


# CLASSIC DRIVER



## 1961 Ferrari 250 GT SWB - California Spider

California Spider

Lot sold	<b>USD 0</b> EUR 0 (listed)	Lenkung	Links
Baujahr	1961	Innenfarbe	Sonstige
Chassisnummer	2935GT	Zustand	Gebraucht
Losnummer	59	Standort	
		Kraftstoff	Sonstige
		Außenfarbe	Sonstige
		Automobiltyp	Sonstige

### Beschreibung

French title

- Certainly the most beautiful cabriolet of the second half of the 20th century
- One of 37 California Spider SWBs with covered headlights
- Completely original, never restored
- Unique, fabulous history
- Belonged to one of the most famous film stars, Alain Delon
- Matching numbers
- The 1961 Paris Motor Show California,
- Same owner since 1971

Ferrari's destiny was changed by the 250. Starting as a small-scale constructor, it took on an industrial dimension and gained the international reputation that it enjoys today. Centred on the famous V12 3-litre engine, which had nothing further to prove, two Ferrari families were born : one destined exclusively for the track and the other, offering a level of comfort and equipment missing

until that point, for the road. The racing line gave birth to such legendary cars as the Testa Rossa, Tour de France berlinetta, 250 GTO and the 250 LM. Meanwhile stars, tycoons and amateur enthusiasts fought over the road-going line which produced splendid coupés and cabriolets. A constant characteristic of Maranello was the strong link between these two groups, which meant that the road-going cars were never far from the race track...The 250 GT California Spider is the child of this perfect marriage. Indeed, while the 250 GT cabriolet by Pinin Farina is derived from the GT coupé, the California Spider is drawn from the competition berlinettas. So much so that the brilliant design by Pinin Farina was bodied by Scaglietti who built the competition cars for Ferrari. The Spider used the same chassis with 2.6m wheelbase as the Tour de France, had a comparable engine and featured the same rear wing styling as the closed version. Being geared less towards racing, it was a little heavier than its counterpart, but still lighter than the cabriolet. Also, there were certain models, specially prepared with a stopwatch in mind, that distinguished themselves on the circuit : Ginther and Hively finished first in the GT category and ninth overall in the 1959 Sebring 12 Hour race, and Grossman and Tavano took fifth place in the Le Mans 24 Hour race the same year, at the wheel of a spider from the NART team belonging to enthusiast Luigi Chinetti. The aforementioned Chinetti was involved in the " California " title of the 250 GT Spider: originally from Milan and a close friend of Enzo Ferrari, he was largely responsible for the widespread and efficient distribution of Ferrari throughout North America. This became an important market for the model that evolved alongside the competition versions, and enjoyed great commercial success with demanding wealthy amateur drivers. In all, forty-seven examples were sold in under two years, with surprisingly just six going to California. Two further Californias left the Scaglietti workshop at that time, a " Boano " coupé and a Pinin Farina cabriolet, both rebodied after accidents. And one must not forget the 52 short-chassis examples which followed on between 1960 and 1962. An exclusive and high-performance model, the California Spider holds a special place in the history of Ferrari, as it embodies an unrivalled fusion of qualities for road and track, the two paths on which Ferrari built its global success. The open versions of this marque are particularly rare, which explains the growing success across the decades of the California, the most expensive road-going Ferrari today. Of the 52 short wheelbase examples of the California produced, just 37 had covered headlights. This feature is the most highly sought after today, for its superior elegance.

When he arrived at the Paris Motor Show in 1961, Gérard Blain was already an established film actor. He was 31, with some twenty films to his name and a passion for Ferrari convertibles. He had just returned his Ferrari 250 GT Series 1 (the 1957 Paris Motor Show car) to the Ferrari importer Franco-Britannic Autos, and was interested in the magnificent 250 GT California SWB Spider, in dark blue with dark blue hard-top and black imitation leather interior, displayed on the same Ferrari importer's stand.

This particular chassis 2935GT, completed on 27 September 1961, had been sent straight to the Parisian importer to be shown at the Motor Show on 5 to 15 October 1961. During the first week of the show, a 250 GT Berlinetta Lusso (#2917), a 250 GTE and a 250 cabriolet series II were on show on the Franco-Britannic stand. The Ferrari 250 SWB berlinetta was sold at the start of the show and was replaced in the second week by this Ferrari 250 California #2935. The Ferrari was bought by Gérard Blain and registered on 21 October 1961 in his name and address (9 rue de Siam, Paris XVI<sup>e</sup> arrondissement), with the number 88 LR 75, just six days after the Motor Show had closed.

