



Jack location

Battaini decal



Jack spring details (note: plastic ties are not original)

Spare tire

A full-size Michelin 215/70 x 15 XWX tire was provided with a cover. The spare tire is above the ZF transaxle.

Spare tire with cover

Spare tire location

User manuals

The most common Bora user manual has a dark green cover. There was also a Warranty and Maintenance manual, and usually a manual for the radio

Manual with tool kit

Warranty manual which in 1977 was shared with the Khamsin. Also, the radio manual. The grey manual is a USA supplement.

Tool kit

Boras were fitted with a tool kit that was very similar to those used on the Ghibli and Indy. Since the Bora never had knock off wheels only the French hammer was provided.

Dash warning lights

Pre-1977 Boras has either two or three non-labeled warning lights to indicate if the LHM pressure was too low, hand brake was on and if the brake pads were worn too much. Of course, it was up to the owner to figure out what each of these lights meant. The 1977 model had the warning lights labeled and relocated. When the LHM pressure is too low the light labeled “Stop Brake Failure” blinks and buzzer sounds.

1973 Euro with two warning lights

1973 USA with three warning lights

1977 USA with labeled warning light. The red push button is to test the operation of the light.

Left side of dash from a 1973 USA

Left side of dash from a 1977 USA. Notice that the Park warning light was moved to the left and labeled. The hazard switch was changed.

Carpet and heel pads

These photos show a typical original Bora carpet. You can see how the piping was stitched and how the heel pad was cut to accommodate for the passenger foot rest.

Jute backing

Heel pad cut to accommodate passenger foot rest. Notice that heel pad has small ribs. This heel pad is difference to that used on prior Maserati.

The carpet inside the front trunk area and the engine compartment is grey with black fibers on most Boras. On some cars the carpet is black.

Grey with black fibers carpet on a 1977 USA

Detail of grey with black fibers carpet – 1977 USA

Black engine carpet on a 1974 USA

Front hood padding

The inside of the front hood was padded with a diamond shaped pattern. The pattern was heat impressed on vinyl.

Pattern details

Headliner

The headliner is ribbed and has an indentation for the sun visors.

Detail of headliner material

Radios

Several different radios were available for the Bora, but most were Baupunkt. Most had cassette tapes and provided the option to record with a microphone.

1974 USA

1977 USA, the microphone is in the additional box located under the dash

This gooseneck radio from a 1973 USA was the top of the line and a very expensive option. Notice the microphone located on the left lower side of the cabin. The microphone has a switch to pause recording. I can't imagine anyone really dictating a letter while motoring at speed and trying to shift gears at the same time!

Antenna (aerial)

The Bora's antenna in unique in that when in its recessed position the top of the antenna is flushed with the body and there is no chrome surrounding as typically found on other cars of this era. The Iso Grifo has a similar antenna design.

It is interesting to note that the Merak, even though it shares the front end with the Bora, did not have the same antenna design.

The antenna is raised and lowered with a dash mounted switch.

Luggage

The Bora sales manual shows two pieces of luggage in the front trunk. The luggage appears to be the same as was available for the Ghibli. I reproduced the luggage for my Ghibli and found that the dimensions were perfect for the Bora and had a couple of luggage pieces made for my Bora to match the interior color. I would appreciate a photo of original Bora luggage for this document.

Luggage shown in Bora sales brochure

Reproduction luggage on a 1977 USA

Gas struts

There are two rear gas struts for the engine cover and either one or two struts for the front hood. Cars with the front hood hinged near the firewall usually have one strut while those hinged in the front have two struts.

Rear struts on a 1977 USA

Detail of strut's label

Original front hood strut from a 1977 USA

USA cars with the large rubber bumpers had four shock absorbers. In case of an impact they were designed to absorb part of the shock.

Detail of bumper shock from a 1977 USA

Emblems and scripts

Maserati script

Maserati script located on rear left

Bora script

Bora script located on rear right

Ital Design plate

Ital Design plate located on left front fender. No plate was located on the right-hand side

Maserati badge

Maserati badge located in front of hood

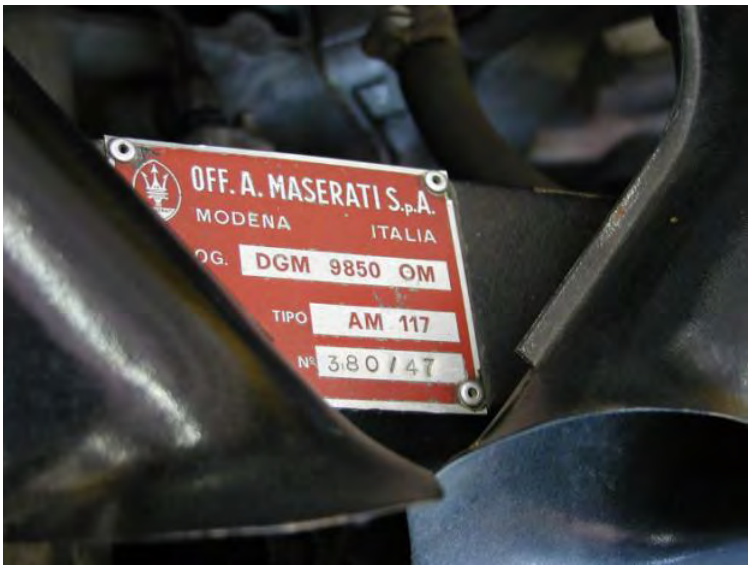
Trident front emblem (Euro only)

