

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Coming to Pebble Beach 2012: 1955 Ferrari 410 Sport](#)

Lead

As a companion piece to Classic Driver's video driving report on the one-off 1955 Ferrari 410 S Berlinetta, William Edgar tells the story of 0598CM, the potent ex-Scuderia Ferrari roadster once owned by his father and driven to great success on his behalf by Carroll Shelby in the 1950s.

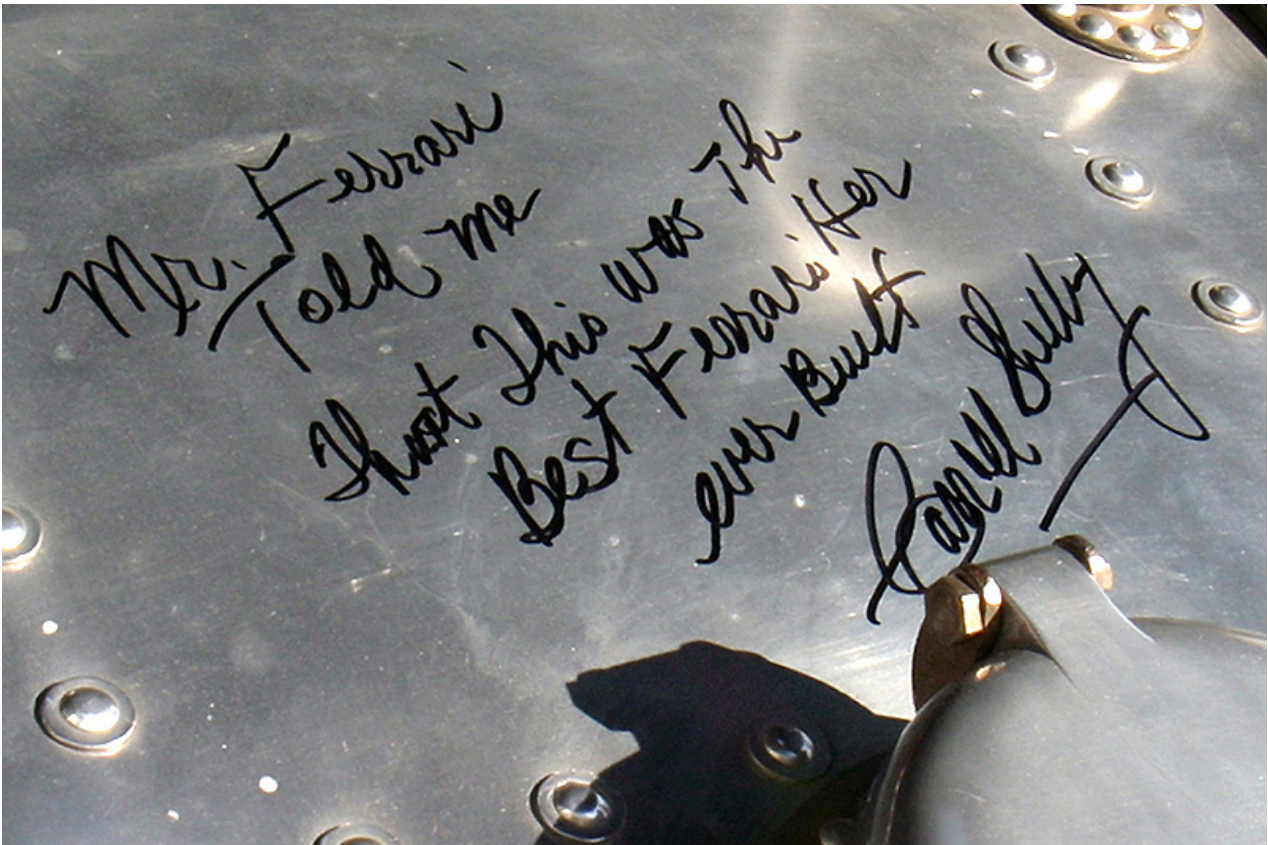
Carroll Shelby called John Edgar's Scaglietti-bodied 410 Sport Spider, chassis number 0598CM, "The best Ferrari I ever drove". That was back in '56 when Ol' Shel was winning races right and left for my father with this 4.9-litre Lampredi V12. Decades later, for present owner Roger Willbanks, Shelby autographed the car's fuel tank with a black Sharpie that Willbanks had happily handed him.

