

SPECIAL FERRARI COLLECTOR'S ISSUE

UNIQUE CARS



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Behind the wheel

FROM FANGIO TO Schumacher, Mille Miglia to Monaco, 250 GTO to Enzo, no other car brand has created as much excitement, passion and gossip as Ferrari. Celebrating 60 years since its first car this year, Ferrari has captured the imaginations of countless 'Team Red' fans the world over.

New or old, race or road, Ferrari has become a byword for the ultimate in auto desirability. From F1 stoushes to the latest 'crash' on YouTube, it's hard to ignore the daily dramas of this most Italian company.

Adding to the mystique is the eye-watering pricetags, special editions and limited build numbers. In Oz you can wait up to three years for your new Ferrari to arrive, a formality Ferrari President Luca di Montezemolo once described as such: "Ordering a Ferrari is like seducing a woman. There has to be a build up to increase

the anticipation but there comes a point when you have to consummate the relationship."

As world-wide celebrations for Ferrari's 60th birthday hit full swing, we decided it was the perfect opportunity to devote an entire issue to the Prancing Horse. Inside you'll find a mix of stories reflecting on the things that make Ferrari so special.

To bring it up-to-date, staff writer David Dowsey recently spent a week in Maranello getting an insider's view of the Ferrari factory, just days after taking part in the big birthday bash at the Fiorano track. Weeks later we still can't wipe the smile off his face!

We hope you enjoy our special tribute to the world's greatest performance cars. *Tanti baci...*

Chris Fincham, Editor



NEXT ISSUE #278 – ON SALE Oct 3



FAMILY FRIENDLY

Every family has the relative they're reluctant to acknowledge and Ferrari's Uncle Arthur equivalent goes by the name of Mondial.

Ferrari's desire to build a mid-engined, four-seater originated in the early-'70s and the styling was initially assigned to Bertone. Five years after its debut, the GT4 Dino hadn't delivered, so Pininfarina was given a go at providing a replacement.

The car that revived a name originating back in the 1950s was displayed at the Geneva Motor Show in 1980 and hit the terrazzo tiling of Australian dealerships a year later.

With a hint of the Testarossa that was to come and a lot of Lancia Gamma in its elongated styling, the four-seat Mondial wasn't the prettiest or sexiest car ever to emerge from Maranello. But Ferraris that err on the side of practicality have seldom been beautiful.

Billed as the Mondial 8, the new 2+2 sat on a 2650mm wheelbase that provided a major improvement on the GT4's rear legroom and improved access. There was extra cabin width as well and huge windows that enhanced rear vision but obliged Ferrari to install air-conditioning as standard.

Priced at \$90,000 in an Australian market sector dominated by Porsche's \$65,000 928S and the sub-\$50,000 Jaguar XJS, the queue for early Mondials here and in other places was less than extensive. Worldwide annual sales during the 8's three-year production run averaged fewer than 250 cars.

With a compact 2.9-litre V8 slotted ahead of the rear wheels, the Mondial offered reasonable weight distribution and more predictable handling than the GT4.

Early Australian-delivered cars with the fuel-injected 2.9-litre V8 could muster just 158kW, which was a 32kW decline



With practicality on its side the Mondial can get you into Ferrari ownership without mortgaging the house

WANT TO BUY A CHEAP FERRARI? NO SUCH THING, BUT THE MONDIAL IS RELATIVELY AFFORDABLE AND PRACTICAL TO BOOT



in output on the superseded car. Add to that a 110kg weight increase and the Mondial's claimed 15.0sec standing 400m time and 240km/h top speed entered the realms of fantasy.

Compliance with emission and fuel consumption reductions in a world on the cusp of eco-awareness were the reasons why Ferraris had forsaken their traditional bank of fuel-swilling Weber carburettors. However, in Mondial guise at least, the balance seemed to have been swung a little too far in the direction of frugality.

