

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE 250F

In many respects, the 250F was a development of the A6GCM. The change of the type of model designation now adopted by Maserati reflected the role of Giulio Alfieri as chief engineer. The 250F was designed as a car that could be sold to private owners and raced by them with factory support, without being extortionately expensive by Grand Prix standards. In fact, the main intention in developing the 250F was to build these cars against customer orders.

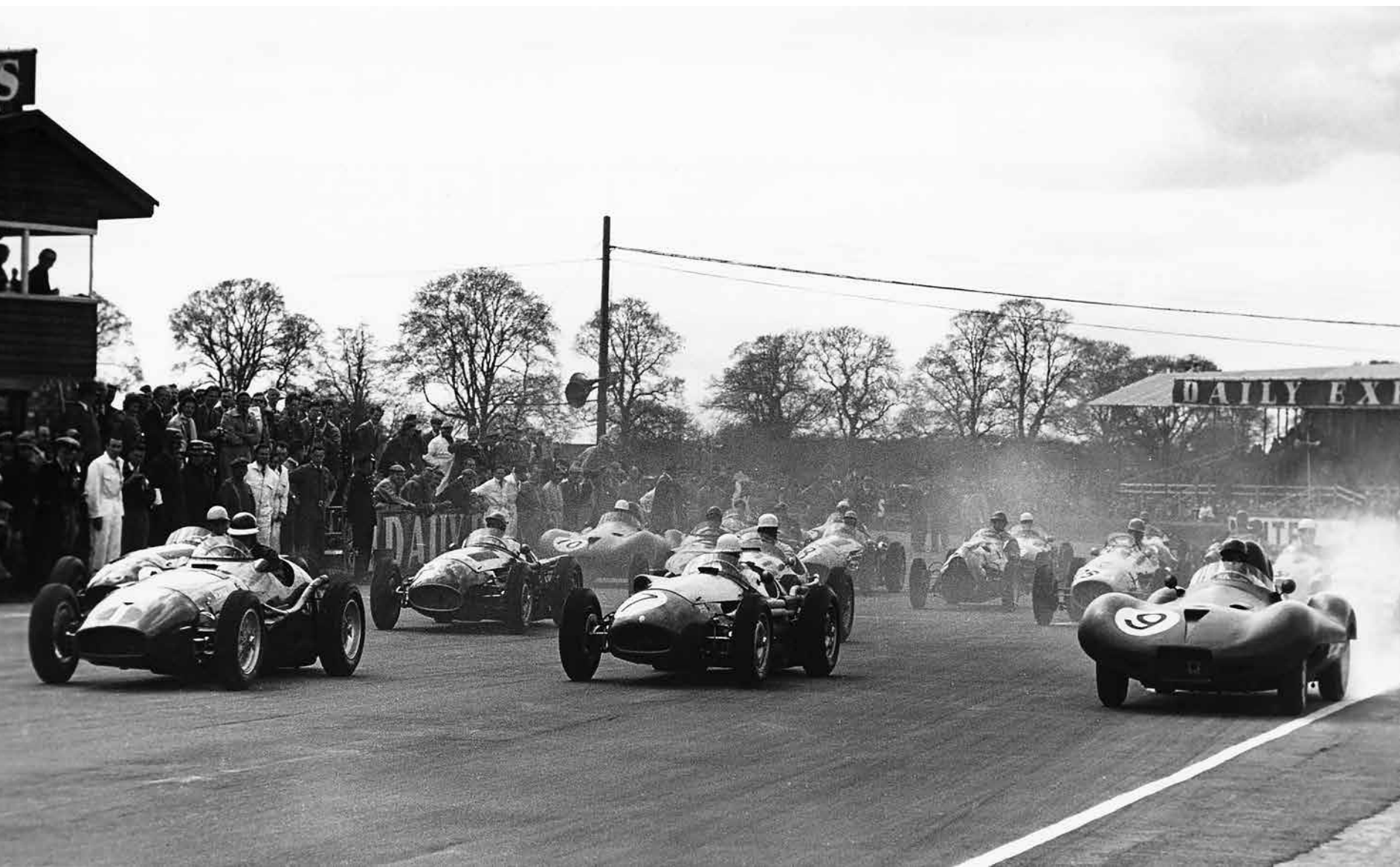
Originally, Maserati as a works team planned to contest only Argentine races because of its close ties with Fangio, the Argentine authorities and the national automobile club. It was believed that success in Argentina, coupled with the fact that no other racing car manufacturer was building customer cars, would kickstart sales. This it did most successfully, and a substantial number of orders was received.

