

TESTS: ALL 5 OF THE NEWEST FERRARIS,
MERCEDES-BENZ 190E 2.3-16, VW SCIROCCO 16V

ROAD & TRACK

AUGUST 1986

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FERRARI FANTASY

MARANELLO TO
LE MANS

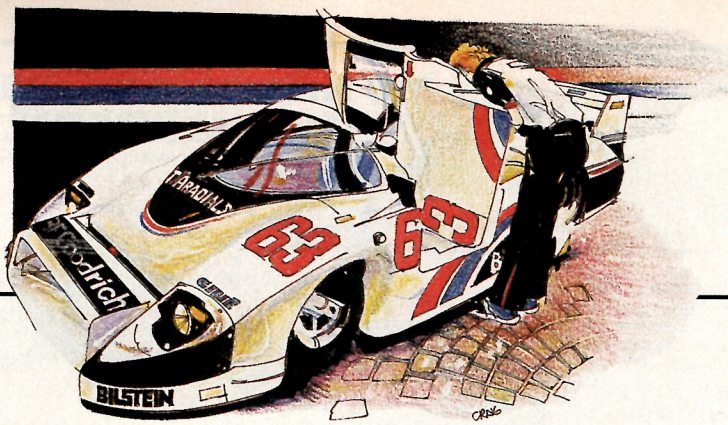


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ROAD & TRACK

AUGUST 1986

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DRAWING BY CRAIG AINSCOUGH

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COVER

Five-car Ferrari Fantasy—photo by John Lamm



FERRARI FANTAS



*Travels with Hill and Frère
to the battleground of Le Mans
and the playing fields of Maranello*

BY PETER EGAN
PHOTOS BY JOHN LAMM



"IF YOU HAVE ever wanted to see Enzo Ferrari in person," John Lamm said in a low, significant tone, "now would be a real good time to look right over there, because I think he is about to get into his Fiat."

We were standing in a small garage at the edge of the Fiorano test circuit at the Ferrari factory in Maranello, Italy. It was a beautiful spring morning with yellow

mustard blooming in the green fields around the track.

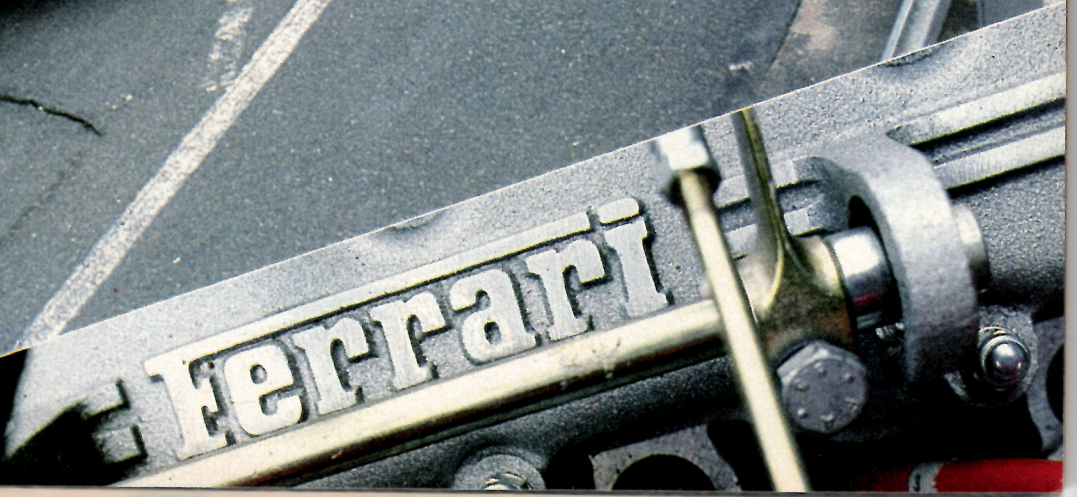
All of us turned toward the cream-colored house with the red shutters, where Ferrari is said to spend his afternoons. A Fiat Chroma sedan carrying three men in dark suits stopped in front of the house. One of them got out and opened the car door. A tall, white-haired man in sunglasses came out of the house, looked around for a moment with chin tilted slightly up →



AUTOMOBILE CLUB DE L'OUEST



GRILL-BAR LOUIS XI



ward, as though taking in the spring sunshine and air, then climbed with steady dignity into the Fiat. Doors closed and the car drove away, down the gravel drive, past the security guard and out through the electric gates of the circuit.

"Enzo Ferrari," I said to John. "The Man Himself."

"Eighty-eight years old and still at work."

I'd gotten slightly closer to the Pope at St Peter's on Palm Sunday in 1973, but no matter. This was Enzo Ferrari, patriarch to another side of the Italian soul. The possibility that we might be offered a brief audience with Ferrari had entered my mind earlier in the trip, but this fleeting glance was somehow more fitting. A person of my ilk had nothing of value to tell Enzo Ferrari, and he certainly had nothing to say to me that hadn't already been said in a lifetime of racing victories and fast, beautiful cars.

We were there, in fact, in a sort of celebration of those cars and victories. The purpose of this trip, ostensibly, was to compare five current production Ferraris: the GTO, Testarossa, 328 GTS, 412 and 3.2 Mondial Cabriolet.

But there was more to our visit than numbers and driving impressions. For one thing, we were testing the cars first in the very heart of Ferrari country, at the factory's own test track, and then later at Le Mans, the scene of so many Ferrari wins. And to get the most out of the cars, we had asked former Ferrari team drivers and Le Mans winners Phil Hill and Paul Frère to come with us. It was a chance to look at the cars in context, you might say, and for me it was a sort of Ferrari baptism by total immersion.

The trip started on a slightly strange note, as Phil Hill, John Lamm, Tom Bryant and I boarded a plane for Milan one fine evening just after U.S. warplanes had passed Libya. In the entire international terminal at Kennedy, there were just about enough passengers to fill a good DC-3, and we joined a thin string of passengers boarding a 747 with a wide choice of seats, cold chicken (thanks to a stewardess strike) and a movie called *Targets*, about international terrorism.

Milan arrived under our plane at sunrise, and two Lancia representatives met us at the airport with a pair of Lancia Themas, a V-6 and a Turbo Diesel, to use during our visit. Phil and I took the diesel and Tom and John the V-6, and sped down the *autostrada* toward Modena, a few drops of spring rain falling. The trees in Italy were just leafing out and had that lacy *Primavera* look, as seen in the Uffizi gallery and Art 101.

