



100 thousands

The Mille Miglia Centenary race, steeped in glamorous history, is set to start revving its engines

Few motor races have a history quite like the Mille Miglia. What began in 1927 as a 1,000-mile blast from Brescia to Rome (and back) has become one of the world's most celebrated historic motoring events.

The speeds may have slowed, but the sense of occasion remains, with hundreds of priceless cars still taking to the beautiful roads of northern Italy each summer. And organisers of the Mille Miglia — literally translated to 'one thousand miles' in Italian — are now gearing up for its centenary in 2027.

Soon after the birth of the motor car, the first races held were epic city-to-city sprints,

where drivers were flagged off at intervals, rather than competing wheel-to-wheel on a race track.

When the Mille Miglia was inaugurated in 1927, no one quite knew how long it would take the 77 entrants to complete the distance. Held on public roads that weren't entirely closed, spectators

lined the route holding torches at night to show drivers the way.

But, as you can imagine, as cars increased in speed, so the race became more perilous. After 11 spectators were killed in 1938, public outcry led to Mussolini personally putting a halt to the race.



Restarted after the war, one of the Mille Miglia's most famous successes came in 1955, when British driver Stirling Moss won at the wheel of a Mercedes-Benz 300SL. He completed the thousand miles in the quickest-ever time, but he had a secret weapon.

In his passenger seat sat the fearless motorsport journalist-turned navigator Denis Jenkinson, who had devised a system of pace notes — delivered by hand signals — to warn Moss of dangers on the road ahead. The #722 number emblazoned on the side of their car corresponded with their start time in Brescia at 7.22am.

At a furious pace, Moss completed the distance in just over 10 hours — more than half the

Below: The famous Burj Al Arab makes for an iconic backdrop against which the Dubai International Boat Show is set
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time of the inaugural race in 1927 — at a never-beaten [i]average[i] speed of just under 98mph.

But tragedy struck the Brescia-Rome race once more. Two years after Moss's triumph, Ferrari works driver Alfonso de Portago and his co-driver were involved in a fatal crash that also claimed the lives of nine spectators, including five children.

Twenty years passed before the Mille Miglia was reborn as a demonstration event for classic cars. With its own set of rules, timecards and marshals, the competition element is now defined by hitting target times, rather than flat-out motoring.

The route is still 1,000 miles, but held over five legs on five days on a figure-of-eight loop, starting and ending in Brescia. Eligibility is restricted to cars that competed in the original event from 1927-57, meaning some of the most beautiful — and expensive — machinery ever built to race is on show. From multi-million-dollar Ferraris and Mercedes to pre-war Bugattis, more than 400 entries take to the roads in northern Italy each year. Crowds continue to line the roads of the marathon event, with an

Top: Luxury cars and boats go hand-in-hand at DIBS

estimated five million spectators on average, making it one of the world's most popular car events.

The 2026 Mille Miglia was held in June with Argentina's Juan Tonconogy returning to the top step of the podium alongside his sister Margarita in an Alfa Romeo 6C Gran Sport Spider Zagato from 1931. It was his fourth victory at the legendary event, but more significantly he ended Andrea Vesco's run of six consecutive wins in a similar Alfa Romeo from 1929.

Attention now turns to 2027, with the centenary edition slated for a late-May slot. The precise route and itinerary are still to be

confirmed, but the significance is already clear, 100 years on from the first pioneering race.

Today, 1000 Miglia is a well-known brand that symbolises historic rallying, with partnerships and franchises extending into modern culture, including the computer game Gran Turismo. The 'race' has also expanded to include other 1000 Miglia events outside of Italy with tours scheduled later this year in Austria, Greece and China.

All of which keeps the tradition and passion of the Mille Miglia alive as the historic event prepares to celebrate its 100th anniversary. 1000miglia.it/en ■

