

From past to present

The renaissance
of the Circuito
di Campione

by Antonio Erario



The first historical revival of the Campione d'Italia Circuit has entered the annals of motoring culture as a luminous triumph, transforming the quiet lakeside enclave into a vibrant theatre of history, passion, and elegance.

From 4 to 7 September 2025, the tiny circuit of just 1,116 metres, once dubbed in the 1930s as “the smallest circuit in the world,” was reborn in all its splendour, a stage upon which cars, motorcycles, boats, and karts narrated a story that entwined past and present in a seamless celebration of engineering artistry. It was in 1937 that

the Campione Circuit hosted its original epic, when the likes of Luigi Villorosi, Franco Cortese, Giovanni Lurani, Piero Dusio, Carlo Felice Trossi, and the eventual victor Giovanni Rocco pitted their machines against the twisting lakeside roads. Almost ninety years later, the revival of that spirit was entrusted to Ermanno De Angelis and Nunzia Del Gaudio of Victorious, with the indispensable support of the

Municipality of Campione d'Italia and the Automobile Club Lugano Classic. Their vision unfolded as a living pageant of heritage, drawing thousands of spectators into a world where history was not merely observed but profoundly felt. Over one hundred cars, twenty-two historic motorcycles, twenty karts, and six vintage boats were arrayed across the town in a shimmering tribute to mechanical genius. The lakefront paddock became a museum without walls, where Bugatti, Maserati, Alfa Romeo, Bentley, and Jaguar gleamed in the September light, accompanied by modern icons such as Ferrari, Porsche, Lotus, and a striking cohort of Dallara.

A quintet of formidable Formula cars commanded special attention: the Brabham Cosworth BT24-3 F1, Graham Hill's Shadow DN1 3A, Riccardo Patrese's Arrows A1, and others from the collections of the Silvio Moser Museum and Master Class Motors. Among them, the star of the weekend, Marco Coppini's 1978 Arrows A1, ultimately claimed the coveted Best in Show award, a verdict joyfully echoed by the public's acclaim. The Casino di Campione, guardian of the town's architectural skyline, served as a symbolic backdrop to a programme as rich as it was varied. There were aquatic displays and street food, music and pop-up stores, while NeroForte simulators allowed visitors to race virtually at no cost. The public marvelled at vintage karts dating back to the 1950s, and applauded as historic motorcycles and boats reclaimed their moment of glory. Roberto Canesi, Mayor



of Campione, was joined by Senator Elena Murelli, President of the Italian Parliamentary Intergroup for Historic Vehicles, at the inauguration. The presence of Jürgen Barth, legendary winner of the 1977 24 Hours of Le Mans, further elevated the atmosphere, as he signed autographs at the wheel of a 1950 Jaguar XK120 OTS, a living reminder of why his name remains etched in racing folklore.

On Friday, after the first warm-up laps and the drivers' briefing in the Salone delle Feste high within the Casino, the cars paraded into Lugano. There, EGM Cigars greeted participants with a personalised Circuito di Campione cigar, and local guides led tours



of the city before an elegant aperitif at Lugano Town Hall, courtesy of Banca del Ceresio. The prelude concluded with a gala dinner atop Mario Botta's architectural landmark, gathering three hundred guests in a glittering overture to the weekend. Saturday witnessed the heartbeat of the revival. At nine in the morning, the first cars took to the circuit, divided into seven groups. The night-time sessions, with the lake-side promenade illuminated by paddock lights, created an atmosphere almost theatrical in its intensity. By Sunday, anticipation reached its zenith with the Concorso d'Eleganza Dinamico. Bernard Weber's Lagonda V12 Le Mans emerged victorious among the cars, pursued by Horbach and Muller's Ferrari 348 TB Challenge and Jean-Marc Rusconi's Amilcar C6. Emilio Castell's Aermacchi 408 triumphed in the motorcycle class, Gianluca Lopes's Riva Olympic in the boats, and Leonardo Garatti's 1962 "Tony Kart" among the karts. The awards ceremony in the Salone delle Feste, attended by more than two hundred guests, provided a fitting crescendo to a weekend already rich with splendour.

The event achieved the rare distinction of becoming the first classic gathering to receive ESG Sustainability Certification, through the collaboration of BrainsHub and GSD Global Sustainable Development. A tree

was planted and a commemorative plaque unveiled by Falegnameria Svanotti in the presence of Mayor Canesi, FIVA President Tidde Bresters, the Italian Ambassador to Switzerland Gian Lorenzo Cornado, Senator Murelli, the organisers, and Ivan Porfido, CEO of GSD Group. That same day, the unveiling of the Poste Italiane stamp dedicated to the event took place, a collector's item destined for preservation in the Poste Italiane Museum. Institutional and cultural support proved invaluable: the Regio Insubrica Working Community, Automobile Club Lugano Classic, FIVA, Ticino Section of the Swiss Touring Club, Automobile Clubs of Como and Novara, Lugano Airport, Federitaly, Aiti Servizi, Cercle Pegase Amilcar, as well as the Tazio Nuvolari, Fangio and Mille Miglia Museums, and the Italian and Swiss sections of Wikimedia. Special thanks were extended to Automobile Club Como, with President Enrico Gelpi and Director Roberto Conforti, for providing marshals, while Italsoccorso oversaw medical readiness. If the inaugural revival was a promise, then its success has transformed that promise into certainty: the smallest circuit in the world has once again become the grandest stage for history's most enduring passions.

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