

A black and white close-up portrait of Clay Regazzoni. He is looking slightly to the right with a serious expression. His hair is dark and wavy. He is wearing a light-colored jacket with a ribbed collar. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a racetrack or pit area.

CLAY REGAZZONI

The fearless driver with a big heart

Articles by

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Introduction

Legends are not born from victories alone. Winning is a secondary issue. Legends go beyond that, penetrating the folds of your mind and creeping in between the beats of your heart. They prefer the subconscious; they're not based on figures or predictable and logical data. Clay Regazzoni was and still is one such legend, because legends exist outside of time. Those who never knew him or who didn't live to see him are fascinated when they watch and listen to him being interviewed in old black-and-white television clips because the messages he conveyed then are still relevant today. The expressions on his face were often ironic and provocative but suffused with a trust that people warmed to in a world that was more than ever marked by a justifiable mistrust of "purveyors of nothing".

You could argue with Clay all night and he would send you faxes full of disapproval. But you knew that it was all "confined" to the specific situation and that he wasn't angry or bitter. He wasn't an easy person, just like anyone who has something to say; his charisma was a product of his culture, of a different way of facing and dealing with problems. Even to the point of personally paying for the consequences.

There are some champions who divide. Regazzoni, on the other hand, always brought people together with his candour and sunny disposition. He was even loved by the opponents he beat, a rarity in an environment where egos trumped feelings, building a barrier that was difficult to overcome. Without these qualities, Clay would never have managed to build another life "afterwards". He was exactly the same as before, just with different goals – ones that involved society's most vulnerable. This was an extraordinary choice for a man like Clay, who had been the symbol of an exclusive sport that paid little attention to what happened off the podium.

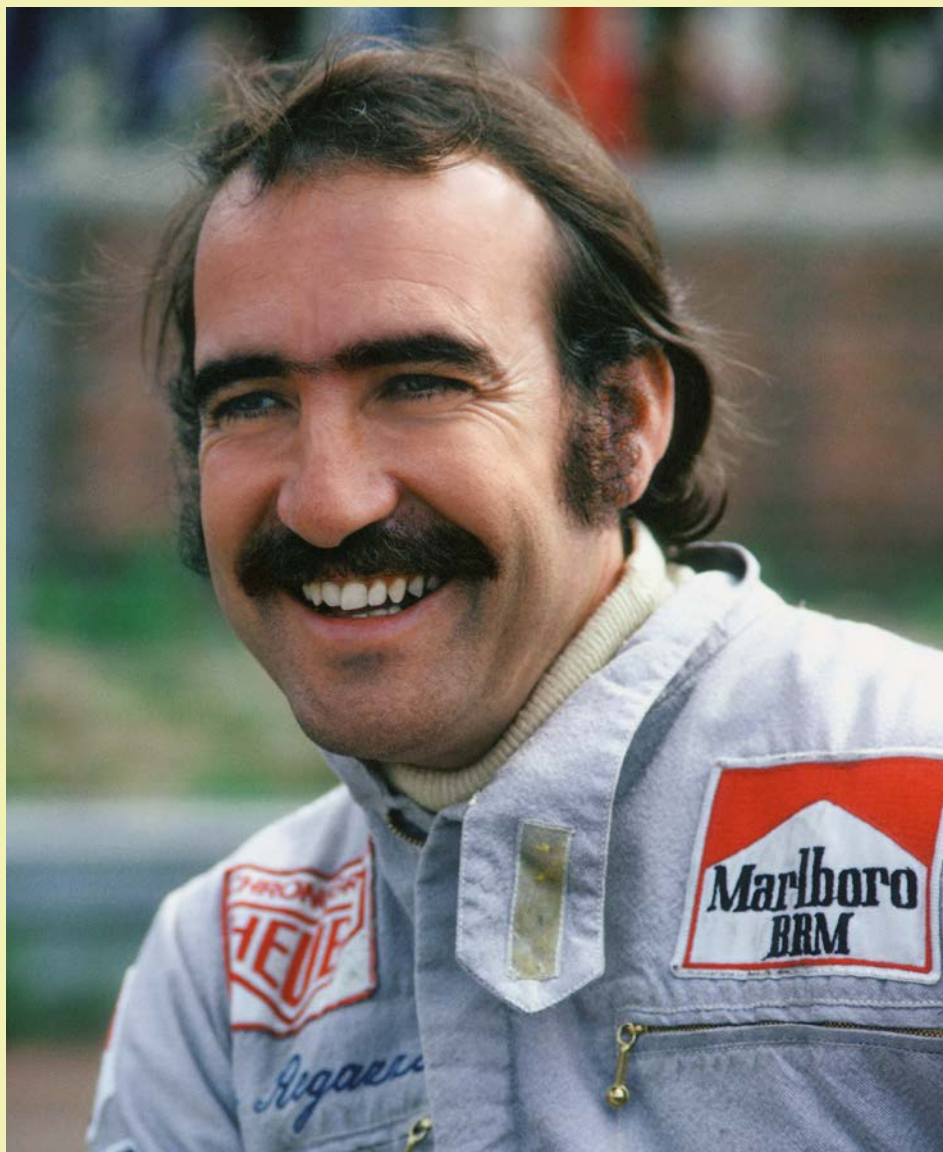
Swiss by birth, Italian by provenance and disposition, Regazzoni was loved wherever he raced because the grands prix were a metaphor for his approach to life: professional, dedicated, determined and topped off with a satisfied little smile because, at the end of the day, his job was his passion and he knew it – even savoured it. He was an example to those who had never had the courage to drop everything to follow their own calling. Kind-hearted yet theatrical. A man who was in a class of his own when it came to speed and is now gone, leaving a lasting mark. Yet a man so full of fun that it feels as if he could reappear at any moment.

Pino Allievi

Page 1:
The expressive face
of a young Clay.

Left:
Clay Regazzoni
beaming on the
podium at the
German Grand Prix,
Nürburgring, 1974.

Biography



Clay (Gian Claudio) Regazzoni was born in Lugano on 5 September 1939; his father was mayor of the municipality of Porza and owner of a fledgling body shop in Mendrisio, where Clay went to work after leaving school in Lugano. Meanwhile, his passion for racing was already growing strong.

It was not until 1963, however, that he began competing, taking part in various competitions in the Swiss championships in an Austin Sprite. In 1964, he entered the national championships in a Morris Cooper and in 1965, he got hold of a Formula 3 De Tomaso, which he swapped for a Brabham shortly afterwards. In 1966, he competed in an F3

race in the Brabham owned by the Martini-Sonvico stable. Meanwhile, he found the time between races to marry Mariapia. At the end of the season, he signed an F3 contract with Tecno. His daughter Alessia was born on 5 January 1967. Over the course of 1967, he took part in the Temporada Argentina and the European Formula Three Championship. His son Gian Maria was born on 28 April 1968 and Clay achieved his first F3 victory. He spent the whole year racing in both F2 and F3 events with Tecno, signing a contract with Ferrari on 31 December 1968 to compete in F2 the following year. Poor results prompted him to leave

A calm and smiling Clay ready to face the new season with BRM, Argentine Grand Prix, Buenos Aires, 1973.

Ferrari and return to Tecno. In 1970, Clay earned the title of European Formula Two Champion in what was a real triumph of a year. It was also the year he made his F1 debut with Ferrari and took fourth place. He switched between F2 and F1 where, at his fourth Grand Prix (the Italian Grand Prix in Monza), he won his first victory in the red Maranello no. 4. At the end of the season, having taken part in only seven Grands Prix, he was ranked third in the world championships. The same year, he competed in 24 Hours of Le Mans in a Ferrari 512 S Sport prototype. By now, Regazzoni was a star on the auto racing stage and would dedicate his time almost exclusively to F1 from 1971 onwards. In 1971, he won the Brands Hatch Race of Champions (UK) but in the World Championship only gained three third places and one sixth place, although he did win the Kyalami 9 Hours driving the Ferrari prototypes. This placed him seventh in the standings. 1972 also brought him little in the way of results and, by the end of the year, he was sixth in the Formula One World Championship. The prototypes brought him victories at the 1,000 km Monza and the Kyalami 9 Hours. He moved to BRM in 1973, where his best efforts brought him two sixth places. He returned to Ferrari in 1974, the year the world title eluded him by a whisker. A single win (the German Grand Prix) and a series of promising results were the boost he needed to contend for the title. On the eve of the final race of the season, Regazzoni and Fittipaldi held an equal lead; everything hinged on the United States Grand Prix. But Clay's car was not on top form, giving Fittipaldi the green light to take fourth place – enough to steal the title from the Swiss driver.

In 1975, Clay – still with Ferrari – gained some excellent results (winning the Italian Grand Prix) and came out in fifth place in the standings. He held onto this position the following year (1976), when he won the United States Grand Prix. It was here that the Regazzoni-Ferrari partnership came to an end.

In 1977, Clay moved to Ensign, a car in which his achievements included two fantastic fifth-place finishes. He competed in the Indianapolis 500 for the first time in a McLaren but was forced to withdraw after 25 laps. It would prove to be an unforgettable experience, however. In 1978, he moved to Shadow but this car was not able to seal him the victory either and fifth place in Brazil turned out to be the best he could do. In early 1979, Regazzoni was once again given an incredible opportunity. He was hired by Frank Williams, who felt the Swiss driver had the potential to secure the first ever win in his single-seater. Regazzoni did indeed win the British Grand Prix, clocking up a series of excellent results that ranked him fifth in the world. He returned to Ensign in 1980, but this was sadly the year he had to say goodbye to racing for good. On 30 March 1980, on his 51st lap in Long Beach, having entered Shoreline Drive at 250 km/h, Clay tried to brake but found there was nothing but an empty space beneath his foot. The impact against the cement wall brought a disastrous end to his career and left him paralysed. After competing in 132 world events in which he obtained five wins, thirteen second places, ten third places and a series of rankings, and having achieved the fastest lap in the race an impressive 15 times, Regazzoni was forced to wave goodbye to Formula 1.

