

**T**he histories of the very early Ferraris have been long obscured by a veil of missing and misinformation. Ferrari has traditionally maintained that all the 125s (the cars built in 1947) were destroyed at the end of their useful lives. That no longer appears to be correct in the most literal sense. While it may be true that no type 125 exists today, it is almost certain that all three cars built as 125s do survive physically. And they all maintain their original chassis as well as their original engines (though all were modified by Ferrari beyond their 125 configuration).

**W**riter, David Seielstad has been researching the early cars for many years and now, on the occasion of Ferrari's 50th anniversary, shares with us what he has learned. Here, in Part One, he discusses the development, production, and racing of the first three cars in 1947, describing the endeavor in the context of the remarkably impoverished environment which was post World War II Italy. Part Two will deal with the years 1948 and 1949.

## BLOWING

**O**NE OF ENZO FERRARI'S BOYHOOD DREAMS was to become a racing driver. By 1919 he had achieved this goal. This was not as simple as it sounds. In between his boyhood musings and becoming a racing driver was the calamity of WWI, the death of both his father and older brother, and his own serious illness. When Enzo Ferrari was invalided out of the army, the economy of Italy was a shambles and there was widespread unemployment. Through perseverance and determination, he overcame numerous adversities. This trait was to be evident throughout his career.

This article is not a biography of Enzo Ferrari; that has been told many other places. Suffice it to say, from the age of 21 until his death seventy years later, Enzo Ferrari was involved with racing automobiles as a driver, team manager, and constructor. This article will be devoted to the beginnings of the company which produces Ferrari automobiles.

**E**nzo Ferrari had some experience with designing and assembling automobiles before he founded his own company in 1946. In 1929 he had left Alfa Romeo to start his own racing team, Scuderia Ferrari (SF) which raced various makes of cars as well as motorcycles. Eventually this team became the official Alfa Romeo racing team. SF first assembled sports cars from parts provided by Alfa Romeo. On the outside, these cars appeared to be regular models; however, they were given chassis plates with serial numbers preceded by SF. Later Alfa Romeo seconded design engineers, including Gioachino Colombo, to design formula cars from scratch in Modena. Under the guise of Scuderia

Ferrari, the Alfa Romeo 8C 308, 12C 312, and 158 Alfetta were designed and constructed using the industrial might of Alfa Romeo. Alfa provided engineering, casting, forging, and manufacturing facilities, while the team in Modena did the actual construction and racing of the cars.

In 1938 Alfa Romeo decided to bring the racing team in house again. Enzo Ferrari moved back to Milan as racing director, but after 10 years of managing his own business, the strictures of a large corporation soon caused him to quit. Alfa was concerned enough about the potential of its former employee that his severance agreement stipulated that Ferrari not build or race cars under his name for a period of four years. As part of his "golden handshake" Enzo Ferrari agreed to this condition.

**A**fter leaving Alfa Romeo, Enzo Ferrari returned to Modena and on September 1, 1939, formally reorganized his Scuderia as Auto-avio Costruzioni di Ferrari Enzo (AAC). The announced intention of this company was to carry out automotive development, production of small aircraft engines, and machine tool production. A difference from the old Scuderia was that Enzo Ferrari owned 100 per cent of the new venture. Ferrari had only been a minority shareholder of SF.

Everybody in the racing community knew Enzo Ferrari was capable of building successful racing cars, and soon he was commissioned to build two cars for the 1940 Gran Premio Brescia

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It's nice to think that history is an absolute, based on complete and accurate records made as events occurred, to be later mined by historians with complete access to all the facts. Unfortunately, at least as far as Ferrari history goes, that's just not even close to how things work. The very first Ferraris have long intrigued serious historians, and the late Stanley Nowak was one of the finest. For a variety of reasons — very limited resources and the pressure of race deadlines, among others — the identifications of these cars are incomplete and inconsistent. Stan produced probably the best "public" record in Cavallino #19 and #22, but as he wrote in that issue, "The following brief histories are by no means the last word on the subject." Based on the best evidence available at that time Stan, assisted by Dick Merritt, constructed likely histories for the first few cars, and that work was accepted as the best and most complete available. It was reprinted and quoted elsewhere by historians as well as commercial automotive magazines.

This article by David Seielstad represents a major update to the "accepted" histories of these early cars. In many areas it will change what Stan wrote, reflecting the availability of information not available to Stan as well as David Seielstad's incredible research. This story is a worthy tribute to Ferrari on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the first Ferrari race win, and we hope it adds both to the full history of the marque as well as to the reader's understanding of why Ferraris are so special. —David Seibert

delle Mille Miglia. Fiat 508C platforms were used with special Touring roadster bodies and an eight cylinder engine that was actually two modified Fiat four cylinder heads with Ferrari designed block, camshaft, crankshaft and sump. Although he could not call

# AWAY THE DUST . . .

by David Seielstad

these cars Ferraris, there are photographs (perhaps doctored) that show at least one of these cars did have a prancing horse badge. These two cars were officially called AAC 815s, and the surviving car carries a blue and silver 815 badge. It appears that the intention was to begin series production. Color brochures were printed, but never picked up (see PH #96), and Touring did some design work on cabriolet and coupé versions. *L'Anteprima Ferrari* by Franco Varisco gives an excellent history of this project.

These two cars were given the serial numbers 020 and 021. Was this because Ferrari considered them a continuation of other cars he had actually constructed? In the 1930s Scuderia Ferrari assembled a number of Alfa Romeo 1750, 2300, 2600, and 2900 sports cars which were given their own serial numbers, SF 24 for example, in addition to their regular Alfa chassis plates. The Alfa tipo Bs were numbered SF 33 to SF 50, the 412s were SF 52 to 54, while the 8C35s were SF ? to SF 65. In addition Enzo generally takes credit for the two Alfa Bi Motore and the original 158 Alfettas.

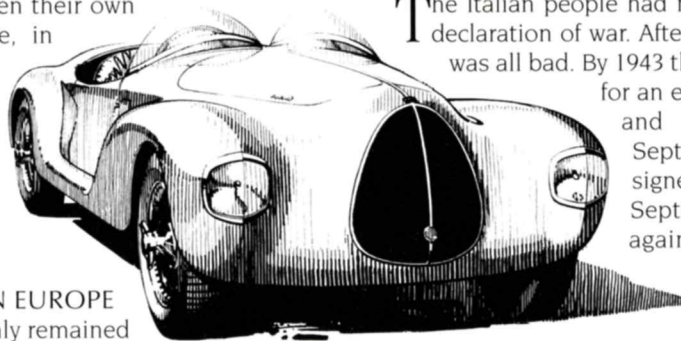
**W**AR COMMENCED IN EUROPE in September 1939. Italy remained out of the conflict and normal activities, such as automobile racing, continued. A truncated Mille Miglia was run on April 28, 1940, with the two 815s leading their class for all but the final lap. And the last pre-war European race was held in Italian North African territory, the Tripoli GP, on May 5, 1940, won by a 158 Alfetta. The Italians managed one more race, the Targa Florio in the Favorita Park, Palermo on May 23rd.

Mussolini finally committed Italy to the Axis side in June, 1940. He thought this was a wise move in view of the fact that the Germans had overrun Belgium and Holland, and France had surrendered. He incorrectly expected England to surrender too and thought it would be better to be on the "winning side." He could not have been more wrong.

In Italy, as everywhere else, manufacturing, production, and farming were converted to the war effort. AAC first tried to license German ball bearing grinding machines but was refused. Under Italian law Ferrari was allowed to copy the machines, which he did. As part of the industrial decentralization, AAC was forced to relocate away from Modena. Originally a site in Formigine was considered, but when the land could not be purchased a second site, owned by the town miller, in Maranello was purchased. Production capacity was moved in 1943 to the new plant which was built on a road called Abetone Inferiore. This is the location of the Ferrari factory to this day.

**T**he Italian people had never been comfortable with the declaration of war. After some early successes the news was all bad. By 1943 the Italian Parliament was looking for an early exit. Mussolini was deposed and arrested July 25, 1943. In September 1943 an armistice was signed in Spain and announced on September 8. Italy declared war against Germany and Japan on October 13, 1943. Peace did not come to Italy, however. The Germans, seeking to protect their southern flank, took control of the military and occupied the country. Allied troops invaded first on Sicily, then the Italian mainland. The Germans retreated north, scorching the earth as they went. The Allied advance bogged down in the mountains short of the Po Valley in the winter of 1944. An Allied blockade of Italy led to a severe decline in living standards in the areas still controlled by the Germans.

During the War, employment at AAC rose from 40 to 160 workers. Although AAC was profiting from war-time contracts, the company suffered from the war as well. First the Germans occupied the factory on September 8, 1943, then looted the plant and carried off many of the copied grinding machines. Finally the Allies bombed the factory on November 4, 1944, and in February 1945.



