

A MUSIK-EXPRESS

The 5000GT series was a very exclusive affair for Maserati customers. Inspired by an idea from the Shah of Persia, 34 vehicles were subsequently produced with a genuine 5000GT engine, as well as two models with an engine that was roughly equivalent to the later Mexico V8.

One special car was chassis number #103.026. The car was fitted with one of Allemano's "standard" bodies.

The production sheet ("Foglio di Montaggio") for the car shows that it was completed at Maserati on January 3, 1962. The internal engine number was 11. Interestingly, the word "Argentina" can be seen in the header of this document. It therefore appears that the car was originally intended for someone in this South American country, who then canceled their order. However, there are no further details on this in the factory archives. The fact is that #026 remained at the factory after completion, waiting for a buyer. This suggests that there may have been difficulties with the Argentine order for the car.

On July 20, 1964, Belponer sold #026 for 2,000,000 lire to I.R.C.A. S.r.L, a packaging company located at Via A. Sauli 26 in Milan. On July 29, the car was re-registered there with the new license plate MI 934913. Belponer later owned a Ghibli Spyder and even a Ferrari 250 GTO, and was the one who bought the legendary, genuine Miura SV Jota prototype from Ferruccio Lamborghini, which one of his mechanics then wrecked during a nighttime drive. Belponer's involvement with Scuderia Brescia Corse ended a few years later in financial disaster for him, costing him his fortune.

But back to the 5000GT #026 – in the early 1960s, Antonio Ciacchi from San Marino, better known by his stage name Little Tony, enjoyed great success in Italy as a rock 'n' roll singer and came second in the famous San Remo Song Festival. Little Tony was a car enthusiast and owned several Ferraris as well as a Maserati 3500GT Spyder Vignale. On October 1, 1964, Tony became the next owner of #026, taking delivery of the car the following day.



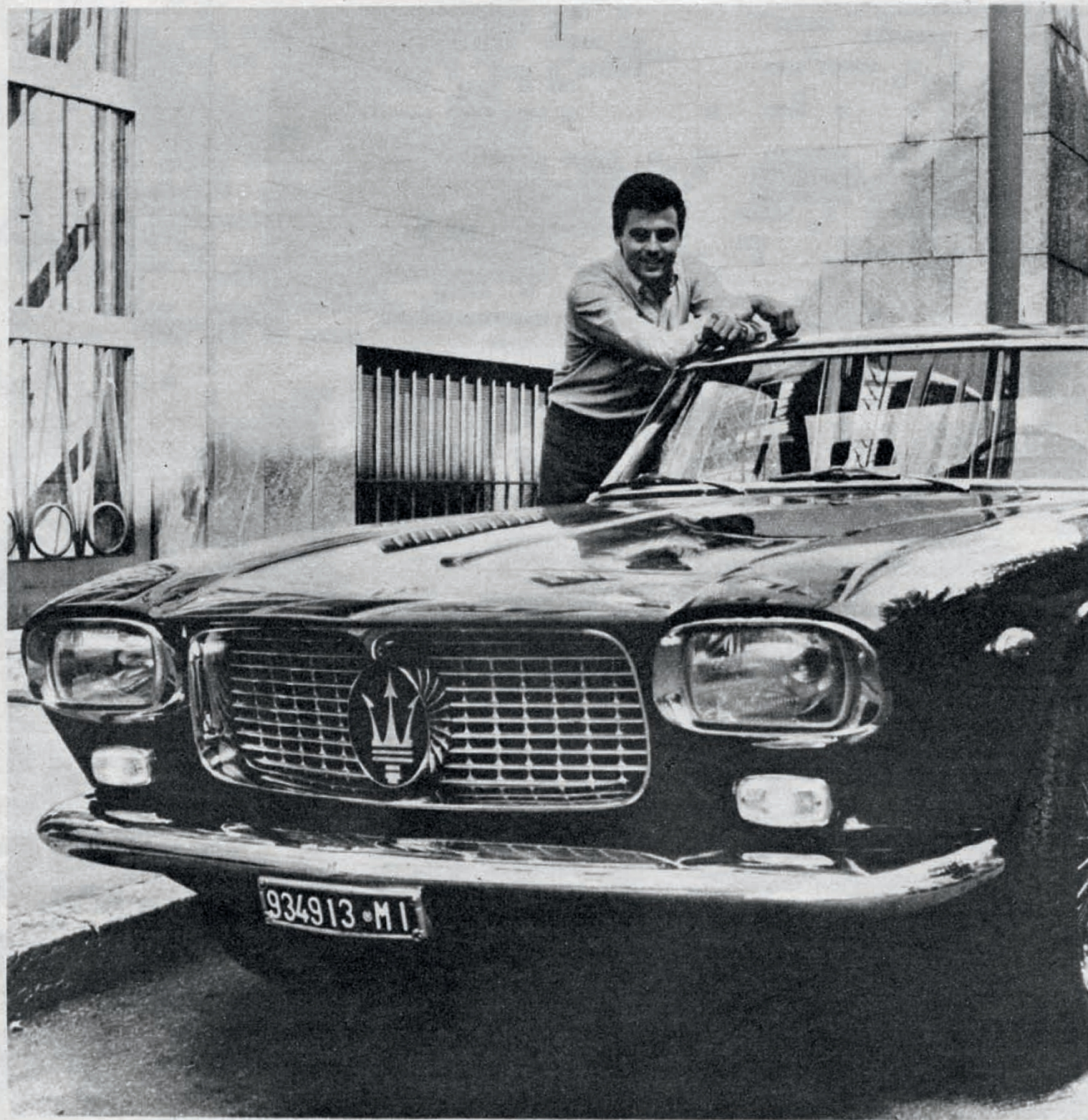
In December 1963, Maserati dealer Franco Cornacchia of Cornacchia Automobili in Milan ordered the car for his customer Alfredo Belponer from Brescia. On January 16, the car was delivered directly from Maserati to Belponer, but not before undergoing a comprehensive service at the factory.

