



PIRELLI MOTORSPORT: OVER 100 YEARS OF SUCCESS

**The history of Pirelli tyres and international motorsport is
one and the same
More than a century of victories on two and four wheels**

History/1:

Chronology of a champion

Pirelli's industrial and technological history is closely linked to its history of motorsport successes, which officially started in 1907. Since then, the Milan-based company has earned hundreds of victories on track and on road, on two and four wheels, exploiting the experience gained on the race track for innovation in its commercial products.

The ultra-high-performance (UHP) P Zero line of products adopts technical solutions derived from the WRC races, in GRAND-AM and GT competitions. Pirelli's historic Cinturato line of tyres - launched in a new range on the European market in 2008 and 2009 - which dominated Formula 1 racing in the 1950s, led to major innovation in commercial tyres in the 1970s (with the CN36 version used for competitive rallies).

As confirmation of Pirelli's motorsport excellence, based on a tradition of innovation and reliability in competition, Pirelli has been selected as exclusive supplier not only for the Formula 1, GP2 Series and GP3 Series championships, but also for WRC and GRAND-AM (from 2008 to 2010) in car racing, and for the World Superbike (SBK) until 2012, as well as Super Stock and Motocross World Championship, in motorcycle racing.

Pirelli's motorsport history reaches all the way back to the late 19th century. In 1897, Giovanni Battista Pirelli supplied tyres to riders in a motorcycle race. Pirelli Motorsport's first official competition was the Paris-Peking overland race in 1907, won by Prince Scipione Borghese's Itala in a memorable effort together with journalist Luigi Barzini, covering 17,000 kilometers with only four tyre changes. This Pirelli victory inspired the company to invent its elongated P logo in 1908, in order to distinguish the brand from competitors and represent it in the eyes of consumers.

In the 1920s, Pirelli began a collaboration with Alfa Romeo to dominate Grand Prix competition of that era. Pirelli fitted cars such as the Alfa P2 models driven by Antonio Ascari, Giuseppe Campari and Gastone Brilli Peri (winner of the first world title in 1925 in that Formula 1 series).

Soon, success in the Mille Miglia race followed, with Pirelli also becoming a major force in road racing. After the Second World War, the first victories with Ferrari and Maserati arrived. The Italian marques Alfa Romeo, Ferrari, Maserati all became Pirelli teammates, followed later by Germany's Porsche, the UK's Aston Martin and others, for both racing cars and standard production vehicles.

Since the beginning of the 1900s, Pirelli has also had an important role in motorcycle racing, with Tazio Nuvolari included among its riders. In the Thirties, the Guzzi, Gilera and Bianchi bikes were all fitted with Pirelli Motocord. It was with this tyre – between 1937 and 1939 – that riders like Taruffi, Alberti, Vanni and Sandri, on the Guzzi 250 and the Gilera 500, established one speed record after another. The Second World War brought the races to a halt, and they were only started again towards the end of the 1940s, with victories again by the Guzzi and Gilera motorcycles. In 1948, the Bisiluri bike with Gilera 500 engine established no less than 31 speed records reaching 300 kilometers (186 miles) per hour while fitted with Pirelli tyres.

The 1950s: four F1 world titles with Alfa Romeo and Ferrari

With the Alfa Romeo 158 and 159, Pirelli obtained two F1 world titles, thanks to Nino Farina from Turin and Argentina's Juan-Manuel Fangio, and in 1952 Pirelli achieved victory with Alberto Ascari's 4-cylinder Ferrari 500 in the F1 World Championship (six wins out of six, in the races in which he took part.)

In 1954 Pirelli fitted Ferrari for the Le Mans 24 Hours, winning with Trintignant and Gonzalez driving the 375 MM Plus. The Milan-based company continued developing increasingly more competitive high-performance tyres, for the most diverse races: from the Carrera Panamericana to the Mille Miglia, from the Grand Prix to endurance tests like the Sebring 12 Hours, won in 1957 by Behra-Fangio's Maserati 450S. In 1957, Pirelli suspended its activity in Formula 1.

In the 1970s important changes were taking place in the motorcycle industry. Segmentation was created, with bikes separated by use: cross-country, enduro and off-road raids got underway, and Pirelli confirmed its commitment to motorcycle racing winning favour with teams and riders in the different segments.

