



1955 MASERATI 250F works-racer

Chassis 2515





1 9 5 5 M A S E R A T I 2 5 0 F
w o r k s - r a c e r C h a s s i s 2 5 1 5

The Maserati 250F

The dawn of a legend

Following its creation in 1950, the World Championship for drivers saw an intense battle between manufacturers Alfa Romeo, Talbot Lago and Ferrari among others.

Maserati yearned to return to the top echelon and the new 2.5 liter Formula for 1954 in addition to the pull-out of Alfa Romeo would provide that opportunity.

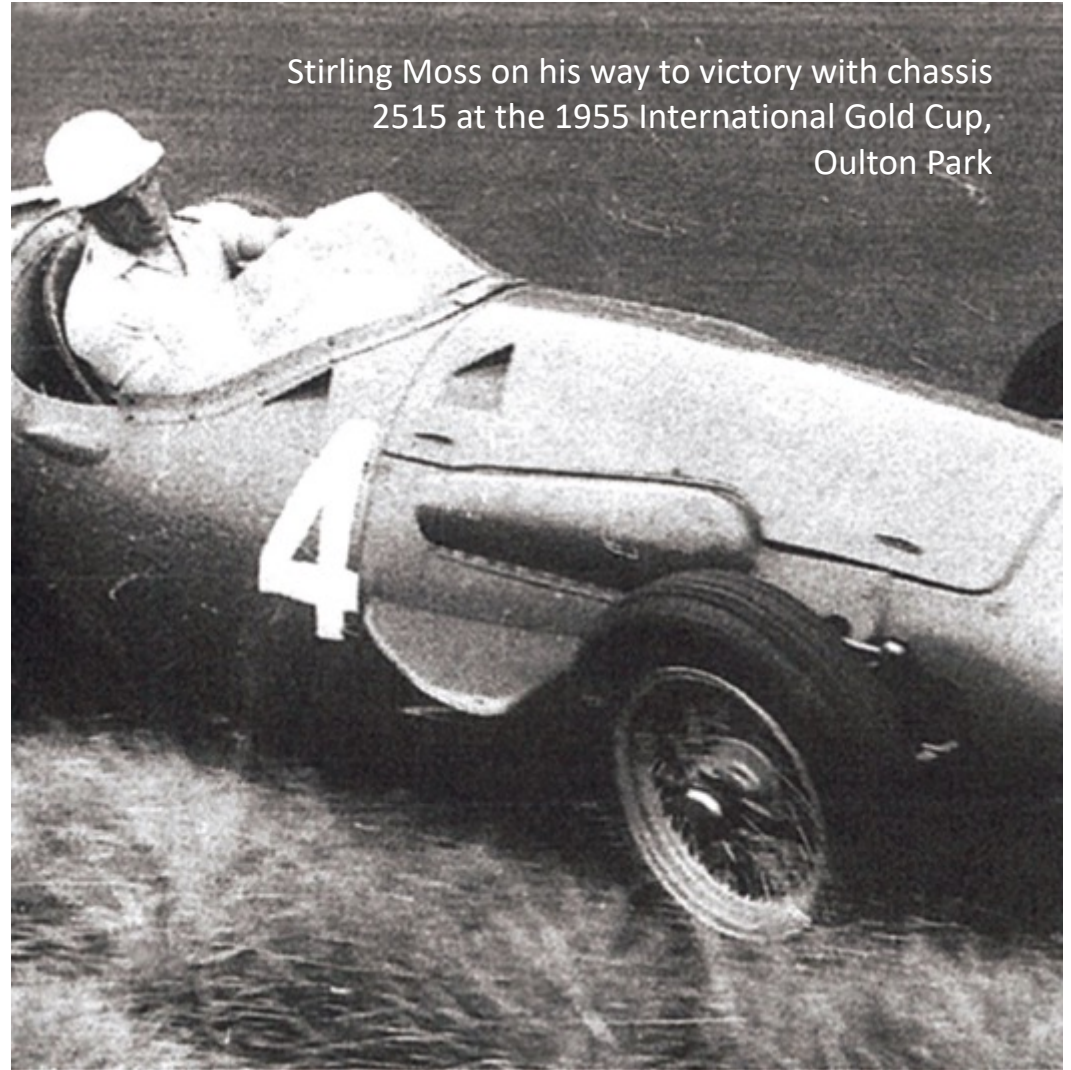
The Maserati factory team was able to entice Ferrari's chief designer Gioacchino Colombo along with engineer Valerio Colotti who would be responsible for the chassis, suspension and transmission of a new car. The Maserati 250F was born.





« In my opinion, the greatest racing car ever is the Maserati 250F. It is completely user friendly and forgiving and I really enjoyed racing the Maserati, first as a privateer and then as a semi-works driver »

Sir Stirling Moss



Stirling Moss on his way to victory with chassis 2515 at the 1955 International Gold Cup, Oulton Park



Technical highlights

The car featured a twin plug, 220 bhp, 2.5 Maserati A6 straight-six engine, ribbed 13.4' drum brakes, wishbone independent front suspension and a De Dion tube axle.

The aluminum bodywork was both functional and elegant with the fuel tank forming the tail of the car and having a capacity of 200 liters.

The cockpit was quite generous and offered an upright seating position with plenty of elbow room but the dash was too close for the straight-armed driving style favored by many of the newer drivers.

The transmission offered four forward gears plus reverse while drum brakes were used for stopping the car with the 13.4" diameter drums mounted outboard front and rear.

Further changes for the works cars were applied during the 1955 season and included a more appropriate 5-speed gearbox, wider steel drums and large bore exhaust system.



1955 MASERATI 250F
works-racer Chassis 2515



The 250F in racing and further upgrades

The 250F was first raced at the 1954 Argentinian Grand Prix, where Juan Manuel Fangio won the first of his two victories before he left for the new Mercedes-Benz team.

Another quick driver who, save for some mechanical problems, could well have won a couple of races, was the young Stirling Moss. At Aintree he did win a Formula Libre race which gave the Maserati 250F its first victory in Europe plus some other British national races. Moss would remark that :

"It steered beautifully, and inclined towards stable oversteer which one could exploit by balancing it against power and steering in long sustained drifts through corners. It rode well on the normal type of relatively smooth-surfaced course, although its small coil springs and leaf spring rear-end would use up available suspension movement over the bumps at the 'Ring'".

Then Maserati signed Jean Behra and Luigi Musso. Maserati was also expanding their sports car racing program and their efforts on the 250F lagged in 1955. Top engineers Bellentani and Massimino left for Ferrari and any development work had to take place on the engines meanwhile 3 works chassis were developed for 1955.

Changes were made during the 1955 season to reduce drag and resulted in tapering nose cowls, high cockpit sides and a full wrap around screen.

A new chassis was also being prepared that along with an angling of the engine by 5 degrees would allow for an overall lowering of the center of gravity. These offset versions would only be available to the works drivers.

Hindering further development was the inability of the Italian suppliers Weber and Pirelli to produce suitable fuel injection and disc brakes systems respectively. Moss would win two Grand Prix but the 1956 season belonged to Ferrari and Fangio.

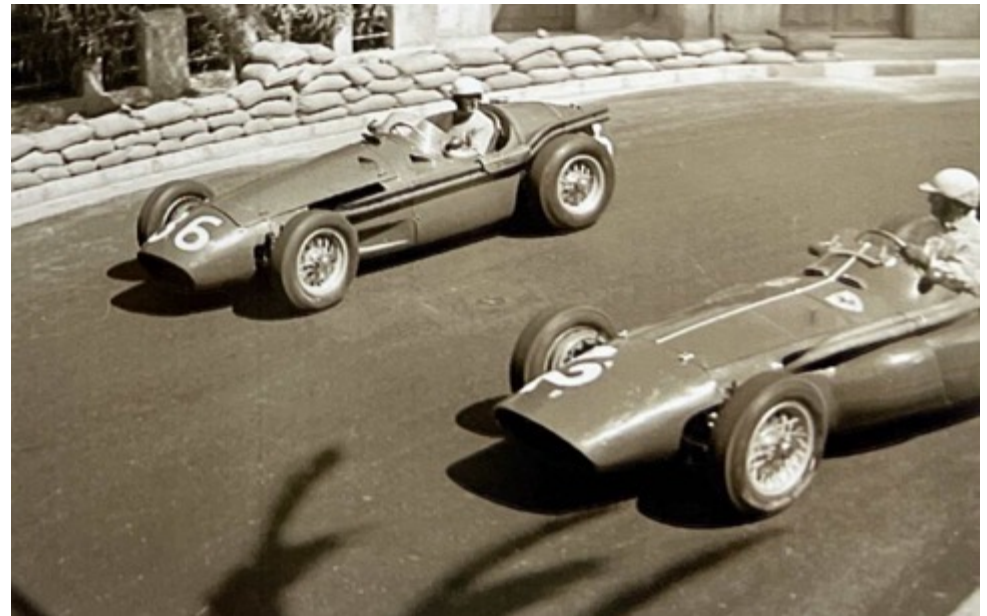
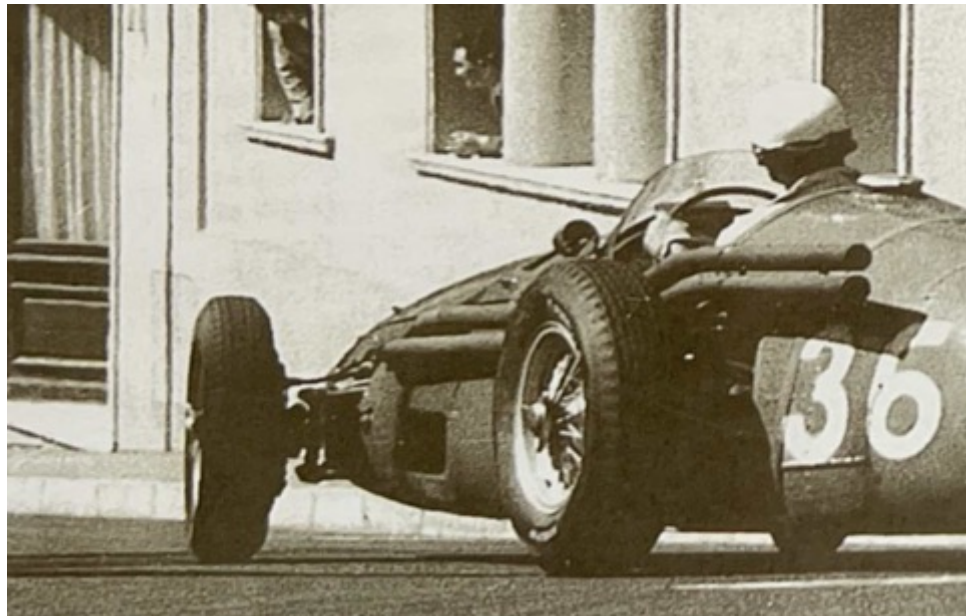
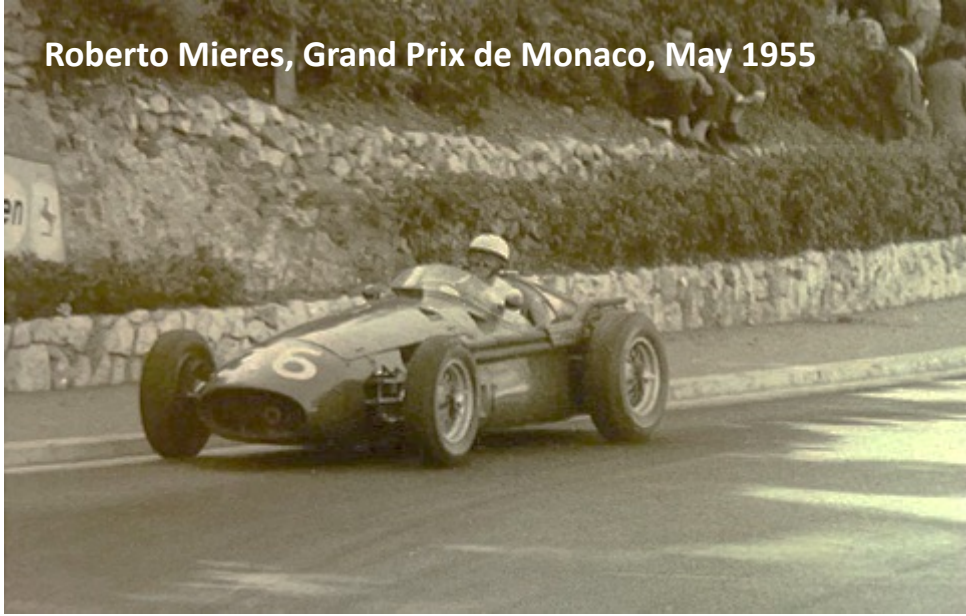
1957 turned out to be the last hurrah for Maserati as the company was drowning under a sea of red ink. Luckily, the Italian government stepped in and placed Maserati under a "Controlled administration" but not so luckily the works racing team was disbanded. Except for those cars remaining in private hands, the end of the Maserati 250F in Formula 1 World Championship had arrived.

