

Bizzarrini's 1965 LeMans Win

The story of Giotto Bizzarrini driving chassis 0222 straight back home to Livorno, Italy, immediately after the 1965 24 Hours of Le Mans is one of the most legendary, romantic tales from the golden era of sports car racing.

The Drive To and From the Track

In 1965, the distinction between a pure race car and a road-going GT was incredibly thin. To prove the absolute engineering reliability of his design, Giotto Bizzarrini didn't use a commercial transport truck (actually he didn't have any money). According to historical accounts, the Iso Grifo A3/C Corsa was driven from the factory in Livorno directly to the Circuit de la Sarthe in France before the race even began. After surviving 24 brutal hours of racing—where it clocked a blistering 303 km/h (188 mph) on the Mulsanne Straight and averaged 169 km/h over 303 laps—the car was dirty, battle-scarred, and victorious in the over-5.0-liter class. Instead of celebrating with a long rest, Giotto hopped into the cockpit of the loud, hot, single-seat-tailored cockpit and personally drove the race winner roughly 700 miles (over 1,100 km) back across international borders to Northern Italy.

Why the Story Endures

Proof of Concept: The drive perfectly validated Giotto's belief that a true sports car should be robust enough to finish an endurance race and immediately serve as road transport. The

American V8 Factor: The journey cemented the reputation of the car's front-mid-mounted 5.3L Chevrolet Corvette V8. While high-strung, multi-carburetor European V12s of the era required constant mechanical attention and rebuilding after a race, the American small-block V8 was bulletproof enough to handle a casual cross-European road trip right after a 24-hour sprint.

Pure Romanticism: The image of a brilliant, tired engineer driving a street-legal, open-exhaust Le Mans class winner down public highways, pulling up to gas stations covered in track grime and race decals, encapsulates a bygone era of motor-sport that will never happen again.

This legendary drive became the primary inspiration for the modern brand's Bizzarrini 5300 GT Corsa Revival Series, which meticulously reverse-engineered chassis 0222 down to its exact 1965 Le Mans specification.