AAC 815

DRAWING BY DAVE CUMMINS



PHOTO COURTESY FERRARI SpA

## 01C

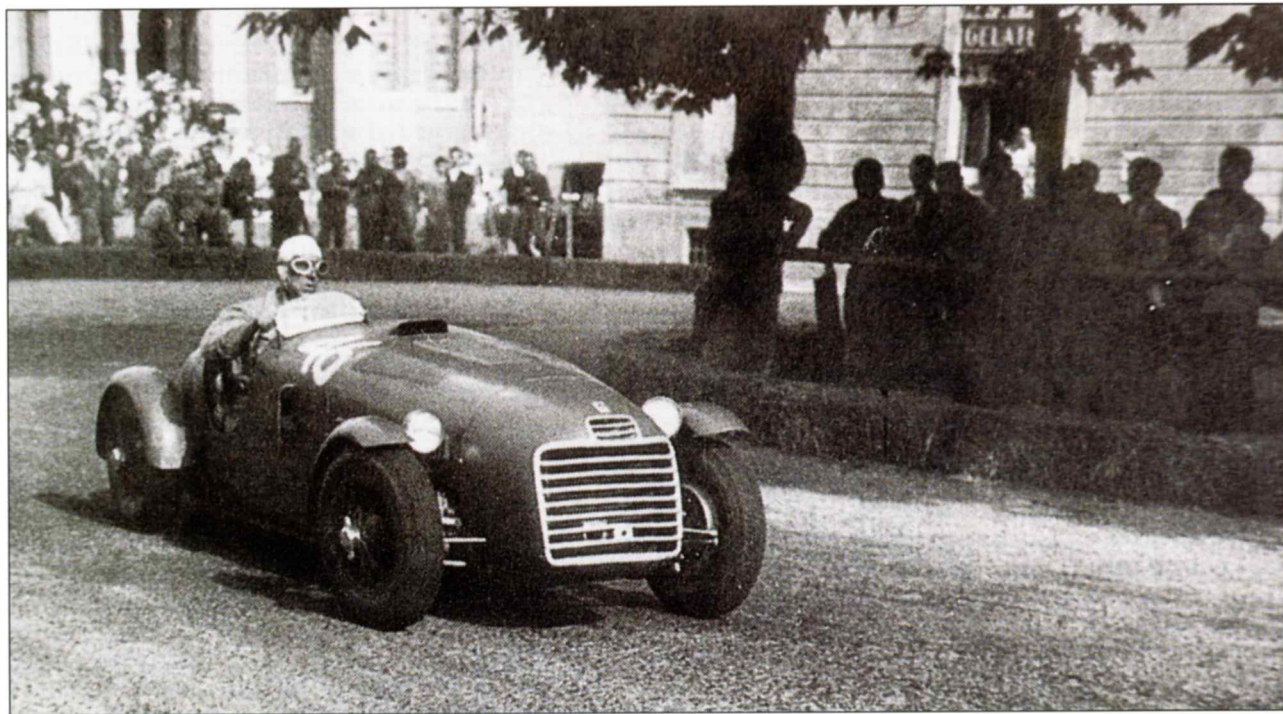
The first Ferrari in its first race —  
Franco Cortese drives at Piacenza May 11, 1947.  
Did not finish



## 02C

The second Ferrari in its second race —  
Franco Cortese drives at Vigevano June 15, 1947. First in class, third overall

PHOTO COURTESY FERRARI SpA



Modena was liberated April 25, 1945. The German forces in Italy formally surrendered on May 2, 1945. Before they did so, factories were ruined, villages burned, and fields flooded. There was extreme hardship caused by skyrocketing inflation, industrial stagnation, and mass unemployment. None of this improved with the German surrender. AAC emerged from the war positioned to profit from the rebuilding of Italy, as machine tools were in great demand. Instead, Ferrari decided to return to what really interested him — building racing automobiles.

Unlike in the US, racing in Europe was a respected vocation or avocation. The US stereotype of a racing driver was of a semi-literate daredevil, grease monkey from the wrong side of the

tracks. In Europe racing was a passion, engaged in by the wealthy and "professional" (though, not in today's terms) drivers. There was no social stigma attached to being a race driver. In fact, star drivers were national idols, much as baseball players were in the U.S. An indication of the important place racing held in Europe is the fact that racing had continued right up to May 1940. The first post war race was organized in the Bois de Boulogne, in Paris, September 9, 1945, just four months after the shooting had stopped. A formula libre series was announced in February 1946, and Alfa Romeo 158s raced at St. Cloud June 9, 1946. In Italy a hill climb was held December 16, 1945, near Naples (Mergellina to Posillipo). 1946 saw the



PHOTO COURTESY FERRARI SpA

## 002C

The third Ferrari in its second race —  
Raymond Sommer drives at Turin October 12, 1947.  
First overall



resumption of Italian racing with a dozen races scheduled beginning June 23rd. The race cars were prewar, including at least one of the AAC 815s. Everything, such as tires, gasoline, and spark plugs was in short supply or rationed. Considering the social and political chaos, that any racing took place is remarkable. Enzo Ferrari was eager to participate in the renewed racing. All he needed was a race car.

As soon as the war ended (and probably even before) he began planning. First Ferrari tried to engage Vittorio Jano, the preeminent racing car designer in Italy, then working for Lancia, but was unsuccessful. In July of 1945 Ferrari got an old friend from Alfa Romeo to design him a complete V 12 sports car. Gioachino Colombo was available, having been laid off by Alfa Romeo which was producing kitchen stoves instead of racing cars. According to Colombo, he met Ferrari in July 1945 and began his first sketches on August 15. Working at home, he completed the design by November 1945. Another laid off Alfa engineer, Angelo Nasi, assisted Colombo. Nasi had designed the front suspension and steering of the Alfetta 158 GP car before the war. According to Colombo, Nasi designed the new Ferrari gear box. He probably had something to do with the suspension design too. In November 1945 Alfa Romeo reinstated Colombo (perhaps in part to get him away from Ferrari) so he returned, leaving Ferrari without engineering talent.

Material shortages, and the lack of design and development engineers prevented rapid progress on the automobile project. Even so, Franco Cortese remembers that near the end

of 1945 Enzo Ferrari told him to put away his order book. Cortese was stunned; the tool business was flourishing and there seemed to be no demand for a luxury sports racing car. In May 1946 AAC was officially renamed Auto Costruzioni Ferrari, soon to be world famous as just "Ferrari MODENA ITALIA."

1946 was a year of unparalleled hardship for most Italians. There was near famine, a chaotic economy, and increasing political violence, especially in the industrial north. Ferrari rebuilt his factory and continued to make and sell machine tools. He had the completed Colombo drawings and was assembling a team to build and develop the Ferrari automobile. Colombo recommended a young designer, who had just been laid off by Alfa Romeo, named Giuseppe Busso. Busso joined Ferrari in June 1946 as its first Technical Director. In the intervening seven months not much progress had been made on the engine.

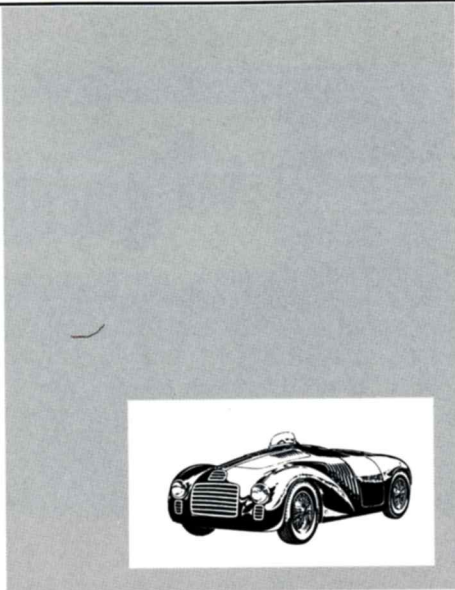
When Busso came to Ferrari, he found a small staff of practical engineers and mechanics who had worked for Enzo Ferrari for many years. Principal among them was Luigi Bazzi. What he did not find was a factory capable of producing automobiles. Machine tool production was continuing; there was no foundry, forging equipment, and especially there were no automotive development engineers. Colombo's drawings had been turned into working drawings by draftsmen. These drawings envisioned a 60 degree V 12 engine of 1500cc (bore/stroke 55 mm X 52.5 mm) with single overhead camshafts. The rest of the design called for a two passenger vehicle with a five speed gear box, independent front suspension, solid rear axle, hydraulic brakes on all four wheels, and semi elliptic leaf spring suspension with a single transverse spring at the front and two longitudinal springs at the rear.

Why a V 12 and why 1500cc? Colombo says that at their first meeting Ferrari and he agreed on the V 12 because Ferrari said he had admired a V 12 Packard which was raced in Italy during the 1920s. Colombo pointed out the mechanical advantages of a V 12 — it allowed a large piston area and short stroke, which would theoretically result in a powerful engine with a high degree of mechanical reliability. Colombo had also been responsible for the 12C 312, a 60 degree V 12 used by Scuderia Ferrari before the war. Colombo's flat, 1.5 liter Alfa 512 GP (54mm X 54mm bore/stroke) had an influence, too. Designed before the war (but not completed until 1942) it loaned some ideas to the new Ferrari design. Franco Cortese says that Ferrari never would have succeeded if the engine had been a four or six cylinder. Certainly the V 12 was exclusive and just exotic enough to cause widespread interest and word of mouth advertising.

