

# ROAD and TRACK

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## The Inside Story of the— **CISITALIA-PORSCHE G.P. CAR**

by Corrado Millanta

Near the end of November 1950, Cisitalia's owner, Mr. Dusio, actually living in Buenos Aires, removed the attachment which immobilized the Cisitalia-Porsche Grand Prix Formula 1 Car, built during 1946-47 in Turin (Italy). It was shipped, with parts for a 2nd car, to Argentina, where it will be perfected, to run in Argentine colors.

The cockpit of the Cisitalia G.P. car is neat and functional. Lever under wheel is to engage front-wheel drive. Note tubular frame.

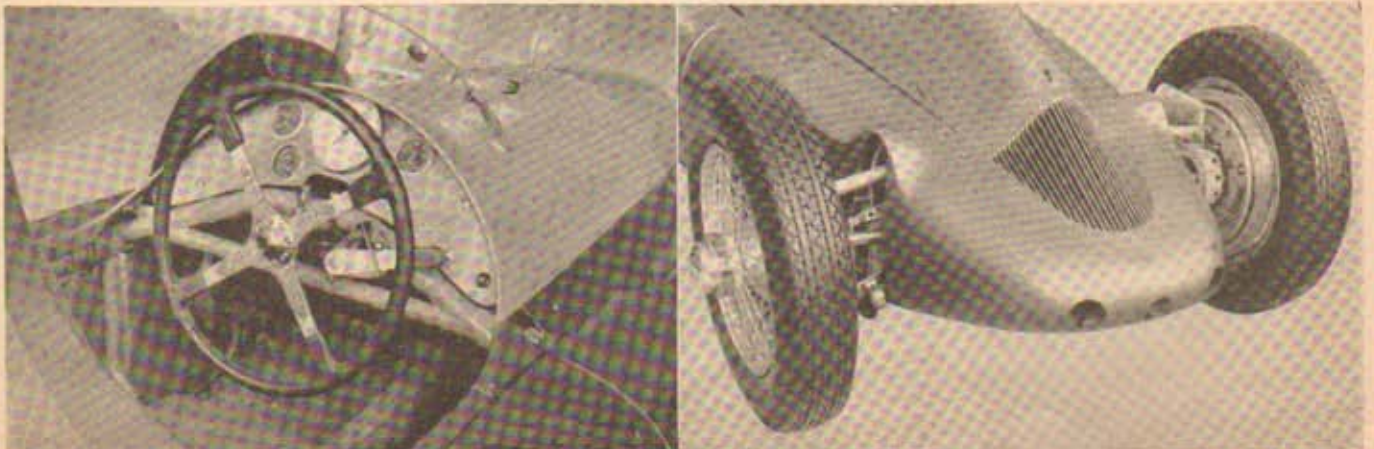
Because of this matter, there has been a revival of interest in it; therefore, we wish to say now what is the true situation of this car and how it went thru so many troubles.

First of all, the Cisitalia Grand Prix car has never run one single yard and its engine has never been tested, not even on the testing bench,\* and we declare that what we are saying now has never been published before. We know perfectly the incredible story of this car, because we were present when the Cisitalia-Porsche deal was made in the winter of 1946-47, and because we followed step by step the

building of the car.

After several weeks of dealing in technicalities, the Porsche-Cisitalia agreement was as follows: By a contract dated February 2, 1947, Mr. Dusio (Cisitalia) purchased from Porsche for the amount of 900,000 Austrian shillings, 10 million liras and \$11,000 the patent of: "Grand Prix Formula 1 Car, V-12 1500 cc sport car, 11 hp diesel tractor, 2/12 hp hydraulic tur-

Rear view of the G.P. car shows ventilating louvers, and rear brake cooling arrangement. Holes are for starting motor and exhaust.



bine." Besides these amounts the Porsche Company would have had royalties for each model built. Till today the only model built is the Grand Prix car.

The Porsche Company had for herself only 500,000 Austrian shillings, as the first contract said. A side contract allowed the rest of the money as a commission to Ferdinand Porsche, Jr., and Luisa Piech (Porsche's child), who had never been in Turin, not even during the contract conclusion. To be exact, we shall say that the 3rd article of the 2nd contract established that the other 400,000 shillings should be paid in Austria, but the \$11,000 and 10 million Italian liras paid in Italy.

