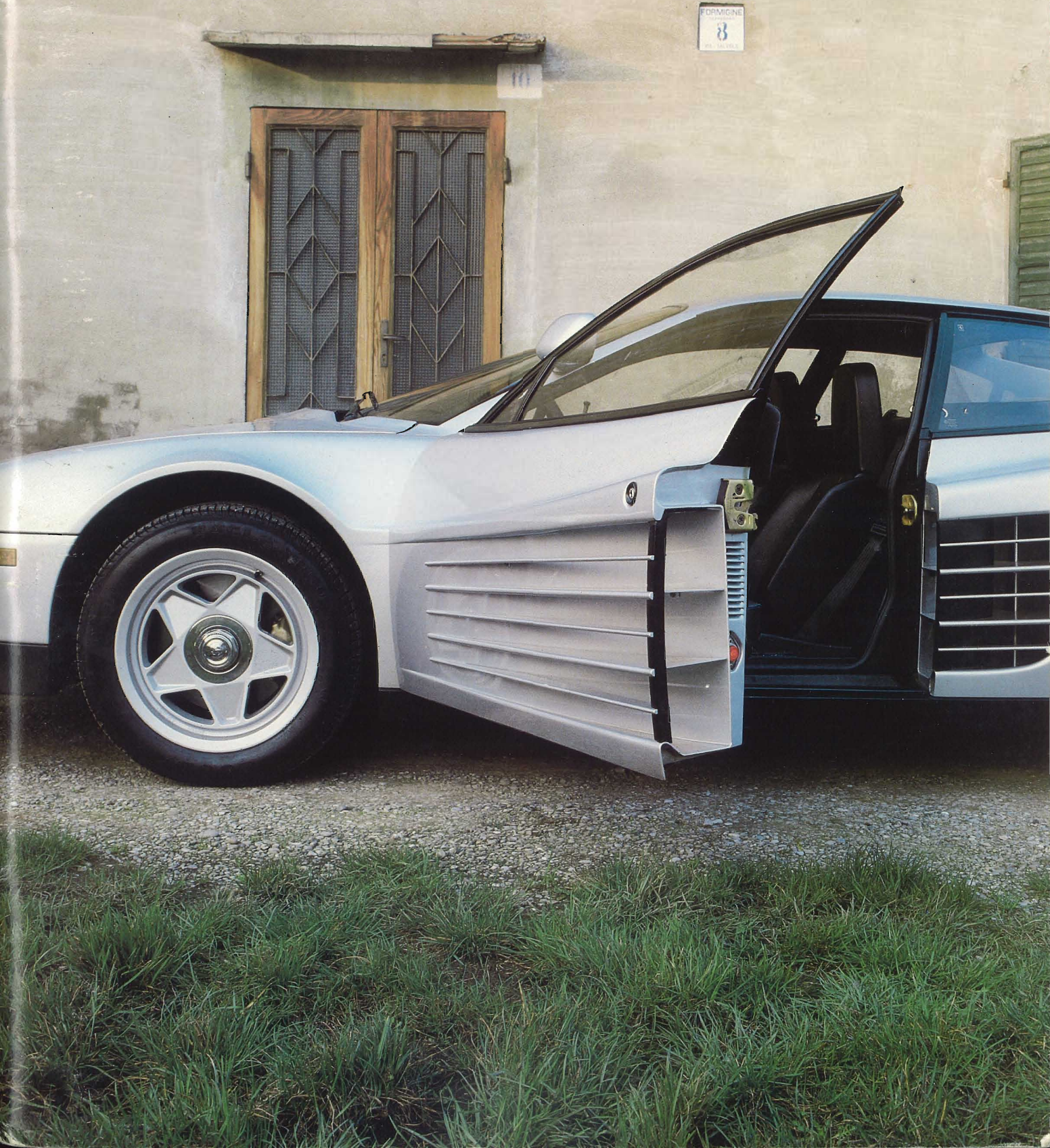


# CAVALLINO



THE MAGAZINE FOR FERRARI ENTHUSIASTS

\$4 NUMBER 27





Four On The Floor (Seats, That Is)  
**250 GTE**

Ferrari's First Four Seater

By Alan Boe



General Marsh Photograph

Sure, many Ferraris are better looking . . . and faster . . . and more valuable, but that doesn't make the 250 GTE 2+2, Ferrari's first four seater, any less important in the overall Ferrari scheme of things. The GTE was the first production based Ferrari designed to carry more than two passengers, and ever since its debut in 1960, a four seater with front engine V-12 power has been part of the automotive selection offered by Ferrari.

