

ENZO ANSELMO FERRARI was born on February 18, 1898, and grew up surrounded by craftsmen who were artists in metal - people like Weber and Maserati, names still famous in the world of motoring.

The Ferrari family were prosperous metalworkers in Modena, Italy - a city famous for its craftsmen. They were among the first in the district to own a motor car.

In the public mind, Enzo Ferrari was a brilliant designer who produced generations of classic racing and sports cars which carried his name to victory all over the world. Nothing could be further from the truth. As Enzo himself once said "I have never considered myself a designer or an inventor, but only the one who gets things moving and keeps them running."

Enzo Ferrari was as much a coordinator and manipulator as a developer. All of his company's most brilliant designs were the work of others. Enzo's work of genius was to keep his organisation functioning over nearly five decades, through a mixture of intrigue, persuasion and sheer determination.



ENZO FERRARI

Sir Winston Churchill once said that all great men have unhappy childhoods - in reaction to the poverty and powerlessness of their personal lives, they seek to build rich empires

admired by the outside world. This seems certainly true for Enzo Ferrari, whose childhood ended abruptly.

Enzo's father died of pneumonia in 1916, and Enzo's older brother, Dino, died in a military hospital soon after. The family business went bankrupt. Enzo joined the army and

was posted to the mountain regiment where he spent the rest of the war shoeing mules.

His first brush with the motor industry was in Turin immediately after the war when he unsuccessfully applied for a job at Fiat. While working as a vehicle delivery man in Bologna, Enzo met racing driver Ugo Sivocci, who hired him as an assistant. Although Enzo was to participate in a number of races over the following years, his career as a driver never amounted to much.

It was Enzo's association with Alfa Romeo that established him as a key player in the international racing circuit. His initial relationship with Alfa Romeo was as an exclusive dealer for the region around Modena. Gradually his motoring

interests grew, both as a dealer and racing promoter, until he travelled almost continuously.

Enzo was married in 1923, but as Enzo's biographer Brock Yates put it: "It is reasonable to assume that Enzo was brought up in a relatively normal Italian household, with Papa Ferrari operating as the undisputed despot, demanding respect from his children and silent, grovelling subservience from [his wife]....Mothers were worshipped, wives tolerated and other women treated as objects of either scorn or lust, or both. Women, to men like Ferrari and his forebears, fell into two simplistic categories: the chaste females who produced them and lustful, low-life harlots from whom they selected their mistresses and concubines."

Although Enzo had only one legitimate child - his son Dino - there were almost certainly unknown others (Ferrari's mistress, Lina Lardi, gave birth to Enzo's other known son, Piero, in 1945).



FERRARI

Official name: Ferrari S.p.A.

Owned by: Fiat (85%)
 • Piero Ferrari (10%)
 • Mubadala Development Co (5%).

Current situation: Ferrari is currently a marginally profitable arm of the financially shaky Fiat group. However, a global economic downturn is likely to see Ferrari's sales slashed. Economic depressions are always tough for luxury carmakers.

Chances of survival: Okay. Regardless of what happens to Fiat, it's inconceivable that Italy would let Ferrari go •



Enzo's career took off when he formed a racing company - *Scuderia* (meaning 'racing stable') *Ferrari* - with Alfa Romeo and several rich local noblemen in 1929. The new partnership produced high-performance Alfas raced by the company's hired drivers. As a sideline, Enzo & his wife produced equivalent road cars for wealthy amateurs.

Ferrari's return to Modena was something of a triumphant return, and carried with it the strong element of 'payback'. To quote Brock Yates:

"...vendetta was a theme that ran throughout his life, the notion that no slight would go unforgotten, that no insult would go unpaid, and that honour in such situations transcended all practical needs... This same refusal to forget would cause him to patiently wait fifty years - half a century - before he believed Fiat's debt to him, incurred by their refusal to hire him in 1918, was fully repaid."

There were problems with the Alfa relationship from the start. However much the Alfa management valued its relationship with Enzo, *Scuderia Ferrari* was in direct competition with its own racing department, both on and off the racetrack, for they were also competing for the same sponsorship money from companies like Champion Spark Plugs.

The *Scuderia Ferrari* team did moderately well, considering the times. There were several successes, although major victories were few. That's hardly surprising when you consider what the team was up against. First, Alfa Romeo was sometimes racing in competition with Ferrari. Further, Ferrari had to struggle to keep his own racing operation working; the fascist dictator Mussolini was pressuring all car companies to go into production of military hardware instead. Racing drivers died frequently. The world's economy was in serious depression. The fact that *Scuderia Ferrari* kept going, let alone won anything, was a considerable feat.

