

# Motor

## ONE MAN'S FERRARIS

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1.8TC coupe  
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Racing with  
Mexico  
Motor





# 'ALL MY HORSES ARE PRANCING ONES'

Some people collect stamps, others Old Masters . . . David Clarke collects Ferraris, six of them. Clockwise in the bottom photograph: 1963 250 GTO 2+2, 1965/6 365 P2/3 Sports Prototype (kitted out for road use), 1967 330 P4 Sports Prototype, 1962 250 GTO, 1963 250 GT Lusso, 1951 212 Export. David puts a value of around £60,000 on his immaculate collection, and to keep them in concours condition he employs 21-year-old Robert Houghton (in Ferrari-works overalls) full-time on cleaning and maintaining the cars. And in a corner of the Clarke family's factory there's a storeroom crammed with £15,000-worth of Ferrari spare parts. Clive Ranger and photographer Paul Skilleter visited him and his cars.





TOR week ending September 4, 1971





## 'ALL MY HORSES ARE PRANCING ONES'

You are motoring rapidly through the Leicestershire lanes. A glance in the mirror reveals a red blob that grows quickly, takes shape as the shovel front of a sports car. You check your speed, glance again at the mirror. Bursts of light from the red car's headlights and you pull over. Shining red metal blurs the green and brown of the hedgerow. You're hit by the sight and sound of Le Mans. All that's left a few seconds later is the memory, and smell, of a racing Ferrari.

It is hot in the cramped cockpit of the P2/3 Ferrari. On my right David Clarke is relaxed shuffling the steering wheel from hand to hand, feeding power gently with his right foot, working his way through the five speed gate.

My head is poking out above the windscreen, spectacles pushing hard against my face. My long legs don't fit so my knees are jammed against the side of the cockpit. Behind the body panel oil and water are on their way to and from the engine. My knees feel like newly sunburned skin that is being rubbed by coarse-woven tweed.

The Ferrari's suspension is hard and everything is happening very quickly and suddenly. My breath comes back in a rush when we wrong slot and finish up slightly sideways-on to a corner in a flurry of dust.

We're off again down a straight bit; Mulsanne must seem short and narrow to Le Mans drivers. David hangs back to let the traffic sort itself out, lifts off momentarily as we pass a roadside cafe frequented by the local police. Then the power comes in with a vengeance and the dancing needle in front of me registers a fantastic turn of speed.

"We'll go down here, it's a lovely stretch of road." David must be used to making himself understood with all that noise so close.

We turn off, the road is a series of gentle undulations and wide sweeping curves. We take two or three curves at high speed without a trace of body roll or lurch.

David is at all times relaxed, his driving precise and unflurried. Half a mile down the road we pick up three coaches and a gaggle of family saloons. "This is no good, we might as well go back." We turn round and re-groove the road "This is the bit I like best" and the car tops an undulation and swoops down the other side.

Back at the Clarke family's box factory in Mountsorrel we enjoy long cool drinks in the sunshine. "This P2/3 for instance—at the time I was trying to buy Ron Fry's 250 LM, but he was asking rather a lot for it. It must have been mid-1966 now I come to think about it. Anyway, Colonel Ronnie Hoare of Maranello Concessionaires contacted me with the news that there was a P2/3 at Modena that Ferrari wanted to dispose of. Would I be interested? I flew out there with the Colonel, drove the car round the Moderna Autodrome, liked it and bought it."

There is very little David Clarke doesn't know about Ferraris, and virtually nothing he doesn't know about his own collection. "There were only five of these built, you know." He motioned towards the P2/3, its front spattered with flies.

"In 1965 it was driven in the Nurburgring 1000K by Graham Hill and Jackie Stewart. They were lying 2nd when they retired with an electrical fault. At Reims for the 12 Hours Michael Parkes and John Surtees finished 2nd and set the fastest lap. Le Mans the same year, this time with David Piper and Jo Bonnier, the car was lying 2nd when it retired with a burnt out exhaust manifold.

"The last two appearances in 1965 were at the Austrian GP, Mike Parkes finished 2nd, and at the Brands Hatch Guards Trophy meeting, Parkes again, where it finished 5th overall.

"Its last appearance was in 1966 at Le Mans. Dickie Attwood and David Piper shared the car but it retired very early on with a water pump seal gone."

