

# Pour Ferrari

Girard-Perregaux's 10-year affair with the Maranello marque

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A decade on from the first of Girard-Perregaux's iconic 'pour Ferrari' models, QP talked exclusively to its President – a near-Godfather of watchmaking – Luigi 'Gino' Macaluso. Against the backdrop of the Italian Grand Prix, the former rally champion reveals a very personal involvement in the development of 'Girard-Perregaux pour Ferrari' – one of the most deep-rooted and successful relationships to have been struck between great marques.



This year's 'pour Ferrari' model, in tribute to Enzo Ferrari himself, features Girard-Perregaux's classic signature movement: Tourbillon with Three Gold Bridges, driving a chronograph with a perpetual calendar (SFr.250,000).



Ferrari's new Scaglietti, whose oval side-panels are said to have been influenced by Girard-Perregaux's 375 MM.

Last year I was fortunate enough to attend the Italian Grand Prix in Monza accompanied by Luigi 'Gino' Macaluso. Macaluso is one of the most interesting watch bosses in the business. With Girard-Perregaux and JeanRichard he consistently produces watches that manage to incorporate horological virtuosity, scrupulous excellence of construction, innovative design and just the right amount of glamour. He is also a former rally champion, a noted and important figure in the complex hierarchy of Italian motor sport and – to judge from the reception he got as he walked through the festival of corporate glamour that is the F1 paddock scene – a much cherished individual.

From the affectionate "Ciao Gino!" to the cheerfully respectful "Ciao Presidente," ambling through the paddock of the Italian Grand Prix in the company of Macaluso is not unlike strolling with the Queen or the Prince of Wales through the Royal Enclosure at Ascot. Tall, tanned playboys in expensive, high-collared shirts detach themselves from expensive, tanned women in short denim skirts to shake his

hand. Crisply blazered businessmen remove their Persols to say hello. Motorsport legends including Jean Alesi rush up to greet him enthusiastically. Even Bernie Ecclestone is mildly solicitous.

By contrast, a trio of film stars – Dennis Hopper, Jeremy Irons and Laurence Fishburne – who have been assembled to give the Williams team a bit of glamour, pass through the crowd anonymously. And yet this tall, bearded man in a jacket and tie continues on, unperturbed, smiling slightly, almost as if embarrassed by the attention he is generating.

### Petrol roots

By now, Macaluso should be used to public recognition by motorsport fans and professionals. While today he works in watchmaking, he once made his living at the wheel. As an architecture student at Turin University he was identified as a rally driver of precocious potential and during the early 1970s was a works driver for Fiat, winning the European Rally Championship once as well as a couple of Italian titles.

'Girard-Perregaux pour Ferrari' was not to be a meretricious exercise in brand extension, limited to sticking a prancing horse onto a dial. These watches are made strictly on Macaluso's terms.

"At the beginning my passion was motor-bikes," he says of his introduction to motorsport, adding self-deprecatingly: "I was not good; I had a lot of accidents." However his performance on a motorbike was no barrier to his success as a rally driver, and at a distance of over 30 years he looks back on the early '70s with immense fondness and not a little nostalgia. "It was a fantastic period of friends and romance. It was a great adventure and a fantastic school – very important for the education of the character," he says, adding that this period was when the sport was becoming more rigorously professional. "These days everyone is so professional; back then, it was just beginning and things were being taken to extremes. I lost friends in fires and crashes. Racing is a highly intriguing but very tough job. You need the motivation, especially when you are a professional driver."

In this and indeed many other things, Macaluso is the diametric opposite of Luca di Montezemolo, who happens to be one of his oldest friends. The Ferrari and Fiat boss is the consummate charismatic showman. Macaluso is quiet, dignified and thoughtful; a quizzical smile playing around his features, speaking in soft, measured tones. There is the calm of a man whose outlook on life is tempered by experience.

