

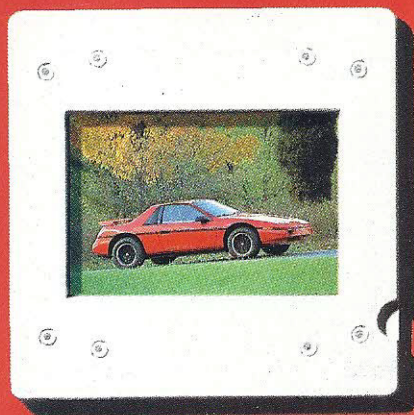
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Is it too late
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Fiero?



Is it too soon
for a continental
Continental?

Will time
stand still for
an all-American
New Yorker?



02508

REVIEW FERRARI MONDIAL 3.2

Ten days with
Ferrari's most practical product.

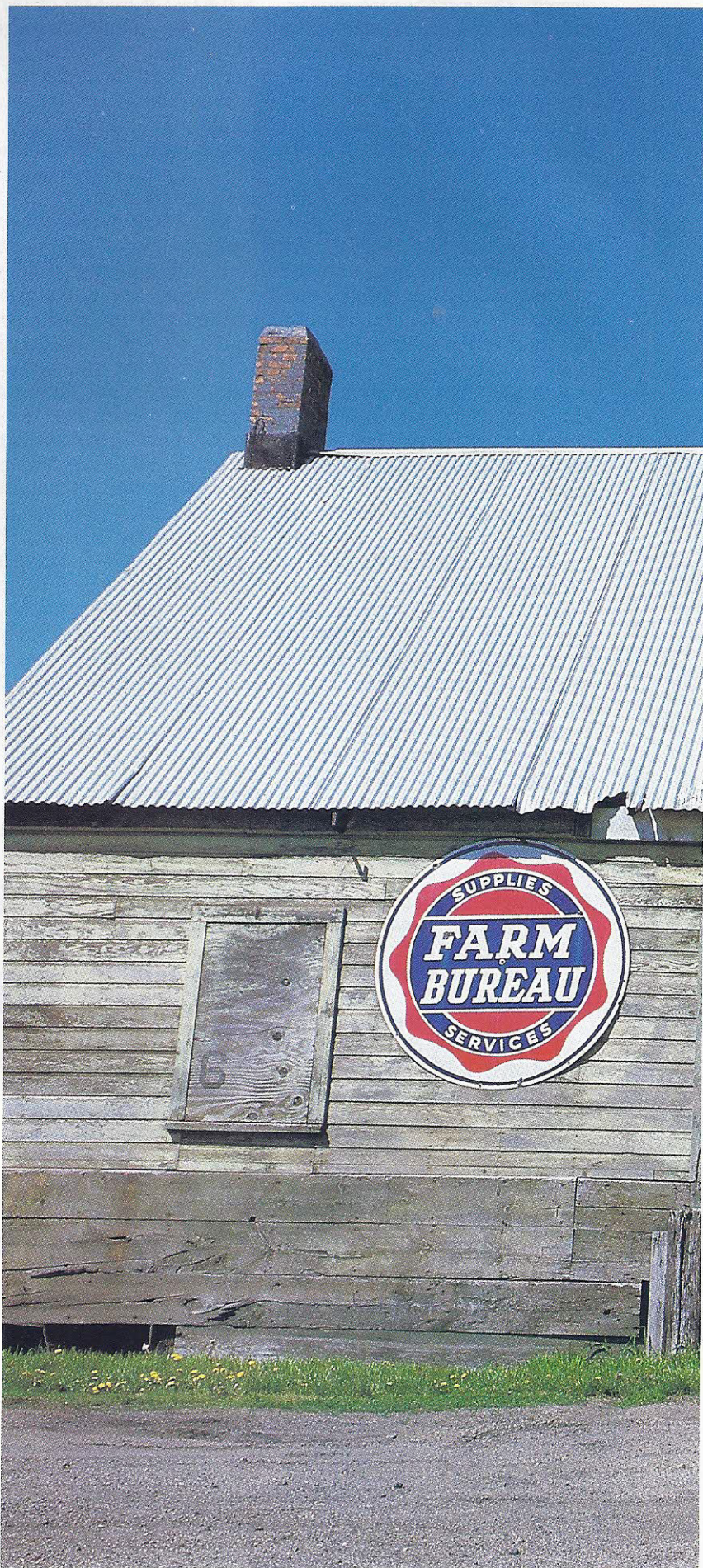
BY DAVID E. DAVIS, JR.

