



An Italian TALE



Armando Filini is one of those who prefer actions to gossip, a pragmatic man. His coherence has always made him stand out. You can see the importance of his role but he never exceeds the limit of protagonism. He started out when he was very young and still today he works with passion and expects his drivers and collaborators to work and live with serenity. This is why the team manager and talent scout is one of the most loved and has a series of important results on an international level. And to think that his wife Laura gave him his first kart. BY GIULIANO CIUCCI GIULIANI

You hardly ever see him angry and, even if he was, he certainly never lets off steam on others. *You can meet him at any time of the day and Armando Filini* always welcomes you with an open smile or with a witty comment, no matter what he is personally going through. Well, I have known him for a long time and I can tell you that there are few people as nice as he is. However, Armando Filini not only stands out not for being friendly and very sociable, but also because of his 'modus operandi' and especially for his ability in programming the racing excursus for drivers, 13-year olds, with the aim of getting the desired success in a short time, 2/3 years. That is exactly how it has been with several drivers who have decided to be under his guidance: Hanley, Bianchi, Harvey, Kobayashi, Monras, Vainio and Leclerc and they have got their names on the list of international karting.

age as Roberto Robazzi Giancarlo Tinini, just to mention one or two of the important names that make up this great story. *It was the time when school was one of the last problems, and Armando then 16, decided to become a plumber.* In those days the love for engines was common to loads of youngsters. So he joins his cousin Bruno as a mechanic. His cousin drove as a private driver a 500 Abarth in uphill races, and with him he also took part in one or two editions of the Italian

ARMANDO FILINI IS THE SAME AGE

AS ROBERTO ROBAZZI AND GIANCARLO

TININI, JUST TO MENTION TWO

IMPORTANT NAMES THAT ARE

PART OF THIS MARVELLOUS TALE

However, now let's get to know Armando Filini, one of the best talent

scout who has made a great come back with the new millennium when he was artifice of the Maranello exploit, a bit better.

Well, Armando Filini is the same





“ THANKS TO EXPERIENCE GAINED, AT ART GRAND PRIX. ALREADY NOW KARTING DRIVERS’ FORMATION IS LIKE THAT OF FORMULA DRIVERS. FOR EXAMPLE, NOWADAYS THERE IS TELEMETRY INVOLVED ALSO IN KARTING, AND IT IS ONE OF THE MAIN POINTS ON OUR PROGRAM. ”

Armando Filini has been riding on the crest of the wave of international karting for about ten years now. The success of Team Maranello has underlined his managerial talent. And it isn't by chance that on his first season in managing the new born team Art Grand Prix, founded together with Nicolas Todt and Armando Filini has already gained several wins and the KF2 European title.



Above, Massimo Filini Armando's younger brother who died in 2003. Massimo raced with the team Dam and won the European Championship with Fabi when with Comer. Right, Armando being rewarded for a town race and above (second from the right) at another event. You can see Robazzi and Cancarini (4th and 5th from left) later, together they founded Tonykart. Top, Armando (12) at the Ciak corner with Pietro Sassi (6) following.



championship.

In 1977, at the age of 20, Armando marries Laura (he was very young, but those were the days when marrying for love combined with common ideas and couplet could aspire to greater things). In fact, it was Laura who noticed how involved he was and his excitement in assisting a city race in Orzinuovo, near Brescia in northern Italy, so she decided to give him a second hand kart as a present.

An air-cooled Tonykart powered by an Aspes 125cc. So, Armando started entering for races, mainly in Italy, and the European championship held in Laval in 1985, when Pietro Sassi took title win.

Here in this story, we inevitably also get some curious anecdotes. For example

when in Fano. *30 years ago, in an Italian championship race, no other than Roberto Robazzi was there to help him.* It was on that occasion that Robazzi, today's Tonykart patron met Angela, Laura's sister and later he married.

