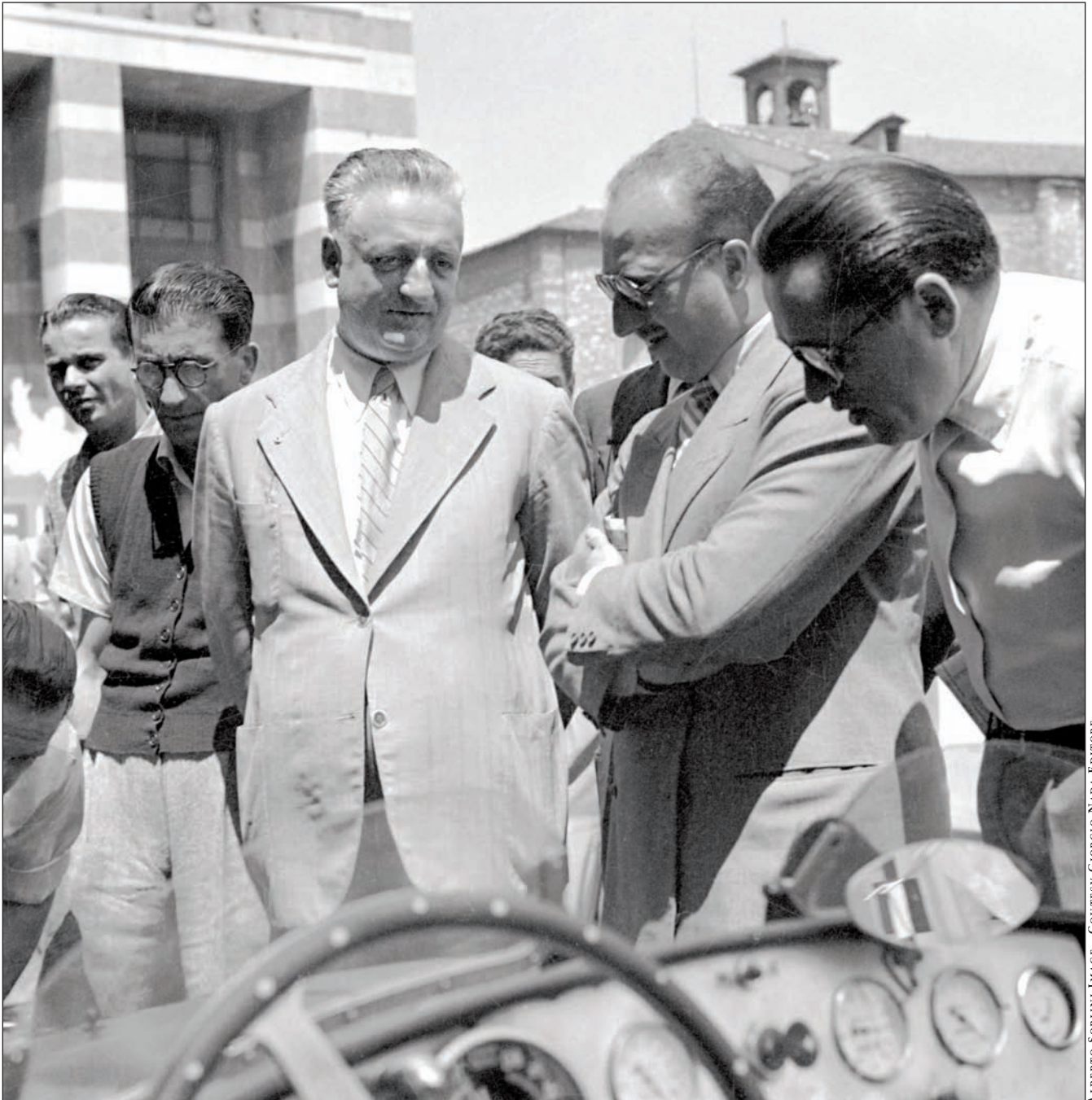


FOTOGRAFIA

ALBERTO SORLINI

FERRARI AND THE MILLE MIGLIA - A HISTORY WITHIN THE HISTORY

THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF ALBERTO SORLINI BY LEONARDO ACERBI



ALBERTO SORLINI IMAGE - COUTESY GIORGIO NADA EDITORE

“The few shots taken by Alberto Sorlini that day in 1947 are the only ones to document the first official participation of a real Ferrari in the Mille Miglia - they are snaps that frame Enzo Ferrari himself rather than the car.”

