

SANREMO-SESTRIERE RALLY

GENERAL CLASSIFICATION

1st	: Therier/Callewaert (Alpine-Renault)*	..	810.5
2nd	: Källström/Häggbom (Fulvia HF)	..	1,030.7
3rd	: Vinatier/Jacob (Alpine-Renault)	..	1,600.0
4th	: Trana/Andreasson (Saab V4)*	..	1,795.0
5th	: Pianta/Kuster (Fulvia HF)*	..	2,146.0
6th	: Smania/Zanchetti (Fiat 125S)*	..	2,859.7
7th	: Ceccato/Eisendle (Fiat 125S)*	..	3,013.5
8th	: Lindberg/Hertz (Saab V4)	..	3,130.0
9th	: Paganelli/Russo (Fiat 124 Spyder)	..	3,488.4
10th	: Tecilla/Scabini (Fiat 125S)	..	3,679.0
11th	: Sonda/Turri (Fiat 125S)	..	4,048.5
12th	: Benetti/Viglino (Renault Gordini)*	..	4,439.5
13th	: Innocente/Fregnan (Fulvia HF)	..	6,617.9
14th	: Bologna/Raviola (Fulvia HF)	..	6,958.5
15th	: Zambelli/Pizzo (Fiat 125S)	..	10,394.0

* Denotes class winner.

125 starters — 15 finishers

AT ONE TIME there was the Rally of the Flowers, which later changed its name to the Sanremo Rally, from the Mediterranean town at which it was based. The route of this event, a European Championship qualifier for several years, was confined to the wild mountains which rise sharply from the sea just across the Italian border from Monte Carlo.

It was a popular event with rough, unmade roads as special stages. Because of its confinement to a small area, works teams could base themselves at Sanremo throughout its duration and drivers out practising could always return to the same hotel bed after each session.

Further north, at Turin, there was the Sestriere Rally which started at the big industrial city and finished at the ski resort of Sestriere. This was organised by the Turin Motor Club, and in recent years it benefited greatly from the financial help of the Fiat organisation.

There was something of a rivalry between these events. One was a Championship event on rough roads and the other was a snow rally, not in the Championship but considerably richer from its Fiat connections. There was little chance that the Sestriere could oust the Sanremo from its place in the Championship table, although it was quite obvious that the Turin people wanted such status for their event.

In mid-1969 the inevitable was announced; the Clubs got together to amalgamate their events and in 1970 the first Sanremo-Sestriere Rally was held, as a qualifier in the International Championship for Constructors. It started at Sanremo, spent its half-way stop at Turin, and finished at Sestriere. Gone was the compact route; gone was the possibility to set up a base at Sanremo; and gone was the familiar atmosphere which one comes to associate with certain events. I must confess that I was a little saddened by the changes, but there is no place for sentiment in such hard competition and it is entirely the prerogative of organisers to run their events in whatever manner they please.



Three Alpines started and two finished, this one driven by Therier and Callewaert in first place. Nicolas retired when his car broke a drive shaft, and this could have been accelerated by loss of wheel balance brought about by snow collecting on the rims.

Despite its Championship status, the rally attracted comparatively little support from works teams. Porsche, having already won at Monte Carlo and in Sweden, sent no cars at all and Ford of Britain withdrew its two entries for Andersson and Piot because these would have drained too much effort away from World Cup preparations.

Understandably, Lancia entered a strong team of five cars, with three Italian drivers, one Swedish and one Finnish. It was concerning this team that a tremendous howl of indignation was taken up by the Italian Press and Television. In the first hour of the rally three of the 1.6-litre Fulvias spluttered to a stop and retired, each with its fuel lines blocked by foreign bodies. The question of sabotage was immediately raised, for all the competing cars had been left out in the open during the night before the rally, on the sea-front *parc fermé*, where security precautions seemed to be scant indeed.

The offending material consisted of flakes of a red, rubbery compound, such as might become detached from the internal surfaces of petrol hoses or rubber fuel bags. But fuel bags were not used so early in the rally, and it seemed that the cars were topped up from known sources before the start. Furthermore, a polythene bag was found in the fuel tank of one of the cars, suggesting "malice aforethought" rather than "natural causes". But in the absence of firm evidence, the incident must bear an "open verdict", at least for the time being.