Also, with the coming of the GTE, Ferrari began to produce cars by the hundreds rather than by the dozens. And ever since then, Ferrari has managed to maintain production of various selected models long enough to see over one thousand examples find their way into the world. Beginning with the 250 GTE, Ferrari production

crossed an important threshold—the Italian grand touring automotive experience had now become available to many more people for the first time.

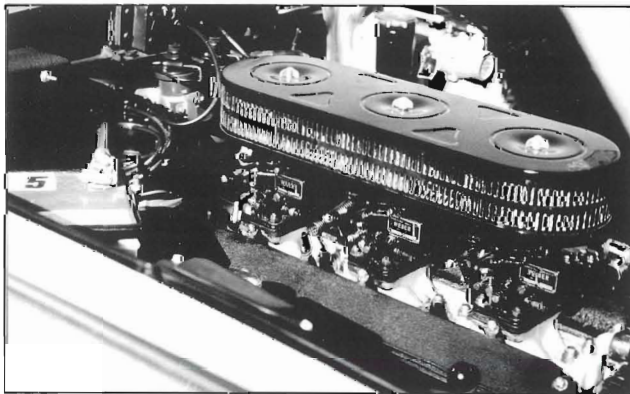
Ferrari was able to maintain production of the GTE for just over three years, turning out about 950 two plus twos during that time, only because the car continued to attract buyers. Why? The 250 GTE brought Ferrari into a new market, a market that, until 1960, had been left largely to Jaguar, Maserati and Aston Martin, a market made up of an automotive clientele that required seating for more than two people, that was concerned with family motoring and yet, asked for V-12 performance as only Ferrari could provide, wrapped in a body created by the automotive artistry of Pininfarina. ▶



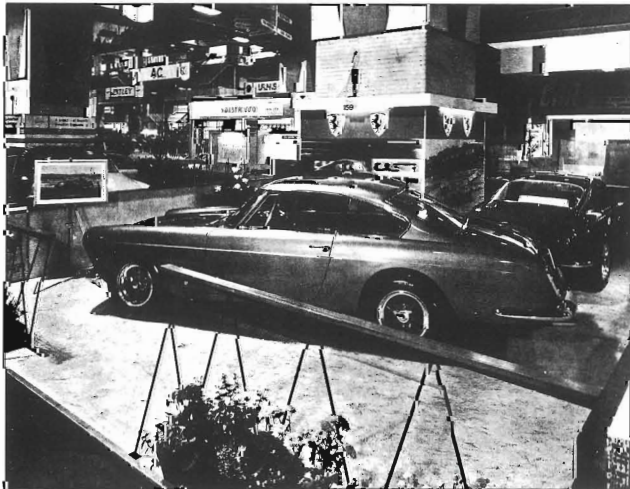
Ferrari Photograph

*"Quattro posti confortevoli su una vettura da granturismo. Docile nel traffico congestionato della città, velocissima sulle autostrade." From the 1960 Ferrari Yearbook.*

*The classic V-12 Ferrari engine in the 250 GTE.*



*The GTE at the London Auto Show, 1960.*



Ferrari Photograph

Consider also that during the GTE production years, the early 1960s, Ferrari offered its customers six other models with Pininfarina and/or Scaglietti styling and Ferrari's own special brand of V-12 power. The 250 GT short wheelbase California and berlinetta, early examples of the beautiful 250 GT Lusso berlinetta, the 250 GT Pininfarina Cabriolet, the very limited 400 Superamerica with coupe or cabriolet body, and the vaunted 250 GTO were all part of the Ferrari arsenal during at least part of the time that the GTE was being built. Yet Ferrari's first four seater outsold all of these other Ferrari models *combined* during the years 1960 through 1963. And at least three of these other Ferraris sold new for practically the same price as the 250 GTE. It wasn't as though the GTE sold because it was low priced. The car sold because Ferrari customers wanted it, even if the same amount of cash would secure the more exotic and racier models.

As Ferrari production increased and these new markets were identified, revenues rose and the factory became better able to fund and field not only a Formula One Grand Prix team, but very competitive sports racing and grand touring competition cars as well. The early 1960s were important years for Ferrari, important in large part due to the 250 GTE 2+2.

They were also important years, when viewed in retrospect, because it was then that Ferrari and Pininfarina began in earnest what has become a most fruitful relationship. Ferrari was not then, and is not today, equipped to design, construct and produce most of the bodies and interiors needed for the road going GT cars. The Ferrari factory existed, especially in the earlier years, primarily to build racing machinery capable of besting anything anyone else could turn out.