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FERRARI AND THE MILLE MIGLIA - AN ENTHUSIAST DOCUMENTS ON SCENE

When the Mille Miglia emerged from the ashes of the Second World War, in June of 1947, among the large crowds thronging Brescia's Piazza della Vittoria in those early summer days was a young man with a camera slung around his neck, absorbed in capturing the faces, cars and views on film. Alberto Sorlini, class of 1920, moved confidently among those cars, some of them more sporting than others, and among the established stars and the promising youngsters, to the extent that once the curtain had come down on the 14th edition of the race, his shots were noticed by the ever vigilant Renzo Castagneto, the famous head of the Mille Miglia, who from 1948 engaged Sorlini as the race's official photographer.

In that first post-war edition, Sorlini's keen eye had noticed car number 219 on the main square in Brescia - a Ferrari, finally a "true" Ferrari, the sole 125 S entered in the race by the fledgling constructor from Maranello. This was the very same Enzo Ferrari who at the Mille Miglia had already written memorable chapters in the history of motorsport pri-



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The car driven by Biondetti and Navone - a 166 S with closed bodywork by Allemano - won the 1948 race, the first victory in the Mille Miglia for the Prancing Horse.

Biondetti and Navone repeated their success in 1949, in a classic 166 MM barchetta.

or to the outbreak of war. He had done so by racing - frequently with great success - the Alfa Romeos of first the Scuderia Ferrari and then Alfa Corse; he had done so with a number of historic cars such as the Alfa Romeo 1750 Gran Sport, the Tipo



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THE MILLE MIGLIA IN 9,000 IMAGES

B and the later 8C 2900 A, and he had done so managing drivers of the calibre of Nuvolari, Varzi, Pintacuda and Biondetti.

The man who on that first day of summer in 1947 carefully observed the mechanics at work around that covered-wheel sports car, which had already scored its first victories that season, was therefore a legendary figure who was about to make further contributions to the history of the Mille Miglia.

The few shots taken by Sorlini that day are the only ones to document the first official participation of a Ferrari in the Mille Miglia - they are snaps that frame Ferrari himself rather than the car, of which only the cockpit and a portion of the right-hand rear wing can be seen. These images nonetheless constitute a document of exceptional value, as Franco Cortese and Adelmo Marchetti's race was brief, cut short by a mechanical problem just past Pesaro.

A disappointment, of course, but one tempered the following year when there were no less than five "rosse" at the start. The car driven by Biondetti-Navone - a 166 S with closed bodywork by Allemano - won the race, the first victory in the Mille Miglia for the Prancing Horse.

That edition was also to be remembered for the remarkable performance by the aging yet indomitable Nuvolari who, at the wheel of a Ferrari 166 SC, was the protagonist of a legendary race conducted at breakneck pace, on the front foot and almost always in the lead before a mechanical failure put paid to his dreams. Once again, the series of photographs by Sorlini showing the Mantuan on the starting ramp, pulling on his gloves and goggles, is a document of exceptional value.

A year later and Biondetti and Navone were to seal their second consecutive victory in the Brescian race for Ferrari, at the wheel of a "classic" 166 MM Touring barchetta. Within Sorlini's archive, much space is naturally devoted to the winners,



Villoresi and Cassani, dented but unbowed, won the 1951 edition in this 340 America.

but also to the other Ferraris that started that edition of the race - from the former Biondetti 166 S Allemano berlinetta raced this time by Giampiero Bianchetti and Giulio Sala, to the 166 SC of a pairing destined for great success, Giovanni Bracco and Umberto Maglioli, passing by way of other 166 MMs with open bodywork driven by Giovanni Vaccari, Felice Bonetto and Piero Taruffi.

