

# EXCELLENCE

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04



# The endless "Thousand Miles" race

*A stupendous interactive museum in Brescia that is continuously renewed*

**by Roberto Mazzetti**

*Director of the museum*



The new museum, opened to the public on 10 November 2004, provides a vivid historical record of the "Mille Miglia," or "Thousand Miles," the legendary automobile race based in Brescia, as part of an ambitious cultural and educational project that acquaints visitors with an extraordinary sporting event. At the same time it takes an up-close look at Italian history, culture and customs in the years between 1927 and 1957, including references and presentations of monuments and



The museum's logo and, above, an OM 665 entitled "Superba." On the facing page, the racing outfit worn by Tazio Nuvolari in 1930 and the starting point of the Museum's exhibit sequence.

points of interest in the cities and regions through which the race passed in the different years it was held. The idea of creating a museum on the subject of the "Red Arrow" event has been pursued by the Association for the Thousand Miles Museum, an organisation established by the "Friends of the Thousand Miles" and by the Automobile Club of Brescia in December of 1996. This non-profit association brings together roughly forty businessmen from Brescia, and Ugo Gussalli Beretta, the President of



Conceived of and created by an association whose members include Ugo Gussalli Beretta

Beretta S.p.A., is one of the founders. The museum complex is housed in the Sant'Eufemia monastery – a valuable archaeological site first constructed by Benedictine monks in the year 1008 – and it consists of a roofed area measuring 5,600 square meters, plus an internal, open-air space of roughly equal size. There is an exposition area of approximately 3,500 square metres, plus zones set aside for a book shop and the "Mille Miglia" Tavern, along with rooms for meetings, conventions and presentations.

The "Thousand Miles" Museum of the City of Brescia takes a modern, educational and entertaining approach to acquainting visitors with the history, costumes and adventures of a period of our history, in the form of a chronological layout that follows a red road. Marked on the floor, this route winds its way through all the sections of the exhibit. The journey is divided into nine different time periods (seven regarding the Thousand Miles of 1927-1957, one the Thousand Miles of 1958-1961, and one the modern-day Thousand

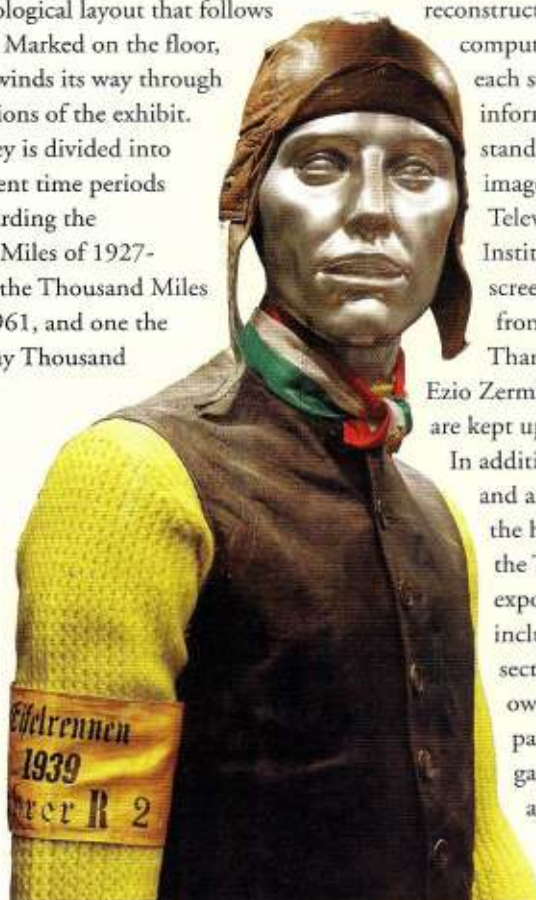


Miles), plus a connecting section on World War II and the post-war reconstruction. There is a computerised station for each section, offering information, race standings and library images from Rai Television's "Luce" Institute, plus a series of screens with film footage from the period.

Thanks to the work of Ezio Zermiani, the audio texts are kept up to date.

In addition to documents and artefacts taken from the historical archives of the Thousand Miles, the exposition materials include – for each section – historic cars owned by private parties, period garments and accessories either donated or loaned by former

participants or other museums. The Tazio Nuvolari Museum, for example, has lent a racing outfit of the "Flying Mantuan", winner of the race in 1930 and 1933, complete with the good-luck turtle that Nuvolari received from Gabriele D'Annunzio. Count Giannino Marzotto, winner of the Thousand Miles in 1950 and 1953, has given the Museum some of his mementos and cups, while the Bonfanti Museum has donated a compressor used for rapid refuelling by the Marzotto team in 1953. Exhibited in the museum rooms are a large number of objects that belonged to the heroes of "the world's most beautiful race." An especially popular piece is a canary-yellow jersey, with a crest in the colours of the Italian flag, worn by Eugenio Castellotti during his victorious run in the 1956 Thousand Miles at the wheel of a Ferrari 290. Each section exhibits vehicles from the period in question. Highlights include a pair of Alfa Romeos, the RL SS MM of 1927 and the 8C 2300 Zagato from the Alfa