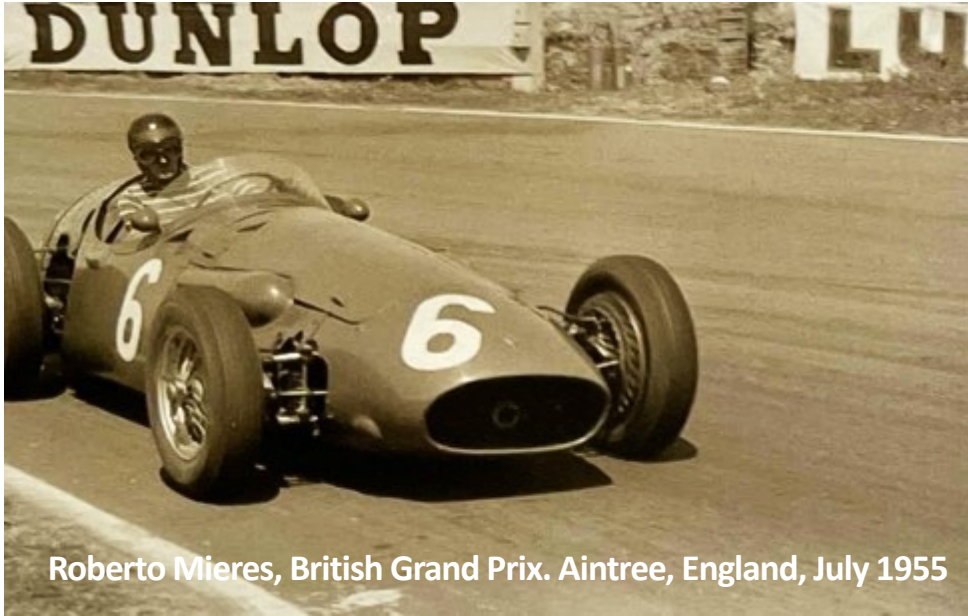




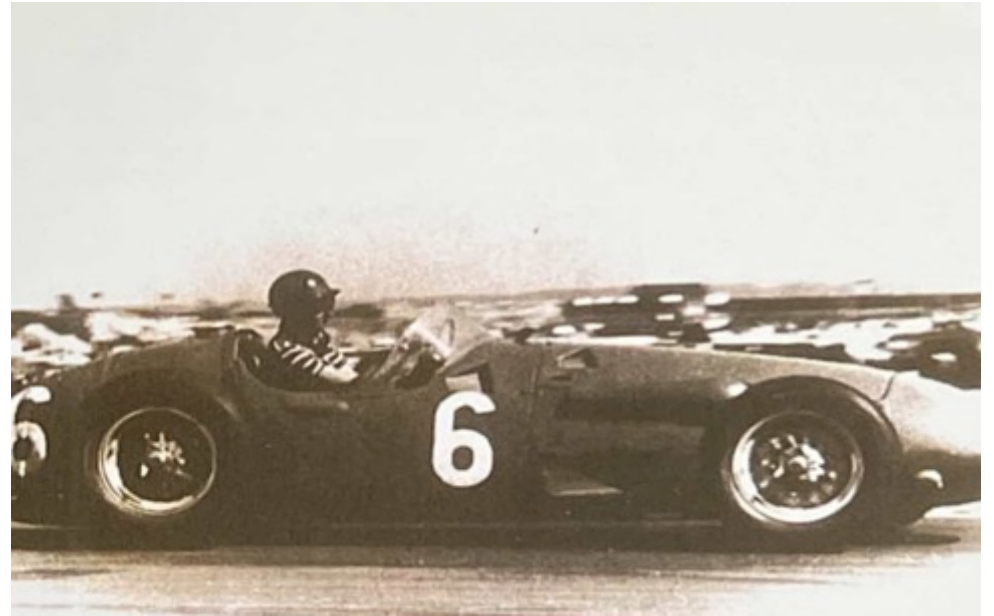
2515 (#16) at the finish line of the 1955 Pau Grand Prix with Roberto Mieres finishing 3rd and standing out as he was smiling at Luigi Musso (#18), finishing 2nd

Roberto Mieres, Grand Prix de Monaco, May 1955





Roberto Mieres, British Grand Prix. Aintree, England, July 1955





Roberto Mieres, GP Bordeaux, 1955



April 1955, Grand Prix de Pau



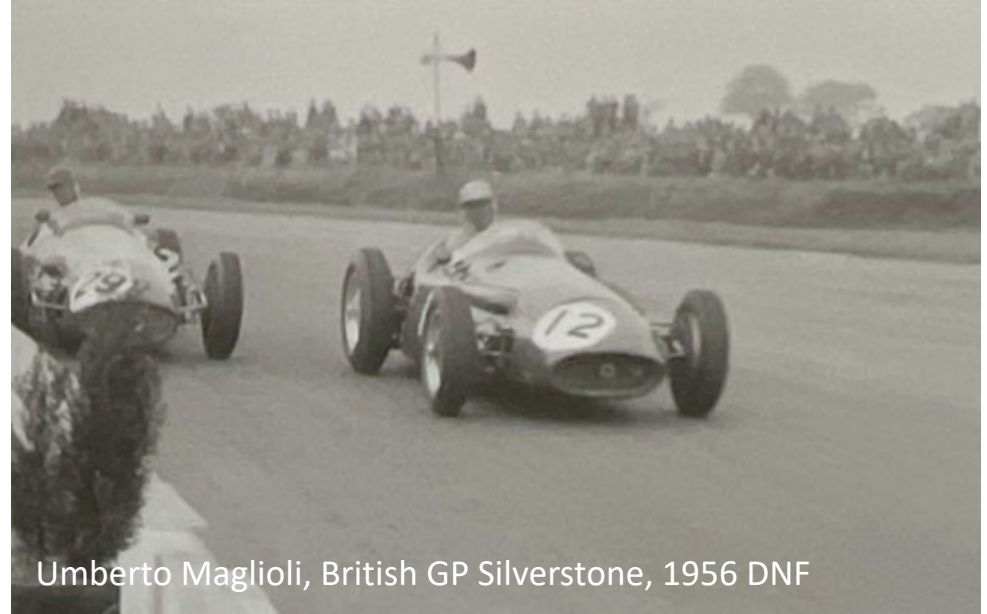
Roberto Mieres, GP Bordeaux, 1955



September 1957, Grand Prix de Monza



Luigi Villoresi, GP Allemand, 1956 DNF



Umberto Maglioli, British GP Silverstone, 1956 DNF

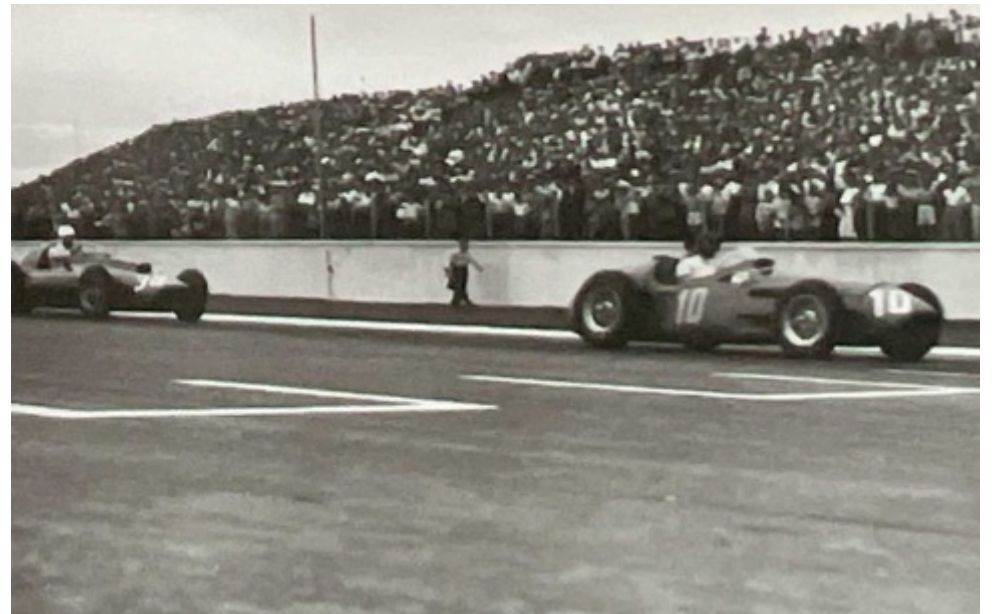
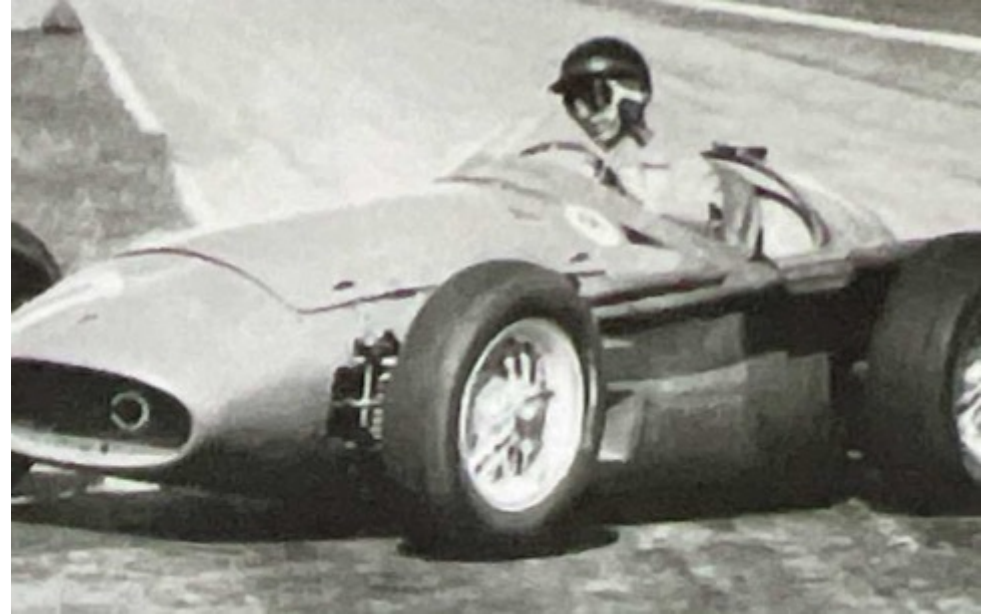


Umberto Maglioli, British GP Silverstone, 1956 DNF



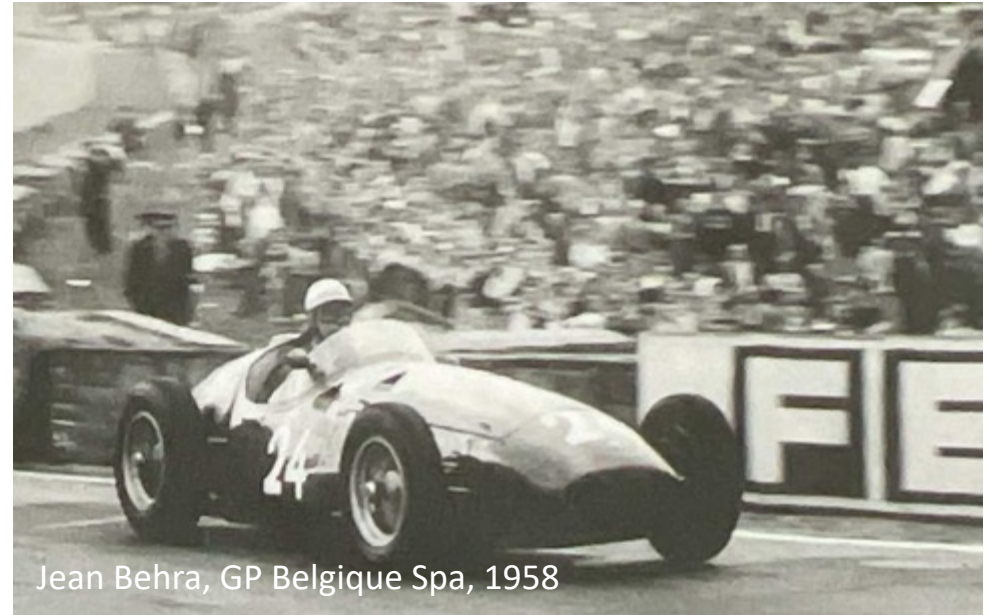
Umberto Maglioli, GP Allemagne, 1956 Practice

Chico Landi, GP Argentina, 1956





Giulio Cabianca, Grand Prix d'Italie, Monza, 1958



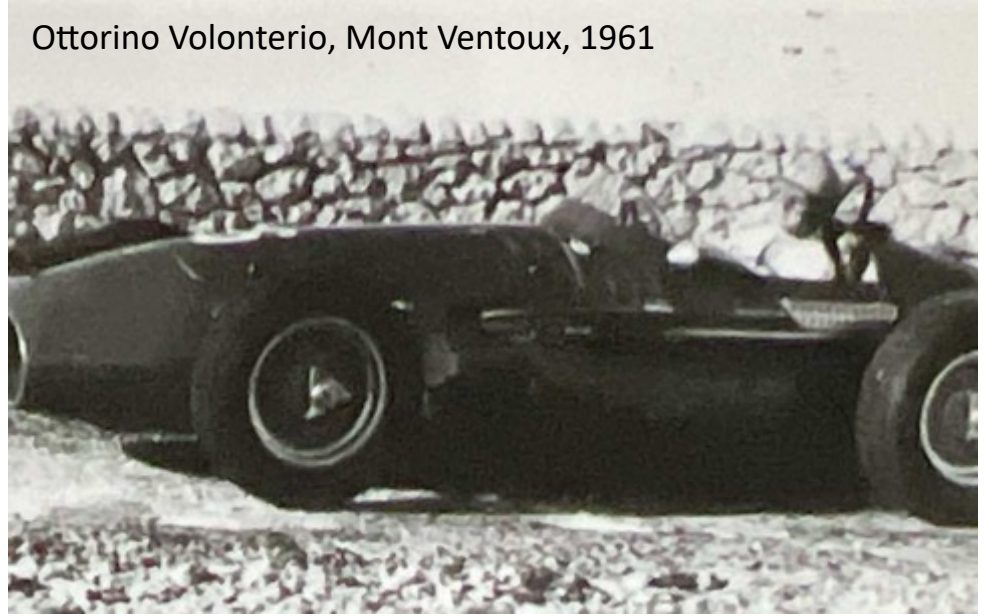
Jean Behra, GP Belgique Spa, 1958



Nino Berni, GP Siracusa, 1958



Sergio Mantovani, GP Argentine, 1955



Ottorino Volonterio, Mont Ventoux, 1961



Ottorino Volonterio, Grand Prix d'Italie, Monza 1957



British Grand Prix. Aintree, England, 1957

CHASSIS 2515

The 250F presented here is chassis 2515, and was manufactured as a factory team car for the 1955 Formula 1 season. Already then the works entries were showing various upgrades from the 1954 cars, which included a bodywork lacking louvres, 5 speed gearbox and wider steel drum brakes.

2515 will be campaigned in no less than twelve Grand Prix during the 1955 season with brilliant highlights including a first place at the International Gold Cup GP in Oulton Park with Stirling Moss at the wheel, as well as two 3rd places during the GP de Bordeaux and Pau with Roberto Mieres.