Then in that year of grace 1950 came the turn of a new man, the rising star from a very good family, the champion no one expected: The Count Giannino Marzotto who, at the wheel of an elegant 195 S Touring berlinetta won, as a "privateer", a memorable edition by beating the second "works" 195 S of Serafini and Salmi, as well as the Alfa Romeo 6C 2500 berlinetta of a certain Juan Manuel Fangio, Alfa Romeo's Formula One driver.

In 1951 it was the turn of Gigi Villoresi and Pasquale Cassani to secure the latest

Mille Miglia victory for Ferrari. They did so at the wheel of a 340 American berlinetta, in an edition made all the more difficult at times by the rain, an edition that also saw the previous year's winner Count Giannino starting at the wheel of a 212 Export bodied by Carrozzeria Fontana with rounded, close-coupled lines that earned it the nickname of "Uovo" or "Egg".

The fifth consecutive triumph for the Prancing Horse came in 1952, when Giovanni Bracco and Alfonso Rolfo engaged in an epic duel in the rain on the difficult hairpins of the Futa and Raticosa passes with the Mercedes-Benz of Karl Kling. The duel went the way of the Ferrari pair at the wheel of a 250 S Vignale berlinetta, in effect the forefather of the long and glorious line of Ferrari 250 GTs that made their mark throughout the next decades.

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FERRARI AND THE MILLE MIGLIA - HEROS IN AN HISTORIC EVENT



Bracco and Rolfo took the 1952 win in this 250 S Vignale berlinetta.

For once driving for the works team, Giannino Marzotto then also won the 1953 edition, paired by Marco Crosara, aboard a 340 MM Vignale barchetta.

Although overall success escaped Ferrari in 1954 and 1955, the cars of the Prancing Horse nonetheless played a leading role, with second place for Vittorio Marzotto in 1954 in a 500 Mondial spyder by Pinin Farina and third for Maglioli and Montefferrario in a 118 LM Scaglietti spyder the following year behind the unbeatable Mercedes-Benzes that dominated that edition.

Eugenio Castellotti drove alone at the wheel of his 290 MM in the victorious edition of 1956.

But finally De Portago and Nelson started the following year in what was for them and for everyone else what was sadly to be last edition of the true Mille Miglia. (But also the engineer Piero Taruffi embracing his wife Isabella following his victory in that 1957, the 8th for Ferrari in the Mille Miglia.) These are just a few of the historic photos taken by Alberto Sorlini and documenting Ferrari's epic feats in the post-war editions of the Brescian classic.

These photographs form a unique archive, testimony to an unrepeatable era of motorsport.

THE NOVAFOTO-SORLINI ARCHIVE TODAY...

In 1989, the entire corpus of photographs dedicated to the Mille Miglia became the property of Giorgio Nada Editore and shortly afterwards, given its particular historical-cultural value, was placed under the protection of the Superintendency of Archival Heritage of the Lombardy Region. In the meantime, the publisher has proceeded to caption the almost 9,000 images and completed the long and laborious process of digitalizing them.

For some time now, the archive has been available to historians, researchers, collectors and mere enthusiasts who may acquire individual shots for private use and for publication. The next step, which is already underway, will be the definitive release of the archive online, providing all enthusiasts of motorsport history with a quite remarkable historical and sporting resource.

The tense countdown for Eugenio Castellotti in his 290 MM, at the start of the 1956 race, which he won for Ferrari.

