

Cisitalia 360 Grand Prix Car

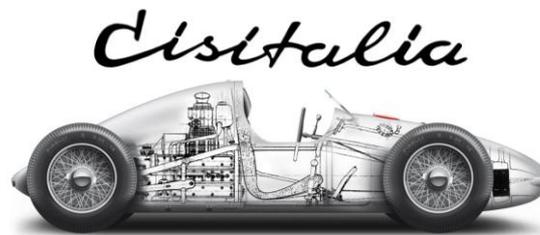
Monoposto Racecar

Built 1947/48

Engine:	Opposed 12 cylinder 180° V-engine, watercooled, two Centric superchargers, two Weber downdraft carburetors
Capacity;	1.493 ccm
Max. Power:	400-450 hp at 10.500 – 12.000 rpm
Max. Torque:	370 Nm at 6.000 rpm
Drive System:	Rear with Front wheel drive at will of driver
Gearbox:	5 speed sequential
Length:	3900 mm
Height:	1130 mm
Wheelbase:	2590 mm
Dry weight:	650 kg
Top Speed:	ca. 300 km/h
Year:	1947/1948
Number built:	2

The history of the project 360 starts February 23rd, 1947 when the Italian entrepreneur Piero Dusio, owner of the car company Cisitalia (*Compagnia – other sources call it Consortio - Industriale Sportivo Italiana*), signed an agreement with Porsche Konstruktionen, Gmünd, Austria for the design of a Grand Prix car corresponding to the rules of the Formula One from 1950, i.e. 1.500 cc supercharged or 4.500 cc normal aspirated. Both Dusio and the Porsche design team preferred the supercharged version.

The Porsche design office under supervision of Karl Rabe, Ferdinand Porsche's chief designer since 1913, with all its experience from the AUTO UNION GP cars created a 1.500 cc, opposed 12 cylinder, 180° V engine, watercooled, aspirated by two Centric superchargers, delivering up to 2,8 bar, fed by two Weber downdraft carbs, mounted deep in the tubular space frame. Calculated from a one cylinder test engine the power output was to be 400 to 450 hp, allowing a top speed up to 300 km/h at 10.500 to 12.000 rpm. In order to be able to put the amazing torque on the street surface while using those days narrow tires the driver was able to engage additional front wheel drive at will by means of a lever behind the steering wheel. The gearbox designed by Leopold Schmid was an innovation, too, later well known as Porsche synchronisation, this one was to be shifted sequential. The body was made from electron with the frame from chromium molybdenum steel. Overall independent



wheel suspension with Porsche type trailing arms on torsion bars in the front and parallel acting arms in the rear operated by torsion bars, too.

Dusio had never taken into account the problems and expenses of physically executing a design like this to a running GP car and consequently suffered serious economic problems already in 1948.

Nevertheless the Cisitalia people with the help of former Porsche colleague Robert Eberan von Eberhorst were able to complete one car and to produce the major components for the second one, though this was never assembled. When Dusio was invited by Juan Peron to start Argentinian Motor Industry he took the finished car to Argentina and in 1953 it was on the road for the first time. It achieved the South American Speed Record with 233 km/h, far away from the expected top speed of 300 km/h. A second attempt was equally unsuccessful and after Peron had to resign from presidency the car came into private ownership and was finally sold to Porsche, where it found a prominent place in their museum.

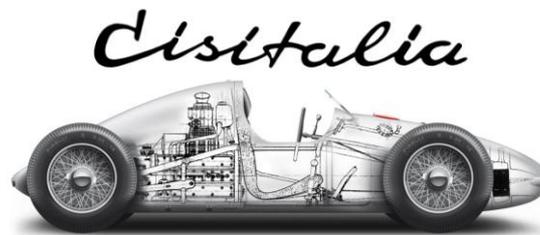
The components of the second car were left back in Italy and in 1968 they were discovered in a Volkswagen dealership in Raconigi near Turin by Italian collector Corrado Cupellini, at that time partnered with Count Giovanni Lurani. After they had realised that it was impossible to complete and assemble the car with the funds available and the technology of the late sixties, they decided to sell it and put an ad in the British magazine MOTOR. Three months later Corrado Cupellini received a phone call from England by a Mr. Tom Wheatcroft – unknown to Cupellini – telling he would come to Bergamo the coming Thursday at 8 pm. When Cupellini went down to the street he realised a caravan with two more or less sleeping children of app. 10 to 12 years. He had not taken any notice of a gentleman in scruffy old clothes walking nearby.

