



Hans Stuber from Bern could afford their expensive hobby because of their patron, Willy Escher. Escher must have also been a good salesman! The board members of the Zurich Grasshopper Club, also drove splendid Bugattis, such as the manager of Nestlé Louis Dappels, in a type 57 convertible – body built by Graber in Wichtrach in the canton Bern. For a time, the 57448 belonged to Hans Matti, the famous Bugatti expert from L'Isle above Lac Lemman.

### LOUIS BRAILLARD (1906 – 1996)

During the early 1930s, Louis Brailard, the brother of Nelly Brailard, drove exclusively as a private driver a Bugatti 35C (chassis number 4936) and a model 51 (chassis number 51137) outfitted with a double camshaft. In 1932, 26 years old, he started for Bucar AG Zurich in the Klausen race and finished 4th place in the sports car class 33.4 seconds behind the phenomenal Tazio Nuvolari. He set a new record for sports cars in the Rheineck-Walzenhausen hill climb, and at the Monte Carlo Rally in 1933 he finished 7th overall along with his co-driver and balloonist Brunner and his mechanic Knebel from the Ecurie Brailard. Snow and ice challenged the drivers on the 4000 kms long route starting in Tallinn, Estonia. The best result of his short career was in 1933. On August 27, he won the Grand Prix d'Albi finishing 6 seconds ahead of the American, Whitney Straight, and 25 seconds ahead of Benoit Falchetto, his future teammate at the Ecurie Brailard. He won yet another victory at the 5.8km long hill climb on Mont Faron near Toulon. The fifth place finish on Mont Ventoux behind Whitney Straight, Marcel Lehoux, Benoit Falchetto and “Fifi” Etancelin may also be considered a success. Other front places recorded for Louis Brailard are at the kilometer race Grand Saconnex, at the hill climbs Montreux-Caux and Monte Ceneri in Ticino.

In 1934 Louis Brailard won a permanent place in his sister's Ecurie. First, he finished second driving the Bugatti 51 in the race car category of the Chanteloup hill climb northwest of Paris. He achieved his first success in the new Maserati 8CM, chassis number 3009, at the oldest and most traditional 6.3 km long La Turbie hill climb in the Provence, finishing third in his class behind Juan Zanelli driving a Spanish 8-cylinder Nacional Pescara and Count Carlo Felice Trossi driving an Alfa Romeo. At the 1934 Grand Prix de Picardie in Peronne, he contributed to the success of the team by finishing fourth in the Bugatti 51 of the Ecurie Brailard. The aftermath of the injuries stemming from the crash in the Saint Lô hill climb along with a skiing accident in early 1935 forced him to withdraw from racing following the Grand Saconnex race March 17, 1935.

He devoted himself to his body shop in La Tour-de-Peilz and Cossonay-Gare. Louis was replaced in the Ecurie by the Frenchman Robert Brunet.

### BENOIT FALCHETTO (1885 – 1967)

Benoit Falchetto was a fighter pilot in the Italian army in World War I. After the armistice, he lived in southern France, and occasionally drove Bugatti and Amilcar racing cars in regional races. Even on a Cyclecar, called “Tony Special”, he attracted notice. In 1932 he won the Grand Prix de Nîmes driving a Bugatti 35B ahead of René Dreyfus driving a Maserati 26M and on September 11 the Grand Prix Antibes ahead of Raymond Sommer (Alfa Monza).

He did not become world famous because of his racing successes, even though he won in 1934 – now driving for the Ecurie Brailard – the minor Grand Prix de Picardie in

