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FERRARI MONDIAL  
... A SHIRT STORY







# MONDIAL MAN

by ALAN CLARK






Ferrari's have a way of making other cars seem quite mundane by comparison. Naturally a Mini or a Fiesta is no competition for one of Maranello's jobs. But the Ferrari Magic is making good cars, even great ones, come off second best by comparison.





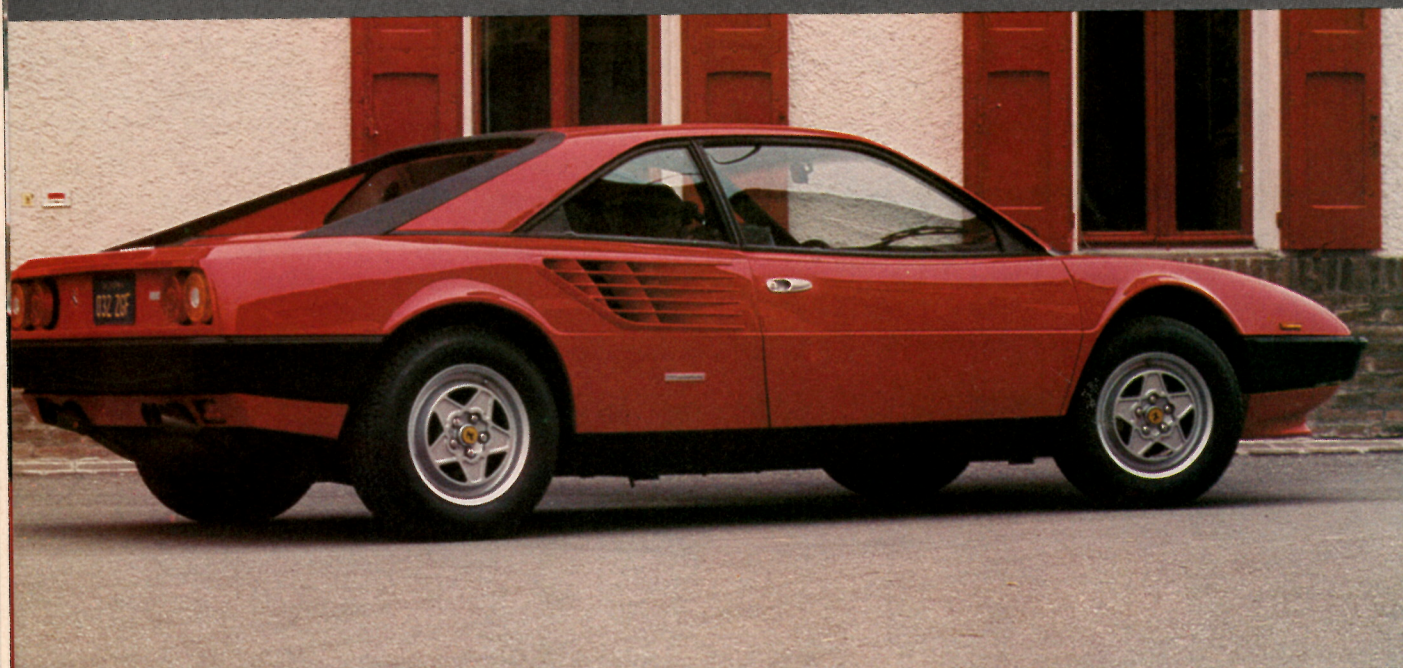




A woman with blonde hair is shown from the chest up, wearing a yellow t-shirt. The t-shirt features a graphic of a red Ferrari 308 GTB with a blue license plate that reads "MONDIAL". The background is a solid red color.

Even among Ferraris there are those that don't capture the hearts of the public as well as others. The 330 GT was probably a good example of this. A more recent example would be the Bertone-bodied 308 GT4. Quite a good design from an aesthetic standpoint, "it just didn't look like a Ferrari" was an oft heard complaint. When the 308 GTB, with its Pininfarina coachwork, was introduced the purists walked away from the GT4 in droves. Subsequently Ferrari's mid-engined 2+2 never did quite as well as it should have.





