



*Diatto automobiles*

## 170 years of history

In Italy, in 1835, DIATTO, the carriage-building company is founded.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, manufacture is broadened to include trams and railway carriages, most notably the luxury Trans Europe Express.

In 1905 DIATTO move into the production of luxury sports cars and (a year later) embark on a racing history, seeing them rise to the podium more than 300 times with champions such as Nuvolari, Maserati and De Sterlich.

From 1910 DIATTO export to Europe, America and Australia; among their prestigious customers are The Italian Royal Family and the family of the young Enzo Ferrari.

In partnership with Ettore Bugatti, DIATTO construct aeronautic engines and subsequently, in the early 1920's, prestigious Diatto-Bugatti road-going sports and race cars.

In 1922 Alfieri Maserati is nominated team manager for DIATTO racing and assigned the task of designing 2-litre, 8-cylinder supercharged engines for the DIATTO GRAN PRIX cars; these will become the precursors to the first race cars with the Trident badge.

In the early 1930's, after 8,500 automobiles had been produced, DIATTO's assembly lines were interrupted; spare parts continued to be produced until 1955.

DIATTO represents the pioneering spirit of motor-racing and thanks to a heritage born 170 years ago, is considered the oldest manufacturer amongst the forerunners to the automobile.



1835

In Italia nasce la Diatto, una fabbrica di carrozze.  
In Italy, DIATTO, the carriage-building company is founded.





**1883**

**Diatto costruisce lussuose carrozze per il Trans Europe Express**

**Diatto produces luxury carriages for the Trans Europe Express**

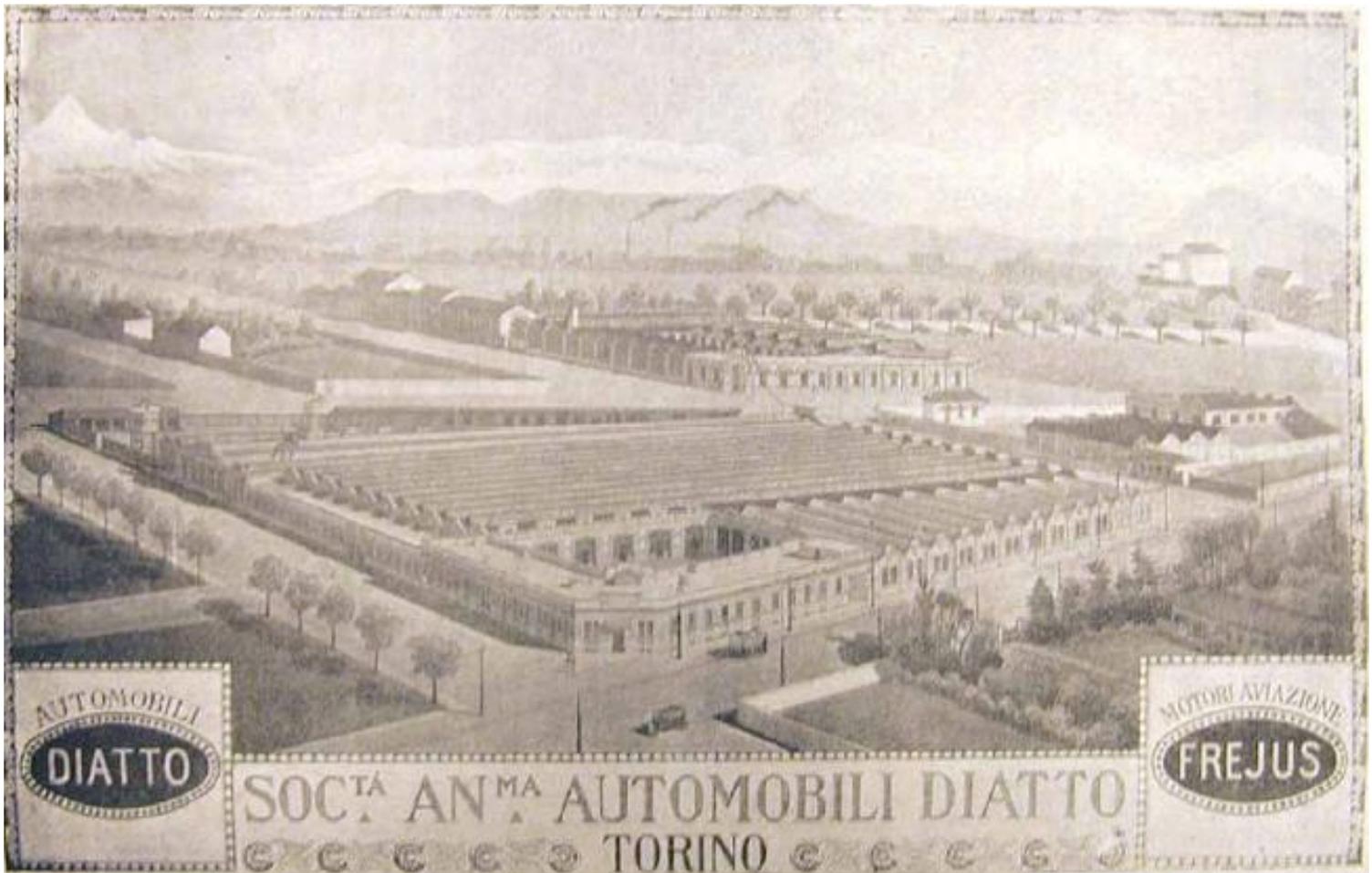




**1905**

**Diatto costruisce automobili sportive e di lusso**

**Diatto produces luxury sports cars**

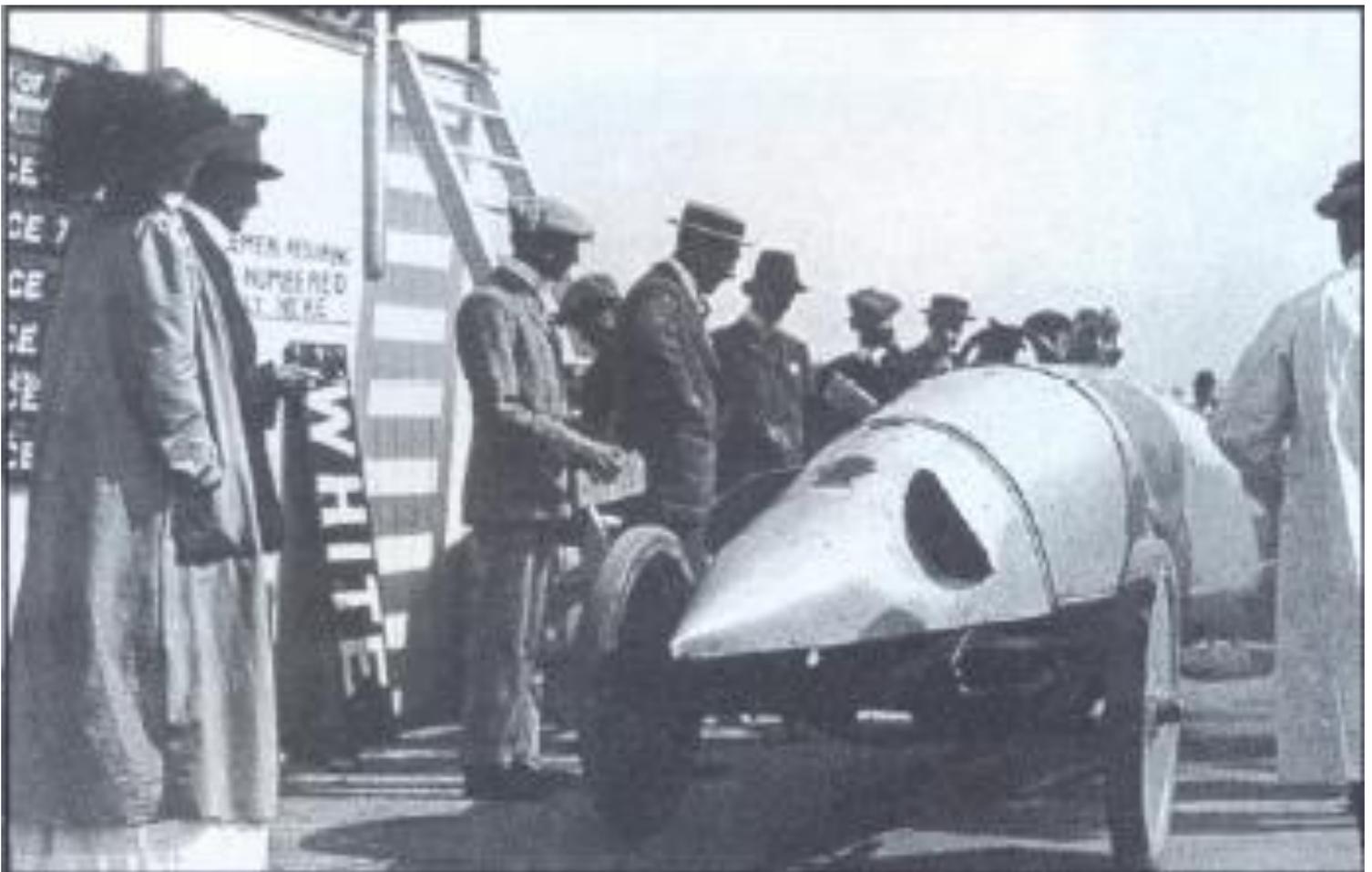




**1910**

**Brooklands - Diatto Aerodinamica Sperimentale di 15,8 HP.  
J. E. Hollebone, secondo classificato**

**Brooklands - 15,8 HP, Experimental Aerodynamic Diatto  
J. E. Hollebone, comes second**





**1914**

**Vittorie nelle corse in Spagna e in Francia**  
**Racing victories in France and Spain**

1914  
MOTORI AEREO CELI E SPORTS  
23-30 Maggio 1914

nella Corsa in Salita di Barcellona - 24 Maggio  
(La più importante corsa della Spagna)