He spent four years in various hospitals and endured more than 60 hours of surgery in total before it became clear: Clay would never walk again. He began developing hand-controlled driving systems and continued to race, competing in the Paris-Dakar rally on multiple occasions, racing in karts and classic cars and becoming an expert in the big rally raids.

He tragically lost his life on 15 December 2006 in a car accident on the A1 motorway, not far from Parma.



Clay Regazzoni and his native country

by Nicola Nenci*



Left:

Clay in the De Tomaso in front of the Martinelli + Sonvico Racing Team stable, Lugano, 1965.

This page:

Clay next to the Brabham lent to him by Moser in Montlhéry (France), 1965.

Clay with Silvio Moser next to the hand-modified Austin Sprite he drove in the Freiburg-Schauinsland Hillclimb (Germany), 1963.

Below:
Clay at the Regazzoni body shop in Mendrisio, managed by his father, 1964.

Clay Regazzoni maintained close ties with his native country despite moving to Monte Carlo, where the militant Ferrari essentially turned him into a “bonus” Italian driver. This article examines his relationship with Ticino, his home in Lugano, his job at the body shop in Mendrisio and the emotional bond he had with Switzerland and with an outmoded little world which, at times, even resented him. How does the saying go? No prophet is accepted in his own country. But even more striking in this case: twenty kilometres further south, over the Italian border, he was an idol. By virtue of his “marriage” to Ferrari and also because of his Latin roots, he was held in high esteem across the Italian peninsula, celebrated with banners, exalted in TV broadcasts, invited onto variety shows and idolised by the public. Despite the Anglicised name, Clay was considered Italian. From this side of the border, in Ticino, the response was a little less warm. Or perhaps just more moderate, more restrained.

Gian Claudio shot to fame so quickly that they nicknamed him “Furio”. It was actually his mother who had been intrigued by a name she had come across in the newspaper: Jean Claude. Gian Claudio, in Italian. Or in Ticino.

To his family, he was Gian Claudio. The one who learned to drive as a young boy at the body shop in Mendrisio, driving cars around the square to familiarise himself with the steering wheel, brake and clutch. Who underwent a rigorous education full of values and morals with religious overtones. All characteristics which would indeed help him become a successful driver – that much is certain – but which would also provide an extra boost (in other words a special kind



of strength) during the years he spent in a wheelchair, allowing him to enjoy an explosive (yes, explosive) new lease of life.

He made his debut in an Austin Sprite in 1963, his brother Reno having modified the front to make it more aerodynamic and aggressive. He competed in various races in Switzerland and in Monza before moving to the Mini Cooper S in November that year, which he also raced in 1964.

In 1965, he bought a De Tomaso from Mario Casoni but had barely started putting it through its paces at the Autodromo in Modena when it became clear that the car was not up to the mark. Regazzoni feared more than ever before that he would spend the rest of his life as a body shop mechanic. Not long afterwards, however, an offer came out of the blue. Silvio Moser asked him to race at the Temporada Argentina in his old Brabham. Without him, Regazzoni would never have been able to fulfil his dreams and would have remained one of the many young people who take up racing only to have to give it up for want of money. They had met each other one Thursday evening at the “Galleria” restaurant in Lugano, the place and time to be if you were a fan of auto racing. It was the home of Schweizerische Automobil Rennsport [Swiss Auto Racing, SAR], a club with offshoots all over Switzerland. Clay and Silvio got on well and became inseparable. A deep and genuine friendship blossomed between them. Both had a great longing to race. On Fridays, and sometimes even on Thursdays, Clay left the body shop and went off with him. He didn’t ask for permission. His father was furious, but it didn’t stop him.



The Martinelli + Sonvico Racing Team at the Belgian Grand Prix in Zolder, 1965.

Below:
Clay in the Tecno F2 at the Monza Lottery Grand Prix, 1968.



That same year, he completed a driver's course in Montlhéry (France) behind the wheel of the Brabham Moser had lent him, finishing up the best among the over 200 participants.

His friendship with Silvio helped Clay launch his driving career. The two Ticinese men joined the Martinelli + Sonvico Racing Team (named after its two founders, Amilcare Martinelli and Aldo Sonvico).

In 1965 and 1966, Clay achieved some excellent results and had a great many accidents but still managed to showcase his remarkable personality, earning him the role of official driver at Tecno, the stable of brothers Luciano and Gianfranco Pederzani from Bologna.

In Ticino, he became the hero of some significant ventures, including ones outside the cockpit. In 1973, for example, he opened a pub in Pregassona known as Clay's Pub. The pub was done up entirely in the English style, full of photographs including an enormous poster of the BRM Regazzoni driving that year and a huge Formula 1 tyre to

welcome its patrons. The establishment was opened with great ceremony thanks to Mike Hailwood, the motorcycle legend, who was in attendance as the guest of honour.

But the greatest manoeuvre he ever pulled on behalf of his home town was when he organised a car exhibition; to call it "legendary" is no exaggeration. It was known as the Esposauto and was held every other year (in odd years) at the exhibition centre in Lugano. The stands really brought the magic of the races to life. Clay's friendships in the pits meant he could have his pick of practically any Formula 1 car that had raced that season, as well as the drivers themselves, whom he invited to the hall in the central pavilion to meet the fans. You walked in and felt like you were entering the paddock at a Grand Prix: Villeneuve, Peterson, Cévert, Laffite, Piquet, Patrese, De Cesaris, Nannini, Surer and Alboreto mingled with visitors and Clay played host. One year, he had Jeb's (the brand which made his helmets) create a real-life replica just for children visiting the Esposauto: a precursor to the marketing stunt.

Then, in 2000, Clay was nominated Ticino sportsman of the century, commenting: "I'm very touched by this prize. I've won a lot of awards but ones that are presented by my native country and my friends here in Ticino are incredibly important to me".

*** Nicola Nenci**

Journalist for the "La Provincia di Como"
[Province of Como] newspaper.





The fearless driver with a big heart

The story of an extraordinary career

by Pino Allievi*



Left:
Clay in the Ferrari 312 T2,
French Grand Prix,
Le Castellet, 1976.

This page:
Clay at the Italian Grand Prix,
Monza, 1975.

The Ensign no. 14 leads Clay towards his dramatic appointment with fate, Long Beach (USA), 1980.

It's ten in the morning and the muggy weather shrouding Lugano is unbearable. Every so often, though, a light breeze wafts over the rooftop terrace at his home tucked between the lake and the mountains, making you feel better. We drink something fresh which he takes from the fridge:

"Everything I do feels as though I were doing it for the first time. I see my house in a different light, for example. I never noticed the steps leading down to my garage, but now they're an obstacle: life can change in an instant".

A moment later, we're in his room – or perhaps it's an office or a bedsit within the home? It's difficult to say exactly what it is. He shows me the letters he's received and I hand him more, since he himself had asked me to keep hold of them while he was still in hospital in Long Beach (California, United States). We laugh at the contents, at a German girl he'd never met before who had sent him a photo of herself in a bikini along with some very...warm wishes. Then there are messages from ordinary well-wishers inviting him to dinners, conventions and meetings to celebrate his return to normal life. Because, at the end of the day, that's how it is: his days of racing are over, it's useless to go back and kid yourself but Clay will always be Clay, with his remarkable moral standing and his ability to convey credible glimmers of hope to others.

He shows me his design for the "new" controls that will help him drive his Jaguar and demonstrates how the system will work, including in other cars of his. The telephone rings: Mario Poltonieri is urging him to accept his offer of commenting on the grands prix for Rai, Italy's public broadcasting station. "What do you think?" I tell him he has to do it, knowing it's what he wants.

He returned a few days ago from the Paraplegikerzentrum [paraplegic centre] in Basel, where he thought he would miraculously regain his mobility, only to discover that they wanted to teach him how to live as a paraplegic instead, i.e. someone who has lost the use of their legs but who can still do anything if they adapt. He's only adapted on the surface. Inside, his world is shattered and he's even considered ending it all.



A moment goes past, maybe two. Then, in a sudden violent outburst: "I was the one who told myself I was crazy to think certain things, that I'd lost my mind. It was precisely those negative thoughts that gave me the wake-up call I needed to make a comeback." Now he's thoughtful, not resigned. "Sooner or later someone will get me back on my feet," he says with half a smile. He can't wait to get back in touch with the people he loves most and to treat himself to a period of uninterrupted rest after months of stress. He asks me about Jacques Laffite, Jean-Pierre Jabouille, Enzo Ferrari and many others who were close to him; he speaks again about the races but with no trace of bitterness over what's happened:

"I've discussed the incident with Morris Nunn, the founder of Ensign. The brake pedal broke, of course it shouldn't have but technical failures are part and parcel of racing. I'm not blaming anyone. That's what happened and that's it".

He doesn't bear any grudges. His condition helps him overcome any feelings of revenge against whoever it might be.

It's the middle of winter when the Catania editorial in the "Gazzetta dello Sport" [sports gazette] brings me the news that a lawyer called Donati from Catania has spoken with Clay at length, explaining how he suffered a spinal injury similar to Clay's in a road accident and found a guardian angel who got him back on his feet, enabling him to walk. Incredible but true. It makes me think of the usual fraudsters who come up with miraculous stories which, when push comes to shove, turn out to be spectacular

hoaxes. But Donati is a serious and highly respected man; there's proof of his disability and now there's proof of his recovery too. Clay gathers the information he needs and leaves for Washington, where Professor Kao operates almost immediately. It's a microsurgery operation lasting an astonishing 17 hours! It sounds like something out of a science fiction film as Regazzoni describes it to me over the phone, explaining that the outcome should become clear over the next few weeks. For now, he tells me that he's staying in a suite at the Watergate Hotel, room 202.

