

# Australia's Sports & Classic Cars

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# 2+2 = near perfection



**W**e are all used to motoring writers waxing lyrical about such exotic cars as those from the Ferrari stable that to see a headline: Really quite a car! even with the exclamation mark, might give the impression that the writer did not like the car he'd just tested. While it is true that the car in question was not in the same league as its smaller carrying capacity versions, the 250 GT 2+2 was a major milestone for the men from Maranello.

The Pininfarina-designed coupe was a member of the series that put the products of the late Enzo Ferrari on the road in greater numbers than would have been considered feasible five years earlier. Significantly it was less a thinly disguised road going track car and capable of carrying more than two.

**Story by Peter Gavaghan  
Pictures by Richard Newton**

Further, it was not only a car that was produced using assembly-line procedures, but one that was the result of its first market research (actually customers' comments relayed to the factory via dealers). Argued the potential buyers: if the car is not going to be as rapidly fast as the short wheel base berlinetta versions, at least it could be more internally spacious.

It evolved out of the 250 Europa and was equipped with the 2953 cc (2.87 in. bore x 2.32 in. stroke) 12 cylinder Colombo V12 engine producing 240 bhp at 7000rpm and torque of 180lb-ft at 5500 rpm. That power output was 40 bhp down on the two-seater berlinettas. The us-

able rev range was from 1000 a minute to 7200 a minute and it was capable of a endowing the 185 inch long coupe with a top speed of 217 kph (144 mph). British road testers in Autosport of October 1961 wrote: "On the M1 (motorway), the Ferrari cruises happily at over 110 mph (176 kph) and had a radio been fitted to the car I am certain it could have been clearly heard. In point of fact, there is a lack of wind-noise at high speeds which borders on the uncanny."

Brute power was not what the engine was all about. The same tester described it as smooth as silk right up its rev range and said that it was so flexible you could drop to 16 kph (10 mph) in top and still motor away quite strongly.

The engine capacity resulted from the regulations governing the racing





**Left: Pininfarina's lines have stood the test of time with the Ferrari 250 GT 2+2. Above: A full complement of instruments befitting a GT.**

make do with souped-up family sedans.

There were certain limitations and shortcomings with the 2+2, although if you believed the motoring writers of the time there was hardly anything to adversely comment upon. They and current owners welcome the fact that cruising at 135 kph (90 mph) would give a petrol return of seven km a litre (20 mpg) and a range of 700 km (440 miles) from the 100 litre (22 gallon) tank – a range in keeping with the GT tag but not attainable because there is such things as slowing down and speeding up. Normal range was a more modest 14 to 16 mpg, even then not bad considering the engine was being fed by three Webers.

Two reasons for the great cruising capabilities - the slick shape and the Laycock-de Normanville overdrive. The overdrive only operated on top in the four speed gearbox (all with synchromesh), but turned the car into a restful tourer. Third was capable of 170 kph (105 mph) and fourth 207 kph (129 mph).

Chief complaint about noise did not circle the exhaust, engine or transmission but the heater fan. In fact, one writer said the car could travel fast without offending sensitive ears and if one drove hard there was an exhaust note to form the per-

Gregory Ferrari was interested in Ferrari, of course, was still as committed to track appearances as those in the showrooms and if one complemented the other, so much the better.

Ferrari had swept the board at Le Mans in 1960 with six out of the first seven placings (albeit they were privateers) and Stirling Moss later led the TT race at Goodwood in a similar car – they were all 250 Gran Turismo. In fact before its official release, Ferrari permitted a 2+2 to be used as the marshal's car at Le Mans, which sent the public away wondering, the rich to see if their bank account could stand a large extraction, and the motoring press in a frenzy.

It is easy to see why. Although the shorter wheelbase two seater versions look sharper, there is nothing

you can take away from the 2+2 in terms of styling. And even with a wheelbase of 2.6 m (102 in.) compared to the berlinetta's 2.4 m (94.5 in), and 4.7 m (185 in.) length it still looked proportionate. Farina made the rear look more like a fastback.

Yet the master designer made sure that two reasonably tall adults could be carried in the rear in a fair amount of comfort. Deep wells behind the front bucket seats meant lanky types could be accommodated even if they did have to supPLICATE their heads.

Not only would it carry four adults, but it could also carry a fair amount of luggage for them, too. This and that on-move performance firmly entrenched it in the Grand Tourer class that had sprung up in the early '50s and was still the realm of the well heeled – the hoi polloi had to





fectly orchestrated accompaniment to fast driving, but not make conversation difficult.

That V12 engine was, on the other hand, "ghost-like" and, even when you switched into overdrive at 5000 rpm, the coupe would still surge forward. "One always has to keep a sharp eye on the rpm counter for that engine will shoot up the scale at an altogether alarming rate," wrote one *Autosport* scribe.

