


CLASSIC DRIVER



1937 Maserati 6CM

Lot sold	USD 0	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1937	Condition	Used
Lot number	136	Location	
		Exterior colour	Other
		Car type	Other

Description

PROVENANCE

Giovanni Rocco, Naples, Italy (acquired new in 1937)
Giuseppe Negro, Torino, Italy (acquired from the above in 1938)
Charles Mortimer, UK (acquired via Charles Brackenbury by 1947)
O.W. Finch, UK (acquired circa 1952)
Frank Kennington and John Marshall, UK (acquired circa 1953)
Jack Haywood, UK (acquired in 1956)
Tim Carson, UK (acquired in 1960)
Morin Scott, UK (acquired circa 1965)
Raymond Fielding, Scotland (acquired in 1969)
Sam Mann, Englewood, New Jersey (acquired from the above in 2000)
Current Owner (acquired from the above in 2006)

RACE HISTORY

Coppa Principessa di Piemonte, April 1937, Rocco, No. 12 (DNF)
Gran Premio di Tripoli, May 1937, Rocco, No. 50 (DNF)
Targa Florio, May 1937, Rocco, No. 4 (DNF)
Circuito di Firenze, June 1937, Rocco, No. 38 (DNF)
Circuito di Milano, June 1937, Rocco, No. 38 (DNF)
Gran Premio di San Remo, July 1937, Rocco, No. 32 (3rd Place)
Coppa Acerbo, August 1937, Rocco, No. 38 (1st Place)
Circuito di Campione d'Italia, September 1937, Rocco, No. 14 (1st Place)

Coppa Edda Ciano, September 1937, Rocco, No. 22 (3rd Place)
Grand Prix de Pau, April 1938, Negro, No. 22 (DNF)
Coppa Principessa di Piemonte, June 1938, Negro, No. 6 (DNF)
Gran Premio di Milano, September 1938, Negro, No. 34 (DNF)
Targa Florio, May 1940, Corsi, No. 8 (11th Place)
Stanmer Park Speed Trials, May 1947, Mortimer
British Empire Trophy, May 1948, Seyd, No. 46 (DNS)
Shelsley Walsh Hill Climb, June 1948, Mortimer, No. 37 (DNS)

EXHIBITED

Numerous US Historic Races (2000–2006)
Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance®, August 2008
Palos Verdes Concours d'Elegance, September 2009 (First in Class)
Greystone Mansion Concours d'Elegance, April 2010 (Jesse Alexander Award)
Arizona Concours d'Elegance, January 2014 (Best in Class)

LITERATURE

David Venables, *The Racing Fifteen-Hundreds: A History of Voiturette Racing from 1931 to 1940*, 1937 racing season discussed
Federico Valeriani, *Coppa Acerbo*, discussed on p. 222
Auto Italiana, No. 15, May 30, 1937, pictured on p. 35
Auto Italiana, No. 23, August 20, 1937, pictured on pp. 24–25
RACI, No. 23, June 6, 1937, pictured on p. 9
RACI, No. 40, March 10, 1937, pictured on p. 13

THIS CAR

The voiturette races for 1,500 cc cars, which took place between 1931 and 1940, were thrilling motor sport events wildly popular with drivers and fans alike. Essentially a scaled-down Grand Prix, voiturette events featured technically advanced cars, a desirable venue, and talented drivers – a combination that made for fierce competition and memorable racing.

One of the great manufacturers of voiturette racing cars was the small firm established by the Maserati brothers in Bologna, Italy. In 1932, Maserati introduced the 4CM, a single-seater powered by either an 1,100 or 1,500 cc supercharged four-cylinder engine. This car became one of the principal competitors in voiturette racing throughout the mid-1930s.

When the new British-built ERA entered the scene in 1935, the 4CM was rendered obsolete. Ernesto Maserati recognized the need for a more competitive machine and promptly produced the 6CM, which featured a supercharged twin-cam inline six engine. The model broke new ground in voiturette design with its independent torsion bar front suspension, which greatly improved roadholding and cornering speed.

In its day, the 6CM was a worthy competitor to the ERA, especially in the hands of factory drivers. The Maserati was also popular with private entrants, as it cost substantially less than the ERA and received full support from the factory in Bologna, Italy.