From Piacenza down to Modena the *autostrada* parallels the ancient Roman road, the *Via Emilia*, and runs straight as an arrow along the eastern edge of the Apennines. The Ferrari factory itself is in

Maranello, a village just to the south of Modena, with the old road running right past its front door.

We drove into the city of Modena first and found ourselves in the town square. Phil pointed out a large, garage-like building with two small signs of the prancing horse hung from its corners. "That's where the original Ferrari factory was," he said. "They used to drive the cars down that street and around the square if they had to test the brakes or something, back when this was a much smaller town and you could do that sort of thing. The garage is still owned by Ferrari and I think it's used by the sales department." We turned a corner and Phil said, "That bank building on the side street was the old *Albergo Reale*, the hotel where Ferrari's guests and drivers stayed when they were in town. The same people have built a new hotel called the *Fini* out on the *Via Emilia*, where we'll be staying."

On the way to the hotel we passed the Scaglietti works, body builders and sometime stylists to Ferrari, and then pulled up in front of the Hotel Fini. As we got out of the car, Phil said, "Good Lord, there's the same doorman who used to work at the *Albergo Reale*." The doorman recognized Phil instantly and greeted him like a lost friend. They talked for a while in Italian, and then Phil went into the hotel. The doorman turned to me, grinning and shaking his head, and held up three fingers. He counted them off one at a time and said, "Pheel Heel, Reechee Geen-tair, Den Guurney. *Amarican!*"

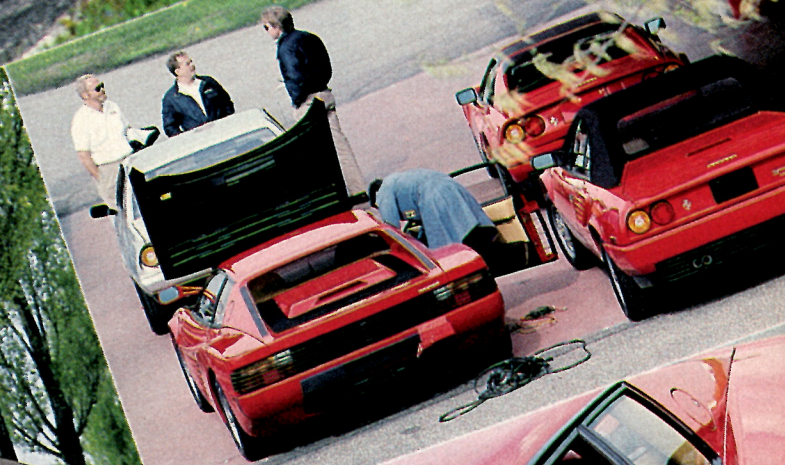
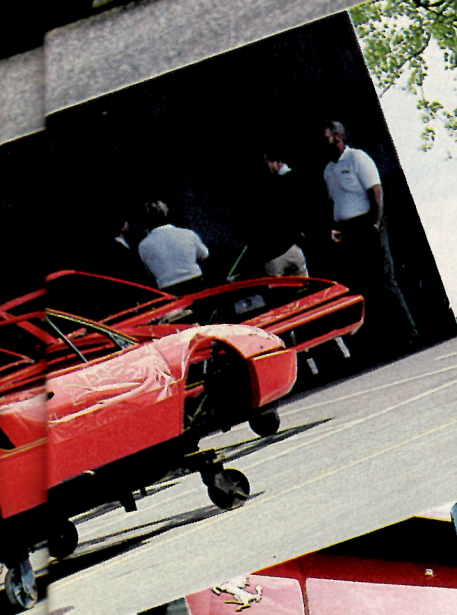
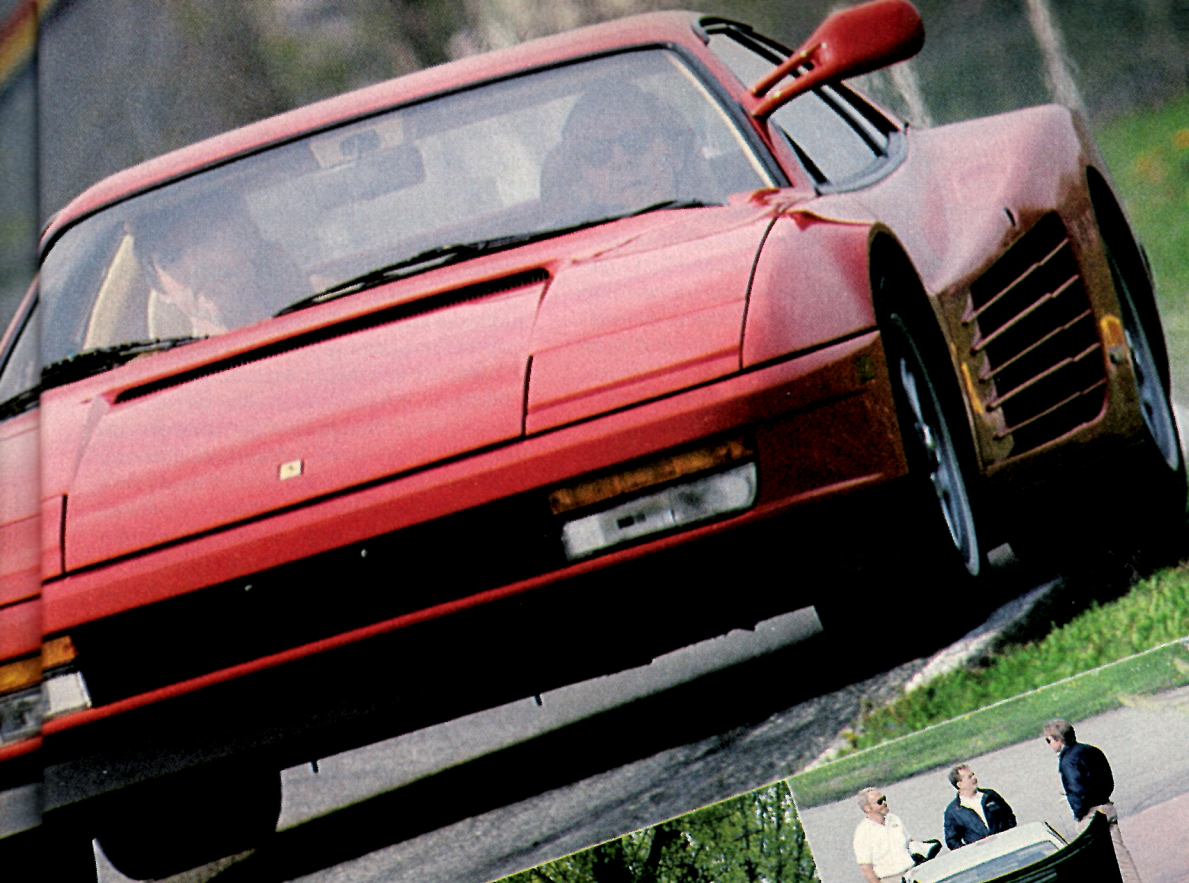
"*Si*," I agreed, cheerfully using up half my Italian vocabulary in one breath.