Interesting was the fact that three of the Lancias (not exactly the same three which retired early) were fitted with two Weber carburetters, a redesigned inlet manifold and modified exhaust pipework, an arrangement which increased the b.h.p. output from 140 to 148. The other two cars used the more familiar Solex equipment.

The Saab team sent just two cars, one with Lucas fuel injection for Lindberg and another with a single Weber carburettor for Trana. Both finished, Trana in fourth place and Lindberg, dogged by failing engine mountings, eighth.

The most interesting entry of all came from Alpine-Renault, who brought three cars. For a long time these lightweight cars have been regarded as too fragile for anything but events on smooth tarmac surfaces—such as the Alpine Rally on which they have done extremely well—and there were cynics who predicted that they would break into pieces from the pounding over the rocky Italian roads. But memories must be short. In 1968 two of them took part in the Sanremo Rally and, although one of them retired with an oil leak on the last day of the event, neither showed any signs at all of cracking up under the strain.

Some of the special stages on the Sanremo-Sestriere were rougher than anything the RAC Rally, Acropolis or even the old Liege provided, and when one of the Alpines emerged victorious at the end of it all the critics were more than confounded. The consortium of *Automobiles Alpine* and the *Régie Renault* decided last year to increase their rally programme in 1970 and they have already tackled three Constructors' Championship events. This victory at Sanremo is their first major one outside France, but its main significance lies in the fact that the team has managed to overcome the "rough" barrier.

Driver of the winning car was the young Frenchman Jean-Luc Therier, a relative newcomer to the Alpine-Renault team but one who has shown exceptional talent. He is regarded as one of France's top hopes for the future. At Sanremo he was co-driven by the experienced Marcel Callewaert.

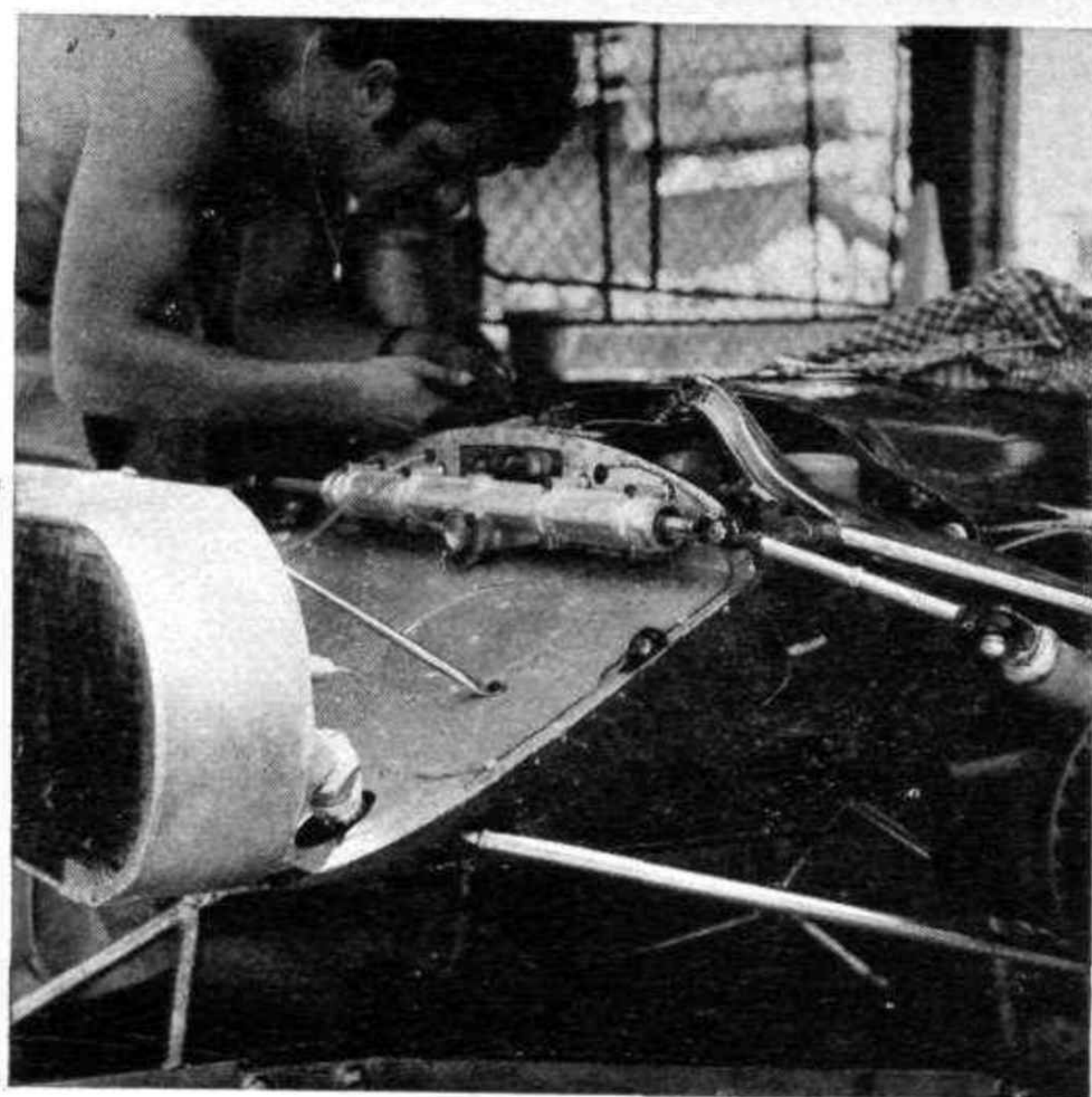
In the past, Alpines were sent to the smooth events and when a rough one came along Renault Gordinis were sent instead. This applied to events such as the Rallye du Maroc and the few unsurfaced rallies which they have in France. But the situation seems now to have changed and it remains to be seen whether wider use will be made of the little GT cars in the future.