Pirelli's experience in rallying began in the 1970s and has continued without interruption for more than three decades, during which it has won 150 titles: from the 1973 Poland Rally won by Warmbold-Todt's Fiat Abarth 124 to the 2005 Rally in England won by Solberg-Mills' Subaru Impreza WRC. Going on to Markku Alen's victory with the Lancia Rally 037 in the 1984 Tour de Corse, and Sandro Munari's successes with the Lancia Stratos at the Montecarlo Rally (from 1975 to 1977) and Stig Blomqvist's victory at the 1983 Sanremo, up to Pirelli's hundredth victory in world rallies with Burns-Reid's Subaru Impreza WRC (1997). Winning Italian drivers have included Franco Cunico, first at Sanremo with the Ford Escort Cosworth in 1993 and Piero Liatti, first with the Subaru Impreza, with Pirelli P Zero tyres. Among Pirelli's more recent rally victories, in addition to those in WRC, the 2010 victory in Montecarlo where Ford swept to victory with the only car in the race officially fitted with Pirelli tyres should be noted.

The 1980s: Pirelli takes command in the various championships

In the 1980s, after its successes in the endurance races of Formula 2, Pirelli returned to Formula 1. In these years, the company made history with the Pirelli P7 radial, the most evolved racing tyre developed by Pirelli technicians to date.

Pirelli P7 tyres were fitted on the Osella-BMW which Eddie Cheever drove to success in the first race of the European F2 Championship at Silverstone in 1980. The following year Pirelli won the European title with the Toleman, and went back to Formula 1. The return was with the British team's single seater racing cars. Pirelli's F1 tyres were later adopted

by Osella, Arrows, Fittipaldi and Minardi, as well as by prestigious teams like Lotus and Brabham. This latter offered Pirelli its first success in France in 1985 with Piquet, twenty-eight years after Moss. Benetton won with Pirelli tyres in Mexico (1986, Gerhard Berger) and Piquet again triumphed in Canada in 1991, which was the last Pirelli victory in the F1 competitions.

The present day and the victories

More recently, apart from rallies, Pirelli's attention has been concentrated on races for prototypes, GT cars, and now, a return to Grand Prix racing as official supplier to GP3.

Pirellis have won endurance races, like the Daytona 24 Hours, and the IMSA Titles, in the mid-nineties with Oldsmobile and Ferrari.

In addition, in 2005/2006 Pirelli was also successful in the GT category with its P Zero tyres. In 2005 it gained victory in the Le Mans Endurance 2005 Series with the Ferrari 550 Maranello of the Italia-BMS Team, and in 2006 with the Porsche 996 GT3-RSR of the AutOrlando Sport team.

In the GT1 class of the FIA-GT Championships, Pirelli obtained 2005 and 2006 Team classifications with the Maserati MC 12, and above all it won the 2006 Drivers' Title with Bertolini-Bartels.

With the Ferrari 430 GTC, Pirelli won in the GT2 class, commanding respect from both teams and drivers like Jaime Melo. The P Zero Racing tyres fitted on the Aston Martin DBR9M were key in the American Le Mans Series, winning the IMSA Cup and allowing Stéphane Sarrazin to be judged the best new driver of 2006.

The Milan company played an important role in the Ferrari Challenge, thanks to the P Zero Racing tyres used for the various races which took place in Italy, Europe and North America, as well as for the important European GT championships, such as those of France and Italy, for the FIA GT4 Cup and for the Seat León Eurocup.

Pirelli is currently the exclusive supplier to many of the world's most relevant racing series, including the FIA WRC (World Rally Championship), FIA GP3, GRAND-AM's Rolex Sports Car Series, VW TDI Cup, Pirelli Drivers Cup, Ferrari Challenge, Lamborghini Blancpain Super Trofeo, Maserati Trofeo, Brazilian GT Championship and World Superbike - achieving remarkable results and the support of each series, its teams and very importantly, the fans.

In January 2010 Pirelli swept to victory at the Montecarlo Rally with Mikko Hirvonen's Ford Fiesta Super 2000, the only car in the event officially fitted with Pirelli tyres. The Finnish star easily overcame road difficulties thanks to Pirelli Winter Sottozero and PZero tyres which, with their versatility and reliability, adapted to all the different conditions, from the ice in the mountain passes to the dry coastal asphalt.

Pirelli debuted in Barcelona on 7-9 May 2010 as the official tyre supplier to GP3, the one-make single-seater series, which has been pitched as a stepping-stone to GP2, a direct feeder category to Formula One.

Designed as a training formula for young and aspiring drivers, the series is made up of nine race weekends, each consisting of a practice and a qualifying session and two races

in an effort to maximise track time for the drivers and accelerate their learning.

Pirelli was chosen by the FIA to supply the control tyre for this crucial new series because of the company's proven ability to contain costs while maintaining a high level of technology to further the best interests of competition.

