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1955 FERRARI 750 MONZA

1955 Ferrari 750 Monza Scaglietti Spider

- Highly original survivor of Ferrari's 'big-banger' four-cylinder sports cars
- Fantastic European and North American racing history
- Believed to have finished 4th at the 1955 Monza 1000 kms
- Two-time class winner and multiple class podiums in Californian club racing
- 20-year preservation within the Briggs Cunningham Automotive Museum
- Emerging from 40-years of further conservation from the collection of Anthony Wang

Forget any notion whatsoever that a four-cylinder Ferrari is not a 'proper' Ferrari. The two-litre 500 'Mondial' was so named because it was the engine that powered Alberto Ascari to the 1953 Formula One World Championship. Increased to a thumping three-litres, the 750 Monza proved to be a diminutive giant-killer and won outright at some of the toughest races, including the Tourist Trophy, the Mugello GP, and the 10-hour epic at Messina. Its bite was definitely as big as its bark.

The 750 Monza also had beauty, clothed in a slippery spider body by Scaglietti which ushered in a newer, more streamlined era of sports racing cars. Approximately 35 were built and 750 Monzas were pedalled by some of the era's biggest names at the most iconic races, from Europe's big international meetings to the vibrant club racing scene in North America.

This Ferrari 750 Monza is chassis 0522M, the 21st car built and was completed at the Ferrari factory over February and March of 1955 for first owner Franco Cornacchia. Milanese car dealer Cornacchia was one of Enzo Ferrari's earliest supporters and his faith was rewarded with exclusive rights to sell Ferrari's cars, establishing the marque's first dealership. Through his Scuderia Guastalla, Cornacchia didn't just sell the red dream, he lived it too. A handy helmsman, Cornacchia raced the latest models from Ferrari, from the 166 in the late 1940s to this 750 Monza in 1955.

0522M's first sortie came merely days after dispatch from the factory, at the XIV Corsa In Salita Sulle Torricelli hill climb on 27th March where Cornacchia placed 4th. Six weeks later, 0522M was back in action at the VIII Gran Premio di Bari. On that occasion the 750 Monza was driven to 9th place by Brazilian ace Francisco 'Chico' Landi, who, in between Formula One drives for the Works Maserati team, was a regular driver for Cornacchia's Scuderia Guastalla.

From further research, it is believed that 0522M's next outing was the III Gran Premio Supercortemaggiore 1,000 Km di Monza. Sponsored by Italian petroleum giant Agip, and named after its 'Supercortemaggiore' gasoline product, the 1955 Monza 1,000 Kms was one of Italy's biggest events. The entry list was an embarrassment of riches, featuring no fewer than nine Ferrari 750 Monzas and three Works 300S Maseratis, and the roll call included the cream of the era's crop of drivers: Behra, de Filippis, Hawthorn, Maglioli, Musso, Taruffi and more.

Among this illustrious line-up were Cornacchia and Landi, in the no.20 Ferrari 750 Monza entered by Cornacchia. While research has not revealed a definitive list of chassis numbers entered into this race, photos and a mock 'rolling start' – filmed for Agip's marketeers from the back of a Lancia Spider – reveal glimpses of the no.20 car which appears to be 0522M. 0522M is unique in having been built with a four-pin bonnet, unlike the standard two-pin bonnets fitted to all other 750 Monzas, and the footage indicates that the no.20 car in this race was just-so equipped. In such esteemed company Cornacchia and Landi accomplished a world-class drive to place 4th as the first privateer car home, behind the Works Maseratis in 1st & 3rd, and the Works 750 Monza of Hawthorn & Maglioli in 2nd.

On 12th June '55 Cornacchia entered 0522M into the Parma-Poggio di Berceto hill climb, in which he finished 7th overall and 3rd in class. This was the last known result for 0522M in its native Italy, before Cornacchia sold the 750 Monza to the USA and it was photographed in the exotic showroom of Ernie McAfee on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles towards the end of 1955. McAfee sold the Ferrari to American novelist and screenwriter Alan Brown Le May. The author of 'The Searchers' and 'The Unforgiven' sensibly estimated that the 750 Monza's high-performance would be beyond his abilities and from 1956 began entering it into California Sports Car Club and Sports Car Club of America race meetings for Robert 'Bob' Path to drive.

Racing was Le May's hobby, even if he wasn't behind the wheel himself, and entered the Ferrari at select events throughout the season, rather than working it hard week-in and week-out. Pomona, Santa Barbara and Palm Springs were favoured regular circuits and Path was a frequent challenger for class podiums, scoring his best result – a 3rd in class – at the CSCC Pomona Preliminary on 20th Oct 1956.

In July 1957 Le May sold 0522 to Jack Bates of Pasadena, the co-owner of the Monise Motors network of dealerships in California. Bates was a more proactive weekend hero and, in barely half a season's ownership, scored no fewer than five class podiums including a win in the CSCC Riverside Preliminary on 21st September 1957. As was befitting for a front-running car in the California club racing scene, Bates treated the 750 Monza to an eye-catching makeover and painted it in his signature livery of metallic silver blue, decorated with a white nose-band and centre stripe. The Kodachrome colour photographs of 0522M during Bates' brief and successful tenure beautifully capture the Ferrari during one of motor sport's most evocative eras.

Texan doctor Richard P. "Dick" McGuire became the Monza's next owner in late 1957 and, having repainted it dark blue, added another class win to 0522M's resumé at the 4th Annual Frostbite Races. Held at the Eagle Mountain National Guard Base in Fort Worth, the Frostbite races on 18th January attracted future American racing superstars Carroll Shelby, driving a Maserati 200SI, and Jim Hall in another 750 Monza that he'd go on to own for 60-years.

McGuire didn't keep the Monza for long and sold it to Otto Zipper, proprietor of another of LA's flagship exotic car dealerships. By 1963 Zipper had sold 0522M to legendary multimillionaire sportsman, racer and team owner Briggs Cunningham, who had begun to assemble a world-class collection for the forthcoming Briggs Cunningham Automotive Museum. Repainted red, but not restored, and registered on the California plates "NSV919", 0522M remained on display in the renowned collection from its opening on 5th February 1966 until Cunningham was persuaded to part with it in May 1985. Over its two decades spent under Cunningham's considered conservation, 0522M was featured and cited in several magazine reviews of the museum and survived the fate of so many great cars in this period which were incorrectly or simply over-restored.

0522M was one of only a few cars to be liberated from Cunningham, before the entire collection was acquired by Miles Collier and the museum was closed in 1986. Today the Cunningham collection still forms the bedrock of Collier's own museum, The REVS Institute in Florida.

The man who'd prised 0522M from Cunningham was brewing empire heir Augie Pabst of Milwaukee, who reputedly paid $35,000 for the car in May 1985 and trailered it to car shows in his custom 'display trailer'. As the classic car market began to boom in the mid '80s, the Monza changed hands rapidly as its value rocketed. 0522M was sold from Pabst in 1986 to fellow Wisconsinite Bill Schley for $110,000 and, just a year later, was passed onto Anthony Wang for four-times as much.

A true Ferrari enthusiast, Wang would preserve the highly original 750 Monza for the next four decades and it only emerged – still unrestored - from his collection in March 2026 when it was consigned to Gooding Christie's Amelia Island auction. Having been bought at the auction by a great Fiskens client, we were able to help another client to acquire 0522M shortly after and it has been our pleasure to help with the further research into this magnificent survivor.

SOLD


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