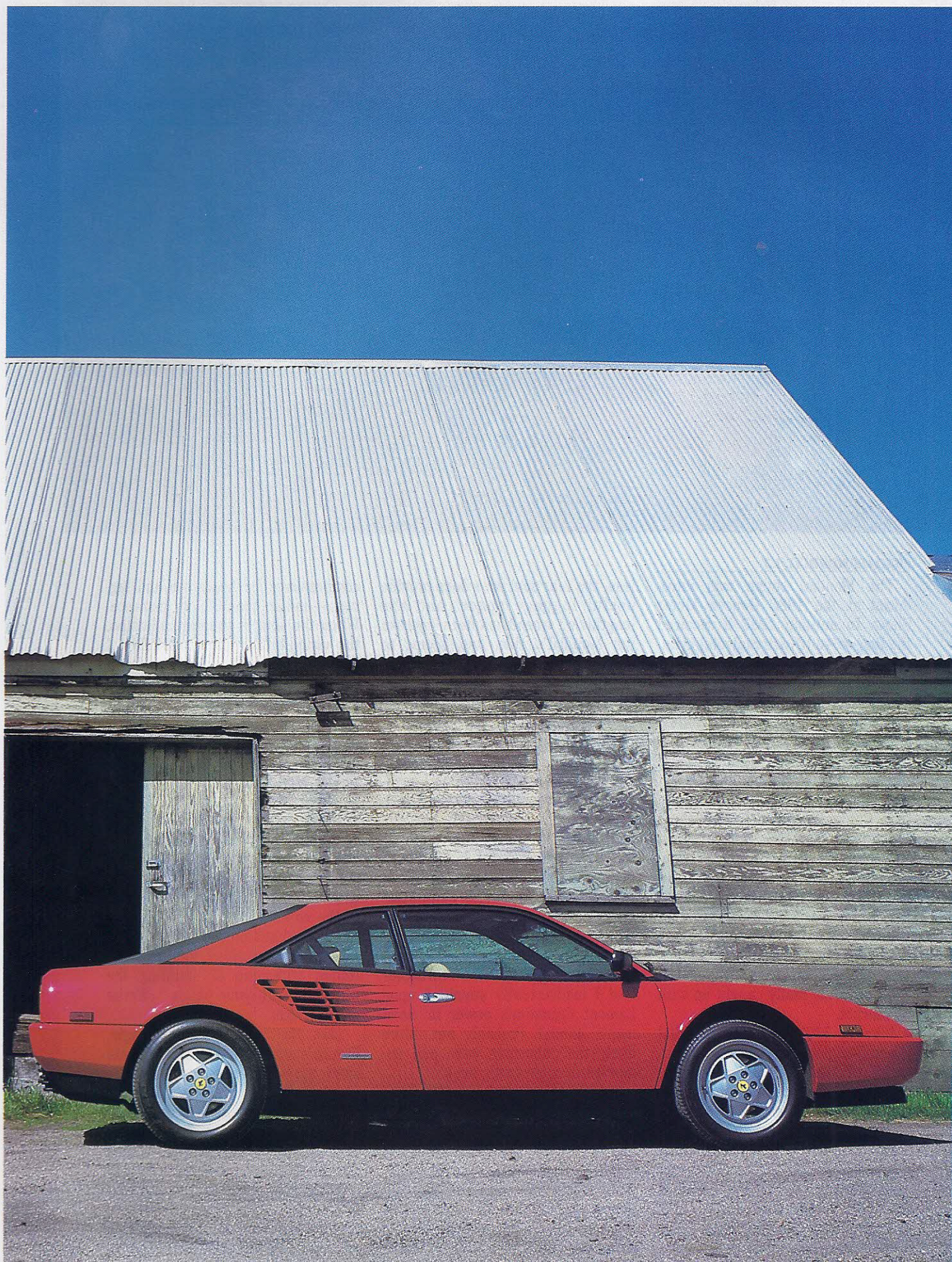
Ann Arbor—I came back from a visit to the Ferrari works in Maranello, stopped off in Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey—home of Ferrari North America—and picked up a lovely red 3.2 Mondial coupe for the 650-mile drive home to Ann Arbor.

