

EVENTS/CAUSES

Ferrari honors racing heritage with Mille Miglia vintage parade

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Ferrari at Mille Miglia

By JOE MCCARTHY

Italian automaker Ferrari is building solidarity among its owners May 15-18 during the open road endurance tour and race Mille Miglia that honors vintage vehicles.

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The tour brings together Ferrari owners of both vintage and modern vehicles for the multi-day event. When owners feel a sense of camaraderie with one another, the loyalty felt toward a brand strengthens, which generates louder brand advocates and more sales.

"This type of clientele enjoys events that bring them together to showcase their cars for a common bond," said Lauren Fix, automotive expert and author of "[Lauren Fix's Guide to Loving Your Car](#)," Lancaster, NY.

"Getting them to these type of high end luxury events is a great way to support the brand," she said.

Ms. Fix is not affiliated with Ferrari, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Ferrari did not respond by press deadline.

Remembering history

Mille Miglia began as a legitimate open road endurance race in 1927 and occurred 24 times until 1957. The race supposedly made brands such as Ferrari, Maserati, BMW and Porsche. Ferrari won eight of the last 10 races leading up to its termination.

The race was banned in 1957 after two fatal crashes that took the lives of several spectators. A total of 56 people were killed during the race throughout its 30 year existence.

In 1977, auto enthusiasts revived the 870-mile race and transformed it into a parade for pre-1957 vehicles.

Ferrari started a distinct tribute for its owners five years ago.

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Mille Miglia highlights

Spanning four days, the activities are split between vehicles post-1957 and those pre-1957.

The Ferrari tribute features Ferrari cars built after 1958 that leave an hour before the official race begins. Vintage vehicles then leave at the appointed time as onlookers line the streets.



Vintage Ferrari at Mille Miglia

The route begins in Brescia and goes through Ferrara, Riccione, Rome, Siena, Pisa and Bologna on May 15. The cars and their crews parade at Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome.

On May 17, drivers will traverse Siena, Pisa and Bologna. Finally, attendees will begin the return journey to the birthplace of Mille Miglia, Brescia.

Throughout the tour at various points, especially in Rome, fans will cheer drivers on, further instilling a sense of camaraderie.

Sit and stare

Endurance races have become hallmarks of the summer season, as owners and fans exult in the best that brands have to offer. Luxury brands work hard to set themselves apart

in this category.

For instance, Bentley Motors showcased its racing history with six limited-edition models featured on a Le Mans microsite. Each of the models is inspired by a driver from the British automaker's six victories at the 24 Hours of Le Mans race in France ([see story](#)).

This year, German automaker Porsche is returning to Le Mans 24 Hours race after a 16-year leave and is hyping up its mission with an extensive digital campaign.

The automaker's pursuit of a victory at Le Mans 24 Hours race has called for a start-from-scratch approach, and the brand is eager to share that journey. Competing in high-level racing events can help a brand clarify design methods, gather favor among auto enthusiasts and gain bragging rights over contenders ([see story](#)).

For many automakers, dedication to racing and endurance is often what pulls consumers in the first place.

"Ferrari is always known to be an exceptional sports car and connecting it with Mille Miglia is a wise PR move," Ms. Fix said.

Final Take

Joe McCarthy, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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