And so I come to see him again, surprising him with a phone call from the airport in Washington. He's pleased to see me again and waits for me for dinner, seeing as it's already 6 p.m. I take a taxi, stop off at the hotel to drop my bags and take a shower, then take another taxi to the Watergate, a complex just a short walk away from Congress in front of an avenue lined with cherry trees in bloom. I go up to the suite and am met with utter chaos. The apartment is a joyful throng of Ticinese friends I've known for years. Merriment reigns and glasses of chilled white wine are being swirled around. Clay is in bed, cheerful, thrilled to have everyone there. I hand him some Italian newspapers and we exchange a few words on the Inter Milan match that has just been played. How's he doing? In response, he pulls back the covers and shows me how he can lift his legs, one at a time, by about forty centimetres and can waggle his toes: "The doctors are all optimistic. I'm just lying here, a bit like a spectator, waiting to see what happens."

When Mariapia drains the spaghetti and serves up the ragu, everyone invites Clay to come to the table on his own two feet. Pablo Foletti, the man who sings Clay's praises on Italian Swiss television, supports him on one side with his wife on the other. Regazzoni moves his legs slowly, one step after another, until he reaches the table some metres away. A huge applause breaks out like when he used to cross the finish line. But this is another finish line altogether.

It's late in the evening – in February, I think. We're at a dinner in Codogno, between Milan and Piacenza, having been invited by a

group of Beppe Gabbiani's friends, a young hopeful on the Italian racing scene who's similar to Regazzoni in some respects, with his calm nature and style of racing. Clay is playing along with the similarities, even if there aren't really that many. He likes Beppe, although he detects a certain lack of discipline that he's never had. The wine flows, the hours pass by, memories and empty promises are tossed around: promises of gatherings that will never materialise. It's always like that on these evenings. But at a certain point, Clay starts telling us about how he's got in touch with some young people left paraplegic after suffering car and motorbike accidents:

"They think it's all over but I've convinced them that I'll get them back on the track, that I'll have them racing again. I've suggested to the Italian Federation that they organise races for the disabled. I've got more time now than I used to and I enjoy doing stuff like this. Giacomo Tansini's helping me out and some others who feel compelled to make life more comfortable for people like me".



And suddenly everyone falls silent because a Regazzoni has appeared that no-one recognises. Before, Clay told his friends what they wanted to hear: anecdotes, stories of women, of Formula 1, of duels on the track. Now he's started telling and sharing with us what's really on his heart.

It's just after two in the morning and the time has come for us to leave but the sly friend who had given me a lift from Milan has already snuck off saying that he had an appointment early the next morning. A

Clay running towards the podium, accompanied by the carabinieri at the Italian Grand Prix, Monza, 1975.

Below:
Clay posing for a photo next to a policeman, São Paulo, Brazil, 1973.



wild fog has descended and I have no choice but to accept Regazzoni's offer of a lift in a BMW series 3 that growls as though it were ready to race. He takes the first few kilometres very slowly. I realise that I haven't been in a car with him since the accident. "Yes, he's redeemed himself," I tell myself, thinking of places like Rio de Janeiro during the Grand Prix when, returning from a restaurant and crossing the neighbourhoods of Copacabana, Ipanema and Leblon, he would never stop at the traffic lights, continuing straight on at red lights especially. Memories that rob me of my sleep when I'm reminded of them every so often.



Now we've reached the motorway: toll booth, ticket, done. Visibility is practically zero but Clay accelerates, accelerates, accelerates. We overtake a truck on the right then move into the fast lane. I don't dare look at the speed we're doing and I don't even manage to close my eyes. I beg him to drop me wherever he wants and I'll walk the rest of the way in the dark but at least alive. He smiles: "Look, in the fog, the less you stick around the better!" And in no time at all we reach the edge of Milan and, shortly afterwards, my house. "Hey, you can't have been scared, you know how I drive..."

Another evening in Bologna, we go out for dinner at Diana, a restaurant under the porticos with a long tradition and some notable regulars. The three of us sit down. Immediately, three or four others appear next to us, among them Panatta, who has just retired from the tennis scene. Kisses, hugs, so lovely to see you again. We push our tables together and a show kicks off between Clay and Adriano that I will never forget. One lays bare the good and bad in Formula 1, the other in the world of tennis, recounting stories of famous women involved in

The final of the British Grand Prix which saw him seal his first victory for Williams, 1979.

various flings, hotels, all manner of escapades worthy of Boccaccio, and sport seen from a rather different angle, shall we say. Two o'clock in the morning comes round as usual. I've got my suitcase with me and was supposed to be taking a train to Milan at nine. Regazzoni, ever the gentleman, offers me a lift: "Come on, come with me and you'll be home in an hour and a half..." I thank him but invent an appointment in Bologna the next morning and quickly check into a room at the Carlton.

"You know I almost didn't realise I'd won? It seemed normal at first. Then, when I woke up this morning, it dawned on me that something extraordinary had happened. Sure, I talked to Ferrari straight after the race and he was beaming, just like his son, Piero. He was in Monza and I'm very fond of him. But now, wow! I've got the whole world calling me up on the phone, I've seen the pictures on the TV, the headlines in the newspapers..."

It's the 7th of September 1970. Regazzoni won the Italian Grand Prix the day before, when the avenues along which the cars had raced were flooded with fans going crazy, something which had never happened in previous years. Everyone under the podium is praising Clay for having reached the top spot after competing in only three Formula 1 races.

A natural bond blossoms between Regazzoni and Ferrari. Enzo Ferrari sees Clay as a driver who can do anything, whatever the risk, and who can help promote his cars. Regazzoni sees Ferrari as the gold standard for his competitive venture. The two are very close: they talk a lot, laugh, fight and make up again. When, on Clay's advice, Niki Lauda arrives at Ferrari, engineer Mauro Forghieri, the technical manager, makes it clear from the outset that Regazzoni will be the one to decide how the car is set up, always with very focused advice. So it's a blow to everyone when the World Championship slips through Clay's fingers at the last race of the season in 1974. Suddenly his Ferrari leaves the track: a mystery that has never been solved.



But Regazzoni isn't just Ferrari. He moves to Williams and, at the age of 40, seals the first Formula 1 victory for the British team on the Silverstone Circuit, where the Formula One World Championship had started back in 1950. It was a triumph, a real feat at a time when Williams was sponsored by a group of Arab companies including a construction company unfortunately owned by the father of the (later) famous Osama Bin Laden.

"But did you know I had to have some sort of soft fruit drink on the podium? Unbelievable. I hadn't realised alcohol was banned because of our sponsors from Saudi Arabia. I can't imagine a victory without champagne. But then, that evening, I got all the toasts I wanted..."

It was his last success before the dark. Or before a new beginning.

*** Pino Allievi**

Columnist for "La Gazzetta dello Sport" [the sports gazette] and Formula 1 commentator for Rai. Together with Regazzoni, he followed grands prix all around the world for many years. Winner of the "Dino Ferrari" journalism prize and author of various auto racing books.



The fearless driver with a big heart

The great man behind the great driver

by Cristiano Chiavegato*



Left:
Presenting the Ferrari 312 T on
the Fiorano Circuit, with Niki Lauda
at the wheel of the single-seater, 1976.

This page:
Clay with Niki Lauda and Emerson Fittipaldi.

Clay in the Ferrari 312 B, Italian Grand Prix, Monza, 1971.



I remember the day Regazzoni made his Formula 1 debut. It was 21 June 1970 at the Circuit Park Zandvoort in the Netherlands. I wasn't there. I had got to know him in Maranello some time before and had been following his incredible performance via the young Mario Poltronieri's television commentaries. He came fourth in the competition won by Jochen Rindt, a fantastic result for a first-timer in a race with 20 competitors. But the first time I spoke to Clay was at another very special event. On 24 August 1975 in Dijon, at a newly devised Swiss Grand Prix that didn't form part of the World Championship, the Ticino-born driver achieved a convincing win having started third in the line-up.

I interviewed him straight after the podium celebrations:

"To be honest, I'd have preferred to win one of the World Championship grands prix. I'm happy with this "little" Swiss one and hope it bodes well for the next few in Monza and the US. I've been pretty unlucky so far and I needed a win to give me a boost. How many times have I competed in a race when I've been in the lead or a top position and then haven't crossed the finish line? Formula 1 has become an exact science: you won't come first unless all of the right pieces are in place. All you need is some trivial error, a tiny technical detail, for it all to go wrong. Drivers don't count for much, unfortunately. It's the car that wins.

But it worked out today and I hope that continues. My dream would be to win in Monza. Lauda could win the world title and me the top place on the podium. That would be amazing".

A dream that would prove true, with Regazzoni triumphing in the Italian Grand Prix and the Austrian champion snatching the first of his three world titles. Clay demonstrated many qualities throughout the course of his career. On a human level he was kind and loyal, while in competitive situations he was brave and determined. Qualities to which everyone who knew him testifies: team mates, opponents, sports managers and contractors alike. The great Jacky Ickx, who was with him at Ferrari for three seasons, confided in me:

"He got into the car and off he went. Straight away. In Monza in 1970, the race was extremely competitive but, in the end, Regazzoni prevailed over everyone, including Stewart who was the reigning champion. The atmosphere on the circuit was bleak after Rindt's fatal accident during practice. Clay's achievement with the legendary 312B lifted the mood and restored some enthusiasm after the disturbing and tragic events of the previous day".

Jackie Stewart remained impressed by the Swiss driver's talent. The Scot recounted an episode from 1972:

Clay driving a scooter up and down the pit with his trusty head mechanic, Giulio Borsari, on board.

Left:
Clay with Mauro Forghieri at the Paul Ricard circuit, Le Castellet (France), 1971.