The employee who led me to the car in the parking structure seemed to be innocent of any useful information concerning its care, feeding, or proper operation. So, not yet able to open the luggage compartment, I tossed my duffel into the back seat, and I was off. Fortunately, only a few minutes later, traffic was more or less at a standstill on westbound Interstate 80, and I was able to read the owner's manual as I crept along at a glacial pace in the fast lane.

Knowledgeable *Ferraristi* appreciate the Mondial's role as the "nicest," most accommodating Ferrari of the bunch, and our local Ferrari dealer, Mr. Bob Schneider, of Dearborn Sports Car Exchange, has described the Testarossa as being "every bit as pleasant to drive as a Mondial." Our chief European correspondent, Mr. Kacher, once suggested that we do a story entitled, "Mondial: The Best Ferrari of Them All?" Ferrari's general manager, Ing. Giovanni Battista Razelli, confided that he preferred the Mondial, and that the fastest time for his frequent trips from Modena to Genoa was achieved in a 3.2 Mondial. It is not *fast*, in the sense that a Testarossa is fast, but it is an extremely docile, comfortable Ferrari that encourages its driver to make full use of all the performance it has.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY COLIN CURWOOD







FERRARI MONDIAL 3.2

The Mondial coupe was introduced at the 1980 Geneva Motor Show. In autumn 1982 it received the four-valve (Quattrovalvole) cylinder heads, and in January 1983, it debuted at the Brussels show in its convertible form. The 3.2-liter engine was introduced at the Frankfurt show in 1985. The convertible was originally conceived strictly as an American model, but within a year it was also being offered in European trim. Convertibles account for about three-quarters of U.S. Mondial sales, and Mondials represent maybe twenty percent of Ferrari's 1100-unit annual sales total in the United States. The early 3.0 Mondials were bog-slow, and far less sexy-looking than their contemporaries, the 308s. The car got off to a slow start, and has never really caught up with its market.

Like the 328 models, the Mondial is a mid-engined car, sharing virtually all of the two-seaters' engine, driveline, and suspension components. The wheelbase is 11.8 inches longer to accommodate the rear seats, but it would have to be at least a foot longer still before those rear seats actually became functional. It would be a much more useful car if its engine were mounted in the front, driving the rear wheels. Nonethe-

less, the rear seat area does provide useful luggage space, and the lengthened wheelbase does improve the Mondial's ride, and seems to make it more predictable in fast transitions. A dab at the brake, a little steering, and the tail seems to know exactly where you'd like it to be.

Twenty-five miles east of the Delaware Water Gap, traffic cleared up and I had gleaned everything I needed to know from the owner's manual, and I started to motor. My Escort's plug didn't fit the Ferrari's lighter, so I was driving naked, but by hooking up with one fast guy or another I was able to cruise across Pennsylvania at seventy-five or eighty most of the time. Twice I blundered into radar traps at those speeds, and both times I was ignored. Was I invisible? Had I inadvertently stumbled upon Lamont Cranston's power to cloud men's minds? Probably not. More likely the policemen were just immersed in their comic books.

Interstate 80 is a lovely road where it snakes through the hills in central and western Pennsylvania, and I really felt that I was getting to know the Mondial. The driver's situation is the best of any of the contemporary Ferraris. The seat can be adjusted to the driver's specific peculiarities without having to make

compromises for headroom and legroom—unlike the 328, for instance. When the seat is properly adjusted, the visibility is quite remarkable. I found that I couldn't see the front-end sheetmetal at all, and I liked the feeling that I was flying along, not as a passenger in a machine that surrounded me, but as an integral component of that machine.