Already there are plans to bring a team of Alpines to Britain for the RAC Rally in November, the first time they will have appeared here, and with opposition from Saab, Lancia, Porsche, Datsun, Ford, Leyland and perhaps one or two others, that event should be one well worth watching.

To return to Sanremo, the incident of the blocked fuel lines was not the only mystery of the event. Källström and Häggbom, who finished second in the only works Lancia to complete the route, were slowed at one point by two punctures. Later, large quantities of bent nails were found strewn across the road at that spot. On the last night, the entire rally was brought to a standstill when a large tree was found felled across the road—and there was an ominous saw cut at its base. Competitors got together, devised their own means of circumnavigating the obstruction, and rejoined the official route at the nearest possible point.

The retirement rate on the former Sanremo Rally was always a little high, with spiritedly-driven Italian cars expiring all over the mountains. This year, with the addition of even rougher stages and an unexpected

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FRONT END.—The Ferrari chassis structure tapers at the front, on which the radiator is mounted. The steering rack is bolted to the front bulkhead.

gearbox is an oil radiator covered by a forward-facing air duct, and the oil tank surrounds the gearbox with the filler under the right-hand radiator duct. On 002, which was used for practice on the first two days, there was an extra oil tank mounted on top of the gearbox, between the radiator ducts, and a large-bore pipe connected this supply to the main tank. In the pipe was a large plumber's tap operated by a piano-wire control near the driver's left shoulder. Oil consumption on the flat-12 is obviously high. For the last practice this system was fitted to 001, and it was also used in the race. Above the gearbox is mounted the Marelli Dinoplex transistorised ignition equipment and a battery master switch in the form of a small lever. This lever has a piano-wire control running up to the left of the instrument panel, to another lever that sticks out through a slot in the cockpit cowling. This means that mechanics or helpers can operate the master-switch from the rear or from the left side of the car, while the driver has an emergency push-button in the cockpit that not only actuates the fire extinguisher system, but also operates the master-switch by means of the cable. The front brakes have cooling air ducts cast into the front uprights, as are the steering arms, while the rear brakes are mounted just inboard of the hub-carriers, and there are four exhaust tail-pipes amongst the rear suspension members, which are pretty orthodox. Needless to say the Ferraris are red, though the nose fins, the aerofoil and the oil-radiator ducts are white.

True to their word after their preview, BRM had two new cars in Africa, 153/01 for Oliver and 153/02 for Rodriguez, while there was one of last year's cars for George Eaton, this being 139/02. Since the preview the rather fragile-looking casting between the engine and gearbox had been reinforced with plates riveted over the openings. The new engines, with redesigned valve layout and the inlets in the centre of the vee and exhausts out each side, sounded crisp and showed promise, but before practice began the first car was in trouble with a hub shaft breaking, and it happened again at the beginning of the first practice, so the second car was withdrawn and they missed two lots of practice until modified shafts were flown out and fitted. Even then their troubles were not over, for though they turned out for the final practice session the oil tank on the first car split.