“I enjoyed spending time with him as a friend, he had a good sense of humour and made me laugh. He was a wonderful person. But he was a tough guy on the track. At the Nürburgring, I was driving the Tyrrell and he was in the Ferrari. The engine in his single-seater was ever so slightly better and every time I tried to overtake him, he eluded me. I was still in contention for the title but I was left without any brakes and he sent me off the track at the Hatzzenbach corner on the last lap. I ended up in the barrier. I was furious, but afterwards my anger subsided into friendship. Clay was a great man, a charming one, a good role model for sport”.

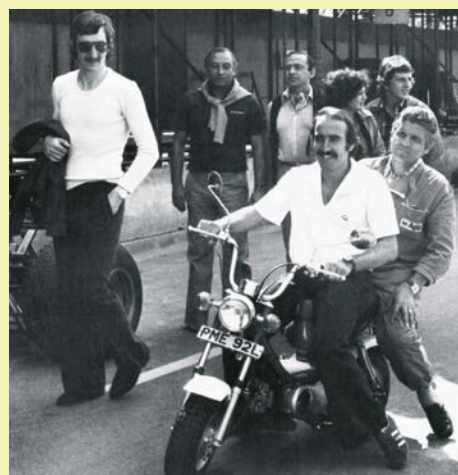
The engineer Mauro Forghieri was the technical manager of the Maranello stable for four of the six years that Regazzoni raced with Ferrari. He got to know him very well in every respect:

“Clay was the ultimate example of a man who knew how to appreciate everything life had to offer. I have to admit he often let his personal way of doing things get in the way of his professional activities. He didn’t always manage to separate the two. But he was a really good driver, a great driver.



Most of all, he could adapt to the cars we gave him, which is no mean feat. Often, and understandably, there are talented drivers who insist that the car be adapted to their needs. That’s not always possible. They have to understand that sometimes it has to be the other way round. Regazzoni, though, always tried to get everything he could out of a car, whether in Formula 1 or driving prototypes. Some great drivers didn’t do what they could have done because they weren’t like that. There are some like that even today”.

Pietro Corradini, a mechanic, was hired by Ferrari in the same year Regazzoni made his debut in the red car. He knew him very well, especially because Clay didn’t treat the men on the team like some of his colleagues, who kept their distance:



“He was on the Racing Team, whereas I was in charge of the engines at first, particularly for the sports cars. In 1975, I was working on the chassis and went to work in his team under Giulio Borsari. Clay was one of us, a little bit cocky, someone who loved life. He was a mate, and you felt good in his company. He loved joking around; as soon as he lifted the visor on his helmet, he became a normal guy. In those days, he even managed to include Lauda, who had only thought about the cars before. In my opinion, and according to the data that the technicians managed to collect, he was incredibly fast. More so than his results suggest in the end. He was unlucky at times too, because

in the ‘wheel-to-wheel’ battle, he never backed down. Anyway, he loved it on the track. He wasn’t one of those drivers who wanted to play engineer. It was an unforgettable experience for us to know him. He was one of the lads and involved everyone, even Mario Andretti and Jacques Laffite – we worked, we raced, we had fun”.

Niki Lauda, thought of by many as a track-side computer, dedicated and almost too meticulous, admitted having learned a lot from Regazzoni:

“Clay was a competitive and extremely fast member of the team and I’m indebted to him for one crucial thing: he taught me how to live and to appreciate that sport certainly does require dedication, but it’s not the only thing worth living for. Life is also about emotions, happiness, being carefree. And he was the maestro both on and off the track when it came to passion; he gave everything he had and some because he knew how to seize the right moments to relieve the pressure and distract himself”.

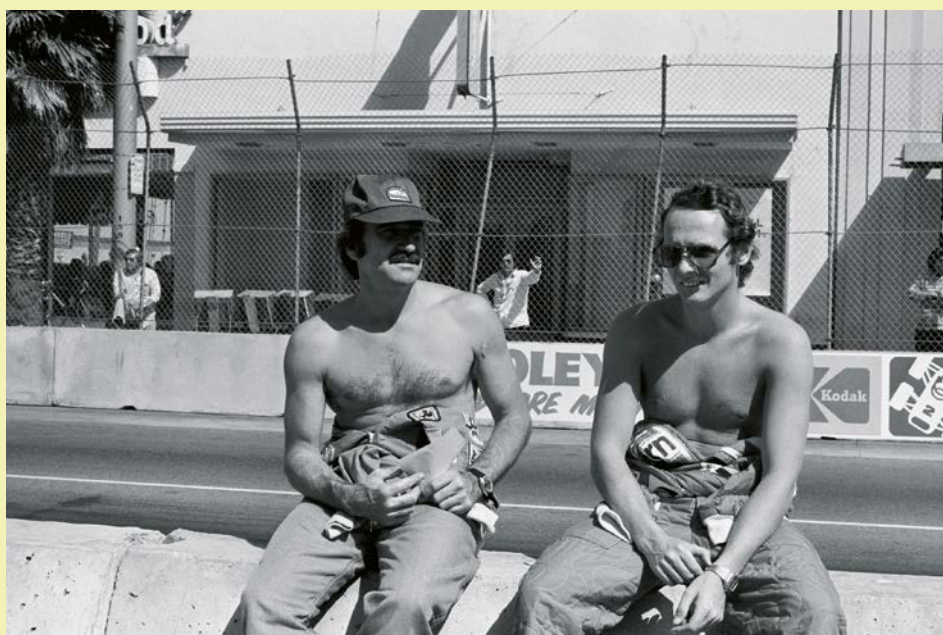
Luca Cordero di Montezemolo was Ferrari’s sports manager from 1973 and witnessed firsthand Regazzoni’s second period competing for the Cavallino as Lauda’s team mate.



“I only have good memories of Clay. He seemed like a Neapolitan Swiss man to me. Extrovert, generous and utterly at ease with people. A kind and courageous person. His performance on the track reflected his personality; he never took his foot off the accelerator. He sparked a great deal of enthusiasm. Unfortunately, it was our fault he lost the 1974 World Championship. At the last race in Watkins Glen (United States), Regazzoni was top of the leaderboard on an equal footing with Emerson Fittipaldi. It was unbelievable; Clay started behind the Brazilian but he managed to overtake him. Then he had a problem with his rear suspension and the McLaren driver, fourth over the finish line, snatched the title. It was Regazzoni himself who recommended that the “Commendatore” Enzo Ferrari hire the young Niki Lauda, with whom he’d raced with BRM the year before.

Above:
Clay with Luca
Cordero di
Montezemolo
and Niki Lauda,
1974.

With Niki Lauda
in a break during
the practice before
the Monaco Grand
Prix, Monte Carlo,
1976.



Ferrari wanted to appoint Frenchman Jean-Pierre Jarier but Clay persuaded him. The rest is history: the Austrian was uncompromising and Regazzoni remained convinced that we had favoured Niki. But the results were what mattered. He always gave it his all and he left the team disappointed. Ultimately, though, we remained friends. I can tell you a story about him. One day, we were at Enzo Ferrari's place when we heard the news that the government was deciding on speed limits. The Secretary of the Council of Ministers had arranged an appointment in Rome and told us we could meet the Prime Minister, Giulio Andreotti, at 3 p.m. It was almost midday. Clay said he would take me. We got into a Ferrari and followed the motorway from Maranello to Rome at lightning speed, arriving in time for the appointment. I, meanwhile, was scared out of my wits...he really was an extraordinary driver”.



But Regazzoni also had other sides to him which were perhaps more real and human. You just have to read what Luca Pancalli said about him – the former athlete and President of the Italian Paralympic Committee who was left disabled in 1981 after falling from a horse during the modern pentathlon:

“I met Clay after his accident through a mutual friend, Stefano Venturini. Together we founded the Federazione Italiana Sportiva Automobilismo Patenti Speciali [Italian Motorsport Federation for Special Licences] to offer new opportunities to young disabled people who wanted to push themselves to a high

