

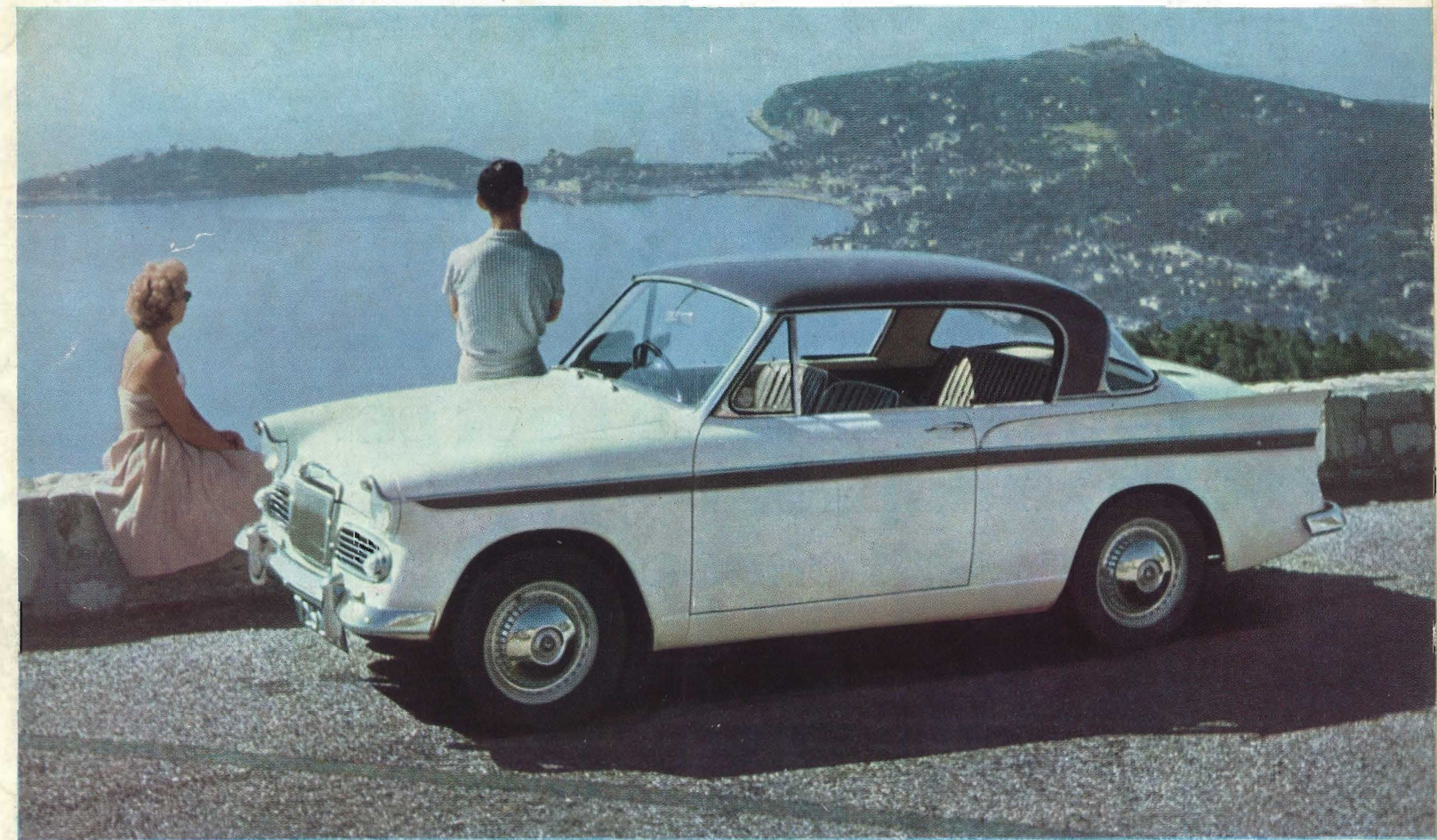
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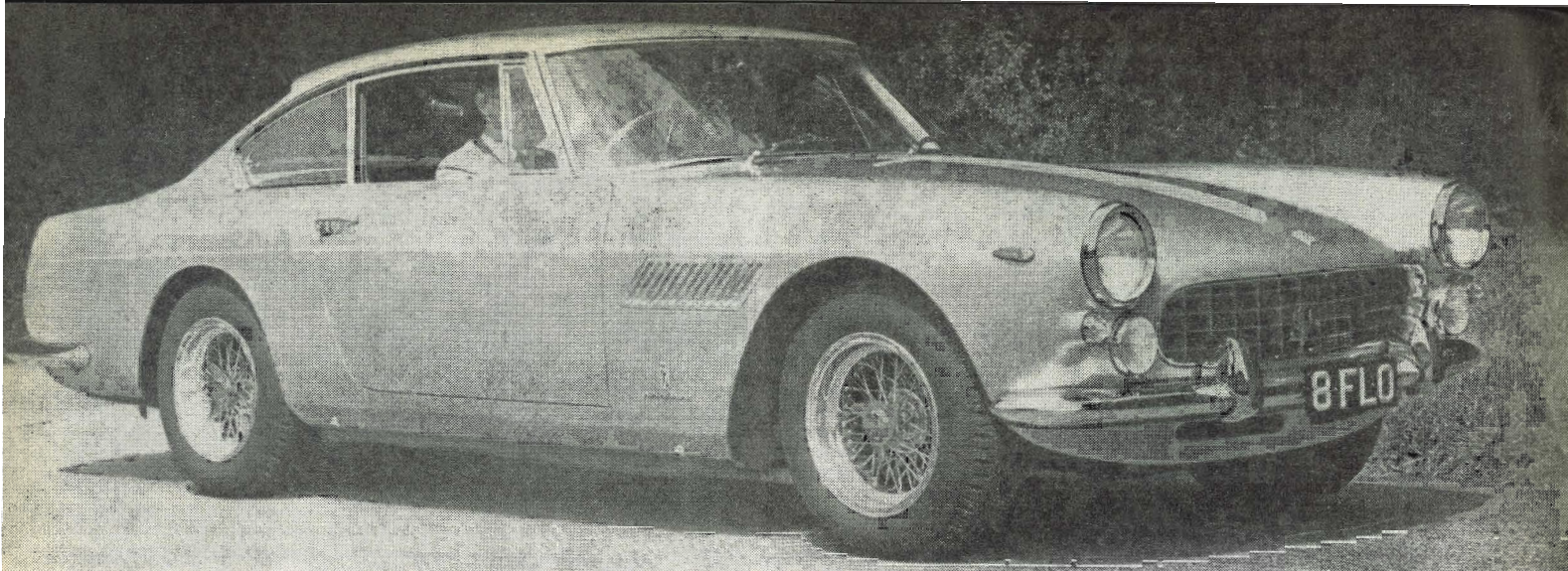
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The elegant lines of the Ferrari 2 + 2 are the work of the incomparable Pininfarina.

