



::: Martini Racing: Twenty-five years of history :::

MARTINI RACING. A name that brings memories, passion, victories but also defeats, feelings, finishing lines, dust, suffering, joy. A name that entered by force in the history of rallies, but especially in the heart of the impassioned. It is practically automatic to associate the MARTINI RACING to the LANCIA, because it is with this brand that the Italian team won everything, arriving up to where nobody still today arrived. To think about the enterprises of great drivers and of histories rich in charm and glory it almost brings to the emotion. It is not possible to stay impassive to the thought of what were able to do drivers of the caliber of MIKY BIASION, MARRKU ALEN, JUHA KANKKUNEN, winning with the national team, such as ATTILIO BETTEGA, HENRI TOIVONEN and SERGIO CRESTO that, with the MARTINI RACING helmet and overall continued their race on the endless roads of the sky. A team not only made of drivers but of men able to build the success around the passion for the races; a strong passion, able to win against the time, the tiredness of sleepless nights, the prickliest cold of the north or the most torrid heat of Africa, but always with the objective to win. Yes the victory, because this is the only thing that finally counts, the only thing we read in the bulletin-board, the only thing that makes us remember how much sacrifices we spent to reach it. Sublime memories, sweets memories, indelible memories. Today this remains of the MARTINI RACING.



It is necessary to go quite a lot back in time to go up again to the first enterprises of the Italian team and precisely in 1968. Since then, pages and pages of history have been written: from the Formula 1 to the rallies, from the DTM to the competitions for sport cars. More than one hundred have been the drivers to wear a blue-red-blue on white background overall and more than 700 the cars used with 15 titles gotten and about 100 individual successes. A palma-res indeed enviable. First important successes arrive when the German MARTINI & ROSSI decides to participate to the World Championship with a PORSCHE 906 in private way. Two the successes with this car, in SEBRING and at the TARGA FLORIO. The following year, we are in 1969, the operation MARTINI-PORSCHE repeats again but with the help of a semi-official team: the BG RACING. It will be a season stingy of victories with only a podium and many withdrawals that persuade the MARTINI managers to make the great breakthrough. In 1970 it is constituted in London the MARTINI RACING and, since then, an endless series of triumphs, in every discipline has made of the Italian team one of the most important in the world with twenty victories in the ENDURANCE World Championship with the PORSCHE and the TECNO, two in the Formula 1 with the BRABHAM and the LOTUS and an impressive number in the rallies, all tied up to the brand LANCIA.

The adventure in this last discipline begins in March 1978. The race is the SAFARI RALLY, the crews WALDEGAARD-THORSZELIUS and PRESTON-LYALL that, on board of a PORSCHE 911SC 3.0 almost succeed in the win respectively closing in fourth and in second position in a hard competition, won by the French NICOLAS on board of a PEUGEOT 504 V6. After this short parenthesis we will need to wait up to 1982 to see a new car with the livery MARTINI. This time it is the LANCIA RALLY 037 to dress the colors of the Italian Team, a new car in the conception and built to oppose the power of the AUDI four wheels drive cars. The debut happens at the TOUR DE CORSE and it is not one of the best. The Finnish MARKKU ALEN, already World Champion in 1978 with the Fiat 131 ABARTH concludes in ninth position while ATTILIO BETTEGA, dawning star of the Italian rally, withdraws after a serious accident with double fracture to the lower limbs. The first step of the podium for the MARTINI however doesn't delay and, at the PACE RALLY in Great Britain, it is the Finnish ALEN to give the first success in a competition of World Championship.



1983 is a year of triumphs. The competition is hard and it is for this reason that the final victory has a sweeter taste. MARTINI RACING begins the season at the best with two historical victories at the MONTECARLO. ROEHL and ALEN sonorously beat up the "panzer" of AUDI preparing the road for the title that punctually arrives at the RALLY DI SANREMO with an all Italian victory and the LANCIA-MARTINI on the roof of the world. It seems indeed a fable.



The following season sees the Italian Team among the favorites for the final success but the results are rather disappointing. Although in CORSO MARCHE in Turin, center of the ABARTH, they work day and night in the development of the 037, nothing seems possible to do against the AUDI that seems to fly on the gravels of the World Championship thanks to the four wheels drive. At the end of the World Championship the AUDI will be winner while to the LANCIA will remain only the crumbs picked at the TOUR DE CORSE and the awareness to be no more competitive against the German rivals. The two following years, although faced with combative spirit and desire to win, will be the darkest ones for the MARTINI RACING and for the history of the rallies. In May 1985 ATTILIO BETTEGA tragically dies

during the TOUR DE CORSE Rally and the same destiny on the following year had the team companions HENRI TOIVONEN and SERGIO CRESTO in a sort of curse that saw the two crews tied up from a commune mocking destiny: same run, same team, same day and same number on the car broadsides: four. Whoever, we believe, after two so tragic events would have given up everything but not the men of the MARTINI RACING. Perhaps for the desire to honor the adventure companions tragically disappeared, perhaps for a matter of pride, but it is certain that MARKKU ALEN won that 1986 World Championship (after removed by an unfair Federation) with the anger and the grim of whom has suffered but has firmly believed to the final success, also and especially in the name of the disappeared friends. The great performances stay indelible in the heart of the impassioned.