**1<sup>A</sup> DIATTO** (cmc. 2500 di cilindrata)

nella Coppa di Turismo in Francia (km. 3120) - 19-29 Aprile

**1<sup>A</sup> DIATTO** (cmc. 2500 di cilindrata)

nella Targa Florio - Giro di Sicilia (km. 1000)

**DIATTO** (cmc. 2500 di cilindrata)

la più piccola macchina iscritta } Unica partita, si classifica 4<sup>a</sup> su 31 partiti di cilindrata fino a 6500 cmc. facendo il percorso senza il minimo incidente.

Società Automobili DIATTO  
TORINO - VIA FREJUS. 21 - TORINO



1919

Targa Florio – Diatto 1° di categoria 3.000 cc  
Targa Florio – Diatto 1th in its 3.000 cc class

31 Settembre - 4 Dicembre 1919      MOTORI AERO CICLI & SPORTS      Pag. 41

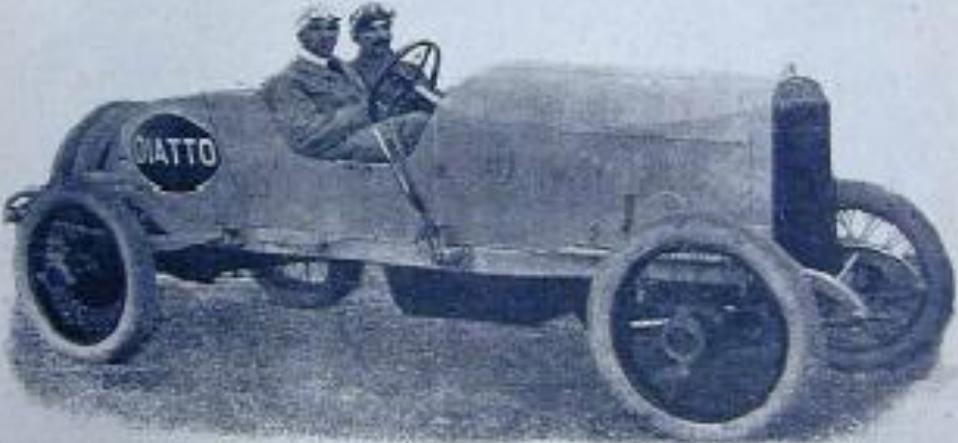
# Automobili Diatto

Società Anonima — Capitale L. 6.000.000 interamente versato  
(Casa fondata nel 1905 — Trasformata nel 1918)  
SOCIETÀ CONTROLLATA G N O M E & R H Ô N E

## TARGA FLORIO 1919

I° della sua categoria =  
III° della classifica generale = *Gamboi su DIATTO*

VETTURA DI SERIE DA TURISMO DEL TIPO 4 DC - 25 HP



Gamboi su vettura Diatto 4 DC — I della sua categoria III della classifica nella Targa Florio

Esclusiva di vendita per l'Italia

### AGENZIA COMMERCIALE ITALIANA AUTOMOBILI DIATTO

Sede Centrale: ROMA, Viale Castro Pretorio, 124

Filiali:

TORINO: VIA BERTOLA, 34	MILANO: VIA BORGOMANO, 30	GENOVA: VIA CERRADA, 10
FIRENZE: PIAZZA SAN MARCO	NAPOLI: PIAZZA VITTORIA, 15-12	BOLOGNA: VIA ESTENSE, 2
	VERONA: VIA DOMO, 10	

S. A. I. - SOCIETÀ AUTO INDUSTRIALE, CASSELLI PORTALE 30 & BORGO S. FELICE 26 - VI. VICENZA  
AGENTE PER LE PROVINCE DI UDINE, BELLUNO, FRIULI E TERRE TRIDENTINE.  
ENRICO DE MICHELI - PIAZZA VITTORIO EMANUELE II, COFFARO  
AGENTE PER LE PROVINCE DI TREVISO, PADOVA, VENEZIA E ROVERETO



**1919**

**Italia – Primi successi agonistici Diatto - Bugatti**  
**Italy – First race success Diatto - Bugatti**

**Primi successi 1919**

**Puri sangue**

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 **DIATTO**

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**Corsa Parma - Poggio di Berceto**

**II<sup>a</sup> CATEGORIA**

**I<sup>a</sup> Classificato: Tipo 30 (Bugatti)**

**II<sup>a</sup> Classificato: Tipo 4DC.**

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Esclusiva di vendita per l'Italia

**AGENZIA COMMERCIALE ITALIANA AUTOMOBILI DIATTO**  
Sede Centrale: ROMA, Viale Castro Pretorio, 124

**Filiali:**

<b>TORINO</b> - VIA BISSOLA, 21	<b>MILANO</b> - VIA BORGOGNONE, 21	<b>GENOVA</b> - VIA ORSOLA, 11
<b>FIRINEE</b> - PIAZZA SAN CARLO, 10	<b>NAPOLI</b> - PIAZZA VITTORIA, 11-12	<b>BOLOGNA</b> - VIA ARDIZZI, 2
<b>R. A. I.</b> - SOCIETA' ALTA INDUSTRIA, CASALE TORIALE, 26 & BORGIO S. PIETRO, 26-27	<b>VERONA</b> - VIA BISSOLA, 15	<b>VIENNA</b>

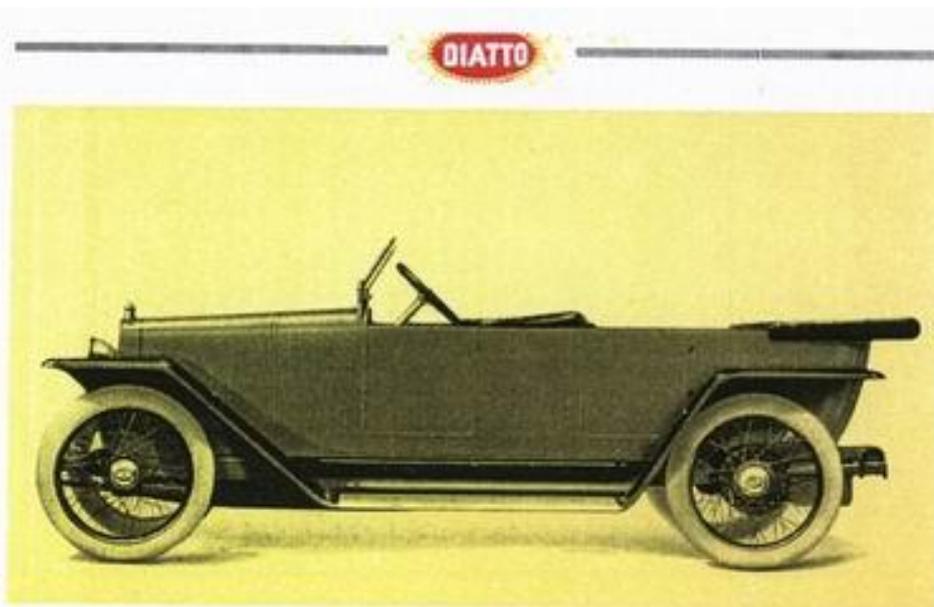
AGENZIA PER LE PROVINCE DI UDINE, GORIZIA, TRIESTE & TREVISO: **HERBERT KNRIG DE MICHELI** - PIAZZA VITTORIO BRANCA, 11, COFFANO

AGENZIA PER LE PROVINCE DI TREVISO, FRIULI, VENEZIA & ROVERETO



**1919 - 1923**

**Automobili sportive e da corsa, Diatto-Bugatti, Tipo 30 e Tipo 22**  
**Type 30 and Type 22 Diatto-Bugatti, race and road-going sports cars**



**LA 15<sup>HP</sup> DIATTO**  
(LICENCE BUGATTI)

**CARACTÉRISTIQUES GÉNÉRALES**

**L**E MOTEUR, du type monobloc à quatre cylindres, alésage 68 millimètres, course 100 millimètres, présente, dès l'abord, cette particularité que les soupapes commandées sont au nombre de seize et logées dans le fond des cylindres. L'arbre à cames, placé au-dessus, fonctionne dans un carter rempli d'huile et facilement démontable.