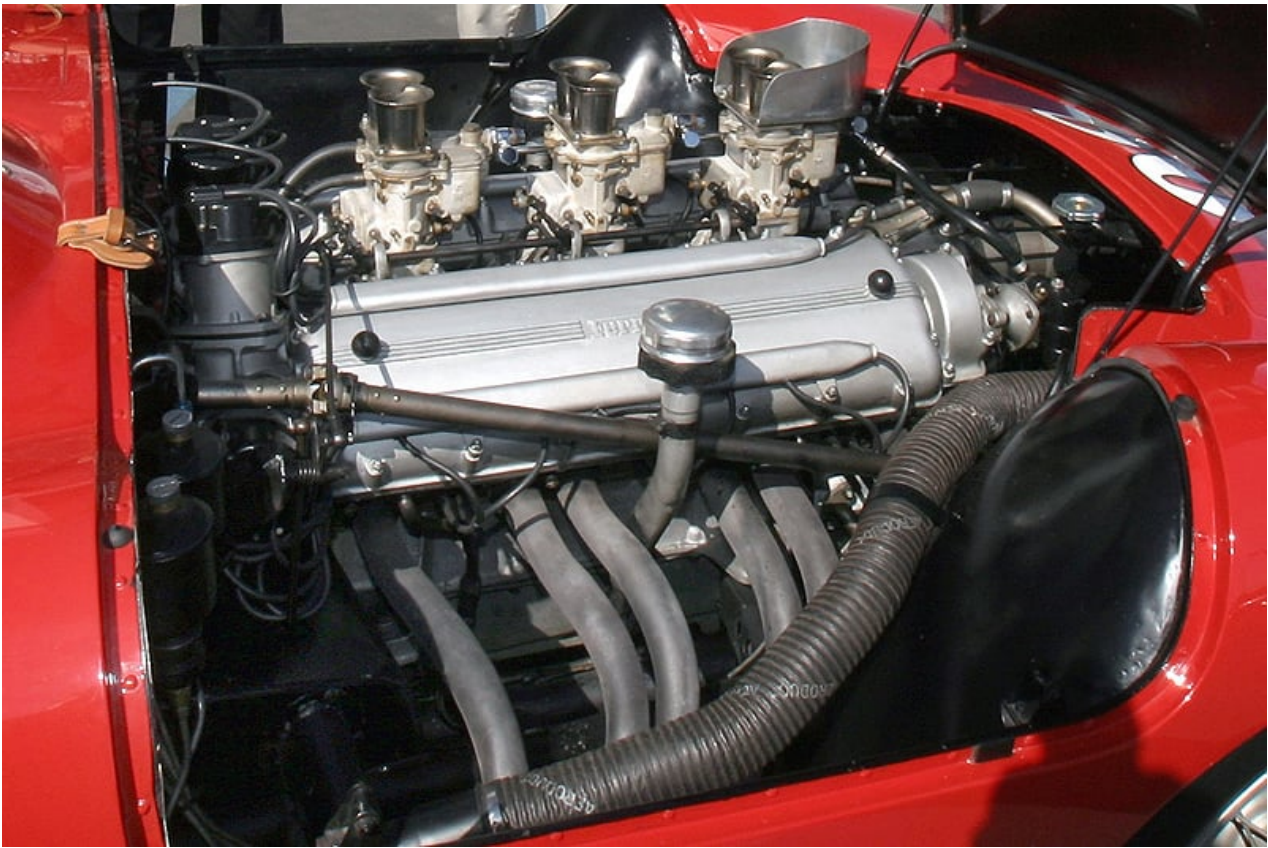
The scrawl is Texas-sized. "Mr. Ferrari told me that this was the best Ferrari he ever built," the man in bib overalls wrote on metal at a California 'Fabulous Fifties' party in October 2006, then signed it 'Carroll Shelby', with trademark swoosh beneath, as if the name alone wasn't exclamation enough.



One of only two 24-plug 410 Sports produced, 0598CM was expressly built for Juan-Manuel Fangio to drive in November 1955's La Carrera Panamericana, but the Mexico 2,000-miler was cancelled because of prior fatalities. Fangio and Eugenio Castellotti raced the car in the January '56 Buenos Aires 1000Km, where its transaxle broke.

Sold soon afterwards to my father as a customer car, over time it served subsequent owners including a place of prominence in Engelbert Stieger's legendary Ferrari collection in Switzerland. When driven in anger, by Shelby (above, at Palm Springs in November 1956 alongside Jack McAfee seated in another John Edgar Ferrari, the tail-finned 857S 0588M), Ginther, Hill and Gregory, it was always a tough nut to beat.







Carroll Shelby, after a life in cars that ten good men would have difficulty filling, is gone now, but that 410 Sport is still here. In fact, it will be on the lawn at Pebble Beach when the 2012 Concours d'Elegance's judges make their rounds, among a display of many of the world's outstanding classics. It's blood red, looks mean as hell, and refuses to be snubbed.

Willbanks (above, centre, with Carroll Shelby), a mild-mannered book wholesaler from Denver, Colorado, has bonded with his iconic 410 Sport on levels of otherworldliness, and I like him because he sees 0598CM very much as I do.

"The car exudes history," he says, "and means something extra special this year in regards to Carroll Shelby. It's the car he is more known for in his driving and helped so much to develop America's sports car racing in its day."



Willbanks then hits the sweet spot. “My only complaint,” he reveals, “is that the car doesn’t tell me what it knows. It sits there and says, ‘I know lots more than you will ever know. I’m more than you could ever imagine.’”

Willbanks hints, though, that his 410 may 'open up' to another car. I fancy a chat with its ex-Edgar stablemate Ferrari, the tail-finned 857 Sport 0588M being auctioned nearby at Pebble through Gooding & Company.

The 410’s opener could well be, “Damn straight to see you again, Little Brother.”

Text: William Edgar

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Gallery

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