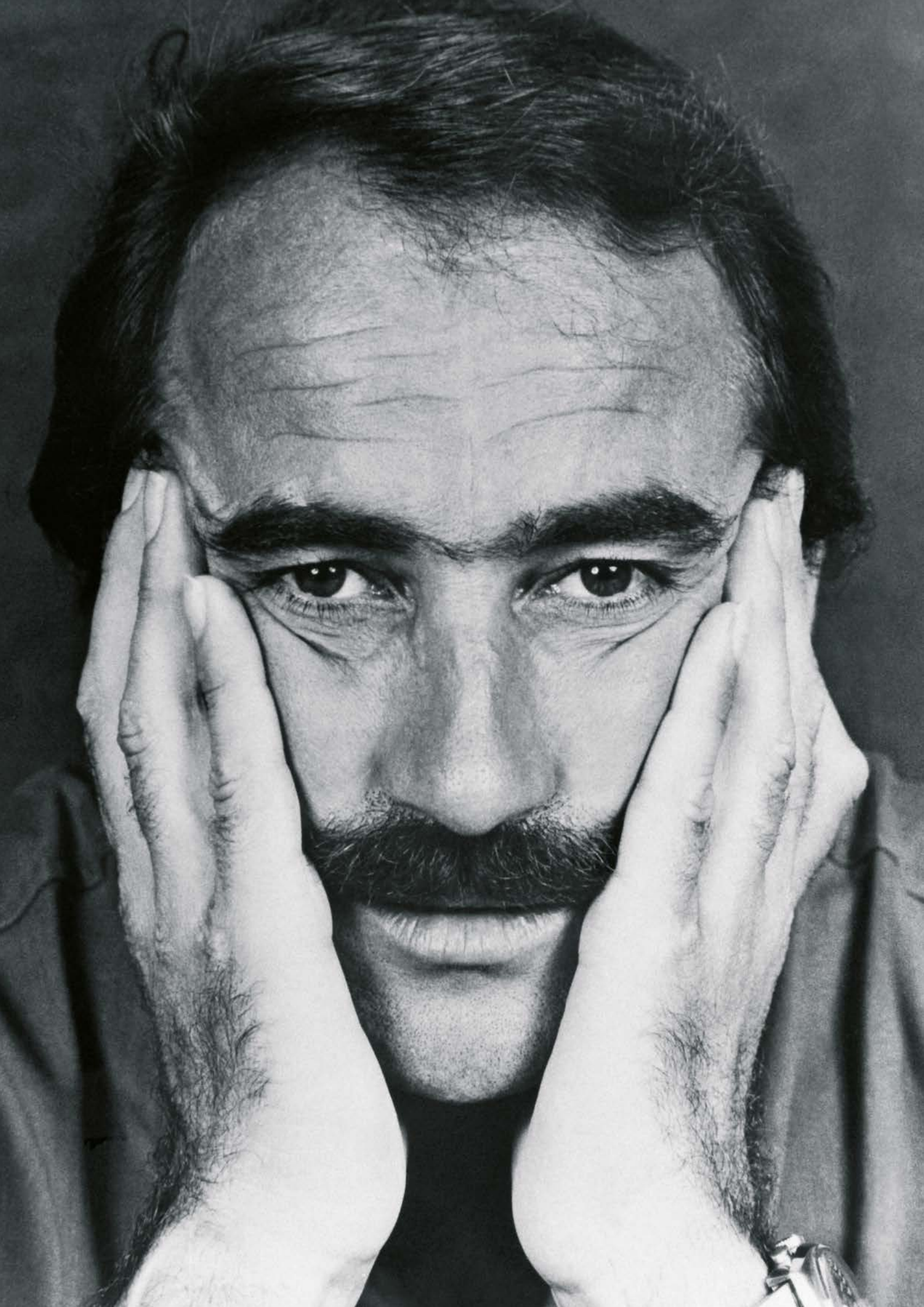
level in driving. Clay, as always, threw himself into the adventure with passion. He was a genuine person, sincere yet a bit surprising from what I've heard, fussy, professional, with a very meticulous and unmistakably Swiss way of doing things. I learned a lot from him and feel like I owe him a lot. The fact that he was able to challenge himself in his disability without abandoning the world of auto racing – of which he was so much a part and for which he had such a deep love – fuelled an extraordinary passion in him. In my opinion, his greatest achievement was succeeding in his mission to make the world of cars accessible to the disabled – two things that had seemed worlds apart until then. And then he was a cheerful man, never sad, able to face problems as an ongoing challenge but always with equanimity. In some senses, I agree that Clay was a pioneer, a man who opened doors it seemed impossible to open”.

I had one last encounter with Clay Regazzoni on the tragic night of 15 December 2006. I was in Maranello for a Christmas meal. I didn't know anything. I got a call from my newspaper asking me to go to Parma to write an article about what had happened. I arrived at the Ospedale Maggiore general hospital and it was almost night time. No-one was around. The friends of his who had waited for him at the Club Italia reunion had already returned, overcome, to their hotels. I looked for directions and saw a sign for the “Anatomical Pathology” department. The chapel of rest was next door...and endless sorrow.

*** Cristiano Chiavegato**

Professional journalist. Correspondent for the daily newspaper “La Stampa”, he has followed over 500 Formula 1 grands prix on circuits around the world and has written various books on auto racing.

Clay with Enzo Ferrari in Maranello, accompanied by veterans of the grands prix led by Maria Teresa de Filippis.



The secret path of the heart

by Cesare De Agostini*



Left:
The driver's intense expression.

This page:
The wreckage of Regazzoni's Ensign,
embedded between the wall and
tyre barrier after his dramatic accident,
Long Beach (USA), 1980.

Clay with Cesare De Agostini, working on the draft of his first biography, Lugano, 1983.

Clay Regazzoni was the hero of an era dedicated to the ideal of pure speed, backed by technology that was achieving some extraordinary results. It was the era of fearless drivers, who battled it out on the field at 300 kilometres an hour.

It was also the era of miraculous drivers, for whom racing on a track or road meant leaving behind the ordinary and getting swallowed up in the extraordinary.

Born Gian Claudio, he spent his first few years as Clyde and in the end became Clay. A short, fast, uncomplicated name that suited a face like his, a face straight out of Ancient Greece.

On 30 March 1980, he was racing in the Formula One World Championship in Long Beach. At the end of a long straight, a bend you had to take at 60, 70 kilometres an hour came into view. He was going at 280. His right foot moved quickly from the accelerator to the brake only to find nothing there. Empty, air, useless space...the pedal had gone. At first, his Ensign collided with a stationary car in the escape road, then struck a stack of tyres, followed by a concrete barrier and finally a metal fence.

He felt a sharp pain shoot up his back. Right down to where the plastic seat was crushing him unrelentingly and up again until it attacked his neck. He came out alive, but a cruel fate had robbed him of any future and had even turned the meaning of life on its head: his legs were no longer able to support him. He became like a tree trunk that manages to survive on just a centimetre of bark through which the tiniest amount of sap runs almost miraculously.

A US hospital took care of him before transferring him to the Paraplegikerzentrum [paraplegic centre] in Basel, Switzerland, where people who have suffered severe spinal damage go to seek treatment.

This was a mistake. With a disastrous obstinacy, they subjected him to all the wrong exercises. They tried to convince him that there was only a fine line between walking and not walking, just a hair's breadth, like a river viewed from ten thousand metres away. Days rolled into weeks, bringing a dark and strange intensity and sense of time that was mostly marked by waiting. But waiting for what?



All that remained was for him to recollect and describe his experiences as truthfully and concisely as possible. An article, a "one-off", a book? Yes, that's just the thing. A book. His book.

At the paraplegic centre in a long corridor with lobster-coloured walls, a grey and heavy door grimly bore the number 204. Through the door, in a room all to himself, was Clay wearing all his champion's past.

But a doubt was stifling my determination and even my desire to knock on that door. I needed courage to face him and this wasn't the best place for it.

The three numbers in the "204" – the two, the zero, the four, – continued glaring at me, immobile and severe, almost as a challenge to anyone who wanted to go in. I hesitated for a long time.

I had to knock, turn the handle, open the heavy door, focus on him and look him straight in the eye. And then there was the greeting, which had to sound as convincing as possible.

Do I shake his hand or not? How can you shake hands with a man who's confined to a wheelchair? One arm raised, another lowered. And then?

After a few seconds, with a timid and faltering push accompanied by the frailest of breaths, I opened the door. A "ciao" rang out, dismissing all inhibitions and embarrassment.

There was no need to look him in the eye or get past any barriers. I didn't have to put him at his ease, shake his hand or make him speak; everything came naturally. He approached me in his chair with ease; it felt like at any moment he would get up and start walking around, casual and agile, just as the world knew him.

His first words, his first breath of nostalgia, had nothing to do with racing cars or tracks or even with speed. He talked about tennis, the long net stretching across the court, the ball getting caught in it every so often, the precise yet powerful racket strokes, the jumps his legs allowed him: "Just think," he said. "A good old game of tennis!"

He stared into space for a moment, then lowered his head, looked down at his thighs, knees and feet: "It was fate, you see...but why did it have to be me?" Then:

"Once upon a time I was just a young guy like all the others. But a secret path began to be forged inside me, taking me down a road that had one chance in a thousand of success. I guess you could call this secret path your heart".

His words felt shadowy like a thought or a regret. His eyelashes still framed his eyelids and eyes and everything else that lay deep within him.

But it was his voice that gave it away. Able to wobble, immediately reassert itself and then start spouting all manner of different tales again, possibly borrowed – who knows – at 100 miles an hour. A familiar speed to him. I was surprised that he'd returned to tennis as a nostalgic sport. Weren't there others? He moved immediately onto racing, beginning by telling me that he had kept to a strict ritual which he always performed before the starting flag at each grand prix:

lowering his goggles onto his face. The full face helmets that came later, with visors that you could lift up and pull down, didn't carry the same emotive drama for him.

Instead, lowering his goggles and adjusting the fit between his forehead and eyes, this was almost a kind of magic that was able to transform him and instil in him a special energy. He would stiffen up, becoming detached and frozen. Almost like a robot.

"Well yes, exactly like a robot," he pointed out. His lips pursed into a shape that made him look a little surprised and a little astonished. Thanks to that robot, he had never thought of the risks he faced in forty-three years. He didn't try to get rid of them, nor did he deny they were there. Even though others – those who suffered from normality – thought they were absurd.

May 1965. It was a special day in Monaco. Every year since 1929, a race had been held on an urban circuit that defied and still defies all logic, crammed with higgledy-piggledy streets. It's more of a sadistic than a normal racing track.

Clay discovered it at the wheel of a little Formula 3 single-seater, when he was still a very young driver with inevitably high hopes.

The competition began and everyone immediately noticed this Regazzoni guy (unknown at this point) hurtle onto the circuit. Obvious danger, extreme risk, lost life. Sure enough, as he turned towards the harbour, he lost all control, steering straight into the guard rail with the sea below.

Regazzoni's staggering accident in the qualifying rounds of the Monaco Grand Prix (Formula 3), from which he miraculously escaped unharmed, Monte Carlo, 1968.





The single-seater's nose slipped under and didn't stop. One more centimetre and the driver's head would have been cut clean off, too high to go under. The first photograph doesn't lie: you can see a man and a car next to the barrier.

But another photograph taken a second later also shows how the same head, the same helmet and the same shoulders had gone to the other side.

"But I don't remember bending down... It all happened so suddenly though."

Years later, he tried his luck at the Indianapolis 500. Just four bends and four straights. The average lap was over 300 kilometres an hour. All of a sudden, his car starts to fly:

"You were going so fast," he explained, "that you didn't have time to notice anything."

He landed on the ground unscathed and a few minutes later, a doctor placed a stethoscope to his chest: his heart was beating more slowly than it had done when he had gone for a check-up to be admitted to race on the great American circuit.

An indifferent heart, utterly detached from nerves, from fear – from everything. They couldn't believe it.