The first Ferrari/Pininfarina joint effort began in late 1951 with the construction of a four passenger coupe on a 212 Inter chassis (S/N 0229). A 2+2 cabriolet on another 212 Inter chassis (S/N 0235) quickly followed and from that humble beginning there has been no turning back. And with the coming of the 250 GTE, the two firms committed themselves to what, for each, amounted to the assembly line production of a GT Ferrari. A corner had been turned and one of the most successful and mutually profitable partnerships in automotive history continues to this day, between Ferrari the engineer and Pininfarina the artist.

Today, however, it would seem that enthusiasm for the GTE has dwindled. Offerings of even well maintained or restored cars command only slightly more dollars now than the nearly \$13,000 price of a new 250 GTE in the early 1960s. The GTE Ferrari is one of the few remaining automotive bargains still available in a Maranello product with V-12 power, a leather interior and



Ferrari Photograph

*The GTE at the 42nd Salone dell'Automobile di Torino.*

Pininfarina styling. But what is a 250 GTE 2+2? Let's take a closer look.

The car burst upon the scene in a rather unconventional way since its introduction was not in association with some selected European automotive show as was the usual Ferrari custom, but rather in association with the world's premier automotive endurance race. The 1960 Le Mans 24 hour marathon held on the weekend of June 25 and 26 resulted in a Ferrari victory (Olivier Gendebien and Paul Frere in a Testa Rossa), but not overlooked by the world's automotive press in the excitement of the competition was the new Ferrari that had been entrusted to the course marshal. One of three prototype GTEs (S/N 1895 GT) received its baptism on the Sarthe circuit that weekend.

Strictly speaking, the new 2+2 wasn't the first Ferrari able to carry more than two passengers, but all earlier 2+1s and 2+2s were built in very limited numbers and carried a variety of coachwork from body builders such as Vignale, Touring, Ghia and Pinin Farina (two words then). Engine displacement also varied with 2 litre, 2.3 litre, 2.5 litre and 3 litre V-12 single overhead cam powerplants being used in these earliest rear seat Ferraris.

The 250 GTE 2+2 evolved out of design, development and testing work that had been going on discretely at both Pininfarina and Ferrari for almost a year before the Le Mans debut. Three distinct prototypes were built (chassis numbers 1287 GT, 1895 GT and 1903 GT), each showing differences in design, styling, trim and accent features. With completion of the fourth and fifth GTEs (chassis numbers 2031 and 2043 GT), production of the car began in earnest, and for the next three years the Ferrari GTE would be the

foundation on which the company's automotive production rested.

With the arrival of the new 2+2, Ferrari discontinued production of the 250 GT Pinin Farina Coupe. The same 102.4 inch wheelbase chassis was the skeleton on which the Coupe and the GTE were built, but to make room for two more people in the newer car, some of the mechanicals had to be relocated. The engine and gearbox were moved eight inches forward in the chassis and the front and rear track measurements were widened by four centimeters. The chassis was constructed of tubular steel as was the Ferrari practice then, and represented the latest development of the type 508 chassis. In GTE trim, it was labeled the tipo 508 E chassis, providing the "E" in GTE.

In outfitting the chassis for four people, the car gained about 300 pounds compared to the weight of the Pinin Farina Coupe—GTEs will check in at around 3,300 pounds ready to roll. Most of this increase can be attributed to the greater overall length of the new car compared to the Pinin Farina Coupe (GTEs measure 185 inches from bumper to bumper, the PF Coupes, 173 inches). The GTE also stands about two inches lower than the Coupe.

Over the production life of the two plus two, several changes can be noted in the car's design, albeit modest ones. Early on some of the cars were delivered without driving lights, and those that did receive them usually had them placed in the far ends of the grille opening. By mid-1962, the driving lights had been moved out of the grille opening and were set below and just inside of the headlights. About this time, the chrome trim rings around the headlights became more pronounced. Deeper dished Borrani wire wheels were added late in 1960, and again in 1963. A few cars were built ►

with hood scoops *a la* the contemporary 250 GT Pininfarina Cabriolet. And for the first time, electric windows could be ordered on a Ferrari.

