

Auto

THE GERMANS
GO ALL-OUT FOR
SUPREMACY – IN THE
WORLD OF SPEED!

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JACOBSEN

HOT RODS VERSUS SPORTS CARS!

*From the Commons to
California by Cisitalia . . .*

THE HARD WAY!

By Bill Pollack

We had intended to give our readers a complete Auto-Trial of the Cisitalia after Bill Pollack had delivered it to the West Coast, but the car needed so many little adjustments to bring it up to top performance that the project was dropped. In a future issue of Auto we will present the Cisitalia Auto-Trial just as soon as this little bomb is ready.—Editor

PIONEERS DID NOT HAVE TO worry about parts for their horses and oxen. Wagons are made of wood. Trees are wood, therefore they are potential parts for the wagons. Head gaskets for Cisitalias do not grow on trees. With this little logic acquired from years of study, I started out in a Cisitalia coupe from Boston for Los Angeles. The car was vintage 1948 from a sunny hill in Italy. The engine was small, even by continental standards.

One day of preventive maintenance was spent at Hansen-MacPhee in Bedford, Mass., where some of the minor ills of the car were cured. It was found that the dry-sumped oil system had a remarkable affinity for the radiator. This was probably due to some relation between the head and the gasket, but, since this peculiar arrangement worked in our favor (except for the cost of the oil), it was decided to attempt the trip.

In spite of the double oil consumption, cooling engine and lubricating same, the gas mileage was very good. The car used only 3.2 gallons during the first 109 miles through traffic from Boston to Hartford,

Conn. Encountering rather nasty weather, I continued through New York and arrived 15 hours and 50 minutes later in Pittsburgh.

Driving along the Pennsylvania Turnpike, I crossed the Ohio line and had the oil changed. This caused some comment, especially when I drained the radiator and told the man I would try water in it for a change.

Cedar Rapids, Iowa, would be a much nicer town if it had a Cisitalia service agency. It was here that a much-used clutch throw-out bearing decided to protest. Since the next 1000 miles were mostly prairie country, I decided to continue, feeling that the bearing would last as long as it liked anyway. The approach of thunder storms and possible hail brought our second period of driving to a halt after some 25 hours on the road. The second stop was made in Cipher, Iowa, "the town that offers nothing."

Gasping up the car for the third stage of the trip, I answered the usual questions of why the car's speedometer went up to 200 mph. The instrument is calibrated in kilometers and my usual answer was that trying to read an instrument calibrated in Mach one, Mach two, etc. was too difficult on these bumpy roads. Later on this same question was more easily answered by a bloodshot stare.

The Cisitalia had beautiful hub caps very carefully perforated for the purpose of venting air from the brakes. I am also inclined to think that they vent spokes. Short-

ly after losing one of these hubs at speed, the same wheel developed a thump which forced a halt. An inspection revealed that the inside spokes had sheared. This left me with five tires and four wheels. The John Deere Tractor Co. has never utilized the practicality or the beauty of Borani wheels, hence there was a short supply of them in the farming area which surrounded me. Continuing, I decided I would write Sr. Ascari and tell him I knew exactly how he felt at Indianapolis.

The complete absence of wind noise and the perfect handling of this car make long periods of driving possible. The car has no tendency to veer on crown roads and the extremely accurate steering made it possible to miss most of the bumps. The handling of the car is comparable to flying a good airplane . . . you simply think where you want to go and, without any perceptible movement, the machine does the rest.

Approaching Cheyenne, Wyoming we climbed to about 6000 ft. and the thunder storms that had been threatening in the distance now welcomed us into their fold. As the intensity of the storms increased, my enthusiasm waned and I decided to rest. Five hours later I rose to check the weather and found that an endless variety of storms would be covering the Continental Divide. While refueling at the local trading post, I was again approached with the usual questions, including an offer from one man, who wanted to breed the Cissy with his quarter horse and went off mumbling something about the Irish sweepstakes and frontal area.

