



KONICA MINOLTA



MAX ANGELELLI

Driver Bio

Whether it was on the ground or in the sky, Max “The Ax” Angelelli always wanted to go fast.

Born in Bologna, Italy, Angelelli continues to be plenty fast as he prepares to race for the final time in his illustrious career in an all-new racecar he helped develop from the ground up – the No. 10 Konica Minolta Cadillac DPi-V.R – at the 2017 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season-opening Rolex 24 At Daytona.

One of the winningest drivers in history with 26 career North American sportscar wins and championships in 2005 and 2013, Angelelli spent the last three seasons as part-time third driver with brothers Ricky and Jordan Taylor at the four iconic sports car races that make up the Tequila Patron North American Endurance Cup at Daytona, Sebring, Watkins Glen and Road Atlanta.

He’s also spent the last two years behind the scenes, helping orchestrate the development of the all-new Cadillac DPi-V.R with manufacturer Cadillac, chassis maker Dallara and engine builder Earnhardt Childress Racing. The result is a stunning new prototype that began the 2017 with high expectations.

“It was very challenging and I think we ended up with a very nice-looking car, in my opinion,” said Angelelli, who continues in his role as program manager in the Cadillac DPi-V.R effort after concluding his driving career at Daytona. “All these different parties sharing the same table – Americans, Italians and other Europeans involved – was kind of interesting and that was a long project that we started in 2015 as an idea. Ultimately, everybody worked very well together, all the little issues were addressed right away, and look at what we have now. It’s not only gorgeous, but it’s fast.”

In his last full-time season as a driver in 2013, Angelelli partnered with young Jordan Taylor to capture his second career GRAND-AM Rolex Sports Car Series driver championship.

Angelelli and Taylor clinched the title in the Rolex Series’ final season in dominating fashion, collecting five race wins, including the final three events in a row at Kansas Speedway in Kansas City, Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca in Monterey, California, and Lime Rock Park in Lakeville, Connecticut. In 2005, Angelelli co-drove with his longtime friend and business partner Wayne Taylor to the Rolex Series driver and team championships in even more dominating fashion.

His five wins in 2013 brought his career total to 26, good for third-most in series history behind Scott Pruett’s 41 and Memo Rojas’ 27. The win at Lime Rock Park was his fourth in a row at the New England racetrack, having won there alongside Ricky Taylor in 2010, 2011 and 2012. That’s a series record.

With his second career Rolex Series driver championship in hand, Angelelli decided to celebrate a bit by finally living out a lifelong dream of taking flight in a fighter jet. He travelled to Russia last October and enjoyed a thrilling ride in a MIG-29, during which he even was allowed to take control of the aircraft in flight. At one point, he instructed his pilot to exert maximum G-forces, and he endured a grueling 8.3 Gs and felt no worse for wear afterward.

Long before his days as a sports car star, Angelelli’s dreams of becoming a jet fighter pilot and a racecar driver spawned when his father Vincenzo, an avid hillclimb racer, brought Max to see his first race at the famed Imola race circuit in Italy.

“Just looking at those cars reminded me of airplanes,” Angelelli said of his first experience watching a race. “I thought: ‘First, I’m going to try to be a jet fighter pilot. If I cannot make it, then the next-best thing is to be a racecar driver.’”

As a young boy, Angelelli attended hillclimb races with his father and a group of friends who would race on the weekends.

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“It was sort of a competition among all the drivers’ sons,” Angelelli said of those weekend races. “There were other kids who were the same age as me that would argue about which one of our fathers was better. My father was always second or third and never won the races, which made me mad. I always said, ‘I can’t wait to be 18, and I can get my driver’s license.’ I was not only determined to beat the fathers but beat their sons, too.”

Determined to do something his dad never accomplished, Angelelli obtained his driver’s license when he turned 18 and immediately filed an entry for the 1985 Vado-Monzuno hillclimb.

Angelelli won the competition by several seconds, beating his father’s biggest rival.

While Angelelli kept entering hillclimb races, he continued to pursue his passion to be a fighter pilot, although he quickly learned how difficult that would be.

“I was not very good at school, so I said to myself, ‘OK, I need to focus on motorsports,’” Angelelli said. “You don’t need to study motorsports; you just have to drive a car. To be a jet fighter pilot, you have to study for a lot of years, and it’s not easy. So when you are 18, you start recognizing how difficult that is.”

With the dream of becoming a pilot behind him, Angelelli focused on his racing career, convincing his father, buoyed by his 1985 hillclimb win, to help him financially to race single-seat cars in his native Italy.