In the evening, after napping long enough to work up a powerful appetite, we drove out of town a few miles to the *Trattoria Rustica da Felice*, a warm, friendly roadhouse of a restaurant on the old *Mille Miglia* route. Paul Frère and Engineering Editor Dennis Simanaitis joined us, having just arrived from Germany in a Renault Alpine Turbo test car. I'd never met Paul Frère before, except in the pages of *R&T* and his books, particularly *Sports Car and Competition Driving*, where as a teenager I learned how cars are supposed to be operated.

If someone asked me to judge Paul as a stranger I might have guessed he was an Austrian ski instructor. He has that tanned, athletic look, as well as a slight limp from a ski accident last year (hit tree avoiding runaway tyro). "One leg is a few millimeters shorter than the other now," he jokes. "I'll have to get an extra thick ski for that side." He comes across as the consummate European gentleman, friendly and relaxed, and, true to reputation, can shift languages with the same ease some of us shift gears. Better, in my case.

In the morning we drove through the Ferrari factory gates and met Dr Luca Matteoni and Sig Pietro di Franci of the →







Ferrari press office. They took us to the coffee shop next door for ritual cups of morning espresso, that special Italian coffee where, apparently, 4000 gallons of normal coffee are distilled down to 50 cc of fine black silt. Hearts pounding on pure caffeine, we drove around the block, past a statue of Gilles Villeneuve, and through the gates to Fiorano. Waiting at the track garage were four Ferraris, attended to by several mechanics and by Dario Benuzzi, Ferrari's *Collaudatore*, or chief development engineer/test driver. We had an example of each current production Ferrari except the GTO, an example of which would be waiting for us when we got to Le Mans.

The Ferrari people kindly gave us the track for two days of testing (see sidebar by Dennis Simanaitis), during which time we also got to poke around the area a bit.

Lunches were held at the Cavallino, an excellent Ferrari-owned restaurant across the street from the factory gates, where Phil introduced me to the delights of *zampone*, a delicious but none-too-lean Moenese sausage made by stuffing the foreleg of a hog with ground pork, each slice containing about as many calories as a 3-tiered wedding cake, including the statue of the bride and groom.

On our last day at Maranello, we went taken on a factory tour. The factory was much larger than the cottage-industry sort of thing I'd pictured, ultra-clean and modern. We passed a long row of brand-new multi-million-dollar computer-operated machine tools, neat stacks of cylinder head and gearbox castings on pallets, rows of Testarossa flat-12s (heads red), V-12 and V-8s on engine stands, and assembly lines of Testarossas in red, black, red, dar-



Just Your Average Fantasy

I MEAN, COME ON NOW. Here's the kid from Cleveland again and he's back testing at Fiorano, and this time there's not only a Testarossa, but also a 3.2 Mondial, a 328 GTS and a 412. They wanted to get us a GTO too, but that one's really scarce.

Paul Frère and I drove down yesterday from Nürburgring. He averaged almost 90 mph for the 8-hour trip, including stops for fuel and borders and for a marvelous lunch at the Hotel Vorfelder outside Heidelberg. Sorry about my power/weight ratio, though. I'll just rev 'em a little higher off the line.

Dr Luca Matteoni, Ferrari's PR head, has kindly arranged U.S.-spec cars where possible, so only the 412 is absolutely new to us. We've already run the 328, Mondial and Testarossa at one time or another (May 1986, May 1984 and June 1985, respectively), but here's an opportunity for back-to-back comparison and for complete handling numbers. Also, it's our first instrumented look at the Mondial since its engine has been enlarged to 3.2 liters.

It's the Mondial that's ready to go first, and I marvel at how little compromise it asks. All the panache of a mid-engine Ferrari with plenty of head room too. Its 7.1 seconds to 60 pares precisely 0.5 sec off the smaller-engine Mondial Quattrovalvole's time, and this advantage keeps growing right up through the quarter mile. Good sounds too, or have I already been seduced by this, the least exciting Ferrari here?

A few laps reminds me which way the track goes. Funny, they haven't fixed that bump in the braking area over the bridge. I wonder if it's there to simulate some famous corner?

The 3.2's slalom is just a tad slower than the 1984 Mondial's, but its skidpad here is 0.84g versus the home pad's 0.81g. I'm a little intimidated by Fiorano's computer timing lights lining the edges of the track, so the slalom speed is understandable. And

maybe Fiorano's skidpad is especially grippy. No matter; this is the virtue of back-to-back testing.

The 412 is next; it feels like a luxury sedan compared with the others. But hardly a slouch: Its turbine-smooth V-12 accelerates the 2+2 even more quickly than the Mondial: 0-60 in 6.7 sec, for instance. And its brakes feel especially powerful and wonderfully easy to modulate, even as they pull the car down from speed through the dog leg at the end of the straight.

Wait a second. Easy to modulate? They're ABS! And the 412's braking distances turn out to be shortest of the lot.

The big car's poise through the slalom is commendable as well. There's a good deal of lean, but you're confident that the tires are never at embarrassing angles. Nor is the car.

Next comes the 328 GTS, a car I've recently driven back home. And unfortunately I'm just as long-bodied here as there; I just don't have enough head room to avoid a contorted driving position. Others love the car, but I'll have to pass.

