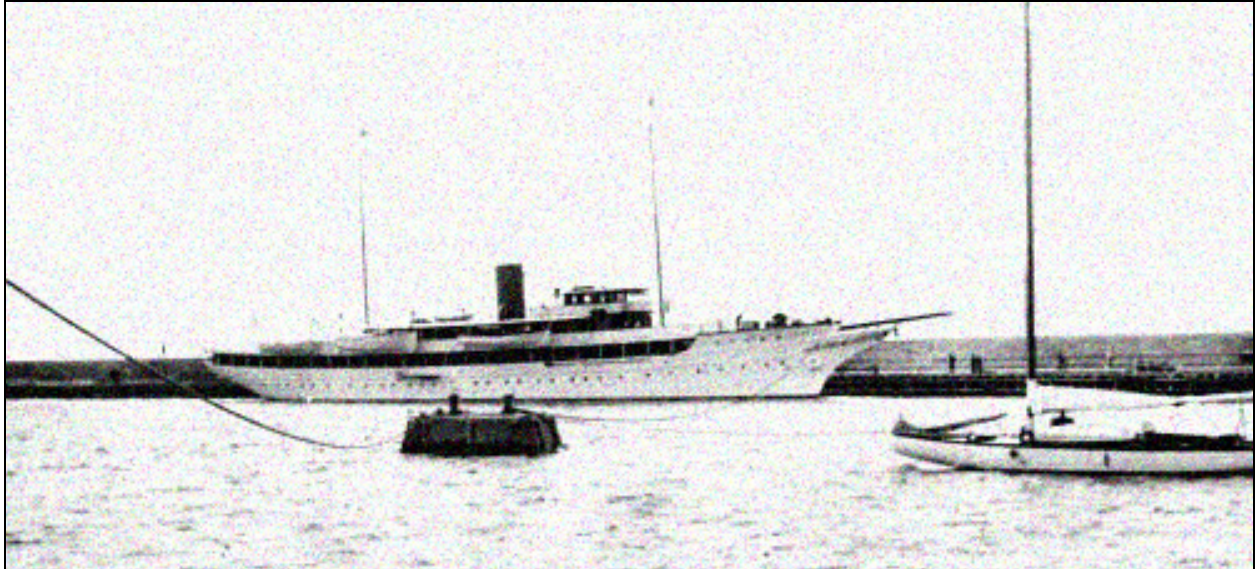




**Post-Race Party aboard the Yacht,
“Bella Fortuna,” of Sr. Carmena-Motta**
April 1934



The famed yacht of Sr. Carmena-Motta, “Bella Fortuna,” where the post-race party was held.

Part I: The Guests Arrive and Board the Yacht

As light of the day began to fade, the first guests arrived at the yacht of the well-known Italian industrialist, **Sr. Guido Carmena-Motta**, a man known for his appetite, large size, and absolute commitment to Italy and its industrial might. His large modern yacht was christened with the name “Bella Fortuna” and gleamed bright white as it rocked gently at rest alongside the jetty on the coast near La Bridja. The ship’s rakish lines conveying a need for speed that seemed fitting for the evening as Europe’s leading race pilots had now completed a grueling, high speed test at Staouéli in the GP d’Algiers.

The mood was light and the air was filled with the scent of grilled goat, not of just one but of a number laid out upon spits over open fires along the jetty. As the guests drove up, they were astonished to see the yacht’s kitchen crew laboring over the large outdoor grills, attended by Algerian cooks brought in from Oran. Everywhere, wine was already flowing and the smell of garlic permeated the air.



Amongst yacht's kitchen crew and its famous professional chef, Marco Oliveti of Trieste, the yacht's home port, stood Italy's famed driver, **Eusebius "Sebi" Orsi**. He regarded the activities and paced back and forth, visibly in charge, supervising the preparation of the goat, accompanied by the chef. As each guest arrived, Orsi waved and smiled – standing out clearly from the cooking crew in his very finely made Italian suit, a dark grey and rakish. Busy amidst a sea of white-clothed chefs and assistants, somehow he kept an air of formality. He wore a white cotton shirt and a striped silk tie.

Observers might have expected that **Sebi Orsi** would have used the tie as a focus point of his fashionable dress or perhaps as an expression of his creativity. However, if anything, his tie was understated, instead forcing an observer's attention upon his whole person. The suit and shirt seemed perfectly tailored to him, obviously Italian in cut, hanging in daring folds and set off by near mirror polish of his black shoes. On closer examination, his shirt's cotton was clearly made of the finest Egyptian cloth, so soft that it seemed already that the women present amongst the arriving guests seemed drawn to feel its texture. Orsi's dress belied a man who knew how to dress and whose attention to fine details would never go unnoticed by the ladies.