Maserati trident located between front bumpers – Euro only

Data and emissions plates

Euro and USA cars differ in the various plates located in the engine compartment, door sill and on the dash of the USA cars. The following photos show some of the plates and their location.

VIN data plate



1973 Euro - Data plate identifying the VIN and engine displacement.

Warning plate

1973 Euro – Warning plate

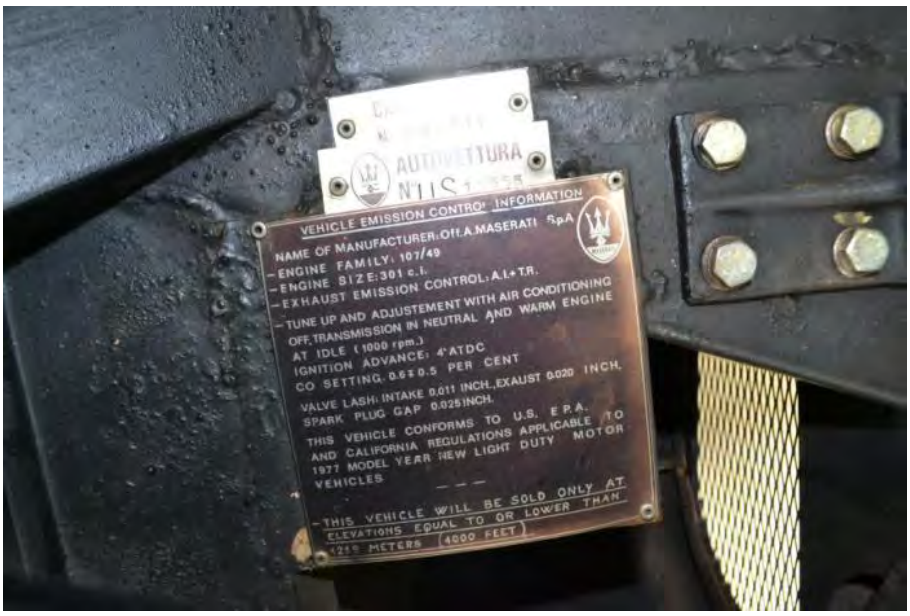
1977 USA – plate includes the manufacture date and the VIN

Manufacture date (USA)

Detail of the plate above

1977 USA - Carrozzeria plate is most likely a unique number assigned to the body. I do not know the purpose of the Autovettura number.

Emissions plates (USA)



1977 USA – Emission information plate. This is a USA only plate and would be different for every year. This plate indicated the car meets the emissions regulations for 1977; even though the car was completed in September of 1978.

Emissions plate from a 1973 USA

Dash VIN plate (USA)

1977 USA – this is a USA only plate which mounts on the dash and it allows the VIN to be visible through the windshield.

Lubrication plate

Lubrication plate from a 1973 USA

Engine identification plate

Engine identification plate from a 1973 USA 4.9 liter

Decals

Run in decal

Run in decal, grey border– 1973 USA

Run in decal – blue border – 1977 USA

Air filter lid decals

Air filter decals – 1977 USA. The Fiam Filter lettering is screened on the metal and is not a decal.

Bosch ignition high voltage warning

Detail of the air conditioner and belt decals located on the air filter lid. 1977 USA

