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Ferrari's Mondial hasn't always received the best of press: some claimed the styling wasn't appealing enough, others pointed a finger at the performance of the earlier versions, while yet more felt Ferrari had pandered too much to the US market in the design of their mid-engined 1980s four-seater. But one thing's for sure, in 2012 a cherished Ferrari Mondial makes an excellent practical classic Ferrari. With four seats, a comfortable ride, that quintessential Ferrari sound track and – in later forms – impressive handling and performance, the Mondial represents excellent value for money. And with prices pretty static you should see most of your investment back in a few years time. If your budget allows, the Mondial T would be our first choice, but any version of the Mondial will make an ideal starting point for classic Ferrari ownership.

LAUNCH AND EVOLUTION

The Mondial 8 – launched at the 1980 Geneva Motor Show – replaced Ferrari's Dino 308 GT4 and had its sights set primarily on the US market. Ferrari hoped the Mondial's 2+2 layout would take the fight to Porsche's 911 and the Pininfarina styling studio certainly included some American styling cues in their new design.

As the second Ferrari to bear the Mondial name (the original 500 Mondial was a Monza-derived 1954 racer driven by Ascari amongst others) the Mondial 8 went through a series of changes over a 12-year production life with the original 1980 car employing a transverse-mounted 2927cc quad-cam 90-degree V8 engine, mated to a five-speed manual transmission. The basic block evolved in parallel with Ferrari's two-seater 308, 328 and 348 models and had Bosch K-Jetronic fuel injection, belt-driven cams, twin front-mounted radiators, side intakes for engine and oil cooling and Magneti Marelli Digiplex electronic ignition.

A mid-engined, four-seat layout inevitably led to design challenges, with the Mondial possessing a long wheel-base and a passenger cabin that was pushed

were slightly elevated to allow the fuel tanks to be fitted ahead of the engine while the higher roofline was blended back using thick black rubber-coated side buttresses. As a result many questioned the car's overall look. There was no questioning the car's rigidity though – a tubular box steel-frame monocoque, independent twin-wishbone suspension with coil-over dampers and stiff anti-roll bars imbued the Mondial with reassuring high-speed stability, while direct rack and pinion steering provided excellent driver feedback. The newly-developed front and rear disc brakes worked well too, despite the car's 1445kg kerb weight.

Instantly recognisable with its black front and rear bumpers, retractable headlights and quad exhaust pipes, the Mondial 8 sold well enough in the US, but buyers questioned the car's performance. So, in 1982 Ferrari released a more powerful 'quattrovalvole' 4-valve-per-cylinder Mondial QV model. Output increased to 240bhp which, in conjunction with some weight-shedding, shaved 0.6 seconds off the car's 0-60 time, and raised top speed by 6mph. Ferrari also incorporated numerous other improvements to the car's systems, including a revised console with the air-conditioning and heated controls relocated. A meatier steering feeling and red Quattrovalvole-embossed intake plenum added to the package.

In September 1983, Ferrari launched a convertible version of the Mondial (the first open-top Ferrari since the 1973 Daytona) with a manually-operated soft-top. This did reduce the rear seating space slightly and also added to the weight but US buyers didn't mind – mopping up most of the Ferrari's convertible production. Demand for a more powerful Mondial wouldn't go away though, and when the Ferrari 328 arrived the Mondial also received the two-seater's larger 3.2-litre engine. With 270bhp at 7000rpm and a further weight saving the Mondial 3.2 Coupe could now hit 60 in just 6.3 seconds, and boasted a 155mph top speed.

The revised Mondial now had colour-coded bumpers too and five-pointed star alloys as well as a complete





instrumentation and rear passenger air-conditioning. The car's turning circle was also reduced. 1988 saw ABS brakes fitted as standard and Ferrari sold 987 3.2 coupes and 810 3.2 cabriolets before – in 1989 – the Mondial underwent its final and most significant transformation, into the Mondial T.