Why one and a half liters? Another basic design principle laid down by Enzo Ferrari was that he wanted not only a formula racing car, but also a model for gentleman racers, and a regular touring model as well. It was believed that produc-

## 01C/0101 **Being a completion of milestones and major events, which can be documented, in the existence of the very first Ferrari automobile. The first two cars built by Ferrari as Ferraris were numbered 01C and 02C.**

- Aug to Nov 1945 Gioachino Colombo completes the design drawings of the first Ferrari.
- 1945 to 1946 Luciano Fochi refines the Colombo designs and produces working drawings.
- April 1946 Rough castings begin arriving at Maranello. Machine work under the supervision of Attilio Galetto is progressing.
- April 22 1946 Date stamped in timing chain tensioner housing installed on 0101 today
- June 5, 1946 1/5 scale, four view drawing is completed detailing final specifics of the chassis configuration.
- June 10, 1946 Giuseppe Busso joins Ferrari as Technical Director and also notes in his diary that he inspected unmachined components ordered by Frederico Gilberti, the head of purchasing
- late June 1946 Chassis plans are provided to Gilberto Colombo at Gilco Autotelai, Milan. Engineer Cantafora suggests changes and improvements which are adopted. Ferrari places order for two chassis.
- July 25, 1946 Design date on tipo 125 engine block drawing.
- Aug. 5, 1946 Full size drawings (frontal and side sectional views) of the tipo 125 (1.5 liter V 12) engine and gearbox. More castings are ordered based on these drawings.
- Sept. 1946 Gilco delivers first two chassis.
- Sept. 29, 1946 First 125 engine completed and run on dynamometer by Busso and Aurelio Lampredi. Power and operation are not as expected. Several major problems prevent the engine from reaching its full potential, operating smoothly or maintaining revolutions. Several Italian magazines report that tests result in 118 hp @ 6800 rpm. In fact it appears 50hp to 60hp was the maximum observed. Additional problems with the connecting rod bearings, ignition and lubrication are discovered.
- Winter 1946-47 Engine development continues. Other major components such as cooling, suspension, steering and brake parts are assembled on first chassis.
- March 1, 1947 First car is assembled without bodywork.
- March 12, 1947 Bare chassis rolled out and run under its own power for first time. Driven by Enzo Ferrari and Luigi Bazzi. The engine is still fitted with front mounted distributors at this point. Before the first race in May the distributors were replaced by rear mounted magnetos fitted with a small adapter to allow mounting directly to the cylinder head and valve covers.
- April 1947 Generic full width roadster body constructed under the direction of Peiretti using local panel beaters and fitted to the chassis first seen on March 12.
- May 4, 1947 Road testing by nominated drivers Franco Cortese and Giuseppe Farina. Cortese is assigned to race the first chassis.
- May 11, 1947 Circuito di Piacenza race. 01C using race number 128 makes appearance as first and only Ferrari to be raced. Initial performance is poor due to overfilled sump. After pit stops to rectify problems and make other adjustments Cortese shows acceptable speed. Race ends with misfiring due to fuel starvation caused by either a clogged fuel pump or an undersized fuel line. Modifications and adjustments are made to 01C based on Piacenza performance and further road testing.
- May 1947 9th Grand Prix of Rome held on city street course named Circuito delle Terme di Caracalla. Again 01C is the only Ferrari entry and it is driven by Cortese this time on race number 56. Initially Ferdinando Righetti, in an 1100cc Fiat/Stanguellini, led the race and set fastest lap. Cortese managed to pass when Righetti bobbed in a turn. After that the Ferrari extended its lead for an easy win. The first in a very long, and continuing, line of Ferrari race victories.
- May 25, 1947
- June 1, 1947 Cortese in 01C is again the only Ferrari entry in the Circuito di Vercelli race. Against six opponents in the Sport class. Racing on #22, Cortese takes an easy class victory.
- June 21, 1947 Ferrari makes its first entry in the Mille Miglia. Cortese paired with a mechanic named Adelmo Marchetti departs at 2:39 a.m. on race number 143. Near Fano they are forced to retire when the head gasket on one bank of cylinders fails.
- July 13, 1947 The next race for 01C was at Parma. This is the first race in which Ferrari fields two cars and Cortese, #78, takes second overall behind Tazio Nuvolari in the cycle fender Ferrari. It is said that a new close ratio gearbox was installed in 01C for this race.
- July 20, 1947 A week later Ferdinando Righetti was recruited to drive, due to the absence of Nuvolari. Righetti raced 01C on race #106, on the Cascine circuit at Florence, and finished third in class.
- Aug. 24, 1947 Two cars were entered at Montenero, but only 01C was available due to a road accident with the Ferrari intended for Nuvolari. This race was restricted to cars of up to 1500cc displacement. During practice the Ferrari did not run well so Cortese turned his car over to Nuvolari. This was the only occasion when Nuvolari raced the full fender car, this time on race number 70. After three laps Nuvolari was forced into the pits with serious carburetion problems and abandoned the race.
- Sept. 21, 1947 During practice for the upcoming 8th Modena race Righetti crashes at Stella di Ligorzano with 01C, which is fitted with a tipo 159 engine. The car was not repaired for the race and makes no further race appearances with the Piacenza full width roadster body.
- Nov. 20, 1947 Busso tests the new 166 engine using Vandervell thin wall shell bearings for the first time. Engine performance is much improved.
- Winter 1947-48 Count Bruno Sterzi of Milan and Prince Igor Troubetzkoy, Paris, decide to form a racing team they name Gruppo Inter. Sommer has already alerted Troubetzkoy to the potential of the new Ferrari so when his friend Sterzi suggests that if they act quickly they will be able to buy cars similar to the Turin winning car, orders are placed for three cars; two 166 Spyder Corsa and a practice car. 01C is stripped of its roadster body and fitted with a replica of the slim profile Turin GP winning car's Spyder Corsa body. At the same time the chassis and the engine are modified to 166 specifications. Both the frame and engine are renumbered as 0101 and it is delivered to Gruppo Inter early in 1948. To this day various components on the chassis are still numbered 1, 01 and 01C. In addition the frame serial number shows evidence of 01C being over stamped as 0101. On the frame there are extra brackets and cut off sub frame members which may have belonged to the full width body originally attached. Several components on the engine such as the starter motor and magnetos have tags that show prewar dates. Many of the bolt heads also have the prancing horse emblem which is a feature of the very earliest Ferraris.



tion costs could be reduced by the simplification of only one engine design which could be used in all three models. The formula for 1947 was announced as a continuation of the pre-war voiturette formula — 1500 cc supercharged or 4500 cc unsupercharged. Ferrari really wanted to build a 1500 cc supercharged formula car, but had to find a way to make this economically viable. The solution seemed to be to build the basic 1500cc engine first, use it in sports cars, and leave the formula machine for later development.

For Busso the challenge was to make the design work. He was not an experienced development engineer, and Ferrari was severely lacking in this regard. As early as June 10, 1946, Busso notes in his diary that individual components were arriving. Before he joined Ferrari other engine components were already being machined under the supervision of Attilio Galetto. Still it appears that the automobile operation was somewhat ad hoc. Gilberto Colombo (no relation to Gioachino Colombo) reports that he arrived at Ferrari in mid 1946 seeking to order some machine tools. Ferrari informed him that he was no longer taking on new machine tool business. At the time Colombo was working for his father's company which produced high quality steel tubing for the aviation industry. In the course of their discussions, the automobile project came up and Gilberto Colombo suggested that his company, Gilco, supply the chassis. Colombo was looking for a way to broaden the company's product line for more consumer oriented products. Soon after the meeting Ferrari placed an order for two frames.

Gilco of Milan was experienced in frame design for aero applications. Gilberto Colombo took the prepared drawings to an engineer named Cantafora for review. Colombo suggested a change in tube shape and type for weight saving and strength, and revised the wheelbase from 2400 mm to 2420 mm. The first two frames were delivered in September 1946, while the third was not delivered until June or July 1947. The first frame weighed 56 kg. Ferrari asked for a lighter model and suggested 50 kg. The next frame weighed 44 kg.

ON SEPTEMBER 29, 1946, THE FIRST ENGINE RAN on the test bed. It was a disaster. The engine produced little power (only a reported 60 hp @5600 rpm), would not run smoothly, and it had lubrication problems. When revved, it broke. There were a number of design faults which a more experienced staff might have caught before getting to this point in metal. In October, Aurelio Lampredi was employed to work with Busso on the engine. He has stated that he found "a technical department staffed by little boys."

Both Busso and Lampredi maintained that, as drawn, the engine was neither capable of functioning nor of being produced economically. A major defect was in the fully floating bearing design. In theory this was supposed to allow higher revolutions, hence more power. In fact it just did not work — the bearings were too thick and of a prewar design. Lampredi substituted needle bearings. Then the crankshaft journals were found to be too small — when hardened, they distorted. There were problems with the ignition. To keep costs down (and increase commonality among Ferrari's planned production) distributors had been specified. But the available distributors would not produce spark consistently over the full rpm range. There were problems with the cam shaft profiles. The gearbox design with a single shaft was impractical, so a more conventional three shaft arrangement had to be designed and produced.

All of this suggests a disorganized effort. Nevertheless, Ferrari held a press conference in November 1946 announcing the planned production of three types of automobiles — a 125 Sport with one carburetor producing 72 hp @ 5400 rpm (this model was never built), a 125 Competition with three carburetors producing 118 hp @ 6800 rpm, and a Grand Prix single seater using a supercharged 1500cc engine of unspecified power at 8000. Delays in producing the first two 125 Competition cars led to the GP project being shelved until 1948.

There have been literally thousands of automobile companies in the past 100 years. Few have produced more than a few models. Fewer still have survived. Most of these companies were launched during prosperous times and enjoyed financial backing. But Enzo Ferrari began at a time which could hardly have been worse — nor did he have potential customers, financing, or an experienced staff. On top of that, there were virtually no raw materials available in Italy, everything from olive oil to electricity was rationed. Metal was mostly recycled war scrap. Very little had been rebuilt since the war. As Italy began its recovery, there was a high demand for machine tools and Ferrari stood to be a successful tool manufacturer. Instead he chose to build automobiles — V 12 racing cars, not economy models. The same perseverance he showed in 1918 was needed again.