Other legendary race drivers will take the wheel during that same season including young prodigy Peter Collins, Luigi Musso, Jean Behra, Carroll Shelby.



Jean Behra pushing hard during the 1955 Spa Francorchamps Grand Prix where he would take 2515 to an honourable 4th place finish

1955 Formula 1 World Championship season | Officine Alfieri Maserati

Jan. 16 – 1955	GP de la Republica Argentina	Works entry #20	S. Mantovani / Jean Behra / Luigi Musso S.	DNF (mechanical)
Jan. 30 – 1955	GP de la ciudad de Buenos Aires	Works entry #20	Mantovani / Harry Schell	7th
Mar. 27 – 1955	GP del Valentino - Torino	Works entry #24	Cesare Perdisa / Jean Behra	DNF (rear suspension)
April 11 – 1955	GP de Pau	Works entry #16	Roberto Mieres	3rd
April 24 – 1955	GP de Bordeaux	Works entry #16	Roberto Mieres	3rd
May 8 – 1955	GP di Napoli	Works entry #10	Roberto Mieres	DNF (oil leak)
May 22 - 1955	GP de Monaco	Works entry #36	Roberto Mieres	DNF (rear axle)
June 5 – 1955	GP de Spa Francorchamps	Works entry #24	Jean Behra / Roberto Mieres	5th
June 19 – 1955	GP of Zandvoort	Works entry #16	Roberto Mieres	4th - Fastest lap
July 16 - 1955	GP R.A.C Aintree	Works entry #6	Roberto Mieres	DNF (piston)
Sept. 11 – 1955	GP di Monza	Works entry #32	Peter Collins	DNF (suspension)
Sept. 24 – 1955	Internat. Gold Cup, Oulton Park	Works entry #4	Stirling Moss	1st - Fastest lap
Oct. 23 – 1955	GP di Siracusa	Works entry #28	Carroll Shelby	6th



Factory team driver Roberto Mieres pictured at the wheel of 2515 during the 1955 R.A.C British Grand Prix where he would unfortunately retire with a piston failure after qualifying 6th on the starting grid.



Following the 1955 season, 2515 would then be sold by the Maserati factory to Scuderia Guastalla (owned by Gianfranco Gornacchia, Maserati agent for Northern Italy. Mainly campaigned by Gerino Gerini, notable driver like Jean Behra, Umberto Maglioli and Luigi Villorresi will also take the wheel of 2515. Meanwhile it was owned by Scuderia Guastalla, the car will constantly be maintained by the Maserati factory for repairs & race preparation.

By the end of the season, 2515 received a new 'lightweight' bodywork, as seen on the 1956 works entries.

1956 Formula 1 World Championship season | Scuderia Guastalla

Jan. 22 – 1956	GP de la Republica Argentina	Scuderia Guastalla #10	Gerino Gerini / Francisco	4th
Feb. 5 – 1956	GP de la ciudad de Mendoza	Scuderia Guastalla #20	Landi Francisco Landi	7th
April 15 – 1956	GP di Siracusa	Scuderia Guastalla #2	Jean Behra	Practice
April 15 – 1956	GP di Siracusa	Scuderia Guastalla #2	Gerino Gerini	5th
May 6 – 1956	GP di Napoli	Scuderia Guastalla #8	Gerino Gerini	3rd
July 14 – 1956	GP R.A.C Silverstone	Scuderia Guastalla #12	Umberto Maglioli	DNF (gearbox)
Aug. 5 - 1956	GP Nürburgring	Scuderia Guastalla #17	Umberto Maglioli	Practice
Aug 5 – 1956	GP Nürburgring	Scuderia Guastalla #17	Luigi Villorresi	DNF
Sept. 2 – 1956	GP di Monza	Scuderia Guastalla #42	Gerino Gerini	10th



2515 is here pictured during the 1955 Monaco Grand Prix with Roberto Mieres (#36) on an epic chase with the two Ferrari 625 of Maurice Trintignant (#44) and Giuseppe Farina (#42)

Upon the end of the 1956 Formula 1 season, 2515 was acquired by Count Ottorino Volonterio (from the Scuderia Guastalla) who would carry on using the Maserati factory for the car's maintenance program throughout the next three seasons (1957 / 1958 and 1959). While Gerino Gerini remained the main driver, additional legends such as Maurice Trintignant and Hans Hermann will also campaign 2515 as a Scuderia Centro Sud entry throughout the 1958 season.

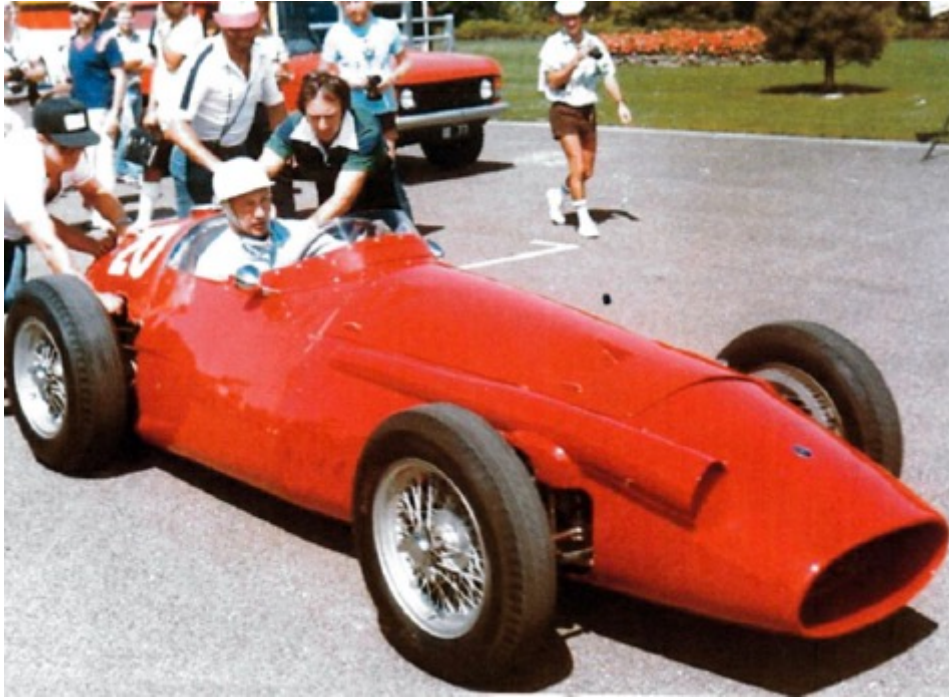
1957, 1958, 1959 Formula 1 World Championship season | Ottorino Volonterio / Scuderia Centro Sud

April 28 – 1957	GP di Napoli	Ottorino Volonterio #?	Ottorino Volonterio	DNF (cyl. Block)
July 14 – 1957	GP de Reims	Ottorino Volonterio #42	Herbert McKay-Fraser	DNS
Sept 8 – 1957	GP di Monza	Ottorino Volonterio #28	Andre Simon / O. Volonterio	11th
May 18 – 1958	GP de Monaco	Andre Testut #56	Andre Testut	DNQ
June 15 – 1958	GP Spa Francorchamps	Scuderia Centro Sud #28	Maurice Trintignant	7th
July 6 – 1958	GP Reims	Scuderia Centro Sud #32	Gerino Gerini	9th
July 19 - 1958	GP R.A.C Silverstone	Scuderia Centro Sud #6	Gerino Gerini	DNF (gearbox)
July 20 – 1958	GP Caen	Scuderia Centro Sud #114	Gerino Gerini	6th
Sept. 7 – 1958	GP di Monza	Joakim Bonnier #24	Hans Hermann	DNF (valve)
Oct. 19 – 1958	GP du Maroc	Scuderia Centro Sud #28	Gerino Gerini	12th
July 18 – 1959	GP R.A.C Aintree	Scuderia Centro Sud #40	Fritz d'Orey	DNF (acc)
Sept. 13 – 1959	GP di Monza	Scuderia Centro Sud #28	Giulio Cabianca	15th

Peter Collins behind the wheel of 2515 during the 1955 Italian Grand Prix at Monza



2515 in the paddock of the 1958 R.A.C. Aintree British GP, entered by Fritz d'Orey



Stirling Moss reunited with 2515 in 1982, just 27 years after taking it to victory at the International Gold Cup at Oulton Park



TOM WHEATCROFT AND THE DONNINGTON MUSEUM

After its last Grand Prix at Monza in 1959, 2515 was sent to the Maserati factory and remain stored while still being the property of Ottorino Volonterio.

Several years later English businessman and car collector Tom Wheatcroft was already on the look for Grand Prix cars for his collection and had planned to purchase a Maserati 250F.

He directly contacted the Maserati factory but all their works entries were already sold to private racing teams years ago as was 2515. The factory therefore recommended Tom Wheatcroft to get in contact with Ottorino Volonterio who had no further plans to use the car and which remained unused ever since the 1959 season.

A very large amount of original correspondence detailing the acquisition of 2515 by Weatcroft from Volonterio accompanies the dossier. In addition, factory letters to Wheatcroft attest the continuous maintenance of 2515 by the works while being campaigned by Scuderia Guastalla and Ottorino Volonterio, as well as its excellent condition.

In 1973 Tom Wheatcroft had created the Donington Grand Prix Collection where 2515 would remain for the next 4 decades before it was acquired by its current owner.

In more recent year, respected Epifani Restorations in Berkeley, California, was chosen to rebuild the engine and drivetrain components without restoring the actual chassis nor bodywork.





OFFICINE ALFIERI MASERATI

SOCIETA' PER AZIONI - SEDE LEGALE IN BOLOGNA - CAPITALE L. 400.000.000 VERS.
AUTOMOBILI

Mr. BERNARD WHEATCROFT
"The Firs" -
Leicester Rd.
WIGSTON FIELDS (Leicester)

England

SEDE AMMINISTRATIVA E STABILIMENTI IN MODENA

VIALE CIRO MENOTTI, 322
Telefoni 30-101/2/3
(con ricerca automatica)
Telegrammi: M A S E R A T I
Casella Postale 310
C/O Postale 8-020
C. C. I. Modena N. 30756
C. C. I. Bologna N. 34059
Codice A B C - 8a Ediz.

VS. RIFERIMENTO	VS. LETTERA	NS. RIFERIMENTO	DATA
		Direz. O. O. gb	2/9/1964

OGGETTO: Maserati 250/F

In risposta alla Sua del 17 Agosto ci spiace comunicarLe che non abbiamo disponibile presso questa fabbrica una vettura 250/F che offriamo.

Le consigliamo tuttavia di prendere contatto con il Conte OTTORINO VOLONTERIO, Villa Monte Ponticone, Puianello, Reggio Emilia, possessore di una Maserati 250/F recentemente revisionata a questa Casa, il quale può essere interessato alla Vostra proposta.

Grazie distinti saluti.-

OFFICINE ALFIERI MASERATI S.p.A.
L'Amministrazione Delegata

Re: Maserati 250/F

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of August 17 we regret to inform you that we are not in a position to offer you one of our 250/F models as we do not dispose of these cars.

We would however suggest you contact Earl OTTORINO VOLONTERIO, Villa Monte Ponticone, Puianello, Reggio Emilia, owner of a Maserati 250/F recently re-conditioned in this factory and in very good conditions. He may be interested in your offer.

Very truly yours



OFFICINE ALFIERI-MASERATI

MODENA (Italia)
VIALE CIRO MENOTTI, 322

1° 30-101/2/3
via Postale 310

Telegr. MASERATI
Codice A. 6° Ediz.

Messrs
BERNARD WHEATCROFT LTD.
"The Firs", Leicester Rd.
Wigston Fields
LEICESTER
England

RIFERIMENTO	VS. LETTERA DEL	NS. RIFERIMENTO	DATA
		Direz. O. O. /gl	13/1/65

OGGETTO: Maserati 250/F

Abbiamo ricevuto la Vs. del 8/1 di cui Vi ringraziamo.

In merito al suo contenuto Vi precisiamo che la vettura appartenne alla Scuderia Maserati e che nel 1957 fu venduta al Sig. Ottorino Volonterio in ottime condizioni dopo essere stata completamente revisionata. La vettura è ancora oggi in ottime condizioni dato che è sempre stata presso di noi ogniqualvolta ha avuto bisogno di riparazioni e messe a punto.

Il numero di tale vettura è 2515.

Certi che quanto sopra sarà di Vs. gradimento, porgiamo distinti saluti.

Dear Sirs,

Thank for your letter dated January 8, 1965.

About its contents we inform you that the car you have recently bought from Mr. Ottorino Volonterio belonged to "Maserati Racing Team" and was sold to Mr. Ottorino Volonterio in 1957 in very good condition having been completely overhauled. The car is still now in very good condition because it was always here in our works as often as overhauling and repairing were needed. The number of the car is 2515.

Sure the above is satisfactory to you, we remain,

Yours faithfully,

The Royal Automobile Club

RAC House, Lansdowne Road, Croydon

ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:
RAC TOURING SERVICES
 P.O. Box 92
 Cross Road,
 Croydon, Surrey



Telephone: MUNicipal 2525
 Telegrams: RACLUSEAN, CROYDON, TELEX
 TELEX 31418

PT/OA/MSG/JPB

8th January, 1965.

F.B. Wheatcroft, Esq.,
 Bernard Wheatcroft Ltd.,
 "The Firs", Leicester Road,
 Wigston Fields,
 Leicester.

Dear Sir,

Further to our telephone conversation of yesterday's date, I enclose the relevant forms in connection with the importation of your 250F Maserati.

You mentioned that you would be collecting the vehicle from the Continent and bringing it over by trailer, and for the trailer a carnet will be required. Application form for same is enclosed.

Regarding the actual importation, the necessary entry forms are included and it would be much appreciated if you could let me have full details of the vehicle i.e. engine & chassis numbers, cubic capacity, and approximate value, so that we can get a fairly accurate assessment from Customs. I am already intouch with them to obtain a figure and am expecting them to contact me next week.

I shall communicate this figure to you as soon as I receive it so that we can make the necessary arrangements for payment of charges at the Port when you arrive.

If I can be of further assistance please let me know.

Yours faithfully,

J.C. RIGBY

p.p. Manager, Foreign Touring Department

(S. Piercy)
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C/C Postale 8-4009

C. C. I. Modena N. 30256

C. C. I. Bologna N. 34056

Codice A.B.C. - 6a Ediz.

