



Image Courtesy Guido Pesce

Alberto Ascari and Luigi Villoresi have a chat before the start of the Gran Premio "Ciudad de Mar del Plata" in Argentina in January of 1950.

MAR DEL PLATA 1950

FERRARI TAKES THE 1949/1950 TEMPORADA AS RACE THREE IS PIVOTAL
BY HISTORIAN TONY WATSON

Ferrari, Four; The Rest, Zero... That was the victory count corresponding to the Scuderia's trek to Argentina for the four round Temporada, which took place between December 18th, 1949 and January 22nd, 1950, with Alberto Ascari and Luigi Villoresi each scoring two victories aboard their works Grand Prix cars. The third of those four rounds, at Mar del Plata, saw Villoresi challenge Juan Manuel Fangio's privateer Ferrari for the lead until both of them tangled and crashed out, allowing Ascari to sail on toward a comfortable win. That story follows.

It was mid-January, 1950, at Mar del Plata, Argentina's most renowned sea resort, 250 miles southeast of Buenos Aires. Being holiday time in the country, the place was packed to the

rafters, and the weekend of January 13-14-15th brought with it a huge bonus for the holiday makers, with the cream of the world's driving talent in attendance for the third round of the December 1949/January 1950 Temporada series, staged to take place on a winding and rolling 2.5 mile layout drawn out on the seafront boulevard and neighboring streets. It was the Gran Premio "Ciudad de Mar del Plata" on the Circuito El Torreón (Mar del Plata).

Twelve months earlier, Juan Manuel Fangio, from the nearby town of Balcarce, had claimed his first international single seater win on this same layout, aboard a Maserati. The huge crowds were this time expecting a repeat performance from Fangio, who had just returned from a first and highly successful season in Europe. This time he

was driving a Ferrari, just like his countryman and Equipo Argentino teammate Benedicto Campos, who was to drive the team's other (albeit shorter wheel-based) Ferrari single seater. (Equipo Argentino was the state-backed outfit, also known as Escudería Achille Varzi.)

At the wheel of similar Grand Prix Ferraris were works drivers Alberto Ascari, Luigi Villoresi and Dorino Serafini, two of the cars carrying "Fernet Branca" yellow lettering and logos on their sides. Serafini's bore "Frenlux" advertising. (Perhaps was this a "first" in regards to a team's cars carrying sponsorship on their bodywork?) The opposition included Giuseppe Farina, Piero Taruffi, Felice Bonetto, Clemente Biondetti, Louis Chiron, Reg Parnell, "B. Bira", Emmanuel de Graffenried, Piero Carini and José Froilán González (the

