

Ferrari





250 GTE²⁺²

The early sixties in Maranello were revolutionary times. And no, this has nothing to do with the Communist who then governed the local council. Revolutionary things were happening inside Ferrari itself. Mr Ferrari had finally decided that, as far as the Grand Prix cars were concerned, it was time to put the horse behind the cart and build rear engine single seaters.

Quiet road car revolution

But the revolution finished there, a legend was about to be born in the shape of the 250 GTE and there was about to be a mass sacking that would see a man in his early twenties suddenly promoted to head of the racing department in Maranello.

Meanwhile, those who were building road cars were enjoying a quiet revolution of their own. This revolution would become known as the 250 GTE 2+2. The first real 2+2 to be built by Ferrari. And by the time the car was fazed out of production, 950 had been built. This, in itself, was a first for the company too, for no previous Ferrari had been built in such numbers.

What Ferrari launched in 1960 could well be described as a true Grand Tourer. This was not a point and squirt machine like a GT. This was the type of car that would you could use to cross continents. You would drive down to the south of France, stopping off

along the way at Le Mans. And what's more the 250 GTE 2+2 has a Le Mans history as well, albeit as a course car in the 1960 running of the event, a tenuous link maybe, but a historical fact none the less.

As has been stated many times before in countless publications, the only reason Mr Ferrari built road cars was to fund his racing activities. Therefore, the 250 GTE 2+2 can be looked upon as sign of his commercial acumen. Branching out, seeking wider markets, but still building proper sports cars that were desirable enough to have people queuing at the factory gates with lira to fund his beloved racing. This can be backed up by the fact that in terms of numbers, the 250 GTE 2+2, at the time, was the most popular Ferrari ever.





250 GTE in Terry Hoyle's workshop.



report and photos: Hugh Doran

Back in the 1960s you had a touch of class if you drove one of these cars. Had you brought British then you would have driven a Bentley. You were someone; someone with discerning taste who was quite happy to go about their day to day life without feeling the need to rub anybody's noses in the mud.

Of course, you were rubbing people's noses in the mud, so to speak, because you were someone and you were driving an exotic Italian thoroughbred. You were cool. The populous, more commonly known in those days as hippies may have disagreed, but the fact remains, you had taste and you were cool.

The styling came courtesy of Pininfarina, who did a wonderful job with the 2,600mm wheelbase. The engine was moved forward in the chassis to create a little more room in the cabin and originating from the previous 250 series, the engine was the standard 60-degree V12, developing 240bhp at 7,000rpm. The initial versions of

the 250 GTE 2+2 had vertical light clusters containing three individual lamps. Whereas later versions were fitted with rear lights in a 'strip', similar in design to the items fitted on the California spyder.

Something of a forgotten Ferrari

Considering the fact that the 250 GTE 2+2 was the first road car with room in the back, it is a shame that the car could be considered as something of a forgotten Ferrari. Although not so surprising, considering some of its siblings in the early '60s, such as the SWB and GTO. But then again, if cars could talk the 250 GTE 2+2's might request to stay forgotten and to be left alone with their caring owners. The reason? Cannibalism.

You see many of these lovely cars have been under the knife. This tip is the number one choice for those who wish to have a car such as a SWB, GTO or a California spyder, but can't afford one, or can't find one. 250 GTE



250 GT 2+2,
Club Concours
at Castle Ashby
2002.



Above: Interior of chassis no. 3269GT. Right: 250 GTE 2+2, Club Concours at Castle Ashby 2002.

2+2s go into the body shop and come out pretending to be something different. Something fake. This is a practice that I am vehemently against and if I may be permitted to speak personally, I salute all those owners who covert their 250 GTE 2+2s and have no intention of turning them into something else.

As mentioned before, the tipo was used as the course car at the 1960 Le Mans, which incidentally saw Ferrari 250 TR 60s finish in first and second, but that is not the 250 GTE 2+2s claim to fame. This tipo really came of age when it was put to work in Rome. Yes, that's right, two Ferraris were put to work on the streets of Rome! Their employer was the Polizia Squadra Mobile, in effect Rome's flying squad.

Fact not Ferrari legend

Some people ask if this was real or just one of the many Ferrari legends. In this case we are talking fact, the Polizia in Rome really did take delivery of two 250 GTE 2+2s, complete with blue light on the roof. Painted black, these two cars got the nick name Black Panthers.

One of these cars was written off in an accident, but the other one survived. The car had been in service for less than a week when the accident occurred! As a result the Polizia choose a select group of drivers and sent them to Maranello on an advanced driving course.

A wise move, as the Ferrari was significantly quicker, lighter and better handling than the Alfa Romeo 1900 TIs that the officers were used to and which only had a meager 90bhp, a little less than the 240bhp of the Black Panthers.

The training period lasted for ten days and included both driving at the Modena Autodrome and on public roads. In one instance the police officers receiving tuition from the Ferrari test drivers were actually pursued by the Modena police, unaware that the car they were chasing contained their colleges from Rome.

As far as the mechanicals were concerned, these

two Black Panthers were totally standard. The only differences from the standard car were the two way radio and the lights and siren.

The call sign of the surviving car was Siena-Monza-44. With the initials of Siena-Monza standing for Squadra Mobile. The reference to Monza, where Ferrari have had so much success, was purely coincidental. The 44 was derived from the last two digits on the number plate: Roma 29444.

Siena-Monza-44 was more often than not driven by officier Armando Spatafora who drove with a certain degree of aplomb. This naturally led to a number of minor accidents, but nothing that couldn't be repaired! Spatafora's aplomb behind the wheel on the streets of Rome in Siena-Monza-44 led him to make a descent of the Spanish Steps during one particular chase!

In all, Siena-Monza-44 spent six years in the service of the Polizia Roma before being retired. Spatafora and the Ferrari had reportedly been very successful in the apprehension of criminals during that period. However, the Polizia had seen the Alfa 1900 TIs pensioned off and replaced with more modern machinery from the Milian constructor. Cars that were much cheaper than the Ferrari to run ... and for Officier Spatafora, less fun.

I believe these two 250 GTEs were the only Ferraris ever to see service in uniform. And this simple act of public service puts the 250 GTE 2+2 right up there with Ferrari's greatest.

Polizia Black Panther.