The season 1987 leave a series of ugly memoirs to the shoulders, but it is with optimism that the MARTINI RACING face a new challenge: the group A. New rules have definitely banished the groups B for the less performing but decidedly surer groups A and it is the new weapon of house LANCIA, the DELTA 4WD to win the first competition, the MONTECARLO thanks to a fast and experienced driver considered the heir of SANDRO MUNARI: MIKY BIASION. The MARTINI RACING with him and with the new acquisition JUHA KANKKUNEN also triumphs in PORTUGAL, ACROPOLIS, OLYMPUS, 1000 LAKES and SANREMO, and, at the end of a thrilling season, the spoil will be full, with brands and drivers title for KANKKUNEN. This impressive series of successes seems unstoppable and also in 1988 the World Rally speaks Italian. The old 4WD still wins to MONTECARLO with BRUNOSABY and in Sweden with ALEN, then retires definitely. From the PORTUGAL RALLY, in fact, the MARTINI RACING race with a new sharper weapon: the LANCIA DELTA INTEGRALE. In ABARTH they worked very hard on the engine, on the brakes, on the weight, on the suspensions and on the track allowing with



this last solution to mount bigger tires and brakes. The new care immediately makes effect. The car triumphs in ten competitions on eleven, inclusive the RALLY SAFARI bewitched for the Italian colors. BIASION becomes World Champion, inheriting the crown from SANDRO MUNARI that before him got it in 1977 with the LANCIA STRATOS.



The 1989 season is the exact copy of the precedent. The reliability of the car and the understanding of the team allow to establish the new record of consecutive successes that goes from the 1988 ACROPOLIS RALLY to the 1989 Argentinian RALLY: nobody had never gotten so much and nobody has succeeded until today to do the same record. The LANCIA DELTA INTEGRALE and MIKY BIASION repeat the success delivering in the hands of the Italian team the fourth World Title. But the history is not finished. At the SANREMO a new bomb: the LANCIA DELTA INTEGRALE 16V. The new rules that the FISA had foreseen for 1990 convince Mr. LOMBARDI to accelerate the development of the car and, also at the debut, for the occasion in red "suit", this gets a great victory, as it was in precedence for the

other versions. The RALLY of SANREMO will be remembered as the most exciting of the Rally history with BIASION and FIORIO divided to the finishing line only from five seconds and with BIASION Champion of the World. The Italian team doesn't have rivals and this fact is also confirmed by the six victories on twelve competitions in the season 1990 that bring the fifth laurel to the MARTINI RACING. As in all the histories, beautiful or ugly, the end arrives and the same also happens for the MARTINI RACING. The conquest of the World Title number six with KANKKUNNEN doesn't stop the decisions of the technical direction that announce, at the end of the season, a resounding withdrawal: a death-blow for everybody.

The world program however continues, giving the technical-sporting management to the JOLLY CLUB of Roberto ANGIOLINI while the sporting direction is entrusted to CLAUDIO BORTOLETTO. The drivers designated for the 1992 Championship will be the French AURIOL and BUGALSKI, the Finnish KKK and the Italian AGHINI. It will be a not continuous season where the MARTINI RACING well succeeds to show up and to get, on the avenue of the sunset, the seventh crown, sixth consecutive. The last victory in a competition of World Championship of the DELTA INTEGRALE, adjourned in the particulars, still speaks Italian. It is ANDREA AGHINI to close a bright career triumphing in the rally of SANREMO.



The activity of the team MARTINI RACING doesn't end. Away from the World Championship because of the business cessation of the LANCIA Races Department, it continues in the Italian championship thanks to the help of the Italian branch of the MARTINI & ROSSI. In 1993 the Team is present in the RALLY Absolute Championship with a great driver, also him at the end of a glorious career: DARIO CERRATO. The season is however rich of bitterness and the fourth absolute place of the Turinese driver, with only two victories, RALLY DELL'ELBA and RALLY DEL SALENTO, definitely enacts the end of a great match among the LANCIA DELTA INTEGRALE and the MARTINI RACING.

On 15th February 1994 a new structure rises from the ashes of the precedent one with the name of TEAM FORD-MARTINI RACING-JOLLY CLUB. The main driver is GIANFRANCO CUNICO, affirmed and fast, belonging to the generation of the evergreen BIASION, CERRATO and TABATON. The couple CUNICO-EVANGELISTI gives the tricolor title to the newborn team in the seasons 1994, 1995 and 1996, underlining the strength of a team never fed up of successes. 1997 is also the last year of the cars of group A. From 1998, in fact, in the World competitions and also in the national ones debut the rally cars of the third generation: the WRC (WORLD RALLY CAR). The JOLLY CLUB MARTINI RACING disputes the last adventure in the Italian Rally Championship with the drivers CUNICO and MEDEGHINI, before reentering the World Championship only getting the fourth and the fifth final place. In the three last years the writing MARTINI is present on the official cars of the team Ford, the FOCUS driven by the champion COLIN McRAE. We are however well distant from what has been written by now or from the six consecutive world titles that spoke Italian.

And it is in that moments that we want to remember the pluri-decorated team. We believe that today anybody could be able to repeat what LANCIA team made, even not the WRC top-teams of today, endowed with more advanced technologies and of more consistent budgets. The match LANCIA-MARTINI wrote a series of fundamental pages in the history of the rallies showing, after the great successes of LANCIA FULVIA, LANCIA STRATOS and FIAT 131 ABARTH, that the made in Italy doesn't fear rivals, from the snows of Sweden, to the lowlands of the Savanna, from the French mountains to the Southern forests. We wonder still today, seeing some "DELTA's" get tired but always combative in the small rallies, what would have happened if the marvelous history between the LANCIA and the MARTINI-RACING had continued. A question that many ask but whose answer will remain inside us.



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