A response from Ferrari to criticism

of its new 2+2 came three years after the original Mondial's appearance. The 'Quattrovalvole' with four-valves-per-cylinder, 177kW and a minor boost in torque went some way to addressing the performance deficit and introduced a Cabriolet version. Australia, though, didn't see this Mondial variant until seven years and two engine upgrades later.

Ferrari's departure from established practice was evident in areas other than the engine bay and body design. Electronic monitoring now kept an eye on everything from coolant and engine oil to whether you've secured the engine hatch.

Australia switched to unleaded fuel in 1986 and that year brought the first Mondial with sufficient power to justify its pricetag. Costing close to \$150,000, the 3.2 version came with a 300cc capacity boost and – producing 198kW – a 25 per cent output improvement on the original 8.

Best and by far the most desirable of Mondials is the 'T' version that was released here during 1990. Other countries got both the closed car and convertible but an Australian market in the depths of its worst financial downturn in half a decade was the

BUYERS CHECKLIST

BODY & CHASSIS

Ferrari during the 1980s conquered its corrosion battle and Mondials that were delivered new to Australia, garaged and not crash damaged have a good chance at rust freedom. Others – especially UK and South-East Asian imports – need to be carefully and professionally inspected on a hoist. Early signs include wheelarch and sill bubbling and dampness from leaks in the luggage compartments. Headlamp operation is critical, as is smooth activation and correct alignment of the roof framing in cabrios. Subframe cracks manifest as squeaking that can be clearly heard when the car is driven but repairs are straightforward. Delaminated window glass – especially the rear screen – is expensive to replace.

ENGINE & TRANSMISSION

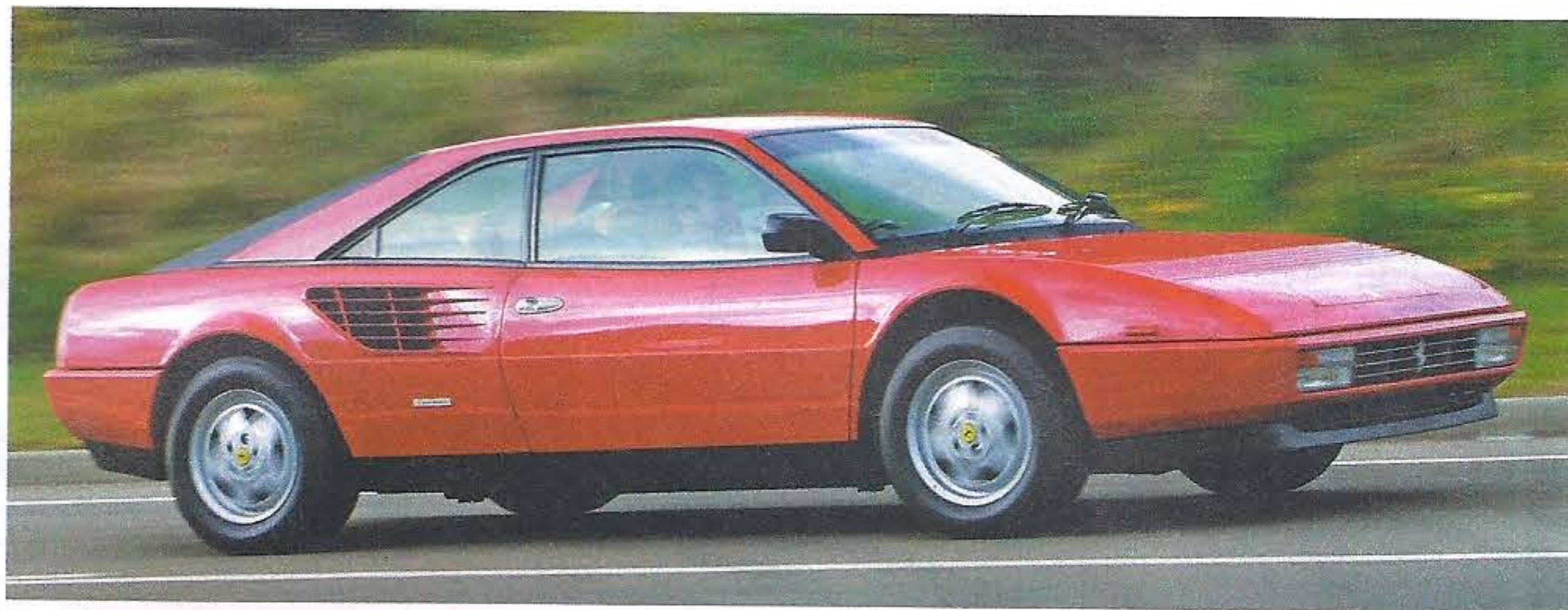
Check for a good maintenance record. Water pump seals deteriorate and reconditioning costs \$800, with oil leaks from poorly maintained engines commonplace and expensive to put right. Cam-drive belts must be changed every 40,000km, or two years regardless of distance travelled. Cars that are difficult to start and hard to keep running when warm are likely to require a string of repairs and adjustments. Well-maintained Ferraris of this era should not overheat and those that do will be displaying symptoms of more serious engine problems. Engine speed needs to be kept under 4000rpm until the oil temperature hits 65 degrees.