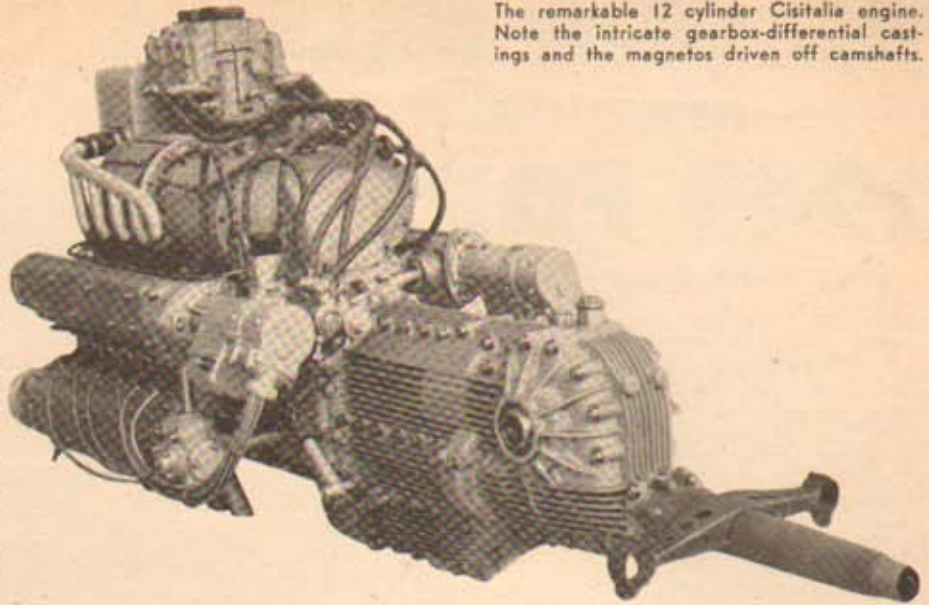
Contrarily to what everyone believes, it is not true that Porsche draws all the sketches. In fact, in the Porsche drawing office are very good designers (whose names never appear) and every one of them works at his specialized group (engine, transmission, chassis, suspensions, body, etc.). For instance, one of them is the Ing. Rabe, who is the only one out of Porsche family having a few shares in the company. We can also say that Prof. Porsche didn't take any part at all in the Cisitalia Grand Prix car design, because in 1947 he was detained by French authorities.

Dusio made in 1947 what you may call a great deal. His company, in fact, started to build sport and race cars, with the collaboration of world-famous technical office. It was the best desired thing at that time. This set-up scared even the big Italian automobile companies, because one of them, Fiat, to be precise, succeeded in introducing one of her engineers into the Dusio deal.

But after the deal was signed, Cisitalia made a childish and unpardonable mistake. The company already had a nice organization of very good Italian technicians, such as the well known Ing. Taruffi and Ing. Savonuzzi, formerly with Fiat, and some other intelligent designers and collaborators. Yet, after the conclusion of the deal, the general direction of Cisitalia was given to two people, who, other than their relationship with the Porsche Company, never had anything to do with the basic operation of the famous project office.

Not only that, but when Cisitalia hired, at our suggestion, the very famous Prof. Von Eberan, to let him build the Grand Prix car, just like he did formerly with Auto-Union Company, they put him under the directions of the new officials. It is understandable that a world-famous technician such as Prof. Von Eberan could not expect such a situation, so after few weeks, he left Turin for England, where he is now.

By then, the Cisitalia Company, being such a very difficult enterprise and at the same time very expensive (the Grand Prix



The remarkable 12 cylinder Cisitalia engine. Note the intricate gearbox-differential castings and the magnetos driven off camshafts.

car has probably cost \$950,000) was going into bankruptcy, which prompted Dusio to try for financial assistance in Argentina.

We'll see what will happen to this car, which never ran and has never been tested but made everyone talking of itself. Many competent Italian and German technicians doubt the adequacy of the new setup in Argentina. This kind of enterprise needs besides a large financial backing, it is closer to specialized accessories industries (spark-plugs, magnetos, etc.). So if this undertaking is very expensive in Europe, where it is easier to call a technician for any engine matter, in Argentina, it will be worse because there is not even one of these industries. For instance, the crankshaft of Cisitalia Grand Prix car is of the "Hirth" type and its parts are connected by a special gear built by Hirth Co. of Stuttgart. As we already said, the engine has never been tested, if it will need some modification to the crankshaft, the setup would not be ready for many months. And this is just one of many examples.

Between the two projects, the original proposal and the actual prototype, there are many differences. January 20, 1947, when Dusio and I went to Kitzbuhel, Austria, to meet Porsche technicians, the car design, showed to us, had a frame made with two parallel tubes, similar to the one used by Auto-Union G.P. car before the war. The engine was a V-12 at 90° with a two-stage supercharger located in front of the engine crankcase. The present ver-

sion has a trellis frame (truss) made of welded tubes; probably they considered the very good results obtained at that time with the 1100 cc single seat model, which had such a frame. Besides, the V-12 engine was abandoned in favor of a horizontal opposed type, and the supercharger is now on top of crankcase; not only that, the Roots type has been substituted by the Centric type. These all-around changes indicate that, besides some doubts, what the Porsche technicians said about the Grand Prix design being ready since the winter of 1946-47 was not entirely the case.

While on the subject, there is another interesting detail. During our visit to Porsche technicians at Kitzbuhel, we were shown a design for a 1500 cc Grand Prix rear engine car, which was supposed to be, as they declared, the one that the Porsche technical office prepared for Mercedes-Benz Co. in 1939-40. This seemed very strange, because at that time Mercedes had the two famous 1500 cc cars (now under attachment in Switzerland) which proved themselves to be the best of their category at the Tripoli circuit. It could be possible that the design was offered to the Mercedes Co., but rejected before they built their own two 1500 cc cars.

During the conversation with the technicians, Dusio was asked if he would prefer the 4500 cc unblown car instead of 1500 cc blown, because they said, the unblown one would weigh just 400 pounds

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