**T**hey did find fault with the headlights which were not up to a car capable of such high cruising speeds, but then, quartz halogen headlights were not common. But they did praise its braking – Dunlop discs were fitted on all four wheels in keeping with a GT car from that prestigious stable. In fact the car was capable of accelerating to 161 kph (100 mph) and back to rest with a full tank and three passengers in under 25 seconds. As you might expect with the longer wheelbase, the balance of the car was not quite as even as that of the berlinettas: 55/45 compared to 49/51 front to rear weight ratio. It was improved if the rear seats and tank were full to 53/47.

But don't run away with the idea that this was the last word in handling – the car still used leaf springs at the rear, semi-elliptic with all their limitations in ride comfort but thankfully no longer asked to do any controlling. Still the front was independent with wishbones, coil springs and anti-roll bar and there were radius rods at the rear to help control that rigid rear axle. And this

**Above left:** three Webers feed the three litre engine. **Above right:** optional and expensive Borroni wheels. **Right:** poetry in motion.



Ferrari was the first one to use Konis.

As if sensitive to the fact that this very popular model would attract drivers who did not have track experience or might attempt to ape those they could not hold a candle to in terms of control, Ferrari made the car a slight understeerer (what General Motors for years called "more forgiving"). And, after all, there was plenty of power to help bring it back on line exiting a corner.

The steering set-up was quite good, for the time. The 2+2 used a ZF box with worm and roller which made it light and direct without transmitting much road shock back to the alloy framed, wood-rimmed steering wheel. "Even bad gullies in the middle of a bumpy corner produce no sharp snatch at the wheel," wrote Gordon Wilkins, who added: "Brief arm movements deal with most corners and it is only on hairpin bends or when passing that the wheel must be passed from hand to hand."

There was a lot of hand movement

in the window winders - typically low geared Italian jobs which you seemed to be winding forever.

Apart from that three-spoked sports steering wheel, there were two large dials for engine and road speed ahead of the driver, with the oil pressure gauge centred between them – as sensible an arrangement as you could think of. Four other gauges – oil temperature, water temperature, fuel and clock – were strung out along the centre of the dash. Below them a row of "guess till you learn what it is" knobs.

For the time seat adjustment was outstanding, with reclining backs on both front buckets which also gave first class lateral support. The standard of finish to the interior was higher than previously attained and conformed to the luxurious atmosphere Ferrari thought appropriate for its buyers to enjoy.

The car photographed belongs to Queensland tavern businessman and part time racing driver Peter Jones, who has owned it for two





years. It began its illustrious career as a silver projectile in the services of the Italian consulate in Canberra before passing into the hands of the redoubtable Lou Molina, who often used to have it on display at his tavern in the inner Melbourne suburb of Richmond. He must have liked it for it was in his stewardship for 26 years before moving north. The car was repainted red in 1975 and the front seats clad in red vinyl instead of leather. In 1980 Pur Sang rebuilt the engine – Pur Sang's owner, John Rosa, owns a 250 GTE himself.

**D**uring his time with the car Peter has worked on the mechanical rather than the cosmetic side. This has proved no problem as he has had as his guide and mentor Ferrari stalwart John McLean.

During his ownership several revisions had been carried out, particularly to the steering and suspension. The right hand drive conversion in the '60s had involved the use of Jaguar parts but Peter was able to track down an original rack for right hand drive from Euro Spares in the UK and thence began a conversion to original specifications. It involved fabricating an idler to attach to the chassis but Peter basks in the knowledge that all the parts and set-up is as per the original system. The suspension and steering were rebushed in deference to the car's age and experience.

The engine restoration was thought advisable given its dnf in the 1992 Targa Tasmania – problems with the wrong thermostat had caused the engine to overheat in

Australia's coldest state, which caused its early demise. A new clutch, again in deference to use and abuse, was thought advisable. Sensible fellows.

It is obviously no slouch when well – Peter was able to pilot it to a second outright and two firsts in different divisions in the 1993 Queensland Classic Car Rally.

Which, perhaps, explains why Peter has not brought it back to concours condition but has seen that it is mechanically sound. "Make it a concours car, spend a lot of money on it, and you are scared of using it," he said. Even so it was voted second most desirable Ferrari in the MacLean's Bridge Concours in 1993.

It's the style that grabs Peter, he's owned a couple of Ferraris before in-

cluding a Dino 286, and he feels that the current model is a natural progression: six to an eight to a V12. He's prepared to overlook the heavy clutch for the spirited acceleration and sheer exhilaration of driving a classic both from a styling and engineering point of view.

He believes it has the traditional '50s type feel, rather than the '60s, which appeals to his nature and he's attuned to that throaty roar it belts out under hard acceleration. Few enthusiasts would not vote it the best sounding car as it surges down a long track straight.

There are only 11 Ferrari GT's in Australia out of the 950 built between 1960 and 1963 and Peter's was the 56th built.



**Top: The rear has an almost fastback treatment yet, right, two adults could be fitted in the rear and the luggage space was quite generous.**