My days of interviewing him face to face continued. It was only then that I was able to dig, to draw him out, to make him delve into the innermost part of himself.

And that's how the kind, extroverted, laddish Regazzoni gradually faded into the background, leaving behind the pensive, absorbed Clay who was forced – perhaps for the first time – to face up to himself.

It was during those times that he spoke of his disappointment with the way Ferrari had dumped him at the end of 1976; he pointed out the unbelievable behaviour of Frank Williams, for whom Clay had secured his first ever victory in 1979 without so much as a thank you; he told the story of how the chief executive of Formula One, Bernie Ecclestone, in the space of one month, had halved the amount he had offered to employ Clay at Brabham after they had already reached a verbal agreement. "I won't do it; I'm a professional."

Then he became one of those rare creatures who seem to have come into the world prepared not only to suffer but also to bear witness to the response you need to have in the face of a cruel setback just like that of losing the use of your legs.

The road, the track had become blurred, lost on the horizon. Blurred, but not impossible. He moved on from the great Formula 1 grands prix to see how he measured up in the big rally raids, the never-ending marathons in racing trucks (the Paris-Dakar, for example) and even kart racing.

He continued to be considered a hero who lived on inspiration, his own rules and a natural charisma that set him apart. His personality, his character, his behaviour, his everyday way of living, his smile, his fits of impatience and his unique fate alone make him worthy of being considered a modern hero. Vigorous, sarcastic, charming.

To get from nought to 300 kilometres an hour in just a few metres was an experience beyond all imagining, costing him eight months at the paraplegic centre, five operations and more than 60 hours under anaesthetic. Despite all this, he re-entered daily life ready to discover another side.

Accepting the floods of invitations that came to his door; reconnecting with friends, re-entering the traffic that life brings, moving with ease. It was a way of rediscovering himself while everything around him became a real challenge.

"I had to break the ice," he recalled.

His first public appearance was in Bassano del Grappa, in Italy, on 30 November 1980. He was presenting a book entitled *Cisitalia*, the name of the most prestigious sports and racing car brand in post-war Italy. It was a volume conceived by a friend of his, Nino Balestra, a published and passionate writer on vintage cars.

In the presence of a packed and listening audience, Clay began: "Sorry, I would stand up but I can't."

Left:
South African
Grand Prix: Clay's
BRM catching fire
after a collision with
Hailwood's Surtees
and Ickx's Ferrari.
An unconscious
Clay is rescued by
Hailwood, who throws
himself into the blaze,
Kyalami, 1973.

Right:
The London to Mexico
Rally in a Mercedes,
1995.



Clay travelling
15,000 km at the
wheel of a huge Iveco
110, Paris-Dakar,
1986.

Below:
The Tatra T815 truck
during the Rally
of Tunisia, 1988.



A long applause. Once the room had fallen silent again, the audience listened to his unmistakable voice. He spoke about becoming a hero in a strange game of fate.

"You can't avoid life's calling. A great many people with disabilities approach me every day, asking me what they should do, who to turn to, if there's any hope. But sadly there's no such thing as a road to the miracle factory."

A strong man was emerging who was on the verge of regaining meaning in his past, control of his present and hope for the future.

This man was Gian Claudio Regazzoni, the young man from the old days who had

gradually become Clyde. Then Clay, pronounced the Italian way with an "a". And eventually Clay, but this time pronounced the English way "Clei". A name without boundaries.

It made sense for a man like this to rebel against his wheelchair. It was inevitable for him to take an interest in people who could no longer walk and the major difficulties they faced. It was inevitable that he would think of putting them behind a wheel and even getting the best of them on the track. After various "lessons", he chose seven young people and lined them up at the Autodromo in Monza, a few hours before the Italian Grand Prix was due to take place. There could not have been a better amphitheatre. At the head of all seven was the man himself, the Clay everyone thought of as a Swiss Italian, who hadn't hesitated to put his name and fate on the line.

Before the starting flag, his briefing, as they called it, was simple and clear: "Guys," he said. "We don't have to prove anything to anyone. At the wheel, we're men just like the rest." Of course, he shot off into first place, followed by the others he had prepared. It was an extraordinary show, the first of its kind in Italy.

He renewed his friendship with the engines, the wheels, the steering wheels, the



Right:
Clay in the Lancia
Aurelia B20 (with
co-driver Cesare
De Agostini) in the
Mille Miglia, 1985.

Below:
Clay at the Vallelunga
track to the north
of Rome, the
headquarters of the
school for disabled
drivers, with the
Alfa Romeo 1.3 TI with
hand controls on the
steering wheel, 1984.

helmets and the fireproof suits, adding an armistice with doctors and a global “deal” with his legs. The challenge had begun; now it was time to take it to its limits.

He hit on something which had a sense of the ultimate; the most famous rally in the world: the “impossible” Paris-Dakar, which embodied the unexpected in its purest form and was the last real motoring adventure of our time.

It took 22 days; the total number of kilometres covered in the number 627 “Iveco 110” truck was equivalent to 50 grands prix. Three weeks in which he experienced the breath, the wind and the sun of the desert mixed with the scorching heat of the day and the incredible cold of the night.

“As you’re driving, you suffer, you curse and you convince yourself that you’ve got yourself into something impossible, something irrational. But, whether I won or not, my aim was to get to Dakar, no matter whether or not I was still in the race.”

With his skill for summarising, he hit the nail on the head when describing the overall feel of those crazy few days: immense and terrifying.

It was clear that a new hall of fame was being written, page by page, for a second racing career that extended to anything with four wheels and an engine – from trucks to karts. One regret remained: never to have been able to compete in the Mille Miglia, the famous thousand-mile race from Brescia to Rome and back.

“I never stopped dreaming of racing those 1,600 kilometres at full speed along the



roads of central Italy. I never had the chance; I was born too late.”

He joined the relaunched “Mille Miglia” several times, the historic tribute to that legendary race that reunited champions, almost champions, gentlemen and hobby racers. It wasn’t about speed but steadiness with a little drive.

At the various checkpoints, people recognised him, ran up to his car and blocked his way, shouting words of encouragement, banging their fists on the roof.

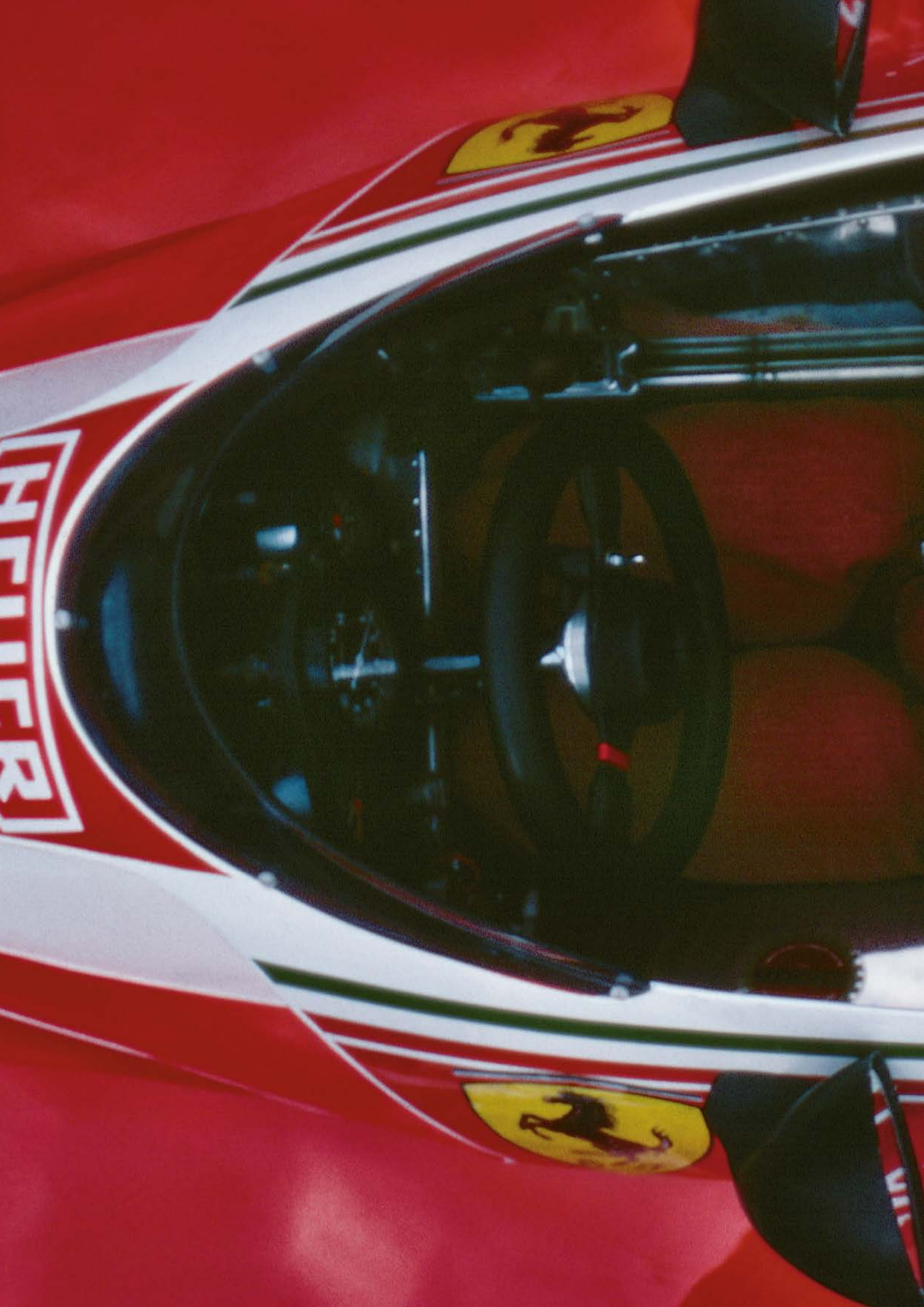
Crowds of people swarmed to the side of the road; men, women, old people and children. But there were also organised groups of sports people flying flags and banners, waving signs expressing their heartfelt support. “Along the Futa Pass, one of their banners caught my eye. On it was a heart and two words: ‘Grazie, Clay’”.

