

## **"Idrocorsa Macchi – Macchi Seaplane Racers" – Book review**

### **Anders Bruun**



**Giorgio Apostolo and Gianni Cattaneo "Idrocorsa Macchi – Macchi Seaplane Racers"** (Ali d'Italia Speciale 26, La Bancaella Aeronautica, 2007). Softback, 98 pages, 30 x 21 cm (11.5 x 8 inches), 120 photos, 34 pages of scale drawings and side-views. List price EUR 25.00, available from La Bancaella Aeronautica, Via Fattori 116, 10141 Torino, Italy (www.bancaero.it, torino@bancaero.it, phone: +39 11 7793586).

This book covers the Macchi seaplane racers from 1925 to 1934. It starts with the last flying boat racer, the M.33, which was outclassed by the US Curtiss floatplanes in the 1925 Schneider Trophy. It continues with the beautiful M.39 monoplane, which took a decisive revenge in 1926, and the 1927 M.52 and its refined

version, the 1928 M.52R. The 18-cylinder M.67 from 1929 then leads on to the fantastic 24-cylinder MC.72, which unfortunately never got the chance to measure itself against the Supermarine S.6B in the Schneider Trophy, but which, when its engine problems were solved, set a piston-powered seaplane speed record which still stands today, 73 years later.

It is richly illustrated with well-reproduced photos, including several that I had not seen before. The authors have not fallen for the temptation of including a lot of photos of the examples preserved in museums. All airplane versions are illustrated by drawings, including six-views by Robert S. Hirsch, beautiful factory cutaways, and colour side views and comparative cutaways. As usual, I would never trust a drawing by Hirsch without checking carefully against photos and other references, but these look better than average. The book is completely bilingual, with Italian text in the left columns and English text in the right columns. Since the text is set in different fonts this works pretty well, but in a couple of cases bits of the English text is presented in the wrong order. The photo captions are also in both Italian and English.

#### **Conclusion**

It is a pity that the book doesn't start from the beginning with the much less documented earlier Macchi flying boat racers, such as the M.7, M.7bis and M.18. However, even though it doesn't give all that much unique information it still gives a competent, accurate and well organised account of some of the most beautiful racing planes ever built. I think it is the first chance to read the story in English from an Italian perspective, rather than the more common English and American perspectives. Since I'm an engineer I would have enjoyed some more technical analysis, for example of the engines, but this book is primarily a modelling reference and it is still well worth having. I don't think a similar number of historical photos of the Macchis have been collected anywhere before, and the photos and drawings will be invaluable for modelling.

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