With a transverse-mounted version of the Ferrari 348's 3.4-litre 300bhp V8 engine, the Mondial T finally had the power buyers had always craved, with 60 breached in just 5.6 seconds and a 158mph top speed. With Bosch Motronic fuel injection, power steering, revised shock absorbers and enhanced gear ratios, the Mondial T proved a hit. Seventeen-inch alloy wheels, revised rectangular side intakes, quad rectangular

headlights and another interior redesign completed the look. Ferrari also manufactured a very small number of Valeo auto-clutch models before Mondial production ended in 1993 with 842 Mondial T Coupes and 1010 Cabriolets sold.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Any classic Ferrari will require a certain degree of on-going fettling to keep it running smoothly, however the Mondial is one of the least fragile you can own. All Mondial engines are dependable as long as any minor issues are dealt with straight away, and regular servicing is adhered to. Ideally services should be carried out at least annually, or every 6000 miles –

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

FERRARI MONDIAL

MODEL:	Mondial 8	Mondial QV	Mondial 3.2	Mondial 3.4T
ENGINE:	2927cc V8	2927cc V8	3186cc V8	3405cc V8
POWER:	214bhp @ 6600rpm	240bhp @ 7000rpm	270bhp @ 7000rpm	300bhp @ 7200rpm
TORQUE:	179lb ft @ 4600rpm	192lb ft @ 5000rpm	224lb ft @ 5500rpm	239lb ft @ 4200rpm
TRANSMISSION:	5-speed manual	5-speed manual	5-speed manual	5-speed manual
KERB WEIGHT (COUPE):	1445kg	1430kg	1410kg	1426kg
TOP SPEED:	143mph	149mph	155mph	158mph
0-60MPH:	7.0sec	6.4sec	6.3sec	5.6sec
MANUFACTURED:	1980-1982	1982-1985	1985-1989	1989-1993
PRICE RANGE:	£10,995 to £14,495	£13,995 to £20,995	£14,250 to £21,995	£19,995 to £35,995

TIMELINE

- 1980 Pininfarina-designed 214bhp Mondial 8 V8 Coupe launched at Geneva Motor Show
- 1982 Mondial QV Coupe launched with 240bhp
- 1983 Convertible Mondial QV released
- 1985 Face-lifted Mondial 3.2 launched with 270bhp
- 1988 ABS brakes fitted as standard on Mondial
- 1989 Mondial 3.4T launched with longitudinal-mounted 300bhp V8 engine
- 1993 Mondial production ended

BUYERS' GUIDE: FERRARI MONDIAL T

FAR RIGHT: The 300bhp 348tb V8 power unit was a big improvement over earlier Mondial engines



whichever is sooner, and new cambelts are essential every three years. Clutches should be considered disposable items, with a new one typically needed every few years if the car is driven actively.

In terms of the engine, common things any buyer should look out for include perished or frayed coolant system hoses, failed sensors – oil pressure and oil temperature senders are frequent culprits – and poor piston sealing. You must start the car from cold and check for any smoke from the exhaust, which itself is prone to corrosion. Camshaft oil seals are also known to leak with some owners having modified the seal housing to alleviate the problem. Check the ignition

headlights, perished leather (it needs regular feeding), accident damage and most commonly of all – failed electrics. Sunroofs are notoriously unreliable – many owners just don't use them – and on convertibles the rear screens often become cloudy and delaminate.

Money spent of an independent inspection by a Ferrari specialist is never wasted and note that the wheels on earlier Mondials will only accept rare Michelin TRX tyres, which can cost £400 each.

Whichever incarnation you buy your Mondial must come with a complete service history plus a well-kept file full of receipts – call some of the servicing dealers to check that the history is genuine. And if the car

housing to alleviate the problem. Check the ignition key assembly on start up as some have been broken. HT leads can also fail and many Mondials will have some signs of rust – make sure yours has none.

Expect difficulty engaging second gear when the car is cold – this is common for most Ferraris from this period – but if other gears are difficult to obtain then there may be a more serious problem with the gearbox. Drive at least two examples before buying. Other known Mondial issues include failed air-conditioning, faded paintwork, fuse box/relay problems on earlier models, corroded coolant expansion tanks, jammed

to check that the history is genuine. And if the car seems too cheap there will be a hidden problem.

