

CORRENTI DELLA STORIA

ENZO FERRARI
(1898- 1988)

Last month's essay (January 2017) was about Ferruccio Lamborghini, who combined the Italian desire for fashion and modern design into a classic automobile that took the world by storm. This month, in keeping with our focus on Italian 20th-century contributions to luxury and design, we look at another automaker, Enzo Ferrari, who worked to build a stylish racing automobile that combined design with speed. He was an Italian motor racing driver and entrepreneur, the founder of the Scuderia Ferrari Grand Prix motor racing team, and subsequently of the Ferrari automobile company. He was widely known as "il Commendatore" or "il Drake." In his final years he was often referred to as "l'Ingegnere" (The Engineer) or "il Grande Vecchio" (the Great Old Man). Ferrari's cars became synonymous with hair-raising power and acceleration, precise high-speed handling and fabulous exclusivity and expense. While Detroit cranked out millions of cars every year, Ferrari averaged about 1,000 a year since its 1947 beginning—with slightly higher production in recent years. Some were racing cars, while others were playthings that sold for more than \$100,000. They could break speed limits in first gear and reach speeds approaching 200 miles per hour. All this came with a lack of interior comfort for driver and passenger in his commercial automobiles (something Lamborghini criticized him about).

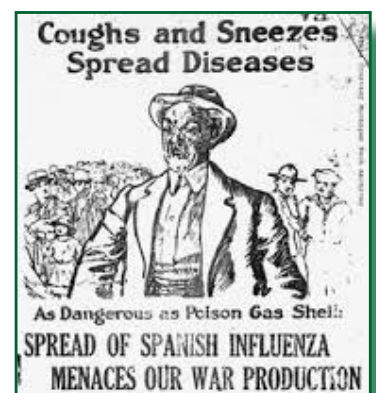
This February 18 would have been Enzo Ferrari's 119th birthday, so it is appropriate, I think, to focus on this automobile racing and entrepreneur of the 20th century.

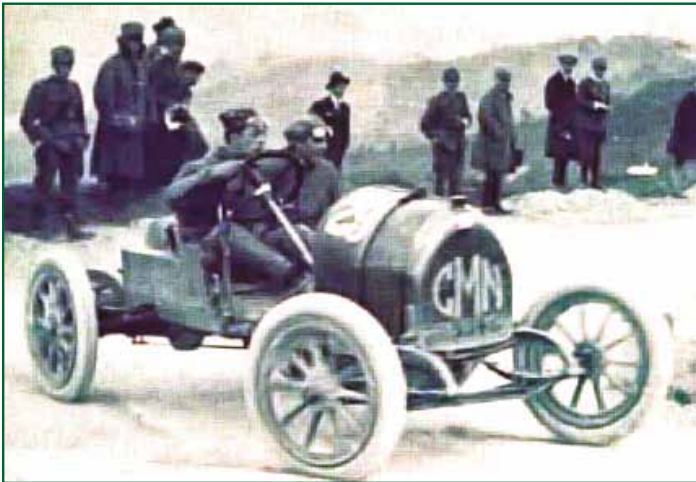


Enzo Anselmo Ferrari was born on February 18, 1898 in Modena, Italy. His birth wasn't registered until two days later because a heavy snow storm prevented his father from reporting the birth to the local registry office. (So, some biographies incorrectly give his birthdate as February 20.) He was the younger of two children to Alfredo and Adalgisa Ferrari (née Bisbini). His older brother was also named Alfredo, but went by the nickname "Dino." Enzo's father was the son of a grocer from Carpi. At the family home in Modena, his father started a metal-blacksmith and engineering business that forged axles and built bridges and roofs for Italian railroads. Eventually, the family company employed around 30 people.

When Enzo was 10, his father took him and his brother Dino to an automobile race in Bologna. There he saw Vincenzo Lancia battle Felice Nazzaro in the 1908 Circuit di Bologna. After attending a number of other races, Ferrari decided that he too wanted to become a race car driver. His formal education was relatively sketchy, something that he would regret in his later years. In 1916, tragedy, which would haunt Ferrari his entire life, struck his family to its core with the death of his father and brother in the same year from a widespread influenza outbreak in Italy. During World War I, he was assigned to the Third Alpine Artillery division of the Italian Army, with the task of shoeing mules; however, he became severely ill in the world-wide flu pandemic of 1918 that almost ended his own life and resulted in his discharge from the army.

Looking for work, he applied for a job at the FIAT plant in Turin, only to be turned down. He nearly starved for lack of work, something that would be





Enzo Ferrari driving in the Parma-Poggio di Berceto.

gan before the race even started; on the run down from Sicily, they were chased by a pack of wolves which Ferrari fought off with his old service revolver. During the race it was more a matter of surviving the roads, wind and rain than any hopes for glory. On the final lap, however, because the Provincial Governor in one of the small villages was giving a speech, a contingent of Carabinieri blocked their progress enough so that they were unable to finish the race in the allotted time. To make matters worse, they also had to retire from the race after the car's fuel tank developed a leak.