Armando stopped racing soon after and concentrated on helping drivers as chassis specialist, something that he had always done even when he himself was racing. It didn't take long before he became well-known publishing his brand name FAAK (Filini Armando Assistenza Kart) on stickers to be put on karts. For those who don't know, at that time, it was normal that if a driver wasn't racing himself he'd be there to help a fellow-driver (in this case Giovanardi) his mechanic and vice versa.

Cazzago was the driver with whom Armando has shared a great part of his life and in some ways has determined a certain "evolution". *With his Tonykart with Robazzi, and then with Dap and ending up in using a Crg.* And after in the early 90s Giancarlo Tinini who drew up the Crg project together with Carlo and Roberto Vanaria asked him to be part of his team as mechanic, or jolly, someone who could do a bit of anything. It was in that year that Armando entered to be part of a project, the DAM, acronym of Dino Chiesa, Armando and Marina Vanaria, Tinini's wife, a structure where he took on the role of team manager. A role that was his from then on. At that time, there were several drivers that Armando Filini



Top, Armando Filini between his pupils Ben Hanley and Jules Bianchi on occasion of the F1 GP in Monza. Again with Gandolfi and Hanley (below) and right with Nocolas Todt and Ben Hanley. Right, with Jules Bianchi when he used to manage the Maranello Race Team. Below, right, Leclerc with his mechanics of the Art Grand Prix team, Machac Jiri and Petr, from the Czech Republic.



WE STARTED OUT WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE FOR THE TEAM.

EVERYONE GOT ON WELL AND

WE HAD A RELIABLE TEAM...

managed and helped especially Piccini, Rossi, Pantano, Gandolfi, Sophie Kumpen, Lotta Hellberg, Liuzzi, Beggio and Jos Verstappen, Max' dad. In 1994 he joins another project, that of Bonetti's BRM, where he also entered also as an associate member. In 1998, BRM was taken over by Pinzoni and Armando was still in charge of the racing department. This continues to the new millennium and best moment of Armando's managerial story. In 2001, backed by Frascari, a wealthy guy who had had his chassis made by Calogero

Vanaria (yes Maranello) Giusti, Armando and Tinini shared the idea of setting up a business, Maranello. Besides being a member of the society Armando was racing team manager too.

It is in these years that Armando leaves his mark, setting up a programme for forming racing drivers from the 100 ICA and later from KF3 with which he gains several continental titles.

Armando tells us- *that was the most important time -We starter out with the right foot and with the right people for the team. We got on well together; it was a reliable group that shared the same philosophy*

of behaviour as me. In my opinion – he continues – it all depends on the harmony of the team. It's very important within a racing team because it influences the drivers positively and their response is very good to input given and consequently the results are good too.

And as for the driver himself, what sort of format do you use?

Patience. You must never rush things, because you need time to optimise ratio. A driver who races for the first time in an international season gets reactions that the team must be able to interpret. It is a mutual thing, the team must be able to read the signals given by the driver and the driver must be able to feel the team's reactions.



Both parties need time to develop the best strategies for the driver.

And how much time do you need?

Let's say 1 year is the time required for preparation. After you get the results.

Does the same go for the driver's talent?

In the approach of driver for team and vice versa, you can get this too; obviously, you must be able to acknowledge a driver who has the necessary qualities to go fast. But it isn't just a question of foot. There are situations where a driver, despite being able to go fast, cannot perform well. For example those who start on front row that is away from the fight. Or there are drivers who are fast but only because their kart is set up well. So, you have to bear in mind all these aspects and try to understand whether a driver makes the difference, without forgetting the material used and the track conditions that he has to face... In my opinion, a talented driver is one that stands out and makes up for the mediocrity of a vehicle. Jules Bianchi and Ben Hanley are among these. Then it is a pleasure to remember Kobayashi too, who for the first time in Sarno and on a damp track was over 1" faster than his rivals, many were surprised and were asking themselves who he was.

With your Maranello experience over, 10 years where you won loads of continental titles and the World Cup in Suzuka with Forè, here you are now with a new adventure... you are like a volcano in continuous eruption.