With little ceremony, Germany's driver, **Godeschalk Hegkman von Grebeneck**, arrived in very punctual manner – if not even slightly early. Hegkman was dressed in a dashing white uniform that seemed equally fitting upon the Baltic coast of Germany as on a battlefield, rows of high buttons crossing the top of the chest and an old, heavy sword hanging upon his hip. From the appearance of the hilt, which was neither bejeweled nor ornate, the sword could only have been of medieval origin; a small Templar cross was inscribed upon the pommel. Hegkman's sword brought a number of whispered comments from the other guests who wondered if he had come better prepared to deal with another possible assault from the Czech driver, Vitez Rychly, who had only a week before been ejected from the Monegasque Embassy pre-race party for striking the German. Hegkman appeared perfectly at home with the sword and at once saluted the cooks before going aboard. He was quickly followed by a number of the other guests, including the stunningly beautiful **Lady Swindon-Harpe**, not in a dress as one might have expected but rather a formal tuxedo. Not surprisingly, she arrived with a large entourage.

Soon aboard were also **Rutger "Hajen" Hägglund**, who despite his Scandinavian bearing, seemed visibly uncomfortable, as he was dressed in a light grey suit which seemed overly casual compared to the evening wear of others already on board. Among those coming in close succession with the Swede was the Japanese Ambassador **Watanabe Tomitani**, who wore a stunning tuxedo with long tails and white tie. Topping off the Japanese man's dress was black top hat. In poor comparison, the necktie Rutger had chosen was striped in light-blue and salmon-pink, which now appeared almost comical in its bright coloration. Hägglund looked up upon the deck



and cocked his head to the side before repeating an old Swedish proverb, “When you take the devil in the boat, you have to row him to shore.” With that, he took a deep breath and headed up the gangway.



Not long afterwards, **Vitez Rychly and VV** pulled up in a bright red Algerian taxi, a Bugatti make, which skidded sideways to a stop on the jetty as if driven in a poor attempt to impress the Czech race pilot, who did not seem to notice. Together, the Czech and his fiancée walked arm in arm onto the boat. Rychly was smartly dressed in a tuxedo and, as many expected, VV was adorned in yet another stunning ball gown, which draped across her large frame lavishly, accented by a beautiful diamond necklace that dangled upon her neck. Both appeared in an unusually cheerful mood as they greeted the photographers on the dockside jetty before walking aboard the yacht, “Bella Fortuna”.

Aristide La Fontaine arrived with Maria, both dressed in formal attire befitting an extraordinary event and party. Maria wore a beautiful dress with a nice décolleté, while Aristide’s formalwear even included a hand-embroidered smoking jacket as part of his tuxedo’s overcoat. Unique among the guests, the Frenchman brought a gift to bestow upon the party’s host, **Sr. Carmena-Motta**, offering a large framed photograph of the start of the race taken earlier in the day by Maria. The Italian soon had an easel brought up and the photograph was put on display at the yacht’s fantail for all to admire.

Tavho Myrsky next arrived, well-dressed in Finnish formal style, smiling and greeting everyone cordially. However, like all Finns, he said little, choosing his words carefully and often simply nodding as others spoke with him. It was not long before a glass appeared in his hand, filled to the top with ice cold vodka – a drink which was soon also in the hands of the Swedish driver, **Rutger Hägglund**.

A number of the drivers did not attend, including the Swiss pilot, **Petrus de Salvion Bernardus**, and the Belgian, **Victor Hugo Stéphane de Broqueville**, as well as **Estebàn Blanco** of Spain and the Norwegian, **Megane Omalie**. Also, it was noted that **John Milk** of Britain was not present. He had been overheard earlier saying that it was very important that he work on his brakes and gearbox and retune his Amilcar. A few of the other drivers had also heard that the British driver state that he was surprised and



disturbed that his Amilcar C6 had seemingly failed him so completely at the final turn of the race, despite his best efforts and after having led upon nearly the entire circuit. Sadly, John Milk had sent his regrets in that he could spare not a moment for such celebrations. Finally, notably absent was Monaco's race winner, **Louis de Montignac**.

With hors d'œuvres and champagne, soon the party aboard the yacht was in full swing. Drivers and guests chatted amicably and much laughter attended the clink of glasses, as everyone stood around the fantail chatting whilst the dinner preparations neared completion.

Suddenly, above the joyous din, **Rutger Hägglund** was heard making an open wager with **Tavho Myrsky**, betting who could dive under this boat in from starboard to portside. Others nearby quickly declined, including Germany's **Godeschalk Hegkman**, who stepped back and shook his head.

The Finnish driver only nodded as if considering the offer, a man of few words. Yet **Hägglund** seemed to take the gesture as accepting the wager. Without hesitation, he dove skillfully off the third deck to the waters below. A full 30 seconds passed and the guests ran to the opposite side of the yacht, hoping to see the Swede come up to the surface. They were not disappointed, even if it was a point that many had forgotten that the daring Scandinavian had originally gained a taste for racing from competitive swimming matches.



Dripping wet and successful in his dare, the Swedish driver clambered back aboard the yacht to the wild cheering of the assembled guests. Saluted by **Sr. Carmena-Motta** with a raised glass, he was led down the ladder below decks for a change of clothes. He reappeared soon afterwards in a silk and linen smoking jacket and formal attire provided by the Italian industrialist, **Sr. Carmena-Motta** himself.

Continued in "Part II: A Lavish Meal on Board"