In fact, everything about this one disappoints me: I never see less than 6.7 sec to 60 (versus our May car's 6.0) and even my braking distances are a bit long; 275 ft from 80, for instance. It's time for a multilingual chat. I've seen Phil wave his hands a lot, so I try this. It doesn't work nearly as well, but then Phil Hill speaks fluent Italian too.

This particular GTS is brand-new, and its green engine probably explains the acceleration; we agree to publish the May results. As for braking, it's decided to try a little experiment, swapping the car's NCTs for Goodyear VR50 Gatorbacks. The latter are measurably better, bringing distances down to 149 and 235 ft for our two test speeds.

The Testarossa feels wide (and at 77.6 in., it is), tail heavy (ditto) and potent (double ditto, exclamation point). I match our previous car's 0-60 time of 5.3 sec, and it's quickest in the quarter at 13.4 sec and 106.5 mph, both a bit quicker than before.

I'm not able to match the slalom speed of my first visit; I'll bet it's those damned lights. In our first chance to skidpad a Testarossa, though, it responds with a best-of-day 0.87g. There's more than enough power to kick the rear out, but the quickest way around is using the power to balance the car's built-in understeer.

Too bad no GTO could be had. From our August 1984 testing, we know it's quickest of the pack. And I recall from our March 1986 top-speed testing at TRC that its seat fits me better than the 328 GTS's.

Which would I pick? It depends. If it's for cruising sunny southern California, I'd opt for the Mondial Cabriolet and never put its top up. If it's a day of lapping Fiorano, give me the exhilaration of the Testarossa. And for that quick 1600-km trip up to Sarthe, I'd like the 412, please.—Dennis Simanaitis.

blue, red, red, red, white and red; another line for 328s, mostly red, with a pearlescent lavender being especially painted for someone special. Sig Franci told us that the U.S. is the largest Ferrari market, getting 30 to 35 percent of production. Italy is next, at 20 percent, followed by 10 percent for Germany.

Phil and Paul created something of a stir as workers returning from lunch realized who their visitors were. Ferrari posters, scraps of paper, and copies of Enzo's book, *Piloti, Che Gente . . .* suddenly appeared for autographing. Word of their presence spread like electrical current through the factory, and soon all the workers in the place were gathered around, shaking hands or looking on with warm approval. As we left, it occurred to me that, for being part of a strong tradition, you could do a lot worse than working at Maranello in a pair of blue coveralls with a Ferrari patch on the pocket.

We had a last lunch at the Cavallino, after which we wandered across the street to a gift shop called Shopping Formula 1. Food, wine and the factory tour had broken down my resistance, and in a misty haze of emotion I bought my own copy of *Piloti, Che Gente . . .* enough Ferrari decals to wallpaper all four of my toolboxes and the first pair of honest-to-God string-back driving gloves I have ever owned, just like the pair Peter Collins is wearing on the cover of the book. Sixty-six bucks' worth in all. Another glass of Lambrusco and I'd have come home in a red jumpsuit with a deposit receipt for a GTO in my pocket.

Late in the afternoon we said our good-byes and drove our Themas northwest toward the Riviera and, eventually, Le Mans. In the north of Italy I took over driving the V-6 while Sigs Hill and Bryant slept it off, whatever it was. Lunch most likely, *Zampone* in particular. Erp. They awoke as we descended to the Mediterranean coast, land of palm trees, seaward-facing white villas, Cinzano umbrellas and sidewalk cafes. We passed through Monaco while blinking, then climbed into the hills near Nice in search of our hotel, the Mas d'Artigny, a big lovely place with a view of the mountains. Paul, who lives nearby in Venice, went home for the night.

On the way north the next day we stopped in the almost painfully charming hilltop village of Mougins for lunch at the Relais au Mougins restaurant run by racing *aficionado* André Surmain. We were joined by Uwe Hucke and his wife Monika, who last year arranged the loan of a 375MM Ferrari for Phil and John in the Monte Carlo Vintage Rally. Andre discovered it would be Phil's 59th birthday the next day, so he had his pastry chef bring out a decadent dessert with a candle on it.

I looked around and thought, "Here we are at a sidewalk cafe on a sunny spring

day in the South of France. Mougins looks like a French village as imagined by Hollywood for a 1958 Technicolor production starring Maurice Chevalier and Leslie Caron, Monika looks like Eva Marie Saint, the food is too good to be true and Phil Hill is blowing out his birthday candle while Paul Frère looks on. And I'm here, too, which just goes to show there is no Plan."

I felt only slightly out of place, like one of those Italian patrons of the arts who has himself painted into the Nativity scene as one of the Three Wise Men. Or maybe a shepherd.

On Saturday we drove up the Rhone River and into Beaujolais country at Tournus, where we stayed for the night at a small, friendly hotel called Le Rempart. At dinner I had *foie gras* and *Canard Très Riche*, a combination Paul Frère warned

would keep me up all night. And so it did. I came down for breakfast and said, "If you want to know anything, just ask me, because I probably thought about it last night."

On to Le Mans, in the rain. I rode across France in the Alpine with Paul and was amazed by the smoothness of his driving on the highway, as I had been on the track at Fiorano. He drifted the Alpine around on the wet highway with a very light, exact touch on the wheel and shift lever. He is the sort of driver who *places* the controls rather than pushing them, like one arranging items on a desk, all the while going like blazes. You can see why his cars lasted—and why he won—at Le Mans.

I rode along thinking, "I hope I can drive this well when I'm 69." Then I started chuckling to myself and thought, "I wish I could have driven this well when I ➤➤➤"

