



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

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### Part II: A Lavish Meal on Board

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Even as the dinner was about to be served, to the surprise of all, the Monegasque driver, **Louis de Montignac**, suddenly arrived upon the jetty. He was so late that many had thought that he had decided to not attend, despite taking first place in the race and being the guest of honor.

Many of the others were overheard commenting that **de Montignac** was so late that it seemed to be a purposeful show of disrespect toward the two Italians. Yet the story was soon circulated among the guests that his behavior was a matter of honor, since he had shown considerable hesitation about attending. The selected host for the post-race party was to have been at Royal Family of Monaco, his prime sponsors for La Grande Épreuve. For Louis, the sudden change of venue seemed to have been forced by what he considered to be the act of the rude Italian driver's friend, **Sr. Carmena-Motta**.

For **de Montignac**, his first concern had been the Prince's perception of the event itself, even if the Prince had urged him to attend on Monaco's behalf as their representative. Indeed, their **Royal Highnesses of Monaco** had politely declined to attend and had already departed toward Nice, France, to prepare for next week's upcoming Grand Prix race. Their graceful yacht sailed past the Italian's yacht even as the party began, one grand and ostentatious, the other reserved and elegant befitting of a true Prince.

As the yacht's small orchestra shifted to soft dinner music, **Sr. Carmena-Motta** announced that upon the foredeck, dinner would be served. Just then, appearing alongside the great Italian industrialist, **Sebi Orsi** rose to the occasion and invited all to partake of the specialties of his home, grilled goat atop a bed of pasta which he had prepared himself with vegetables, some rosemary and Italian virgin olive oil. The wine, Orsi announced, would be a Sangiovese di Romagna.

Everyone eagerly made their way forward to the tables, which were laid out in white, tall candle tapers upon every surface lighting the foredeck like a thousand small stars hovering amongst the guests. A second, smaller quartet of musicians now began to play softly in the tones of Italy's more famed and modern composers, Giacomo Puccini, Alfredo Piatti, Donato Lovreglio, and others, including even the soft sounds of Salvatore Messina.



As the guests took their seats, **Sebi Orsi**, the Italian driver, walked amidst the tables on the yacht's deck and tapped a spoon against the edge of his empty wineglass, its clear ringing quieted the crowd.

**Orsi** began, "Welcome, my friends, to our celebratory goat roast! Before we can proceed, I have a few announcements...."

"First, I believe you will find the goat very satisfactory, for which I would like to thank the yacht's chef, Marco Oliveti, for his glorious work today on this fine meal. Any fault you find with the roast is mine alone and any compliments are his.

"Second, I wish to congratulate the victors of the race. I believe that at least two of the victors are fine gentlemen and since I may have stolen some of their rightful attention, I apologize. But this is a competitive sport, and there you are."

Turning to **Louis de Montignac**, who all knew was there to represent the **Prince and Princess of Monaco**, the Italian declared, "Finally, I must add that I have stolen this party from the good Prince and beautiful Princess of Monaco, something I had no right to do. I was impetuous and for that I apologize."

His speech completed, **Sebi Orsi** limped to his chair, then paused and called over to **Louis de Montignac**, "And please pass on to their Royal Highnesses that if there is anything I could ever do to make amends, I will do it without hesitation."



Despite the apparent graciousness of the offer, **de Montignac** seemed unimpressed.

Soon the meal was served. It was an extraordinary repast for all. The wine was a perfect accompaniment, as was commented upon by the French driver, **Aristide La Fontaine**. Soon La Fontaine stood and, in a booming voice, his southern French accent evident, offered his own toast to **Louis de Montignac**, the victor upon the circuit. Raising his glass, he called out, "To the Principality's fastest driver!" After everyone drank, La Fontaine made his rounds walking from driver to driver to shake hands around the table as conversations continued.

Yet when **La Fontaine** reached the German driver, **Godeschalk Hegkman**, there was a tense moment. All who had observed the race knew that it had been the German's collision with the Frenchman's Salmson car that had knocked Aristide out of the race. Prior to that point, he had made an amazing advance, coming up from the back of the pack to a second place position in an incredible display of driving skill. For a moment, a silence settled over the tables before Aristide took the German's hand and nodded briefly, commenting only that it had been a very bad, "*Queue de poisson*", a term which was seemingly lost upon the German who appeared overly formal and made no reply.

