

The Gino Rosato Story

By Joey Franco

The Gino Rosato story draws many parallels with one of the most well-known classic folk tales of all time; Cinderella. Rosato truly is a Cinderella man - plucked from obscurity, his attributes were unrecognized as a youth, and many had little or no faith in this day-dreamer from Laval. There are however some discrepancies with the folk tale: the horse drawn carriage is a cherry red Ferrari, the fairy godmother is Jean Todt, and Michael Schumacher is prince charming.



The tale begins in Laval on March 16th 1972 where Gino is born to parents Carole and Michele. Gino has admitted on many occasions that he was not a very bright student and many people did not think he would ever amount to anything.

At the age of 18, Gino worked at the Delta Hotel in downtown Montreal. During the 1991 Canadian Grand Prix, his hotel manager asked him, since he was the only Italian speaking employee at the hotel, if he would like to assist members of team Ferrari with any errands they might need him to run. Gino immediately jumped at the opportunity, and he became Ferrari's unofficial gofer during the Montreal Grand Prix, doing just about anything from picking up provisions for the team members to running errands for them.

Slowly but surely, Gino's hard work and dedication began to catch the attention of people like Ferrari team principal Jean Todt. Gino was eventually hired as a full-time employee of Scuderia Ferrari and became the second Québécois, after Gilles Villeneuve, to serve the prancing horse.

Nicolangelo Cioppi, automotive journalist and former Formula Renault Pilot is a very intimate friend of Gino's. "To me he is more than a friend," states Cioppi during an interview at La Belle Italienne restaurant. "He is like a little brother, but at the same time he is like an older brother because he has circled the globe 17 or 18 times. He has seen different cultures, he has met many people, therefore even if he is younger, he has a lot more life experience than I do - and sometimes when I need some advice, I give him a call and he is always available to help me out."

Cioppi says Gino's first years at Ferrari were very difficult. Although he was of Italian origin, he was looked at as an outsider - a Canadian. Gino was able to overcome those difficulties with his perseverance and hard work. Slowly but surely he began to rise up the ranks at Ferrari. Rosato would be appointed as head of logistics and security. His many tasks included the personal security of superstar Michael Schumacher, dealing with team sponsors, and assisting Jean Todt.

During the Schumacher era, Ferrari would gain its place at the top of the racing world. "We rewrote the history books, and in those years... my life changed dramatically. I would have never



Nicolangelo Cioppi, Gino Rosato and Patrice Brisebois at press conference.

imagined this." Over the 18 seasons with the team, Gino celebrated eight F1 constructors championships and six driver championships. When he arrived at Ferrari, the team had slightly less than 100 wins. When he left, the tally stood at a tall 210. "Over my career at Ferrari, I celebrated over half of the marque's victories in Formula One."

Meanwhile, former senior vice president commercial and brand at Ferrari, Dany Bahar, was appointed CEO of Lotus in late 2009. Several weeks after taking the chief executive position at Lotus, Bahar gave his old colleague Gino Rosato a call and made him an offer he couldn't refuse.

"When I was given this offer, I began to look back at my career, thinking about the first floors I washed, the first garbage bags I emptied - and now I was being proposed to be in charge of 1,200 people at Lotus." This was truly a once-in-a-lifetime offer, and after much consideration he accepted the proposal. In late October of 2009, days before the final Grand Prix of the season in Abu Dhabi, Rosato announced his appointment as vice president corporate affairs at Lotus. The announcement was made in a small café in downtown Montreal in front of the local press.

Lotus will also be competing in the 2010 F1 Championship with pilot Jarno Trulli. Gino Rosato is a brimming example of where passion and hard work can lead you to, he is the pride of the Montreal Italian community. We wish our Cinderella man Gino Rosato all the best for his new position, and a fruitful championship for our friend Jarno Trulli. In bocca al lupo. ❖

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