GENERAL DATA

	Ferrari 3.2 Mondial	Ferrari 328 GTS	Ferrari 412	Ferrari Testarossa	Ferrari GTO
Price as tested ¹	\$69,500	\$64,900	na	\$102,500	na
Body type	convertible	targa	coupe	coupe	coupe
Layout, engine/drive	mid-trans/rear	mid-trans/rear	front/rear	mid-long/rear	mid-long/rear
Curb weight, lb	3545	3170	3980	3660	2555
Test weight	3680	3340	4150	3945	2720
Weight dist, f/r, %	44/56	44/56	52/48	40/60	47/53
Wheelbase, in.	104.3	92.5	106.3	100.4	96.5
Track, f/r	59.6/60.4	58.0/57.8	58.3/59.0	59.8/65.4	61.4/61.5
Length	182.7	168.7	189.4	176.6	168.9
Width	70.5	68.1	70.8	77.6	75.2
Height	49.6	44.4	51.7	44.5	44.1
Engine type	dohc 4-valve V-8	dohc 4-valve V-8	dohc V-12	dohc 4-valve flat-12	dohc 4-valve twin-turbo V-8
Bore x stroke, mm	83.0 x 73.6	83.0 x 73.6	82.0 x 78.0	82.0 x 78.0	80.0 x 71.0
Displacement, cc	3185	3185	4942	4942	2855
Compression ratio	9.2:1	9.2:1	9.6:1	8.7:1	7.6:1
Bhp @ rpm ²	260 @ 7000	260 @ 7000	340 @ 6000	380 @ 5750	400 @ 7000
Torque @ rpm	213 @ 5500	213 @ 5500	333 @ 4200	354 @ 4500	366 @ 3800
Fuel injection	Bosch K-Jetronic	Bosch K-Jetronic	Bosch K-Jetronic	Bosch KE-Jetronic	Weber-Marelli
Transmission	5-sp manual	5-sp manual	5-sp manual	5-sp manual	5-sp manual
Gear ratios, :1	3.41/2.35/1.69 1.24/0.92	3.39/2.35/1.69 1.24/0.92	2.83/1.71/1.25 1.00/0.80	3.14/2.01/1.53 1.17/0.88	3.69/2.30/1.64 1.28/1.02
Final drive ratio, :1	4.06	3.82	2.24	3.21	2.90
Steering type	rack & pinion	rack & pinion	rack & pinion, power asst	rack & pinion	rack & pinion
Brake sys, f/r	11.4-in. vented discs, f & r	10.7-in. vented discs/10.9-in. vented discs	11.9-in. vented discs/11.7-in. vented discs; ABS	12.2-in. vented discs, f & r	12.2-in. vented discs, f & r
Wheels, f/r	alloy; 190 TR 390	alloy; 16 x 7J	alloy; 180 TR 415	alloy; 16 x 8J f/ 16 x 10J r	alloy; 16 x 8 f/ 16 x 10 r
Tires, f/r	Michelin TRX; 220/55VR-390 f/ 240/55VR-390 r	Goodyear Eagle VR50; 205/55VR-16 f/ 225/50VR-16 r	Michelin TRX; 240/55VR-415 f & r	Goodyear Eagle VR50; 225/50VR-16 f/ 255/50VR-16 r	Goodyear Eagle VR50; 225/50VR-16 f/ 265/50VR-16 r
Suspension, f/r	unequal-length A-arms, coil springs, tube shocks, anti-roll bar, f & r	unequal-length A-arms, coil springs, tube shocks, anti-roll bar, f & r	unequal-length A-arms, coil springs, tube shocks, anti-roll leveling	unequal-length A-arms, coil springs, tube shocks, anti-roll bar, f & r; rear springs & shocks are dual	unequal-length A-arms, coil springs, tube shocks, anti-roll bar, f & r

¹U.S. prices where applicable; 412 price in Italy is approximately 130 million lire or \$84,000; GTO price is currently estimated at \$175,000 and appears to be escalating.

²U.S. versions have SAE net figures; 412 and GTO figures are DIN.

was 21. Or when I'm 41. Any time would be fine."

Late that afternoon we zoomed past a cluster of road signs with arrows for Le Mans, Arnage and Mulsanne. "I think we're getting warm," I said sagely to Paul.

He suddenly pulled over at an intersection of three roads and parked on the shoulder. I noticed that the edges of the road were painted with crisp white lines. "That," Paul said, pointing down a long, undulating stretch of public highway, "is the Mulsanne Straight, and this corner is Tertre Rouge. These sheds along the road are the signaling pits. They put the signaling pits on this slow part of the track because they thought it a safer place to read pit signs than the fast front straight."

We got out of our cars and Phil walked over to Tertre Rouge. "They've changed this corner all around," he said. "It used to be much sharper, and you had to be careful because it went off-camber and it could spill you off into the trees over there."

"Or into the sand," Paul said.

We drove a short distance down the Mulsanne Straight and then pulled over to have coffee at the Restaurant des Hunaudières, a famous old spot on the circuit. The owner, M. Maurice Genissel, recognized Phil and Paul immediately and shook hands with all of us. "He's been running this place for years," Phil said as we sat down. "He used to be a driver, and he raced a Bugatti here in 1929 and 1930. When I first came to Le Mans, the Marshall people used to aim everybody's headlights on that little road across the street on Friday night, so we'd hang around in here while our cars were waiting in line. Just about 100 yards down that road, incidentally, is the spot where the Wright brothers made the first airplane flight in Europe. There's a monument next to the horse-racing track."

We visited the Wright monument, then continued down the rest of the nearly four miles of Mulsanne Straight. It took a sharp right-hander, Mulsanne Corner, and headed down a sweeping stretch of road through the woods for 2 km to a hard left. "Indianapolis," Paul announced, downshifting and throwing the Alpine into the turn. "They called it Indy because it used to be covered with brick." Then a hard right. "Arnage," he said, like a train conductor calling out stations. Less than 2 km and then a kink in the road. "White House, where the Bentley Boys had their crash in 1927." A short stretch and then the circuit disappeared under a fence, which forced the public highway left, skirting the central track facility.

Inside the fence is the Bugatti Circuit, which uses only the front straight of the traditional circuit, connected to a short road course behind the pits. This is used mostly for club races and drivers schools. In other words, you can drive all but about 1.5 miles of the 8.5-mile Le Mans circuit

on public highways, with only the chicane, the front straight and the Esses being fenced in.

It was too late in the evening to go into the track, so we headed west through the Sarthe countryside, searching for Phil's favorite hotel, the Ricordeau, in the little village of Loué. M. Ricordeau, who used to run this charming place, is gone now, but the new owners have managed to preserve its restaurant's 2-star rating, with a vengeance. We joined Jim MacLean and Helmut Schmitt for dinner. Jim is a past president of the Ferrari Owners Club and helped arrange the loan of the five Ferraris we'd be driving at Le Mans from Auto-Becker of Germany. Herr Schmitt was the man entrusted with the delivery of the cars. Not joining us for dinner was the driver of the transporter, who had to stand guard over the five Ferraris all night in a parking lot at the edge of Loué. All 500,000-odd dollars' worth. After another Adventure in Gout, we all turned in for the night.