History/2:

History, people and anecdotes from a century of victories

Ascari and Campari, handicap with bread and salami

At the 1925 French Grand Prix, before a public which was decidedly hostile to red Italian cars, favoring the many - but ... less competitive – local racing cars, one of the most incredible demonstrations of strength which has ever occurred in car racing was seen. The official Alfa Romeo P2 cars of Antonio Ascari and Giuseppe Campari were so superior to the other competitors (Delage, Bugatti, etc.), that the team was persuaded to arrange for an *ante litteram* pit-stop for the drivers, and while the technicians polished the bodywork after filling the tank and checking the oil and water, the pilots had time for a snack of bread and salami. Having thus satisfied the purely gastronomic aspect, the Alfa Romeo drivers calmly went back to the race, winning with an embarrassing superiority and a rather worrying gap for the rivals.

Varzi beats Nuvolari, thanks to the rain tyres

In the early 1930s, Italian racing enthusiasts were divided between Nuvolari fans and those who preferred Varzi. There were a great many epic battles between the Mantova and Novara drivers, such as in the case of the 1000 Miglia in which – with Nuvolari in the lead – Varzi received an order from the pits from his patron Enzo Ferrari, who invited him to change his tyres for “anchored” ones (the “rain” tyres of the day). It started to rain, and with the suitable Pirelli tyres, the valiant Achilles made up for much of the lost distance, going on to easily overtake Nuvolari – driving an official Alfa Romeo but in deep trouble with the tyres. Varzi thus got his own back for the “trick” that Nuvolari had played on him four years before, when Tazio recovered ground on the Apennines by switching off his headlights when he came down the hills so that his rival couldn't see him. That was how the Mantova driver had won hands down over Varzi, destroying all the latter's resistance in the last stretch towards the finishing line in Brescia.

Fangio's master exploit with the Maserati at Nürburgring

One of the great drivers to make car racing history was certainly Juan-Manuel Fangio, the Argentine who dominated the F1 in the first decade of the world championship races. At the 1957 Grand Prix, Fangio was by then at the end of his career and about to win his fifth World Title – out of the eight which had so far been awarded ... - with the Maserati 250F and Pirelli tyres. He was a driver who had Varzi's coolness together with Nuvolari's boldness, and in that G.P. “el chueco” (the bandy-legged) had to battle against Moss's Vanwall and, above all, against the Ferraris of Hawthorn and Collins, who were the real rivals of this champion. On the twelfth lap of the twenty-two on the program, Fangio stopped at the pits to change tyres and fill the tank. Changing the tyres took longer than expected because of a technical problem in replacing the nuts; so the two Ferraris went into the lead with a margin of no less than 46 seconds. Considering the fact that there were ten laps to go, the Argentine had to gain almost five seconds a lap on the two

Englishmen who in the meantime were forcing the pace. It looked like an impossible feat, almost suicidal (since Nürburgring was already a dangerous track, even then) and in the first two laps after the pit stop he managed to gain only two seconds per lap on the Ferraris. But already after the sixteenth lap, the Maserati had recovered no less than seven seconds. And on the next lap the Argentine struck off another seven seconds from the gap. In the Maranello pits, everyone was getting nervous and Hawthorn and Collins were told to accelerate. Driving round the curves at 230 km/h but without raising his foot from the accelerator and cutting all the curves as much as absolutely possible without going off the track, Fangio got within sight of the two English drivers at three laps from the end. Seeing the Ferraris practically within reach galvanized Fangio even more, and he reached and overtook first Collins on the penultimate lap, and then Hawthorn's Ferrari, too, after a terrifying skid. The miracle, the feat which the Ferrari timing engineers had considered impossible, had been achieved.

Piquet's victory number 13 makes Pirelli happy...

It was 7 July 1985. To favor television viewing of the Tour de France, it was decided that the French Grand Prix, to take place at Le Castellet (and therefore a stone's throw from the sea of Tolone, Marseilles, Bandol and Saint Tropez), would start at 1:15pm, which would actually be just after midday considering daylight-saving time, and under a burning sun hot enough to crack the stones. One of the angriest people was Nelson Piquet, fifth in the classification with the Brabham-BMW fitted with Pirelli P7 tyres, who was rightly worried about the heat that drivers and cars would have to stand for more than an hour and a half, and when there was the lethal Signes straight where Marc Surer could drive his Arrows-BMW at 338.4 km/h (210 mph). And Piquet's worry was increased by the defect in the gears on the racing car, because of which he was forced to use the reserve car. Without Mansell (Williams-Honda, in hospital after a dreadful accident), the G.P. was about to start with Rosberg (Williams-Honda) and Senna (Lotus-Renault) in the first line. At the start, the two drivers controlled the situation, in front of Alboreto in the Ferrari, but the one who set off best was none other than Piquet. In the first two laps he overtook the Italian driver and Prost (McLaren-Tag) who had both left in front of him. The Ferrari engine broke soon after, while Piquet (with a full tank) was driving faster than everyone else. Already after six laps, Nelson had overtaken Senna, and he then went into the lead overtaking Rosberg the following lap. The heat caused defects in Senna's gears, who started off again late, and Piquet left all his rivals behind, battling against each other. The Brabham in the lead continued to increase speed: the merit was also that of the Pirelli tyres which performed excellently on the rough, burning hot French track. The hard P7 tyres, developed during the winter in South Africa, allowed the Brazilian champion to carry off this exceptional exploit, and after 53 laps gave Pirelli its victory. For Nelson, who reached the finish exhausted but obviously happy, it was his 13th Grand Prix win.

