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FACTS & STORY

Alfa Romeo Tipo 512 (Italy, 1940)

RACING

scale 1:43

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What if...

In the late 1930s, road racing was clearly dominated by the German brands Mercedes-Benz and Auto-Union. The other manufacturers were hardly able to send competitive cars to the race track and therefore they were looking for alternatives to the 3 liter premier class in order to achieve sporting success. The smaller displacement class of 1.5 liter seemed to be the right choice. The traditional Italian company Alfa-Romeo also came to this conclusion and realized its first race car in 1938 – the Type 158. During this time, thoughts became more and more concrete that the premier class of 3 liter cars should be replaced by the 1.5 liter class in future. The plans were already so far advanced that the introduction of the new class soon became apparent and Alfa-Romeo then developed a new racing car.

This task was entrusted to the then 43-year-old Spanish engineer Wilfredo Ricart. For the first time in Alfa-Romeo history, he chose the center of the vehicle as the engine location. In addition, he relied on a very low center of mass. He combined these two specifications with the design of an

extremely flat 12-cylinder engine in a 1800 V design. A Roots supercharger ensured a powerful increase in performance, so that the 1500 four-stroke engine had a performance of over 330 hp at 8,600 rpm. At the beginning of the development, probably only one copy of the model, named with the abbreviation Type 512, was set on wheels. A second racing car is said to have been set on wheels later on – already in the times of war – but was never called into action to complete test drives.

The two prototypes of the 512 have survived to this day. One is exhibited at the 'Museo storico Alfa Romeo' and the other one is part of the exhibition of the 'National Museum of Science and Technology Leonardo da Vinci'.

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