Although Enzo was no slug when it came to manipulating business relationships to his own advantage, Alfa Romeo was never innocent either. Ferrari was often given unproven machines to race, in order to save face if the new machines broke down. Supply of new racing equipment that looked like winning, however, was often kept for Alfa's own team.



ENZO FERRARI

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In 1932, Enzo's son Alfredo (almost always known by the nickname Dino) was born. The other important event in Enzo's life was the *Mille Miglia* (thousand mile) race. Alfa & Ferrari worked together to snatch back this all-important prize from Mercedes, which had won the previous year. The cooperation

worked; Alfa Romeo, using one of Enzo's drivers, sped to victory, while Ferrari team members came second. Just one year later, however, Alfa's management initially declined to pass over the new P3 models, leaving the *Scuderia Ferrari* team trying to race with dated racing technology.

Despite this handicap, the *Scuderia* team put on a brave showing at the Monaco Grand Prix, and might easily have won had the engine of the outdated 8C Monza not disintegrated on the last lap. Enzo's drivers persevered, but they lost because they were driving old cars. One by one they quit. Ferrari desperately hired replacement drivers, and eventually got his P3 racing cars from Alfa Romeo, which had previously simply stored them after withdrawing from racing.

Tragically, Enzo lost three of his drivers to road crashes in a single year, yet he kept racing. With his new cars, he was successful. *Scuderia Ferrari* was now the official Alfa Romeo racing department.

Enzo joined the Fascist Party in 1934. Given his total non-involvement in politics up to this point it is probably safe to say that this was a matter of good business; fascists controlled much of Italy's business world and especially Alfa Romeo. However, he freely used his company's newsletter for Fascist promotions over the next few years.

From 1933 till 1938, The *Scuderia Ferrari* team with *Nuvolari* fought an increasingly uneven battle against the German teams of Daimler-Benz and Auto Union. Two things brought this event about. One was a French rule designed to limit the seemingly-out-of-control speed of many racing cars by limiting them to a maximum weight of 750kg. This was quickly noted as a golden opportunity by German designers Ferdinand Porsche and Dr. Hans Nibel, of Daimler-Benz. Instead of the clumsy old designs which were dominating European motor racing at the time, why not put



hugely powerful engines into super-lightweight cars?

Hitler backed these good ideas with Deutschmarks. He had decided that the honour of the German nation was at stake, and therefore the Germans had to win all races; with massive state and private funding, that's more or less what happened. Although Hitler's money was nowhere near enough to cover the cost of the new racing machines, both companies enjoyed hugely profitable relationships with the German government, notably in the production of war equipment and loans on warmly generous terms.

A weary Ferrari gave up the uneven contest in 1938 and driver Nuvolari went off to race for Auto Union. Enzo decided to move to a different class of racing – the smaller *voiturette* (small car) class. The resultant car, the Alfa 158, was a great success both before and after the war. The car was still an Alfa Romeo, and Enzo's long rivalry with the Alfa engineers, notably Wilfredo Ricart, came to a head in 1939; Enzo lost. Alfa's arrangement with Ferrari was soon dead and buried.

Enzo then set about producing his own racing cars. His contract with Alfa stopped him from racing under his own name for four years, so he formed a new company – Auto Avio Costruzione. Enzo's first customer was one Alberto Ascari, who wanted a car to race in the 1940 Mille Miglia. Ferrari's new designer, Alberto Massimino, reworked a Fiat saloon to become the Auto Avia 815. Two were produced, but both retired from the race with engine failure.

Before further development could take place, the war intervened and until 1943 Ferrari's company survived by producing cheap knock-offs of a range of German machine tools.

With the war lost for Italy, Enzo Ferrari and team did a post-mortem on the car which had failed them just

before the war. From the death of the Auto Avia 815, the 125 Ferrari Sport was born, lovingly brought into the world by master craftsmen Gioachino Colombo and Luigi Bazzi, while Enzo himself indulged his passions for intrigue, manipulation and women.

The 125 was the first vehicle to carry the name Ferrari and the legendary prancing horse logo. The 125 was built at Ferrari's new plant among the orchards at Maranello (he moved there in 1943, partly to escape the Allied bombing raids on Modena).