While the engine was being sorted, work began on the chassis. It too needed to be revised. Special Colombo designed units which acted as both shock absorber and spring limiters were replaced by standard Houdaille lever arm shocks. Leaf springs designed to be interchangeable were not the correct stiffness for the front and/or the rear. And throughout the first year handling was problematical. During the winter of 1946, parts continued to arrive, such as fuel tanks, radiators, suspension, and brake parts.

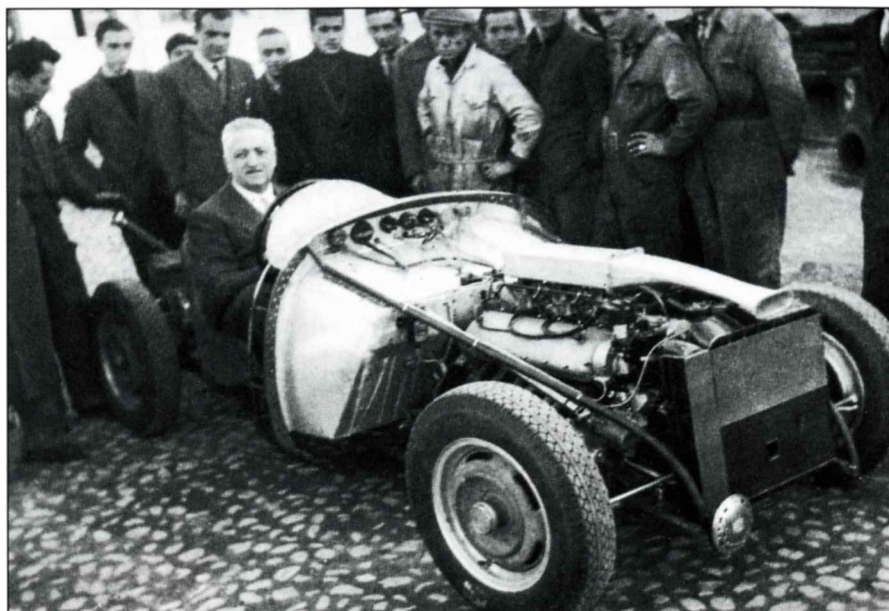
In the January 15, 1947 issue of *Auto Italiana*, there was a story by Giovanni Laurani describing the activities at Maranello. The article was illustrated with a drawing of a Ferrari coupe by Giovanni Cavara. According to the drawing and published specifications, the car had distributors on the front of the cam shafts, a column shift, steel wheels, a wheelbase of 2420 mm, and a weight of 800 kg. The March 1, 1947 issue of *Auto Italiana* published a short notice that the debut of the Ferrari 125 Competition was imminent.



**02C/0201** The second Ferrari constructed and assigned chassis number 02C. The early development of its components is the same as listed for 01C.

- Sept. 1946 Gilco delivers first two chassis
- Winter 1946-47 Engine development continues. Other major components such as cooling, suspension, steering and brake parts are delivered.
- March 1947 Assembly begins
- April 1947 Cycle fender body build by Modena panel beater Ansoloni based on sketch provided by Busso. This car is lighter than the full width roadster.
- May 4, 1947 Road testing by nominated drivers Franco Cortese and Giuseppe Farina. Farina is assigned to race the cycle fender chassis since he is considered the more experienced driver and this car is expected to be quicker. This car was intended for city street races where better vision in the tight corners was expected to be a benefit. It was also favored with a more powerful engine. Factory workers give it the pejorative nick name "l'autobotte."
- May 11, 1947 Circuito di Piacenza race. 02C using race number 166 practices and scores sixth fastest time. Farina has two minor accidents, which are repaired. He then refuses to race the car stating that it is inferior to Cortese's.
- May 1947 Modifications and adjustments made based on race performance of first car and further road testing.
- June 5, 1947 Second race in Roman Spring of Motors events on the Terme di Caracalla circuit. 02C makes its first appearance in a race driven by Cortese on race number 52. During the race Cortese and Taruffi collide in a corner and the Ferrari is forced to retire. Before dropping out Cortese ties the fastest lap speed set by Taruffi
- June 15, 1947 The first Circuito di Vigevano (Pavia) race attracts only one Ferrari. Again Cortese on #46 races the car. It is believed that for this race a locked rear end is tried. Self locking differentials were not available so either there was no differential at all or the planetary gears were blocked. The idea was to prevent the inside wheel from spinning. Cortese finishes first in the Sport class and third overall.
- June 29, 1947 Varese race on the Colle Compigli circuit. In this race Cortese takes the cycle fender car to its first outright victory on race number 22 and sets fastest lap.
- July 6, 1947 At Forli in the Coppa Luigi Arcangeli Tazio Nuvolari joins the team. He is the lone Ferrari entry in 02C on race number 72. In his first race in a Ferrari Nuvolari scores a first in class by lapping all his adversaries.
- July 13, 1947 The next race for 02C is at Parma. This is the first race in which Ferrari fields two cars and Nuvolari, #80, takes first overall followed by Cortese for the first one, two Ferrari victory. At the start Nuvolari stalled and then had to pass 14 cars in 18 laps to lead with just two laps left before the finish.
- July 20, 1947 The next race was at Florence on the Cascine circuit. Nuvolari was scheduled to drive the cycle fender car, but his health did not permit this. Cortese substituted on race number 36 but failed to finish due to valve spring breakage. The car exhibited quite a bit of roll in corners indicating that the suspension was not yet fully developed.
- Late July to early August 1947 The engine of 02C is enlarged to 59mm X 58mm becoming the first type 159S (1902 cc). At the same time the cycle fender coachwork was removed and replaced with a full width roadster body similar to that on the first Ferrari 01C.
- August 15, 1947 Only the new tipo 159 entered for the Coppa Acerbo at Pescara. Cortese racing #21 went into the lead then pitted with a lubrication problem. After the oil radiator was bypassed he reentered the race, set fastest lap and finished second overall, first in class. Besides enlarging the engine, new valve springs were tried out.
- August 1947 During a road test Bazzi had a serious accident with 02C. Bazzi suffered broken ribs and a broken leg. As a result of this accident Ferrari could only field one car for the next race and lost the services of Bazzi until November.
- Aug. 24, 1947 Two cars were entered at Montenero, but only 01C was available due to road accident with the Ferrari intended for Nuvolari.
- Sept. 28, 1947 At the 8th Modena race Nuvolari is still too ill to participate so Righetti again substitutes. Righetti was scheduled to race a 159 engined car, but a week prior to the race he ran off the road and damaged the car too severely for it to be repaired in time for the race. Instead he drives 02C, fitted with a tipo 125 engine, to a disappointing fifth overall.
- Nov. 20, 1947 Busso tests the new tipo 166 engine using Vandervell thin wall shell bearings for the first time. Engine performance is much improved.
- Winter 1947-48 02C, still fitted with the full width roadster body it had at Pescara is updated with the new 166 (1995 cc) engine. Of the three 1947 Ferraris, this one alone remains at the works. At some point in time the serial number is altered to 0201. The block shows clearly that the C was overstamped with a 0 and an I added at a different angle.

March 12, 1947



**T**HE FIRST COMPLETE BARE CHASSIS RAN UNDER ITS OWN POWER ON MARCH 12, 1947.

At that point the engine still employed distributors mounted vertically on the front of the cam shafts. Photos of the initial roll-out indicate a typically chilly late winter day with pale sunshine. There was obvious pride on the faces of the workers — and relief on that of Enzo Ferrari who had the honor of being the first to drive the new car. He drove it to Formigine and back, touching approximately 150 kph he reported.

Lampredi quit on March 27 again leaving Busso and Bazzi alone to develop the car. By this time Peiretti was employed as body builder, and he apparently produced the first body with local panel beaters. Based on photos of the March 12 roll-out, it appears that the first car received the envelope roadster body with a modified fire wall. One can see in those photos, that there are tubes running from the top of the scuttle to the main frame tubes at the base of the radiator. There is also a hoop running around the dash. This same structure can be seen inside the cockpit of the car (with the roadster body) entered in the 1947 Mille Miglia.

**A** second car was completed before May, but this one was given a rather ugly cycle fender spyder body which was built by Ansaloni in Modena based upon a sketch provided by Busso. Around the factory this car was known derisively as "l'auto-botte" (barrel or tubby car). Because of the open wheel design of this body, there were no frame tubes around the dash or other upper frame members. This car was usually favored with a more powerful engine and weighed 630 kg dry.

The subject of serial numbers has to come up . . . . In 1947, when Ferrari began to build automobiles under his own name, it seems it was decided to begin numbering from one. The serial numbers applied to the first two, and at that point only, chassis were 01C and 02C. Which was which? As the story unfolds, it appears that the car which was rolled out in March became the roadster that made its debut at Piacenza in May. As will be explained, it appears that the number of this car was 01C. The tubby car, which was the second one completed, was numbered 02C.

Another bit of logic which tends to support this conclusion

was Ferrari's practice of reserving even numbers for its competition models, while assigning odd numbers to the road going models. This practice was in effect in late 1947/early 1948 when all the Spyder Corsas were given even numbers, while the new open and closed sports cars received odd numbers. Applying this thinking to the first two cars, besides the fact that the full fender roadster appears to be the first car completed, it was also bodied as a sports car while the second car with cycle fenders was more of a competition model, hence would be eligible for an even serial number.

Politically 1947 was no better than any recent year. Political and labor strife continued. Roads, bridges, and communications had still not been repaired and the economy was still extremely fragile. Though Ferrari had been trying to get into automobile production for nearly two years, he suffered constant delays. Still the date was set and both cars were taken to Piacenza for the May 11, 1947 race.