Sunday morning it poured *averse*, as the French say in high school textbooks, raining your *chais* and your *chiens*. A cold, windswept morning, but we went to the track anyway, driving into the pits, where all the Ferraris were unloaded and lined up, beading water beautifully. All of us stood in one of the empty pit garages, shoulders hunched and hands in pockets, looking bleakly out at the wet track.

I asked Phil if it reminded him of 1958, the first year he won Le Mans, driving with Olivier Gendebien.

"I think the weather was worse than this," Phil said. "It started pouring a few hours after the race started and it rained all night. I couldn't see anything going down the straight, so I dragged the tool roll over from the passenger seat and sat on it. We didn't have any belts, so I stuffed rags and anything else I could find under me. It was a tremendous advantage to be able to see over the windshield while everyone else was driving around blind, and I found that by tilting my hat back just so, I could see over the windscreen and under my visor, without having to look through all those layers of fogged-up stuff."

"How fast could you go down the Mulsanne Straight in the rain?"

"Flat-out, which, for the Ferraris, was about 170 mph in 1958. I would tip my head down when there wasn't anything to see, but every so often you would notice a strange, denser mist on the road ahead of you, and that meant there was a car in there somewhere, and you would listen to your own exhaust note and you'd hear a little flutter in the sound. It would go from a steady NNNNNNNN to a pulsing NN NN NN NN, and you knew you were getting near another car. So you'd move over, and out of that dark mist would appear a damned Deutsch-Bonnet or some other little thing."

Paul Frère finished 4th overall that year, co-driving with Edgar Barth in the small 1.5-liter Porsche RSK. "One of my lasting memories of that race," Paul said "is that I came out of White House during one terrible downpour when you just could not see anything, even looking over the windscreen, and everyone slowed down almost to a stop because the conditions were impossible. And I was never so astonished in my life, because all of a sudden Duncan Hamilton in the D-Type went zooming past me right here on the pit straight going absolutely flat-out—OOOoooooahhhh—and he couldn't see *anything!* He just took a chance."

Phil pointed to the Dunlop bridge at the top of the curve that takes the front straight over the hill. "That bridge used to be farther down the hill, and for hours after it stopped raining the bridge would continue to drip water on the track. It was right where you were setting the car up to go around the corner, and the corner was narrower then and it went off-camber halfway around, so it was horribly unsafe compared with what it is today."

"And when it rained hard," Paul added, "there was a river across the track in the same spot."

I asked if the corner at the top of the hill could be taken flat-out in the dry. Both men nodded. "Just," Phil said. "That was the thrill of Le Mans. Before they put in the chicane, you could sit here and watch these cars at their top speed. You'd listen for the cars and hear this Eeeeeeeeee and you could hear just who did what. And the Ferraris used to have a nasty habit of betraying any cowardliness here. Back of just a little bit and the damned thing would go Eeeeeeeblub-blub-blat and ruin everything. Remember?"

Paul nodded. "Yes, when you'd want to cheat about going fast, you couldn't."

"With some cars you could lift and get away with it," Phil added, "but the Ferraris were terrible. They broadcast it all over the place. The pits, the spectators in the stand, everyone could hear your engine note through here. They'd look at each other and say, 'Oh. He *lifts*.'"

Listening to both men talk about Le Mans, I doubted that either had done much unnecessary lifting. Between the two of them, they had four overall wins, a pair of 2nd places and a class victory. Paul won the 1500 class with a Porsche in 1953 and finished 2nd overall in 1955, co-driving an Aston Martin with Peter Collins. Phil won in 1958, driving a Ferrari; Paul was 2nd in an Aston Martin in 1959, won in a Ferrari in 1960; and then Phil won for Ferrari in 1961 and 1962. (Olivier Gendebien was co-driver in all their victories.) In one period of five years, the two men accounted for four wins and a 2nd.

Good folks to show you the fast way around Le Mans. Which they did when the weather cleared the next day.

Returning to the track early, we began lapping the Bugatti circuit in the five cars. I rode in all of the cars with both Phil and Paul at Fiorano and Le Mans, and drove all but the GTO myself. Dennis has already compared the cars' handling and performance numbers in his sidebar, so I'll just give a few impressions gleaned from the track sessions.

Mondial Cabriolet: This stretched 308 derivative has been a soft-seller for Ferrari, probably because it is halfway between the racy me-and-one-good-friend appeal of the 2-seaters and the classic GT grandness of the front-engine 12-cylinder 412. Though the chassis and drivetrain layout are similar to the 328's, on the track it feels heavier, a bit longer and shorter-g geared. "The length," as Paul Frère says, "makes the handling very easy. Longer wheelbase means less angle for rear movement and makes it easier to drive the car. And I like how nicely it responds to the accelerator. Backing off for corners, it comes out just right. Even the American version now goes much quicker than the early European version.

"Steering is typical Ferrari, quite dead in feel, but very precise. The gearshift is also typical Ferrari, precise but with a lot of friction in it, which I don't particularly like. It's also very stiff until the oil warms up. The ride is quite soft and the car rolls a bit in corners, but it doesn't upset the handling, which is excellent. The Mondial is a good compromise between ride and handling."

412: As the oldest design of the group, the 412 is the repository of many of the virtues that have made Ferrari's road cars so well loved—front engine, rear drive, a V-12 making proper noises under the hood, exceptional balance, road-holding and handsome good looks. It is a Real World car that you would happily use for daily transportation as well as long road trips.

Phil did a few laps in the 412 and said, "It's lovely, isn't it. The kind of car you'd just like to keep driving all day. The ride is civilized, yet the road-holding and balance are so good you can do anything with it." Paul agreed. "It's a real Ferrari with authentic engine noises. For such a big, comfortable touring car, it's very good on the circuit. The clutch is much too heavy for a car of this specification—it's the last Ferrari with the single-disc clutch rather than the new twin disc that is 30 percent lighter in pressure. The 412 is much noisier and less refined in some ways than a Mercedes, for instance, but it's much more sporting. It demands a different kind of driver."

328 GTS: Phil and Paul both picked this as their favorite car on the track, and so did I (even before hearing the other opinions; honest). Only Dennis cast a dissenting vote, finding the driving position uncomfortable for his shorter leg length and →



taller upper body. Agility was the key word for those of us who liked it; the 328 has quick steering, wonderful balance and gives you the feeling it can be thrown around at will and easily gathered back up. And, of the group, it gave me the most feedback through the steering.