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The new car was powered by a tiny V12 engine, with a capacity of just 1.5 litres – less than many modern small cars. The bodies of the new Ferrari may have lacked the elegance of later models, but after failing to finish in its first race, the 125, in the hands of 54-year-old Tazio Nuvolari, flew to victory at Forlì & Parma.*

Ferrari's next car, the 166, used the same engine design but with a two-litre capacity, and brought victory at Le Mans in 1949. Out of the racing cars sprung the Ferrari road cars. This process of building racing cars and then building street-legal versions has characterised Ferrari ever since.

However, it would be a big mistake to assume that Ferrari's success was due to superior technology. That's simply not true. Despite a public image of Ferrari the wizard technologist, the opposite was probably more accurate. Until Fiat took over many years later, Ferrari racing cars only won when there was no serious opposition – for example, after the war when the Germans were banned and Alfa Romeo was too broke to compete.

As soon as the Germans returned to racing they wiped the floor with Ferrari, as did the tiny British racing teams, whose individual budgets wouldn't have paid for Enzo's electricity bill.

The early Ferrari road cars were few and far between, and no two were the same. This changed with the 250GT in 1954. With a body designed by the noted designer Pininfarina, the 250 has a timeless elegance combined with power that still impresses today.

Enzo Ferrari's legendary status in Italy (he was nicknamed 'the pope') had as much to do with Italy's own inferiority complex as it had to do with his cars. The simple fact is, after World War II, no one took Italy seriously. Italian society was a shambles, its politics a joke while its engineering was laughed at by the rest of Europe. Yet, of course, the Italians had talent, pride and a strong nationalism. It was this sense of Italian machismo that Enzo exploited so freely. A victory for Ferrari was a victory for Italy.

The early 1950s were sweet years for Ferrari; his cars achieved the never-beaten record of nine consecutive grand prix victories. However, the return of Mercedes in 1954 left Ferrari high and dry – a disaster that hurt two ways. First, Ferraris won no significant races for two years, then this humiliation hurt the sales of Ferrari road cars.

For the first of several times, Ferrari was rescued by Fiat owner Gianni Agnelli, who took over the



production of Ferrari road cars and donated seven Lancia grand prix cars which Agnelli had acquired as part of his takeover of the bankrupt Lancia company. The Lancias were raced to victory as Lancia-Ferraris, despite the fact that Ferrari's only contribution was the badge on the front.

Enzo also made good use of the \$100,000 or so per year he got from Agnelli, and set about designing the cars that kept Ferrari in the limelight.

Ferrari's son, Dino, died of an unidentified neurological disease in 1956.

Despite winning world championships in 1956, 1958, 1961 & 1964, Ferrari racing cars were notable not for their sophistication, but for their crudity compared to their opposition. Enzo Ferrari believed, in an extraordinarily naive fashion, that power alone would win him races.

Virtually every popular racing improvement was added to Ferrari racing cars years after Ferrari's rivals had used them successfully. When improvements were finally added, they were usually agreed to only after Ferrari had been wiped out in yet another race.

Englishman Harvey Postlethwaite, who came to work for Ferrari in 1981, discovered the strange paradox of a highly efficient design team working at computers while the Ferrari boss, Enzo himself, resisted most attempts at improving the cars. To quote Postlethwaite: "There was no interest on Ferrari's part in chassis, aerodynamics or brakes. He lived in the past, totally distracted by horsepower to the exclusion of all else."

One of the most extraordinary things about Enzo Ferrari, however, is that he almost always managed to win the public relations race with the rest of the motoring world. To this day most people believe that Ferrari racing cars have usually been winners,

when the opposite has more often been the case.

Enzo Ferarri built himself an international image as the quintessential Italian craftsman, driver and builder of successful precision racing machines. Most of Ferrari's myth was a distortion or often completely untrue. The purpose of the myth was partly to sell cars, but mostly to boost the seemingly insatiable ego of a man whose childhood had suddenly ended in death and bankruptcy.

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Most extraordinary of all was how well Ferrari kept the world conned. A survey in 1980 showed that 30% of all

people attending Grand Prix races came solely to watch the Ferraris.

Ferrari needed his street cars, but they held almost no interest for him. Ferrari's street cars have always held an extraordinary mystique, despite the fact that many pre-Fiat examples were shoddily put together and suffered from numerous problems, not the least of which was bad rust.