**C**ortese was to drive the full fender roadster, and Giuseppe "Nino" Farina was slated to race the cycle fender car. Claimed horsepower was 90 for the roadster and 120 for the cycle fender car, although this seems optimistic. During practice Farina damaged his car twice. It was repaired, but on race day he refused to drive it, claiming that his car was inferior to that of Cortese. This caused a lot of anguish among the mechanics and resulted in the termination of Farina's services. There were 19 starters, including Beltrachini in an AAC 815 (021). The new Ferrari was not the star. Nino Rovelli in his pre-war BMW made a great start, but Ferdinando Righetti in an 1100 cc Fiat won. The Ferrari would not run well and trailed a plume of oil smoke. Once the overfilled sump was cleared, the car did show some speed, but eventually broke down due to a fuel pump or a fuel feed problem. A subsequent modification was made to increase the diameter of the fuel line.

In *Le mei giorie terribili* Ferrari describes the race as, "a promising failure." In truth neither of the cars was really ready. Corrado Millanta, quoted just before his death in 1983, said Piacenza was not a good race for Ferrari: he was not ready and should have postponed his debut. Neither Cisitalia nor Maserati presented their new models.



**T**HE NEXT RACE FERRARI ENTERED WAS THE ROME Grand Prix, held May 25 on the Caracalla Baths street circuit. Only the full fender roadster was entered to be driven by Cortese. This time Ferrari won — quite an achievement — the first Ferrari constructed won in only its second race. (See sidebar on page 32 for a complete list of the 1947 races Ferrari entered.)

Cortese continued to be the only driver available in the next few races. He took a first in class at Vercelli and at Vigevano but failed to finish at the second Rome race where the cycle fender car made its debut on June 5 and in the Mille Miglia.

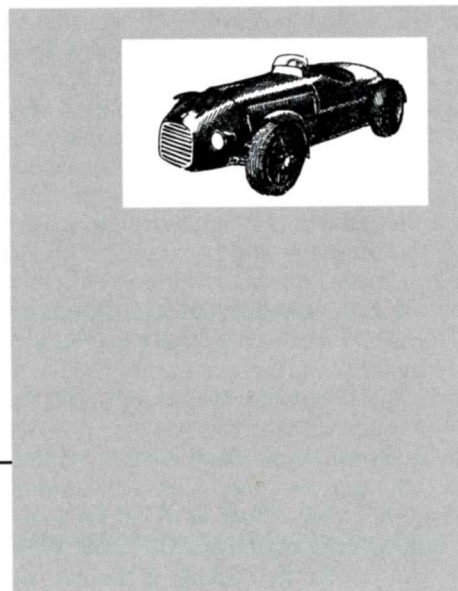
Both cars were undergoing constant mechanical modification. Changes were also being made to the body work to improve cooling of the engine and brakes. Before the first race, distributors were replaced with magnetos mounted horizontally at the rear of the cams and projecting through the fire wall. Adoption of magnetos meant that new cam covers had to be made. Another early problem was valve spring breakage; the cure turned out to be shot peening the springs. At Vigevano the car had no differential (self locking axles were not available). At Parma a new close ratio gear box appeared.

After the first few races Ferrari and Busso were convinced that a larger engine was needed to stay competitive, so the first major modification to the V 12 occurred. The bore and stroke were increased from 55 mm X 52.5 mm to 59 mm X 58 mm. Horsepower is said to have increased to 125 @7000 rpm with 8.5:1 compression ratio. Using an alcohol fuel mixture, 11.5:1 compression ratio produced 136 hp @6500. There were two reasons for enlarging the engine: the first, the tendency of race organizers to run 1100cc and two liter classes. This meant the type 125 was ineligible for the smaller class and noncompetitive in the larger class. Secondly, a new Formula 2 for two liter racers was announced. Stripped of headlights and fenders, a cycle fender car would be eligible for this new class. For these reasons, the 1902cc type 159 engine was quickly developed.

**T**his new engine made its first appearance at Pescara on August 15, installed in 02C (the barrel car) which now had a new body closely resembling the Piacenza full fender roadster. Close examination of the two cars reveals many minor differences. Since Peiretti had left in June, it is not known who built this body. Because of its similarity to the Piacenza roadster, it was probably done by local panel beaters.

(A note about the terms "Piacenza" type roadster and "Pescara" type roadster . . . As far as is known, the factory had no name or number designations for these bodies. In order to simplify the discussion of these first cars, historians have, over the years, come to refer to them by their first race appearance.)

In August Ferrari suffered another setback when Bazzi crashed a 159 (02C) while road testing. Bazzi suffered a broken leg and several fractured ribs which kept him out of action until November. Now the full load of building, racing, and modifying the cars, besides supervising the engine test cell, fell to Busso.



## ??/002C

**The third Ferrari assembled in 1947. It is not known what serial number it carried in 1947, but when it was sold at the end of the season it was numbered 002C. It was an all new body design which became the standard Spyder Corsa model in 1948**

- July 1947 Gilco Autotelai delivers third chassis to Ferrari and work begins on assembling a new car incorporating all that has been learned so far in the season.
- August 1947 Busso seeks out his friend Bruno Ermete, who worked at Carrozzeria Allemano, for suggestions on a body design. By this time Peiretti had left Ferrari so it is probable that local panel beaters were again engaged to turn the design into a body. The new body was quite an improvement over the previous cycle fender effort being much lower and slimmer.
- Sept. 28, 1947 The new car makes its debut with a tipo 159 engine driven by Cortese on race number 20. Cortese sets fastest lap before suffering ignition problems. After pitting for repairs the car failed to restart so was retired.
- Sept.-Oct. 1947 After talks with Farina came to naught, Raymond Sommer was recruited to do development testing on 002C. After some revisions it was meticulously prepared for the important Turin Grand Prix.
- Oct. 12, 1947 Entered in the City of Turin Grand Prix held on the Valentino Park circuit. Only the new Spyder Corsa was entered. Ferrari made another change in his driver line up by recruiting the French champion, Sommer. In a fierce battle with the new A6 GCS Maseratis of Villorresi and Ascari, Sommer, #78, set fastest lap and finished first overall. Both Maseratis failed to finish. This was by far Ferrari's most impressive victory of his first season and resulted in several orders for cars "like the one which won at Turin." Sommer was so impressed that he expressed a desire to buy the winning car, too. Sommer did recommend to his friend Igor Troubetzkoy that if he was serious about his racing ambitions he ought to buy a Ferrari.
- Nov. 20, 1947 Busso tests the new 166 engine using Vandervell thin wall shell bearings for the first time. Engine performance is much improved.
- Winter 1947-48 002C was updated with a 166 engine and sold to Gabriele Besana.

In June or July a third frame had been delivered. Busso set about building a new car incorporating all that had been learned so far. A new, slimmer, cycle fender body was built. This time Busso consulted his friend Bruno Ermete, a professional body designer working for Carrozzeria Allemano, for ideas. Again it is not known who actually built the body, but the result was quite an improvement over the original tubby car. In some sources this car is referred to as "tipo 159 Sigaro Ermete" lending further credence to the possibility of Ermete's involvement in its body style. The serial number of the third car is not known for certain. Logically it ought to have been 03C. It appears, however, as if a new numbering series was adopted for the new "production" competition model. The third Ferrari may have been numbered 002C. This car was delivered in 1948 to its first owner with this number. As it exists today, the block where the serial number 002C is stamped does not show any signs of over-stamping, filing, or peening. Traditionally, Italian automobile builders have begun new numbering series for each new model. This practice was followed by even the small marques, such as Osca and Cisitalia, so it is not unusual that Ferrari did so too.

This new car made its first appearance at Modena on August 24. In Ferrari's home town great things were expected, but this race will be remembered as the debut of the new Maserati A6 GCS in which Alberto Ascari won the accident shortened race. During practice Cortese crashed the full fender 159 engined car (01C). In the race the new cycle fender car (002C), driven by Cortese, failed to finish. The Pescara car (02C), fitted with a 125 engine, raced by Righetti, managed a poor 5th overall. Enzo Ferrari was very dissatisfied; instead of progress results were going backwards. Colombo was brought back as a consultant. He pronounced the new 159 was, "... all wrong." Though this did not bode well for the overworked Busso the new slim line 159 was completely revised for the last race of the season at Turin.

This is a good place to discuss the driver situation. As the first two cars neared completion, Ferrari hoped to sign a "name driver" to the team. He considered several names — Alberto Ascari, Guido Scagliarini, Tonino Brivio, and Mario Tadini — before choosing Giuseppe "Nino" Farina as the lead team driver. Franco Cortese, already in Ferrari's employ, was a very good (and convenient) choice for the number two position. At the first race Farina complained about the car and refused to drive, Cortese was, therefore, the only driver Ferrari had in the first seven races. In July the great Tazio Nuvolari was retained, but his health prevented him from participating in several races. When he drove, Nuvolari's stature gave an assist to the young Ferrari reputation. Ferdinando Righetti, who had several good showings in the Fiat/Stanguellini, joined the team as a substitute for Nuvolari. When Nuvolari was too ill to compete in the final race of the year, the French champion Raymond Sommer was pressed into service.