SEVERAL ASPECTS MUST

BE CONSIDERED TO UNDERSTAND

WHEN A DRIVER CAN MAKE

THE DIFFERENCE

Let's not exaggerate: it is only because I love working in a certain way and I like those who share my project can appreciate my ideas and any innovations there may be. Well, an important aspect when you have to work together. These presuppositions were no longer present in Maranello and I thought it would be better to start over with new partners.

What partners!

It was an occasion that came up because it was with Nicolas Todt that we had already starter collaboration. Drivers like Bianchi who from Maranello ended up in Art Grand Prix.

So, when at the end of the year (2011 author's note) I had decided to homologate a new chassis and I asked Nicolas if he was interested in joining me in this adventure.

What are the changes from Maranello to Art Grand Prix?

My job is the same, but the aims change. In this project the team manages to get more gratification, because of the different aims. Let's say that we have gained a value that we must capitalise better: investing on drivers that set out in kart driving and get to formula racing.

So, the philosophy of Art Grand Prix besides preparing the driver for racing guarantees continuity in his career?

Yes. The programme that we want to offer is more suitable for today's situation and what expectations of today's racing are. Due to the experience gained in Art Grand Prix drivers already follow a formation in karting that is like that use for formula racing. Today also in karting you have got telemetry, for example, it is a point in our programme. The driver registers an enormous amount of data and consequently all this will be studied by the team and the driver.

Art Grand Prix is also concerned for the driver's psycho-physical preparation in collaboration with F. Medicine, and "stage" (practical phases) are set up. But there is more, we have developed a test program on a simulator that enables the driver to get an idea of what his approach should be like when he really gets into the cockpit of a racing car.

Will Bianchi and Hanley be the future testimonial for this project?

Jules Bianchi already is. Instead, Ben Hanley, although only 27, is involved with an important programme as Driver Coach supported by Art Grand Prix and, at the same time he is official GP3-GP2 test driver and official tester for F1 and GP2 tyres. Charles Leclerc, backed by AllRoad Management, is about to go on to car racing (Formula Renault 2000).



The Cup corner, trophies win in his first year of the Art Grand Prix racing led by Armando Filini. Cups, well not all of them, the one for the continental title is missing... Left page, Vainio and Ben Hanley studying the data together with Francesco Parisio and Czech engineer Yan Straka back at the time with Maranello. Straka father and son are the same as those for the KVS team that has just won the KF2 World Cup with Tiene and it was Armando himself who helped their entry into the international scene is times gone by. Far left, Art G.P. team with Nicolas Todt and Armando Filini together with drivers of the 2012 Season.

ARMANDO FILINI RESULTS

» CIK TITLES

2012

1st European Championship (KF2)
B. Barnicoat (GB) ART GP/Parilla

2009

1st European Championship (SKF)
A. Vainio (FIN) Maranello/Maxter
1st Asia-Pacific Championship (KF3)
J. King (GB) Maranello/Tm

2008

1st Suzuka World Cup (KF1)
D. Forè (I) Maranello/Maxter
1st European Championship (KF3)
A. Vainio (FIN) Maranello/Maxter
1st Viking Trophy (KF3)
M. Zimin (RUS) Maranello/Xtr
1st Monaco Kart Cup (KF3)
A. Vainio (FIN) Maranello/Maxter

2007

1st European Championship (KF3)
J. Harvey (GB) Maranello/Xtr
1st Monaco Kart Cup (KF3)
M. Goff (GB) Maranello/Xtr

2006

1st European Championship (JICA)
M. Monras (E) Maranello/Parilla
1st Viking Trophy (JICA)
P. Suvanto (FIN) Maranello/Parilla

2005

1st Asia-Pacific Championship (FA)
J. Bianchi (F) Maranello/Parilla

2003

1st Asia-Pacific Championship (ICA)
K. Kimura (J) Maranello/Maxter

2002

1st Monaco Kart Cup (JICA)
A. Sims (GB) Maranello/Maxter

» CIK PODIUM

2012

2nd European Championship (KF2)
C. Leclerc (MCO) ART GP/Parilla
3rd World Cup (KZ1)
B. Hanley (GB) ART GP/Tm

