



Mille Miglia 1927-1951: The Alfa and Ferrari Years (Mille Miglia Racing S)

R.M. Clarke

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This is the first of two volumes covering the great Mille Miglia road races that were run between 1927 and 1957. The second volume covers the post war years 1952 to 1957. This book in this form would not have been possible without the help and cooperation of Mike Lawrence who generously allowed us to freely quote from his informative 1988 book *The Mille Miglia*, now sadly out of print. Our book is primarily his book expanded to include most of his sources of information - we have in a way illustrated his text with contemporary reports so that readers can draw their own conclusions regarding a particular race. Mike started his book with a warning about accuracy which we think is right and prudent to include here. Not many motor racing books begin with a statement from the author warning his readers that a book for which they have paid good money may not be accurate in every respect. This, however, is the case with this book and the reader is entitled to an explanation. In 1938, *The Autocar's* correspondent complained that there was confusion as to who was on what car as no two programmes agreed. The previous year, *Motor Sport's* correspondent wrote, 'The race as a race was impossible to follow. Indeed little attempt is made by the authorities to keep the spectators informed as to what is going on.' When *Autocourse* first appeared in 1951 it carried a report of the race but warned readers that it could not guarantee its accuracy. The reason was that much of the information had to be gathered from the official press releases and quite often these contradicted each other. If a magazine employing an Italian correspondent with access to all the official information has to warn its readers to be on their guard, an Englishman writing over 30 years after the event can hardly put his hand on his heart and tell his readers otherwise. Contemporary race reports frequently disagree over the reasons for a particular car's retirement and, even more infuriatingly, quite often one can find no reason for a particular runner's demise. One moment Giuseppe Puntero is in touch with the leaders, the next moment he has vanished from the report. In a race with a single lap of 1,000 miles it was impossible to keep a lap chart or to track down every runner to discover why he had dropped out. Another problem occurs when giving the average speeds for the winners and class winners - one has so many choices each year. The trouble is that exact measurement of each route was well nigh impossible and anyway suffered from translation from kilometres into miles. Having taken a calculator to the problem, I was left with the feeling that, overall, Count 'Johnny' Lurani had got it just about right in his book on the Mille Miglia and I have used his figures except on those occasions where I have included class winners which do not appear in his book. Our thanks go to the well known motoring artist Nick Watts for allowing us to reproduce on our front cover his splendid painting *Mille Miglia 1951* depicting that years winning Ferrari 340 America being driven by Gigi Villoresi. A total of 176 fully illustrated pages.

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