30 MINUTES OF BLISS

Behind the wheel of a Ferrari 2+2



The Prancing Horse—an emblem which any enthusiast would welcome on his car (and which frequently adorns a car which does not qualify for it!).

By
JOHN BLUNSDEN

EVERY so often I have a dream. In it, someone approaches me, dangling a set of ignition keys, and says, 'Here you are, these are from my new Ferrari. Now off you go, and enjoy yourself'. The trouble is the shock is always too much, and I wake up even before I've climbed aboard!

But the other day this is exactly what happened, only this time it was no dream. Mr. John Danny, who is chairman of Grovewood Securities, the parent company owning Brands Hatch, Snetterton, Mallory Park and Oulton Park circuits, came down to Brands in his new Ferrari 2+2 . . . and handed over the keys.

Now this is not a story of how it accelerates from 0 to 100 mph in so many seconds, or how you can get all four wheels sliding through an 80 mph curve in third. There were only just over 600 miles on the clock (which meant a strict rev limit of 4,000 rpm) and, well, I ask you, if you had a spanking new 2+2, would you want someone to start wringing its neck?

So the following is just a collection of impressions, based on 30 minutes of what can only be described as sheer bliss.

It goes without saying that the clean, well-balanced body lines by Pininfarina cloak an interior which is luxurious without being in any way ostentatious, and a control and instrument layout worthy of a product of Maranello.

Through the superbly finished three-spoke, slightly dished steering wheel, you look at large matching speedometer and rev counter, separated by an oil pressure gauge. To the left are five more circular dials—fuel gauge, oil and water temperature gauges, ammeter and clock. Most of the hand controls are in a central console, the gear lever—needless to say—being perfectly placed, and the only real criticism is that the handbrake, just to the right of the console, calls for quite a stretch forward. All the instruments are on a plain metal base, but are shielded from the screen by a substantial hood.

There is a sense of urgency about the idling note of the V12 3 litre engine. If it was a mundane power unit, you would probably remark, 'A bit on the noisy side, isn't it?' But this, of course, is the stamp of an engine bred for performance, and once under way those 12 cylinders work with a silkiness which is as rare today as it is delightful to listen to and 'feel'.

Slight low-speed fluffiness is cleaned right out by 2,000 rpm, and unlike some of the GTOs this is an exceedingly tractable road