Part of the reason for the shoddiness of the Ferrari street cars was simply that Enzo didn't give a toss about his customers. He regarded his clients as rich fools who were there simply to finance his motor racing efforts, and therefore the glory of (Enzo) Ferrari's name.

Speaking of the early-'60s 330GT models, Brock said "Beneath the flash and glamour of the engines and the Prancing Horse label lay machines made up of simple welded tube chassis and components often cheaply or badly fabricated. The bodies were inclined to rust and leak and no-one, not even the best mechanics, could figure out the electrical wiring that had apparently been improvised on each automobile.

"The clutches were the true Achilles' heel, and the [Ferrari dealer] Chinettis were lucky to escape a major lawsuit when one exploded and tore off a woman's foot. Somehow they avoided litigation by replacing the automobile and selling the damaged machine to another unwitting customer."

After discussions with, among others, the Ford Motor Co, Ferrari ended up selling out to Fiat in 1969 for far less than the \$20 million or so that Ford had offered. The reason: Ford would not let Ferrari run the racing department.

For the next 20 years Enzo ran an often-unsuccessful and staggeringly expensive racing department while Fiat did a better job of running his road car factory (the agreement allowed Fiat to take a 90% holding in Ferrari, but only after Enzo's death).



Ferrari fell into decline as its founder aged. The quality control slipped in the road car factories. The racing victories fell away. Most of Ferrari's best drivers left in disgust. Enzo continually wasted precious energy trying to blacken the names of his ex-drivers and other enemies. His death in 1988 left an organisation on the point of collapse.

Gordon Murray, the designer of the world's fastest road car, the McLaren F1, was once asked if the F1 would resemble a Ferrari F40. "I don't think so," he replied, "there's no one at McLaren who can weld that badly."

And it's sadly true that models like the Ferrari Testarossa and 348 failed to deliver a car that was anything like what the customers had the right to expect. Build quality & reliability were shocking on some cars. Things like dashboard switches were simply pinched from budget Fiat models. The Testarossa, for all its power, handled poorly for a car of its price, while the 348 was sometimes dangerously difficult to control at speed.

Worse, the Japs were baying at Ferrari's heels both on and off the racetrack. Honda-powered racing cars cruised comfortably to victory, while the Honda emulation of the Ferrari sports car – the NSX – terrified Ferrari. It was as fast, handled beautifully, was comfortable and yet had that spunky red look of power that people had grown to associate exclusively with Ferrari. The Yanks loved it.

Ferrari's rescue in 1991 came from Fiat & Toyota. Fiat head Gianni Agnelli appointed a lawyer to run Ferrari – but not just any lawyer. Luca Cordero Di Montezemolo started with Ferrari in 1973 as its Formula One race team manager. He worked closely with old man Enzo himself, and like Enzo he is an organiser & motivator.

"Enzo Ferrari was like a grandfather to me... Can you imagine being team manager for Ferrari at the age of 25?I worked with a lot of pressure..

but on the other hand I was comfortable because I knew that Mr Ferrari was 100% behind me."

One of Di Montezemolo's first acts as President was to hire Fiat expert Franco Canna and two production gurus from Toyota.

In classic Japanese style, production at the factory was radically changed. The factory now worked as three teams – the design team, the improvement team and the assembly-line team.

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Each team was responsible as a whole for ensuring the quality of the products they produced. Team leaders were also expected to consult, coordinate decisions and make sure they were carried out effectively.

The results speak for themselves: the Ferrari range, while still temperamental in a typically Italian way, at least offers supercar quality for its supercar price.

Ferrari's racing cars are winning races again, although they face heavy competition and future victories are by no means certain.

The interesting thing about the Ferrari organisation is that its international image as a maker of quality high-performance machines remains largely untarnished. Why? Because people want to believe the Ferrari myth.

Look at a Ferrari. No other car stirs the passions so easily, no other car conveys such effortless status, no other car offers such a promise of unbridled power.

The secret lies in the private passions of sensible men and women who labour as stockbrokers and merchant bankers by day, but dream of another life by night – a world of power and sensuality that Ferraris promise to fulfil.

So old man Ferrari was an egotistical old charlatan? Big deal. His cars are art objects, and he effortlessly sold the world his vision of Italian lust & splendour. In a world increasingly fixated with practicality, Ferrari passed to us his emperor's garland of self-indulgence.

In an ocean of faceless, mass-produced vehicles, Ferrari cars say that you are a worthwhile, effective individual. That was something Enzo always wanted to believe about himself •

