Beat: Entertainment

Photo Report: Carrera Autopodistica 2025 Castel San Pietro Terme Italy

Tradition, Passion, and Speed

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USPA NEWS - A Unique Event in the Heart of Emilia-Romagna
Every year, on the second Sunday of September, the streets of Castel San Pietro Terme come alive for one of the most anticipated and original events in Emilia-Romagna: the Carrera Autopodistica, a one-of-a-kind race where teams of young people compete by pushing engine-less vehicles at astonishing speeds. The streets transform into a vibrant urban circuit pulsing with adrenaline, as the entire town awakens with a collective thrill that fills the air from the earliest hours of dawn.

For over seventy years, this event has embodied the sporting, artisanal, and communal spirit of this Bolognese town, becoming a cultural and identity symbol for generations of locals. It's a day when time seems to stand still, marked only by the silent roar of wheels and the quickened beat of hearts.
We at Foto ReD Photographic Agency documented every moment with a keen and passionate eye, capturing the energy, effort, joy, and tension that make this race a unique experience in the Italian sports scene. Each shot is a fragment of emotion: the focused gaze of a driver, the powerful push of a runner, the liberating embrace at the finish line.

What is the Carrera Autopodistica?
The Carrera is a race of handcrafted four-wheeled, engine-less vehicles, powered solely by the physical strength of athlete teams along two urban circuits: Viale delle Terme and the historic town center. Each team alternates its "pushers" in a breathtaking relay, aiming to launch their vehicle as fast as possible.
Drivers, seated inside the vehicles, tackle curves and straights with pinpoint precision, while spectators cheer enthusiastically from every corner of the course, encouraging their favorites with chants, applause, and cowbells. The air vibrates with tension and anticipation—every meter is a challenge, every turn a chance to overtake.

Origins: From 1954 to Today
The first edition of the Carrera took place in 1954 during the Sagra della Braciola, a local festival celebrating traditional cuisine. What began as a friendly game among locals has evolved into a true sporting event, complete with official regulations, structured teams, and increasingly sophisticated prototypes.
Since 2019, Castel San Pietro Terme has proudly held the title of "City of the Carrera," a testament to the cultural and identity significance of the event. It's a story passed down from father to son, from team to team—full of fierce rivalries and deep friendships, of training under the sun and dreams that race faster than the wind.

Technology and Craftsmanship: The Soul of the "Macchinine"
These "carrere" are far from simple carts—they are the result of years of study and experimentation in aerodynamics, composite materials, weight balance, and structural resistance. Each team works year-round to improve their vehicle, testing innovative solutions and training athletes with tailored programs.
The Carrera is also a laboratory of ingenuity, craftsmanship, and collaboration, where passion merges with technique. Every bolt tells a story, every weld is made with care, every curve of the body is designed to challenge the wind.

Structure and Materials
• Chassis: lightweight and strong, made of aluminum, steel, or carbon fiber
• Body: molded in fiberglass or carbon, customized with team colors and symbols
• Wheels: four, with high-precision ball bearings
• Steering: mechanical, controlled by the driver via levers or handlebars
• Brakes: disc or pad brakes, used sparingly to avoid losing speed

Configuration and Team
• Driver: in a low, reclined position, steering with full concentration
• Pushers: 3 to 5 athletes, alternating with technique and strength along the course
Design and Testing
• Aerodynamic studies using CAD software
• Weight balancing for stability and responsiveness
• Weekly road tests for setup and performance
Innovation and Regulations
• Strict rules on dimensions, weight, and safety
• Ongoing research into materials and technical solutions
• Rigorous inspections by the Technical Commission
These vehicles, despite lacking engines, can reach speeds over 50 km/h, powered solely by human strength—a perfect blend of sport, ingenuity, and determination.

Preparation: A Year of Work and Training
Behind each vehicle lies a year of work, passion, and dedication. Teams design and build their race cars, attending to every detail. Testing and training begin in spring and intensify over the summer, with trials on the Viale Terme straight and in the historic center.
Each team lives the Carrera as a mission: they sweat, argue, improve. Hands get greasy, muscles harden, but hearts stay light, fueled by the dream of crossing the finish line first.

The 2025 Races: Adrenaline and Spectacle
The 2025 edition featured a rich and varied program:
• Carrera dei Piccoli: 95 young racers under 15—pure enthusiasm and a promising future
• Coppa Terme – Giuseppe Raggi Trophy: speed and strategy on the tree-lined avenue
• Carrera Autopodistica – Maurizio Ragazzi Trophy: the main race in the historic center, preceded by the increasingly competitive and thrilling Women's Carrera
• Superpole: nighttime time trials, where the silence of night amplifies every breath and every sprint

A Celebration for the Whole Town
Carrera is not just a sport—it's a celebration that involves the entire community. Families, fans, artisans, shopkeepers, and volunteers come together to celebrate an event that blends tradition, competition, and spectacle.
The streets fill with colors, chants, flags, and smiles. Balconies become grandstands, bars turn into meeting points, and children climb curbs for a better view. It's a day when Castel San Pietro Terme shows its most authentic face to the world: one of shared passion.

The Morning of the Festival: Parade and Presentation
The day begins with a festive atmosphere: colorful and creative floats parade through the town center, celebrating local culture and the ingenuity of its citizens. Then, all participating teams are officially presented, led by the town's marching band, which accompanies the procession with lively and engaging rhythms.
It's the moment when glances meet, hands are shaken, and chills run down spines. Emotion is palpable, hearts beat fast, and every team knows they're about to experience something unforgettable.

A Deep Bond with Local History
The Carrera takes place in the shadow of the Cassero, a medieval stronghold built in 1199. This monument represents the historical roots of the town and provides the perfect backdrop for a race that, though modern and technological, is deeply rooted in the past.
The fusion of history and innovation is one of the elements that makes the Carrera a truly unique event. It's as if time itself bends.

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