Mr.
FREDERICK BERNARD WHEATCROFT
The First Leicester Rd.
WIGSTON - LEICESTER (England)

SALDO/ACCANTO VS. ORDINE NS. ACCETTAZIONE AVV. SPEDIZIONE DATA FATTURA
 2848 7.9.67

OGGETTO: FATTURA N. 3586

MERCE RESA ns. Officine Modena IMBALLO
 MEZZO ED INDIRIZZO DI SPEDIZIONE proprio
 PAGAMENTO alla consegna

OFFICINE ALFIERI MASERATI S.p.A.
 IL PRESIDENTE

Materiale per vettura 250/F			
1	Canna grezza	L.	4.800=
1	Biella	"	20.000=
1	Pistone ø 84	"	14.500=
6	Valvole aspirazione	" 5.000=	30.000=
6	Valvole scarico	" 5.000=	30.000=
12	Molle	" 1.500=	18.000=
12	Molle	" 1.500=	18.000=
12	Molle	" 1.500=	18.000=
2	Segmenti ø 84,10	" 250=	500=
1	" "	"	560=
1	" "	"	240=
2	mt. gommino	" 300=	600=
4	Gommini	" 100=	400=
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15	"	" 100=	1.500=
6	"	" 100=	600=
4	Guarnizioni	" 100=	400=
		L.	160.000=
		I.G.E. 4%	6.400=
		L.	166.400=

L'imposta sull'Entrata è stata versata a favore del 1° Ufficio Imposta Generale Entrata di Roma sul c/c n.º 51940 con posteggio N.º 13102 del 3/9/64

PER QUANTANZA
 OFFICINE ALFIERI MASERATI S.p.A.
 ALFIERI MASERATI

La fattura di cui è oggetto la presente fattura è eseguita alle condizioni generali e particolari già a voi note e specificate nella nostra accettazione d'ordine sopra citata.



The Maserati 250F

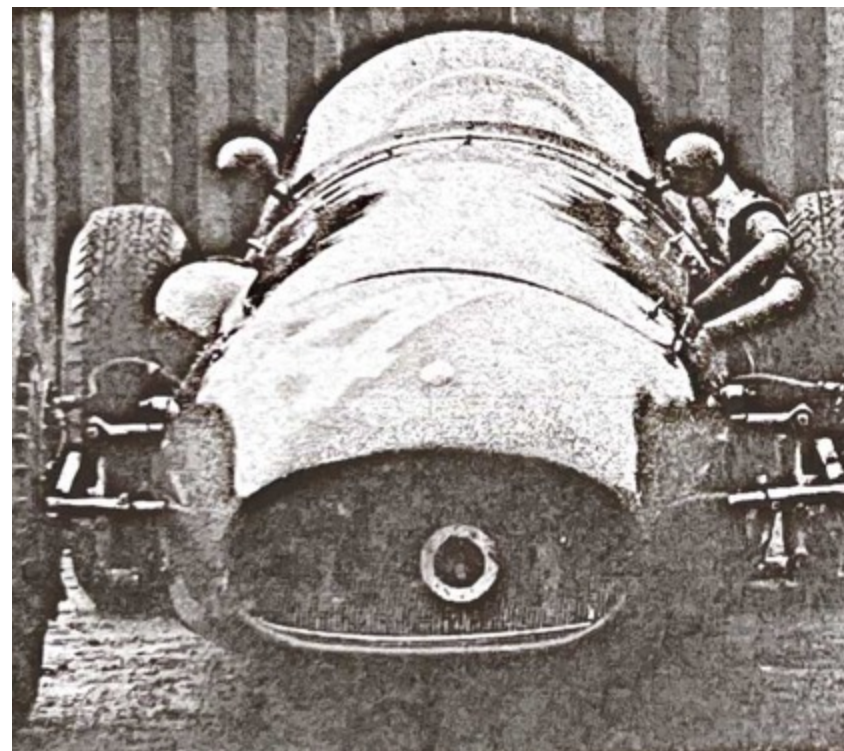
Excerpt from the book by David McKinney

Not a 250F Year – The 1955 Season

Maserati went into the 1955 racing season in a seriously disadvantaged position. The team faced not only the prospect of being unable to match Mercedes and Lancia, but was also in danger of being overtaken by Ferrari. Solutions were sought in the provision of more power, with a redesigned cylinder head coming off the drawing board and experiments being carried out with fuel injection.

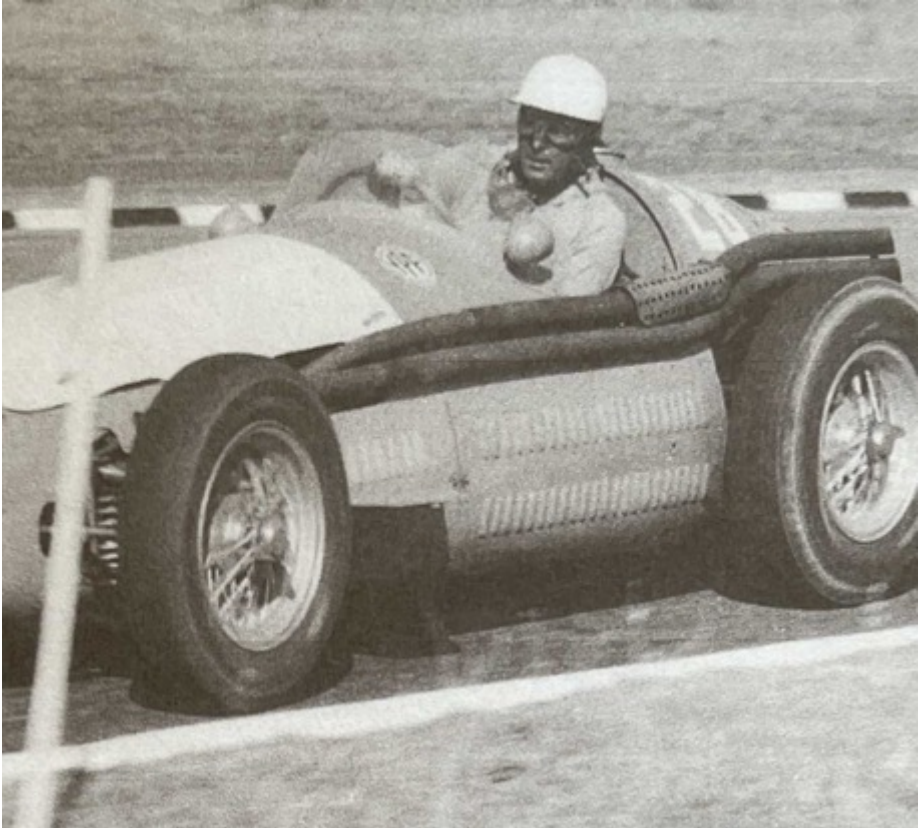
There was also a problem in securing the services of a suitable Number One driver, for Maserati lost its best man when Moss signed to join Fangio at Mercedes for the new season. Musso, Mieres and Mantovani were more than competent, but none was yet a star, and so the factory put its faith in Gordini ace Jean Behra as leader of the 1955 team.

At least there seemed no problem with availability of hardware. In addition to 2501, the new car that Godia had raced in Spain at the end of 1954, the factory also built two more new cars, 2515 and 2516, to the same smooth-bodied specification. In addition, 2512 and 2514 were retained, and would be updated as the season progressed, as would 2511, which had been absorbed into the team the previous year.



The body shape of 1955 cars was similar to earlier models, but louvres were no longer considered necessary.

(Ferret Fotografics)



Harry Schell in his privately owned ex-works car during the 1955 Argentine Grand Prix. He switched from Maseratis soon afterwards, but would return. (*Ferret Fotografics*)

As the year started, the same private owners who had run 250Fs in 1954 announced their intention of continuing in 1955, apart of course from Mieres and Mantovani, who were now fully fledged works drivers. Schell, Bira and Rosier all had their familiar mounts, as did British owners Gilby Engineering, the Owen Organisation and Stirling Moss. The Gilby car would again be handled by Roy Salvadori, while Owen's driver this year was up-and-coming twenty-three-year-old Peter Collins. Moss meanwhile retained his car for events that Mercedes was not contesting, and would otherwise make it available to guest drivers on a race-by-race basis. Over the winter it was equipped with disc wheels and brakes like those on the Owen car.

Argentine Grand Prix

The World Championship again opened in South America, but a 250F raced – and won – before this, when Bira took his private car to victory in the *formule libre* New Zealand Grand Prix on the Ardmore airfield circuit on 8 January. He won his preliminary heat, started the final from pole position, led the 400km (250-mile) race from start to finish, and set a new lap record of 1min 29.5sec.

Prince Bira also entered his car for an Australian race, the South Pacific Championship at Orange in New South Wales, at the end of the month, but it put a con-rod through the block after only two laps of practice and was unable to race. The factory sent no fewer than six cars to South America for the 16 January Argentine Grand Prix, and in addition was also looking after Schell's private car. Local drivers Clemar Bucci and Carlos Menditeguy, both of whom had raced Maseratis in the past, were brought on to the side for the occasion.

In practice, Behra (2516) and Schell (2505) were, perhaps not surprisingly, the fastest team drivers, the Frenchman setting fourth-fastest time behind González (Ferrari), Fangio (Mercedes) and Ascari (Lancia), with Schell qualifying seventh, but the other five cars were much slower.

Two of the works Maseratis were out of the race almost before it started. There was a collision between Behra's car and Kling's Mercedes, and then two other cars, including Menditeguy's 250F (2511), piled in. All four were out there and then.

The other Maseratis continued, however, and by lap ten Schell was in fifth place. Mantovani had stopped to hand his car (2515) over to Behra, and within another dozen

laps the Frenchman was up to seventh.

The heat was almost unbearable and the drivers, one by one, stopped at the pits for refreshment or relief. On lap 31 Musso (2501) came in, slumped over his steering wheel, and Mantovani was sent out in his place. As the others struck trouble Schell's position improved, and he was up to second – with only Fangio ahead – when on lap 35 he, too, succumbed to the conditions. He rejoined, in fifth place, after a three-minute rest and a cool drink, and before long was back up to second. And when Fangio stopped for refreshment, the Maserati was in the lead, with Mieres (2514) running strongly in fourth.

Fangio wasted little time in getting back to the front, but at half-distance in the ninety-sixth lap Schell was still second, with Mieres now third. Behra was seventh in the car already driven by Musso and Mantovani, but handed it back before long, and was thus in a position to give Schell a rest when the plucky Franco-American finally gave up. The blue and white car, the best placed of the Maseratis, unfortunately lost ground with a mechanical problem before the race was over, while Bucci, whose car (2512) was also driven by Schell and Menditeguy, was soon out of the race altogether.

Mieres, the only driver apart from Fangio to complete the race single-handedly, finally crossed the line in fifth place, five laps behind the winning Mercedes, but well clear of the Schell/Behra and Musso/Mantovani/Schell Maseratis.

The team was in action again two weeks later, in the two-part formule libre Buenos Aires City GP, but was outrun by both Mercedes and Ferrari in the first race, both of these teams using cars with 3-litre sportscar engines. In the second race, however, Menditeguy held a strong third place for several laps, and after he fell back Schell, who had taken over Mantovani's car, engaged Behra in a good tussle for fourth place, eventually finishing ahead. On the combined results of both races Behra was classified fifth, with Menditeguy, Schell and Mantovani in the next places. The car allocation for this race appears to have been the same as in the earlier Argentine event.

The European Season Begins

After his fine performances in the Argentine races, on top of his brilliant 1954 Spanish GP, Schell might have been expected to be offered a place on the factory team for the European season, but instead he joined Ferrari (and later in the year switched to the British Vanwall team).

Mercedes was not present for the first European F1 race of the year, the 380km (235-mile) Turin Grand Prix on 27 March, but Lancia and Ferrari were. Maserati countered by bringing five cars, and giving promising twenty-three-year-old sports-car driver Cesare Perdisa a try-out for the team in practice. Ascari was fastest qualifier, but Behra (2516) and the impressive Musso (2501) were next, and shared the front row of the grid with the Lancia. Mieres (2514) qualified fifth, but Perdisa (2515) was a somewhat outclassed tenth and Mantovani crashed the spare car (2512). He was seriously injured, and had to have one leg amputated at the knee, thus effectively ending his career.

There were enough Maseratis at the front of the grid to gang up on Ascari at the start of the race, and Musso, Mieres and Behra shot into the first three places. By the time the Lancia driver had fought his way to second, on lap 10, Musso was well clear.

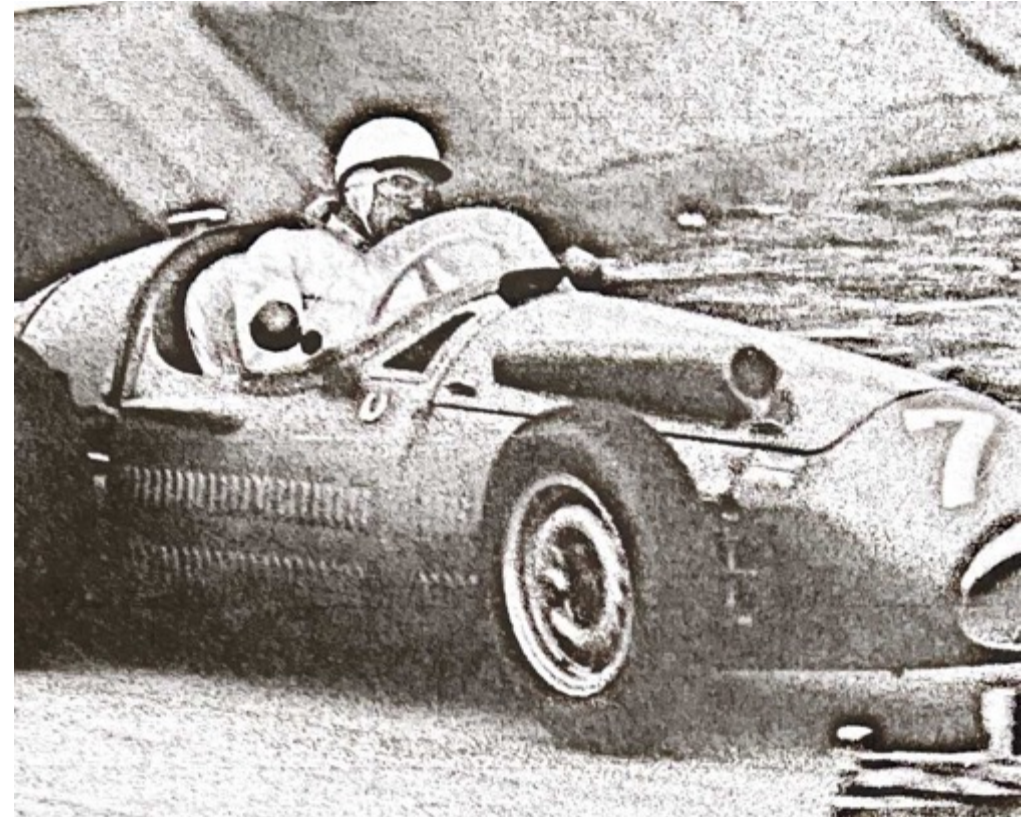
Two laps later Maserati lost two of its cars, Behra, who was still third, and Perdisa, from ninth, both succumbing to broken De Dion tubes.

