

CLASSIC DRIVER

From Mille Miglia to Mexico, these Ferraris battled with motorsport's best

Lead

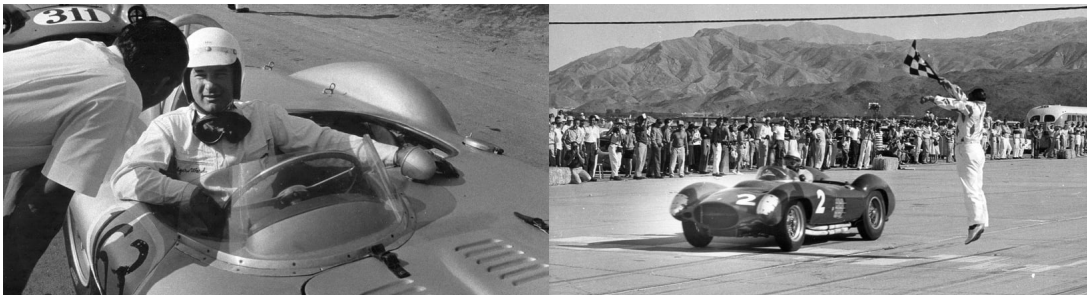
Of all the iconic Ferrari models over the years, the prancing horses of the mid-1950s were among some of Maranello's finest creations. Effortlessly stylish, and yet brilliantly fast, these two Scaglietti Spyders have now been reunited and offered for sale by Copley Motorcars...



Michael Schumacher's dominating F2002, Sir Stirling Moss's dancing Ferrari 250 GT SWB, or perhaps, more recently, Charles Leclerc's Monaco-conquering SF-24. Wherever you stick a pin in Ferrari's timeline of motorsport entries, you'll likely find a moment in time when the scarlet machines were the ones to beat. They were, and still very much are, far more than a carmaker, for every single employee of the brand joins a family that is passionate about winning to a level beyond even the most ambitious person's wildest beliefs. However, it wasn't just about winning for the likes of Enzo Ferrari, it was about total dominance, and during the 1950s, not long after the company was founded in 1947, cars such as these Scaglietti-styled 121 LM and 410 Sport you see before you, had the taste of champagne and glory very much on their headlamps, aiming to cement the Ferrari name in some of the world's most difficult endurance races.



We'll start the story in 1954, and the utterly stunning Ferrari 121 LM Scaglietti Spyder, one of just four examples ever made. After Ferrari's successes in Formula One during the early 1950s, attention was also turned to sports car racing as a way to further enhance their dominance in motorsport. 1953 saw two open-top racers, a 340 MM and 375 MM shine brightly in the World Sportscar Championship, as well as claiming first overall in the 1954 running of Le Mans, driven by Jose Froilan Gonzalez. The new 121 LM was designed specifically to participate in the 1955 Le Mans, in an effort to preserve Ferrari's winning streak at that race. Boasting beautiful coachwork by Scaglietti and a mighty 4.4-litre, inline 6-cylinder engine, three 121 LMs were entered into the race, but all suffered mechanical issues along the way and were forced to retire. This example, chassis number #0484 LM, was left to tackle the mighty Mille Miglia instead. While the 121 LM was lightning fast, reliability was its biggest downfall, with Umberto Maglioli and co-driver Luciano Monteferrario battling reliability issues along the way, but eventually bringing the car home to a triumphant third place.

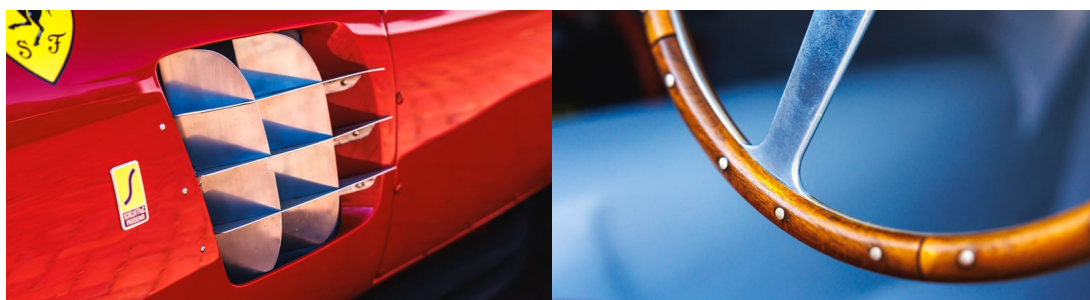


In August of 1955, the 121 LM, now owned by construction tycoon Tony Parravano, was sent to the United Kingdom ahead of the Daily Herald International Trophy race at Oulton Park, with a thriving Carroll Shelby behind the wheel. Sadly for both Shelby and Parravano, reliability issues were its downfall once again, and the car failed to finish the race. Following this disappointment, #0484 LM then traveled to the USA, with high ambitions for race wins. It landed in California in 1955 and underwent body modifications in search of better cooling, which also included the removal of the fin on top of the headrest to aid its aerodynamic capabilities. It was put to work almost right away in the Grand Prix of Venezuela and a race in Torrey Pines in late 1955 and 1956 respectively, both of which resulted in DNFs. Finally, though, in 1957 with Phil Hill behind the wheel, #0484 LM would finally taste glory at the Palm Springs Road Races, finishing in first place.



Over the coming years, the 121 LM was raced by some of the sport's finest names, including Ken Miles, Roger Ward, Lou Brero and many others. It was retired from racing in 1959, and lived a quiet life. In 1987, through David Cottingham's DK Engineering it was sold to Peter G. Sachs for a princely sum of \$200,000. After a lengthy restoration, Sachs would exhibit the car all over the world, including showcasing it at the 1995 Goodwood Festival of Speed, an event still in its infancy at the time, only running for two years prior. Under Sach's ownership, the car took on an entirely new form of competition, being entered into multiple Concours d'Elégance events across the USA and beyond, before he sold it in 2014.

