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1973 WILLIAMS FX3-1

1972/3 Williams FX3 Politoys / Iso-Marlboro – ex Henri Pescarolo / Nanni Galli

- Williams' highly historic first in-house Grand Prix chassis
- Raced with Henri Pescarolo, Chris Amon, Nanni Galli, Jackie Pretorius
- Politoys then Iso-Marlboro period sponsorship
- Restored 2011 by Phil Reilly and active in U.S. historic racing
- Eligible and prepared for historic racing events including Monaco Historique GP

From the very dawn of Williams, one of the greatest constructors in Formula One history, this FX3 is chassis 1, Williams' first in-house Grand Prix chassis, and today a highly suitable entry for historic racing.

After disillusionment with the bought-in de Tomaso and March 711, Frank Williams resolved to build his own racer, kickstarted with £40,000 sponsorship from the Italian model car company Politoys. The resulting FX3-1 launched Williams into the exclusive club of Formula One constructors, representing the first step toward Williams historic nine Constructors' World Championships and seven Driver's titles.

Design engineer Len Bailey of the GT40 project drew the monocoque chassis, fabricated by Maurice Gomm at Old Woking, with final assembly by Williams and Ford Cosworth power. When the project ran late, Ron Tauranac of Brabham was drafted in to see it to completion. With Frank seeking sponsorship and still not ready to use the Williams name, the result was known as the Politoys FX3, then later as the Iso Marlboro.

Just getting to the start line was a remarkable feat, making chassis 1 a shining symbol of Williams' heroic origin story. These were the shoestring years, when bailiffs frequented the workshops, where road cars and possessions were sold to raise cash, when business was famously conducted from a telephone box after the company line was cut off, and when Frank was even evicted from his home – all to satisfy his insatiable need for speed.

The Politoys FX3 made its racing debut in dark blue livery at the July 1972 British Grand Prix, piloted by Frenchman Henri Pescarolo, who went on to four career Le Mans victories across 33 starts. After an off, the Williams unfortunately retired, part of a Pescarolo pattern that would take its toll on many of Frank's cars. Rebuilt for the John Player Challenge at Brands Hatch, she competed with New Zealander Chris Amon (the 1966 Le Mans winner with Bruce McLaren), retiring with mechanical failure a signal that more development was required.

For 1973 FX3-1 relaunched under new sponsorship as the Iso-Marlboro, illustrating the crucial importance of financial backing. With Marlboro sponsoring BRM, the Williams relationship arose because Patrick Duffeler of Philip Morris decided that backing an up-and-coming team looked great – even better if linked to an exotic Italian manufacturer like Iso Rivolta. Italian ex-March driver "Nanni" Galli signed on, promising £20,000 for his Formula One drive, though the *lire* apparently never quite materialised.

In its new white, green and red livery, the Iso Marlboro had four races for Williams in 1973, herAfter best result a 4th with British driver Tony Trimmer in the Race of Champions at Brands Hatch. She appeared with Nanni Galli in the Argentinean Grand Prix at Buenos Aires, and came home 9th with the Italian in the Brazilian Grand Prix at Interlagos. She also raced with Jackie Pretorius in the South African Grand Prix at Kyalami, and tested with well-known New Zealander Howden Ganley.

Retiring from competition due to a change in regulations, FX3-1 was then preserved as a Marlboro display car for many years. In 2011 a bare-metal restoration was carried out by well-known experts Phil Reilly & Co in the United States. She was returned to

1973-spec in race-ready condition, with assistance from period driver Howden Ganley as consultant, who even signed the inside cowl.

Entering historic racing from 2012, FX3-1 has appeared in multiple Masters Historic Grand Prix USA events, including at Sonoma, Laguna Seca, Portland and more. She headlined the Iso Class at The Quail Motorsports Gathering and has made multiple appearances at the Rolex Motorsports Reunion in Monterey. Now benefitting from a decade of modern development and testing not received in period, she now offers a robust historic racing package for a fortunate new owner. Eligible for many historic racing events, she qualifies for the Monaco Historic Grand Prix, and if desired, could be returned to the 1972 Politoys spec to become potentially very competitive in the pre-1972 group.