It took Ascari until lap 21 to latch on to Musso's tail, at which point the leading Maserati spun and retired with a broken oil line.

Ascari kept going to win for Lancia, with Mieres less than half a minute back after a fine drive. Two private cars had started, Rosier (2506) finishing a distant sixth, but Bira, who came home ninth after a very long stop, was not classified as an official finisher.

This had been a good showing, but the Maseratis clearly could not match the Lancias on equal terms. The racing department there fore set to and produced a new big-valve cylinder head, fed by larger carburetors, in an effort to bridge the gap. This was fitted to the engine of Behra's car, 2516, for the 11 April Pau Grand Prix. He was joined for this race by Mieres in 2515 and Musso in 2501; all three would stick with these particular cars for most of the rest of the season, leaving 2512 awaiting repairs after its Turin crash, with both 2511 and 2514 available as back-up if required, or for sale.

Ascari and Behra again set the two fastest times in practice at Pau, with Mieres this time third, and Musso down in sixth place, behind Villorosi and Castellotti in the other Lancias. Rosier was tenth in the sixteen-car field, his time equalled by a second blue Maserati, for Gordini team stalwart André Simon had bought 2505 from Schell, and was racing it here for the first time.



Moss had now left the Maserati team, but continued to run his car privately, including this event at Goodwood. The structure on the engine cover hides the experimental fuel-injection system. (Ferret Photographics)



The line-up of cars with new louvreless bodywork. The car on the left is 2501, which first appeared in this form at the end of 1954; the other is 2515, one of the new cars for 1955. (*Ferret Fotografics*)

British Grand Prix

The cancellation of the French Grand Prix meant that the next big event was the 435km (270-mile) British round on 16 July. A fourth works car was again brought here for Perdica, but he was dropped by the team after his mediocre showing at Spa and the entry was taken over by 250F privateer André Simon. All four British-based 250Fs were also present.

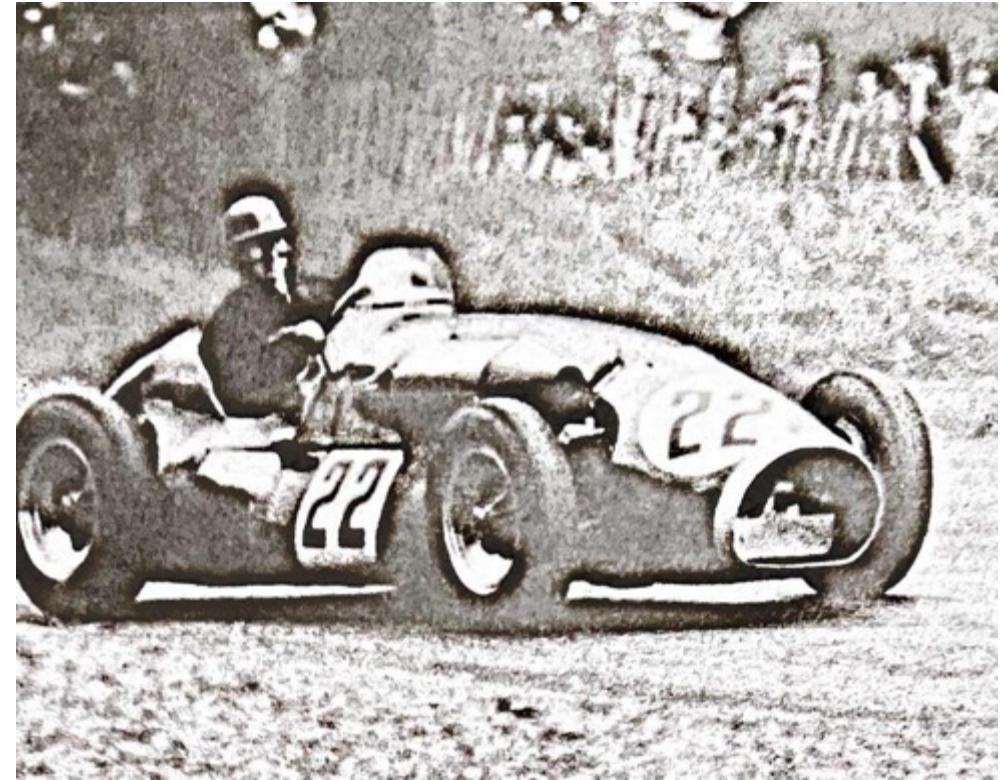
This year's race was held not at its traditional Silverstone home but on the northern Aintree circuit, where Behra was in great form, qualifying third fastest, behind the two fastest Mercedes entries but ahead of the other two. Mieres was sixth, Simon eighth and Musso ninth. The regular works trio were in their usual cars, among which Mieres's had been equipped with an experimental five-speed gearbox; Behra tried 2514 in practice but Simon drove it in the race. The local cars all started from the back half of the grid. Macklin, having another outing in 2508, started from sixteenth place, Salvadori twentieth, Gould twenty-second and Collins twenty-fourth.

Two other factory cars, 2501 and 2516, now had the five-speed gearbox earlier seen on 2515, and all three appeared at Monza with new brakes and a single exhaust pipe instead of the earlier two, with other detail improvements as well.

On the driving front, the regular works trio was joined by young Collins, invited to join the team in recognition of his impressive drives in England, and Menditeguy, who had of course driven for Maserati in Argentina.

Mieres qualified seventh, with Musso and Collins a few places behind and Menditeguy further back again, though the pre-race withdrawal of the two Lancias, which had now been turned over to Scuderia Ferrari, moved Mieres up the grid one place and his teammates two. With Behra in the streamliner, Mieres had taken over the Number One car (2516) for this race, Collins getting Mieres's usual car (2515) and Menditeguy the car that Perdisa had used at Monte Carlo and Spa (now numbered 2511 again). Musso stuck with his regular mount (2501).

Surprisingly, perhaps, only two private 250Fs started, American sports car ace John Fitch in the Moss car and Gould, who was again driving the factory-owned car (2514). They started from the back of the grid.



Moss rejoined Maserati in time to win the Oulton Park Gold Cup race in a works car at the end of the season. Here, he acknowledges the driver of a slower car he has lapped.

(David Hodges Collection)



The start was a ragged affair, from which Mieres emerged in seventh place with Collins ninth. Menditeguy and Musso were in the back half of the field, but the Italian driver immediately set about making up places. After five laps Mieres was still seventh, but Musso was now eighth and Collins tenth. Within another three laps Collins had dropped to the tail of the field after a stop. He rejoined, but went out with gearbox trouble before the race was one-quarter run.

Mieres had meanwhile lost six places with an early stop, but had reached seventh again after thirty laps, with his countryman Menditeguy two places further back, but after an eventful race Menditeguy took fifth place with Mieres seventh.

Among the private entries, Gould had got himself into the top ten early on, with Fitch a few places further back, but the Englishman went out with a holed sump. The attrition rate allowed the American to take ninth at the end.

The Season Winds Down

The championship season now over, the factory sent two cars to England for the 260km (161-mile) Oulton Park Gold Cup race two weeks after Monza, in the names of Behra and Musso. In the intervening period, however, the Frenchman was injured in a crash in the Tourist Trophy sports car race, but happily Stirling Moss was able to rejoin his old team for Oulton Park.

There was stiff opposition from a pair of Lancias, which Ferrari had sent over for Hawthorn and Castellotti. Indeed, Hawthorn was fastest in practice, but Moss and Musso were next and, once the race got under way, held the first two places. Moss was in complete control all race, and Musso looked equally secure in second until his gearbox gave out five laps from the end. Moss took the flag more than a minute in front of Hawthorn. The winning car was 2515, though it carried 2516 identification for this race.

Gould was in 2514 again for this race, but was an early retirement with engine trouble. Salvadori in the green Gilby car meanwhile circulated calmly for a final fifth.

A notable feature of this race had been the encouraging form showed by the emerging British makes, BRM, Vanwall and Connaught. One of these, Schell's Vanwall, led from start to finish the 162km (101-mile) F1 Avon Trophy race at the British national meeting at Castle Combe on 1 October. Collins, making one of his rare appearances in the Owen Maserati, retired from second place, but Gould was there to take it over, finishing with only the Vanwall ahead. Salvadori had hurt himself in another event but took sixth, Rosier having retired.

Small-car exponent Les Leston had been entered in some of these races in 2508, without getting to race, but finally got a start in the 60km (37-mile) libre race at this meeting, finishing in fourth place.

Salvadori had had another busy – and successful – season in smaller British events. He secured first place in the F1 race at the Easter Goodwood meeting and also in less important libre races at Ibsley and Snetterton, and in two even smaller events. He also notched up a second place and a third. As work on the new BRM neared completion, the Owen Organisation raced only occasionally at this level, but Collins won the poorly supported London Trophy libre race at Crystal Palace in May.

The works team was out in full strength for the last Continental race of the year, the 388km (241-mile) Syracuse Grand Prix in Sicily on 23 October. It had been thought that one at least of the five factory entries might be using fuel injection, for further experiments had been carried out, but all were fitted with carburettors. All also reverted to twin exhaust-pipe configuration.



Amelia Island 2014





2014 at Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance class N-1





250F in Bill Pope's Scottsdale Automotive Museum





Retromobile Paris 2019 on loan by Bill Pope



2020 at Retromobile Paris



Rolex Revival Réunion at Laguna Seca 2023





2024 Monaco Grand Prix Historique





Maserati 250F – THE CARS

Excerpt from the book by Walter
Bäumer & Jean-François Blachette

2515

Completed: December 1954

Chassis: Factory car

Engine: 2515

Color: Red.

Eleventh of the series, built as a factory car, #2515 with a sleek bodywork was part of the Maserati equipe that was shipped in December 1954 for the 1955 Formula 1 season opener in Buenos Aires, the Argentine GP on January 16. Because of the heat, the new car was locally modified with roughly cut aluminum stone-flaps and a strange air scoop on the front right side. Italian driver Sergio Mantovani was entered by the factory for that race. He practiced the car not better than on nineteenth position on the grid against strong opposition from Ferrari, Lancia, Mercedes-Benz and his own teammates Jean Behra, Harry Schell and local hero Carlos Menditéguy.

On race day, Luigi Musso, who was driving another factory 250F, was out of the race. Due to the terrible heat, Mantovani needed a rest and stopped in the pits. He handed over his car to Musso to continue the race. Factory driver Jean Behra had started in #2516 but on lap 3 need to retire his car with a split in its fuel tank. Musso came in and Behra took over and jumped behind the wheel of #2515. The fearless Frenchman overtook several other cars, making it up to seventh position but his car ran out of fuel and left on lap 56 of the total 96 laps.



The first outing of #2515 was at the Argentine GP in January 1955. The car was in the hands of Italian driver Sergio Mantovani. Note the additional air intakes just in front of the engine bonnet and the unpainted panel that had been mounted on both sides of the front of the car. (Klemantaski Collection)

Mantovani, partnered by American but Paris resident Harry Schell made it better in Heat 1 of the Buenos Aires GP on January 30, 1955, when they finished in eleventh overall position. In Heat 2, he again forwarded #2515 after some laps to Harry Schell who could not race in his 250F after mechanical problems occurred in Heat 1 which could not be repaired on short notice for Heat 2.

The American made it good with #2515 and finished fourth overall. The aggregate result of both heats shows #2515 in seventh position.

The car was shipped back to Italy and was prepared by Maserati for the Turin GP on March 27, 1955, held over 90 laps in the Valentino Park of that industrial metropolis in Northern Italy. Sergio Mantovani and Cesare Perdisa both practiced the car but, in the race, it was driven by Cesare Perdisa who handed over the car to Jean Behra who had retired the sister car #2516. In his first lap in #2515, the French ace broke and Behra was out of the race.

Argentine racer Roberto Mieres was sitting in the repaired #2515 on the public streets of the Pau GP on April 11. After 304 km of the race, he finished successfully in third position behind winner Jean Behra in #2516 and Eugenio Castellotti in his Lancia D50. After 302 km of race, Mieres repeated his result with #2515 on April 24, in the

Bordeaux GP in France where Behra was again the winner in #2516 and with Musso second in #2501. The Argentine had bad luck after qualifying in second row in the Naples GP on the Posillipo circuit on May 8, when the oil tank on #2515 had a leak and so was out of the race on lap 23, before mid-distance. The car came back to the factory, was refreshed and the old build sheet from 1954 was thrown away and a new one was issued on May 16, 1955.

The next race was on the Mediterranean and Mieres was back in #2515 for the prestigious Monaco GP on May 22, 1955, qualified in sixth position on the grid. Halfway into the race the man from Argentina was still driving well and was in fourth position. On lap 65, the rear axle of #2515 failed and Mieres was out.