The last of the new cars was the De Tomaso which Frank Williams was running in conjunction with the small Italian factory in Modena. With co-operation from the local Campagnola casting firm Alessandro de Tomaso has been using magnesium castings as the basis for many of his designs (at one time he even produced a complete cast monocoque), and the new Formula One car was no exception. A large and complex casting forms a central bulkhead from which a Cosworth V8 engine and Hewland gearbox are hung, while the

aluminium monocoque centre section extends forward from this bulkhead to another casting in front of the driver's feet. The chassis cross-section is pear-shaped, the cockpit sides not only bulging to accommodate the fuel bags, but sagging downwards to keep the weight low. Suspension front and rear follows orthodox Formula One thinking, and is not unlike last year's Brabham layout, with exposed spring units at the front. Wheels are Campagnola cast alloy of 13 in. diameter at the front and 15 in. diameter at the rear, with large single nut centre-lock fixing. While the central cast bulkhead is an interesting piece of design, incorporating an extension at the bottom to take the lower engine mounts, and an integral bush for the gear-linkage rod to pass through and so on, it would appear to be a rather vulnerable component that would have to be replaced completely if it suffered any damage, unlike a fabricated structure that could be taken apart and repaired. The designation of this De Tomaso-Cosworth V8 was 505/38/1, the three groups of numbers being respectively the total of all cars built by De Tomaso the design number and the category, *i.e.*, Formula One.

The remaining three cars in the entry list were old but nonetheless quite competitive Formula One cars, all turned out in a most immaculate condition, and they would have been a credit to any Grand Prix grid. Team Gunston, backed by the Rhodesian Tobacco Company had an early Lotus 49 to "B" specification for Love to drive, and this had their own idea of exhaust pipes for the Cosworth V8 engine, in which the four-into-one on each side curled up and over the rear suspension. The second car was the Brabham-Cosworth V8 that Frank Williams built for Courage last year, though when delivery was made to de Klerk, the driver, some vital parts were missing, and the aerofoil for example had to be made out in Johannesburg. Both these cars were in the orange and brown colours of Team Gunston and were well prepared. The last entry was a Lotus 49C that began life as the car that Bonnier wrecked in practice for the Gold Cup last year but a complete rebuild at Lotus did not leave much of the original car. Entered by a local racing enthusiast, Aldo Scribante, the car was finished in orange and blue and Charlton was the driver.—D. S. J.

THE THINGS THAT HAPPEN . . .

According to the *Daily Telegraph* a police patrol car demonstrating better driving crashed on the A283 Washington-Storrington road, slightly injuring the driver and two passengers. The car apparently went off the road on a bend, through a hedge and on to its side in a field. It was giving a final demonstration of how to drive safely to the passengers, who had attended safety-first lectures given by divisional police officers!

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heavy fall of snow on the eve of the rally, it was even higher. Only fifteen cars from the original 125 got to the *parc fermé* at Sestriere.

The time appointed for final scrutineering, during which leading cars were to be dismantled if required, was 3 p.m. But at this time there was no move at all from officials, so after enquiring, the Lancia mechanics departed for Turin and home and those of Saab and Renault went off to bed. They were not at all pleased when they were roused later in the evening to start the job of taking their cars to pieces. As far as the Lancia was concerned, officials did the job themselves, dumping all the parts in the boot of the car afterwards since they were not quite sure how they all pieced together.

Organisationally, it was not the best of rallies, and it seemed that officials in the Turin area were working to systems which differed from those used by officials in the south. Häggbom was waiting at one control for his time to come up on the clock and he put his card down for a moment in order to tie a shoelace. An eager official immediately snatched it up and banged it into the printing clock. No amount of explanation could persuade him to cancel the time thus stamped (which was one minute too early for Häggbom) and the Swede couldn't press his argument for fear of offending against the regulation which gave a penalty for being rude to marshals!

Three events have gone, with two victories to Porsche and one to Alpine-Renault. Remaining we have the East African Safari, Austrian Alpine Rally, Acropolis Rally, the Coupe des Alpes and the RAC Rally making up the Constructors' Championship.—G. P.