

# PRANCING HORSE.

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# Mondial 8:

## A NEW GENERATION ARRIVES

by CHUCK QUEENER

Year after year, generation after generation Ferrari continues to manufacture the world's most sought-after automobiles. In a week's time 1650 people will build 60 units ready for delivery throughout the world; 33 of which will be distributed to Ferrari North America before being sent to 49 dealers in the United States and Canada. The current range of production offers the 308GTS; of which 20 a week are constructed, the 308GTBi is done at 10 a week, the 512BB and 400i squeak out 7.5 units each week while the newest Mondial 8 is up to 15 cars and expected to go higher.

Mondial loosely translated means world-wide and with this newest generation of Ferrari road-cars it is very easy to see how times as well as Ferraris have changed.

During the time I spend with this car both privately and in the company of *Road & Track* the comparison between it and the 308GTB clouded the opinions of everyone. I had to keep telling myself that this isn't a GTBi, it wasn't meant to compete with that car but to replace the GT4. The

from Maranello. No one was ever confused by a 250GT Pinin Farina Coupe and the 250 GT Berlinetta.

The Mondial is quick but not fast; attractive but not stunning, exciting but not thrilling. It was born of a time when a man's travel requirements could mean mid-town Manhattan at noon and U.S. highway 22 an hour later. I am reminded of a story about an American dealer trying to explain to Mr. Ferrari that the cars sent to the U.S. needed larger radiators. "Nonsense", Mr. Ferrari said. As they drove thru rush-hour traffic the dealer watched with great interest as the water temperature steadily climbed. Just as the dealer was about to make his point Mr. Ferrari suggested it was time to pull over at a local *trattoria* for refreshments! The Mondial is a different cut. Evolution got in the way and helped create a very livable car.

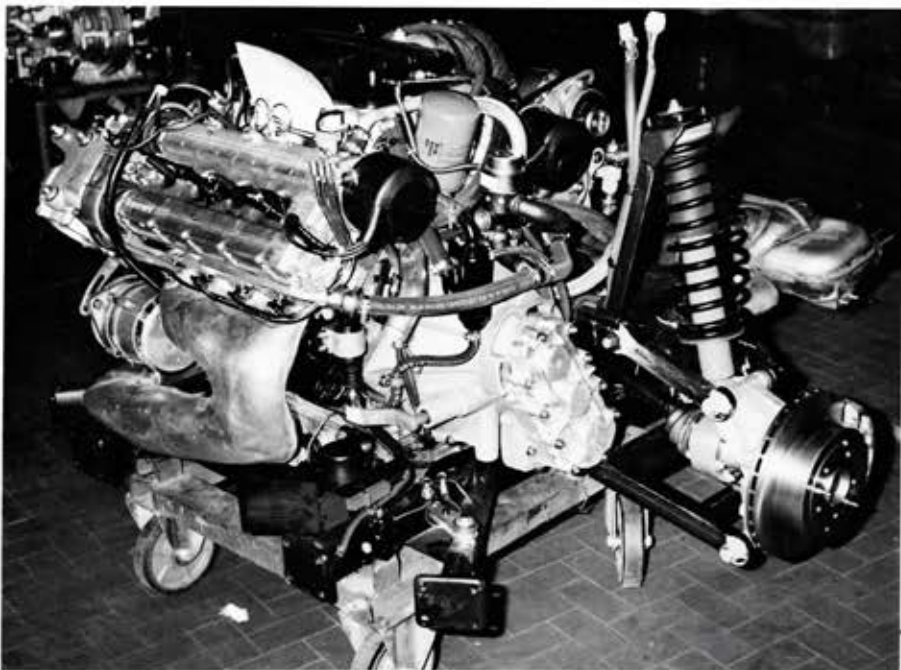
As I said, it was conceived as the replacement for the 308GT4 which was styled by Bertone. Many dimensional changes were made to help Pininfarina create a more appealing shape and this seems to have been met with mixed emotions. Sergio Pininfarina remarked that after years of watching public reaction to his products, the ones that looked good 10 or 15 years later were not *the* show-stoppers and he feels this way about the Mondial.

Mechanically the car is very similar to the GTBi. It has the same 308 engine with Bosch K-Jetronic fuel injection developing 214 bhp at 6600 rpm. The gear box and suspension components are also the same. You will have no doubt by now read *Road & Track* and *Car and Driver's* unimpressed road tests so I won't go into that, just remember the Mondial does weigh 380 lbs. more than the GTBi and that the wider tires help contribute to its lack of acceleration.

Owners and service technicians will be delighted by Ferrari's clever design of the chassis which allows for the removal of the entire engine/trans-axle and rear suspension



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*Mondial 8 rear chassis assembly removed from car for easy service.*

providing quick and easy service. (Does that also mean cheaper?)

Driving the Mondial 8 is perhaps its real virtue. I found that it goes almost unnoticed thru traffic and maintained a low profile (no pun intended) to law enforcement types in four Northeastern states.

Climbing into the cockpit looks easier than it is. Those wide doors just open up the interior but when you get in the front wheelwell gets in the way. Once you're in the smell of Connolly hide makes you pause before inserting the key.

Everything is adjustable; steering, up, down, in or out. It is possible to

find just the right driving position. However, with the car I drove it was difficult to heel-and-toe but this could be fixed in the customary Italian manner.

Once underway the car's character comes alive. The long wheelbase smoothes out choppy toll-roads and its incredible visibility keeps you out of potholes. You can lounge around in 3rd or even 4th gear at 1,000 rpm and still accelerate without trauma. This is a very nice car and it is bound to excite a passion in some just as the 166 Mille Miglia did over 30 years ago.



