



Ferrari's 3-Litre Road Recipe — Twenty Years of Change

IT'S only when one spends a day with two cars from the same manufacturer, built a couple of decades apart, that one fully realises just how that manufacturer has to adapt to its changing role within the market place. Take Ferrari for instance. 20 years ago, Maranello's road cars were distinctively elitist in a manner which suggested scant acknowledgement of the fact that they might have rivals within the "super car" bracket. Their cars were dramatic, individualistic and unashamedly products of a policy which said, in effect, "this is what we consider to be the best, most refined, high performance car on the market. Take it or leave it." Today, no manufacturer, no matter how high his standing, can afford to ignore competition from similarly priced luxury cars. And that includes Ferrari. Recently, we spent an exhilarating day in the company of a pair of 3-litre Ferraris which are representative of a similar segment of the market, albeit 20 years apart: the 1963 250 GT/L Berlinetta Lusso and the 1983 Mondial Quattrovalvole.

It was at the 1962 Paris Motor Show that Ferrari first took the wraps off the Lusso,

now generally acknowledged as one of the most attractive, well balanced and nicely proportioned front engine V12s ever to emerge from the fabled Italian manufacturer. The Lusso's history actually extends back to 1959, when Ferrari revised its "Tour de France" 250GT designed to encompass a shorter wheelbase variant which quickly became known as the SWB amongst the marque's aficionados. The 250 GT SWB, like the Lusso which was to follow, carried a Pininfarina-designed body built mainly out of steel by Scaglietti, and soon evolved into the legendary 250GT0 which must now be regarded as possibly the most sought-after Ferrari model of all time. Production of the 250 GT SWB range ceased towards the end of 1962 and, as the GTO was basically a competition car, it was obvious that a new road model was needed in the range.

That newcomer was to be the Lusso. Built with the traditional small diameter tube frame chassis, overlaid with hand beaten steel panels, but including alloy bonnet, boot and doors, the Lusso's gently rounded profile and sculptured curves gave it a

APPROPRIATE surroundings: the Lusso and Mondial seem happily at home on the drive in front of Woodham Mortimer Place, home of European Electronics Systems. Opposite, this shot from above nicely contrasts the flowing elegance of the Lusso's lines with the square-cut, aerodynamically efficient shape of the Mondial.

distinctively elegant appearance. Subsequent front-engined Ferrari road cars, right through to the 365GTB/4 Daytona, arguably the fastest production car of all time to emerge from the Maranello factory, have all projected an aggressive, uncompromising visual image. The Lusso is one of Ferrari's few creations to combine that aggressiveness with a classical, timeless appeal. Even in 1983, the Lusso's profile looks as fresh as tomorrow. . . .

Tracking down a Lusso for this article didn't turn out to be a particularly difficult task, thanks to a stroke of coincidence and good fortune. Despite the fact that only 350 examples of this Ferrari left the factory between January 1963 and August 1964 and despite the fact that fewer than a dozen found their way to this country, the writer managed to locate an absolutely pristine example within 20 miles of his home! Last month's issue contained an article on Audi competition engine specialist Terry Hoyle, and when I accompanied colleague Mike Greasley on a visit to Hoyle's premises we uncovered his secret passion: Ferraris! His pride and joy is a superbly restored '64

Lusso which he acquired some four years ago and on which he has lavished a great deal of attention, both from a mechanical and bodywork point of view.

A Mondial Quattrovalvole had been furnished by the marque's British importers, Maranello Concessionaires, so an enjoyable day "playing cars" was in prospect, despite the onset of the sort of rainy weather which makes most classic car owners head for the cover of their garages. In that respect Terry Hoyle was most trusting and accommodating, and although his knuckles must have been turning white with terror when I set off up the rain-soaked A12 at the wheel of his cherished device, I must say that he concealed his apprehension with admirable dignity!

