



The Ferrari 500 that has been drove by Alberto Ascari, in his victory on the British G.P., raced on the Silverstone circuit, in the 19th of July 1952 (acrylic paint with aerograph on paper).

3- Ferrari 500 (1952/3)

With the abandonment of competition from Alfa Corse, in late 1951, the shortage of official teams for next year's World Championship of Drivers began to worry the races organizers. At the time, its revenues were derived, mainly, from spectators who they could attract the circuits. After the announcement of the withdrawal of BRM in early 1952, CSI (Commission Sportive Internationale, the commission of FIA in charge of motor sport) was then forced to resort to Formula 2 vehicles, 2 liter and normally aspirated, to save the Championship and keep the appointments with the organizers.

Ferrari had the right car for the new technical regulation, with its 500 model (the name, as was usual in the Scuderia, came from the capacity of each of the four cylinders of its engine) premiered the previous year.

Designed by Aurelio Lampredi, who had replaced in 1951, Gioachino Colombo ahead of the technical department of the company, the little Ferrari had a relatively simple and extremely reliable 2 liter and 4-cylinders engine, which revealed, from the beginning, very competitive. The engine was equipped, on its origin, with four Weber carburetors, and the two overhead valves per cylinder where controlled by two camshafts at the head. The ignition was made by two spark plugs per cylinder and delivered 165 hp at 7,000 rpm. It reached, at the end of its development, 185 PS at 7,500 rpm, when

F1 World Champions- Ferrari 500 (1952/3)

equipped with two double throat Weber carburetors. Over the previous 2-liter and 12 cylinders in V engine, that powered the Ferrari 166, the new engine stood out for excellent torque, very suitable to the characteristics of the time circuits, the lower weight and by having less about two thirds of the moving parts of its predecessor, with considerable gains in reducing friction losses and ease and economy of maintenance.

The engine was mounted in front position, the traditional at that time, of a tubular chassis, which was coated with a sleek aluminum body. The suspensions resorted to a transverse spring and overlapping quads, in the front and a rigid system in Pont De Dion, with two longitudinal bars and a transverse spring in the rear.

He debuted with a victory in the GP of Modena in September 1951.

Entered by the Scuderia in the World Championship of Drivers, the Tipo 500 occupied the first four places in the championship in 1952, with the first three with the factory drivers, Ascari, Farina and Taruffi, in this order and the fourth with a private driver, Rudy Fisher!

The following year the competition was more organized and did not allowed the same domain, but could not prevent Ascari to win, between 1952 and 53, nine successive GP, if we exclude the Indianapolis 500 and became the first double champion of the World.

Ferrari built eleven Tipo 500 chassis (5 for the factory team and 6 for sale to private drivers) that won 30 of the 33 races in which they participate, which, despite the weak opposition, reveals an impressive efficacy. Its great mechanical simplicity, allowing an easy and inexpensive maintenance and its extraordinary reliability helped build the image of quality of the Scuderia vehicles.

The first Ferrari to win a World Championship was thus a Formula 2 and revealed, to the leaders of the Scuderia, the path to success that still endures today, based on the excellent organization, the greater technical perfectionism, the best preparation and maintenance and the chose, in every moment, of the best drivers of his time.

When the new technical regulations entered, in 1954, they limited the participation in the World Championship of Drivers to the Formula 1 vehicles of 2.5 liters normally aspirated or 750cc supercharged, Ferrari converted some of the 500 models into the new 625, by adapting them to the new engines.

Against the powerful Mercedes, Ferrari could do little and got only one win in 1954 and another in 1955, with Maurice Trintignan to take the 625 to its last success at the Monaco GP.

In the next year the Scuderia aligned the D50's, from Lancia, which had abandoned the competition and that, driven by Fangio, would bring back the glory of a World Championship to the Maranello factory.

António Eiras© 2014