Paul said, "I think it's the best of them all. Very nimble, and I like the steering better than that of any other Ferrari. The handling is remarkably good, there is less friction in the gearchange and it has excellent brakes—I can comfortably brake later with this car than with the others, possibly because of the weight. Overall, it inspires the most confidence. The 328 is certainly the one I would like to have."

Testarossa: Faster, larger, smoother than the above, the TR's flat-12 produces a lower and more muscular note from the engine bay; hyper at its highest level of performance, but almost relaxed while turning lap times comparable to the most hard-driven laps in the first three cars. A magnificent, solid chunk of car with a great feel of breeding. Paul said, "It's a more exciting car, and it can do everything just a little better. In spite of its power, it's quite easy to drive, but, of course, you mustn't give it too much power in the corners. The car is enormous, but much more manageable than it looks. It has tremendous and immediate throttle response."

"In slower corners," Phil added, "it needs a small pitch and some power to get it to turn on its rear weight bias, because it has such terrific grip. It tends to push the front end initially, so you have to use the power to point it, but you don't want to use too much power at the exit of a corner, or you'll just push toward the curb."

In my own driving, I found the Testarossa to be great fun, because of its speed and horsepower coming out of turns, but also less tossable than the 328, for instance. It is a heavy car, and in a fast cor-

ner it feels as though you are dealing with a lot of mass. I wrote in my notebook, "It feels like a real race car, but the trickiest for me to drive fast—turns in quickly followed by understeer, then the rear end catches up and begins to swing slowly and controllably around. Feels like the Louisville Slugger with the big end, and the big end is somewhere behind you." Of course, the TR's ability to go faster everywhere may have had something to do with this sensation. Lapping at the same pace as the 328 was almost effortless in the Testarossa, thanks to its tremendous stick and power. On the highway, it would be faultless at any but the most insane speeds. And it's pretty good at those.

GTO: As I mentioned, I rode in the GTO with both Paul and Phil at Le Mans, but did not drive it, in deference to its private owner and its \$175,000 price tag, not to mention my inexperience at drifting under the Dunlop Bridge at 135 mph, which Paul and Phil did without blinking. Riding was just fine, in this car.

Power. Lots of it. The German owner had diddled with the wastegate, bringing peak boost up from 13.0 to 16.0 psi, making an already fast car, built for racing homologation, even faster. And I had thought the Testarossa was quick.

You buckle yourself into low racing seats studded with ventilation grommets, hit the starter with a competition-style push-button instead of twisting the key, and the engine comes to life in a staccato, angry beat (I don't care what they say about the controlled burning of fuel mixtures; there are *explosions* going on in this engine). A rather abrupt clutch hooks up the rear tires, and you are growling (check over the shoulder for traffic), then shrieking out pit row and under the half-tire Dunlop Bridge.

It is immediately evident, turning into Turn 1, that the GTO is twitchier and

quicker on its feet than the Testarossa. It most resembles a tauter 328 with higher spring and damping rates, wider tires and big sudden gobs of horsepower, which is pretty close to what it is. As the car exits the corner, power comes on with a wallop bringing the rear tires right to the edge of wheelspin, and spits the car down the track. There is the slightest dropoff in boost between each upshift, and each time the power surges on, the GTO feels like one of those cartoon cars that stretches out and snaps back together under hard acceleration. The brakes appear to work with brutal competence, and the car seems quite nicely balanced going through the turns before the front straight.

Flying over the top of the hill past the pits, I unglue my head from the seatback to look over at the speedometer, whose needle is somewhere between 220 and 230 km/h. We pass a Formula Renault from the *Ecole de Pilotage*, which, compared with the GTO, looks like something trapped in amber. And on to another lap.

Back in the pits, Paul and Phil agree that the power was fun to play with on the track, but might be a bit much for the average driver on the street. Phil observes, "This thing is so much faster than the Testarossa, I passed it out on the back straight with just a little burst of throttle. Until you get used to it, the GTO is embarrassing fast coming on when you don't necessarily want it to. You have to wait to see what's going on, or you could spin it just big time. I'm not sure I'd like to have it in the rain, coming out of a tight corner in the lower gears."

Paul agreed. "The power is all right in the dry. In the wet I think it might be difficult. But I generally like it better than the Testarossa because it's lighter and it understeers less. It makes quicker transitions."

"It's not a car you'd want to give to ju-

PHOTO BY JIM MACLEAN



Helmut Becker.

THE ORIGINAL IDEA was to test the five Ferraris at Fiorano and then drive them to Le Mans. Great idea, but no soap. Ferrari doesn't maintain a press fleet of cars. We then turned to Jim MacLean, past president of the U.S. Ferrari Owners Club, and asked if he could help arrange a Testarossa, GTO, Mondial Cabriolet, 328 and 412 for driving impressions by Paul Frère and Phil Hill at Le Mans. MacLean talked with his friend, Armin Johl of

Making It Happen

Karl Seeger Lederwaren GmbH in Germany, a longtime *ferrarista* and between them they reached the right source.

Perhaps the only man in Europe who could make this happen is Helmut Becker. He has a company in Düsseldorf, Germany called Auto-Becker (Suitbertusstrasse 150, 4000 Düsseldorf, West Germany) that imports, sells and distributes 17 different car lines. As a lifelong lover of Ferraris, it's no surprise that one of Becker's 17 marques has a prancing-horse logo. Through the diplomacy of MacLean and Johl, Becker agreed to provide the cars for Le Mans, sending his right-hand man, Helmut Schmitt, to oversee their care and feeding.

Herr Becker is involved in other projects besides selling cars. He is the author and publisher of a beautiful book entitled *Ferrari. Faszination auf Radern* (Ferrari, Fascination on Wheels) and is the principal organizer of an upcoming birthday party to mark the 100th anniversary of the automobile. This gala involves a rally of 150 exotic cars from Düsseldorf to Berlin under the guidance of the German Minister of Traffic. It takes place October 9-12. This birthday celebration of the automobile will coincide with the Berlin international auto show.

Becker is clearly the sort of dealer whose business is based on a deep love affair with exciting cars.—Thos L. Bryant

anybody," Phil said, "but it really is an outstanding machine."