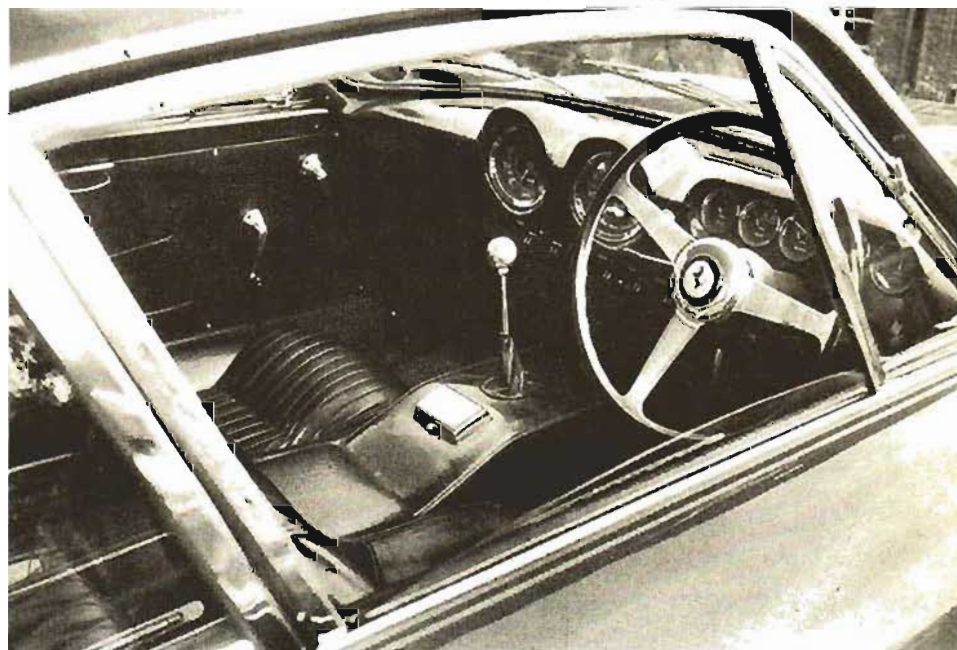
David's other racing Ferrari hasn't been converted for road use. "You see, I'd have to modify the exhaust system if I wanted to use the car on the road, and it seems shame to ruin it—to silence that sound. I'd have to weld a new tailpipe section . . . here. And of course, that would make the car non-standard."

His P2/3 is the sole survivor of the five that were built. Piper has one "but that's been modified from original specification, you know".

David's road modifications to the P2/3 include different suspension settings and needles in the Weber carbs and softer sparking plugs. The cockpit has been painted and the seats trimmed, and to reduce the exhaust roar plates have been welded on to the exhaust pipe ends, he also added a small piece at the rear of the body to cover the longer exhaust pipes.

It says a lot for his mods and Ferrari engineering that the P2/3 is a docile road car and that regular maintenance is restricted to bleeding the brakes, checking tappets and changing the brake discs and pads.

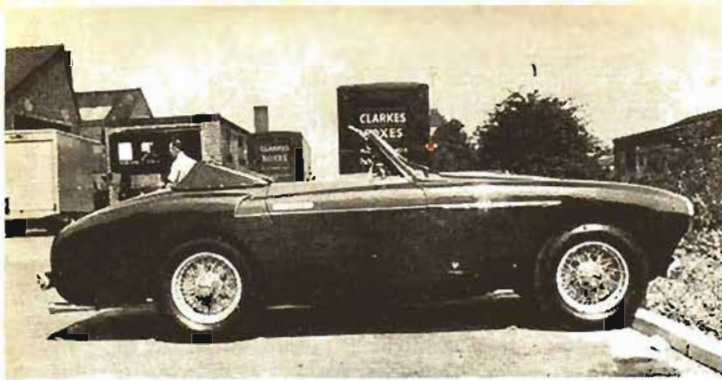
The P4 has an equally interesting history: "It won at Daytona in 1967 with Chris Amon and Lorenzo Bandini at the wheel. At the Le Mans Test Day Bandini broke the lap record with a lap of 146.24 mph but the car didn't race because it was damaged by fire during practice. Vaccarella crashed while leading the Targa Florio and the car's final competition appearance was at the BOAC



Inside and out David Clarke's Ferraris are showpieces. Above: 250 G1 2+2, below: the striking 212 Export







### 1951 212 Export drophead by Vignale

**Engine:** 60° V12 of 2562 cc with 68 × 58.8mm. bore and stroke. Compression ratio 8:1, 150 bhp at 6600 rpm. One 36 DCF Weber carb., single plate clutch, five speed non-synchro gearbox.  
**Chassis:** live rear axle, 15 in. × 4½J wheels (tyres: 6.40 rear, 5.90 front). 27 gallon fuel tank, average fuel consumption 19 mpg. Geared for maximum speed of 126 mph



### 1962 250 GTO

chassis number 3869, 18 gauge aluminium body by Scaglietti  
**Engine:** dry sump 60° V12 of 3 litres with 73 × 58.8 mm. bore and stroke. Compression ratio 9.5:1, 300 bhp at 7500 rpm. Six 38 DCN Weber carbs., single plate clutch, five speed all-synchro gearbox.  
**Chassis:** live rear axle, ZF differential. 15in. wheels, 6L front, 6½L rear (tyres: 6.00 front, 7.00 rear Dunlop racers). 27 gallon fuel tank, average fuel consumption 18 mpg. Geared for maximum speed of 138 mph (top speed of standard car 165 mph)

500 in 1967 when Ludovico Scarfiotti and Peter Sutcliffe finished 5th overall."

