

Maserati 250F

**Scalextric C.2551A Maserati 250F,
- Juan-Manuel Fangio, German Grand prix 1957.**

**Cartrix 0921 Maserati 250F
- Juan-Manuel Fangio, European Grand Prix, Pescara 1957.**

**Scalextric C.2662 Maserati 250F,
- Jean Behra, French Grand Prix 1957.**

**Cartrix 0920 Maserati 250F
- Francisco Godia-Sales, German Grand Prix 1954 (1956).**

**Superslot H.2681A Maserati 250F,
- Francisco Godia-Sales, Italian Grand Prix 1957.**

**Cartrix 0922 Maserati 250F
- Masten Gregory, Italian Grand Prix 1957.**

By Holger "Slaasshh" Thor

Maserati was founded in Bologna , Italy, by the four brothers Alfieri, Bindo, Ettore, and Ernesto, and started motor racing back in 1926, first battling it out with Alfa Romeo and Bugatti and later with Mercedes-Benz and Auto Union before the war.

When new regulations for the Formula One World Championship were released in 1954, a new Maserati was ready to take up the challenge. It was first called 250F1, but soon the "1" was dropped. It had a six cylinder 2.5L A6 engine with 3 double Weber carburetors and 240 hp. The World Champion from 1951 Juan-Manuel Fangio and his young protégé Onofre Marimon were hired as drivers. Winning the first two races of the season, Fangio gave the Maserati team a magnificent start, but already at the start of the season he had signed an agreement with Mercedes-Benz to switch to their team, as soon as they entered the scene at the third round of the season, the French Grand Prix at Reims. Here Fangio and his German team mates Karl Kling and Hans Hermann totally dominated the race in their Mercedes W196's, and they would more or less continue to do so the rest of the season.

The World Champion from 1952 and 1953 Alberto Ascari had signed for the Lancia team, but they did not have their Lancia D50 ready yet, so they allowed Ascari to start a few races for Maserati to try to stop the Silver Arrows. He didn't succeed. 1955 would prove no better. Fangio stayed with Mercedes and his team mate was now Stirling Moss, and together they dominated the season in the same fashion as in 1954.

Finally in 1956 Mercedes was out of the business, and Maserati and the other opponents were hoping for better times. The hopes for Maserati got a first blow, when they lost the fight for Fangio, who signed a contract with Ferrari, where he in the Jano produced Lancia Ferrari D50 won his 3rd title in a row and 4th in total. During this season Stirling Moss took two fine wins in Monaco and Italy in a private entered Maserati 250F.

Finally for the 1957 season Maserati succeeded in persuading Fangio to drive one of their cars. In the latest version of the 250F with 270 hp and 5 gears he managed to take 4 wins against strong opposition from Mike Hawthorn and Peter Collins in Ferrari and Stirling Moss and Tony Brooks in Vanwall, and win his 5th and last title.

Always only been a semi works team, red numbers forced Officine Alfieri Maserati out of motor sport at the end of 1957. The Italian government put the factory under "controlled administration".

The conventional but very reliable Maserati 250F had won 8 Grand Prix's in total, and was in the years 1958 to 1960 still seen in the colours of privateers and customer teams, until the rear engine époque took over.



Juan-Manuel Fangio in his Maserati 250F #1 passing Stirling Moss in his Vanwall VW5 #10 on his way to his greatest (and last) victory! At the German Grand Prix on the Nürburgring, August 4th 1957, Fangio once and for all showed the world of motor sport racing that he was still "El Maestro". Despite the fact that Fangio celebrated his greatest successes in his Mercedes W196, his name will forever be connected to Maserati 250F because of this, his last victory. At the start of the race, he took the lead in front of the Lancia Ferrari 801's of Mike Hawthorn, Peter Collins and Luigi Musso. But the Ferrari's could complete the race without a pit stop, which the Maserati could not. So halfway thru the race Fangio had to stop for fuel and new tyres. His lead of 28 sec. was transferred to a 3rd place 38 sec. behind Hawthorn and Collins. The mission seemed impossible, and during the next two laps he lost further time. The faces in the Ferrari pit were smiling all over, and they even signalled their drivers to slow down, since Fangio was losing time. But Fangio's slow lap times was only a trick made up by him and his team chef Giambertone. Next time round Fangio got a secret hint, that Ferrari hand falling for their trick, and then he speeded up. Two long laps had to be raced, before the Ferrari team chef could signal his drivers, that Fangio was now hunting them down far too fast. Fangio had started the most outstanding race of his career. Early in the race Fangio had sat up a new lap record, but halfway thru the race this was beaten by Collins. Now Fangio started a series of laps, where he sat a new fastest lap time each time round the circuit. Lap after lap he chased the Ferrari's and on lap 20 out of 22 he finally got them in sight.