### A connection is made

However, for the last decade these two very different men have collaborated on one of the most intriguing projects to link *haute horlogerie* and expensive motor

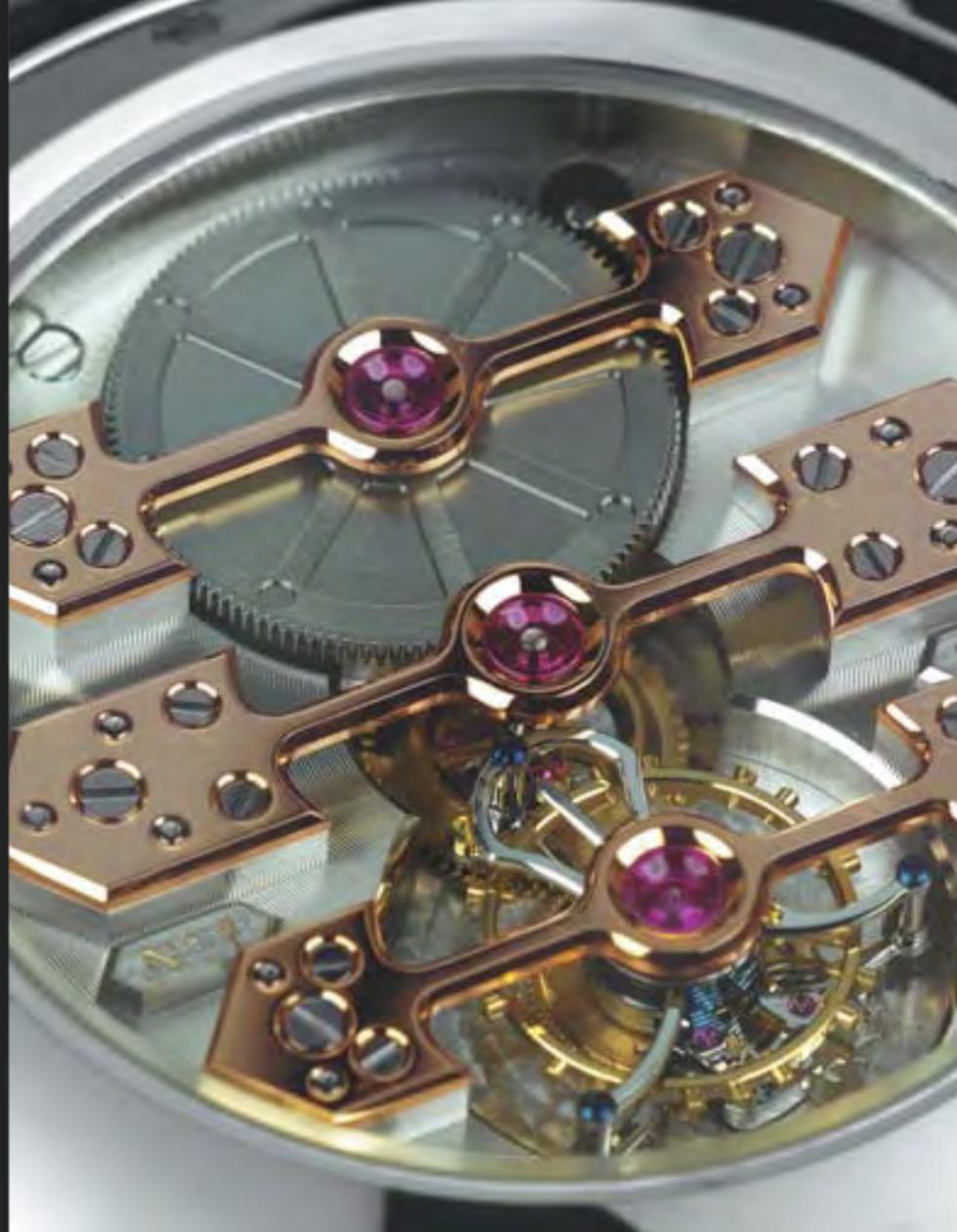
cars. Today, co-branding projects between manufacturers of luxury cars and watch-makers are plentiful: the deal brokered between Bentley and Breitling has practically resulted in the creation of what is, *de facto*, an entirely new brand, Breitling for Bentley. Maserati has teamed up with Audemars Piguet; TAG Heuer is working with Mercedes; and Michel Parmigiani's eponymous brand has come up with a quite revolutionary concept for Bugatti.

