

1950 Giaur (Chassis #BT-004)

By Mark R. Brinker



Two Italian gentlemen wedged into a tiny race car, flying atop open roads across glorious countryside, through blistering sun and pounding rain...crowds lining the course dangerously close. From 1927 to 1957 this was the Mille Miglia. Can you possibly imagine a more enjoyable way to spend 20, or so, hours?

If you really wanted to prolong the experience racing through Italy, there was nothing better than a not-so-potent 0.75-liter car. Case in point; in the inaugural race Giuseppe Cazzulani and Ugo Monferroni piloted a Peugeot 5 HP Spider Tipo MM to a first in Class H (750-cc) finishing the 1,000-miler in a nifty 33 hours, 51 minutes and 33 seconds (equals 29.5 mph!).

As time and technology advanced the 750-cc cars became significantly faster, however, and if anything, they shrank in size. The book *La Sport* by Curami and Vergnano is an impressive A-to-Z accounting of more than 80 Italian manufacturers, many of whom produced small racecars in equally small numbers. I've often wondered as I turn pages staring at historical photographs: "just how did two spaghetti-eating men strap into these wee machines?" Were they artfully

lowered in using a tree limb and rope? Did they run up from behind and jump into the cockpit while locked in a bear hug? Did vineyard workers stomp them into position? Or was some type of secret olive oil lubricant involved?

In my opinion the 750-cc jobs of the 1950s should be included in any list of interesting cars that raced the MM. And, while there were numerous builders, my personal favorites include cars from Stranguellini, Bandini, Siata, Nardi, Moretti, and Giaur. These racers were ultralightweight, nimble, most often gorgeous and definitely Italian.

The Automobile Club of Marche was born in the province of Ascoli Piceno, Italy, in 1914, and the De Angelis family were among the founders. Three De Angelis brothers, Francesco, Vincenzo and Vito, all born in the 1920s, continued their family's great passion for the automobile. In 1952 the De Angelis family entered the 19th MM. With Vincenzo and Francesco (E. Troiani was on the entry list but did not race due to illness) at the helm of a Fiat Topolino (Car #43; License Plate AP11548) they finished 228th overall. The following year the duo again raced the Topo (Car # 83), this time to a 252nd overall finish.

Then in 1954, Francesco acquired his very first purpose-built racer. The car was one of Berardo Taraschi's spectacular Giuars (chassis #BT-004), which was equipped with a Giannini G1 engine (#G1-085). In 1947 Berardo Taraschi had begun building sports

and competition cars in Teramo, Italy (near Ascoli Piceno), under the name Urania. Following some racing success, Taraschi struck a deal with Domenico and Attilio Giannini whereby they would provide him with their own Giannini engines. The G1 engine was a single overhead cammer, whereas the later G2 engine had twin overhead cams. The contraction of Giannini and Urani led to a new Italian marque known as Giaur, and the resulting cars were truly wonderful.

Giaur #BT-004 was completed in 1950 and was first purchased by Italo Arlini-Di Brigida from Pineto, Italy. He soon raced it (Car #308; License Plate #TE6004) in the 1950 Mille, where it finished 71st overall and 6th in Class. The Giaur was then sold to Gustavo Laureati of Grottammare who teamed with driver Elio Celani and DNFed with the car (#33) at the '51 MM. Laureati and the Giaur tried again at the '53 MM (Car #2240). Now teamed with co-driver Amedeo Francescangeli, the car placed 161st overall and 11th in Class.

As previously mentioned, Francesco bought #BT-004 in 1954 and soon thereafter raced it at Circuito di Macerata (Car #24) where he ran 3rd in class. Following this, brothers Francesco and Vincenzo raced the Giaur at the 1954 MM (Car #2337) where they placed 156th overall and 12th in Class. The car then was raced at a variety of events including Circuito di Salerno, Circuito di Terni, Vermicino-Rocca di Papa Hillclimb and



several other local events.

