

## Ferrari D50

CMC | 1956



*The German diecast model producer wishes to offer to the collectors as much significant models of the car racing history of the 50s. Just after the launch of the Lancia D50, the car used by the Scuderia Lancia in 1955 Formula 1 season, CMC launches, as was natural, the 1956 F1 Ferrari D50 model.*

It's a little bit complicated to explain that, but most of the dedicated diecast car collectors have a long term relationship with high-end models producers. That's because these producers don't launch new models that often, and the new issues are announced many months, sometime years before. But if you have a lot of patience (and enough money), you can build in time a whole racing team at home. Particularly if we talk about the Ferrari brand, CMC has in its portfolio an extended range of racing cars, from 250 Testa Rossa to 250 GT, or from 250 GTO to 500 F2 and 312 P. The list of Ferrari models created by CMC started more than 12 years ago and now, this list is filled now with another great issue, the Ferrari D50.

It's an interesting beginning for the story of the real car, because D50 is not an original Ferrari, but rather a Lancia in disguise. We wrote [here](#) about the epic story of Lancia compete in Formula 1, no longer that a season and few months, a story which ended tragically with the dead of Ascari pilot and the bankruptcy of the Lancia brand. Lancia D50, a creation of the Hungarian origin engineer Vittorio Jano, brought some important innovations in the F1 competition: the engine block sloped 12 degrees with respect to longitudinal axis, which allowed the accomodation of the transmission shaft through the pilot compartment; the engine block stressed with the chassis; the gearbox placed behind the cockpit, just in front of the rear axle, for a better distribution

of the weight between axles; double ignition; external fuel tanks. But an end of a story could be a beginning for another one. The takeover of the Scuderia Lancia by Scuderia Ferrari in 1955 meant also the taking over of the 6 Lancia D50 cars. Adittionally, the Ferrari team would also benefit from the services of Vittorio Jano.



The monoposts were renamed Ferrari-Lancia D50 and they continued to compete in the next races of the season. However the Mercedes Benz pilot Juan Manuel Fangio could not be stoped from his road to a new world title, despite the tragedy that shadowed the fame of the German brand. In June 1955 at Le Mans, in the middle of the race a horrible accident has thrown in the stands a Mercedes car, and several dozen people have been killed. The awful event led to the Mercedes withdrawal from all motor sports competitions at the end of the year.

This moment was an opportunity for Ferrari, who signed a contract with the great Fangio, already three times world champion in Formula 1. The next season was supposed to be Ferrari's season. The Ferrari engineers have made a lot of changes to the Lancia car. Thereby the external gas tanks were dropped, replaced by a central one, placed behind the driver. However the shape of the body has been preserved, due to its certain streamlined capabilities. The former external tanks have been welded with the main body, resulting in a one single structure. The space inside the envelopes of the tanks has been used for the passing of the exhaust pipes or, in some cases, for little additional fuel tanks. The oil radiators disappeared and they have been replaced by one single radiator behind the front grille. Even it was a high performing car, Lancia D50 had been criticized for bad handling, therefore the Ferrari team together with Jano have changed the suspension and have strengthened the chassis-engine structure.



The result of all changes was auspicious: Juan Manuel Fangio won again the world champion title in 1956, this time driving a Ferrari D50, with three wins in Grand Prix races – in Buenos Aires, Silverstone and Nürburgring. The last official race of the season, the Monza Grand Prix, was the one which decided the whole season winner; Fangio was driving the No.22 car, but he abandoned it due to technical failures. It seemend like Stirling Moss (placed 2nd in the race in that moment) will win the champion title. Peter Collins, the Fangio's teammate at Ferrari and the leader of the race, was heading to its first victory in a Grand Prix, driving the No.26 car, also a Ferrari D50. At that time, the regulations allowed a car to be driven by several pilots, and then they would share the points. But Collins, proving a rare spirit of sportiness and attachment to the team, offered his car to Fangio, putting the world title above his personal victory in the Monza race. Stirling Moss took the lead, but Fangio was saved by Collins's decision: he finished the second, but he earned the 3 points that helped him to win his 4th world title.

However, Manuel Fangio changed again the team in 1957, joining the Maserati and winning a new world title. Perhaps the pilot's genius was the most important, above all technical innovations released by the engineers. The Ferrari's pilot, Luigi Musso, achieved the 3rd place at the end of the season, driving a modified version of D50 car, named DS50. Ferrari returned in the lead in 1958, when Mike Hawthorn won the championship, driving a Ferrari 246, the first car with a V6 engine in the Formula 1 history. But it was a completely different car, and it was clear that the D50 era was over.

At a first glance, it looks like the Ferrari D50 model is very similar with the previous CMC issue, Lancia D50. But a closer look will show you the opposite – we're admiring a completely new model, a different one in every detail. The body shape has been modified substantially, according to the real model; therefore the fuel tank envelopes have been integrated in the main body and the oil radiator between the body and tanks have disappeared. Also, the long exhaust pipes which extended the evacuation galleys have vanished. Now the exhaust pipes are masked inside the body, through the former tanks. Two generous rectangular holes display 4 final pipes on each side. The Ferrari D50 ground clearance is higher than that of Lancia, again, according to the real fact. The part of the body behind the cockpit is longer comparing to Lancia and it's very nicely detailed, with line rivets following the joints between the metal body parts. Unfortunately, this part is no longer detachable, so we cannot look inside to see the detailed structure of the chassis. The engine hood is smaller, limited only to the top of the engine. The engine block is the same as Lancia D50, and it looks spectacular with that admission filter photoetched tops. The frontal grill is slightly discreet, but perhaps Ferrari payed more attention for an aggressive look, not a stylish one.





Instead, the structure of the suspensions is at least the same spectacular as the Lancia's one. The bars have now a metallic appearance and they are not painted in gray anymore. It's the same with the brake drum-wheel seat aggregate, which is looking better, almost real. However, it seems to be a problem for both models to deal with the entire steering mechanism, which doesn't work as expected. If we consider also the position of the wheels, especially on the front axle, which stand unparallel and they're not perpendicular on the ground, we conclude that the replication in 1/18 scale of the suspension-steering is hard to be made without compromises.

Despite these issues, there is a high-level of precision in most of the details – from the fine line rivets on the body to the functional caps for gas/oil/water, from the metal exhaust pipes to the big Ferrari logos on each side. We're pretty sure that this great attention to small details will be a pleasure for any collector. Particullary, the model which has been analyzed for this review had a little problem with the windshield, hard to be locked in a normal position. Working on this, we observed that the windshield stands are fastened with one screw on each side, in contrast to Lancia where the stands are fastened with rivets painted in the body color. The rough cockpit is a little bit colorful due to a yellow piece on the right side (the fule pump?). The small slot in front of the pilot's cockpit is still functional, same as the Lancia.

Overall, the Ferrari D50 1/18 model has, exactly as the Lancia D50 model, a strong potential to look good in pictures; it conveys high level of dynamics and force from any angle.

It will be a good company for the other CMC F1 "celebrities" of the 50s or 60s of the 20th Century, as Ferrari 500 F2, Ferrari 156 F1, Mercedes W196, Maserati 250 F or even the iconic Fiat Bartoletti transporters Ferrari or Maserati. The Ferrari D50 will be available in several historical liveries, beside this plain version: the winners of France, Great Britain and Germany GPs or other competitors in Belgium or Germany GPs. Nevertheless, it's important to mention that the Nurburgring versions will be a slightly different (long) nose, and the Spa Francorchamps competitor will be painted in yellow. Therefore, will be difficult for collectors to choose a particular livery version, and for sure, at least some of these versions will be hard to find in the future.