However, Sivocci and Ferrari did perform well enough to be offered a job with Alfa Romeo, which entered some modified production cars in the 1920 Targa Florio. Ferrari, driving one of these cars, managed to finish second overall and first in his class. While he was at Alfa Romeo, he came under the patronage of Giorgio Rimini who was Nicola Romeo's aide. In 1923 he was racing and winning at the Circuit of Sivocci at Ravenna when he met the father of the legendary Italian WWI flying ace Francesco Baracca, who had been tragically shot down and killed in the war. The senior Baracca was enamored with the courage and audacity of the young Ferrari, and presented him with a necklace that had his son's squadron badge, the famous Prancing Horse on a yellow shield, on it. In memory of his death, Ferrari used the prancing horse to create the emblem that would become the world famous Ferrari shield. However, the world first saw this emblem on an Alfa Romeo because Ferrari was still working for Alfa Romeo. (It was not until 1947 that the shield was first seen on a Ferrari. That year, the Ferrari automobile was born).



In 1924 Ferrari won the *Coppa Acerbo* at Pescara, a success that encouraged Alfa Romeo to offer him a chance to race in much more prestigious competitions. He was promoted to full factory driver. His racing career up to that time mostly consisted of local races in second-hand cars, but with his promotion he was now expected to compete driving the latest cars at the year's most prestigious race, the French Grand Prix. What happened next is not quite clear, but it seems that Ferrari suffered a crisis of confidence and was not able to take part in the biggest race of his career. A lesser man may have been permanently scarred by this crisis, but Ferrari was able to resume his position at Alfa Romeo, becoming Rimini's "Mr. Fixit." He did not race again until 1927, but by then, his racing career in prestigious events was pretty much over. Recognizing one's limits in this most dangerous of sports should not be minimized. He continued to compete in minor events and in this he was quite successful.

seared into his consciousness all his life. Eventually, he found a job as test-driver for C.M.N. (Costruzioni Meccaniche Nazionali), a Milan-based car manufacturer which redesigned used truck bodies from war surplus into small passenger cars. Besides his duties of test-driving, he also delivered chassis to the coach builder. He was later promoted to race-car driver and made his competitive debut in the 1919 Parma-Poggio di Berceto hillclimb race, where he finished fourth in the three-liter category at the wheel of a 2.3-liter, 4-cylinder C.M.N. 15/20.

While at CMN, he met Ugo Sivocci who was also a test driver. On November 23, 1919, he and Sivocci joined forces in the 1919 Targa Florio. Their adventure be-

In 1929 Ferrari started his own firm, Scuderia Ferrari. He was sponsored in this enterprise by the Ferrara-based Caniano brothers, Augusto and Alfredo, heirs to a textile fortune. Alfa Romeo had temporarily withdrawn from racing in 1925 and the Scuderia Ferrari's main task was to assist wealthy Alfa Romeo customers with their racing efforts by providing delivery, mechanical support and any other services that they required. With Alfa Romeo, he exchanged a guarantee of technical assistance with stock in his own company. Ferrari then made similar deals with Bosch, Pirelli and Shell. To supplement his "stable" of amateur drivers, he induced Giuseppe Campari (*right*) to join his team. He followed this with an even greater coup by signing Tazio Nuvolari. In its first year of racing, the Scuderia Ferrari could boast 50 full and part-time drivers. The team competed in 22 events and scored eight victories and several good placings. Scuderia Ferrari caused a sensation. It was the largest team ever put together by one individual. None of the drivers was paid a salary, but received a percentage of the prize money that the team won. Any extra technical or administrative assistance a driver required was gladly given for a price. The basic plan called for the driver to get to the race; his car would be delivered to the track by the Scuderia, with the company handling any entrance fees or duties. It is not surprising that Ferrari would look fondly back at this period. It is also not out of the question that if anyone could survive as an independent in the contemporary Formula One world, then Enzo Ferrari would be that man.



Alfa Romeo agreed to continue partnering with Ferrari's racing team at Scuderia either as a client or as the official racing department of the factory until 1933, when financial constraints forced it to withdraw support.



Drivers Enzo Ferrari (1st from left), Tazio Nuvolari (4th) and Achille Varzi (6th) of Alfa Romeo with Alfa Romeo Managing Director Prospero Gianferrari (3rd) at Colle della Maddalena, c. 1933

At first, this seemed to be just the opening that Ferrari needed, but then it became apparent that Scuderia's own supply of new racing cars would soon dry up. Luckily for Scuderia, Pirelli interceded and convinced Alfa Romeo to supply Ferrari with six P3's and the services of engineer Luigi Bazzi and test-driver Attilio Marinoni. The Scuderia became, in effect, Alfa Romeo's racing department.