Jean Behra was driving the sister car #2516 in the Belgian GP in Spa-Francorchamps on June 5, 1955. In his third lap, he spun off his car into La Source corner and the car was much damaged. The pitlane is not far away and Behra was running back to his team. Mieres in #2515 was called in and Behra took over the car. At the end, Mercedes-Benz won with a dominant one-two ahead of Giuseppe Farina in a Ferrari 555. Local hero Paul Frère secured fourth place in another Ferrari 555 and Behra crossed the



Two weeks later, it first rained at the start of the Buenos Aires GP, a formule libre race. Mantovani powered his #2515 through the water on the track. (Klemantaski Collection)

finish line in fifth place in #2515 after 35 laps.

The factory car #2515 with carburetor bulge added Monza for a test session on June 15, 1955, with Jean Behra before the Dutch GP on June 19 where it was again driven by Mieres who was in great form, took the fastest lap and was attacking Behra, overtaking him on lap 50. While Fangio and Moss reduced their speed in their Mercedes-Benz and drove a one-two to the finish in a controlled manner, Mieres finished fourth overall behind Musso who was in #2501.

The Maserati team with four cars crossed the channel and was ready for the British GP at Aintree on July 16. Again, Roberto Mieres was behind the wheel of his #2515, which had been updated with an experimental 5-speed gearbox. His start from sixth position was excellent and at the end of the opening lap he was in third position. His #2515 was in trouble when an oil pipe broke on lap 48, causing a sudden piston in the engine and that was the end of Mieres in that race.

Jean Behra tested both #2515 and the sister car #2516 in Monza late in August 1955. The former car, now fitted with bigger brakes, came into action in the Italian GP in



When back in Europe, #2515 was prepared for Roberto Mieres in a local garage near the 1955 Grand Prix in Pau. In the back is #2501 for Luigi Musso. (Fonds Charles Montagne, Dépt. des Pyrénées-Atlantiques)



Jean Behra always loved to be photographed. Here he smiles next to Roberto Mieres's #2515 in Monaco in 1955. (Archives J.P. Bompuguet/Ph. Vidal)



Behra with #2515 in the banking at Monza. This circuit near Milan was fast and its banking was bumpy. (Klemantaski Collection)



British driver and future Ferrari ace Peter Collins was driving in the 1955 Italian GP at Monza when the bumpy banking damaged the car's rear suspension after 22 laps. (Klemantaski Collection)



In September 1955, the car was fitted with engine 2516 and labeled to that chassis number. With this identity, it was in the United Kingdom for the Gold Cup race at Oulton Park, where ambitious Guerino Bertocchi discusses the maintenance of the car for driver Stirling Moss with mechanic Arturo Brancalini. (Walter Bäumer Collection)

Monza on September 11. Maserati had invited the young Englishman Peter Collins with Sergio Mantovani as an alternative driver. Starting from the sixth row in the race, Collins stopped at the pits, losing his tenth position, and rejoined but was out after the rear suspension of #2515 caused trouble on lap 23.

For the International Trophy in Oulton Park on September 24, 1955, Jean Behra had been entered with #2516 but did not arrive in the UK as he was still injured during the Tourist Trophy sports car race. Stirling Moss could not use #2516 pedals, so the factory sent #2515 with a #2516 ID for Moss. Luigi Musso practiced the car, but it was Stirling Moss, who had the fastest lap in it in that race and finally crossed the finish line as the winner. After this race, the car was renumbered by the factory back to #2515.

US race "immigrant" Carroll Shelby took out #2515 in the Syracuse GP on October 23, 1955, and qualifying as fourth on the starting grid, he finished in sixth position after 68 laps of driving, but two laps behind the surprising British new driver Tony Brooks, winner in his Connaught.

From December 8 to 12, the car was on the Aerodromo, the home circuit of Maserati and Ferrari in Modena. Maserati had several cars to be tested for Tony

Parravano, the wealthy entrepreneur from California, USA, who had a new Maserati 150S and 300S both tested by Englishmen Mike Hawthorn and Stirling Moss. In that session, Hawthorn, the future Ferrari driver, tried out #2515, and this was the last appearance of #2515 in 1955.

Franco Cornacchia was the major Maserati distributor in Northern Italy, based in Milan. He had driven a Ferrari in Carrera Panamericana and the Targa Florio and had also purchased a 200S and a 300S sports racing car for Maserati. In 1951, he became the founder of Scuderia Guastalla, which was also based in Milan. Barrie Hobkirk assumed that the car had been sold to Cornacchia early in 1956. It is more likely that Guastalla had borrowed the car from Maserati and maintained it at the factory.

As usual, early in the season, all Formula 1 teams were traveling to South America to participate in the Argentine GP in Buenos Aires. The 1956 event was held on January 22 and saw no less than eight cars from Maserati, among them #2515, which was given by Scuderia Guastalla to Brazilian veteran driver Francisco "Chico" Landi.



A mechanic checks #2515 to prepare it for scrutineering in Buenos Aires before the 1956 Argentine GP. The small damage on the upper front lip came during practice and was repaired for race. (Alejo Perez Monsalvo Collection)

After the tragedy in Le Mans in 1955, Mercedes withdrew from racing at the end of that year and, therefore, was not present in Buenos Aires. For that reason, only cars from Italy were standing on the grid in the Argentine capital. When Maserati had nominated Stirling Moss as their No. 1 driver, Luigi Musso had signed with Ferrari.

Practice shows the stunning performance of the Ferrari-Lancia D50, driven by Fangio and Castellotti, and Landi in #2515 was only able to achieve the eleventh position on the grid after qualifying. In the race, he shared the car with the Italian Marquis Gerino Gerini. Both drivers finished successfully in fourth position but six laps behind the winners, Fangio and Musso, who also had shared their Ferrari.

The next venue in Argentina was the Buenos Aires GP in Mendoza on February 5, about 1,000 km away from the capital. Again, Chico Landi was in #2515 and finished in seventh overall position. After the South American campaign, all cars were shipped back to Italy. The next race for #2515 was in the far south of Italy on Sicily for the Syracuse GP on April 15, 1956. Jean Behra practiced in the car that Gerino Gerini would use for the race. He finished in fifth position, three laps behind the winner.

Qualifying in fifth on the starting grid, Gerini had the car again in the Naples GP on May 6 and saw the checkered flag in third overall position. #2515 remained out of use until July 14, when it was in the UK for the British GP in Silverstone, a race of 101 laps. Guastalla had entered Italian driver Umberto Maglioli who qualified far twenty-fourth and retired early on lap 22 with a broken gearbox.

On August 5, 1956, #2515 of Scuderia Guastalla was in the paddock of the Nürburgring for the German GP. Umberto Maglioli and prewar Maserati racer Luigi Villoresi practiced the car. In the race, Maglioli drove a works 250F and left Villoresi driving #2515 until lap 14, when the engine had valve problems, and the prewar ace was out at the North Curve of the daunting circuit and was pushed from the road by the officials.

The engine was repaired, and 3 weeks later, #2515 was entered in an unusual event for a 250F, the Swiss Olon-Villars Hillclimb on August 26, where Gerini gunned the car around corners to the final second position. Only one week later, for the Italian GP in Monza, Gerini practiced #2515 against strong opposition from Ferrari, Vanwall and the 250F of Behra and Moss in sixteenth position. He lost a lot of time on race day and finally came home in a disappointing tenth position.



A cool Chico Landi, the Brazilian race legend, is sitting in the car that was renumbered back to #2515 in the Parc Fermé of the 1956 Argentine GP in Buenos Aires. He drove the car with Gerino Gerini to a good fourth overall position. (Willy Iacona Collection)



Veteran driver Luigi Villorosi prepares for the practice session in the Nürburgring pitlane for the 1956 German GP. Team mate Umberto Maglioli (left) assisted Bertocchi in making adjustments in the cockpit. The gentleman on the right with the camera is Maserati dealer in Rome and Scuderia Centro-Sud owner, Guglielmo "Mimmo" Dei. (Klemantaski Collection)

For the rest of the 1956 season, #2515 was not used again. There was a rumor that the car had been shipped to New Zealand late in 1956 for the International New Zealand Grand Prix, a formule libre race held on January 12, 1957, for driver Benoit Musy, who had died in Monthléry on October 7, 1956, while driving a Maserati 200S. #2515 was never shipped to New Zealand.

Around mid-April 1957, #2515 was standing in the Modena Aerodromo pits for a test with Maserati chief mechanic Bertocchi and a Maserati customer, the Swiss playboy and amateur racer Count Ottorino Volonterio, who was interested in purchasing a 250F, after having raced in 1955 and 1956 with his private A6GCM-Interim (see the chapter on A6GCM-Interim cars).



Luigi Villoresi raced #2515 in the 1956 German GP on the 'Ring until lap 14, when the engine had valve problems. Villoresi stopped the car beside the track, and a marshal and a policeman pushed it away. (Revs Institute)



On the Aerautodromo in Modena, Swiss journalist and 'wheeler-dealer' Hans Tanner sits in the car and gets some information about the car that had received a new more modern coachwork. Future owner Ottorino Volonterio leans on the steering wheel. (Walter Bäumer Collection)



On the Aerautodromo in Modena, Volonterio poses in #2515 that he had purchased from Maserati in the late summer of 1957. Note the white stripe on the red car. (Walter Bäumer Collection)



No woman could withstand Ottorino and his gentle eyes. He had more success with women than on a racetrack and was a friendly, charming man who liked the camera. Here he is in his #2515 before he lent his car to his friend, Giulio Cabianca, for the 1959 Italian GP. (Spitzley/Zagari Archives)



Giulio Cabianca in the Volonterio owned car in the 1958 Italian GP in Monza. Chased by Chris Allison in his Ferrari, Cabianca finished the race far from the podium in fifteenth overall. (Walter Bäumer Collection)

Probably, Swiss journalist and part-time wheeler-dealer Hans Tanner had contacted the factory for Volonterio and hoped to make some money. After the test, Tanner was sitting in the car, posing for the camera.

The deal came through, and Volonterio became the new owner of #2515, which had received new coachwork in the 1957 style, featuring a long white arrow stripe along its red body.

His first outing in the car was in the Naples GP on April 28, 1957 but starting from the last row on the Posillipo circuit, he had to retire the car on lap 4 after water was found in the cylinder head of its engine. Volonterio registered his car in the Reims GP on July 14. He drove it in practice but was unable to qualify for the race. It might be noted that the ACS, the Automobile Club of Switzerland, had refused to give him a driver's license because he was too slow in Grand Prix races. Instead, he obtained an Italian driver's license.

Volonterio entered American Herbert Mackay-Fraser to drive the car. He was killed in one of the supporting races the day before the Reims GP. Subsequently, Umberto Maglioli was entered but failed to show up at the circuit. No race for #2515 that day. Volonterio now seemed to understand that his talent as a race driver was limited.

He took his car to Monza for the Italian GP on September 8, 1957, and had entered André Simon to drive it. The Frenchman qualified at the back of the grid in sixteenth position. On the race day, Simon was partnered by Volonterio and both drivers could not get a better final result than eleventh overall, no less than 15 laps behind the winning Vanwall of Stirling Moss.

It was Volonterio's last race in Formula 1, and he continued racing smaller sports cars. His #2515 was either given back to Maserati S.p.A. to be sold or he resold the car to the factory.

However, the factory archive confirms that Volonterio wrote notes to Maserati S.p.A. in October 1957, and that the car was sold by Maserati S.p.A. to Franco Cornacchia on December 17, 1957.

Then the history of #2515 becomes a bit confusing. It was no longer entered by Cornacchia. But Ottorino Volonterio still had it somehow under control. It was not raced in 1958 and was photographed during a factory overhaul in April 1959, with a long-extended air intake scoop similar to the 1957 factory cars.

The only known appearance in 1959 was the Italian GP on September 13 where it was entered by Volonterio for Giulio Cabianca, a well-known O.S.C.A. sports car driver, who qualified last of the twenty-one starters and could not better finish than last on fifteenth overall position, eight laps behind the winner.

Barrie Hobkirk assumed that the car could have been driven in local hillclimbs during this period. At least three hillclimbs in Switzerland and France have been identified by the authors. On August 28, 1960, Volonterio took his 250F to Switzerland to race it at the Ollon-Villars Hillclimb with race number 40 but finished in one hundred eleventh position...

In 1961, #2515 was still located in the factory. They removed the center stripe, added a roll bar, and shortened the long nose to improve its performance in hillclimbs.

On August 26, 1962, the car was driven in practice by Volonterio in the Ollon-Villars Hillclimb in Switzerland, but he did not qualify for the event.

One year later, on June 23, 1963, Volonterio started on the Mt. Ventoux Hillclimb in France and crashed, breaking a leg and damaging the front of the chassis.



Not being successful on race circuits, Volonterio tried to race hillclimbs. In 1962, he was not competitive and here he is in 1963 at Ollon-Villars where he failed to qualify. (Gérard Barathieu Collection)



Volonterio with his mechanic in a local garage before he tried his luck in the Mt. Ventoux Hillclimb in 1963, but he could not finish the event. (Archives Maurice Louche)

In 1964, the car was repaired by the factory and rebuilt with two sizable rectangular radiator exhaust ducts in the forward bonnet and fitted with 250F 'Piccolo' front brake drums.

Tom Wheatcroft of the UK purchased #2515 in 1965 for his collection located in Donington. #2515 was refurbished by Fergus Preparations in Bourne, UK, under the supervision of Peter Shaw. Wheatcroft drove the car throughout the 1960s until the 1980s in various historic race events, where it was driven by racers Chris Amon, Denis Hulme, Alan Jones, and Stirling Moss.

In 2013, #2515 was sold to a US collector from Scottsdale, Arizona. In 2019, it was presented by a French/German dealer at the Rétromobile show in Paris. In 2020, a US dealer at Rétromobile in Paris, France once again featured the car on a stand.

Tazio

M A G A Z I N E



Slow stories on fast cars
SPRING 2023

7



Tazio

M A G A Z I N E

7
LIMITED
EDITION



Touching The Divine

Maserati 250F

STORY
Johan Dillen

PHOTOGRAPHY
Dirk de Jager

This is it; Driving Nirvana, and we have touched it. Stirling Moss was spot on when he called this 'the nicest handling F1 of its time'. This is the 1955 Maserati 250F, probably the best car you'll ever drive in your life.

A Maserati 250F should figure prominently in your all-time top-ten race cars. It was the most successful F1 of its time, Juan Manuel Fangio drove one to his fifth and final world title. You have the Moss quote and finally, it remained in use long after it had lost its competitive edge. In the latter half of the fifties, it was everybody's darling.