*** Cesare De Agostini**

A journalist and writer, he is considered the leading expert on Tazio Nuvolari.

He won the “Bancarella sport” and “CONI” awards in 1983.







Previous double
page spread:
Clay in the Ferrari 312
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1976.

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www.clayregazzoni.com

www.clubclayregazzoni.it

www.irp.ch

Find out more

ANDRETTI, MARIO (born in Montona in 1940) was an American racing driver with Italian roots. In 1969, he won the Indianapolis 500 and, the following year, he competed in the Spanish Grand Prix in the March, crossing the finish line for the first time and coming third. He won the Formula One World Championship in 1978.

BORSARI, GIULIO (born in Montale, 1925-2013) was a mechanic at Maserati and Ferrari and founder and president of the Club Meccanici Anziani di Formula 1, a club for long-standing Formula 1 mechanics. From 1974 to 1976, he led the team in charge of assisting Clay Regazzoni in his single-seater.

BRABHAM, was a Formula 1 stable set up in 1962 by former world champion Jack Brabham (1959 and 1960) and engineer Ron Tauranac. It triumphed in four incarnations of the Formula One World Drivers' Championship (1966, 1967, 1981 and 1983).

BRM, British Racing Motors, was a British Formula 1 team. It won 17 grands prix and were Formula One World Constructors' Champions in 1962.

CASONI, MARIO (born in Finale Ligure in 1939) was president of Piccole Industrie Italiane [small Italian industries] and vice president of the General Confederation of Italian

Industry (Confindustria). He combined his great passion for speed with his extraordinary entrepreneurial flair right from the outset, winning the Trofeo della Montagna [mountain trophy] (1963-64) and coming second in the equivalent speed contest on the track. He also competed in Formula 2 in a Ferrari Dino. He was the official driver until 1970 but didn't give up the sport completely until 1983.

CORRADINI, PIETRO (born in 1947) was the legendary head mechanic at Ferrari, for whom he began working in 1970.

ECCLESTONE, BERNIE (born in Ipswich in 1930) was a British driver and entrepreneur. In 1974, he was one of the founders of the Formula One Constructors Association (FOCA) and of Formula One Management (FOA), companies that purchase and manage the broadcasting rights for the Formula One World Championship.

ENSIGN, was a British Formula 1 stable founded by Morris Nunn in 1973.

FERRARI, ENZO, (born in Modena, 1898-1988) founded the famous Ferrari stable in Modena in 1929. He received a great many awards for his extraordinary career, including a nomination for the Cavaliere del lavoro [order of merit for labour] in 1952 and the Cavaliere di Gran Croce della Repubblica Italiana [knight grand cross of the republic of Italy] in 1979.

FITTIPALDI, EMERSON (born in São Paulo in Brazil in 1946), was a Brazilian racing driver and winner of the Formula One World Championship in 1972 (with Lotus) and 1974 (with McLaren). In 1989, he won the Indianapolis 500 and the CART PPG Indy Car World Series.

FOLETTI, PABLO (born in Lugano, 1937-1998) was a journalist, commentator and writer on auto racing. He was one of the founders of Esposauto.

FORGHIERI, MAURO (born in Modena in 1935) was an Italian engineer and designer of Formula 1 cars, the technical manager of the Ferrari stable from 1962 to 1971 and from 1973 to 1984. The Cavallino won four World Drivers' Champion titles under his guidance.

GABBIANI, GIUSEPPE (known as Beppe, born in Piacenza in 1957) was an Italian racing driver whose exploits included competing in the 1978, 1979 and 1981 Formula 1 seasons.

HAILWOOD, MIKE (born in Great Milton in 1940), nicknamed “Mike the Bike” for his exceptional talent for motorcycling, is considered one of the greatest motorcycling champions of all times, collecting 76 wins and nine world titles in grand prix motorcycle racing. He competed in 49 Formula 1 grands prix, becoming one of the few sportsmen able to compete in major series in both motorcycling and auto racing.

ICKX, JACKY (born in Brussels in 1945) started out in motorcycling, then raced in the 1966-1979 Formula 1 seasons, sealing eight victories, 13 pole positions, 14 fastest laps and four hat tricks. Finishing second in the final standings in 1969 with Brabham and in 1970 with Ferrari, he is considered one of the best drivers never to have won the world title.

JABOUILLE, JEAN-PIERRE (born in Paris in 1942) was a French racing driver who won two Formula 1 grands prix in 1979 and 1980 and was European Formula Two Champion in 1976. He is also known for being the first driver to lead the Renault F1 to victory (1979).

JARIER, JEAN-PIERRE (born in Charenton-le-Pont in 1946) was a French Formula 1 racing driver and European Formula Two Champion in 1973. His best chances of winning, however, came in the Lotus, when he was asked to step in for Ronnie Peterson who had died following an accident in the 1978 Italian Grand Prix.

LAFFITE, JACQUES (born in Paris in 1943) was a French racing driver who was crowned European Formula Three Champion in 1973 and gained the title's Formula 2 equivalent in 1975. He made his Formula 1 debut in 1974 and remained there until 1986 (winning six victories in all), when he was forced to retire after a serious accident. He currently works as a sports commentator for French television.

MOSER, SILVIO (born in Zurich in 1941 and died in Locarno in 1974) was a Swiss driver of international acclaim. 1964 was an unforgettable season thanks to his wins at the Temporada Argentina and the European Formula Three Championship. He was the

first driver from Ticino to win points in the Formula One World Championship from 1967 to 1971. He was one of the founders of Esposauto.

NUNN, MORRIS (born sine loco in 1938) was a British engineer and the founder and owner of the Formula 1 stable Ensign in the 1970s.

PANCALLI, LUCA (born in Rome in 1964) was an Italian pentathlete, swimmer, sports manager and politician. Following a major accident during an equestrian competition (1981) which left him wheelchair-bound, he continued playing sport at a high level, competing in four Paralympic Games and winning eight golds, six silvers and one bronze medal.

POLTRONIERI, MARIO (born in Milan, 1929-2017) was a journalist, racing driver and sports commentator who was the voice of Formula 1 on Rai for almost 25 years.

RINDT, JOCHEN (born in Mainz in 1942 and died in Monza in 1970) was an Austrian racing driver and Formula One World Champion in 1970. He was the only runner to be awarded the world title posthumously.

STEWART, JACKIE (born in Milton, in 1939) was a British racing driver and winner of the Formula One World Constructors' Champions in 1969, 1971 and 1973.

TYRRELL, was a Formula 1 stable founded by Ken Tyrrell in the late 1960s. It won 24 grands prix and the World Constructors' Champion title in 1971, the same year in which Jackie Stewart also won the drivers' title racing with Tyrrell. On the verge of going under following a long decline ending in the 1998 season, it was bought up by British America Racing.

WILLIAMS, FRANK (born in South Shields in 1942) was a British racing driver. He later established himself as a sports car manufacturer, founding Williams Grand Prix Engineering, which made its Formula 1 début in 1973 and was awarded the World Constructors' Champion title nine times.

Sources: www.treccani.it, www.sapere.it



Clay Regazzoni: remembering a champion



"Clay? What a great guy! He worked with us on two occasions for six years in all and left an indelible mark. His loss was a huge tragedy because Regazzoni was one of us, one of the family. My father invited him back in 1973 because he thought very highly of him and liked his cool approach to races. It was so typical of drivers at the time, for whom courage, arrogance and daring were the order of the day. And then Clay was very sociable and would talk about anything and everything with my father, from football to women. And who could forget: it was Clay who wanted to appoint Niki Lauda. For him it was a gesture of loyalty, even if as team mates they competed against each other with no holds barred. Speaking of the World Drivers' Championship title, which Regazzoni lost in 1974, I have to stress that it wasn't some sort of fix. It was just a string of unfortunate circumstances due to some decisions we made about the set-up and other technical details. I had an excellent relationship with Clay based on friendship and a touch of camaraderie. He was a great driver and a great man."

Piero Ferrari

Born in Castelvetro di Modena in 1945, Piero Ferrari is an entrepreneur and sports manager. He is the only living son of Enzo Ferrari.

"He was a fantastic guy. It was great spending time with Clay both on and off the track: he always made you feel calm and optimistic. And he never gave up, even when things didn't go his way. He knew how to excel on the track because he was brave and never gave in. He wasn't scared of anything. After dreadful accidents he only took a moment to recover his smile. The fact that he spoke the same language as us and was very open made things easier, especially when it came to getting the cars just so. In the test laps, Clay had no problem in pushing himself to the limits, which helped us identify the strengths and weaknesses of every car straight away. He was great at the final set-up, obviously, and he was a very hard worker. My best memory has to be his win in Monza in 1970, with the crowd storming the track, and us in the pit, to hug him."

Mauro Forghieri

Born in Modena in 1935, Mauro Forghieri dedicated his life to auto racing. He was an engineer, a designer of Formula 1 cars and the technical manager of the Ferrari stable for several years. The Cavallino won four Formula One World Drivers' Championship titles during his time as manager.

Left:
A triumphant Clay
on the podium of the
Brands Hatch Race
of Champions (UK),
1971.

Top left:
With Enzo Ferrari.

Top right:
With Mauro Forghieri.



My father, Gian Claudio – Clay to everyone else

by Alessia Giorgetti Regazzoni*



Left:
Regazzoni and his family on the balcony
of their home in Cassarate - Lugano, 1970.

This page:
Clay holding his son, Gian Maria,
by the hand, 1970.

Clay on the legendary VéloSoleX with his whole family, Cassarate - Lugano, 1970.



