

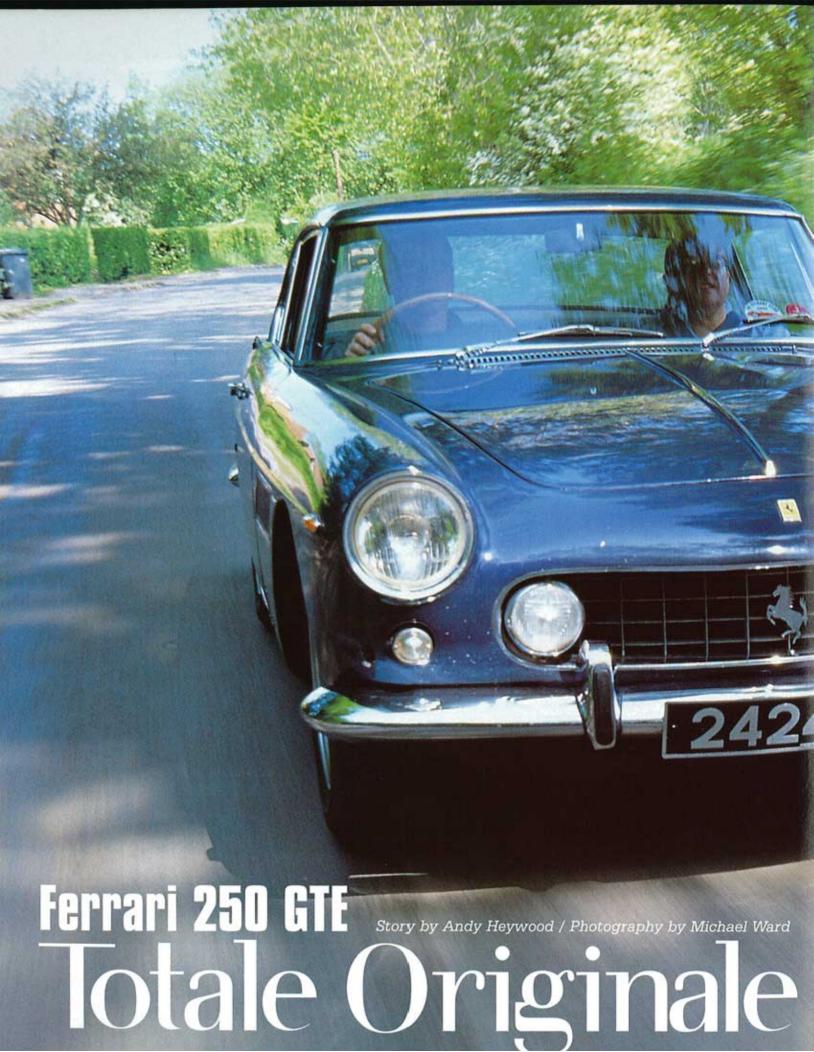
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## Ferrari 250GTE



And then there were the running costs, which like any V12 Ferrari were prodigious. As values decrease, owners become more reluctant to pay the costs and condition goes down. There begins the vicious circle. And as merely secondhand gives way to classic, practicality literally takes a back seat. An enthusiast looking for a Ferrari for the weekend already owns more practical vehicles and is therefore less likely to choose the larger, more unwieldy coupe with the rear seats, especially when the cost of ownership is the same as with something more overtly exotic.

If you are now wondering who in their right mind would run a 250GTE, meet Tony Bernstein. His right-hand drive example featured here is one of a handful of original UK imports and has been in the family for 20 years. For him, the GTE embodies old-school Ferrari. It goes about its business some to the marque, yet every drive with the V12 is as exciting as the first, something that Tony was keen to let me find out for myself.