36





Apart from Fangio, the who's who of mid-fifties Formula 1 drove this car

Who's who

And now we are about to find out why. The car that stands in front of us, warmed up and ready to go at the Chambley race track, has nothing but famous names on its drivers' list. Stirling Moss, Jean Behra, Carroll Shelby, Peter Collins, Luigi Musso, Harry Schell, Roberto Mieres,... Apart from Fangio, that's the who's who of mid-fifties Formula 1, all of them having driven the hell out of this Maserati 250F, chassis #2515. By the way, the second part of that famous Stirling Moss quote on the 250F goes like this: 'You could get a pretty good lap time without being that skilful.' So right up my street, then.

It's a big step to get in. Literally. The sides of the 250F are high but the seat is mounted deep inside the car. So, before you drop your legs down you have to step on the cushion. Only then can you slide down and position your legs either side of the big transmission tunnel that houses the clutch and the prop shaft. It reaches all the way up to the seat, forcing you into a wide-legged

driving position, leaving your crown jewels fully exposed should that prop shaft under the seat suddenly break.

Brake on the right

Whilst your left foot only has to worry about operating the clutch, your right foot has a slightly more complex task. Maserati equipped the 250F with the throttle in the middle and the brake pedal on the right 'because that's how one drove powerful Italian cars.' Moss, for one, wasn't convinced and had the set-up replaced by the now common position with the throttle on the right 'because it was like that in other cars.' The 250F classic position is slightly easier when heel-toeing, your heel only having to apply a slightly inwards tip. Only these days, your instinct is the complete opposite. As long as you are firmly on one of the two pedals, it's easy to operate. It becomes slightly trickier after a moment when you were coasting and had no foot on a pedal. Hesitation leads to doubt, and your first instincts lead you to make a poor decision. However, you find yourself adapting surprisingly quickly.

The gear selector is placed low down in a gated shift pattern. As you take your right hand off the wheel, you have to reach a long way down, just above your knee. The gearchange itself is silky smooth. The five-speed gearbox has a dogleg pattern, with first gear requiring a little push down. It is a gear used only for starting and, even then, it is not strictly necessary. The normal starting procedure requires an external starter to turn over the crank. On a cold day, it would take a bit of time to fire up a 250F for the first time. But once it has done a couple of laps to get up to temperature, our crew finds it much easier to just push start the Maserati while keeping it in second gear. There was no shortage of volunteers to push either.

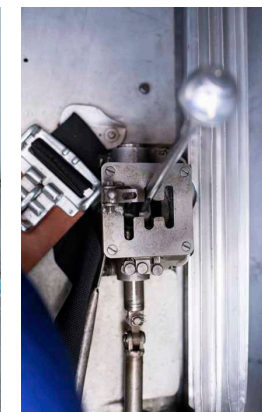
No diva

With the magneto whirring, the engine barks as you let out the clutch. A strong melodic chant fills the exhaust pipes that run by your left ear. The first lap is a cautious one. Fortunately, the 250F immediately instils confidence. Its predictable reaction to your input,

assuring you everything is going to be alright, puts you at ease. Once you get used to the throttle position, you start digging in a bit more. There is no response time, the six-cylinder engine immediately picks up the pace as you ask for more revs. Not just willing, eager. You feel the car has its own will, but it does without the capriciousness of a diva. As you are settling in, the realisation hits you as you start working away on that thin wooden steering wheel, carrying the famous Tridente in the middle: this really is you, commanding the fabled 250F. The names flash before your eyes: Moss, Behra, Collins, Shelby... they all conducted this car before you. It genuinely brings a tear to my eye.

Honestly, never have I felt this much emotion driving a car. It's not just the history, it's the sound and the feeling of fifties motor racing that overwhelms you. You see the streets of Pescara, with the high curbs painted black and white, in front of you. Or the climb towards the bridge after the Virage de la Gare at Pau, where this car shone.

The sound and the feeling of fifties motor racing overwhelms you



Original engine

This 250F still runs the original engine, rebuilt by the previous owner. "On the one hand, that's a huge risk. It would be wiser to get a replacement engine in," says Johannes Jäger at Klassikerschmiede, who takes care of this 250F. "On the other hand, you know that once the original engine goes out, there is little chance it will ever come back in. So for now, since this chassis is not actively raced, we stick with the original engine and keep it in top shape." Here is why we stick, as instructed, to a 6000 rpm max, whereas a works driver was not shy to push the engine north of 8000 rpm. Your typical private owner of a 250F – remember, Moss was one – would push the engine to 7200 – 7400 rpm. The difference: a works engine needed a rebuild every 500 miles, whereas the lesser-stressed engines managed much bigger intervals.

The six-cylinder has a singing, throaty baritone voice from low revs onwards. As the mechanical rev counter clicks past 4000 rpm, it adds volume. It's not so much the power, these engines

were rated at around 240 to 270 hp, depending on the year of development. The torque, however, is supremely impressive as the engine's pull intensifies between 4000 and 6000 rpm.

Don't lock up

Coming off the throttle and hitting the brakes brings the message home: this really is the fifties we are talking about. The drum brakes are – in all fairness – surprisingly adequate, but you need to give them time to get their job done. And you have to be careful with the amount of pressure you apply. You would not want to lock up a wheel of this priceless piece of art. It's here you start to see the difference in driving this calibre of car. You don't need to scrub off all that much speed.

The key is to find a rhythm. This is the moment where the 250F reveals itself to you. And you find out this car is not just automotive jewellery; it is also a precision tool. You feel it when you load up the tyres a bit. A small drift follows inevitably. When executed right, this small drift sets



up the car, and takes away the effort from the steering. You steer it gently on the throttle now. No provocation is necessary to induce this drift, you feel the 250F doing it all by itself. It's in the DNA of this car. In the faster corners, you can keep the car balanced all the way on the throttle all the way through. If you do it right, you feel the steering lighten ever so delicately. You keep your foot in, but you moderate and feel how the rear takes over the steering. It's as delicate as a ballerina tiptoeing through Tchaikovsky. It is, simply, driving perfection.

Finesse

I must admit, I have not experienced anything like this before. The downshift on the gearbox brings another example of this Maserati's finesse. There is no need to double declutch, but you do need to match the revs on the downshift. Not only are the

pedals perfectly set up for this, but you will notice that you can still adjust the amount of throttle as you come down the box. If you need a bit of extra revs, you'll feel how that initial, slight resistance in the lever will disappear the second you add some. The lever smoothly slots into the selected gear. In the fifties, this must have been the perfect race car.

Perfection, however, was not what Maserati had in mind when they produced the 250F. Here you need to be aware of that second part of the Stirling Moss quote: anyone could extract a decent lap time from it. Maserati's goal at the time, more so than Ferrari, was to sell race cars to privateer drivers. Maserati at the time only produced road cars over the winter months, keeping the racing mechanics busy. The company's main source of income was selling race cars.



↓ First Grand Prix, Argentina 1955, brought retirement for chassis 2515, here with Behra behind the wheel. Photo The Klemantaski Archive

New rules

In 1952 and 1953, the Formula 1 championship was run to Formula 2 regulations, with a maximum capacity of 2 litres for naturally-aspirated engines and 750 cc for compressor-type powertrains. For 1954, this was to change to a 2.5-litre formula. For the talented engineer Giulio Alfieri – not to be confused with company founder Alfieri Maserati – the rule change was an opportunity that allowed Maserati to return to the forefront of single-seater racing. Maserati had been good but saw its performance dwindle, at the hands of the rival team in Modena: Ferrari.

For the engine, Maserati further developed the 2-litre A6GCM six-cylinder engine. All aluminium, twin cam head, 42 DCO Weber carburettors, and in 2.5-litre form, easily producing 240 to 250 hp, the engine was a Modenese masterpiece.

At the same time, Alfieri opted for a tubular frame structure, with small-diameter tubes to save weight. Both the ZF limited slip differential and the gearbox – initially a four-speed – were installed at the rear axle. With the engine sitting behind the front axle, the weight distribution was near perfect. Initial testing started in 1953, and after the first, promising results in racing in 1954, Alfieri carried out the first improvements to the 250F; lengthening the wheelbase by 8 centimetres and moving the oil tank to the rear.

Fangio... for a bit

The 1954 season started in Argentina, with plenty of buzz surrounding the return of Mercedes to single-seater racing. Firstly, Fangio had signed up for the German squad. And secondly, Mercedes would only appear from the French Grand Prix onwards, in July.

Until then, Fangio was free to do what he wanted and the Argentinian maestro opted for the new Maserati 250F, one of three Maserati works entries in the first race in Argentina. Two things were clear: Ferrari had the faster car in the dry, but the Maserati was quicker than the Ferrari 625 in the wet. And race day would see rain. Fangio gave the 250F its first victory, with a lead of over one minute over Farina in the Ferrari. One side of Modena had a reason to party.

At Spa, the second race counting for the world championship, Fangio was again in one of three works 250s. Stirling Moss, still a rather unknown driver at the beginning of 1954, had not managed to convince Maserati that he was worth a seat in the works team. So he bought his own 250F. At that moment, it was something no

constructor offered. At that time a privateer could, at best, get his hands on the old racecars as the season ended. At Maserati, however, you could order a brand new, and very promising at that, Formula 1 race car. Something that is unheard of, even to this day. Imagine walking into Red Bull Racing and saying: 'I'll have one of those, and I'll race you next Sunday.'

All hope's on Moss

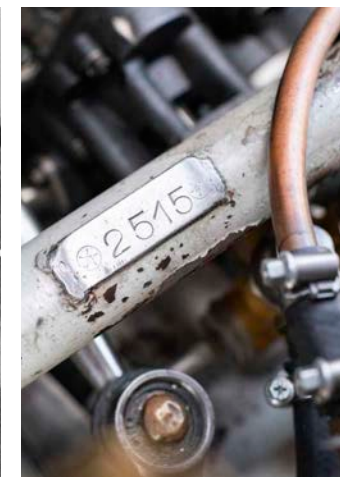
Fangio took victory once more at Spa, with Ferrari's effort dwindling and a remarkable Moss finishing in third spot, the youngster quickly making a name for himself. After that, Fangio moved to Mercedes and stormed to the championship. Maserati opted not to bring their works team to either the French Grand Prix or the British Grand Prix, Alberto Ascari took over the role of lead driver in the Maserati squad. Stirling Moss received an encouraging word from Maserati, instructing him to give all, and that the

factory would take care of the costs if he blew up the engine. Ascari blew not one but two engines, and while Moss was charging towards the front, he lost all drive.

While the 250F was undoubtedly fast, reliability was still an issue. The other races in the championship followed a similar pattern for Maserati. But in many other, non-championship, races the 250F became very much the car to beat, especially if it had Stirling Moss behind the wheel. Moss, 26 at the time, would clock six wins in a 250F entered either by him privately or by the works team.

One of two works cars

For the 1955 season, Maserati introduced wider steel drum brakes, an improved exhaust and the five-speed manual. A new, slick bodywork without louvres on the bonnet also appeared on the works cars. Chassis #2515 was one of just two such works chassis





At Spa, Behra took over #2515 from Mieres and finished fifth



for the 1955 season. Competition was tough, with not just the W196 from Mercedes, but also the D50 from Lancia and the Ferrari 625. Maserati had hoped Moss would sign for them, but he thought Mercedes was a better career prospect. Instead, the impetuous French ace Jean Behra and Luigi Musso became the pillars of the Maserati offensive.

Chassis #2515 was retired from its first race, the Argentinian Grand Prix in 1955, with engine trouble. At the non-championship Grand Prix de Pau, Roberto Mieres drove it to third place, with teammate Behra winning. At the Bordeaux Grand Prix, the Maserati works drivers scored a one-two-three, Mieres again taking third in #2515. Moss, who was allowed to drive other cars in non-championship races, drove his own 250F to fourth. But

apart from Ferrari, the competition was non-existent.

Le Mans drama

At the Monaco Grand Prix, Mercedes, Lancia joined the battle. For a long time, Mieres with #2515 was the best of the Maseratis, until his race ended with axle failure. Next up was the Belgian Grand Prix, on June 5th. By now, Lancia had lost their lead driver Ascari, killed when testing a Ferrari at Monza. Just the one D20 for Castellotti appeared. Mercedes with Fangio and Moss dominated in that order. Behra crashed his car. Later, he would take over #2515 from Mieres and finish fifth, the best of the Maseratis. Just one week later, the drama in which over 80 people lost their lives would unfold at the Le Mans 24 Hours. Mercedes would continue in the remaining Grand Prix races, but quit motorsport at the end of the season.



A win for #2515

#2515, again with Mieres behind the wheel, finished fifth in the Dutch Grand Prix at Zandvoort, whilst managing fastest lap of the race. At the Italian Grand Prix at Monza, Maserati gave another young British talent a chance to shine. Peter Collins lined up in #2515, retiring after 21 laps with gearbox trouble. Stirling Moss took over #2515 in the International Gold Cup as a works entrant. He won the race, with Mike Hawthorn in the now rebadged Ferrari/Lancia D50 coming second. #2515 ended its career as a works car with Carroll Shelby in the Syracuse Grand Prix in Sicily, finishing sixth.

Maserati sold #2515 to the Italian Scuderia Guastala for the 1956 season. A third place at the Gran Premio di Napoli was the car's best result that year. Even in private hands, the factory still took care of this chassis and even updated it with lightweight bodywork towards the end of the season. For

the works team, 1956 had meant the big revival of the 250F. With Stirling Moss now officially leading the team, he would end the championship in second place behind Fangio, who had moved to Ferrari. Moss won the Monaco and Italian Grand Prix.

Fangio's masterpiece

For 1957, Fangio returned to Maserati. By now, Alfieri had further improved the 250F, with the engine now putting out 270 hp. Fangio won the first three Grand Prix of the season and, of course, drove to a sensational win in the German Grand Prix at the Nürburgring, chasing down the Ferraris of Hawthorne and Collins. It became one of motor racing's greatest feats, Fangio breaking the lap record time and again. What turned out to be his last victory in F1 was arguably his greatest. In the 250F, Fangio conquered his fifth world title, a record that remained unbroken until 2003, when Michael Schumacher took his sixth world title.