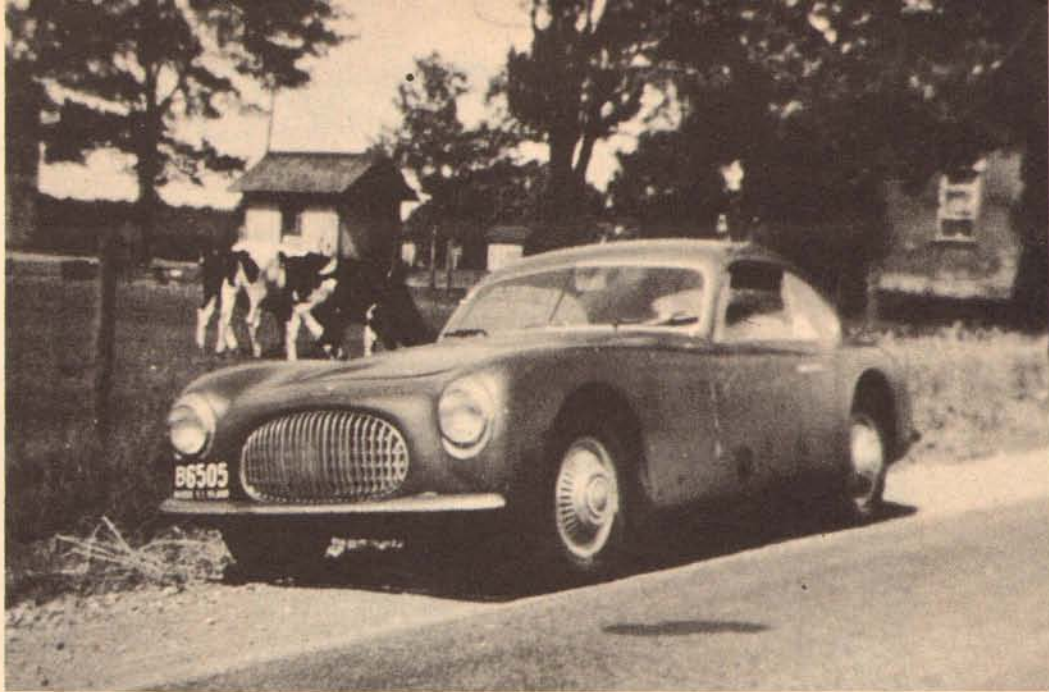


The Cisitalia on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston. The gleaming finish was soon to be depreciated by a continental crossing

The Continental Divide, in the middle of the Wyoming plains, is the highlight of some of the most desolate country in the United States. It is inhabited solely by ex-Allard drivers with a small contingent of TC enthusiasts, who act as liaison officers with the rest of the world.

Leaving this land of Indians and passionate horses, I climbed to 8800 ft. over the Cheyenne Pass. It was here that I saw some of the most inspiring sights of the trip. I drove into the base clouds of the thunder storms and then above them to see each storm throwing bolts of power in every direction. But for the accompaniment of Moussorgsky's "Night on Bald Mountain," this could have been a Disney fantasy. The grim amputated trees in every direction gave mute testimony to the strength of the surrounding giants.

The crossing of the Divide was made to the tune of three inches of rain and seven inches of hail in a nearby town. The windshield wipers on the Cissy had been set for



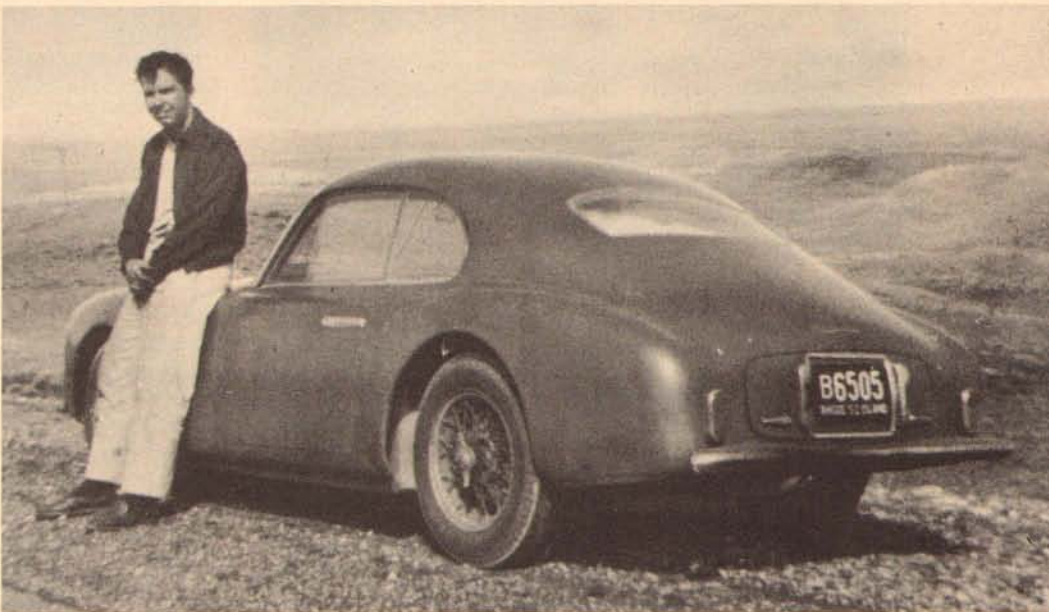
... Two stock cows on farm in Ohio ignore the presence of one of Italy's finest "breeds." This part of the country was completely oblivious to the passing of this historical event

... Shadow of young man taking picture of broken spokes in Borani wheel. Noted many strange monoposto machines pulling large implements which dug into the earth. Probable purpose was some sort of new governor. Could not get any pictures as natives feared "white magic"

a mild Italian rain; in this storm the time lag from wipe to wipe conveyed a feeling of waiting for a television channel to resume the video portion of its picture. Provo, Utah, was warm, so I stopped.

The last part of our trip from Provo to Los Angeles was made without stop. Eighty miles from Las Vegas ("how much for a Cisitalia on a hard-way eight?") trouble began. Some member of a party to overthrow Cisitalias had blithely inserted 80 lbs. of air into my right front tire. This was discovered when the shock on my left front wheel came off, for which act I offer no explanation.

The last 400 miles of a trip are always considered the most difficult and my case proved the axiom. Approaching Los Angeles, my speed increased like that of a pair of horses running home. As the lights on the Cissy began to grow dimmer, the tired feeling in the power plant seemed to indicate that we had been a little too hopeful. The car was smoking so badly that I felt sure the head gasket would leave us. After the first traffic came the city lights, then my street. While pulling into my steep driveway I stalled the engine. When I tried to restart it, the battery was dead.



... Large town in background just had seven inches of hail. This is quite a way from Broken Wheel, Iowa. Man in picture made no comment when interviewed, but showed signs of being alive. This is probably the ruling species in this area