**T**HAT RACE WAS THE GRAND PRIX OF TURIN, run on October 12, 1947. Raymond Sommer driving the new 159 cycle fender Ferrari (002C) defeated Alberto Ascari and Gigi Villoresi in their A6 GCS 2000 Maseratis. This was a major victory for the new Ferrari company. In its first season Ferrari entered 14 races, winning four outright, taking first in class in three others, and two second overall placings. Word quickly spread that the new car was a good one, and Ferrari suddenly found himself in the enviable position of having (at least four) clients beating on his door



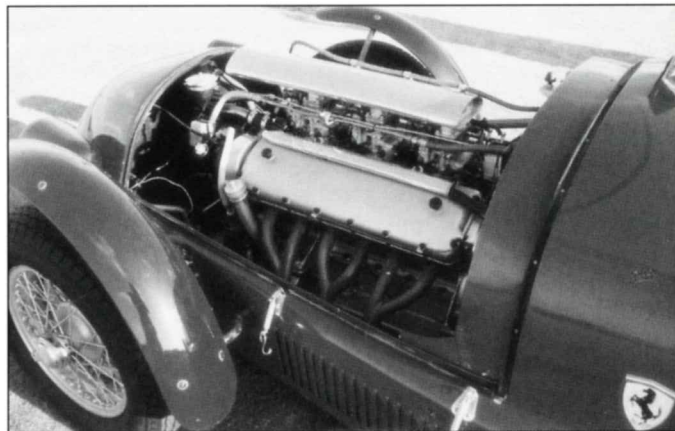
This is the frame of the Troubetzkoy car showing the serial "0101". This number was stamped in a soft non ferrous metal which had been poured onto the frame tube in a slight depression. Note that the "1" does not match the other numbers in size or angle.



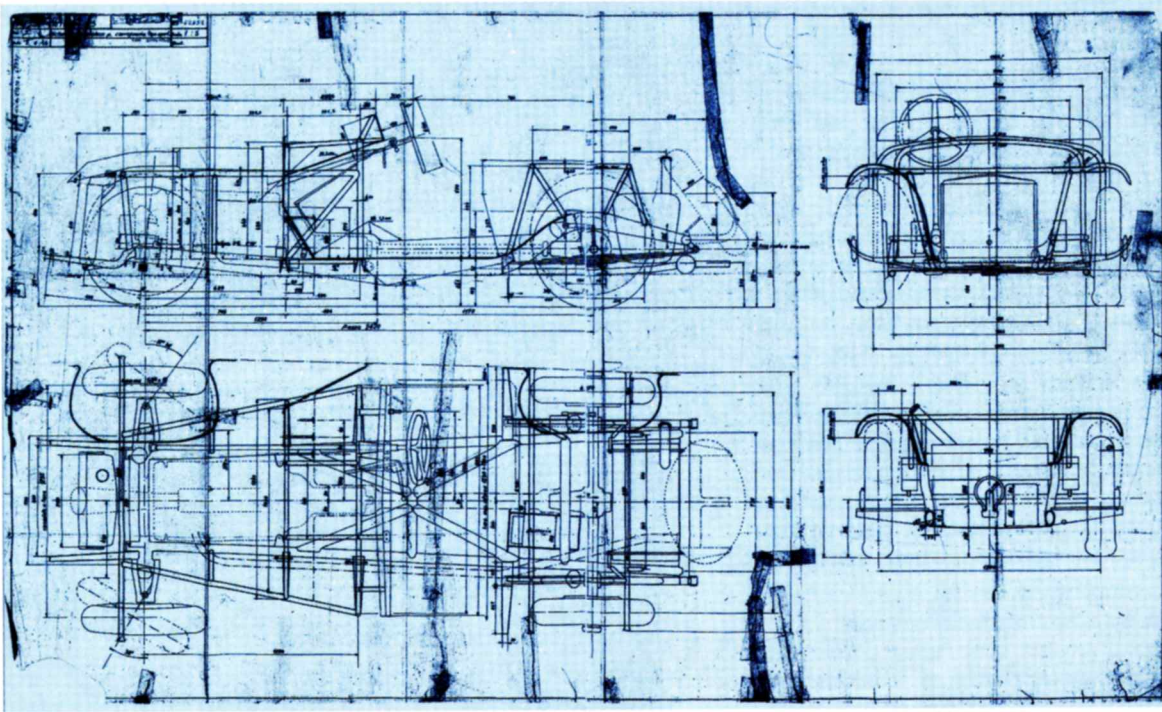
The soft metal with the number "0101" was removed uncovering other numbers stamped and scratched in the frame. Viewed one way it appears to be "1 01C0". The leading "1" is very crudely done. If you turn the magazine upside down the number could be construed to be "00101". It appears that an attempt was made to modify "01C". This is strong "proof" that 0101 is actually 01C renumbered.



Serial number stamped in the rear of the engine block of 0101. The numbers have obviously been over stamped and there is evidence of filing. While the existing number is 0101, it is not clear what the underlying original number might have been.



This is the restored 0101 showing details of the earliest Ferraris. The cam covers are plain with no ribs or script. The magnetos are mounted horizontally at the rear and the oil filler cap is a small fitting.



**June 5,  
1946**

Here is a four view of the frame in which the outlines of the Piacenza roadster body can be seen. Also visible is a three carburetor engine, a column shift, a square gas tank with right side filler neck, and 92mm x 55mm oval main frame tubes. The wheelbase is specified to be 2420mm.

demanding to buy the very car that had won at Turin. This also forced a policy which was to build winning cars and sell them. Racing vehicles became the mainstay. As Enzo Ferrari wrote, ". . . [it was] a time when we had to sell our victorious cars in order to pay our workforce." The earliest customers were gentlemen drivers. They were the only ones who were able to afford to buy a Ferrari. The big gamble had paid off — the rest is history.

Even before the Turin race one of the major headaches of the 125/159 engine had been solved. Engine bearings had been a continual problem from the first full floating design to the needle bearings. The main bearings were poured white metal and the connecting rods, which had to be hardened, were using needle roller bearings of two diameters. In order to keep them from skidding, it was necessary to machine the crank journal in a slightly convex profile, then to assemble all the needles using alternating sizes. Machining and assembly were very tedious. Nor was it a good solution for an engine meant to be in long term service in the hands of private owners.

Giulio Ramponi, an ex Alfa Romeo riding mechanic and two time winner of the Mille Miglia as well as former Scuderia Ferrari mechanic, had moved to England before the war. He was an old friend of Ferrari and kept in touch with racing developments in Italy. In the summer of 1947 he visited Modena and suggested the adoption of Vandervell thin wall shell bearings. Ramponi arranged a personal visit by Tony Vandervell who provided a set of connecting rod and main bearings for a new engine which Busso was designing.

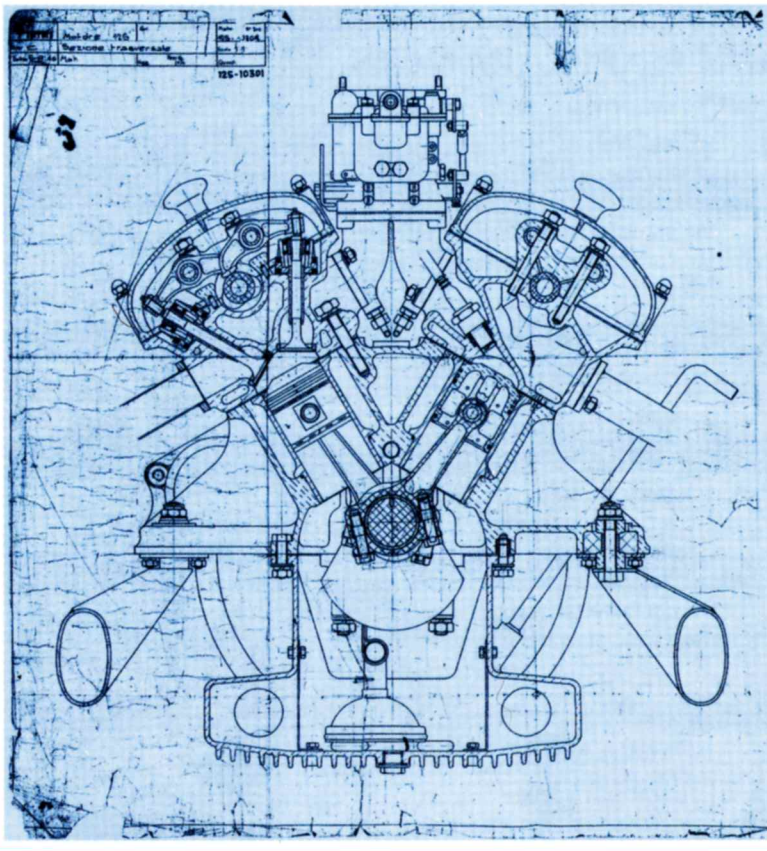
This new engine was a refinement of the 159, but had slightly altered dimensions of 60mm X 58.8 mm giving a single cylinder capacity of 166 cc (later becoming the classic "Ferrari 166"). After the Turin victory Busso approached the electricity board and begged for an extra allocation of power for the company which was casting pistons. Without the extra power it was impossible to get a different set of pistons. Busso reported that the Turin victory greatly helped his request. The new 166 engine with Vandervell bearings ran for the first time on November 20, 1947. Revolutions immediately went up to 8000 with a corresponding increase in power. Besides the bearings, the engine

had new carburetors specially designed by Weber for Ferrari. All the existing engines were modified to the new specification, reinstalled in existing chassis and sold to customers. In addition to the mechanicals, the bodywork for the racing cars had also been standardized, based on the Turin winning car's shape. This body style became known as the Spyder Corsa.

Another legacy of Busso was the introduction of Serafino Allemano to Ferrari in the summer of 1947. As a result, at least one, and perhaps two bodies were commissioned for the long delayed Sport program. The first berlinetta body was delivered about December 1947.