The Mondial's steering wheel is mounted at the traditional Italian Trailways bus angle, and I found myself quite comfortable steering the way I've seen Europeans do—pulling down on the steering wheel rim with the hand that's on the inside of the corner, and pushing up with the hand that's on the outside. Jean Lindamood describes this as "the Italian technique of shuffling the wheel through your hands." Works like a charm.

Like the steering wheel angle, Ferrari's shift linkage and shift gate have received more than their share of criticism from America's automotive pundits. A Ferrari is not as effortless to shift as a Toyota or a Honda, but, with practice, it has charms that go beyond mere ease of shifting. It's worth pointing out that if Ferraris were as easy to drive as Hondas and Toyotas, then they'd *all* be bought by the gold chain crowd.

REACTIONS

An everyday Ferrari.

It is axiomatic that an automobile with tremendous character cannot be all things to all people. But does that mean that breadth of appeal is inversely proportionate to strength of character? As a car manages to become more accommodating, does it necessarily become less interesting? I don't think the equation is quite that simple, but there are certainly tradeoffs involved.

Case in point: The Mondial is the most useful, most flexible car in the Ferrari lineup. Compared with the faster and more confining Testarossa, or with the faster and *much* more confining 328GTB/GTS cars, the Mondial is roomy, comfortable, and unchallenging to drive. It is acceptable for both touring and commuting in that strange and wonderful place called the "real world." On balance, the Mondial is a pretty decent automobile, and an incredibly good Ferrari.

But I can't shake the sense that it is also, somehow, a *lesser* Ferrari. Swoopy styling, an intimate cockpit, and snappy acceleration are part of what Ferraris are all about. Making sense as transportation was never part of the mandate. Even if it is for a good cause—civility and accommodation—that the Mondial's lustier qualities are toned down, they are still diminished. Mr. Davis feels comfortable with the tradeoffs; I have a harder time with them. Sure, I like the Mondial, and I respect the job Ferrari did with it. But if I could have only one Ferrari, there's no question it would have only two seats.

—Kevin Smith

The Mondial is an everyday car; an everyday Ferrari, if you will. Even so, I couldn't help falling for it during its altogether too brief visit. Part of my attraction was for its redness, part for its lovely lines, part for the fact that it's a Ferrari—a magic name that I don't have the desire to ignore, even in the name of journalistic objectivity. In any case, as Mr. Davis says, the Mondial is so easy to drive, so comfortable to fit into, so inviting, that the rest is mere icing on the cake.

Journalists aren't supposed to be this shallow, but frankly, I was half-hooked when I opened the Mondial's door and the smell of leather (not the coddled smell of garment leather, nor of "Corinthian" leather, but the raw, masculine smell of, ahem, *hides*) almost knocked me down. There is something masculine and tough about all Ferraris. It is that smell. It is the gleaming chrome of the external shift gate. It is the unearthly howl of the engine at 7000 rpm hammering the back of your skull, and the discipline it takes to ratchet the stick cleanly up and down through the gates.

