

MASERATI

A family concern bred racing success under the brand of the trident

Five of the six brothers who founded Maserati were talented mechanics, engineers, and race car builders. Alfieri and Ettore were employed together at Isotta Fraschini and then Diatto, building Grand Prix cars, before they began Officine Alfieri Maserati in 1914—which started off making spark plugs. Although he died in 1910, before the founding of the company, eldest son Carlo provided the first Maserati automobile. He was an accomplished bicycle racer who developed a single-cylinder motor for the bicycle factory he worked at. Ernesto steered the company through the Great Depression and World War II, and soon after, when Maserati revisited plans to build its first road car. Brother Bindo departed Isotta Fraschini in 1932, after the death of Alfieri, to provide his expertise in production technology.

However, the sixth Maserati brother gave the company its most visible legacy. Mario was a painter and an artist who designed its logo of the three-pronged trident, as held by Neptune, god of the oceans. He patterned it from the statue of Neptune in Bologna's Piazza Maggiore. Not only was it a symbol of the brothers' hometown, but it also stood for strength and vitality, qualities that were embodied by the race cars designed and built by the Maserati brothers.

From inception, Maserati was a company entirely focused on competition. Throughout the 20th century, its cars were victorious in every Formula (One, Two, and in the new millennium, Formula E), across the endurance races of the World Sportscar Championship, at the Mille Miglia and Targa Florio, even at the Indianapolis 500 in America, where it became the only Italian company to win the hallowed event—twice in a row. The first car to wear the Maserati trident, the Tipo 26 of 1926, won its class in the grueling Targa Florio with Alfieri behind the wheel—its debut outing. A Maserati would win the same event every year between 1937 and 1940. In the hugely competitive, politically charged Grand Prix era

of the 1930s, the 8CM proved successful against both the mighty Silver Arrows of Germany as well as homegrown competition from Alfa Romeo. When Maserati decided to focus on the smaller *voiturette* class, the marque racked up successes: Maserati's racing cars were raucous, breathlessly fast, challenging to harness, yet endlessly rewarding for those who could step up to the challenge, such as Tazio Nuvolari, Louis Chiron, and Prince Bira

of Siam. The 1.5-liter 4CLT remained competitive for privateers well into the 1950s—impressive for a car developed in 1939.

Juan Manuel Fangio won his last of five championships in a Maserati 250F. At the 1957 German Grand Prix, Fangio was leading by 30 seconds when a botched pit stop dropped him down to third, and nearly a full minute behind Peter Collins. Fangio took aim at the

“WHEN MASERATI TOOK ITS RACING KNOW-HOW TOWARDS ROADGOING CARS, ALL SIGNS POINTED TO SUCCESS.”



Interior of a 1958 Maserati 3500 GT convertible built by Carrozzeria Touring.



Two Maserati 3500 GT convertibles from 1958 and 1963. Over 2,000 coupes and convertibles were produced between 1957 and 1964.