His debut came in the Formula Fiat Abarth race at the same Imola circuit that he attended as a boy, where he finished an impressive fourth.

Over the next several years, Angelelli raced his way up the European ladder, with dreams of making it to Formula 1.

After spending two years in the Italian Formula Boxer Championship, he moved up to the Italian F3 Championship for four years. The pinnacle was the 1992 season, when he won four races for the RC Motorsport team en route to his first championship.

Angelelli continued to learn and grow as a racecar driver by competing against the best drivers at the time.

Despite racing against arguably the toughest competition in the world on his way up the European racing ladder, Angelelli never got his shot at Formula One.

He began to look at sports cars in 1999. But before he made the switch, Angelelli spent three years in the German F3 Championship and followed that with rides in the FIA GT Championship and the Japanese GT Championship.

“I said that I have to change because I can’t go any further in single-seat racing in Europe,” Angelelli said. “I was in F3 at the time, and it was evident that I wasn’t able to go to Formula One. I figured I would have a longer life in sports cars because, at the time, I was one of the youngest in my generation.”

While disappointed that his dream of competing in Formula One was coming to an end, little did he know he was about to meet someone who would change his life forever, personally and professionally.

During testing for the 1999 Rolex 24 At Daytona, Angelelli met Wayne Taylor.

Since that meeting, Taylor became a trusted teammate, friend and car owner. Both have shared some of their biggest successes in racing together.

“I was very, very, lucky that I met Wayne Taylor,” Angelelli said. “If I hadn’t met Wayne Taylor and didn’t race on his team, by now I would have been back in Japan or out of racing completely.”

“By the second race, which was after Daytona where we finished second in a Ferrari, we went to the 12 Hours of Sebring, and that was where Wayne and I knew we were speaking the same language. Since then, we became closer and closer. We’ve been so close since then that even my wife feels like she’s the third wheel. Earlier, Wayne and I used to have to talk to each other. Now we just look at each other and understand exactly what the other is thinking.”

Together, Taylor, Angelelli and Allan McNish finished second in the 1999 Rolex 24 At Daytona. In 2000, Taylor and Angelelli helped develop the Cadillac sports car program, where they developed a special bond.

After their foray into the American Le Mans Series with Cadillac, Angelelli decided to join Taylor for a full assault in the 2004 GRAND-AM Rolex Series. It was a successful venture as they captured their first victory in Phoenix and followed it with wins at Daytona and Virginia International Raceway in Alton.

But nobody, except for Angelelli and Taylor, knew what was coming during the 2005 Rolex Series season.

En route to winning the team, manufacturer and driver championships in the Rolex Series by starting the season with a win at the prestigious Rolex 24, the team won five races and captured three poles in 2005. That SunTrust Bank-sponsored group also became the only team in series history to complete every lap of the season, which turned out to be 2,056 total laps.

“It was obviously special for everything that happened,” Angelelli said of the dominant 2005 season. “It was also revenge for all those people who didn’t believe in Wayne and me in the motorsports business. I was also very happy to finally give back to Wayne. During a certain period of time, he was the only person who believed in my skill as a driver. I was very happy finally in 2005 to bring this gift back to him and tell him, ‘Thanks that you believed in me all the way.’ Wayne went through a lot of difficulties to keep me inside his family. It was just great, great revenge.”

The special 2005 season was bookended by a runner-up result in the 2004 championship standings and a third-place finish in the 2006 title chase. In those first three years, Angelelli and Taylor scored nine wins, five poles, 22 podiums, 31 top-fives and 36 top-10s. Wayne Taylor Racing was formed in 2007, and Angelelli maintained his championship form. He scored five wins and 19 podium finishes with various co-drivers during the 2007, 2008 and 2009 seasons. Angelelli was joined in 2010 by Taylor’s eldest son, Ricky, as full-time co-driver. The two collaborated on seven wins and 19 podium finishes over the next three seasons before Taylor moved to the No. 90 Spirit of Daytona team for the 2013 season. In 2013, the then-21-year-old Jordan Taylor, the team owner’s younger son, joined Angelelli as full-time co-driver.

For 2014 and 2015, Angelelli stepped out of the cockpit full-time and join the Taylor brothers at Daytona, Sebring, Watkins Glen and Road Atlanta while continuing his role as team partner with Wayne Taylor. The 2014 season marked the beginning of what is now known as the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship era, a combined entity representing the merger of the Rolex Series and the American Le Mans Series.

Angelelli resides in Monte Carlo with his wife, Manuela, and his sons, Samuele and Emanuele, and also has a U.S. residence near the Taylor home in Apopka, Florida.