The heart of the Lusso, visible when one lifts the forward-hinged bonnet, is a delicious sight for all true Ferrari devotees. The 60-degree, 3-litre V12, the work of immediate post-War designer Gioacchino Colombo (the man who did the design work on Alfa Romeo's supercharged 1½-litre 158 way back in 1938) is neatly installed beneath a trio of Weber 36DCS carburettors which nestle snugly between the black crackle finish of the two cam covers. With a bore and stroke of 73.00 × 58.8 mm, the Lusso's engine develops in the region of 250 bhp at 7,400 rpm, sufficient to endow the car with the sort of performance that will still turn heads in 1983, let alone 1963.

Hoyle admits that the car was "rather down at heel" when he purchased it from Belgium, but the same precise attention to detail that's typical of his work on the Audi rally engines has also been brought to bear on this particular road-going V12. Quite clearly there is little that Terry doesn't know about this Ferrari engine and, when I looked slightly apprehensive when he explained how he regularly revs it round to beyond 7,000 rpm, he replied firmly, "although everybody says I shouldn't be doing that because the car is 20 years old, my feeling is that it's a Ferrari and that's what it's for!" Quite so.

I had always been under the impression that Weber-carburated Ferraris were notoriously difficult to start, particularly from cold. Several colleagues who have experience of the pre-injection, flat-12 Berlinetta Boxers testify to the need for a specialist starting technique, and when I saw this array of twin-choke Webers beneath the Lusso's bonnet, I must say that I felt more than a tinge of apprehension. But the fact of the matter is that the Lusso fired up with no more reluctance than the Bosch K-Jetronic injected Mondial, although the provision of an Autoflux electric pump system is a useful accessory which, operated by a switch on the fascia, enables the driver to prime the Webers before switching on the engine, thus minimising the possibility of vapour lock on a warm day.

The 3-litre V12 is fitted with a two-valves per cylinder head and ignition is by two coils

and two Marelli distributors, vertically mounted and driven off the rear of the camshafts. Each distributor employs two pairs of contact points and there is a single sparking plug per cylinder.

Internally, the Lusso really makes little concession to creature comforts and it was strange riding in a seemingly modern car without anything in the way of seat belts or harnesses, this particular machine having been built shortly before the 1965 "cut off" date after which such accessories became obligatory. The driver's side is dominated by an evocative, three-spoke Nardi wood rimmed wheel, set a trifle too high for modern tastes, and although a dated worm and roller steering system is employed, it proved remarkably responsive and precise during our brief stint in the driving seat.

The fascia layout is unusual, visually perhaps the least aspect of the Lusso's trim. In this Ferrari priority has been given to the secondary instruments, leaving the typically 1960s-style Veglia speedometer and rev counter paired alone under cowlings in the centre of the instrument panel. Immediately ahead of the driver, and easily visible, are (from left to right), a clock, fuel contents gauge, water temperature, oil temperature and oil pressure gauge. The whole effect of the fascia layout seems faintly out of keeping with what we've come to expect from the cockpits of high performance cars in the 1970s and 80s, but that's just a measure of the dramatically changing tastes and styles during the era spanning the years between these two particular Ferraris.

Initially acquired complete with non-standard Porsche seats, this Lusso now sports a pair of original specification, leather trimmed buckets which proved extremely comfortable, even though the driving position is tailor-made for the Italianate

profile — and there are no "cissy" luxuries such as adjustable steering columns to mitigate this state of affairs! The seats were conjured up by Ferrari specialists Graypaul Motors, who also did the restoration of the bodywork, and Hoyle pays tribute to the amazing way they seem to be able to come up with all sorts of small components, not major items, but the sort of things which "round off" a totally genuine car. "You'd be lost without a company like this to provide all the small bits and pieces" he reflects, "things like the seats and details like the little trim surround to the rear number plate." Having said that, one should point out that this Lusso is devoid of a rear bumper, not through component shortage, but the owner's choice. "I think it looks better like this," he muses, "a little more like a GTO, perhaps!"