David reckons the P4 would be worth about £25,000 in the US. "I heard about the car through Michael Parkes in October 1969. The whole car had been rebuilt 200 miles previously. As I explained, I don't use this one on the road, but I've raced it a few times. I've managed 64 sec. on the Silverstone Club circuit with it, and that's not bad for a car built for long distance racing, you know." David goes into raptures about the P4's performance: "it's smooth from 2000 right up to its maximum of 8000 rpm".

David's first Ferrari—a 1951 212 Export—was bought from the Chequered Flag in 1960. "It was owned by an Italian Count originally. It was in a terrible state when I first bought it and over a period I

David and Robert out for a drive: the P2/3's ride is firm but not as jarring as one would expect from a car with such racing pedigree

must have spent about £3000 getting it right. I even bought a Ghia-bodied Ferrari just to get a spare engine. The whole car was a terrible mess. Basically sound, just uncared for."

The car is now an immaculate tribute to its creator.

It almost goes without saying that the Clarke GTO is the desire of anyone who knows anything about Ferraris. "I've had countless offers for that one. It has won several concours and lots of people tell me it's the best example they've ever seen.

"I tried to buy the car in 1962 from Colonel Hoare, but Ron Fry bought it. He raced it in 1963 and early in 1964. Carl Richardson owned the car for a while and entered it in a number of hill climbs and rallies. I lost sight of it for a couple of years, found it again and bought it. The engine was okay but the bodywork was appalling.

"It's fitted with those wretched disc brakes. Do you know, we have more trouble with disc brakes than anything else. I

prefer drums for quick motoring, they're far better. I like to feel the pedal, can't stand a servo."

David's passion for cars goes back into his childhood and his Ferrari fanaticism was prompted by the "sight and sound" of the red cars from Modena.

The Clarke family's business was founded in 1913 by his grandfather. "The boxes were made the traditional way in those days, you know, glue and scissors." Now the £1 million company produces a million boxes a week. "Ninety per cent of our boxes used to be for the shoe trade. But things have changed, we now make boxes for just about anything." The tools and spares that are so necessary for maintaining Clarke's Ferrari collection are stored in boxes made at the factory, and designed by him.

"I'm president of two auto clubs and I do a lot of charity work." One of the auto clubs is at Ware in Hertfordshire where David is happy to display his cars at their annual Speedshow. When he's not playing with his





**1963 250 GT Lusso**

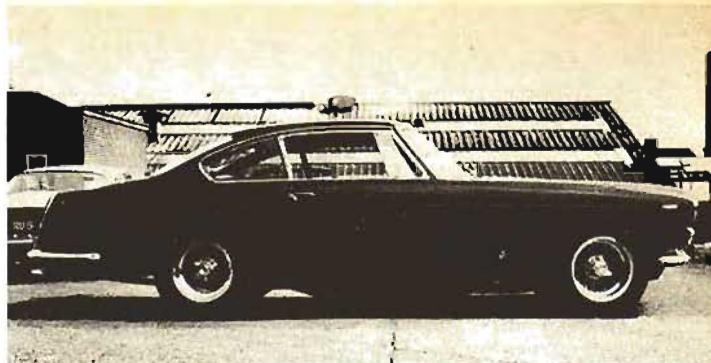
chassis number 4845GT, steel body designed by Pininfarina, built by Scaglietti

**Engine:** 60° V12 of 3 litres with 73 × 58.8mm. bore and stroke. Compression ratio 9.2:1, 250bhp at 7000rpm. Three 36 DCZ Weber carbs., single plate clutch, four speed all-synchro gearbox.

**Chassis:** live rear axle, ZF differential. 15in. × 6½L wheels (tyres: 185 front, 205 rear).

22 gallon fuel tank, average fuel consumption 16 mpg.

Geared for maximum speed of 146mph

**1963 250 GT 2+2**

chassis number 4887GT, steel body designed and built by Pininfarina

**Engine:** 60° V12 of 3 litres with 73 × 58.8mm. bore and stroke. Compression ratio 9.2:1, 250bhp (normally 240bhp) at 7000 rpm. Three 40 DCL 6 Weber carbs., single plate clutch, four speed all-synchro gearbox and Laycock overdrive on top gear only.