Les engrenages de distribution sont coniques et enfermés dans des carters.

Le carburateur est du type automatique. L'avance des gaz est commandée par une pédale.

L'allumage s'effectue par une magnéto à haute tension



1920

November 10, 1920.

The Motor 113

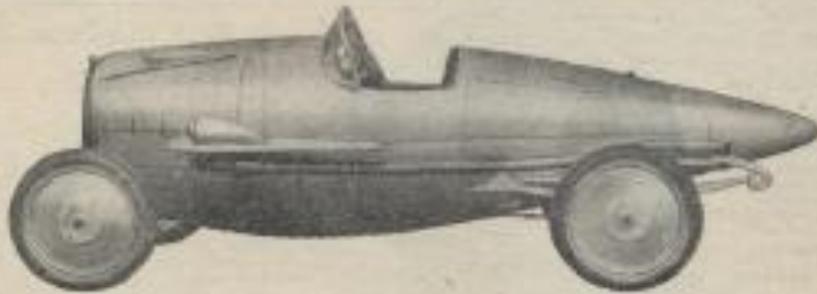
# DIATTO

"The Italian Super-Sporting Car"

Apply at Stand  
No. 119

Olympia

STAND TELEPHONE HANMERDITCH 206



Demonstration Car outside  
Olympia at disposal of clients.

AGENCIES FOR CERTAIN TERRITORIES STILL OPEN.

*Sole Concessionaire:*

## G. Foresti.

66 St. James's Street, S.W.1.

Telephone  
LONDON 1837.  
Telegrams  
OTTAFRACH  
ST. JAMES'S



**1921**

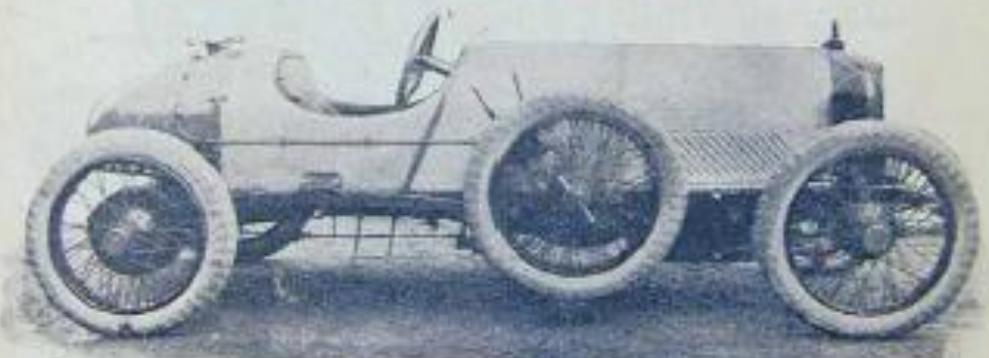
**Vittorie nei Concorsi d'Inghilterra e di Svizzera**  
**Victories in Competition in United Kingdom and in Switzerland**

Fig. 36 MOTORI ASSO CIVILE & SPORTS 23 - 31 Agosto 1921

ECONOMIA E CONVENIENZA

# DIATTO

offre nella sua produzione del 1921  
la vettura leggera più veloce e di maggior rendimento  
nel suo tipo **25 HP**  
e la vettura più vantaggiosa e pratica  
nel suo tipo **10 HP**



La vettura DIATTO tipo 25 HP sport vittoriosa nelle corse del 1921.

Vittoriosa nei due ultimi Concorsi per il minor consumo  
in Inghilterra e Svizzera

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**Automobili Diatto**  
VIA FREYUS, 21 - **TORINO** - VIA FREYUS, 21



**1924**

**Italia – Diatto 3 litri: Nuvolari vince nella sua Mantova**

**Italy – Diatto 3 litre: Nuvolari wins in his home town, Mantova**

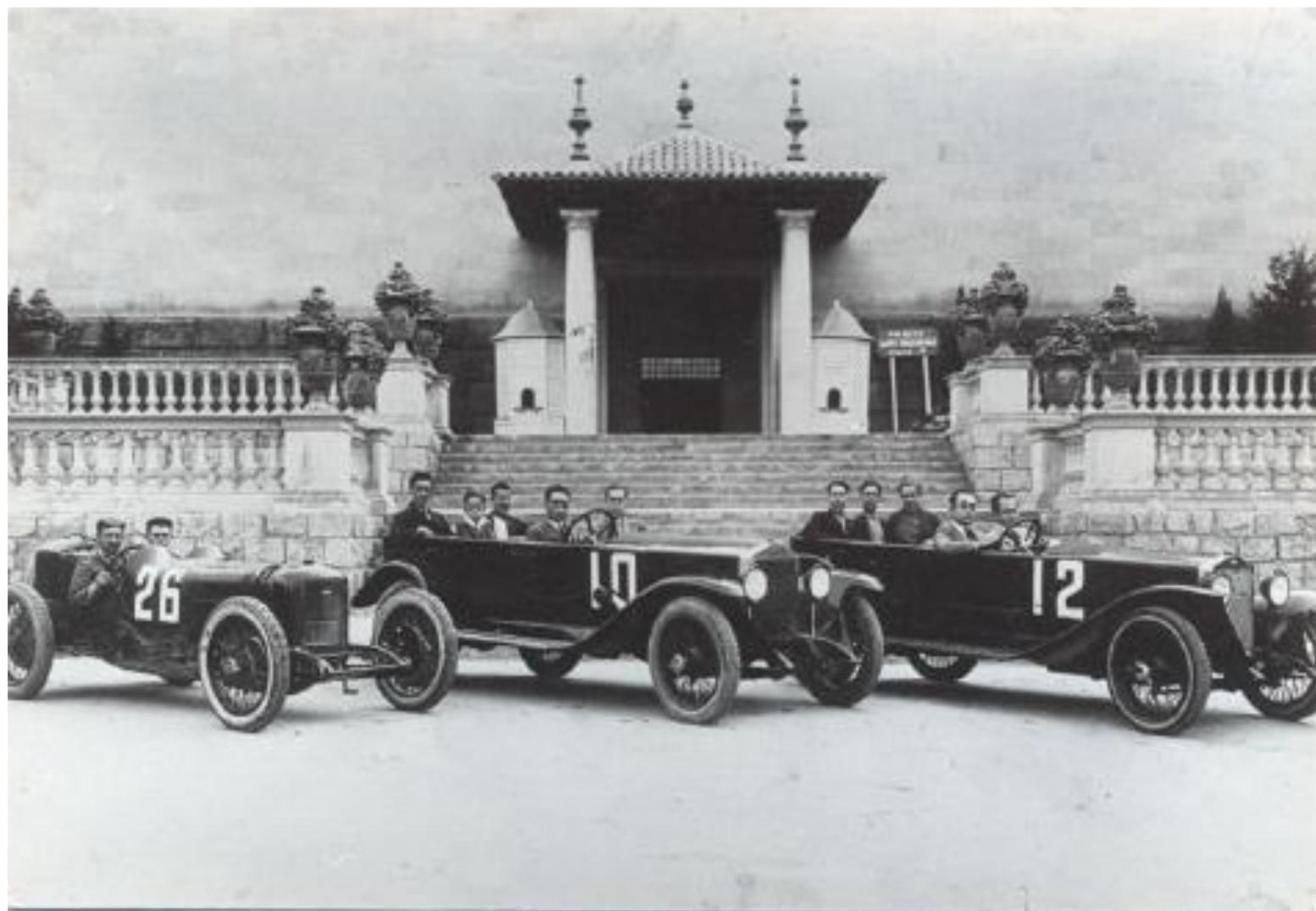




**1925**

**La squadra corse Diatto, diretta da Maserati, alla Rebassada (Spagna)**

**The Diatto racing team, led by Maserati, competes in Rebassada (Spain)**





**1925**

**I fratelli Maserati sulla Diatto Gran Prix 8 cilindri con compressore,  
antesignana delle Maserati Tipo 26**

**Maserati's brothers in the supercharged 8-cylinder Diatto Gran Prix, the  
forerunner to the Maserati Type 26**





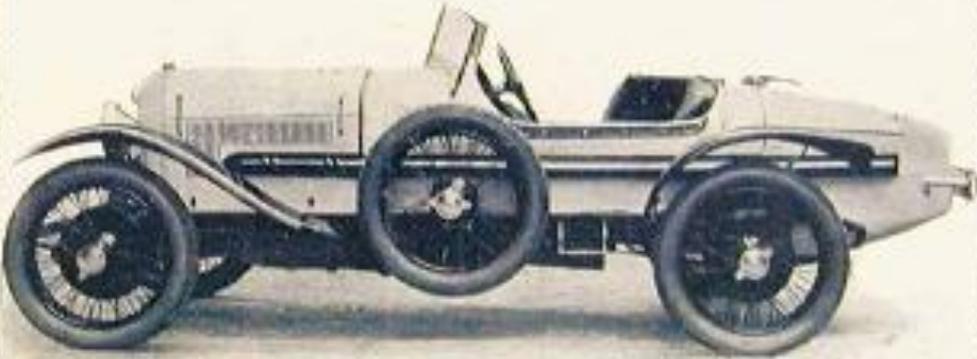
**1926**

**The Type 30 Diatto is the fastest Italian 2 litre in production**

31 Maggio 1926 L'AUTO ITALIANA

S. A. AUTOCOSTRUZIONI  Via Venaria, 75 - TORINO

**La "DIATTO 30" è**  
**La più veloce "2 litri,, italiana, di serie,**  
**in commercio**



Tipo 30 e Tipo 35 Gran Sport

Velocità oraria Km. 130-145

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CANDELE CHAMPION - RUOTE RUDGE WHITWORTH - AMMORTIZZATORI HARTFORD

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Prove e consegne sollecite presso tutte le Agenzie



**1927**

Sei ore di Brooklands: 1° Diatto, classe 2 litri  
Uno dei 300 podi conquistati  
**One of 300 podium positions**



**An absolutely standard  
2-Litre 4-Seater**

**DIATTO was FIRST**

in the 2-litre class in the Essex Club Six-hour Endurance Race at Brooklands on Saturday, May 7th, winning the **ESSEX CUP** for the class and a **GOLD MEDAL**.