Once I'd slid myself in behind that splendid steering wheel, tucked my feet up sufficiently to find the well-positioned pedals, and made myself familiar with the high-set, notchy, but very positive change controlling the four speed gearbox, it was time to fire up and sample a helping of Lusso motoring. The engine had been well warmed up by the car's owner by the time I took it over, so there wasn't a trace of hesitation as the V12 burst into life. The initial burbling soon gives way to a deeper, more business like rasp as one opens the throttle, that distinctive V12 "twang" accentuated by the lovingly crafted exhaust system with its twin tail pipes emanating from each bank.

Even using modest throttle openings, there is no mistaking that this is a quick machine. Using around 7,000 rpm it will sprint from 0-60 mph in eight seconds and just break the 20 sec. barrier from standstill to 100 mph. Directional stability is



remarkably good for a 20 year old machine and the ride and bump suppression quite outstanding, something which came as a major surprise. Front suspension is by means of unequal length wishbones and coil springs, while a live axle located by longitudinal leaf springs with trailing arms are employed at the rear together with a Watts linkage. Needless to say, disc brakes are employed all round, although there is little in the way of sharp response here to betray the presence of the Bendix "Hydrovac" vacuum-operated booster system. Although I take the point that it may be necessary to warm the brakes up progressively, I wasn't particularly impressed with this aspect of the Lusso's character.

The gearing is such that 20 mph per 1000 rpm is on tap in top gear and if you floor the throttle at 90 mph in fourth there's a real kick in the back as the Lusso shrieks off on its way towards its 150 mph top speed. This sort of performance, however, is exacted at the expense of high fuel consumption — 14 to 16 mpg being about as good as one can expect, ensuring that even the Lusso's 25 gallon tank will only be sufficient for about 375 miles.

In my view, the Ferrari Lusso has stood the test of time commendably well, underlining the point that good cars are good, bad cars are bad and the passing of time makes no difference on either score. Setting aside the somewhat misty-eyed aura of nostalgia that old exotic cars seem to