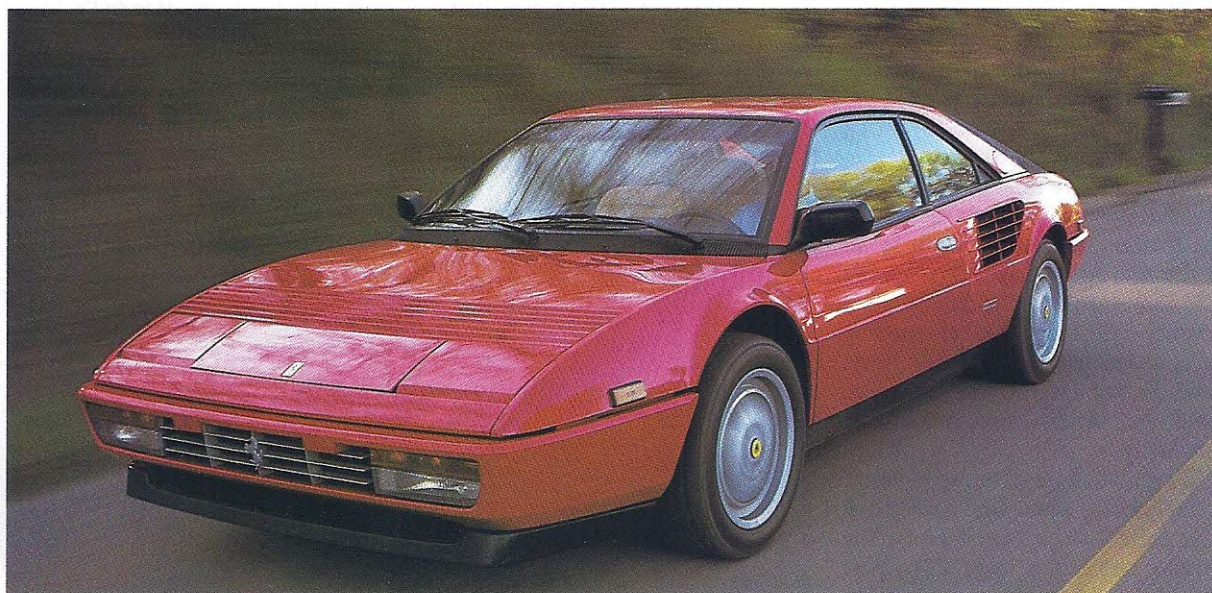
Tough girls like me go crazy for men's cars. And I don't think for a minute that a couple of extra seats in back and a comfortable position behind the wheel make this particular Ferrari any less of a man's car. The Mondial is still demanding, only it's not cramped for space, and it's not as compromising to drive as its two-seater progenitor. Hand me the keys and I'll head for tomorrow.

—Jean Lindamood

David E. Davis, Jr., and Kevin Smith may tell the world that, as Ferraris go, this one's easy to drive. Let's put that in perspective. I've seen the two of them curse and struggle to find reverse. I've seen them perform all manner of slick two-steps and *still* miss shifts. I've seen both of them saw at the wheel in the parking lot, making two- and three-point turns, emerging with small rivers of sweat streaming from their brows. None of which means the Ferrari isn't enjoyable. It *is*. But it's enjoyable like a twenty-minute one-on-one basketball game is enjoyable, and it requires roughly the same concentration.

I found myself double-clutching, matching revs, and moving the shift lever gingerly, as if I were cueing the tone arm on my favorite Sibelius LP. Sure, an Italian supercar deserves that much. But the pindling metal shift rod and its hard plastic knob are clanging throwbacks. Why does Ferrari work so diligently at affecting eccentricity?

However, I also disagree that the Mondial looks old-fashioned. Quite the contrary: I think it's Ferrari's most elegant car. The 328 resembles a Fiero; the Testarossa suffers from hyperglandular gaudiness; the GTO is angular and angry. The Mondial's shape is perfect—the sort of car Candice Bergen might drive, if she were muscular enough to horse it around. In short, the Mondial is the one Ferrari that causes heads to turn in appreciation, rather than shock. But drive it across the country? No, sir, no.—John Phillips III





Mondial interior: Ferrari's most comfortable up front; luggage only in back.

FERRARI MONDIAL 3.2

The trick is to time the shifts, and to move the lever with brisk authority. I actually shift by the numbers, unconsciously counting off the discrete moves of the one-two shift, or the four-three shift, against a mental metronome. Jean Lindamood gives the throttle a little blip just as she's sliding the lever into the next gear. Kevin Smith's method is to use only as much clutch travel as is required to disengage. John Phillips III said the shift knob hurt his hand, and we all hooted and jeered and called him a sissy.

Our test car's speedometer was about ten percent fast. I drove along for about 150 miles marveling at its smoothness and silence at ninety miles per hour, until I did a ten-mile check using my watch and the Interstate mileage markers and discovered that I wasn't going ninety miles per hour at all. Other than that, everything on the Mondial worked exactly as it was supposed to during the ten days we had the car.