Average Speed 59.2 M.P.H.

1 only Diatto entered.

*Sole Concessionnaire :*

**CYRIL DURLACHER**  
20, Swallow Street, Piccadilly, W.1

*Telephone : Gerrard 1107.*



**1922**

**Inaugurazione dell'Autodromo di Monza: "Prima pole position"  
"Pole position" at the Inauguration of the Autodrome at Monza**

**2002**

**Dopo 80 anni, rievocazione della "Prima pole position"  
80 years later, "Inauguration pole position" revisited**

# **CORRIERE DELLA SERA**

## **MILANO**

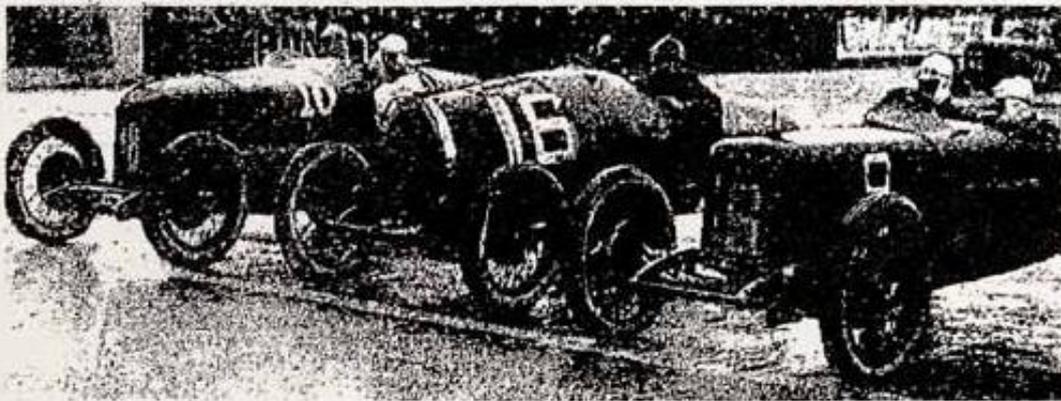
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E-MAIL: corraon@ics.it

**CRONACHE DELLA CITTÀ E DELLA PROVINCIA**

MARTEDÌ 12 NOVEMBRE 2002

10 SETTEMBRE 1922



**Pietro Bordino dominò la gara  
e vinse a 140 km/h di media**

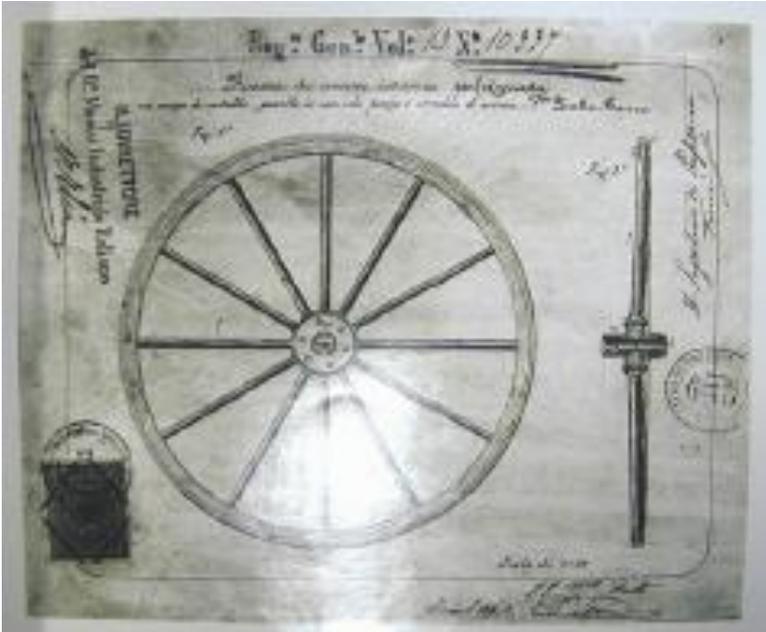
MONZA — Al primo Gp d'Italia, il 10 settembre 1922, si iscrissero 38 concorrenti, ma parteciparono solo in 5. La gara, durata a circa 159 mila metri, fu senza storia. Pietro Bordino (nella foto della partenza, sulla Fiat 800 numero 15, accanto a Pietro De Vincenzi su Bugatti numero 16 e a Guido Meregalli su Diatto numero 9) si portò subito in testa, seguito da De Vincenzi e Felice Nazzari. Quando De Vincenzi si fermò al box, Nazzari, che aveva mezzo giro di distacco, passò in seconda posizione. La gara proseguì senza colpi di scena e poco dopo 150 giri (su 80) dimostrarono la pari in tre: Bordino, Nazzari e De Vincenzi. Bordino vinse, percorrendo gli 899 chilometri in 64' 43" 17", a quasi 140 di media. Nazzari arrivò secondo a 3'27", mentre De Vincenzi, terzo, si fermò al 70° giro.

# **In pole position Fiat, Bugatti e Diatto**

*Dopo ottant'anni si ricostituisce a Monza lo schieramento di partenza del primo Gran Premio*



## A 170 YEAR HISTORY



*1838 – Diatto patent for the “perfected wheel”*

### 1835 The year the company was founded

In 1835, in Torino, on the banks of the river Po, Diatto founded a workshop for the construction of carriages.

### 1838 The first patents

Guglielmo Diatto, 33 years old, an inventive and enterprising craftsman, patented a ‘perfected wheel’, the first in a series of technological innovations that would make the fortunes of three generations of industrialists – a copy of the patent is held at the Museo Nazionale dell’Automobile in Torino, which also displays a Diatto.

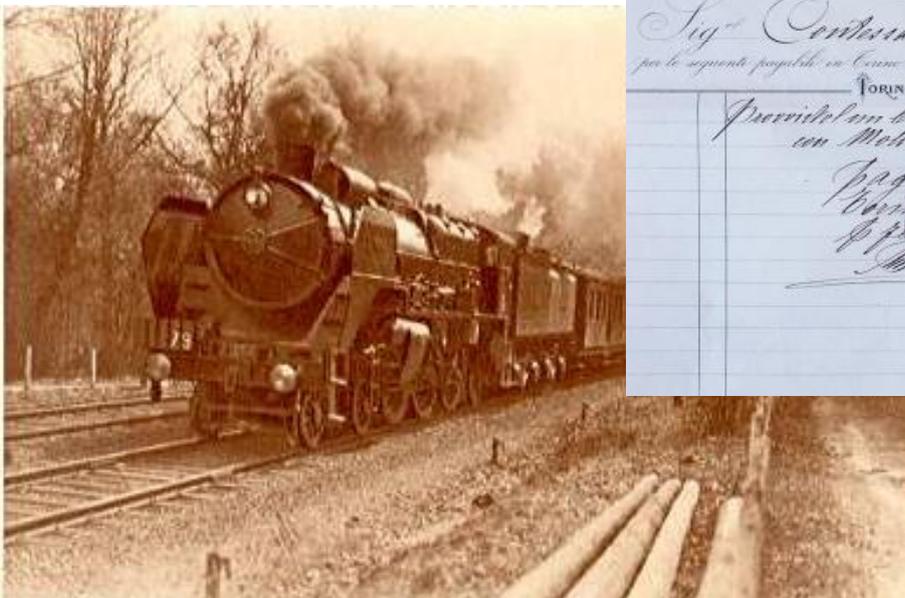
### 1864 - 1918

#### Railway carriage construction for Europe

The founder’s sons Giovanni and Battista constructed trams and railway carriages, also for the luxury Compagnie des Wagons Lits et des Grands Express Europeens, T.E.E. of Paris.