Ferrari team chef Tavoni gave the pit signal "Full speed". But it was to no use. On lap 21 Fangio cut the inner curve and was ahead of Collins, and a few miles later he forced Hawthorn out on the grass to pass him. With all 4 wheels perfectly drifting he took a brilliant victory. Fangio won, beating the Nürburgring, Hawthorn and Collins, and his own physically tiredness after 400 kms of racing. During the 22 laps of the race, he broke the lap record not less than 10 times! During the last 3 laps, he admitted he had done things and taken chances he had never done before, and would never do again. This victory was his last and the cornerstone for his 5th and last world title. Juan-Maul Fangio was 46 years old in 1957!



Juan-Manuel Fangio in his Maserati 250F #2 finishing 2nd at the European Grand Prix in Pescara, August 18th 1957. In this race the great Fangio was beaten by Stirling Moss in his Vanwall VW5. In the next race, the last Grand Prix of the season on Monza, Italy, the result was the same, but it was enough to secure Fangio his 5th and last World Championship. "You must always strive to be the best, but you must never believe you are!", was his motto. Juan-Manuel Fangio died in his native Argentina on July 15th 1995.



Jean Behra with his famous chequered helmet in his Maserati 250F #4 at the French Grand Prix on Rouen-Les-Essarts July 7th 1957. Qualifying second fastest on the grid he took the lead right from the first corner, but later faded to 5th place. Team mate Fangio took the victory yet again. Frenchman Jean Behra was a very colourful personality, and after Chris Amon from New Zealand the most famous driver never to win a Grand Prix. In 1959 Behra was factory driver for the Ferrari team, but after a piston failure forced him to retire from his home Grand Prix on Reims, he physically punched his team chef Romolo Tavoni. After this episode he was fired on the spot. Strikes in Italy meant that Ferrari did not appear for the British Grand Prix, and at the next Grand Prix, the German on AVUS (Automobil Verkehrs und Übungs Strasse) on August 2nd, Behra was still out of a drivers seat, so he entered a private Porsche RSK in the support race the day before the Grand Prix. Half way thru this race he lost control on the wet banking and crashed at high speed. Jean Behra was killed in the initial impact, and his body was thrown from the car and hit a flagpole.



Francisco Godia-Sales in his Maserati 250F #20 finishing 4th in the German Grand Prix on the Nürburgring, August 5th 1956 (Cartrix says 1954, but it was in fact 1956). Godia-Sales was born out of a wealthy family in Barcelona, Spain, and he drove briefly for the Maserati factory team on a pay-drive basis in the fifties. His best results in Grand Prix racing being two fourth places in 1956, the mentioned one in the Eifel mountains and again on Monza, Italy.



Francisco Godia-Sales in his Maserati 250F #10 finishing 9th in the Italian Grand Prix on Monza, September 8th 1957, six laps after the winner. Godia-Sales received more or less immortal fame and is particularly remembered for his remark at the Buenos Aires 1,000 Kms sports car race in 1958, when the great Juan-Manuel Fangio returned to the pits with a badly damaged Maserati 300S: "You do not have to be a World Champion to do that. I could have done that!". Francisco Godia-Sales died November 28th 1990 in Barcelona.



American born Masten Gregory made his Formula One debut at Monaco in 1957 driving a private Maserati 250F for the Scuderia Centro Sud team. And what a debut? He finished third and became the first American to stand on an F1 podium. In the above car with #26 he is passing Francisco Godia-Sales in his semi-works Maserati 250F #10 at the Italian Grand Prix at Monza, September 8th, 1957. Gregory finished fourth and Godia-Sales ninth that day. Masten Gregory never managed to become one of established F1 stars, his best ever result was a second place in Portugal in 1959 in a Cooper-Climax T51. But he had great success in sports cars. He won the Nürburgring 1000 in 1961 and the Canadian Grand Prix sports car race in 1962 among others. But his greatest success was winning at Le Mans together with Jochen Rindt in a Ferrari 250 LM for the North American Racing Team in 1965. While on holiday in Italy in 1985 Masten Gregory died of a heart attack, only 53 years of age. The Scuderia Centro Sud was a hobby project of Guglielmo "Mimmo" Dei, a Maserati dealer for Central and Southern Italy. From 1956 to 1965 the team Scuderia Centro Sud raced second hand cars from Maserati, Cooper and BRM in Formula One, only failing to make any entries during the 1962 season. Best result for the team ever was the above mentioned third place for Masten Gregory at Monaco in 1957. If not for any other reasons "Mimmo" Dei and his Scuderia Centro Sud made their place in race history when they during the 1958 season hired the attractive Roman Maria Teresa de Filippis to be the first woman ever to drive F1, doing so in the Belgian, Portuguese and Italian GP that season. She failed to score any points. All in all the Scuderia Centro Sud team scored 24 points during its existence, but never won a race.