Ferrari took this opportunity to retire from driving. At the same time, the Scuderia took a more professional turn. All looked set for Ferrari to make his true mark on the racing scene. What he did not count on was a German tidal wave in the form of Auto Union and Mercedes, against which the Scuderia team struggled to compete, despite its quality. Although these German manufacturers dominated the era, Ferrari's team did achieve a notable victory in 1935 when Tazio Nuvolari beat Rudolf Caracciola and Bernd Rosemeyer on their home turf at the German Grand Prix. But, victories in any of the major races were few and far between.

But things were happening in Ferrari's personal life at the same time. In 1932 his first son was born, named Alfredo after his father, but known as Dino, and

In 1937 Ferrari suggested to Alfa Romeo that they build 1.5-liter voiturette-class cars. However, Alfa decided to regain full control of its racing division, and Ferrari was retained as Sporting Director. After being the man in charge at the Scuderia, he now found himself working under Alfa's engineering director, Wilfredo

Ricart. Ferrari was upset with the new arrangement; so he left and founded Auto-Avio Costruzioni, a company supplying parts to other racing teams. Although a contract clause restricted him from racing or designing cars for four years, Ferrari managed to manufacture two cars for the 1940 Mille Miglia, driven by Alberto Ascari and Lotario Rangoni.



The post-war Tipo 125 1500-cc supercharged Grand Prix car being driven by Dino Ferrari. This was among the first cars built by the new Modena company.

In 1943, because of World War II, Ferrari's factory was forced to undertake war production for Mussolini's government. Following Allied bombing of his factory, Ferrari relocated from Modena to Maranello. At the end of the conflict, Ferrari decided to start making cars bearing his own name, and founded Ferrari S.p.A. in 1947, with his classic symbol of the Prancing Horse on a yellow shield as the company emblem. He set out to create his own Grand Prix car and in 1947 a 1.5-liter Tipo125 entered the Grand Prix of Monaco. In 1948 Ferrari had its first win at Lago di Garda. The first major victory came at the 1949 24 Hours of Le Mans, with a Ferrari 166M driven by Luigi Chinetti and Peter Mitchell-Thomson. In 1950 Ferrari enrolled in the newly-born Formula 1 World Championship and is the only team to remain continuously present in the race since its inception. Ferrari's first Grand Prix victory came in 1951 at the British Grand Prix at Silverstone. This was followed in 1952 with his first Formula One World championship, repeated again in 1952.

Production of sports cars for both other racing teams and the consumer market was also an important endeavor for Ferrari, but in marked difference with other car manufacturers, racing was not used to sell more cars; rather, cars were sold so that the team could continue racing! Many of the cars that were sold were last year's models. Ferrari was not a sentimental person when it came to his cars; those that were not sold were turned to scrap or scavenged for parts. Ferraris became a common feature at all major sports car racing events, including Le Mans, the Targa Florio and the Mille Miglia. Many of Team Ferrari's greatest victories came at Le Mans (nine victories, including six in a row 1960–65) and in Formula One during the 1950s and 1960s.

By the end of the 1960s, increasing financial difficulties as well as the problem of racing in many categories and having to meet new safety and clean air emissions requirement for road car (consumer) production and development caused Ferrari to start looking for a business partner. In 1969, Ferrari sold 50% of his company to FIAT, with the caveat that he would remain 100% in control of the racing activities and that FIAT would pay sizable subsidies until his death for use of his Maranello and Modena production plants. (He had previously offered Ford the opportunity to buy the firm in 1963 for \$18 million; however, late in negotiations, Ferrari withdrew once he realized that he would not be able to retain independent control of the company's racing program). With the collapse of the Ford deal, Ferrari became a joint-stock company, with FIAT taking a small share in 1965 and then in 1969, increasing its holding to 50% of the company. (In 1988 FIAT's holding rose to 90%).

Following the agreement with FIAT, Ferrari stepped down as managing director of the road car (consumer) division in 1971. In 1974 Ferrari appointed Luca Cordero di Montezemolo as Sporting Director/Formular One Team manager. (Montezemolo eventually assumed the presidency of Ferrari in 1992, a post he held until September, 2014). Clay Regazzoni was deputy champion in 1974, while Niki Lauda won the championship in 1975 and 1977. After those successes and another title for Jody Scheckter in 1979, the company's Formula One championship hopes fell into the doldrums.