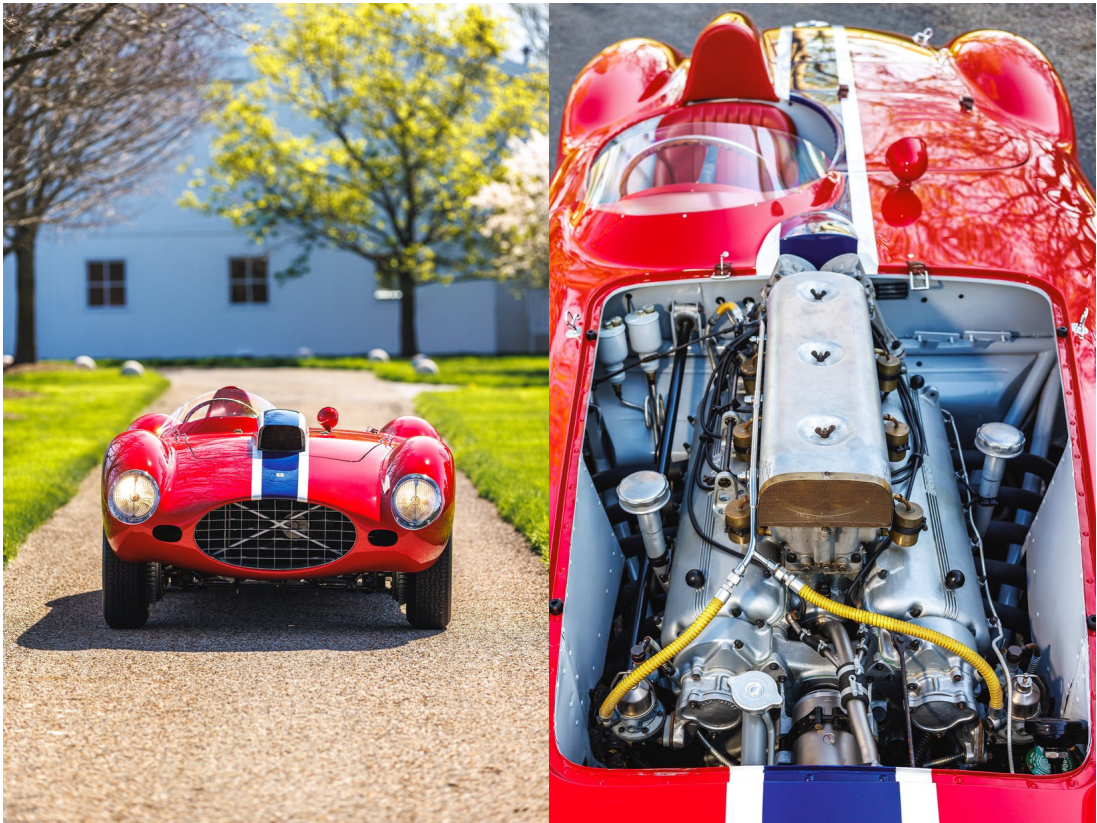
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While the 121 LM lived a varied life that commenced in its European homeland, the second car in this wonderful pairing, a 1955 Ferrari 410 Sport Spider Scaglietti, barely felt the Italian sun on its Rosso paintwork before it was briskly sent to the USA. Its lucky new owner, the aforementioned Tony Parravano, received the car in the summer of 1955 and promptly started reworking its perfectly sculpted panels. Known now as a Parravano trademark, he cut out egg crate inserts in side vents of the arches, strangely not to hold eggs, but to aid in the engine's cooling. Just like 121 LM, chassis #0592 would be immediately put to use, and in February of 1956 the car headed to Palm Springs Road Races, where it was driven by Carroll Shelby, fairing far better than the 121 LM and bringing home first place for Scuderia Parravano.



The 410 Sport, just like the 121 LM, was a complex and occasionally high-strung beast, not only to drive, but also to maintain. Designed for the Carrera Panamericana, a five-day race that featured seven tricky stages and a relentless amount of driving, it ran the entire length of Mexico, and during the early 1950s quickly became one of *the* races to enter if you were serious about motorsport. Ferrari fitted the car with their 4.9-litre V12, instead of the 121's 6-cylinder, with the inkling that the dead-straight roads in certain sections of the race would be where the 410 would shine. Sadly for Enzo, after just five events, the race across Mexico was stopped, not aided by the tragic events of the incident at Le Mans in 1955, leaving nothing but bad press for motorsport. Instead, the 410 Sport would need to make a name for itself in the USA.



By 1971, after a flurry of races in Mexico, the car was now in the hands of Robert N. Dusek, who would become one of the world's biggest collectors of the Prancing Horse. For the years that followed, the car was displayed at many events all over the USA, as well as being featured in countless magazines and publications, often being regarded as a true piece of motorsport history.



Whether you look at these two thoroughbreds as the beautiful pieces of rolling art, or as true icons of a period in time when Ferrari was hell-bent on showing the world what they were made of on the racetrack, the conclusion is that they somehow thread the needle between both, perfectly. Both the 121 LM and 410 Sport are bite-the-back-of-your-hand gorgeous automobiles and are a testament to the owners who have loved and maintained them over their now 70-year lives. Many of their contemporaries were driven to their fullest in period, some were destroyed, others were rebodied, but only a few survived, and seeing these two together under the same roof is a moment even Enzo himself might have cracked a smile for had he been here today.

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Photos: (Period Photos) - The Kelmantaski Collection. Other Photos - Teddy Pieper

Gallery

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