Sainz and Pirelli overcome the Finns' invincibility at the "1000 Lakes"

With a foot wounded, Carlos Sainz was not at all sure that he would be able to take part in the 1990 "1000 Lakes" race. With his Toyota Celica GT-Four fitted with Pirelli tyres, the Spanish driver had dominated most of the season (and had check-mated the Lancia-Martini team several times). In Finland, Carlos also had the chance to make a serious bid for the Drivers' Title. But the pain in his foot was intense, and the Spaniard had never won in Finland. In any case Sainz decided to at least try to drive in the first special trials, to see whether the pain would be bearable and if he could still be competitive. In the first trials, it was Juha Kankkunen's Lancia Delta Integrale which dominated the scene, battling against Markku Alen's Subaru Legacy and the Mitsubishi Galants of Kenneth Eriksson and Ari Vatanen. Sainz trotted round behind the Scandinavians, also battling against

Pentti Airikkala's debuting Ford Sierra Cosworth 4x4 and Timo Salonen's Mazda 323 4wd-Gtx. Surrounded by the local aces, the Spaniard seemed lost, but as the pain in his foot began to calm down, his rhythm did quite the opposite. Kankkunen had to raise the white flag for various problems and Vatanen (like Eriksson) was no longer able to check the Toyota's advance. After ten special stages out of the forty-two on the programme, Carlos took command and gave no respite until the end, marking up the best time in twenty-three timed stretches and destroying the resistance of the Mitsubishis and the Subaru. Only Vatanen could limit the damage, coming in second with a 19 second gap, while all the others arrived with margins which were, to say the least, enormous. And with Sainz, the Latins also conquered (at least, as regards rally driving) even Finland.

Pirelli's tungsten tips are key to success in Sweden

Tungsten is best known as the key ingredient to the filament in electric lightbulbs but it also played a key part in Ford driver Mikko Hirvonen's victory on Rally Sweden, round one of the World Rally Championship, on 14 February 2010. In order to generate grip on a surface that is almost impossible to stand on, the rally cars run on Pirelli Sottozero snow tyres equipped with nearly 400 tungsten-tipped studs, which are designed to bite through snow and ice into the firmer surface underneath. As suits the extreme environment of the World Rally Championship, tungsten is one of the toughest metals known to mankind. It's got the highest melting point of any element other than carbon (around 3422 degrees Centigrade) and a very high density: about 19 times heavier than water. This makes it ideally suited to propel rally cars through narrow and twisty snow-covered stages at average speeds that border on 120 kph. An even bigger challenge occurs when the cars pass through the stages a second time as the roads are often swept clean of snow, exposing loose gravel underneath. Then the studs have to resist direct contact with the ground, which can rip them out completely. Pirelli benefits from a patented process in which the studs are inserted into the tyre at the time that the tyres are actually made, ensuring that most of them remain in place however challenging the conditions.

Although Swedish roads are so slippery that approximately 90 per cent of all new cars sold there come with some form of electronic stability programme, the Pirelli-equipped rally cars still manage to accelerate from 0-100 kph in less than four seconds and brake to zero again in even less time. This attention to detail and high performance is equally evident in Pirelli's road tyres, on which the competition tyres are based. The rally tyres also covered 1534 kilometres of road section throughout the three-day event, impressing Formula One driver Kimi Raikkonen, who is using Pirelli rubber on his first season in the World Rally Championship with the Citroen Junior Team. Hirvonen's victory meant that his season got off to the best possible start, after the Finn suffered the heartbreak of losing out on the drivers' title by just one point last year. "The tyres were excellent," said the Ford driver, who eventually won by 42.3 seconds from Citroen's six-time world rally champion Sebastien Loeb. "Even when the stages were cutting up, we still enjoyed a good level of grip, which allowed us to take our first win on Rally Sweden."