**Chassis:** live rear axle, 15in. × 6½L wheels (tyres: 185 front 205 rear).

22 gallon fuel tank, average fuel consumption 15 mpg.

Maximum speed of 140mph

**1965/6 365 P2/3 Sports Prototype**

chassis number 0826 (P2 originally, modified to P3 specification in 1966), body by Drago in 18 gauge aluminium

**Engine:** 60° V12 of 4.4 litres with 81 × 71mm. bore and stroke. Compression ratio 9.7:1, 380 bhp at 7200rpm. Six 38 DCN Weber carbs., three plate clutch, five speed non-synchro gearbox.

**Chassis:** 15in. × 8in. front and 9in. rear wheels (tyres: 5.50m front, 6.50m rear Dunlop racers).

Two 16 gallon fuel tanks, average road fuel consumption 15 mpg, circuit consumption 9mpg.

Geared for maximum road speed of 150mph (this car was timed at 189 mph at Le Mans)

**1967 330 P4 Sport Prototype**

chassis number 0856, 18 gauge aluminium body by Cigario

**Engine:** 4 ohc, 36 valve, 60° V12 of 4 litres with 77 × 71mm. bore and stroke. Compression ratio 11:1, 450bhp at 8000 rpm. Lucas fuel injection, 24 (10mm.) plugs, three plate diaphragm clutch, five speed non-synchro gearbox.

**Chassis:** tubular spaceframe with monocoque centre section and glass-fibre doors. 15in. × 10in. front, 12in. rear wheels (tyres: 10.30 front, 12.30 rear).

Two 16 gallon fuel tanks, average track fuel consumption 8mpg.

Geared for maximum speed of 152 mph (this car was timed at 198mph at Le Mans)

cars, talking Ferraris to his many enthusiast friends, helping run a profitable company, attending to his charity work and attending auto club meetings, he enjoys listening to classical music. "Tchaikovsky is my favourite composer." But he soon returns to the subject dearest to him. "My favourite coachbuilder is undoubtedly Vignale. Just look at the line of that 212. Do you realise that car is 20 years old and it still looks good."

Most of all David Clarke is a perfectionist. This can probably be traced to his engineering background (he's a member of the Institute of British Engineers), and the fact that his early career included a spell as a film producer making films for oil companies, the BBC and ITV. "But the family business called me back, and here I've been ever since." His greatest ambition, apart possibly from owning a few more Ferraris that he likes, is to run his own Ferrari garage. Mainly because of his £15,000-worth of spares David is able to help a number of owners who have been unable to get certain parts for their cars.

But his search for perfection and his increasing efforts to keep his collection in concours condition don't prevent him from

using each of his cars on a rota basis. "They're a bit of a liability as normal everyday transport. I'd never be happy if I had to park one of them anywhere. The slightest scratch could ruin them. But neither do I like the idea of them being museum pieces. They have to be used, that's what they're for."

His annual insurance bill for the cars amounts to £350 and his full-time mechanic, 21-year-old Robert Houghton who shares David's enthusiasm for the marque Ferrari, is kept busy maintaining the cars in concours condition. "Robert and I are learning all the time. Most of my modifications have been a matter of trial and error. Try a mod here, test it, modify it again, test it, and eventually it's right. There's never a day goes by without us learning something about one or other of the cars." There's no doubt that his suspension settings work—just ride in one of his cars, or take your Ferrari to Warwick Banks, the Koni specialists, and they'll supply you with shockers and settings to David's exacting standards of ride and handling.

When the Clarke Ferraris leave home for a long trip, or when David is racing one or other of the prototypes, the cars usually ride

in a large Bedford transporter and fully-equipped workshop—done out in Ferrari red with prancing horse emblems on the side. "The transporter has underfloor heating so that the engine can be pre-heated before we use the car.

"We usually take the caravan as well. I fitted that up with a generator so it has its own heating, tv, hot water and such like." The caravan also has the ubiquitous Ferrari prancing horse stuck discreetly on the walls. The magazine shelf is topped by copies of the Ferrari Enthusiasts' Club magazine; a back copy reveals that David Clarke is "a Ferrari enthusiast".

As to David's future Ferrari buying plans: "I like to have only six cars at one time. I'd rather have a few immaculate cars than, say, 10 scruffy ones.

"You might say I'm a traditionalist, but I don't care for the current Ferrari range, except maybe for the new Dino. I might be tempted to buy one of those."

Whatever David buys next there's absolutely no doubt as to the badge it will wear on its glittering flanks. As he puts it, casting a fatherly eye over his £60,000 collection: "All my horses are prancing ones."