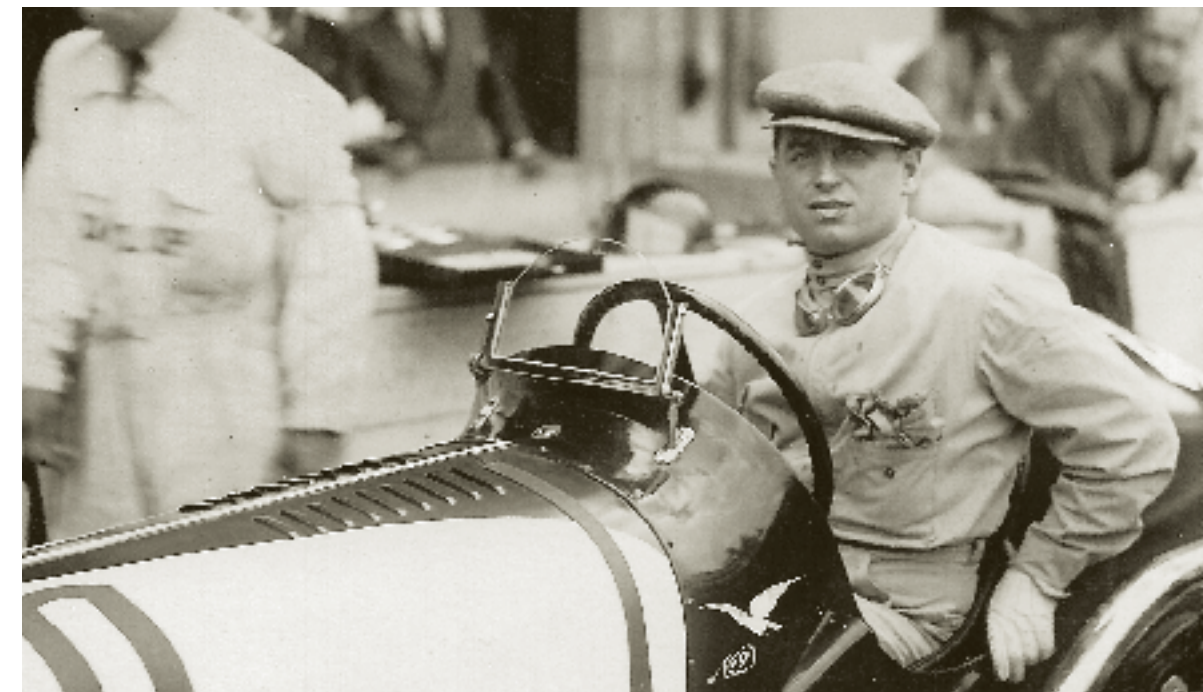
Peronne (May 27, 1934) or even though he finished first in the Formula Libre race at Montlhéry (September 9, 1934) over a 90 km race driving the same car (3015).

But Falchetto did stand out even in hill climb racing. This was the case at the Mont Ventoux race in 1933 and 1934. In 1933, driving the Bugatti 51, he only had to yield to Whitney Straight and Marcel Lehoux, and in 1934 – this time with the Ecurie Brailard's Maserati 3015 – Hans Stuck and Whitney Straight were faster than Falchetto. The losing time lapse of 36 seconds on the roughly 22 kilometer course behind Bergkönig (Hill climb Ace) Stuck driving the 16-cylinder Auto Union and 16 seconds behind hill climb specialist Whitney Straight – also driving a Maserati 8CM – can be regarded as highly respectable.

Falchetto's “immortality”, as bizarre as it sounds, is a result of the death of Isadora Duncan. On that fateful September 14, 1927, he sat at the wheel of a two-seater sports car and when the car moved, the long silk scarf of the famous dancer and choreographer caught in the spokes of a rear wheel and instantly broke the neck of the 50 year-old American. He rarely drove in races after the liquidation of the Ecurie Brailard and when the 62-year old had to drop out of the Belgian Grand Prix on the third lap because of a gearbox failure in his homemade “La Falchetto”, it meant the end of his racing career. He later started a business manufacturing batteries – and met with moderate success.

### ROBERT BRUNET (1903 – 1986)

The Frenchman Robert Brunet was among the most colorful figures in racing during the 1930s: Extravagant, always in the company of beautiful women, married to a rich, young



countess. After sporadic and mostly unsuccessful races in the early 1930s, he bought the Bugatti 51 (chassis 51 132) for the 1933 season from Jean-Pierre Wimille and started regularly at various events to moderate success. In 1933, he drops out five times. The 1934 season was more successful. He started 10 races to finish 7 of them. His best result with his private Bugatti 51 was 3rd place at the Grand Prix de Picardie, behind Falchetto and Sommer, but ahead of Brailard.

He ran his first race for the Ecurie Brailard at the Grand Prix de l'UMF in Montlhéry. (September 9, 1934: Alfa Romeo 8C Monza, chassis number 2211138). In San Sebastian, at the Grand Prix of Spain, Brunet drove the Maserati 8CM (3015) for the first time. Brunet retired due to an accident in the 25th lap. During his time with the Ecurie Brailard, he never placed high enough to make it to the winner's

*Benoit Falchetto is the most successful driver in the Ecurie Brailard. He wins the Grand Prix de Picardie driving the Maserati 3015 and the Grand Prix de l'UMF on the high speed track of Linas Montlhéry and attains several front positions either in circuit racing and hill climbing. Falchetto is considered an enigmatic figure in the Grand Prix circus. After the war Falchetto races a car he designed himself. Without results! His tragic relationship with the dancer Isadora Duncan makes headlines.*