The Giuar was then put away for the '55 season while Francesco raced a Fiat 1100 TV (Car #2322) which expired from a broken transmission during the '55 MM. In late 1955 Francesco traded BT-004 to seasoned racer Alfredo Tinazzo for an Alfa Romeo 1900. Tinazzo raced the Giuar at the MM in '56 (Car #158) and '57 (Car #147) but DNFed at both events. Then in 1959 tragedy struck; Tinazzo was killed during a race at Monza.

Francesco's son, Giuseppe De Angelis, recently said, "I was born in 1966 and my father loved to tell me stories about his cars and his days racing at the Mille Miglia. Everyone in my family knew that Tinazzo died at Monza and that my father's Giuar had been destroyed...it was a subject that no one liked to talk about. When my father died in 1992 I was only 26 years old. Since then I sometimes daydreamed about finding the crashed remains of the Giuar, but it always ended with the harsh reality that it was gone."

Accelerate to 2007 when 41 year old Giuseppe, now a successful banker, began to follow the family tradition. Giuseppe said, "I began to collect old cars and I continued to think about my dad's Giuar that was gone before I was born. Then on April 9, 2011 I was talking with my older cousin Stanislao about old cars. The last part of the discussion was about the Giuar. Stanislao was born in 1948 and although he was very young when he'd seen my father's car he seemed to remember it quite well. As always the talk ended with the same thing; the car destroyed at Monza where Tinazzo died. For some reason when I got home that day I decided to search the internet for information about Tinazzo's fatal crash. I found more than one site confirming the deadly accident, but I was shocked to find that Tinazzo died at Monza in 1959 while racing a De Sanctis Fiat!"

Emotions of a boyhood dream rushed in as Giuseppe could hardly fathom the sudden revelation. "In an instant it became obvious to me that the Giuar might have survived, but there was one minor problem; it could be in storage, hiding anywhere in the world. Quickly I went to the local Automobile Public Registry and searched for anything having to do with the license plate numbers I saw on the Giuar in old family photos. Incredibly, I discovered that the car had been sold many, many times in Rome. Even more astounding, I learned



that the Giuar had been purchased by someone close to my home town of Ascoli Piceno in 1999."

Now moving extremely fast, Giuseppe searched the records for the name of the last known owner. "I combed the internet and found several telephone numbers. I starting dialing with my heart pounding in my chest. After three or four calls a woman answered. I asked her if anyone there collected cars and she said that her husband, who died in 2003, had. When I asked her if she knew anything about a car called Giuar she told me that the car had a bad history, that she didn't like to talk about it, that she'd given it away and had absolutely no idea where it was. I remember being very sad but I asked if she and I could get together to talk."

Two days later on Saturday April 16, Giuseppe traveled to the woman's home. Giuseppe said, "When she opened the garage to show me her husband's car collection I fell to my knees with tears flowing from my eyes. The Giuar was there!!! After walking around the car with my mouth gaping open and after composing myself I asked the woman why she told me the car was given away when it was actually in her garage. She told me that she didn't understand about the name Giuar...she was thinking that I was asking about a Jaguar. The woman noticed the tears in my eyes and

told me many people had tried to buy the car from her over the years. She also said she had no intention of ever selling it. When I showed her the pictures of my father with the Giuar from the early 1950s her face instantly changed and she had a broad, warm smile."

Within 48 hours the woman called Giuseppe and agreed to sell him #BT-004 along with its original Gianinni G1 engine (#G1-085). In less than 72 hours Giuseppe had the car on his trailer and the De Angelis Giuar was back home after 57 years. Tazio Taraschi, Berardo's son, learned of the amazing find and quickly travelled to Ascoli Piceno to see the car. In addition to confirming its authenticity, Tazio will be assisting with the restoration.

Giuseppe hopes to race the Giuar at the 2012 Mille Miglia Storica. "I was so happy to locate this lost family treasure that I'd been hearing about for all of my life," Giuseppe said. "And I've come to realize that it was the undying spirit of my father that helped me to find it."

Special thanks to Cliff Reuter of etceterini.com for bringing this wonderful Giuar story to our attention. 🏎️

Do you know of a Hidden Treasure? If so, send your photos and stories to Mark at mbrinker@vintageracecar.com