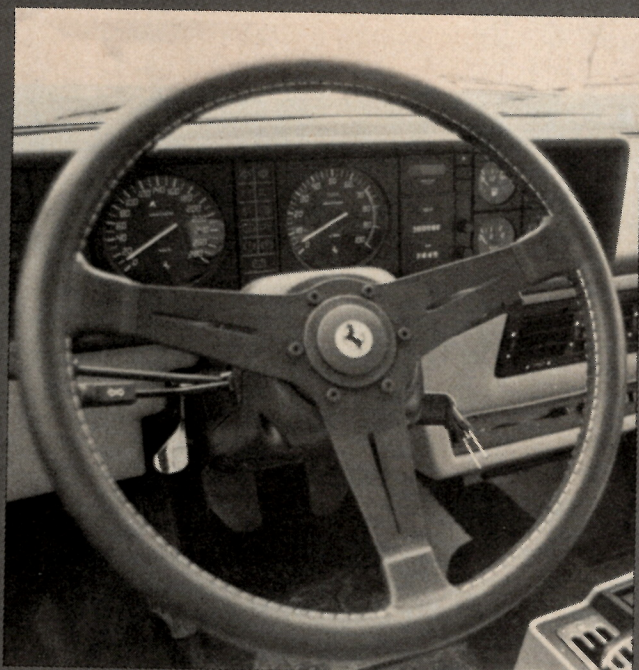
At last year's Geneva Auto Show, Pininfarina displayed an all new four-place coupe derived from 308 GT4 mechanicals. Named the Mondial 8, the new car sported bodywork looking a bit like a three-way cross between a 308 GTB, a Boxer Berlinetta and the Pininfarina-Ferrari show car collaboration the CR25. The Mondial name hastens back to 1952 if memory serves. The original Mondial was a two-place roadster with a 170 horsepower in-line four under the bonnet.

This new Ferrari has had some modifications done to its familiar three-liter alloy V-8. The most significant is the abandonment of Weber carburetion for Bosch K-Jetronic fuel

injection. And while some may bemoan the loss of multiple carburetion, they will find the German-made fuel-injection offers notably improved driveability, especially at lower engine speeds and when running cold. No need to add that injection also allows engine pollutants to be more easily controlled and fuel consumption can be reduced in the bargain. The second major change to the engine is the installation of a Marelli Digiplex electronic ignition system. While not as advanced as the Bosch Motronic distributorless engine computer fitted to the BMW 732 and 745i, the Marelli unit does an admirable job. The Digiplex system, as fitted to the Mondial, can utilize up to eight different spark curves, selection of which is determined by manifold vacuum. The Marelli system is, of course, fully electronic and completely breakerless. The engine produces a respectable 214 horsepower in European emissions trim. I suspect the U.S. powerplant will be quite off that with your rather amusing "potato-in-the-exhaust-pipe" methods of pollution control.

**mondial 8**





No surprises in the gearbox. A customary [for Ferrari] five-speed fully synched unit runs the power from the transverse engine down to the rear wheels. The axle ratio is 4.06 to one which reduces down to a gentle 3.74 to one final drive in overdrive top gear. That's just a fraction over 20 mph per 1000 rpm in fifth gear, a number that makes Ferrari's 143 mph maximum speed figure quite credible.

Inside, Pininfarina have gone to great lengths to make all four Mondial occupants as comfortable as possible. The front seats are very good with adequate support and a bolster sufficiently long to support the Clark lower frame. Forward visibility is excellent though the nose will drop out of sight for shorter drivers, leaving them to guess when the \$60,000+ car's front bumper is. Rear and side visibility is just fair but those roof buttresses do tend to leave you with a substantial right hand blind spot. While the rear seat is more than adequate for children, adults will find the back a bit cramped especially on the left side if the driver is over five-

feet-eight or is rather long of leg. The instrumentation is outstanding. No gimmicky LEDs. The instrumentation is straightforward, logically layed out and as legible as anyone could ask. The typeface selected for the gauges is a block style that looks like italicized digital calculator numbers.

The Mondial's road manners are very much like the 308GTB from which it was derived. The handling is a bit looser than the shorter wheelbase GTB yet more responsive than the GT4 the Mondial replaces. Actual adhesion is quite good due in no small part to the VR rated 240/55x390 Michelin TRX tyres. Curiously these are the same tyres as fitted to the 308GTB and GTS models destined for the States yet the light alloy wheels on which they are mounted are of completely different offset and design. Giant cheese slicer vents aside the wheels may be the Mondial's weakest design component.

Overall performance compared with a GTB is as you would expect. With 16 horsepower less than a carbureted two-seat 308 [power output is the same now for all injected three-liter V8s-Ed.] pulling a car that's nearly 300 pounds heavier, the Mondial is not quite the road burner the 308 GTB is. The Mondial I drove [privately owned] covered the one-quarter mile in a little over 15.25 seconds. Very acceptable these days. Naturally, the car available on your shores will be noticeably slower as mentioned previously.

Not too long ago I drove an Opel Senator after my fling with the Mondial. The Senator is a superb executive class sedan, a rather nice BMW Seven Series basher. But somehow after driving the Monidial, the Opel seems to be more akin to a Chevette. I know the Senator's a fine car, but that Ferrari

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