Alain Delon was from the same generation as Gérard Blain, and sports cars were clearly part of his celebrity scene. Liking the look of his friend's stunning Ferrari, he bought it, and had it registered in Monaco, 4452 MC. A copy of the Monégasque registration papers in the actor's name reveals that he registered it on 23 May 1963 in the Principality. Amazingly, Marc Bouvot, the son of the third owner, found the original plates 4452 MC that his father kept after buying the car from Alain Delon.

At this period, having become established through roles in *Plein Soleil* et *Rocco et ses frères*, Alain Delon's acting career suddenly took off. Handsome, charming and talented, he caused heads to turn and hearts to break. Producers profited from this fabulous image by keeping him busy in one film after another. In 1963, he starred with Jane Fonda in *Les Félines* (Joy House), in which René Clément weaved him into a Machiavellian plot. The following year, he appeared with Shirley MacLaine in *La Rolls Royce jaune* (The Yellow Rolls-Royce), in which he seduced a rich and beautiful marquise. The Ferrari shared these great moments with the celebrity actor and photos show him at the wheel of the

Spider 2935GT, in the company of these two actresses, themselves stars admired worldwide. In 1964, Alain Delon and his wife Nathalie travelled to California. The actor had the car sent out so that he could enjoy driving it around the streets of Los Angeles. It must have been at this time that the indicator lights on the side of the front wings were changed to correspond with American regulations. Under the passenger seat we found the original round indicator lights in their box ! On the period insurance certificate, an original document supplied by the son of the third owner, an address in Beverley Hills is recorded by hand. No doubt the actor noted this information down for his insurance company. In a photo taken in the United States in 1964, the Ferrari California is spotted at a gas station, with Nathalie Delon, while her husband checks the tyre pressures. In another photo, the couple are seen in Los Angeles, riding in their car.

In July 1965, Alain Delon parted with the Ferrari California, entrusting its sale to Michel Maria Urman Automobiles, 40 bis rue Guersant, Paris XVIIe, a specialist in prestigious cars. It was bought on 2 August 1965 for the sum of 30,000 francs by Paul Bouvot, having covered just 37,000 km. At that time, Paul Bouvot ran the Style Centre of Peugeot, and as a designer, appreciated the California's exceptional styling. One day he confided to his son : " This Ferrari is a masterpiece, it is beautiful which ever way you look at it, with or without its attributes. " He was no doubt referring to the bumpers, which were sometimes taken off the car, as photos shown to us by his son Marc Bouvot reveal. Paul Bouvot registered the car on 18 August 1965, with the number 6101 RU 75. Over the course of a year, he covered some 25,000 km, not bothered about turning up at the Peugeot Style Centre at the wheel of this car, something that must have riled certain directors who would have preferred to see him arrive in a more classic Peugeot. Paul Bouvot was a passionate Ferrarista however. When he sold the California Spider in May 1966 to its fourth owner, Mr Robert Cooper (a Canadian living in Paris), it was to buy another Ferrari 250GT SWB California a few months later offered by his friend Jess Pourret. But that is another story...

Robert Cooper kept the car for six months, before selling it at the end of 1966 to a Parisian sports car enthusiast who ran it until October 1967. The last but one owner of 2935GT was a doctor from Paris who kept the car for four years until it was acquired by Jacques Baillon in November 1971. And so 2935GT entered a prestigious collection that had been started during the 1950s by Roger Baillon, his father. Jacques Baillon drove the Ferrari very little, and like the majority of his cars, it soon found itself stored away, protected from the elements and bad weather.

Marc Bouvot, whose father bought the car from Alain Delon in 1965, allowed us to consult his outstanding original documents (original Monaco number plate, original insurance documents in Alain Delon's name, copy of the Monégasque registration document, original leather folder). Also thanks to the reference book on the Paris Motor Show entitled "Les Ferrari au Salon de Paris-1948 /1988" by Dominique Pascal, with the collaboration of Jess Pourret and Marc Rabineau, we were able to put together a complete history file.

The specialist's view

" This highly sought-after automobile is presented today exactly as we found it, on 30 September, when we opened the garage door to the property. There it sat in front of us, in the dry, covered with a light veil of dust and several piles of magazines and papers. It has held up against the passing of the years better than the weight of paper...its boot is dented. However, it was imperative not to touch anything, as this was part of the story of this Sleeping Beauty, its originality, exclusivity and unique history. Every speck of dust is a record of the years it has been stored and kept safe from the elements. Protected from mo

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