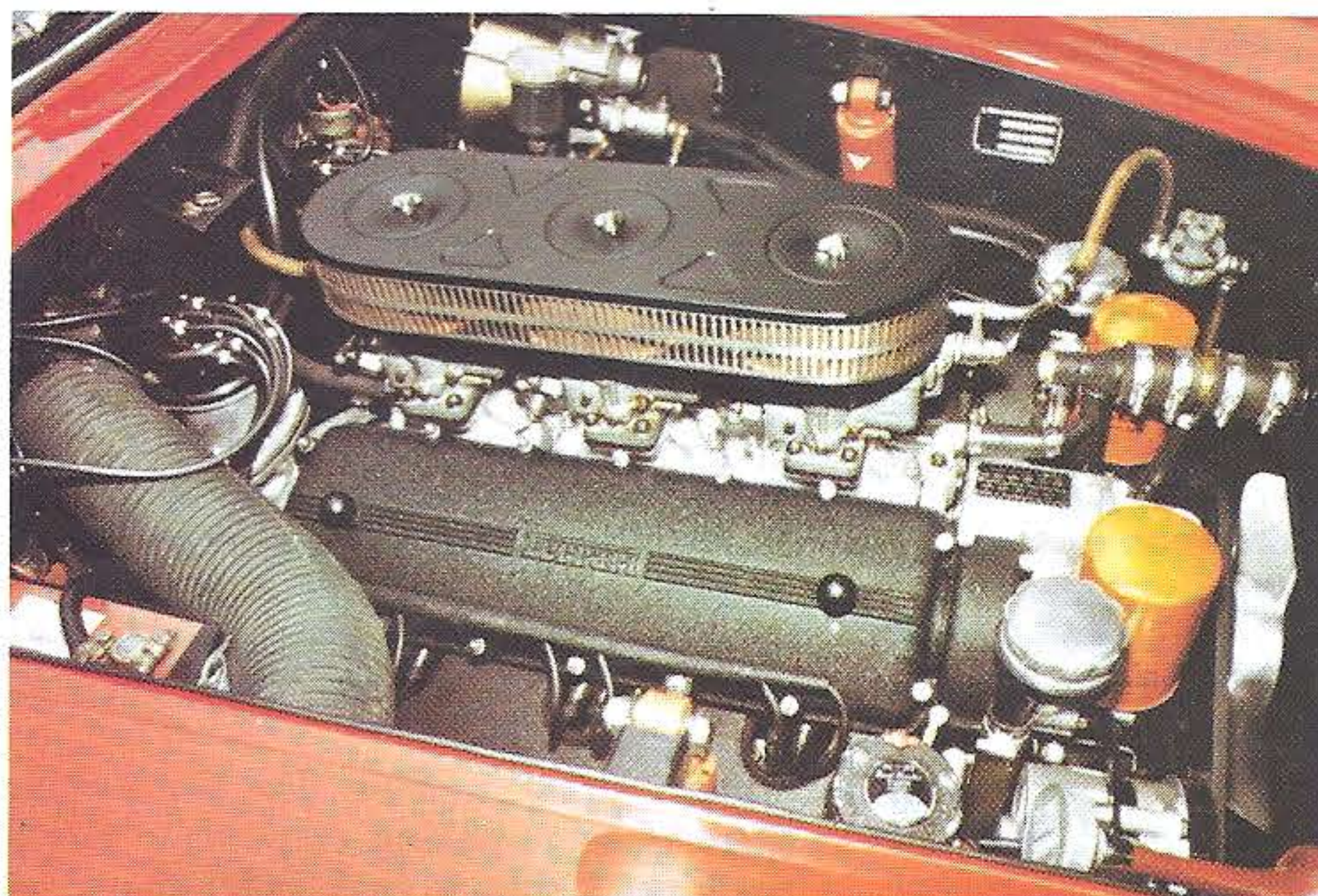
generate amongst their most passionate fans, the Lusso does a pretty good job by the standards of 1983. It's got a decidedly "vintage" flavour, but retains a taut and well balanced feel. To me it was proof that such qualities don't have to go hand-in-hand with an agricultural lack of refinement.