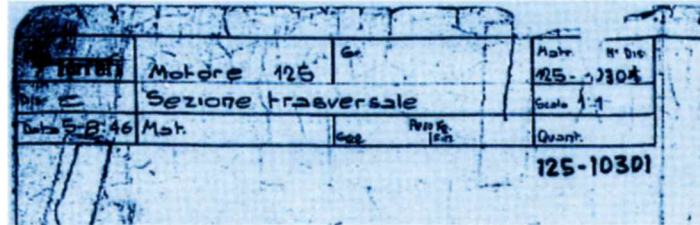
With the first sales, new chassis and engine parts were ordered. Late in 1947 Colombo was again let go by Alfa Romeo and returned to Ferrari. Colombo's criticism of Busso, and Busso's frustration over the company's failure to develop his twin cam GP engine design, caused Busso to quit and return to Alfa Romeo. With the departure of Busso, Ferrari again retained Lampredi. This time Lampredi was appointed to an equal position with Colombo. Lampredi was given responsibility for racing cars while Colombo was to concentrate on the road cars. This seemed to suit Colombo as he could remain at his home in Milan, where the majority of the coach builders were located. Conditions at Maranello had improved too. There was a trained work force, modern machine tools, and a large factory devoted entirely to automobile production.

1947 concluded with the three original cars being revised and several new cars under construction. Ferrari had also concluded agreements with his new customers to service, revise, and enter their cars in various races. Though the customers seem to have believed that their agreements were exclusive, in fact similar arrangements were made with different parties. During 1948 most of the cars were kept at the factory, and there were some instances of private cars being used as regular works racers, possibly without the knowledge of the owners. Actually such arrangements were not unusual in Italian racing circles. It was almost a duplicate of the original Scuderia Ferrari operation, and Maserati had a similar program for its customers.



## August 5, 1946

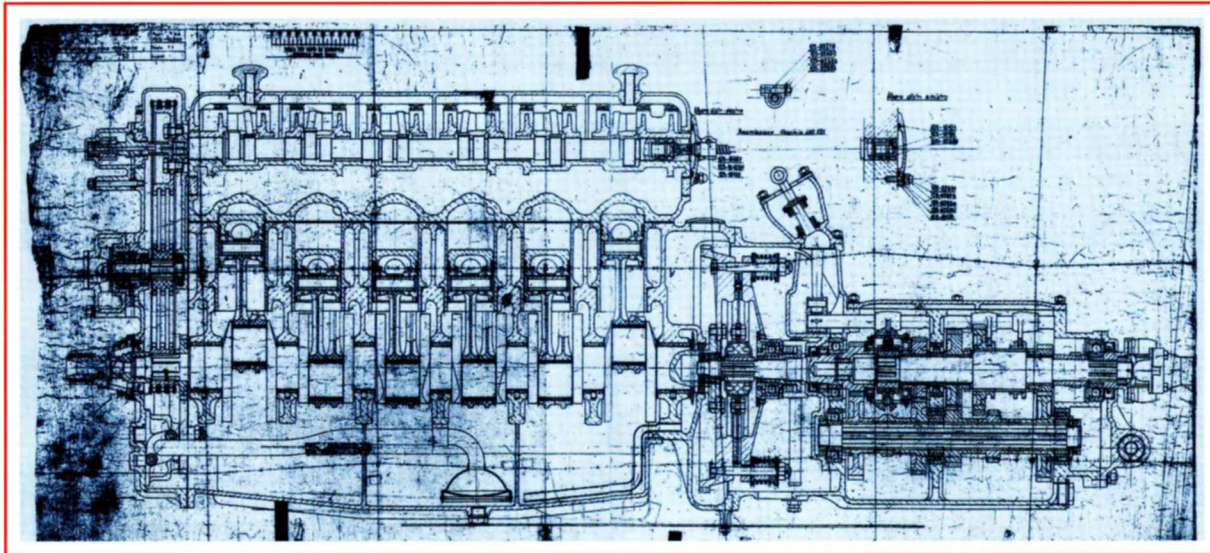
In this cross section, one can see many details of a Ferrari engine which remained familiar until the mid 1960s. An interesting detail here is that the main frame tubes are scaled at 80mm x 45mm. Gilberto Colombo, of the company which built the frames for the first three cars, claims that he suggested a different tube size — 92mm x 55mm for the main frame members — which all the early cars used. This drawing may predate the suggested change.



All these drawings from 1946 are on Ferrari drafting paper: Ferrari seems to have begun using the long F logo almost immediately upon renaming the company Auto Costruzioni Ferrari in May 1946. There are some later drawings (1947) of separate components on AAC drafting paper, possibly used when supplies of Ferrari paper ran low.

## 1946

The date is not completely visible, but the year 1946 can be read. One can see in this longitudinal view, that the gearbox is drawn for a column shift. Exactly when the change was made to a direct shift is not known, but this probably explains the tall gear shift tower on the transmissions in 0201, 002C, and 004C.



**C**ONTROVERSY SURROUNDS SEVERAL IMPORTANT ISSUES. How many different Ferrari chassis were actually built in 1947, and then what happened to them? Resources were too scarce and money too dear for anything to be just thrown away in those days. The following is a breakdown of the 1947 Ferraris:

- 1) PIACENZA TYPE ROADSTER — appears May 11, May 25, June 1, June 21, July 13 (two radiator cooling holes high up added), July 20, and August 24. Piacenza type not seen again, although it was probably the car damaged in practice a week before the Modena race on September 28.
- 2) "L'AUTOBOTTE" CYCLE TYPE — was at Piacenza on May 11, but first competes in a race June 5 in the Rome GP, said to have been crashed by Bazzi in tests before August 24

Livorno race. Last race for this style body was July 20 at Florence. Definitely not seen after August 24, unless it was at Modena September 28 and crashed again before the race.

- 3) PESCARA TYPE ROADSTER — (second body) appears August 15, Coppa Acerbo, Pescara. A new body with only one cowl vent, slightly protruding headlights, and longer rear fender line, there are also two small slits at base of the windscreen. This Ferrari appears again September 28 with modified front body work (brake cooling holes are smaller, carb opening moved to hood, repainted). It has two slits at the base of the windscreen, single cowl vent, and gas filler sticking out at right rear. This spyder continues to appear in 1948 with modified hood and gas filler inside rear body. Seen in 1948 at races on May 2, at the Mille Miglia, and August 15 at

# 1947 FERRARI RACE APPEARANCES

(Also noted are appearances of AAC 815 sn 021)

**RACE # ENGINE/SN BODY DRIVER RESULT**

## May 11 — Piacenza

128	125S 01C	Roadster	Cortese	Did not finish, fuel feed
166	125S 02C	Cycle fender	Farina	Did not start (Farina refused to drive after practice incident)
162	815 021	Touring spyder	Beltrachini	Did not finish

## May 25 — 9th GP of Rome, Circuito delle Terme di Caracalla

56	125S 01C	Roadster	Cortese	1st overall
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**NOTES:** First win ever for an automobile named Ferrari

## June 1 — Coppa Faini, Vercelli circuit

22	125S 01C	Roadster	Cortese	1st in class
?	815 021	Touring spyder	Beltrachini	4th in class

## June 5 — Roman Spring of Motors, Circuito delle Terme di Caracalla

52	125S 02C	Cycle fender	Cortese	Did not finish, accident
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**NOTES:** First race for the cycle fender car after aborted Piacenza entry. Most reports state that this race was on 5 June. This would be a Thursday, and the posters for the race carry this date.

## June 15 — Vigevano

46	125S 02C	Cycle fender	Cortese	1st in class, 3rd overall
?	815 021	Touring spyder	Beltrachini	Did not finish

**NOTES:** It is believed an axle without differential was tried in this race.

## June 21-22 — XIV Mille Miglia

143	125S 01C	Roadster	Cortese/Marchetti	Did not finish, head gasket
124	815 021	Touring spyder	Beltrachini/Matta	Did not finish

## June 29 — Varese, Circuit Colle Campigli

22	125S 02C	Cycle fender	Cortese	1st overall
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## July 6 — Coppa Luigi Arcangeli, Forli

72	125S 02C	Cycle fender	Nuvolari	1st in class
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## July 13 — Parma

80	125S 02C	Cycle fender	Nuvolari	1st overall
78	125S 01C	Roadster	Cortese	2nd overall

**NOTES:** #78 was the same as at Piacenza with no holes for radiator cooling

## July 20 — Third Cascine, Florence

106	125S 01C	Roadster	Righetti	3rd in class
36	125S 02C	Cycle fender	Cortese	Did not finish, cam shaft and valve springs
70	125S 01C	Roadster	Nuvolari?	???????

**NOTES:** Number 70 is usually identified as being Florence. Number 106 was the Piacenza type without radiator cooling holes. If #70 is also Florence then there were two Piacenza type, one with cooling holes, and the other without. All evidence suggests that there were only two 125S in existence and both were at Florence on race numbers 106 and 36 as pictured in many books and magazines. Number 70 (the Piacenza type) is probably at Livorno and the car ultimately driven by Nuvolari. Nuvolari's racing record makes no mention of his participation in the Florence event at all. If *Ferrari 84/85* can be relied upon then this photo, so often identified as Firenze Circuito delle Cascine, is actually Livorno with Nuvolari driving.

## August 15 — (Ferragusto), Coppa Acerbo, Pescara

21	159S 02C	Roadster (new)	Cortese	2nd overall, 1st in class
23	815 021	Touring Spyder	Beltrachini	Did not finish

**NOTES:** Colombo says #21 is one of the first two with a new body and engine, body is different with two holes for radiator cooling, different carb intake, larger brake cooling vents in front apron, single cowl flap, two small cuts at base of wind screen and longer rear fender line.