The link between premium watchmaking and top-end motorcars was almost completely unexploited at the beginning of the 1990s. But then Ferrari approached Gino Macaluso. Macaluso had just bought Girard-Perregaux and his friend Luca di Montezemolo had recently taken over Ferrari. "When he arrived at Ferrari in 1991 Luca had a problem," explains Macaluso. "The trademark was not well controlled. Everyone used the trademark without any control by the company and it was the same thing for the watches. Luca and I have a common friend, Gianni Bulgari [!], who called me and said 'Gino, what do you think about making a watch for Luca at Ferrari?'"

Much as he wanted to help his old friend di Montezemolo, Macaluso had reservations and responded cautiously. "I said it could be interesting, but the problem was that there were a lot of other Ferrari watches on the market. I thought about it, called Luca back and said 'OK it could be possible, but we have to design a very special watch; a watch that is very personalised, with a very interesting movement.'"



Luigi 'Gino' Macaluso – combining his passion for motorsport and a shrewd approach to watchmaking.



As well as commemorating their 10-year partnership, the advanced technology of Girard-Perregaux's Enzo Ferrari watch is a nod to that of Ferrari's Enzo car. The barrel-drum even bears a motif from the Enzo's engine, seen here suspended from the first bridge in the classic Tourbillon with Three Gold Bridges movement, visible through the sapphire-glass caseback.

### Matching standards

As long as Macaluso was making watches for Ferrari it was to be on his terms: this was not going to be some meretricious exercise in brand extension, limited to sticking a prancing horse onto a watch dial. For a start it was to be called 'Girard-Perregaux pour Ferrari', appreciating that the customers of Ferrari would not be taken in by a facile piece of badge engineering. Instead, Girard-Perregaux pour Ferrari was envisaged as a concept that was worthy of both the most exigent standards of watchmaking and the quasi-mythological status of Ferrari's cars. "My opinion of Ferrari is very high," explains Macaluso, whose car collection includes examples of the famous Maranello marque; "For me it represents the height of technology, design, performance and emotion. I said to Luca, 'It has to be the 456 of the watches.'"

### Establishing a legend

The first Girard-Perregaux pour Ferrari was designed in 1993: a gold automatic chronograph rattrapante. "When I presented the watches in Maranello, Luca was absolutely satisfied and we decided to start with a series of 499 pieces (Mr Ferrari typically states that it is necessary to produce one car less than the needs of the market!)." At the time, the influence of Enzo Ferrari himself was still very strong at Maranello and a year later the watch made its debut. "We presented it in 1994 in Place Girardet in La Chaux-de-Fonds with Enzo Ferrari's son Piero and we sold the entire production in two weeks."

The project was continued with a perpetual calendar chronograph, housed in the same case – the F50 (actually launched prior to the car itself). All the time, the relationship between Ferrari and



(Left) The 250 GT Tour de France, from 1997 – a chronograph with both the seconds counter and sweep-seconds hand at the centre. (Right) The first of the 'Girard-Perregaux pour Ferrari' series, launched in 1994: a gold, automatic chronograph rattrapante.

Girard-Perregaux deepened. "The relationship with Ferrari has never been based on the business side; it has always been a passionate story really and sometimes I was in strange situations in both the USA and Hong Kong; when the Ferrari subsidiary asked to launch a car at the same time as the watch, for instance. On two occasions I presented the car and the Ferrari CEO presented the watch."