*8,11,1887*

*Diatto invoice for the sale of a carriage*



*Trans Europe Express*



## 1905 - 1932 DIATTO VEHICLES



The engineers Vittorio and Pietro Diatto, grandsons of the founder Guglielmo, the third generation of the wealthy dynasty of distinguished industrialists, founded the company Automobili Diatto in Torino on April 12th 1905.

Diatto was equipped with a foundry for iron, aluminium, cast iron and bronze and would be the only Italian automobile manufacturer with a

complete production cycle. *1905 - The Diatto factory*

The company produced luxury sports cars, with engines up to 6,0 cc, with 4, 6 and 8 cylinders, compressor, 4 valves per cylinder and aluminium pistons.

### 1906 - 1915 The first international victories

In just the second year of its life Diatto won the Tourism Cup and the Cannes Cup in France, the Herkomer Competition in Germany, the Petersburg-Moscow race in Russia, the Barcelona Cup in Spain, the Lugarno-San Gothard race in Switzerland and the Milano-San Remo and the Gold Cup in Italy, with the engineer Vittorio Diatto personally racing his 3,770cc 4C.



*1906 - Germany: Diatto won the Herkomer Cup*



**1910 - 1927**

**Diatto was the official supplier to the Italian royal family**

Thanks to its avant-garde technology and design Diatto won the favour of the Italian Royal Family who, in 1910, purchased 4 vehicles, of which one was a sports car, trust and confidence that would continue until 1927.

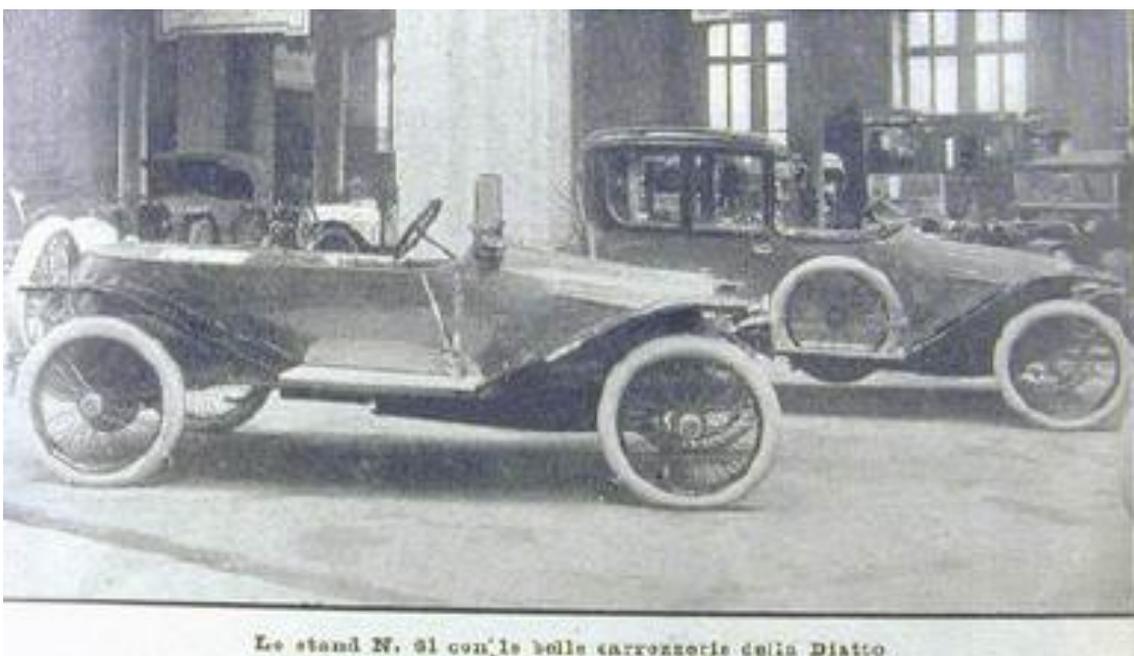
The family of the future champion Enzo Ferrari also became Diatto clients.

***1906 - Italy: Vittorio Diatto won the Gold Cup***

**1910 Diatto began exporting internationally**

Also thanks to its sporting supremacy, Diatto established an extensive sales network to guarantee sales and assistance worldwide for the Queen of lightweight vehicles, fast, comfortable, elegant.

From 1910 onwards exports in Europe reached Spain, France, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, England, Poland and Russia, in North and South America they arrived in Canada, the USA, Brazil, Cuba and Argentina and in Australia the vehicles were sold in Sydney and Melbourne.



Le stand N. 51 con le belle carrozzerie della Diatto

***1913 - Diatto at the Motor Show***



### 1912 Buy-outs of other vehicle manufacturers



In order to meet the considerable number of orders and increase the normal production rate by more than 40 vehicles a month, Diatto purchased first the Itala automobile factory and then the workshop belonging to the engineer Cesare Scacchi, ex-Fiat designer and the English industrialist

John Newton, ex Valt-Vehicles Automobili Leggere Torino (100 employees, production rate of 5 vehicles per month).

### 1915 Industrial buy-outs continue

### *1915 - The Diatto factory*



Diatto acquired the most important aircraft engine factory, Società Gnome & Rhone, holders of the patent for the rotary engine on military fighter planes, with a production rate of 200 aircraft engines per month, transferring the advanced technology to the automobile production sector: "Diatto: the most enlightened science and the safest experience in automobile and aircraft engineering".

Diatto inaugurated a second plant employing 1500 workers and became the third most important industry in the Italian kingdom.



### 1915 - 1918 Wartime production

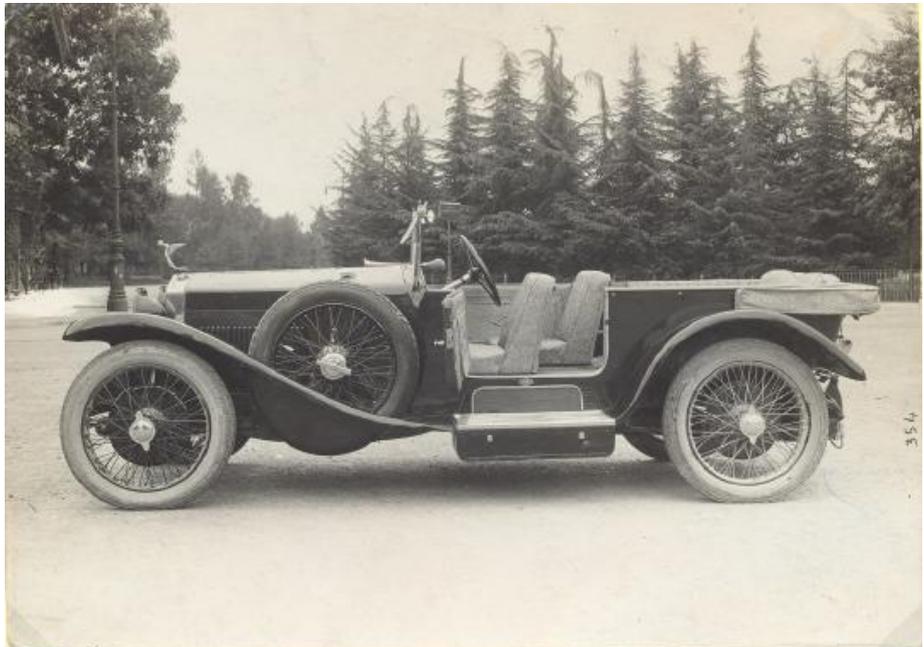


Diatto converted its production for wartime needs and supplied thousands of military lorries and aircraft engines to the French, Belgian, Bulgarian, Russian armies and to the Italian kingdom, however the latter did not honour their payments, compromising the future of the company.

### Technological supremacy

Diatto invested in technology: the historical patent for the 'perfected wheel' in 1838, applied to the production of carriages was followed by numerous automobile patents, from gearboxes to braking systems, from carburettors to fuel supply systems, applied to the mass production models.

With the mass produced models the company won the International Competition for Best Yield in England and Switzerland, competing against 50 vehicles representing the most important European and American manufacturers.



Diatto cars were appreciated for their light weight and speed, which led to lower fuel consumption.



## FROM BUGATTI TO MASERATI: DIATTO, GENESIS OF A LEGEND

### 1915 Diatto-Bugatti aircraft engines



Shortly before the war, Diatto had begun working with Ettore Bugatti, technician-turned-constructor, establishing a firm alliance, thanks to the common talent for aircraft and automobile engine design.

The Diatto 8 cylinder engine for the wartime aircraft industry was built on licence from Bugatti.

On September 23rd 1916, Diatto sent an enthusiastic telegram to Bugatti:

*“Glad to tell you, excellent results from engine... tests concluded brilliantly at 210HP”.*

The magazines from the time reported the successful partnership widely:

*“Official tests for the Diatto-Bugatti engine: a true technical masterpiece, incomparable precision, strength and excellence of the materials, the compendium of all modern progress”.*

### 1916 - Advertisement for Diatto-Bugatti

### 1919 - 1925 Prestigious Diatto-Bugatti motor cars

Following the war the partnership was extended to the production of automobiles.