3rd Viking Trophy (KF2)
N. Nylund (FIN) ART GP/Parilla

2011

2nd U18 World Championship
P. Ovaska (FIN) Maranello/Wke
3rd European Championship (KF2)
A.S. Hansen (DEN) Maranello/Maranello

2010

2nd U18 World Championship
M. Koykka (FIN) Maranello/Wke
3rd European Championship (KF2)
T. Suninen (FIN) Maranello/Maranello

2009

2nd World Championship (SKF)
A. Vainio (FIN) Maranello/Maxter
3rd World Championship (SKF)
B. Hanley (GB) Maranello/Maxter

2008

2nd World Cup (KF2)
Z. Groman (CZ) Maranello/Parilla
2nd European Championship (KF3)
J. Wiman (FIN) Maranello/Maxter
3rd World Cup (KZ1)
D. Forè (I) Maranello/Maxter
3rd Asia-Pacific Championship (KF2)
Giaguaro Nero (I) Maranello/Parilla

2007

2nd European Championship (KF2)
M. Monras (E) Maranello/Parilla
2nd Monaco Kart Cup (KF3)
J. Harvey (GB) Maranello/Xtr

2006

2nd World Cup (FA)
J. Bianchi (F) Maranello/Parilla
2nd Asia-Pacific Championship (ICA)
K. Meters (CZ) Maranello/Parilla
2nd Viking Trophy (ICA)
M. Laine (FIN) Maranello/Parilla

2003

3rd World Championship (FA)
B. Hanley (GB) Maranello/Maxter
3rd Viking Trophy (ICA)
N. Vestergaard (DEN) Maranello/Maxter

» TROPHIES / INTERNATIONAL RACES

2012

1st - WSK Euro Series (KF2)

C. Leclerc (MCO) ART GP/Parilla
1st WSK Euro Cup for Teams (KF2)
ART Grand Prix

2011

1st Winter Cup (KF2)
T. Suninen (FIN) Maranello/Maranello

2009

2nd Winter Cup (KF2)
M. Goff (GB) Maranello/Maxter

2008

1st Winter Cup (KF3)
A. Vainio (FIN) Maranello/Xtr
1st Andrea Margutti Trophy (KF2)
Z. Groman (CZ) Maranello/Parilla
2nd Italian Open Masters (KF3)
K. Ceccon (I) Maranello/Tm
2nd Andrea Margutti Trophy (KF2)
A. Vainio (FIN) Maranello/Xtr
3rd Andrea Margutti Trophy (KF2)
K. Ceccon (I) Maranello/Tm
3rd Winter Cup (KF3)
K. Ceccon (I) Maranello/Tm
3rd Bridgestone Cup European Final (KF2)
A. Vainio (FIN) Maranello/Maxter

2007

1st Andrea Margutti Trophy (KF3)
J. Harvey (GB) Maranello/Xtr
1st Winter Cup (KF2)
Y. De Brabander (F) Maranello/Parilla
2nd Italian Open Masters (KF1)
D. Forè (I) Maranello/Parilla
2nd Italian Open Masters (KF3)
J. Harvey (GB) Maranello/Xtr
3rd WSK International Series (KF2)
M. Monras (E) Maranello/Parilla
3rd WSK International Series (KF3)
J. Harvey (GB) Maranello/Xtr
3rd Italian Open Masters (KF1)
M. Laine (FIN) Maranello/Parilla
3rd Andrea Margutti Trophy (KF3)
P. Suvanto (FIN) Maranello/Xtr

2006

1st WSK International Series (ICC)
J. Bianchi (F) Maranello/Maxter
2nd Winter Cup (FA)
J. Bianchi (F) Maranello/Parilla
3rd Italian Open Masters (FA)
J. Bianchi (F) Maranello/Parilla