In 1981 Ferrari attempted to revive his team's fortunes by switching to turbo engines. In 1982, the second turbo-powered Ferrari, the 126C2, showed great promise. However, Gilles Villeneuve was killed in May, and in August teammate Didier Pironi had his career cut short in a violent end over end flip on the misty back straight at Hockenheim after hitting the Renault of Alain Prost. Pironi was leading the driver's championship at the time; he would lose the lead as he sat out the remaining races. The Scuderia went on to win the Constructors Championship at the end of the season and again in 1983, but the team would not see championship glory again until after Ferrari's death in 1988. The final race win for his team that Ferrari saw was when Gerhard Berger and Michele Alboreto scored a 1-2 finish at the final round of the 1987 season in Australia.



His drivers won more than 4,000 victories, and the Ferrari team took 13 world titles, including nine in the Formula One category since 1952.

MANAGEMENT CONTROVERSIES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON RACING

Enzo Ferrari's management style was autocratic and he was known to pit drivers against each other in the hopes of improving their performances. Some critics believe that Ferrari deliberately increased psychological pressure on his drivers, encouraging intra-team rivalries and fostering an atmosphere of intense competition for the position of number one driver. "He thought that psychological pressure would produce better results for the drivers," said Ferrari team driver Tony Brooks. "He would expect a driver to go beyond reasonable limits...You can drive to the maximum of your ability, but once you start psyching yourself up to do things that you don't feel are within your ability, it gets stupid. There was enough danger at that time without going over the limit."

During the late 1950s and 60s, seven Ferrari drivers—Alberto Ascari, Eugenio Castellotti, Alfonso de Portago, Luigi Musso, Peter Collins, Wolfgang Von Trips and Lorenzo Bandini—were killed driving Ferrari racing cars. Although such a high death toll was not unusual in motor racing in those days, the Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* described Ferrari as being similar to the god Saturn, who consumed his own sons. However, in Ferrari's defense, contemporary F1 race car driver Stirling Moss commented: "I can't think of a single occasion where a (Ferrari) driver's life was taken because of mechanical failure."

In public Ferrari was careful to acknowledge the drivers who risked their lives for his team, insisting that praise should be shared equally between car and driver for any race that was won. However, his longtime friend and company accountant, Carlo Benzi, related that privately Ferrari "would say that the car was the reason for any success."

Following the deaths of Giuseppe Campari in 1933 and Alberto Ascari in 1955, (he had strong personal relationships with both), Ferrari chose not to get too close to his drivers out of fear of emotionally hurting himself.

In his later years, Ferrari rarely left Modena, and never went to any Grands Prix outside of Italy; he was sometimes seen at the Grands Prix at Monza near Milan and/or Imola, which was fairly close to the Ferrari factory. He usually followed the progress of the Ferrari team from written reports and viewing races on TV.

PERSONAL LIFE AND DEATH

Ferrari spent a reserved life, and rarely granted interviews. He rarely left Modena and Maranello, except for when the annual Italian Grand Prix at Monza, just outside of Milan, took place, or when he took a trip to Paris to broker a compromise between the warring FISA (International Automobile Federation) and FOCA (Formula One Constructors' Association) in 1982. (The battle boiled during the late 1970s and early 1980s, and came to a head when the racing teams affiliated with FOCA, an equivalent to a racing team union, boycotted the 1982 San Marino Grand Prix). Ferrari was involved with others in bringing a resolution to the dispute, which increased the professionalism, commercialism, and popularity of Formula One racing.

Ferrari married Laura Dominica Garello (c. 1900–1978) on April 28, 1923, and they remained married until her death. They had one son, Alfredo “Dino”, who was born in 1932 and groomed as Enzo’s successor, but he suffered from ill-health and died from muscular dystrophy in 1956. Enzo had a second son, Piero, with his mistress Lina Lardi in 1945. Since divorce was illegal in Italy until 1975, Piero could only be recognized as Enzo’s son after his wife’s death in 1978. Piero is currently a vice-president of the Ferrari Company with a 10% share of ownership.



Piero Lardi Ferrari (b. 1945)



Ferrari was made a *Cavaliere del Lavoro* in 1952, to add to his honors of *Cavaliere* and *Commendatore* that he received in the 1920s. He also received a number of honorary degrees (he was proudest of an honorary engineering degree from the University of Bologna), the Hammarskjöld Prize in 1962, the Columbus Prize in 1965, and the De Gasperi Award in 1987. In 1994, he was posthumously inducted into the International Motorsports Hall of Fame, and in 2000, he was also inducted into the Automotive Hall of Fame.

Enzo Ferrari died on August 14, 1988 in Maranello at the age of 90. No cause of death was given, but he was known to have suffered from kidney disease. His death was not made public until two days later, per Enzo’s request, to compensate for the late registration of his birth.

Shortly before his death, he had witnessed the launch of the Ferrari F40, one of the greatest road cars at that time. It was dedicated as a symbol of his achievements. In 2002, the first car to be named after him was launched as the “Enzo Ferrari” (right). He was buried in San Cataldo, outside Modena.