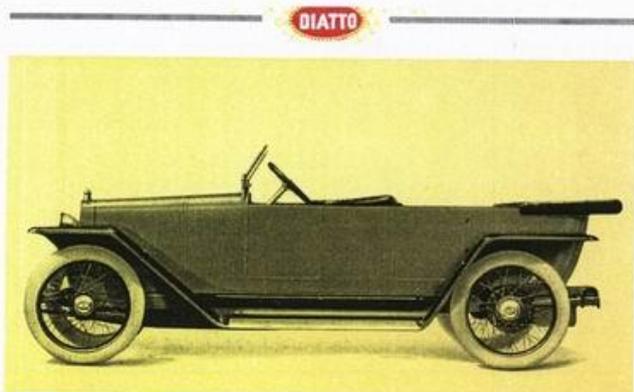
Diatto both 50 Type 23 chassis Bugatti, to be fitted with its technology, engines and bodies.

In 1919, Diatto presented its production at the international motor shows in London and Paris (in the French capital the event was held in the Champs-Élysées), five luxury vehicles including the three

*new “Diatto 30 with 16 valve engine”, produced with chassis licensed from Bugatti.*

*The T 23 Bugatti sold in Italy with a Diatto radiator.*





The praise published in the press in 1919:

*“The names Diatto and Bugatti, with their sound and genuine mechanical tradition and the most daring and ingenious innovation, combined and blended in a common project are extraordinarily eloquent and significant for every technician and every motorist”.*

**1919 Italy – First race success Diatto – Bugatti**  
*A Diatto-Bugatti won the Parma-Poggio di Berceto*

**LA 15<sup>HP</sup> DIATTO**  
(LICENCE BUGATTI)

CARACTÉRISTIQUES GÉNÉRALES

**L**E MOTEUR, du type monobloc à quatre cylindres, alésage 68 millimètres, course 100 millimètres, présente, dès l'abord, cette particularité que les soupapes commandées sont au nombre de seize et logées dans le fond des cylindres. L'arbre à cames, placé au-dessus, fonctionne dans un carter rempli d'huile et facilement démontable.

Les engrenages de distribution sont coniques et enfermés dans des carters.

Le carburateur est du type automatique. L'avance des gaz est commandée par une pédale.

L'allumage s'effectue par une magnéto à haute tension

- 5 -

Primi successi 1919

**Puri sangue**

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**DIATTO**

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Corsa Parma - Poggio di Berceto

II<sup>a</sup> CATEGORIA

I<sup>a</sup> Classificato: Tipo 30 (Bugatti)

II<sup>a</sup> Classificato: Tipo 4DC.

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Rilasciato in vendita per l'Italia

AGENZIA COMMERCIALE ITALIANA AUTOMOBILI DIATTO

Sede Centrale: ROMA, Viale Castro Pretorio, 124

Filiali:

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FIRENZE - PIAZZA SAN GIOVANNI, 11	NAPOLI - PIAZZA VITTORIO, 11-12	SALONICA - VIA CANTÙ, 26
VERONA - VIA S. ROSSO, 11	VERONA - VIA S. ROSSO, 11	

R. A. I. - UNICO CONCESSIONARIO ITALIANO AUTOMOBILI DIATTO & Bugatti S.p.A. - TORINO

CONCESSIONARI PER L'EUROPA: GIULIO GIARDINO, TORINO & TORINO, TORINO & TORINO

BUREAU DE MARCHÉ - VIALE CANTÙ, 26 - TORINO

DIRETTORE GENERALE: GIULIO GIARDINO, TORINO & TORINO, TORINO & TORINO

*Brochurs for the Diatto-Bugatti convertible and coupé presented at the Paris and London motor shows, produced from 1919 onwards.*

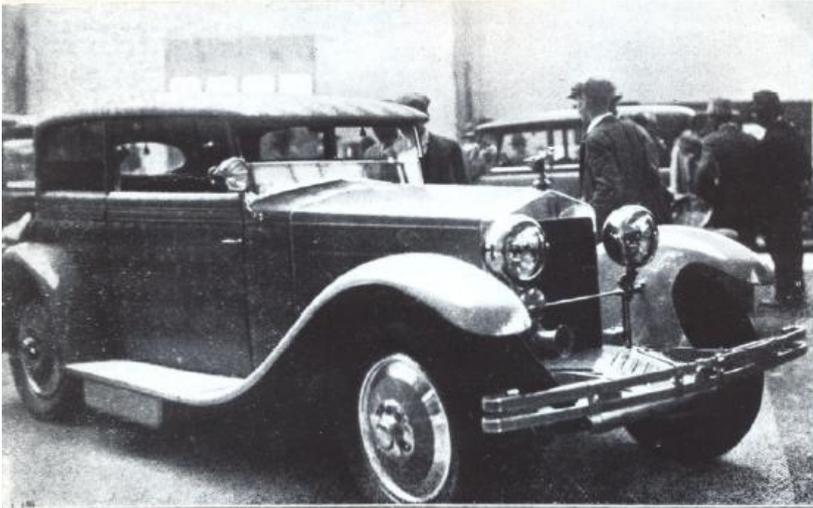
### Diatto-Bugatti racing cars

From 1919 and until the early nineteen-twenties, when Diatto-Bugatti won their first victory in the Parma - Poggio di Berceto race, the Italian press simply identified Diatto-Bugatti as ‘Bugatti’.

Diatto and Bugatti built racing cars both with Diatto tipo 25 HP Sport chassis and Bugatti 4 cylinder 1,500cc engines with compressor and with Bugatti “Brescia da corsa” chassis and Diatto 2,000cc 16 valve engines, exchanging the technologies as they competed.

The Diatto-Bugatti racing cars won, amongst other things the Brescia Gentleman’s Grand Prix, the Susa – Moncenisio and the Aosta - Gran San Bernardo.

Although Diatto, founded in Torino in 1905 and Bugatti, founded in Molseim in 1910, shared technologies for some years, they remained two separate and independent companies.



La Guida interna sport "Plumelastica" del Garavini su chassis Diatto tipo 30 ricoperto in tessuto speciale moiré a grana finissima con fascia azzurra.

### First class design

The most famous designers in the world used Diatto bodywork: Bertone, Castagna, Garavini, Ghia, Mulliner, Schieppati, Stabilimenti Farina, Zagato.

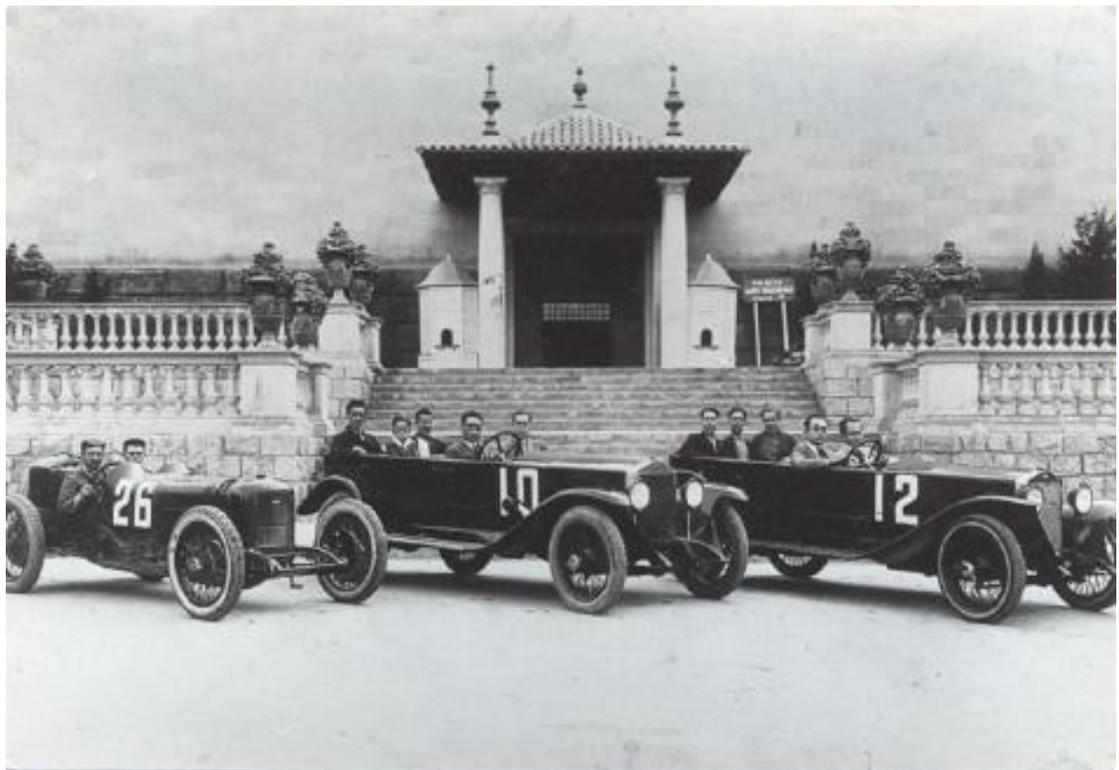
*"The classic design of the Diatto radiator, with its straight lines, its low chassis, elegantly fitted, for low streamlined vehicles, has been a lesson to others."*

*1928 - A luxury Diatto coupé*

### 1922 - 1926 Alfieri Maserati became the team manager of the Diatto racing stables

In 1922, Diatto beat the offers of the competitors, engaging the driver and designer Alfieri Maserati who was much in demand, with his brother Ernesto, entrusting him the position of Team Manager.