↑ Roberto Mieres was Argentinian successor to Fangio after he left Maserati. He was out with a broken axle at European GP, Monaco 1955, in 2515. Photos The Klemantaski Archive

← Jean Behra (inset) had crashed and overturned his 250F on lap four of the Belgian GP. He then took over 2515 from Mieres. Photos The Klemantaski Archive



Belgian Grand Prix, Spa, 1958. Maurice Trintignant steers Scuderia Centro Sud-entered 250F to seventh place. Photo The Klemantaski Archive


Had Mercedes and Lancia not left Formula 1 in 1955, the 250F may not have been remembered in the same way as it is now. But this is how history works, and the numbers show that in the days of the 2.5-litre rule in F1, no car performed better than the Maserati 250F.

Donington collection

As far as this car is concerned, chassis #2515 kept going, even if it was no longer competitive. In 1958, the famed Scuderia Centro Sud entered it in different Grand Prix, driven by among other Hans Herrmann and Maurice Trintignant. Its final race was, fittingly, the Italian Grand Prix at Monza, where it finished 15th in the hands of Giulio Cabianca. After that, it was stored at the Maserati factory, at the behest of its owner since 1956, Ottorino Volonterio.

When Tom Wheatcroft, the legendary owner of the Donington circuit in the

UK, went looking for a works 250F, Maserati pointed him towards this chassis. A deal was struck, and for forty years, the car remained in original condition in Wheatcroft's fabulous Donington Grand Prix collection.

Since then, it has only had two further owners, who took great care in keeping this 250F original. Only the engine and the transmission have had a mechanical rebuild in the meantime. I'm savouring this moment, as I steer #2515 back into the pitlane. All I can think of is that Stirling Moss made a mistake. This is not just one of the finest-handling Formula 1 cars of its time. No, it's one of the best ever. Full stop. | 

Our thanks for making this happen: Kurt Engelhorn, Florian Seidel (Carficionado.com), Johannes Jäger (Klassikerschmiede) and the Chambley racetrack (circuit-chambley.fr)





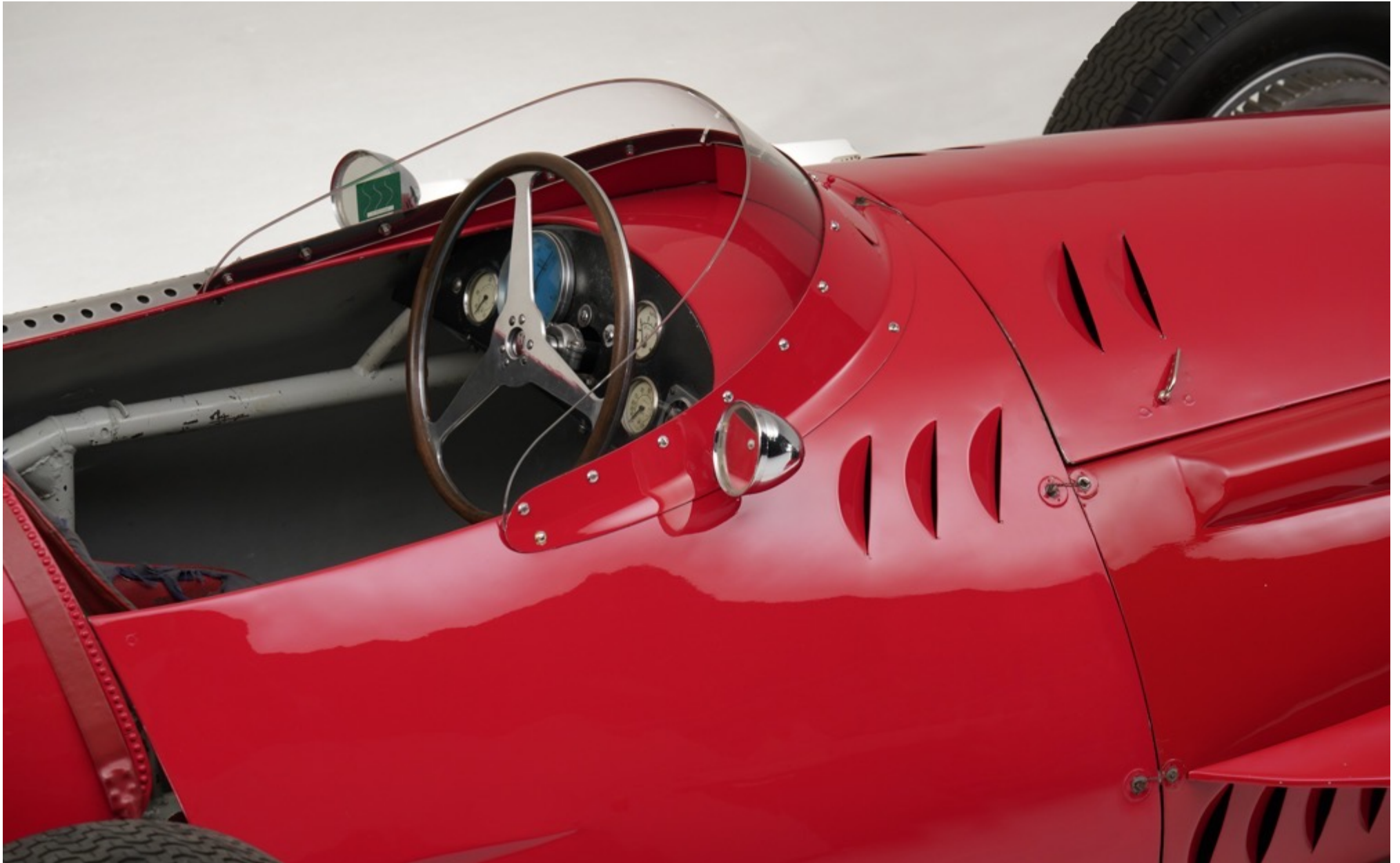
Exclusive Offer

2515 represents an extremely rare opportunity to acquire one of the most original works Maserati 250F in existence and driven by legendary drivers from the period. With only 19 works cars produced (and one of just 2 made for the 1955 season), of which several have disappeared or been renumbered, this example is one of a handful survivors which have made it through the decades thanks to its long standing time at the Donington Grand Prix collection.

Eligible for world class concours and track events including the Historic Grand Prix of Monaco. This major piece of Formula 1 history would represent a significant addition to any important collection.









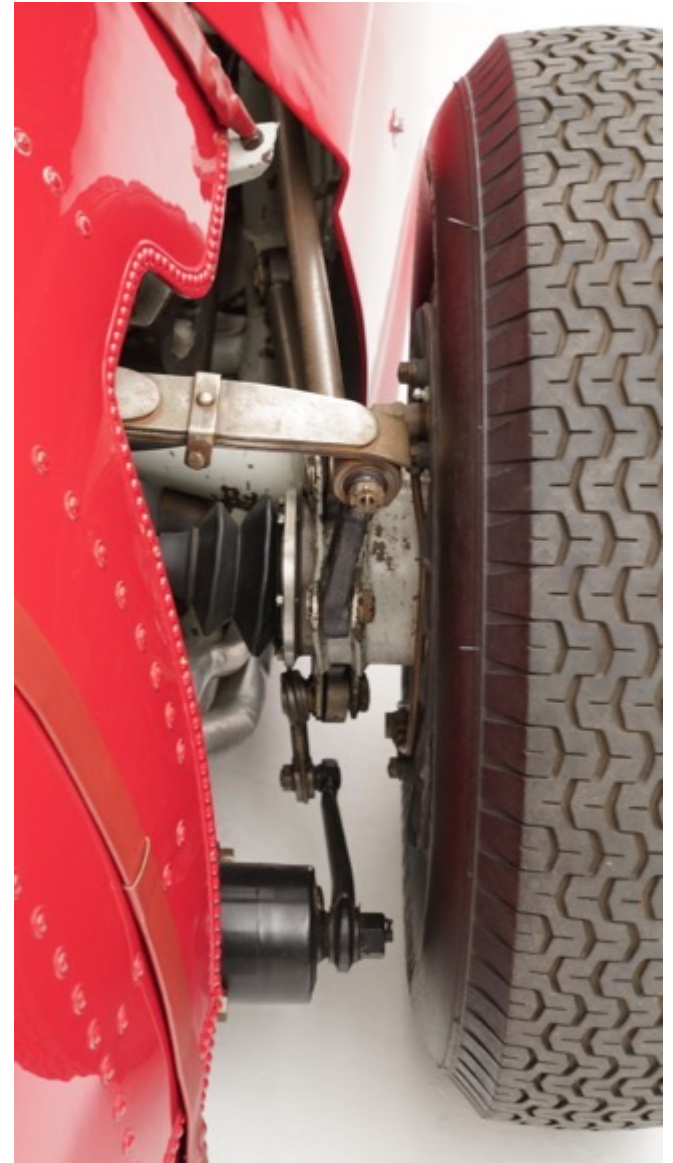












Summary

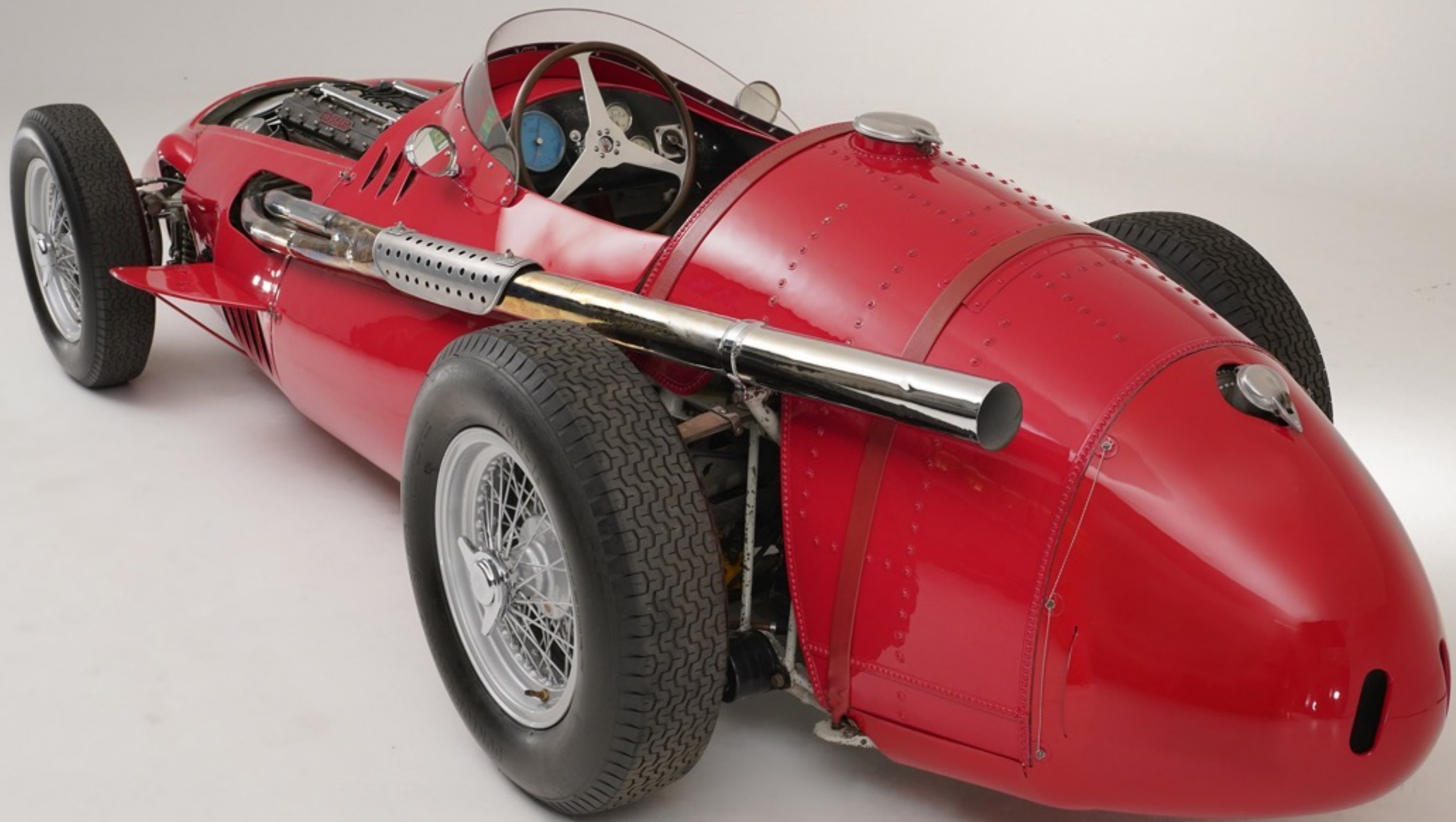
- Works entry for the 1955 Formula 1 season
- Taken to victory by Stirling Moss at Oulton Park in 1955
- One of the most original 250F in existence
- Piloted in 1955 by Maserati team drivers Stirling Moss, Luigi Musso, Peter Collins, Carroll Shelby, Roberto Mieres, Jean Behra, Sergio Montavani, Harry Schell, among others
- Piloted between 1956 - 1959 with Maserati factory race support and maintenance by Drivers such as Luigi Villorosi Maurice Triginant Hans Herrmann Umberto Maglioli Gerino Gerini and others.
- Successfully shown at 2014 Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance 2014 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance and 2017 Arizona Concours d'Elegance by Bill & Linda Pope. 2019 on loan by Bill Pope for Retromobile 2019 exhibit.





- 2020 offered by Hamann Classic Cars at Retromobile and sold to European collector and vintage racer Kurt Engelhorn. Maintained by experts in United Kingdom and Germany benefitting from some upgrades to enhance liability
- Raced by Kurt Engelhorn at 2022 Kilometer Lancé in St. Moritz, 2023 Rolex Revival Reunion at Laguna Seca and 2024 Monaco Grand Prix Historique
- Retained in the Donington Grand Prix collection for over four decades
- Maintained by renowned marque experts in recent years
- Eligible for the world's greatest historic events
- Now offered with extensive well documented history file, FIA HTP passport, two sets of wheels, original radiator, original seat and other original parts.

Price on request







KILOMÈTRE LANCÉ

2

Benelli

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