For Your Bookshelf: Ferrari 857S – The remarkable history of 0578M

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Reviewed by Kieron Fennelly.

Title: Ferrari 857S – The remarkable history of 0578M

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Fifties and sixties sports cars, especially Ferraris, exert an enduring fascination. Volume nine in Porter Press's Exceptional Cars series deals with the 857S, unusual for a Ferrari in

having a four-cylinder engine. This unit which reached 3.5 litres capacity by the end of the 857's works career was, explains author Ian Wagstaff, designed to offer the low speed torque for use on slower circuits and lacking in the firm's more highly strung V12s. As usual in this series, the book describes the background to the model before concentrating on the specific history of a chassis, here 0578M. There are also profiles of its principal drivers, those on the rather less-known Umberto Magnioli and Eugenio Castellotti especially interesting. [*A minor layout error has crept on to page 51 which has a picture of Magnioli when it should show Castellotti.]*

After its works career, 0578M raced briefly in New Zealand, an interlude which also provides a welcome opportunity to look back over a largely forgotten race series, before finishing its competitive life in Scandinavia. Subsequent restoration to its 1956 works condition and nostalgic trips to such events as the Mille Miglia in recent years complete the story.

As with previous books in this series, the account is supported by copious photography, some of familiar races – the 1955 TT at Dundrod for example, but here as elsewhere the pictures have a freshness because they follow the less fancied Ferraris rather than the works cars from Mercedes, Aston Martin and Jaguar which have featured in any number of books and articles over the years. The work concludes with a lavish gallery comprising twenty-two pages of studio shots of 0578M.

VERDICT

Handsomely and indeed compellingly illustrated, and authoritatively written, Ferrari 875S is a worthy addition to the Exceptional Cars series.