

1954 FERRARI BERLINETTA 375MM, 0490 AM



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0490 AM ready for delivery from Ferrari/Pininfarina.

Carl: "I bought this 375MM Berlinetta, 0490 AM, in 1971 from Ed Weschler, who lived in Milwaukee. "Fast" Eddie, he was called, a race driver. It was a wonderful car, one of the last of the 375MMs, with that beautiful body by Pininfarina that later on was used as a template for the 250 GT "Tour de Frances".



"I drove the car quite a lot. It was very reliable. I was dealing with an airline pilot in California at the time. He said: 'I have photos of my 250 GT SWB SEFAC hot rod, I can fly into Chicago and show you them.' I told him I could pick him up. The day he flew in, I was going to look at the 375 in Milwaukee. I picked him up at the airport. 'Come with me, keep your mouth shut' I told him. 'OK'. I bought his 250 SWB from his photos, by the way. We drove up in my Cadillac. We got to Weschler's place and a kid went to fetch him."

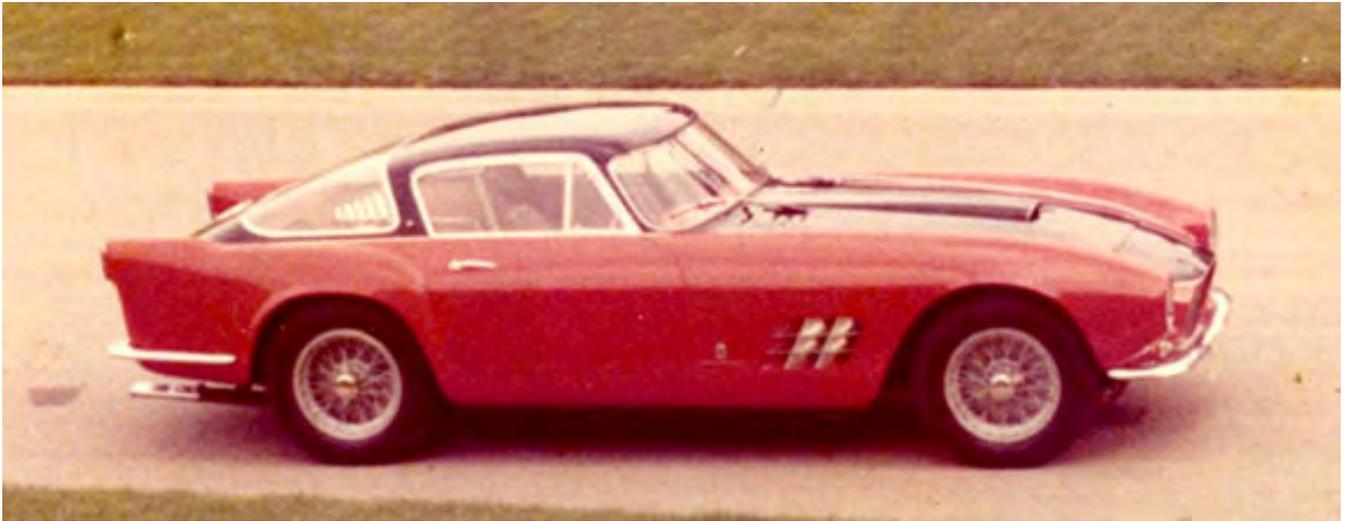
"All of a sudden, this 375, brmm, brmm, pulled up in front of us. It's RHD. Ed's driving it. He says, 'come on, we're going for a ride'. He was a race driver, you can imagine! We came back, I got out and we followed Ed. I kept saying, to the pilot: 'Do you see that f... car? It's mine! Just look at it! It's mine! I've got it!' I gave Ed a \$500 deposit and took the pilot back to O'Hare airport. Joe Marchetti later on got the Scuderia hot rod for me. I paid \$5500 for the 375. I went to Milwaukee with the cash. When I was there, another guy pulled up and offered more money. Ed didn't take it. I told him how much I appreciated that."

"I kept the car for just over a year and then sold it to Lawrence Slattery, also of Chicago. He kept it for over thirty years, so I guess my ownership of it wasn't very long compared to his!"



Ferrari 375mm number 0490 AM was one of the last of Ferrari's most powerful cars of the early 1950s. The cars had started out using Ing. Lampredi's "Big Block" V12 engine and had been progressively enlarged from an initial 275 size until they reached 4.5 liters (each cylinder capacity = 375 cc). There were a very few even bigger variations afterwards of up to 4.9 liters, which Ferrari named the "410", or "375 plus". Some of these engines featured twin plugs per cylinder, making 24 that needed changing when the car was serviced!

The first 375 engine went into Ferrari's 1950 GP car and Froilan Gonzales posted Ferrari's first victory in Grand Prix racing at Silverstone in the British Grand Prix with one of these 375 F1 cars. Alfa Romeo, seeing the writing on the wall, withdrew their highly supercharged 1.5 liter straight eight-engined cars from Grand Prix (F1) racing at the end of 1950, forcing the FIA to adopt a Formula 2, up to 2 liters unsupercharged, format for the next two years but that's another story.



There were 340 and then 375 Ferraris, mostly using the suffix “MM” after the type number, to denote Ferrari winning the Mille Miglia with them.





Using a 375+, Ferrari won Le Mans in 1954 and the factory then produced a small series of cars for the street with typically beautiful bodywork by Pininfarina, Ghia and Vignale. It appears that only six cars were produced for the street. They were, of course, very expensive, intended only for the fortunate few who had the money to purchase them. Afterwards, the design was developed into the Tipo 410 SuperAmerica, of which Carl had two but we'll come to them later.

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0490 AM today, restored to original colors.