SUSPENSION & BRAKES

Neglect is responsible for most suspension and brake ailments that affect these cars. Shock absorbers can leak oil, affecting shock performance and transmitting unwanted stress to other suspension components. Reconditioned units cost less than \$300 each but the consequences of ignored maintenance can run beyond \$5000. Depending on driver behaviour, brake pads manage 15,000-25,000km and disc rotors up to 50,000. Pads per pair of wheels cost less than \$250 with rotors at up to \$500 per unit. Models with metric wheels still fitted require expensive and difficult-to-source Michelin TRX tyres.

INTERIOR & ELECTRICAL

Fuse board problems are a major concern and \$2000 is the minimum cost of rectification. The box is mounted in the front 'boot' and susceptible to water damage. Power windows that shudder or simply don't work can absorb \$1500 each in repair expenditure. While replacement window motors cost \$220, aligning the mechanism and installing a voltage booster takes up to 16 hours. Air-con problems are common and full system reconditioning expensive. If the car is a cabriolet, insist on seeing the roof being raised and lowered to check for binding or twisting of frame components and fabric damage.



Rust is not usually a big worry with Mondials but paint is not very resilient (above). Realistic seating for four is Mondial's trump card (above right). Mod cons like air-con and electric windows can be costly to repair (right). While V8 had decent power it had a lot of weight to pull around (far right)

destination for just a handful of open-top Cabriolets.

With its 3.4-litre V8 mounted longitudinally and generating 224kW, this was the only Mondial capable of pushing through the 250km/h barrier.

ON THE ROAD

With a responsive V8 humming away behind your shoulder and the spindly gearshift falling easily to hand, Mondials are among the most relaxed Ferraris ever created.

The cabin is bright and open and you'll get used to the instrument cluster that looks like it was pinched from a 1970s Passat. The seats are supportive in every direction and offer plentiful adjustment. Providing the driver doesn't sprawl too selfishly, there's even a reasonable amount of knee room for those confined to the sculpted rear buckets.

The gated gearshift ensures you know exactly where the lever is going. The only problem, at least until the gearbox oil warms, is getting it there. Skipping second gear altogether until this has occurred is an option but double



clutching when up-and-down-shifting should do the trick.

With early Mondials weighing a tad more than 1580kg and running higher gearing than two-seat cars with the same engine, off-the-line acceleration isn't spectacular. Zero-to-100km/h will take the better part of 8.0secs and rubber-ripping starts aren't recommended unless you're prepared for a \$2000 clutch repair.

When driven at normal highway speeds the car was said to be responsive and, despite early versions' lack of power steering, not difficult to navigate. ABS brakes didn't materialise until very late in the Mondial's development and care needs to be taken in pre-'90s versions to avoid front wheel locking.