After my drive from New York, the Mondial was put into our regular test car rotation, and driven daily by all of the Ann Arbor-based writers. We also took turns driving the car on a seventy-eight-mile loop of winding rural roads just west of our home base. Except for Mr. Phillips's sore hand, our notes show remarkable unanimity.

We all found the steering to be extremely heavy at parking speeds and near perfect at highway speeds. The turning circle is a large thirty-nine feet, the steering is three and a quarter turns, lock to lock, and the result

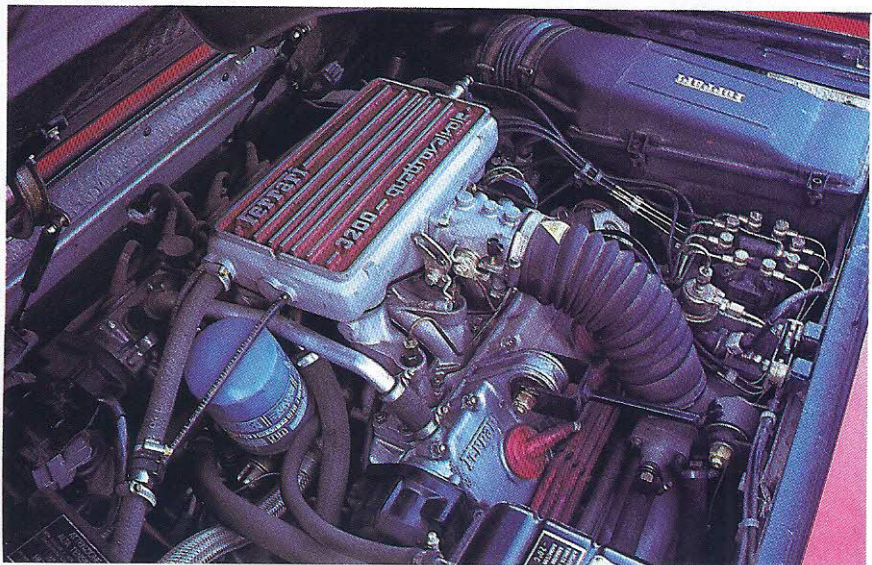
is a lot of winding at low speeds. There is also a fair bit of kickback in the steering on bumps. We all found the ride to be excellent, except for a tiresome inability to handle expansion joints and other sharp impacts. Jean Lindamood said, "I wouldn't think twice about knocking off a cross-country trip in a Mondial, but I'd do it on back roads to stay away from those Interstate expansion joints."

The Mondial's brakes proved to be everything one could wish in a car capable of a 140-plus top speed. Modulation was outstanding, especially when the car was being driven hard. We all used the term "squeezing on the brakes" to describe the sensation of brake control that we felt on unfamiliar winding roads. Ferrari's management sniffs contemptu-

ously at the idea of anti-lock brakes, saying that they've already designed a braking system that is exactly right for the car, so why would they want ABS? They are similarly unforthcoming on subjects like four-wheel steering, four-wheel drive, and active suspension.

The Mondial's V-8 engine was admired by one and all. It is one of a very few nonracing engines that are as beautiful to look at as they are to drive. A real shooter would buy his Ferrari with a spare engine that he could keep in his den to admire when he wasn't going anywhere. Unfortunately, Ferrari's very modern foundry only makes parts enough for twenty-four V-8 engines a day, and six or seven of those are shipped to Lancia for installation in the Thema, so a spare might be hard to obtain. The engine is a 90-degree V-8 with four belt-driven overhead camshafts and four valves per cylinder. Ignition system is Marelli-Microplex, and fuel management is Bosch K-Jetronic. The engine produces 260 horsepower at 7000 rpm and 213 pounds-feet of torque at 5500. Maximum allowable revs, 7700. It is an extremely willing engine that pulls strongly right through the rev range and makes a very nice sound in the process. A sound, we might add, that drowns out the stereo at anything above idle.