MONDIAL TEST DRIVE

First things first – the Mondial is a classic Ferrari, not a modern sports car, so don't expect it to drive like one. There's plenty of space in the front and visibility is pretty good but the cabin switch gear is spread out somewhat, the pedals offset to the centre and the gear-lever is extremely long. In addition you will need to get to grips with the classic Ferrari gate – complete with dogleg first gear – and by modern standards the

BELOW: Classic Ferrari colour combination of Rosso paintwork with Crema hide interior





steering wheel is very large. As already mentioned, second gear is difficult to engage when cold. Thankfully though, the clutch action is pretty light by Ferrari standards and the ride exemplary.

You'll find the handbrake to the right of the driver's seat and the cabin – while capacious – boasts very few storage areas. However, the Mondial does have both front and rear boot areas which can accommodate a few soft overnight bags.

When setting off the steering feels heavy at first, but it quickly lightens at speed and provides excellent feedback as all but the tightest of corners are negotiated with aplomb. There is little tendency for extreme oversteer and later 3.4T Mondials come with power-steering which feels lighter at low speeds.

The Mondial's handling is impressive given the length and age of the car, and that high-revving V8 engine

BUYING A MONDIAL

You'll find quite a few Mondials offered for sale in both private classifieds and at Ferrari specialists, but always take your time and do plenty of research before driving a minimum of two different examples.

When you settle on a car get it inspected by an independent Ferrari specialist before agreeing a price and phone previous servicing agents to check that the service record is genuine.

If possible you should choose a low-mileage car that has had recent regular use, rather than a 'barn' find. History is everything with a classic Ferrari so a complete record of the car's servicing, maintenance and repair is essential, with the Mondial 3.4 T Coupe the pick of the bunch. Buy one without the troublesome sunroof for around £20,000, add a decent sports exhaust, and you'll be in Mondial heaven for

ABOVE: An entry level Ferrari with usable space and good performance for very reasonable money

and age of the car, and that high-revving V8 engine just behind you ensures you always feel involved. You'll need to take it easy at first though – no high-revving or full use of the throttle until the coolant hits 70 degrees and oil temperature 65 degrees. Once warmed up the Mondial feels every inch a Ferrari with plenty of performance and a whirring, whistling and ultimately roaring sound track to match.

OWNERSHIP

Any Ferrari is an emotional purchase but don't be tempted to buy a Mondial unless you can afford to keep up the maintenance. Basic servicing is around £500-£600 a year but that's only part of the story. Any extra work that's needed (and there will definitely be some) can rapidly multiply this figure three, four or even six fold. Seek out a reputable specialist – like Foskers at Brands Hatch – and you can keep ownership costs down, while maintaining the car's provenance. A major 18k service is around £850, a cambelt change in the region of £775 and a new clutch anywhere between £750 and £1200.

The air-conditioning needs regular fettling and on longer journeys the rear boot, with the engine right next to it, can get pretty hot.

Insurance costs are actually very reasonable as long as your Mondial is properly garaged. Residual values are pretty strong – although a Mondial is unlikely to dramatically increase in value over the next few years.

sports exhaust, and you'll be in Mondial heaven for years to come. **||**

CARS WE SPOTTED

1983 Mondial QV Coupe Rosso/Crema, 47,000 miles, original service book and history, minor rust spots, Ferrari specialist. £12,950

1988 Mondial 3.2 Coupe Rosso/Crema, 52,000 miles, full service history, all books/manual/leather folder/keys, ABS model, air-con, CD player, no rust, private sale. £15,500

1993 Mondial T Coupe Rosso/Crema, 45,000 miles, comprehensive service history, all books and tools. Ferrari specialist. £19,995

1991 Mondial T Convertible Blu Sera/Castoro, 13,500 miles, in concours condition, two keys and fully documented service history. £30,000

Useful Websites

www.ferrari.com

www.ferrariownersclub.co.uk

www.ferrariownersclub.net

www.ferrarilife.com/forums/uk

www.fcars.co.uk/forum

Many thanks to Foskers (www.foskers.com, tel: 01474 874777) for their help with this feature

