

An Aston Martin on the Gran Premio Nuvolari

by Joe Hurwich



Not Monterey. Joe Hurwich and Sterling Pratz in the Aston Martin on the shores of Lake Trasimeno, a lake in the province of Perugia, in the Umbria region of Italy on the border with Tuscany.

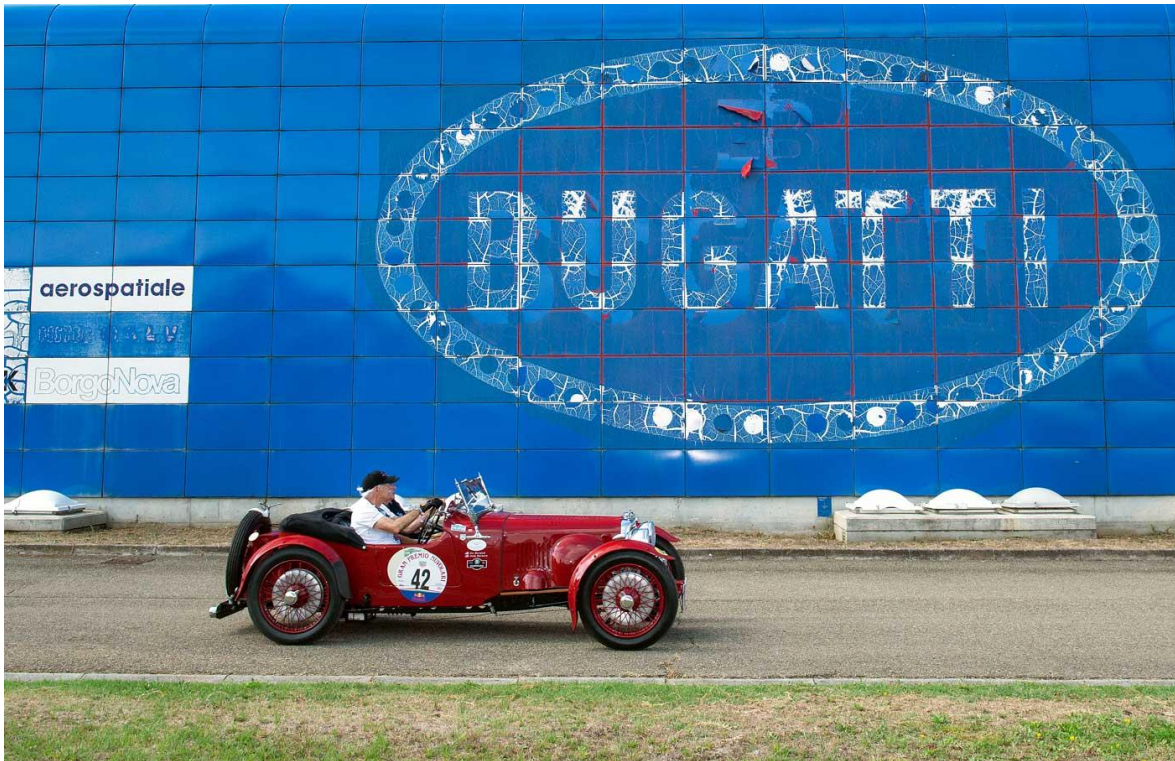
In an earlier 1968 newsletter. I wrote of my experience at the Mille Miglia in my 1931 Aston Martin. It was so much fun that I decided to participate in the [Gran Primo Nuvolari](#) this past 16-19 of September. The Nuvolari is an event similar to the Mille Miglia, but one day shorter and a bit less intense. Entry is open to cars even up to the early 70s but most are prewar or 50s cars. It is named, of course, after Tazio Nuvolari, the great Italian race driver, and for that reason starts and ends from his hometown of Mantova, Italy. I had been told about the Nuvolari by many friends from my three previous Mille Miglias. They all said it is an event not to be missed. It is shorter and less strenuous than the Mille but still covers some of the same fantastic Italian roads in central Italy. After the Mille, I left my car in Amsterdam with Team Houtkamp and that made it easier to ship it directly to

Mantova. I was supported in the event by [Ecurie Bertelli](#), the premier prewar Aston Martin folks who maintain and store my car during the off season. My co-driver for this event was my son in law, Sterling Pratz, with whom I had done the Mille in 2018.



At the start. Joe at the wheel with Sterling.

After a very relaxing day in Bologna, I travelled to Mantova for the event a couple of days early. Mantova, or Mantua as the locals call it, is a very quaint and enjoyable Italian town similar in some respects to Brescia, where the Mille begins. The check in and inspections are on Thursday, and after passing all inspections and placing our transponder, we were ready to proceed the following morning. For the Mille, all cars line up over about a ½ mile street to go over the stage. For the Nuvolari, all cars are staged in the central square of Mantova, which essentially shuts down the day of the start, and cars set off over the stage, oldest to newest, every 20 sec for a total field of just under 300 vehicles. The 1931 Aston was number 42. Spectators get to see all of the cars before the rally starts and then they can watch the start.



Campogalliano, in the province of Modena in Emilia-Romagna, is still an important place for Bugatti fans. It is there that the Italian Romano Artioli, in the late 1980s, created one of the most modern automotive factories in the world and the Bugatti EB110.