In 1997, Macaluso took a little historical detour to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Scuderia Ferrari – the motor racing team run by Ferrari using Alfa Romeo cars, which preceded Ferrari's time as a motor manufacturer under his own name. "After that we continued to dedicate watches to the masterpieces of Ferrari: the 250 Tour de France, 250 Testarossa, 250 Le Mans, etc. At the same time I decided that I would like to conduct special research into the materials. We worked very closely with the Formula 1 team in order to understand the materials they use for Formula 1 engines and then we started a collection of watches based on the technological aspects. Now we have a special alloy

of aluminium specially produced for us that we call GP Al, and we were also able to offer the first example of dial in carbon fibre."

### 375 MM

It was about this time that Macaluso began to adopt a slightly more intellectual approach to the watches he was making for Ferrari, relating them to various engines. It is an example of the sort of intellectual *jeux d'esprit* so characteristic of Macaluso and his watches. However it took a little effort to persuade the rather more literally minded di Montezemolo. "At a certain moment Luca said, 'Do you not think what you are doing now is too subliminal?' I agreed that it was subliminal but I also believe that it is important to go a little bit deeper in the matter."

No watch in the Girard-Perregaux pour Ferrari series is more eloquent testimony to

Roberto Rossellini took a very keen interest in motor racing and participated in such prestige events as the Mille Miglia. And so it was that Pinin Farina created the Ferrari 375 Mille Miglia, for Rossellini's wife Ingrid Bergman. Only one model was built, but its sunken oval side-panels were enough to inspire Girard-Perregaux and subsequently Ferrari, design-wise.





The 375 MM monopusher chronograph. Its lugs' relation to the case resembles and inspired design elements of the 375 Mille Miglia and new Ferrari Scaglietti, respectively.

that than the 375 MM; a rectangular monopusher chronograph. The way Macaluso tells the story of the creation of this watch shows just how much personal effort, care and thought he puts into his watches. "I didn't want to create a massive rectangular watch. The movement was very difficult and when the time came to present the watch to Luca I became worried and called Franco Cologni and said I think it is too close to the Cartier Tank."

"I was really upset, alone in my office. However, inspiration soon came to cut the lugs. I called the chauffeur and after about 25 minutes' very fast drive to the prototype workshop I stayed and watched the evolution, second by second. I then came back and called Franco and said 'Franco I think I have resolved the problem.' After that, I took the watch and asked my son Stefano what it could be related to. And Stefano said it reminded him of a car he had seen in a book about Pinin Farina and Ferrari; he took the book and showed me the car: the 375 Mille Miglia."

"It was a one-off prototype car with a Formula 1 engine, commissioned by [celebrated film director Roberto] Rossellini for his wife Ingrid Bergman. It was a special metallic colour which you can still order: Ingrid Grey. I showed it to Luca and he said it was a fabulous car and remembered that it had an oval shape on the side. He said 'I have to call Pinin Farina as I would like to use the shape for the new

car with four seats.'" That car was the Scaglietti, which made its debut this year. A rare example of watch design influencing car design, rather than *vice versa*.

### In tribute

If the 375 MM speaks of a romantic age when coachbuilders could make entirely *sui generis* bodywork on a bespoke basis, Macaluso's most recent watch for the cars from Maranello is an altogether more current and contemporary concept. The Enzo is the most arresting of Girard-Perregaux watches yet to appear. With its eye-catching polychromatic subdials, this is perhaps the ultimate Girard-Perregaux pour Ferrari: perpetual calendar, Tourbillon with Three Gold Bridges, moonphase and chronograph. As ever, the little touches set it apart: a motif from the Enzo engine is recreated on the watch's barrel drum; the box and electronic winding system recall the pistons and carbon-fibre chassis of the Enzo ultra-supercar.

It is 10 years since the first Girard-Perregaux pour Ferrari made its appearance and it would seem that with the Enzo a destination has been reached. However, Macaluso feels that his work for Ferrari is not over just quite yet. "I am not yet finished," he says. "I hope that I can continue to produce at least three other watches to salute the 250 short wheel-base, the F40, and the 250 GTO." Horolophiles – as well as petrol heads – should be in for a treat. ○