Tom Wheatcroft introduced himself as the prospective buyer and within short time they agreed in a purchase price of 8.000 Pounds Sterling which Tom Wheatcroft paid immediately in one pound notes in cash. Cupellini recalls that he asked Tom Wheatcroft whether the notes came from a robbery of British Churches.

Kevin Wheatcroft told Martin Schröder that the parts were stored in the third floor of a storey building and that he was allowed to carry the steering wheel down to the car.

Tom Wheatcroft commissioned a body to be made from scratch by well known panel beater John Cole. The chassis and suspension were completed, the existing engine parts were put together to a nice display with the beautiful Hirth crankshaft presented separately. This display is well known to everybody who ever visited the Donington Museum.

It was Martin Schröder who managed the car to be presented in the Museum PROTOTYP in Hamburg for one year from 2008 to 2009.



When Rick Hall collected the car from Hamburg he mentioned that Tom Wheatcroft wanted him to complete the car and make it run. The next step was that Rick went to „The Mill“ in Arnesby and collected every little piece that might fit the Cisitalia 360.

When Martin Schröder visited Rick Hall on December 20th, 2009 together with the present owner, having some small talk on Martin's constant search for AUTO UNIONS, the latter realised some red plastic boxes and after asking „May I have a look“ he opened the boxes and found quite a number of black corroded engine and gearbox parts. On Martin's questioning look Rick mentioned casually „Oh, that's the remaining parts for the Cisitalia 360.“

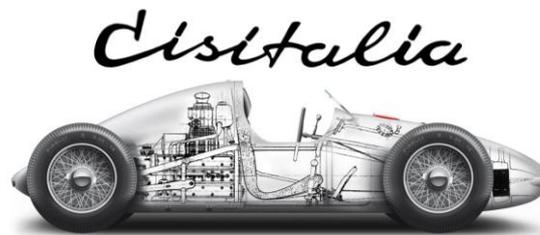
Taking into account that Tom Wheatcroft had passed away in October 2009 and that the collection already had sold cars, Martin asked whether the Cisitalia was for sale, too. And Rick's comment was: „Yes, there are already substantial offers for the car.“

Of course the present owner had realised Martin's enthusiasm on what he had found and so asked him for details re Cisitalia 360. Martin explained to him that except of finding an original 16 cylinder AUTO UNION with racing history the Cisitalia 360 is the most important and absolute unique project in the history of motor racing. Finally the present owner said „Let's make an offer.“

So they did and it was March 10th, 2010 when the agreement with Kevin Wheatcroft was signed, all files, photos, a complete parts list and blue prints discovered on the attic of „The Mill“ were handed over and the car was collected by Crosthwaite & Gardiner who will study the project in detail and make a quotation for both, the period and the funds needed to complete the most complex GP car design of all time and to make it a running car. The plan is to complete the existing engine and to build a new one delivering the 400-450 hp expected by the designers, to race it and to demonstrate the superiority of its design.

Martin Schröder was entrusted by the owner to execute all historic research as well as to supervise the building and assembly of the car. And he was most successful in meeting people connected with the car in Argentina as well as finding reports of the 1953 record attempt near Buenos Aires. He also was able to buy app. 100 blue prints of the drawings executed in Gmünd and an amazing number of vintage photos. One of them was taken in 1960. After former Porsche Race manager Huschke von Hanstein had managed to get the car out of Argentina 12 Porsche apprentices under their master Gerd Wagner were called to put the parts together and to make the car run.

This car is on static display in the Porsche Museum in Stuttgart needing a rebuild as well as the still incomplete second car. The car at Porsche was driven 1953 and 1960, i.e. one might call it a *restoration*. The second car is just new-old-stock and the process will be *building* the car and make it run after 62 years of lying at various places due to the economic problems Dusio faced in 1949.



Most probably Porsche will make their car run too, i.e. there is a chance that Porsche engineers will accomplish the design of their predecessors many generations ago.

It will be decided in due course of whether the car will be built in Germany with the help of Porsche or whether it will be built by well known British specialists of Crosthwaite & Gardner who just finished a Mercedes W125 and an AUTO UNION Type A.

We will continue with the report on blueprinting the complete car, re-manufacturing missing parts, checking the design with today's engineering knowledge, in order your readers will be able to follow this amazing technical adventure.

Any information like photos, documents or persons regarding the Cisitalia 360 is highly appreciated and should be forwarded to martin.schroeder@gmx.net .

CISITALIA Project
Martin Schroeder
Am Wedemarkbad 33
30900 Wedemark
Germany
P: +49 511 9 52 53 85
Website under construction: www.cisitalia-page.com