For 1938, Maserati radically revised the 6CM with a more powerful engine, semi-cantilever rear springs, a lowered frame, and a more aerodynamic body. That same year, however, Alfa Romeo unveiled its new Tipo 158 and, in 1939, Mercedes-Benz built its own 1,500 cc racing car. Small manufacturers such as Maserati could not compete with these government-backed giants. Soon after, with the outbreak of WWII, the golden age of voiturette racing came to an end.

The Maserati 6CM presented here, chassis 1540, has a rich, well-documented history that can be traced to February 24, 1937, when it was sold to Giovanni Rocco, a racing driver from Naples, Italy.

Rocco, who began his racing career in 1934 with a Maserati 26B, was always loyal to the House of the Trident. In 1935, he bought a 4CS 1500 which he raced in Italy through 1936. He was among the first privateers to purchase the new 6CM, and he actively raced the car during the 1937 season.

With chassis 1540, Rocco first demonstrated his remarkable abilities as a racing driver. In May, he

outpaced all the Italian voiturette stars and led the Targa Florio until he retired on the 32nd lap with a burned valve. Though he failed to finish the race, he set the fastest lap, averaging over 121 km/h, and was awarded the RACI cup.

Rocco's next notable drive was at the Gran Premio di San Remo, where he placed 3rd, followed by back-to-back victories at Coppa Acerbo and Circuito di Campione d'Italia. The final race of the season was the Coppa Edda Ciano in September, where Rocco drove 1540 to 3rd Place.

In 1938, Giovanni Rocco was invited to drive for the Maserati factory team along with Count Carlo Felice Trossi and Aldo Marazza. No longer needing his 6CM, he sold it to Giuseppe Negro of Torino. Negro entered 1540 in the Grand Prix de Pau, the Coppa Principessa di Piemonte, and the Gran Premio di Milano, though he was plagued by mechanical issues and failed to finish every race. Some sources suggest that the 6CM may have next been loaned or rented to Secondo Corsi, who entered the 1940 Targa Florio and finished in 11th Place.

Following WWII, the 6CM was acquired by Charles Mortimer through British dealer Charles Brackenbury. Mortimer, who raced at Brooklands before WWII, owned many significant sports cars including a Bugatti Type 35B, an MG KN Special, and a Barker-bodied Bentley 6 1/2 Litre. In 1947, Mortimer campaigned the 6CM in the Stanmer Park Speed Trials; the next year, his business partner R.C. Rowland entered the Maserati in the British Empire Trophy and the Shelsley Walsh Hill Climb.

Following Mortimer, the Maserati subsequently passed among several UK owners before being sold in 1969 to Raymond Fielding of Scotland. A knowledgeable mechanical engineer with a stable of many fine competition cars, Mr. Fielding carefully preserved the 6CM during his three-decade ownership.

In 2000, well-known collector Sam Mann of Englewood, New Jersey, purchased 1540. Before bringing it to the US, Mr. Mann commissioned renowned Maserati authority Sean Danaher to restore and prepare the 6CM for historic racing. During this process, 1540 was confirmed as an exceptionally pure example, retaining its original major components. In fact, the original body panels, stamped with the factory numbers, were retained in the restoration except for the bellypans, which could not be reasonably repaired but served as patterns for replacements.

During Mr. Mann's ownership, the Maserati was campaigned in vintage races at Lime Rock, Pocono, and Laguna Seca with great success, including several wins and many top-five finishes.

The current owner, a respected collector with a passion for Maserati automobiles, acquired the 6CM in 2006. The car was then refinished in its current, very attractive silver livery, and it was invited to the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance® in 2008, where it was displayed in the Open-Wheel Race Car Class. The Maserati has since been exhibited at three other prominent shows in California and Arizona, winning a major award at each outing.

Today, this beautiful Maserati voiturette car is eligible to compete in many top-tier events, including the Goodwood Trophy, the Monaco Historic Grand Prix, and many other racing series in Europe and the US. It is also a natural choice for concours d'elegance in light of its rich history and exquisite presentation, with the many jewel-like features that characterize prewar Maserati racing cars.

Few formula cars from the 1930s have survived their racing careers at all, and fewer still in such complete, intact, and original order as this marvelous Maserati. That it has been carefully documented by Dr. Adolfo Orsi Jr., as well as sympathetically and expertly restored, makes it an ideal acquisition for collectors and racers alike.

A historic and genuine car, built by one of the great Italian marques during the zenith of European voiturette racing, this 6CM is a true prize.

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