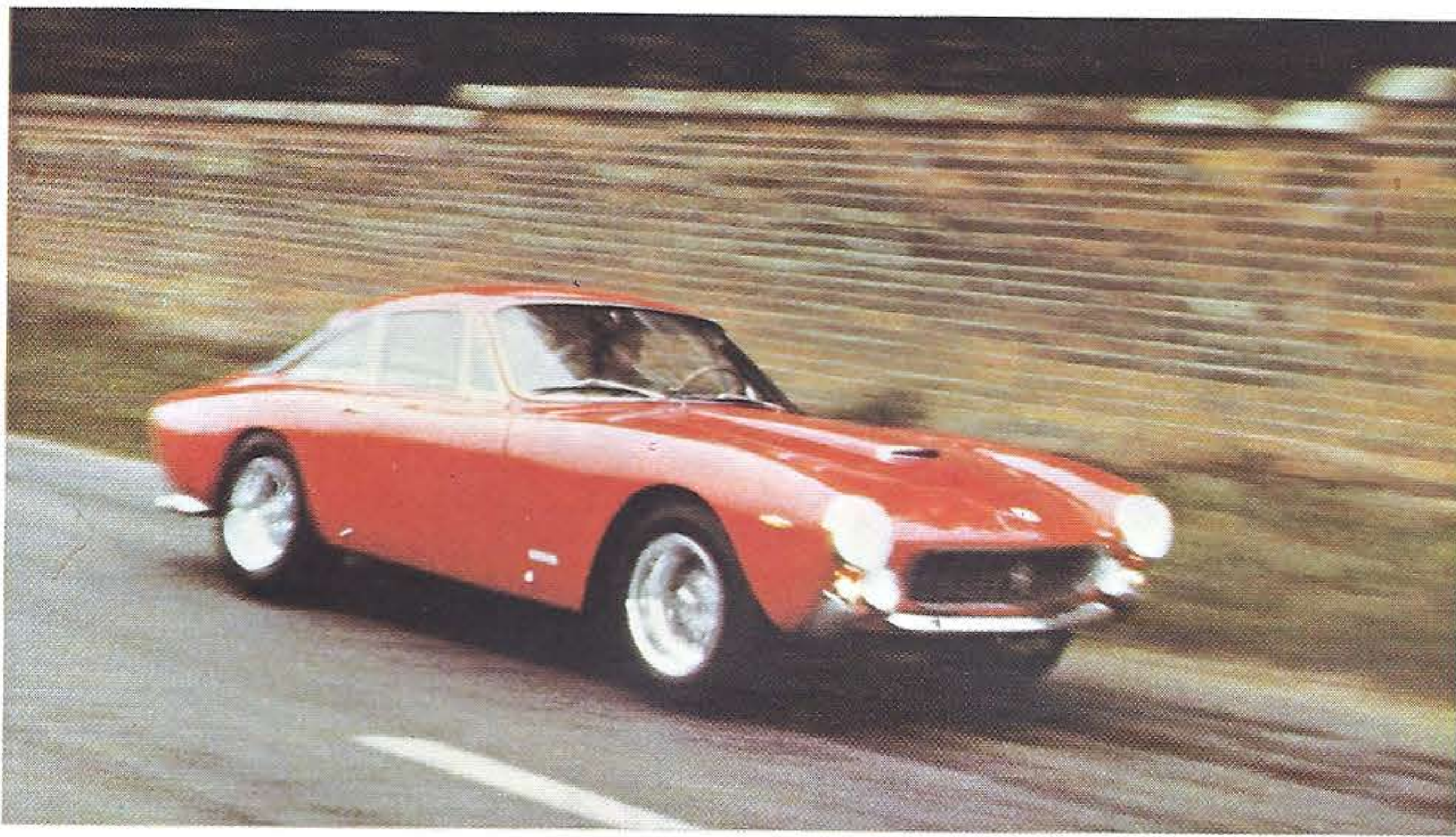
Unquestionably, the Lusso was regarded as a splendid car measured against its contemporaries of the early 1960s. But how does the Mondial Quattrovalvole measure up against its rivals in the 1980s? And, more interestingly, how will the central engined V8 two-plus-two be regarded in years to come?

We first encountered the attractive Mondial back in 1981 when we tested it in its 214 bhp guise: it impressed us as a truly

CONTRAST IN STYLES: Three twin choke Weber DCS carburettors sit snugly between the Lusso's two banks of six cylinders (left); the ancillaries of the V12 are far more accessible than on the transverse V8 (right) in the Mondial. The

lower pictures show the two cars' interiors, the Lusso on the left with its large wood rimmed wheel, the Mondial on the right.





The twenty years that have passed between the Lusso's heyday and the evolution of the latest V8 Mondial have been perhaps the most crucially difficult for the highpriced sporting car. In 1963 the Lusso represented elegant, no-compromise high performance enjoyment from what was, even in those days, the most exclusive car manufacturer in the World. The rich who bought the Lusso didn't have to worry about banal aspects as fuel efficiency or longevity, neither did Ferrari go overboard catering for those considerations. The engine, the performance, the *image*, was everything. How times change.

Nowadays the Fiat / Ferrari combine recognises, as do all luxury car manufacturers, that the well-heeled potential purchaser is likely to be a much more hard-nosed, selective individual than he was twenty years ago. Like as not, he will be looking for the excuse to buy a Ferrari if he's a true enthusiast of the marque, but there will be equally persuasive reasons for him to look at a Porsche or a Mercedes. In that respect, the Mondial Quattrovalvole does a splendid job keeping the Ferrari magic alive, combining it with the performance that one takes for granted from a car carrying the Prancing Horse emblem and offering high levels of trim and refinement to satisfy the discerning buyer.

