



the
**Henry
Ford**®



Rossella Manfrinato

Nationality: Italian

Involved in racing since 1998

Website: <http://www.manfrinato.com>

Origins: Born and raised in Milan, Italy, Rossella Manfrinato was a tomboy, opting to play with marbles and cars instead of the girly toys preferred by her sister. As soon as she was old enough to cheer, Rossella became an adamant supporter of Ferrari's Formula One team, a group called the Tifosi in Italian, and began attending races with her father at the nearby Monza Track.

Early Influences: After her father took Rossella to her first Formula One race and she experienced the sights, sounds, and smells first-hand, she knew she wanted to not only cheer on Ferrari's racers, but be a part of the action. After that decision, whenever her sister would receive dolls as gifts, Rossella would receive mechanic kits and tools to help her follow her dream. Even though she knew it would be difficult to break into the male-dominated field and there were no female Italian engineers for Manfrinato to look to as role-models, she was determined to make it in motorsports.

Education: Knowing she wanted to work in the racing industry, Manfrinato started taking science and math courses in high school and chose to complete the scientific studies educational track. She earned a mechanical engineering degree from the University of Milan's Polytechnic school a few years later, specializing in vehicle dynamics. To incorporate motorsports into her required thesis, Rossella based her work and research on Formula 3000 cars, creating a mathematical model of the vehicle. The project, considered avant-garde in the field, led to the published work entitled "Identification of Dampening and Stiffness Parameters of a Motor Racing Car" and opened the doors for numerous future job opportunities.

Career Path: While working on her degree, Manfrinato secured an internship with a Formula 3000 (now called the GP2 Series) team, becoming the only female engineer working in Italian motorsports. Although she started working in data acquisition, she was later promoted to engineering, working on the car Tom Kristensen drove to a sixth-place finish in the

1996 Formula 3000 Series. After finishing her degree and thesis, Manfrinato relocated to the United States to work with Tatuus, the Italian car manufacturer, on its Formula 2000 program. For the 1998 and 1999 seasons, Rossella was in charge of team tech support for customers at Tatuus's shops and offered track support for the team on race days. In 1999, Manfrinato worked races with the United States-based road racing team TransAtlantic Racing, being the only female engineer in the paddock at the 24 Hours at Daytona and other Grand American Series events. Since 2000, Rossella has been the team manager and lead engineer with Philip Creighton Racing Team, while also offering support and consultations for other teams and racers. By working closely with the Creighton teams as well as helping other racers with engineering updates, Manfrinato has gained experience in many series and organizations including the Indy Racing League (IRL), Indy Lights, Formula Ford 2000, American LeMans Series (ALMS), Formula Star Mazda, Grand-Am, International Formula 3000, Formula Renault, Sports Car Club of America (SCCA), United States Road Racing Championship (USRRC), and Full Throttle Racing (FTR). Rossella acted as chief design engineer and liaison for the Indy Lights Series in 2002, helping Dallara, a leading Italian chassis manufacturer, design a chassis for the Indy Lights-model cars and later provided customer support. Manfrinato is also an accomplished driver, competing in the Formula Ford 2000 and Infinity Pro Series. By winning the 2007 and 2008 FF2000 National Division Championship and the 2008 South Atlantic Road Racing Championship, Rossella has shown she is just as talented behind the wheel as she is in the paddock or pits.

Major Responsibilities: At Philip Creighton Motorsports, Manfrinato supervises all of the engineering projects that come through business, both those for the Creighton Team and consulting jobs. As a race engineer, Rossella oversees every change besides engine work done to the car in the pits, including modifications and updates throughout the race. Afterwards she collects data to analyze what happened throughout the race and how to improve a car's results. Since Creighton Motorsports is a smaller operation, Rossella also acts as the team's business manager, a position she never imagined she would hold. She organizes and oversees the business aspects of the shop, keeping track of what everyone on the Creighton team is doing in regards to specific projects and making sure each person knows what they have to do to successfully complete jobs.

Advice to Others: Manfrinato loves her job and encourages anyone interested in pursuing a technology career in motorsports to go ahead and try it! She says having a passion for the sport is the most important thing for an aspiring race engineer or team manager, since someone can develop the technical aspects of the job through various experiences. It may at times seem like an uphill battle for someone to establish his- or herself in racing and Rossella admits it is not easy to break into the field, but having a passion for the sport earns respect from others and helps get new engineers noticed. While most racers and engineers may talk about how difficult it is to get started in racing, Manfrinato warns it is even harder to leave motorsport and try any other job after experiencing the thrill of working on the track!

Life off the Track: A current resident of Alpharetta, GA, most of Manfrinato's time is spent working or entering races herself, but her love of sports doesn't stop there. She enjoys watching Italy's soccer team compete and driving to nearby lakes on her time-off to ride her jet ski and take part in other water sports. Rossella's friends and family are incredibly important to her as well, with her spending much of her free-time with friends in the area and traveling to visit her family still living in Italy as much as her job will allow.

Interesting Fact: Rossella collects souvenir shot glasses from all of the destinations and attractions she has visited. Her collection represents past vacations, such as the one from the Grand Canyon, as well as notable stops she has made while working or racing, like the glass purchased at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Awards and Achievements:

- Featured speaker on women in motorsports at the 2002 Society of Automobile Engineer (SAE) Conference