Everyone knew Clay but Clay was dad's public persona. I, on the other hand, want to talk about Gian Claudio, who largely remained in the shadow of Clay but who was more important to me and my family.

If Clay was the worldly man, Gian Claudio was the man of faith moulded by a strict upbringing under his parents. The faith that had guided him through the second stage of his life after he was paralysed and which instilled in him the following moral: "If it's happened to me, it's because I'm famous and I can be an example to the disabled world." The idea of integration was a priority for him. With his determination, he helped a lot of people in wheelchairs realise that they could have a second chance in life. Seeing a paraplegic facing up to restrictive races like the Paris-Dakar automatically sends out a message of strength and makes you want to fight.

The incident in Long Beach did not stop the man Gian Claudio or the driver Clay but rather offered him the chance to begin a new and fascinating chapter in his life. He had an indomitable spirit that wasn't afraid of anything or anyone and it was this that allowed him to overcome not just the physical but also the psychological trauma. Without ever feeling sorry for himself or being pitied. He asserted himself once again and even more so as a "personality"

in front of everyone. Under this new guise, he gave hope to people who thought that a handicap prevented you from living a normal everyday life.

If Clay was the playboy of the paddock, Gian Claudio was the family man, the husband and the dad. Far away but always near. Gian Claudio was always with us. If I had a problem, he was always there. If I faced a setback or difficulty, he helped me with that optimism of his that used to see things differently; but also with his toughness and meticulousness that taught us never to give up and to push ourselves to make our dreams come true. He taught us simply to live, to be happy in the small things because it's in the small things that you find peace.

Clay signed contracts. Gian Claudio had never wanted a manager and he blindly entrusted my mother with looking after his earnings as well as with raising us children and ensuring everything was in order at home. He taught us not to be afraid because he told us fear was made of nothing. The word "problem" didn't exist as far as he was concerned: for him, problems were just small obstacles to overcome. My brother and I knew he would indulge our most outlandish requests even if he followed it up with: "Ask your mother." Speaking of which, I remember a funny incident which took place in the summer of 1980: while

dad was convalescing at the Paraplegikerzentrum [paraplegic centre] in Basel, Gian Maria and I were on a school trip in French-speaking Switzerland. While there, we had the chance to take a trip around Lake Geneva on board a small Piper aeroplane; all we needed was our parents' consent. From the principal's office we called Basel, but instead of dad answering, it was mum who took the call and began to yell, asking where on earth we could have got the idea from. But knowing deep down that dad would have agreed (because opportunities like this don't come up every day), I told the principal that we were allowed to go! Out of the whole school, it was only us two who went!

Clay was the one who moved to Monte Carlo for money reasons but Gian Claudio was the one whose country was close to his heart, who got emotional when he heard the Swiss national anthem or rooted for an athlete or team competing under the Swiss flag.

Clay was the hero of a stormy break-up with Ferrari, but Gian Claudio kept up a friendly correspondence with its founder, the Commendatore, in order to express his gratitude and appreciation.

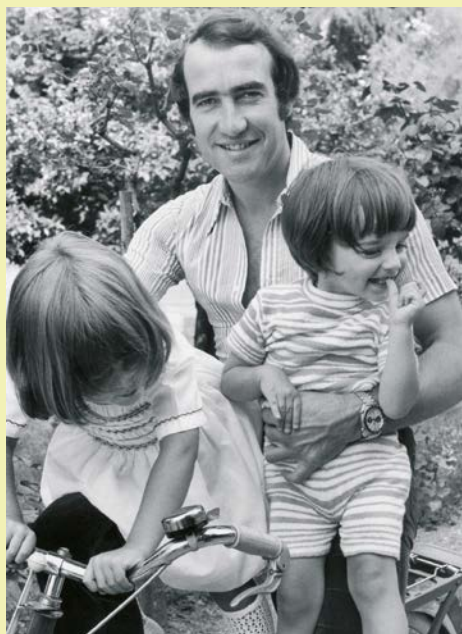
Clay and Gian Claudio sadly remained divided until the very end, the courageous Clay driving at 300 kilometres an hour but Gian Claudio killed in a stupid accident at 80.

This is our Gian Claudio, who wasn't laid to rest in Hollywood or in Monte Carlo but at a cemetery in Porza above Lugano. The safe haven where everything began, including his passion for cars in the little yard behind his house.

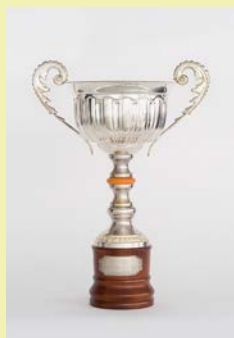
And, last but not least, thank you to Clay, or Gian Claudio, call him what you will. The one whose battle we are continuing to fight as we raise money to support research into paraplegia. His heart, soul and driving force will always be my dear mother.

*** Alessia Giorgetti Regazzoni**

Clay's daughter



Clay with his children,
Alessia and Gian
Maria, Cassarate -
Lugano, 1970.



Clay Regazzoni Memorial Room

When my father bought a plot of land in the district of Pregassona in Lugano the day before he died, we could hardly have imagined building a Memorial Room there in his memory. My mother soon came round to the idea of setting up a centre on the very same plot to house a collection of cars, photographs, helmets, trophies and mementoes from his racing career. The Memorial Room was to become a bridge between his memory and the principles that guided him through the second half of his life: his fight for paraplegics, his prevention work to reduce the number of road accidents, his conviction that life doesn't just end the moment you find yourself in a wheelchair. These were activities that had absorbed him and which he pursued with the same determination and flair that all of his opponents and fans recognised in him behind the Formula 1 wheel. The same enthusiasm, the same courage, the same joie de vivre, the same positivity, the same passion for a good cause.

I remember the first races he did in cars adapted with special controls: the joy in his eyes when he told us how eager his novices were. The Memorial Room allows us to continue that fight by working to spread the word, prevent accidents and raise money. We partner with educational institutions and various associations. Experience has taught us that teaching young people about road safety and the world of paraplegics at the Memorial Room has an entirely different impact compared with what could be conveyed within the four walls of a classroom. I will always remember something my father said:

“The state should educate younger generations; it must teach them respect for other people and important principles from an early age so we can turn today's children into the decent people of tomorrow. When I go out to a restaurant with a friend, the waiter will still take the order from them, not me.

I can't stand it. The time has come to change this subculture because if someone can't walk, it doesn't mean they can't think – quite the opposite, in fact. Let's stop talking about 'architectural barriers' when really it's a failure in our culture”.



I mentioned mementoes. At the head of the pack is the Ferrari 312 B3, the one in which dad became World Championship runner-up in 1974. It was donated to us by a Swiss collector: he felt it would do much better at the Memorial Room than at his home! Then there's the Tecno in which he won the European Formula Two World Championship in 1970. And then there are his three favourite cars adapted with steering wheel controls: a Ferrari Daytona, a Ferrari F40 and a Mustang which he drove around town or in re-enactments and events of various kinds. There are photographs. Lots of them. All of them accompanied by a caption, some of them familiar. On the walls are giant photographs that convey what Clay meant to his fans. His leap at the Nürburgring with the B3 during the 1974 German Grand Prix, which he won, and then a really great photo of him running towards the podium after winning the 1975 Italian Grand Prix, helmet off, smiling, with a crowd of fans following after him like the tail of a comet. There are trophies, including the winning trophy which his friend Jackie Ickx gave him after ceding victory to

Left:
A selection of
the many trophies
won by Clay Regazzoni
over the course of
his career.

Right:
A shot of the Memorial
Room in Lugano.



him. It makes me smile thinking how Clay had once come up with the bizarre idea of having the great sculptor César melt down all his trophies into one big one. Where would we have put it? Then there are the helmets. The first is the Tecno one with the red visor sporting the Swiss cross. The second is slightly more customised and is perhaps the most important because he wore it the first time he won in Monza in 1970. Then there are the full face helmets. My dad was one of the last drivers to switch to the full face helmet because he had become very fond of lowering his goggles before setting off.

With the visits we organise to the Memorial Room, we hope to help visitors get a sense of the human side of motorsport, to spark interest and curiosity in dad's experiences, to raise awareness about the importance of taking road safety seriously and to share information and figures relating to paraplegia in general.

The audiovisual material available on a screen in the hall is a way of summarising and synthesising how we communicate the key ideas and values from Clay's sporting career. As we engage with schoolchildren, we are able to take advantage of valuable partnerships with people like Alvaro Franchini, a representative from the Cantonal Police who conducts our sessions on road safety, and Giampaolo Donghi, a representative from the group InSuperAbili who is responsible for raising awareness about paraplegia.

Clay's dream was to free people from their wheelchairs and it has been both mine and my mother's strong desire to continue this

legacy of helping and supporting those with paraplegia which he began over thirty years ago. The Clay Regazzoni Memorial Room is part of a non-profit initiative aimed at supporting scientific research and helping people with paraplegia by means of the "Club Clay Regazzoni - Aiutiamo la Paraplegia" [the Clay Regazzoni club - we support paraplegia], set up in 1994 and the only association licensed by my father, in conjunction with the "Fondazione Internazionale per la Ricerca in Paraplegia - IRP" [the international foundation for research into paraplegia] in Geneva, which my father co-founded in 1995 and on whose committee he then served.

I'd like to finish by saying that the Memorial Room is undoubtedly a special place for me where I feel right at home. Perhaps it's because of that enormous picture of him smiling as though he were sitting on the sofa at home, telling me about his adventures and teaching me to always be positive, always face the future eagerly and always countersteer.



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Above:
The cups and trophies
won by Clay held at
the Memorial Room.

Three generations
giving a tour of the
Memorial Room:
Clay's wife, Mariapia,
his daughter, Alessia,
with the little Sofia,
and Gian Maria.

Clay ready for his next race in the Ensign, 1977.



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