It must be remembered that until the appearance of the rear-engined Cooper Formula 2 derivatives, no other constructor except Connaught offered customer cars for the 2500cc Grand Prix Formula. Operation of a works team by Maserati on a regular basis was secondary, and the decision to operate such a team was not settled finally until Fangio won a second Championship Grand Prix, the Belgian race, before he left to drive for Mercedes-Benz.

After Fangio left the works Maserati team, it was led by the very experienced Argentine Onofre Marimón, who was not, and never could be, a great driver, backed up by relatively



One of the first private buyers of a 250F was young British driver Stirling Moss, seen here on his second outing with 2508 in the rain-swept first heat of the International Trophy at Silverstone. He retired in the final because of failure of the de Dion tube, which was a weak feature of early 250Fs. (Courtesy FotoVantage)



The start of the 1955 International Trophy race at Silverstone. It became a direct fight between the private 250Fs and the new British Connaughts and Vanwalls. The front row of the grid consisted of, left to right: Salvadori (no 4, Gilby Engineering-entered 250F), slow off the mark because of the high first gear fitted to this car; in this photograph he is partially hidden by Hawthorn (no 1, Vanwall); Moss (no 7, his private 250F), and Fairman's streamlined B-series Connaught (no 9). (Courtesy FotoVantage)

(Vanwall) matched this time. Moss with his Maserati was third fastest in 1min 50sec, despite a rough-running engine, while both Jack Fairman (Connaught) and Peter Collins (Owen Racing Organisation 250F) achieved 1min 51sec.

In the opening laps of the race Salvadori led from Collins,

Fairman, Hawthorn and Moss. On lap ten Moss slowed at Stowe Corner and abandoned the car at Club Corner because the engine had seized up. All four British Grand Prix contenders retired: the Connaughts of Fairman and McAlpine succumbed to minor teething problems in what was their first serious race, Hawthorn

As Maserati did not contest the Silverstone race, Stirling Moss was released to drive for the British Vanwall team. He led throughout to score a fine victory. More than a year was to elapse before Vanwall could achieve the same success in a full length Grand Prix. (Courtesy FotoVantage)



In the International Trophy Roy Salvadori was at the wheel of the second Gilby Engineering 250F with the chassis number 2507. He battled with Archie Scott Brown (Connaught Syracuse), whom he is leading in this photograph, until the final drive locked up and he crashed heavily. (Courtesy FotoVantage)