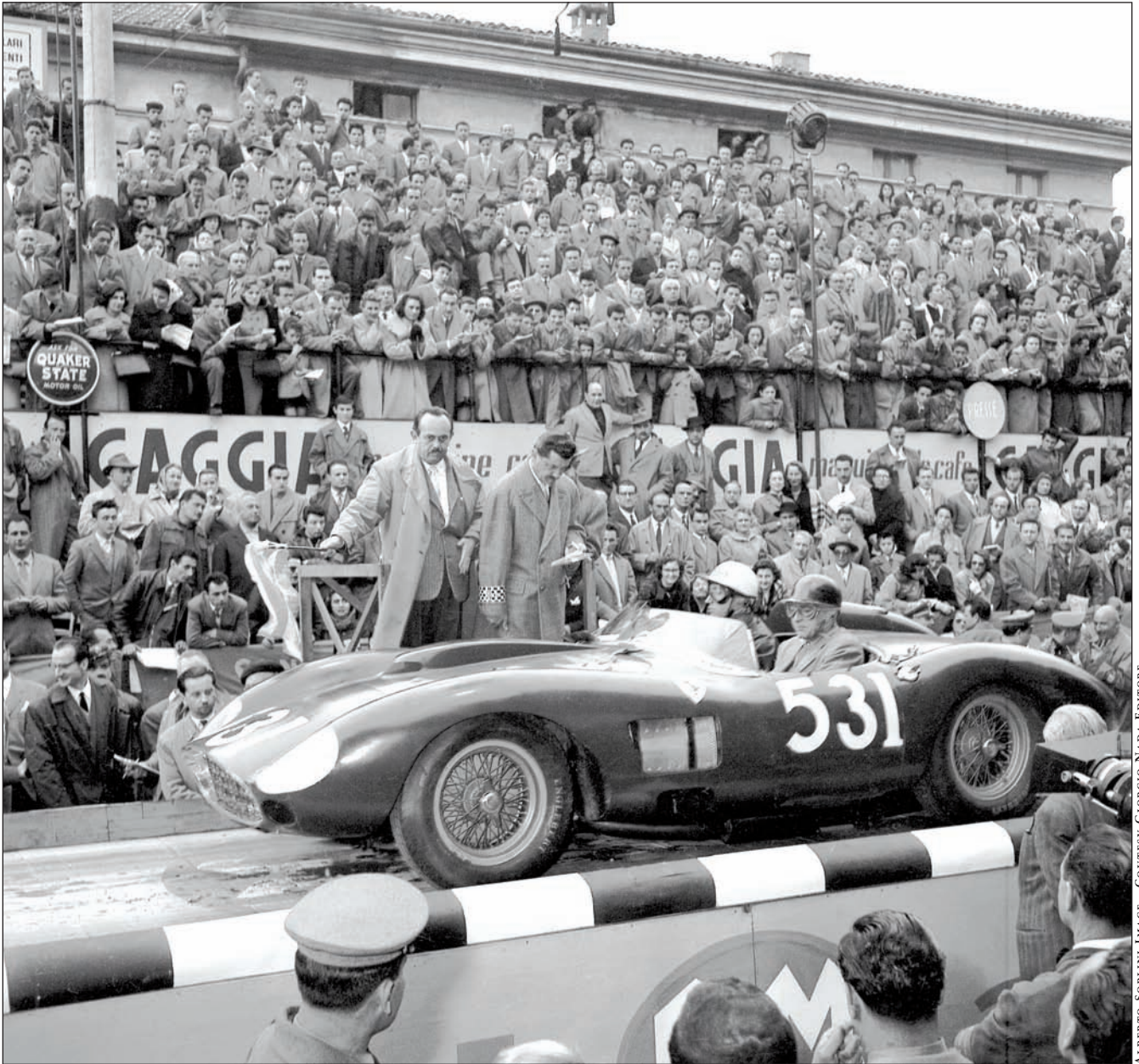


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FERRARI AND THE MILLE MIGLIA - TO END AT LAST IN TRAGEDY



A grand montage of Mille Miglia life - an exciting car, an expectant team, a concentrating official, a hesitant flag, a worshipful crowd - all to end too soon with the crash of these protagonists in the 1957 race, Alfonso de Portago and Edmund Nelson in their Ferrari 335 S.

Visit our good friends at Giorgio Nada Editore in Milan, the famous book publishers and book sellers. They also buy up photo collections and these several images are from the collection of Alberto Sorlini, who took around 9,000 images in black and white and color, featuring almost all the participants in the Mille Miglia from 1947 to 1957.

*To find out more about this collection, please email: Info@giorgionadaeditore.it
Giorgio Nada Editore, Via C. Treves 15/17, 20090 Vimodrone (Milan) - Italy Tel: +39 0227301126
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