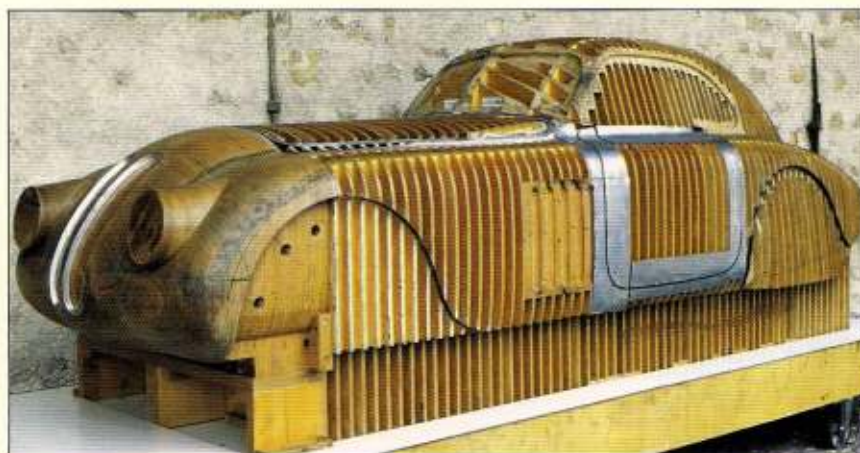


A space for motorcycles and Brescia has been opened, with MI-VAL models from the 1950's



Benz 300 SL. The most acclaimed piece, exhibited in a room all its own, is naturally the O.M. 665 Superba, not only because it was the winner in the first year of the race, but also on account of the fact that it was built in Brescia, in what is now the Iveco plant. New features introduced in recent months include a large electric track on which 1/32-scale models of the cars that competed in the Thousand Miles can be raced by visitors using push-button controls. In celebration of its first year of operation, the Museum has set aside a space dedicated to motorcycles and Brescia, with an exposition of bikes built in the 1950's by the MI-VAL company of Gardone Valtrompia, a subsidiary of Beretta, plus mementos

Romeo Museum, a vehicle identical to the one driven to victory by Nuvolari in 1933, plus a 1938 BMW 328, on loan from the Museum of the Bavarian Manufacturer, a 1954 Maserati A6 GCS, a 1955 Ferrari 750 Monza and the famous "gull wings" Mercedes-



Upper left, the monastic complex of Sant'Eufemia, which holds the Museum. To the right, Ugo Gussalli Beretta with Giacomo Bontempi, two of the Museum's founders. Lower left, a "Victoria" gas pump from the late 1930's. Above, a wood silhouette of the BMW 328 Touring, winner of the race in 1940. On the facing page, a Fiat 8V Vignale from the 1950's.

E X C E L L E N C E



The Museum shall serve as a centre of motor culture



### How to reach the museum

Prepared in the former monastery of Sant'Eufemia, founded in the year 1008. The Sant'Eufemia district is located in the eastern portion of the City of Brescia, on State Roadway 45-b, "Gardesana Occidentale."

**By car:** Follow the road signs for "S. Eufemia." From Milan, exit A4 "Brescia Centro;" from Verona, exit A4 "Brescia Est;" from Turin-Piacenza, exit A21 "Brescia Centro."

**By bus:** From the city: the 3 line (final destination Rezzato) and the 11 line.

#### Open hours:

Winter: 9 am - 6 pm

Third Friday of the month: 9 am - 9:30 pm;

Summer: 9:30 am - 6:30 pm

Third Friday of the month: 9:30 am - 10 pm;

**Closed:** Mondays

**Full-price ticket:** 10 euro;

visitors over 65, students between 13 and 18 years of age: 8 euro;

Italian Automobile Club members with valid membership card in their name: 6 euro.

and images of the motorcycle racers who racked up dozens of victories on these machines. Though not strictly pertinent to the "Red Arrow" race, the exhibit is part of a larger effort to transform the Museum into a centre devoted to the culture of motors and mobility. The exposition materials on fashion, customs, politics and technology provide an overview of life in the early 20th century sure to interest a larger segment of the public than racing enthusiasts alone.

The 21,000 visitors registered by the Museum in its first year include numerous families, plus an impressive female presence. A key factor in the financial support of the Museum is the leasing of its rooms for meetings, conferences and assemblies, as well as meetings of companies and clubs. In its twelve months of operation, more than 110 outside events have been held at the Museum.

## MEMORIES



Maggi, Mazzotti, Canestrini and Castagneto, the founders of the race.



Tazio Nuvolari, the "Flying Mantuan," winner in '30 and '33.



An Alfa Romeo 6C 1750 taking part in the 1929 race.



A Maserati Sport at the starting line of the 1936 "Thousand Miles."



1957; chequered flag for the arrival of a Porsche 550 Spider.