## August 24 — Montenero, Livorno

?	125S ?	?	Nuvolari	Did not start
70 (?)	125S 01C	Roadster	Nuvolari	Did not finish, carburetion

**NOTES:** This race was limited to 1.5 lt. so 125 engines were being used. Nuvolari's car crashed before race by Bazzi during tests at Maranello so Nuvolari took over Cortese's. Number 70, if this is Livorno, has two holes for radiator cooling, but lacks other features of the Pescara 159S, is more similar to Piacenza body. Therefore, proof that the original roadster was not rebodied into the Pescara type.



Roman Spring of Motors  
May 25 June 1 June 5

May 25, the 9th Grand Prix of Rome, the second race entered by Ferrari, and their first overall win. The third race date listed here is a bit of a puzzler as it fell on a Thursday. (1947 is the same as this year in the day/date relationship.) Of the 14 races which Ferrari entered in 1947, all but two were on Sundays. The other non-Sunday race was Friday August 15.)

Pescara again. It may also have been in the combined Giro di Sicilia/Targa Florio on April 3 to 4.

4) SPYDER CORSA TYPE — first appears September 28 at Modena, then October 12 at Turin, Valentino track. Factory records indicate a third car was built up in July 1947. The author believes it is a new chassis numbered 002C, later sold to Count Gabriele Besana.

Was one of these a reused, rebuilt or rebodied original chassis or were there four separate chassis? Most writers seem to agree that there were only three separate chassis constructed in 1947. Factory records also confirm that there were only three chassis delivered in 1947. Actually at no time during 1947 do more than two cars appear at any race.

The Spyder Corsa sold to Prince Troubetzkoy appears to be 01C renumbered 010I, with a new body and 166 engine. He raced his Spyder Corsa early in 1948, so it could not have been made out of the Pescara type (02C) which the factory was still racing at that time. The 166 Touring Le Mans berlinetta 020I is said to be 02C. Examination of 020I shows that a "C" was over stamped 0, and an "I" added at a different angle. Close examination of Troubetzkoy's car shows similar overstamping to convert 01C to 010I. This accounts for two cars, in addition to the first 159 Spyder Corsa. That makes only three different chassis for 1947.

REVISITING THE SUBJECT OF SERIAL NUMBERS . . .  
When the first Ferrari cars were built, it appears it was decided to begin numbering them from one. By this reasoning the number of the third car ought to have been 03C. It appears, however, as if a new number series was adopted for the new Spyder Corsa model. This third car may have been numbered 002C. While it is not known what serial number was given to this car when built, it is known that in 1948 this car, the Turin winning 159 Spyder Corsa, was delivered with a 166 engine and was at that time numbered 002C.

In 1948 Ferrari did start a new numbering series for the 166 Sport, the 166 MM, and the single seater racing cars, so it is not unlikely that in the previous year the new model series was

#### August 24 — 4th Circuito automobilistico di Senigallia

?	815 021	Touring Spyder	Beltrachini	5th in class
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NOTES: No Ferraris were entered in this race

#### August 31 — Circuito di Novara

?	815 021	Touring Spyder	Beltrachini	5th overall
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NOTES: No Ferraris were entered in this race.

#### September 28 — Modena

20	159 002C	Spyder Corsa	Cortese	Did not finish, starter motor
16	125S 02C	Roadster (new)	Righetti	5th overall

NOTES: Colombo says #20 is an all new car. Righetti was entered on a 159, but crashed in training at Stella di Ligorzano a week before the race. Number 16 is similar to the new Pescara roadster but has new engine cover, smaller front brake cooling vents and appears freshly painted. This race was the debut of the Maserati San Remo. Ascari won in the new Maserati A6 GCS. The race was stopped after 24 laps when Bracco (Delage) crashed into the stands killing or injuring over 20 spectators.

#### October 12 — Valentino Park circuit, GP di Torino

78	159 002C	Spyder Corsa	Sommer	1st overall
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NOTES: This is same car as appeared at Modena, with very slight modification to grille.

2-4 April Giro/Targa ? Cortese/Righetti. Since Cortese uses the Pescara car later in the season it is possible he raced it here too. No known photos exist. Factory says they drove 166 SC.

12 May MM #10 Cortese/Marchetti DNF

15 August Pescara #1 Cortese 5th

**New Pescara roadster (02C) appears in 1948:**

begun with a new sequence of numbers. Also in keeping with what became later practice, even numbers were reserved for racing chassis and odd numbers were assigned to street cars. The first 159 Spyder Corsa was clearly a competition model, as indicated by the C (for Corsa meaning race or race car) suffix.

**R**ETURNING TO EVENTS IN 1947 for an examination of bodies and chassis . . . On March 12 the first Ferrari was rolled-out and run under its own power without body-work. By May 11 two cars had been completed and both had been bodied – one with a roadster body, and the other with the cycle fender spyder body called “l’autobotte” (the barrel or tubby car). Which car was which? In looking at the engine compartments of both these early cars, it is clear that the one with the roadster body has the same frame arrangement as the at the March 12 roll-out, and that the “barrel” car does not share that arrangement. It has neither the frame rail running down from the scuttle, nor the hoops for the body where it passes over the dash.

**I**t would be logical that the first car shown on March 12 was the only one in existence at that point. This assumption is further supported by the crude body which seems to have been quickly made up in order to get to the start line at Piacenza. After six months had been required to complete the first car, the second one appears to have been assembled in just over one month. If these assumptions are correct, then the roadster was 01C, and “l’autobotte” was 02C.

On August 15 at Pescara only one car appears. It has a new type 159 engine and a new roadster body. Colombo writes that this car was one of the first two, rebodied.

**N**ow problems start to arise concerning what happened to the first two cars. Before Livorno on August 24 Bazzi crashed one of the first cars so badly that he broke his leg and three ribs. Race reports state that only one car was available for the next race at Livorno and that it was driven by Nuvolari. There is a photo of a slightly modified Piacenza type roadster

with the race #70. This photo is usually identified as “Cortese at Florence” on July 20, but the driver in race #70 is clearly Nuvolari. Unless the factory had three cars completed by July 20, which does not seem to be the case, Cortese drove “l’autobotte” (02C) with race #36 at Florence, while Righetti was in the roadster (01C) with race #106, and Nuvolari was not present (in a Ferrari or any other car). If race #70 is at Livorno, then the Piacenza roadster (01C) could not be the one which was rebodied for Pescara the week before. It would be “l’autobotte” (02C) which received the Pescara type roadster rebody.

At Modena on September 28, an all new cycle fender car, the third Ferrari built, appears with a

159 engine. It is race #20 driven by Cortese. Also raced is the Pescara roadster (02C) with a 125 engine and race #16, driven by Righetti. Supposedly during practice for this race, Righetti crashed the other 159 so that car was a DNS. What was this other car? It must have been the Piacenza roadster (01C) with a 159 engine. On October 12 Sommer drives the new Spyder Corsa in the Turin race at Valentino Park. This was a Grand Prix race, so the roadsters were not entered.

**I**F THE ABOVE ASSUMPTIONS ARE CORRECT, then the following is possible:

**A)** The Piacenza roadster was 01C and continued to exist throughout 1947. At the end of the year it received a new Spyder Corsa replica body and 166 engine and was renumbered 0101.

**B)** The “l’autobotte” or “barrel car” was 02C and was rebodied as a roadster for Pescara, then continued to exist throughout 1948. Later it was stripped and sold in September 1949 as a bare chassis renumbered 0201. In early 1950 it was bodied as a Touring Le Mans berlinetta.

**C)** The first Spyder Corsa was built as either 03C or, more likely, 002C and was sold as 002C in late 1947 and delivered in early 1948.

**0101** appeared at the combined Targa Florio/Giro di Sicilia in April 1948, practiced by Troubetzkoy and raced by Bruno Sterzi. In 1948 02C continued to exist as the Pescara roadster and appeared in both the Mille Miglia and again at Pescara,

then it disappeared. 002C was sold to the Besena brothers and raced in Argentina in January 1948. This is the only sequence of events which makes 0101 and 0201 possible as renumbered 01C and 02C. Two other points in favor of the theory that 0201 was 02C renumbered are the horn button and gear box. The very earliest cars had an aluminum button with concentric rings, but no prancing horse. 0201 has such a button, as well as the distinctive gated gear shift on a tall tower. Only four cars had such a shift — they were 01C, 02C, 002C and 004C.



Possibly for the first time since 1948, the first and third Ferraris built are parked next to each other. Seen at the Cavallino Classic, that's 01C, now 0101, on the left. It wears its fourth body, a recreation of its second Spyder Corsa configuration, which is quite different from its original Piacenza type roadster body. On the right is 002C. Though the body is the third on this chassis, it is a replica of its original body, the first Spyder Corsa type. **MARC SONNERY PHOTO**

**M**AY 1997 MARKS THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY of the first appearance of a Ferrari in public and also the 50th anniversary of the first Ferrari race victory. All three of the first Ferraris still exist with their original engines (enlarged to two liters). The first car Ferrari built was the first Ferrari to win a race. It is now numbered 0101 and carries its fourth body which is a recreation of its second Spyder Corsa configuration. The second car, which won two races in 1947, exists with its third body, a Touring berlinetta constructed in 1949. The third Ferrari, which won the notable victory at Turin in 1947 also exists, now with its third body which is a replica of its original shape.

**All opinions and mistakes in this article are those of the author. It should also be noted that I was not present jotting down the serial numbers of the very first Ferraris. This is a best guess based on an examination of all the evidence available. Any corrections and additions would be most welcome.**

— David Seielstad