Cooling system decal

The cooling system decal – 1977 USA

Detail of the cooling system decal

Salchi paint code decal

Paint name and code – located inside the gasoline filler lid – 1977 USA

Paint name and code – detail – 1977 USA

Bosch coil decal

Bosch coil decal – 1977 USA

Bosch ignition amplifier decal

Amplifier location – 1977 USA

Ignition amplifier decal – 1977 USA

Tire size and pressures decal

Tire size and pressure – located on glove box lid – 1977 USA

Vitaloni side mirror decal

Vitaloni Tornado decal – 1977 USA

Weber vacuum solenoid

Part of the cabin ventilation system - 1977 USA

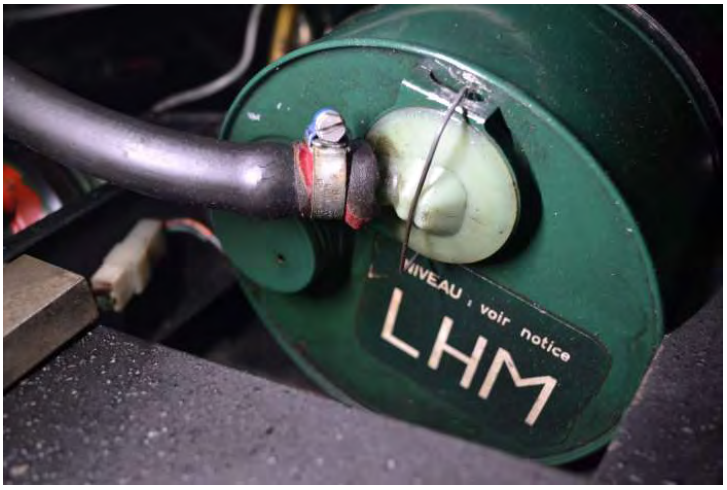
Campagnolo wheel decals

Gold decal from a 1974 USA

This decal was used on the late style wheels without the hubcaps – 1977 USA.

Some of the earlier cars may have used the decals below. I need photos of original (non-restored) wheels showing this earlier decal.

LHM tank decal



Many of the Citroen components were painted this green

Assembly markings

During the manufacturing and assembly of the Bora several markings were put on the car to indicate that the work has been completed. Although I can only speculate on the significance of the markings they clearly had some significance during the assembly process. This is just a sampling of the some of the markings. If you find an original assembly marking on your Bora, please photograph it and indicate its location.

Head "red dot" marking

Towards the front of each head, right on the middle of the valley, there should be a painted red circle. Perhaps this was put on after the valves had been adjusted.

Red dot on a 1977 USA

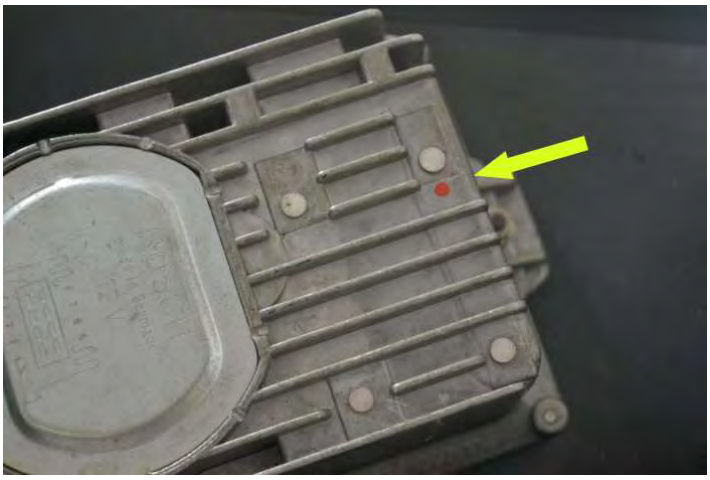
Brake caliper markings

The Bora brake calipers were plated, and a blue marking applied. Not sure of its purpose but perhaps to indicate that the calipers had been pressure tested.

Front caliper – 1977 USA

Rear caliper – 1977 USA

Bosch ignition amplifier marking



There was a tiny red dot put on the amplifier, most likely after it had been tested to be working correctly.

Chalk markings

Sometimes removable panels were hand marked with the last digits of the VIN to identify to which car the part belongs. I found this part on my car (#1044) which was intended to go to car #1048. Either someone picked the wrong part during assembly or they were in a rush to get my car finished and a part was “borrowed” from another one that was being assembled at the same time.

Paint colors and code

I obtained the list on the following page from long time Maserati factory historian Ermanno Cozza. This list is in no way complete but includes most of the most common Bora colors. The color of my Bora, Oro Longchamp, is not on this list.

2

MASERATI BORA 1972 - 80

Denominazione		Cod.MM.D	Cod.SALCHI
BLEU SERA MET			106 A 1B
RAME MET.			106R49
VERDE PINO MET.	AR 216		106G30
BLEU ISCHIA MET.			106A51
ROSSO FUOCO			20R308
CELESTE CHIARO MET			106 A 20
GIALLO			20Y305
MARRONE COLORADO MET.	ITALVER 3221		
ARGENTO AUTEIL MET	=LAN 8062M	16.287	
NERO		12.380	
BIANCO POLO PARK	=LAN 1037M	10.319	20W152
ARGENTO MET		16.287	
ROSSO			20R190 20R 308
BEIGE			106Y19
ROSSO RUBINO MET.	=FA 119	16.119	
CELESTE CHIARO MET.		16.300	
LUCI DI BOSCO MET.	AR 825	ITALVER - Z 463 - 550	
VERDE INDY MET.	ITALVER 3221		