One area where we failed to agree was front seats. There's no argument about the rears, which are strictly for luggage and grocery bags. But John Phillips III and I were apparently the only members of the staff who liked the Mondial's front



The most beautiful, most musical V-8 engine this side of Cosworth or Ilmor.

seats. Everybody else pronounced them too flat, too lacking in lateral support. After my New York–Detroit dash I was actually quite pleased with them, thinking that they tended to disprove the notion that a driver's seat must look like the one in the Toyota Supra, or a Recaro, in order to be taken seriously.

We are agreed that the driving experience in the Mondial is not a matter of blinding speed, but rather the way Ferrari does it. With a 0-to-60 time somewhere between 7.1 and 7.5 seconds, depending on who's driving, the Mondial will get blown off by several American cars, two or three Porsches, at least one Mercedes, and a couple of BMWs. But none of these feels or sounds or looks like the Mondial. Ferraris are unique, however many seats they have, and that dynamic exclusivity sets them apart from other cars, and is at the same time very difficult to quantify.

Among four-seaters, the Porsche 928S 4 probably comes closest to doing what the Mondial does in the way that the Mondial does it. But we doubt that Porsche 928 prospects are Ferrari Mondial prospects. Similarly, the Mercedes-Benz 560SEL is designed to perform the same mission as the Mondial—with greater comfort, at least equal performance, and an equally heart-stopping price tag—but the respective personalities of those two cars and their buyers are also light-years apart. Until there's another Lamborghini four-seater, the Mondial seems to be the only car in its category.

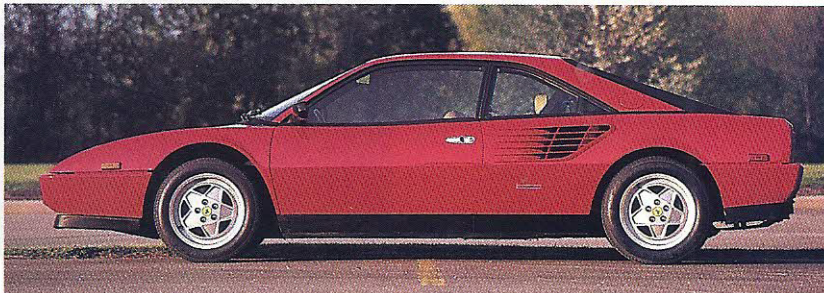
Should you consider owning one? Of course, provided you genuinely enjoy driving, and you're prepared to go the extra distance to alter your own automotive prejudices to suit the car's idiosyncrasies. Though it's a bit less zoomy, the 3.2 Mondial has the comfort and luggage space that the 328GTS and GTB lack, and it is an eminently more desirable car than the older, larger, and more expensive 412 (not sold in the U.S.). With the 3.2 engine, it now has enough performance to really take advantage of the superior handling and roadholding inherent in its chassis. It may not hold its value, or appreciate, in the same way that some more exciting Ferrari models have in the recent past, but you're not going to lose a lot of money on any Ferrari. All that remains in question is your relationship with your bank.



FERRARI MONDIAL 3.2

GENERAL:

Mid-engine, rear-wheel-drive coupe
2 + 2-passenger, 2-door steel body
Base price \$71,700



MAJOR EQUIPMENT:

Air conditioning standard
Sunroof standard
AM/FM/cassette not available
Leather interior standard
Cruise control not available

ENGINE:

32-valve DOHC V-8, aluminum block and heads
Bore x stroke 3.27 x 2.90 in (83.0 x 73.6mm)
Displacement 194 cu in (3185cc)
Compression ratio 9.2:1
Fuel system Bosch K-Jetronic mechanical injection
Power SAE net 260 bhp @ 7000 rpm
Torque SAE net 213 lb-ft @ 5500 rpm
Redline 7700 rpm

DRIVETRAIN:

5-speed manual transmission
Gear ratios (I) 3.42 (II) 2.35 (III) 1.69 (IV) 1.24 (V) 0.92
Final-drive ratio 4.06:1

MEASUREMENTS:

Wheelbase 104.3 in
Track front/rear 59.8/59.4 in
Length 178.5 in
Width 70.7 in
Height 48.6 in
Curb weight 3400 lb
Fuel capacity 18.5 gal

SUSPENSION:

Independent front, with upper and lower A-arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar
Independent rear, with upper and lower A-arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar

STEERING:

Rack-and-pinion

BRAKES:

11.1-in vented discs front
11.0-in vented discs rear

WHEELS and TIRES:

16 x 7.0-in front, 16 x 8.0-in rear cast magnesium wheels
205/55VR-16 front, 225/55VR-16 rear
Goodyear Eagle VR55 tires

PERFORMANCE (manufacturer's data):

0–60 mph in 7.4 sec
Standing ¼-mile in 15.0 sec
Top speed 149 mph
EPA city driving 13 mpg

MAINTENANCE:

Headlamp unit \$50.38
Front quarter-panel \$551.18
Brake pads front wheels \$98.92
Air filter \$33.25
Oil filter \$16.47
Recommended oil change interval 7500 miles

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
ENGINE				
power				●
response				●
smoothness				●
DRIVETRAIN				
shift action				●
power delivery				●
STEERING				
effort			●	
response				●
feel				●
RIDE				
general comfort				●
roll control				●
pitch control				●
HANDLING				
directional stability				●
predictability				●
maneuverability				●
BRAKES				
response				●
modulation				●
effectiveness				●
GENERAL				
ergonomics				●
instrumentation				●
roominess				●
seating comfort				●
fit and finish				●
storage space				●
OVERALL				
dollar value				●
fun to drive				●

FERRARI FABRICATION

Computer-guided automation coexists with hammers and sweat in the making of a legend.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DOUGIE FIRTH

In the manufacture of Ferraris, time and progress are put to use where they can help, ignored where they cannot. And always, the sense of community remains. Enzo Ferrari once said: "Here it is always like a family. Here worked the father, often the mother, the son, the daughter-in-law, the uncle. They feel as if they are at home and that the factory has remained a part of the family and that its fate is their fate."



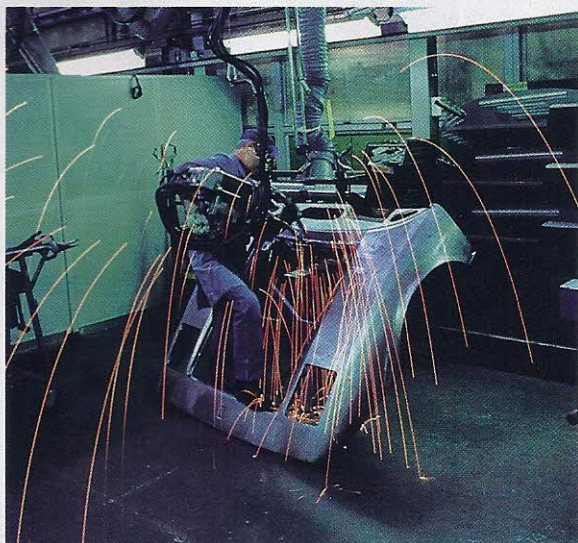
Ferrari has always been willing to farm out body welding and to buy minor components anywhere, but the heart of the car—the engine—is purely an in-house creation. Automated machining operation prepares raw castings for final assembly.



Only 2500 cars roll out the Maranello gates in a year—not so many that each one can't have minor flaws tended to with a well-placed hammer.



The aluminum DOHC, 32-Valve V-8 takes shape at a couple of spotless, neat work stations. In its 3.2-liter, 260-hp specification, it is installed in the Mondial, the 328GTB, and the 328GTS. A few 215-hp 3.0s are built for Lancia's Thema sedan.



Don't tell OSHA: Welding practices in Ferruccio body construction, including the use of much lead, would never stand up to American work rules and regulations. But, hey, it's Italy.



Compared with the thoroughly modern foundry and the reasonably up-to-date assembly lines, the Scaglietti body works seems crude and old-fashioned. Steel Mondial bodies are fabricated by a bunch of guys with hammers and tin snips.