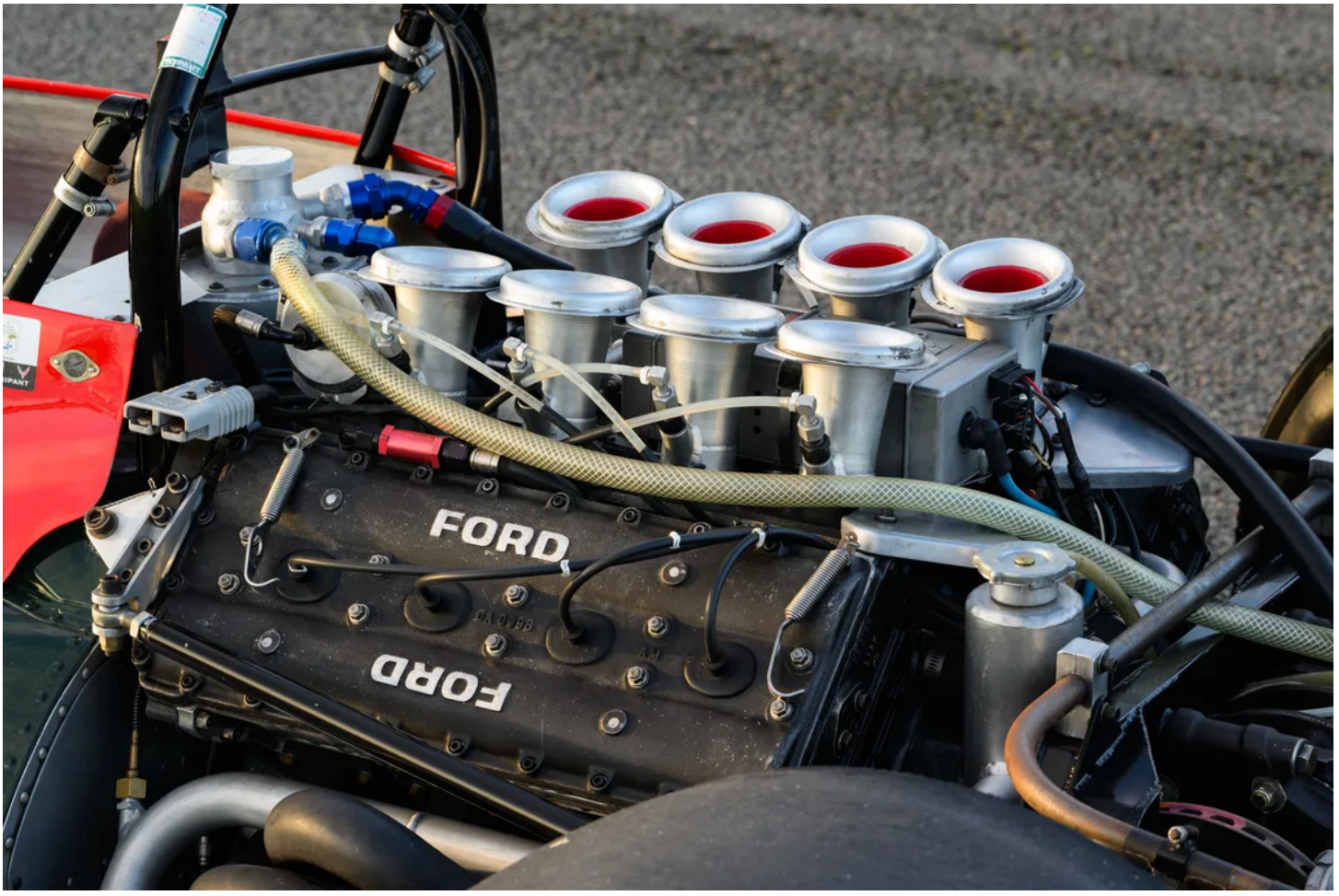
As Williams first grand prix chassis, FX3-1 is the important common ancestor and crucial first step for all of Williams' legendary later successes. With her classic coke-bottle shape and DFV power, she will be an outstanding addition to any collection – and a powerful symbol of the earliest racing years of Sir Frank Williams and his team.

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