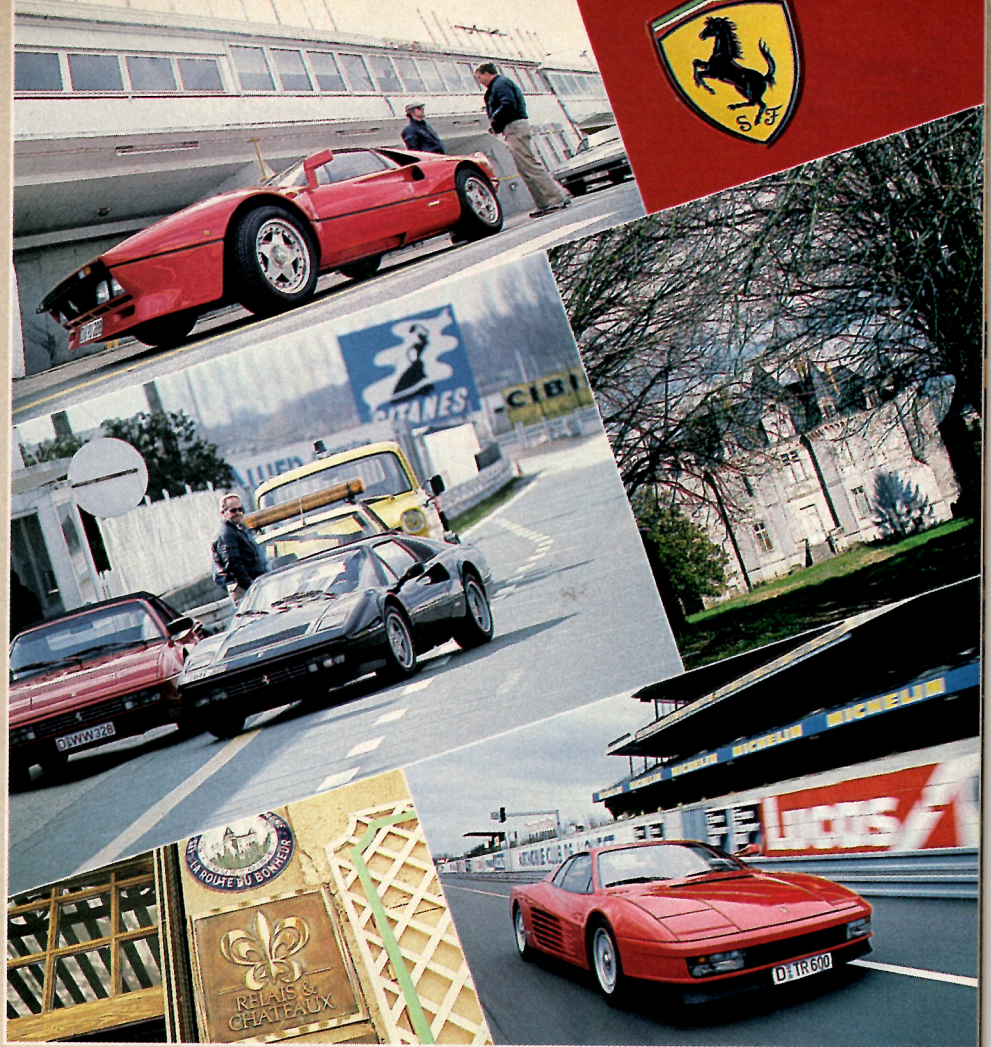
We finished testing in the afternoon, just as another giant rainstorm came blowing through. After helping to load the cars on their trailer and wishing our German friends a good trip back to Düsseldorf, we all retired to the Restaurant des Hunaudières for lunch. I rode with Phil.

"I'd like to come back here for the 24 Hours," I said as we drove out of the track. "I've never seen the race."

Phil drove on quietly for a minute and then said, "I came back here for a race a few years ago, but I don't know that I'd care to again. I don't want to erase my good memories of the place any more. It's too busy now, in a big-business sort of way. Before it was camaraderie-busy, if you know what I mean. Today it's all big sponsorship and big money, and any kind of niceties are just tokens, rather than genuine. The competitors, the officials, everything . . ."

"In the old photos," I said, "it looks like a road through the French countryside, with the earthen embankments and the narrow road running through wicker barriers and hedgerows. Now it looks to me like a Race Facility."

"You ought to see some of the old pictures I took here in 1951 and 1952," Phil said. "In fact, you should see them soon, because they're going fast. I used some kind of English film and it's sort of fading now. But it had nice colors at the time." 📷



PERFORMANCE¹

	Ferrari 3.2 Mondial	Ferrari 328 GTS	Ferrari 412	Ferrari Testarossa	Ferrari GTO
Acceleration:					
Time to distance, sec:					
0-100 ft	3.4	3.0	3.3	3.0	3.1
0-500 ft	8.6	7.9	8.3	7.4	8.0
0-1320 ft (¼ mi)	15.3	14.5	15.0	13.4	14.1
Speed at end of ¼ mi, mph	94.0	96.0	96.5	106.5	113.0
Time to speed, sec:					
0-30 mph	2.7	2.0	2.6	2.0	2.3
0-60 mph	7.1	6.0	6.7	5.3	5.0
0-80 mph	11.7	9.9	10.9	8.1	7.7
Top speed, mph	145	149	147	181	180
Brakes:					
Stopping distances, ft, from:					
60 mph	151	149	134	150	na
80 mph	250	235	230	242	240
Handling:					
Lateral acceleration, g	0.84	0.85	0.82	0.87	na
Slalom speed, mph	60.0	60.3	59.4	60.3	na

¹Data obtained in Fiorano testing, but for the following: 328 GTS acceleration from May 1986 road test; top speeds TRC (Testarossa, GTO), road test (328 GTS) and estimation (3.2 Mondial, 412).

CALCULATED DATA

	Ferrari 3.2 Mondial	Ferrari 328 GTS	Ferrari 412	Ferrari Testarossa	Ferrari GTO
Lb/bhp (test weight)	14.2	12.8	12.2	10.4	6.8
Bhp/liter	81.6	81.6	68.8	76.9	140.1
Mph/1000 rpm (5th gear)	19.4	19.4	23.5	26.1	32.7
Engine revs @ 60 mph (5th gear)	3100	3100	2550	2300	1835