

CLASSIC DRIVER

1,000 smiles on the Mille Miglia, the most beautiful race in the world

Lead
The Mille Miglia is perhaps the only race in the world that unites not only classic car collectors and enthusiasts but also communities, as villages and cities along the route turn out to cheer on the competitors. In this, the great road race's 90th anniversary, Rémi Dargegen caught all the action...

Happy birthday to you



I still think the Mille Miglia is one of the greatest races in the world. The selection of cars is truly amazing and actually complementary to that on the Tour Auto, as the age of the cars on the Mille stops almost where those on the Tour Auto begins. There could've been more significant Ferraris this year, particularly given the marque's 70th anniversary and the Mille Miglia's 90th, but that said, the 375MM, 500 Mondial, 340 America Touring, 250MM, 750 Monza, and 225S were certainly some of my most memorable machines from this year's event. Special note must also go to the triplet of Maserati A6 GCSes, Jaguar D- and C-types, Gregor Fiskens' Aston Martin DB3S, and the Alfa Romeo 8C Monza and Botticella.

The way to our hearts





Generally, the route chosen is fantastic, although, this year, it sometimes felt as though concessions were made purely for the sake of historical accuracy. For example, after the start on the first day, we seemed to pass through one uninteresting industrial town (typical of northern Italy) after another, while looking around us into the distance, there were some wonderful landscapes that we could have taken instead. Things certainly improved on the second and third days, however, when some of my favourite stretches were traversed, through wonderful, historic towns, the Apennine Mountains northwest of Florence, and, obviously, Tuscany.

No rest for the wicked



One of the most important things to emphasise about the Mille Miglia is that it's certainly no leisurely drive through Italy. The days are incredibly long, the checkpoint times are demanding, and the weather always throws up some surprises — we encountered an apocalyptic storm as we arrived into Rome on the second evening, which lasted well over an hour and turned the quaint cobbled streets into fast-running rivers. But no one complains. Each and every competitor knows exactly what he or she has signed up for, and really, it's all part of the fun. Suffice to say, you've never deserved your favourite tipple so much as when you cross the finish line on the Mille Miglia.

Besides the point



Which leads me on perfectly to my next point — too many competitors take the race too seriously. For example, on so many of the cars you can barely see the dashboards or half the windscreens because they were filled with modern navigation instruments. How can that possibly respect the spirit of the original event? The organisers should allow just one basic ‘trip master’ and, of course, the road book, to ensure fairness and authenticity. What’s more, everybody is driving like crazy to reach their checkpoints, which is simply not worth risking life and limb for. The police are very helpful escorting competitors through traffic and out of major cities, but too many people were taking big risks by driving too fast.

Until next year...



As I arrived back into Brescia on Sunday afternoon and watched each car proudly cross the finishing block, that horrible bittersweet feeling swept over me, as I realised it was over for another year. It was another four amazing and unforgettable days, which only serve to confirm that this isn’t just one of the most wonderful races in the world — it is *the* finest. *La corsa più bella del mondo...*

Gallery