Arrival of the ULP-era Mondial 3.2 brought 0-100km/h and 0-400m times

BUYING THE BADGE

THE MONDIAL is not the only Prancing Horse you can get without having to win Lotto. Here's three other examples:

400i (1979-1984) – A proper four-seater with room for the kids, extending its use beyond usual Sunday morning run. Engine is 4.8-litre V12, with three-speed auto standard. Just 502 built, making it rare but not terribly desirable. A really good one is worth \$60,000.

328 GTS (1985-89) – Regarded as last classic Ferrari V8, this two-door (pictured below) is reasonably quick (0-100km/h – 6.2secs) and recommended for first-time Ferrari buyers. Might just find a nice example for under \$100,000.

308 GT4 Dino (1974-79) – Another unloved four-seater. V8-engined and designed by Bertone, it can be yours for under \$50,000.





of 7.0 and 15.0secs respectively. While those figures remain some way adrift of the two-seat cars' capabilities, you can't fit the kids and a set of golf clubs in a 328.

Comfort and practicality were the main attractions of Mondial ownership, so supple leather-covered seating was a given, allied to electric windows, air-con, central locking and, from the QV onwards, electric mirrors.

Power steering became available from 1986 and, while its absence on earlier cars

isn't especially noticeable once on the move, heaving on the wheel when the car is stationary isn't recommended as damage to the column joints may result.

While Mondial panels are zinc-treated against rust, paintwork isn't especially resilient – the reds and metallics especially suffering in our climate.

HOW MUCH?

Jumping into a cheap (sub-\$50,000) and possibly nasty car is not a sensible move, since any savings on the initial outlay will be quickly absorbed in repair expenses. Buying a good one is going to involve pretty much the same investment as a two-seat 308 GTSi, so you need to assess whether the 2+2's enhanced practicality is worth the trade-off in performance and future collectability.

Fortunately, our market isn't overflowing with bad Mondials, so \$60,000 is a realistic minimum. That amount should secure a presentable 3.2-litre coupe with service history showing the most expensive maintenance tasks to be at least 20,000km away.

Top-of-the-line Mondial Ts will reach \$100,000 and \$130,000 is possible for a pristine car – line-ball with current values for a very good 348 Spyder.

Cars that have not enjoyed regular use and/or servicing are potential money pits, so insist on seeing all recent service receipts. Inspection by a specialised Ferrari workshop is essential.

"Detailed maintenance history is absolutely vital," says Rudolf Masi, whose Piccola Scuderia (02 9519 4332) maintains an array of Ferrari Mondials and supplied our 1987-build 3.2-litre example. ■

3 MONDIAL 3.2

FAST FACTS

FERRARI MONDIAL, 1980-93

PRODUCTION: 6124

BODY: unitary construction, steel and alloy two-door coupe or cabriolet

ENGINE: 2.9, 3.2 or 3.4-litre V8 with quad camshafts and fuel injection

POWER & TORQUE: 158kW @ 6600rpm, 238Nm @ 4600rpm (Mondial 8)

PERFORMANCE: 0-100km/h – 7.8secs, 0-400m – 15.7 secs (Mondial 8)

TRANSMISSION: five-speed manual

SUSPENSION: Front: independent with coil springs and wishbones, telescopic shock absorbers and anti-roll bar. Rear: independent with coil springs and wishbones, telescopic shock absorbers and anti-roll bar

BRAKES: disc front/disc rear with power assistance (Mondial T with ABS)

TYRES: 240/55VR390 radial

PRICE RANGE: \$30,000-130,000

CONTACT: Ferrari Club Divisions in all states. Website: fca.org.au

"JUMPING INTO A CHEAP – SUB-\$50,000 – AND POSSIBLY NASTY CAR IS NOT A SENSIBLE OR FINANCIALLY ADVISABLE MOVE."