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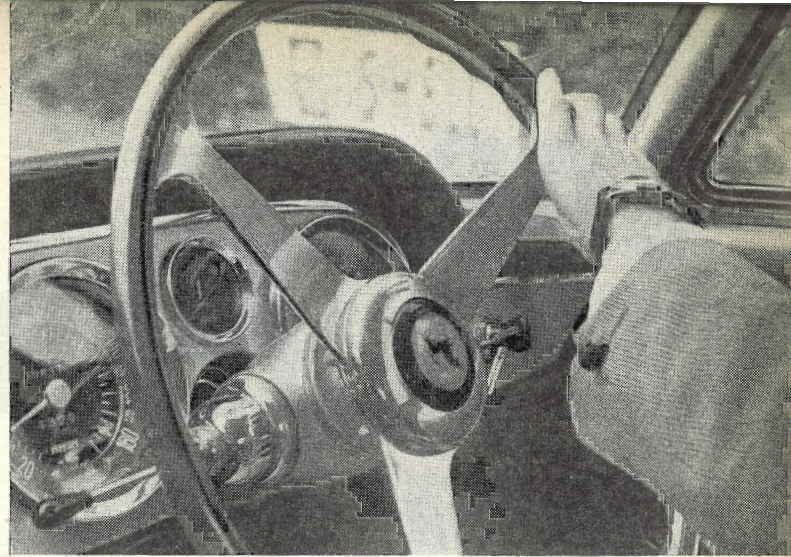
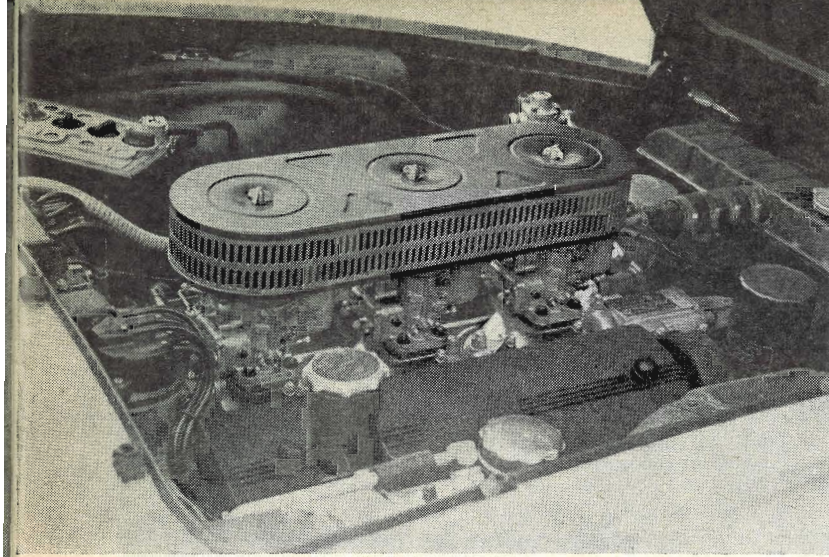
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Left: A 'real' power unit! The 3 litre V12 Ferrari engine, the 'impatient' tick-over of which is an invitation for the driver to get to work with that right foot! **Right:** Maybe the BSM would say this is not the right way to steer round a right-hand bend, but at least it demonstrates the comparatively low-geared steering of the Ferrari.

car, with a discreet, if 'interesting' exhaust note.

It has a four-speed gearbox plus overdrive on top, and it is very much a five-speed car, overdrive being used almost continuously as a cruising gear, with direct top being the ratio to give the lively acceleration for swift and safe overtaking. The gear movements are moderate in travel, the lever has a very robust feel, but the action is light and positive for all forward speeds; a very strong spring protects reverse.

The pedals are all light-acting, the clutch having quite a long travel with smooth take-up. At the limited speeds possible, the brakes had to be 'smoothed' rather than prodded.

The steering was a revelation. Although rather lower geared than I had expected, it felt completely positive and was literally

finger light. After running the car on the road I did two or three slowish laps of the Brands Hatch club circuit, and just to prove a point I put the right front wheel on the white line bordering the track going into Clearways, and just holding the steering wheel with one finger against a spoke, I was able to guide the car so accurately that the road wheel followed the irregular course of the white line right round this long bend.

With normal road tyre pressures the Ferrari had a reasonable amount of understeer, but otherwise it cornered as though on rails. The slightest flick of the steering wheel will produce a reaction by the front wheels, and I would imagine that it must be one of the most responsive luxury Grand Touring cars in the world.

It costs a lot of money to own a Ferrari in this country—the 2+2 retails at £5,607—but how can one put a price on the sheer enjoyment and satisfaction to be derived from ownership of a car like this?

This particular Ferrari—finished in an elegant shade of grey—is Mr Danny's second car (he also runs an example of 'The Best Car in the World'). But I haven't the slightest doubt that, when business is forgotten and motoring becomes an activity to be enjoyed, instead of a means to an end, the Ferrari will assume its rightful role of head of the stable.

Those 30 minutes were more than sufficient to convince me that not without good reason are the products of Maranello the most highly prized and coveted cars in the world!

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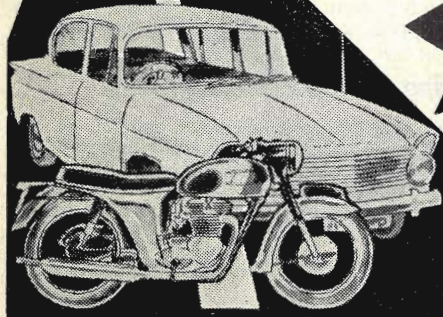
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