With that, the Swedish driver, **Rutger Hägglund**, stood and addressed the guests in another toast, "My friends! I'm glad to eat the Algerian-German goat in this handsome boat. And then it would be nice to make another race in Nice. Cheers my friends!!" And with that, he laughed and everyone joined in the good humor of the moment, taking notice of his reference to the German driver having been roasted somewhat by the Frenchman's quick wit.

Numerous toasts followed. The Czech, **Vitez Rychly**, raised his glass in what was one of the most sincere toasts of the night, intoning, "To Louis, champion of the desert!" As everyone downed their wine, suddenly also **VV** stood and gave a furtive glance toward **Sebi Orsi**, then shyly added, "And to zee danger that keeps zee blood pumping and makes us know zat ve are alive!" Sebi Orsi returned her glance, his eyes narrow and black, reflecting VV's gaze. He seemed to project an understanding of the real reasons for the difficulties his car had suffered in the final tire blowout at the finish line, which many had concluded were likely due to sabotage undertaken by VV herself.

Even the Finnish driver, a man of few words, offered a toast with his vodka rather than the wine that others had in their glasses. **Tavho Myrsky** said, "Ladies, Gentlemen and Racers!! I am going to say a word about the winners of the race, neither because I recognize nor admire their victory or their skills, for I am as good as them, but because I would attend of them to make the same for me when I finish the next race in the first place. So my friends... Bravo!!!!!!"





Finally, Germany's driver, **Godeschalk Hegkman**, brought himself up to his full imposing Prussian height. His long sword hanging at his side, he raised his glass and, a faraway look seemingly overcoming his visage, seemed to nearly chant the Latin words, "*Suum cuique.*"

As the German then drank silently, the others were confused by his meaning. They did not immediately join him until their host, **Sr. Carmena-Motta**, rose from his seat and quietly intoned, "My colleagues, here is Herr Hegkman – I present to you a man of honor." The Italian nodded and made a grand gesture toward the standing German, "Sir, please, we of these older Orders of Men and Honor must translate for our guests." And with that, the Italian industrialist raised his glass, as did the other guests.

As he stood before the assembled guests, **Sr. Carmena-Motta's** large size seemed to suddenly fall away. For an instant, he appeared years younger and a new twinkle entered his eye, as if brought upon by recognition of some ancient secret shared with the German. A recognition swept the room of two men somehow joined together in a way none understood, as if heralding from another time and world. The two men looked as if more at home in a saddle, hunting at dusk, the horns blowing as dogs barked and beaters pressed their quarry into the open fields, and almost like two old friends who would talk of stags and hares and of crusades long years past.

**Sr. Carmena-Motta** whispered his translation, "*To each what he deserves.*" And all of the guests drank almost as if in reverence of an older, finer time.



The only driver not to make his own toast was **Louis de Montignac** himself, who, despite the Italian's apology, appeared somewhat reticent throughout the party. Even at the table, he was aloof and distant, answering questions with short two syllable answers. Many interpreted this as his way of pointing out that the Principality of Monaco was not happy with the way the post-race party had been seized upon by the Italians as if some sort of prize, despite that it was Monaco itself that had taken home the first place trophy.

As dinner wrapped up, **de Montignac** was overheard mentioning that he felt that the Italians lacked proper etiquette, an art, he said, which "seems to be an unknown word for the Italian". Then, in a slightly louder voice, de Montignac also proclaimed that **Sebi Orsi's** driving was extraordinarily poor. Daringly, he even went so far as to say that the Italian hadn't overtaken any of the other cars to come from behind, but that rather he had only experienced good enough luck to place in that so many of the cars before him, had crashed, one by one, allowing him to gain several positions. He glanced at Orsi and, as if in a mock toast, intoned quietly, "He should not be that arrogant." And with that, de Montignac drank his glass, took his top hat, and prepared to leave.

*Continued in "Part III: After Dinner, Dancing & Discussion"*