Many of my colleagues consider that the Mondial represents a "softening" of Ferrari's sporting edge, as exemplified so well by the Lusso. I don't agree. The Mondial is a Ferrari which is just as at home in the more cautious, demanding environment of the 1980's as the Lusso was in the lavish, devil-may-care 1960s. It may well be a less romantic proposition than its front-engined forbear, but it nonetheless does a good job proving that Ferrari is as adept at catering for changed market circumstances as any other manufacturer in the business. — A.H.



versatile machine, pleasantly capable of everyday use in traffic as well as displaying obvious agility through the country lanes. But there wasn't much in the way of Ferrari bite offered by the two-valve version of that 2927 cc (81 x 71 mm), transverse mounted V8. Earlier this year we were fortunate enough to sample the new 240 bhp, four-valves per cylinder version of this free-revving engine installed in the 308GTB and, in honesty, the machine seemed transformed. From jeopardising its reputation, running the risk of being slyly dubbed "an up-market Lancia", the Ferrari 3-litre V8 was back in business as an engine worthy of the Prancing Horse. Our recent spell with the same engine in the Mondial confirmed our original impression, although we were conscious of the two-plus-two machine's extra weight and the feeling that, at just over 2500 miles, it hadn't fully loosened up and the best was yet to come.

Ferrari is highly conscious that, to sustain its position in the 1980s, it must take on, and match, not only companies like Porsche, but also BMW, Mercedes-Benz and Jaguar. The buying public today can obtain hitherto undreamt-of performance out of large saloon cars, a situation which hardly existed in the Lusso's heyday. Thus Ferrari's image has altered significantly over the last few years. Build standards have improved beyond recognition, particularly since 1980, and the image of a Ferrari as a temperamental, slightly heavy, less-than-agile sports coupe has been successfully nailed once and for all.

By the objective standard of 1983, the Mondial Quattrovalvole is a splendid car. It's quick, racing from 0-60 mph in 6.5 sec. and 0-100 mph in 16.2 sec. In fourth gear it will surge from 70-90 mph in less than 6 sec. On the other side of the coin it will pull from rest easily in second gear — even in third! — and will trickle along at 1,000 rpm in top before surging away to scale the heights of its performance potential without a murmur.

Sitting fatly on its Michelin TRX rubber mounted on rather bland alloy rims (no

chrome Borannis here!) The Mondial is a true child of the aerodynamic age. Its profile is pleasing to the eye, obviously efficient, but not exactly a thing of beauty to take your breath away. Inside the cockpit, all is well-trimmed leather and thoughtfully arranged instrumentation. Better still, the driving position is fine for your six foot-plus writer: the steering column is even adjustable!

I have to say, hand on heart, that I reckon the Lusso's gearchange is slightly better than the Mondial's. The central engined Ferrari's change is damn' near impossible until its warmed up, after which it demands the sort of care and judgement that have become unfashionable to effect even perfect upchanges. The open metal gate always strikes me as a romantic throw-back to Maranello's old sports racing machines and, whilst its a pleasant Ferrari trade mark, the lever's spring loading in the second /third gear plane, suggests that one could just as easily manage without it.

Of course, while the Lusso was a pure two-seater coupé with reasonable luggage space, but nothing so outlandish as a lift-up rear tailgate, the Mondial really is a cleverly packaged two-plus-two, every bit as accommodating in this respect as machines like the Porsche 928 or 944. It is quite possible for a fully grown adult to sit in the back if the front passenger seat is pushed forward, and there is sufficient space for the occupant to endure quite reasonable distances before becoming aware of any discomfort.

Fiat's influence, of course, has been hard at work within the enclaves of Ferrari production car engineering for more than a decade now, in fact ever since the Commendatore made his highly secret deal with Gianni Agnelli back in 1969. While Mr. Ferrari now holds total sway over his beloved racing cars, Fiat's controlling influence on the road car side continues to steer the marque down that difficult road which spells commercial viability while, at the same time, sustaining the company's precious, unique image.