Initially, it is all about the noise. The controls have all

without the constant reference to wealth that has soured

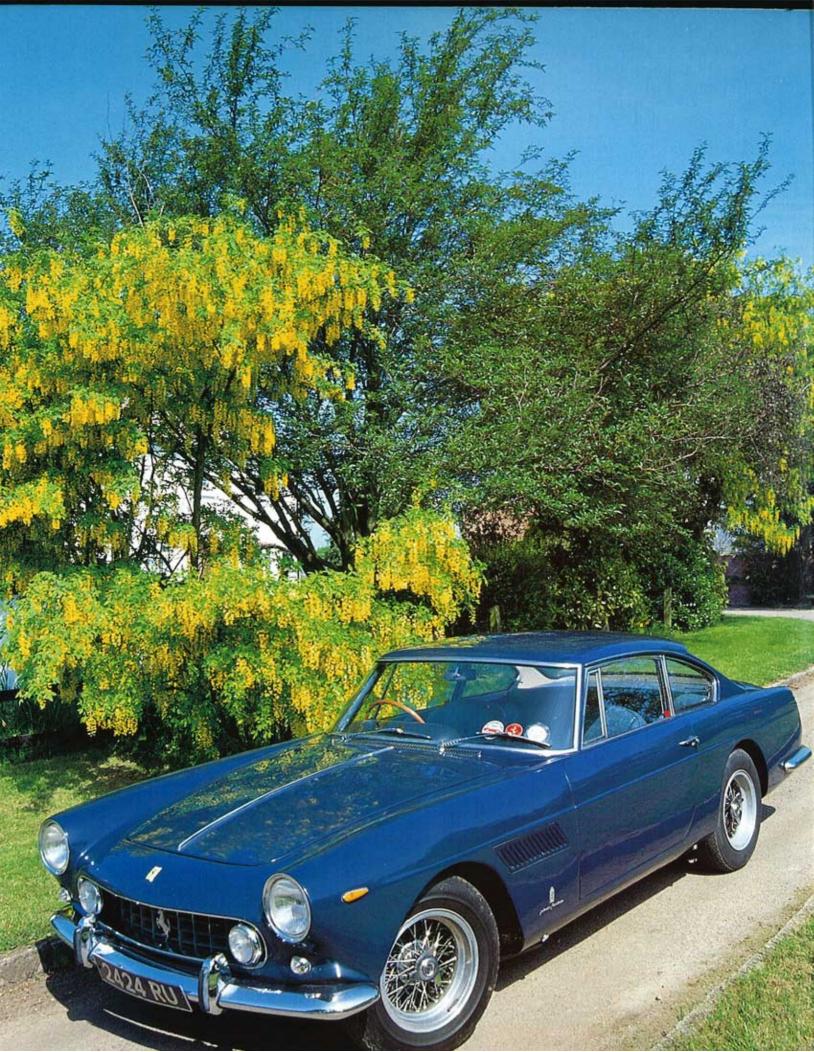
Initially, it is all about the noise. The controls have all fallen logically and surprisingly ergonomically to hand, the clutch and steering pressures are not too high, though the steering is very low-geared as a result and the gearbox selects first with little drama. Just pull away, though, and you are already aware that the engine is the heart of this car, dictating its whole character. There is such keenness to rev, such sweet mechanical noises emanating from the engine bay and such a distinctive howl from the exhausts as soon as the revs rise.

The narrow route to our photo location provides little opportunity to test the performance, but it gives a good impression of the handling. For such a large car, the GTE is \

FAR RIGHT: This GTE has been owned by the same family for the last 20 years BELOW: Bournemouth registration indicates an original Maranello import













ABOVE: Like most fourseater Ferraris, the 250 GTE is not highly valued LEFT: Classic frontengined V12 for less than £30k could be tempting

engine? The aural payback more than makes up for it.

I really enjoyed my time with this car. It appeals in so many ways but mostly as an eccentric choice for Ferrari folk. It ticks all the boxes in engineering terms but maintains a coolness that the red wedge brigade have somehow lost in recent years. It also says a lot about you as an owner. You clearly have a sophisticated understanding of the marque for its core values. Also you have taken the moral high ground, eschewing fakery and the lure of filthy lucre but, most of all, that contrary to the Hot Rodder's

gospel, you are the real man. 51

me is still on our tail. We're not going that fast by modern

the throttle once more and lose him in a swirl of unburnt

standards. In fact, the only way to get rid of him is to plant

hydrocarbons. Ferrari claimed a top speed of 157mph for the

GTE if the longest axle ratio had been specified, or 125mph

ratio which makes it great fun to hustle around unobtrusively.

And what if it does need lots of revs to get the best from the

on the short axle. This car feels as though it has the lower

surprisingly pliable on country lanes. Sharp, almost, as long as you relearn the need to actually move the steering wheel, rather than think it round. With four-wheel disc brakes, it gives confidence in the stopping department as well. It also behaves impeccably while being shunted around for the inevitable sweet spot on the photographer's lens, displaying none of the ill-mannered temperament one has been led to expect. It really is a practical Ferrari.

With my appetite truly whetted and the photos completed, we go in search of one of my favourite roads. It is a stretch I know very well and have driven along in a huge number of different cars. When the throttle opens fully for the first time, Tony senses my slight disappointment at the lack of go. "It's all at the top end," he says while grinning. He knows what to expect and as I keep my foot planted, the noise builds maniacally until at 5000rpm it really starts to go. Not surprising as I later find out that maximum torque of only 193lb ft is not reached until that figure.

Up to third and back on the gas before lifting for a long sweeping corner, the engine cackles on the overrun and I realise that like most cars from this era, I need to be back on the gas again well before the corner to maintain composure. It remains neutral through most of the corner but with a hint of building understeer, easily dialled out with a little more throttle. It really is an old-school Ferrari—with old-school handling.

The only problem is that while I am waxing lyrical about







## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Engine:	V12
Capacity:	2953cc
Bore and stroke:	73mm x 58.8mm
Compression ratio:	8.8:1
Max power:	240bhp @ 7000rpm
Carburation:	3 Weber 40DCL6
Top speed:	217km/h
Wheelbase:	2600mm
Weight:	1280kg
NPODE COLUMN	