Alfieri Maserati remained at the head of the officials in four years until 1926, winning numerous victories in four years, from the Targa to the Florio Cup, from the Cremona circuit to the Coppa della Consuma, from the Colline Pistoiesi to the Monza Gran Prix, from the Aosta-Gran San Bernardo to the Parma-Poggio di Berceto, from the Limonest to the Schabenberg in France, from the Gothenbourg to the Bollans in Swiss, from the Rebassada to the Valencia in Spain.



*The Diatto racing team, led by Maserati, competes in Rebassada (Spain)*



## 1925 Diatto - Maserati Grand Prix



In 1925, Maserati, under the guidance of the engineer Giuseppe Coda, technical director with years of experience at Diatto, which he called “my maestro”, designed for Diatto the first 2,000cc 8 cylinder compressor engine.

On June 14th the competitive, 160HP Sport Diatto Gran Prix 8C compressor at the Monza race track.

*Maserati's brothers in the supercharged 8-cylinder Diatto Gran Prix, the forerunner to the Maserati Tipo 26*

## 1926 From the Diatto racing cars come Maserati

The next year, following Diatto's official withdrawal from racing, Maserati took ten Diatto Tipo 30 sport chassis, equipped with 8C engines, gears, suspension and many mechanical parts.

With these Diatto chassis and the vast technical and sporting know-how inherited from the Diatto Racing Team, Maserati built the first sports cars with the 'Trident' badge.

The Diatto Gran Prix 8C compressor, which evolved into the first Maserati Tipo 26, continued to win and be competitive for many years.



*1926 - Maserati leaves Diatto and becomes a manufacturer*



### 1919 - 1926 Top class performance

As an advertisement from the nineteen-twenties says, *Diatto vehicles are the fastest mass-produced two-litre Italian cars on the market.*

The production rate increases to 6/7 vehicles a day.

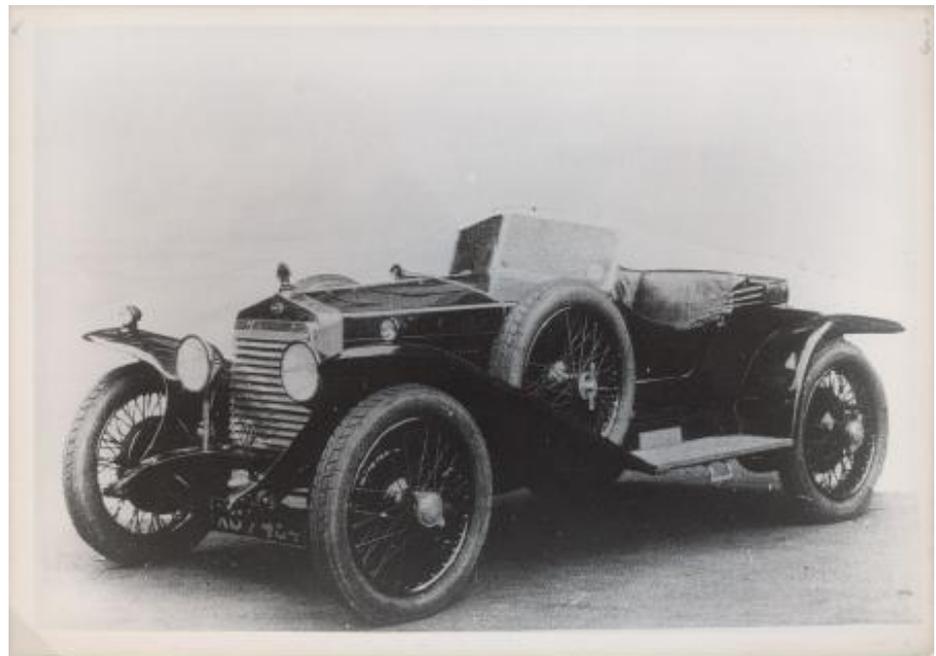
### 300 times on the podium

Diatto, with the great champions of the period, Maserati, Nuvolari, Brilli Peri, De Sterlich, Meregalli, Schieppati, Materassi and Aymini, gained the podium in the European Gran Prix, in Barcelona, in Sweden, in Switzerland and on the tracks in Monza, Targa Florio, Brooklands, St Petersburg-Moscow, Tunis-Tripoli.

### 1926 – Advert for the Diatto 2 litre

### 1932 Production of cars is suspended

In 1932, due to insuperable financial difficulties, caused by the non-payment of the considerable military supplies to the Italian kingdom, the ownership changed hands and production was limited to motor compressors and spare parts for Diatto vehicles, the company closed in 1955.



## Dalla Diatto - Bugatti 1500 alla Maserati "Tipo 26": genesi di un mito

1921-22 - *Accordo Diatto-Bugatti per la costruzione su commessa di una piccola serie di auto da corsa con motori EB 1500 (69x100) e telai Diatto tipo 25 HP Sport (Passo 2550, carreggiata ant. e post. 1400) modificati con assale tubolare tipo B.C.C. portante agli estremi fusi a snodo ad attacchi detti a "forcella invertita" e "piatti inchiodati" (sic! Coda), senza freni anteriori: sterzo a 26°, tiranteria e barra di accoppiamento adattati dal tipo 25 HP; freni posteriori azionati con tiranti dall'asse portante il pedale e/o con leva collegata anche ad un freno sulla trasmissione; ruote Rudge Whitworth Straight side e gomme 820x120. L'italo-francese Franz Conelli richiede a Coda ulteriori modifiche al suo esemplare: alleggerimento del telaio da 840 a 750 kg e di tutta la vettura eliminando anche il baquet per il meccanico; radiatore dell'acqua della tipo 25 HP più grande di quello previsto da Coda per il tipo sport-tubo di scarico all'altezza dei collettori - 4 in 2 - e non in basso come nel progetto, ed altro. Con questa "speciale" F, Conelli partecipa ad alcune competizioni tra cui la Susa-Moncenisio 1921.*

1922-23 - *L'ing. Coda progetta e costruisce un motore 8 C in linea con due blocchi Diatto tipo 20 (79,7x100) ispirandosi al motore Bugatti Avio 8C che la Diatto aveva prodotto su licenza sotto la sua direzione tecnica. Coda entra in contatto con Alfieri Maserati per una collaborazione con la DIATTO ed insieme realizzano varie migliorie a quel motore: nuove teste senza interposizione di guarnizione con i blocchi, nuovi carburatori - Zenith da Ø 36 - in sostituzione dei Feroldi avio modificati da Coda ed altro, si costruisce un secondo motore a teste fisse e vengono assemblati due prototipi utilizzando due telai tipo 20 di serie (passo 3.10; carreggiata ant. e post. 1,40). È da notare che l'ing. Coda pensa di costruire anche una vettura di lusso ed uno spider con un motore del genere oltre che una da competizione. Le prove sul Moncenisio, con una carrozzeria spartana, effettuate da Coda, Maserati e De Sterlich sono del tutto insoddisfacenti. De Sterlich fa sostituire le gomme 820x120 con altre 820x135 e modificare le balestre posteriori zavorrando il retrotreno con quattro ruote - non per scorta! - e, cambiate le otto candele, riprova sullo stesso percorso ma il prototipo prende fuoco - viene spento con il concorso di alcuni montanari presenti lungo la strada.*

1923-24 - *Coda e Maserati sviluppano i due motori costruiti ed assemblano due nuovi prototipi con telai Diatto tipo 20 sport (passo 2650, carreggiata ant. e post. 1350), ruote Rudge Whitworth Stright side e gomme 820x120. Il motore a testa fissa viene dotato di due carburatori Zenith da Ø 36 e compressore a palette ideato da Coda collocato al posto del magnete, quindi con la girante a 90° rispetto all'albero motore, il magnete trasferito in coda al secondo albero di distribuzione. Le prove su strada, pur soddisfacenti anche con il motore a teste fisse, evidenziano ancora problemi. Si abbandona definitivamente l'idea del motore biblocco, quello a teste fisse viene acquistato da Conelli, l'altro riutilizzato per alcune componenti. Coda e Maserati realizzano allora un 8C monoblocco in linea (7,9x100) monoalbero con testa smontabile senza guarnizione interposta con il blocco. L'alimentazione è aspirata con due e poi quattro carburatori Zenith da Ø 36; La lubrificazione è a carter secco con radiatore dell'olio posto davanti a quello dell'acqua, pompa "a palette mobile" (sic! Coda) e serbatoio di recupero collocato sotto il cruscotto anteriormente al posto del meccanico. Le prove sono finalmente molto soddisfacenti.*