THE 1957 SEASON: MASERATI'S GREATEST YEAR

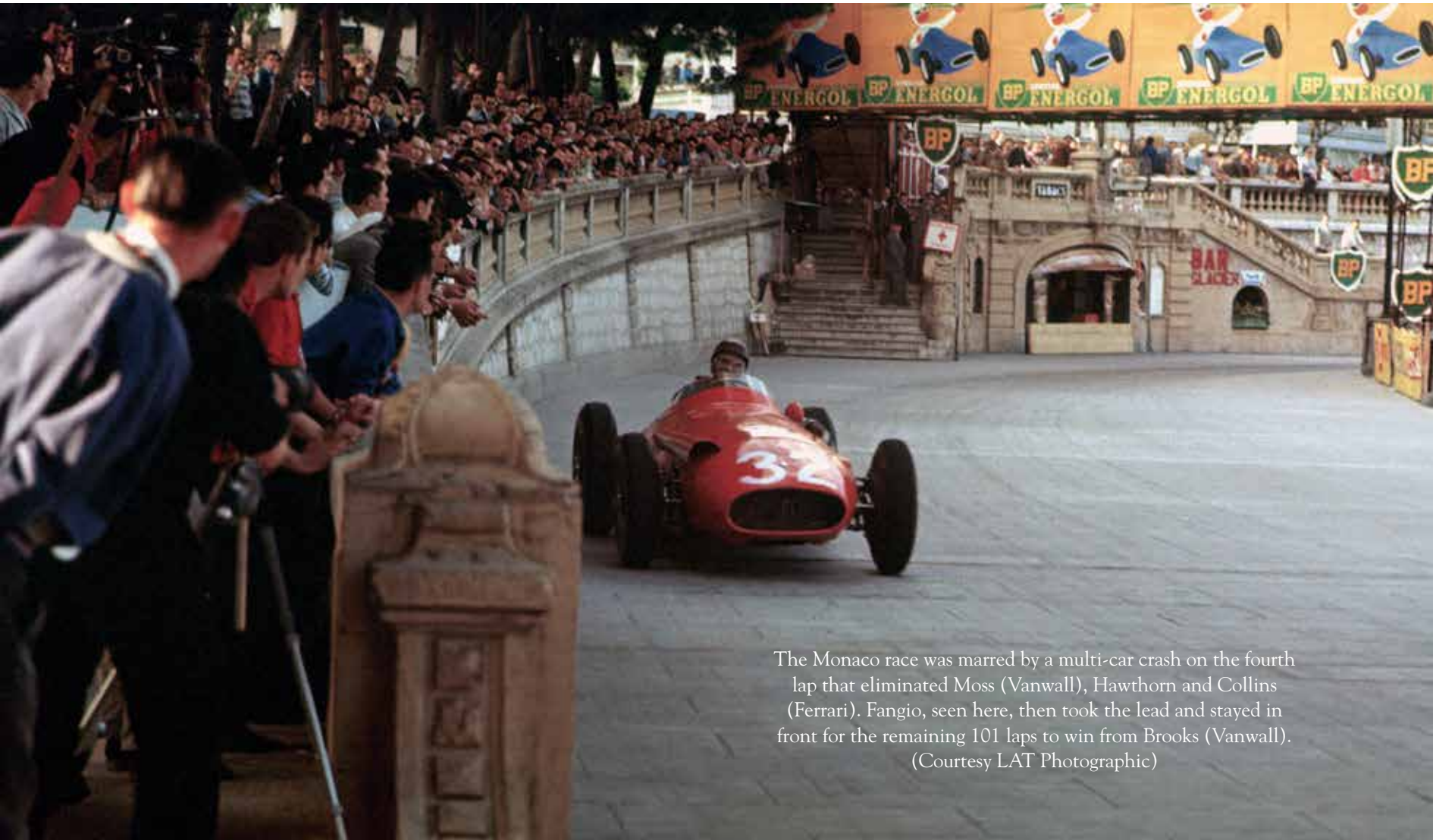


A rare view of Fangio testing the prototype V12 at Monaco; following is Giorgio Scarlatti at the wheel of his 250F, which was a works car in this race. (Author's collection)

were Fangio and Collins. On the second lap Collins succeeded in passing Fangio, and this was the order as race leader Moss approached the chicane on lap four.

Moss claimed that the Vanwall's brakes failed and he carried straight on, smashing into the barriers. Barricades and poles were scattered, Collins avoided Moss' crashed car, but his Ferrari was hit by flying poles. Next on the scene was Brooks (Vanwall), but, as he braked hard, Hawthorn ran up the back of him, tearing off the Ferrari's right front wheel and smashing the suspension on that side. Fangio succeeded in picking his way through poles and debris to take the lead, and Brooks resumed, holding second place.

For the remaining 101 laps the order at the front of the race was unchanged, and as Brooks struggled to get to grips with the



The Monaco race was marred by a multi-car crash on the fourth lap that eliminated Moss (Vanwall), Hawthorn and Collins (Ferrari). Fangio, seen here, then took the lead and stayed in front for the remaining 101 laps to win from Brooks (Vanwall). (Courtesy LAT Photographic)