Tail light style also changed as production of the 250 GTE continued. The earlier cars were fitted with tail lights set vertically in a plated panel located in each rear fender tip. A red reflector lens was set above an amber or red turn signal light on these cars, which was placed over the red rear and brake light. By late 1961, a limited number of cars were produced with a one piece tail light. Two bulbs were contained under a single all red lens or a single lens with the upper half amber and the lower half red. A red reflector was placed below the second bulb in this design. Most GTEs built from mid-1962 on were equipped with one lens tail lights that now included a clear back-up light.

Connolly leather interiors came standard with the 250 GTE, and this included leather door panels, transmission tunnel and rear seats, a leather covered parcel shelf under the rear window and a leather covered dashboard. Instrumentation on the cars is very complete as has always been the Ferrari custom. Ahead of the driver are two big dials, a tachometer to the left and a speedometer to the right. Between them is a smaller gauge conveying oil pressure. On left hand drive cars a row of four gauges parade away from the speedometer to show oil temperature, water temperature, fuel level and the time. By 1961, the design layout of these smaller instruments had been changed into a three over two arrangement (the new gauge being an ammeter). An extra dashboard fresh air vent appeared with this change. Either metric or standard measure gauges were used depending upon the car's initial sales destination. Warning lights are also presented in the tachometer dial to indicate a non-charging generator or alternator, to warn that the electric fuel pump is on, and to show that the heater/defroster fan is on.

The engine used in the 250 GTE is Ferrari's tipo 128 E, Gioacchino Colombo designed, chain driven single overhead cam, 60° V-12 displacing 2,953 cubic centimeters and capable of registering a roaring 240 horsepower at 7,000 rpms. The engine's block is cast in silumin, a silicon/aluminum alloy. This latest version of Ferrari's classic small block V-12 contained coil valve springs in place of the old mousetrap style valve springs, and introduced spark plugs located on the outside of (instead of between) the engine vee just above the exhaust headers. Earlier GTEs were delivered with three Weber 40 DCL 6 carburetors, but by 1961 three Weber 36 DC 3 or DCS carbs were used.

All of these four seaters came equipped with an electric fuel pump controlled from the dashboard, plus a mechanical pump located in the engine compartment. Larger valve sizes were used

in the car's engine by late 1960, and in 1963, an alternator replaced the Marelli generator. All GTEs left the factory with a Laycock de Normanville, electrically controlled overdrive that is usable only while in fourth gear. The gearbox is a factory built, fully synchromeshed, four speed. Perhaps to allay fears of testers of early GTEs, whose gearboxes and overdrive units shared the same oil supply, the cars built from late 1962 on have separate lubrication systems for these units. Fuel tank capacity is just over 20 gallons and fuel consumption should range between 14 and 17 miles per gallon.

The 250 GTE 2+2 was the first road going Ferrari to receive disc brakes (used on all four wheels) and Koni shock absorbers, replacements for the old drum brakes and Houdaille lever action shocks used on earlier GT Ferraris. Coil springs were added to the rear suspensions of the later GTEs. The solid rear axle uses lateral rods for location, while semi-elliptic leaf springs and the Koni shocks form the rear suspension. Up front, independent A-arms, telescopic Konis and coil springs form the suspension there. An anti-roll bar was used on all cars with a larger diameter unit added on later cars as the result of on-going chassis development. Pirelli Cinturato tires in 180-15 or 650-15 size were wrapped around the Borrani wire wheels.

In late 1963, before redesigning the body for Ferrari's next four passenger GT, an additional 50 or so GTE styled cars were completed with four litre V-12 engines. These cars have become known as 330 America 2+2s because of the "America" script found on their trunk lids. Chassis numbers for the 250 GTEs range from 2031 GT (not counting the three early prototypes) to 4961 GT, and from 4973 GT to 5125 GT for the 330 Americas.

In many respects, it's a shame that more of these old Ferraris haven't survived or haven't been restored. The car is an important part of the history of Ferrari, the lines of the Pininfarina body are not unsightly, its mechanicals are those made famous during the Golden Age of Ferrari racing successes, and there may be some investment potential because of the car's lower current market value. Driving one is no dull affair either. The Ferrari exhaust note and mechanical chatter are there as is the celebrated acceleration of the V-12 and the romance of owning a Ferrari that is becoming rarer and rarer as more GTEs are sacrificed to maintain the more valuable 250 GT spyders and berlinettas.

As Dyke Ridgley has said in reference to the GTE, "these are fast, entertaining, fun cars to drive." That they are. And just think . . . for about \$13,000 you can get a garage full of Ferrari exotica, a price well under what equivalent performance would cost in a modern day touring car or in almost any other vintage V-12 Ferrari.