1926-1927 - L'entusiasmo per la nascita della prima Maserati è alle stelle e subito si lavora alla costruzione della prima vettura, sarà chiamata "Tipo 26". In realtà si tratta di un rifacimento dell'auto di Conelli con le seguenti modifiche: al telaio tipo 20 Sport con assale B.C.C. vengono aggiunti freni anteriori Diatto - senza servofreno Perrot che sarà applicato dal telaio 30012 - motore, cambio e tutti gli accessori totalmente prelevati dal prototipo Diatto 8C trattenuti da Alfieri nel 1925, cilindrata ridotta a 1592 (60x66) ed altre modifiche: trasmissione e ponte di nuovo tipo; lamierino tra i due longheroni anteriori sostituito con altro più lungo per un migliore invito all'aria verso il convogliatore del radiatore; lamiera parasassi al di sotto del motore, cambio, trasmissione chiusa sul davanti con una spessa rete; ruote Rudge Withworth a canale e gomme 820x120. Velocità oltre 180 km/h. La numerazione del telaio è 30011 - dove il 300 indica la provenienza del telaio medesimo DIATTO e l'11, l'undicesimo dei motori precedentemente elaborati e/o costruiti da Alfieri Maserati per le auto da corsa alcuni dei quali montati poi su richiesta sia dalla Diatto a Torino che direttamente dai Maserati: DIATTO 4 cilindri: 20 S/2000; 20 H-S/6000; 23 S/2300; 26 S/2600; 30 S/3000; 35 SS/3500. DIATTO 8 cilindri: 40 B.T.S./4000; 40 B.T.F./4000; 40 M.M./4000; 20 SS M.B./2000; 8 C MASERATI: "TIPO 26" M.B./1500

1925-26 - Alla fine di giugno 1925 Alfieri Maserati consegna alla Diatto il secondo motore 8C costruito ma, con la mediazione di Coda, trattiene il prototipo a saldo per l'opera svolta negli ultimi tempi senza retribuzione, al pari dello stesso Coda; Finita questa collaborazione Alfieri ne cerca un'altra ma non riesce a trovarla. Conelli si offre di contattare Bugatti e per questo fa montare da Alfieri il motore a teste fisse biblocco da lui acquistato nel 1923 dalla Diatto su di un telaio tipo 20 sport modificato con l'assale tipo B.C.C. prelevato dalla sua Diatto-Bugatti del 1921. De Sterlich offre la carrozzeria che aveva commissionato a Schieppati per la Diatto 8C da lui prenotata che non verrà più prodotta e la vettura così assemblata, verniciata in azzurro chiaro viene mostrata da Conelli a Bugatti, in occasione di una sua visita a Milano, insieme alla rossa Diatto 8C di Alfieri. Ma l'accordo di collaborazione Bugatti-Maserati non si fa. De Sterlich rileva allora dalla Diatto una decina di telai tipo 30 - che saranno modificati in sport - e li fa consegnare ad Alfieri convincendolo, insieme ad altri estimatori, anche con varie elargizioni, a mettersi in proprio nella costruzione di auto da corsa. Il battesimo avviene nella primavera del 1926 suggellato da una bella fotografia di gruppo intorno alla vettura voluta da Conelli e sulla quale per la prima volta appare il "tridente" disegnato da Mario Maserati, l'unico dei fratelli non interessato alle automobili ma alla figurazione artistica.

## ***From the Diatto – Bugatti 1500 to the Maserati Tipo 26: the birth of a legend***

1921-22 – An agreement between Diatto and Bugatti to build to order a small number of racing cars with the EB 1500 (69x100) engine and Diatto Tipo 25 HP Sport chassis (wheelbase 2550, front and rear track 1400), modified with tubular BCC axle and stub axles with “inverted fork” and “riveted plate” (so-called by Coda) couplings, without front brakes: steering 26°, linkages and coupling bar adapted from the Tipo 25 HP; rear brakes actuated with linkages from the pedal shaft mounting axle or with lever also connected to a transmission brake; Rudge Whitworth Straight Side wheels and 820x120 tyres. Italian-French driver Franz Conelli asks for further modifications to his car: chassis lightened from 840 to 750 kg and removal of the mechanic’s sports seat (“baquet”); water radiator of the Tipo 25 HP, larger than that installed on sports cars by Coda, exhaust pipe at the height of the manifolds (4 in 2) and not low down as provided by the design, along with other changes. With this special “F”, Conelli participates in a number of races including the 1921 Susa-Moncenisio.

1922-23 Engineer Coda designs and builds an inline 8 cylinder engine with two Diatto Tipo 20 engine blocks (79.7x100) based on the Bugatti Avio 8C engine licensed to Diatto under his technical direction.

Coda contacts Alfieri Maserati to collaborate with Diatto and together they improve the engine: new heads without block gaskets, new carburettors (Zenith diameter 36) in place of the Feroldi aviation units modified by Coda and others, as well as a second fixed head engine, resulting in the assembly of two prototypes using 2 Tipo 20 series production chassis (wheelbase 3.10, front and rear track 1.40). Note that Coda was thinking of building a luxury car and a spider with this type of engine, as well as a race car.

The tests at Moncenisio, with a Spartan body, run by Coda, Maserati and De Sterlich, are very disappointing. De Sterlich replaces the 820x120 tyres with 820x135 tyres and modifies the rear leaf springs by ballasting the rear axle with four wheels (that are not meant as spare wheels) and, after changing the eight spark plugs, tries again along the same route, but the prototype catches fire and is put out by the local people.

1023-24 Coda and Maserati further develop the two engines and assemble two new prototypes with Diatto Tipo 20 Sport chassis (wheelbase 2650, front and rear track 1350), Rudge Whitworth straight side wheels and 820x120 tyres. The fixed head engine is equipped with two Zenith 36 diameter carburettors and a vane supercharger designed by Coda located in place of the magneto, so that the rotor is positioned at 90° with respect to the crankshaft, and the magneto is placed at the end of the second camshaft. The road tests are still problematic, although even the fixed head engine gives good results.

The two-block engine is finally abandoned and the fixed head engine is acquired by Conelli, the other used for parts. Coda and Maserati now build a single block inline 8 cylinder engine (7.9x100) single crankshaft with removable head and without block gasket.

*The fuel supply is of the aspirated type, first with two and then four Zenith 36 diameter carburettors, lubrication is of the dry-sump type, with oil radiator located in front of the water radiator, with mobile vane pump (so-called by Coda) and scavenge tank under the dashboard, in front of the mechanic's seat. The tests are finally very satisfactory.*

*1925-26 – At the end of June 1925, Alfieri Maserati delivered the second 8C engine but, in agreement with Coda, kept the prototype as payment for his unpaid work (even Coda had gone unpaid for some time).*

*Alfieri attempted to find a new collaborative project, but without success. Conelli suggested contacting Bugatti himself and, for this reason asked Alfieri to install the double-block fixed head engine purchased from Diatto in 1923 to a modified type 20 sports chassis, with BCC axle taken from his 1921 Diatto-Bugatti.*

*De Sterlich offered him the body he had commissioned from Schieppati a Diatto 8C which, in the event, was never built, and this car, in light blue livery, was shown to Bugatti by Conelli during the former's visit to Milan, along with Alfieri's red Diatto 8C.*

*But no collaboration between Bugatti and Maserati was ever established. De Sterlich then bought ten type 30 chassis from Diatto for modification into sports chassis, and delivered them to Alfieri as part of his effort, along with other admirers who even financed the new company, to convince him to set up his own racing car company.*

*The new company was launched in 1926, as attested by a group photo around Conelli's car, on which the Trident symbol designed by Mario Maserati – the only brother not interested in cars but rather in painting – appears for the first time.*

*1926-27 Enthusiasm for the first Maserati is sky high and work starts immediately on the first car, to be called the Tipo 26.*

*Actually, this is a remake of Conelli's car, modified as follows: the Tipo 20 Sport chassis with BCC axle is equipped with Diatto front brakes (without the Perrot servobrake, which will be used from the 30012 onwards), with engine, gearbox and all accessories taken from the Diatto 8C prototype kept by Alfieri in 1925, and displacement reduced to 1592 cc. (60x66) and other modifications: new transmission and axle; metal sheet between the two front side members replaced with a longer one for enhanced air flow to the radiator; gravel guard metal sheet under the engine, gearbox and transmission closed at the front with a thick net; Rudge Whitworth treaded wheels with 820x120 tyres. Speed over 180 kph.*

*The chassis is numbered 30011 – 300 indicates the Diatto origin of the chassis and 11 the eleventh of the engines previously built by Alfieri Maserati for the race cars, some of which were then requested by Diatto in Turin and by Maserati themselves.*

*Diatto 4 cylinders: 20S/2000; 20H-S/6000; 23S/2300; 26S/2600; 30S/3000; 35SS/3500*

*Diatto 8 cylinders: 40 B.T.S./4000; 40 B.T.F./4000; 40 M.M../4000; 20SS M.B./2000; 8C MASERATI: "TIPO 26" M.B./1500*