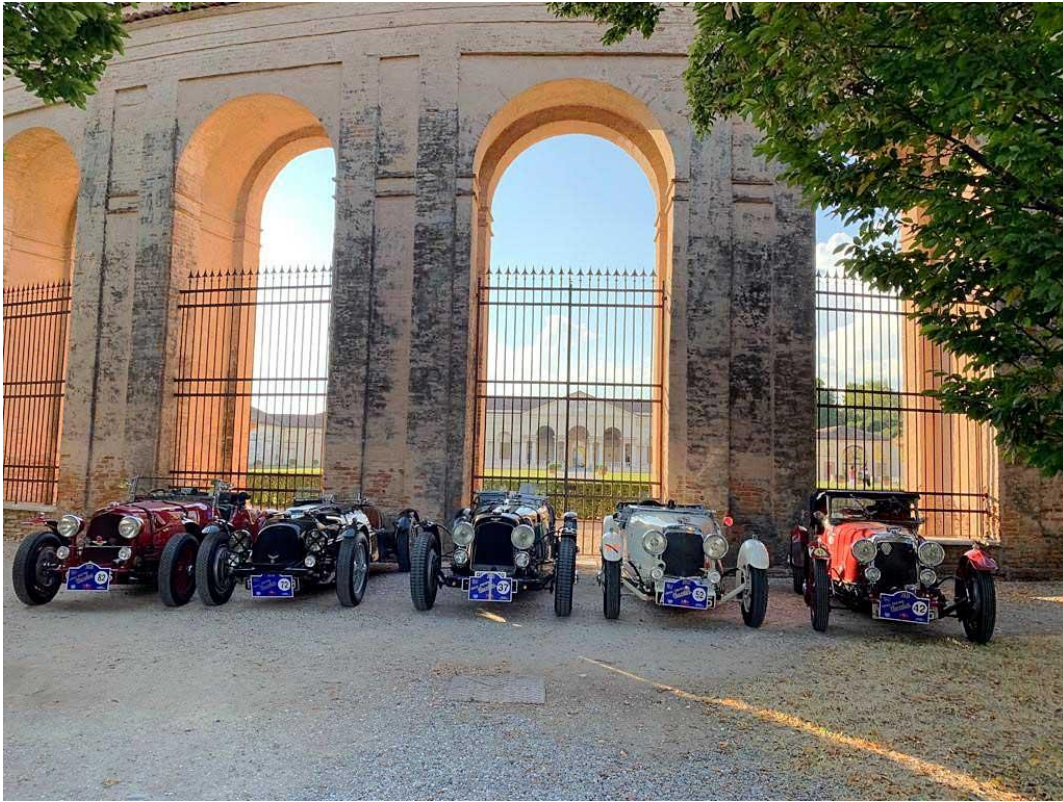
The rally is a really fun event for a car guy; the route passes through multiple cities with stop offs at various tracks throughout Northern Italy. Interspersed throughout each day are time distance trials in the European style, with periodic major checkpoints which must be driven through within a minute after the allotted time. The first day went reasonably well. However, we got very lost at the end of the day and couldn't find the final checkpoint so lost a significant number of points. We arrived in Rimini at around 8:30 PM (it should have been closer to 7 PM). We stopped at the autodromo of Modena and Mugello, the recently used F1 track, for laps along the way as part of the event, also passing through the Futa and Raticosa mountain passes between Bologna and Florence.



San Marino is a tiny European country with medieval landmarks like the Three Towers of Monte Titano.

On day two, the route was from Rimini south towards Perugia to the Lamborghini Golf Club (yes I guess those car guys do play golf) for lunch near the Lago Trasimeno. We passed through Urbino on the route there and, after lunch, wrapped around the west side of the lake north to Anghiari and then to the small republic of San Marino. I missed San Marino in 2018 Mille due to a blown clutch in my then 1938 MG SA. WOW, what a beautiful little mountain town with one road in and the same one out. Throughout all the days, we stopped at many small towns for a drive through the main square, frequently on streets that are only normally open to pedestrian traffic. Typically, each town square is a big party, with an announcer identifying the cars as the rolling car show passes through.

On Sunday the route was from Rimini back to Mantova, with a lunch stop at the Monastery San Benedetto Po, which dates back to the 11th century. Some mild rain on the last day was of minimal inconvenience but did force us to put up the top- but no side curtains for this car! Luckily our support team was there to help raise the top!



My Aston was one of five Bertelli era cars that participated in the event. All were supported by *Ecurie Bertelli*. I made new friends of all of the other teams and still connect with a couple on a regular basis. During the event we had our own WhatsApp group including the Ecurie mechanics and we shared photos and stories.

We had minimal mechanical issues with the car during the event, all of which were taken care of at the evening rest stops in Rimini by our Ecurie Bertelli team mechanics.

Participants are from all over Europe, especially Italy, Germany, Switzerland and Holland. There were only three American drivers and we finished 1st in the American group, despite our getting lost on day one. Having an escort of Polizia on motorcycles (similar to the Mille) really makes the rally work well through many of the larger cities, and to quote one of the other drivers “...where else can you break four traffic laws in one intersection with the police waving you through? Only in Italy.”

Doing it again: I finished the Mille article by saying that it was too strenuous and I probably wouldn't do it again, but as time went on the feeling got stronger and I just finished submitting my subscription for the 2022 Mille Miglia, now I just wait until April when they will announce who has been admitted.



The end of a memorable event.



The photo was taken after the event in the plaza where the scrutineering was done before the event started. A wonderful finish, with prewar Alfas, BMWs, Aston Martins, Rileys, and Lancias.



**Faenza is noted for its International Museum of Ceramics,
not that there was much time to see it.**

In the late 19th century and in the first years of 20th century, Meldola was well known for its production of silk. Today, the main activities include agriculture and the manufacture of furniture

Urbino is a walled city in central Italy. It's known for the turreted, 15th-century Palazzo Ducale.