On February 12, the new owner paid the then hefty sum of 7,500,000 lire for the car and registered it on February 20 with the number BS 141536. The car was painted a fiery red, a rather unusual color for this model. Signore Belponer was not just anyone – he was the very wealthy heir to an industrial family whose company had a monopoly on the manufacture of machines for producing stockings. He was also the founder and owner of the "Scuderia Brescia Corse" racing team. Belponer used his 5000GT to drive to various racing events in which members of his Scuderia participated.

imported to San Marino. But how did Little Tony come to own the 5000GT? It is likely that Tony first saw the car during promotional filming for the Italian cosmetics company "Brilliantina Linetti." A photo appeared in the Italian weekly magazine "Oggi" in its April 1965 issue, long after Tony had already bought the car. The fact that the photo was taken much earlier is proven by the old license plate MI 934913, which was still mounted on the vehicle.

Tony owned the car for about a year and then sold it to a Swiss buyer. Through an advertisement in the Swiss *Automobil Revue* magazine in its May 5, 1966 issue, the car found its way to the USA to another very well-known musician – Joe Walsh, guitarist, singer, and founding member of the rock band The Eagles ("Hotel California"). In one of his songs, he sang, "My Maserati does 185 – I lost my license now I don't drive." Mr. Walsh sold #026 to another

EH, TONY...



La bellissima Maserati 5000 ad iniezione di Little Tony.

Roma: mezzogiorno sul viale che porta all'EUR. Macchine così ce ne sono tre o

D. - Tony, è vero che ammiri solo le cose più belle?

HISTORY

musician, Henry Vestine, guitarist and singer with the rock band Canned Heat. Walsh himself has remained loyal to the Maserati brand to this day and currently drives a Quattroporte VI.

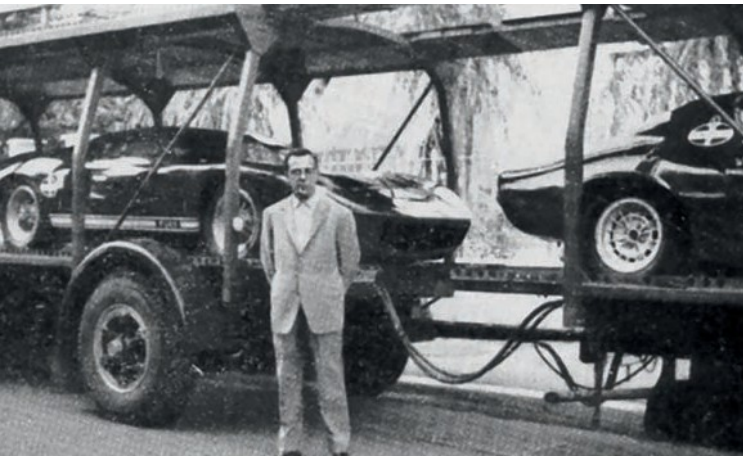
Henry Vestine was known for driving his cars at full throttle and was stopped countless times by the police in his Maserati. One day, Vestine revved the engine too high. As a result of the subsequent engine overhaul, a new crankshaft was installed. However, Vestine didn't quite trust the whole thing and, to be on the safe side, installed a US V8 engine and stored the original engine.

In the 1980s, the 5000GT was in Seattle, Washington. There, #026 was offered for sale in an American car magazine for \$26,000. The owner at the time was John Holden. Paul Wear bought the car and sold it in 1984 to Larry "Flathead" Wakefield, a car enthusiast among the many car fanatics in Washington who acquired numerous European exotics. He owned the Maserati until 1986. In the early 1990s, collector Ken McBride, also from Seattle, became the owner of #026. At that time, the car was registered in Washington with the license plate AWG 069.

McBride restored the car and exhibited it at the Concours in Pebble Beach in August 1999. On August 17, 2002, the 5000GT was sold by Bonhams at Quail Lodge.

Since 2009, the car has been owned by Australian Steve Dowling. He had his new acquisition restored in Europe and by Bill McGrath in England. Steve drives his 5000GT on the numerous outings of the English Maserati Club and at international meetings.

WB



Alfredo Belpone's passion for racing ruined him in later years.

